

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Houghton Union Chapel,

PLACE: 26493

ADDRESS: 21 Blackhill Road, Houghton



Houghton Union Chapel, August 2018

Source- DEW

DESCRIPTION

The former Union Chapel at Houghton is a single-storey, stone building built into the face of a gently sloping site in the village of Houghton. The former chapel is not very visible from the street due to the CWA hall built directly in front of it. However, when the church was built in 1845, it was one of the main community buildings on the village green.

The main body of the church has three bays with a gable porch and lean-to to the rear. It is constructed in irregular blocks of local stone which are pointed in a rough mortar. The front (south-west) facade of the church is constructed from rubble and rendered in a rough lime-based render and lime washed. This end of the chapel is badly cracked and the render at the top of the gable has gone entirely leaving the stones underneath exposed. The gable of the rear (north-east) facade is face stone, this gable has the remnants of dead ivy which once covered this end of the chapel. Both the south-east and north-west facades of the church include three vertical sash windows. The windows are timber-framed with timber lintels. The top and bottom sashes of each window is divided into six panes. Some of the glass is still intact, however, most panes are broken or missing. The roof is clad in corrugated-iron with modern 'D'-profile gutters which probably replaced original gutters. Some of the gutters are hanging loose. The barge boards have rotted out and the sheet of iron on

the north-east end of the roof has fallen exposing the original timber shingles underneath. The redbrick chimney from the central fireplace can be seen at the ridge.



South-west end of the chapel showing missing render and stone work underneath. August 2018
Source: DEW



Roof of the chapel showing missing sheet of iron and original timber shingles underneath. August 2018
Source: DEW

A later gabled porch (now roofless) is attached to the front facade and has a central front door that is now blocked in. The porch is also rendered. Deterioration of the porch has revealed the door to the main part of the building. This is a timber double door with a transom light divided into five bays. There is only one pane of glass left in the transom. The original timber lintel is in place.



Inside the gabled porch, showing blocked in door and missing roof. August 2018
Source: DEW



Front door, showing original lintel and transom. August 2018
Source: DEW

To the rear of the former church is a stone lean-to with a timber-framed cgi-clad section to the north end, and a cgi skillion roof. This part of the chapel is partly set into the ground. The random local stone (south-east) side of the lean-to has a stone and red-brick chimney topped by a clay chimney pot. The stone in this part of the building is good condition although the mortar has nearly entirely gone. There are two windows in the back wall, one in the stone section and another in the cgi-clad section, this section also has a side door.

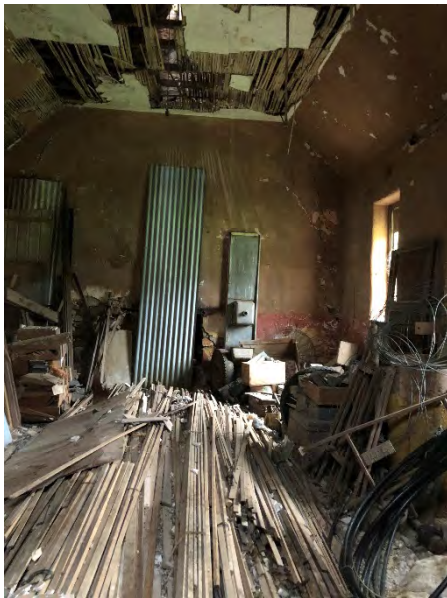


Rear of the chapel showing the cgi-clad section with side door and window. August 2018
Source: DEW



Rear of the chapel showing the stone section with red-brick chimney and window. August 2018
Source: DEW

The interior of the main section of the chapel is currently being used for storage of farming equipment and building materials. It appears to have not been entered or altered for some time. As a result, evidence of the original construction techniques remain. The walls of the chapel are rough-lime rendered which are coloured brown the height of the ceiling with the lower wall coloured red. The plaster is largely intact however, small sections are cracked. The back wall of the main room of the chapel has a fire place with the chimney breast behind. This is set into a wall which divides the main body of the church in two. There is no door in the dividing wall which means the second room in the main building must be accessed through the lean-to section at the rear of the chapel. The ceiling follows the line of the roof framing above and is constructed using lath and plaster. Large sections of the ceiling are missing. The interior of the lean-to section is face stone painted with a lime wash. Internally the timber framed cgi walls are clad with sheets of timber particle board.



Inside the main room at the Chapel looking towards the rear of the building showing the exposed lath and plaster ceiling. August 2018
Source: DEW



Inside the Chapel looking to the front of the building. August 2018
Source: DEW

HISTORY

The Union Chapel Houghton was built in 1845 in the small Adelaide Hills village of Houghton. The chapel is significant as one of the oldest surviving non-conformist churches in South Australia, as well as one of the first Union chapels in the colony. It also reflects the brief early period when Houghton was one of the colony's more significant settlements.

Aboriginal History – Kurna people in the Houghton area

Before European settlement, the Kurna people lived in the hills north of Adelaide and by the Little Para River. Kurna territory extends from Cape Jervis at the bottom of the Fleurieu Peninsula to Port Wakefield on the eastern shore of Gulf St Vincent, and as far north as Crystal Brook in the Mid North. The Kurna people were a nomadic, hunter-gatherer society who changed their dwellings according to climatic conditions. In summer they would camp near the coastal springs where they fished for mulloway. With the onset of winter, they moved to the woodlands, often using hollowed-out red gums with bark extensions as shelters.¹

One of the favourite camping and meeting places for the Kurna people in the Houghton area was at the Snake Gully Bridge crossing by the Little Para River. In 1848, two 80-acre sections (Section 2174 and 2175) near the creek were set aside as an aboriginal reserve. The success of reserves such as these was limited because the Aboriginal people's rituals and hunting practices could not be limited to such a small area. By 1853, the sections were leased to Thomas Roberts and were later subdivided and sold.² It can be assumed that the land was then used primarily for farming.

Once Europeans colonised South Australia, the Kurna people were encouraged to live away from the larger towns and city. To encourage the Kurna people to move away from areas of white settlement, rations were taken to rural collection points. One

such collection point was at the Torrens crossing at Paradise. After rations were supplied at Paradise, it is thought that the Kurna people held a corroboree on the Torrens that night and then hold a second corroboree at Houghton on the following night.³

One of the ways the traditional owners of the Houghton area are commemorated is through the naming of some of the settlements and waterways. The Little Para waterway and the suburbs of Para Hills and Para Vista are derived from the Kurna word for water 'Pari' ('water'), a word which is incorporated in the Aboriginal name 'Karra-wirra-parri' (River of the Red Gum forest).⁴

European Settlement - The Little Para Survey

During the very early days of colonisation in South Australia, the settlement area known as Tea Tree Gully, which included the villages of Houghton, Steventon, Hope Valley, Modbury, Inglewood, Highbury and Golden Grove, was used primarily by squatters or shepherds in charge of flocks of sheep and cattle. Early settlers were attracted by the Little Para River that ran through the area, making it a lush and fertile place for grazing livestock.

As early as 20 April 1837, John Barton Hack provided a glowing description of the area in a letter to his friend Henry Watson in England. Hack states he was:

'delighted with the beauty of the Valleys, which are filled with the richest black moulds I have yet seen anywhere, and the springs of water in all directions, which we know to be always flowing, as the tea-tree which will never flourish without water constantly around its roots, is growing abundantly. We shall send two men tomorrow to build a sheep-fold and take possession of it as a sheep run'.⁵

From this time, the area was squatted on and used as temporary sheep stations. Permanent settlement was not allowed until land was officially surveyed in 1839, therefore the first settlement of the area included mostly rudimentary huts built as shelter by the squatters.



An early thatched cottage in Houghton (c1900)

Source- State Library of South Australia B 16025

The early survey of land in South Australia was problematic and considerably slowed the early settlement of the State. The first South Australian surveys took place in March 1837 and included Holdfast Bay and the area along the banks of the River Torrens. The 437 holders of preliminary land orders were entitled to select one acre of the land surveyed in the city and 134 acres of country land for each city acre they owned. These early landholders also had the right to have their country sections surveyed anywhere outside of the capital, which made the process slow and tedious. As a compromise, Light identified eight districts that were proclaimed as suitable for settlement in 1838. However, these did not include the Tea Tree Gully area.⁶ Therefore, survey and official settlement of this area did not commence until later (1839).

Between July 1838 and November 1841, at least thirty villages were laid out near Adelaide as a result of the first land surveys. By 1840 the following towns had been established in the rural area around Adelaide: Hindmarsh, Bowden, Thebarton, Prospect, Walkerville, Goodwood, Kensington, Islington, and the German village of Klemzig. All were located near the Torrens or its tributary creeks, on the outer edge of the parklands, or where important roads passed through to country areas.

