

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABC Co Brewery Garden) **PLACE NO.:** 26531

ADDRESS: Kaurna Country

107 Port Road, Thebarton

(River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))

CT 5941/298 D64225 A2, CT 5138/158 D1038 A387, CT 5137/205 D1038 A383, CT 5138/158 D1038 A391, CT 5138/158 D1038 A386, CT 6064/474 D1038 A382, CT 5138/158 D1038 A390, CT 6137/685 F103751 A2, CT 6064/474 D1038 A381, CT 5138/158 D1038 A389, CT 6137/684 D1038 A385, CT 6064/472 D82670 A31, CT 5138/158 D1038 A388, CT 6137/684 D1038 A384, Hundred of Adelaide

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABC Co Brewery Garden), in which the West End Brewery Christmas Riverbank Display is held at the end of each year, is closely associated with SABC Co, the State's largest and most profitable brewery. Designed, built and maintained by SABC Co employees with support from SABC Co, the garden and displays have grown from humble beginnings in 1959, to fill the riverbank adjacent to the former West End brewery and demonstrate SABC Co's desire as a major business to give something back to the community, while also developing a positive public image of the company.

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

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

Established in 1893, the South Australian Brewing Company Ltd (SABC Co) quickly grew to become the largest and most profitable brewery in South Australia. In 1938, SABC Co acquired its major competitor, the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Co. acquiring the Thebarton site and running it and the West End

brewery (Hindley Street) until 1980, when the Hindley Street site was closed and demolished. In the decades after 1938, SABCo made improvements and expanded the facilities at both breweries, including developing the brewery garden at Thebarton in 1959.

The idea to create the garden was devised by SABCo brewer Andrew Crooke and supported by SABCo's Managing Director Roland Jacobs and General Manager Ron Aitken. SABCo intended to connect with the community by remediating the degraded riverbank and providing a display for the community's benefit. The first display was created for Christmas 1959.

In the following decades, SABCo supported the ongoing improvement and development of the garden, both financially and also by enabling brewery staff to create and maintain the garden and the seasonal displays in it. While the garden is not related to brewing, which was SABCo's core business, the brewery garden demonstrates other elements of SABCo business, including company philanthropy and marketing of its image. The brewery garden is closely associated with SABCo and its desire to give something to the community, while also developing a positive public image of the company.

SITE PLAN

Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABCo Brewery PLACE NO.: 26531 Garden)

107 Port Road, Thebarton, (River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))



Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABCo Brewery garden), CTs as listed in table below, Hundred of Adelaide

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LEGEND

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

Elements of Significance:

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

- Formal layout of the garden and hard landscaping such as stone retaining walls, pathways and stairs
- Garden beds facing the river
- Mass planting of canna lilies (red coloured flowers) in the garden beds (not necessarily the current plants, it is the concept of mass planting of red canna lilies that is integral to the planting scheme)
- Mass planting of different conifer species to create colour and texture (not necessarily the current trees and shrubs, it is the concept that is integral to the planting scheme)

- Model of the brewery truck (but not necessarily at exact location within the garden)
- Manicured expanses of lawn

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

- The Hindmarsh Bridge, and the road and foot paths that pass above the garden

Certificates of Title

CT 5941/298 D64225 A2	CT 5138/158 D1038 A387	CT 5137/205 D1038 A383
CT 5138/158 D1038 A391	CT 5138/158 D1038 A386	CT 6064/474 D1038 A382
CT 5138/158 D1038 A390	CT 6137/685 F103751 A2	CT 6064/474 D1038 A381
CT 5138/158 D1038 A389	CT 6137/684 D1038 A385	CT 6064/472 D82670 A31
CT 5138/158 D1038 A388	CT 6137/684 D1038 A384	

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

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

Physical Description

A linear garden on the southern bank of the River Torrens, extending west approximately 220m from the Hindmarsh Bridge towards the Sir William Goodman Bridge (SHP 10987). The brewery garden slopes towards the River Torrens and features:

- a large garden bed to the rear of the garden that extends its full length and is supported by stone retaining walls dissected at intervals with paths and stairways and planted with mature trees and shrubs including conifers and poplars.
- a large expanse of manicured lawn.
- a number of feature garden beds within the lawn, namely
 - 3 long rectangular beds supported with stone retaining walls, 2 are mass planted with red canna lilies and 1 with mixed conifers and shrubs
 - square garden bed with stone retaining walls and a concrete handle, containing hedged and topiary shrubs, giving the appearance of a basket or crown
 - circular bed with a single feature planting of bird of paradise plant
 - kidney-shaped bed, mass planted with apricot-coloured canna lilies
- a model red brewery truck set within a rockery planted with conifers (this is the remains of the original grotto which has been largely removed).
- model animals, such as deer, kangaroos and horse, and toadstool dotted about the lawn and garden beds
- a large rockery with pond (was once the cascade) featuring an island with statues of a kangaroo and emu in the centre
- time capsule celebrating centenary of SABC Co,
- model 'inn' of the nativity. During the year the 'inn' doors are kept closed, however at Christmas they are opened displaying key figures from the nativity.
- model of a volcano with people inside depicting the Roman god 'Vulcan'
- Model of a half-timbered 'mill' with waterwheel and garden bed to front
- Model of a tree stump

Elements of Significance:

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

- Formal layout of the garden and hard landscaping such as stone retaining walls, pathways and stairs
- Garden beds facing the river
- Mass planting of canna lilies (red coloured flowers) in the garden beds (not necessarily the current plants, it is the concept of mass planting of red canna lilies that is integral to the planting scheme)
- Mass planting of different conifer species to create colour and texture (not necessarily the current trees and shrubs, it is the concept that is integral to the planting scheme)
- Model of the brewery truck (but not necessarily at exact location within the garden)
- Manicured expanses of lawn

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

- The Hindmarsh Bridge, and the road and foot paths that pass above the garden

History of the Place

In 1888, William Simms, owner of the West End Brewery on Hindley Street; Sir Edwin Smith, the owner of the Kent Town Brewery located on the corner of Rundle Street and Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town; and William Rounsevell, owner of a wine and spirit business, announced the merger of their respective businesses to create the South Australian Brewing, Malting & Wine & Spirit Company Ltd.¹ In 1893, the wine and spirits portion of the business was sold and the South Australian Brewing Company Ltd (SABCo) came into being.

After the 1938 acquisition of its major competitor, the Walkerville Co-Operative brewing Company, SABCo operated two brewery sites: the West End Brewery (Hindley Street) and Southwark Brewery (Thebarton). The two sites operated independently until 1949 when administration was centralised in the SABCo head office on Hindley Street (SHP 13354).²

In the early 1950s, plans to expand operations at the Southwark Brewery (Thebarton) were implemented. Following this period of expansion and improvement, brewer Andrew Cooke suggested improving the appearance of the riverbank in 1958, leading to the creation of the brewery garden (see below).³

Annual reports from the 1960s indicate a range of new facilities and plant were built and/or installed during the decade.⁴ Then in 1971, SABCo restructured to become a holding company and was renamed South Australian Brewing Holdings Limited, with brewing conducted by the South Australian Brewing Company. Further

improvements and expansion occurred at the Southwark Brewery in the 1970s to enable the closure of the West End Brewery (Hindley Street) in 1980.

Further upgrades and improvements of the brewery took place in the 1980s while the company continued to diversify, acquiring a variety of new businesses. By the early 1990s, SA Brewing had become one of the largest manufacturers of water heaters in the world and appliances in Australia, and owned numerous packaging and beverage companies. The nature of these business acquisitions was such that brewing became a minor sideline for the company, and in 1993 SA Brewing announced a complete restructure. SA Brewing Holdings Ltd became Southcorp Holdings Limited and divided the business into four portfolios and the brewing division and brewery was sold to Lion Nathan. In 2009, Lion Nathan was acquired by Japanese company Kirin Holdings Co Ltd.⁵ The garden and Christmas Display continued under the new owners.

