

## **MARKS COTTAGES, KEITH SHERIDAN AND SIMPSON COTTAGES**

294-300 Gilbert Street, 29-31 O'Brien Street

This nomination incorporates two rows of cottages, one row of five, single-storeyed, small, attached houses facing Gilbert Street, built in 1902-3 and a second group of two, single storeyed, attached houses facing O'Brien Street, built in 1925. The houses are owned by the Adelaide Benevolent Strangers' Friend Society and represent the work of charitable organisations in providing housing for the needy.



294-300 Gilbert Street, Mark's Cottages (CD Ref 1343/15)

The significance of these houses lies in their representation of the theme of philanthropy and charitable organisations. The wealthy in the nineteenth century saw charitable activities as an essential role of anyone who had attained great wealth. Donating money to worthy causes became almost an obligation to those wishing to appear as good citizens. It is a common theme in South Australian nineteenth and twentieth century history, and often took the form of the provision of housing to those that were considered deserving, in this case widows and deserted wives. Examples in Adelaide include the Elder Workman's houses in Angas Street and the former Cottage Homes in Stanley Street, North Adelaide.

As discussed in the Register Nomination Report for Elder Hall, the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society was established with the aim of preventing pauperism and is the oldest, private charitable organisation in South Australia. It was the largest until 1914, providing more relief than any other organisation other than the government's Destitute Board. The South Australian Society is modelled on its English namesake, a charitable society associated with the Methodist Church. The Adelaide Benevolent Strangers' Friend Society is similarly associated.

The Adelaide Benevolent Strangers' Friend Society is still operating but was at its most active during the late 1880's, 1890's and 1900's. Its main aim has always been to provide cheap

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accommodation. The Society initially rented and then purchased housing in the city and suburbs.

The Gilbert Street houses are examples of housing run by the Society. The land parcel on which the houses were sited, had been acquired by the Lady Kintore Cottages Incorporated, a society established in 1895 by Lady Kintore, the wife of Governor Kintore. The aim of this society was to help in providing housing for the ‘respectable poor’, people such as ‘indigent widows and deserted wives and their families’. The plans for the houses were approved by Council on 13 October 1902 and were to be built by William Gully.

In 1909 it became evident that the Lady Kintore Cottages Incorporated had an income insufficient to maintain the houses. The trustees of Lady Kintore Cottages Incorporated requested that the Government pass a bill to enable the transfer of the society’s funds and property to the control of Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers’ Friend Society. This situation had arisen as the Lady Kintore Cottages Incorporated was run by trustees under the management of a committee. The committee was elected annually and subscriptions had to be paid before one could become a member. In 1905 all subscriptions had ceased and therefore the society had no members. Consequently it was impossible to elect a committee and the two surviving trustees had no power to lease the cottages without the consent of the committee. The organisation folded. In December 1920 a Bill was passed and the properties were vested with the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers’ Friend Society.



29-31 O'Brien Street; Keith Sheridan and Simpson Cottages (CD Ref 1343/13)

In 1925, the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers’ Friend Society benefited from the generosity of the late Miss Kate Sheridan and Mrs A.M. Simpson. Two new cottages were built in O’Brien Street. They were to be called the Keith Sheridan and Simpson Cottages. Plans were approved for their construction on 21 July and 6 October 1924.

On the completion of these cottages the Society owned twenty five cottages in the city; eleven in Stanley Street, seven in Vinrace Street, five in Gilbert Street and two in O’Brien Street.

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Those in the West End are still owned by the Society while the Stanley Street property was sold in the 1970s.

The two rows of houses are significant in representing and illustrating an aspect of the character and type of housing constructed in the south western corner of the city. The houses are different from their surrounding development in that they are later and are associated with a charitable organisation and the provision of housing for the needy.

The south western corner of the city has always been associated with Adelaide's working class citizens and was primarily residential until the twentieth century. It was the site of slums during the nineteenth century. The area contained the densest population in the city from the 1840s to c 1900, evidence of this fact existing in the allotment sizes and types of housing that remain. The area declined in the twentieth century as a result of industrial and commercial uses of the land. It is beginning to be used again for residential purpose.

*Lady Kintore Cottages Act 1920*, Section 5; Land Title Office, Certificates of Title 604/159, 688/171; *Digest of Proceedings*, 13 October 1902, 2 July 1924, October 1924; Minute Books of *Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society*, 1920-21, 1925; *Advertiser*, 21 January 1981, p. 2; Theakstone, K.R. *Poverty, pauperism and power: the history of the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, 1849-1914*, MA Thesis held at Flinders University, 1987, summary; Burgess, H.T. "Cottage Homes and City Mission" *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol 2, pp. 73-75; Register Nomination and Objection Report for Elder Hall, file number 6628-13410, State Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Planning; Parliamentary Debates, 1920, vol 1, p. 957; Dickey, B. *No Charity There; A short History of Social Welfare in South Australia since 1836*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide 1986, p. 113.

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.*