The first towns to be established further afield were the coastal towns of Port Adelaide, Morphett Vale, Noarlunga, Aldinga (originally Dowingsville), Bellevue and McLaren Vale (originally Gloucester). These towns had the advantage of being located on the coast. They were the first port of call for ships coming to and leaving the colony. The townships were established by the 1840s, and soon boasted the usual hotels, churches, post offices, smithies and mills. These coastal towns played a significant role in the establishment of South Australia.

Settlement in the areas further out from the city, in the hills, was still not allowed which caused much frustration for the first settlers. Therefore, in 1839, to overcome the problem of slow land survey, the early settlers discovered a land regulation made in London in 1835 regarding the 'Special Survey' of land in the new colony. Special Surveys allowed the early colonists to request the survey of 15,000 acres of land anywhere outside of Light's eight defined districts.⁷ On payment of £4,000 (£1/acre), the applicant could choose an area of 4,000 acres from the newly surveyed land.

Gawler was South Australia's first inland town outside of the Adelaide area, and was established in 1839 as a result a Special Survey requested by Henry Dundas Murray, John Reid and a syndicate of ten other colonists. Gawler was the only city other than Adelaide to be laid out by Colonel Light, although other South Australian towns have embraced aspects of Light's town plan.⁸

Like Henry Dundas Murray and John Reid, John Barton Hack was one of the first settlers to take advantage of the Special Survey process, and on 16 January 1839 Hack requested a Special Survey of the Tea Tree Gully area. The survey was known as the Little Para Special Survey and also the Third Special Survey. The survey included the towns now known as Houghton, Inglewood and Golden Grove. By April 1839, a private surveyor had further surveyed the Little Para survey into 64, eighty-acre sections. These early sections were scattered over the district making the most of the river and its fertile

land. Forty-five of the sections were selected by Hack and were jointly acquired with Thomas Williams and Colonel Gawler – who was being represented at the time by Lieutenant George Hall.⁹ Hack initially used his land as a sheep station and dairy, sending butter to Adelaide. The station was run by Joseph Barritt. In April 1840 a further sixteen sections from the 1839 Special Survey were advertised for general selection.

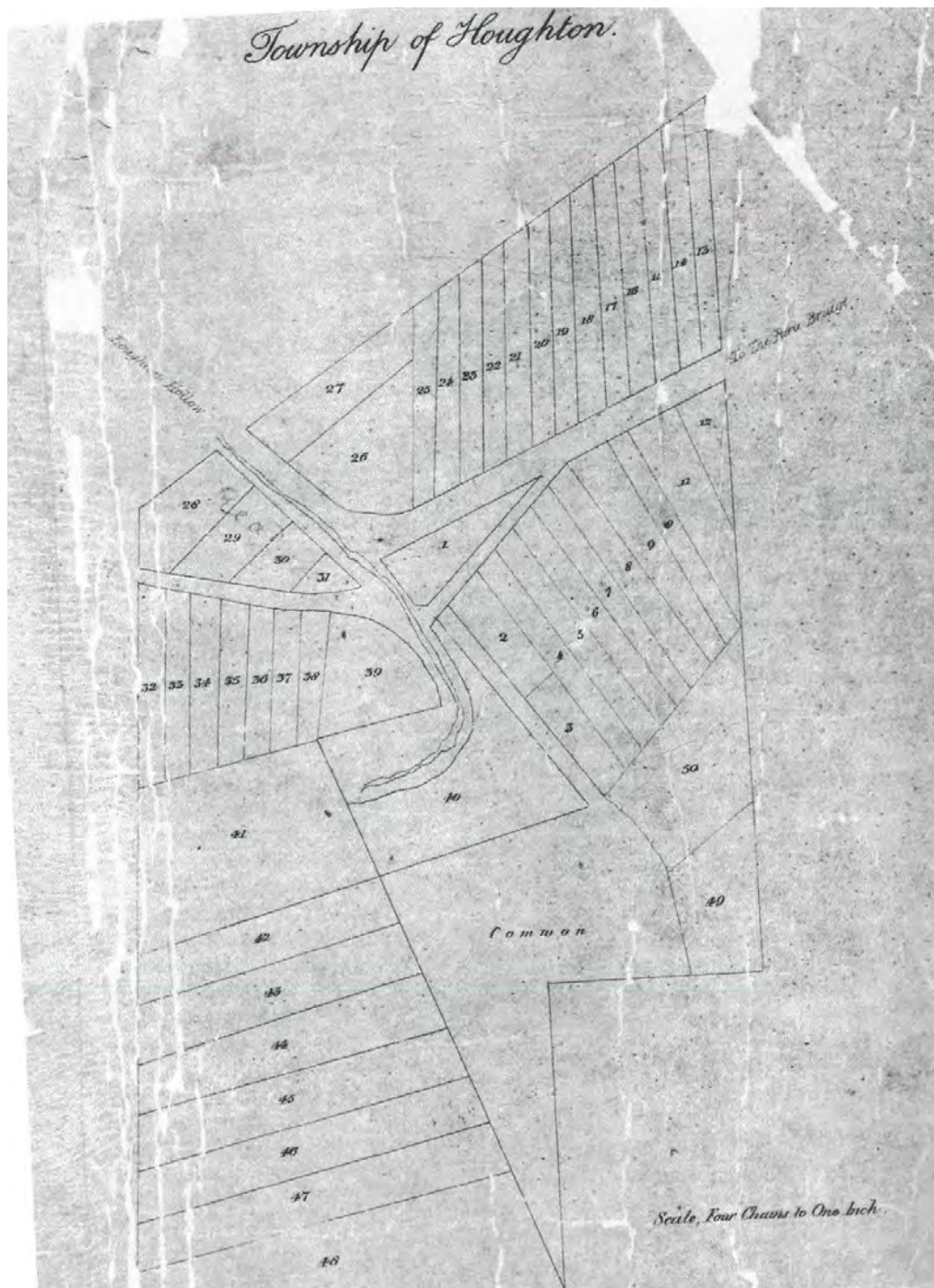
By May 1840, Hack started leasing small portions of his land for farm use at £4 per acre. Then later in the same year, Hack sold his 600 acres of land to Jacob Hagen – woolgrower, shipping agent and moneylender¹⁰ and John Richardson – house, land and commission agent,¹¹ for £3 per acre. Joseph Barritt was kept on as manager of the sheep and dairy station. The land was held under mortgage to John Morphett. Richardson named his new property 'Houghton Lodge', located on the Little Para on Section 1559, which consisted of one stone dwelling-house, seven cottages for labourers, and a stock-yard with calf pens and milking bales.¹² Houghton Lodge is not to be confused with the village of Houghton on Section 5519 that Richardson established one year later.

In 1845, Gawler's 1,000-acre selection from the Little Para Survey was sold to Andrew Shillabeer and Joseph Gould. Thomas Williams settled on his selection, naming his property the Hermitage.¹³ From this time on, several townships were established in the area. These included Highercombe settled in 1840, Montague – later known as Dry Creek in 1840 and Steventon, now known as Tea Tree Gully, which was first surveyed in 1942, however, the area was not fully established until 1858.¹⁴

Houghton

One of the sections John Richardson had acquired from Hack in 1840 was section 5519.¹⁵ Section 5519 was hilly, and as a result was not being used for agriculture. In 1841 shortly after his purchase of land from Hack, Richardson subdivided section 5519 into 50 allotments and laid out the village of Houghton.¹⁶

The village was laid out with elongated strips of land around a town 'common'. The village was planted with oaks and elms, giving it a distinctively English appearance.



Village of Houghton (section 5519) as laid out by John Richardson in 1841. The original plan shows the Village Green and the strips of land.

Source- Auhl, Ian, (1993), p. 42

The first allotments were sold to Charles Millar in October 1841, and one of the first public buildings in the town, the Traveller's Rest, was built soon afterwards. The Traveller's Rest was a Public House, and by April 1843 the publican's license was registered to Thomas Neale.¹⁷ The pub stood on a triangle of land and was the centre piece of the village.¹⁸ By the end of 1842, in addition to the pub the town had six cottages and a shop.

