HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

DRAFT – *Assessment Documentation*

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct is associated with the inauguration of Government-funded rail networks in the development of Western Australia. It was opened in July 1879 as the State's first Government railway, the line servicing the mining industry in the Northampton district.

The construction of the line to service the Northampton mining district is an early example of the Western Australian government's attempts to support the industry and expand export during this period in the State's development.

The extant stone bridges along the route of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway, including McGuire's Creek Railway Bridges and Bowes River Railway Bridges, were the first bridges constructed as part of a government rail line in Western Australia.

11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;

The extant fabric along the route of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway line provides a unique opportunity to understand the construction of this seminal line in Western Australia's railway history, its failures, and the measures taken to rectify the problems experienced with the line as surveyed due to poor planning and knowledge of railway infrastructure in WA at this time, including the multiple realignments in the early twentieth-century.

The archaeological sites of the railway housing along the Geraldton-Northampton Railway line have the potential to provide information about the people who lived and worked on the line.

11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct represents the earliest attempt at railway construction by the Western Australian government.

11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct has social significance for its connections with the development of railways in Western Australia, a major mode of transport and source of employment throughout the history of the State.

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct is highly valued by the local community, particularly in Northampton, as evidenced by the recent interpretation established for the site.

11(f)[1] Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct contributes to the cultural landscape of the area with its undulating and sometimes dramatic formations and cuttings, extant somewhat ghostly railway signs, and ruinous stone bridges.

11(h) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;

As the first bridges constructed as part of a government rail line in Western Australia, the extant stone bridges along the route of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway, including McGuire's Creek Railway Bridges and Bowes River Railway Bridges, provide an opportunity to investigate government bridge construction during this early period.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

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1 For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present,* Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.
For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate,* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

12. 1 CONDITION

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct is overall in fair to moderate condition. Although largely ruinous and/or ephemeral in terms of extant built fabric, the landforms that define the line's route remain intact and in fairly good condition.

Original Railway Station, Geraldton (No. 1) in in good condition having recently undergone conservation works

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) (No. 3) is in good condition.

12. 2 INTEGRITY

This section explains the extent to which the fabric is in its original state.

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct retains a moderate to high degree of integrity. Although largely ruinous and/or ephemeral in terms of extant built fabric, the landforms constructed to facilitate the line are still clearly evident, as are a number of bridges and culverts along its length and it is likely to remain extant for the foreseeable future so retains a moderate degree of integrity overall.

Original Railway Station, Geraldton (No. 1) has a low degree of integrity having had substantial alterations made to its original fabric since it ceased to be used as a railway station, including the addition of a second storey.

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) (No. 3) has a moderate to high degree of integrity having had limited intervention into its original fabric it remains largely as constructed.

12. 3 AUTHENTICITY

This section explains the extent to which the original intention is evident, and the compatibility of current use.

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct has not served as a railway line since its closure in 1957, and it is unlikely to ever serve this purpose again. However, much of the landforms constructed to facilitate the line are still quite intact, as are a number of bridges and culverts along its length, which are likely to remain extant for the foreseeable future so overall the place retains a moderate degree of authenticity.

As an archaeological site *Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct* has a high degree of authenticity as much of the sites along its length remain undisturbed.

Original Railway Station, Geraldton (No. 1) has a low to moderate degree of authenticity not having served as a railway station since being superseded by the second station in 1893.

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) (No. 3) has a moderate degree of authenticity. Although not having served as a railway station since passenger traffic from Perth ceased in 1975 part of the place functions as the TransWA ticketing office which is compatible with its former use as a railway station.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This heritage assessment is based on the documentary evidence for this place compiled by Historian Eddie Marcus in July 2013, and physical evidence compiled by Senior Heritage Officer Dr Kelly Fleming following a site survey in June 2014 with amendments and/or additions by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee.

13. 1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Geraldton-Northampton Railway Precinct covers approximately 50 kilometres of railway reserve between Geraldton in the south and Northampton in the north. A large portion of the line is still discernible in formations (mounded earth banks) and cuttings (trenches excavated into bedrock), with other fabric such as stone bridges, remnant sidings and signposts also extant at some locations.

Background

The route of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway runs through the lands of the Amangu Yamatji people near Geraldton (Champion Bay) and the Nanda Yamatji people near Northampton. Sources of food in these areas included kangaroos, emus, ducks, birds, eggs, seeds, tubers, fruits, gums and fish, which were caught in the ocean during the summer months.[2] Drinkable water was accessible by the sand hills or underground in dry creek beds.[3] Lieutenant George Grey, who was the first explorer of the region in 1839, observed large mud huts, constructed by local people, alluding to a more sedentary lifestyle. The huts were grouped together and Grey commented that in certain areas they collectively held over 150 people, indicating the large populations of Aboriginal people in the area.[4]

Following Grey's expedition to the Champion Bay district in 1839, no further exploration occurred until 1846 when Augustus Charles Gregory investigated the area's agricultural potential.[5] In 1848, Gregory led a second expedition, during which deposits of galena (lead ore) and copper were discovered in the vicinity of the Murchison River.[6]

In December 1848, the newly-appointed Governor, Charles Fitzgerald, visited the site to verify the mineral and agricultural prospects.[7] A conflict with local Aboriginal people resulted in Fitzgerald being speared in the leg.[8] Nonetheless, the trip confirmed the potential of the Murchison district for European settlement and development.[9]

After Fitzgerald's return, in October 1849 the new Geraldine Mining Company commissioned Gregory to lead an overland party.[10] Simultaneously, Gregory

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2 Gratte, S, *The Aboriginal history of Geraldton (Jambinu) and surrounding areas*, (City of Geraldton, 2015), p. 2

3 Gratte, S, *The Aboriginal history of Geraldton (Jambinu) and surrounding areas*, p. 2

4 Gratte, S, *The Aboriginal history of Geraldton (Jambinu) and surrounding areas*, p. 3

5 Bain, Sr Mary Albertus, *A Life of its Own: A Social and Economic History of the City of Geraldton and the Shire of Greenough, 1846–1988* (City of Geraldton, 1996), p. 4

6 Bain, *Life of its Own*, pp. 4-5

7 Bain, Life of its Own, p. 5; Spillman, K., *A Rich Endowment: Government & Mining in WA 1829-199*4 (UWA Press, 1993), p. 13

8 Stannage, C. T., *A New History of Western Australia* (UWA Press, 1981), p. 97

9 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, pp. 13-14

10 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, pp. 14-15

was instructed by the Surveyor General, John Septimus Roe, to survey the newly approved townsite at Champion Bay, which was later to become Geraldton.[11] In December 1849, approximately 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of lead ore from the Geraldine Mine was carted and then shipped back to Fremantle.[12]

In the 1850s the colonial government continued to support both mining and pastoralist interests in the area through the provision of convict labour and infrastructure.[13] This decade also saw more deposits discovered and the establishment of mines such as White Peak Mine (1855), the Wanerenooka copper mine (1856) [P4658 *Wanerenooka Mine Site*], and the Wheal and Gwalla mines (1859).[14]

Fitzgerald's successors maintained the position that the government should make every effort to encourage further development of the district through the provision of infrastructure. In 1864 Northampton was proclaimed, with the intention of servicing the mining area.[15]

Planning a railway

As the closest harbour at Port Gregory had proved too dangerous for shipping, ore had to be carted over rough unmade roads to the port at Champion Bay. Pressure was exerted on the Government by a combination of mine owners at Northampton, pastoralists, and merchants at Geraldton, for the construction of a railway.[16]

As early as 1868, a public meeting at Champion Bay heard a demand for a 'tramway… extending from the Geraldton Jetty to Northampton (with a view to its further extension to the Geraldine mine), passing in its course through the centre of all the mineral lands between the White Peak and the Geraldine mines'.[17] The Legislative Council is thought to have finally agreed to a railway as a response to the falling price of ore in the early 1870s.[18] It is also possible that the Government's hand was forced by a need to gain popularity due to a separatist movement which was attracting settlers in the Victoria District.[19]

The first step towards the building of a Government railway was taken on 15 August 1872, when the Legislative Council authorised the provision of funds for a preliminary survey of the line. This was followed on 10 September 1872 by a call for tenders for the engineering survey of a 3ft 6in line of approximately 32 miles (50km) in length, from Champion Bay to the mines at Northampton.[20]

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11 Bain, *Life of its Own*, pp. 6, 43

12 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, p. 16

13 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, pp. 17-20

14 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, p. 20; Considine & Griffiths Architects, 'Conservation Plan for Gwalla Precinct, Northampton', prepared for the Shire of Northampton, April 2000, p. 7

15 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, pp. 20-21; 'History of Country Town Names', Department of Land Information, www.dola.wa.gov.au, accessed 9 July 2013

