

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496

ADDRESS: Lacepede Street, Mount Gambier,

DESCRIPTION



Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable as it appeared c1991

Source: Heritage South Australia image files courtesy of Peter Donovan

The following description of the Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable is in two parts. The first describes the roundhouse and turntable prior to the fire that occurred on 18 October 2014, while the second outlines their current condition.

The roundhouse is a wedge-shaped structure consisting of nine bays and faces the turntable. The roundhouse is constructed from timber-framing and has a skillion roof. The support posts are made from oregon, the roof-frame is a mixture of oregon, radiata pine and Eucalyptus hardwood. The two side and outer walls and roof are clad with sheets of corrugated galvanised iron. Large multi-paned windows puncture both the side and rear walls to provide natural light. The inner face of the roundhouse is open, however, it is fenced with cyclone wire metal gates each topped with three rows of barbed wire to prevent unauthorised access. Access to the roundhouse is provided by two single doorways in the outer wall at bays two and seven and via the gates on the inner face of the structure. A set of rails runs from the turntable and into all but one bay of the roundhouse. The northern bay does not have rails and operates as a workshop.

The turntable is set in a large circular pit with concrete walls and is guided by a circular rail fixed at the base of the pit and adjacent to the wall. The turntable is fixed to the centre of the pit on a metal, rotating base that supports a platform with rails that extends across the diameter of the pit. A metal A-frame gantry is fixed across the centre of the platform and supplies the electricity that powers the turntable via a catenary fixed to the top of the gantry and over-head wires. A small corrugated galvanised iron clad shed for the turntable driver sits on one end of the platform. Multiple pairs of rails radiate around the turntable which provide access to and from the roundhouse and the railway yard.



Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

At some time after c1991 and before the 2014 fire, the multi-paned windows in the rear wall were replaced with green corrugated polycarbonate sheets. The multi-paned windows in the northern side wall were largely removed and reclad with corrugated galvanised iron sheets leaving only the top portion of glazing. It also appears that a large portion of the rear wall was reclad with new sheets of corrugated galvanised iron, especially the southern half.

The fire occurred during the night of 18 October 2014 and started in the sole remaining carriage housed in the roundhouse. Due to the large fuel source provided by the carriage, the fire took hold in the roundhouse roof frame and spread, burning about half of the structure. The posts closest to the carriage experienced significant charring. The central portion of the roof collapsed into the building (see image below).

Damage was also sustained to the central portion of the rear wall and resulted in the loss of the framing and cladding of this part of the building. A number of sheets of corrugated galvanised iron on the side and rear walls and the glazing in the northern side wall were also lost due to fire damage. The polycarbonate sheeting also sustained damage, with the upper portion of the sheets breaking away. Since this damage, the inside of the round house has also been graffitied, however, there are only a few tags on the exterior walls.



Aerial image taken in 2018 showing the extent of loss to roof structure and rear wall.

Source: Googlemaps

In the intervening years the turntable has slowly deteriorated and become overgrown with vegetation. Metal components have corroded and some of the timber sleepers have been lost due to rot. The majority of the floor structure has been weakened due to neglect and is in poor condition. Some of the rails surrounding the turntable have been removed, most likely due to vandalism, and those that remain are obscured by vegetation. While the wires connecting the turntable to the electricity supply have also been removed, it appears that all of the other components of the turntable remain. The concrete side walls that support the pit in which the moveable components sits have also been graffitied.

HISTORY

The Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable represent a number of different aspects of South Australian history. Firstly, they are a part of the development of railways in South Australia. Then as the South East region of the State was colonised and developed, the railways became an important means of transporting pastoral and agricultural products for sale, which in turn supported the ongoing pastoral and agricultural development of the region. Similarly, the railways supported the development of the forestry industry and, in particular, post-World War Two regional

industrialisation when the forests matured and government and private companies invested in saw-timber and pulp production. Each of these aspects of the State's history is considered in turn.

Development of Railways in South Australia

The development of railways in South Australia had its beginnings in the private initiatives of a number of companies formed specifically with the intent of building railways in the fledgling colony. However, due to a variety of reasons including political interests, commercial rivalries and government ambition the colony's first railway projects were undertaken by the colonial government. The first to open were the horse traction tramway that linked Goolwa and Port Elliot in 1854 and the Adelaide to Port Adelaide line that followed in 1856, on which steam engines operated.¹

While initial plans for the Adelaide to Port Adelaide line indicated an intention to lay the track in standard gauge (4' 8"), consultation with South Australian Chief Engineer Benjamin Babbage and Isambard Brunel, then the Chief Engineer of the Great Western Railway Company in the UK, the government chose to lay the track in broad gauge (5' 3"). At that time broad gauge was being considered by both NSW and Victoria, and the South Australian government thought it prudent to have consistency between the three colonies.²

The passage of the *South Australian Railways Act 1855-56* followed and the first railway commissioners were appointed in 1857, heralding the beginning of South Australian Railways (SAR).³ From these beginnings came the railway network that spread across the State. Donovan has identified the development of 17 main lines including their various branch lines between 1854 and 1929.⁴

The expansion of the rail network supported the development of mining, pastoral interests and agriculture and thereby the economic development of South Australia. The first railway boom began in the mid-1870s and continued until the end of the 1880s. Up until 1877 only 480 km of track had been laid, however, in the decade following 1800km of track was laid. This expansion was largely a result of a public works campaign initiated by Premier James Boucaut in the mid-1870s. While Adelaide remained the focal point of the system, country areas were also connected to sea ports and it was at this time that Adelaide and Melbourne were linked.⁵

For the first decades of railway development in South Australia, all tracks were broad gauge, however, that changed in 1870 when a narrow gauge (3' 6") line opened between Port Wakefield and Hoyleton.⁶ The introduction of narrow gauge was due to personal bias and the presentation of unsubstantiated facts to government that suggested broad gauge was 'an old and clumsy system'⁷ and narrow gauge lines were cheaper run.⁸

Six narrow gauge lines/networks were ultimately built in the belief that those lines would not become a part of the broad gauge system but would instead link agricultural areas with a coastal port where goods could be transported by ship. The narrow gauge network that eventuated in the South East of the State was built in line

with that idea and resulted in separate lines that linked Naracoorte and Kingston in 1876; and, Beachport and Mount Gambier in 1879. It was at that time the first railway station was built in Mount Gambier. The station was extended in 1892 and was replaced with a new station building in 1918 (LHP).⁹

