

To: South Australian Heritage Committee  
From: Senior Historical Architect  
Subject: REGISTER NOMINATION REPORT: THOMSON BUILDING  
(FORMER COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND FORMER STORE),  
CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND HILL STREET, KAPUNDA  
Date: 6th May, 1982

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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared as a result of a request by the District Council of Kapunda for funding to help defray costs to restore the building. The building is located within the Kapunda Conservation Area identified by the Australian Heritage Commission (G42,21/10/1980). The Council is currently undertaking extensive work to convert the building into an art gallery. The Minister has already approved funding for this project.

Historically, the Thomson Building is a significant example of building which occurred between 1870-1880 when Kapunda was the second largest provincial town in the State. Andrew Thomson, the owner and the builder of the store, was a prominent citizen of the township. Located on Main Street, it reflects both the style and optimism of the commercial sector in Kapunda at the time.

Architecturally, Thomson Building is a significant grouping of three elegant and distinctive buildings which are compatible in detailing and decoration.

Environmentally, the Thomson Building contributes to the scale and character of the streetscape which has retained many late 19th Century elements. Located on the corner of Hill Street, Thomson's Store also relates well to the Institute and Printing establishment in Hill Street, thus linking two streetscapes harmoniously.

The Integrity of the building is intact externally.

The Thomson Store is not currently on either the Register of the National Trust or the National Estate Register but it is included in the Kapunda Heritage Area on the National Estate Register.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Thomson's Building be included on the Register of State Heritage Items, and that it be categorised A.2, A.3, H.3.



Barry G. Rowney  
Senior Historical Architect

II:BAH  
6.5.82

South Australian Heritage Ag 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures	
	Item THOMSON BUILDING, MAIN STREET, KAPUNDA. (FORMER COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND STORE).	
Age Approx. 1871 -	Theme	Office
Period 1852-1883	Subject TRADE AND COMMERCE - RETAIL	Region Lower North
Building Type SHOP & RESIDENCE	Style HIGH VICTORIAN	Status None

Qualitative Data		Grading				
Component	Comment	E	VG	AG	FP	NA
<u>History</u>						
1. Context:	Associated with the commercial activity of Kapunda. A town which evolved around the copper mine during the period from 1842 to 1886, representing the earliest mining town in South Australia. Built in or around 1871, the building illustrates the style, optimism and prosperity of the time and the prominence of the Main Street as a commercial centre.		*			
2. Person/Group:	Andrew Thomson (1834-1924). Born in Buckhaven, Fife, Scotland. Settled in Kapunda during the late 1850's and became one of the town's first councillors. Chairman of Kapunda Hospital's Board of Management in 1898. Built store in 1871.		*			
3. Specific Event:	1950: Became Council offices and Library.			*		
<u>Architecture</u>						
4. Architect/Builder:	Architect - not yet known. Builder - not yet known.					*
5. Design:	Three adjacent buildings on corner site, two two-storey buildings facing Main Street, single storey building on side street. Italianate influence in ornate applied decoration to facades, balustraded parapets, window surrounds.		*			
6. Construction:	Random local stone, stucco facade to southern building, pilasters, entablature.		*			
7. Interior:	Ornate staircase with cast iron balusters, decorative cornices and ceiling roses, lantern skylight in single storey building at rear.			*		
8. Representation:	An exceptionally fine example of a corner store of substantial massing and decoration.		*			

South Australian Heritage Act 1970-80

Register of State Heritage Items  
ITEM EVALUATION SHEET  
Buildings and Structures

Item THOMSON BUILDING,  
MAIN STREET, KAPUNDA.

Component  
Environment

Comment

Grading

F VG AG EP NA

9. Continuity:

Located on the corner of two streets which contain other adjacent buildings. Harmonious in age and style (with the exception of the adjacent public toilets).

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10. Local Character:

The building is prominent because of its corner situation in the streetscape of the main street and contributes to the predominantly 19th century character of the streetscape of the main street.

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11. Landmark:

Of local significance only in identifying the intersection of Hill and Main Street.

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Integrity

12. Alterations:

Facades seem reasonably intact apart from minor alterations to shop front. Fanlights over some ground floor windows appear to have been blocked up. Internally, alterations have occurred due to adaptation.

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13. Condition:

Some evidence of damp in base of walls and at ceiling level, some cracking, lathe and plaster ceilings in poor condition.

