

## REGISTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

Former St. Paul's Anglican Church (deconsecrated)  
192-200 Pulteney Street  
142-154 Flinders Street  
Adelaide

Certificate of Title Volume 4334 Folio 432

### 1. STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This substantial building of 1857-1859 exemplifies well the building activities of the Anglican Church in the early colonial period of South Australia. Its erection and historical associations are demonstrative of the desire of this congregation to express in built form their position in society and commitment to faith. Its construction and incomplete nature however, tangibly detail the changing perceptions of religious observance and patterns of demographic change in the City of Adelaide. Its substantial use of bluestone, naive detailing and dramatic corner location provide Pulteney and Flinders Streets with a measure of counterpoint, accenting the physical character of the City of Adelaide and enriching interpretations of its historical development.

### 2. RELEVANT CRITERIA

It is a building important to the understanding of the evolution of South Australia's social and cultural heritage, being demonstrative of changes in religious practices and population patterns rarely reflected elsewhere in such a prominent building. Its construction, rich historical associations and townscape prominence are significant to an understanding of the consolidation of the Anglican Church in an urban setting.

### 3. SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

- 3.1 Architectural: demonstrates a representative type erected for functional requirements rather than stylistic purity, i.e. a simple aisled nave church with few stylistic allusions to the usual Gothic preferences except for the general shape and form of the building. A substantial composition in bluestone rubble with brick dressings. While not of a calculated design it exemplifies the urgency of accommodation in the formative years of South Australia.
- 3.2 Historical: demonstrates an important theme, i.e. provision of a focus for religious worship in a community once prominent in Adelaide and South Australia. It also demonstrates changes in forms of liturgy and is associated with an early translation from England through the Reverend Alexander Russell of 'high Church' practices advocated by the Tractarian (Oxford) Movement and the revival of Pre-Reformation ceremonial rites, the earliest church in Adelaide to perform such services.
- 3.3 Cultural: through expansion of the congregation, erection of the Church, subsequent decline and later de-consecration of the building, it exemplifies patterns of change within the city in general, while changes specific to the building and its congregation detail the evolution of the Anglican Church in particular. In addition the building is a prominent townscape element and part of a cultural landscape of distinction.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

##### 4.1 Architectural

The building erected in 1857-1859 as St. Paul's Anglican Church is located on the north-eastern corner of Pulteney and Flinders Streets in the City of Adelaide. The principal elevation faces Pulteney Street while a buttressed side elevation addresses Flinders Street. The building is set back from the property boundaries to both streets and is complemented by a masonry wall. The former church building is intimately associated with the heritage listed former St. Paul's rectory to the east and these buildings have a strong relationship with the Bethlehem Lutheran Church (further to the east along Flinders Street).

The building, with its buttressed walls, steeply pitched roofing, lancet windows and gabled elements is typical of the preference made by the Anglican Church for designs with a Gothic derivation. The former church building was described in 1856 as being of "the early English style". (1) The subsequent quotation of such an optimistic architectural categorisation in previous assessments has been unfortunate as it has led to a view that the building has distinct stylistic pretensions. The building has however little tracery, mouldings or other architectural features which justify such a categorisation and therefore rather than being dismissed as a building of little or no academic architectural significance, its prevailing merit should be viewed more in terms of its substantial representation of a constructional vernacular. The former church is constructed of bluestone rubble with red brick dressings to windows, doors, piers and buttresses. The building is characterised by a nave with clerestory lighting, arched aisles to either side of the nave as well as the base of a large unfinished tower, to the north-western corner of the building. Despite additions to the north, the creation of two further doorways in the southern elevation and new joinery to the front doors, the exterior remains remarkably intact.

As an evocation of a once very typical constructional technique, but now one of a rapidly diminishing number of buildings of such construction, St. Paul's former church may be most closely compared architecturally and constructionally with the Scots Church at the corner of Pulteney Street and North Terrace. Both buildings, when analysed for architectural merit, yield little more than fugitive academic architectural interest and although Scots has a completed tower, the clerestory interior of the former St. Paul's church is still arguably the finer. It is contended that both the heritage listed Scots and the former St. Paul's Church tangibly witness the prevailing building conditions in the colony of expediency and immediacy with only a little applique of ornament. Large buildings of bluestone rubble are now rarely found in the City of Adelaide. Large bluestone buildings erected by religious bodies, in the first twenty years of establishment of the Colony of South Australia are even more valuable, especially as the former St. Paul's Church makes a strong contribution to the character of Pulteney Street and the group of buildings previously alluded to.

