



**ADELAIDE GENERAL
POST OFFICE**

141 King William Street, Adelaide

Heritage Management Plan

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Cover image:

Completed GPO from Victoria Square, c.1872, note painted canvas clock faces

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Adelaide General Post Office

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Prepared for

Cushman & Wakefield

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and brief

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) has been commissioned by Australia Post and addresses the Adelaide General Post Office (Adelaide GPO) at 141 King William Street, Adelaide, South Australia (Figure 1, Figure 2). The GPO is owned by Australia Post and is included in the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) as Place ID 105518.

As included in the subject site, the Adelaide GPO was constructed in three major stages, 1872, 1893 and 1922-1926 and reference is made to these three building components throughout the HMP (refer to the plan at Figure 3).

The report has been prepared in accordance with Australia Post's 'Heritage Strategy for Australia Post Heritage Places' ('Heritage Strategy') updated in 2015, to enable Australia Post to meet its obligations under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999 (Aus)*, (EPBC Act). The EPBC Act establishes the CHL, a list of places with heritage values which are managed or owned by the Australian Government and affords them statutory protection.

This HMP has been prepared as a review of the *Adelaide General Post Office Conservation Management Plan* (Bruce Harry and Associates, 2007) and to comply with the obligations of the EPBC Act.

The primary objectives of the HMP are to:

- establish the cultural heritage significance of the GPO, its individual elements and areas
- provide appropriate policies for the conservation of the building and site as a whole, taking into account both the care of significant physical fabric and ongoing use and management.

By way of background, it is noted that the site as a whole is currently owned by Australia Post, however land in the north-west part of the site, where the 1922-26 additions are located, is subject to a 99-year lease and this land is currently subject to a redevelopment proposal which includes a new tower form to be located to the rear of the retained GPO complex. This proposal is not assessed in the CMP.

1.2 Methodology

This HMP broadly follows the principles and processes set out in the *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter, 2013* (Burra Charter) and its Practice Notes. The Burra Charter establishes a standard of practice for those involved in assessing, managing and undertaking works to places of cultural significance.

The HMP has also been prepared in accordance with Schedule 7A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations, (Aus) 2000*: 'Management Plans for Commonwealth Heritage Places' which sets out various requirements such as a comprehensive description and condition of the place; the methodology used to establish its heritage values; provision of a management framework including relevant statutory requirements; and the provision of policies for the management and conservation of the place.

1.3 Previous reports

As noted, this HMP is a review of the *Adelaide General Post Office Conservation Management Plan* (Bruce Harry and Associates, 2007) and material from this study is incorporated into the report.

It is also noted that there was an earlier CMP prepared by Andrew C Ward & Associates in 1989 (Andrew C Ward & Associates architect – planners, *Adelaide Post Office Site: Conservation Analysis and Conservation Management Plan*, prepared for Australia Post, 1989). Reference is also made to this study.

