



## 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.

#### PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways
- 5.2 Organising workers and work places

#### HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 106 Workers (incl. Aboriginal, convict)
- 110 Resource exploitation and depletion
- 202 Rail & light rail transport

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

*Menzies Railway Station Group*, with its stone Station Building in Federation Arts & Crafts style, row of three stone Federation Bungalow style Platelayer's Cottages, and Station Master's House, is valued for the aesthetic characteristics of individual elements, and as a whole as a significant group. (Criteria 1.1 & 1.4)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* has a landmark setting in the Menzies town. It is a dominant element along the east boundary of the townsite and contributes to the townscape and character of Menzies. (Criterion 1.4)

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

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

## **11.2 HISTORIC VALUE**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* demonstrates infrastructure constructed to meet the transport and labour requirements of the goldfields during the 1890s gold rushes in Western Australia when large numbers of people, heavy machinery, ore and timber had to be moved to the fields by the most efficient means. The place illustrates the consolidation and improvement of efficiency and living conditions of the goldfields and surrounding districts brought by the railways. (Criterion 2.1 & 2.2)

The Station Master's House was constructed to a standard design for the occupation of the Menzies Station Master. The size of the place, with four main rooms, reflects the status of the Station Master's position, in contrast to the adjoining two-room Platelayer's Cottages, which were constructed for the members of the track maintenance gang. (Criterion 2.2)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is associated with the Public Works Department and Chief Architect John Grainger, who designed the buildings. (Criterion 2.3)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is associated with railway contractors Henry Teasedale Smith and Joseph Timms, trading as Smith & Timms who, as well as constructing the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line, were also involved in the construction of the Boyanup-Busselton, York-Greenhills, Kalgoorlie-Kanowna, Port Hedland-Marble Bar and Nannine-Meekatharra lines between 1894 and 1911. (Criterion 2.3)

## **11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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## **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is highly valued by the local and wider community as evidenced by the efforts of the Menzies Shire Council to prevent demolition of the Platelayer's Cottages in the 1970s. (Criterion 4.1)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* has a significant association with the local Indigenous population, by means of the high number of Indigenous people employed to work on the railway in the vicinity since WWII, and via the provision of Indigenous housing on site since the 1970s. (Criterion 4.1)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* contributes to the local community's sense of place as an identifiable built representation of the former significant railway presence in the town and a reminder of a way of life no longer practiced. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1 RARITY**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* comprising Station Building, Station Master's House and three Platelayer's Cottages, is the most intact and substantial group of railway buildings remaining on the Kalgoorlie-Leonora railway line, and includes the only railway station building remaining on the line north of Kalgoorlie. (Criterion 5.1)

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is a rare remaining example of a group comprising the Station Building, Station Master's House and three Platelayer's

Cottages, demonstrating a way of life and functions no longer practiced. (Criterion 5.2)

## **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is a good representative example of the type of station buildings and railway residences constructed on the goldfield lines in the 1890s. (Criterion 6.1)

## **12.3 CONDITION**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is in fair condition. There is evidence of recent restoration and painting works on both the interior and exterior and roofs of the three Platelayer's Cottages. The Station Master's House show evidence of cracking, previous repairs and fretting stone and mortar particularly on the walls around the north corner, and also general stone damage around the base perimeter of the walls, and the chimney. The Station Building shows evidence of intervention (repairs) to the stone walls, particularly on the platform walls in the vicinity of the luggage entrance.

## **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Menzies Railway Station Group* operated continuously as a railway facility into the 1970s. The Station Building provides the office and base operation for a local mining company, and the Station Master's House and Platelayer's Cottages provide accommodation support facilities for Menzies Aboriginal Corporation, all places thereby providing useful functions that have required little or no interventions to the original buildings. Although the train still operates on the line, *Menzies Railway Station Group* is no longer connected to the provision of railway services. It has a moderate degree of integrity.

## **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

The *Menzies Railway Station Group* has changed very little and retains a high degree of authenticity. Changes to the fabric include the painting of the roofs of the Platelayers Cottages (2003), and the removal of the bathroom from under the south corner verandah of the Station Master's House.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is a collection of stone buildings constructed in 1898 comprising the Station Building, in Federation Arts and Crafts style, and three Platelayer's Cottages and Station Master's House in Federation Bungalow style. The place was built by railway contractors Smith & Timms, to plans prepared by the Public Works Department.<sup>1</sup>

Following the discovery of the rich Coolgardie goldfields in 1892, prospectors began to venture into the surrounding areas. In 1894, gold was found by Leslie Robert Menzies in an area north of Goongarrie and the Lady Shenton and Florence mines were established. A mining camp, known as Menzies, developed in the vicinity of the mines as other prospectors flocked to the area.<sup>2</sup> The North Coolgardie goldfield was gazetted on 28 June 1895, and encompassed the towns of Menzies and Goongarrie.<sup>3</sup> Menzies was declared a municipality on 30 August, and the North Coolgardie goldfield was gazetted a magisterial district on 20 September 1895.<sup>4</sup> Ten mining companies had been floated in the area by late 1895 and an estimated 1,800 mining leases were taken out throughout the North Coolgardie field between March 1895 and September 1896.<sup>5</sup>

During construction of the Eastern Goldfield railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in 1895-96, plans were already underway to extend the line to Menzies. Both Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were vying to be the junction for this line and thus become the centre of the eastern goldfields.<sup>6</sup> Another route, from Southern Cross, was proposed by Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, who issued a circular to explain their point of view, but Kalgoorlie was chosen as the start point.<sup>7</sup> A contract for the line to Menzies was let to Smith & Timms on 17 August 1897.<sup>8</sup>

