

State Heritage Areas of South Australia



Burra State Heritage Area Commercial & Civic Buildings

State Heritage Places entered in the South Australian Heritage Register

Burra has a rich heritage of commercial and civic buildings, constructed mostly of local stone, and dating from the early years of the Burra Mine to the early 1900s. The places described below are particularly significant to Burra's (and South Australia's) story, and are State Heritage places entered in the South Australian Heritage Register.

Drew and Crewe's Store and Outbuilding

21 Commercial Street, Burra

SAHR 14426 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 23 April 1992

The Drew family erected this building in 1880 as a general store in Burra. The firm was originally established as Samuel Drew and Company in 1848 and it appears that there were four brothers involved in the business – Samuel, John, Charles and Thomas. In 1889 John Drew took over and entered into partnership with Mr E.W. Crewes. Trading as 'Drew and Crewes' they continued to supply a wide range of household goods, as well as chaff, lucerne, seeds, galvanised iron and tars to the region. By 1909 the firm was recognised as a prosperous business – the largest of its kind outside of Adelaide. Drew & Crewes continued trading until 1938.



Drew & Crewes's Store, 2005



National Bank, 2005

National Bank

1 Market Street

SAHR 10007 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984

The first bank in Burra was a temporary branch of the National Bank that opened in Kooronga in 1859. Until that time payment at the mine was made by money orders. This building was completed in 1862 and is one of South Australia's earliest offices for the National Bank of Australasia. Its formal style, with Georgian features, reflects Burra's prosperity as a mining town at that time, and was built at a cost of £1,500, possibly to a design by Edmund Wright.

The South Australian Register (15 March 1862) provided a detailed description of the new building:

It stands on rising ground, facing Market Square, at the bend of Commercial Street, leading to the Institute and Telegraph and Post Offices. It is built of neatly pointed stonework, with stuccoed pilasters, window and door dressings, and is surmounted by a bold cornice, also stuccoed, behind which rises the galvanised iron roof. The interior, though plain, is in keeping with the exterior, and is as replete with every convenience both for the public and the Manager, as it could well be. The accommodation is as follows –

Public room 25 x 20 feet, and fitted with handsome cedar counters, etc; Manager's Room 17 feet x 12 feet, furnished in like manner; strong room, dining room, and drawing room, in addition to good bedrooms, kitchen and other domestic conveniences, besides a large underground tank for rain water at the rear. The private entrance is at the side (the building being situated at the corner of a cross street) and that for the public at the corner.

Burra Community School (former Model School)

Smelts Road, Burra

SAHR 10025 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 28 May 1981

This building, which today is part of the Burra Community School complex, was built as one of the first group of Model Schools in South Australia. It was completed during 1877, the same year as the mine closed, on a site donated by the South Australian Mining Association.

The school was intended for 800-1000 students, but when it opened in January 1878 only 300 had enrolled. Many rooms remained unoccupied until the high school opened in the western wing in 1913.



Front entrance, 2005



Eastern side

The building's original cost was £7,000. It is a striking structure, characterised by horizontal stucco banding and the slightly Gothic detailing of many of South Australia's educational buildings. The original building has had extensive additions and alterations, including a central library and the partial removal of walls. In 1978 the primary and secondary schools combined as the Burra Community School – South Australia's first community school. Part of the original Model School building now accommodates the community library.

former Telegraph Station and Post Office

5 Market Street, Burra

SAHR 10017 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 28 May 1981

This Telegraph Station and Post Office building was designed by the Colonial Architect and erected in 1861. Previously, the first official mail run to Burra began in 1846, and the town's first post office was the accountant's office at the mine. The first telegraph was sent to Adelaide in 1860 from the Burra Institute.

In 1862 [John McDouall Stuart](#) sent a message from this telegraph station to the Governor of South Australia, informing him of his successful crossing of the continent.



Former Burra Post Office

The building's southern wing was added in 1890 and the northern wing in 1911 to house the telephone exchange. This building was Burra's Post Office for nearly 100 years, until a new Post Office was erected in Market Square in 1960.