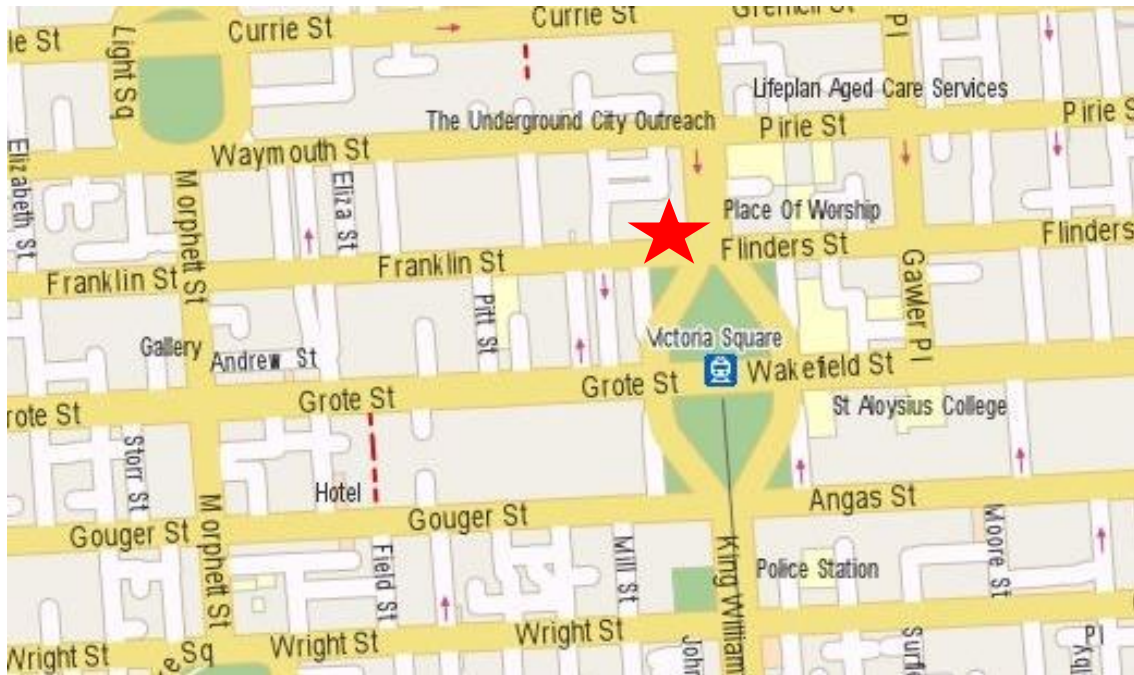


Figure 1 Location plan for the Adelaide General Post Office

Source: www.street-directory.com.au

1.4 Subject property

The former Adelaide GPO is located at 141 King William Street, Adelaide, South Australia (refer Figure 1). The property comprises fabric from a number of building programmes and phases of development from the 1870s to the interwar period and beyond, but with three principal stages in the study area (1872, 1893 and 1922-26). The subject site is indicated in the plan at Figure 2 and the stages are shown at Figure 3.

While formerly part of the Adelaide GPO complex, the former Telephone Exchange at 141-159 Franklin Street to the west (1914) does not form part of the subject site and has not considered by this HMP.

1.5 Statutory heritage controls

1.5.1 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

At a Commonwealth level, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Aus)* (EPBC Act) focuses on the protection of matters of national environmental significance, with the states and territories having responsibility for matters of state and local significance. Matters of national environmental significance include world heritage properties and national heritage places. The EPBC Act establishes lists of places of cultural heritage significance and sets management requirements that apply to these places. The EPBC Act also establishes the National Heritage List (NHL) and Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) and sets out the requirements for the management of heritage places on these.

As noted above, the Adelaide GPO is included on the CHL as Place ID 105518 (Adelaide General Post Office, 141 King William Street Adelaide). While the statement of significance refers to the 1872 and 1893 wings, no formal extent is provided for this listing and it is assumed the full extent of the Commonwealth-owned land (including the 1922-26 additions) is included in the CHL. This accords with the extent of the subject site for the purposes of this HMP (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Aerial photograph with the current study area (Adelaide GPO) indicated in red: the former Telephone Exchange is to the west and is indicated with the blue arrow. Note that the study area reflects the extent of the CHL listing.
Source: Nearmap