Henry Teasedale Smith had worked on railway construction for Millar brothers in Victoria. With Joseph Timms, he undertook the construction of the Boyanup-Busselton line for the WA Government in 1894. In 1897, they won the contracts for the Kalgoorlie-Menzies, York-Greenhills and Kalgoorlie-Kanowna lines. The partnership was terminated on 30 June 1900, but the pair returned to railway

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<sup>1</sup> The identity of the builder has not been located in records of the period. The Platelayer's Cottages were Departmental Property (DP) 445, 446, 447 & 448 (not extant) south to north on Walsh Street. The Station Master's House was DP 449.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, Martyn & Audrey, *Golden Destiny: The centenary history of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia*, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, 1893, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> *West Australian Government Gazette*, 28 June 1895, p. 894.

<sup>4</sup> *West Australian Government Gazette*, 30 August 1895, p. 1411 & 20 September 1895, p. 1495.

<sup>5</sup> Rodgers, P. & B., *No Sign of the Times: A collection of stories of the Menzies District*, Shire of Menzies & Hesperian Press, 1992, pp. 1-10; *Coolgardie Miner*, 3 September 1896, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, H. H., *The Golden Miles*, Rigby, 1977, pp. 173; Webb, M. & A., op cit, pp. 208-211, 288-293.

<sup>7</sup> *West Australian*, 25 July 1896, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, p. 206; PWD, *Annual Report*, 1898, Railways Construction Branch, p. 61. Gunzberg gives contract letting date as 20 August & *Annual Report* has it as 17th, the latter date being used here.

contracting in 1907, first in South Australia and then back in WA. Smith and Timms built the major portion of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar line between 1909 and 1911, before lack of labour forced them to hand construction back to the Public Works Department, and in 1910 they completed the Nannine-Meekatharra line.<sup>9</sup>

Completion date for the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line contract was 1 December 1898, but as with other goldfield railway constructions, the contractors pushed to complete the line as early as possible so they could operate it until the handover date and reap a financial benefit. During this operating period, work on completing station facilities and ballasting of the line was carried out. Smith & Timms were authorised to charge 6d per ton per mile for the carriage of merchandise, but a petition from business people in Menzies resulted in permission for the fee to be raised to 9d on condition that the railway was completed at the earliest date possible.<sup>10</sup> With the added incentive, work commenced in mid September 1897, and a thousand men were employed by the end of October. As each stop was reached, the line was opened for traffic with Cobb & Co coaches covering the rest of the route north.<sup>11</sup> At Menzies, there was debate about the location of the station yard, with arguments raised that it was too far south of the town centre, but petitions and deputations failed to have it relocated.<sup>12</sup> The line reached Menzies on 4 March 1898, and the contractors advertised the running of one train each way daily except Sundays.<sup>13</sup> The contractor's station master, a Mr Cooper, operated from a tent while work on the station buildings commenced early in March 1898.<sup>14</sup>

The Kalgoorlie-Menzies line was officially opened by the Governor, Sir Gerard Smith, on 22 March 1898. Two trains brought hundreds of visitors and the official party to the event.<sup>15</sup>

All was bright, dazzling bizarre. Top hats and parasols mixed with Afghan camel men, schoolchildren in white, Druids in regalia, and helmeted firemen. The Mayor, Mr F. B. Schlam, and the local Member of Parliament, Mr H. Gregory (formerly Mayor of Menzies), gave a cordial official welcome, and the engine called "The Menzies" steamed through the official ribbon held by Mrs Schlam and Mrs Piesse (wife of the Commissioner of Public Works). A procession was formed comprising the town band, pioneers and others in drays and carts, three Cobb & Co coaches, the fire brigade with horse drawn pump, a piper and 60 men of the Caledonian Society, cyclists in great numbers, in the centre His Excellency the Governor in a special two horse trap, and 16 Afghans on their camels. It wound its way up Shenton Street, around the town and back to Shenton Street and the town hall. It all created a good deal of dust, which was the penalty for any procession, but nobody was worried about a bit of dust that day.<sup>16</sup>

The official report on the construction of the line appeared in the Public Works Department *Annual Report* of 1897-98:

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<sup>9</sup> Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, pp. 229-230.

<sup>10</sup> *North Coolgardie Herald*, 30 November 1897, p. 2, from Ian Elliot's research on Railway Buildings Menzies, 18 July 1994, HCWA place file 1553.

<sup>11</sup> *North Coolgardie Herald*, 5 & 26 October & 29 November 1897, p. 2, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

<sup>12</sup> *North Coolgardie Herald*, 15 December 1897, p. 3 & 16 December, p. 2; *Menzies Weekly Times*, 15 January 1898, p. 8 & 12 February 1898, p. 5, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

<sup>13</sup> *Menzies Miner*, 12 March 1898, p. 11, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

<sup>14</sup> *Menzies Miner*, 26 November 1898, p. 4, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

<sup>15</sup> *The Coolgardie Miner*, 23 March 1898, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 22 March 1958, p 6.