Town Hall & Institute

Market Street, Burra

SAHR 10403 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984

The Town Hall was first built as a one-roomed institute, known officially as the Burra Miners and Mechanics Institute, on land owned by the South Australian Mining Association. In 1874 SAMA legally transferred the land to a group of gentlemen, who shortly after declared a Trust aiming to promote 'useful knowledge and rational mental recreation amongst its members'.

Colonial institutes had been established in many country areas of South Australia by the late 1850s, ably assisted by Government grants and grants-in-aid, based upon membership. These institutes ideally sought to provide opportunities for further education, beyond that taught to a fortunate minority. Like most of these institutes, the Burra Institute's main function was the provision of library services. Mr W.H. Birbeck was appointed the first librarian in 1858.



Burra Town Hall, 2005

old Commercial Bank building.

The Town Hall, as it is now known, has also been used as a picture and stage theatre.

former Redruth Police Station, Cells and Stables

Helston Street, North Burra

SAHR 10014 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 1 September 1983

Burra's first police station, cells and stables were erected on this site in 1847. This was two years before the survey of this section (the Government town of Redruth) and so the station would have been among the first public buildings constructed in Burra. Like the courthouse and the gaol (both constructed a few years later), it was necessary that the town's police station be built on public land, rather than sited in the more heavily populated Koorunga area (owned by the SA Mining Association).

In 1851 the police force consisted of three constables and three mounted officers for a community of 5 000 people. The cells were used as a temporary gaol until the Redruth Gaol was built in 1856.



Former Redruth Police Station, 2005



Stables & cell block, 2005

In 1872-73 new cells, stables and a stable-yard were added to the existing police station. These still stand on the site. The original stable was converted into a forage store, and this is also still onsite.

In 1878 the first police station was demolished and a new one completed by 1879. This building then served until the 1960s, when a new police station was erected near Market Square.

The original 1847 stables (later a forage store), the 1873 cells, stables and stable-yard, and the 1878 police station are now maintained by the National Trust and opened to the public.

former Redruth Courthouse

Sancreed Street, North Burra

SAHR 10027 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 1 September 1983

This courthouse building was erected in 1857 on the Police Reserve in the Government town of Redruth. (Burra's first courthouse had been a rented cottage in Koorunga in 1847.)

The building was designed by the Colonial Architect, E.A. Hamilton, and was completed at a cost of £800. In 1864 the original, single-storey courthouse was enlarged, the roof raised in the process and a new clerk's room added. In 1878 a porch was added to the courthouse, and the clerk's room was extended.

The courthouse was closed in 1986 when the court transferred to Clare. The building is now maintained by the National Trust.



Former Redruth Courthouse, 2005

former Redruth Gaol
Tregony Street, North Burra
SAHR 10042 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 24 July 1980



Former Redruth Gaol, 2005

The Redruth Gaol, erected in 1856 at a cost of £3,200, was South Australia's first country gaol.

The previous year Thomas Perry, the gaoler at the police cells, had complained to the Presiding Magistrate that he had more prisoners and lunatics than he could accommodate in the lock-up. Tenders were called for the new gaol, which had to be erected on Government land at Redruth (outside the privately-owned SA Mining Association holdings at Koorunga). By September 1856 the new gaol was ready for occupants.

Perry was the gaoler there for 23 years, and it became known as 'Perry's Hotel'. It housed thirty prisoners, as well as the gaoler and his family, a turnkey and a warder.

There were three cells for men and three for women, with separate exercise yards. A second storey was used as a work room. The walls were topped with broken glass. The gaol was closed in 1894 and the prisoners transferred to Gladstone.

The building was renovated and resurrected in 1897 as a Government Protestant detention centre – Redruth Girls' Reformatory. It housed an average of 30 'incorrigible' girls over the age of 15, who were sent to Redruth from other institutions in Adelaide, which could not meet demand. The Reformatory continued until 1922 when a series of events, including a wild riot by the 'Girls of Hampton Court', led to its closure and the transfer of the girls back to Adelaide.

The National Trust now maintains the building. In 1979 *Breaker Morant* was filmed in and around Burra, with the Redruth Gaol one of the major locations.



Cell Block, 2005



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