

BETTER HERITAGE INFORMATION SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with either the *South Australian Heritage Act 1978* or the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.

The information contained in this document is provided in accordance with s14(6) and s21 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.

REGISTERED NAME: Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office **PLACE NO.:** 10361

ALSO KNOWN AS: Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office

ADDRESS: Bunganditj Country
2 Mundy Terrace
Robe SA 5276
CT 5546/229 T441801 A1
Hundred of Waterhouse

CONFIRMED IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE REGISTER:

24 March 1983

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office demonstrates the development of communications infrastructure in South Australia during the mid-nineteenth century. Built in 1858, it was one of the five original repeater stations built for the intercolonial telegraph line connecting Adelaide and Melbourne, the first of its kind in Australia. An additional structure was added in 1862 to house the town's post office. Consequently, the joint-facility served as an important State and regional communications hub for over a century.

INDICATIVE CRITERIA (under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*)

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office demonstrates the development of communications infrastructure in South Australia during the mid-nineteenth century, for postal and telegraph services. Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail's version of an electromagnetic telegraph system, developed in the United States during the 1830s and 1840s, was a ground-breaking technological advancement. Their system provided a means to communicate rapidly over long-distances. The system, including Morse's dot-dash code, also known as Morse Code, was swiftly embraced around the world, including in the Australian colonies. The first telegraph network in Australia was established in Victoria in the early 1850s. South Australia was quick to follow, developing its own local network in 1855 under the direction of Charles Todd, the Superintendent of Telegraphs. The next year, Todd and his Victorian counterpart, Samuel McGowan, agreed to develop an intercolonial telegraph line between Adelaide and Melbourne. Commenced in 1857 and completed in 1858, this line was the first of its kind in Australia and marked the onset of a much larger network, eventually resulting in the Australian Overland Telegraph Line that connected Australia to the outside world in 1872.

The Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office was built in two stages. The first, the telegraph station, opened in 1858 as part of the first intercolonial telegraph line. It was one of the five original repeater stations built for the line, the others being located in Mount Gambier (original station replaced 1865), Willunga (Former Post Office and Telegraph Station (SHP 10626)), Port Elliot (demolished) and Goolwa (within the Goolwa State Heritage Area). The mail service was delegated to the telegraph officer in 1860, resulting in a second structure built in 1862 to house the town's post office (originally established in 1846). Consequently, the joint-facility came to serve as a regional communications hub, a role it served for over a century.

SITE PLAN

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

PLACE NO.: 10361



Former Telegraph Station and Robe Post Office, 2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276; CT 5546/229
T441801 A1, Hundred of Waterhouse.

N

LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

Physical Description

The Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office consists primarily of two integrated structures that were constructed separately: the electric telegraph station to the east (1858) and the post office to the west (1862). While both are part of the same building complex, they are noticeably different in style. Each is considered in turn.

The Former Telegraph Station

A vernacular building constructed of rendered limestone featuring:

- A hipped roof with a return verandah, both clad with corrugated galvanised steel,
- A large central fireplace and rectangular chimney with string courses,
- Stone quoins,
- Sash windows with stone surrounds,
- A panelled entrance door with glazed upper fields,
- Four main central rooms,
- Timber floorboards,
- Timber ceiling panelling and trusses,
- A lean-to kitchen at the rear with a fireplace and chimney,
- Additional lean-to extensions at the rear (south) and side (west).

The Former Post Office

A hall built of rendered limestone featuring:

- A gable roof, clad with corrugated galvanised steel,
- A sloping verandah,
- A protruding entrance with double panelled doors and fanlights,
- Sash windows,
- A chimney and fireplace,
- Timber floorboards and skirting boards,
- A lean-to extension to the rear.

Both structures are internally accessible via doorways. A white picket fence with a gate to the western side encloses the property. There are additional, non-original outbuildings at the rear of the property.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The former Telegraph Station,
- The former Post Office,

- The lean-to kitchen,
- The northern and eastern verandas,
- Timber roof panelling and trusses,
- Wooden floorboards,
- Any original fixtures and fittings.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- All lean-to extensions except for the kitchen,
- The outbuildings.