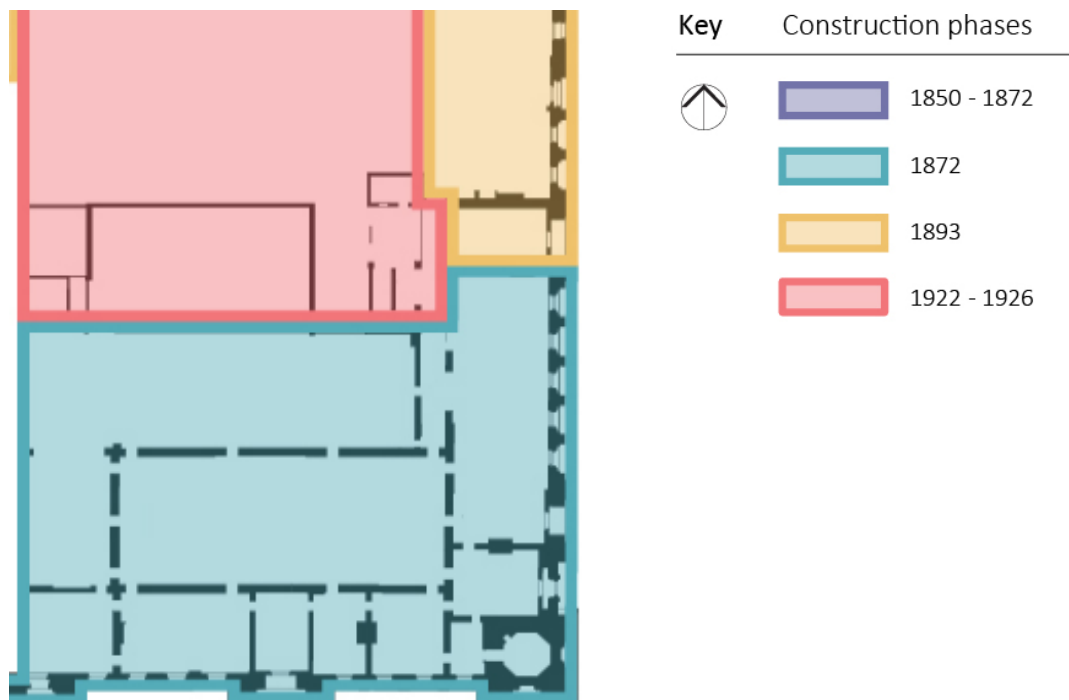


Figure 3 Plan of the subject site showing stages of construction

1.5.2 *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Pursuant to the *Heritage Places Act (SA) 1993* (Heritage Places Act) Adelaide GPO - including the original 1872 building and the surviving sections of the 1891-3 additions - are included on the South Australian Heritage Register (SAHR), administered by the South Australian Heritage Council. The place is designated as building 10860. Note that the former Telephone Exchange of 1907 and its 1914 extension are also included in this registration, which accordingly, covers a wider area. Those sections of the site included in the SAHR are indicated at Figure 4 below.

Responsibility for the Heritage Places Act falls within the portfolio of the South Australian Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation. Under Commonwealth Law, the Adelaide GPO is subject to both the requirements of the EPBC Act and the Heritage Places Act 1993.

The statement of significance included for the place included in the Heritage Places Database is as follows:

Opened in 1872, the Adelaide GPO was one of South Australia's most important public buildings, and represents the critical role played by postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications in the development of the state. The scale and impressive architectural detailing of the building and its prominent location in the centre of Adelaide reflect its importance as the focus of the network of communication services in South Australia for many decades. Its construction was the result of the entrepreneurial drive of Postmaster-General Sir Charles Todd, who was instrumental in establishing telegraphic communications in both South Australia and Australia and in encouraging the state Government's monopolistic control of all communication services in South Australia. The subsequent additions to the building and the construction of the separate Telephone Exchange were a direct response to increasing demand for the new technologies of telegraph and telephone services in the years leading up to and following Federation.¹

The plan parcel and title for the Heritage Register are identified as follows:

CT 6084/525 D86151 A807, CT 6091/763 D86151 A801, CT 6122/319 D86151 A800

As discussed below, the *Development Act 1993* requires all development applications affecting State Heritage Places and State Heritage Areas to be referred to the Minister responsible for the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.