By 1843, Houghton was becoming recognised as one of the more important villages in the colony. A newspaper of 1843 reported that Houghton '*speaks very much for*

the untiring industry of our country settlers, that, wherever they can introduce the plough with any probability of return, the difficulties of situation are very little considered. In the neighbourhood of Houghton the gardens which I saw were laid out with considerable taste, and the vine occurred much attention'.¹⁹

By 1845, most of the sections had been sold and the town was gradually becoming a hive of activity. During the 1840s, Houghton was an important settlement because it offered the only blacksmith and hotel between Walkerville and Chain of Ponds, as well as providing the only school, chapel, pub and butcher for a large area. This made it a popular place for travellers to stop, resulting in the improvement of the road that ran through the village from Adelaide to Chain of Ponds. The accessibility and popularity of the village led to the introduction of a postal service in 1848 that serviced the Little Para area. Later in the 1850s, local government for the district was established in Houghton.²⁰

In 1854, the road that ran through Houghton to Chain of Ponds was diverted to avoid the village and the steep pitch of Black Hill. As a result, development in the village significantly slowed and a new village named Inglewood was established on the new road. The fact that Houghton still retains such a strong village atmosphere can be attributed to the road diversion as well as the retention of the original village green. Some of the early buildings still stand, including cottages built in William Street and Houghton Hollow (c1840), the store and Post office building (c1844), and the Union Chapel (1845).



Possingham's General Store and Post Office (c1890)
Source- State Library of South Australia B 31087



Travellers Rest Hotel (c1910)
Source- State Library of South Australia B 11365

Houghton Union Chapel

In the other Australian colonies, the Church of England was a 'state-church' supported and subsidised by the Government. South Australia was founded on principles of non-discrimination against non-conformist denominations. These principles of religious freedom led to a far greater relative percentage of minor denomination churches being established in the colony, as well as slowing down the early progress of the Church of England and discouraging that denomination's domination. It was not until 3 August 1847 that any State aid was available to assist

church building in the Colony. This Act was repealed in 1851. Therefore, the task of funding and construction of the first churches in the colony were the responsibility of the community. In an effort to reduce the number of churches that needed to be built, the construction of a multi-use and multi-denomination church was an attractive and viable option. These multi-use churches were usually called Union chapels and were built in small townships with the purpose of accommodating a number of different Christian denominations and uses.

Early in the establishment of Houghton, the need for a church became apparent when Congregationalists (and possibly others) held occasional services in a 'smoky hut'. Due to the religious freedom of the early settlers, people from a variety of different Christian denominations had settled in the area. To avoid the need to construct several different churches, it was agreed that a Union Chapel should be built to accommodate the needs of three different congregations.

In 1844, John Richardson sold allotment 18 at Houghton to George Morphett, John Morphett's brother, with the intention that the land would be used for the construction of the first church in Houghton. It was during the early part of 1845 that the combined Congregationalists, Wesleyans Methodists and Episcopalians¹ built a stone, multi-purpose church on lot 18 which they named the 'Union Chapel'. The church was constructed by the community, with *'the people themselves carting stone and sand, burning lime, sawing the timber and splitting the shingles for the roof'*.²¹

The first three services were held in the church on 18 May 1845. The first in the morning by Mr S. Gill, one in the afternoon by Mr J. Playford (great-grandfather of former South Australian Premier Sir Thomas Playford), and the third in the evening by Mr W. R. Squibb, who was also the village schoolmaster.²² The site also included a cemetery behind the chapel, although this has since been razed.



Houghton Union Chapel built (1845), photo taken (c1909).

Source- State Library of South Australia (B 41902)

¹ The Episcopalians were a strand of the Anglican Church. See comparison section below for more information about the Episcopalians in South Australia.

In 1847, George Morphett conveyed the church to the trustees of the chapel and also to William Riccardo Squibb for use as a village school. Squibb ran and taught at the school which had 26 students in 1847.²³ In 1850, Squibb resigned as schoolmaster and subsequently built himself a house (now demolished) on lot 17 next to the chapel. Squibb continued to be a significant local resident who, in addition to preaching in the chapel, served as Houghton's postmaster from the 1850s until his death in 1885. He was also politically active and was instrumental in the forming of the district's first local council, the District Council of Highercombe, in 1852.

From the time of its construction until the 1860s, the church continued to service the Wesleyans, Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, and the local school. A report written by the Congregational Society in 1861 states that *'Public services are conducted as usual by the Wesleyans in the morning and by the agents of this Society in the afternoon on the Lord's day. There is an average attendance from 50 to 60 persons.'* *'Attendance as to numbers and regularity is more encouraging at this place than at any other visited by the agents'*.²⁴

However, a rift between the three religious groups occurred, and by the late 1860s the three denominations were seeking alternative locations to set up their own independent churches. The Episcopalians were the first to withdraw from the chapel. There is no record of where the Episcopalians practiced after this time. By 1867 the Wesleyans had also withdrawn from the chapel and laid the foundation stone for their new church on 7 July.²⁵ The Wesleyan church was situated across the green from the Union Chapel. Finally in 1874, the Congregationalists also withdrew from the Union Chapel. By 1875 they had constructed their own church on the other side of the green, just two doors down from the new Wesleyan chapel.²⁶

In 1874 the chapel was conveyed to the District Council of Highercombe for the purposes of a district school. It was during the 1870s that the chapel became very run down and neglected, possibly due to confusion over ownership and responsibility for the building. At the time a newspaper report suggested that the building *'was sadly deficient'* and there was *'a continual flow of water, at a rate of two gallons to the hour coming out from the foundations'*. While the building continued to function as a school, many parents kept their children home from school due to the *'unhealthy character of the building'*.²⁷ Another described the building as a *'wretched hovel'* which was *'scarcely fit for herding cattle, much less human beings'*.²⁸

In 1875, the residents of Houghton demanded the government provide resources for a new school building. In their address to the Minister of Agriculture and Education the deputation stated that *'Houghton was one of the oldest towns east of Adelaide; that there were at present 60-70 pupils attending the school'*. It stated that the increased population in the district would result in between 150 and 200 children attending the school for instruction. The teacher *'had declared he would not remain in the district much longer unless better accommodation was provided, as he could not do justice to himself or the children'*.²⁹

The passage of the *Education Act 1875* resulted in the classification of the Houghton Primary School as a public school, and in 1877 the government approved funding for the construction of a new school building. The new school was built on land donated by RD Highercombe on the village green. The foundation stone was laid on 13 February 1878, and the new school building was completed by the end of the year.³⁰ The poor condition of the former Chapel also resulted in its other remaining uses being transferred to new buildings in the following years. This included a Rechabite Hall (c1880) and Community Hall (1901).³¹

The Union Chapel remained in the ownership of the District Council of Highercombe, until it was transferred to the Tea Tree Gully Council when the two Councils merged. In June 1951 the Council conveyed the chapel to The Minister of Education. In July 1951, The Minister of Education conveyed the title to the South Australian Country Women's Association Incorporated (CWA).³² Soon afterwards the CWA built a small hall on the land directly in front of the chapel. In 1984, the CWA subdivided their property to separate the small parcel of land on which their hall stands from the larger strip behind (including the Union Chapel).³³ The Union Chapel was then sold to a private owner.

Since 1878, when the Houghton school relocated, the Houghton Union Chapel has been little used other than as an outbuilding. Despite this, the building still stands and is one of the last remaining building built during the early settlement of Houghton. It is also one of the first Union Chapels and one of the oldest surviving churches in South Australia.

Chronology

Year	Event
March 1837	The first South Australian surveys take place and include Holdfast Bay and the land along the banks of the Torrens.
April 1837	John Barton Hack visits the Little Para area and decides to build a sheep fold.
1838	Union Chapel built in Port Adelaide (now demolished)
16 Jan 1839	John Barton Hack requests a Special Survey of the Tea Tree Gully area
April 1839	The Little Para survey was further surveyed by a private surveyor into 64, 80-acre sections
1840	In May, JB Hack started leasing small portions of his land for farm use at £4/acre. Later in the same year, Hack sold his 600-acre of land to Jacob Hagen and John Richardson for £3/acre. 16 further sections from the 1839 Special Survey were advertised for general selection.