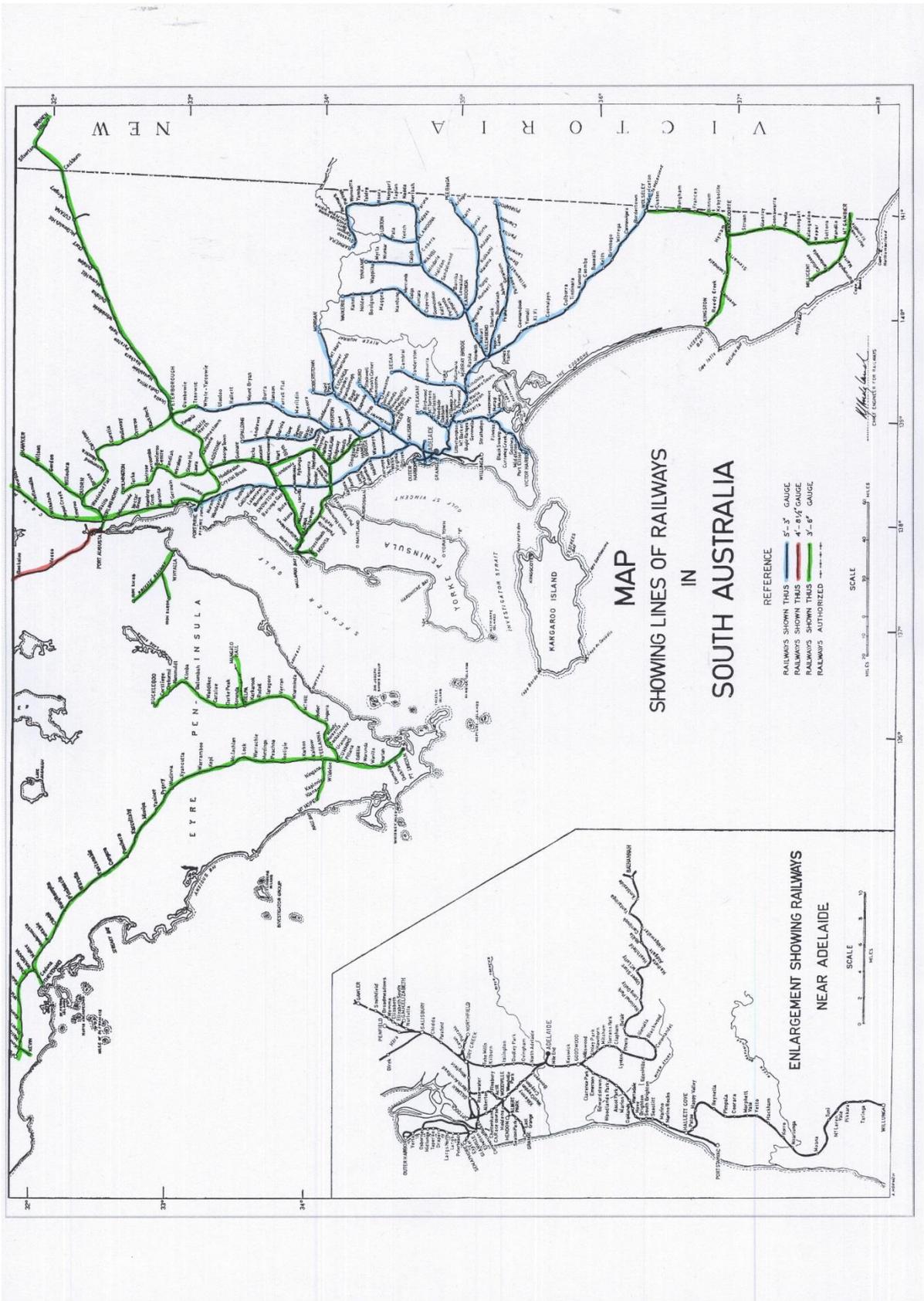
However, within a decade the fallacy that the narrow gauge lines would not become a part of the wider network became self-evident when Mount Gambier was linked to Adelaide by rail in 1887. This created yet another of the numerous 'break in gauge' stations in South Australia at Wolseley. Break in gauge stations occur where different gauge lines meet. At these stations passengers and goods had to move from the train they had been travelling on to another train with a different gauge to continue their journey. Wolseley was a large railway town close to the Victorian border where the trains from Adelaide to Melbourne passed. A direct link between Mount Gambier and Melbourne was slow to be realised due to fears that the South East's pastoralists and agriculturalists would trade through Victoria rather than Adelaide, but was eventually completed in 1917.¹⁰

A second railway boom occurred between 1906 and 1919. It was during this time that the Commonwealth Railways formed (1911) and a standard gauge line was built between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie in the 1910s and 1920s, completing the transcontinental line that connected the east and west coasts of Australia (see map below illustrating the different gauges in operation in South Australia at that time).¹¹

The 1920s heralded a period of immense change for SAR and is, in South Australian railway histories, commonly referred to as the Webb era. WA Webb was an American railwayman who rejuvenated SAR and brought South Australia's railway network into the twentieth century. Jennings describes the four key areas of change undertaken by Webb as: the conversion of the western system to broad gauge; track and bridge strengthening and reconstruction; reorganisation of the Islington Workshops; and, gauge standardisation.¹²

While the western system was widened, Webb did not recommend the conversion of the South East system to broad gauge as he felt 'the capital expenditure ... would never be justified.'¹³ The Commonwealth government was prepared to cover the cost if the South Australian government agreed that it would pay for the network to be converted to standard gauge at a later unspecified date. However, the depression halted any plans for gauge conversion in the South East at that time.¹⁴

Plans to broaden the South East system emerged again in 1940 when the economics of doing so was reconsidered by a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. In particular, the committee found the enormous increase in production in the South East; the prospective expansion of the timber industry; a large increase in South East railway revenue; and, a reduction in the anticipated loss to SAR to undertake the conversion were reasons to undertake the project. However, a lack of labour and materials prevented work from commencing until shortly after the conclusion of World War Two.¹⁵



Map showing gauge as originally laid, narrow (green), broad (blue) & standard (red)

The broadening of the South East system began with major upgrades to the railyard facilities at both Wolseley and Naracoorte. About three quarters of the approximately 400 men employed to lay the new tracks were recently arrived migrants who were housed in temporary camps that moved as the work progressed. The section between Wolseley and Naracoorte opened in 1950; Naracoorte to Mount Gambier opened 1953.¹⁶

In the early 1950s, the future of the South East rail network was positive due to both real and anticipated increases in pastoral production, agriculture and forestry industry, including the manufacture of paper and board products and saw-timber. Haulage of these products by rail was expected to increase and early figures presented by SAR indicated this was the case. However, about the same time road haulage began to offer real competition.¹⁷

Prior to 1949 the distances trucking firms could transport freight was tightly controlled by the State government. Those restrictions were relaxed in 1949 due to a national rail strike. In 1964 the South Australian government completely deregulated the road haulage industry enabling any person to carry freight on any road in the State. The combination of the deregulation of road haulage and ongoing improvements to roads while minimal expenditure was made on rail upgrades impacted on the competitiveness of freight haulage by rail. Further hampering the economic viability of SAR were antiquated management practices and a sense of social responsibility that resulted in the operation of economically unviable services to provide South Australians with access to transport. However, increasing private vehicle ownership and other road based transport options began to challenge the latter concern.¹⁸

The broadening of some narrow gauge lines such as the South East network and the introduction of diesel electric locomotives from 1951 were some of the measures introduced by SAR to improve its competitiveness. However, the continued economic difficulties faced by SAR in the 1960s and 1970s ultimately led to the transfer of country lines to the Commonwealth government in 1975 with the Commonwealth taking over operational responsibility in 1978. Country services were run by Australian National while metropolitan lines remained under the ownership and control of the State and were run by the State Transport Authority. While under the operation of SAR, passage of legislation had been required before a line could be closed, however, Australian National could close lines without such procedures. In keeping with their operation and management of the rail system from a commercial perspective, Australian National closed 35 percent of the State's narrow gauge and 23 percent of the broad gauge lines in the ten years between 1978-1988.¹⁹

Line closures in the South East began in 1956 when the Millicent to Beachport section of the line was not broadened and then closed. The closure of the Naracoorte to Kingston section of the line followed in 1990. Standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne line, completed in 1995, then isolated the South East from the national network. Some services were run on the southern portion of the network (the Limestone Coast Railway) after 1998, but the line then closed in 2006, due to issues

including public liability insurance. Discussion between the Victorian and South Australian governments in the late 2000s and early 2010s considered reopening some of the lines to meet the freight needs of the Green Triangle region but it is unclear whether or not those proposals are still under consideration.²⁰

