

Place No. 11 Croydon Station Homestead Group



Head station buildings at Croydon Station

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Croydon Station Homestead Group (fmr)
Other Name (1)	
Other Name (2)	
Location/Address	
Street Number	24km due SE of turnoff to station on Great Northern Highway
Street Name	
Suburb/Town	
Other Locational descriptor (text)	583750 7664291 Longitude: 117.8065 Latitude: -21.1204

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	NEW ENTRY
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	Yes
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	No
Management Category	C

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	c.1875
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Individual Building or Group Historic site
Use(s) of Place	

<i>Original</i>	FARMING/PASTORAL: Homestead Servants' Quarters/Shearers' Quarters Shed Kitchen Stockyard Other
<i>Present</i>	FARMING/PASTORAL: Homestead Servants' Quarters/Shearers' Quarters Shed Kitchen Stockyard Other
<i>Other</i>	
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	9. STONE 904 Local Stone 6. METAL 606 Corrugated Iron
<i>Roof</i>	6. METAL 606 Corrugated Iron
<i>Other</i>	3. CONCRETE 399 Other Concrete
<i>Condition</i>	Poor
<i>Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):</i>	Little
Physical Description	
<p>The station homestead complex is comprised of earlier (19th and 20th century) and later (late 20th century) buildings. Key historical structures are mentioned below (refer to the site plan for corresponding numbers).</p> <p>Cyclone damage saw the installation of demountable structures as the main residential building (11), including provision of residential services (10). Older stone buildings are largely abandoned, however one (6) is protected from cyclones under a purpose built metal structure.</p> <p>The earliest homestead buildings are located between two stony ridges. They include the ruined remains of a two-roomed stone-built homestead (12), now with no roof. Another two-roomed stone walled building (9) has complete walls, although no roof, and is at risk of collapse. The current laundry (5) was also a stone building, with adaptive reuse in its current role.</p> <p>The remains of a shearing shed (2) built of corrugated iron cladding on a wooden and metal wooden frame are located on the other side of the outcrop. It is in a ruinous state. An earlier structure with a stone floor (3) has had the walls removed in entirety at some stage.</p> <p>The remains of yards (4) to the south are still visible in aerial images.</p>	
History	
<p>In 1875 Croydon Station was owned by Edward Robinson, who also owned Langwell Station from 1882.</p> <p>In 1878, the Station was owned by Mr J. Seabrook and Edward Robinson.¹</p> <p>By 1885 the Station was sold to Duncan McRae, along with Langwell Station.</p> <p>E.T. Hooley (writing as Bucolic) describes Croydon Station in 1886: 'Still further eastward lies the station of Messrs D. And R. McRae and Isdell, lately purchased from Messrs Seabrook and Robinson for £27,000. The station includes some of the famous table land, also portions of the Upper Fortescue and Sherlock rivers. This country... is very suitable for wool growing.'²</p>	

Hooley reveals that Croydon Station country was subject to a drought from 1884-1886, 'but since January (1886) very heavy rains have fallen, and the whole country now looks magnificent.'

In 1889 Charles Mitchinson Straker joined Duncan McRae in purchasing Croydon Station.³ Together McRae and Straker owned Croydon, Coolawanyah and Hammersley Stations.⁴

Gold was discovered near Croydon Station in March 1892 and an area of land was declared the Croydon Goldfields, under the Goldfields Act. A report stated that 'there were about 50 men here at first, but many of them have left, as they were too poor to prospect without getting any gold. Those who stop on will probably do well when they strike the run of the gold.'⁵ By 1901, copper was being mined at Croydon.⁶ The Evelyn Copper Mine, leased by A.E. Morgans, was located on Croydon.⁷

In 1911 Straker sold his interests in Croydon.⁸

In 1912, J.S. Battye described the Station as 'one of the best naturally-watered properties in the North West' and wrote that 'There are altogether on this station about 80 natives, none of whom are under any signed agreement, and none of whom would leave the station of their own free will.'⁹

Croydon Station is described in 1920 as 'a big rough place requiring plenty of hands and horses and entailing much hard work.' It had 'mainly Spinifex, only 3 grass paddocks...Open country, major portion either too rough or too subject to flooding for sheep paddocks.' As a consequence, in 1920 only about 1/3 of the property was fenced for sheep. The station held 17,000 sheep and 2,700 cattle with 170 horses and 20 donkeys. Transport to market was via Whim Creek Railway and on to Balla Balla Landing Jetty. The station had nine wells and eighteen mills.¹⁰ In 1920 the station was owned by Nicholas & Fox and consisted of 459,580 acres.

It is thought that during World War Two the Croydon Station holding paddock yards were used as runways for aircraft, and that the runway markers are still evident. The old shearing shed is believed to have been used for storing explosives and the small stone toilet building as a cyclone shelter.¹¹ Further research is needed into Croydon's use during World War Two.

Croydon Station was, with Mallina Station, once part of McCroy Station owned by W.R.J., E. and S.F. Stickney in the 1980s.¹²

Croydon Station Homestead Group was badly damaged by fire in the 1980s and the old homestead was largely burnt down.

Archaeology

The archaeological potential is for significant remains of the sheep industry to be recorded. The sequence of 19th and 20th century station buildings records the history of architecture, vernacular design and changes in stations and technology over 150 years.

The contribution and realities of station life for Aboriginal people are reflected in the material remains alongside local memories.

SIGNIFICANCE	
Historic theme (s)	1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 106 Workers (including Aboriginal, convict) 107 Settlements 109 Environmental change 110 Resource exploitation and depletion 3. OCCUPATIONS 301 Grazing, pastoralism and dairying 6. PEOPLE 601 Aboriginal people 603 Early settlers
Statement of Significance:	

Croydon Station has historic significance and research potential as one of the early pastoral stations in the Shire of Roebourne (c1875) with evidence of changes in station life in the North West over time until the present. The station buildings are a mix of remnants of the stone remains of the original homestead buildings and post 1970s additions. The stone ruins reveal methods of stone wall construction. The station also has historic significance for its use during World War Two. The station precinct has aesthetic significance as it is set within a landscape of rolling hills and against striking rounded pink hued hilly granite outcrops with views across the Sherlock River floodplain.

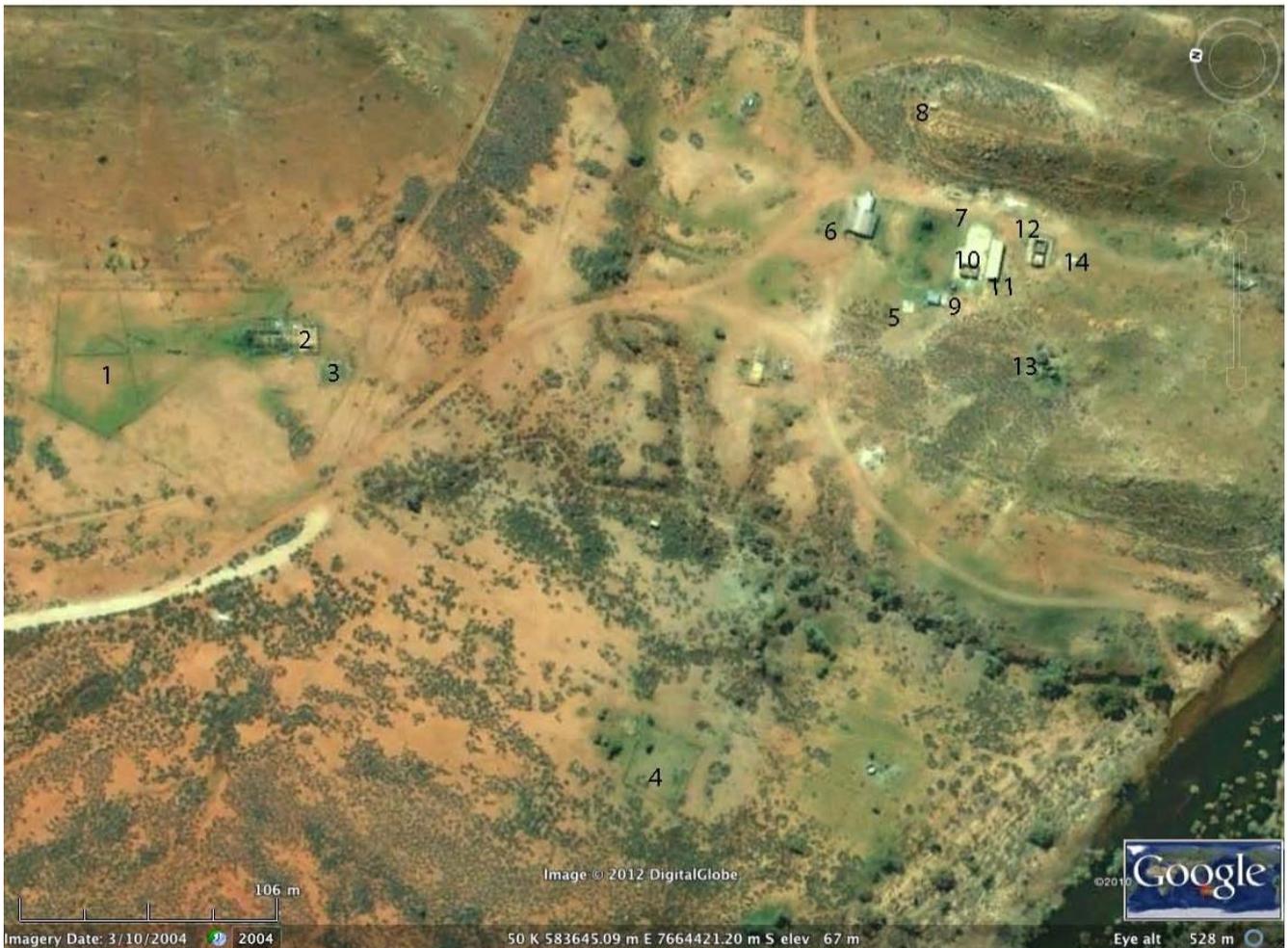
ASSOCIATIONS	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	Edward Robinson Mr J. Seabrook Duncan McRae Charles Mitchinson Straker

OTHER	
References	
See endnotes.	

NOTES	
MHI 1996	Site identified on Review List
MHI Review 2012	Site assessed, Place Name Record created



Remains of kitchen at Croydon Station, 2012



CROYDEN HEADSTATION

1. Remains of sheep yards (Holding pens undressed posts with galvanised iron rails)
2. Remains of shearing shed (roof lost; undressed timber posts and timber roof frame; CI wall remnants; bagged concrete floor)
3. Remains of foundations of earlier structure (stone footings and pebble levelling fill)
4. Yards or fenced enclosure
5. Concrete floor
6. Workers' quarters (CI roof with metal post supports; CI walls; concrete floor. Building largely protected with freestanding structure (CI roof; metal posts and frame; no walls)
7. 2012: site of prefabricated coolroom and storage
8. Toilet
9. Laundry (CI roof and walls; concrete floor)
10. Ruin: one-roomed building (includes kitchen: roof lost; stone walls; with internal white rendered walls, external walls rendered white; stone floor)
11. Modern demountable residence under CI roof
12. Ruin: two-roomed building (W room is kitchen: roof lost; metal posts as roof beams wired to plate; stone walls with internal white rendered walls, external walls tuckpointed and whitewashed; stone floor; concrete verandah floor to S)
13. Watertank (concrete)
14. Modern generator shed



Remains of shearing shed at Croydon Station, 2012

¹ Owners of Stations in the North West in 1878 from the records of Mrs George Fisher dated 1953, Karratha Station Records 1929-1967, Batty Library, State Library of Western Australia.

² 'More Nor'West Stations', *West Australian*, 29 March 1886, reproduced in P.J. Bridge (ed.), *Pastoral Pioneers of W.A. 1884-1886 by E.T. Hooley (Bucolic)*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 2004, p 23.

³ Batty, J.S. 1985, *The History of the North West of Australia*, Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, p 219.

⁴ Batty, J.S 1912, *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Cyclopaedia Co., Perth.

⁵ 'The Gold Discovery near Croydon Station', *West Australian*, 15 April 1892, p 3.

⁶ 'The North West Gold and Copper Mining', *West Australian*, 26 Nov 1901, p 2.

⁷ Batty, J.S 1912, *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Cyclopaedia Co., Perth.

⁸ Batty, J.S. 1985, *The History of the North West of Australia*, Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, p 219.

⁹ Batty, J.S 1912, *The Cyclopaedia of Western Australia*, Cyclopaedia Co., Perth.

¹⁰ Croydon Station Inspector's Report on Classification of Pastoral Leases 1747/96, Inspection on 30 Oct 1920.

¹¹ According to the station manager of Pyramid Station who recounted this information, site visit by Alistair Paterson and Kate Gregory on 29 June 2012.

¹² Croydon Station Built Environment Committee Assessment Form, National Trust of Australia (WA) Classification Files.