- 1841 **Richardson subdivided section 5519 into 50 allotments and laid out the village of Houghton.**
The first allotments in Houghton sold to Charles Millar in October and one of the first public buildings in the town, the Travellers Rest, was built soon after.
- 1843 The Travellers Rest, a public house in Houghton, was registered to Thomas Neale.
Union Chapel built in Brighton (now demolished)
- 1844 **Union Chapel built at Angaston (oldest surviving Union Chapel in SA - SHP)**
John Richardson sold allotment 18 at Houghton to George Morphett
- 1845 Gawler's 1,000-acre Little Para property sold to Andrew Shillabeer and Joseph Gould.
Houghton Union Chapel constructed: The combined Congregationalists, Wesleyans and Episcopalians built a stone, multi-purpose building on lot 18 which was called the 'Union Chapel'.
Union Chapel built in Gawler (now demolished)
- 1846 **Union Chapels built in Hindmarsh (extant SHP13693), Mitcham (now demolished) and Kensington (now demolished)**
- 1847 **Trustees of the Houghton Union Chapel convey the use of the building during the week to the village school, run by Squibb, at a cost of ten shillings per annum.**
- 1848 A postal service in which serviced the Little Para area was introduced.
- 1850 **Union Chapels built in Morphett Vale (extant LHP) and Peterborough (now demolished)**
- 1852 Local Council of Houghton opened.
- 1854 Road running through Houghton diverted to avoid the village and the steep pitch of Black Hill.
- 1855 Construction of Bristol House in Houghton
- 1868 The Wesleyan Methodists built their own church across the green from the Union Chapel in Houghton.
- 1874 **Houghton Union Chapel was conveyed to the District Council of Highercombe for the purposes of a district school.**
- 1875 Houghton Congregationalists construct their own church on the other side of the green.
Residents of Houghton demanded the government provide more resources for a new school building.
- 13 Feb 1878 Foundation stone laid for new primary school.

1885	Construction of Houghton Rechabite Hall
June 1951	Houghton Union Chapel conveyed to The Minister of Education. CWA built a small hall on the land directly in front of the chapel.
July 1951	Former chapel conveyed to the South Australian Country Women's Association Incorporated (CWA).
1984	CWA subdivided the small parcel of land on which their hall stands and sold the large strip of land, including the Union Chapel.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

The Houghton Union Chapel is one of the earliest church, school and community buildings in the State, and has significant associations with the early religious development of South Australia. The Houghton Chapel was built cooperatively by members of the Wesleyan Methodist, Congregational and Episcopalian Churches in 1845, and was shared by them as a place of worship until 1874.

South Australia was founded on principles of non-discrimination against dissenting denominations. Demonstrating the religious freedom the first settlers to South Australia enjoyed, the Houghton Union Chapel has significant associations with the distinctive early religious development of the colony, and in particular with the religious cooperation that prompted the construction of several multi-denominational or 'Union' Chapels. The building was also used as a local primary school from 1847 until 1877 and is one of the earliest examples of a building used for schooling prior to the standardisation of education in South Australia in 1875. The Chapel has been little altered for over 160 years, and thus provides a rare insight into early construction techniques and materials, as well as into the design of early church buildings.

Identification of South Australian Historical Themes

Houghton Union Chapel can be considered under the following themes as per the draft Heritage South Australia Historical Theme document.

4 Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

4.3 Developing community / supporting institutions

8 Developing Social and Cultural Life

8.4 Participating in associations

8.5 Participating in spiritual life

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Houghton

Houghton is one of the earliest settlements in the Adelaide Hills to the east of Adelaide. There is only one place in Houghton on the South Australian Heritage Register. This is the Houghton war memorial erected in 1917 and located in the village green. The memorial is significant as one of the first memorials of its kind in the Adelaide Hills. Other buildings which remain from the early settlement of Houghton include:

House, former Methodist Church. Initially the Methodists in the town held services in the Union Chapel. However, from 1864, the Methodists became unhappy with the arrangement of sharing the church and started considering the construction of their own church. This building was built in 1867 directly opposite the Union Chapel on the other side of the village green, and was used as a church until 1977. The building was later converted to a house.³⁴

Houghton Uniting Church and Hall, former Congregationalist church (1874). The Congregationalists initially held their services in the Union Chapel. However, in 1874 the strong body of Congregationalists in the area decided to build their own church. This church is also located on the opposite side of the green to the Union Chapel, with only two blocks separating it from the Methodist church. In Australia in 1977, the Congregationalists, Methodists, and members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia merged to form the Uniting Church. During this time the building changed its name to the Uniting Church. Today it continues to be used as a church.³⁵



Children pulling a handcart and onlookers in the main street of the township. The large building in the centre left of the photograph is the Congregational (now Uniting) Church (c1912), the building to the left of the photograph is the former Methodist Church and Methodist hall.

Source- State Library South Australia B 27126

Bristol House (1855). This grand two-storey Georgian house was built for William Reed in 1855. The house was used as a combined residence and butcher's shop until 1877, at which time it was purchased by Edward Whitehead and converted to a residence only. It was named 'Bristol House' after the home town of Whitehead's wife. While the house is one of the only remaining original residences in the town, it is not a typical example, being built by a very wealthy resident.³⁶



Premises of a residence known as 'Bristol House'
(c1938)

Source- State Library of South Australia B 63957



Bristol House (c2015)

Source- Google Street View

Houghton Cemetery. The earliest burials in Houghton occurred at the small cemetery behind the Union Chapel. However, by the mid-1850s Houghton had grown so quickly in size that a much larger cemetery was established on Johns Road where a large piece of land was laid out formally as a cemetery. The cemetery continues to be used and has retained some of the early head-stones from the 1860s. The original cemetery behind the former Union Chapel has been razed.

Former Rechabite Lodge (1885). The Independent Order of Rechabites were a prominent early friendly society in South Australia. Members of the society were protected and cared for by the Rechabites at a time when there was no state welfare or public health services. By 1910 the Rechabites were the largest friendly society in South Australia. Most friendly societies met in public buildings such as churches, school and halls. It wasn't until the 1900s that the Friendly Society commonly built their own buildings. The Rechabites had close connections with the Methodist Church and often used their buildings for their meetings. In Houghton the Rechabites first met in the Union Chapel. However, by 1885 they had built their own hall which is situated on the hill overlooking the village. The hall was used by the society until the 1970s at which time it was used as a gymnasium.



Primary School Arbor Day, group of old scholars assembled at the Rechabite Hall. (c1909)

Source- State Library of South Australia (B 27010)

The Houghton Rechabite Hall is not listed as a State or Local Heritage Place. However, there are four Rechabite Halls listed as Local Heritage Places. These include:

- Dwelling - former Rechabite Hall, Hicks Hill Road, Cherry Gardens. Established in 1861 with meetings held in local houses until the hall was built in 1894.³⁷
- Former Rechabite Meeting Hall, 22 Gordon Street, Glenelg, c1930.³⁸
- Prospect Rechabite Hall, 232 Prospect Road, Prospect, built in 1929 which replaced the previous hall which was destroyed by fire in 1927.³⁹
- Former Rechabite's Hall & School, 20 North Parade, Strathalbyn. Built in 1881. The Primitive Methodists also used the building as school for a time.⁴⁰

Houghton Primary School (1878). Houghton Primary School was the first school in the district and originally based in the Union Chapel building from the 1840s, with around 25 students. The school was registered by the Government in the 1850s, and by 1855 had become the fifth-largest school in South Australia. By the 1870s, the number of students attending the school had grown to 60-70 and the Union Chapel was too small to accommodate the children. In 1878 the new primary school was built.



The 'new' 1878 Houghton School (c1910)

Source State Library of South Australia (B 27033)

Christianity in South Australia

The settlement of South Australia was planned in accordance with Wakefield's principles of systematic colonisation. Religious freedom was one of the founding principles to underpin the development of the colony, although Wakefield intended that South Australia should still retain a Christian character. Religious diversity and non-conformism were extremely important to the early colonists of South Australia, where the absence of a 'state church' (Church of England) led to all denominations being treated equally in a way that differentiated it from other Australian States.

In many newly established townships in South Australia, the founding of churches was left to the townspeople with the help of visiting clergymen. In most cases, support for

ministers and church buildings came from voluntary contributions and labour. Extensive fundraising and donations were required to secure, permanent clergymen and support the construction of church buildings. With all settlers subscribing to one faith or another, most villages ending up having the support to build at least one church building. In general, these proved to be the most substantial buildings in most settlements.⁴¹

Some communities such as Klemzig developed with one dominating faith (Lutheran), while many other settlements built a range of churches to meet the needs of their community. Consequently, several small churches of different denominations were often built in a township resulting in South Australian towns often having a diverse range of religious buildings.⁴² In some cases one church could service more than one denomination. In cases where this occurred the church was referred to as a union church or union chapel.

In the case of the Union Chapel in Houghton, the church was the coming together of Congregationalists, Wesleyans and Episcopalians.

