

**THE CENTRAL MARKET - FORMER CITY MARKET
FACADE OF GOUGER STREET TWO STOREYED
SHOPS, ADELAIDE; AND
FACADE OF GROTE STREET BRICK BUILDING
WITH TOWER, ADELAIDE**

Gouger and Grote Streets

On Saturday, 23 January 1869 at about 3.15 am, a small but noisy procession wound its way from the East End Market towards Victoria Square. To the lively strains of the Concordia Band, eight carts laden with produce were driven by market gardeners in a determined attempt to secede from the East End Market.¹ Having reached a site between Gouger and Grote Streets, in only a few hours, about 500 purchasers quickly bought out the entire stock of goods for sale, so that for those hurrying to the scene of activity after 6.00 am, there was nothing left to buy.²

So began the first day of the Central Market (then called City Market) in 1869, owned and operated throughout its history by the Corporation of the City of Adelaide. The official and less lively opening was a year later, on 22 January 1870.³

From that time the Central Market has continued to evolve to assume a vital part of the heritage of the City. It is a place for trading for any merchant, grower, wholesaler or retailer selling directly to the consumer. The significance of the market lies in its position as a major retail outlet for food and market produce of all types since 1869. The market has been located at its current site for approximately 120 years. For many years the Central Market was the major place to buy food in Adelaide, the once residential heart of South Australia. It has been the focus and inspiration for much of the development in the immediate area and has been patronised by many South Australians. It is sentimentally regarded by the community.

The three Town Acres (333, 379, 380) on which the market is sited were purchased for the purposes of establishing a market in September 1867. Prior to the opening of the City Market, the Council had operated a public market from 1855⁴ until the early 1860s on land that was known as the 'Corporation acre'. In the early 1860s, the Town Hall was constructed on land that had been set aside for its municipal purposes, thereby displacing the market.

The City needed a produce market that was spacious and conveniently located. Richard Vaughan saw the opportunity and by 1861 provided what was needed, close to the then unmade East Terrace, between Rundle Street and North Terrace.⁵ The Corporation was powerless to intervene when such a facility was desperately needed. Nevertheless, they

¹ *The South Australian Register*, 25 January 1869

² *Observer*, 30 January 1869

³ *South Australian Register*, 24 January 1870, p. 3c

⁴ *Observer*, 23 December 1854 and 5 February 1855

⁵ Warburton, E. *The History of St Peters*

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intended to provide and profit from a market in the future. However Vaughan built and consolidated his enterprise without competition from a Corporation market.

The Corporation procrastinated during the early 1860s when several choice City blocks became available. Even an area in the Park Lands, opposite Waterhouse Buildings in North Terrace was considered⁶, but the Chief Secretary in July 1866, "declined to allow land forming part of the Government reserve" to be used as a market site.⁷ The failure of the Corporation to act swiftly in providing market facilities only strengthened Vaughan's position and guaranteed him eventual permanency for his private market.

By the time the Corporation had finally bought three Town Acres, Vaughan's market was "filled to overflowing with gardeners from all quarters". Just before the Corporation's opening of the City Market in January 1869, questions were asked about the legality of the operation of the East End Market, which apart from anything else was grossly overcrowded. A few days before the Corporation's market opened, a "little undue energy" from the police soon convinced the crowded-out traders that some of them should simply move on. This interference by the police and the Corporation in the East End Market activities ' did not go unnoticed by parliamentarians who alluded to the events in the House of Assembly and referred the issue onto the Attorney General to investigate.⁸ Vaughan "applied for and obtained first an Act for the establishment of markets in 1871, and in 1872 a private Act for making and maintaining a market at East Terrace".⁹ During these negotiations the Corporation did all it could to prevent the Act for Vaughan's market being assented to, but was unsuccessful.

Six months after the opening of the Central City Market, in June 1869, timber and iron sheds were constructed. The market was open for business on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday mornings, and as many as 50 to 100 produce carts made use of the new facilities. Initially, a single shed with the dimensions of 160 feet x 50 feet x 16 feet high was constructed, with another completed by its side several weeks later. The first shed accommodated 87 carts. The two sheds were soon fitted with gas lighting.¹⁰ The Mayor's Report of 1873 recorded that the two sheds were joined together by "throwing a roof over the central roadway between sheds A and B, and the erection of a lofty and well-built shed along the western boundary of Acre 380".¹¹

Because of all the activities on the site, it became necessary to build a five room dwelling for the clerk of the market so that "greater attention and care would thus be given and exercised over this valuable property". The dwelling was built on Town Acre 333, on the northwest frontage in 1875. In November 1877, it was reported that "this city market is slowly but steadily working its way into public favour".¹² Each year after 1869, with the increasing popularity of the market, several shops were built on the perimeter of the market area, facing

