HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME:	Ferrari House (Former Eagle Star Insurance Building)	PLACE: 14099

ADDRESS:	28-30 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000

DESCRIPTION

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building 1968), 2019

Source: DEW Files 2019

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is a Post-war International style commercial building that opened in 1968. The style of the building is strongly influenced by Mies van der Rohe's 1950s buildings and, in particular, the Seagram Building (1954-1958) located in New York.

Ferrari House is comprised of nine levels including a basement, ground floor and seven stories above. The building features a reinforced-concrete frame, cantilevered

concrete-slab floors and an anodised-aluminium and grey-tinted-glass curtain wall that is 'hung' from the edge of the floors. The curtain wall is composed of aluminium-framed windows, aluminium spandrels and distinctive aluminium 'I'-beam mullions. The 'I'-beam mullions are created by joining two C-shape sections back-to-back.

Originally the ground floor curtain wall (to the shops and foyer) was set back behind the columns. In 1984, the foyer was reduced in size to create additional retail space in the first shop-front. Further modifications occurred at some point after 1991, when the ground floor curtain wall was repositioned to be in alignment with the columns to enlarge each of the shops. This reduced the pedestrian area at ground level that was once a feature of the building. The subsequent pedestrianisation of James Place has minimised the impact of this loss. The terrazzo finishes to the ground floor shops and foyer are original features of the building, while the ceramic-tile cladding to the ground floor concrete columns is more recent.

The interior of the building has also been completely refitted twice, with the exception of the staircase balustrading, and retains none of the original features that were identified in 1968 in *Architecture and Building* as being of note. (See history for further information about the original interior features of the building.) The first refit took place in 1984 and a second refit has taken place progressively over a number of years and began in c2002. The latest refit includes a new shop space in addition to the shop fronts on the ground floor, new office spaces, a dental suite and a beauty school.

Extent of Listing / Significant Fabric / Curtilage:

The elements with heritage significance include:

- Built form and volume of the building
- Curtain wall including grey-tinted glazing, anodised aluminium window frames, spandrels and 'I'-beam mullions
- Terrazzo finishes to ground floor shops and foyer

The elements excluded from the heritage listing include:

- Interior offices, school, dental and shop fit-outs, elevators and plant

HISTORY

Within a few years of the establishment of South Australia there were calls by members of the public for the establishment of a local insurance company.[1] In December 1838 a prospectus for a joint stock insurance company was advertised in the *South Australian Register* and called for investors to purchase 3000 shares at £50 per share.[2] By May 1840, a third of the required sum had been subscribed and the South Australian Insurance Company began operation on 1 June 1840.[3] The first report of the Directors, delivered at the first annual general meeting held in July 1841, noted the sale of marine, fire and life assurance policies.[4]

From these small beginnings, the South Australian Insurance Company was joined by overseas companies as well as the establishment of further local companies.[5] By 1864 there were 23 insurance companies listed in the Sand & McDougall Directory,

including Eagle Life Assurance Company a forerunner of Eagle Star Insurance. By 1900, 74 insurance companies were listed in the Directory and in 1916, when the last separate list to be included in the Directory was published, there were 81 insurance companies included in it.[6]

Eagle Star Insurance Company

Eagle Star Insurance Company is a British insurance company that was founded in 1904 by Edward Mountain (later Sir Edward) and was originally known as the British Dominions Marine Insurance Company. In 1916, Edward purchased three British Insurance companies – the Eagle, the Star and the Sceptre – and shortly after changed the name of his company to the Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance Company. While the company originally specialised in marine insurance it was known for pioneering 'all-in' household insurance and for creating a department staffed entirely by women to offer services to female customers.[7]

In 1937, the company changed its name to Eagle Star Insurance Company. Directorship and management was retained by the Mountain family throughout most of the twentieth century, with Sir Edward's son and then grandson taking over respectively in 1948 and 1974. In the early 1980s, Sir Denis (grandson) successfully thwarted a takeover bid by Allianz Insurance Company.[8] However, Eagle Star later became a subsidiary of Swiss Zurich Insurance, while the Australian branch of the company was acquired by QBE Insurance in the early 1990s.[9]

Eagle Star in South Australia

Arrangements to open a branch of Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance in South Australia commenced in 1919, when company Manager Mr Kennedy visited Adelaide.[10] A branch opened in the following year and operated from Australasia Chambers on King William Street. South Australian directors were AW Duncan, JW Grasby, WA Sneyd and AJ Walkley, while Rees & Brownsworth were appointed managing agents and attorneys. The company's global assets at that time amounted to more than £17 million.[11]

In the late 1960s, Eagle Star commissioned Melbourne-based architectural firm Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd in association with Adelaide-based firm Berry Gilbert and Polomka to design its first purpose-built office in Australia. Located on the corner of Grenfell Street and James Place, the job was Berry Gilbert and Polomka's first $1 million commission. The building was constructed by AV Jennings Industries (Aust) Ltd,[12] and was officially opened by Premier Steele Hall on 26 September 1968.[13]

The Eagle Star building was influenced by Mies van der Rohe's design for the Seagram Building in New York (1954-1958) and followed his tenet of 'less is more'. The Seagram Building is Mies' most well-known commercial building and embodies the culmination of the International Style in the years after World War Two. It is set in a large plaza and is 39 stories high. The ground floor is set back behind the columns of its frame while the 38 floors above are enclosed in an amber-glass curtain wall with extruded bronze I-beam mullions and Muntz metal (a copper alloy) spandrels. The I-beam mullions are

a distinctive feature of the building and when combined with the narrow proportioning of the glazing adds to the building's sense of verticality.[14]

Seagram Building, New York
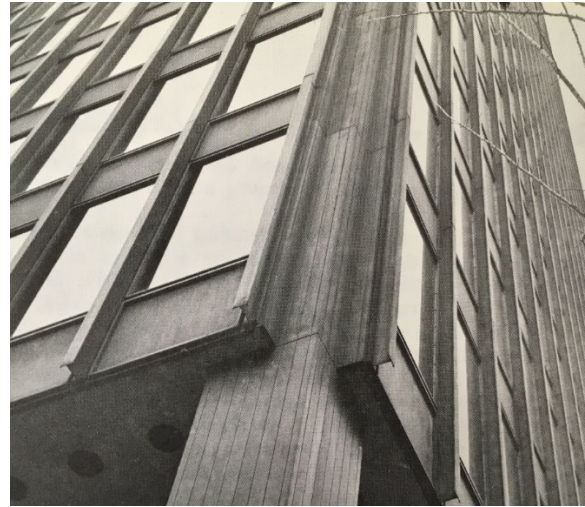
Detail of the curtain wall of the Seagram building note the I-beam mullions

Source: *American Buildings and their Architects*, p.266.