16 Le Page, J. S. H., *Building a State: The Story of the Public Works Department of Western Australia, 1829-1985* (Perth, 1986), p. 120

17 'Public Meeting at Champion Bay', *Perth Gazette*, 10 April 1868, p. 3

18 Spillman, *Rich Endowment*, p. 21.

19 Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 120

20 Joyce, John (ed.), 'Western Australia's First Government Railway, 1879-1957' (Ashfield, 1979), p. 3

The successful tenderer was James Major, of Melbourne, who undertook the survey at a cost of £35 per mile.[21] In Major's report, submitted 14 June 1873, he recommended a gauge of 3 feet, with 35lb rails, as sufficient to carry the proposed mineral traffic. To keep the cost of earthworks to a minimum, Major advocated a surface line involving numerous grades of 1 in 40 and 5-chain curves (with 1 in 30 grades and 4 chains radius as minimum values). It is likely that Major was under instructions from the Surveyor General, Malcolm Fraser, to design a line which could be constructed for the minimum cost possible.[22] The cost of construction was estimated at £87,704, a sum considered sufficient to equip the line with rolling stock and necessary station buildings.[23]

It appears that Major's recommendation for a narrower gauge was accepted, since the *Government Gazette* of 11 November 1873 requested firms to tender:

> … for a three foot gauge extending from a point 30 links eastward of Government School [in Geraldton] to the Township of Northampton, a distance of 33 miles 66 chains or thereabouts to be completed by 1st October 1875. Tenders to be sent to the Colonial Secretary by 10th February 1874. Tenders could be for either the supply of all labour and materials, including Rolling Stock and Permanent Way; or labour and materials on Line construction, landing and storage of Rolling Stock and Permanent Way materials; and maintenance of [the] Line for one year.[24]

It is noteworthy that the tender did not call for the construction of any station buildings to service the line.

The *Geraldton and Northampton Railway Act* was passed by the Legislative Council, receiving Royal assent on 22 November 1873, and this was followed by a *Loan Act* on 15 January 1874 raising the sum of £89,000.[25]

On 24 February 1874, the tender of David Proudfoot, of Dunedin, New Zealand, was accepted for construction of the railway.[26] A newspaper report on the awarding of the contract is typical of the public scepticism surrounding the entire project:

> The first railway in the colony – between Geraldton and Northampton – will be commenced in a short time – the tender of Mr. Proudfoot, a New Zealand firm, we believe, has been accepted, to construct the railway, without rolling stock and permanent way, for £42,500. The consulting engineer and the superintending engineer have also been appointed. It may seem strange that so small a contract has been taken by contractor out of the colony, but tenders were invited in such a way as practically to exclude local contractors from competing with foreign firms. Tenders were invited for the construction of the whole distance, including permanent way, rolling stock, and twelve months maintenance. No local firm felt competent to undertake such responsibility, and the Government were left to select from the few foreign tenders sent in. The construction of this railway is purely a hobby of Mr. Weld's, who hopes by the bribe of cheap transit to induce speculators

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21 *Herald*, 21 December 1872, p. 3. Major also surveyed the line from Guildford to York. His appointment proved controversial: see *Herald*, 5 October 1872, p. 2; *Herald*, 21 December 1872, p. 3.

22 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 3

23 Carson, Alfred, 'The Champion Bay County', *Early Days*, 3.2 (1939), pp. 16-17

24 'Geraldton and Northampton railway : specification of works, general conditions of contract, etc., etc.' (Government Printer: Perth, 1873 [copy held at SLWA]); Joyce, *Government Railway*, p. 3

25 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 3

26 Arblaster, Margaret, 'The Beginnings of Railways in Western Australia, 1879-1890' (unpublished, 1964), p. 6; *Herald*, 28 February 1874, p. 3

> from the neighbouring colonies to invest in opening up, and developing, the mine lands existing in the neighbourhood of its northern terminus, Northampton. It is not intended to, nor can it, serve any other industry than the mining, and should capitalists decline to invest, the railway will be useless.[27]

The superintending engineer was Henry Victor, while James Major was appointed consulting engineer. This latter appointment was controversial since it was unusual to engage the surveying engineer as consulting engineer, an independent person being preferred.[28]

Owing, however, to ill health, Proudfoot relinquished his contract, forfeiting the deposit of £500 which he was required to lodge as a condition precedent to his tender being accepted. Some months later, James Palmer of Melbourne undertook to construct the line for £50,000, and H. E. Victor was appointed supervising engineer.[29] By now, the gauge of the line had been altered, and the cost of the line correspondingly increased:

> The line, which is to be constructed on the 3ft. 6in. gauge, will cost about £2,500 per mile, including rolling stock. The rails will be 35lb. to the yard, the engines about 15 tons, and the speed maintained something less than 20 miles an hour. The sleepers will be of jarrah, to be supplied by the Rockingham Company. The cost of the railway will come out of the £100,000 5 per cent. loan which the Government of Western Australia floated here some time since. The Champion Bay end of the line will connect with Perth, a distance of about 300 miles, by means of steamships.[30]

The contractor was to be responsible for the erection of any temporary cottages and other conveniences. Timber was to be 'of perfect quality', straight and charred to a depth of one quarter inch (6 mm), if the engineer so desired. A number of clauses dealt with the quality of bricks and stone, although it is unclear in this contract what structures were intended to be constructed with them.[31]

Building a railway

The first sod of the line was ceremonially turned by Governor Weld on 22 October 1874. Weld used a polished wheelbarrow to place the turf in and wheeled it to a proposed embankment. The wheelbarrow was subsequently kept as a memento in Geraldton Mechanics' Institute (known as the Geraldton Residency in 2017).[32]

According to the contract, the railway was to be completed by March 1876. But owing to a multitude of factors, including the adoption of the 3' 6" gauge, considerable alterations to bridges and culverts, deviations and subsidiary works not originally provided for, the line was not opened until 26 July 1879, the ceremony being performed by Governor Ord five years after his predecessor had inaugurated the work.[33]

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27 *Herald*, 28 February 1874, p. 3

28 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 3

29 'Railways in Western Australia', *Launceston Examiner*, 1 August 1874, p. 5

30 'Railways in Western Australia', *Launceston Examiner*, 1 August 1874, p. 5

31 For a number of journalists, such seemingly redundant clauses provided evidence of incompetence on the part of the Government. See, for example, 'Geraldton and Northampton Railway', *Herald*, 9 December 1876, p. 3.

32 'Geraldton – Its Early History and Development', *Geraldton Guardian* (Supplement), 24 December 1927, p. 9

33 Carson, 'Champion Bay County', pp. 16-17

One of the first issues was the decision just prior to the beginning of work that the line would be changed to standard 3' 6" gauge. An investigation by a Select Committee condemned this because the government had not been advised of the decision beforehand.[34] Following this was Major's death in February 1875 and the appointment of his replacement, W. D. Lovell, in June.[35]

Lovell spent two months preparing a comprehensive inspection and appraisal of the works to date. His report criticised almost every feature of the line. He condemned the Chapman Bridge design as being unsafe, and the cuttings and embankments as being too narrow and inadequately protected by proper drainage. He also commented on the poor quality of the rails which had been sent out, drawing attention to tests carried out by Major, in which serious flaws were revealed. Lovell also pointed out the lack of planning for any necessary buildings.[36]

Under the chair of J. G. Lee Steere, a Legislative Council Select Committee was formed to reconsider the railway and recommend ways in which the project might be carried to completion. Their report, issued 16 December 1875, was damning:

> The committee were of [the] opinion that the preliminary survey had not been satisfactory, and that further steps should have been taken to test the correctness of Mr. Major's report. The Executive Council, in altering the gauge of the line from 3ft. to 3ft. 6in. and thus involving an additional expenditure of £481 per mile, without consulting the Legislature, nor asking an increased vote, had manifested a want of candour in the matter, and the departure, under such circumstances, from the original plan was wholly unjustifiable… No doubt the quality of the rails imported from England was very inferior … and the committee recommended that every endeavour should be made to obtain a rebate upon the price paid for the same, and that greater caution be exercised in future. From a review of the whole of the evidence adduced … the committee were of [the] opinion that the suggested alterations [and] amended designs, be at once proceeded with, and that a further sum of £29,369 10s more than already voted would be required for completing the work, thus increasing the cost or the by about £900 per mile.[37]

Shortly afterwards, James Thomas was appointed Government Engineer and Director of Public Works, and he issued another report on the line on 21 July 1876.[38] This report was very critical of the decision to move from a 3' gauge to a 3' 6" gauge, which had involved unnecessary expenditure.[39] However, a subsequent inquiry by the Legislative Council into the 'scandalous waste of public money' criticised the management of the whole project, noting that sixteen people were involved in managing the contract, and that certificates had been signed for completion of aspects of the work without that work having been sighted.[40]

