

ALBERT BRIDGE

Frome Road

The construction of the Albert Bridge in 1879 improved communication and the transportation of goods to eastern, northern and southern Adelaide. The bridge occupies the site of an earlier bridge, destroyed by floods in the late 1840s. Temporarily, a footbridge of timber was erected alongside.

Before the erection of the Albert Bridge, City Bridge in King William Road carried the majority of traffic across the River Torrens. In August 1871 out of a special meeting of the Adelaide City Council, a petition to parliament was sent requesting a sum of £4000 towards the cost of a bridge over the river at or near the present Frome Road crossing. Soon after a public meeting was called by the mayor to discuss the issue. John Clark moved a resolution that 'the present bridges [Morphett Street and King William Road bridges] connecting North and South Adelaide were inadequate for the traffic'. Another direct communication between north and south Adelaide was demanded since the previous bridge on the Frome Road site had been swept aside some twenty years previously. A Mr Dowie went on to say, '... if a bridge was wanted there [at the Frome crossing] 20 years ago, it was much more wanted now, seeing how materially the city had increased'. At this time the City Bridge was also dilapidated and was rebuilt in the mid-1870s. The proposed bridge at the Frome Road crossing presumably took second place in order of priorities.

During this period it was proposed that the old City Bridge be transferred to the Frome Road crossing site and used there. In May 1877 tenders were called to assess the expense for such an operation, but the cost was found to be excessive. In January 1878 tenders were received for the erection of a new bridge at the Frome Road crossing to the design of Grainger and Worsley.

The foundation stone was laid by the mayor the Honourable Henry Scott in August 1878, and on 7 May 1879 the bridge was opened and named Albert Bridge by Mrs Buik the mayoress in the presence of official dignitaries and a large public gathering. The bridge was erected by Davies and Wishart under the superintendence of the city surveyor J.H. Langdon. It had a total span of 120 feet, broken into two spans of 30 feet, and a central span of 60 feet between two central caissons filled with concrete. The cast-iron work was imported from England and was combined with Tea Tree Gully sandstone to abutments, piers and wing walls. When completed the bridge cost £9000, which was a considerable price for a bridge of this span. The structure is of interest for its unusual bridging solution. It was designed by John Harry Grainger who was London born but it was in Adelaide where he practised as a qualified architect-civil engineer. He moved to Melbourne and designed Princes Bridge in addition to such notable buildings in Western Australia as the Perth Law Courts, Houses of Parliament, and the Coolgardie Town Hall. He settled at Brighton in Victoria and continued his profession. In Adelaide, he designed the Ambassadors Hotel in King William Street. J.H. Grainger's son was composer George Percy Grainger.

The bridge was redecked in the 1950s and again in 1982 when additional structural members were included to support the road deck. The bridge remains in very good condition with

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decorative elements such as hand rails, lamps and finely dressed stonework. With the landscaping of the River Torrens the bridge has taken on a greater landscape significance as one of the key visual elements of the Torrens Valley through the City of Adelaide.

ACA, *Digest of Proceedings*, 1876-77, Appendix: Conditions of contract, Engineer report on 'Screw Pile Bridges', specification, 25 February 1878, 29 April 1879, 12 May 1879, Mayor's report, 1877-78, 1878-79; MLSA, Historical photographs; *South Australian Register*, 9, 10, 15 August 1871, 18 November 1874, 24 April 1875, 9 March 1876, 9 May 1877, 5 September 1878, 29 January 1879, 15 May 1879.