History of the Place¹

The Postal Service and Telegraphy in South Australia

Australia's vast geography and its isolation from Britain and the 'centres of power in Europe and America', quickly led to the adoption of and reliance on long-distance communications technologies. Accordingly, the colonies embraced 'post, telegraph and telephone' services almost as soon as they were developed.¹

The postal service was the first major form of long-distance communication established in each of the Australian colonies. Though mail has a long history dating back thousands of years,² it underwent major reforms in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century, making it a more efficient and affordable medium.³ The Australian colonies had established postal services prior to many of these reforms, but by the 1850s, they embraced improvements such as flat-rates and postage stamps.⁴ Likewise, South Australia would adopt these reforms.

The postal service was established in South Australia in 1837. Within a few years, six post offices existed across the colony and an overland mail service was established in 1846, which 'passed through the South East'. The mail was first transported by the mounted police and then by private contractors, while adhesive postage stamps were introduced in 1855. All overseas communication, including news dispatches, was transported to and from the colony by sea,⁵ and despite progress, this process could still take months.

The advent of the electric telegraph revolutionised long-distance communication, as 'Suddenly, human knowledge could be spread and shared instantly over great distances'.⁶ The technology had been developed incrementally by various inventors

¹ Much of this section draws from Susan Marsden, *Working Lines: A History of Robe Electric Telegraph Station and Post Office* (Robe: District Council of Robe, 1987).

during the first half of the nineteenth century and was first put to commercial use within Britain. However, Samuel Morse's single-line wire version, developed in the United States with Alfred Vail during the 1830s and 1840s, drastically improved and streamlined the technology.⁷ Morse also devised a code comprised of dots and dashes to represent each letter of the alphabet (Morse Code). This code could then be 'tapped out by a keyboard and recorded at a distance by a register and a moving stylus on a strip of paper'. It was transmitted via electromagnetic single-line wires.⁸

The Australian colonies were almost immediately attracted to this new technology. In the early 1850s, the Victorian government appointed Samuel McGowan as its General Superintendent of Telegraphs. McGowan, an expert telegraphist from Canada who had studied under Morse, went on to lead the construction of Australia's first telegraph network in Australia.⁹

South Australia followed by appointing Charles Todd as its Superintendent of Telegraphs in February 1855, while Todd was still in the UK. Todd arrived in November 1855 and the South Australian Observatory and Telegraph Department was established in 1856. His first mission was to erect a telegraph line between Adelaide and Port Adelaide, however James McGeorge, a private citizen, had beaten Todd by erecting his own line in late 1855. Nonetheless, Todd still went ahead with his plan and constructed the government's line in February 1856. By April, the telegraph network had extended to Gawler. The government bought out McGeorge the following year and demolished his line.¹⁰

From the outset, Todd's 'interest in the telegraph went far beyond the lines to Port Adelaide or Gawler Town', with Todd wanting to 'see Adelaide connected to the rest of the world'. A starting point to do so was to connect to Melbourne, 'where the first telegraph lines in Australia were already operative'.¹¹ Todd travelled to Melbourne to discuss building an intercolonial line with McGowan. Both men were excited by the prospect and lobbied their respective governments to go ahead with the proposal.¹² Todd reported that it afforded him:

much pleasure to find that the Melbourne Government were thoroughly earnest in their desire to co-operate with this colony in connecting the two capitals, and they further entertained the extension of intercolonial telegraph on a vast scale, so as to unite, by a network of lines, all the large centres of population in Australia.¹³

He was further pleased that New South Wales and Tasmania would commence building their own lines around the same time, which would result in 'one uniform system' being adopted, which would avoid the 'confusion and unnecessary competitions that have so usually attended such undertakings'.¹⁴

In 1856, the South Australian and Victorian governments agreed to co-develop the telegraph line between their capitals and construction commenced in April 1857. In addition to the construction of the lines themselves, five stations were to be built in South Australia: at Willunga, Port Elliot, Goolwa, Robe and Mount Gambier, the latter then connecting to the station at Portland in Victoria.¹⁵ Each station would comprise four rooms to house the machinery as well as the stationmasters.¹⁶

