

RECORD OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

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

NAME: Shri Ganesha Temple PLACE NO.: 26361

ADDRESS: 3A Dwyer Road, Oaklands Park, South Australia, 5046

Physical Description

The Shri Ganesha Temple is a single-storey building which has had extensive alterations and additions. It was formerly a Lutheran church and has been converted to a Hindu temple. It is set back from the street. It has a temple-styled, glazed and columned entry which supports three arched niches housing colourfully painted, hand-sculptured deities. It has a domed tower which sits above the main shrine, Sanctum Sanctorum, containing the principal deity Shri (Holy) Ganesha, the Elephant-headed God who is the remover of obstacles. The dome, adorned with sixteen, hand-crafted, colourful sculptures, rises from a glazed, pyramidal roof and is visible from the street. The remainder of the rendered front façade has applied decorative features including two sacred 'Om' symbols signifying the sound a-u-m.

Internally, either side of the Sanctum Sanctorum, sit two smaller shrines – one for Shri Muruga, Valli and Deivanai, the other for Shri Laxmi Narayana. On the northern side, there is a shrine for Shri Shiva Linga, and on the southern side, Shri Durga. Adjacent the Shri Shiva shrine is the Vasantha Mandapam and shrines for Navagraha and Vairavar. On the left wall of the main temple entry lies the Shri Hanuman shrine. The main temple is separated from a large hall by an operable wall. The hall opens to an eastern, covered outdoor area via two large, hand-crafted teak doors adorned with bells, and imported from South India. Various ancillary rooms are located off the main spaces.

Statement of Heritage Significance

The Shri Ganesha Temple at Oaklands Park is significant as the State's first traditional Hindu temple constructed in South Australia and since the late 1990s it has provided the State's Hindus, from different sects, with a place for both spiritual worship and cultural studies. The design of the Shri Ganesha Temple resembles the human body lying on its back with the head to the east and feet to the west and houses 25 hand-crafted deities, including Ganesha, crafted in India. According to religious tradition,

Hindu temples are renewed every 12 years, so in February 2012 the Shri Ganesha Temple was cleaned and the deities repainted by a team of Indian craftsman.

Relevant Criterion under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

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

The Shri Ganesha Temple has strong cultural and spiritual associations for the Hindu community of South Australia. The Temple provides a spiritual and cultural focus for the South Australian Hindu community and provides a sense of identity and belonging in a publicly visible way. Whilst the Temple is used as a place of worship it is also a community centre for the tuition of Hindu philosophy and culture, Indian languages and music.

Extent of Listing

The components that are critical to the heritage significance of the Shri Ganesha temple include:

- Temple including central domed shrine, smaller shrines, pillars and rooms.

The extent of listing *excludes* paint schemes and other features that would traditionally be renewed every 12 years.

History of the Place

This building was originally constructed as the Grace Lutheran Church in 1959. There were several periods of growth for the Lutheran church in South Australia, including substantial expansion to meet the demands of post-WWII migration from Europe. The Grace Lutheran Church was dedicated on 22 Nov 1959, however it was relatively short-lived. The closing service was held on 1 Jan 1967.

The Hindu Society of South Australia held its inaugural meeting on 10 August 1985. It aimed to provide both an umbrella organisation for all Hindu groups in the state and to establish a place of worship. On 23 November 1985 the Society purchased the disused Grace Lutheran Church at Oaklands Park and took possession in January 1986. A granite statue of Shri Ganesha was imported from Mamallapuram, South India and was consecrated in July 1986. In November 1988 the first full-time priest was appointed and by 2007, with growing popularity, two priests were needed to serve the community.

At a meeting held on 31 January 1999 it was decided that work should commence on remodelling the temple. This involved: rebuilding 'the altar areas in the style of a traditional Hindu temple' including constructing a main Sanctum Sanctorum, with a dome and glass roof, and other shrines to house deities; extending the building behind the main shrines; and creating a temple styled façade at the entry with an adjoining sanctum (SGT 2000, p.6). Earlier, on 28 June 1998 the foundation for these new works was ceremoniously laid with guests including the Mayor of Marion Council. The alterations and additions, costing \$600,000, were designed by Shri (Mr) S. Nagarajan from India; the Chief Stapathi, meaning Hindu Temple Architect 'trained

in the traditional art of temple building' (Lewandowski 1980, p.141). The engineer for the project was Rajalingam who also designed the Sydney Murugan Temple.

