

City of Adelaide Heritage Survey (2008)

NAME: *Laubman & Pank, 62-64 Gawler Place*

ZONE/POLICY AREA: CBA - PA15

APPROVED / CURRENT USE: Shop
FORMER USE: Commercial
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: 1863; alterations 1934

LOCATION: 62-64 Gawler Place
ADELAIDE SA 5000
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Adelaide City Council
LAND DESCRIPTION: CT-5751/774 CT 5751/775

HERITAGE STATUS: Local Heritage Place
OTHER ASSESSMENTS Donovan, Marsden & Stark, 1982; McDougall & Vines, 1993



Laubman & Pank, 62-64 Gawler Place—View to southeast

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DESCRIPTION:

Five-storey Art Deco/Classical building of pleasant opening/wall proportions constructed over length of narrow city allotment to Gawler Place (front elevation) and Francis Street (rear elevation) alignments. Roof is of corrugated iron.

Front Elevation—Gawler Place

Front of building of strong vertical proportions with flat central façade framed by two projecting vertical fins. Original iron windows with divided margined panes. Restrained parapet with deeply incised bands. Simple stepped pediment flanked by ribbed detailing. Render work to masonry (brick) façade coursed and windows highlighted by tiled banding between floors. Alterations to shop fronts at ground floor—suspended awning over pavement with advertising hoarding.

Rear Elevation—Francis Street

Rear wall of building forms, with adjoining buildings, a distinctive western wall along Francis Street. Is of unpainted red brick, bluestone and retains original windows, door and rear, side fire stairs.

The assessment includes the whole building defined by the gabled roof. A particular feature is the detailing of the western elevation especially the vertical elements on either side of the building that extend from the first floor level to the pediment, along with the arrangement of windows that reflects the early construction of the building.

The assessment does not include additions at the rear, alterations to the ground floor shopfront, the cantilevered verandah, nor interiors.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

This is an historical building of great significance. It is an exceptional illustration of survival and re-use because it incorporates a warehouse dating to the city's early years (1860s) and to surviving business Harris Scarfe. The additions reflect the continuing commercial pre-eminence of the site and are an important element in a continuous line of historical buildings along this part of Gawler Place. It is also important because of its association with George S Kingston, South Australia's first Deputy Surveyor-General and one of the colony's first practising architects who later became a State parliamentarian. It illustrates several key themes in the city's history: *3.5.2 Retail and Wholesale Industry; 3.5.4 Small Retail Establishments; 4.3 Development of the Building Industry, Architecture and Construction; and 4.5.2 Victorian commercial (1870s to 1890s); 4.6 Heritage and Building Conservation; 4.7.1 Adaptive re-use.*

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; and
- (d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area; and
- (e) it is associated with a notable local personality in George S Kingston, South Australia's first Deputy Surveyor-General and one of the colony's first practising architects who later became a State parliamentarian.

ELEMENTS OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Inclusions

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

Exclusions

- Interior detailing
- Modern entry/window system at ground floor
- Any rear additions
- 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:](#)

[Shop and Office \(part former Warehouse\); external form, in particular the fabric and detailing of the Art Deco façade to Gawler Place, excluding the relief signage on the splayed vertical façade projections and the incongruous later street level shopfronts](#)

[This is the legally recognised listing and should be used for the purposes of development applicant assessment](#)

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

McDougall & Vines, 1992 with additions by Donovan & Associates, 2008

The Laubman & Pank building is a portion of a warehouse originally designed in 1863 by George S Kingston for hardware merchant George P Harris (the business later known as Harris Scarfe's). Charles Farr was the builder and a Mr Sanders constructed the walls.

At the opening of the new building in 1864, it was described as having:

... a frontage of 60 feet & by a depth of 75, and is built of Glen Osmond stone, the quoins being hammer-dressed and the stonework neatly pointed and jointed. The front has five large circular headed openings on each of the three floors. The newels of the doors and windows are in brick, as well

as the head mouldings, which are continued across the front as string courses at the level of the springing of the centres, the section of the latter, as well as of the cornice (in Portland cement), being designed from the best Norman authorities. The entire building, both externally and internally, has been constructed with the greatest care and of the most massive proportions, so as to ensure ample strength as well as space for the varied and ponderous goods forming the stock of a wholesale ironmonger. The extent and variety of the shelving alone is a proof of the vast variety of goods which modern civilization requires to be supplied by the hardware merchant. The space thus occupied comprises an area of 3,800 feet superficial on each floor after deducting the walls; and the floors are of the following heights:- Cellar, 8 feet; ground floor, 15 feet; first floor 13 feet; and second floor, 10 feet. There are two spacious entrances in Gawler-place, and two commodious staircases afford access from the ground floor to each of the others.

