

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 409	Category: 2
Assessment Date: 24/03/2015	Last Revision Date: 24/03/2015	
HCWA Number:	Asset ID:	MCH134547

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	Kurrajong Trees (18)
Other Names:	
Type of Place:	Tree
Address:	Flores Road, between Fourth & Fifth Street (East side)
Suburb:	Wonthella

LOCATION

Map Reference:	GPS Northing:	GPS Easting:
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Photo Description:

Row of 18 Kurrajong trees adjacent to Flores Road. (Date 27/02/2015, T. Henkel)

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Fmr Rail Reserve	Assess No.:	
Reserv No.:		Vol/Fol:	
Dia/Plan:			

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	Railway Siding	Occupied:	
Current Use:	Site		
Ownership:			
Public Access:			

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	Not applicable	Roof:	Not applicable
Condition:	Good	Integrity:	High
Original fabric:	Trees		
Modifications:	Rail removed		

The row of 18 Kurrajong trees (*Branchychiton populneus*) is located on the former rail reserve on the eastern side of Flores Road in the suburb of Wonthella. Planted parallel to the road and situated between Fourth and Fifth Streets, the trees have been planted along a north-south axis adjacent to the old rail alignment.

HISTORY

Construction Date:	1932	Source:	Stan Gratte/Library
Architect:			
Builder:	Wonthella Progress Assoc		

The Wonthella area was surveyed in the 1850s and in the early years the du Boulay family owned much of the area, known as "Woorree Farm". In 1887 the railway between Geraldton and Walkaway was opened. In 1896, Wonthella, originally referred to as 'East Geraldton', was subdivided into 1/4 acre blocks for railway workers for the proposed marching yards in anticipation of a boom from the Murchison Gold Rush. At this stage the locality was called "Ootacarra". The yards were subsequently constructed in town and the blocks were not taken up until the 1920s. However, the area quickly developed as market gardens, not residential as originally planned. During the depression years "share farming" in the area became an established practice. Within a few years, many of the share farmers were able to buy their own land in the area. Given the considerable produce, predominantly tomatoes, was being grown in the locality it was

soon determined that it would be beneficial for a siding to be established on the Geraldton to Walkaway railway to facilitate the loading and transportation of produce to the markets in the eastern states and overseas. The Wonthella Progress Association, established in 1932, lobbied for the establishment of a siding to be located at the eastern end of fifth Street. In anticipation of the siding being located there, members of the Association, including George Allen a well-respected local resident and leader in the tomato growing industry, planted a stand of 18 Kurrajong trees. Meanwhile the name for the new siding was under construction. 'Woorree' was the first name suggested, however this was deemed to be too confusing owing to similar sounding names in the eastern states. Instead the name 'Wonthella' was suggested, the being a contraction of 'Wonthellarra', believed to mean 'to give' in an Onslow aboriginal dialect. With the support of the local progress association, this name was formally approved by the Railways Department on 25 July 1932, for the new public siding. A small timber framed corrugated iron roofed railway shed was relocated from the Hutt Railway Siding on the Northampton line to WOnthella. However, instead of being off-loaded adjacent to the Kurrajong trees, the little building was positioned approximately 200 metres to the north on the eastern side of the railway immediately to the north of Allen Street. At its peak, three trains per week were sent south loaded with tomatoes, bound for Sydney and Melbourne, also South East Asia and Singapore. A large army base was established east of the railway siding during the Second World War. The Wonthella Railway siding was closed in 1956, the small building was removed, however the stand of Kurrajong trees remains. (Sources: Stan Gratte, Geraldton Library).

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA:	104 Land allocation and subdivision 202 Rail and light rail transport
AHC:	4.1.2 Making suburbs 3.8.5 Moving goods and people on land 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kurrajong trees (18) have historic value for their association with the development and beautification of the suburb of wonthella and with the railway line which ran between Geraldton and Walkaway to Midland. The kurrajong trees are a significant stand of established vegetation which has been a visual element of the suburb since 1932.

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Management Category:	2
Level of Significance:	CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE: Very important to the heritage of the locality.
Management Recommendation:	Conservation of the place is highly recommended. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the heritage values of the place and should retain significant fabric wherever feasible.

OTHER LISTINGS

No other listings

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

GLLSC - VF Localities Wonthella P9316, P9317.

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

Date: 27/02/2015 Photographer: T. Henkel Description: Stand of trees looking south.