Unlike the Seagram Building which is set back in a large plaza, the Eagle Star Insurance building had to make the most of the small confines of the land parcel and was designed to maximise lettable office space. To achieve that end, Yuncken Freeman Architects designed the building with a reinforced concrete structure, cantilevered concrete slab floors and curtain walls to both Grenfell Street and James Place. The frame was set back from the façade to eliminate the need for perimeter beams and the anodised-aluminium-framed and grey-tinted-glazed curtain wall was hung from the edge of the floors. The thinness of the curtain walling maximised the useable internal floor space.[15]

The ground floor was set back to create additional pedestrian space at street level. An entrance foyer provided access to the offices above and fronted Grenfell Street, while four shops fronted James Place.[16] A life-size steel sculpture of an eagle by Czechoslovakian-born and Melbourne-based artist Belo Angyal graced the foyer.[17]

At the time of its construction, the interior of the building featured a new ceiling and lighting system and an innovative new air-conditioning system. Eagle Star Insurance was the first building in South Australia to feature the ceiling and lighting system that incorporated flush fitting fluorescent lights fitted into a vinyl-coated metal pan to form a continuous run across the ceiling. Traditional vents were not used to provide the conditioned air, instead it was pumped through a narrow grid located between the ceiling tiles and the return air was taken through the light fittings, the ceiling space acted as the return vent.[18]

In the early 1970s, Yuncken Freeman Architects designed a larger but similar structure for Eagle Star Insurance's Melbourne Office. The Melbourne Office, known as Eagle House, also features an aluminium and glazed curtain wall. Unlike the Adelaide Eagle Star Insurance building, the curtain wall of the Melbourne building is flush and features green-tinted glazing. Eagle House was awarded the RAIA Award of Merit in 1972 'as one of the most elegant and attractive office buildings in Australia' and the inaugural Alcoa Australia Award for aluminium use in 1973. It is entered on the Victorian Heritage Register as an architecturally significant building and is considered as one of the 'finest examples of the curtain wall phase of Australian commercial architecture'.[19]

The SA Chapter of the RAIA identified Eagle Star Insurance building in its top 100 Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register, stating 'the designing Architect understood the refinement of detailing demanded by the framed, curtain wall office building. Compared with contemporary Adelaide office buildings, it demonstrated the neoclassical refinement of Miesian philosophy'.

Chronology

1807   Eagle Insurance Company is established in London after a meeting in Cole's Coffee House. (Later acquired by British Dominions Insurance Company to become part of Eagle Star Insurance Company).

1839   English and Scottish Law Insurance Company founded in the UK, later acquired by British Dominions Insurance Company to become a part of Eagle Star Insurance Company.

1840   South Australian Insurance Company is formed. It is the first insurance company to be formed in South Australia and sells marine, fire and life assurance policies.

1843   Star Insurance Company Founded in the UK, later acquired by British Dominions Insurance Company to become a part of Eagle Star Insurance Company.

1864   The Sceptre Insurance Company founded in the UK, later acquired by British Dominions Insurance Company to become a part of Eagle Star Insurance Company.

1920   Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance company establishes their first Adelaide office in the Australasian Chambers on King William Street.

1922   Eagle Star Insurance Company founder Edward Mountain is given a Baronetcy and becomes Sir Edward.

1937   Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance company changes its name to Eagle Star Insurance Company.

1953   Savings Bank of South Australia located on Hindley Street and designed by Caradoc Aston Fisher Woodhead Beaumont Smith is the first building in

Australia to achieve the form of a crystalline skyscraper. Due to building delays it is not constructed until 1958.

1955	Beacon House (former MLC building) opens in Victoria Square – the first International Style building to be constructed in Adelaide.
1955-1970	A building 'bonanza' occurs in the city of Adelaide and a number of new commercial buildings are constructed.
1968	**Eagle Star Insurance Company opens its first purpose-built office in South Australia. The building is designed by Melbourne-firm Yuncken Freeman in the Post-war International style and is officially opened by Premier Steele Hall on 26 September.**
1984	Interior refit and curtain wall to shop fronts and foyer repositioned.
1992	**QBE Insurance group acquire the Australian portion of Eagle Star Insurance.**
c.2002-2019	Progressive refit begins on interior of Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building). The building is occupied by multiple tenants and has multiple uses including offices, dental suite, shops and beauty school.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) constructed in 1967-1968, is an outstanding example of the modern commercial buildings that irrevocably changed the city's skyline between 1955 to c1970, an important period of architectural transition in the city of Adelaide. The building pronounced the shift towards modernism in terms of both design and the use of materials and construction techniques, and the built form and curtain wall retain a high degree of integrity.

Ferrari House is also an outstanding example of a Post-war International Style building in South Australia and finely articulates many of the key characteristics of the style, including a sleek, rectilinear, prismatic or crystalline form; reinforced concrete frame; cantilevered floors; and an elegant light-weight curtain wall. The curtain wall features grey-tinted glazing, anodised aluminium spandrels and distinctive anodised aluminium 'I'-beam mullions that span vertically between the floors. The design of Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) was inspired by the work of Mies van der Rohe and has been recognised by the SA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects as a 'neoclassical refinement of Miesian philosophy – less is more.'

Identification of South Australian Historical Themes

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is considered to be associated with the following themes from the Draft Framework of Historical Themes for South Australia:

3. Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

3.1 Constructing capital city economies

3.9 Developing trade and economic links outside of South Australia

3.12 Financing South Australia

4. Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

4.4 Marking significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities

5. Working

5.1 Working in diverse places and conditions

5.1.1 Working in offices

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Insurance & Assurance Company Offices

There are eleven State Heritage Places on the Register that are associated with either insurance or assurance companies. Two were constructed in the late nineteenth century, four between 1900 and 1918, four during the interwar period, and one in the decades after World War Two. State-listed insurance buildings are:

- Office (Facade of former SA Harbors Board Building) 199-201 Victoria Square ADELAIDE (1884) (was originally built for National Mutual Life) SHP 10896
- National Mutual Building (former Insurance Office) 89-91 King William Street ADELAIDE (1898) SHP 11634
- Electra House (former Citizens' Life Assurance Co, then Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Co. Ltd [MLC] and then Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Co. Building) 131 King William Street ADELAIDE (1901) SHP 13387
- Quest on King William (former T&G [Australasian Temperance and General Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd] Building) 82 King William Street ADELAIDE (1912) SHP 11740
- Former AMP [Australian Mutual Provident Society] Port Pirie Office Building 5 Norman Street PORT PIRIE (1916) SHP 10988
- Former AMP [Australian Mutual Provident Society] Building 189 Main North Road CLARE (1917) SHP 10070
- Office (former Alliance Assurance Company Building), 18 Grenfell Street ADELAIDE SHP (1925-1926) 13592
- Woodards House 47-49 Waymouth Street ADELAIDE (1928-1929) (originally built for Norwich Fire Insurance Society) SHP 13106
- Office (former AMP [Australian Mutual Provident Society] Building, former CBA) 19-23 King William Street ADELAIDE (1936) SHP 11574
- Mayfair Hotel, CML (Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd) Building 41-49 King William Street ADELAIDE (1936) SHP 11637
- Beacon House (former MLC [Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Company Ltd] Building) 181-191 Victoria Square ADELAIDE (1955-1957) SHP 13596.

