

## STATUE OF HERCULES

Pennington Garden West, North Adelaide



This life-size bronze statue of Hercules is placed on a pedestal which was designed by local firm of monumental masons, Hugh Fraser and Frederick Draysey. The statue is a copy of Glycon's Farnese Hercules in Naples, Italy and the *Observer*, with overstatement typical of the day, recorded that this was the finest Hercules in the world. It was presented to the City of Adelaide by W.A. Horn and unveiled on 4 October 1892 by the Mayor of Adelaide, F.W. Bullock.

The *Adelaide Observer* reported the unveiling of the statue commenting that Adelaide could now boast the statue of a heathen goddess and god, thanks to the generosity and Classical taste of Horn, for the admiration of the "thoughtful and the refined". Hercules was described in the following terms:

the pride of his magnificent  
physique eloquently  
expressed in bronze, lounges  
negligently with his  
formidable club within  
reach, and will, it is  
hoped, retain

(CD Ref 2835/75)

his post until the crack of doom, or as long as his tough metallic frame hold out. The figure is a fine example of what the ancients considered the grandest type of muscular manhood, the vast shoulders, deep chest, powerful trunk and magnificent muscles swelling out of the body and limbs conveying, through the genius of the original sculptor, the idea of superhuman strength, though perhaps not activity.

Horn donated the statue to the City on the condition that it was placed in a position where it "would be free from the attacks of larrikins." He suggested it should be placed in the north eastern corner of Victoria Square and this was agreed to by Council in June 1892. The statue remained in Victoria Square until June 1930 when it was moved to Pennington Garden West as a part of remodelling of Victoria Square.

William Austin Horn (1841-1922) was a mining magnate, pastoralist and politician. Horn was born in NSW and moved to South Australia with his family in 1852. Horn worked on Walter Hughes' property at Wallaroo when copper ore was discovered in the area by the shepherd, Patrick Ryan. The story is told that Hughes asked Horn to ride to Adelaide to lodge a claim for the land. A rival syndicate had also learnt of the discovery and Horn's task was to reach Adelaide before them. As it happened both teams were waiting at the lands office for it to open and Horn was recognised by the clerk at the office and consequently lodged his claim first. The rival syndicate was unhappy and a select committee set up to investigate the matter. It found against Hughes and ordered that the matter be settled in court. Hughes paid thousands of pounds for the mine, that was eventually to become one of the richest in Australia. Horn became a shareholder. Following the success of the Wallaroo copper mines he invested in pastoral properties which eventually prospered. Horn's capital was used to prospect for and develop existing and new mines across the country and he was involved in the discovery of Broken Hill. He became a shareholder in the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. Horn developed businesses in the Asian region. He was extraordinarily wealthy, through a fortunate combination of good luck and good management.

Horn entered the South Australian House of Assembly in 1887 and remained a member until 1893. He organised and funded a scientific expedition to the centre of Australia which resulted in a four volume report detailing the biological, geological, botanical and ethnological discoveries of the expedition. He contributed to the funding for the Australasian Antarctic Expedition in 1911-14. In 1896 he moved to England and returned to SA only briefly in 1901 and 1907. He maintained that an Australian was simply an Englishman born in the sun. He died in London in 1922 and left an estate valued at over £200,000 to his family.

Horn was one of a number of very wealthy South Australian nineteenth century gentlemen and benefactors. He participated in public life, representing South Australians in parliament, funded scientific expeditions, published his own books of verse and generously donated art to the city and collections to the museum. Although Horn never held an academic degree he was apparently interested in the Classics. This may explain his donation of three statues to the City of Adelaide acquired while he travelled in Europe. All three statues have Italian provenance and are in the Classical manner. This statue, together with Venus and the Athlete were the earliest statues to adorn the streets of Adelaide. All three statues were seen to be the epitome of maturity and consolidation of endeavour in material success and also in the concern for the arts.

Weston, K.H. *The Statuary of Adelaide, 1920-21*, Held in the MLSA; City of Adelaide, *City of Adelaide Reference Book*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1983, p 112; *The Adelaide Observer*, 8 October 1892, p 33; Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Searle, (eds.), *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, South Australia, 1983, vol 9, 1891-1939, pp 367-8; City of Adelaide correspondence, Director of Corporate Services to Ms Patricia Tyley, 8 December 1989.

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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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.*