

## **PALM HOUSE, BOTANIC GARDENS**

A 'fairy palace', declared Lady Musgrave as she opened the Palm House in January 1877. Dr Schomburghk's recommendations for a palm house were of more utilitarian intent: ' . . . with barely sufficient room to display the extensive and valuable collection of plants, a means should be found to erect a new and commodious structure'. A Department of Environment and Planning brief of 1982 declared the structure to be:

*. . . a national monument because of its rarity and form; a state monument because of its link with the early development of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, because it is a major example of conservatory, architecture and the largest prefabricated example in South Australia; a local monument because it occupies a primary site in the layout of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, and is a widely known feature. The building is on the Register of the National Estate, the Register of State Heritage Items and is also classified by the National Trust as being of great historical and architectural significance.*

The building made of iron and glass was shipped from Bremen, Germany via England. G. Runge the architect supervised the work at the premises of the manufacturers J. Hoper in Bremen. The cost was estimated at £1087. The weight of glass and iron was 48 000 pounds and when it arrived in 1875 one-third of the glass panes were broken, which were compensated for by the ship owners. The fitting of the ironwork was made by Brown and Thompson under the supervision of the government architect G.T. Light. A total of 3808 panes of glass were fixed in place.



(CD Ref 1725/38)

The Palm House was erected on a terrace formed of soil taken from the large pond in a cleaning operation to clear sewage sediment.

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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*The South Australian Register* reported on opening day that the arrangement of the interior was ' . . . as excellent as it is pretty, and is an unmistakeable evidence of the artistical ability and exquisite taste of Dr Schomburghk, from which the ideas emanated, and under whose supervision it was carried out'.

The reporter commented favourably on the large central rotunda adorned by an ornamental coloured border worked in cement. An avenue ran from the rotunda to both entrances, and was paved with red and black octagonal tiles.

In 1982 a grant was approved for \$14 000 by the Minister of Environment and Planning from the State Heritage Fund to restore the structure which forms such an impressive feature within the Botanic Gardens.

Best, B., *George William Francis*, 1986, p. 89; Botanic Gardens Library, Letter: director to architect-in-chief, 4 April 1938, director of Botanic Garden to director of Public Buildings, no. 357, 11 March 1969; *Chronicle*, 3 November 1938; Marcus, W.E., *South Australia: its history, resources and productions*, 1876; Lamshed, M., *The Botanic Gardens*, 1955 pp. 63-7, 93; MLSA, Historical photographs; *Observer*, 28 March 1891; PRO GRG38/7/155/20.12.1865 38/7/131/1.12.1865; GRG70 Annual reports of the Botanic Gardens, 1873-84; SAPP, No. 29, Appointment of Hospital and Lunatic Asylum Commission, 1864, p. iv; SAPD, 15, 30 October 1935, 22, 23 September 1936; *South Australian Government Gazette*, 10 October 1857, 21 January 1858; *South Australian Register*, 23 January 1877; State Heritage Branch, Register nomination: Museum of Economic Botany, 3 March 1981; Brief for the conservation of the tropical house, October 1982.

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.*

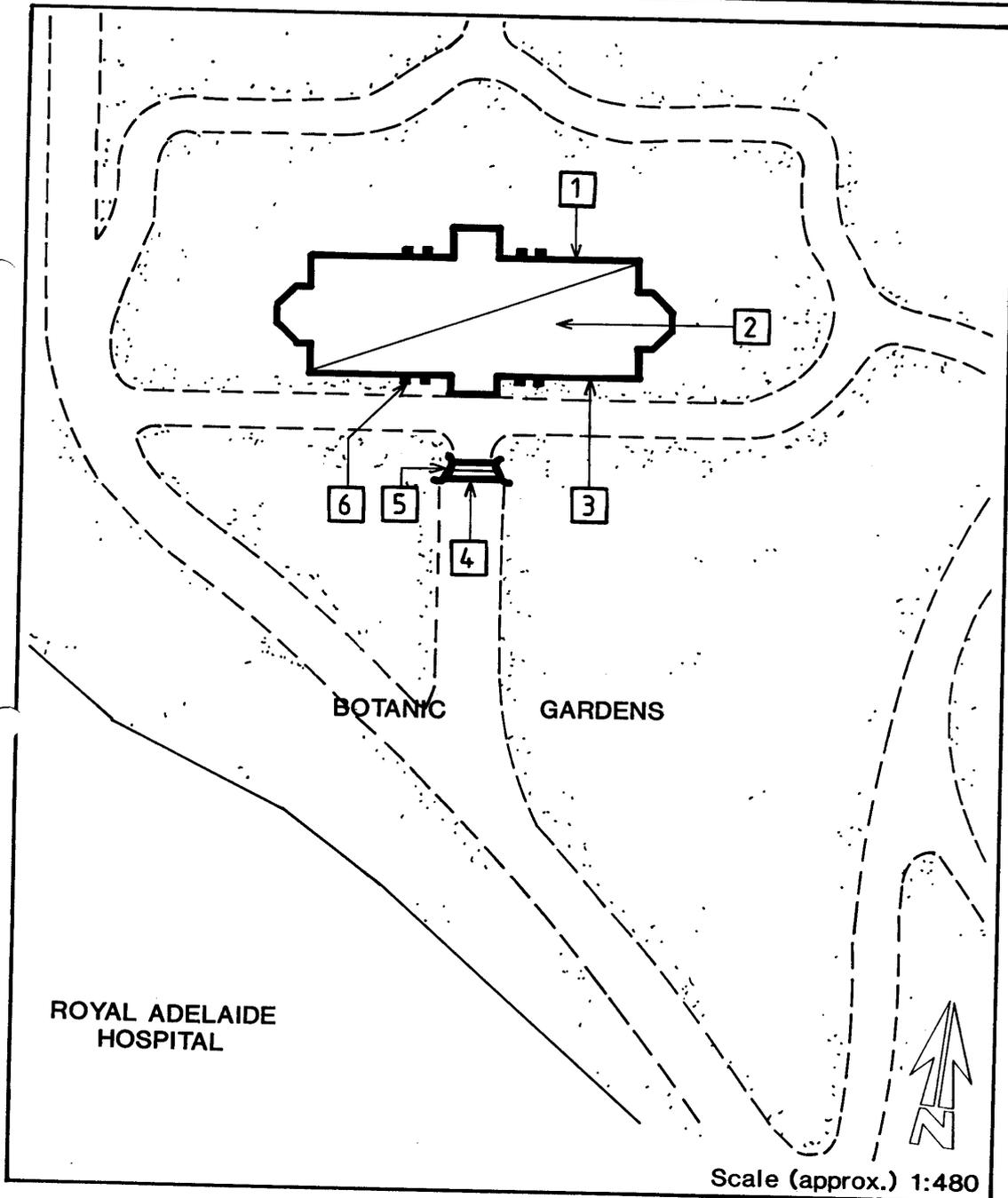


# CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

## The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	PALM HOUSE	Building No	110503
Address	Botanic Gardens, North Terrace Park No. 11.05		



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#### NOTES:

1. Note prefabricated cast iron frame.
2. Metal cresting.
3. Glass set in iron framework on rendered plinth.
4. Steps (rebuilt 1982/83).
5. Rendered handrails with urns.
6. Rendered pillars with urns.