

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE

King William Road

The first Adelaide Festival of Arts was held in 1960 as a brave - and successful - attempt to promote Adelaide's role as a centre for arts within Australia. The festival became a biennial event, the focus of which is now the Festival Centre itself built above Elder Park and the banks of the River Torrens.

This site has long been associated with entertainment since the creation of the Torrens Lake and Elder Park with its rotunda in 1881. The Festival Centre complex covers the site of the City Baths, Cheer-up Hut and Advertiser Sound Shell as well as the Government Printery, and Lands Department stables.



(CD Ref 2835/37)

The construction of the Festival Centre represented a milestone in South Australian history as a dramatic expression of the South Australian part in Australian cultural development and of local political commitment to that development. It was built by the state government as the centre for performing arts in South Australia and was officially opened on 2 June 1973.

The architects were Hassell and Partners and the builders A.V. Jennings Industries (Australia) Limited.

The Festival Centre is an unashamedly modern complex notable for its bold structuralistic approach to form. The multi-purpose Festival Theatre, the more intimate drama theatre (Playhouse), the experimental theatre (Space) and the Amphitheatre are integrated successfully by roof form and the formality of the dominant octagonal module. The individual components of the complex are noted for their versatility, the appeal of internal spaces, the quality of finishes, the good acoustics and the planning of seating and facilities which are held in high regard by artists and patrons alike. The complex has been criticised as 'strident' in colour and finish. Concern has also been expressed that the Festival Theatre and Playhouse Theatre express themselves as concrete buildings whereas they are in fact steel framed. There are also some serious structural faults. Yet the complex as a whole is genuinely historic and the architecture may be regarded as progressive while reflecting the period in which the concept was first mooted.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

The striking form contrasts to adjacent buildings erected in the classical idiom. It is a dramatic punctuation in the Torrens Lake frontage and visually dominant from War Memorial Drive, King William Road and the Adelaide Bridge. The Hajek sculpture plaza and recent additions such as the larger restaurant and conference centre are not as happily related, the plaza in particular butting uncomfortably against the exposed northern wall of Parliament House.



(CD Ref 2835/38)



(CD Ref 2835/39)

Advertiser, 3 March 1973, 1 June 1973, 25 October 1974, 19 March 1977; *Architecture Review*, July 1974, September 1978; Bolase, N., 'Largest work in Australia' in *Bulletin*, 3 May 1975, p. 52; Brown, I., 'Adelaide Festival Centre review' in *Architecture Australia*, October/

November 1977; *Bulletin*, 9 November 1974, pp. 47-50; *Constructional Review*, August/September 1973, pp. 34-41, March 1976; Kemp, K., & Molnar, G., 'On the 'Adelaide Festival Centre' in *Theatre Australia*, May 1977, p. 10-12; Premier's Department, South Australia, Press release, 8 April 1975; *SA Chapter Bulletin, RAlA*, February 1975, p. 3; Saunders, D., 'Festival Theatre' in *Art and Australia*, October/December 1973, pp. 168-73; Saunders, D., 'Sense and nonsense of the Adelaide Festival Theatre' in *Architecture in Australia*, December 1973, pp. 60-3; Whitelock, D, *Festival: the story of the Festival of Arts*, 1980.

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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.

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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	FESTIVAL CENTRE AND SCULPTURE PLAZA	Building N ^o
Address	King William Road	261501

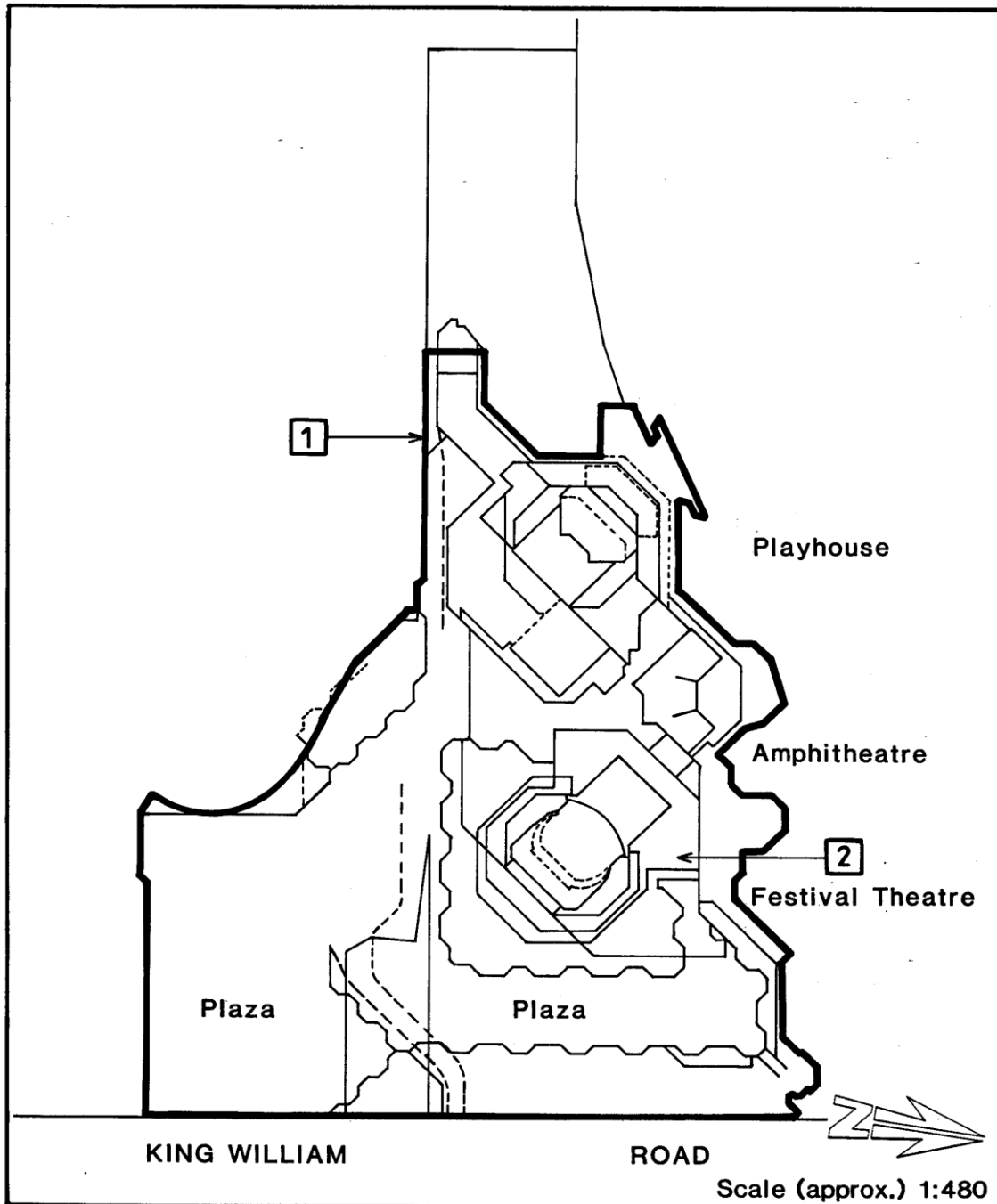


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NOTES:

1. Extent of curtilage.
2. Brick construction (Stretcher Bond) with use of concrete panels and glass.