

NORTH ADELAIDE RAILWAY STATION AND SIGNAL BOX; WYE SIGNAL CABIN; 1854 ABUTMENTS TO RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER RIVER TORRENS

These items are associated with the development and subsequent expansion of the South Australian rail network located in and near the west Park Lands.

On 26 March 1847 the first Australian ordinance for the regulation and construction of railways was passed in South Australia. This did not relate to any specific railway but set out in great detail the conditions, responsibilities, limitations and privileges applying to future companies empowered by 'Special Acts' to construct and operate railways.

In 1848 the Adelaide City and Port Railway Company was formed in London, and although negotiations failed and the project was abandoned, a private act was passed for the construction and operation of a railway from ' . . . the stone quarry below the Legislative Council Building along Port Road Adelaide with a branch to the North Arm'. This presumably created the precedent for the necessary location of the Adelaide railway station complex (the present railway station building having replaced a station dating from 1854). In 1851 an act was passed appointing a board of undertakers to build a railway to the Port with government funds. This railway was the first colonial (state) owned railway in the British Empire. The opening of the line took place on 19 April 1856. Any remnants from this original Adelaide-Port line are among the earliest remains of steam powered railway in Australia.

Benjamin Herschell Babbage (1815-78) was appointed as local chief engineer. In England the services of Isambard Kingdom Brunel chief engineer of the Great Western Railway Company were enlisted as agent and consulting engineer. Brunel made highly significant contributions



to the increasing use and exploitation of industrial technology in the mid-nineteenth century. Babbage as an associate of Brunel, designed and built railways in England and Italy during the years 1842-48. The rails originally laid in the Adelaide to Port railway were of the same type as those used in the Great Western Line in England.

By January 1852 the line was

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being laid, and in 1853, 9 acres in the Park Lands were sought for the yards and station complex. In 1854 tenders were called for the major works such as the railway station and terminus, and in October the abutments and groynes for the bridge over the River Torrens were being erected. In 1855 the Torrens Railway Bridge crossed the water at a height of 32 feet. The arch was constructed of timber and had a clear span of 106 feet over the river with girders at 13 feet

intervals and stone abutments of 5 feet thick concrete foundations protected by sheet piling. Castings were made by Pybus with ironwork wrought by Baker. Jacob Pitman constructed this Babbage designed bridge for £8000 over a period of thirteen months.

Some of the abutments of this original bridge survive and appear to be constructed of Torrens Valley limestone. Not only are these abutments important to the history of steam locomotion in Australia but they are also the earliest surviving remains of a bridge across the River Torrens. The bridge, the abutments and its structure are well illustrated in a watercolour by H. Glover of 1856. It would appear that even the upper walling with brick arches recessed is original, as a contemporary description stated that 80 cubic yards of brick in arches and invert were used.

In 1876 the bridge over the river was upgraded and a bowstring arch built on the



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1854 abutments. It no longer exists. A single span arch bridge constructed and positioned a few metres east on the new Main North Line in 1910-11 was transferred on to the Port Line in 1925, displacing the 1876 bowstring bridge which was dismantled soon after. As a result of



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track standardisation the western side of the abutment has been compromised by a new bridge built in the early 1980s.

The next line to be opened was the line to Gawler (1857, then extended to Kapunda in 1860). This resulted in the construction of the North

Adelaide Railway Station. It was opened in 1857 as part of the expansion of the rail network in South Australia and is among the earliest railway stations to survive. (The stations at Bowden and Alberton were built in 1855, and Gawler was built in 1857.) In 1878 alterations were made to the windows, doors and west facing veranda over the platform. The station was slightly extended, and in about 1880 the present signal box was erected.

Other structures associated with the expansion and development of the South Australian rail network are the signal cabin at the Adelaide yard of 1899 (of almost identical design to the

signal cabin at Peterborough), and the Adelaide Wye Signal Cabin of 1915 near the Adelaide Gaol.



