# FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

## Former Mill — INQN–SR–02

### LOCATION

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| **Address** | 2 Railway Terrace, Quorn |
| **Owner(s)** | Ozolins Nominees Pty Ltd, P.O. Box 42, Quorn |
| **CT Number** | 4312/440 |
| **Lot** | 1, 2 |
| **Hundred** | Pichi Richi |
| **Local Government Area** | Kanyaka/Quorn |

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| **State Heritage Status** | State Heritage Register — 10195 — 24 July 1980 |
| **Other Assessments** | Register of the National Estate<br>National Trust Classified List — 767 |

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| **Film/Neg Number** | 4/15 |
| **Photographer** | B.G. Rowney |

## Former Mill

### DESCRIPTION

A three storey building with gabled roof form. The walls are of limestone and the rendered quoins are painted. There are casement windows and the roof is of corrugated galvanized iron.

Other features include a one storey block of modern motel units built to the north of the Mill in the same materials but with a skillion roof.

### HISTORY

Established in 1879 for the well-known milling firm of John Dunn & Co., this building was one of two flour mills erected on Railway Terrace. The other was owned by Cowan & Co. who opened their mill in late 1878.

John Dunn of Mount Barker founded his milling industry at Hay Valley in 1841. Subsequent mills were built at Mount Barker, Bridgewater, Port Adelaide and, as farming areas pushed further northward into the State, at Port Pirie, Wilmington, Quorn, Port Augusta, Hawker and Wolseley.

In 1894 John Dunn died, and in less than a decade all of his properties were sold off, the Quorn property being purchased by Joseph Nicholas on 19 September 1900 and then by Henry Waters on 19 June 1906. Waters had been employed by Dunn & Co. from 1884 serving the company in a managerial capacity at Quorn. Born on 16 February 1859 at Burra, Waters continued to carry on operations as a chaff, grain and produce merchant. He also dealt in groceries and confectionery, and according to journalist and publisher J. Edward Robertson who visited the area in 1909, 'controls a very successful Bakery Department. The bread turned out by Mr. Waters is a first-class production, and Catering is carried out liberally and satisfactorily'.

In 1909 *The Cyclopedia of South Australia* described Waters' business:

> The main building, facing Railway Terrace, the business centre of the town, consists of three storeys, and is a substantial stone-and-brick structure of imposing appearance, the ground-floor of which is well stocked with a varied assortment of general groceries. The chaff-mill is fitted with all the latest machinery, and there is also a bakery from which supplies are distributed over a wide radius, a woodyard, and saw-mill, in connection with the business. The various buildings cover about an acre and a half of land, and a loopline from the railway is run right up to the chaff-mill, affording excellent facilities for dealing with large contracts for the supply of hay and chaff for export or use in the State at short notice. The concern, which is the most important of its kind in the northern districts, is known by the name of the Quorn Chaff-mills and Firewood Yards, and is very widely patronized by the residents of the town and district, its connection extending as far north as Hergott, over two hundred miles distant.

As well as conducting his own business, Waters was wheat-buying agent for George R. Wills and Quorn agent for the South British Insurance Co. For some years Waters used the Mill as a private residence. After he died in July 1941 the property passed

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to Henrietta R. Shute (1941) then to Arthur H. Barnes in February 1952. The property again changed hands after Barnes' death on 17 July 1966 when Joy Noble and Gerarda Martineau became owners in July 1967. In May 1968 the two were joined by Margaret Vreugdenhill and the Mill Motel Co. Pty Ltd was formed. It was then that the building was converted into the Mill Motel with the old section housing a restaurant, kitchen, office, shop, art gallery and museum with motel units being erected at the rear where Henry Waters' woodyard and sawmill once stood.