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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.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item ALBERT BRIDGE

Building No

Address Frome Road (adjacent Zoological Gardens)

115001

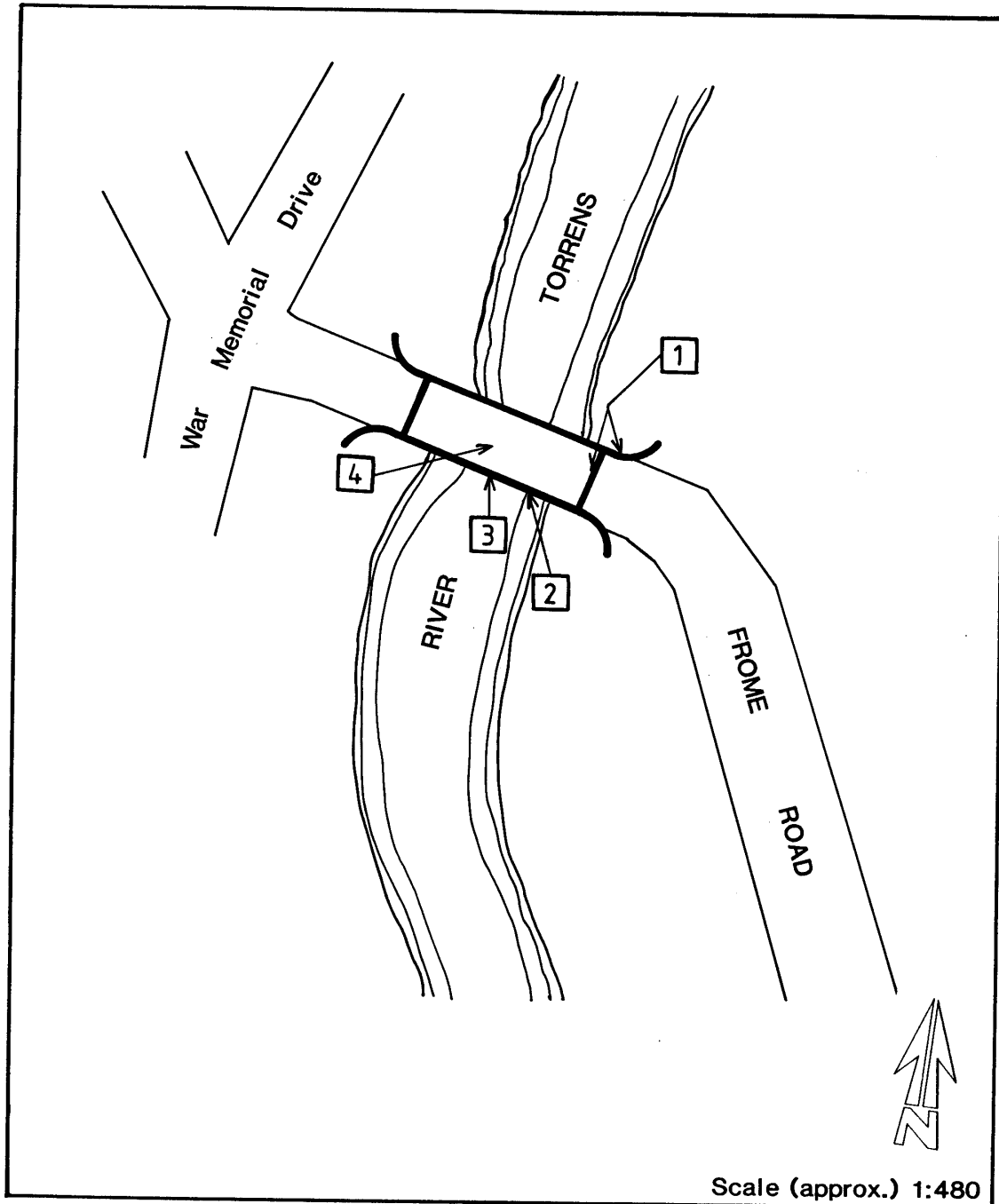


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NOTES:

1. Hammered ashlar sandstone retaining walls and approach wing walls.
2. Cast iron construction including columns, arches and riveted metal plates.
3. Note: Cast iron balustrades and lamp posts.
4. Asphalt road surface (redecked 1982).