

Former Bank of South Australia  
(Seaview House)

INPA-RSR-02

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**LOCATION**

<b>Address</b>	12 Tassie Street, Port Augusta
<b>Owner(s)</b>	Minister of Works
<b>CT Number</b>	4145/749
<b>Lot</b>	101
<b>Hundred</b>	Davenport
<b>Local Government Area</b>	Port Augusta

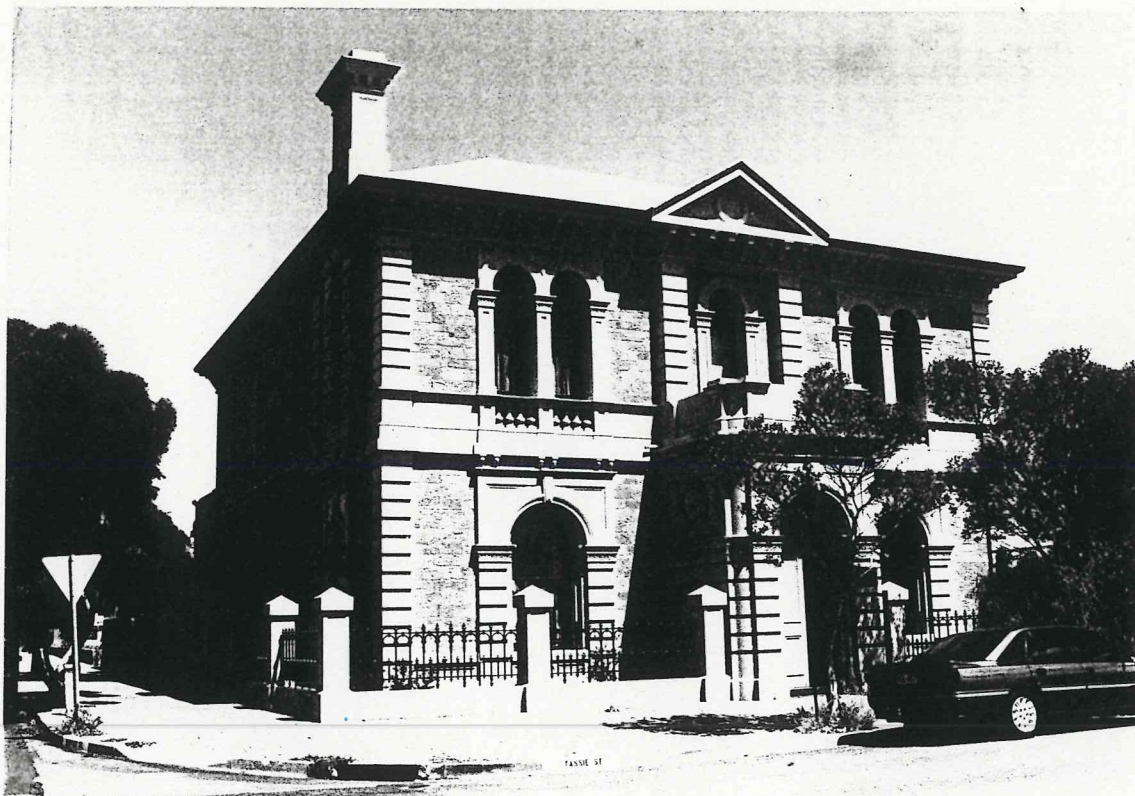
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<b>State Heritage Status</b>	Nil
<b>Other Assessments</b>	National Trust Recorded List — 2118

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<b>Film/Neg Number</b>	2/28; 12/28, 29, 30, 31, 32
<b>Photographer</b>	B.G. Rowney/P.F. Donovan

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## FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

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### Former Bank of South Australia — Seaview House

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#### DESCRIPTION

A two storey building of hipped roof form with double hung sash windows. The walls are of pecked ashlar sandstone with rendered quoins and dressings. The roof is of corrugated galvanized iron, while there is a grand rendered entrance to the building. Inside the entrance is a plaque which notes:

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NORTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS

OPENED BY  
THE HONOURABLE TOM CHAPMAN  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE  
1ST OCTOBER, 1982

The fence is of rendered piers and corrugated galvanized iron. Additions have been constructed at the back of the building. These are of rock faced concrete blocks with rendered quoins.

