

City of Adelaide Heritage Survey (2008)

NAME: 21-31 Chesser Street
Former Henry Austin Building

ZONE/POLICY AREA: CBA - PA15

APPROVED / CURRENT USE: Offices, restaurant and studios

FORMER USE: Warehouse

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1920, 1980 adaptation

LOCATION: 21-31 Chesser Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Adelaide City Council

LAND DESCRIPTION: CT-6062/846

HERITAGE STATUS: Local Heritage Place

OTHER ASSESSMENTS Donovan, Marsden, Stark, 1982; McDougall & Vines, 1993



Chesser Cellar—View to northwest

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DESCRIPTION:

Two-storey early twentieth commercial building (finished at northern end with three-storey section, No. 21), with basement constructed to Chesser Street alignment. The name 'Henry Austin Building' is still evident on the building. Building occupies full allotment and addresses corner to Chesser Lane. Construction is of unpainted Flemish bond red brick, cement render and some original timber entry doors. Some changes made to ground floor level with large glass windows and new entrances, although several original doorways also survive with stone and timber doorsteps. Recent additions also include pergola. Original windows and detailing on upper levels and at all three levels facing Chesser Lane.

Significant components include: original two-and three-storey building form, red brick walling, original windows and doors on all sides of building to Chesser St and Chesser Lane, including warehouse projecting rod at upper floor window, Henry Austin Building lettering. Significant interior features include the cellars, original stairs and the bar - a former cashier's counter (in Chesser Cellar, No. 29). All could be used to assist in reinstatement of original features to ground level if desired.

Those features that do not contribute to significance of building are c. 1980 ground floor treatments, pergola and balustrade details, although these are sympathetic additions and add to the character of the street.

The assessment has not included interior detailing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

A substantial and well-detailed early twentieth century commercial building, the most prominent of the surviving red brick warehouses that form and enclose the distinctive Chesser Street precinct; also the home of one of the most enduring, popular restaurants in Adelaide (Chesser Cellar) which draws much of its character from the historical features of the building. It illustrates several key themes in the city's history: 3.1 *Economic Cycles*; 3.5.2 *Retail and Wholesale Industry*; 3.5.5 *Warehousing*; 3.6.1 *Company Offices*; 4.3 *Development of the Building Industry, Architecture and Construction*; 4.5.3 *Edwardian Commercial (1900 to 1920s)*; 4.7.1 *Adaptive re-use*; 6.2.4 *Cafes and Restaurants*.

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 and historical themes that are of importance to the local area, including both its original use for warehousing and with many of the original interior and exterior features providing the setting for the past 40 years of Chesser Cellar (29 Chesser Street) an iconic Adelaide restaurant and meeting-place; and

- (d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area. Although there are new ground openings to Chesser St, and a pergola and balustrades, the building overall still exhibits a high degree of its original architectural character, including the cellars, and the original chamfered corner and all three levels at the rear (Chesser Lane) are retained.
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ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Inclusions

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

Exclusions

- Interior detailing
- Modern alterations at ground level
- 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 Warehouse (Henry Austin Building); external form, in particular the fabric and detailing of facades

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

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

In December 1910, when the first Torrens Title for this property was issued, The Wyatt Benevolent Institution Inc of Adelaide was the registered owner of portion of Town Acres 146, 165, 166 and 208. The entire area comprised 2 acres 36 perches.

Dr William Wyatt arrived in the colony aboard the ship *John Renwick* in February 1837. He had occupied the position of surgeon on the voyage to Adelaide and later became Colonial Surgeon and Chief Inspector of Schools. Within a month of his arrival, Dr Wyatt acquired Town Acres 146, 165, 166 (on which the present building was erected) and 208 for the sum of £36-18-0. Upon his death in 1886 he bequeathed the whole of his estate that included the above town acres, 'to poverty-stricken educated classes, subject to the payment of an annuity to his widow, and certain annuities during the lifetime of specified relatives.' The Wyatt Benevolent Institution Incorporated was the trust that was formed. The trustees were given wide powers of authority: 'they can sell or exchange lands in the estate, or buy others, and may build, procure, and fit up buildings on any trust lands in Adelaide, and within 10 miles of the city, for the purpose of the fund.'



B.2035, February 1924 (SLSA)



B.15605, October 1964 (SLSA)

One of Chesser Cellar's originators in the 1960s was Jim Bowen, a later Lord Mayor, and the restaurant and cellars were run by Caon, and are still operated by his son, Primo Caon.

The Wyatt Benevolent Institution Incorporated ceased its interest in the property in 2004 when the title passed to Maledon Aust. Pty Ltd.

REFERENCES:

Adelaide City Council, Correspondence dated 25.2.1992 from The Wyatt Benevolent Institution, Adelaide City Archives.

Donovan, Marsden & Stark, *City of Adelaide Heritage Study*, 1982, Adelaide City Council.

McDougall & Vines, *City of Adelaide, Townscape Context and Local Heritage Assessment*, Adelaide, 1993.

McDougall & Vines, *The City of Adelaide: a Thematic History*, Adelaide City Council, August 2006.

Adelaide Now (Advertiser) 18.7.2006.

<www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,19850289-5006783,00.html>.

Register, 27.3.1919, p. 4—early information on the formation of the Wyatt Benevolent Institution Incorporated.

Russell Starke, *Ravings* (2004), <www.messenger.net.au/pulse/htm/starke17.htm>.

State Library of South Australia, Library Database (Photographs): B.2035, February 1924; B.15605, October 1964.