

PILGRIM CHURCH (Formerly Stow Memorial Church)

2-10 Flinders Street

Erected in 1865-67 as a memorial to Reverend T.Q. Stow, the Congregational church replaced one erected in 1839-40 in Freeman Street (Gawler Place). Although not directly associated with the building, Stow was immensely important in establishing Congregationalism in South Australia. After Stow's death in 1862 several prominent Congregationalists decided to erect a church as a memorial to him.

A design competition was held in 1864 which was won by the architect Robert George Thomas. Construction started in 1865 and the church was opened in 1867.

The *South Australian Register*, 17 April 1867 described the church as in the early English Gothic style, with adaptations from the French Gothic. The nave was much wider than usual, while the aisles were narrower, leaving nearly the whole interior open to the view of the minister. There was a tower and spire, partly built ' . . . and the whole of the works are of the most durable and substantial character, none of the walls of the church being less than 2 ft. 4 in. thick . . . '. The total cost for fixtures and fittings was about £1200. Interior fittings were of Sydney cedar, and a handsome clock was presented by Mr Perryman.

The builders were Brown and Thompson (formerly English and Brown), at a cost of more than £10 000. Carving was done by an Irish mason, Mr Peters. The lengthy report in the Register concluded:

The exquisite beauty and chasteness of the Church have been the subject of remark for sometime past; and now that it is so far completed as to be opened for public worship its harmonious proportions and grand effect have been admitted by all who have seen it. The building is a real ornament to the City, it is far superior in effect to any other ecclesiastical edifice in the Colony, and does great credit to the architect who designed it, to the builders who erected it, and to the congregation who have been spirited enough to carry it out.

Stow Church is one of two churches designed on Flinders Street by Thomas. The Baptist Church, was built four years earlier in 1861-63. R.G. Thomas was a son of Robert Thomas of *South Australian Register* newspaper fame. He arrived in 1836 on the *Rapid* and was engaged as a draftsman on Light's staff. He remained in South Australia for some years surveying the colony, then returned to England to complete his education as a civil engineer and architect. He designed some prominent churches and buildings while at Newport, Monmouthshire (Wales), and the influence of this experience and the architectural aesthetic of the time is to be found in the two Adelaide churches. Following his return to Adelaide in 1860, Thomas joined the public service in 1866. He became architect-in-chief, designing the Supreme Court in conjunction with William McMinn and superintending the erection of the General Post Office. He left this post in 1870. From 1874 until his death in 1884 he was the secretary to the Board of Health.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

Stow Memorial Church (now Pilgrim Church) is an important part of the Victoria Square environs. The building is of intrinsic merit with bluestone walling well dressed with sandstone. The detailing of the porch is exceptionally fine. The capitals are of Caen limestone (France) and quatrefoils in Bath limestone (England). The contrast between the materials and the crisp detailing and robustly carved relief, all of which remain in good condition attract the eye and display the virtuosity of the mason's craft. The building's interesting composition is a significant departure from the primarily axial Gothic churches, the small aisles behind a well detailed 'screen' of arcading, and the relatively large transepts, achieving a surprisingly intimate interior. The composition, if completed with the spire over the tower as in the original design, would be dramatic, stamping the building as architecturally 'fashionable' for the 1860s, even in Britain. It justifiably won the acclaim of critics and remains significant to the historical development of the Congregational Church and the quality of architecture in South Australia at a time when the colony was gaining confidence and prosperity.



(CD Ref 3964/13)

ACA, *Digest of Proceedings*, 29 April 1889, 27 October 1890, Smith Survey 1880; Hunt, A., *This side of heaven*, 1985; Loyau, G.E., *Representative men of South Australia*, 1883, pp. 233-5; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 235); Morgan, E.J.R., & Gilbert, S.H., *Early Adelaide architecture 1836 to 1886*, 1969; Pascoe, J.J., *History of Adelaide and vicinity*, 1901; *South Australian Register*, 26 January 1864, 25 June 1864, 7 February 1865, 17 April 1867; Thomas, R.G., Unpublished,

undated, anonymous paper of R.G. Thomas held by Department of Planning and Development, ACC.