(CD Ref 1256/27)

The Adelaide Times, 21 April 1856; Cumming, D., *Industrial heritage tour of part of the city of Adelaide*, 1981; Cumming, D., *Notes on engineers* (draft), Department of Civil Engineering, University of Adelaide, 1982; *Register*, 12 October 1925; SAPP, No. 87 of 1853, *Report of Select Committee on Railways*, No. 62 of 1876, p. 9, No. 66 of 1877, p. 18, No. 47 of 1910, p. vii, No. 47 of 1925, photographs; *South Australian Register*, 19 December 1855; State Transport Authority, *Adelaide railways* (pamph.), n.d; Thompson, M.H., *Railway bridges over the River Torrens*, 1987.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). 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.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register - Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	NORTH ADELAIDE RAILWAY STATION AND SIGNAL BOX	Building No	-
Address	War Memorial Drive, North Park Lands		272501

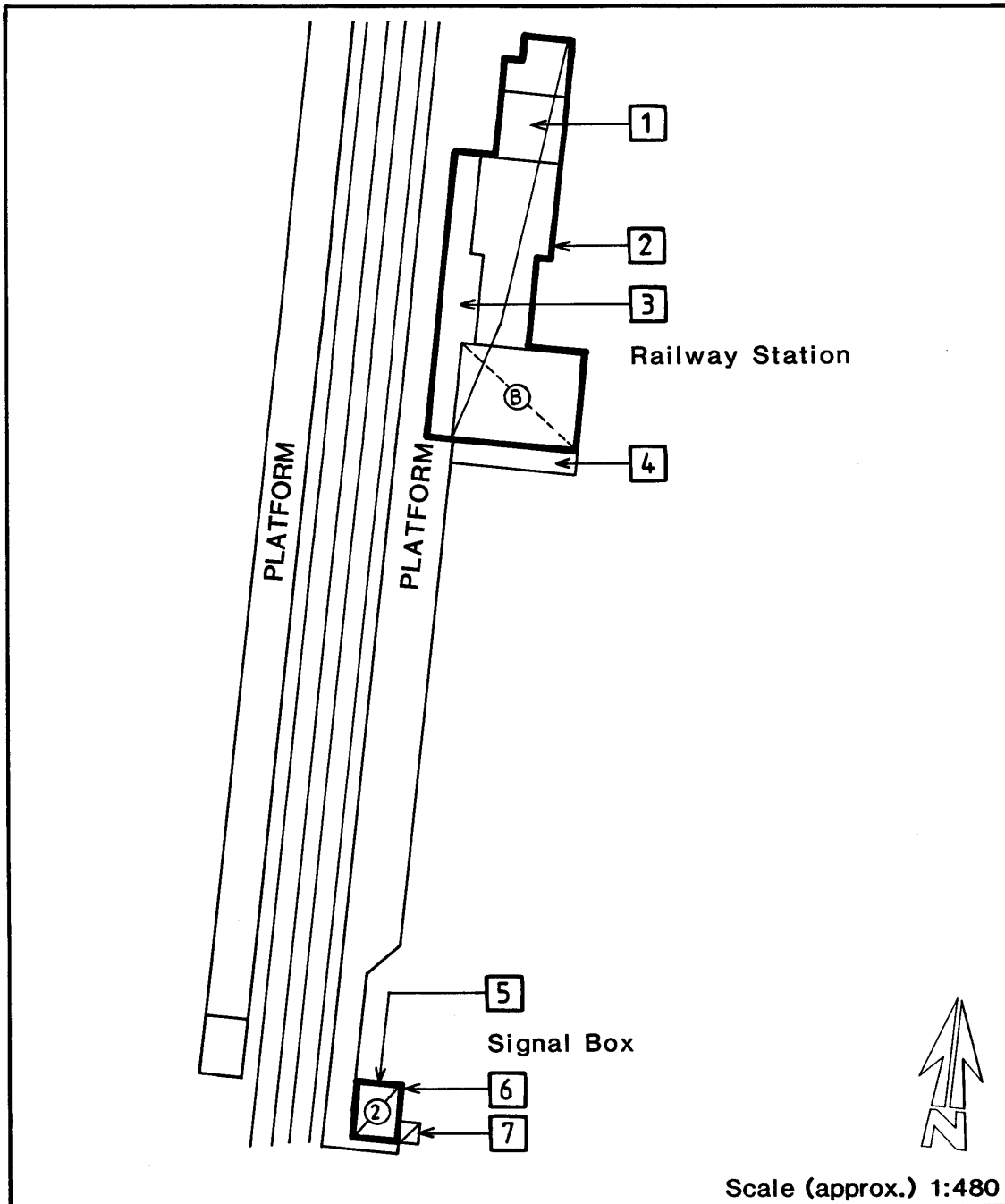


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NOTES:

1. Iron infill.
2. Bluestone rubble with stucco enrichment and rendered plinth.
3. Concave verandah.
4. Iron lean-to.
5. Note: Bargeboards.
6. Brick (English Bond).
7. Weatherboard addition.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	WYE SIGNAL CABIN	Building No
Address	North-West Park Lands, (adjacent Adelaide Gaol)	278001

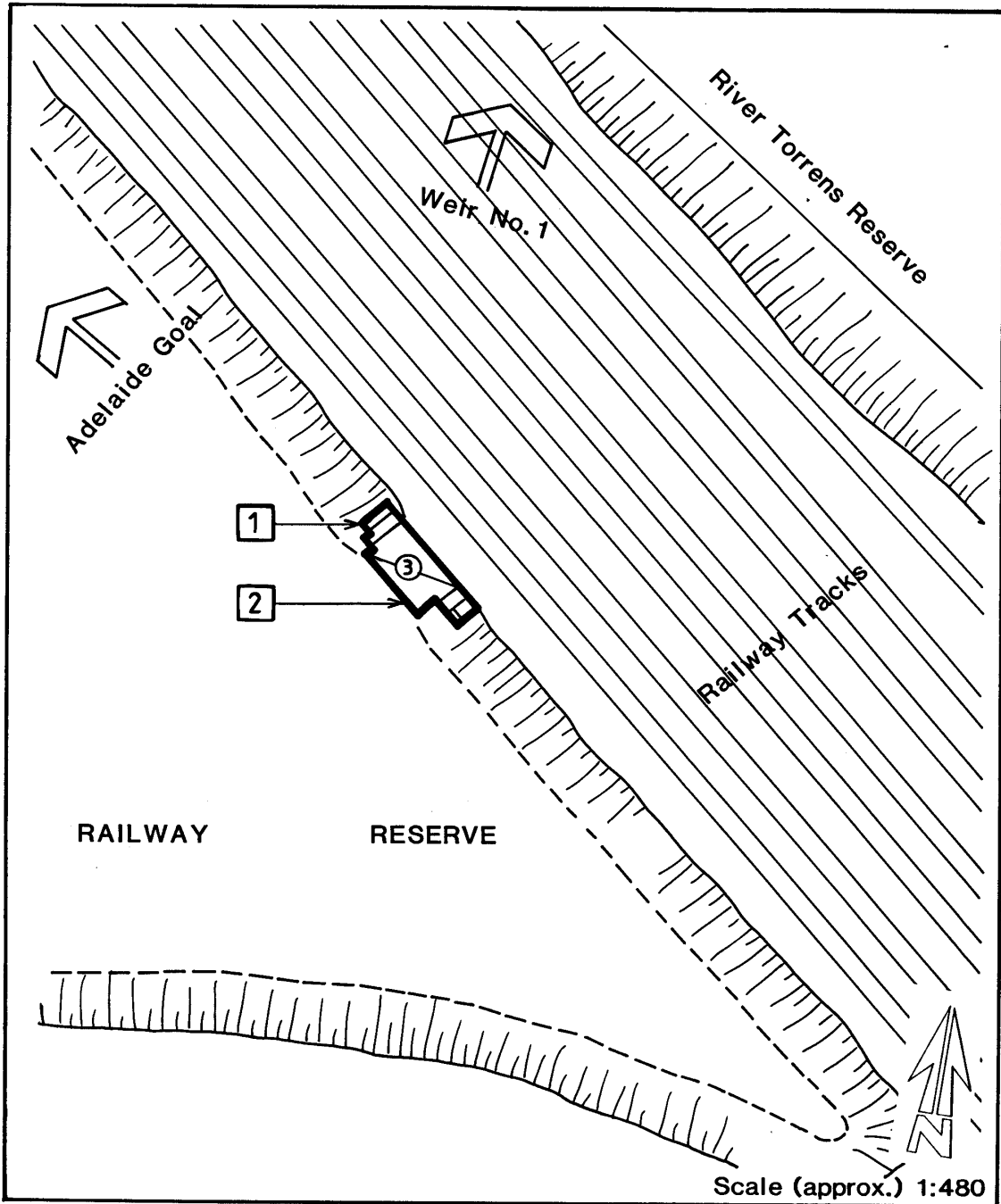


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NOTES:

1. External timber stairs.
2. Brick construction (English Bond) with timber framed top storey.



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Item	BRIDGE ABUTMENTS AND BOW STRING ARCH BRIDGE	Building No
Address	North-West Park Lands	271501

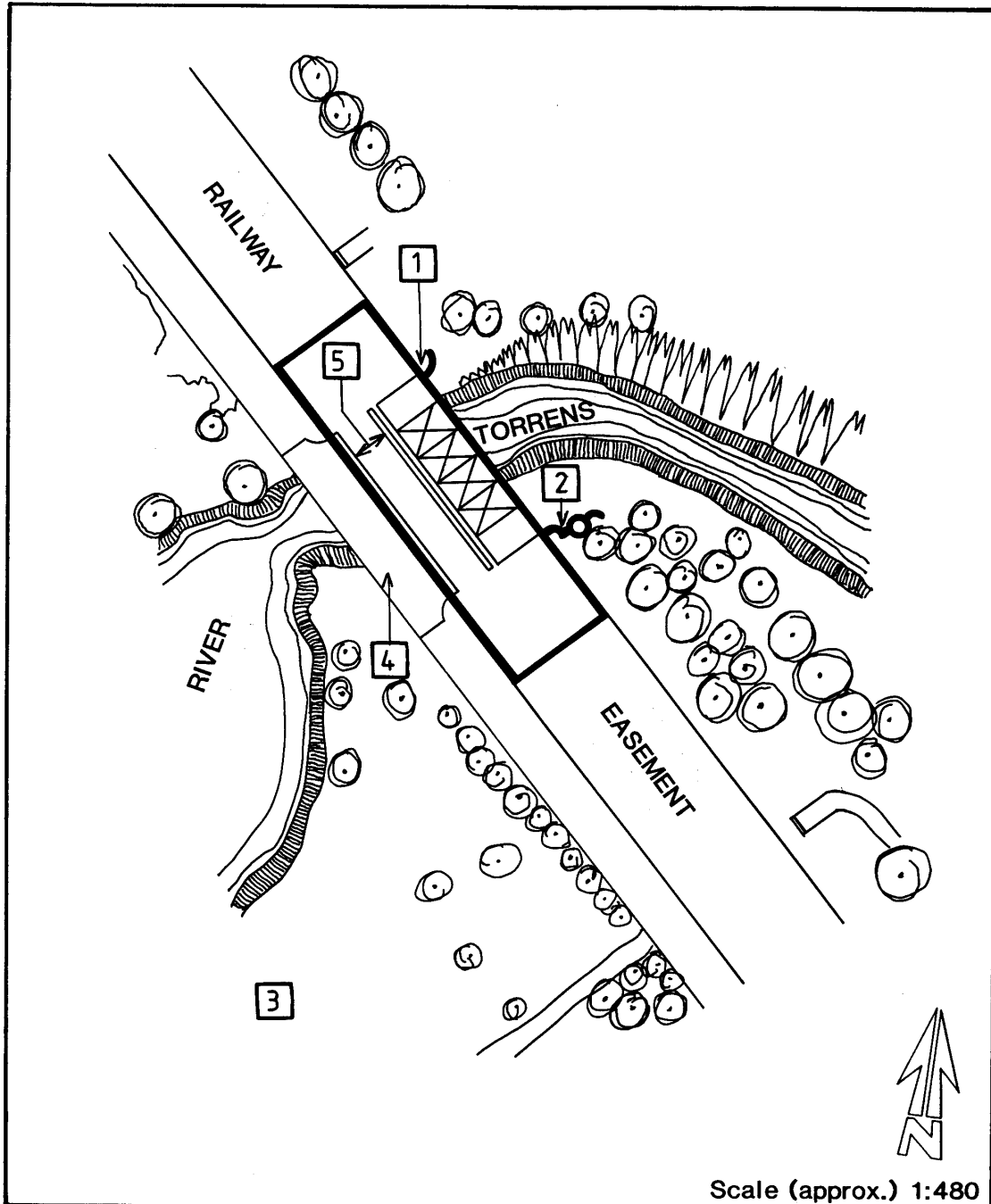


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Address	North-West Park Lands	271501

NOTES:

1. Bow-string bridge (1876) over original railway abutments (1854).
2. Limestone rubble, squared sandstone and rock faced sandstone with margins.
3. N.B. Trussed bridge excluded.
4. New concrete construction bridge (standard gauge).
5. Rivetted steel construction.