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34 Austin, J. M., 'Construction of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway', in *Western Rails*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 1979, p. 7

35 Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 122

36 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 3; Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 125

37 *Herald*, 22 December 1875, p. 3

38 The report was reproduced in two parts: *Herald*, 12 August 1876 & 19 August 1876

39 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 4

40 *Inquirer & Commercial News* (supplement), 30 August 1876, p. 1

Throughout the long period during which work on the railway was in progress, there was continuous trouble. Allegations of incompetence and dishonest practices were made, and from time to time the contractor was in financial difficulty, absorbed in disputes with his own staff and with the Public Works authorities. The Legislative Council frequently criticised the Government for its lack of control and wasteful expenditure.[41]

In late September 1877, a 17 mile stretch of line from Geraldton was opened by James Thomas.[42] However, it was not until 26 July 1879 it was possible to finally announce that the Northern Line was complete, some seven years after the project was started, and five years after building commenced.[43]

A few years after opening, a humourist from the Eastern States described the railway line:

> This railway is, I think, the most remarkable in every respect I ever saw. The train, drawn by a Fairlie engine, which looks like the Melbourne Observatory telescope set on wheels, dashes along at the blood-curdling pace of five miles an hour,[44] and takes about six hours to do the journey. The country passed through is a perfect garden of flowers, and great consideration is shown to those passengers who may be botanically inclined, for the train will wait for them about a dozen times en route while they complete their collection of floral beauties. It is a positive fact that a fellow passenger amused himself by gathering a handsome bouquet of blossoms by leaning out of the carriage window and leisurely plucking them from the banks as we meandered serenely past. A tale is told of a vigorous old lady who was in the habit of taking the train to Geraldton several days a week from one of the stopping places. One day she was not at her post, but – an extra spurt being put on – was overtaken about a quarter of a mile farther on. The train was stopped, and the guard was about to alight to assist her in, but she waved her hand, and trudging on said, 'Thankee, no; I won't trouble you to-day, 'cause I'm rather in a hurry to get into the bay; but when I gets in I'll turn on them points for you in Marine Terrace.' Of course one can't believe all he hears, but there is a ring of truth about this story.[45] However, joking apart, the Geraldton and Northampton railway does its appointed work in a fairly effective manner. As may readily be imagined, the passenger traffic is not large, and the lead ore, which at present is the principal freight, can afford to wait a few hours in transit if it can be transported cheaply.[46]

At £146,631, the cost of the Geraldton–Northampton Railway was almost triple the original estimate. By the time of its completion, the price of lead had fallen dramatically and mines began to close.[47] Such was the extent of the collapse of the mining industry in the district that in 1901 it was reported: 'Of late years Northampton has fallen upon evil times, and the mining industry has almost

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41 Carson, 'Champion Bay County', pp. 16-17

42 'The Month', *Herald*, 29 September 1877, p. 3

43 'Council Papers', *Inquirer & Commercial News*, 1 October 1879, p. 4

44 The description of the Fairlie here is curious, since these engines did not come into general use on the line until 1885, three years after the original publication of this account. However, there were a number of trials of the Fairlie, and one of these probably accounts for their incorporation into this travelogue.

45 This urban legend developed a number of variants over time. For a version, told by the first guard on the line, comparing the speed of motorcars with the railway, see: 'Early Geraldton', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 11 May 1939, p. 4

46 'Through Jarrahland', *Daily News*, 23 January 1883, p. 3

47 Higham, G., 'Over the Range: Railways across the Darling Range of Western Australia' (Australian Railway Historical Society [WA Division], 1968), p. 3; Considine & Griffiths, 'Gwalla Precinct', p. 26; Battye, J. S. (ed.), *Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 2 (Hesperian Press, 1985 [1913]), p. 1006

completely died out'.[48] Despite this, the area's pastoral and agricultural industries, especially its sheep flocks and the growing of cereals like wheat, were consolidated in the early 1900s, ensuring the continued existence of the town.[49]

The whole purpose of the railway now had to be changed, since the future viability of the mining operations looked bleak, and after the line was completed, it had to rely, almost entirely, on passenger and general freight traffic for revenue.[50]

The first trains on the railway

In April 1874 an order was placed in London for rails, two locomotives and 40 mineral wagons to operate the Geraldton–Northampton Railway. The engines were to be constructed by Kitson & Co, of Leeds, for two 2-6-0 tender engines. One engine arrived in Geraldton on board the *Lady Louisa* on 12 February 1876, and the other on the *Robert Morrison* in April 1876. The first steam was raised and the locomotive ran along Marine Terrace, Geraldton, on 3 August 1876. The engines commenced hauling mineral traffic over the line as sections were completed.[51]

However, when completed the Geraldton–Northampton railway was something of an engineering curiosity. Apart from its steep grades it had many more pronounced curves than was typical. It was jocularly said from 1879 to 1895, while some of the worst curves were being negotiated, the engine driver at one end of the train and the guard at the other might shake hands.[52] One traveller claimed, albeit somewhat improbably:

> I myself have been a passenger on the train when a fellow passenger, because of the near approach of the line to a curve and the character of the gradient, has alighted from the slowly plodding and puffing train as it steamed into one of these nearly circular sweeps, entered the bush, shot a turkey, and re-embarked with his prize as it emerged at the other end.[53]

As a consequence, it could take between up to six hours for a train to cover the 50km separating Geraldton and Northampton.[54] A distinguishing feature of the Kitson engine was that the pony truck wheels were behind the cylinders. Their axle load of less than 6 tons allowed operation over 35lb/yard rail, while a coupled wheelbase of 7' 5" enabled the engines to work around sharp curves.[55]

After the official opening of the line, it has been claimed that the first train to Northampton was staffed by driver Peter Collins, fireman James Moore, and

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48 P. W. H. Theil & Co., *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia* (Hesperian Press, 2000 [1901]), p. 727

49 Battye, *Cyclopedia*, p. 1006

50 Austin, Jeffrey M., 'Construction of the Geraldton-Northampton Railway', *Western Rails*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 8-9; Kelly, G. J., 'A History of Mining in the Geraldton District', *Early Days*, Vol. 6 Pt. 1, pp. 80-81.

51 Gunzburg, Adrian, *A History of WAGR Steam Locomotives* (Perth, 1984), p. 15

52 'First State Railway', *Western Mail*, 15 December 1938, p. 68

53 'First State Railway', *Western Mail*, 15 December 1938, p. 68. This anonymous passenger eventually became the Governor of Western Australia through repeated retellings (e.g. Taylor, Mary [ed.], 'The First Government Railway, 1879-1957 and Beyond' [Northampton, 2008], p. 25).

54 Carson, 'Champion Bay County', pp. 16-17

55 Gunzburg, *Steam Locomotives*, p. 15

guard Dan McGillivray.[56] When, much later, McGillivray retired, he recounted a number of 'amusing incidents' in his speech at his valedictory:

> There were no vacuum brakes on the train in those days, and when negotiating a steep grade all hands would be called upon to lower the hand brakes of the waggons and stand on them to prevent the train from bolting down the grade. The fuel used in the engine was firewood. Frequently the engine would pull up and all hands would carry wood for the engine in order that the journey could be continued to the next stopping place.[57]

The rough operating conditions with primitive maintenance facilities and a water supply of dubious quality meant that the Kitsons' boilers rapidly deteriorated, and new fireboxes had to be ordered in 1881, and replacement boilers in 1885. Eventually the engines were transferred to Fremantle for use on the Eastern Railway, before being individually purchased by the Whittaker Bros and the Bunning Bros in the early 20th century. Both engines lasted into the 1950s before being cut up for scrap.[58]

In 1879, the Commissioner for Railways reported:

> There is now in course of construction for the Northern Railway an engine on what is known as the 'Fairlie' principle, for working the goods and mineral traffic on this line. This class of engine is especially adapted for Railways of a type such as this, having steep gradients, sharp curves, and light rails. The engine is of the double-boiler double bogie principle, with four cylinders 10 inches diameter, and an eighteen-inch stroke. It has six wheels to each bogie, so that although a heavier and far more powerful engine than those at present on the line, the weight on each wheel is considerably less, and consequently not so injurious to the permanent way—a matter of very great importance, seeing that the rails are only 35lbs to the yard. Its great advantage, however, is that resting upon bogie frames it will pass round the sharp curves of the line with the greatest ease.[59]

However, it was only the deteriorating condition of the Kitsons which finally forced a trial of one of the Fairlies on 20 November 1881. The erection of the engine was unsuccessful, though, and it was not until 1885 that the Kitsons had deteriorated so badly that running the Fairlies was the only way of keeping traffic moving on the line. Even so, the Locomotive Superintendent, in his annual report for 1885, noted that the Fairlies were costly to work and unsatisfactory for lines such as the Geraldton–Northampton. Consequently, the two locomotives were transferred to Fremantle in 1888 for use on the Eastern Railway, and one was cut in two with half driving workshop machinery and half being converted into a 2-4-2 engine.[60]

When the district was depressed around the beginning of the 20th century, and currency was in short supply, it was rumoured that the Northampton stationmaster would issue a single ticket to Geraldton for a cockerel and a return ticket for two birds.[61]

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56 'First Train to Northampton', *Western Mail*, 17 November 1927, p. 41. The guard's name is spelt McGilbery in this account, but this seems an error.