The cost of the new building was estimated to be approximately £6,000.

In 1870, an extension was added at the rear. Constructed of Glen Osmond stone and finished in brick, the dimensions of the new part were 117 ft x 26 ft. The architect responsible for the work was a Mr Presgrave and Mr Farr undertook the construction at an approximate cost of £1,800. The *Register* described the extension as having:

... a cellar excavated for about half the length, in addition to which there are three floors of the whole length. The cellar walls are 3 feet in thickness, those of the ground floor 2 feet 6 inches, in the first storey 2 feet, and the top 21 inches. The total height from the ground to the top of walls is 38 feet, and to the top of the roof, which is of galvanized iron in semi-circular form, 45 feet. The floors are supported by 23 iron columns and gum girders, measuring 16 x 12 inches, 14 x 12, and 12 x 12.

The building was extended to the north in 1886 (now Allens) to a design of Edmund Wright and James Reed. This new extension was constructed by Hammond & Moss and was of four storeys in height—including a basement—and was constructed entirely of brick. Both buildings were connected by archways broken through the walls. The façade of both buildings was stuccoed to achieve a uniform appearance. The stucco work included massive moulded string courses above each range of window arches, and a cornice of considerable depth which united this old warehouse and the new (now Allens) extension.



B.5338, c .1901 (SLSA)

Harris Scarfe Ltd redeveloped its premises between 1920 and 1923 and another floor was added to the entire structure. The new storey echoed the 1886 design of Wright & Reed.



B.1822, December 1923 (SLSA)

In May 1929, Fricker Bros, Alberton, was contracted to undertake extensive additions to the premises. The contract price was understood to be between £22,000–£23,000 and Eric H McMichael was the architect appointed to the project.

Laubman and Pank, opticians, acquired the building and almost immediately engaged McMichael and Harris to prepare plans for the remodelling of the premises. JB Hughes, Prospect, was appointed contractor for the project, and work commenced in March 1934.

As part of the remodelling, the front of the building was demolished and the old elevation was substituted with a new 'modernistic style'. As *The Advertiser*' noted:

The work will be carried out in brick and white cement stucco, with large steel-framed windows, and coloured tiles underneath the window sills. Two vertical coloured neon signs, on both sides of the front elevation, extending from the first floor to the top of the building, will add to its attractiveness at night.

The wooden floors at ground and first floor levels were replaced with reinforced concrete and a concrete staircase from ground to first floor levels was installed. A blackwood staircase serviced all other floors. In all, it was estimated that 'about 2,000 bags of cement, eight tons of rolled steel joists, 14 tons of mild steel rods, and about 40,000 bricks would be used in the work, in addition to other materials'.



B.6785, 1935 (SLSA)

The 'reconstructed premises' had a frontage of 35 ft to Gawler Place and extended 106 ft in depth to Francis Street. Laubman and Pank occupied part of the building that was accessed through a separate entrance. Its consulting rooms, lens grinding machines and artificial eye department were located on the ground floor, while its offices were located in the basement.

Another entrance, on the north side of the building and opening into an entrance porch, serviced the other floors. The first floor was set aside for professional suites for dentists and doctors, while the remaining floors were given over to office accommodation.

It was at this time of remodelling that the four-storey building became known as the Laubman and Pank Building.

Over the years, other alterations to the building have been undertaken. These have included: converting the shop and warehouse to offices (1955); alterations and additions (1973); an extension of the mezzanine floor (1974); erection of an awning, extension of the fire escape and interior alterations (1975); upgrading (1980); and new shopfront (1993) and signage.

George Strickland Kingston was born and trained as a civil engineer in Ireland. He migrated to South Australia in 1836 and quickly established himself as a government and commercial surveyor and architect. He was elected to the South Australian Legislative Council (1851–1857), then the House of Assembly (1857-1860, 1861–1880). He became Speaker in the House of Assembly (1857–1860, 1865–1880). Surviving examples of his work are to be seen at Government House (south-west corner of building) and the original section of the Adelaide Gaol.

Eric H McMichael began his career in architecture when he left school and was articled to Garlick & Jackman. On completion, he was employed by the Works and Buildings Department. In 1910 he opened his own practice when he was commissioned by his wife's family to design Verco Building on North Terrace. It was this commission that launched his successful architectural practice that saw him elected President of the South Australian Institute of Architects (1919–21). Soon after, he formed a partnership with Albert Harris, an Englishman who arrived in the State in 1922, and by 1927 they were reported as being one of the two largest and busiest architectural firms in South Australia. The firm was responsible for designing the former Rechabite Building, 195-197 Victoria Square. The firm's largest commission came in 1938 for design of the Savings Bank of South Australia in King William Street.

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