

City of Adelaide Heritage Survey (2008)

NAME: *Child Care Centre, 102-106 Gilbert Street*

ZONE/POLICY AREA: *RA8*

APPROVED / CURRENT USE: Child Care Centre / Child Care Centre

FORMER USE: Tradeschool

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: 1918

LOCATION: 102-106 Gilbert Street

ADELAIDE SA 5000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Adelaide City Council

LAND DESCRIPTION: CT-5805/70 CT 5085/641

HERITAGE STATUS: Local Heritage Place

OTHER ASSESSMENTS Nil



Child Care Centre, 102-106 Gilbert Street — View to northeast

DESCRIPTION:

The complex of buildings at this child care centre are of brick. The former Adelaide Woodwork School building to the south of the complex faces Gilbert Street, where the south wall has a high skirting, and its corner piers are of alternating brick and rendered courses with rectangular rendered capitals. The building has an industrial sawtooth roof that admits southern light. There is *faux* rendered balustrading either side of the central wall panel that carries the raised name of the school, a crown, and 'G' (George [V]) and 'R' (Rex). The two timber frame double-sash front windows have a small three-paned fixed panel at their top. The north-western corner at the rear of the building has capitals that rise from the wall. To the west of the former Woodwork School building is an open play and activities area.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

This is essentially an industrial building with typical architectural features and is not one of particular architectural merit. However, it is one of considerable historical value because of its identification with the Adelaide Woodwork School, and by implication its association with the development of technical education in South Australia. Its new use as a child care centre also reflects features of modern society and the development of such centres. It illustrates key themes in the city's history: *5.2.1 Creating State Government Institutions and Facilities; 5.4 Government Employment and the Public Service; 7.1.2 Pre-schools and Kindergartens; 7.2 Technical Training and Further Education.*

RELEVANT CRITERIA (Under Section 23(4) of the *Development Act 1993*):

This building is recommended for Local Heritage listing because it meets the following criteria:

- (a) it displays historical, economical or social themes that are of importance to the local area in being established for technical education purposes; and
 - (d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area, in being an industrial factory-type building; and
 - (e) it is associated with a notable personality in Charles Albert Fenner.
-

ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Inclusions

- External form and scale of the original building, including exterior walls and roof;
- Fabric and detailing of the façade.

Exclusions

- Interior detailing
 - New services
-

NOTE: The 'Description of Place and Elements of Heritage Value' listed in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan for this property are as follows:

Former Adelaide Woodwork School

External form, including original fabric and detailing of original building. Excludes later additions.

This is the legally recognised listing and should be used for the purposes of development application assessment.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Charles Albert Edward Fenner (1884–1955) (B.Sc, Hons I, 1912, Dip.Ed, 1913, University of Melbourne), became superintendent of technical education in South Australia from 5 November 1916. He supported the teaching of technical subjects in high schools and liberal subjects in technical schools. He helped draft the 1917 Technical Education of Apprentices Act which, with its concept of compulsory, part-time, technical study for apprentices, set a precedent for other States. Fenner was a figure of his time in stressing the views of education for citizenship, and technical education as a means of providing skilled labour to develop South Australia's industrial base.

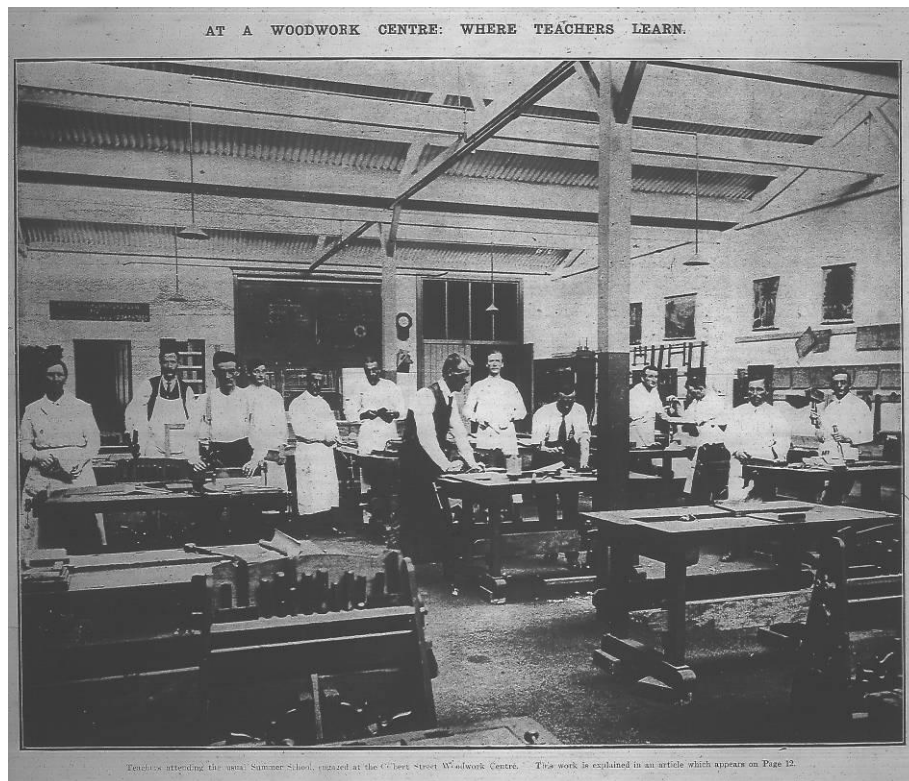
The *Technical Education of Apprentices Act, 1917* (No. 1294) made it a duty of apprentices to attend technical schools. The registration of apprentices was begun in 1918. From the beginning of 1922, there were three district schools: the Printers' Trade School, Adelaide, the Ironworkers' Trade School, Thebarton, and the Woodworkers' Trade School, Thebarton, with a branch at Edwardstown.