57 'Early Geraldton', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 11 May 1939, p. 4

58 Gunzburg, *Steam Locomotives*, pp. 15-16

59 'Council Papers', *Inquirer & Commercial News*, 1 October 1879, p. 4. For more details on the Fairlie engines see 'The State Railways', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 2 July 1932, p. 1

60 Gunzburg, *Steam Locomotives*, p. 17

61 'First State Railway', *Western Mail*, 15 December 1938, p. 68

Stations and stopping points

In 1900, a description of the Geraldton–Northampton Railway outlined some of the problems with the line:

> This railway line is a curiosity in many ways. Firstly, there are only stations at the terminal points, Geraldton and Northampton, and there is no connecting telephone… Then there are innumerable little landings or stopping places all along the line, some not more than half a mile distant from, one another, at all of which the train generally stops. These stoppages contribute largely to the slow time made, the 34 miles trip from Geraldton to Northampton usually occupying three hours. Finally the grades are very heavy, and some of the curves are so sharp that an eight wheeled truck cannot safely be used on the line.[62]

The railway works included the building of bridges, sidings and the erection of two railway stations at the port of Geraldton and at the line's terminus in Northampton.[63] The site of the station in Northampton apparently caused some debate and its final location, at the southern end of the townsite at Gwalla, was one of two sites considered and was only decided upon in 1878.[64] Eventually Northampton had two railway stations, with the station at Gwalla being replaced by the station on Mary Street in 1913, which closed with the railway in 1957.

The *Original Railway Station, Geraldton* was completed in time for the official opening of the Northern Line by Governor Ord on 26 July 1879.[65] It was only in this month that tenders for *Northampton Railway Station (Gwalla)* were accepted, following a number of extensions to the tender deadline.[66] This contract was awarded to R. Creswick,[67] and the Commissioner for Railways gave details in his annual report:

> The Geraldton station, platform, turntable, sidings, &c, have been completed, and a goods-shed erected on the ground, purchased for the purpose…, and to this site the workshops have also been removed. Mr. Creswick's tender for the building a Railway Station at Northampton, for the sum of £1,684 14s, has been accepted, and the work is in course of erection; it will include a Telegraph and Post Office under the same roof. Tenders have been accepted for the construction of a goods-shed and engine house at Northampton, at a cost of £1,078 14s.[68]

An 1892 timetable shows ten stations and stopping points then in use: Geraldton, Chapman (4 miles), White Peak (10), Taylor's (19), Oakabella (21), McGuire (25), Mercy's (27), Ryan's (28), Bowes (30), and Northampton (34).[69] By 1911, a timetable for a special train service shows the addition of five more stopping places:

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62 'Agriculture at Northampton', *West Australian*, 29 May 1900, p. 6

63 Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 125; Considine & Griffiths Architects, 'Conservation Plan of Marine Terrace Precinct, Geraldton', prepared for the City of Geraldton, April 2003, p. 179

64 'Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council of Western Australia', 1878, A. 2, p. 8, cited in 'Considine & Griffiths, 'Gwalla Precinct', pp. 25, 26; Report of the Director of Public Works, 1878, p. 3, *Votes & Proceedings*, 1879

65 *Inquirer*, 26 July 1879; Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 125; State Heritage Office, 'Original Railway Station, Geraldton'. Details on the history of *Original Railway Station, Geraldton* and *Gwalla Railway Station (fmr)* can be found in their respective assessments held by the State Heritage Office.

66 *Government Gazette*, 28 May 1878, 11 June 1878, 2 July 1878, 13 May 1879

67 *Government Gazette*, 22 July 1879

68 'Council Papers', *Inquirer & Commercial News*, 1 October 1879, p. 4

69 Joyce, 'Government Railway', p. 7

> Special train leaves Geraldton at 8.30 a.m., stopping at intermediate stations as under:— Bluff Point, 8.36 ; Chapman, 8.41 ; Waggerakine, 8.45 ; Glenfield, 8.54 ; Wokarine, 9.2 ; Stone Siding, 9.6 ; White Peak, 9.12; Oakagee, 9.37 ; Howatharra, 9.50 ; Oakabella, 10.4 ; McGuire's, 10.28 ; Isseka, 10.36 ; Ryan's, 10.43 ; Bowes (arr.), 11 a.m.[70]

The issue of speed and derailments (and near derailments) led in 1907 to a proposal to straighten the line at a cost of £20,000. However, the then Minister declined to support the project.[71] It appears, however, that some straightening did occur later.[72]

Higher prices for lead resulted in increased demand and the re-opening of mines in the Northampton district in the 1910s and 1920s.[73] The fact that many of the mines were situated to the north of the town is said to have influenced a government decision to extend the railway line from Northampton to Ajana.[74] As part of the work, it was proposed to relocate Northampton's railway station to a more central position at Mary Street.[75]

During World War II, a diesel-electric locomotive was put on the Northern Railway. This resulted in travel time from Ajana to Geraldton being reduced to 3½ hours, rather than the ten or more it had been taking. As a consequence, residents of Ajana were able to take a day trip to Geraldton for shopping.[76]

In 2004, a description of a few of the stops on the route from Geraldton to Northampton in the late 1940s and early 1950s was given by Stan Gratte, who had been a fireman on the line:[77]

- '[It's] quite likely we stop [at Bluff Point] to put off a passenger or a loaf of bread and even a block of ice wrapped in straw and sewed up in a wheat bag, or perhaps someone gets aboard.'
- 'There is a shunting loop at [Waggrakine and Glenfield] and it is likely that we have a truck of sheep, cattle or pigs for the abattoirs on the north bank of the Chapman River.'
- 'Just past Waggrakine Siding the tomato gardens are close to the line on the east side. These mainly belong to Macedonians, who had then recently arrived from war-torn Europe… A home, a simple cottage, built of secondhand (usually) corrugated iron, was their castle with a similar packing shed.'
- '[Wokarina] had a Station Master, Ernie Richards, who lives in a weatherboard house with his wife. He likes a yarn as he doesn't see too many people. '
- 'We leave Wokarina and roll downhill, over a big embankment called 'the deviation'. This was built in the depression, about 1932, to bypass a long loop towards White Peak Hill, up one side of a gully and back on the other side.'

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70 'Advertising', *Geraldton Guardian*, 16 September 1911, p. 3

71 'Curves and Culverts.', *Sunday Times*, 12 May 1907, p. 5

72 For example, see 'Letter to the Editor', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 26 May 1936, p. 4,

73 Kelly, 'The history of mining', p. 92

74 'Considine & Griffiths, 'Gwalla Precinct', p. 26

75 Geraldton-Northampton Railway, Proposed extension to News Station Site for Northampton, c.1912, Cons. 1649, Item 15268, SROWA

76 Taylor, 'First Government Railway', p. 38

77 Taylor, 'First Government Railway', pp. 22-26

- '[Oakabella] was a place where we probably stopped to put off a truck of superphosphate or stock. There was of course stockyards and ramps at most sidings and signs of these are still visible [in 2004].'
- 'Our next stop is McGuire's and this is only a watering stop. Bill Richards has a lead mine here and pumps water from it and sells the water to the railways… Just after leaving Bill's mine, which is on a hill, we pass the old mining town of McGuire's. The stone foundations of several houses can be seen on the east side of the line, down a gully. I believe there was a lead smelter there too.'
- '[Bowes Siding] had one of the earliest wheat bins for bulk handling. This burnt down [in the late 1990s].'

Closing the railway

In August 1954 the Government appointed an interdepartmental committee to conduct a review of the issues surrounding road and rail transport. The committee comprised representatives from the Departments of Works, Railways, State Housing, State Sawmills, Forests, Transport, Main Roads, Treasury, Agriculture, and Supply and Shipping.[78]

As a result of the committee's report, in July 1956 the Government requested that a further committee investigate non-paying railways. This committee issued two reports which formed the basis of the proposals submitted to Parliament. A total of 1,350 km of line was closed in 1957, including all operations on the Northern Railway from Geraldton to Ajana.[79]

Sections of the rails on the line began to be pulled up in 1961 with the majority of it making its way to Japan as scrap metal.[80] It is unknown if the timber sleepers were also pulled up at this time but it is likely these were removed slowly over time as physical evidence indicates some may have remained in-situ until quite recently. In addition, once the line was discontinued land at the Geraldton end began to be subdivided and sold with much having since been redeveloped.