Woodards House 1929

Source: DEW Files
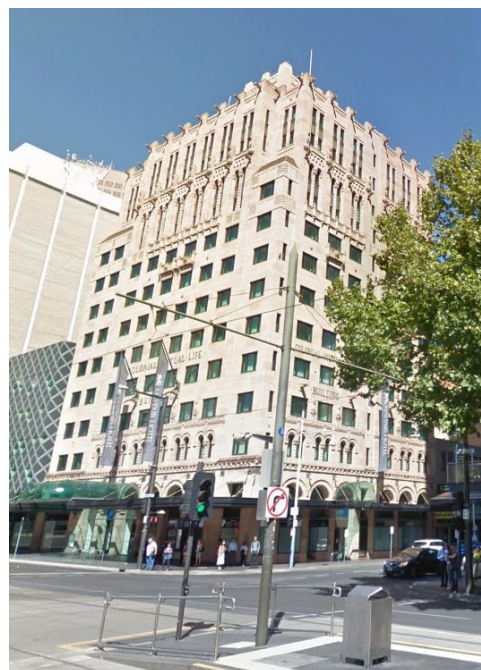
Mayfair Hotel formerly Colonial Mutual Life 1936

Source: Googlemaps 2018

Postwar Office Buildings

A building 'bonanza' occurred in Adelaide in the years between 1955 and 1970 and it was during this time that a number of steel or reinforced concrete framed, curtain wall commercial buildings were constructed. These buildings were inspired by overseas examples of Modern and International Style architecture and began to transform the city's skyline. In the process many of Adelaide's nineteenth century buildings were replaced with sleek office blocks that challenged not only traditional architecture but also the height restrictions imposed in the city at that time. During the 1950s the maximum height in the city was limited to 40m but was modified in 1961 to 61m for buildings with frame construction.[20]

Many of the small office buildings built during this period were commissioned by insurance companies and banks (see illustrated appendix) and some such as the Eagle Star Insurance building, Reserve Bank (SHP 16170) and Beacon House (former MLC Building – SHP 13595) are considered to be of 'superior design merit'.[21] During the 1970s, concrete increasingly featured as the cladding on commercial buildings, while the design of some was inspired by brutalism, and replaced the sleeker crystalline forms of the earlier commercial buildings.[22]

Since 1955, many of the smaller commercial buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s have been demolished or substantially altered to make way for new taller buildings, unhindered by height restrictions. Others such as the AMP building on King William Street have been unsympathetically reclad.

Three commercial buildings from the 1950s-1960s are listed in the South Australian Heritage Register, including:

- Beacon House (former MLC building), 181-191 Victoria Square, ADELAIDE (1955) SHP 13596, listed in 1986 under the *South Australian Heritage Act 1978*. The conservation management plan for the building suggests that if considered under the criteria of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, the building would meet criterion (d). 'The former MLC Building is an outstanding example of the class of buildings recognised as International Style skyscrapers'.
- Former IPEC Building 259 Glen Osmond Road, FREWVILLE, (1963)SHP 13990 mid-20th century corporate complex inspired by organic principles of Frank Lloyd Wright
- Reserve Bank of Australia, 182-188 Victoria Square, ADELAIDE (1963-1967) SHP 16170, listed under criterion (d) as an outstanding example of the buildings erected between 1955 and1965 which combined the use of new construction techniques with prestigious building materials.

Reserve Bank of Australia now Flinders University (1963-1967)

Source: Googlemaps 2018
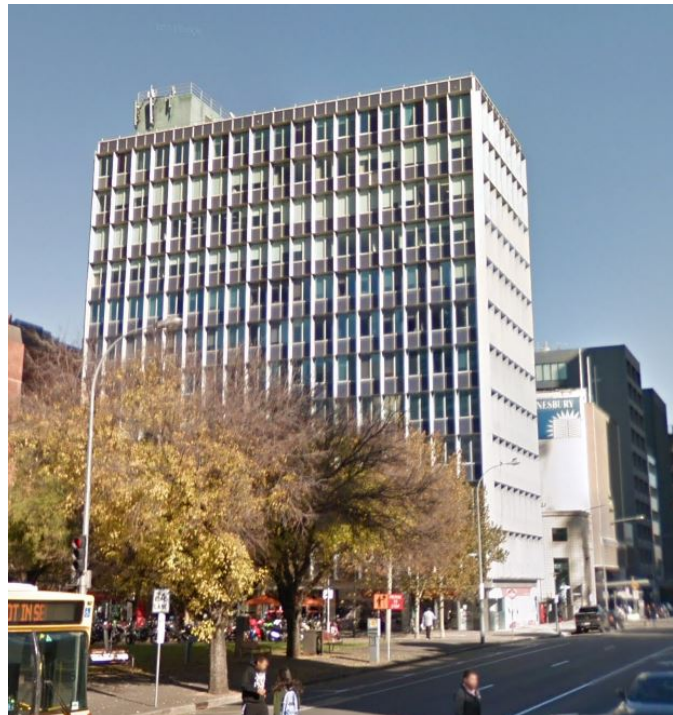
Beacon House (former MLC Building, 1955)

Source: Googlemaps 2018

A selective sample of commercial buildings constructed during the 1950s to 1970s can be found in an illustrated appendix at the end of this report.

Modern & International Style

While Adelaide was architecturally conservative prior to World War Two, in the years after the war more clients were willing to commission buildings that drew on modernist/functionalist design known as the International Style. 'International Style' was a term coined by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock in 1932 in their essay 'The International Style: Architecture Since 1922' which acted as the catalogue for an architectural exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The style as it was employed in Australia c.1940-c.1960 is defined by Apperly et al as Post-War International and was prevalent in Adelaide during the 1950s and 1960s.

