



# REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

## 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is highly valued by the Merredin community as a reminder of Merredin's past as an important railway junction. Each place within the group is valued for its individual aesthetic characteristics, and together they form a significant group. (Criterion 1.1)

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is a landmark in the Merredin town. It is dominant in the vista along Great Eastern Highway and from the main commercial centre on the north side of the railway line. It is integral within the centre of town and contributes to the townscape and character of Merredin. (Criterion 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Merredin Railway Station Group* illustrates the importance of the railway system in the development of agricultural areas and their supporting townships in regional Western Australia. The development of the individual elements within the group reflect the growth of the town and the railway system. (Criterion 2.1)

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is situated at the junction of a major railway system and was the centre of Western Australian Government Railway's maintenance operations on the Eastern Goldfields Railway from 1904 to 1970. (Criterion 2.2)

The Water Tower and its associated dam are a fine example of a water supply system fashioned to fit prevailing conditions and environment. They illustrate the difficulties of providing rail transport over long distances in Western Australia in the days of steam engines. (Criterion 2.2)

### 11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The Signal Cabin is of considerable significance for its ability to provide information and interpretation of an occupation associated with the railways,

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

and a way of operating the rail system that is no longer practised. (Criterion 3.2)

#### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is highly valued by the Merredin community. The restoration of the place as the Old Station Museum by the Merredin Museum and Historical Society testifies to this. (Criterion 4.1)

Being a prominent group structures, *Merredin Railway Station Group* contributes to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is the only remaining example of a railway group comprising a Water Tower, Signal Cabin, and three brick station buildings. (Criterion 5.1)

The Signal Cabin is the finest example of only two such structures remaining in rural Western Australia. The Signal Cabin is of considerable significance in its ability to inform of an occupation associated with the railways, and a way of operating the rail system that is no longer practised (Criteria 5.1 & 5.2)

The Water Tower is one of the only remaining examples of its type with a 40,000 gallon (182,000 litre) square cast iron water tank on a 45 foot (12 metre) high timber tower. (Criterion 5.1)

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is one of the most complete and authentic groups of railway buildings in Western Australia and demonstrates functions and a way of life no longer practised. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is a particularly fine example of a country railway junction station group, comprising the Water Tower, Signal Cabin, and three brick station buildings. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is in good condition. The buildings are maintained on a regular basis by the Merredin Historical Society who run the Old Station Museum.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Merredin Railway Station Group* operated continuously as a railway facility until 1968, when a new station was built. Since 1978, the place has functioned as a railway museum, presenting the buildings as they were used throughout the years of operation of the railway. The group has retained a moderate degree of integrity.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The place shows minimal evidence of changes to the fabric except the painting of the entire face brick facade of all three brick buildings. Despite this, the group displays a high degree of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Architect.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Merredin Railway Station Group* comprises the Water Tower (1893), a 40,000 gallon (182,000 litre) tank on a 45 foot (12m) high timber tower on the railway reserve, and four buildings on the railway platform comprising the Signal Cabin (1913, 1915), timber and iron on a two-storey high steel stand; Refreshment Rooms with cellar (1915, 1927), brick and tile; Waiting Rooms (1920), brick and iron; the Main Station Building (1927), brick and tile.<sup>1</sup> The brick buildings replaced earlier structures of timber and iron. In 1978, *Merredin Railway Station Group* was converted into a museum. The Water Tower was restored in 1997.

Sandalwood cutters worked in the Merredin district in the 1880s and 1890s. Their tracks criss-crossed the district between the granite outcrops that dotted the area. The rocks acted as water catchments, providing a reliable source of water at a shallow depth with good grass for horse feed. The usefulness of these rock catchments had long been recognised by the Aboriginal communities in the area. Pastoralists also took up leases in the district around the same time.<sup>2</sup>

With the discovery of gold in Southern Cross and later in Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie, transport was required between Perth and the goldfields. The Eastern Railway, which had been constructed as far as Northam in 1886, was extended to Southern Cross in 1894, Coolgardie in 1895 and to Kalgoorlie in 1897. Water was required for the railway steam engines every 50 to 60 kilometres, and supply was an ongoing problem.

