RAA OFFICES
(Former YWCA)

49-51 Hindmarsh Square

In 1879 Mary Colton (later Lady Mary Colton), the premier's wife, formed a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) from a bible class of young women attending the Pirie Street Wesleyan Methodist Church Sunday School. The YWCA was closely identified with Wesleyan Methodism and concentrated upon spiritual guidance and moral welfare. The YWCA also closely shared the views of the Women's Christian Temperance Union with regard to the importance of evangelism, temperance and social purity. There was a dramatic shift from religious instruction after Lady Colton's death in 1898. Later when a vibrant Mrs Birks became the new president, plans for a new building were made and she introduced new activities for young women of all denominations who were seeking vocational, social and recreational opportunities. In 1899 all the existing rules were repealed and new rules adopted.

When the Lady Colton Institute in Hindmarsh Square was opened on 22 November 1900 it provided the YWCA with its first permanent premises and gave it the opportunity to organise many new and more varied activities. The YWCA attracted increasing numbers of young women living away from their families to work in factories and businesses, and membership increased from 156 in 1901 to 1000 by the First World War. By 1912 several branches had been organised: the Lady Colton Guild for girls of leisure, Lyceum Club for young businesswomen, the Girls Progressive Club for young girls, a tennis club, a rowing club and a savings club for factory girls called the Thrift Club. Within this progressive period influences concerning organisational policy, aims and staffing came not only from the national level but from England and the United States of America.

Another service provided was an employment bureau aimed at recruiting women for domestic service. Although by the early twentieth century this was not a popular choice of work for women, recruitment increased during the depression years of the 1930s.

After the First World War there was a downturn in membership and the association again changed its rules to suit the times. It was no longer compulsory to be a member before privileges were granted. By the 1930s the YWCA had further adapted by affiliation with several sporting organisations. However, the association never lost sight of its original object to protect the moral welfare of young women.

In 1899 a competition was held for architectural designs for the new YWCA building. The design of G. de Lacy Evans and R.J. Haddon of Melbourne was placed first, and in 1900 the foundation stone was laid by Miss Colton, Sir Samuel Way presiding.

R.J. Haddon arrived in Australia in 1891, and worked in Perth, Adelaide and Hobart before settling in Melbourne at the turn of the century. Haddon, variously described as the champion of art nouveau and a pioneer of architectural modernism, designed this building in partnership with G. de Lacy Evans and it is difficult to determine the exact extent of Haddon's input.

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Certainly the corner turret and the rear elevation, together with the dramatic architectural detailing, would appear to be of Haddon's design.

The *South Australian Register*, 10 November 1900, described the Lady Colton Institute building as 'a handsome ornament to a part of the City where architectural beauties are quite unknown'.

This building is one of the best surviving examples of Edwardian/federation style building in Adelaide with notable manneristic details interpreting neo-classicism in a form which makes good use of the site. The building remains an attractive feature of the western side of Hindmarsh Square, although overshadowed by later development. The integrity of the building had been marred by the breaking out of the northern wall and the link with the modern-style Royal Automobile Association building. This use by the RAA is of historical interest as the old building has been used by them from March, 1929 until the 1950s. The Association then repurchased the building in the 1980s.



(CD Ref 0151/73)



(CD Ref 0151/74)

(Rear entrance, Hyde Street Facade)

Burgess, H.T., *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, 1909, Vol. 2, pp. 62-3; MLSA, Historical photographs (Gall Collection), *The Blue Triangle*, June 1929, p. 10; *South Australian Register*, 10 November 1900, 23 November 1900; Stewart, V., 'A history of the Adelaide Young Women's Christian Association, 1879-1939', BA Hons. thesis, Flinders University, 1985.

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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.