Following passage of the Technical Education of Apprentices Act, male teachers were asked to apply for the position of teachers of manual training (woodwork) in metropolitan centres. As a result of this call, six teachers assembled at Cowandilla School on Monday, 19 March 1917. By the end of the year six teachers had been trained and were ready to take over schools that had been prepared during the year. Those schools were situated at Norwood, Adelaide, Glanville, Prospect and Port Adelaide.

The Adelaide Woodwork School opened in Gilbert Street in 1918. The building—constructed by F Fricker—was described as:

... of brick, with a large workshop 56ft. x 30ft., timber store, offices, cloak porch. This building has been completed and is in accommodation [1918] also giving every satisfaction, and has a neat elevation fronting Gilbert St, the whole of which was done by contract for £1,189.

The school was fitted-out for about 30 student boys and girls, aged 14 to 18 years, for their technical instruction. This was one of six intended metropolitan technical-manual instruction centres that were to follow the discipline of woodworking within the then 50-year old Swedish Sloyd system of training in manual dexterity. The Gilbert Street school held regular two-week long Summer schools over January for South Australian teachers.



'Teachers attending the usual Summer School, engaged at the Gilbert Street Woodwork Centre',
Observer, 24 January 1920, p. 26.

A photograph of 1920, 'Models from a three years' course', shows the kinds of work produced: an inlaid chess board, kitchen cutting boards, foldable hat peg and coat racks, a shirt ironing 'anvil', butter boxes, fret-work wall organisers, a wooden carving knife (probably a model for the ironmonger), scoops, a mason's hammer, axe handle, picture frames, roller towel mount, and salt box.

Adelaide Woodwork Centre, although not a technical or central school, played an important role in the development of technical education in South Australia. In addition to instructing primary school boys, the Adelaide Woodwork School instructed all college students training to become woodwork teachers. From 1923, all men from the Teachers College were required to spend half a day at the centre. This continued to the war years, or perhaps the 1950s, when the number of students training to become craft teachers demanded new accommodation. Woodwork I and II became subjects which could be used by primary teachers for classification.

To cope with their requirements, Saturday morning classes were instituted and also classes were made available during Christmas vacations. The Saturday morning class extended beyond its original intention and developed, for some, into a hobby class. Many women attended these classes. A photograph in the early 1920s shows nine women in a class.

Legislation recognised the current nature of trade training by changing the name Trade Schools to Technical Colleges from the beginning of 1967. From 1 January 1972 the Division of Technical Education became in practice a new Department of Further Education.

With the establishment of Western Teachers College, Adelaide continued to train the craft teachers. With increased numbers and the extension of the course to three years the centre was wholly given over to teacher training and eventually the staff was appointed as lecturers. When, in 1976, Western Teachers College extended to a property on Holbrooks Road, it

incorporated special accommodation for home economics, art and technology and industrial arts in its plans. This meant that the Adelaide Woodwork Centre was no longer required for the training of teachers. It was decided to close the school.

The school building has since become a child-minding centre but the old name "Adelaide Woodwork School" still remains on the front of the building.

Fencing was undertaken in 1918; and repairs were carried out to the roof in February and September 1922. A northern 'wing' (extension), and installation of windows on the western external wall were built c. 1985-1987, and steel pergolas were erected in 1992.

REFERENCES:

Adelaide City Council, Department of Building Surveying, File No. DF 3485:01, 102–106 Gilbert Street, Adelaide City Archives.

Advertiser, 23.3.1917, p. 11c—'Woodwork in Schools'.

Observer, 24.1.1920, pp. 12e—'Where Teachers Learn'.

Observer, p. 26 (photograph), also found in PRG 280/1/19/167, State Library of South Australia.

Peake, Jack, 'The System and the Treatment of Technical Teachers 1880s-1976', <<http://www.lythrupress.com.au/vision/049.html>>.

Register, 22.3.1917, p. 6e—'Woodwork in Public Schools'.

Register, 22.1.1920, p. 7g—'Where Teachers Learn. At a Woodwork Centre'.

South Australian Parliamentary Papers (*SAPP*) 29/198, p. 83 includes the description of the school; *SAPP* 29/1917, p. 83; *SAPP* 44/1919, p. 29, includes details concerning the registration of apprentices in 1918; *SAPP* 44/1923, p. 33, includes details concerning the trade schools; *SAPP* 44/1967, p. 20, notes the change of name of the Trade School.

State Records of South Australia, Department of Education, GRG 18, online, <http://www.archives.sa.gov.au> including details of Department of Further Education.

State Records of South Australia, Department of Public Buildings, GRG 38/16, Vol. 2, No. 122.

Trethewey, Lynne, 'Fenner, Charles Albert Edward (1884-1955)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 8, [Melbourne University Press](http://www.melbourneuniversitypress.com.au), 1981, pp. 481–482 (online).