The portion of track between Pick and White avenues that ran through central Mount Gambier has been since removed. In its place a walking track has been laid and the portion of rail reserve adjacent to the Mount Gambier station turned into a landscaped park; the reserve adjacent to the roundhouse remains unimproved. Department for Planning Transport and Infrastructure have reserved a narrower rail corridor within the original rail reserves so that the track can be reinstated if necessary.²¹

Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

The conversion of the South East system in the early 1950s from narrow to broad gauge to facilitate transport of increased agricultural, pastoral, paper pulp and saw-timber production, necessitated the construction of new yard facilities at Naracoorte and Mount Gambier. At Naracoorte the new facilities included raised platforms, sheep and cattle trucking yards, stock sales yards, cottages for staff, goods sheds, and a two-bay roundhouse and turntable.²² The new facilities at Mount Gambier included a 9-bay roundhouse and turntable to 'stable' the locomotives, ash and inspection pits, watering and cooling facilities, administration buildings and a signal cabin. As there was insufficient space to accommodate all of the new facilities in the railway reserve adjacent to the Mount Gambier station, some, including the roundhouse and turntable were built in a new yard located to the west of the station building.²³

While the Naracoorte and Mount Gambier roundhouses were not constructed until the early 1950s, they were based on the standard design developed for the roundhouses built in the 1920s as a part of Webb's rejuvenation of SAR. The size of the roundhouses was based on the 85ft diameter of the turntable; tracks radiated around it at seven degrees and forty-nine seconds. The inner wall of the roundhouse – that closest to the turntable – was typically 100ft away, while the outer wall was 200ft. This meant the maximum possible number of tracks was 46 pairs. While it was suggested that the roundhouses would be built with either a steel frame or from reinforced concrete, they were constructed from oregon, a timber known for its ability to withstand the corrosive effects of engine smoke that when combined with water created sulfuric acid. The walls were clad with galvanised-iron and the roofs with a special composite board. However, the composite board did not withstand the corrosive effects of engine smoke and were replaced with corrugated asbestos 'Deep Six'.²⁴ Some of the larger roundhouses, such as those built at Peterborough, Mile End and Mount Gambier also had their walls punctured with multi-paned windows to provide natural illumination. While the posts of the Mount Gambier roundhouse are oregon, the roof timbers are also comprised from radiata pine and a Eucalyptus hardwood.²⁵

The turntables installed in the 1920s and 1950s differed from earlier nineteenth century ones. They were twin span with each span supported on a central pivot and at the outer edge by wheels on a ring rail. As a result, engines didn't need to be balanced prior to being turned. The size of the locomotives also meant that the turntables were powered by an electric motor. Power was supplied by a rotating twin-wire pick-up fixed to the roundhouse or a free standing post. The turntable was operated from a small cabin located on the turntable.²⁶ In addition to the electric motor, the turntable at Mount Gambier also had a hand crank to turn the table.²⁷ The Mount Gambier turntable was built by local South Australian company Perry Engineering.

The roundhouse and turntable were used by SAR and then Australian National until the mid-1990s when the South East network became isolated from the national rail network by the completion of gauge standardisation between Adelaide and Melbourne. Between 1998 and 2006, Limestone Coast railways used the roundhouse and turntable as a stable and workshop facility to maintain their locomotives and rolling stock. After Limestone Coast railway ceased operation in 2006, its rolling stock continued to be stabled in the roundhouse until each item was sold and transported to its new owner. The remaining carriage in the roundhouse that was the seat of the 2014 fire had been sold to Steam Ranger and was awaiting relocation at that time.²⁸

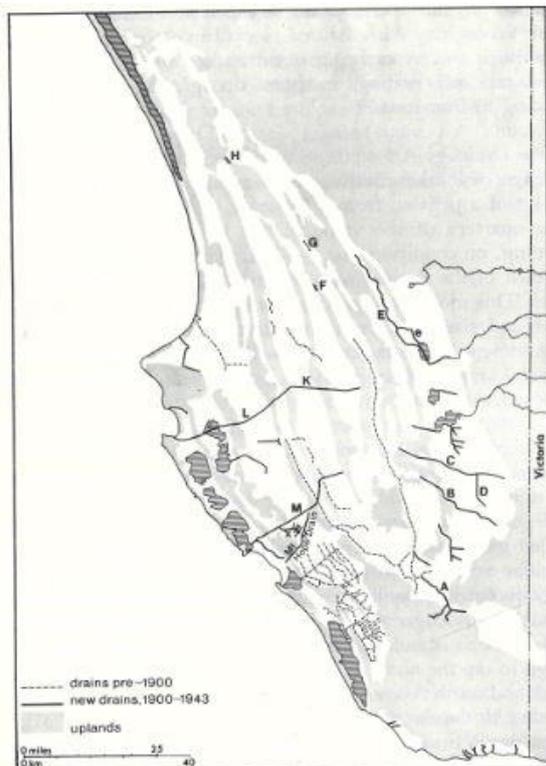
A Brief History of Mount Gambier with a focus on Agricultural and Pastoral Production

The original inhabitants of the area surrounding Mount Gambier are the Bungandidj people. Settlement by colonists began in 1840 when Stephen Henty arrived from Merino Downs near Portland in Victoria and established a cattle run near Bowne's Lake. Henty was unaware the land he occupied was in South Australia and not Victoria and in 1845 Evelyn Stuart secured a lease for it from the South Australian Government, thereby dispossessing Henty. A number of small farms followed and in 1849 Dr Edward Wehl arrived, renting his hand mill to the local community so they could grind their own flour.²⁹

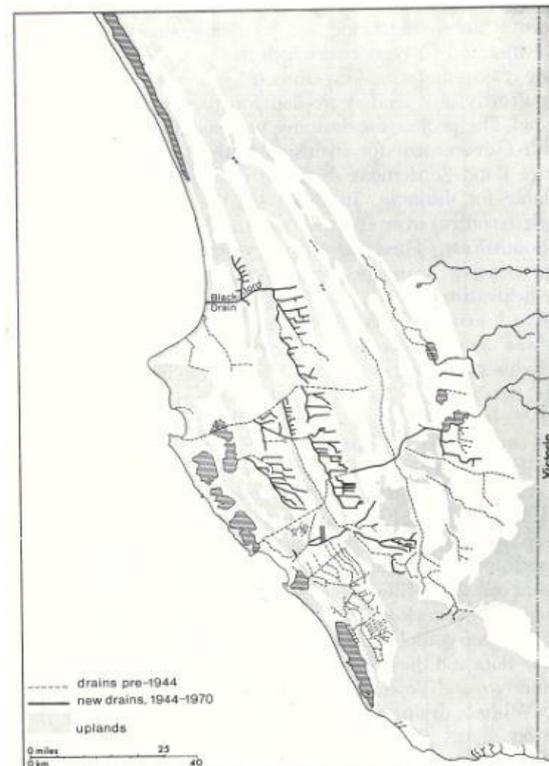
In 1854, Hasting Cunningham purchased section 1103 in the Hundred of Blanche from Stuart (who had acquired it in 1847) and engaged surveyor William Murray to lay out a portion of the section as the township of Gambiertown. Named after the mountain nearby, the township soon became known as Mount Gambier instead.³⁰ By 1856 the population of Mount Gambier and surrounding areas had reached 300. Early crops included wheat, barley, oats and potatoes. While much of the land around Mount Gambier was held by pastoralists, by 1867 26,000 acres was under agricultural production. In those early years farmers found it incredibly difficult to transport their produce to external markets, while pastoralists transported wool by bullock dray to Portland in Victoria. The opening of the railway between Mount Gambier and Beachport in 1879 was a huge boon to farmers, providing access to Beachport's shipping facilities.³¹

Further agricultural development to the north-west of Mount Gambier was facilitated by the drainage of the swampy land there. It was a lengthy process that was initiated by threats of secession from South Australia. Farmers in Victoria who similarly felt their

government was ignoring their concerns about the provision of services and facilities and the means to deal with seasonal flooding, joined together and proposed the creation of a new State to be known as Princeland. In response, George Goyder the Surveyor General was sent to investigate the causes of flooding in 1864. This facilitated the improvement of services and facilities such as the roads and telegraph. He proposed a major drainage scheme that was implemented in stages over the following 50 years. Further drainage schemes were implemented by the State government between 1900-1943 and 1944-1970 (see maps).³²



Map showing drainage of the lower South East pre-1900 & 1900-1943



Map showing drainage of the lower South East pre-1944 & 1944-1970

Source: Williams pp.212, 220.

In the years after World War Two, farm consolidation occurred. While the total number of farms decreased, both the total acreage under production and the average size of each farm increased. The increased acreage under cultivation was due to the drainage schemes. While the production of cereal crops and potatoes was significantly increased, when compared to production in the rest of the State they were considered to be 'of minor importance'.³³ However, livestock for meat and wool made a substantial contribution to the State's economy. In 1962, 20 percent of the State's sheep production, 20 percent of the wool clip, 39 percent of beef cattle and 22 percent of dairy cattle were raised in the lower South East.³⁴ In the mid-1980s, the South East produced approximately 30 percent of the State's wool clip, remained the most important dairying area outside of the herds that supplied the Adelaide metropolitan area and produced 20 percent of the State's cattle.³⁵ As in the 1960s, by the mid-1980s cereal production in the South East had increased but in comparison

to the acreage and harvests obtained from other parts of the State, was considered to be of only minor importance to South Australia's economy.³⁶

Forestry

The South East region of South Australia quickly became the mainstay of the South Australian forestry industry, which had been established in the 1870s. Under the leadership of Walter Gill, second Conservator of Forests, large radiata pine plantations were established in the region from the 1890s.³⁷ By the mid-1920s, private companies such as South Australian Perpetual Forests invested in plantations but were more reluctant to invest in milling. By the end of the 1920s, the Forestry Department recommended increased government investment in milling and a new mill was erected at Mount Burr in 1930. At about the same time there were also calls for investment in pulp and paper and board production and investigations were conducted to ascertain the quality of the pulp and commercial viability of the industry. Concerns about the impact of the timber sources for the pulp industry on saw-timber, led to debate about the use of the forests and ultimately ensured that the pulp industry was supplied with thinnings as a by-product of saw-timber production.³⁸

Private investment in the pulp industry began in 1941 when Cellulose Australia opened a pulp plant near Millicent. During World War Two pulp from the South East's pine plantations was turned into components for explosives. While private mills had begun operation in the South East, the government opened another saw mill in 1940 at Nangwarry to ensure capacity to process the mature trees.³⁹

Donovan and Howell argue the continued expansion of both the pulp and timber industries in the South East in the years after World War Two was a part of the government's post war industrialisation strategy. While Adelaide was the main focus of activities, regional industrialisation occurred in both the South East and Mid-North with steel production at Whyalla and electricity production at the newly built power station at Port Augusta that was supplied with brown coal from the Leigh Creek mine.⁴⁰ The conversion of the South East rail network from narrow to broad gauge and the construction of new railway facilities, including the Mount Gambier roundhouse and turntable assisted with that development.

In the decades after World War Two both government and private companies established saw-mills, and pulp, cardboard and manufactured/particle board plants. The government also invested in research and development that resulted in forest management techniques that proved important not only to South Australia but also nationally.⁴¹ In 1966, the Forestry Department led an initiative to coordinate a cooperative arrangement between government and private forest reserves to ensure on-going timber supplies. That idea was supported by the State Forest Policy that in essence aimed to meet the State's timber needs from within the State; provide sufficient timber resources to indefinitely support a stable processing industry; and, continual improvement in productivity and use of the timber grown. In 1986 the South East contributed over 48 thousand hectares of the State's 62 thousand hectares of

forest plantations.⁴² Forestry continues to be an important industry in the South East to this day.

Chronology

- 1839 South Australian Railway Company formed in London, prospectus issued and plans for a horse drawn railway in Adelaide advertised in the popular press (nothing eventuates).
- 1840 Stephen Henty begins pastoral activities near Mount Gambier.
- 1845 Adelaide Railway Company issues prospectus.
Evelyn Stuart acquires the lease for Henty's land from the South Australian government and a number of small farms are established in the vicinity of Mount Gambier.
- 1847 *Railways Clauses Consolidation Act* assented. The Act regulated construction and operation of railways.
- 1848 City and Port Railway Company issues prospectus.
- 1849 South Australian Colonial Railway Company issues prospectus
De Edward Wehl arrives in the Mount Gambier area and rents his hand mill to local framers.
- 1849-1850 South Australian Railway Company merges with City and Port and South Australian Colonial Railway Companies to form the Adelaide City and Port Railway Company. The proposed line between the city and Port is surveyed, 250 tons of rails arrive from England and standard gauge chosen. The line is not built due to a dispute between the company and the government and the company disbands. Government takes over the task of laying the line.
- 1851 Select Committee examines question of railways in South Australia and in particular a line between Port Elliot and Goolwa to support trade on the River Murray.
- 1854 Hasting Cunningham purchases section 1103 in the Hundred of Blanche and engages surveyor William Murray to layout a portion of the section as Gambiertown.
- 1853-1854 An 11km railway/tramway between Port Elliot and Goolwa constructed with Government funding. Horse traction is used to pull the carriages and wagons.
- 1856 The Adelaide-Port Adelaide line opens, steam engines *Adelaide*, *Albert* and *Victoria* are imported from Manchester UK. On the first run 8 February, the *Adelaide* derails near the Adelaide Gaol. First paying passengers travel on 19 April, the line is formally opened 21 April.
- 1864 The Goolwa-Port Elliot line is extended to Victor Harbor (horse powered).

- Surveyor General G Goyder investigates the causes of flooding in the lower South east and proposes a drainage scheme to increase cultivatable land.
- 1869 Goolwa-Port Elliot line is extended from Goolwa to Strathalbyn (horse powered).
- 1867 26,000 acres of land under agricultural production around Mount Gambier.
- 1873 *Forest Trees Act* assented.
- 1876 Railway between Kingston and Naracoorte begins operating.**
- 1879 Railway between Beachport and Mount Gambier begins operating. Mount Gambier Railway Station opens.**
- 1881 Railway between Naracoorte and Custon begins operating.**
- 1883 Railway between Custon and Bordertown begins operating**
- 1884 Adelaide-Victor Harbor line via Goolwa opens and steam engines replace the horses.
- 1886 Railway from Adelaide reaches Bordertown and links the South East with the Capital.**
- 1887 Railway between Naracoorte and Mount Gambier begins operating.**
- 1892 Mount Gambier Railway Station extended.**
- 1906-1919 Second railway boom in South Australia
- 1918 New Mount Gambier Railway Station opens replacing the 1879 station.**
- 1920s Webb era resulting in the modernisation of SAR
- 1930 South Australian government opens the Mount Burr saw mill.
- 1940 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works proposes broadening of the South East rail network.
South Australian government opens a saw mill at Nangwarry
- 1941 Cellulose Australia opens pulp mill near Millicent.
- 1949 Work begins on broadening of the South East rail network.
- 1950 Broadened line between Wolseley and Naracoorte opens.
New facilities at Naracoorte including raised platforms, sheep and cattle trucking yards, stock sales yards, cottages for staff, goods sheds, and a two-bay roundhouse and turntable built.
- 1953 The broadened line between Naracoorte and Mount Gambier opens. New railway facilities are constructed at Mount Gambier including roundhouse and turntable, signal box, ash and inspection pits, and watering and coaling facilities.**
- 1957 South Australian government saw mill begins operation in Mount Gambier.

- 1958 South Australian Perpetual Forests open a mill at Tarpeena.
- 1960 APM and Cellulose Australia Ltd begin producing tissue papers near Snuggery.
- 1966 Forestry Department coordinates a cooperative arrangement between government and private forest reserves to ensure the on-going viability of forestry in the South East.
- 1963 NB Lewis publishes 'Optimum thinning range of *Pinus radiata* in South Australia' which guides forestry management in South Australia and Australia.
- 1975 Commonwealth government take over the ownership of the South Australian railway network with the exception of the Adelaide metropolitan lines.
- 1995 Standardisation of the railway line between Adelaide and Melbourne completed, isolating the South East network from the rest of the State.
- c1998- Limestone Coast Railway operates and uses the roundhouse and turntable**
- c2006 to stable and maintain its locomotives and carriages.**
- 2014 The roundhouse badly damaged by fire.**
- 2018 Completion of stage 2 of the Mount Gambier Rail Trail, a walking trail and some landscaped spaces located in the Mount Gambier rail corridor. The trail runs past the roundhouse and turntable.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

As the nominated place does not meet any of the criteria for a State Heritage Place, a Statement of Heritage Significance has not been prepared.

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Railway Heritage

South Australian Railways (SAR) and the railway network it created throughout the State has made a vital and ongoing contribution to the economic development of South Australia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Across the State there are 91 State Heritage Places that represent the various aspects of railway development in South Australia from its first establishment in the 1850s until today. Some examples include bridges, dam, stations, goods sheds, workshops, residences, bore, water tanks, trees, level crossings, signal cabin, weir, hostel, platforms, platform shelters, crane and roundhouses and turntables. Similarly, there are 83 Local Heritage Places that represent the development of the railways in South Australia. Importantly, Donovan in his thematic survey of the *Railway Heritage of South Australia* notes that 'there are many items that are peculiar to the railways and will not be found in other forms of transport ... Locomotives also come into this category as do the purpose-built railway stations, turntables and roundhouses.'⁴³

Of the 91, there are 68 from the nineteenth century and 23 State Heritage Places that are associated with the development of the railway network in the twentieth century. All of the twentieth century places were built either in the first two decades of the century or during WA Webb's rejuvenation of SAR in the 1920s. While some of the listed station complexes may have some buildings or structures that were built in the second half of the twentieth century, there are no places on the South Australian Heritage Register that are listed directly due to their association with the ongoing development of the railway network from that time.

A sample of State Heritage Places with a turntable and/or built 1900-1920 include:

- Balaklava Railway Station Complex 1880 (goods shed, station, **turntable**, silos (1956), crane) (SHP 12942)
- Strathalbyn Railway Station Complex 1884 (station, goods shed, water tank, **turntable**) (SHP 14088)
- Merildrin Railway Station and Yards 1900 (station, platform, goods shed and some other associated equipment) (SHP 12376)
- Port Pirie Railway Station 1902 (SHP 10229)
- Hindmarsh River Railway Bridge 1907 (SHP 11186)
- Watsons Gap Railway Bridge 1907 (SHP 11183)
- Angaston Railway Station & Goods Shed 1909-1911 (SHP 14606)
- Riverton Railway Station complex nineteenth century and 1910-1920s, (station, signal cabin, water tower, goods shed) (SHP 10097)
- Tailem Bend Railway Station 1914 (SHP 10437)
- Bordertown Railway Station 1915 (SHP 13721)
- Western yard Entrance (Wye) Signal Cabin 1915 (SHP 13659)
- Salt Creek Railway Bridge 1918 (SHP 14602)
- Reedy Creek Railway Bridge 1919 (SHP 14603)

A sample of State Heritage Places that represent the Webb era rejuvenation of SAR include:

- Murray Bridge Railway Bridge 1925 (SHP 13826)
- Victor Harbor Railway Station Historic Site 1925 SHP (11730)
- Tailem Bend **Turntable** 1925 (SHP 17078)
- Port Lincoln Railway Station 1927 (SHP 14608)
- Abminga Railway Station Complex 1928 (only the foundations and locomotive inspection pit remains) (SHP 19146)
- Adelaide Railway Station 1928 (SHP 10844)
- Peterborough, 22-bay **roundhouse**, 1920s, (4 bays removed 1970s, leaving 3 bays isolated, **turntable** remains, **SHP 12694**)

Roundhouses and Turntables

The main functions of a roundhouse are maintenance activities and to 'stable' locomotives. There is only one railway roundhouse on the South Australian Heritage Register, the 1920s Roundhouse at Peterborough. There is another place on the

Register that is called a 'Round House' (former Murray Bridge Works Superintendent's Home – SHP 13577), however this was built to house people rather than railway locomotives.

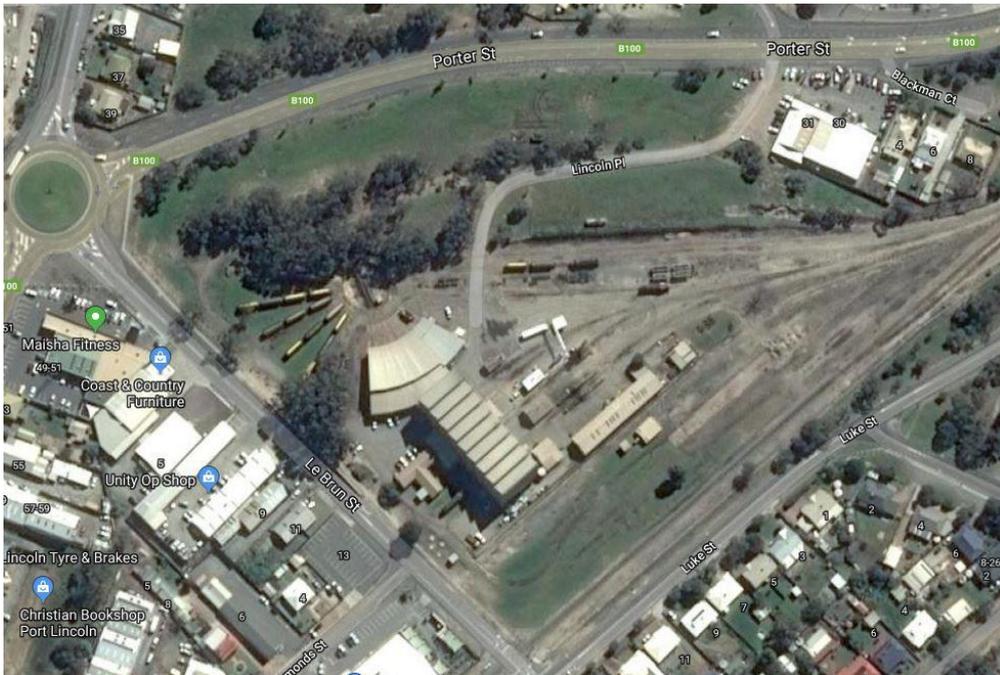
Eight roundhouses and turntables were built in South Australia by SAR; six during the rejuvenation of SAR during the 1920s and two in the early 1950s during the gauge conversion (narrow to broad) of the South East network. Of the six constructed in the 1920s, all but two have been demolished and only one is listed. The roundhouses and turntables built during the 1920s are:

- Mile End freight terminal and marshalling yard, 43-bay roundhouse, 1926 (demolished 1970s, turntable since removed)
- Taillem Bend, 14-bay roundhouse, (was still in use in the 1990s, roundhouse since demolished **turntable only SHP 17078**)
- Peterborough, 22-bay roundhouse, 1920s, (4 bays removed 1970s, leaving 3 bays isolated, turntable remains, **SHP 12694**)
- Port Augusta, 5-bay roundhouse, 1920s, (ownership transferred to Commonwealth soon after the roundhouse and turntable were built, roundhouse still in use in the 1990s, since demolished. Google maps 2010 show visible track form and turntable, status 2018 unclear).
- Port Lincoln, 5-bay roundhouse, late 1920s-early 1930s, (Google maps 2018 indicate roundhouse and turntable **still extant**)
- Wallaroo, little is known about this roundhouse and turntable (most likely demolished prior to 1991, google maps 2018 indicate the turntable or part of it still exists)



Mile End Roundhouse in use c1960s (since demolished)

Source: Jennings, WA Webb, facing p.66.



Port Lincoln railyards showing roundhouse and turntable (unlisted)

Source: Google maps, 2018

Of particular note is the roundhouse and turntable at Peterborough (SHP 12694). Peterborough became one of South Australia's most important railway junctions in the 1880s – a role it continued to play well into the twentieth century. The Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable, the second largest in the State, were built in the 1920s as a part of major upgrades to the railway facilities located in the town and reflect the modernisation and efficiency philosophies implemented at that time by Commissioner Webb.

The Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable were State-heritage listed in 2002 and at that time retained a high degree of integrity although it appears the structure had been re-clad prior to listing and while the structure had termite damaged its condition was fair.⁴⁴ The roundhouse has been damaged badly twice since it was State heritage listed including c2006 by strong winds and again in c2009 when winds tore off parts of the roof. Repairs to fix the damage are still ongoing (see images below).



Peterborough Roundhouse under construction mid-1920s

Source: SLSA B15763



Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable as it appeared in 1984 prior to State heritage listing.

Source: Heritage South Australia image file 12694



Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable as it appeared c1984, showing recladding prior to State heritage listing.

Source: Heritage South Australia image file 12694



Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable as it appeared in 2005 after State heritage listing.

Source: Heritage South Australia image file 12694



Peterborough Roundhouse as it appeared in 2005 after State heritage listing.

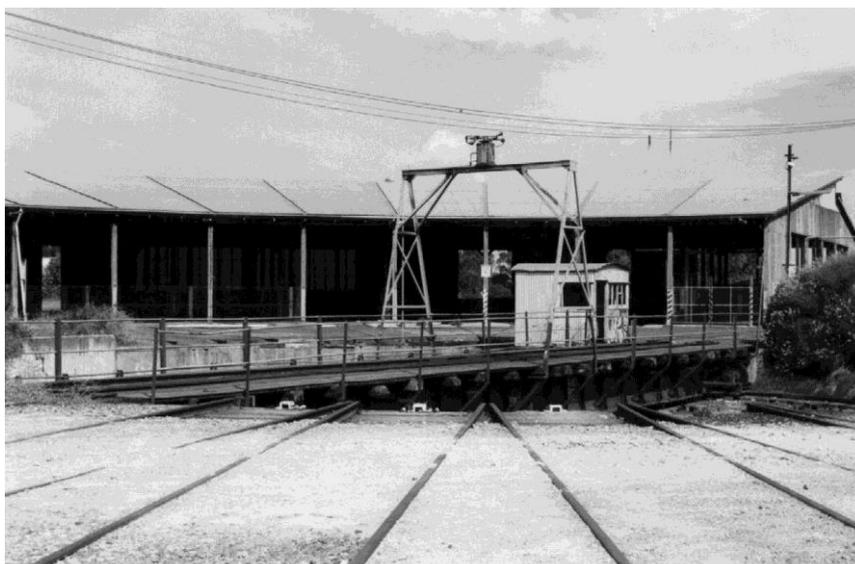
Source: Heritage South Australia image file 12694



Peterborough Roundhouse as it appeared in 2018, ongoing repairs include replacement of the damaged and lost panes of glass due to wind damage.

Source: Flickr (Fiveprime), c2018

Only two roundhouse and turntable combinations were constructed in South Australia during the 1950s, both in the South East. The largest was the 9-bay roundhouse at Mount Gambier, with the other being the 2-bay roundhouse at Naracoorte (roundhouse now demolished, although turntable may still exist).



Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable as they appeared c1991

Source: Heritage South Australia files courtesy of Peter Donovan

Other than roundhouses, there are no other twentieth century railway structures on the Register that were built specifically to 'stable' locomotives. The idea of stabling a locomotive inside a building is also not current practice in South Australia with both passenger and freight locomotives parked in the yard when not in use.⁴⁵

It is not clear if locomotive maintenance was carried out in all or only some of the roundhouses constructed in South Australia. The roundhouses built at Mile End and Peterborough were built specifically as places for major locomotive maintenance to occur. It is likely that minor maintenance was carried out in the other roundhouses, and it is known that one bay of the Mount Gambier roundhouse was designated and used as a workshop.

In addition to roundhouses, maintenance can also occur in other types of railway buildings/sheds/workshops. Some like those at the Islington Railway Workshops at Kilburn in Adelaide are substantial stone buildings built in the late nineteenth century. However, many are large rectilinear, saw-tooth-roofed, corrugated-galvanised-iron-clad structures (see for example Dry Creek, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta railway yards) that are similar in appearance to numerous other twentieth century industrial buildings. The only places listed on the Register from the twentieth century where locomotive maintenance may have occurred are the Abminga Railway Station Complex, 1928 (SHP 19146) and Riverton Railway Station Complex, nineteenth century and 1910-1920s (SHP 10097).

Railway Heritage in Mount Gambier

There are four local heritage places that represent aspects of Mount Gambier's railway heritage, they include:

- Wool Sorting Stores, Margaret Street (platform and loading to railway)
- Railway Station, Railway Terrace 1918 (replaced the 1879 station)

- Railway Signal Box, White Avenue 1953 (built as a part of the gauge conversion)
- Railway Turntable, Lacepede Street 1953, (built as a part of the gauge conversion and the turntable being considered by this assessment)



Signal Box, White Avenue

Source: Mount Gambier Heritage Survey Review (2007), p.183.

Assessment against Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*):

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.

SAR and the network of rail and associated facilities it built, managed and maintained were of vital importance to the development of South Australia in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Rail connected the State and its people and facilitated economic development by transporting a variety of freight. Of particular importance were minerals and agricultural and pastoral products.

The Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable, built in the early 1950s and in operation from 1953, is associated with the industrialisation of South Australia and in particular regional industrialisation of the South East. The structures supported increased agricultural and pastoral production in the region in the decades after World War Two by providing stabling and maintenance for the locomotives that hauled freight and passengers on the newly broadened South East rail network.

However, while the roundhouse and turntable contributed to the operation of the South East network and supported the industrialisation of the South East region and agricultural and pastoral production, its contribution to the story of railway development in South Australia is not strong or influential. This is because the purpose for which the roundhouse and turntable was built – to stable and maintain steam locomotives – was eroded by the introduction of diesel electric locomotives in the early 1950s. While the roundhouse continued to operate as a maintenance facility for the diesel-electric engines that replaced steam technology, the deregulation of road freight in 1964 meant that the importance of rail as a means to transport goods from the South East was challenged and then ultimately replaced by road transport, with rail freight services ceasing after 1995. In addition, while the roundhouse still demonstrates its capacity to stable locomotives, it no longer demonstrates the maintenance function that became its primary role. Therefore, the roundhouse and turntable only had a limited role in supporting the industrialisation of the South East region in the post-war years.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.

The Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable is a rare example of a roundhouse and turntable combination in South Australia. While turntables were installed without a roundhouse, roundhouses were not constructed without a turntable. The first roundhouse and turntable combinations were constructed in

South Australia during the 1920s as part of a major rejuvenation of the South Australian Railways. The rejuvenation was led by SAR Commissioner WA Webb who modernised and increased the efficiency of railways in South Australia. It was during the 'Webb era' that six roundhouse and turntable combinations were built. The roundhouses and turntables were integral components of railway facilities that supported the economic development of the State.

Of the six, only two roundhouse and turntable combinations remain, including the Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable (SHP 12694) and Port Lincoln Roundhouse and Turntable. The Taillem Bend Turntable (SHP 17078) is also a State Heritage Place, however, its roundhouse has been demolished.

During the early 1950s, two further roundhouse and turntable combinations were built at Naracoorte (demolished) and Mount Gambier (subject of this assessment) as part of the facilities upgraded to increase the freight capacity of the South East railway network. At that time, the gauge was broadened to enable larger locomotives and heavier loads to be hauled. This was required in order to cope with real and anticipated increases in agricultural and pastoral production and the emerging importance of forestry and the resulting saw-timber and pulp products produced by it.

Roundhouses were an important facility for steam locomotives, as unlike the diesel electric engines they replaced they were stabled rather than being left outside in the yard. The roundhouse also provided workshop facilities where repairs and maintenance took place. Only one full roundhouse was ever built in South Australia at the railway yards at Mile End, a half roundhouse was built at Peterborough while the remaining roundhouses ranged in size between two to fourteen bays. Most were less than nine bays, making the Mount Gambier roundhouse one of the larger roundhouses built in South Australia and the second largest remaining in the State.

Only three roundhouse and turntable combinations in South Australia remain; including those at Peterborough, Port Lincoln and Mount Gambier. Therefore they are also endangered. Further, as diesel electric locomotives do not need to be stabled and workshop facilities are now provided in large rectilinear industrial buildings (sheds), it is highly unlikely that the combination of a roundhouse and turntable will be built again. As turntables were built in South Australia without an associated roundhouse and a number of them have been State heritage listed (see comparability, rarity, representation), they are not rare nor endangered.

However, the integrity and intactness of the Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable have been compromised to such an extent that they are no longer considered to demonstrate heritage qualities at the State level. The roundhouse was built as both a stable and workshop facility and while to an extent the building does still demonstrate its purpose as a stable it no longer demonstrates its function as a maintenance facility. There is very little left in the building to

suggest that maintenance took place in the structure. Furthermore, a number of changes were made to the built fabric of the roundhouse sometime between the early 1990s and 2014. The most prominent were the replacement of the multi-paned windows in the rear wall with green corrugated-polycarbonate sheets; and, the removal of the multi-paned windows in the northern elevation. These changes have affected the integrity and intactness of the place and therefore its ability to demonstrate the veracity of its historical message.

In addition, the roundhouse was also damaged by a fire in 2014, which has further reduced the structure's intactness. The fire caused various degrees of damage to the posts and approximately half of the timber roof frame. The damage was particularly substantial in the central portion of the structure (the seat of the fire), resulting in the loss of the roof, both framing and cladding and significant charring of the posts. The fire then progressed through the roof frame causing charring of the timbers and some charring of the tops of the posts. Subsequently, damage has also occurred to some of the sheets of polycarbonate and corrugated galvanised iron cladding also resulting in losses and the removal of a section of the outer wall.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

The roundhouse and turntable were constructed in the early 1950s as part of the development of new railway facilities to support the broadening of the gauge in the South East rail network. The facilities were located on a vacant allotment along the rail corridor and adjacent to the existing railway reserve that house the station and other railway facilities. There is nothing in the physical fabric,

documentary or oral history evidence relating to the roundhouse and turntable to indicate that the place is likely to contain physical evidence not currently visible that will contribute meaningfully to the understanding of South Australia's history. The roundhouse and turntable are documented in a number of sources, including, but not limited to, photographs and newspaper articles. Consequently, the likelihood of physical evidence with sufficient integrity or condition to yield information about the site not already known through other sources is highly unlikely.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (c).

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

The Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable are associated with the upgrade of the rail network in the South East region of South Australia during the mid-twentieth century. The rail network was broadened at that time to enhance the freight-carrying capacity of SAR in the South East and support increased agricultural and pastoral production and the emerging saw-timber and pulp industries that subsequently became an important aspect of the South Australian economy.

Only one full circle roundhouse was built in South Australia – the now-demolished roundhouse at Mile End (1920s). All other roundhouses were only part circles, with the largest being the half circle roundhouse at Peterborough (SHP 12694), which was a vital railway centre in South Australia. Other than the 14-bay roundhouse constructed at Taillem Bend, the 9-bay Mount Gambier roundhouse was the next largest roundhouse built in the State.

The Mount Gambier roundhouse was constructed as a place to stable steam locomotives and operated as a maintenance workshop. However, while one of

the end bays housed the workshop tools and equipment, there is very little remaining physical evidence to indicate that was the case. There are two small modern sheds inside the roundhouse, a metal staircase and some remnant bits and pieces such as barrels and metal clips. No larger maintenance tools or equipment remain.

The basic structure of the building still illustrates its use as a stable for steam locomotives. Rail track extends into the eight bays used to accommodate the locomotives and connects each bay with the adjacent turntable. Similarly, the adjacent turntable is obviously a railway turntable.

However, the intactness of both the roundhouse and turntable have been diminished. In particular, the fire damage to the roundhouse has resulted in the loss or damage of approximately half of the roof structure. A number of panels of corrugated galvanised iron used to clad the side walls are missing and there is a large opening in the rear wall where a section of the fire damaged frame was removed. In addition, the multi-paned windows that were once a feature of the building were modified at some point in time with the removal of the glass panes and their replacement with large panels of green corrugated-polycarbonate sheeting. The polycarbonate sheeting is also damaged.

The locally heritage listed turntable is also in a poor state of repair. While most of the machinery to operate it appears to still remain, it has become highly corroded. The sleepers and other timberwork are suffering from rot and areas of loss.

While the Mount Gambier roundhouse is certainly one of the most substantial surviving examples of its class in South Australia, both the integrity and intactness of the roundhouse and turntable have been diminished by the loss of the maintenance facilities, changes to the cladding and through damage sustained by fire and neglect. The loss of integrity and intactness means that the roundhouse and turntable are no longer an outstanding representative of the class.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would

qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.

Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.

Roundhouses and turntables are representatives of nineteenth century railway technology built to support the maintenance and stabling of steam locomotives. All but two of South Australia's roundhouse and turntable combinations were constructed in the 1920s at a time when steam engines were the only locomotives then in use in South Australia. While many nineteenth century turntables were operated by manpower (i.e. a hand crank was used to turn the table), it was during Webb's rejuvenation of SAR in the 1920s that electric powered turntables were installed. The turntable at Mount Gambier is dual-powered, meaning that electricity was its primary power source, but a hand crank allowed lighter locomotives to be turned by hand if need be.

The roundhouse also reflects traditional building techniques, being a large timber-framed structure with multi-paned windows and clad with sheets of corrugated galvanised iron. A special board for cladding was initially installed in the 1920s roundhouses but was soon replaced with sheets of asbestos 'Deep 6'. However, the roof of the Mount Gambier roundhouse is clad in corrugated iron and there is no evidence on site to suggest that asbestos 'Deep 6' was used as its roof-cladding. Nonetheless, even if it had been used, asbestos was a typical building product by the mid-1950s.

Consequently, the roundhouse and turntable do not represent a breakthrough in terms of design, fabrication or construction techniques. Nor do they demonstrate an outstanding degree of aesthetic merit. The technology represented by the roundhouse and turntable derive from the nineteenth century and the use of electricity in turntables built in the 1920s was standard practice by the 1950s. Therefore, the roundhouse and turntable could not be said to extend the limits of thinking or technology, nor are they a creative adaptation of it. Rather, they represent a 1920s modification to nineteenth century technology that was built in the early 1950s. Further, the loss of the maintenance facilities in and the re-cladding and fire damage of the roundhouse and neglect of the turntable have reduced their integrity and intactness.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (e).

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual association for the community or a group within it.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

The Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable have a strong association with two small groups of committed local residents. The first are the people who ran the Limestone Coast Railway after the closure of the South East rail network by the Commonwealth government in the mid-1990s. The local group used the roundhouse and turntable as a stable and workshop for their locomotives and carriages for approximately ten years.

A second very recently formed small group of local residents have demonstrated their connection to the place through their passionate campaign to prevent the demolition of the roundhouse. There may also be some individuals who worked for SAR or who are 'train buffs' who demonstrate a wider South Australian connection. However, none of these groups are widely recognised, nor do the members of the group have an enduring or long-term association with the place. Neither can their connection be satisfactorily demonstrated to others, with the exception of the current group who are actively working to prevent the demolition of the roundhouse. Further, ex-SAR employees and 'train buffs' tend to recognise the importance of the Peterborough Roundhouse and Turntable (SHP 12694) over that of the Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable. That association is due to the importance of Peterborough as a significant railway hub during the 1920s, and its representation of Webb's modernisation and efficiency aims for railways in the State.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

The strongest association between the roundhouse and turntable with a person, group or organisation is with the South Australian Railways (SAR). The *South Australian Railways Act 1855-1856* resulted in the appointment of South Australia's first railways commissioners in 1857 and the beginnings of what ultimately became a government owned, operated and managed railway network that crossed the State and connected it with the rest of the country. The roundhouse and turntable at Mount Gambier were built by SAR in the early 1950s to support the industrialisation and increased agricultural and pastoral production of the South East. The roundhouse and turntable were some of the facilities constructed to support the larger steam locomotives used to haul freight and passengers. However, within twenty-five years of the roundhouse and turntable coming into operation, they and the South East rail network, were owned and operated by the Commonwealth government. Therefore, the roundhouse and turntable do not have an enduring connection with SAR.

Furthermore, the Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable were built as replicas of the roundhouses and turntables installed by SAR in the 1920s as a part of the Webb era rejuvenation that modernised and improved the efficiency of the organisation. Therefore, it is these earlier combinations of roundhouses and turntables that better represent SAR's significant contribution to South Australia's history. Of the six built during the 1920s, the roundhouse and turntable at Peterborough (SHP 12694) and Port Lincoln still remain.

There are also many other places associated with the operation of SAR during the nineteenth and early twentieth century – a time when the organisation was of most significance to South Australia. It was during the decades after World War Two that the importance of the railways reduced due to increased private

vehicle use and the deregulation of road freight in 1964. There are a number of places listed as State Heritage Places (see comparison) that better represent SAR at a time when it was of vital importance to South Australia.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).

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Pers Com. Genesee and Wyoming Australia 10 July 2018.

Pers Com. Adelaide Metro 10 July 2018.

SITE RECORD

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable **PLACE:** 26496

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Timber-framed, corrugated-galvanised-iron-clad, 9-bay roundhouse with skillion corrugated-iron-clad roof.

DATE OF COMPLETION: 1953

REGISTER STATUS: Provisionally Listed
22 July 2018

CURRENT USE: Unused
2014–present

PREVIOUS USE(S): Roundhouse and turntable for stabling and maintenance of locomotives.
1953–2014

BUILDER: Perry Engineering (turntable) c1953.

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Transport (Rail)
Category: Roundhouse and Turntable

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: City of Mount Gambier

LOCATION: **Street Name:** Lacepede Street
Town/Suburb: Mount Gambier
Post Code: 5290

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Ref.:** CT/5962/699 D33040 A28
Hundred: Blanche

MAP REFERENCE: **MGA Zone** 52
Easting (X) 1537216.0133
Northing (Y) 5747373.4481

OWNER: **Name:** Minister for Transport and Infrastructure
Address: Adelaide, SA 5000

SITE PLAN

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



**Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable, Lacedepe Street, Mount Gambier, 5290
CT 5962/699 D33040 A28**

Legend

-  Parcel Boundary
-  Roundhouse and Turntable
-  Location of former railway buildings on site (now demolished)

N↑

PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



Roundhouse view to south-west showing the fire damage to the central portion of the roof frame and loss in the back wall.

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Roundhouse view to south showing intact and undamaged posts at front of structure

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



Roundhouse view to north showing extent of damage to the structure

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Roundhouse showing charring of posts in centre of structure

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



View of turntable from the roundhouse

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



View to north showing where the workshop was located

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Roundhouse showing loose pieces of cladding

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



View of roundhouse and turntable showing degradation of timbers on the turntable

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Turntable pit showing concrete walls

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



Maker's plaque on the turntable and an example of tagging

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Turntable base and drainage channel.

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

PHOTOS

NAME: Mount Gambier Roundhouse and Turntable

PLACE: 26496



Turntable – base view of timbers

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Interior workings of machinery used to turn turntable (housed in shed)

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018



Wheel and outer rail that enabled operation without balancing the locomotives

Source: Heritage South Australia 19 July 2018

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- ¹ Peter Donovan (1992), *Railway Heritage of South Australia*, (Adelaide: National Trust of South Australia), pp.13-15.
- ² Donovan (1992), pp.15-16.
- ³ Donovan, p.50.
- ⁴ Donovan pp.41-47.
- ⁵ Donovan (1992), pp.16-20
- ⁶ Donovan (1992), p.20.
- ⁷ Bagot quoted in John Evans, (2014), 'The Uniform Gauge Question: A South Australian Perspective', *Australian Railway History*, vol.65, no.918, p.4.
- ⁸ Evans, pp.4-5.
- ⁹ Donovan p.460.
- ¹⁰ Evans, pp.4-5, Donovan (1992), pp.21, 46.
- ¹¹ Evans, pp.5-7. Donovan (1992), pp.25-27. RI Jennings (1973), *WA Webb South Australian Railways Commissioner 1922-30 A Political, Economic and Social Biography*, (North Plympton: Nesfield Press), p.129.
- ¹² Jennings, p.124.
- ¹³ Jennings, p.128.
- ¹⁴ Jennings, pp.128-129. Evans, pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁵ SAR (1950), *Official Opening of South-Eastern Broad Gauge Railway Wolseley-Naracoorte*, (Adelaide: KM Stevenson Government Printer), pp.17-21
- ¹⁶ SAR, pp.21-33. 'Test Train Yesterday', *Border Watch* 23 June 1953, p.2
- ¹⁷ SAR, p.33.
- ¹⁸ Donovan (1992), pp.34-36.
- ¹⁹ Donovan (1992), pp.36-38.
- ²⁰ Donovan (1992), p.48. Planning SA (2008), 'Greater Mount Gambier Master Plan', (Government of South Australia). Department of Planning and Local Government (2011), 'Limestone Coast Region Plan', (Government of South Australia). Department for Transport Planning and Infrastructure (2009), 'Green Triangle Region Freight Action Plan A Joint Initiative of the Victorian and South Australian Governments', (Government of South Australia and Government of Victoria). Pers Com. Martin Schoenfisch (DPTI Mt Gambier) 19 July 2018.
- ²¹ Pers Com. Martin Schoenfisch (DPTI Mt Gambier) 19 July 2018.
- ²² 'Progress Report on Gauge Widening to Mt Gambier', *Border Watch* 2 September 1950, p.7. SAR, pp.16, 29.
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