Along with surveyor Edward Cracknell, Todd himself had inspected the area between Robe and Mount Gambier and identified three potential routes, before settling on the one that ran along the 'government road' through to Mount Muirhead and then over the 'flat' to Mount Gambier.¹⁷ After encountering multiple complications during construction, including a shortage of timber for telegraph poles and faulty connections, the line was completed by May 1858. While completed later than expected, the total cost of the line was slightly less than anticipated, coming in at £19,403 rather than £20,000. The line was officially opened in July 1858. While minor connectivity issues persisted, Australia's first intercolonial telegraph line was now operating.¹⁸

Other intercolonial lines were built over the years that followed. The line connecting Sydney to Melbourne was opened in late 1858, and Tasmania was connected to the line in 1859 via a short-lived submarine cable, which was abandoned in 1861. Tasmania did not reconnect until a new line was opened in 1869. Queensland connected in 1861. The same year, due to heavy line traffic, another line between South Australia and Victoria was opened. A direct line between Adelaide and Sydney opened in 1868. Western Australia connected in 1877.¹⁹

All the while, Todd remained extremely active in South Australia. He was appointed as the Postmaster General in 1870 after the Post Office and Telegraph Department merged to become the South Australian Post and Telegraph Department.²⁰ Owing to his background as an astronomer and meteorologist, he was also a leader in both pursuits. The telegraph, for instance, was used to transmit weather updates from the telegraph stations that were set up to record meteorological data.²¹

Todd's most famous role, though, was leading the development of the Australian Overland Telegraph Line, which connected the Australian colonies to the outside world. While the colonies cooperated to build lines between themselves, there was fierce competition to connect to an international line. Though South Australian efforts began in the 1860s, which included John Stuart's overland expeditions, the annexation of the Northern Territory in 1863, and the erection of a telegraph line to Port Augusta in 1865.²² Construction of the Overland began in 1870 and was

completed two years later in 1872.²³ Todd had thus realised what had been his goal from the outset.

Establishing Robe

Guichen Bay in the South East of South Australia forms part of the traditional lands of the Bungandij people, who have been present in the area for at least 30,000 years.²⁴ Europeans first charted the coastline of the region in 1802 during the Baudin and Flinders expeditions and sealers established a presence at Guichen Bay in 1831.²⁵

European exploration of the South East took place from 1839 and settlement began as early as 1840.²⁶ Much of the South East was initially settled by pastoralists and by 1847 approximately half of the region was held under pastoral licences. As primary production expanded the colonial government began to provide a series of government towns as service and staging centres. The provision of ports to ship goods to market was also viewed as essential and Robe was established in 1846, to provide a port for the burgeoning wool clip then being obtained from the South East.²⁷ Robe was officially declared as a port by the Government in 1847.²⁸

Situated towards the south of Guichen Bay, the town at Robe (or Robetown) went on to become the first major town of the South East.²⁹ Robe became the administrative centre of the region when a Government Resident was appointed in 1846.³⁰ Over the next two decades, Robe developed as an international port that serviced the local wool industry and import and export markets. It also facilitated the arrival of thousands of immigrants, including British and Irish people, as well as Chinese prospectors during the Victorian gold rush.³¹

The Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office

Postal services at Robe were established 'almost immediately'.³² In addition to his role as Robe's Sub-Collector of Customs, colonial administrators made Berry J. Lipson responsible for the mail. Lipson operated from a 'temporary wooden building at the site of Robe's present Post Office',³³ presumably on the corner of Mundy Terrace and Bagot Street.

Showing the centrality of the mail and the importance of communications infrastructure, Robe's surveyors had reserved Allotment 1 for a post office. Although not built from the outset, the first official post office opened at this site on 10 July 1849. Neither this building nor Lipson's original building remain.³⁴

Responsibility for the local mail service changed hands several times during the 1850s, falling to specialist postmasters and, for a time, Charles Philip Brewer, Robe's second Government Resident.³⁵ The mail itself was 'carried to and from Guichen Bay ... by

land and sea'.³⁶ The mounted police were at first responsible for transporting the mail by land, however this role later went to private contractors, though police escorts accompanied them. The journey by horse and cart between Adelaide and Robe took around five days.³⁷ Schooners and steamers also delivered mail to and from Adelaide, eventually including international mail and news first delivered to Sydney.³⁸

At some point when planning the intercolonial telegraph line between Adelaide and Melbourne, Charles Todd and the South Australian Observatory and Telegraph Department decided that a repeater station was to be built at Robe, or Guichen Bay. The Colonial Architect forwarded his plan for the station to Charles Brewer in October 1857. The following month, Charles Augustus Perry, an architect, won the tender to build the stations at Robe and Mount Gambier for £900.³⁹