*Kalgoorlie-Menzies Railway.* - The contract for this railway, being a length of about 80¼ miles, was let on 17th August 1897, for a sum of £137,851 9s 5d. Work was commenced about the middle of September, and pushed on with such energy that, in spite of great difficulties and inconvenience, the whole of the clearing, earthworks, and the construction of culverts was completed, and the rails laid into Menzies, and line opened for traffic by the contractors during the first week in March, 1898.

This achievement, considering that the whole of the materials of construction had to be conveyed an average about 40 miles, that condensers had to be erected to supply water for the men and locomotives employed, stands, I think, unparalleled in the annals of railway construction in the Australian colonies...

The works along the line are generally light throughout, and very similar to those extant upon the other goldfields lines, and do not call for special mention. Stations have been provided at the mining centres of Paddington, Kurawa (Broad Arrow), Bardoc, Goongarrie and Menzies, and in addition to these, for the convenience of traffic working, four (4) wayside crossing places [sidings] have been put in....

The Station Buildings, Station-masters' Houses, Platelayer's Cottages, & c., are of stone, procured locally, and at Menzies a terminal station, of special design, has been erected.<sup>17</sup>

The list of facilities and work required at the terminal station at Menzies was impressive:

1 station house, special design (stone); 1 passenger platform, 450ft. long; 2,200ft. picket fencing; 12 wicket-gates; 1 stationmaster's house, 2nd class (stone); 1 woodshed and latrine; 1 goods shed, 200ft. long; 1 outside loading platform, 165ft. long; 1 horse and carriage loading platform; 1 lamp room and latrines; 1 office and store; 4 Platelayer's cottages (stone); 4 latrines; 1 engine shed, 4-stall; 2 outside engine-pits, 40ft. long; 1 carriage shed, 100ft. long; 1 coal store, 60ft. long; Turntable foundations and walls; Erecting turntable; 1 engine water tank (25,000 gallons); 5-ton crane foundations; Erecting 5-ton crane; Foundations for weighbridge; Erecting weighbridge; Sheep and cattle yards; Road approaches, as shown; Footpaths as shown.<sup>18</sup>

Not everyone was pleased with the railway buildings provided at Menzies, with at least one person critical of the high cost involved in their construction.

In their wildest dream, the people of Menzies never hoped for the magnificent railway buildings which an incompetent and extravagant department has bestowed upon them. The accommodation provided here is sufficient for a town of 20,000 inhabitants and is quite as extensive as that provided at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. Parcel and cloak rooms have been provided with unmindful extravagance and the latrines and lamp rooms are far too costly and extensive. Then there is the unnecessary separate platform for loading and unloading horses and carriages, a monument of departmental folly. In his defense, the Minister for Public Works states that it would have been almost inhuman to place workmen in iron and wood buildings, forgetting that his department had condemned the school children of Menzies to that very inhumanity.<sup>19</sup>

In June 1896, the *West Australian* had published an item criticising the provision of iron-clad cottages on the Northam-Southern Cross and South-Western lines,

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<sup>17</sup> PWD, *Annual Report*, 1898, Railway Construction Branch, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> Kalgoorlie-Menzies Railway specifications in 'WA Specification Book 2A: Railways, surveys, formation, bridges, platelaying and water, station buildings, fencing', SROWA AN260/CCE ACC 26202A, Item 9, Contracts 12 & 13. None of the original plans for Menzies have been located. Only Book 1 of the 3 Books of drawings for Kalgoorlie-Menzies Railway, 1897, have been located at SROWA (WAS 399 CONS 1649, Items 05572/1-3).

<sup>19</sup> *Menzies Miner*, 24 December 1898, p. 8, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

which had elicited a response from Railway Commissioner Piesse that he would consider the provision of better quality housing for later contracts. Clearly, the Department was going to be criticised no matter what it did.<sup>20</sup>

The specially designed Menzies Station Building comprised station master's office, clerks' office, parcels room, luggage room, luggage entrance, ticket office, public waiting room, and ladies waiting room and toilets.<sup>21</sup> The Menzies Station Master's House, was a standard four room, 2nd class, station master's residence with the kitchen located in a corner of the verandah. It had verandahs on all four sides, which appears to have been a concession to the goldfields climate.<sup>22</sup> The place was numbered Departmental Property (DP) 449.

The stone Platelayer's Cottages, which were constructed to the standard two-room design for the type, also had verandahs on all four sides instead of just to the front and rear. The cottages were numbered Departmental Property (DP) 445, 446, 447 and 448 (not extant), from south to north on the Walsh Street frontage of the railway station reserve.<sup>23</sup> They were occupied by the workers who maintained the rail track, or permanent way. The men were known as fettlers, platelayers, or permanent way (per way) men, and later as trackmen.

In February 1899, Station Master C. Barlow, goods clerk Moore, parcels clerk M. Duffy and head porter R. Kantah arrived, as the first Government staff to be stationed at Menzies.<sup>24</sup> As the railhead for the district, Menzies became the forwarding point for the North Coolgardie and Mount Margaret goldfields and places such as Lawlers and Lake Darlot in the East Murchison field.<sup>25</sup>

The average quantity of goods and material sent out from Menzies each week is about 300 tons, including mining machinery and timber, as well as produce of all descriptions. To move this quantity requires some 230 horse and 70 camels, but the number of animals maintained for the trade is much larger than this.... The forwarding trade gives employment to 120 men and furnishes a weekly wage fund of £500. In addition, 20 men are employed in handling goods at the station yard.<sup>26</sup>

The goods shed at Menzies, at 200 ft long by 43 ft 6 inches, had been designed to cater to the large amount of goods passing through the station yard.<sup>27</sup> The town of Menzies grew rapidly to include ten hotels, three banks, four churches, a police station, post and telegraph office employing 25 staff, 40-bed hospital, a school for 200 children and a Mechanic's Institute.<sup>28</sup> As well as mining, the surrounding district supported a pastoral industry, which had begun with the droving of cattle from the North West and South Australia to provide meat for the goldfields population.<sup>29</sup>

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20 *West Australian*, 8 & 10 June 1896, p. 5.