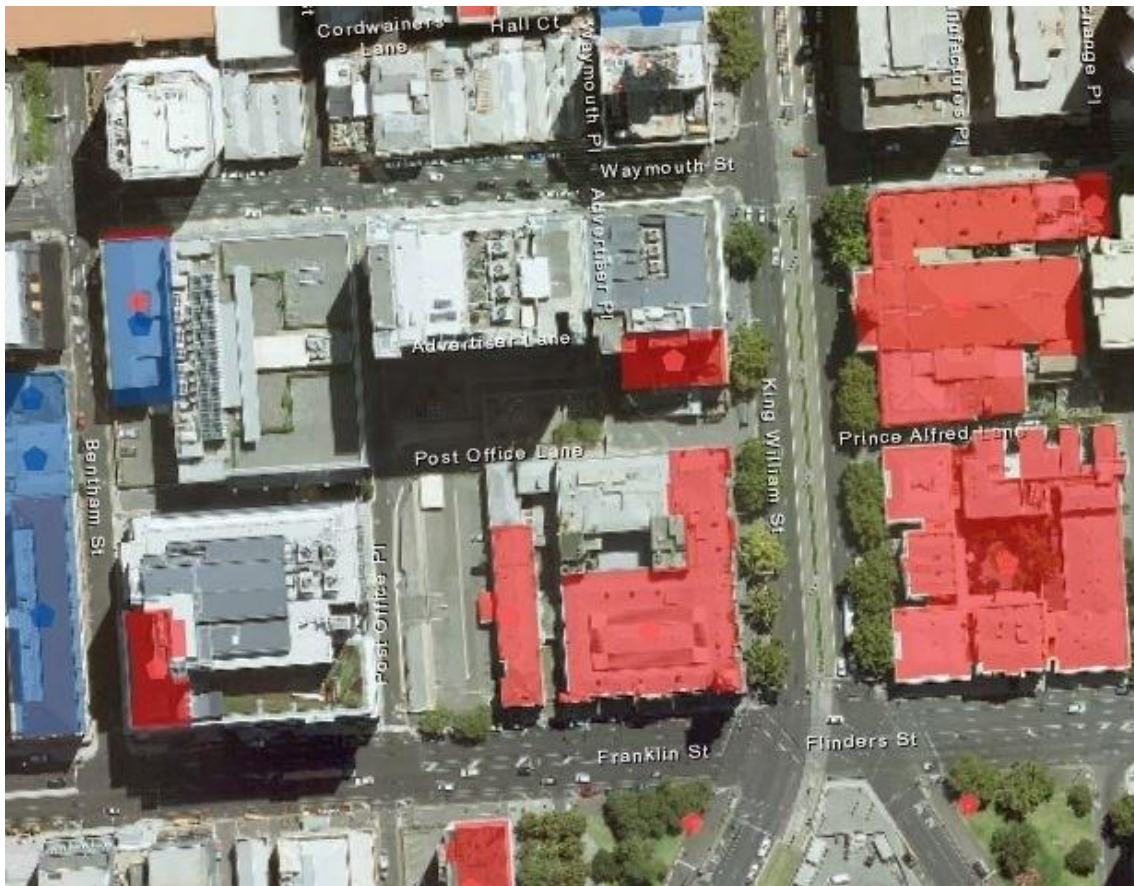


Figure 4 Areas identified on SA Heritage Register are indicated in red

Source: http://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/HeritageItem.aspx?p_heritageno=1299, accessed 5 June 2016

1.5.3 *Development Act 1993 and the Adelaide City Development Plan*

Planning and development in South Australia is governed by the *Development Act, (SA) 1993* (Development Act) and is subject to approval by Local Government Authorities. The Act requires each Local Government Authority to prepare and administer a Development Plan for its area of responsibility. Through the Local Area Development Plan, the opportunity exists for Council to identify, schedule and make detailed policies to protect items of Local Heritage Value. Local councils have their own requirements for development affecting local heritage places or contributory items and these are identified in each Council's Development Plan. For convenience, most local area Development Plans also identify the State Heritage Places within their area.

The former Adelaide GPO is included in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan as a State Heritage Place². It is included to the extent of the original 1867-72 building and the surviving 1891-3 extensions. The former Telephone Exchange to the west which does not form part of the subject site is also included in the listing. No elements of Local heritage Value are noted in the Development Plan and, consequently, there are no requirements under the Adelaide City Development Plan. Notably, the additions of 1921-6 located in the north-western sections of the site are not identified as elements of Local Heritage Value.

1.6 **Aboriginal cultural heritage**

The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DSD-AAR), is the South Australian Government's lead agency on matters relating to Aboriginal affairs. The Division has a number of responsibilities including the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage and culture.

DSD-AAR maintains a Central Archive and Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects. These archives are not public but the Department can provide broad information about Aboriginal heritage on receipt of a formal request.

A formal request was made to the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division in May 2016. On 9 June 2016, the Department advised that the Central Archive has no entries for Aboriginal sites within the GPO site.

This notwithstanding, the Act notes that any land, developed or undeveloped, can contain Aboriginal sites relating to traditions. Section 20 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act (SA), 1988* requires that any Aboriginal sites, objects or remains, discovered on the land, are to be reported to the Minister.

See also the note below at 1.8 Limitations.

1.7 Non-statutory heritage listings

1.7.1 *National Trust of Australia (South Australia)*

The Adelaide GPO has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (South Australia) as a building of State significance. There are no statutory requirements as a consequence of this classification.

1.8 Limitations

The HMP accepts and relies upon the historical material contained in the Bruce Harry and Associates Conservation Management Plan of March 2007. It is noted that while it included a list of sources (bibliography), the 2007 CMP did not include specific references (either as in-text references or as notes) and the specific sources of much of the information is not directly cited.

While only limited additional historical research has been undertaken in the course of this review, where additional material has been included, sources for this information are provided through the inclusion of endnotes.

Apart from those constraints on the physical investigation noted at Chapter 3, no limits were placed on the current assessment.

This HMP does not include a formal assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage values. It is acknowledged that these may well exist. Further, it is acknowledged that there may also be shared values. There are many historical heritage places which have Aboriginal cultural heritage values in addition to non-Aboriginal cultural values (shared values).

No community or stakeholder consultation was undertaken in the course of the preparation of the HMP. There is potential for this consultation to occur in the future as part of Australia Post's adoption and implementation of the HMP.