

## TERRACE OF SHOPS AND RESIDENCES

229a-237 Rundle Street East

Located on the corner of Rundle Street East and Union Street, this block of six attached two storey shops was built in 1898 for the South Australian Company.

The South Australian Company, from the time of settlement, owned seven of the 14 Town Acres that abut Rundle Street East. The Company owned until 1924, much of Town Acre 90, the Acre on which this building is situated.

The South Australian Company was founded in 1835 and was vitally important in South Australia's settlement and development. The Company was a major influence in South Australia's affairs until the First World War. Its fortunes declined after the War and its affairs were finally wound up in 1949. The Company's former head office, Gawler Chambers still survives.

The Company constructed several shops as investments in Rundle Street East, including the Austral Hotel and shops together with this terrace. The shops at 229-237 Rundle Street East were associated with the Chinese family of Sym Choon from the early 1920s. Thomas Sym Choon purchased the building for his four children between January 1924 and September 1925. The children established rental businesses.

The Sym Choon family is believed to have made its way to South Australia after the Victorian Goldrush of the early 1850s. Initially the family established a market garden in Unley and by 1908 a Sym Choon is recorded as operating a fruit shop at 253 Rundle Street. By 1918 the Sym Choon's are listed as tea importers with premises in Rundle Street.

Gordon Sym Choon, one of Thomas's children was an importer of peanuts and later fireworks. He was reputed to be a 'bookie', servicing the East End Market area. Gladys Sym Choon, a daughter, made her mark in the City of Adelaide as an importer of Chinese and other Oriental luxury goods. She is believed to have journeyed annually to China, other Asian countries as well as Russia, in search of merchandise that included embroidered satins, china vases, sandalwood carvings, ivory figures and sandalwood soap. Gladys married Edward Chung Gon in 1937 in Launceston, Tasmania, and has lived there ever since. She left her shop in care of managers. When the shop finally closed in August 1985, after 52 years of successful trading, the goods sold at the shops had hardly changed from the early 1920s. Although in different hands, the shop retains the name of Gladys Sym Choon.

The complex of buildings contains six attached two storey shops and residences. The building is constructed of brick to the rear walls and stone to the front and side walls with a roofed balcony and verandah.

The building has a parapet at the roofline. Each shop and dwelling unit has an alternating design of either a solid parapet with rendered geometric decoration or a more open design. Below the parapet, at the gutter line, the building features a line of dentils with elaborate rainwater heads located nearby. There are six residences on the first floor of the building and

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each has a doorway opening onto a roofed balcony. The balcony is decorated with cast iron lacework to the balustrade and fascia. One unit retains a shallow pediment on top of the balcony, the others have been removed. The verandah to the ground floor projects beyond the balcony and covers the entire footpath.

The ground floor shop fronts have been substantially altered as trading patterns have required. Originally each unit would have had an entrance for the shop and an entrance for the dwelling. The shop fronts and dwelling entrances have been altered and adapted, some doorways leading to basements and others to upstairs tenancies. The shopfront alterations to the ground floor are all different, no two shopfronts being the same. The shopfront to Gladys Sym Choon's is a stepped and quality chrome and glass construction dating from c. 1930s. It is perhaps the best remaining example of this period of shopfront design.

The rear of the building reveals its construction materials and makes clear that extensions to the west were intended or some demolition has taken place. On the eastern wall the last shop has had a brick addition to increase the height of the building.

The shops at 229-237 Rundle Street East are located directly opposite the Tavistock buildings and in close proximity with the complex containing the Austral Hotel and shops. They contribute to an important streetscape of intact nineteenth century commercial and residential buildings in an area of immense significance in the history of the City.

Rundle Street East is an area of special character in the City of Adelaide. This South Australian Company terrace complements the predominant character of the area and the listed buildings opposite in particular.

Digest of Proceedings, 18 April, 1898, 25 July 1898; Rate Assessment Books for the period 1897-1902; Land Title Office, Certificate of Title 1405/121-124; *The Examiner*, 21 April 1937, picture of Gladys Sym Choon, Women's Supplement; *The Advertiser*, 27 January, 1938, advertisement for Sym Choon; *The Advertiser*, 1 November 1951, advertisement for Sym Choon fireworks at 221 Rundle Street; *The Advertiser*, 28 August 1985, p.3; Joff Chappel, interview, 10 January 1990.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **City of Adelaide Heritage Study**, October 1990, Volume One, part of a review of the City of Adelaide Plan 1986-1991. 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 a place of Local Heritage (City Significance). 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.*