

BRAY HOUSE

56-58 Hutt Street

Bray House well represents the piecemeal and sometimes haphazard construction of many important city residences, reflecting in built form the rising status of owners. Ayers House, is another more cohesive example.

In 1837 town acres 285 to 288 were granted to John Wright. The Kingston Map of 1842 depicts a small wooden house on the part of Acre 288 now occupied by Bray House. James Bunce bought the property in 1850 for £290. By this time the timber house had evidently been replaced (or encased), for the city assessment surveyed in 1849 records that Bunce 'owned' and occupied a brick cottage of five rooms, although in 1850-51 the property was described as coach house, stables and wooden house of five rooms. By 1852 the house had increased to six brick rooms with three rooms of paling construction. On 29 September 1852 Neville Blyth purchased the property, later selling an eastern section together with parts of town acres 286 and 287 to Harry Lockett Ayers in 1867. In the intervening fifteen years the house was extended, bringing it to the form seen in the Smith Survey of 1880. Certainly in 1853 major additions were undertaken for the annual rate leapt from £65 to £125.

The noted architect George Strickland Kingston is said to have designed the slate roofed section with the colonnade but there appears to be no documentary evidence of this and as such its attribution to Kingston must be doubted. The addition to Bray House in the 1880s has been confidently attributed to the architect Rowland Rees. While this too cannot be confirmed, the ebullience of detailing suggests that Rees may have been responsible.

While the process of historical development and the architects of Bray House elude researchers, the historical significance of the house and its former owners remains beyond question. The contribution of Neville Blyth is of considerable importance to the history of South Australia. Blyth, a brother of (the Honourable Sir) Arthur Blyth, was born in Birmingham in 1828. The family arrived in South Australia in 1839, and Neville and Arthur Blyth later began an ironmongery business in Hindley Street. The firm was successful and by the late 1850s the brothers were able to take part in the public life of the colony, becoming notable politicians. Neville Blyth represented various constituencies in the House of Assembly from 1860 until 1878. He became treasurer for a brief period and minister of education 1877-78. He returned to England in 1878, was a member of the London Commission for the Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition of 1887 and died in Surrey in 1890.

The house, which has become known as Bray House, was sold in 1878 to John Cox Bray later the Honourable Sir John Cox Bray, KCMG, whose descendants continued to live in the house until the property was purchased by the Corporation of the City of Adelaide in 1973. It has since been rehabilitated as offices. John Cox Bray was born in Adelaide in 1842. He was called to the bar in 1870, became the member for East Adelaide in 1871, minister of justice in 1875, attorney general in 1876-77, leader of the opposition in 1881 and premier of South Australia from June 1881 to 1884. He also occupied the positions of chief secretary, treasurer, speaker, was knighted in 1890, and in 1891 became a member of the Federal Convention. He was agent-general in England from 1892 until his death in 1894.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide



(CD Ref 1606/67)

Bray House is important because of the historical associations and as a record of the architectural and constructional achievements over a period of thirty years. The earliest parts of the house display features typical of their period (slate roofing, paned windows,

rubble masonry and sheet metal tiled roofing). The two room deep addition of the 1880s is typical of the boom period, with flamboyant use of stucco, extensive cast-iron work (the extent and detailing of which befitted the status of J.C. Bray) and classically derived design elements. The robust nature of the composition and detailing of this wing is comparatively rare in the city. The detailing is somewhat whimsical and pretentious but is a valuable record of architecture of this period, as are the interior and fittings.

ACA, Assessments, Smith Survey 1880; Johns, F., *An Australian biographical dictionary*, 1934, p. 42; Kingston map 1842; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 285); Mennell, P., *The dictionary of Australian biography*, 1892, p. 45; Morgan E.J.R., & Gilbert, S.H., *Early Adelaide architecture 1836 to 1886*, 1969, p. 55.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). 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 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.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	BRAY HOUSE	Building No	13/0403
Address	56-68 Hutt Street 4-8 Nil Street	CTs	4111/695-698

