

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRE (Former Model School)

121-139 Grote Street

The annual report of the Education Board in 1873 stated that 'the primary object of these [model] schools, as their name implies, is to furnish a standard of method and organisation for the public schools generally.'

The new educational philosophy was reflected in the construction of the Model School in 1873-4 and the Training School in 1875-6. In 1859 part of Town Acre 329 was purchased to build a model school but funds could not be provided. In 1872 the Education Board suggested that the wants of the colony would be better met by model schools rather than a teacher training institution. This board believed that a greater benefit would accrue from a structure which ' . . . should be a pattern for every public school in the colony'.

A design competition was held in 1872 which was won by Edward John Woods. The school was designed for utility rather than as an imposing exterior, the *South Australian Register* commenting that it was extremely plain, presenting a ' . . . solid though not heavy appearance'.

The style was 'Gothic' with gables and gablets. Of only one floor, its principal frontage is to Grote Street. It was built of bluestone masonry with brick quoins. The builders were T. Martin and Son who carried out the work in 1873-74.

The school was divided internally into three sections to accommodate separately boys, girls and infants. The principal schoolrooms - those for boys and girls - were 70 feet by 24 feet and the infant classroom was 40 feet by 20 feet. Between the two large schoolrooms was an arcade paved with slate. This was intended to keep the classrooms cool and to provide a sheltered walk. A turret in the centre of the roof contained a bronze bell with a sonorous tone. Because there was increasing concern for public health much attention was paid to ventilation, which was reported as ' . . . very complete. Shafts for the exit of impure air pass from the ceiling up through the roof, while a good supply of fresh air is admitted by apertures below the wall plate.'

The school could accommodate 600 pupils. Boys were housed in the western wing and girls in the eastern wing. The school was enclosed by a substantial stone wall with brick coping and piers.

Minor alterations were made in 1892 and 1908 when the two main classrooms were divided into three smaller classrooms, and new classrooms were added to each wing at the rear. By 1908 when it had become Adelaide High School, the number of classrooms had been increased from five to thirteen.

Despite the replacement of the tall narrow double windows on the eastern and western walls, the Model School is a fine example of an early school built by the government of South Australia before 1875. The missing central fleche has recently been reconstructed.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

When the Education Act (compulsory primary school education) was passed in 1875 the president of the newly set up Council of Education, J.A. Hartley, quickly implemented a school building program. He pushed for the appointment of an architect to expedite the design and construction of suitable school buildings. He visited the Victorian Education Department in January 1876 to commission that department's architect to prepare plans and specifications of school buildings suitable for South Australia. He also met Edward Davies, a senior draughtsman with the Victorian Education Department. In 1876, Davies accepted a position under E.J. Woods as senior draughtsman for the Education Department in South Australia. Davies' expertise in school building in Victoria was undoubtedly the crucial factor in the rapid design and construction of government schools from mid-1876.

The former Model School and its neighbour, the former Training School, stand as a record of the earliest attempts to standardise education methods and principles before 1875.

Alongside these two buildings is another historically significant school building, the Advanced School for Girls, the first built by the government for secondary education of girls. These three buildings, each with its own specific function, reflect South Australia's education system before, during, and shortly after the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act. Severe damage by fire in mid-1987 has necessitated major repairs to the building during 1987-88. The three buildings combine historical, architectural and institutional significance and make an important contribution to the streetscape.

ACA, Smith Survey 1880; Burchell, L., *Victorian schools*, 1980; Burgess, H.T., *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. 1, 1909, pp. 404-7; Department of Housing and Construction Plan Room, HD 815-44; Jones, H., 'Pinnacle of the state school system: the Advanced School for Girls, Adelaide', in *Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society, (ANZHES) journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1975, pp. 1-13; MLSA Historical photographs (Town Acres 329-330); Morgan, E.J.R., & Gilbert, S.H., *Early Adelaide architecture 1836 to 1886*, 1969, pp. 56-7; PRO, GRG 24, Records of Colonial Secretary's Office 1873-76, GRG 18, Records of the Education Department, GRG 50, Central Board of Education and Council of Education; SAPP, No. 24, 1873, *Report of Education Board*, pp. 7-8; *South Australian Register*, 26 January 1874, 27 January 1874, 31 January 1874.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.

Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MULTI-
CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRE (Former MODEL SCHOOL)
Address 121-139 Grote Street; 242-260 Morphett Street

Building No
10/2001-1

CT 8/123
CT 172/181

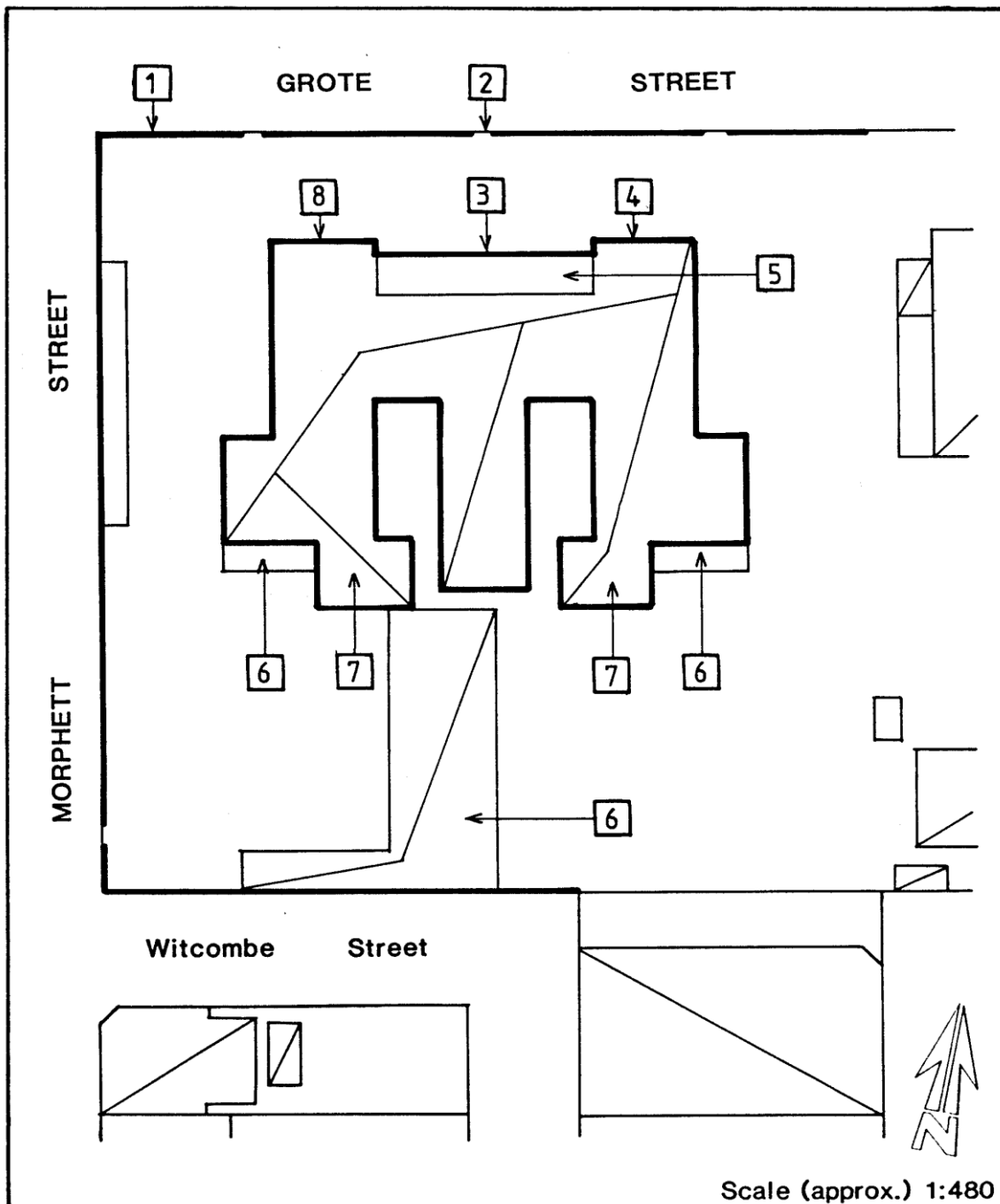


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NOTES:

1. Coursed random bluestone with red brick coping and pillars and polychrome brick string course.
2. Note arched brick entry.
3. Red brick columns, arches and dentils.
4. Note arched windows.
5. Note arched dormer windows extending through verandah.
6. Iron shed.
7. Slate roof.
8. Coursed random squared bluestone finely pointed with red brick quoins and bluestone plinth.