

# STATUE OF COLONEL WILLIAM LIGHT

‘Light’s Vision’ Montefiore Hill

The statue on Montefiore Hill at North Adelaide was originally located at the entrance to Victoria Square, pointing north along King William Street. The original site chosen for the statue was the centre of the roadway in Victoria Square in a line with Flinders and Franklin Streets. It was moved to its present location in May 1938.



The statue consists of a bronze figure, that stands 9 feet and 6 inches high. It was the work of W. Birnie Rhind of Edinburgh. The figure stands on a pedestal designed by the South Australian architectural firm of Garlick, Sibley and Wooldridge. The pedestal is composed of grey and red granite, parts of which are polished and parts of which are rock faced. The whole composition is over 15 feet high.

The statue was commissioned as a result of the evident decay of the sandstone monument and memorial erected in memory of Light which marked his grave in Light Square. A committee was established in January 1892 and it decided “That the meeting considers it desirable to perpetuate the memory of the late Colonel Light, founder of the City of Adelaide, by the erection of some substantial monument in the city for that purpose.” The Adelaide City Council, the Government

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and the public were approached for donations to fund the erection of a statue. The citizens of Adelaide donated £368 towards the statue and the Government and Council promised £1000 and £500 respectively. However progress in erecting the statue was slow and it was not until 1905 that the Government and Council donated their promised amounts. A committee was formed to call for designs and select a site in 1904.

In 1904, it was also decided that a replacement monument should be erected to mark the grave of Light in Light Square. The Committee selected one of the thirteen designs submitted in May 1904. It was the work of the architect H.L. Jackman, and took the form of a granite column topped by a surveyor’s theodolite. The Light Square monument was unveiled in June 1905. This has recently been placed on the Register of State Heritage Items.

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In December 1904, the model by the Scottish sculptor, Birnie Rhind of Colonel Light was selected from nine designs for the statue that had been submitted in 1904. The Council's Annual Report of 1905 stated that the casting of the winning design was underway and that it should be ready for unveiling in early 1906. Considerable delays were experienced as the sculptor had some difficulty in establishing what was the proper uniform for Colonel Light's regiment, the Royal Engineers in 1836. Apparently difficulties were also experienced in the casting of the figure at the bronze founders in England. The statue was shipped from England in September 1906 and arrangements were made for its unveiling in early December 1906.

William Birnie Rhind was born in Edinburgh in 1853 and died there in 1933. He was the son of the sculptor John Rhind. William Birnie Rhind studied at the Edinburgh School of Design and the Royal Scottish Academy. Rhind was elected a full member of the Royal Society of Art in 1905 and is noted for sculpting numerous monuments and memorials in Edinburgh, most notably those featured in the Scottish National Gallery and the statues and bas-reliefs on the various regimental memorials after the Boer War. The architectural firm of Garlick, Sibley and Wooldridge was commissioned to prepare the pedestal. The statue cost £1000 with the pedestal costing £510. In February 1906 a successful appeal was made for further subscriptions to the fund.

The statue was unveiled on 27 November 1906 by the Governor Sir George Le Hunte with the words, "In the name of the King and on behalf of the State of South Australia, I unveil this statue of the founder of Adelaide." An immense crowd had gathered to witness the unveiling ceremony. The date of the unveiling was significant as it was exactly 70 years previously that Light decided on the site for Adelaide. The pegging out of the streets and allotments commenced on January 11 and was completed on March 10. Landowners took possession of their allotments on 23 March 1837.



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On 12 October 1919, Sir Henry Galway unveiled a bronze wreath attached to the pedestal. The wreath was the outcome of the first Town Planning Conference held in Adelaide in appreciation of Light's imagination and foresight as a town planner.

In January 1938 the Council received a letter from the Pioneers' Association of South Australia asking that consideration be given to commemorating the centenary of Light's death in 1839. Among their proposals was the idea to transfer Light's statue from King William Street to the vicinity of the newly improved lookout and sundial on Montefiore Hill. The Pioneers' Association provided estimates for a further improvement and extension of the area, including a grander platform and the creation of a roadway that encircled the lookout site. It was a design provided by the architect, F. Kenneth Milne. Council decided not to improve the area, but to simply move the statue and place it on the site of the sundial. The President of the Pioneers' Association, Sir Henry Newland suggested the lookout be renamed "Light's Vision". It was decided no function would be held to mark the moving of the statue and it was re-erected on its new site in May 1938.

Since its relocation to Montefiore Hill, Light's Vision has become one of the most popular sites for tourists and locals to visit in Adelaide. It is difficult to know whether this is due to the fine statue on the site or the view over the City that the lookout provides. In any case the statue can be argued to be of considerable aesthetic interest. Most South Australians and many visitors have experienced the view from the lookout.

Weston, K.H. *The Statuary of Adelaide*, 1920-1, Held in the MLSA; City of Adelaide, *City of Adelaide Reference Book*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1983, p 111-2; *The Advertiser*, 28 November 1906, pp 7-8; *The Advertiser*, 27 November 1906, pp 6-7; ACC File 153c; ACC Annual Report, 1903, p 11; ACC Annual Report, 1904, pp 13 and 19; ACC Annual Report, 1905, p 7; ACC Annual Report, 1906, p 11; ACC Annual Report, 1937-8, p 12.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **City of Adelaide Heritage Study**, October 1990, Volume Two, 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.

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.*