In 1999 a report was completed by the Midwest Trails Group, funded by Trailswest and the City of Geraldton, to determine the feasibility of establishing leisure trails along abandoned rail alignments throughout WA.[81] In 2017 the proposed trails network has not been actioned.

13. 2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Geraldton-Northampton Railway Precinct covers approximately 50 kilometres of railway reserve between Geraldton in the south and Northampton in the north. Between 9 and 13 June 2014 a survey of the majority of the former railway line was undertaken by State Heritage Office staff. The following describes the extant physical fabric of the former line in geographical sections working south to north and using cross roads and land descriptions/formations

78 Joyce, 'First Government Railway', p. 14

79 Joyce, 'First Government Railway', pp. 13-14; 'Northampton MI', Site No. 77; *West Australian,* 1 May 1957

80 *Geraldton Guardian*, 20 April 1961; *West Australian*, 10 July 1963

81 Midwest Trails Group (1999) 'Feasibility Study into leisure trail conversions of the Geraldton to Galena and Wokarina to Yuna railway lines'. Prepared by Adam Murszewski, January 1999. Funded by Trailswest and the City of Geraldton. p.ii.

to provide some reference points for the physical fabric. A large portion of the line is still discernible in formations (mounded earth banks) and cuttings (trenches excavated into bedrock), with other fabric such as bridges, remnant sidings and signposts also extant at some locations.

Small portions of the alignment were not surveyed due to time constraints and/or lack of access due to thick vegetation cover. However, a detailed analysis of aerial imagery for the historical railway reserve provided further evidence that the alignment is discernible, in some form, for the majority of its extent.

Geraldton to Bluff Point

Within the townsite of Geraldton the majority of the earliest railway infrastructure has been removed. However, *Original Railway Station (1878-1893), Geraldton* remains extant, as does the 3rd Railway Station (*Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*) which was in use from 1915. Both of these places are entered in the State Register.

Original Railway Station, Geraldton (No. 1)

Located on the ocean side of Marine Terrace, the first railway station was originally a single-storey stone building (1878) and was in use as a railway station until 1893. A second storey, constructed from brick, was added in 1909 when it became the Mechanic's Institute and public library. The building displays a variety of styles due to the different phases of construction with the ground floor predominantly Victorian Georgian albeit with Federation elements incorporated later. A timber verandah surrounds the ground floor supporting the second storey balcony. The roof is hipped with small gables to the east and west and is clad with corrugated iron.[82]

The route of the former railway line is also discernible through the townsite. Starting at the first railway station building, the route of what is currently Marine Terrace follows the former route of the railway line. Marine Terrace terminates at Forrest Street. No rails or other features provide evidence for the line, and it is believed that the rails were removed prior to the road being bitumenised. The route of Marine Terrace passes by the location of the 2nd Geraldton Railway Station (1893-1915) which is no longer extant.

The termination of Marine Terrace at Forrest Street also results in evidence for a clear demarcation of the route of the former railway line through the town terminating.

Geraldton Railway Station (fmr) (No. 3)

The 3rd Railway Station (*Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*) demonstrates the early twentieth century development of railway infrastructure in the Geraldton townsite. The brick and iron former station comprises two single-storey wings and a central double-storey section. It is situated on the ocean side of Chapman Street with the platform on the west side. Completed in 1915 the building is in the Federation Free style. The zero mile peg for Geraldton is just south of the station building.

82 HCWA Assessment Documentation for P1068 Original Railway Station (1878-93), Geraldton pp. 10-11.

The northernmost termination of the platform of the 3rd Railway Station (*Geraldton Railway Station (fmr)*) largely results in the clear demarcation of the visible elements of the route of the former railway line through the townsite. Further north of this point there is some potential for the extant land forms to reflect the former railway cutting/formation, but these are somewhat ambiguous and have not been included in this assessment.

Evidence for the route of the former railway line is again demonstrated north of the Phelps St/Chapman Rd roundabout, and northernmost termination of Stella Maris Drive in the pedestrian path that runs along the coast line. Other than the path there is little evidence for physical fabric relating to the railway infrastructure.

Bluff Point to Chapman River Bridge

North of the Mabel St/Chapman Rd intersection the railway route veers northeast crossing over Chapman Rd approximately 80 metres south of P13253 *Railway Cottage (fmr), Bluff Point & Two Mile Well*. The Walkaway branch continued on to the southeast and the Northampton line continued to angle northeast past the cottage. The line ran through what is now an area of dense scrub approximately 70 degrees northeast towards the North West Coastal Hwy. Within the area between the cottage and the point where the deviation of the Northampton and Walkaway lines is clearest, evidence for the route of the railway is relatively limited. However, the point at which the dense scrub begins also marks a cutting which is approximately 2 metres at its deepest point. The cutting is filled with dense grass and shrub cover but is still clearly discernible.

The cutting terminates at the car park for St Lawrence's Primary School and any evidence for the route of the railway line appears to have been completely removed from this point through to where it again intersects with the current alignment of North West Coastal Highway. The Crowtherton siding is believed to have been situated within the road verge just north of the northeast corner of the St Lawrence's Primary School lot boundary. No physical evidence of the siding was visible at this location in June 2014.

From this point through to approximately the Chapman River the former railway route appears to align with the North West Coastal Highway (starting at approximately the mid-point between Smith and Dawson Streets). This area was not intensively scrutinised during the June 2014 survey and there is some potential for the railway to have deviated from the current highway route with evidence for formation or other railway related infrastructure possibly remaining extant within the adjacent road reserve.

Chapman River Bridge to Wokarina Siding

Just before Spalding Park, and in line with the Crowtherton St/Chapman Rd roundabout to the west, the former railway route veers to the west of the highway, crossing the river approximately 20 metres west of the North West Coastal Highway. Little physical evidence for the railway was discernible alongside the highway south of the Chapman River Railway Bridge but some may remain further south.

The second Chapman River Railway Bridge is of concrete construction and remains extant, having been converted into a pedestrian bridge. The original

Chapman River Railway Bridge was of timber construction, the piles for which are still situated approximately 2-3 metres west of the current concrete bridge. The stone lined abutments on both banks of the river also remain extant, as do some remnant timber footings.

The former railway line ran just west of the North West Coastal Highway until approximately the Chapman Valley Rd roundabout however little physical evidence was discernible. The Waggrakine siding is believed to have been located at some point between the roundabout and Adelaide St. This area was not examined during the June 2014 survey due to time constraints.

Between the roundabout and the location of Glenfield siding (at approximately the intersection with Macedonia Ave) the former railway route runs just west of the North West Coastal Highway, continuing due north when the highway veers to the northwest just south of the Beattie Rd intersection. This area was not surveyed in June 2014 due to time constraints.

North of Beatty Rd

The former railway route north of Beatty Rd was walked in its entirety through to Wokarina siding (approximately 300 metres north of Wokarena Rd in line with Alexander Drive). The railway line is discernible throughout this area in varying degrees, some just in exposed, slightly raised gravel clearings with some segments of more pronounced formation visible and at least one railway nail (colloquially known as 'dog spikes'). The concrete abutments of Dolby Bridge are still visible 50 metres north of the Dulchev Way/Alexander Drive intersection. The alignment continues to be discernible right through to Wokarina siding in varying degrees.

Wokarina to White Peak Siding

Wokarina Siding

Wokarina siding comprises an area with evidence for both railway infrastructure and occupation areas. The site is immediately visible due to the variety of non-native vegetation surrounding a clearing (11 x 14 metres). The boundary of non-native vegetation spans approximately 60 x 40 metres while the primary site area is approximately 90 x 55 metres. The extremities of the site comprise fragmentary artefact scatters of glass and some ceramics that spread out from a central point and have been subject to some disturbance due to track/firebreak construction at the western edge. The artefactual material mainly dates to the early twentieth century. Centrally located within the clearing are the foundations of what was probably a dwelling. Building debris (i.e. brick, concrete and iron) as well as two small areas with brick foundations in-situ are clearly visible one of which, considering its dimensions (1.5 x 1.2 metres) may have been a fireplace for the dwelling with the remainder of the super-structure possibly being timber-framed with cladding, all of which has been removed.

A rail set vertically upright approximately 1.2m high indicates the position of a former railway sign just north of the occupation area. The railway formation is clearly discernible to the north of the Wokarina occupation area and two small areas of rubble/clearing may be associated with the former siding.

Approximately 200 metres north of the Wokarina occupation area and siding the railway line branched out to form the Wokarina Yuna Line which heads to

the north east. The Geraldton to Northampton formation continues to be clearly discernible until this point then is difficult to see through the approximately 400 metres north of Eliza Shaw Drive. The line is then clearly visible through to Stone Siding in the form of a cutting approximately 64 metres in length, which then transitions into a raised formation for approximately 70 metres.