Congregational Church

The English Congregational Church was initiated in the 1500s by a Church of England clergyman, Robert Browne. His aim was to form an independent nonconforming Protestant church. However, while the concept of an independent church was accepted by the English population, it was not until 1833 that the first meeting of the English Congregational Church was held. Shortly after its initial meeting, the Church sent a young minister, Thomas Quinton Stow, to Adelaide. On his arrival in Adelaide in 1837, Stow pitched a tent and held meetings and services on North Terrace.⁴³ Within weeks the tent was upgraded to a rudimentary structure made of gum tree posts with a thatched roof. As the popularity of the Congregational Church increased, between 1836 until 1850, Rev Stow assisted with the establishment of churches in a number of places in South Australia.⁴⁴ These included:

Date	Name	Address	Heritage Status
1837	The Congregational Church	North Tce, Adelaide	now demolished
1838	The Congregational chapel	Orsmond/Milner Streets, Hindmarsh	now demolished
1840	Congregational classical chapel	Freeman St, Adelaide	now demolished
1844	Ebenezer Congregational Chapel	Ebenezer Pl, Adelaide	now demolished
1844	Congregational Church	6 Tatachilla Road, McLaren Vale	SHP14069 – South Australia’s oldest surviving Congregational Chapel
1848	Glenelg Congregational chapel	Glenelg	now demolished
1848	Congregational Church	1 Lemar Close, Macclesfield	LHP

1848	Cheetham's Congregational Chapel Congregational	58 Maesbury Street, Kensington	LHP
1848	Port Adelaide chapel	Port Adelaide chapel	now demolished

In addition, there was a Union Chapel (SHP14373, see below) built in Angaston in 1844 which accommodated Congregationalists and Baptists, and the Houghton Union Chapel.



Congregational Church, 6 Tatchilla Road, McLaren Vale, built in 1844 (SHP14069)
Source- DEW



Cheetham's Congregational 58 Maesbury Street, Kensington, 1848, LHP
Source- Google Street view

Methodism

Methodism is a religious movement founded by John Wesley as a result of his efforts to reform the Church of England. The movement became a separate religious denomination in England during the eighteenth century and quickly spread to America and then Australia in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵

In general, Methodist congregations came from the working classes, and, due to the differing views held by its followers and ministers, the Methodist doctrine became divided. The individual Methodist denominations were the Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, and Methodist New Connexion.⁴⁶ The establishment of the various branches of the Methodist denominations was the responsibility of lay people, many of whom were local farmers, miners and builders who might be able to help with the provision of land and labour.

Within the early colony of South Australia, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was the largest and wealthiest Methodist denomination. Their first service was conducted on Kangaroo Island on 13 November 1836, making them among the first denominations to practice their religion in the new colony.⁴⁷ As the State grew, Methodists began to move to other rural areas to establish farms and also their churches. Being dominated by farmers, and miners, Methodist churches were more common in rural areas than in the city, with Adelaide Methodists forming only a quarter of the total number of Methodists.⁴⁸ From 1836 until 1850 around six Wesleyan Methodist Churches were built in the new colony. These included:

Houghton Union Chapel (26493) – Heritage Assessment Report, 2018
Heritage South Australia, DEW

Date	Name	Address	Heritage Status
1838	Wesleyan (later Baptist) church	Hindley St, Adelaide	now demolished
1839	Wesleyan church	Gawler place, Adelaide	now demolished
1841	Wesleyan church	Franklin St West, Adelaide	now demolished
1842	Wesleyan church	Princes Highway, Nairne	now demolished
1849	John Bowden chapel Bible Christian/Wesleyan	South Para Road, Kersbrook	LHP
1850	Wesleyan Church	Tod Street, Gawler	SHP 10388



John Bowden chapel, 1524 South Para Road, Kersbrook, built in 1849, LHP. (c2015)
Source Google Street View



Wesleyan Church Lot 102 Tod Street, Gawler, built in 1850, SHP 10388
Source DEW

Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church was established in America in the 1700s by Samuel Seabury and is part of Anglican Communion as its roots have been traced to the English Reformation and the Church of England.⁴⁹

The church was organized after the American Revolution, when it became separate from the Church of England, whose clergy are required to swear allegiance to the British monarch as Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The Episcopal Church describes itself as "Protestant, yet Catholic".⁵⁰ The Book of Common Prayer (BCP), a collection of traditional rites, blessings, liturgies, and prayers used throughout the Anglican Communion, is central to Episcopal worship.

In 1839, a newspaper article suggests an Episcopal church was built in Adelaide. It does not indicate where the church was and presumably it no longer exists. Therefore, the Houghton Union Chapel is the only remaining Anglican Church built especially for the Episcopal strand of this denomination.

Union Chapels

South Australia was founded on principles of non-discrimination against non-conformist denominations. These principles of religious freedom led to a far greater relative percentage of minor denomination churches. For this reason, South Australia had a relatively large number of churches, and many South Australian towns would

have had multiple churches to accommodate the variety of different denominations. However, the lack of government funding meant the cost of building churches became the responsibility of the community and sometimes made it harder for churches to be constructed as quickly. In an effort to reduce the number of churches that needed to be built and quickly provide congregations with a viable place to worship, many communities cooperated to build a multi-use and multi-denominational church building as the first church and hall in their settlement. These multi-use buildings were generally known as Union chapels and appeared in small townships to service communities that were forming.

Of the ten Union Chapels that were once built in South Australia, only four now survive, with Houghton being the second oldest. Other surviving early Union Chapels are summarised below.

Union Chapel, Angaston, 1844 (SHP 14373) was opened on 28th February 1844 with services held for Congregationalists and Baptists. The building was also used widely as a community building. Over the years it has had many uses including a public meeting hall, storage for dried fruit, a home when buildings were scarce after World War 2, a shearing shed, and a garage. A period of neglect and poor maintenance resulted in the chapel falling onto a state of disrepair. However, in recognition of the importance of the building to the Angaston community, volunteers and tradespeople under the control of the Angaston Council restored the building between 1989 and 1994. The Old Union Chapel, as it is known, was reopened as a public building 150 years after it was built, as a tribute to the pioneers of the district. In 1993 it was confirmed as a State Heritage Place. Since its restoration, the Angaston Union Chapel has been used for occasions such as weddings, naming ceremonies, exhibitions, baptisms, concerts, meeting place and funerals.⁵¹



Angaston Union Chapel (c1895)

Source State Library of South Australia (B 57371/60)

Hindmarsh Historical Society Museum, 1846 (former Hindmarsh Fire Station & Christian Chapel (SHP13693)). In 1846 a Union Chapel was built in Hindmarsh.⁵² The congregation of this Union Chapel traced its roots to a small band of Christians, who erected this non-denominational Christian Chapel fronting Lindsay Circus (site of the soccer stadium). The chapel was altered, possibly in the 1850s, but may incorporate parts of the original building. It was superseded by a new church across the street in 1876. While the building has been substantially altered, it has important historical ties to the founding years of Hindmarsh village. The building was subsequently used as a school and meeting hall and by the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade from 1890 to 1925, when they moved into a new building in front of it. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade used the buildings 1942-1957. The Hindmarsh Historical Society has occupied the site since 1969. The Hindmarsh Historical Society Museum (former Hindmarsh Fire Station & Christian Chapel) was confirmed on the State Heritage Register on 23 November 1989 because of its significant religious links to a relatively rare type of congregation, and for dating from the earliest years of the Colony's first secondary town (Hindmarsh was established in 1838).



The Hindmarsh Historical Society Museum (former Hindmarsh Fire Station & Christian Chapel SHP13693, (1846)

Source Google Street View (c2016)

Former Union Chapel, Morphett Vale, 1850 (LHP). In 1850 a Union Chapel was built in Morphett Vale.⁵³ This small building has been significantly altered, including a number of additions since its original construction. The whole of exterior of historic building, excluding later additions, was included on the local heritage list for Morphett Vale on 2 December 2002.



Former Union Chapel, Morphett Vale (LHP)

Source Google Street View (2013)

Other Union Chapels

A Union Chapel was also built on Taylors Street in the Mitcham village green (now Mitcham Reserve) in 1846. It accommodated dissenting (non-Anglican) Protestant services, and like the Houghton Union Chapel, the Mitcham Union Chapel was used as a school – The Thomas Mugg Village School. In 1847 the Mitcham community appointed former cabinet maker, Thomas Mugg as a schoolteacher for their children. The Mitcham Public School became the longest surviving public school in South Australia. By 1862 it was recorded that Thomas Mugg taught 23 boys and 13 girls.⁵⁴ The Mitcham Union Chapel was the meeting place for the community, and was a catalyst for the development of the Mitcham Council in 1853.⁵⁵ The Union Chapel no longer exists, however, a memorial to the chapel stands at Mitcham Reserve.

Newspaper records for the early settlement of South Australia suggest Union Chapels were also built in In Port Adelaide in 1838,⁵⁶ Brighton in 1843,⁵⁷ Gawler in 1845,⁵⁸ Kensington c1846,⁵⁹ and Peterborough c1850. These churches no longer exist. Later, in 1920 a Union church was built in Renmark to accommodate the Congregationalists and Methodists in the area. A newspaper report about the church indicated that this Union Church was built in recognition of the fallen soldiers from World War One - a time when all religions came together to mourn the loss of life during the war, regardless of their religious denomination.⁶⁰ This church continues to operate as a Uniting church. In addition, it is possible there may have been other Union churches built in South Australia, but records do not exist.