⁶ Adelaide City Council, *Digest of Proceedings*, notice papers, 14 May 1866

⁷ Adelaide City Council, *Digest of Proceedings*, notice papers, 30 July 1866

⁸ *Observer*, 23 January 1869

⁹ Burgess, H.T. *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. 2, pp. 204-9

¹⁰ *South Australian Register*, 19 June 1869, supplement, p. 4 h

¹¹ Mayor's Report, Adelaide City Council, 1873, p. 2

¹² Mayor's Report, Adelaide City Council, 1873, p. 2

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Gouger and Grote Streets. A two storey 27 room hotel, known as the Langham Hotel was built¹³ to meet the need for accommodation and refreshment for the workers.

The market in the early 1880s is recorded as offering for sale from its premises, vegetables, fruit, hay, meat, some fish and game, but there was pressure to consider providing increased facilities for a fish market. There was no place in Adelaide where the occasional large supplies of fish could be received for resale. As a result the supply of fresh fish was scarce even though there were plenty to be caught. The opening of the railways to Port Augusta and Port Pirie also saw the possibility of regular supplies of fish being available for the public to buy, if there was a central depot from which it could be distributed.¹⁴ As it was, only one fishmonger, Edwin Daw, was selling fish from the shops he had rented, on three days a week. As a consequence a new brick fronted shed to be used as a fish market was constructed in 1884, deliberately detached from the other market sheds. The market was leased initially for 30 years to Daw and remained until September 1923. It was situated on Town Acre 379 facing Gouger Street.

From the 1880s until 1900, the 1869 sheds held the 35 shops and 260 stalls that made up the market. The sheds had become crammed and dilapidated and it was obvious that more accommodation was required. In 1900, plans were drawn of an impressive two storey brick facade facing Grote Street to replace the 1869 sheds. The *Advertiser* wrote that at first "the idea was to do the work piecemeal, but it was decided to carry it all out on a settled plan, so that the completed building should form one homogeneous whole".¹⁵

The building will be in red brick, with terra-cotta facings, and will undoubtedly be seen to special advantage in Grote Street, the magnificent width of this thoroughfare giving excellent opportunities for viewing architectural beauties. As can be seen the building is to be two storeys in height, the lower of which is to be filled with shops, with handsome plate-glass fronts. The arches above the shop fronts are to be filled with stained glass, which will greatly add to the appearance.¹⁶

Included in the plans was an 80 feet x 32 feet assembly room on the first floor where wedding parties, dances and parties could be held.¹⁷ The large shed covering the existing stalls was also to be rebuilt. Sixteen shops were also incorporated into the Grote Street additions. The foundation stone was laid on 8 February 1900. The design of the building was the product of the Corporation's chief draughtsman, R Sloan, under the direction of the City Engineer. It was hoped that such a facade would also grace Gouger Street.

Not long after the Grote Street additions were completed, which in the end was not quite as the plans first depicted, a 121 foot veranda was added to the facade.¹⁸

The gas lighting which had been sufficient for almost 35 years gave way to the new technology of electricity in 1902. The Mayor and members of his Council visited the market on a Saturday night to witness the effectiveness of the new electric lighting.¹⁹

¹³ Mayor's Report, Adelaide City Council, 1879-80, p. 96

¹⁴ Mayor's Report, Adelaide City Council, 1881-80, p. 133

¹⁵ *Advertiser*, 8 February 1900

¹⁶ *Advertiser*, 8 February 1900

¹⁷ Mayor's Report, Adelaide City Council, 1899-1900, p. 102

¹⁸ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1901, p. 10

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In 1905 seven old shops at the southern end of the Central Market facing Gouger Street were demolished to make way for larger two storey shops which were completed in 1906. These shops are now an essential part of the market buildings in Gouger Street. Seven shops were also demolished on the western side of the market and replaced in 1905.²⁰ In 1906, alongside the Grote Street brick facade, three, two-storey shops were built and leased. This building went on to be the successful Empire Theatre which opened in April 1909 and remained as such until 1952 in which year Peoplestores Limited acquired the building and created a Gouger Street shop frontage.

The Central Market acted as a magnet for other businesses, including the rebuilt Hampshire Hotel in 1911, the theatre now known as Her Majesty's and Moore's Department stores in 1914. The Central Market buildings continued to develop by replacement, additions and alterations.

One of the most ambitious building programs at the market, apart from the frontage to Grote Street, was the construction of the arcade of shops in 1915 to utilise all the remaining vacant land. It was built on the eastern side of the market.