21 PWD Plan EEL 6372/3, 'Menzies Passenger Station House: shewing conversion of clerks' office and parcels room into refreshment room', 1903, SROWA, ACC 1781 CCE 6372.

22 PWD Plan 4735, Standard Drawing: Station Master's House (2nd class), wood. No files relating to the Station Master's House, Menzies have been located in PTA archives or SROWA.

23 WAGR, Menzies Progress Plan 124B, SROWA ACC 1642 /124B, 1899-1905. Numbering corresponds with present day 2 Walsh Street (445), 4 Walsh Street (446) and 6 Walsh Street (447)

24 *Menzies Miner*, 26 November 1898, p. 4 & 18 February 1899, p. 10, from Ian Elliot's research, op cit.

25 *The North Coolgardie Herald*, Special Mining Number, 24 April 1901, p. 9.

26 *The North Coolgardie Herald*, Special Mining Number, op cit.

27 WAGR, Menzies Progress Plan 124B, SROWA ACC 1642 /124B, 1899-1905.

28 Rodgers, P. & B., op cit, pp. 1-10.

29 Webb, Martyn & Audrey, op cit, pp. 780-781.

In February 1901, the Public Works Department began construction of the line from Menzies to Malcolm and Leonora. The new section of line was taken over by the Railways Department on 12 January 1903.<sup>30</sup> The importance of Menzies as a railhead and forwarding point ceased, but the place was given a new function as a refreshment stop. The clerks' office and parcels room in the Station Building were converted to refreshment rooms. The alterations were internal, with kitchen fittings and a stove installed in the clerk's office and removal of the shelving in the parcels room to make space for tables and chairs. The refreshment rooms were operating as licensed premises in 1925, but whether a licence had been issued when the place was first opened is not known.<sup>31</sup>

Menzies also ceased to provide facilities for trainmen when the Leonora line opened, the men instead ending their shift at Leonora or Malcolm. The trainmen had been occupying Platelayer's Cottage DP 448, which they vacated on 23 February 1903.<sup>32</sup> Gold production, and railway activity in the goldfields, began to decline from 1903 but Menzies remained a viable township as the administrative centre of the district and a service centre for the pastoral industry. At Leonora, the ongoing success of the Sons of Gwalia mine meant that trains continued to run a daily schedule through Menzies.

The Platelayer's Cottages required additions to make them habitable by the families of the per way men. Requests were made for verandah flooring and enclosures at the rear for kitchens, bathrooms and extra bedrooms. The enclosures were generally sleeper floored, timber framed and iron clad structures, but hessian was also used for the walls when the Railways Department could not supply other building materials. In 1903, a spark from the stove ignited the hessian walls of the kitchen at DP 447, destroying the room and causing some damage to the verandah posts and rafters.<sup>33</sup>

In 1904, Per Way Inspector Tom Brown, his wife and three children moved into DP 448. Mrs Brown was ill and the family required 'live-in help', so Brown requested the addition of two rooms. The Resident Engineer reported to the Chief Engineer that Brown's 'position requires that he should live differently from his men, and early advice of leave to build additions to his house would be esteemed a favour.' The Commissioner did not agree, so the Chief Engineer had some old sleepers and timber provided to 'knock up a room'. In 1911, during ganger J. Templeman's tenancy, the prefabricated goods shed office, which had not been installed in the goods shed, was erected as an extra room. The additional rental charge of sixpence a week was considered a good return on the structure.<sup>34</sup>

For the most part, the tenants of the Platelayer's Cottages were members of the Menzies per way gang, but when not required for their occupation the places were let to other railway employees, such as a porter or locomotive depot worker or, occasionally, to a private tenant. There was a generally rapid turnover of tenants in most of the cottages, with few remaining in residence for more than a year or two.

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30 Gunzberg, A. & Austin, J. op cit, pp. 207.

31 PWD Plan EEL 6372/3, 'Menzies Passenger Station House', op cit; WAGR file, Menzies refreshment rooms, 1933-1973, SROWA, ACC 1240 Item R4574/38.

32 Railways Department property file for DP 448, 1903-1979, PTA Archives.

33 Railways Department property file for DP 447, 1903-1957, PTA Archives.

34 Railways Department property file for DP 448, op cit.

The turnover of station masters was only a little less rapid. Station master C. Barlow had been transferred to Kalgoorlie in 1899, less than a year after arriving. He was followed by F. Tracey (1899-1901), G. A. La Roche (1901-1907), P. L. Ross (1908), A. Seabourne (1910-1912), W. Walmsley (1914-1916), James A. Goldthorpe (1917-1922), James A. Scanlan (1923-1925), J. Horn (1927), and E. O'Callaghan (1928-1930).<sup>35</sup> Additions to the Station Master's House over the years comprised a bathroom and sleepout within the verandah.<sup>36</sup>