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14. Compatability:

Not functioning at present.

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Supplementary Information

15. Adaptation Potential:

The extensive open areas in the building would lend themselves to numerous public uses. Elegant staircase, ornate cornices and ceiling roses and fanlight should be retained.

16. Interpretation Potential:

The building could, because of ownership, be used for active interpretation as well as passive interpretation in the streetscape sense.

17. Current Situation:

The local Council owns the building which it is converting into an art gallery. Work is currently progressing towards that end.

Evaluated By Carolyn Wigg  
Register Architect

Iris Iwanicki  
Register Historian

Date

Reviewed By

Date

South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization

Date

HISTORICAL RESEARCH REPORT - THOMSON'S BUILDING, KAPUNDA

Located on the corner of Main Street (or Burra Burra Road) and Hill Street, the former store was built some time around 1871 by Andrew Thomson, a Scottish storekeeper and draper. The Main Street of Kapunda was the focal point of commercial activities in the township, which in 1865 was the second largest provincial township in South Australia. After copper was discovered in 1842, by pastoralists Dutton & Captain Bagot, the township grew up about the resultant mine, and was regarded as:

"Beautiful for situation, with a superior climate, pleasant surroundings, and material interests of such diversity and magnitude, that invite and will repay development, the prospects of Kapunda appear to be firmly assured." (Burgess, 1902, 2/377).

Progress in the township was based during the late 1850's on implement making as well as mining and marked by a gas works and street watering in 1867. By 1860, the railway reached Burra, bringing about the cessation of most of the copper traffic through Kapunda. In the same year, copper was discovered at the Moonta/Wallaroo site, destined to grow twenty times the size of the mine at Kapunda.

At the time of the store's construction, Kapunda enjoyed both a Town Corporation, which had been proclaimed on the 13th July, 1865, with Dr. Blood as Mayor, and a District Council, formed in 1866. The football club, one of the first in Australia, was also founded in 1866, an indication of the lively civic life of the town.

Andrew Thomson, the owner of the building, was a prominent citizen of Kapunda. In 1867, H.R.H. Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, had been entertained by him for dinner during a visit to the town, whose residents greeted the royal visitor ecstatically. Burgess describes Thomson as having set up business as a general storekeeper in 1860. One of the first councillors of the town, he was also a member of the Board of Management of the Kapunda Hospital and occupied the position of Chairman in 1898. The shop, with its two storey facade, fluted plaster decorations and large cellar, testified its owner's success. Originally in partnership with a J. Stobie, Thomson had become the co-proprietor of Whittaker's store, the first built in Main Street in 1849. He then dissolved the partnership (for reasons unknown) and after a term at Carrington Smedley's old store on the Hill Street site, built the shop in question on the opposite corner. (Charlton, 1971, 123). From the title deeds, Thomson appears to have let part of Lot 51 together with the rear right of way from the 12th February, 1872 until 1889. This was probably the building facing Hill Street. After his death in 1924, the property was transferred to James Guthrie Christie, a general draper, in 1926, finally coming into ownership by the District Council of Kapunda in 1946. After occupying the premises in 1950, the District Council merged with the Town Corporation in 1962, and ran a local library at the rear of the Main Street offices, with an entrance into Hill Street, opposite the Kapunda "Herald" offices.

The significance of this building in local terms resides in its association with one of Kapunda's pioneers and prominent citizens and its use later as a Council Chambers. In the wider sense, Thomson's Store demonstrates by its style, construction and location, the prosperity of Kapunda during its heyday when it restored the infant colony's ailing economy.

Sources:

1. I.J. Bettison Kapunda, a Study of the Establishment of a Community in Rural South Australia Hist. Hon. Thesis Adelaide Uni. 1960.
2. H.T. Burgess The Cyclopaedia of South Australia 1902, Vol. 2.
3. R. Charlton The History of Kapunda Melbourne Hawthorn Press 1971.
4. G. Pretty, R. Charlton and B. Rowney Kapunda: The Historical Development of an important Australian Town's Plan Adelaide, South Australian Museum 1975.
5. Ngaiawang Folk Province Feasibility Study  
Kapunda Committee Kapunda Centenary Celebrations - Official Souvenir 1946.

Iris Iwanicki  
Register Historian

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Thomson Building, Corner Main + Hill Sts, Kapunda.