An article in the *Advertiser* of 27 July 1968 written by Elizabeth Young noted of the refurbishment:

> So take a derelict mill, preserving its historic character — massive red gum beams, 27 inch-thick walls, deep-set, small-paned windows — introduce all the amenities of the mid-twentieth century; the ground floor becomes a restaurant and gift shop; up the narrow stairs ... to the first floor, which, with neutral walls, matting on the floor, special lighting, becomes a gallery; up again to the museum floor, where relics of pioneering days, household and farming implements, Aboriginal weapons and artefacts, geological specimens and exploratory charts, help bring to life the origins and beginnings of the district.

The Mill continues to be used as a Hotel/Motel/Restaurant.

### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The building reflects one of the major industries of the region and once belonged to one of the significant milling companies of South Australia.

The building makes a significant contribution to the streetscape and its location helps to define the commercial part of the town. It was entered in the State Heritage Register on 24 July 1980.

### RELEVANT CRITERIA

(a) the building demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, particularly its early dependence on agriculture and the manner in which this underpinned the settlement of the colony;

(d) the building is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance, although its fabric has been altered in the light of new uses;

(g) the building has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance, particularly the milling company John Dunn and Co.

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### REFERENCES

Anonymous, 'The Mills that Grind for Gold: A Milling Enterprise', *The Critic*, 11 June 1898, pp. 25–28 (early details of Dunn's mills).
Burgess, H.T. (ed.), *The Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Facsimile Edition, Austaprint, Hampstead Gardens, 1978 [1907, 1909] vol. II, pp. 603–04.
Department of Environment and Natural Resources, State Heritage Branch — 10195.
Lands Titles Office — CT.666/48; CT.4312/440.
Robertson, J. Edward, *Prosperous Quorn and Port Augusta, The Seaside Resort of South Australia*, J. Edward Robertson, Adelaide, 1909, p. 7.
Stuart, A. (ed.), *A Miller's Tale: The Memoirs of John Dunn of Mount Barker*, Waterwheel Books, Kingswood, 1991, pp. 101, 121–23.
The Book Centenary Committee, *Quorn and District Centenary 1878–1978*, Lynton Publications, Blackwood, 1978, p. 54.

**Site Surveyor** B.G. Rowney **Date(s) of Survey** 27.4.1994

FLINDERS RANGES RESEARCH

# Quorn

**The town of Quorn began with the surveying of the railways. It would eventually become the junction of the Sydney-Perth and Adelaide-Darwin railway systems. When a hundred years later it lost the railway traffic it had to rely on its other services to farmers and pastoralists. As the gateway to the Flinders Ranges, the tourist industry has become an important revenue earner.**

**Because of its beautiful surroundings and climate several films have been made in and around the town. The first, in 1949, was Bitter Springs followed by Kangaroo in 1951, Robbery Under Arms, The Sundowners and Sunday Too Far Away.**

**Quorn Map**

**Until the 1870s the land in the Quorn district was used by pastoralists until replaced by farmers after the passing of the Strangways Act in 1869 and the disregarding of Goyder's Line. Some of the first farmers to settled in the area were John Joyce in 1871, Abraham Brewster 1872, Gustav Liebich from Germany in 1874. They were followed a little later by Johann Britza and his wife Maria Schuppan from Eden Valley and Gustav August Altmann from the Barossa Valley in 1877.**

**These farmers cultivated up to four hundred acres, growing mostly wheat. To reduce transport cost and storage the Quorn Mill was completed in 1877, but only worked for ten years after which it became a grain store. By 1883 the town had two flourmills.**

**During this time, and even before, several surveys were made for a railway connecting Port Augusta with the pastoral and mining properties in the far north. The first line was surveyed in 1861 for the Great Northern Copper Mining Company of South Australia which operated the Nuccaleena mine. Nothing came of this or the other schemes, until 27 June 1876 when the Act to construct a line from Port Augusta to Government Gums was assented to by the South Australian Governor, Musgrave. This line would go through Pichi Richi and from there over the plains northwards.**