Peterborough Union church (c1910)

State Library of South Australia (B 61759)

Early churches in South Australia (c1840s)

Between the time of settlement in 1836 until 1850, around 61 churches were built in South Australia (including those listed above). Due to the religious freedom of the early settlers, the denominations of these churches varied greatly, and some of the non-conforming churches that were generally less well represented in other states (eg. Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, Lutherans and Congregationalists) had the freedom to build their churches anywhere they chose.

Many of these early churches were simple timber, pise or pug-and-pine buildings. Some were later replaced by stone structures, while others simply ceased to be. Of the colony's first 61 churches, including the Union Chapels in Houghton and Angaston, 26 are still standing today. In addition to the churches pictured above, the following is a list of the remaining churches from the early settlement of South Australia. It is worth noting that despite the large number of people from different denominations that established churches in South Australia in the early years, the majority of churches on the State Register are Anglican.

Date	Name	Address	Denomination	#SHP
1838	Holy Trinity	North Tce, Adelaide	Anglican Church,	SHP13357 and 13358
1843	Ebenezer Baptist Church	Brougham Ct, Nth Adelaide	Baptist	SHP13538
1845	St John's Lutheran Church	46 Main Street, Lobethal	Lutheran	SHP11689

c1845	Christian Chapel	3A Hindmarsh Place, Hindmarsh	Congregational	SHP11800
1846	St James, cemetery, rectory + belltower	Blakiston	Anglican	SHP13939)
1846	Salem Baptist Church	30 Victoria Street, Gumeracha	Baptist	SHP10742
1846	Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church	250-262 Main South Road, Morphett Vale	Catholic	SHP10596
1846	Former Primitive Methodist Chapel	Hartley Vale (nr Kenton Valley),	Primitive Methodist	(now a ruin – not listed)
1847	St Mary's Anglican Church	1163-1165 South Road, St Marys,	Anglican	SHP 11523
1847,	St Andrew's Presbyterian Church	38 Hutchinson Street, Mt Barker	Presbyterian	LHP
1847- 48,	St George's Anglican Church	45 St Bernards Road, Magill,	Anglican	LHP
1848,	Church Christ Anglican Church	1708 Main South Road, O'Halloran Hill,	Anglican	SHP14403
1849	St Andrew's Anglican Church	43 Church Terrace, Walkerville,	Anglican	SHP14185
1849	Christchurch Anglican Church	36-40 Palmer Place, North Adelaide	Anglican	SHP10866
1849,	St Matthew's Anglican Church	146-148 Kensington Road, Marryatville,	Anglican	LHP
1849	Bible Christian Chapel	Kingston Street, Burra (Kooringa),	Bible Christian	SHP10013
1849	Presbyterian Church	Alfred Street, Strathalbyn,	Presbyterian	SHP10918
1849	Inverbrackie Presbyterian church	nr Oakbank,	Presbyterian	
1849	Aeon Baptist Chapel	Kenton Valley,	Baptist	
1849	St Michael's Anglican Church	St Michael's Road, Mitcham, 1849,	Anglican	LPH

Schools

Education in the new colony of South Australia was slow to become established. Initial schooling was virtually non-existent. This was due to a lack of teachers and facilities to teach in. In order to increase the number of schools in operation and the number of teachers coming to South Australia, the Central Board of Education was established under the 1851 Education Act. At this time there were 31 schools in South Australia with an average of 51 students attending each school. By 1869 the number of schools had increased to 330. However, the conditions in the schools was terrible and many parents refused to send their children to school. In addition, the pay rates provided to the teachers was so low that many teachers had to look for alternative means of making a living.⁶¹ Due to lack of facilities, teachers were encouraged to use country chapels or community halls to run classes. There were few purpose built schools.

Due to the growing pressure on the government to improve the standard of schooling in South Australia, in 1875 The Education Act was passed. The Education Act allowed for the establishment of public schools and contained provisions about the compulsory schooling of children of a certain age. The Act set out penalties for parents who neglected to send a child, aged between 7 and 13, to school.⁶² At the same time the government's Council of Education began the lengthy process of building public 'model' schools and also of examining and supervising the already established private schools. Some of these were closed down. As an 1874 newspaper report stated '*The grand object of the Model Schools is to bring into full working order a metropolitan education establishment, which shall form the standard and basis by which all Government teachers are to be guided*'.⁶³ During this time many Model School buildings were constructed providing a standardised approach to education in South Australia.

There are around 47 schools included on the State Heritage Register. Of the 47 listed schools 25 were built after the 1875 Education Act was passed.

In order of construction, the following schools were built prior to the 1875 Education Act:

Date	Name	Address	#SHP
1840	Dwelling Buckland House Sometimes School	21 St Lukes Street, Willunga	14165
1845	Dwelling Former Shop Sometimes School	2 Mine Street, Kapunda	11616
1847	Old School House St Peters College	Hackney Road, Hackney	10540
1850	Maryvale School	Streaky Bay	14229
1850	Former School House, Poonindie Mission	Lincoln Highway, Poonindie	12596
1854	Scotch College	Carruth Road, Torrens Park	10699
1856	Former Schoenborn Bethlehem Lutheran School	Schmaal Road, Gomersal	12962
1857	Anglican Christ Church Day School	128-130 Main Street, Yankalilla	14065
1858	Dwelling Balhannah School	2 West Terrace, Balhanna	12856
1858	Former Reynella School	6 Peach Street, Old Reynella	12587
1859	Holly Cross Lutheran Church and School	184 Gruenberg Road, Moculta	12244
1860	KirKala Station Site	Poochera Road, Streaky Bay	14227
1860	Former Moonta School of Mines	29 Ellen Street, Moonta	10142
1861	Friedensberg Lutheran Church and School	49 Lablacks Road, Springton	13930
1862	Former Bassatts Boys School	17 St Luke Street, Willunga	SHP10345
1862	Former Burnbank School	Springs Road, Mount Barker	13936
1863	Former Gnadenfrei School and Residence	Seppeltsfield Road, Marananga	12965
1865	Milang School	46-50 Coxe Street, Milang	13813

1867	Woods Mackillop School House	Portland Street, Penola	12701
1868	Former Christ Church School	81 Jeffcott Street, North Adelaide	13488
1869	Prince Alfred College	23 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town	10606
1870	Former John Knox School	7 William Street, Morphett Vale	12534

The Houghton Union Chapel was used as a school house from 1847 until 1877. Therefore, as the list above indicates, the Houghton Union Chapel is the third oldest building known to be used for the purpose of a school house. Although some other buildings, may have been used for schooling during this time they are not included on the State Heritage Register.



Dwelling Buckland House Sometimes School, 21 St Lukes Street, Willunga, 1840, SHP14165 (2016)
Source: DEW



Dwelling Former Shop Sometimes School, 2 Mine Street, Kapunda, 1845, SHP11616 (c1980s)
Source: DEW

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 Houghton Union Chapel demonstrates three significant aspects of the evolution of the State's history. The first theme is the development of towns or villages as a result of the first Special Surveys that took place in the new colony of South Australia. The second theme is religious development in South Australia, and in particular the prevalence of non-conformist denominations due to the religious freedom of the first settlers. The third is of evolution of the State's Education history.

Early settlement of South Australia

In contrast to other Australian States, South Australia was founded on principles of free settlement and systematic colonisation. Land was bought, not granted, with systems put in place to establish townships and settlements to supply food and shelter for the new settlers. Systematic free colonisation is an important part of the evolution of South Australia's history and is a fundamental point of difference.

The planned settlement of South Australia meant that people had the opportunity to purchase South Australian land before settlement actually took place. From 1836 until 1839, South Australia was surveyed based on the requests of the preliminary land holders. However, in 1839 the Special Survey process had begun. Colonists had the opportunity to request an area be surveyed and were then permitted to purchase the newly surveyed land at £1 per acre. The first towns to be established in the hills areas were located to the north-east of Adelaide with Gawler being among the first. Gawler was surveyed as a result of a special survey in 1839 and is the only city other than Adelaide laid out by Colonel Light. Other towns established shortly after Gawler between 1839 and 1842 were Paracombe, Hermitage, Gumeracha, Montacute and Houghton.

While Houghton is significant as one of the first villages established in the Adelaide Hills north-east of the city, it was by no means the only settlement from this period. During its boom time during the 1840-50s, Houghton was a stop-over for travellers from the city. After traffic was diverted around the village, Houghton itself only had minor significance to the settlement of South Australia and the evolution of the State. Therefore, Houghton's significance is to this area of the State rather than the State as a whole.