Stone Siding

Comprising an area of the first railway alignment (the eastern portion c.1874-1879) and a later alignment (the western portion c.1932) the line is clearly discernible and a number of features were recorded.

1870s Alignment (East)

The c.1874 portion of the former railway line deviates from the southern end of the c.1930 portion at an angle of approximately 50 degrees to the northeast taking a sharp 'dog leg' turn back to the northwest after approximately 600 metres.

The embankment is clearly discernible for the first 78 metres then becomes more difficult to pick up for 180 metres until a clear cutting is reached which runs for approximately 180 metres albeit with a small area where the alignment is less clearly defined.

From this point onwards, starting around the area the former railway line turns back to the northwest, the line largely follows a gravel track.

1930s Alignment (West)

Commencing with a well-defined formation the c.1932 portion of the former railway line is clearly discernible for approximately 100 metres from the point the two lines begin to deviate. The line then appears to follow a sandy track for approximately 80 metres before becoming a raised formation for the next 200 metres. A limestone quarry is situated at the approximate location of Stone Siding to the west but no other fabric was visible.

For the next 40 metres the line is difficult to see until defined by two stone culverts with concrete pipes connected by a portion of well-defined formation (approx. 23 metres). The next 70 metres is again difficult to discern until a shallow cutting, 20 metres in length, is reached.

A well-defined high formation runs for approximately the next 150 metres. Portions of the formation have been subject to erosion. The formation terminates at large concrete bridge abutments (approx. 26 x 12 metres) which would have supported a timber railway bridge. No timbers remain.

To the west of the formation leading to the concrete bridge abutments lies an area of industrial debris comprising a number of pieces of cast iron ship's tanks, corrugated iron tank fragments, a cast iron pulley, and other miscellaneous ferrous metal objects, none of which were readily identifiable. An amber beer bottle base fragment (c.1930) was also identified. It is likely the site is associated with the construction of the bridge during the 1930s.

A further portion of high formation (approx. 60 metres) was recorded before the two lines converge at the north.

Stone Siding to White Peak Siding

From the point where the c.1874 and c.1932 lines converge (600 metres southeast of White Peak Road) the line continues northwest to White Peak Siding. This portion is a relatively easy to discern formation, approximately 400 metres in length, and has two stone culverts with concrete pipes, one at 105 metres and another at 375 metres north of the convergence of the lines.

At the location of the White Peak Siding there is little fabric other than a small earth mound. From this point to White Peak Road ephemeral evidence for the alignment is discernible in the grass cover.

White Peak Road to Oakajee Siding

The White Peak Road to Oakajee Siding segment is approximately 9 kilometres in length. The line runs alongside the North West Coastal Highway for the first 4 kilometres, and then it deviates to the northeast for around 3 kilometres, taking a fairly sharp turn back to the northwest for the 2 kilometres to Oakajee Siding.

North of White Peak Road

For approximately 130 metres north of White Peak Road the alignment is not discernible followed by a length of 80 metres where evidence for the alignment is discernible albeit ephemeral. A washed out bridge or culvert then marks the beginning of a clearly defined formation 150 metres in length with another area of no definition for approximately 100 metres. Another clear formation follows for the next 300 metres intersected by a washed out culvert approximately half way along its length. This terminates at a shallow heavily vegetated cutting adjacent to which is a railway sign (with no timber of the sign remaining), and a collection of dog spikes (railway nails). The alignment follows the track for 60 metres and then transitions into a formation 140 metres long truncated at its halfway point by a washed out culvert. The alignment is not distinguishable for the next 230 metres, and is then defined by a shallow cutting for approximately 78 metres through until it splits into two lines about 115 metres south of Lacey Road.

North of Lacey Road

As noted above the line begins to diverge 115 metres south of Lacey Road, as they head north the two lines become more pronounced with the earlier (c.1874) alignment to the east and the more recent (c.1907- c.1930s) to the west.

West Alignment (c.1907- c.1930s)

From the termination of the shallow cutting south of Lacey Road, the line transitions into a formation 70 metres long which is intersected by concrete bridge abutments at approximately 50 metres to the north. None of the bridge timbers remain. The line is then intersected by Lacey Road and cannot be discerned for approximately 50 metres. The alignment is then distinguishable as a formation for 45 metres, along which a clear sleeper pattern can be easily seen in the differential grass cover.

The alignment is then indistinguishable for 90 metres but following this is clearly defined as a formation for the next 240 metres (until the two alignments again converge) with concrete bridge abutments just visible in the vegetation cover approximately halfway along its length.

East Alignment (c.1874)

The east alignment is far less well defined with much of it (approx. 65%) unable to be discerned apart from five eroded culverts/bridges evenly spaced along its length, and the accompanying fragments of formation either side of these. The east alignment converges with the west alignment at its northern end after a small cutting 35 metres in length.

The area of convergence of the two lines is not clearly visible for approximately 45 metres but the alignment is then marked by an intact railway sign followed by a shallow cutting that extends for 75 metres. The culvert ends and the line is not clear for 22 metres until it is visible again in a formation that runs for 88 metres with one area close to its end exhibiting evidence of a washed out culvert. A second intact railway sign completes this length. A number of railway nails can be seen along the formation. The formation is followed by a 100 metre cutting in which a clear sleeper patterns can be seen in the differential vegetation growth, albeit with some gaps along the cutting's length.

A concrete culvert marks the continuation of the alignment after a small length where the line is not visible (22 metres). The culvert is well formed and very intact so may have been a more recent repair to the line. It is followed by a clear formation approximately 200 metres in length with one potential culvert located at the northern corner of an adjacent dam. The dam appears relatively recent and is likely to be agricultural as opposed to rail related function.

The alignment becomes difficult to discern for the next 130 metres after which there is a 45 metre formation which terminates at what may be a stone culvert but vegetation cover made this difficult to confirm. From this point to just south of Rewell Road the alignment appears to have been destroyed by ploughing.

Approximately 90 metres south of Rewell Road is a medium sized timber and concrete bridge (10 x 9 metres), the timber decking of which is largely intact albeit quite deteriorated. A length of formation is clearly discernible either side of the bridge for about 50 metres.

<u>North of Rewell Road</u>

A clear, well-defined formation runs for approximately 155 metres north of Rewell Road, transitioning into a shallow cutting for 65 metres, then a formation for a further 50 metres with a small, well-formed concrete culvert at approximately the half way point. This is followed by a cutting that runs 80 metres, a formation for 100 metres, 65 metres of flat ground where alignment is visible, 90 metres of formation, 50 metres of cutting, 120 metres of formation, and a 100 metre cutting.

Approximately 400 metres between this last cutting and the small deviation south of Wells Road was not subjected to survey due to time constraints. However, aerial photography suggests that 115 metres may have been destroyed by a cropped field, while the next 140 metres may follow a dirt road. The 160 metres from this point until the line again splits into two alignments (approximately 1 kilometre southwest of Wells Road) was not surveyed but an examination of aerial photographs suggests vegetation is very heavy in this area.

The entire line from the deviation to Wells Road was quite heavily vegetated and difficult to survey. A portion of both alignments were surveyed as far as was possible.

East Alignment (c.1874)

The line could not be discerned for approximately 60% of this alignment besides a small segment of formation (65 metres) at its southern end and a 75 metres cutting at its northern end.

West Alignment (c.1907- c.1930s)

The southernmost portion of the west alignment was not surveyed due to the heavy vegetation. However, the northern end is defined by a deep cutting of which approximately 50 metres was surveyed. This transitions into 30 metres of formation at the north with a small concrete and timber bridge (5 x 5 metres) half way along its length. The concrete abutments of the bridge remain intact as do the steel girders on which approximately 50% of the timber sleepers remain in situ. A 20 metre cutting runs north of the formation with the remaining portion of the west alignment is not discernible through to where the two alignments converge (approx. 20 metres to the north).

Deviation to Wells Road

After the deviation converges the line continues to angle off to the north east for approximately 2 kilometres then back towards the northwest for a further 2 kilometres to Oakajee Siding.

The line north of the convergence of the two alignments comprises 340 metres of formation which demonstrates evidence of erosion in parts. This is followed by a gap where the line cannot be discerned for 70 metres, then 70 metres of formation which transitions into 70 metres of shallow cutting.

The next portion comprises a 200 metre length of formation which exhibits evidence of erosion in parts and has a concrete culvert approximately 30 metres north of its starting point. A small dry stone wall cuts across the formation. A shallow, 130 metre long cutting follows this.

The line cannot be discerned from this point for approximately 75 metres and a dam has been dug through the alignment. The line is then marked by a 30 metre cutting after the dam, transitioning into a 30 metre length of formation which terminates in an eroded culvert. The line is then difficult to pick up for approximately the next 45 metres to Wells Road.

