The original workshops at Rockhampton were established in the late 1870s at the railway reserve area bounded by Denison, South, Campbell and Stanley Street. With a change of location in the early years of the 20th century, further development took place in the mid to late 1910s as part of a redevelopment of the entire railway infrastructure in Rockhampton. With many modifications and adaptations over time, the railway workshops continue to function as an operational railway workshop maintaining and repairing railway rolling stock.

The roundhouse was a purpose-built building, designed for the storage, servicing, and running maintenance of steam locomotives allocated to the Central Division based on Rockhampton. The building is significant as the only full circle roundhouse ever constructed in Queensland for the use of steam locomotives, and as one of the last surviving examples of such a building in Australia.

The railway workshops continue to function as an operational railway workshop maintaining and repairing railway rolling stock. Buildings are used for the repair of wagons, for the modification of wagons and locomotives and for general running maintenance.