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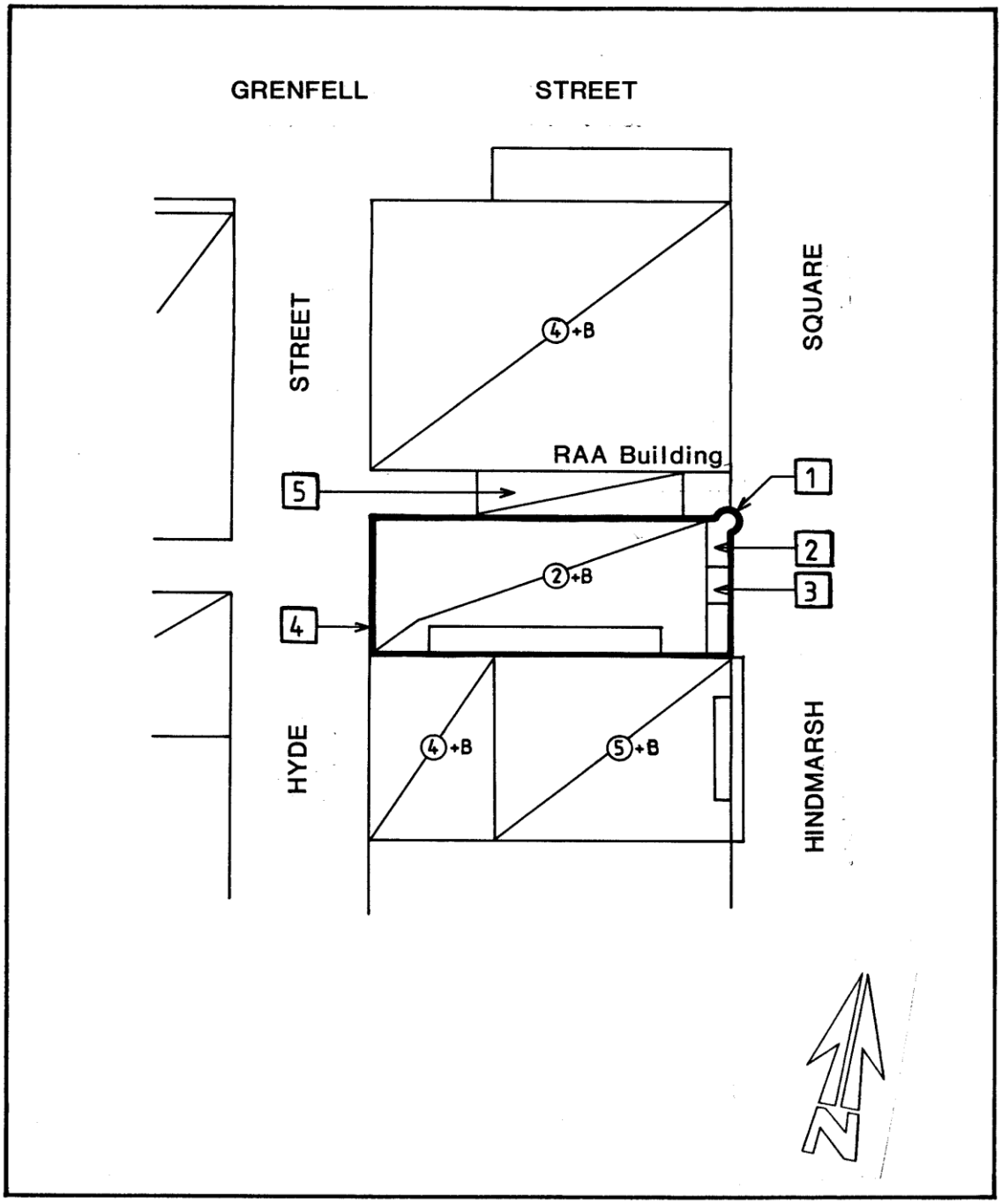
CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register - Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	R.A.A. OFFICES (Former Y.W.C.A.)	Building No 7/0803
Address	49-51 Hindmarsh Square, 10-12 Hyde Street	CT 4185/894 CT 4194/792



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NOTES:

1. Turret with extensive floral enrichment.
2. Basement reveal with metal railing.
3. Front portico and balcony above. Brick construction (English Bond) with extensive stucco enrichment. Balustraded parapet with gable.
4. Rear elevation consistently designed with Hindmarsh Square facade.
5. New link.

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