The interior of the former Church building has been significantly adapted to form a combined restaurant and entertainment facility. While this has dramatically impaired an appreciation of the interior from what is now the ground floor area of the building through the construction of a mezzanine in the building, it is contended that such adaptation would have been inevitable to secure economic viability and hence the longevity of the building. The former use, scale and character of the building remain clearly perceivable at the clerestory level however.

#### 4.2 Historical

St. Paul's was built on land donated by the Pulteney Street School which was adjacent to the north. The Register in 1860 described the events leading up to the formation of the church.

'We believe that it was in July, 1855, that the Rev. A. Russell, who had been some time previously appointed minister of St. John's, feeling the anomaly of his position in a church remote from the mass of the population established additional Sunday and week-day services in Pulteney Street School. These attracted such congregations that at the close of the year the Trustees of Pulteney Street School appropriated half an acre of their property for a church... A committee of members of the Church of England undertook to canvass the district, in order to ascertain whether the necessity of a new church was strongly felt. Their report was such that a Building Committee was formed and steps were vigorously taken for the collection of the necessary funds.' (2)

St. Paul's was the fifth Anglican church to be built in the City of Adelaide, preceded by the Anglican churches of Holy Trinity, St. John's (which were both subsequently rebuilt) Christ Church and St. Luke's. Expectations of a large number of parishioners (evidenced by the size of the building) were quickly fulfilled.

'St. Paul's church was erected at a time when the congregation lived mainly within the city bounds, and big ideas were entertained as to its completion.' (3)

St. Paul's was also one of the rare Anglican 'High' churches. St. Paul's was the only city Anglican Church (until 1876 when St. Peter's Cathedral was opened) which was actively involved in the Tractarian (Oxford) Movement or 'catholic revival'.

In England during the 1830s, the Tractarian (Oxford) Movement began, the ideas of which gradually spread to Australia, and were felt in South Australia during the 1860s. Alexander R. Russell, invited by Bishop Short to come to South Australia, took up positions first at St. Andrew's, Walkerville in 1854, and St. John's, Adelaide, 1855 followed by his incumbency of St. Paul's on its opening. The Tractarians revived 'pre-reformation ceremonial into public worship'. David Hilliard states that the first innovations in ceremonial and church ornaments occurred in the mid 1860s at St. Andrew's, Walkerville (George Dove); St. Paul's, Port Adelaide (Samuel Green) and St. Paul's in Pulteney Street. (4)

The aesthetics of colourful gowns, crosses and lighted candles as well as the sound of the Gregorian Chant (5) complemented the firm belief that the ancient practices of the Church of England were

being restored. These services not only attracted a large local working class Anglican congregation to the colourful spectacle, but also attracted very cultured worshippers who saw these practices as essential to the 'beauty of holiness'. (6) Some of Adelaide's most prominent families became members of the congregation.

One of St. Paul's most notable members of the congregation was Lady Edith Fergusson, the first wife of Sir James Fergusson, governor of South Australia from February 1869 to April 1873. She and her husband tried 'nearly every one of the Anglican churches in the City' before joining the congregation of St. Paul's.

One of the reasons given for the Fergussons' attachment to this church, was its 'reputation for charitable works, one in which St. Paul's out-shone all other parishes in the diocese'. (7)

Lady Edith not only became an active charity worker but she and her husband were avid supporters of church furnishings. The controversial first surpliced choir of 1869 is believed to have been paid for by the Fergussons. (8) Although Russell justified the new practice by stating it was a 'long established custom in all our cathedrals, and many of our Parish Churches' this did not pacify some members of the congregation who saw this as such extreme ritualism that they left the congregation. (9)

The pew rents book for 1890, lists Sir Henry Ayers, Sir John Bray (the first South Australian born Premier) and Dr. Richard Schomburgk (director and principal designer of the Adelaide Botanical Gardens from 1865-1891). Entered in the Register of Baptisms for April 1871 30th, is the son of Sir James Fergusson and Lady Edith while on May 2nd, 1905, John Langdon Bonython, was baptised, the son of Blanche Ada and John Lavington Bonython (who is described as an 'Adelaide Journalist').