“On these frontages it is proposed to build 36 first-class one storey modern shops and on the eastern frontage nine second-class shops to replace the 10 existing shops there. The roof of the arcade is to be constructed of glass in iron framing, and floor will be of tiles or slagetto paving.”²¹

The cost of the improvements was estimated to be £28,957 and work commenced in April 1915. The arcade was built between Grote and Gouger Streets extending from the eastern market roadway to Moore's Department Store, fronting Victoria Square. The arcade was 30 feet wide and 201 feet long, running east and west from the eastern roadway of the market to Page Street. Several smaller arcades opened from the main arcade. The arcade ceiling was fitted with a great deal of stained glass or leadlighting and Wunderlich ceilings were incorporated into the structure. The arcades were closed with ornamental iron gates hung at the northern and southern entrances, with large collapsible gates at the main eastern and western entrances. The design for the arcades were prepared in the Engineer's Department of the Corporation. In April 1920, Tuesday trading commenced.²²

Early on the morning of 27 December 1925, the north eastern corner of the market suffered damage through fire. The prompt efforts of the fire brigade prevented it spreading into the arcade and only two shops were gutted and eight slightly damaged.²³

The Corporation continued to improve the market by replacement of antiquated facilities as and when it became necessary. In 1927 the market consisted of 252 stalls, three promenades, two roadways for vehicles with a centre promenade running east and west. However, there was always, it seemed, further room for improvement, such as remodelling or providing new

¹⁹ Adelaide City Council, Digest of Proceedings, 17 March 1902

²⁰ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1905, p. 49

²¹ *SA Register*, 20 October 1914

²² Adelaide City Council, *Annual Report*, 1915, pp. 30-31; 1916, p. 22; media release to *Advertiser* and *SA Register*, 10 August 1915.

²³ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1925, p. 30

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sanitary arrangements to dispose of the rubbish accumulated during market hours. From the early 1920s there was growing criticism of the butchers' stalls which were seen as unsanitary and generally in poor repair. Reports from the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board first confirmed these fears in 1922.²⁴ But it was 1929 before the Corporation acted deciding not to renew the leases of the butchers. Understandably the butchers' protests reached the News on 29 October 1929. Sales of meat were very high, especially at the weekends, when as much as £5000 worth was sold. One tenant, L. Meredith who had leased a stall for 32 years said "Sales of meat there were a public necessity. Customers came from all suburbs, and from as far as Gawler". It was also voiced that "if the meat stalls go hundreds of customers will be affected". The Metropolitan Abattoirs Board had first contacted the Corporation six years before and now they insisted the butchers' stalls be improved or demolished. Only in June 1930 did the City Engineer's office propose a scheme for the reconstruction of stalls suitable for butchers' and fish stalls. The stalls were designed to be fly proof, while maintaining the essential character of the market. In order to pay for the costs of new stalls, the rents for these traders rose by 58 percent to 15/- for the fish stalls, and by 131 percent to £2-5-0 for the butchers. Works did not begin until 1933 when on 3 March, the *Advertiser* reported that seven new butchers' stalls were at last going to be rebuilt.

The Depression had begun to affect the trading of the Market by 1931. In the Annual Report of 1930-1, it was stated that "of 41 shops in the market one is vacant, while of 74 in the Arcade, 23 are unoccupied. One only of the five work rooms is untenanted". The tenants, through the Central Market Stallholders' Association wrote asking for a reduction in fees for the occupancy of the stalls at the Market.²⁵ On 20 May 1931, the Corporation decided to decrease all fees for stalls held by agreement by 20 per cent and 10 per cent for those occupied under daily tenancy. This was to take effect from 1 October 1931.²⁶

From the Depression until the 1960s, a 30 year period, no major work was carried out to the market buildings. When the Council decided to improve the market in the 1960s, the works were of a radical nature. The Corporation approved the removal of much of the interior of the Central Market, including all the iron and glass market arcades. Only part of the Grote Street brick facade was retained together with the shops fronting Gouger Street. When the Central Market was first under review for redevelopment in 1955-6, a rooftop car park for 230 cars was also planned for the market. In March 1958 it was reported that "Adelaide City Council would be justified in spending at least £2 million in redeveloping the city market area". Further it was stated that it was seen as expenditure that would not only profit the Council but could also stimulate a dramatic growth in the southern section of the City.²⁷

Stimulation in the City was certainly needed, for the City's population was plummeting. It had already dropped to 28,000 from 35,000 in 1951 and continued to drop to 14,000 in 1972. Councillor Bert Edwards pointed out that "it is time Adelaide City Council paid more attention to the south-west section of the city, which is screaming out for development and where already some progress had been made".²⁸ Dall the Jeweller, of one of the arcade shops, wrote to the Town Clerk in September 1960 that the "shop fronts and general appearance of the arcade leaves much to be desired. General feeling of shopkeepers is that the arcade is