Unique to Robe, the station was built of limestone due to its abundance in the area.⁴⁰ It is not clear when the building was completed, but Charles Todd reported on 15 June 1858 that the station was 'now open to the public for the transmission of South Australian messages only'.⁴¹ The entire line was officially opened to intercolonial traffic on 21 July 1858. On 30 July 1858, a correspondent for the South Australian Register reported that they believed the station was in a 'convalescent state', albeit prone to 'relapses', which Todd knew how to handle.⁴²

Like the other five stations, the building at Robe had four rooms and was designed to accommodate a telegraph officer. Towards this end, further amenities were added between 1858 and 1860, including a verandah, rainwater tanks, front picket fence and a lean-to kitchen.⁴³

Each of the main stations went on to be profitable and to transmit valuable and vital information.⁴⁴ Robe, for instance, routinely reported on shipping movements and developments.⁴⁵ Most notably, along with its counterpart in Mount Gambier, the station helped to provide live updates on the wreck of the *Admella* in 1860, which sank near Carpenter Rocks and resulted in the loss of 89 lives. Todd recognised the significance of the incident, commenting that the telegraph had 'now become a necessary adjunct to civilization and commerce' and he could not 'better exemplify its vast utility than by referring to the sad wreck of the ill-fated *Admella*'. In rallying assistance to the rescue effort, he added that the telegraph had helped save lives during the disaster.⁴⁶

In 1860, local postal services were transferred to the telegraph officer, who was now also the postmaster. This move predated the official amalgamation of the telegraph and post offices in 1870 and was a strategy typically deployed in country towns.⁴⁷ A hall that conjoined with the telegraph station was built in 1862. According to historian

Liz Harfull, this was done to 'create more room for both functions'.⁴⁸ It possibly also helped to differentiate the service and dwelling components of the building.

The station also served other purposes. It had been equipped with meteorological devices to provide weather updates via the telegraph line.⁴⁹ Beginning in the early twentieth century, the station provided telephony services. A public phone with limited reach was installed in 1906 and a manual exchange was added in 1910. A direct line to Adelaide was established in 1921. The manual exchange remained in operation to 1968, well after automatic exchanges were introduced elsewhere. It outlasted the station's telegraph service by a decade.⁵⁰

By the twentieth century, the post office had been in decline for decades. Robe's economic fortunes began to reverse in the 1870s after competing ports developed, notably at Kingston. The lack of a railway was especially damaging.⁵¹ By the twentieth century, when the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for postal services, the station's post office had been downgraded from official to semi-official status. It almost lost its telegraph equipment in the 1920s due to the downgrading to semi-official, however, the reinstatement of official status prevented this from happening.⁵²

By the 1940s, the building's condition had degraded. After multiple health complaints from resident postmasters, the government condemned the dwelling in 1958 and provided alternative accommodation.⁵³ Almost a decade later in 1967, a new post office was designed by Architect A. Breakay of the Department of Works, which was completed and opened the following year.⁵⁴ After one hundred years serving as a regional communications hub and after accommodating multiple postmasters and postmistresses, the building ceased to serve its original purpose.

Subsequent History

The relocation of the post office left the future of the old site uncertain. The Commonwealth, its owner, sought to sell it to the District Council of Robe, which apparently planned to demolish the building to construct a carpark. Fearing the loss of the historic site, ratepayers prevented the sale by disallowing the Council to borrow the requisite funds. The Robe Chamber of Commerce then decided to purchase the site in a bid to preserve it. The Chamber acquired it in February 1973 and the transfer was finalised in June 1973.⁵⁵ Although the Chamber intended to open a museum at the site,⁵⁶ it was soon leased to the State Bank of South Australia in November 1973, which appears to have remained there at least until November 1976.⁵⁷

In 1978, the site was purchased by Norman and Lois Vincent. Their purchase marked the first time the property had been acquired by private individuals.⁵⁸ It was also the first time it was used exclusively as a dwelling. The site has passed hands several times

since and several alterations have been made over the years. The Former Robe Electric Telegraph Station and Post Office was confirmed as a State Heritage Place on 5 April 1984 as 'Post Office – Former'.