Throughout its first forty to fifty years, St. Paul's maintained a large congregation of prominent families and many small businessmen, professional people and tradesmen. Several beautiful and valuable memorials were presented to the church during this time, attesting to its significant status in Adelaide. By the teens of the twentieth century, however, demographic realities assailed St. Paul's.

'In those days (1860s) our Parish seems to have been one of the chief centres of the people. Then the tide of population surged towards the city, but now it is ebbing towards the suburbs; and in a few years St. Paul's will be left high and dry amid shops, warehouses and other evidences of busy activities during the day, but all quiet and deserted at its close...' (10)

Wealthy and professional families moved out to the suburbs, the governors of South Australia preferred to worship at St. Peter's Cathedral, and the congregation began to be comprised of mainly decreasing numbers of middle and lower class families. This last fact is reiterated in the parish magazine, The Echo, from 1900 to 1940, e.g.

'Formerly professional men and those engaged in commercial pursuits lived in the City, but now they reside in the suburbs, and the majority of those who live in this parish are people of very modest

means, who are unable therefore to bear the whole cost of supporting St. Paul's Church. We therefore appeal, not only to those who attend St. Paul's Church, but also to those who derive their incomes from their business premises in the City, to give liberally...' (1926) and 'In this parish, business premises have displaced private residences to a large extent, and it has therefore become necessary to appeal to those who formerly attended St. Paul's Church, and to others who may be willing to do so, to help maintain the church...' (1936).

The former church was always closely associated with Pulteney Grammar School, one of Adelaide's foremost private schools for boys, which moved to Flinders Hall, built by St. Paul's in Flinders Street in 1873, and then to its present location in South Terrace. Pulteney Grammar schoolboys were regular choristrers at the church, and the school activities were faithfully reported in the parish magazine.

## 5. CULTURAL

In concert with other religious buildings, now adapted for other purposes following de-consecration, St. Pauls has been largely denuded of the fittings which were intimately associated with the memorialisation of both ceremony and worshippers. However, as with, for example, the Synagogue which will be similarly cleared of the more portable articles, sensitive interpretation of St. Pauls would clearly reveal its significance in terms of both the consolidation of the Anglican Church and the historical development of the City of Adelaide.