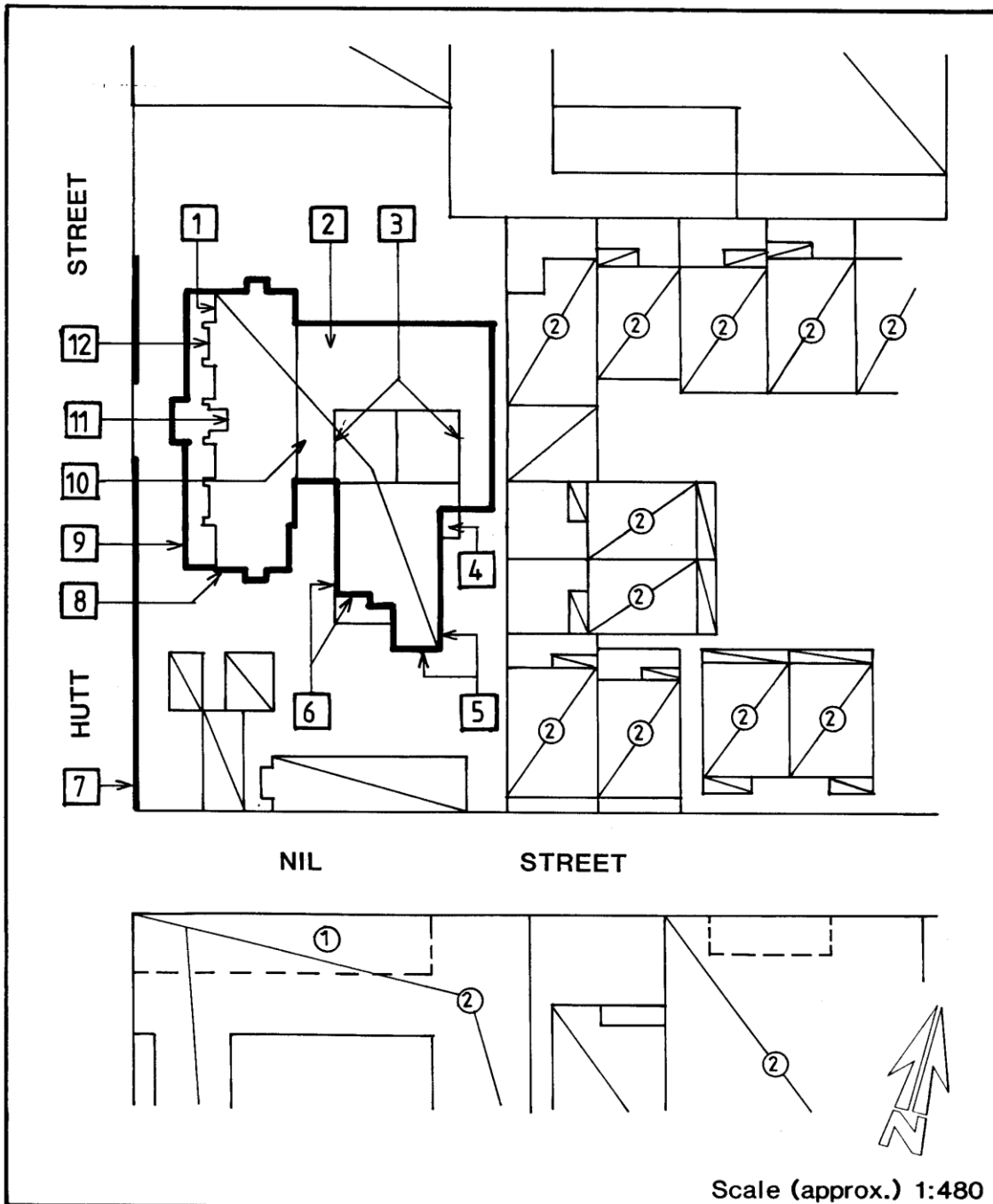


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NOTES:

1. Coursed random bluestone with extensive stucco enrichment.
2. Slate shingle roof.
3. Eaves terminated.
4. Brick addition.
5. Brick (English bond).
6. Rendered facade.
7. Bluestone fence (Note: Cast iron in central section).
8. Raised rusticated quoins.
9. Note: Cast iron friezes, spandrels and columns.
10. Cellar.
11. Note: Leadlight panels in all front windows, fanlight and sidelights.
12. Note: Detailed parapets and chimneys.