At Merredin, a large rock, known as Merredin Peak, provided a good water catchment. In 1893, the Public Works Department designed a Dam at the base of Merredin Peak to collect water. The Railway Dam had a 40 acre (16ha) catchment area and a capacity of 7,470,000 gallons (34 million litres). Cost of construction was £5366-0-0.<sup>3</sup> The water was pumped to the Water Tower, a square tank with a capacity of 40,000 gallons (182,000 litres) on a 45 foot (12m) high stand, which was erected in the Merredin railway yard in 1893.<sup>4</sup> The water was gravity fed from the Water Tower to the railway engines.

The Water Tower and associated Railway Dam at Merredin were part of a wider system of over 100 dams and tanks managed by WAGR along its many

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<sup>1</sup> The Main Station Building was also known as the Parcels Office. In this report it is referred to as the Main Station Building to avoid confusion when talking about the parcels office within the building. The date of construction of the cellar is not in agreement with the date of 1906 put forward by Merredin Museum & Historical Society. That date is based on WAGR building plans in their possession. Unfortunately, plans are not always a true indication of construction date, and the date of 1915 is based on newspaper reports and Railway Department annual reports as referenced later in this report.

<sup>2</sup> Ewers, John K. *Bruce Rock: The Story of a District*, Bruce Rock District Road Board, 1959, pp. 10-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways and the Roebourne-Cossack Tramway*, Perth, Gov. Printer, 1905/1906, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> PWD Plan 2364, 12 June 1893.

kilometres of railway line.<sup>5</sup> When water on route was not available, the engines had to haul water trucks and leave them at strategic points along the way.<sup>6</sup>

The Northam-Southern Cross section of the railway line was constructed by Joseph McDowell. The contract included construction of station buildings, and the first building at the Merredin siding, probably built in 1893, was an open shed 12 x 18 feet (3.7m x 5.5m) on a 200 foot (60m) long platform.<sup>7</sup> This was used as a waiting room and station building. The government took over the Northam-Southern Cross section of the Eastern Goldfields railway on 1 July 1894.<sup>8</sup>

On the railway reserve, there was also a tool shed and two two-roomed cottages for married 'permanent way' men, that is, the men who maintained the track.<sup>9</sup> The Station Master's house was built in 1896, when Joseph McDowell won the contract to build 25 such houses along the Northam-Southern Cross line at a cost of £9,375.<sup>10</sup> That same year, waiting room additions for the line, which would have included the Merredin siding, were contracted out.<sup>11</sup>

The Merredin siding was about 4 km south of Hunt's Dam, a small settlement with a wayside inn, on the York-Southern Cross road. With the opening of the railway, the inn was abandoned and the settlement moved to the siding. In 1904, the locomotive depot at Southern Cross needed to be moved west and Merredin, halfway between Perth and Kalgoorlie, was the perfect site. A townsite was surveyed that same year. A coal depot was established and a railway barracks built for the single railway men, giving rise to the name of Barrack Street. Houses for married railway workers were built on the other side of the line.<sup>12</sup>

The refreshment arrangements on the Eastern Goldfields line consisted of four restaurant cars which were put into service in 1905, and were reported as being so successful that the Eastern states was following suit.<sup>13</sup> Two years later, however, a refreshment room, a small one room building, probably timber, was built at Merredin station and tenders were called for managing the service.<sup>14</sup>

As well as servicing the goldfields, the railway opened up the district for settlers on the land. Branch lines were constructed into the new wheat

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<sup>5</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1905/1906, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Affleck, Fred, *On Track: The Making of Westrail 1950-1976*, Perth, Westrail, 1978, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> McDowell was running a passenger service to Burracoppin, about 35 km east of Merredin, by December 1893, so it is reasonable to suppose he had constructed station buildings up to that point.

<sup>8</sup> Gunzberg, Adrian & Austin, Jeff, *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 227-228.

<sup>9</sup> *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 1 September 1892, p. 697; Law, F. A. *The History of the Merredin District*, Merredin Road Board, 1961, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 12 June 1896, p. 965.