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	PILGRIM CHURCH	Building No 7/2010
Address	2-10 Flinders Street	CT 1313/164

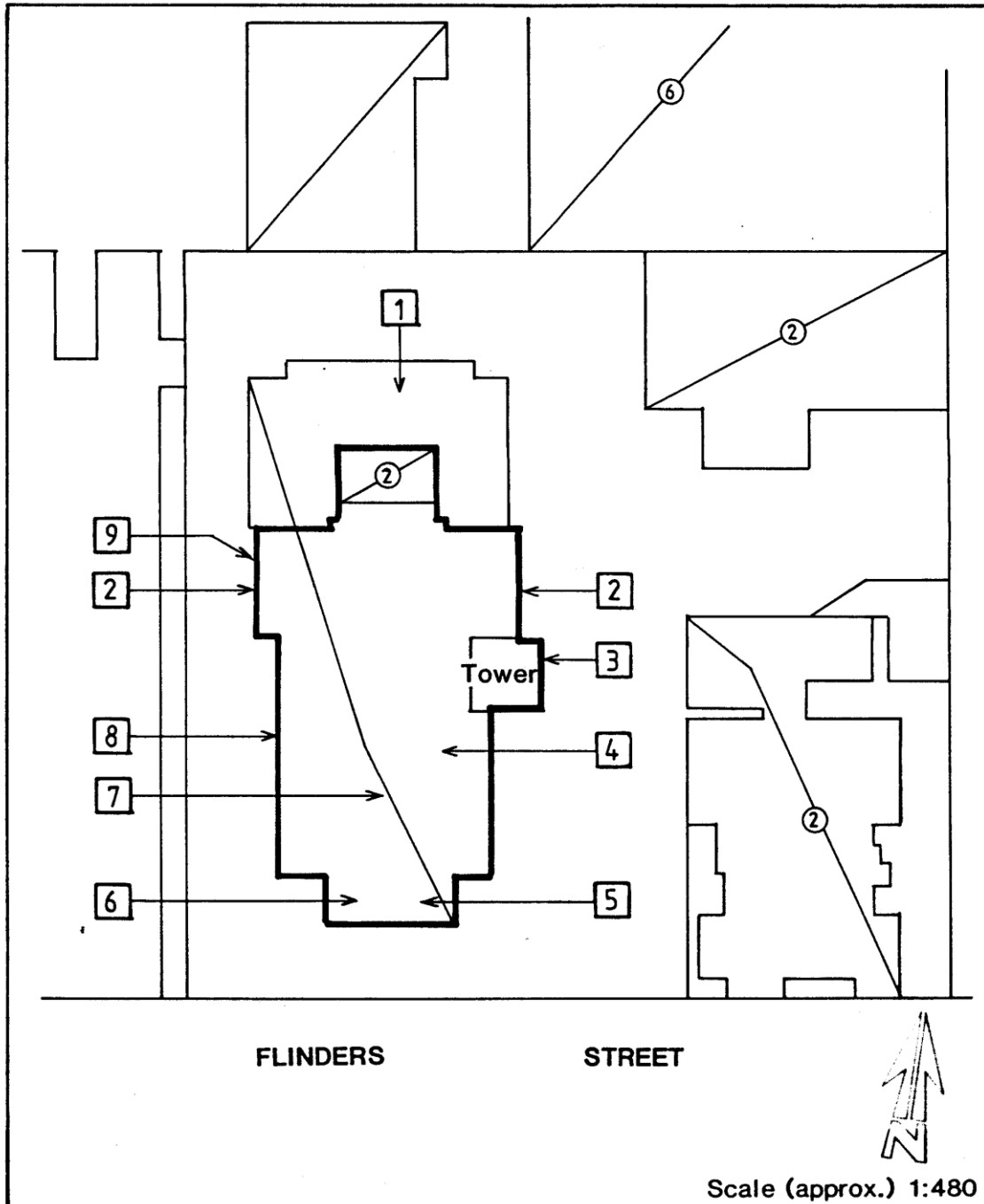


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NOTES:

1. Recent sympathetic addition.
2. Note Tracery.
3. Note Columns, moulded hoods.
4. Interior original (Note Cathedral Organ).
5. Note Sandstone columns, floral detail, parapet, windows.
6. Coursed punch faced sandstone portico.
7. Metal cresting.
8. Extensive use of leadlight windows.
9. Coursed random bluestone with sandstone quoins (punch faced with drafted margins).