Northeast of Wells Road

Approx. 1.2 kilometres of the alignment northeast of Wells Road was not surveyed on the ground due to time constraints. This is the portion that deviates furthest from the North West Coastal Highway to the east taking a sharp turn back to the northwest. The alignment was surveyed approximately 350 metres northwest of this sharp turn through to Oakajee Siding.

The first 300 metres of the portion surveyed comprises a clearly defined formation with a few small areas where the formation is less easily discernible. What appears to be a large eroded culvert is situated 40 metres south of its northern termination. A portion of one side of the stone walling for the culvert remains in situ, and two large concrete pipes are situated in the eroded out

area. The formation transitions into a 120 metre shallow cutting followed by a further 55 metres of formation.

The line is not discernible for the next 140 metres and appears to have been destroyed by clearing to create the adjacent paddock. The line is again distinguishable by a further 170 metres of formation intersected by an eroded culvert halfway along its length.

The next part of the line has again largely been destroyed by clearing with one small, 20 metre section of formation still visible within a 400 metre gap. The formation is discernible for the next 300 metres, to the point where the line splits into two at the Oakajee Siding, with two eroded culverts along its length.

Oakajee Siding to Howatharra/Taylor's Siding

The Oakajee Siding is believed to have been located approximately 250 metres southeast of Oakajee Road and the line splits into two alignments, here referred to as the north and south due to the northwest-southeast orientation of the line.

North Alignment

Two portions of the northern alignment were discernible in two shallow cuttings of approximately 80-90 metres each. There is then little visible evidence for the line for approximately 230 metres. Northwest of Oakajee Road the north alignment is again visible with a shallow cutting approximately 80 metres in length. An intact railway sign is situated at the northwest end of the cutting.

The line is not discernible for the next 80 metres but is then clearly defined by a shallow cutting for the majority of the remainder of the north alignment (280 metres). The cutting transitions into a formation 50 metres before the north alignment intersects with the south, and this formation continues on for a further 300 metres, transitioning into a shallow cutting for a further 130 metres.

South Alignment

Only the northwest end of the south alignment could be discerned, while the south east portion appears to have been largely destroyed by clearing for agriculture and tracks. The northwest end is defined by a 50 metre formation which transitions to a 120 metre long shallow cutting, 35 metre formation, 20 cutting, 130 metres formation, with an eroded out culvert 20 metres before it intersects with the north alignment.

Continuation of Single Alignment

The line continues in a northwest direction towards the North West Coastal Highway and essentially follows the highway's route through to Howatharra Siding. Only two thirds of this portion was surveyed due to time constraints.

The northwest orientated segment commencing approximately 1.3 kilometres from Oakajee Siding comprises a length of formation that transitions into a very shallow cutting halfway along its length. This is followed by a formation approximately 400 metres in length. There is another railway sign at the southern end of this segment and three concrete culverts are distributed along its length with another railway sign before the formation transitions into a shallow 70 metre cutting.

From this point the line runs alongside the North West Coastal Highway, however the line is not visible for approximately 70 metres followed by an area where there is no discernible formation but the sleeper pattern can be seen in the differential vegetation growth for 60 metres. This is followed by a 70 metre cutting, 140 metres of formation along which are a number of culverts including one that is eroded out, and one small bridge/culvert that retains its timbering further north. The last 30 metre segment surveyed comprises a shallow cutting.

From this point a segment of approximately 400 metres of the line was not surveyed due to time constraints.

The survey recommenced approximately 175 metres south of where Coronation Beach Drive intersects with the North West Coastal Highway. A segment of cutting, approximately 127 metres in length, leads up to where the line again splits into two alignments (referred to below as West Alignment 1 & East Alignment 1) directly east of Coronation Beach Drive. The southern end (approximately 60 metres) of the double alignments was not visible.

As the line converges in the north it again splits into two lines for approximately 70 metres (referred to below as West Alignment 2 & East Alignment 2).

West Alignment 1

The west alignment is visible in a 140 metre segment of cutting, followed by 20 metres where the line is not visible, then 13 metres of formation, 8 metres where the line is not discernible, 31 metres of formation, and then the line splits again.

East Alignment 1

The east alignment is visible in a 49 metre segment of cutting, followed by 44 metres of formation, then 61 metres of cutting. The last 90 metres of the east alignment is not discernible.

West Alignment 2

The west alignment in this segment comprises 65 metres of formation that has some attributes that may suggest it acted as a siding.

East Alignment 2

The east alignment comprises approximately 65 metres of formation.

The last segment surveyed here after the deviations comprised 45 metres of formation.

The next segment was not surveyed (approximately 400 metres) due to dense vegetation.

South of Nanson-Howatharra Road

Continuation of Single Alignment

Survey recommenced approximately 440 metres south of Nanson-Howatharra Road which comprised a shallow cutting approximately 100 metres in length. This was followed by 90 metres where no line was discernible then another cutting 64 metres long. The line was not discernible for the next 120 metres then a 47 metres cutting ran to Nanson-Howatharra Road.

Howatharra Siding/Taylor's to Oakabella Siding

The line could not be discerned in the area immediately north of Nanson-Howatharra Road for approximately 110 metres. However, a plaque marks the location of the Howatharra Railway Station (also known as Webb's Siding) approximately 90 metres north of Nanson-Howatharra Road. The plaque also notes this was the location of the shunting loop for Howatharra. Another plaque approximately 90 metres to the south west of this marks the site of the Howatharra Government School.

The line is again discernible after this point in a low formation which runs for approximately 290 metres. There is a stone box culvert 114 metres north along the visible formation, and a timber culvert at 275 metres.

Approximately 425 metres north of Nanson-Howatharra Road two concrete pads are situated within the railway reserve. Historical plans indicate these are the remains of one of two railway cottages, and their associated outbuildings, that were situated north of the Howatharra Railway Station. In the area surrounding these there are a number of refuse piles.

The area north of the cottage sites, including Taylor's Siding which was approximately 200 metres to the north of these sites, was not surveyed due to time constraints. This represents approximately 3 kilometres of the line.

Survey recommenced approximately 300 metres south of Oakabella Siding with a wide shallow cutting 80 metres in length. Twenty metres north of this is a wide low formation 44 metres in length followed by an area where the line is not discernible for 42 metres.

Oakabella to McGuire's Siding

Oakabella Siding

The line then splits into an east and west alignment approximately 120 metres south of Oakabella Siding, the easternmost being defined by an earth platform with a timber retaining wall approximately 70 metres in length. The west comprises 30 metres of discernible formation then the line cannot be distinguished for 40 metres until it reaches a small earth platform 20 metres in length. The line directly east of this (10 metres away) is defined by a sleeper pattern which can be seen in the vegetation.

The line is not discernible for 90 metres following this point but then appears to follow the track for the next 850 metres. The line is distinguishable at intervals in formations and cuttings as follows; 137m formation, 75m not visible, 42m cutting, 60m not visible, a 28m cutting, 50m not visible, 128m formation, 50m cutting, 90 metres deep cutting, 100 metres not visible, 90m formation.

The next portion of the line (approximately 4.5km between Oakabella and McGuire's Sidings) was not surveyed due to time constraints.

South of McGuire's Siding

Survey recommenced 1.3km south east of McGuire's Siding with a cutting 74 metres in length. The line then splits into an east and west alignment.

Eastern Alignment

The eastern alignment commences with a shallow cutting 17 metres in length, followed by a formation 7 metres in length which leads to a culvert 8 metres in

length. The next portion comprises a cutting 165 metres in length with a railway sign post (no sign) 120 metres along followed by a 90 metre formation. The eastern alignment terminates in a 70 metre cutting,

Western Alignment

The west alignment is somewhat less discernible than the east commencing in a 40 metre cutting, followed by a 20 metre area where the line is not visible, a shallow 20 metre cutting, then 90 metres where the line is not discernible. The final portion is a cutting 175 metres in length.

Continuation of Single Alignment

The alignment continues north in a formation that largely follows the track for 295 metres. A cutting 57 metres in length follows this 215 metre formation which again follows the track.

McGuire's Siding

The next portion comprises 75 metres of line that appears to have been constructed into a hillside and exhibits both formation (west side) and cutting (east side), then 130 metres of formation that follows the track through to and just past McGuire's Siding. There are a number of features in the area around where the siding was located including a tank stand and two pits, probably makeshift wells.

McGuire's to Ryans Siding (Incl. Isseka & Chally (Mercy's Sidings)

The line is not discernible for a 25 metre portion where it intersects with a track that heads east. The next portion comprises a 100 metre cutting followed by 145 metres of formation intersected 80 metres along by McGuire's Creek Railway Bridge (c.1879; c.1910).

