

**City of Adelaide Heritage Survey (2008)**

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**NAME:** *King William House, 25-27 King William Street* **ZONE/POLICY AREA:** *CBA - PA16*  
Former Commercial Bank of Australia

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**APPROVED / CURRENT USE:** Shop (Duty Free)  
**FORMER USE:** Former bank  
**DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:** 1889; Additions/Alterations: 1926–1927

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**LOCATION:** 25-27 King William Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Adelaide City Council  
**LAND DESCRIPTION:** CT-5549/221

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**HERITAGE STATUS:** Local Heritage Place  
**OTHER ASSESSMENTS** McDougall & Vines, 1993



*King William House – View to west*

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**DESCRIPTION:**

This building consists of five floors and a basement, and has a high parapet. The ground floor is constructed of finely detailed red granite, with classical features including rusticated pilasters and Corinthian columns, with later bronze-detailed windows and doors, including transom lights. The upper floors are of white rendered masonry with bronze-framed windows, the top floor having classically-styled, round-headed windows at each side. There is a projecting cornice between the third and fourth floors and a more restrained cornice below the parapet. The building occupies the full allotment and the frontage aligns with King William Street. The interior has highly decorative features on the ground and mezzanine floors, including ceiling roses, cornices and pillars.

Significant components include: original building form, including facade elements: pilasters; columns; all glassed areas and bronze framework; plinth and both sets of steps up to the entry; all facade details on upper floors, including parapet. Interior features on ground and mezzanine floors: floors, ceiling roses, cornices and pillars.

Those features that do not contribute to significance of building are the interiors of all other floors.

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**STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:**

This building has historical significance as it shows the growth in banking in South Australia in the late Victorian era. It is also a good example of the architectural style and detail of the late Victorian period and the 1927 extensions provide an interesting example of how an earlier classical style of building could be easily adapted to the new Inter-War style using a more restrained classicism. It illustrates several key themes in the city's history: *3.1 Economic Cycles; 3.1.8 New Technology and City Development; 3.3.2 Banking; 3.6.1 Company Offices; 3.7.3 Office Workers; 4.3 Development of the Building Industry, Architecture and Construction; 4.3.2 Twentieth Century Architects; 4.5.4 Inter War Commercial Styles (1920s to 1942); 4.7.1 Adaptive re-use.*

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**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 or social themes that are of importance to the local area, as it is a good example of a growth of banking in South Australia in the late nineteenth century; and
  - (d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area, as it is a good example of the architectural style and detail of the late Victorian period an interesting example of how an earlier classical style of building could be easily adapted to the new Inter-War style of restrained classicism.
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## ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE VALUE:

### Inclusions

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

### Exclusions

- Interior detailing
- Additions at rear
- 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 Bank (Commercial Bank of Australia); external form, in particular the fabric and detailing of King William Street façade.

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

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## BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

This building was designed by architect Edward Davies, who won a competition for the design in October 1886. It was built for the Commercial Bank of Australia in 1889 and was then described as a building in Renaissance style, three stories high and crowned with cupolas. The banking chamber and the ground floor were the most attractive parts of the building, with the chamber being originally lit by a central ceiling lantern of embossed and cathedral glass.



B.2905, c. 1889 (SLSA)

In 1926 tenders were called for additions and alterations to the building, the intention being to give the bank a more up-to-date image. WT Lamerton was awarded the tender in June 1926. As noted in *The Builder*.

An extra storey will be added over a portion of the building. The banking chamber will be enlarged and improved, and a central entrance instead of two side entrances will be provided. A passenger lift will be installed, with concrete staircases at front and back. The new floors will be of concrete, covered with wood. Ornamental iron gates will give access from the street to the vestibule. The ground floor façade, which is of granite, will be slightly re-modelled. The two upper storeys of sandstone will be pulled down, and there will be a new design, with an extra storey giving a total height from the pavement of 72 ft. All the new windows will be of steel and of ornamental type.

Architects appointed to the project were Davies (who prepared the plans for the original building), Woolridge & Counsell.

The changes were in line with the more restrained classical style of architecture which was common in commercial and public buildings of the Inter-War period.



B.4715, 1928 (SLSA)

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## REFERENCES:

Adelaide City Council, Correspondence dated 30.10.1992 from The Gasparin Group, Adelaide City Archives.

Danvers Architects, Heritage Significance Report, 25–27 King William Street, Adelaide, Adelaide City Archives.

Donovan, P, S Marsden and P Stark, City of Adelaide Heritage Survey, unpublished report to Department of Planning and Development, Adelaide, 1982.

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

State Library of South Australia, Library Database (Photographs): B.2905, c.1885; B.4715, 1928.

*The Builder: Journal of the Building Industry in South Australia*, "The Builder" Publishing Company, Adelaide: Vol. 7, No. 8, 24.2.1926, p. 5; Vol. 7, No. 24, 30.6.1926, p. 16.