**A site for the town was surveyed by Godfrey Walsh in 1878 and named after Quorndon in Leicestershire, England, which has recently started its own Magazine. The first town sites in Quorn were sold on 30 May 1878. Among the first buyers were, Francis Treloar, William Armstrong, already building his Pinkerton Hotel and organising cricket matches, Thomas Thomas and Luke Turner. Later that year additional subdivisions were surveyed for private parties. Work on the line was started in July 1878 and some 200 Chinese workers, on loan from Victoria, and many Cornish and Irish labourers worked on the first section.**

**At Christmas that year Morphett's Dining Rooms and Restaurant opened and the Port Augusta cricket team travelled to Quorn to show them how to play the game. Unfortunately the Augustians had failed to do their home work and were trashed! In February 1879 W.C. Greenslade opened his Transcontinental Hotel which he said had 'Unrivalled accommodation, Commercial Rooms, Bath, Billiards, Superior Wines and Spirits'. It also offered Traps and Horses for hire.**

**Later that year the line to Quorn was completed and opened for traffic on 15 December 1879. From now on Quorn's population increased rapidly, not just because of the railway employees but also business people to cater for them and the people who travelled on the train. Quorn also served the farmers on the newly opened Willochra plain. As ususal it soon had its post office, police station, church, bank, transport facilities, brewery, water supply, baker, butcher and school. The first school was opened in 1879 with William James George as first teacher in charge of forty children. In 1883 it had a total enrolment of 226 children but only about a hundred attended regularly every day.**

**Later the Railways built workshops adding further population and the need for even more support services. The first teamster to provide transport services in and around Quorn was William Abbott, who operated from Saltia where he started carting materials for the Overland Telegraph Line.**

**By 1881 the town had a population of 540. On 4 September 1882 the town was visited by the Adelaide Dramatic Company from the Theatre Royal, Adelaide and despite the short notice the assembly room was filled to capacity. A year later the town had become big enough to have its own council and on 25 October 1883 Quorn was incorporated. William C. Barton was elected its first mayor. Robert Thompson, who arrived from Scotland in December 1879, became one of the first residents in 1880 and Mayor in 1894. He served in that position for 27 years. In an effort to improve the town, almost all footpaths were eventually kerbed with Mintaro slate**

**Churches were very active in the early days and the first Anglican service was held in 1879 in the Transcontinental Hotel. Lutheran services were conducted in private homes until the St Petri Church was finished in 1890. The Anglican Church held its harvest festival in early February 1887. The Rev Marshall and Ashworth from Port Augusta both attended. A tea meeting was held during the afternoon in the Institute Hall and a moonlight picnic after evening service on the East Park Lands.**

**The Foundation stone for the Town Hall was laid by Mrs R.W. Foster and the building completed in 1891. In 1897 Quorn was visited by Mr Mallen, the oldest established Surgeon Dentist. He called in every month and consulted at E. Gilbert chemist at Quorn. That same year, on 16 October 1897, the Quorn Cottage Gardeners' Society held its second Spring Show at the Town Hall with Leslie Pooler as Secretary.**

**During the drought and depression several families moved away but at the same time others came in from the drought stricken far north such as Joseph Turner, hawker of Farina, and family. He enrolled his daughters Jane, born on 9 February 1882 and Alice, born 18 May 1884 at the Quorn Public School in 1892. They were followed later by Elizabeth Turner and children, also from Farina in 1898. With houses empty, vandalism at Quorn increased and often resulted in the breaking of windows of some of these unoccupied houses.**

**By the turn of the century Quorn had several churches, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic as well as the Salvation Army. It had just as many hotels, The Criterion, Grand Junction, Transcontinental and Pinkerton, later changed to Austral. This last hotel got its name from William Pinkerton, a small pastoralist of Eyre Peninsula who during the 1850s settled in the Quorn area for a short time. In 1854 he bought a ship, sailed to Melbourne, bought sheep and cattle, went to New Zealand where he stayed until 1867, and finally settled in Mexico. Pinkerton died in 1893.**

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FILM 82
NO 9

THE MILL MOTEL FROM NORTH EAST

QUORN
11-3-79

FILM 82
NO 8

THE MILL MOTEL FROM NORTH

QUORN
11-3-79