In 1925, the 25,000 gallon water tank and stand was relocated from the loco depot on the south side of Crusoe Street to the north end of the station yard, and the following year half the goods shed was removed. In the 1930s, there was renewed activity in the goldfields due to men trying their luck during the Depression and a bounty provided by the Commonwealth Government to encourage gold production. A trainmen's barracks was provided at Menzies in 1935. The barracks were made up of a depot relocated from Kookynie and two permanent way camps moved from Gunga. The structures were located at the far north end of the station yard.<sup>37</sup>

In the early 1930s, the licensee of the refreshment rooms was W. Collier, who was also licensee of the Railway Hotel, the only hotel still operating in Menzies at that time. The refreshment rooms were only open thirty minutes before and after a train stop. In 1933, the licensee of the refreshment rooms was F. G. Murphy, who traded after opening hours and was fined on several occasions for 'sly grog sales'. His lease was terminated in 1935.<sup>38</sup> The next lessee, Gordon Hack, was the owner of the Savoy Hotel in Perth and licensee of the Menzies Railway Hotel. He installed a refrigeration plant and renovated and painted the refreshment rooms. At Hacks instigation, electric light was installed at the station and all the railway dwellings. Power was provided from the Menzies Lighting Plant, which Hack also owned. Mrs J. M. Weaver took over the refreshment rooms in 1940, and she was followed by Mrs Kathleen Butcher in 1945.<sup>39</sup> Mrs Butcher lived in the Station Building.<sup>40</sup>

From at least 1937 for a period of ten years or so there was no station master at Menzies, only a caretaker (name unknown). In 1947, Menzies was declared a booking station and the station master at Malcolm, G. Morey, was transferred to Menzies in May that year, despite protests from the residents of Malcolm.<sup>41</sup>

The trainmen's barracks were unused by the mid 1940s and in 1947, the kitchen was moved to Salmon Gums and the accommodation block was relocated to Yellowdine.<sup>42</sup> In 1949, a diesel electric rail car was introduced on the Eastern Goldfields line, resulting in altered working of the line, and trainmen's barracks were again required at Menzies. This time, the trainmen were housed in the Station Building. The refreshment rooms were rearranged and renovated, the lamp room (not extant) was altered to provide ablution facilities, and the ladies waiting room was converted to a liquor store. The work was completed in May

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35 *Wise's Post Office Directory*, 1899-1940.

36 Physical evidence.

37 WAGR file, Menzies trainmen's barracks, SROWA, AN262/1 ACC 1240 Item R2702/38.

38 WAGR file, Menzies refreshment rooms, 1933-1973, SROWA, ACC 1240 Item R4574/38.

39 WAGR file, Menzies refreshment rooms, Item R4574/38, op cit.

40 WAGR file, Departmental houses, 1940-1980, SROWA CONS 4771 WAS 1208 Item R6964.

41 WAGR file, Menzies opening as a booking office, SROWA AN262/3 ACC 1240 Item 19323/47.

42 WAGR file, Menzies trainmen's barracks, Item R2702/38, op cit.

1950. In 1955, a spare room was excised from the refreshment room lease to provide additional barracks accommodation and the lessee's rent was reduced accordingly.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1950s, Greek and Italian migrants were employed as trackmen at Menzies. The maintenance gangs in the goldfields also included a considerable number of Aboriginal men, particularly after World War Two.<sup>44</sup>

The station master was withdrawn from Menzies on 30 August 1964 and the service on the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line was reduced to one train each way weekly. The service was known as the 'Leonora Goods with coach attached' which was a goods train with passenger coach. Because the station and railway houses were isolated from the town, the Railways Department employed a caretaker, believing their presence would minimise the incidence of vandalism. Mrs. Kathleen Butcher, licensee of the refreshment rooms, was employed as siding caretaker from 9 October 1965, at a remuneration of \$8 a fortnight. The liquor licence was discontinued at the refreshment rooms around this time, and Mrs Butcher moved into the vacant Station Master's House. She continued to meet all trains and provide sandwiches and scones for travellers, but with the reduction of train services, the refreshment room trade was significantly reduced and in recognition of her long service, the Railways Department reduced Mrs Butcher's rent of the refreshment rooms to \$5 a year.<sup>45</sup>

In 1968, work was completed on the new standard gauge track between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle to conform to the standard gauge Trans-Continental line. Discovery of nickel deposits in the northern goldfields districts made it necessary to also convert the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line to standard gauge. In July 1973, the narrow gauge line was closed to allow for the reconstruction. Most of the stations along the route were closed, with only four stations - Bardoc, Menzies, Kookynie and Malcolm - forming part of the new line. The official opening of the Kalgoorlie-Leonora standard gauge line took place on the weekend of the 13-16 September 1974.<sup>46</sup> The refreshment rooms at Menzies closed with the closure of the narrow gauge line and did not re-open. Kathleen Butcher was still acting as siding caretaker and residing at the Station Master's House in 1975.<sup>47</sup>

Aboriginal employees made up most of the Menzies per way gang in the 1970s. In 1971, DP 445 was tenanted by Repairer Donaldson (5 occupants); DP 446 by Repairer Flynn (3 occupants); DP 447 by Repairer Lynch (5 occupants) and DP 448 by Ganger Lynch (11 occupants).<sup>48</sup>

In 1972 Western Australian Government Railways undertook a housing review to ascertain existing railway housing conditions and future requirements. The Station Master's House was listed for retention and upgrading, but the four Platelayer's Cottages were to be replaced with transportable housing, which was

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43 WAGR file, Menzies refreshment rooms, Item R4574/38, op cit & ACC 4774 Item CE 05280.