The key characteristics of the Post-War International Style are:

- Sleek, glossy, prismatic forms with uninterrupted surfaces
- steel and reinforced concrete frame, expressed selectively
- cubiform shapes
- cantilever
- curtain wall featuring large expanses of glass
- tall buildings that challenged and changed city height limits
- sun-control measures
- smooth surfaces with contrasting textures
- load bearing walls used for curvilinear forms that contrast with rectangularity[23]

A key aspect of the International Style is the curtain wall that was developed by European architects such as Mies van der Rohe who used it to express the building as a crystalline form. Australian architects began to experiment with the design of 'crystalline skyscrapers' as access to materials and technology became increasing available after World War Two. *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture* notes that the first Australian design (1953) to achieve the form of a crystalline skyscraper was the 'slab-like State Savings Bank of SA' located on the corner of Hindley and Bank Streets in Adelaide. However, it was not the first built due to a delay in its construction. A key characteristic of the style, other than the expansive use of glass, is 'extruded or rolled mullions spanning between floors in the vertical direction'.[24]

While there are twenty-six State Heritage Places that are described as either 'international' style or 'modern' architecture on the Register, only nine are buildings (other than dwellings) constructed after 1945 and include:

- Adelaide High School, West Terrace, ADELIADE (1951) SHP 12557
- City of Mitcham Council Chambers, 131 Belair Road TORRENS PARK (1934-1954) SHP 26304
- Beacon House former MLC building, 181-191 Victoria Square, ADELIADE (1955) SHP 13596
- Bragg Laboratories, University of Adelaide, Victoria Avenue ADELAIDE (1962) SHP 13757 Hassell & McConnell, International Style in the style of Mies van der Rohe
- Former IPEC Building, 259 Glen Osmond Road, FREVILLE (1963) SHP 13990 mid-20th century corporate complex inspired by organic principles of Frank Lloyd Wright
- Greek Orthodox Church and Belltower, 282-288 Franklin Street ADELAIDE (1966) SHP 13205 modern interpretation of Byzantine architecture
- Adelaide Festival Centre, King William Road, ADELAIDE (1974) SHP 13200
- Union Building Group, University of Adelaide, Victoria Drive ADELAIDE (1975) SHP 17619 Union House by Robert Dickson, 1970s section vernacular adaptation of modernism
- Adelaide Fire Station, 81-129 Wakefield Street, ADELAIDE (1976-1983) SHP 26356 Rod Roach with Woodhead, postmodern architecture.

Bragg Laboratories 1962
Example of International Style and Miesian architecture

Source: CMP

Fire Services Headquarters 1983
Example of post-modern architecture

Source: Hansen Yuncken 90+

Representation of the twentieth century on the South Australian Heritage Register

There are 2,300 State Heritage Places on the South Australian Heritage Register; 1,747 were built in the nineteenth century while only 435 places represent the twentieth century. (Please note that due to limited information in early Register entries there may be other places from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries not included in the figures provided. A number of entries are also natural formations/features and pre-date colonisation).

This means that only about 19% of our listed places date from the 100 years from 1900-2000, in contrast to the 76% that date from the 70 years between 1837-1900. There is even more of an under-representation when it come to the second half of the twentieth century, with about 1% of the Register dating from the 1950s to present. From the time period considered in this report, 1950s to 1970s, there are eight State Heritage Places from the 1950s, eight that represent the 1960s and three from the 1970s.

State Heritage Places constructed in the 1950s:

- Adelaide High School, West Terrace ADELAIDE (1951) SHP 12557
- Mount Gambier Fire Station, Sturt Street MOUNT GAMBIER (1955) SHP 14723
- Modernist Style Dwelling, Oaklands Road, SOMERTON PARK (1951) SHP14467
- Second World War Memorial Gates, memorial Drive PORT PIRIR (1959) SHP 19047
- Executor Trustee Buildings, Penola Road, MOUMT GAMBIER (1958) SHP 14722
- Radium Hill Townsite and Cemetery, Maldorky Station, OLARY (1950s) SHP 21246
- No 2. Dock, Ocean Steamers Parade, PORT ADELAIDE (1958) SHP 26478 Sheds 13 & 14 only date from 1950s, sheds 16 & 17 were built earlier.
- Shri Ganesha Temple, Dyer Road, OAKLANDS PARK (1959) SHP 26361.

Mount Gambier Fire Station 1955

Source: DEW Files 2018

Second Word War Memorial Gates, Port Pirie

Source: Googlemaps, 2018

State Heritage Places constructed in the 1960s:

- Renmark Distillery Bridge, Renmark Avenue, RENMARK (1960) SHP 13801
- Bragg Laboratories University of Adelaide, Victoria Avenue ADELAIDE Hassell & McConnell, International Style in the style of Mies van der Rohe (1962) SHP 13757
- Former IPEC Building 259 Glen Osmond Road, FREWVILLE (1963) SHP 13990 mid-20th century corporate complex inspired by organic principles of Frank Lloyd Wright
- Nunyara Chapel, Burnell Drive, BELAIR (1963) SHP 14785
- Reserve Bank of Australia, Victoria Square, ADELAIDE (1965) SHP 16170
- Dickson Beach House, Main South Road, NORMANVILLE (1967) SHP 26195
- Cooper Pedy Catholic church & Presbytery, Hutchison Street COOPER PEDY (1967) SHP 26195
- John Dowie's Three Rivers Fountain, Victoria Square ADELAIDE (1968) SHP 26375.

Three River's Fountain 1968

Source: DEW Files

Nunyara Chapel 1963

Source: DEW Files

State Heritage Places constructed in the 1970s:

- Kathleen Lumley College, MacKinnon Parade, NORTH ADELAIDE (1967-1971) SHP 26350

- Adelaide Festival Centre, King William Road, ADELAIDE (1974) SHP 13200
- Union Building Group (Union House (1975) within the group designed by Bob Dickson), University of Adelaide, Victoria Drive ADELAIDE (1975) SHP 17619.

Berry Gilbert and Polomka

The partnership between Dean Berry, Stephen Gilbert and Brian Polomka was formed in 1959 and continued until the early 1980s. During that time the firm was responsible for the design of a number of architecturally important buildings in South Australia, including some that were professionally recognised at the time of their construction and others identified later by the SA Chapter of the RAIA in their 'Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register'. Examples include:

- City of Mitcham Council Chambers, 131 Belair Rd TORRENS PARK, Dean Berry (1930s) SHP 26304
- Norwood High School, Dean Berry (1959)
- House, 110 George St NORWOOD, Brian Polomka (1954-1964) (Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register)
- House, 113 George St NORWOOD, Brian Polomka (c1980) (Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register)
- St Barnabas College Chapel, BELAIR, Berry Gilbert Barker & Polomka (1960) (Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register)
- Woodlands School Chapel, GLENELG, Berry Gilbert Polomka (1963) (Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register)
- Royal Automotive Association Offices, Grenfell St ADELAIDE, Berry Gilbert Polomka attributed to Berry (1964)
- Thomas Hardy & Sons office and bulk store, MILE END
- Coober Pedy Hospital, COOBER PEDY (Civic Trust Award 1984)
- Prospect Library, Thomas St NAILSWORTH (Civic Trust Award 1984)

Woodlands School Chapel 1963

Source: Top 100 Significant SA Architecture card file

Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd

Yuncken Freeman Architects were formed in 1933 and continued to practice until 1992. They appear to have undertaken two commissions in South Australia including Eagle Star Insurance building (1968) (subject of this assessment) and the Monarto Environmental Impact Study (1972). Yuncken Freeman are particularly noted for the design of modern curtain wall commercial buildings that 'experimented with materials, form and space'.[25] A number of the firm's buildings are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and include:

- Sidney Myer Music Bowl (1958), Kings Domain, MELBOURNE VHR H1772
- Eagle House (1972), 473 Bourke Street MELBOURNE 1973 VHR H1807 also awarded the RAIA Award of Merit 1972 and the inaugural Alcoa of Australia Award for Architecture. Eagle House is significant as it is 'one of the finest examples of the curtain wall phase of Australian commercial architecture.'[26] (Note – Melbourne's Eagle House was built 5 years after the Adelaide example and has many similarities)
- Former BHP House (1972) 130-148 William Street MELBOURNE VHR H1699 also awarded the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Award. Former BHP House is significant for 'demonstrating the principal characteristics of early 1970s multi-storey office buildings [and] heralded a new aesthetic in high-rise buildings.' The building also has technological significance in the 'innovative structural application of steel and concrete'.[27]

Eagle House, Bourke Street Melbourne

Former BHP House, William Street Melbourne

Assessment against 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.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

> *The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.*

> *Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.*

The Eagle Star Insurance building is associated with the provision of financial; services, and, in particular, insurance in South Australia. The South Australian Insurance Company, formed in 1840, was the first local provider of insurance and assurance policies. They were soon followed by other local, interstate and international providers and by the time Eagle Star Insurance entered the South Australian market in 1920, they were one of over eighty companies or agents offering policies to South Australian families and businesses.

It was the financial services sector, primarily insurance companies and banks that commissioned the construction of the new sleek modern commercial buildings that began to transform the city's skyline in the 1950s and 1960s (see illustrated appendix). While the Eagle Star Insurance building was the company's first purpose-built office in Australia and is an exemplar of the Post-war International Style, it was constructed at the end of the 1960s. By the end of the 1960s, the design of the city's commercial buildings was in transition and much taller buildings, clad in concrete began to dominate. In the 1970s examples of brutalist architecture also occurred.

While Eagle Star Insurance building is a significant example of an International Style commercial building it did not make a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the evolution or pattern of South Australian history.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

(b)   it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is associated with the provision of financial services in South Australia and particularly insurance and assurance policies. The sale of insurance and assurance policies has been a part the financial services on offer in South Australian since 1840, when the South Australian Insurance Company began operation. The number of companies offering insurance and assurance policies to South Australians grew rapidly in the following decades and by the early twentieth century over eighty firms and / or agencies sold a variety of policies. Insurance and assurance remains an active part of the financial services sector in South Australia and is not rare, uncommon or endangered of being lost.

Since 1840 there have been numerous buildings constructed in South Australia that are or have been associated with a variety of different insurance companies, a number of which still exist. Commercial buildings constructed for insurance companies in the twentieth century are also well represented on the South Australian Heritage Register. Of the eleven insurance buildings listed as State Heritage Places (see comparability, rarity, representation), ten were constructed in the twentieth century.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

(c)   it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or

palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

There is no visible fabric, documentary evidence or oral history related to the Eagle Star Insurance building to suggest that there is likely to be any physical evidence not currently visible that will contribute meaningfully to an understanding of South Australian history. The building was constructed in the late 1960s and replaced an earlier building. There are a number of documentary and photographic sources that relate to the history of the site and specifically the Eagle Star Insurance Company and the building.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (c).

(d)   it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

The former Eagle Star Insurance building is a notable example of an Adelaide office building and in particular, represents the phase of modern commercial building that irrevocably changed the city's skyline between 1955 to c1970.

Originally constructed to provide insurance services, the former Eagle Star Insurance building has associations with the development of the financial services sector in South Australia, and has represented a number of commercial uses since its construction in 1968. While the internal spaces have been adapted and modified for other uses, including legal offices, a beauty school, shop and dental suite, the quality of the external fabric is considered to be exceptional.

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is an outstanding example of the modern, curtain-wall, commercial buildings that transformed the city's skyline during the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike the earlier traditional commercial buildings constructed in the city such as the T&G building (1925), Mayfair Hotel (former CML 1936) and State Bank (former Savings Bank of South Australia 1943) SHP 13384, these new sleek high-rise curtain-wall, commercial buildings such as Eagle Star Insurance, Reserve Bank SHP 16170 and Beacon House (former MLC) SHP 13596 pronounced the shift towards modernism in terms of both design and the use of materials and construction techniques (see illustrated appendix).

Of particular note is the distinctive built form and volume, and light-weight crystalline curtain wall, hung from the edge of the cantilevered concrete floors and composed from grey-tinted glass and anodised aluminium frames, spandrels and 'I'-beam mullions that typifies the class. It is these features that makes Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) a notable example of the curtain wall commercial buildings constructed during an important period of architectural transition in the city of Adelaide (1955-c1970).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does** fulfil criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

> *The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.*

> *Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.*

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) constructed in 1967-1968 is an outstanding example of a Post-war International Style building in South Australia. The building finely articulates many of the key characteristics of the style, including a sleek, rectilinear, prismatic or crystalline form; reinforced concrete frame; cantilevered floors; and an elegant light-weight curtain wall composed from anodised aluminium and grey-tinted glass cladding. The built form and curtain wall, which exhibits grey-tinted glazing, aluminium spandrels

and distinctive aluminium 'I'-beam mullions that span vertically between the floors is inspired by the work of Mies van der Rohe and in particular his design for the Seagram building in New York.

The built form and curtain wall retain a high degree of integrity, however, the interior of the building has been completely refitted. The position of the curtain wall to the shops and entrance to the foyer on the ground floor has also been slightly altered to create additional retail space. These changes have not diminished the building's ability to finely illustrate the main attributes of the Post-war International Style.

The Eagle Star Insurance building is critically recognised by the South Australian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects as one of the top 100 twentieth century buildings in South Australia. Their commentary on the building states 'the designing architects understood the refinement of detailing demanded by the framed curtain wall office building [and it demonstrates] the neoclassical refinement of Miesian philosophy' ie 'less is more'.

The SA Chapter of the RAIA also noted that the Eagle Star Insurance building is a very refined example of the International Style and was the precedent for the Melbourne Office, Eagle House that was built in 1972. Eagle House in Melbourne was awarded the RAIA Award of Merit 1972 and the inaugural Alcoa of Australia Award for Architecture 1973. It is also included in the Victorian Heritage Register as 'one of the finest examples of the curtain wall phase of Australian commercial architecture'.

Susan Marsden, Paul Stark and Patricia Sumerling, who are noted South Australian historians and heritage consultants, identified the Eagle Star Insurance building in the *Heritage of the City of Adelaide* as a commercial building with 'design of superior merit' that illustrates the 'shift away from traditionalism to modernism' in the City of Adelaide in the years between 1955 to c1970.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does** fulfil criterion (e).

(f)   it has strong cultural or spiritual association for the community or a group within it.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

> *The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.*

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

The former Eagle Star Insurance building has a cultural association with members of the South Australian Architectural fraternity and people who appreciate and celebrate modern architecture. The building is recognised by the South Australian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects as one of the top 100 twentieth century buildings constructed in South Australia. It has also been celebrated by Modernist Adelaide and the Adelaide Chapter of the Art Deco and Modernism Society, social media groups with collectively over 3,500 followers.

