

BALFOUR'S SHOP

72 Rundle Mall



(CD Ref 3974/86)

Balfour's Cafe was built in 1924 as the new city premises of the baking company of Balfour Wauchope Limited. The shop was designed by the prominent Adelaide architects, Woods, Bagot and Laybourne Smith. The design of the building is considered to be innovative because of the building envelope, which is independent of the internal structure. The building has a large steel and glass curtain wall to the Rundle Mall frontage surrounded by abstracted Classical details, in particular the monumental pilasters which frame the studio-like south light. The facade is largely unaltered. There are several buildings close to Balfour's that were constructed in the 1920's.

The origins of the company lie with James Calder, a Scottish baker who emigrated to South Australia in December 1852. In 1855 he had set up a bakery and confectionery business at 130 Rundle Street and by the mid 1860s had prospered to the degree where he was able to build the City Steam Biscuit Factory in Twin Street (which still survives) as well as opening another shop at what was

then 43 Rundle Street. His nephew John Balfour had joined the business and in 1877 the company's name was changed from James Calder to Calder and Balfour. The popularity of the Company's products increased and they became 'a householdword throughout the whole of South Australia'. The company outgrew their Twin Street factory and moved to their larger newly built factory in Cardwell Street in the early 1890s. In the early 1900s, Balfour's amalgamated with one of their competitors, Bricknall and Company Limited.

The Company's expansion in the 1890s coincided with an economic recession and some hard times followed. However, Elizabeth Balfour, James' wife, salvaged the finances of the company by opening a restaurant at 136 Rundle Street. Later in 1900-1, her son, JG and son-in-law, Charles Wauchope became partners and the company name was changed to E. Balfour and Company. It was at this time that the Company's retail premises were moved to 74 Rundle Street (now known as 72). Several partnership changes occurred soon after or at the turn of the century and by 1924 the company was known as Balfour Wauchope Ltd.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

By the 1920s until well into the 1950s, Balfour's bakeries and its cakes had become a South Australian institution. The Balfour's Cafe in Rundle Street in 1929 was described as one of 'the' lunch spots in Adelaide. According to historian Rob Linn, Balfour's Cafes "breathed a gracious, but relaxed atmosphere which suited the nature of Adelaide society at that time", and until well after the Second World War.

The company continues to be one of the state's largest and best known bakeries. The bakery itself is located on the corner of Waymouth and Franklin Streets. It employs a work force of several hundred employees producing over 200 different products. Although this Rundle Street shop was sold by Balfour's in 1989, and the cafe function closed approximately ten years ago, the company leases the building for use as its major city retail outlet.

Entry for Balfour's Shop, *Significant Twentieth Century Architecture in South Australia*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects; Linn, R. *Serving the generations - a history of Balfour's*, (unpublished manuscript), 1987; Hopkins, Nigel "Checking out the biggest tuckshop...", *Advertiser*, 24 August 1984, p. 23; Thomas, Wayne "Its Balfour's - and Adelaide - revisited", *Advertiser*, 7 July 1983, p. 18; *Builder*, 20 February 1924; Woods, Bagot and Laybourne Smith, plan dated 1924; *Adelaide: Queen City of the South*, pp. 149, 158.

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.

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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.