

## BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

164-170 Flinders Street

The Lutheran Church in Australia was founded in South Australia, with its first service being held in 1838 at the old Port (Port Misery). Similar to the Methodists and Baptists it soon suffered from splits and schisms over doctrine, the status of congregations and liturgical requirements. The Lutherans who arrived in the earliest days of the colony were united under Pastor Kavel; however, when Pastor Fritzsche arrived in October 1841 the congregations split over minor doctrinal questions. Eventually the United Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the opposing faction, following Pastor Fritzsche's views. The schisms deepened and by the turn of the century Australian Lutherans were a maze of separations and amalgamations (some for purely geographical reasons). In 1921 all but two synods united.

Finally in 1965 the congregations of the Australian Lutheran Church were formally united.

The congregation of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church was part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and, with St Stephen's Lutheran Church in Wakefield Street, continues to provide for the Lutheran congregations in the city of Adelaide, both having been long connected with prominent members of the German speaking community.

The church is also significant in a wider sense due to its close association with that important immigrant group, the Germans. Their contribution has also been recognised within Adelaide by the heritage listing of the facade of Darlington House (former German Club) and several houses in lower North Adelaide, the site of a small German community.

Until the opening of the Bethlehem Church the Evangelical Lutherans were served in Adelaide by lay preachers and pastors from elsewhere in the colony. In 1868 the congregation decided that it should have its own permanent minister and sent instructions to Germany for his selection. At the same time, as the *South Australian Register* reported on 12 August 1871, money was raised to build a church suitable for the new minister and '... commensurate with the position of the German Lutheran Church, which we understand to occupy a similar position among the Germans to that of the Anglican Church in England'.

The new church was designed by James Cumming '... in the early Gothic style', using dark rubble stone, with rusticated quoins and dressings', and a tower provided with a bellchamber. The contractors were Brown and Thompson and the building committee comprised Messrs J.W.A. Sudholz, J. Weil and J. Reiger.

The building was opened for public worship on 23 June 1872, the reverends Oster, Stremmel and Teichelmann officiating. The *South Australian Register* of 15 July 1872 noted that the bell-chamber would hold three bells, which were being cast in Germany from cannons captured from the French and presented by Prince Bismarck on behalf of the Emperor. The bells never arrived as the vessel in which they were being shipped was lost. Gasoliers were presented by H.L. Vosz and the communion plate was donated by the renowned craftsman and jeweller Henry Steiner.

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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The external form of the building remains remarkably original. The plan of the church, with the exception of the vestries to the north-east, is virtually identical with that depicted in the Smith Survey of the city in 1880. The two storey block at the rear dates from 1883, while the vestries bear a foundation stone dated 1961.

The building, with its unusual tower, remains an important street and townscape feature of Adelaide, and despite an unfortunate commercial intrusion it is visually tied to the former St Paul's Anglican Church complex to the west.

*Advertiser*, 28 October 1965; Burgess, H.T., *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. 2, 1909, p. 53; Jensen, E., & R., *Colonial architecture in South Australia*, 1980, p. 466; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 227); *South Australian Register*, 12 August 1871, 15 July 1872.

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.*

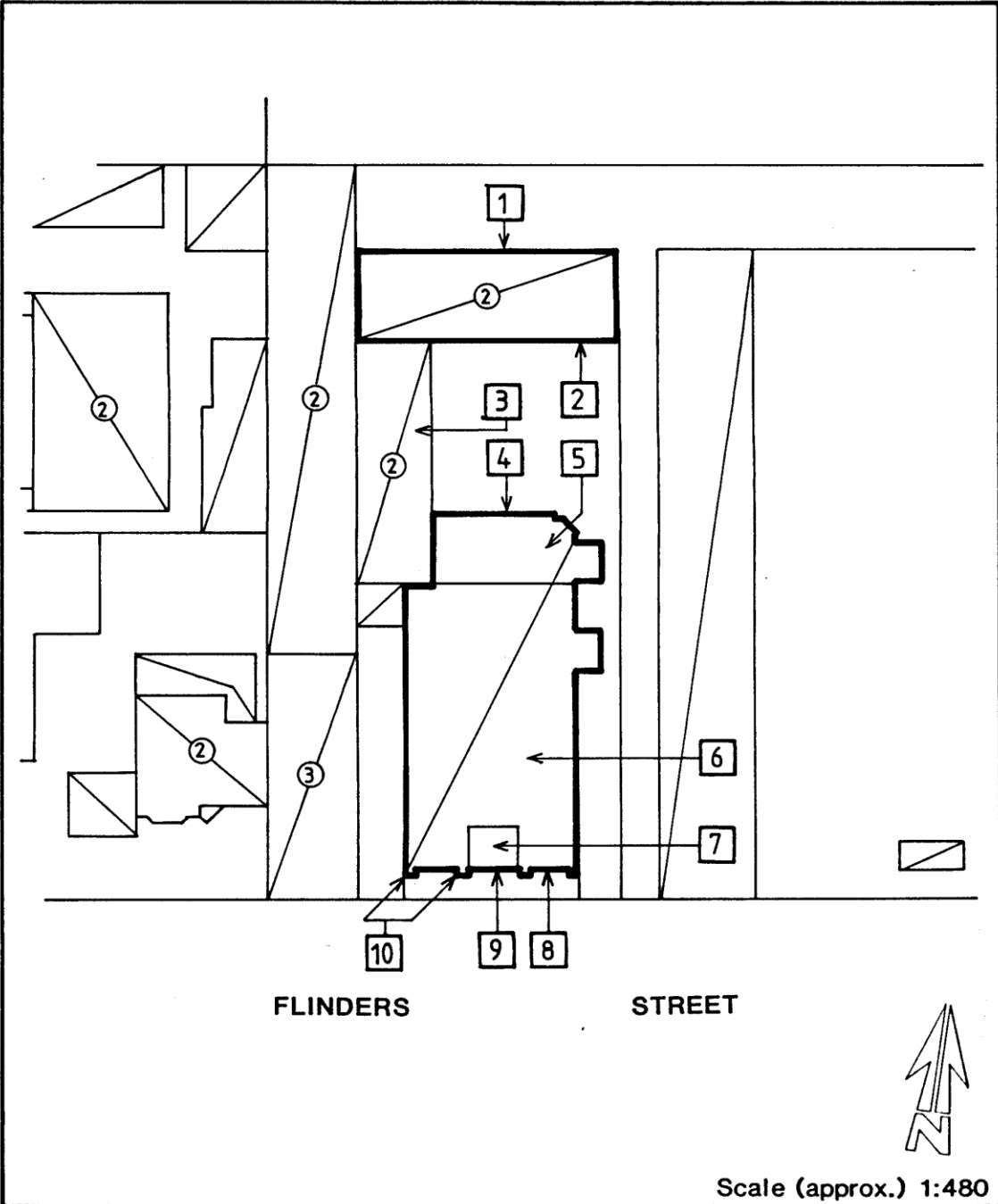


# CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

## The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH	Building No	8/2030
Address	164-170 Flinders Street		CT 2084/6



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#### NOTES:

1. Coursed random bluestone with brick detailing.
2. Note: Fenestration altered, brick and render facade at ground level.
3. Cream brick addition.
4. Rendered.
5. Sympathetic addition (1961).
6. Terra cotta tiled roof with metal cresting.
7. Bell tower with metal shingle roof.
8. Coursed random bluestone with stucco enrichment.
9. Note: Leadlight and tracery.
10. Note: Spires.