<sup>11</sup> *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 3 January, 1896, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Law, F. A. op cit, pp. 18 & 26; Works & Ways Plan 23753, 20 August 1925.

<sup>13</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1905/1906, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1906/1907, p. 77; *Merredin Mercury*, 3 March 1915, p. 2; *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 1907, p. 3130.

growing areas to provide better transport for farm produce and supplies.<sup>15</sup> The opening of the railway loop line to Dowerin in 1911, the Bruce Rock-Quairading-York line in 1913, the Bruce Rock-Corrigin-Narrogin line in 1914, and the Narrogin-Naremben line in 1923, made Merredin a major railway junction.

To deal with the growing traffic on the lines, a Signal Cabin was constructed on the platform in 1913.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, a toilet was added to the Signal Cabin, and work was under way to improve the Refreshment Rooms.

The work of altering the refreshment rooms at the station are now being proceeded with. The cellar is being put down and a new and more commodious building is to take the place of the room which has for so long done duty, and one which will be more in keeping with the importance of the town.<sup>17</sup>

The new Refreshment Rooms probably comprised the two-room timber and iron building which was still in use as a kitchen and bedroom in 1944.<sup>18</sup> The cellar was constructed of brick and used to store drinks and perishables. Ten cottages for railway employees were also being built at this time, as well as a timber footbridge which accessed the island platform from both sides of the railway line.<sup>19</sup>

In 1916, over £25,000 was paid in wages to local railway staff and the future for the town was looking bright. All was not well with the facilities at Merredin railway station however. Promised improvements were 'hung up' by World War One and complaints were being voiced. The station had no waiting room and no cover for people waiting for connecting trains in the middle of the night, which was especially hard on women and children.<sup>20</sup>

In August 1916, the Commissioner for Railways, J. T. Short, passed through Merredin on an inspection tour and received a deputation from Merredin Road Board regarding the 'disabilities under which the townspeople and the travelling public labour in connection with the accommodation provided at the railway station.' While the platform was 'a good one', and the signal box, footbridge and urinals were 'up-to-date', the town required a 'suitable' ladies waiting room, and a men's waiting room, as well as better refreshment accommodation, which was 'very poor, as was bar accommodation.' Commissioner Short made no promises, however. It was all a question of finance, of which there was none.<sup>21</sup>

A few months later, residents were shocked to have delivered to the station, by train, a 'dilapidated old shanty, without a roof, from somewhere near Wyalkatchem, put on the platform as gentlemen's waiting room.'<sup>22</sup> Whether the shanty was made use of is not known. In May 1918, there was still no waiting room for ladies and the refreshment provisions 'could not be worse if there was no refreshment accommodation at all.' Conditions at the railway

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<sup>15</sup> Stannage, C. T. (ed) *A New History of Western Australia*, Perth, UWA Press, 1981, p. 250.

<sup>16</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1912/1913, p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 3 March 1915, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> WAGR Refreshment Rooms, Plan No. 17, Merredin 1944/45.

<sup>19</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1914/1915, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 6 July 1916, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 18 August, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 8 December 1916, p. 2.

station were poor for working staff and public alike.<sup>23</sup> Construction of the Waiting Rooms was begun later in 1918, but the place was not completed until August 1920.<sup>24</sup>

There were 41 people employed at the Merredin Railway Yard in 1920, and 15,757 passenger journeys were booked at the station in the 1920-21 financial year.<sup>25</sup> The facilities provided at Merredin railway station were still not considered satisfactory. An editorial in the *Merredin Mercury* in January 1923, highlighted the poor state of the railway station buildings at that time.

The Railway Station still remains the station of huts ... The so called refreshment rooms still remain a puny den, not having enough room to swing the proverbial cat. The fine cellar that was made some ten years ago is still in the open, and a receptacle for stagnant water. 'No money' is the excuse.<sup>26</sup>

It was another four years before these matters was rectified.

A start has been made this week with the erection of the new railway station, and already several of the old buildings have been removed to make way for the new. £11,000 is being spent this year on the most urgent portions of the proposed station, and it is expected that the balance of the £27,000 which it is estimated the complete work will cost, will be completed next year.<sup>27</sup>

Merredin's new station buildings were constructed using 'salmon tinted Coolgardie bricks salvaged from the Golden Gate, Hannan Street and Kallaroo Stations,' on the defunct Eastern Goldfields Railway loopline. The buildings constructed in 1927, were the brick and tile Refreshment Rooms and the Main Station Building.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1930s, the Railway Dam was enlarged and almost totally rebuilt by sustenance workers. During the Second World War, the RAAF No. 10 Stores Depot was stationed at Merredin with several hundred personnel. When Australian Forces returned from the Middle East, the First Australian General Hospital was housed in temporary accommodation east of the town. An extra siding was built at Merredin Station Yard for the hospital train.<sup>29</sup>

During the 1949-1950 drought, WAGR hauled up to 10 million gallons (455 million litres) of water each week. In 1959, 324 of the 395 locomotives were still steam engines.<sup>30</sup> The general shortage of water and lack of high quality coal, made Western Australian Railways an expensive operation. Costs had to be trimmed. In 1961, luxury 'Scenicruiser' buses were introduced on the Perth to Narembene route, cutting one of the passenger rail services through Merredin. Between 1961 and 1964, buffet cars and better accommodation on the trains to Kalgoorlie took away the need for the Refreshment Rooms at the stations along the way. Merredin Refreshment Rooms closed.

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<sup>23</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 2 May, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1918/1919, p. 67; 1919/1920 p. 59 & 1920/1921, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1918/1919, p. 67; 1919/1920 p. 59 & 1920/1921, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 11 January 1923, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 20 January 1927, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Railway Museum brochure; information from physical inspection; *Report on the Workings of the Government Railways*, op cit, 1926/1927.

<sup>29</sup> Eastern Goldfields Railway File, ACC 1781/6200.

<sup>30</sup> Affleck, Fred, op cit. p. 11.

The other major problem for WAGR was the size of the gauge. At Parkeston, 4 kms east of Kalgoorlie, the narrow Western Australian gauge line met the standard gauge line from the east, and everything had to be manually transferred from one to the other. In 1966, the standard gauge line was finally extended to Fremantle. Merredin acquired new grain storage and transfer facilities to handle the grain brought in on the narrow gauge branch lines.

In 1968, a new station was built at Merredin on the standard gauge line.<sup>31</sup> *Merredin Railway Station Group* was decommissioned. In 1969, all steam locomotives were replaced with diesel, and all locomotive servicing and maintenance for the entire Government railway system was transferred to a new depot at Forrestfield. The locomotive depot at Merredin was no longer required.

A referendum was held on whether to keep *Merredin Railway Station Group* and 534 'Yes' votes were recorded. The Merredin Museum and Historical Society was set up to handle the conversion of *Merredin Railway Station Group* into a railway museum. The Department of Tourism provided a grant of \$20,000 against the Society's \$15,000. Public support was gathered to raise the district's share of the funds.<sup>32</sup> The Old Station Museum opened in 1978.

In 1993, Merredin Museum and Historical Society constructed a waterfall, dedicated to pioneer women, at the western end of the railway station precinct. At the western end of the platform a rose garden commemorates pioneers of the district.

In 1997, the Historical Society was granted a Lotteries Commission Grant of \$37,000 for restoration work on the Water Tower.<sup>33</sup> In 1998, *Merredin Railway Station Group* is a living railway station museum, a memorial to a way of life when train travel was the main mode of passenger transport. The Refreshment Rooms are used by the Merredin Fine Arts Society for their art gallery and other purposes.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is located within the railway reserve in the Merredin townsite. The group is located east to west along the railway, which is parallel with the Great Eastern Highway on the south, and Barrack Street, Merredin's main street, on the north.

The Water Tower is the easternmost element in the group, located on the south side of the railway line, adjacent to Great Eastern Highway, and is the tallest element of the group. West of the Water Tower, on the east end of the railway platform, is the Main Station Building. Further west along the platform is the Signal Cabin, then the Waiting Rooms, and then the Refreshment Rooms. Each building is separate and freestanding.

*Merredin Railway Station Group* makes a significant contribution to the Merredin townscape and character, and the Water Tower, and the Signal Cabin are landmarks on Great Eastern Highway in Merredin. The place is now the Old Station Museum run by the Merredin Museum and Historical Society.

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<sup>31</sup> Merredin Railway Station, Contract No. C13-3, AN 260/CCE ACC 1786.

<sup>32</sup> *Merredin Mercury*, 18 June 1975, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *The Wheatbelt Mercury*, 2 April 1997, p. 1.

Descriptions of each of the buildings in the group are detailed separately, progressing from east to west along the group in the railway reserve. The buildings within the group have undergone minimal interventions to the fabric, except for the extensive painting of the former face brick surfaces of the three brick buildings, and small changes to accommodate the continuous development of the railway services and facilities on the site until 1968.

The Water Tower was built in 1893, to a standard WAGR design, of which the 12 metre stand was the tallest, and the 182,000 litre tank, the largest capacity. The square steel tank is typical of the tanks constructed on the main lines. The sign writing on the tank, advertising 'Kalgoorlie Bitter' and 'Oatmeal Stout', both brewed at the Merredin Brewery in the 1920s, is a singular example.

The tank is supported by a square grid of four bush timber posts along each edge, making twelve posts in total. The posts are original, and have new steel straps around the circumference on the lower section of the tower. The cross bracing on the tower is new timber. This is a result of work carried out on the Water Tower in 1997. The ladder is intact and useable, and a water pipe still connects the water tank to the Railway Dam at Merredin Peak, 2 kilometres north east, which was also constructed in 1893. The tower and tank are in good condition.

The entry to the Old Station Museum is at the eastern end of the railway platform, where the pedestrian footbridge (demolished c. 1970) exited from the town side of the railway line. The original station building at Merredin was located at the east end of the Main Station Building.

The buildings are all central along the island platform. The first railway line was situated on the south side of the platform. The lines on the north side subsequently developed as station business grew. Construction of the three brick buildings in the group was originally face brick work finished in tuck pointing on various facades on the buildings. Some time later the face brick work on the three buildings was painted. One small area of brickwork has been stripped of paint to reveal the warm mellow golden and pink tones of the brickwork. The coursing of the brickwork is also different on the three buildings, although all feature three course arched headers and bullnose sills to the windows. The windows throughout are timber framed double hung.

The Main Station Building is a brick and clay tile (Bristile) building with a timber floor, and hard plaster interior walls. The gabled tile roof extends at break pitch over the platform along eight strutted section (bays) on the northern and southern elevations. The gabled ends of the roof are infilled with rough render between vertical boarding. Each rendered vertical panel has a series of vertical air vents. Located at the east end is the entry, signalled by a gabled portico.

The entry doors to the Main Station Building are typical of the sliding doors which are in place throughout this building and the Refreshment Rooms. They are four panelled timber doors, sliding on the interior wall, on a wheel and bracket system. Above the double sliding doors is a double fanlight window arched across the top. The ticket office has double sliding doors opening onto the platform north and south. Directly in front of the eastern entry to the platform is the ticket office window and timber barrier rail.

The ticket office (accessed from the parcels office behind) is lined with vertical tongue and groove painted boards. The parcels office counter is in situ. The parcels office is a large space which opens into a hallway down the north side of the building. The hallway opens into a series of five small rooms along the south side of the building. The eastern most room was the paymaster's office. The desk is in situ. The platform below the paymaster's office window was stepped up for the pay recipient to reach the paymaster at the window. Other rooms were the station master's office, the staff room, switch board and signal control room, and the battery room. The west end of the passage opens onto the platform. The west end wall of the building is clad with sheets of flat asbestos, as it was intended that the building would be extended. The Main Station Building is in very good condition, and has retained a high degree of integrity and authenticity.

The Signal Cabin is a three-storey high timber framed and weatherboard clad building on a steel rail structure. The hipped gambrel roof is clad with corrugated iron. The weatherboard external cladding is painted. The original timber staircase is still in place. In the 1950s, when the safety standards were improved, the former open balustrade was replaced with sheet iron. In 1915, the toilet half way up the staircase was constructed to facilitate the work ethic of the signal man who was not permitted to leave the Signal Cabin during a shift. The platform level of the building is steel structural support.

The second floor area of the Signal Cabin was not accessible, and therefore has not been inspected. The top floor is a large enclosed space with the original signals running the entire length across the front wall of the Signal Cabin. The room is clad with painted tongue and groove boards on the walls and the ceiling. The entire frontage of the upper floor is glazed with timber framed vertical format windows which also wrap around both ends to give unrestricted views up and down the railway line. The floor boards in the north west corner are worn down, evidence of the signalman's presence. The Signal Cabin is in very good condition, and has retained a high degree of integrity and authenticity. The only other example of a Signal Cabin in rural Western Australia is in the Narrogin Railway yard. It is a 1965 construction and in a poor condition.<sup>34</sup>

The Waiting Rooms building is a brick and iron construction, and has concrete floors throughout. The gabled iron roof, clad in short sheets, extends at the main pitch (low), over the platform on the north and south elevations. The verandah infill detail consists of vertical boards with Gothic detail along the bottom, at head height. The eaves are extended with spaced board lining, and the gable infill is a series of vents in horizontal louvred boards. The top of the brick wall at the gable is corbelled.

The Waiting Rooms has two entries, open arched doorways, one at each end of the building. The ladies waiting room at the east end is a large space with adjoining toilet facilities. A fireplace is central in the west wall of the room, and the original timber seating, on turned timber legs, runs along the south and north walls. The men's waiting room is smaller with seating only along the south wall. The condition of the building is good except for evidence of

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<sup>34</sup> WAGR file, 'Narrogin Station buildings and improvements, 1951-1976; WAGR, 'Alphabetical Index to Contracts and Specifications', 1901-1966, from HCWA Assessment 3521, Narrogin Railway Station.

rising damp in the entry to the women's room. The place has retained a high degree of integrity. The Waiting Rooms functions as a public toilet facility for the museum. Due to the replacement of the timber floors with concrete, the place has only a moderate degree of authenticity.

The western most building on the railway platform is the former Refreshment Rooms. Within this building is the 1915 cellar which is intact, but was not inspected at this time. The Refreshment Rooms building is a brick and tile construction with a break pitch verandah extending over the platform on the north and south elevations. The gable infill on the east end consists of vertical boards with roughcast and vertical format air vents in between, similar to the east gable of the Main Station Building. The western wall is completely clad with t & g timber on a timber frame. Plans indicate that a weatherboard structure comprising kitchen and bedroom adjoined at this point (since demolished). The building still has the timber floor throughout. The eastern end has two sets of sliding doors and fanlights, as evidenced in the Main Station Building, except that these doors are more elaborate with six panels per door.

The cellar is accessed from the external trap, and from behind the bar. The bar is a reconstruction of the original. Behind the bar area is a large open space used by the Merredin Fine Arts Society. The room has a set of sliding doors opening onto the platform on each side. The walls are hard plaster except the end wall which is lined with horizontal t & g boards. The ceiling is lined with sheets of Masonite with battens over. The place is in good condition and has retained a medium degree of integrity. The fabric shows some evidence of alterations on the south wall near the bar entry, but otherwise, has a moderate to high degree of authenticity.

The platform on which the buildings are located is integral within the group. It was the first element constructed (1893) within what is now *Merredin Railway Station Group*. The platform is bitumen. A number of weigh bridge and other railway operational items are still in place along the platform. On the rail side (north), a two metre high steel framed plastic coated weld mesh link fence protects the public from passing trains on the still operational railway lines adjacent to *Merredin Railway Station Group*.

Fifty metres west of the Refreshment Rooms, south of the end of the platform, is the stone fountain construction commemorating women pioneers. At the end of the platform is a rose garden commemorating pioneers of the district. These have been added since the place became a museum.

*Merredin Railway Station Group* is in good condition. The buildings within the group have undergone minimal alterations to the original fabric and have retained a high degree of integrity and authenticity.

### **13.3 REFERENCES**

No key references.

### **13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research is recommended on the Water Tower and Railway Dam which are particularly interesting and fine examples of a 100 year old railway water supply system.