44 Railways Department property files for DP 445-448, PTA Archives.

45 WAGR file, Departmental houses, Item R6964, op cit & ACC 4774 Item CE 05280.

46 Whiteford, David, 'The demise of the narrow gauge in the Eastern Goldfields (WA)', in The Australian Railway Historical Society, Bulletin no. 455, September 1975, pp. 213-217.

47 Correspondence, 18 July 1975, WAGR file, Departmental houses, Item R6964, op cit.

48 WAGR file, Departmental houses, Item R6964, op cit.

to be located in the township.<sup>49</sup> The cottages were generally considered to be in poor condition and lacking facilities and were under threat of demolition. The Railways Department estimated that it would cost \$4,720 to bring DP 446 - which was typical - to a 'reasonably liveable standard' and were not prepared to undertake the cost. The Shire of Menzies wanted the cottages retained for historical reasons, and expressed their opposition to demolition in a letter to the Minister for Transport on 10 March 1975.<sup>50</sup> In July 1975, the Menzies Cultural Group (now Menzies Aboriginal Corporation) enquired as to the possibility of obtaining the cottages for Aboriginal housing.<sup>51</sup> DP 445, 446 and 447 were purchased by the Menzies Cultural Society with lease of railway reserve land, while DP 448 remained tenanted by a trackman.<sup>52</sup>

On 26 August 1979, DP 448 was gutted by fire. Eight-year-old Eugene Sullivan died in the blaze and five other people were injured. Police investigated the cause of the fire but the result of their investigation was not recorded in the Railways Department property file for the cottage. The remains of the building were removed from the railway reserve.<sup>53</sup>

A staff of three was required for the per way gang, but better housing was needed. One transportable house was available in the town and it was considered that the Station Master's House could be upgraded for another trackman's residence. Attracting staff to the area, however, was proving difficult and in 1980, the Menzies permanent way gang was disbanded 'due to the inability to acquire staff for this location'.<sup>54</sup> The position of siding caretaker was discontinued and the Station Master's House were leased by the Menzies Cultural Society for the use of local families.

In March 1980, the Shire of Menzies leased the Station Building on a ten year lease at peppercorn rental. The Railways Department acknowledged that the 'historical significance of the stone building to your district is appreciated'. The Shire fenced the platform side of the site, installed gates at the entrance and boarded the windows to prevent vandalism, intending to restore the building. By 1988, no work on the place had been undertaken. Julia Mines N.L. (now Julia Corporation Limited) requested to sublease the building for use as an exploration and mine office for the Company's exploration programme in the district, which was instigated to provide gold ore for their treatment plant located at Goongarrie. A lease was approved and Julia Mines N.L. undertook restoration of the building, the work comprising repairing floorboards, replacing windows and doors where necessary, painting the interior, and re-connecting water and electricity services.<sup>55</sup>

The various elements of *Menzies Railway Station Group* were entered on the Shire of Menzies Municipal Heritage Inventory in 1996.<sup>56</sup> Title to the Platelayer's

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49 WAGR, *1972 Housing Review: Report on future housing requirements*, bound typescript, Appendix 5; Correspondence, 18 July 1975, WAGR file, Departmental houses, Item R6964, op cit.

50 Correspondence, Shire of Menzies to R. J. O'Connor, Minister for Transport, 10 March 1975, WAGR file, Departmental houses, SROWA, Item R6964, op cit.

51 Correspondence 2 May & 10 July 1975, WAGR file, Departmental houses, Item R6964, op cit.

52 Correspondence, 18 July 1978, Railways Department property file for DP 446, op cit.

53 Railways Department property file for DP 448, op cit.

54 Correspondence, 18 July 1978 & 19 March 1980, Railways Department property file for DP 446, op cit.

55 PTA file, Lease 3571, Menzies Station Building.

56 Ball, Julia & Aris, Kelly, *Shire of Menzies [Municipal Heritage Inventory, 1996](#)*, Entries 14-18.

Cottages was transferred to the Menzies Aboriginal Corporation in September 2000.<sup>57</sup> In 2003, the cottages were re-roofed and restored.<sup>58</sup>

In 2004, the Menzies Aboriginal Corporation owns the three Platelayer's Cottages and leases the Station Master's House. Julia Corporation Limited continues to lease the Station Building and occupy it as their regional office.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Menzies Railway Station Group* comprises; Station Building and platform, Station Master's House, and three Platelayer's Cottages. There is no evidence of any other elements of the original railway presence in Menzies. Walsh Street is a formed gravel road that terminates at the Platelayer's Cottage at no. 2 Walsh Street. There is no evidence of formed roads in the vicinity of *Menzies Railway Station Group*.

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is located in the railway reserve within the Menzies townsite, parallel to the railway line on the south east side, and Walsh Street, on the north west side. Within the reserve, the Station Master's House is at the north east end of the group facing Walsh Street and backing onto the railway line, with the Station Building set back from Walsh Street, 100 metres to the south west. A further 100 metres to the south west are three of the four original Platelayer's Cottages, also facing Walsh Street, and aligned on a residential setback as for the Station Master's House.

*Menzies Railway Station Group* makes a significant contribution to the Menzies townscape and character, and is visible on entry into Menzies from the south, contributing to landmark element of the place.