McGuire's Creek Railway Bridges (P9055)

The bridge is a substantial concrete and timber structure approximately 10 metres in length. The timber bearers sit atop large concrete abutments approximately 10 metres in width, which comprise the bridge constructed in 1910. The stone retaining walls that date to the original bridge (1879) line the river bank just south of the c.1910 bridge. The centre of the bridge is supported on large timber piles.

North of McGuire's Creek Railway Bridges

The portion of the line north of McGuire's Bridge alternates between formation and cutting along its length taking a winding route to Isseka Siding. The first portion comprises 155 metres of cutting/formation i.e. cutting to the north east and formation to the south west. The next portion comprises cutting for a further 115 metres, cutting/formation for 80 metres, cutting for 120 metres, 115 metres of formation,100 metres of cutting, 35 metres of formation, then 150 cutting until the line essentially becomes Rose Road for 230 metres. A 90 metre cutting is then discernible, then a 220 metre formation that is intersected by a small stone-lined culvert just south of the intersection with Percy Road. This is followed by a cutting 110 metres in length, 100 metres where the line is not discernible, and then 250 metres of formation continues to Isseka Siding.

Isseka Siding

Just north of Isseka Siding three concrete pads are visible, likely associated with the tank stand and weighbridge office shown at this location on a c.1914 progress plan for the site.[83] Approximately 65 metres of formation running through to the tank stand is just discernible. This is followed by a cutting 45 metres in length. There is a well 20 metres west of the tank stand.

The 1.8 kilometres between Isseka and Ryan's (including Chally (Mercy) Sidings (P9065 Railway Siding) was not surveyed due to time constraints.

Ryans to Bowes Siding

South of Walsh Road

The survey was recommenced approximately 120 metres north east of Ryan's Siding where a 110 metre cutting was visible. The line then splits into northern and southern alignments of which only the southern alignment is still discernible comprising 180 metres of formation with a culvert halfway along its length, followed by 110 metres of cutting. The remainder of the line is not discernible until approximately 45 metres south west of a stone and timber bridge where a relatively high formation commences intersected by the bridge approximately halfway along.

The bridge, which crosses a tributary of the Bowes River, is quite intact albeit in poor condition. The timber decking and bearers have deteriorated but the local stone abutments and retaining walls are very intact. The bridge is supported by a central stone pier which is also intact.

The line from the bridge passes through a Geraldton Wax farm for about 350 metres and is not discernible. A cutting extends from the property boundary for approximately 55 metres followed by a formation that runs for approximately 295 metres. This is intersected by an eroded out culvert 23 metres along its length. There are still areas where scatters of railway spikes can be found along the line here. The line is not discernible for 95 metres then 65 metre cutting runs to the next property boundary. The Bowes River Railway Bridge is situated approximately 35 metres north of the property boundary fence.

Bowes River Railway Bridge (1879)

The remanent stone abutments of the Bowes River Railway Bridges (P9054) can be seen approximately 35 metres inside the boundary of the neighbouring property. This was not surveyed in 2014, but an assessment of the place in 2005 noted that the bridge was constructed in 1879 and spanned approximately 16 metres, and that the stone abutments were all that remained with the south abutment being most intact and 'comprising a crest-shaped stone retaining wall, which splays outwards and tapers downwards, and supports an embankment behind.' The assessment also noted that a stone pier was positioned centrally between the two abutments. The north abutment and stone pier were noted as being deteriorated.[84]

The next 600 metres of the line was not surveyed.

North of Walsh Road

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83 N R – Isseka, Progress plan, 15 December 1914. Con 1642 Item 342 Progress Plans – Northampton.

84 P9054 'Bowes River Railway Bridges', Below Threshold HCWA Assessment Documentation. p. 8.

The survey recommenced north of Walsh Road for approximately 500 metres and comprised 150 metres of formation, 70 metres of cutting, 135 metres of formation intersected by a timber-lined box culvert 95 metres along its length, then a cutting 40 metres long with sleeper patterns clearly discernible in the gravel surface.

South of Nabawa-Northampton Road

An area of approximately 300 metres was surveyed south of Bowes Siding. An extant railway sign post with timber sign extant was recorded at the southernmost portion of this segment, followed by approximately 95 metres of cutting and 95 metres of formation still discernible in the ploughed fields.

Approximately 2.3 kilometres between Ryan's and Bowes Sidings was not surveyed due to time constraints.

Bowes to Northampton (Gwalla) Station

Bowes Siding

Bowes Siding comprises two concrete pads, and what appears to be a relatively recent corrugated iron silo just north east of the fence line.

East of Bruce Road

The survey recommenced 2 kilometres east of the site of the Northampton Railway Station (Gwalla) site, just east of Bruce Road, where the line was followed west for approximately 800 metres. This portion comprised 100 metres of formation intersected by an eroded out culvert approximately halfway along its length. The next segment was characterised by a dual cutting/formation for 45 metres followed by a 40 metre formation with a small culvert two thirds along its length. A 220 metre cutting follows this after which is a 135 metre formation intersected by a culvert midway along its length. The final segment surveyed comprised 90 metres of formation followed by a 40 metre cutting.

Northwest of Seventh Avenue

The survey recommenced approximately 200 metres southeast of the Northampton Railway Station (Gwalla) site, approximately 200 metres from the intersection of NW Coastal Hwy and Seventh Avenue, where a portion comprising approximately 85 metres of cutting was discernible.

The line was not visible again until we were within 80 metres of the Gwalla platform. This segment comprised 20 metres of cutting followed by 50 metres of cutting/formation.

Approximately 3 kilometres of the line between Bowes and Northampton was not surveyed due to time constraints.

Northampton Railway Station (Gwalla) Site

An assessment was undertaken of Northampton Railway Station (Gwalla) in 2006 which describes it as originally comprising 'a rendered stone building in the Victorian Georgian style with a hipped roof in shingles…..a shingled verandah…..over the stone platform and….a small, skillion-roofed room….on the northern side of the station.' Post and telegraph services were also provided

in the station building.[85] A historical plan showing the wider station area indicates there was a goods platform and shed to the north of the railway station, a turntable to the east, and sheep and cattle yards just east of this. A well is shown east of the shed.[86]

In 2013/14 local Rail Heritage WA members undertook some excavation within the railway station reserve to partially reveal foundations of some of the former railway buildings and other elements, e.g. loading ramp, goods shed, engine shed and tank stand. In addition, interpretive signage and interpretive 'infrastructure', i.e. example rails, an ash pit, and pump house foundations, have been constructed to demonstrate the location and form of these elements.

The most substantial extant element visible on the site in 2014 was the local stone, random rubble construction retaining wall.

13. 3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Principal Australian Historic Theme(s)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.8.5 Moving goods & people on land
- 3.8.6 Buildings & maintaining railways
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

Heritage Council of Western Australia Theme(s)

- 107 Settlements
- 202 Rail & light rail transport
- 303 Mining

Comparative Analysis

First Railways

The first railway in Australia was a line between Melbourne's Flinders Street Station and Port Melbourne (then called Sandridge), which opened on 12 September 1854. This would have been second to the Sydney Railway Company's track between Sydney and Parramatta, which commenced construction in 1849, but the project ran into financial difficulty and had to be taken over by the New South Wales government. The Sydney line finally opened on 26 September 1855.[87]

The first railway in Western Australia was a private line, constructed in 1871, for the Western Australian Timber Company, running for 20km from Lockeville to Yoganup.[88]

Two other small timber railways were constructed in the 1870s:

- Rockingham to Jarrahdale (1872)

85 P9006 'Gwalla Railway Station (fmr)'. HCWA Below Threshold documentation. p. 8.

86 Gwalla Railway Station Plan, proposed extension c.1912, Cons 1649 Item 15268, State Records Office WA.

87 Birmingham, J., I. Jack, & D. Jeans, *Industrial Archaeology in Australia* (Richmond, 1983), p. 139

88 Le Page, *Building a State*, p. 113

- Canning River to Bickley (c.1872)

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct is a benchmark site as the first government railway constructed in the State.

Other Early Lines

Railways continued to develop slowly in Western Australia during the latter part of the nineteenth-century until the gold rush period (c.1890) initiated an unprecedented program of infrastructure building. Prior to this a number of other lines were constructed to facilitate the transport of people and goods. The following lines were constructed prior to 1890:

- Eastern Railway, Fremantle to Guildford (1881) which was then extended to Chidlow (1884); York (1885); Beverley (1886); Northam & Toodyay (1888)
- The Midland Railway Company opened the Midland Junction to Walkaway line (1882-1894) [Geraldton to Walkaway (1886-1896)]
- Bunbury to Boyanup (1887; taken over by the Government in 1891)
- Clackline to Toodyay (1888) – spur line from Eastern Railway
- Great Southern Railway, Beverley to Albany line (1889)

Geraldton–Northampton Railway Precinct represents the first attempt by the Western Australian government to construct railway infrastructure in the State.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

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13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH
