

RAILWAY HERITAGE of SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Site Name Riverton Railway Station, Signal Cabin, Goods Shed
 & Yard

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This is the largest and most important complex in the Lower North. The style and fine execution of the construction reflects the great importance that Riverton had as an agricultural region and also indicates the importance given to railway structures at this time in the development of the railways particularly in the Lower and Mid North of the state. The station also has the distinction of being the site of the only murder of a member of parliament in Australia. The Honourable Percy Brookfield died as a result of wounds sustained after wrestling with a gunman on the station on 22 March 1921. The assassin was not convicted he being found too insane to plead.

Significant Interest

- **Historical** The station and yard is historically significant as the largest and most important railway station complex of the Lower North, reflecting the dominance of Riverton as a railway centre, refreshment stop and works area from 1870.
- **Architectural** The complex is important for the high quality of its architecture and for the technical achievement of its elaborately detailed and finished range of bluestone buildings. Significant elements include stucco quoins, strings and surrounds to openings, picket fences, paired brackets to the eaves lines, chimneys topped with stucco caps.
- **Environmental** This is a large item, perhaps one of the largest in Riverton, however, it is located on the edge of the town and therefore is not a landmark item.

RECOMMENDATION

Every effort should be made to find an appropriate new use for this significant item. All attempts should also be made to seek to preserve the associations of the several items in the yard.

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ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

HISTORICAL

Date Station built 1879

Additions Goods shed 1869; Signal cabin 1883; Water tower 1870

With the opening of the northern railway line to Riverton on 21 February 1870, the town became an important railway centre and works area. The present two-storey building is the second station to be built on the site, it having replaced the first timber structure which was burnt down earlier in 1879.

The station at Riverton gained a measure of historical notoriety as the site of Australia's first - and to date, only - murder of a politician. Percy Brookfield (1875-1921), a 38 year old militant trade unionist, was the independent member for Broken Hill at the time and, after the New South Wales election in March 1920, held the balance of power in that State Parliament. On the evening of 21 March 1921 he left Broken Hill by train for Sydney via Adelaide with other passengers who were going to Adelaide for the Easter holidays. At 9 a.m. on 22 March, Brookfield's train pulled in to Riverton. After breakfast in the refreshment room, passengers were returning to the train when a 36 year old Russian, Koorman Tomayeff, opened fire randomly with an automatic pistol. Several passengers were wounded before Tomayeff retreated a short distance to the west of the platform to reload. Brookfield and a policeman walked along the platform towards the gunman. Brookfield continued alone, talking with Tomayeff until they were within arm's reach. Tomayeff then fired twice, wounding Brookfield in the stomach. Other passengers then disarmed the gunman. Brookfield was taken to the Adelaide Hospital where he died a few hours after arrival. His body was returned to Broken Hill for burial. Tomayeff was arrested, but at a hearing at the Adelaide Gaol on 4 May 1921 it was recorded that he was unfit to plead. Tomayeff was placed in a mental institution at the Governor's pleasure: he died in 1948.

The Riverton refreshment room closed 28 October 1978. The line north to Spalding closed on 17 April 1984 and the station became unattended on 23 August 1986.

ARCHITECTURAL

Size Double and single storey

Wall Materials Bluestone

Roof Form Hipped

Roof Material Corrugated galvanised iron

Window type Timber-framed, double-hung sash

Other features The verandah which runs the length of the building, the bay windows and the brackets and dentils.

The design is a rare one, though it features many details characteristic of domestic architecture of the period.

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& Yard

REFERENCES

Advertiser, 31 August 1869
Burrows, M, *A Brief History of Riverton and the Gilbert Valley*, District Council of Riverton, Riverton, 1973
Burrows, M, *Riverton: Heart of the Gilbert Valley*, District Council of Riverton, Riverton, 1965, p.38
Heritage Investigations, 'Heritage Survey Region 8', 1981, Item 113
Institution of Engineers, File 516
Mortlock Library of South Australiana. Research Notes 65, 540
National Trust Classified List 2370, 1199
Recorder, 28 October 1978
SAPP 16-1870, p.4; 47-1891/2, p. 5; 47-1898
SAPP, Railway Commissioner's Report for December 1873, 1874 (refreshment room), for June 1883, 1884 (refreshment room), 1885, 1901
State Heritage Branch - Survey of Mid-North railway structures, c 1986

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

CIRCUMSTANCES

The station became unattended on 23 August 1986. It is presently for sale, with the STA asking \$90 000.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of both the station building and station complex, of which it forms the dominant part, are high.

ENVIRONMENT / PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

This is a large complex, located on the edge of the town.

Site Name Riverton Railway Station, Signal Cabin, Goods Shed
& Yard

Address Riverton - 111 kms on the Peterborough line

Section 461, lot 106

Hundred Gilbert

CT Nos 4344/538, 2515/175, 1349/83

Local Government Area Riverton District Council

Owner(s) State Transport Authority

State Heritage Status Registered on 28 May 1987

Other Assessments National Trust Classified List

Current Use None

Condition Good

Exterior Good

Known Threats None

Conservation action identified Finding an appropriate new use

Associated item(s) Watertank with a masonry base, Signal box at the end of the platform with a masonry base and timber superstructure, gabled roof goods shed, water stand pipes.

Comments This is a very significant complex because of the individual items and their mutual associations.

Site Surveyor Peter Donovan **Date(s) of Survey** 28 September 1991

Site Name Riverton Railway Station, Signal Cabin, Goods Shed & Yard

Film/Neg Number 10/1

Photographer Peter Donovan

Subject Name View of the front of the railway station



Film/Neg Number 10/2

Photographer Peter Donovan

Subject Name Close view of the front of the railway station



Site Name Riverton Railway Station, Signal Cabin, Goods Shed & Yard

Film/Neg Number 9/34

Photographer Peter Donovan

Subject Name View of the rear of the railway station



Film/Neg Number 9/35

Photographer Peter Donovan

Subject Name View of the station yard showing the water tank, goods shed and stand pipe.



Site Name Riverton Railway Station, Signal Cabin, Goods Shed & Yard

Film/Neg Number 9/36

Photographer Peter Donovan

Subject Name View of the station yard showing the goods shed, stand pipe and signal box





FILM 1
NO 3

RAILWAY STATION FROM SOUTH EAST
6629-10097

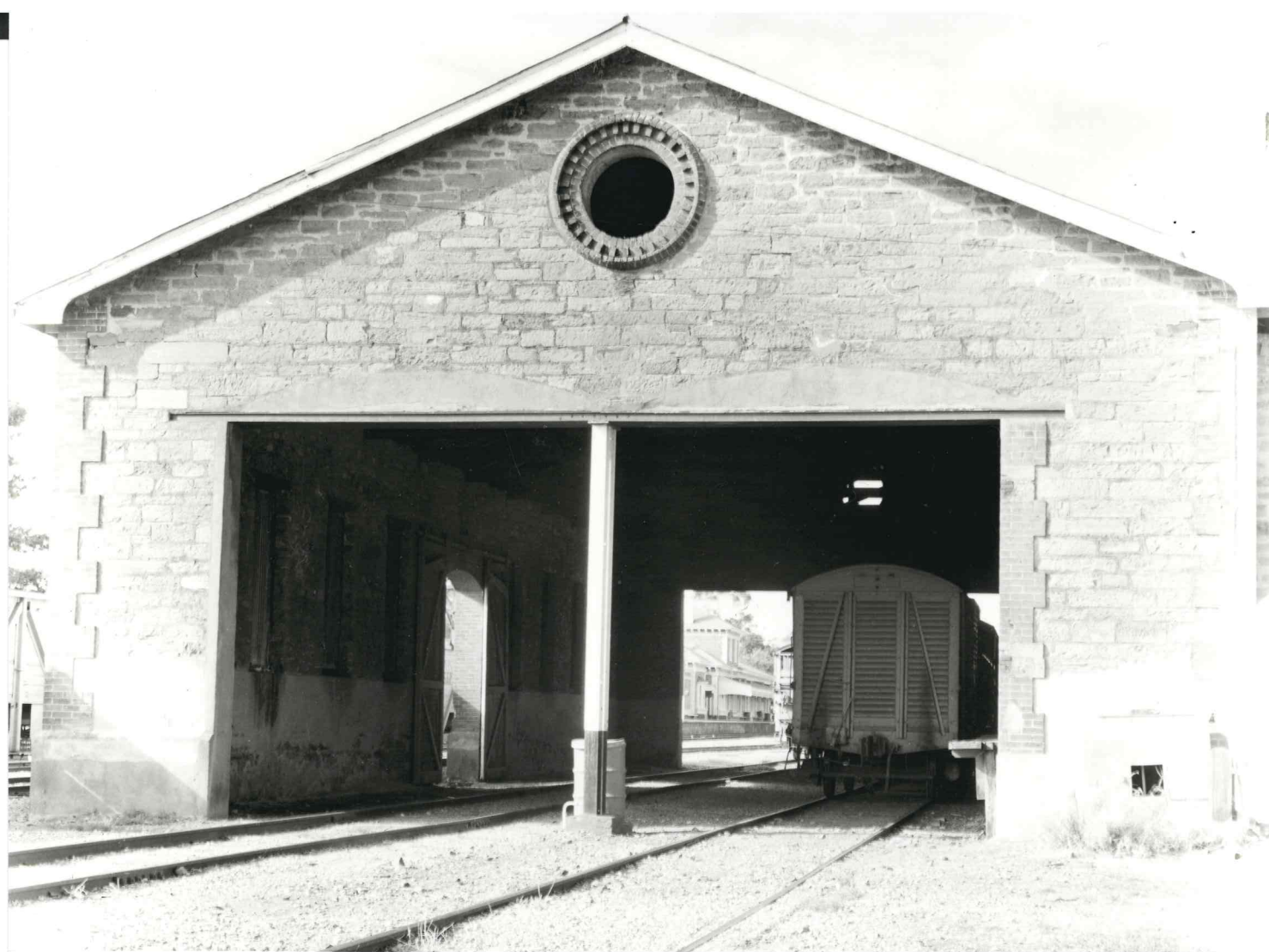
RIVERTON
D.C. RIVERTON
12-12-78



FILM 1
NO 4

RAILWAY STATION DETAIL FROM SOUTH
EAST
6629-10097

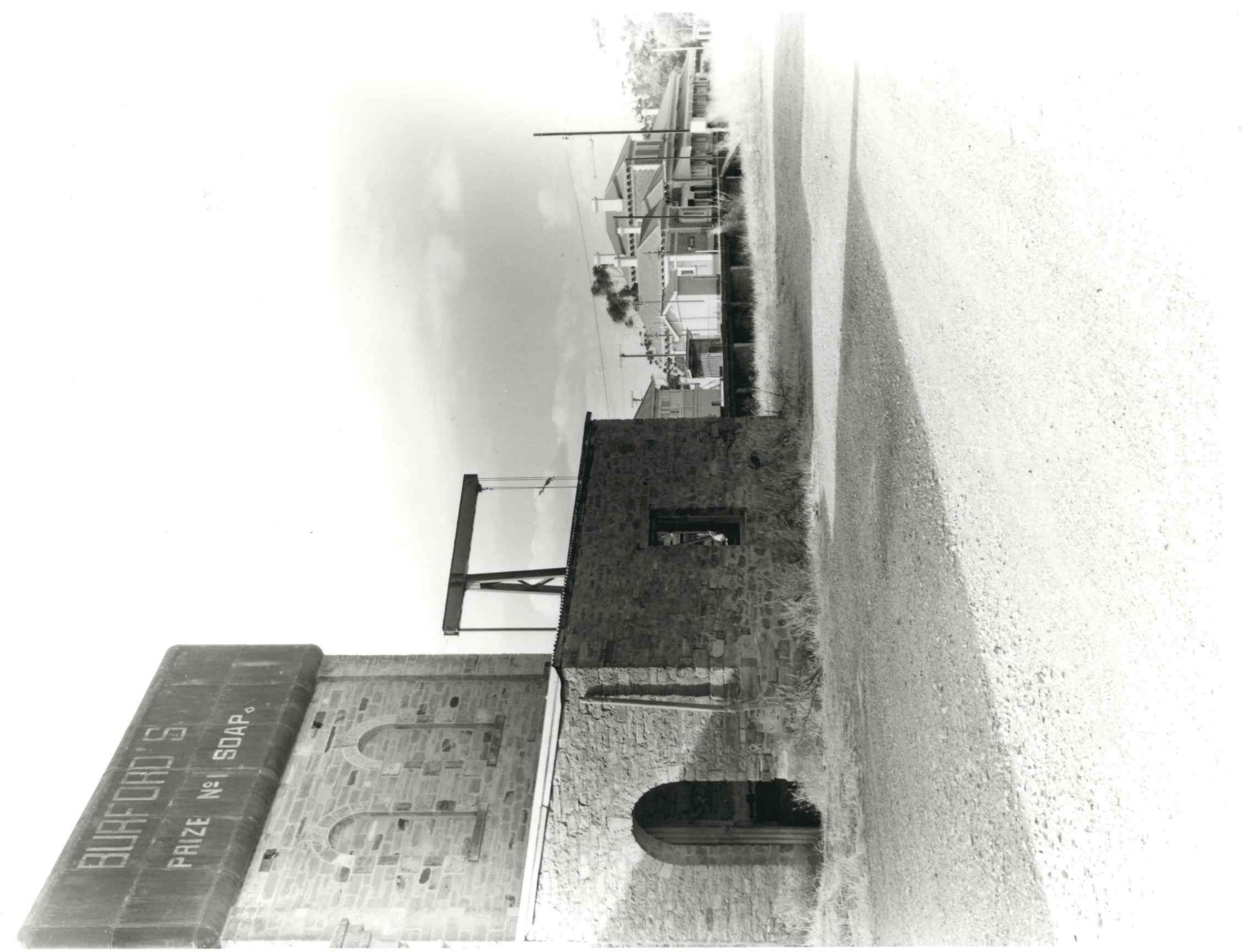
RIVERTON
D.C. RIVERTON
12-12-78



FILM 1
NO 2

RAILWAY SHED FROM SOUTH
6629-10097

RIVERTON
D.C. RIVERTON
12-12-78



FILM 1
NO 1

RAILWAY BUILDINGS FROM SOUTH EAST
6629-10097

RIVERTON
D.C. RIVERTON
12-12-78