#### Railway Station Building

The Station Building is a single storey structure in an elevated position, sloping up from Walsh Street, with a bitumen platform along the southeast (railway line) side. The rectangular plan form comprises two separate buildings connected under the one main roof, with an open arched 'luggage entrance' between the two built sections providing access between the street frontage and the platform. The Station Building aligns parallel with the railway line on a north-east south-west alignment. There is a 2.0 metre high chain link fence along the platform edge and extending around the entire site, with double gates central on the Walsh Street entry. The Walsh Street frontage is truncated each side, and the entire forecourt is bitumen. There are peppercorn trees on the site and some intrusive elements associated with the mining company operations, including a caravan, and fuel tank and stand.

The Station Building, constructed in the Federation Arts and Crafts style, is a face stone building with a hipped gambrel roof clad with painted corrugated iron. The roof extends as a skillion, at break pitch, along the entire railway platform, supported by bracketed square timber posts. At the Walsh Street frontage there is a verandah centred over the platform entry access, and flanked by gable end features. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes with mesh security panels fitted on the exteriors of most windows. There are numerous door entries, both single and double, with original panelled doors in most openings and clear glass double-paned fanlights above, all on the platform side of the building.

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<sup>57</sup> Certificates of Title for 2, 4 & 6 Walsh Street, Register numbers 1105, 1106 & 1107 on DP 193938.

<sup>58</sup> Information provided to Laura Gray during site inspection in June.

The double entry into the waiting room, the luggage entrance and 'counter' openings all have arched headers. The counter openings feature a set of three arched double hung sash windows and a bracketed timber ledge, with diagonal timber infill panel below. The entrance gates of the luggage entrance are on site, but not fixed in situ. The interior of the building was inaccessible, however inspection through the windows revealed that the floors are timber, and walls and ceilings plaster, with original skirtings and architraves in situ. It was not possible to determine if the ceilings were lathe and plaster, although it is likely. The cast iron 'black' stove is in situ in the kitchen, with simple bracketed mantle above, and timber shelving is still evident in the luggage room and refreshment rooms.

#### Station Master's House

Approximately 100 metres north-east up the railway line from the Station Building is the Station Master's House. The site is fully fenced with colourbond fencing, with a vehicular gate access on the south end of the Walsh Street frontage. The Station Master's House is central within the fenced site, on level ground, with no plantings. A recently built workers accommodation hut is located on the north east corner of the site. There are no other outbuildings.

The dwelling displays some characteristics of Federation Bungalow style, although primarily the design is functional and purpose designed for the Station Master.

The Station Master's House is a face stone building with a hipped corrugated iron roof that has been painted. A skylight has been fitted into the kitchen roof. The square form stone building has a surrounding concrete verandah under the main roof. The building comprises four main rooms with a central corridor and two rooms each side. On the east corner, a fifth room is the kitchen that extends under the verandah roof. A timber framed, weatherboard clad bathroom enclosure under the main roof on the south corner was removed in 2002, leaving some evidence on the stone walls and the removal of the concrete verandah floor in that vicinity. The front of the building is symmetrical with a central front door flanked by a window each side. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes throughout. The front door opens in a wide central corridor with a high coved ripple iron ceiling. The ceilings throughout are coved around the exterior perimeter. The ceilings are lathe and plaster except the corridor. The floors throughout are 0.125 metre tongue and groove jarrah boards. The walls are hard plaster, and original skirtings and architraves remain in situ. The rooms on the north-east side (left of entry) were inaccessible. The Metters stove is still in situ in the kitchen, with simple bracketed mantle above. A basic kitchen fitout and shelves remain.

#### Platelayer's Cottages

Approximately 100 metres south-west down the railway line from the Station Building are three Platelayers Cottages. Aligned side by side fronting Walsh Street, and backing the railway line, they are numbered 2, 4 & 6 Walsh Street, from south to north. There is no evidence of the fourth cottage, which would have been on the north side of no. 6. Only no. 6 was accessible into the 2 main rooms, no. 4 was occupied and the site inaccessible, and no. 2 vacant but inaccessible at the time of the inspection. The kitchens were all inaccessible, but those at no. 2 & no. 6 were viewed through the windows. Each of the three sites are fully fenced with colourbond fencing, with vehicular gate access at the Walsh Street frontage. Each cottage is central within the fenced site, on level ground, with

minimal plantings, and various ablution outbuildings at the rear of each cottage. The three cottages are the same design and construction, basically a two roomed stone building with surrounding verandah and a fireplace in one room. No. 2 & no. 6 have the chimney on the south-west side, while no. 4 is a mirror image, with a chimney on the north-east side.

The dwellings displays some characteristics of Federation Bungalow style, although primarily the design is functional.

Each Platelayers Cottage is a face stone building with hipped corrugated iron roofs that have recently (2003) been painted. The rectangular stone buildings have surrounding concrete verandahs under the main roofs with various verandah enclosures clad with corrugated iron, although each kitchen extension at the rear is similar in form and layout. Each cottage comprises two connected main rooms with front and rear access in the larger of the two rooms, that also has the fireplace. Each cottage has a rear kitchen extension, beyond the verandah roof, and a bathroom enclosure under the main roof, all timber framed and clad with vertical sheets of corrugated iron. The front of the cottages are symmetrical with a central front door flanked by a window each side. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes throughout. Most doors are replacement flush panel doors, although the bathrooms still have ledge and brace doors. The main ceilings throughout are flat and consist of battened asbestos, and the bathroom and kitchens are similarly lined, but on the rake. The walls are roughly sand rendered, and the floors are concrete. The fireplace has a flat arched opening and basic bracketed mantle fixed on the rectangular form chimney breast. Each of the kitchens features a flat tin lined chimney, Metters stove and basic cupboard sink fitout.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

Menzies Station Building was a special design but is similar in style to other station buildings constructed on the goldfields lines. The Platelayer's Cottages and the Class 2 Station Master's House were standard designs of the 1890s, with some minor variations. Both types were built with surrounding verandahs instead of just the front and rear verandahs. This appears to have been a concession to the hot, dry goldfields climate. The station master's house at Lenora (c.1903), which is a timber construction, was also built with surrounding verandahs.

