

CITY OF ADELAIDE NOMINATION

File No.: 10411

**BALFOUR'S SHOP
72 RUNDLE MALL
ADELAIDE**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Description:

The facade of Balfour's is historically significant, both architecturally and for its association with Balfour's since the time of its completion. The facade is a steel and glass curtain wall, and has abstracted classical detailing. It was constructed in the interwar period, a time of transition in architecture, when there was a growing emphasis on technology and functionalism.

The interior of the cafe has been modified and a mezzanine floor removed. However, sufficient timber wall-panelling has been retained to provide a good impression of its former ambience.

Statement of Heritage Value:

'Balfour's' in Rundle Mall is the last functioning cafe to be operated by this prominent South Australian business, founded by James Calder in 1853. Balfours has occupied this building since 1895. A new facade was designed by Louis Laybourne-Smith in 1924. The interior of the cafe has been modified and a mezzanine floor removed. However, sufficient timber wall-panelling has been retained to provide a good impression of its former ambience. A well-known cafe and a landmark in Rundle Mall.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the Heritage Act 1993):

Criterion (f) it has strong cultural associations for the community or a group within it.
'Balfour's' is a landmark for many South Australians.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the shop known as 'Balfour's', 72 Rundle Mall, Adelaide, be Provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register.

Action Officer: Carol Nightingale

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The following report was prepared for Adelaide City Council.

Architectural

Balfour's Cafe was built in 1924 as the new city premises of the baking company of Balfour Wauchope Limited. The shop was designed by the prominent Adelaide architects, Woods, Bagot and Laybourne Smith. The design of the building is considered to be innovative because of the building envelope, which is independent of the internal structure. The building has a large steel and glass curtain wall to the Rundle Mall frontage surrounded by abstracted Classical details, in particular the monumental pilasters which frame the studio-like south light. The facade is largely unaltered. There are several buildings close to Balfour's that were constructed in the 1920's.

Historical

The origins of the company lie with James Calder, a Scottish baker who emigrated to South Australia in December 1852. In 1855 he had set up a bakery and confectionery business at 130 Rundle Street and by the mid 1860s had prospered to the degree where he was able to build the City Steam Biscuit Factory in Twin Street (which still survives) as well as opening another shop at what was then 43 Rundle Street. His nephew John Balfour had joined the business and in 1877 the company's name was changed from James Calder to Calder and Balfour. The popularity of the Company's products increased and they became 'a household word throughout the whole of South Australia'. The company outgrew their Twin Street factory and moved to their larger newly built factory in Cardwell Street in the early 1890s. In the early 1900s, Balfour's amalgamated with one of their competitors, Bricknall and Company Limited.

The Company's expansion in the 1890s coincided with an economic recession and some hard times followed. However, Elizabeth Balfour, James' wife, salvaged the finances of the company by opening a restaurant at 136 Rundle Street. Later in 1900-1, her son, JG and son-in-law, Charles Wauchope became partners and the company name was changed to E Balfour and Company. It was at this time that the Company's retail premises were moved to 74 Rundle Street (now known as 72). Several partnership changes occurred soon after or at the turn of the century and by 1924 the company was known as Balfour Wauchope Ltd.

By the 1920s until well into the 1950s, Balfour's bakeries and its cakes had become a South Australian institution. The Balfour's Cafe in Rundle Street in 1929 was described as one 'the lunch spots in Adelaide. According to historian Rob Linn, Balfour's Cafes "breathed a gracious, but relaxed atmosphere which suited the nature of Adelaide society at that time", and until well after the Second World War.

The company continues to be one of the state's largest and best known bakeries. The bakery itself is located on the corner of Waymouth and Franklin Streets. It employs a work force of several hundred employees producing over 200 different products. Although this Rundle Street shop was sold by Balfour's in 1989, and the cafe function closed approximately ten years ago, the company leases the building for use as its major city retail outlet.

References

Entry for Balfour's Shop, Significant Twentieth Century Architecture in South Australia , Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

R Linn, Serving the generations - a history of Balfour's, (unpublished manuscript), 1987.

Nigel Hopkins, "Checking out the biggest tuckshop...", Advertiser, 24 August 1984, p. 23.

Wayne Thomas, 'Its Balfour's - and Adelaide - revisited.', Advertiser, 7 July 1983, p. 18.

Builder, 20 February 1924.

Woods, Bagot and Laybourne Smith, plan dated 1924.

Adelaide: Queen City of the South, pp. 149, 158.

Photographs, MLSA, B44401, 1930.

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SITE RECORD

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|-------------------------------|---|
| Location: | 72 Rundle Mall, Adelaide |
| Description: | <p>The facade of Balfour's is historically significant, both architecturally and for its association with Balfour's since the time of its completion. The facade is a steel and glass curtain wall, and has abstracted classical detailing. It was constructed in the interwar period, a time of transition in architecture, when there was a growing emphasis on technology and functionalism.</p> <p>The interior of the cafe has been modified and a mezzanine floor removed. However, sufficient timber wall-panelling has been retained to provide a good impression of its former ambience.</p> |
| AMG References: | <p>N 6132725 E 280850 Map Sheet ADELAIDE (2500:1)</p> |
| Land Description: | <p>Hundred of Adelaide PTA 43 Lot 2 Certificate of Title Volume 5268 Folio 522</p> |
| Local Government Area: | Corporation of the City of Adelaide |
| Owner: | Tobin Metals Pty Ltd |
| Current Use: | Shop and eating house |
| Original Use(s): | Shop and eating house |
| Heritage Status: | <p>1985 - Nomination received 1991 - Provisionally entered in State Heritage Register 1992 - Removed from the Provisional List of State Heritage</p> |
| Other Assessments: | |
| Photograph Nos.: | |
| Report by: | Carol Nightingale |

at least one will become another success story like the Frog Cake.

"Without giving to much away to my competitors, we are working on a new range of pies that is going to blow the lid off the pie market. That will be before next winter. So stay tuned!" - John Koot.

[< Return to Archive](#)

Contact:

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and Sons

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BALFOURS