Chronology

Year Event

1836 Thomas Gilbert is appointed as South Australia's first Postmaster.

1846 Counties of Grey and Robe are proclaimed by the colonial government and are opened to claim under pastoral license.

The Government of South Australia establishes Robe as the administrative centre of the South East.

The Post Office at Robe begins operating in December.

A Post Office opens at Mount Gambier.

1847 Robe is gazetted as a port by the government.

1855 Charles Todd is appointed as the observer and superintendent of electric telegraphs in February.

Charles Todd arrives in South Australia on 5 November.

James McGeorge develops a telegraph line between Adelaide and Port Adelaide. The government later buys the line and dismantles it.

1856 The South Australian Observatory and Telegraph Department is established.

Charles Todd develops a telegraph line between Adelaide and Port Adelaide in February.

The Victorian and South Australian governments agree to co-develop an intercolonial telegraph line between Melbourne and Adelaide.

1857 Telegraph Offices open in Willunga, Port Elliot and Goolwa.

1858 The Guichen Bay Telegraph Office opens at Robe on 21 July.

The Mount Gambier Telegraph Office opens.

The telegraph line between Adelaide and Melbourne is completed.

1860 The Post Office at Robe relocates to the Telegraph Office. Both services are administered by the stationmaster, now also the postmaster.

- A telegraph office opens in Penola on 13 August.
- 1862 An extension to the post office and telegraph station is completed in October.**
- A telegraph office opens at Port MacDonnell.
- 1863 A telegraph office opens at Naracoorte.
- 1866 The Guichen Bay Telegraph Office changes its name to the Robe Telegraph Office.**
- 1867 A telegraph office opens at Kingston on 2 October.**
- 1868 The telegraph line connecting Adelaide and Sydney is completed.
- 1870 The Post Office and Telegraph Department merge to become the South Australian Post and Telegraph Department.
Charles Todd becomes the Postmaster General.
- 1872 The Australian Overland Telegraph line is completed on 22 August.
The Overland Telegraph line is connected to Java, linking it to London.
The Adelaide General Post Office opens. It receives the first message delivered through the Australian Overland Telegraph line.
- 1876 A telegraph office opens at Millicent.
- 1879 A telegraph office opens at Beachport on 23 May.
A telegraph office and post office open at Bordertown in May.
- 1907 The telephone is introduced to Robe in the form of a public phone and a trunk line to Millicent.
- 1910 A telephone exchange is opened at the Robe post office in November.
- 1921 Robe's telephone network is connected to Adelaide via a trunk line.
- 1953 The dwelling at the post office and telegraph station at Robe is deemed unsuitable by the Government and new facilities are erected elsewhere in the town.**
- 1967 Architect A. Breakay of the Department of Works designs a new post office building for Robe.

1968 Robe's new post office building opens in August.

1973 The Commonwealth sells the building to the Robe Chamber of Commerce on 5 June.

1978 The building is purchased by Norman and Lois Vincent, marking the first time it has been owned by private individuals.

1983 The post office and telegraph station is confirmed as a State Heritage Place with the registered name 'Post Office – Former' on 24 March.

1987 *Working Lines: A History of Robe Electric Telegraph Station and Post Office* by Susan Marsden is published by the District Council of Robe.

2008 Heritage SA conditionally approves Development Application 822/096/08 to alter and add a bathroom to the building.

2009 Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/035/2009 to erect a detached dwelling and separate utility building at the site.

References

Books and Chapters

Browne, Christopher. *Getting the Message: The Story of the British Post Office*. Phoenix Mill; Far Thrupp; Stroud; Gloucestershire, 1993.

Burgess, H. T. *The Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. I. Adelaide: Cyclopedia Company, 1907.

Harfull, Liz. *Almost an Island: The Story of Robe*, reprinted edition. 2013; Mile End: Wakefield press, 2015.

Marsden, Susan. *Working Lines: A History of Robe Electric Telegraph Station and Post Office*. Robe: District Council of Robe, 1987.

Moyal, Ann. *Clear Across Australia: A History of Telecommunications*, reprint. 1984; Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1985.

Pugh, Derek. *Twenty to the Mile: The Overland Telegraph Line*, reprint 2021; Rapid Creek: Self-published, 2022.