The consecration ceremony (Maha Kumbhabhishegam) for the remodelled temple was held 6-9 November 2000. It was officially opened in 2001 by the then Premier of South Australia, John Olsen and is reportedly the State's first traditional Hindu temple (Stone 2001, p.10). Hindu temples are only able to be renovated every 12 years. Thus in 2012 further renovations were undertaken including cleaning and repainting the deities by a team of Indian craftsmen. The second consecration ceremony was held on 3-5 February 2012.

The Shri Ganesha Temple is used for daily *pujas* (worship), *archanas* (worship concluded by the waving of lamp) and *bhajans* (religious hymns), to practice religious rites, and celebrate religious festivals. It is also a cultural centre for teaching Hindu philosophy and culture, Indian languages, music and 'other related subjects not taught in a school curriculum'. The Temple community aims to 'pass on the cultural tradition to younger generations'. Shri Ganesha is also an 'important community centre for many new migrants' (Adelaide Temple online).

Currently, the Hindu Council of Australia lists three temples in South Australia; the Shri Ganesha Temple, the Hare Krishna Temple (devoted to the movement founded in New York in 1969) at Kilburn and the Murugan Temple Adelaide (no address or details given) (Hindu Council of Australia online). In 2010 it was also reported that a new \$3 million Hindu temple was planned in George Street, Greenfields, in the City of Salisbury Council area however no works appear to have commenced (Nelligan 2010 online) (Google maps). Therefore, as the President of the Hindu Society of South Australia states, Shri Ganesha is currently the State's only Hindu temple (Siva Selvakulalingam 2012).

References

The primary source for this Record was:

- University of South Australia (Dr Susan Lustri) 2012, Assessment Report for Shri Ganesha Temple, Commissioned by DEWNR.

Refer to the assessment report for more detailed information about the history and references. Additional references are:

- 'Shri Ganesha Temple (SGT): Maha Kumbhabhishekam (Consecration Ceremonies) 6-9 November 2000 & 3-5 February 2012'.
- Stone, K. 'Opening of First Hindu Temple Fulfils a Dream', *The Advertiser*, 3 September 2001, p.10.
- Vadivella Belle, C. 'State's Hindu Sanctuary', *The Advertiser*, 2 May 2007, p.22.
- Adelaide Temple online at <http://adelaidetemple.org> (29 May 2010).

SITE RECORD

Shri Ganesha Temple
3A Dwyer Road, Oaklands Park, South Australia, 5046

FILE NO: 26361

FORMER NAME: Former Grace Lutheran Church

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Single-storey building with a glazed and columned entry porch and a domed tower. Internally, there are a number of shrines and small rooms which form part of the temple.

DATE OF COMPLETION: 2000

SA HERITAGE REGISTER STATUS: **Description:** Confirmed
Date: 10 May 2013

LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS: N/A

CURRENT USE: **Description:** Hindu temple
Dates: 1986 to present

PREVIOUS USE(S): **Description:** Lutheran Church
Dates: 1959-1967

ARCHITECT: **Name:** S. Nagarajan
Dates: 1998-2000

BUILDER: **Name:** Hoppas Construction
Dates: 1998-2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: **Description:** City of Marion

LOCATION: **Unit No.:**
Street No.: 3A
Street Name: Dwyer Road
Town/Suburb: Oaklands Park
Post Code: 5046

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Type:** CT
Volume: 5704
Folio: 110
Lot No.: 150
Section: DP 53033
Hundred: Noarlunga

PHOTOS

Shri Ganesha Temple
3A Dwyer Road, Oaklands Park, South Australia, 5046

FILE NO: 26361



Upper section of main shrine for Shri Ganesha Temple (showing dome)