Brewery Garden

Michael Cudmore suggests that the idea to improve the appearance of the southern bank of the River Torrens, adjacent to the Southwark Brewery (later West End Brewery) was made in 1958 by Andrew Crooke, SABCo brewer. The idea was supported by General Manager Ron Aitken after he visited the Anheuser Busch brewery in Tampa Florida.⁶ In 1958-1959, Anheuser Busch established a new brewery on a 160 acre site, creating extensively landscaped grounds that became a show piece for brewery tours.⁷



Landscaping undertaken by Anheuser Busch at their new brewery in Tampa, Florida, c.1960s

Source: <http://bgthistory.com/attractions/defunct-attractions/anheuser-busch-brewery/>

While the South Australian site is substantially smaller, Aitken and Roland Jacobs (SABCo Managing Director) viewed the proposed improvements as a means to tidy and enhance land that had previously been used as a rubbish dump and to connect the brewery with the community.⁸



The bank as it appeared in c.1956

Source: SABCo Annual Report, 1956



Work on the garden begins, with dirt brought in to fill and level out some of the hollows in the bank, 1959

Source: SABCo Annual Report 1960.

George Rauch is credited with the design of the brewery garden and would later be instrumental in establishing Sab-Aruma at Walker Flat, a holiday camp for SABCo employees. Rauch and other SABCo employees, with financial assistance from SABCo, undertook the work required to create the built elements in the garden and replant the river bank, making further improvements each year. The first Christmas display held in 1959, was very simple, however, noticeable improvements were in place for the first Adelaide Festival of Arts display that was installed only a few months later in 1960.



First Christmas Display, 1959, note the grotto (left), garden bed with stone retaining walls at rear of the garden and rubble (far right) that will become the cascade

Source: Painter, p.285.



Display for the first Adelaide Festival of Arts, 1960, incorporated the Festival logo, note the growth of the plants and improvements to the lawn

Source: SABCo Annual Report 1960

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Display for the 1962 Adelaide Festival of Arts, note the completion of the cascade (mid right)

Source: SABCO Annual Report 1962

In keeping with SABCo management's aim to create a connection between the brewery and community, a number of seasonal displays were installed in any one year, including annual displays for Easter and Christmas and more periodic events such as the Adelaide Festival of Arts and the Royal visit by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in 1963.



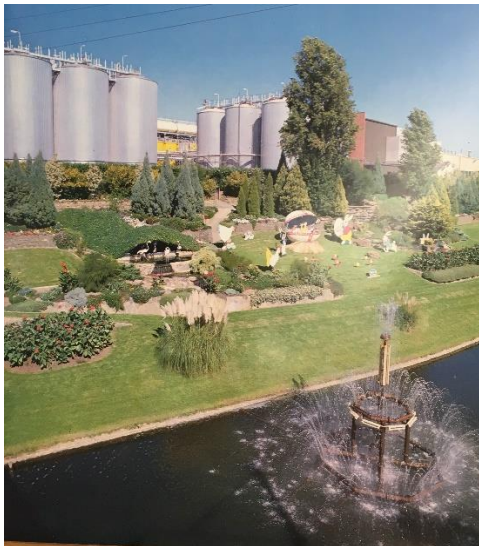
Brewery garden display for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, 1963, note the addition of the lily pads in the river

Source: SABCo Annual Report, 1963



Brewery Garden Christmas Display 1968, note the cascade, grotto and fountains in the river and cascade

Source: SABCo Annual Report 1969



Easter (1980) (left) and Christmas (1981) (right) displays

Source: SABCo Annual Reports 1980 and 1982



This image taken in c.1980 clearly illustrates the initial focus on developing the eastern end of the garden. Note the modification to the cascade, which has been scaled back to a large pond with island and a more natural cascade to its west, also note the growth of the conifer plantings. In the following decades, the western half of the garden is developed further.