While these groups do not have regular interactions with the Eagle Star Insurance building, the latter two groups do periodically feature it in various walking tours of the city. It is through these walking tours that Modernist Adelaide and the Art Deco and Modernism Society promote South Australia's modern architectural history while also celebrating the building. However, the Eagle Star Insurance building is one of many places that the three groups have an attachment to and many other architecturally important buildings in South Australia are also promoted and celebrated in a similar manner.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

(g)   it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places,* that note:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person

will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is associated with the Eagle Star Insurance Company who commissioned it as their first purpose-built office building in Australia. It is also associated with Melbourne-based, architectural firm Yunken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd who designed the building and the Adelaide firm Berry Gilbert and Polomka who managed its construction.

Eagle Star Insurance Company was one of many insurance companies that operated in South Australia during the twentieth century. The company was a relative late-comer to the South Australian market as it did not open its Adelaide premises, based in Australasian Chambers on King William Street, until 1920. At that time over eighty other insurance companies and / or agents were already established in South Australia. Like those other insurance companies Eagle Star offered a variety of policy types.

One of the most notable aspects of the company's contribution to South Australia was the commissioning of Yunken Freeman to design the Miesian-inspired International Style commercial building on Grenfell Street. It was Eagle Star's first and only purpose-built premises in South Australia. The Australian branch of Eagle Star Insurance was acquired by QBE Insurance in the early 1990s.

While Eagle Star contributed to the array of financial services and in particular insurance products available in South Australia during the twentieth century, it was one of many companies to do so. Therefore, other than commissioning an architecturally distinct building, Eagle Star has not made a strong, notable or influential contribution to the pattern of the state's history. The commissioning of architecturally notable buildings, while of interest, is not representative of the work of the company, which is the sale of insurance and assurance policies.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g) with regard to Eagle Star Insurance Company.

The partnership between Berry Gilbert and Polomka was formed in 1959 and continued until the early 1980s. During that time the firm was responsible for the design of a number of architecturally important buildings in South Australia including some that were professionally recognised at the time of their construction with an award of merit and others identified later by the SA Chapter of the RAIA as one of the top 100 buildings in the Significant Twentieth Century Architecture Register (see Comparability, rarity and representation). While the Eagle Star Insurance building was also identified in the top 100 significant South Australian buildings for its Miesian inspired architecture, it was not designed by Berry Gilbert and Polomka but rather Melbourne-based firm Yuncken Freeman.

Eagle Star was Berry Gilbert and Polomka's first building project to cost over $1 million and is an example of their project management skills. However, there are

other buildings that better represent the firm's architectural oeuvre (see Comparability, rarity and representation), including large projects such as the construction of hospitals, schools, factories and warehouses.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g) with regard to Berry Gilbert and Polomka.

Yuncken Freeman Architects are a Melbourne-based architectural firm that operated between 1933 and 1992. While they undertook some commissions in Adelaide, Canberra and overseas their most prominent and well-known works are located in Victoria. A number of them, including Melbourne's Eagle House completed in 1972, not only won professional awards but are also listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. Yuncken Freeman were inspired by modern architecture and a number of the buildings listed on the Victorian Heritage Register recognise their contribution to modern commercial building design including Eagle House and the former BHP House.

While Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) is an exemplar of Yuncken Freeman's architecture and specifically, 1950s-1970s commercial buildings, the firm itself is not an organisation of historical importance to South Australia. The firm's only South Australian Commissions appear to be Eagle Star Insurance building in the late 1960s and the Monarto Environmental Impact Study in 1972.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g) with regard to Yuncken Freeman Architects.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).

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SITE RECORD

NAME: Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance building) **PLACE: 14099**

FORMER NAME:	Eagle Star Insurance building
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Post-war International Style curtain wall commercial building
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1968
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 27 September 2018
CURRENT USE:	Legal offices, dental suite, beauty school, shops
	Unknown - present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Insurance company offices & shops
	1968 - unknown
ARCHITECT:	Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd in association with Berry, Gilbert & Polomka
	1968
BUILDER:	AV Jennings Industries (Aust) Ltd
	1967-1968

SUBJECT INDEXING:	**Group:**	Commerce, Commerce (retail and wholesale)
	Category:	Office building, shop

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Adelaide	
LOCATION:	**Street No.:**	28-30
	Street Name:	Grenfell Street
	Town/Suburb:	Adelaide
	Post Code:	5000
LAND DESCRIPTION	**Title Reference:**	CT5849/638 Lot 1 Community Strata Plan 20905
	Title Reference:	CT5849/639 Lot 2 Community Strata Plan 20905
	Title Reference:	CT5849/640 Lot 3 Community Strata Plan 20905
	Title Reference:	CT5849/641 Lot 4 Community Strata Plan 20905

Title Reference:	CT5849/642	
	Lot 5 Community Strata Plan 20905	
Title Reference:	CT5849/643	
	Lot 6 Community Strata Plan 20905	
Title Reference:	CT5849/644	
	Lot 7 Community Strata Plan 20905	
Title Reference:	CT5849/645	
	Lot 8 Community Strata Plan 20905	
Title Reference:	CT5849/646	
	Lot 9 Community Strata Plan 20905	
Title Reference:	CT5849/647	
	Lot 10 Community Strata Plan 20905	
	Hundred	Adelaide
MAP REFERENCE:	**MGA Zone**	54
	Easting (X)	280845.901
	Northing (Y)	6132746.505

SITE PLAN

NAME: Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building)   **PLACE:** 14099

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building), 28-30 Grenfell Street Adelaide SA 5000 CT/5849/639, CT/5849/640, CT/5849/642, CT/5849/643, CT/5849/644, CT/5849/645, CT/5849/646, CT/5849/647, CT/5849/649, CT/5959/263

Legend   **N**

☐ Nominated place

PHOTOS

NAME: Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building)   PLACE: 14099

Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building) Grenfell St frontage

Source: DEW Files 23 May 2019

Shop-fronts to James Place (note alignment of curtain wall with columns)

Source: DEW Files 23 May 2019

Shop-front to James Place – note original location of curtain wall behind column (this shop front only)

Source: DEW Files 23 May 2019

Foyer entrance on Grenfell Street

NAME: Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building)   PLACE: 14099