Rogers, Tony, and Ferrante, Judy. *The Weatherman from Greenwich: Charles Todd, 1826 to 1910; Meteorologist, Telegrapher, Electrician, Postmaster-General, Astronomer, South Australian*. Adelaide: Australian Meteorological Association, 2017.

Williams, Michael. *The Making of the South Australian Landscape: A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia*. London; New York: Academic Press, 1974.

Reports and Theses

Dallwitz, John, and Marsden, Susan. *Robe Historical Interpretation Study: Stage 1 in the Establishment of the Robe Historical Interpretation Centre*. Adelaide: Department of Environment and Planning, 1983.

Newspapers

'Guichen Bay', *Adelaide Observer*, 19 June 1858, p.1.

'Guichen Bay'. *South Australian Register* (Adelaide). 30 July 1858, p.3.

Todd, Charles. *The Adelaide and Melbourne Electric Telegraph*, 17 October 1856, in *Adelaide Observer*, 25 October 1856, p.5.

Archival

Certificate of Title Vol. 2279, Folio 13

Websites

'Alfred Lewis Vail: American Scientist and Businessman', Britannica, 2023.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Lewis-Vail>

André, Roger. 'Wool', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia, 19 March 2014.

<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/wool>

Johnstone, James. 'South Australia - Colonial: 1854-1900. Overview of S. A. Developments', *Telegrams in Australia: 1854-1988*, 2023.

<https://telegramsaustralia.com/Forms/Colonial/Sth%20Australia/Overview%20of%20%20SA.html>

Johnstone, James. 'South Australia – Colonial Period: 1855-1900. Telegraph Offices in the Port Wakefield – Salisbury to Barossa Region', *Telegrams in Australia: 1854 – 1988*, 2023.

<https://telegramsaustralia.com/Forms/Telegraph%20Offices/South%20Australia/SA%20TOs%20-%206%20PW%20Salisbury%20Barossa.html#Gawler>

Johnstone, James. 'South Australia – Colonial Period: 1856 to 1900. Telegraph Offices in the Border Town – Mount Gambier Region to Victoria', *Telegrams in Australia: 1854-1988*, 2023.

<https://telegramsaustralia.com/Forms/Telegraph%20Offices/South%20Australia/SA%20TOs%20-%2013%20Bordertown%20Mt%20Gambier%20Victoria.html#Guichen>

'Sir Charles Todd', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia, 2013.

<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/people/sir-charles-todd>

'Overland Telegraph', *Defining Moments*, National Museum of Australia, 2022.

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/overland-telegraph>

SITE DETAILS

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office

PLACE NO.: 10361

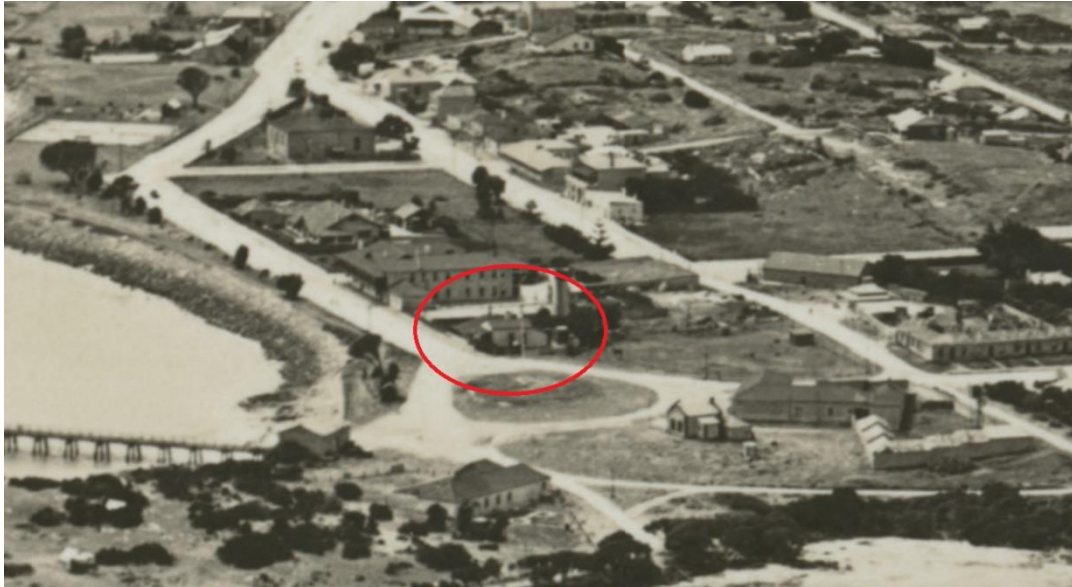
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Two integrated limestone structures comprising a bungalow with hipped-roof, central chimney and return verandah, and a hall with a gable roof and raked verandah.
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1857-1858
REGISTER STATUS:	Confirmed 24 March 1983
CURRENT USE:	Dwelling, 1860 -
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Post Office, 1860 – c.1968 Telegraph Station, 1858 – c.1968
ARCHITECT:	Colonial Architect Edward Hamilton, c.1857
BUILDER:	Charles Augustus Perry, 1857-1858
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	District Council of Robe
LOCATION:	Street No.: 2 Street Name: Mundy Terrace Town/Suburb: Robe Post Code: 5276
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Reference: CT 5546/229 T441801 A1 Hundred: Waterhouse