The interior of the building on the ground floor comprises a reception room, two offices, computer room, plant room, toilets and shower, tea room and store room. The old vault is now used as a store room. The first floor comprises four offices, library and front and back balcony.

Floors are all of timber with carpet finishing. Mosaic floor tiles have been used in the corridor areas. Ceilings are high with deep cornices, and fireplace surrounds are either of marble or timber. The former vault has a slate floor. Deep skirtings, architraves and surrounds are all of timber which have been painted. New plaster ceiling roses are evident in some offices.

The side entrance has a timber door with sidelights and a fanlight and opens into a small entrance room with a timber staircase leading to the upper floor. The staircase has timber ballustrades and a curved handrail at the bottom while the steps are covered with carpet. An enclosed timber storage area is under the stairs. All the staircase woodwork has been painted including the skirtings, doors and timber surrounds. The floor in this area is of mosaic tiles.

The whole interior of the building has been painted in a dove-grey while the woodwork has been painted in a darker shade of grey. The carpet is of soft grey tones while the mosaic tiles are in earth tones and set in a Victorian-style with a patterned border.

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#### HISTORY

While there had been a representative of the Bank of South Australia in Port Augusta from 1876, it was not until 16 August 1880 that the bank acquired land — part Section 41 — on the corner of what is now known as Tassie and Marryatt Streets on which to build permanent premises. Work began in late August or early September 1881.



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Designed by Adelaide architects Wright & Reed, the bank was constructed by local builder and timber merchant T. Sara & Co., while T. Burgoyne oversaw the works. The total cost of the building was approximately £4,500.

Edmund William Wright arrived in South Australia in May 1849, after having trained as an architect, surveyor and engineer in London, and after experience gained in Canada and Bermuda. After a slow start in the colony, which included a short stint served on the Victorian goldfields with his brother, Wright became more firmly established. In 1859 he became Mayor of Adelaide, in 1860 he employed Edward Woods as a draftsman and, in 1861, offered him a partnership. This was subsequently dissolved after several years. By 1880 Wright formed another partnership with James Henry Reed and J.G. Beaver; their firm was responsible for the design of the Bank of Adelaide.

As early as 1859, Wright advocated that there were arguments in favour of adapting Italian styles of architecture: 'flat roofs; large, lofty, well-proportioned rooms for the sake of coolness; and windows 'possessing a judicious amount of decoration so as to reduce the quantity of glass without producing a goal-like external appearance'. Notable examples of work in which Wright was involved as a designer and/or as principal supervisory architect include Brougham Place Congregational Church (1860); Adelaide Town Hall (1863); Edmund Wright House (1874); and Parliament House (1889 — although not to Wright & Tayler's original prize-winning design). 'Athelney' at Hackney, 'The Olives' at Glenelg, 'Linden' at Burnside and 'Paringa Hall' at Somerton were others. Wright was an inaugural Vice-President of the South Australian Institute of Architects set up in 1886. His two partners were also involved: Reed was an inaugural member (and became Honorary Secretary in 1891) while Beaver was inaugural Honorary Secretary. Wright died in 1888.

The *Port Augusta Dispatch* noted of the building designed by Wright & Reed that:

The Bank of South Australia is one of the finest new commercial structures in Port Augusta. It is situate at the corner of Tassie and Marryat streets, is two stories high, has a commanding appearance, being of white stone, and a very handsome elevation. ... Both internally and externally the building is remarkably well finished. The verandahs, balconies, and balconette are features in the building, and the domestic conveniences are of a most complete character. Provision is made for an ample supply of good, cool water, there being a large underground tank. The apartments in which the business of the bank is conducted are spacious and elegantly fitted in cedar wood. The strong-room is well worth seeing. ...