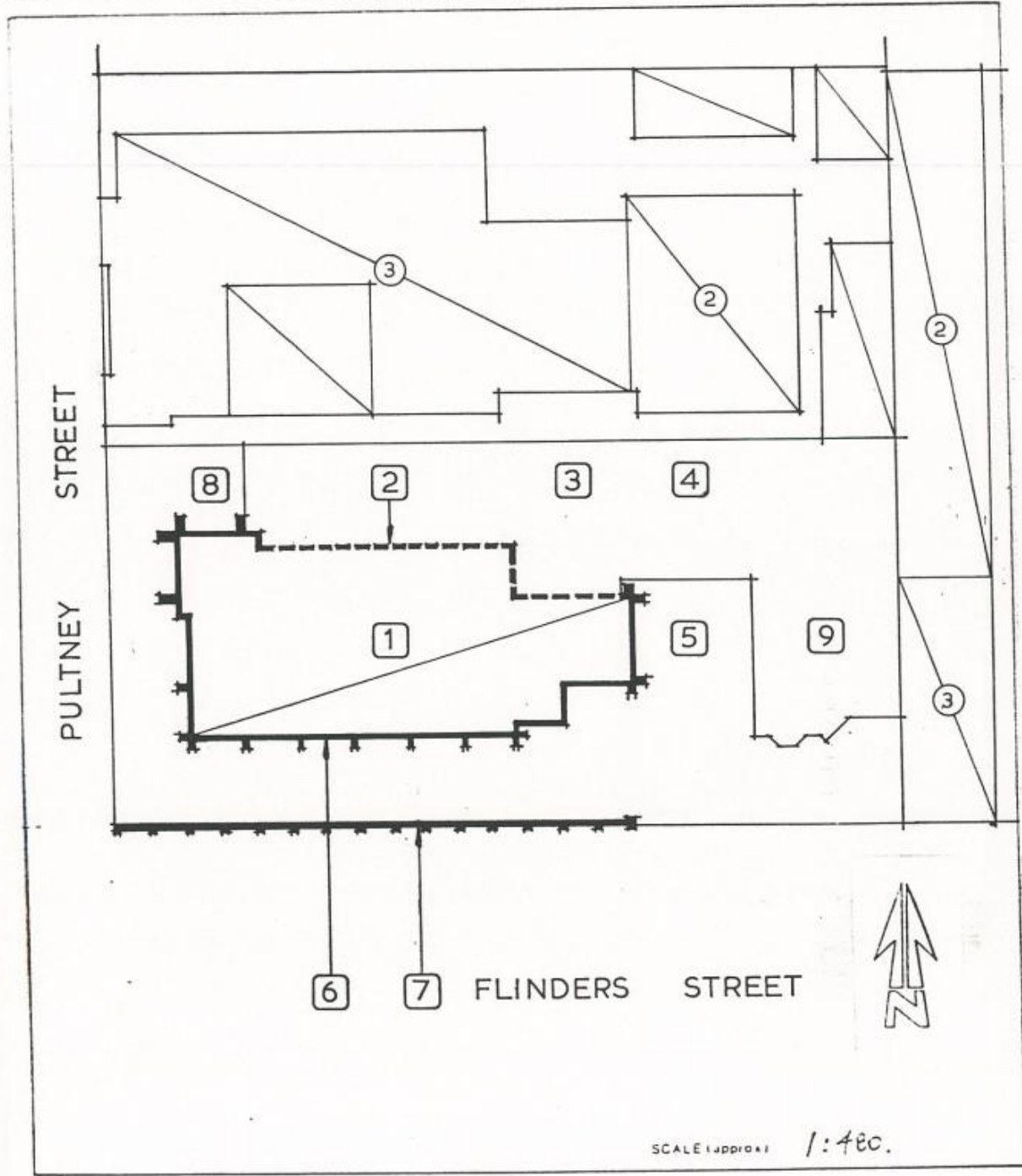
The fittings and memorials removed from St. Pauls include the two stained glass windows by Tiffany Studios of New York and presented to the Church by Mrs. H. L. Ayers in 1909. Despite the loss of these windows to the Chapel at Pulteney Grammar School (an act which would have occurred even if St. Pauls had been heritage listed in 1980) this loss obfuscates neither the importance of the Church in the eyes of its earlier congregations nor the status of the church in the City of Adelaide.

The survival of the building to date is made all the more poignant by the demolition of the majority of the Wesleyan Churches and the loss of several Presbyterian Churches in the City of Adelaide. While the Anglican Church is well represented by working ecclesiastical buildings in the City of Adelaide, the social commentary offered by St. Pauls former church underscores the later history and fate of many City based denominations the rise and subsequent decline in the St. Pauls congregation mirroring the population in the City which rose at the turn of the century to approximately 40,000 residents thereafter steadily declining only to rise again in the 1970s.

St. Pauls former church, its important incumbent and colourful services, represent a notable aspect of the history of the Anglican Church and the significance demonstrated by this church is related directly to an identifiable cultural group influenced by the latest liturgical trends in England. In addition the building with its relative austerity and workmanlike character is evocative of the formative years of South Australia. The subsequent loss of many of its congregation to St. Peter's Cathedral, its subsequent de-consecration yet its proximity to the active Bethlehem Lutheran Church nearby offer a complex picture of Adelaide and its residents over a period of some one hundred years.

CITY of ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY  
THE CITY HERITAGE REGISTER - DEFINITION OF ITEMS

ITEM	FORMER ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH	BUILDING NO.
ADDRESS	192-200 PULTENEY STREET	



SCALE (approx) 1:400.

ITEM FORMER ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

BUILDING NO.

ADDRESS 192-200 PULTENEY STREET

1. Main body of building.
2. Line of northern extent of original church.
3. Kitchens erected as part 1983/4 adaptation and refurbishment.
4. Link between former Rectory and former Church.
5. Courtyard.
6. Southern buttressed elevation to Flinders Street contains altered windows and doorways.
7. Southern boundary wall.
8. Incomplete belltower abutted by recent extension which serves as storage and service access.
9. Former Rectory building.

SCALE: APPROX. 1:400.