Early religious development of South Australia

The way in which religion developed in South Australia was a point of difference for the colony. Unlike other Australian colonies, the Church of England was not the 'State church' – instead, non-conformist denominations were actively encouraged to establish themselves in South Australia under principles of religious freedom. There were four sects of Methodists, and multiple sects of Baptists and Lutherans as well as Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Other smaller groups flourished as well, including Unitarians and the Church of Christ. South Australia was truly a 'Paradise of Dissent'.⁶⁴

The wide spread of different denominations had a significant impact on the development of the State, both culturally and physically. Many settlements

constructed more than one church or chapel building to serve the various congregations – alongside the hotel, these were usually the most prominent structures in the village. Houghton was no exception, eventually having three separate church buildings, the first of which was multi-denominational – the Union Chapel.

Houghton Union Chapel was built by its community in 1845 with no aid from the government (aid was only briefly available between 1847 and 1851). Given the village had only been founded four years earlier and Houghton's early residents were still establishing themselves, money was scarce. The Houghton area's small congregations of Wesleyan Methodists, Congregationalists and Episcopalians were not yet in a position to construct their own separate buildings, so they banded together to build one shared chapel – a building that not only provided each group with a place to hold their services and meetings, but also provided a school. This type of practical cooperation was not uncommon in South Australia in the first decade of settlement – several other Union Chapel were also built in the early years, with the first built in Port Adelaide in 1838 (now demolished). The next five Union Chapels to be constructed in South Australia were in Brighton (1843), Mitcham (1844), Angaston (1844), Houghton (1845) and Gawler (1845). Of these first six Union Chapels, only two now survive, the state-listed chapel at Angaston, and the subject chapel at Houghton.

Slightly later in 1846, a non-denominational Christian Chapel was built in Hindmarsh (SHP13693). While this building also exemplifies the prevalence of non-conformist religions found in early South Australia, and the religious freedom of the first settlers, it has been significantly altered since its early construction. In comparison, the Houghton Chapel stands today as it was first built in 1845 and therefore better demonstrate its association to the first Union chapels of South Australia in its fabric. These early chapels are of great significance to the State because they exemplify the religious freedom of the first settlers and the diverse religious landscape of 'free' settlement.

Early school buildings in South Australia

Due to a lack of teachers and facilities, schooling in the new colony of South Australia was poorly organised and the establishment of schools was problematic. Teachers were encouraged to use country chapels or community halls to run classes. In order to increase the number of schools in operation and the number of teachers coming to South Australia, the Central Board of Education was established under the 1851 Education Act. At this time there were 31 schools in South Australia with an average of 51 students attending each school. Of the first 31 South Australian schools only six remain, the Houghton Chapel being the third oldest. By 1869 the number of schools had increased to 330. However, the conditions in the schools was terrible and many parents refused to send their children to school.

Due to the growing pressure on the government to improve the standard of schooling in South Australia, in 1875 The Education Act was passed. The Education Act allowed for the establishment of public schools and contained provisions about the

compulsory schooling of children of a certain age. The Houghton Chapel continued to be used as a school for another three years after the 1875 Act was passed. However, in 1877 the government approved funding for the construction of a new school building. The new school was built in 1878 on land donated by RD Highercombe on the village green and was one of largest in the state. After this time in many Model School buildings were constructed providing a standardised approach to education in South Australia and many of the original school houses were converted to other uses or were demolished. Therefore, being one of the first buildings used for schooling before the Education Acts of 1851 and 1875, the Houghton Chapel remains as a record of evolution or pattern of the State's Education history. In addition, the new Houghton primary school was one of largest in the state – therefore demonstrating the importance Houghton has played in development of education in South Australia.

In summary, the Houghton Chapel was used as a chapel for the Wesleyan Methodists, Congregational and Episcopal Church from 1845 until 1874. In fact, the Houghton Union Chapel is possibly one of only two churches built in South Australia to accommodate the Episcopal Church. As was common with most of the first churches, the building was also used as a school house and meeting hall for the friendly societies located in the area. By 1875 the Wesleyans and Congregationalists had built their own churches in Houghton and the Episcopalians had merged with the other churches. The school continued to use the building until a new school was built in 1878. After this time the building has been little used other than for storage of farming equipment. This has resulted in the chapel looking much as it did when it was originally used and its use as a church and school can be demonstrated in its fabric.

The Houghton Union Chapel was the fourth Union Chapel built in South Australia and the second oldest surviving example. Of the fifteen surviving non-conformist churches built in South Australia from 1836 until 1850, The Houghton Union Chapel is the third oldest and serves to exemplify the religious freedoms of the first settlers.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does** 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.

Houghton Union Chapel is a rare surviving example of an early place of worship and schooling, and represents a way of life which was a crucial part of early South Australian settlement, but is now no longer practiced.

When South Australia was established, the settlers had the freedom to practice any religion they chose. This led to the construction of over 61 church buildings in South Australia between 1836 and 1850, representing over 11 denominations and sects. Of the known church buildings in this first phase of settlement, 5 were dedicated purely for Wesleyan worship, 8 were Congregationalist, none were Episcopalian, and 9 were Union Chapels – a combination of different denominations. Houghton Union Chapel representatives all four of these church types, having been constructed jointly by Wesleyans, Congregationalists and Episcopalians. Of the 61 churches built during this time, there are only around 8 churches which survive which are older or the same age as the Houghton Union Chapel.

When it was constructed in 1845, the Houghton Union Chapel was the fifth building to be built for Wesleyan services, the seventh Congregationalist and the first Episcopalian. It was also the fifth Union Chapel constructed and is the second-oldest surviving example of a Union Chapel. Overall, it is now one of only four surviving Union Chapels in the State, the others being at Angaston (1844), Hindmarsh (1846) and Morphett Vale (1850). These are all aspects of rarity that link in closely to the earliest period of religious development in the colony that exemplified religious freedom.

As well as its important and rare demonstration of early religious development, the Houghton Union Chapel is also an early surviving school building. Being used as a school prior to the passing of government regulations regarding education, The Chapel is the third oldest surviving building with direct connection with early education in South Australia.

In summary, the former Union Chapel represents several significant qualities that are rare and endangered. It provides a rare insight into the early development of church buildings in rural South Australia, including through its links with three separate denominations, and its representation of the now rare concept of the Union Chapel. It is also one of the oldest surviving chapels and schools in the state, and has rare and endangered qualities because of its state of intactness, having been little altered for over 100 years.

It is recommended that the nominated place/object **does** 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 physical fabric or documentary or oral history evidence relating to the Houghton Union Chapel to indicate that the place is likely to contain physical evidence not currently visible that will contribute meaningfully to the understanding of South Australia's history. The Houghton Chapel was built within four years of Houghton being established and has remained much the same since its initial construction. Consequently, the likelihood of physical evidence with sufficient integrity or condition to yield information about the site not already known through other sources is highly unlikely.

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 Houghton Union Chapel is an example of the class of building known as a church built during the early settlement of South Australia. It was built as a simple rectangular stone church with gable ends, an entrance porch and lean-to at the rear. Being built in 1845, the Houghton Union Chapel is one of the oldest surviving buildings of its class in South Australia. Since the disuse of the chapel in 1877, the building has only been used for storage of farming equipment and building materials. There has been no additions or conservation work undertaken on the building and despite reports in the 1860s of bad drainage, the chapel is largely intact. The original lath and plaster ceilings, rough rendered walls, roof framing and window frames remain. Therefore, the chapel still faithfully presents its historical message and can be regarded as an example of an early South Australian church. However, when compared to other places in its class, many better examples are already recognised on the State Heritage Register and are referred to in the comparison section above. Furthermore, due to neglect, the Houghton Chapel is not well-preserved.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** 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.

The Houghton Union Chapel is an outstanding surviving representative of early vernacular construction techniques and materials.

The Houghton Union Chapel is a well-proportioned, simple rectangular church with the sides divided into three-bays with three evenly placed windows and gable ends. The building is constructed in irregular blocks of local stone which are pointed with a rough mortar. There is a small lean-to at the rear and a rendered entrance porch at the front. The roof is clad in sheets of corrugated iron. It is unlikely that the building was formally designed by an architect and it was constructed cheaply using local materials as a cooperative community venture. Despite this, the chapel has survived as a solid, well-built building, withstanding significant drainage issues and general neglect.