Detail of curtain wall

Source: DEW Files 23 May 2019

Detail showing formation of 'I' beam, window frame and spandrel

Source: DEW Files 23 May 2019

Example of new interior fit-out for legal offices

Source: Dew Files 23 may 2019

Example of new interior fit-out for dental suite

Source: Dew Files 23 may 2019

Example of new interior fit-out for beauty school
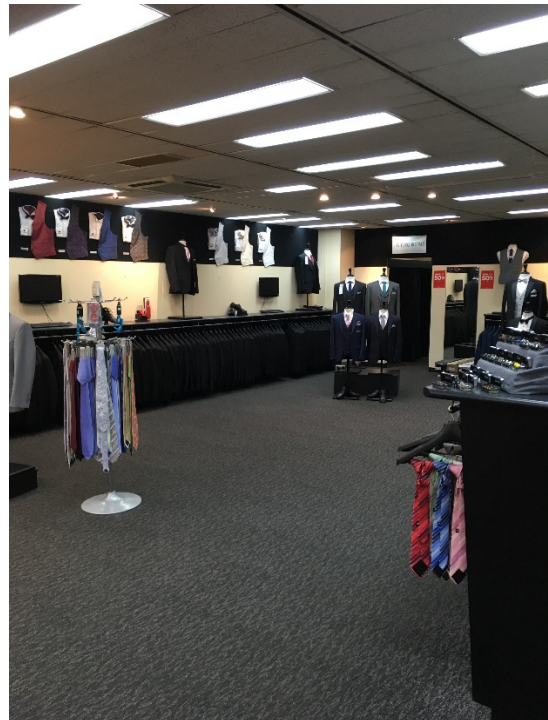
Example of new interior fit-out for shop

Source: Dew Files 23 may 2019

Illustrated Appendix

Sample of commercial buildings constructed in Adelaide 1955-1978.

Building & Brief Details	As Built	Present Status
MLC 1955 Victoria Square (Osborne McCutcheon) Bates Smart McCutcheon Known as **Beacon House (SHP 13596)**		
Da Costa 1957 Grenfell Street (James Irwin) Woods Bagot		
City Mutual Life 1957 Crn King William & Pirie St (James Irwin) Woods Bagot		
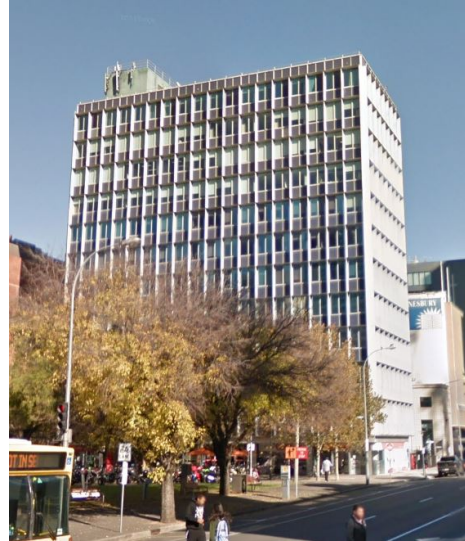
Heritage South Australia, DEW
Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building) (14099)

Bank SA
1958
Hindley St
Caradoc
Aston Fisher
Woodhead
Beaumont
Smith

Designed
1953
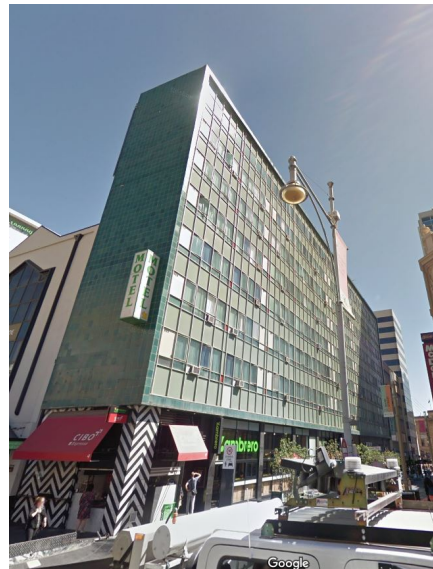
Dalgety House
1960
Currie Street
(James Irwin)
Woods Bagot

Note re-cladding

Advertiser Building
1960
King William
Street
James Irwin
Woods Bagot

Demolished

**Royal
Exchange
House**
1961
Currie Street
Caradoc
Ashton Fisher
Woodhead
Beaumont
Smith

**Pearl
Insurance**
1961
Grenfell Street
Stephenson &
Turner

**Note the small building adjacent
left, this building was demolished
for Eagle Star (subject of
assessment)**

Reserve Bank
1962
Victoria Square
Commonwealth Department of Works with Rolf Jensen
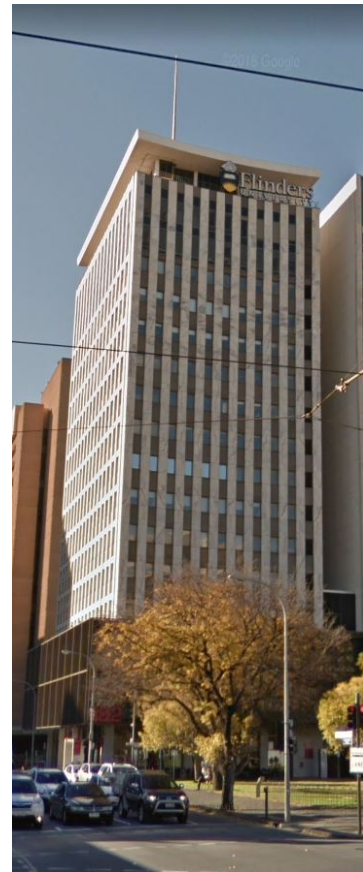
Electricity Trust
1962
Eastwood

Heavily modified/demolished

North Terrace House
1962
North Terrace
Stephenson & Turner
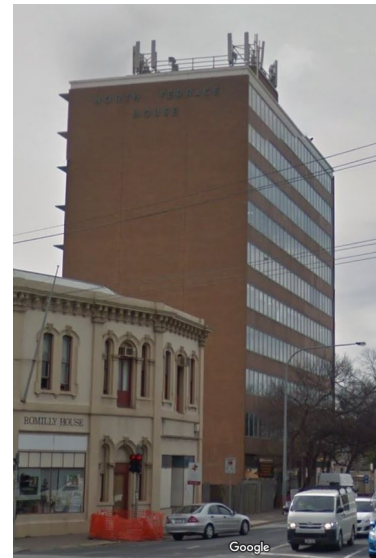
Prudential
1963
North Terrace
Roy Wilson
Woods Bagot

Astor House
1963
Flinders Street
(P Simpson)
Shepherd & Simpson

Extensive use of aluminium was a noted feature of the building

Demolished or substantially altered

IOOF
1963
Gawler Place
McMichael &
Harris

**State
Administration
Centre**
1968
Victoria
Square
Public
Buildings
Department
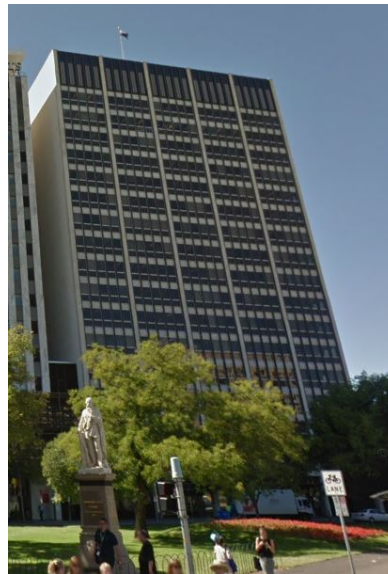
AMP
1968
King William
Street
(probably
James Irwin)
Woods Bagot
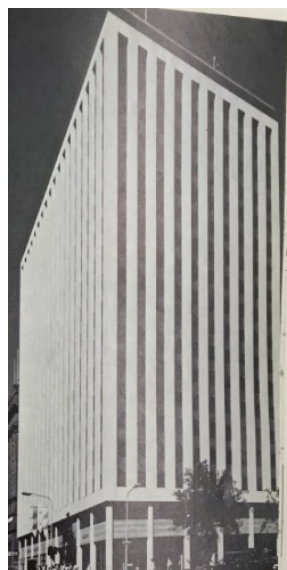
Note re-cladding