The bank opened for business on 29 December 1881.

However, following the financial difficulties of the late 1880s, the Bank of South Australia premises was acquired by the Union Bank of Australia Ltd on 20 August 1893 but the Union Bank remained only a short time before selling the premises on 23 February 1905 to Andrew Tennant then noted as being of Glenelg Station.



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Tennant was a pastoralist who had arrived in South Australia in 1838 when only three years old. As well as being a member of the South Australian Parliament — House of Assembly, April 1881–March 1887 and Legislative Council, November 1898–March 1902 — Tennant held several directorships including that of the China Traders Association, the Adelaide Steamship Co. (1875–1913) and the Commercial Bank of South Australia. He was also president of the Port Augusta and Flinders Jockey Club.

After Tennant's death on 19 July 1913 the property passed to John Tennant (sheep farmer of Princess Royal near Koorunga — the homestead of which was also designed by Edmund Wright) — Frederick A. Tennant (solicitor of Adelaide) and John T. Love. Frederick Tennant died in November 1937 at which time the property passed to John Tennant, John T. Love, Richard G. Hawker (of Bungaree, Clare) and Andrew Tennant (pastoralist of Stony Gap near Koorunga). Richard Hawker and Andrew Tennant became joint owners in May 1940.

On 7 March 1957 the property was acquired by the Commonwealth Railways and was used as the Seaview Railway Hostel. The building was sold to the present owners on 2 August 1979 and after renovations and refurbishments costing more than \$300,000 was opened in October 1982 as the offices of the Department of Agriculture. The building continues to be used by the Department of Agriculture.

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### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The place is particularly significant as an example of the work of Edmund Wright and for the high quality of its design and construction which remains evident although the interior has been upgraded. Wright was pre-eminent in South Australia's architectural history which spanned civic, ecclesiastical, domestic and commercial architecture. The building is also important because of its early association with the Bank of South Australia and the manner in which the location of such a building in Port Augusta highlights the economic significance of the town. It is recommended that the former bank be included in the State Heritage Register.

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### RELEVANT CRITERIA

- (a) the building demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, particularly the importance of Port Augusta in the economic development of the northern part of South Australia;
  - (d) the building is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance, and its location near the wharf highlights the early significance of maritime trade to Port Augusta;
  - (e) the building demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics, particularly as an example of the work of Edmund Wright;
  - (g) the building has a special association with the life or work of an organisation of historical importance, namely the Bank of South Australia.
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#### REFERENCES

- Anderson, R.J., *Solid Town: The History of Port Augusta*, Port Augusta, R.J. Anderson, 1988, p. 115.
- Anderson, R.J. (ed.), *McLellan's Transcontinental Articles on the History of Port Augusta*, Port Augusta College of TAFE, Port Augusta, 1986.
- Coxon, H., Playford, J. and Reid, J., *Biographical Register of the South Australian Parliament 1857–1957*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1985, p. 221.
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- Morgan, E.J.R. and Gilbert, S.H., *Early Adelaide Architecture 1836 to 1886*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1969, pp. 145, 152, 155-56.
- Page, M., *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836–1986*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects (South Australian Chapter), Adelaide, 1986, pp. 31, 54–55, 56, 61 (description of Wright's philosophy), 92–93, 94–95, 104–06, 118.
- Port Augusta Dispatch*, 5 and 26 August, 16 September, 14 October 1881 (construction details); 30 December 1881 (opening); 30 September 1882 (description).
- Transcontinental*, 1 October 1982 (opening after renovations).
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Site Surveyor B.G. Rowney/P.Donovan Date(s) of Survey 11.2. and 4.11.1994



Former Bank of South Australia — Seaview House

Interior — entrance foyer to residence showing portion of stairs



**Former Bank of South Australia — Seaview House**

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Interior — entrance foyer to residence showing portion of stairs



Former Bank of South Australia — Seaview House

Interior — upper landing showing portion of stairs