The building ceased being used in 1877 and since this time, has only been used for storage of farming equipment and building materials. Since its first construction, there has been no alterations undertaken on the building, other than the installation of the current roof cladding. Due to the age of the iron sheets, the roof cladding was likely done while the building was still being used in the mid-1800s. Its untouched state means the building has retained a number of construction techniques typically used to build the first buildings in South Australia which have, in most cases, subsequently been lost due to decay or removal during conservation. Items of note include the external lime-based pointing, the multi-paned timber windows, the timber shingles evident under the sheets of cgi, the lath and plaster ceiling, the rough lime-rendered internal walls in the main body of the church and the lime washed interior walls in the rear lean-to.

While the Houghton Union Chapel used construction techniques common to other churches built during the early settlement of South Australia, examples of its type of construction are not commonly found. Due to the untouched nature of the place, the integrity of these construction techniques is of a very high standard and provide an outstanding representative of the particular construction techniques highlighted above.

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 Houghton Union Chapel was built early during the settlement of Houghton to accommodate the needs of the Wesleyan Methodists, Congregational and Episcopal Church in the area. It was used by them as a place of worship and community facility from 1845 until 1874 at which time the Wesleyans and Congregationalists had built their own church and the Episcopalians had ceased operation. The building was also used as a community hall, friendly society meeting place, and as a school until the new primary school was built in 1878. After the 1870s the chapel was mostly used as a farm outbuilding. It is currently disused.

Since the construction of alternative and separate accommodation for the religious denominations, school and friendly society, any cultural or spiritual association between the South Australian community and the Houghton Chapel has been forgotten. This is evident in its neglected condition.

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.

The only people closely associated with the Houghton Chapel are the first priests and school headmasters. These people include Mr S. Gill, Mr J. Playford and Mr W. R. Squibb. There is no record of Mr S. Gill and the significance he had to South Australia. Similarly, there is no record of J. Playford's role in the early establishment of South Australia, although he was the father and great-grandfather of two former South Australian Premiers. Squibb was a significant local resident who was the local schoolmaster from 1845 until 1850. He had a house on lot 17 next to the chapel (now demolished) and served as Houghton's postmaster from the 1850s until his death in 1885. He was also politically active and was instrumental in the formation of the district's first local council, the District Council of Highercombe, in 1852. However, Squibb's importance is to the local Houghton area, rather than the broader State of South Australia.

The Houghton Chapel could be considered to have a special association with the Wesleyan Methodists, Congregational and Episcopal Church. However, as indicated in the comparison section of this report, there are already a number of churches that were built especially for the use of these organisation and provide a better connection between the buildings and the church groups. Furthermore, since the construction of new churches to accommodate the Wesleyans and Congregationalists in Houghton, these church groups have a closer association with these later buildings than the Union chapel.

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

Elements of Significance:

The elements with exceptional heritage significance include:

The church building including the front porch and rear lean-to

The elements with no heritage significance include:

The CWA building located in front of the church

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Newspaper articles

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- 'Government Gazette', *Southern Australian*, Fri 14 Apr 1843, p. 2
- 'The country districts', *South Australian Register*, Wed 1 Nov 1843, p. 2
- 'Storekeeper's Licences Granted'. *South Australian*, Tue 15 Jun 1847, p. 3
- 'Advertising', *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, Sat 6 Sep 1845, p. 1
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- 'The Congregational Home Missionary', *South Australian Weekly Chronicle*, Sat 27 Apr 1861.
- 'Houghton', *Adelaide Observer*, Sat 27 Jul 1867, p. 1.
- 'Deputation', *The South Australian Advertiser*, Tue 20 Mar 1877, p. 5.
- 'Deputation', *South Australian Register*, Fri 22 Sep 1876, p. 6.
- 'Deputation', *The South Australian Advertiser*, Wed 1 Dec 1875, p. 3. 'School accommodation at Houghton', *Adelaide Observer*, Sat 27 Nov 1875, p. 10.
- 'The Government Gazette', *The Express and Telegraph*, Fri 15 Feb 1878, p. 1.
- 'Congregational Union and Home Mission'. *Adelaide Observer*, Sat 8 Apr 1876
- 'Episcopal Church', *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, Sat 12 Aug 1837, p. 3.
- 'Governor at Mitcham Centenary', *The Advertiser*, Mon 16 Mar 1953, p. 5.
- 'Advertising', *Southern Australian*, Sat 7 Jul 1838, p. 1.
- 'Local and provincial intelligence', *Adelaide Observer*, Sat 21 Oct 1843, p. 5.
- 'Advertising', *South Australian*, Tue 4 Mar 1845, p. 2.
- 'Local Intelligence', *South Australian Register*, Wed 30 Sep 1846, p. 4.
- 'Local Intelligence', *South Australian Register*, Wed 7 Oct 1846, p. 3.
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SITE RECORD

NAME:	Houghton Union Chapel	PLACE:	26493
FORMER NAME:	Houghton Primary School		
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Single-storey stone church with gable roof, rendered front porch and stone lean-to at rear.		
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1845		
REGISTER STATUS:	Recommended in Heritage Survey Date nominated 2003		
CURRENT USE:	unused Date/s 1878-present		
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Church, school, meeting place (1845-1878). Outbuilding.		
BUILDER:	Local residence Date 1845		
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group:	Religion	
	Category:	church	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Tea Tree Gully		
LOCATION:	Street No.:	21	
	Street Name:	Blackhill Road	
	Town/Suburb:	Houghton	
	Post Code:	5131	
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title	CT/5462/764	
	Reference:		
	Lot No.:	2	
	Plan No.:	3148	
	Hundred:	Yatala	
MAP REFERENCE (GDAxx):	MGA Zone	52	
	Easting (X)	1394314.7190	
	Northing (Y)	6102239.6080	

SITE PLAN



NAME: Houghton Union Chapel

PLACE: 26493



Houghton Union Chapel

Legend

-  Outline of former Houghton Union Chapel
-  Site boundary CT/5462/764





South-west elevation of the Houghton Union Chapel. Note the three-bays of windows and siting into the hill. (March 2018)
Source DEW



South-west elevation note the stone and brick chimney at the rear. (March 2018)
Source DEW



CWA building situated directly in front of the chapel. (March 2018)
Source DEW



Front wall of the chapel. Note the rendered stone work and bricked up front door. (March 2018)
Source DEW



North-east side of the chapel. Note fallen gutters.
(March 2018)
Source DEW



Front corner of the chapel. Note the crumbling render and stone work underneath. (March 2018)
Source DEW



Rear gable. Note missing bargeboard and remnant ivy.
(August 2018)
Source: DEW



Stone lean-to at rear of the church. Note missing pointing, red brick chimney.
(August 2018)
Source: DEW



Interior of the cgi clad section of the lean-to. Note lime-washed stone and timber particle board cladding.
(August 2018)
Source: DEW



Interior of the main body of the chapel showing the internal dividing wall and top of the fire place to the right. Note lath and plaster ceiling. (August 2018)
Source: DEW

Short videos of the Former Houghton Chapel can be viewed using the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA6HXGsLq5w>

(Interior and exterior of the chapel filmed in August 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAp3hMx7fe0>

(Exterior only, filmed March 2018)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdU004_siPO

(Houghton showing the location of the chapel in relation to the village green. Filmed March 2018)

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⁶ Auhl, Ian, (1993), p. 18-19.

⁷ Auhl, Ian, (1993), p. 22.

⁸ Gawler Church Hill, State Heritage Area: guidelines for Development (Department Environment and Water, Heritage South Australia), p. 7.

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¹¹ Auhl, Ian, (1993), p. 41.

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¹⁷ 'Government Gazette', *Southern Australian*, Fri 14 Apr 1843, p. 2.

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²⁶ Pope, Anna, (2003), *Torrens Valley Heritage Survey, Part 1, Summary of Recommendations and Inventory*, (Heritage South Australia), p. 27, 'Congregational Union and Home Mission'. *Adelaide Observer* Sat 8 Apr 1876, p. 11.

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- 31 Pope, Anna, (2003), Part 1, p. 27.
- 32 Title search provided by the Lands Titles Department SA.
- 33 Title search provided by the Lands Titles Department SA.
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- 35 Pope, Anna, (2003), Part 2, p. 243-244.
- 36 Pope, Anna, (2003), Part 2, p. 245-246.
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- 38 INDEPENDENT ORDER OF RECHABITES SRG 164/33-45 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DISTRICT NO. 81 sourced from http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/srg/SRG164_33-45_IORechabites_speciallists.pdf
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- 42 Rowney, 1991 p. 2.
- 43 Anderson, (1989) A Heritage Database for Methodist Church Buildings (1836-1900) in the Adelaide and Moonta Districts B.A (Hons) Thesis, (Adelaide: Flinders University) p. 68.
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- 45 <http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/heritageofmethodism.htm>
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