PHOTOS

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

PLACE NO.: 10361



Aerial view of Robe showing the former post office and telegraph station in red, c.1940.

Source: SLSA B41274



Front of the former post office and telegraph station, c.1982.

Source: DEW Files, c.1982

BHI Summary of State Heritage Place: 10361

Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register on 24 March 1983

The South Australian Heritage Council endorsed the content of this BHI - SSHP on 15 February 2024

PHOTOS

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

PLACE NO.: 10361



Eastern elevation of the former post office and telegraph station, c.1983.

Source: DEW Files, c.1983



Rear of the former post office and telegraph station, c.1982.

Source: DEW Files, c.1982

BHI Summary of State Heritage Place: 10361

Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register on 24 March 1983

The South Australian Heritage Council endorsed the content of this BHI - SSHP on 15 February 2024

PHOTOS

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

PLACE NO.: 10361



Western elevation of the former post office and telegraph station, c.1982.

Source: DEW Files, c.1980



Western elevation of the former post office and telegraph station, 2011.

Source: DEW Files, 2011

BHI Summary of State Heritage Place: 10361

Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register on 24 March 1983

The South Australian Heritage Council endorsed the content of this BHI - SSHP on 15 February 2024

PHOTOS

Former Robe Telegraph Station and Post Office
2 Mundy Terrace, Robe 5276

PLACE NO.: 10361



Front of the former post office and telegraph station, 2011.

Source: DEW Files, 2011



Front of the former post office and telegraph station, 2020.