Source: SABCo Annual Report, 1980

While displays were common for many seasonal occasions in the early years of the garden, the Christmas Display has become the annual event in the brewery garden. A vast array of 'temporary' props that feature only during the Christmas season are installed by the brewery and the whole garden is illuminated at night. As dusk falls and the lights are switched on, the northern side of the river bank fills to capacity as families come to view the display in what has become an 'iconic South Australian tradition'.⁹ One source suggests that as many as 300,000 people visit the Christmas display each year.¹⁰

While the garden has been changed over the decades, with modifications to the planting scheme and new permanent displays, its basic design has remained largely the same. There have been a number of notable events that have impacted on the brewery garden, some include: the millennium drought that resulted in the water features being drained and permanently switched off; and, the year Moby Dick (the whale displayed in the River Torrens) made his great break for freedom when in 2005, the Torrens weir was accidentally left open and Torrens Lake drained, flooding the garden and sending many of the displays downstream, some as far as Henley Beach. In the 60 years the Christmas display has been staged, it has only been cancelled once, in 2020 due to COVID-19.

The closure of the West End Brewery in 2021 has left the immediate future of the Christmas display in doubt, however, the garden itself will remain. As at mid-2021 Lion (the owner of the brewery) and City of West Torrens are discussing the continuation of the annual Christmas display.

Chronology

Year Event

- 1888 The South Australian Brewing, Malting & Wine & Spirit Company Ltd is formed after William Simms, Sir Edwin Smith, and William Rounsevell merge their respective businesses.
- 1893 The South Australian Brewing Company (SABCo) is established after the wine and spirit portion of the business is sold.
- 1938 SABCo acquires its major competitor, the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Co and operates two breweries, its West End Brewery on Hindley Street and the Walkerville Brewery at Thebarton.
- Early 1950s A number of new structures are built at the Thebarton brewery, including the two Clearspan buildings.
- 1958 Andrew Crooke, SABCo brewer suggests the riverbank is improved, the idea is supported by General Manager Ron Aitken and Managing Director Roland Jacobs.**
- 1959 The riverbank adjacent to the brewery is landscaped creating the Brewery Garden and the first of the annual Christmas displays is installed.**
- 1960 A display is exhibited in the garden for the first Adelaide Festival of the Arts
- 1962 The cascade and fountains in the garden are completed in time to feature in the display for the second Adelaide Festival of the Arts.**
- 1963 A special display is prepared in the brewery garden for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.
- 1971 SABCo restructures to become a holding company and changes its name to SA Brewing Company. It begins to diversify its business portfolio.
- 1971-1972 The land to the south of Winwood Street is purchased to expand the Southwark Brewery in anticipation of closing the West End Brewery.
- 1974 The closure of the West End Brewery (Hindley Street) by 1982 is announced.
- 1980 The West End Brewery (Hindley Street) closes early after the expansion of the brewery at Thebarton occurs more quickly than anticipated.
- 1980s Further site expansion and modifications take place at the West End Brewery (Thebarton).
- 1984 SABCo administration building on Hindley Street is sold.
- 1985 An additional 2.2 hectares is purchased adjacent to the West End brewery

(Thebarton) and further expansion of the brewery occurs.

- 1993 SA Brewing Holdings become Southcorp and sells the West End brewery (Thebarton) to Lion Nathan.
- 2000s The water features in the garden are drained due to the millennium drought.**
- 2005 The weir is accidentally left open and the Torrens Lake drains, flooding the garden and sending many of the displays down river, including Moby Dick (the whale), some as far as Henley beach.**
- 2009 Lion Nathan is acquired by Kirin.
- 2020 Lion announces the closure of the West End Brewery, to take effect mid-2021.**
- To prevent the spread of COVID-19 the Christmas Display is cancelled for the first time since it began in 1959.**
- 2021 Lion and the City of West Torrens begin discussions about the future of the brewery garden and annual Christmas Display.**

References

Bird, Louise (2001), 'A Vanishing Garden Passport: South Australian Gardens of the 1920s-1940s', in David S Jones ed. *20th Century Heritage Our recent Cultural Heritage*, (Australia ICOMOS National Conference: Adelaide), pp.320-328.

Cudmore, Michael (1988), *History of the South Australian Brewing Company Limited*, (SABCo: Adelaide).

Painter, Alison (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide).

SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports (1950s-1992).

Southcorp (1993), Annual Report.

Websites and Online resources

'Anheuser-Busch Brewery History' www.bgthistory.com.attractions.defunct-attractions/anheuser-busch-brewery/ [accessed 19 July 2021].

Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050,Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing.>

Play & Go Adelaide www.playandgo.com.au/est-end-brewery-christmas-riverbank-diplay-thebarton/ [accessed 8 July 2021]

'The West End brewery is closing' <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-15/west-end-brewery-closure-what-does-it-mean/12767956> [accessed 19 July 2021].

SITE DETAILS

Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABCO Brewery PLACE NO.: 26531 Garden)

107 Port Road, Thebarton

(River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Riverbank garden with stone retaining walls, finely manicured lawns, mass planted garden beds, empty water features and permeant novelty displays (inn, truck, volcano, tree stump, mill, animals, and mushrooms).

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1959

REGISTER STATUS: Nominated 27 November 2020
Provisional Entry 5 August 2021
Confirmed 16 December 2021

LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS: Local Heritage Place (13 December 2001)

CURRENT USE: Garden
1959-present

ARCHITECT: George Rauch and SABCo (later Lion Nathan) employees
1958-2021

BUILDER: SABCo (later Lion Nathan) employees
1958-2021

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: City of West Torrens

LOCATION:

Street No.:	107
Street Name:	Port Road (River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street))
Town/Suburb:	Thebarton
Post Code:	5031

LAND DESCRIPTION:

Title	See table below
Reference:	
Hundred:	Adelaide

Title Reference:

CT 5941/298 D64225 A2	CT 5138/158 D1038 A387	CT 5137/205 D1038 A383
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CT 5138/158 D1038 A390	CT 6137/685 F103751 A2	CT 6064/474 D1038 A381
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CT 5138/158 D1038 A388	CT 6137/684 D1038 A384	

PHOTOS

Former West End Brewery Garden (former SABCo Brewery PLACE NO.: 26531 Garden)

107 Port Road, Thebarton

(River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))



West End Brewery Garden showing the brewery truck and rock garden that was previously the grotto

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing the pond and rock garden (previously the cascade)

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021

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West End Brewery Garden pond

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021



Sign on the northern riverbank from SABCo about the garden

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021

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West End Brewery Garden showing the three mass planted rectangular garden beds

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing the 'Inn' from the Nativity, the basket or crown shaped garden bed and one of the stairways that dissect the rear garden bed

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Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021

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West End Brewery Garden showing 'Vulcan's' volcano, the feature bird of paradise plant, and mill with rockery garden

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing the tree stump and kidney-shaped garden bed

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021

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West End Brewery Garden showing one of the paths that dissect the rear garden bed

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing an example of the conifers in the rockery gardens

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Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

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West End Brewery Garden showing the lawns, canna lilies and 'deer seated on a rock' model and background of trees in rear garden bed

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing the stone retaining wall to rear garden bed

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

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(River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))



West End Brewery Garden showing the stone retaining wall to the rectangular beds

Source: DEW Files 24 march 2021



West End Brewery Garden showing the pond (now dry) that was once a part of the cascade, with central island with kangaroo and emu figures

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

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107 Port Road, Thebarton

(River Torrens/Karrawirri Parri (adjacent Adam Street Thebarton))



West End Brewery Garden showing examples of the figures in the garden

¹ Alison Painter (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide), pp.148-154.

² Painter, p.277.

³ Michael Cudmore (1988), *History of the South Australian Brewing Company Limited*, (SABCo: Adelaide), p.124.

⁴ SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, *Annual Reports (1950s-1992)*. Cudmore, p.131.

⁵ Southcorp (1993), *Annual Report*. Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050,Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing>.

⁶ Cudmore, p.124.

⁷ 'Anheuser-Busch Brewery History' www.bgthistory.com/attractions.defunct-attractions/anheuser-busch-brewery/ [accessed 19 July 2021].

⁸ Painter, p.284.

⁹ Play & Go Adelaide www.playandgo.com.au/est-end-brewery-christmas-riverbank-diplay-thebarton/ [accessed 8 July 2021]

¹⁰ 'The West End brewery is closing' <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-15/west-end-brewery-closure-what-does-it-mean/12767956> [accessed 19 July 2021].