The Menzies Station Master's House has a kitchen under the main roof, on a corner of the verandah, which was part of the original stone construction. All the station master's houses on the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line appear to have been built to this design, as evidenced by the Goongarrie station master's house.<sup>59</sup> The stone kitchen was not part of the Class 2 station master's houses built in the 1890s prior to 1898. In the Class 2 Kalgoorlie station master's house (1897) and Narngulu station master's house (1896), the kitchen originally occupied the fourth main room. A separate iron-clad kitchen addition was later constructed off the rear verandah at Kalgoorlie. Narngulu station master's house is part of a current assessment and alterations to that place have not yet been addressed.

On the Eastern Goldfield line between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, the specifications called for 12 cottages at five stations. Construction material for these was not stipulated, but most were built of stone. At Coolgardie and

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<sup>59</sup> [HCWA assessment documentation, \*Three railway cottages, Goongarrie, Place 15411\*.](#)

Kalgoorlie, two stone cottages were built at each station.<sup>60</sup> The two cottages at Coolgardie are extant on Woodward Street, in the former railway reserve. They are classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) and entered on the Register of the National Estate. One of the two platelayer's cottages remains at Kalgoorlie in the railway reserve fronting Forrest Street. It is associated with the station master's house, built to the earlier Class 2 design. The Kalgoorlie station master's house has been extensively altered for use as single-men's barracks and is currently unused. The house and cottage are part of the Kalgoorlie Railway Station Group, a registered place which also includes the stone station building in Federation Arts & Crafts style (larger than the station building at Menzies), parcels office and Railway Institute building.

On the Kalgoorlie-Menzies line, twenty-nine stone platelayer's cottages and four Class 2 station master's houses were constructed.<sup>61</sup> Two cottages and station master's house remain at Goongarrie and although they are in fair condition, most of the fixtures have been removed. The three residences are entered on the State Register of Heritage Places.<sup>62</sup> A station master's house and one cottage remain at Broad Arrow, and a station master's house and platelayer's cottage have been relocated from Bardoc to Mt Vetter's station homestead. They are all entered on the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Municipal Heritage Inventory. The station master's house at Leonora was a timber construction. None of the station buildings remain between Kalgoorlie and Menzies.

Fifteen timber cottages were specified for the Donnybrook-Bridgetown line, constructed between 1896 and 1898.<sup>63</sup> Platelayer's cottages on the agricultural lines, constructed between 1900 and the 1930s, were of timber and iron construction for ease of relocation.<sup>64</sup> There are two brick platelayer's cottages located at Bencubbin, in the Mount Marshall Shire, on the Wyalkatchem-Southern Cross loop line and one at Spencer's Brook. All were built between 1914 and 1917.<sup>65</sup> The Platelayer's Cottage, Spencer's Brook has been assessed as below threshold for the State Register.

On the former Mullewa Murchison line, there were thirty-one stone platelayer's cottages constructed.<sup>66</sup> At least two cottages are extant at Mount Magnet but are in poor condition. A number of the station master's houses on the line were Class 5 (or 5th Class), while those at major stations were Class 2. The Yalgoo station building and Class 2 station master's house, built in stone, remain in good condition, with a barracks, square tank on a stone tank stand and a dam. The Yalgoo Railway Station Group is entered on the State Register. The stone station buildings at Mt Magnet and Day Dawn have been demolished, and those at Mullewa and Cue are in poor condition.<sup>67</sup>

A comprehensive collection of stone railway residences is located on the 1886 Geraldton-Walkaway line, which comprises four remaining five-room stone cottages, of the original five built along the eighteen-mile line for the occupation of

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60 PWD, 'Western Australian Specification Book 2A' op cit.

61 PWD, 'Western Australian Specification Book 2A', op cit.

62 HCWA assessment documentation, *Three railway cottages, Goongarrie*, Place 15411.

63 PWD, 'Western Australian Specification Book 2A', op cit.

64 HCWA assessment documentation, *Station Master's House, Wyalkatchem*, Place 15748.

65 HCWA assessment documentation, *Platelayer's Cottage, Spencer's Brook*, Place 16633.

66 PWD, 'Western Australian Specification Book 2A', op cit.

67 HCWA assessment documentation, *Yalgoo Railway Station Group*, Place 2778.

gatekeepers, the Walkaway station building with station master's residence included, and the Class 2 station master's residence at Narngulu built in 1896 at the junction of the Mullewa line.

*Menzies Railway Station Group* is a representative and rare remaining example of a group comprising station building and residences constructed on the goldfields lines in the 1890s.

#### **13.4 KEY REFERENCES**

WAGR files relating to the Menzies railway station, State Record Office of WA.

PTA files for Menzies railway properties, PTA office, East Perth Railway Terminal, West Pde, East Perth.

#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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