Source: Google Street View, 2020

-
- ¹ Susan Marsden, *Working Lines: A History of Robe Electric Telegraph Station and Post Office* (Robe: District Council of Robe, 1987), p.4.
- ² See Christopher Browne, *Getting the Message: The Story of the British Post Office* (Phoenix Mill; Far Thrupp; Stroud; Gloucestershire, 1993), pp.1-12.
- ³ See Browne, *Getting the Message*, pp.46-62.
- ⁴ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.5.
- ⁵ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.4-5.
- ⁶ Tony Rogers and Judy Ferrante, *The Weatherman from Greenwich: Charles Todd, 1826 to 1910; Meteorologist, Telegrapher, Electrician, Postmaster-General, Astronomer, South Australian* (Adelaide: Australian Meteorological Association, 2017), p.2.
- ⁷ See Ann Moyal, *Clear Across Australia: A History of Telecommunications*, reprint (1984; Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1985), p.16. Regarding Vail, see 'Alfred Lewis Vail: American Scientist and Businessman', Britannica, 2023.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Lewis-Vail>
- ⁸ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.5-6.
- ⁹ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.6.
- ¹⁰ Rogers and Ferrante, *The Weatherman from Greenwich*, pp.145-148; James Johnstone, 'South Australia – Colonial Period: 1855-1900. Telegraph Offices in the Port Wakefield – Salisbury to Barossa Region', *Telegrams in Australia: 1854 – 1988*, 2023.
<https://telegramsaustralia.com/Forms/Telegraph%20Offices/South%20Australia/SA%20TOs%20-%206%20PW%20Salisbury%20Barossa.html#Gawler>
- ¹¹ Rogers and Ferrante, *The Weatherman from Greenwich*, p.152.
- ¹² Charles Todd, *The Adelaide and Melbourne Electric Telegraph*, 17 October 1856, in *Adelaide Observer*, 25 October 1856, p.5.
- ¹³ Todd, *The Adelaide and Melbourne Electric Telegraph*, p.5.
- ¹⁴ Todd, *The Adelaide and Melbourne Electric Telegraph*, p.5.
- ¹⁵ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.10; H. T. Burgess, *The Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. I (Adelaide: Cyclopedia Company, 1907), pp.272-273; James Johnstone, 'South Australia - Colonial: 1854-1900. Overview of S. A. Developments', *Telegrams in Australia: 1854-1988*, 2023.
<https://telegramsaustralia.com/Forms/Colonial/Sth%20Australia/Overview%20of%20%20SA.html>
- ¹⁶ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.10.
- ¹⁷ Todd, *The Adelaide and Melbourne Electric Telegraph*, p.5; Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.9.
- ¹⁸ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.9-10.
- ¹⁹ Moyal, *Clear Across Australia*, pp. 23-34.
- ²⁰ See 'Sir Charles Todd', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia, 2013.
<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/people/sir-charles-todd>
- ²¹ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.15.
- ²² See Derek Pugh, *Twenty to the Mile: The Overland Telegraph Line*, reprint (2021; Rapid Creek: Self-published, 2022), pp.1-13.
- ²³ 'Overland Telegraph', *Defining Moments*, National Museum of Australia, 2022.
<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/overland-telegraph>
- ²⁴ Liz Harfull, *Almost an Island: The Story of Robe*, reprinted edition (2013; Mile End: Wakefield press, 2015), 12-14; Susan Marsden, *A Glimpse of Golden Days* (Robe: District Council of Robe, 1985), pp.11-12.
- ²⁵ Harfull, *Almost an Island*, 11; Marsden, *A Glimpse of Golden Days*, p.12.
- ²⁶ Harfull, *Almost an Island*, 14-16; Marsden, *A Glimpse of Golden Days*, p.14.
- ²⁷ Roger André, 'Wool', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia, 19 March 2014.
<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/wool>; Michael Williams, *The Making of the*

South Australian Landscape: A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia (London; New York: Academic Press, 1974), pp. 339-341.

²⁸ Dallwitz and Marsden, *Robe Historical Interpretation*, pp.4-10.

²⁹ Dallwitz and Marsden, *Robe Historical Interpretation*, pp.4-10.

³⁰ Marsden, *A Glimpse of Golden Days*, pp.21-24.

³¹ Dallwitz and Marsden, *Robe Historical Interpretation*, pp.10-16.

³² Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.4.

³³ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.4.

³⁴ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.5.

³⁵ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.5.

³⁶ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.4-5.

³⁷ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.5.

³⁸ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.5.

³⁹ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.10.

⁴⁰ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.10.

⁴¹ 'Guichen Bay', *Adelaide Observer*, 19 June 1858, p.1.

⁴² 'Guichen Bay', *South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 30 July 1858, p.3.

⁴³ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.15.

⁴⁴ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.11.

⁴⁵ Using Trove, historic newspaper search results relating to the telegraph at Robe and Guichen Bay show numerous articles for shipping intelligence. Local news articles are also well represented.

⁴⁶ Charles Todd quoted in Harfull, *Almost an Island*, p.73.

⁴⁷ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.15-16.

⁴⁸ Harfull, *Almost an Island*, p.73.

⁴⁹ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.15.

⁵⁰ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.25-27; Harfull, *Almost an Island*, pp.73-74.

⁵¹ Marsden, *A Glimpse of Golden Days*, pp.46-48.

⁵² Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.25.

⁵³ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.26; Harfull, *Almost an Island*, p.74.

⁵⁴ Marsden, *Working Lines*, pp.26-27.

⁵⁵ Certificate of Title Vol. 2279, Folio 13, Transfer No. 3467277.

⁵⁶ Marsden, *Working Lines*, p.27.

⁵⁷ Certificate of Title Vol. 2279, Folio 13, Lease No. 3617872, Extension No. 3695596, and Extension No. 3822972.

⁵⁸ Certificate of Title Vol. 2279, Folio 13, Transfer No. 4144016.