General Accident, Fire & Life Assurance
1969
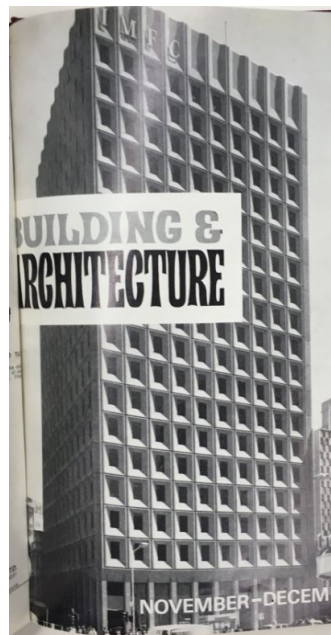Cheesman Doley Neighbour Raffen

IMFC
1969
Crn King William and Hindley St
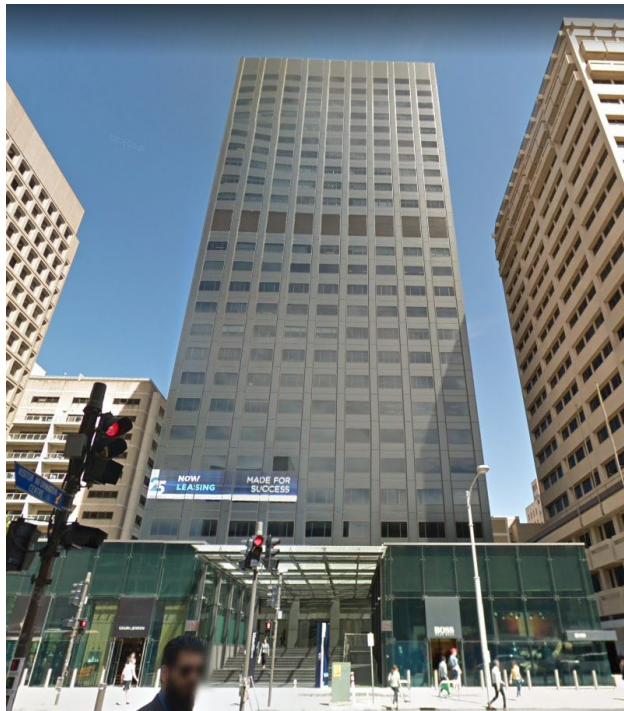Cheesman Doley Neighbour Raffen
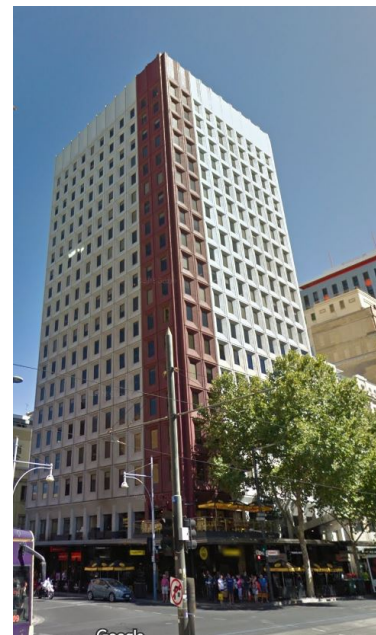
Note the later painting of façade

**Grenfell
Centre**
1974
Grenfell Street
Cheesman
Doley
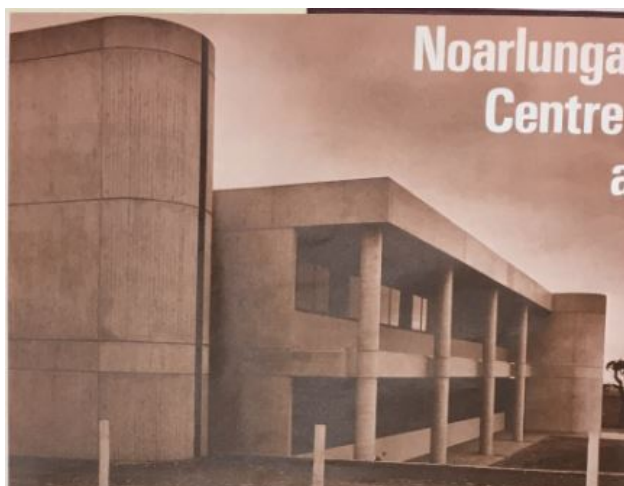Neighbour
Hanaford
Pellew
Hodgkinson

**Regency Park
TAFE**
1977
Regency Park
(Guy
Marron?)
Cheesman
Doley
Neighbour
Raffen

**Noarlunga
City Council**
1977
Beach Road
Christies
Beach
(Antanas
Lapsys)
Ceesman
Doley
Neighbour
Raffen

Forensic Science
1977
Divett Street
(K Hocking?)
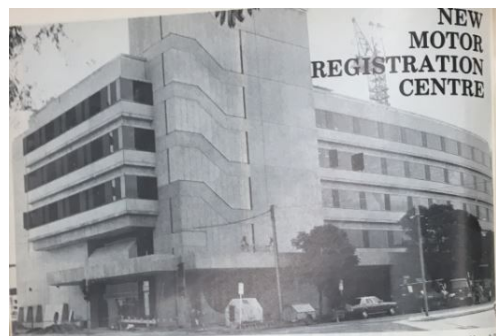Public Buildings Department

Motor Registration
1977
Wakefield Street
(AD Evans?)
Public Buildings Department

Colonel Light Centre
1978
Pirie Street
(Ian Halliday, John Morphett, David Hassell)
Hassell

Source: 'The Changing Skyline of Adelaide', *The Trend in Building and Architecture Today*, vol. 1, no.2. *Building and Architecture* various issues between 1962 and 1978.

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[16] 'New Office Bloc', p.40.

[17] 'Eagle Star's New $1m Office Block Asset to City', *The Advertiser* 26 September 1968.

[18] 'New office Block', p.40.

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[21] Susan Marsden, Paul Stark and Patricia Sumerling eds. (1990), *Heritage of the City of Adelaide'*, (Adelaide: City of Adelaide), pp.43-44.

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