²⁴ Adelaide City Archives, Town Clerk's Department, C15/54/157A

²⁵ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1932, p. 28, *Advertiser*, 10 May 1932

²⁶ *Advertiser*, 31 May 1932

²⁷ *The News*, 25 March 1958

²⁸ *The News*, 25 March 1958

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losing ground in present commercial business and would welcome assistance from Council to stimulate trade".²⁹

A great deal of advice and guidance was sought by the Corporation in relation to the markets' redevelopment. Finally in November 1963, preliminary sketch plans by architects, Cheesman, Doley, Brabham and Neighbour were approved with authorisation to produce final sketch plans and an estimate of cost for redevelopment of the market area which was expected to be over £400,000. Wilckens and Burnside Limited won the tender for the reconstruction in November and commenced on 18 January 1965.³⁰ At this stage the eastern end facade of the market in Grote Street was demolished.

On 17 June 1966, Lord Mayor James Irwin OBE, opened the new market. The rooftop carpark on its first trading day saw a turnover of 3,600 cars using the 230 bay car park. Building works had begun on the eastern half of the site.

Behind the Grote Street brick facade, all traces of the old market were removed and redeveloped in two stages. The 76 remodelled stalls were situated on six brightly lit malls running north-south with the facility for selling from both sides instead of one as previously.³¹ Each had "mezzanine storage areas above and additional shops were constructed under the carpark ramps." Escalators were installed between the ground floor and carparks. During the 1960s redevelopment of the market, the Corporation decided that the market should have its title officially recognised. Up until 16 August 1965, the market had always been the City Market. After this date it was the Central Market.

In February 1967, a 50 year lease was granted to Weinarts (Victoria Square) Pty. Ltd. for the redevelopment of the eastern two acres which had contained an arcade of shops and the Langham Hotel.³² In June 1968, the first stage of the redevelopment was completed and a month later C J Coles opened for business.

For ten years the Central Market had few alterations except that it could now accommodate 530 motor cars under cover at this 'one-stop' shopping complex. However, on the night of 27 June 1977, a major portion of the southern stall area of the market was badly damaged by fire causing \$500,000 worth of damage. Major restoration and rejuvenation works were quickly undertaken³³ but from this time onwards until 1983, the market was threatened by several major redevelopment schemes which never came to fruition. Fierce competition from suburban shopping centres caused much concern and stallholders first raised proposals to attract more shoppers to the area through increased overhead car parks.³⁴

Historically, the Central Market has reflected the times and fortunes of the South Australian economy. It is a reflection of fortunes and attitudes and a much loved institution. The buildings nominated for the Register (the Grote Street buildings constructed in 1900, and the Gouger Street buildings erected in 1906) reflect the second phase of the construction of substantial buildings to be erected on the site that housed market functions. As such, they

²⁹ Adelaide City Council, Town Clerk's Department, C15/54

³⁰ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1964-65, p. 53

³¹ *Advertiser*, 15 June 1966

³² Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1966-67, p. 6

³³ Adelaide City Council, Annual Report, 1976-77

³⁴ *Australian*, 3 September 1985

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reflect the consolidation of the Central Market as it firmly established itself as a major retail food outlet.

The architectural reminders of the early years of the market are the brick facades on Grote Street that date from 1900 and a group of seven two-storey shops in Gouger Street, completed in 1906.

The Grote Street building is a two storey brick building with a four storey tower to the western end of the building. A modern steel-framed, mesh clad pedestrian and car park entrance is attached to both ends of the building. The brickwork used in all the walls of the building is of good quality. The bricks are laid in a Flemish bond and are, and were always designed to be, exposed. The roof of the building is disguised behind a parapet. The building features a decorative brick parapet using profiled bricks. The brickwork to the tower has been laid to create a decorative scalloped pattern.

The Gouger Street shops constructed in 1906, are housed in a two storey building of brick that features rendered decoration and parapets to the face of the building. The main features of the building are three distinctive gables, projecting from above the parapet.

Both buildings (the Grote and Gouger Street shops) are constructed in architectural styles popular at the time and therefore they represent an important architectural style and period. There are several examples of more florid architectural styles in the City; the Adelaide Fruit and Produce Exchange, West's Coffee Palace and the RAA Building in Hindmarsh Square. The buildings constructed near the Central Market are much simpler, but are good examples of their period, demonstrating the increasingly acceptable use of brickwork to produce solid, utilitarian buildings.

The construction of both buildings and the evident success of the market, encouraged other businesses to establish themselves here, often using a similar design theme.

Both buildings contribute to notable physical environments. Their character and construction prompted the erection of other new buildings in the vicinity, a good many of which were constructed using red brick. The character of the Grote Street and Gouger Street buildings may be said to have informed the character of the area.

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