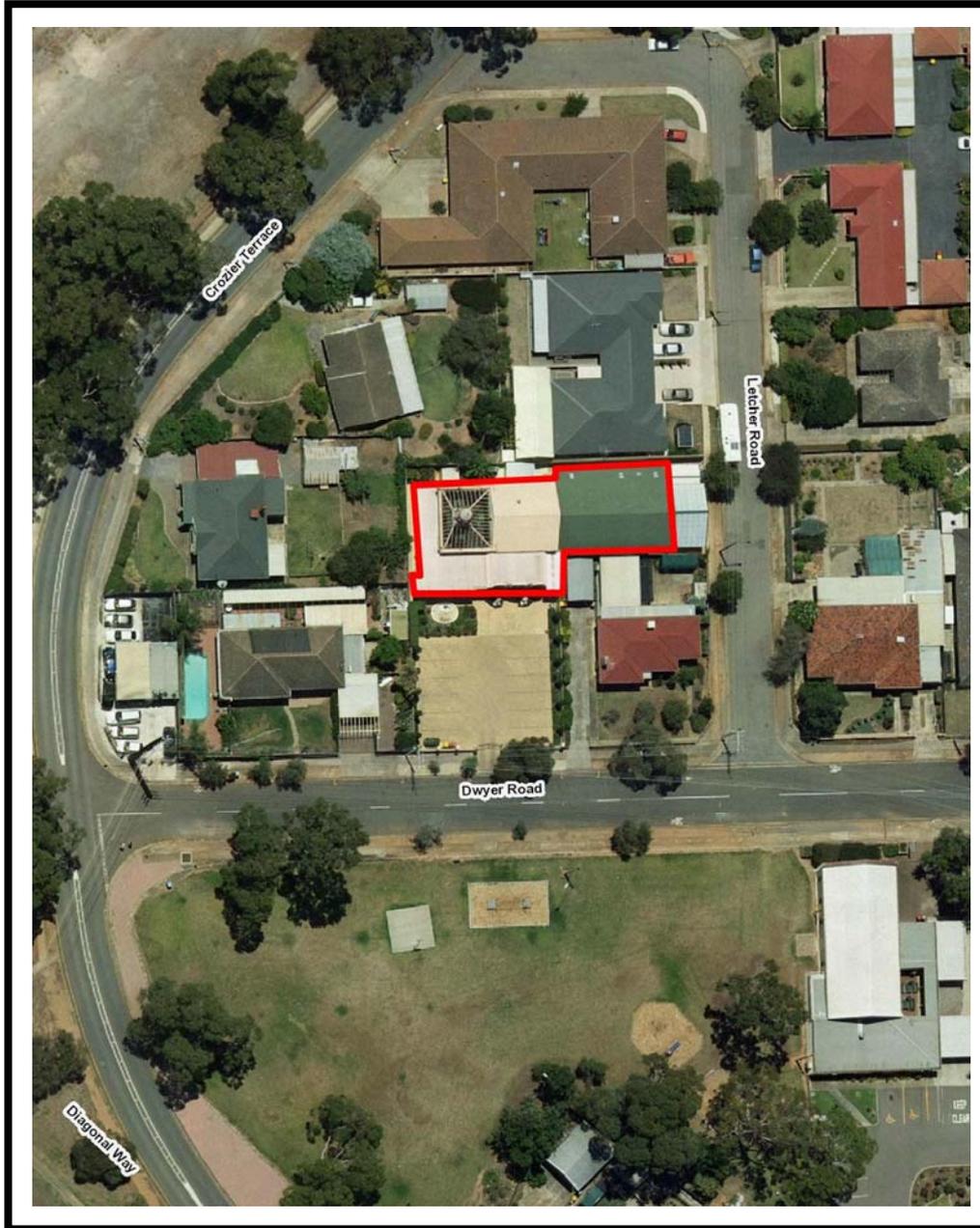


Main shrine for Shri Ganesha Temple (Sanctum Sanctorum)

SITE PLAN

Shri Ganesha Temple
3A Dwyer Road, Oaklands Park, South Australia, 5046

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Site Plan showing extent of listing for Shri Ganesha temple