

CHURCH - PILGRIM UNITING
(Former Stow Memorial Church)
FLINDERS STREET, ADELAIDE

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Historically, the item is significant as a memorial to Thomas Stow, pre-eminent in the spiritual and intellectual life of early South Australia.

Architecturally, the item is a representative ecclesiastical Gothic building, distinguished by the sculptural treatment of its porch.

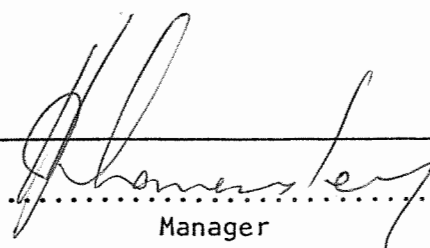
Environmentally, the building's contribution has been diminished by the construction of nearby high-rise buildings, but it remains an important element of the streetscape.

The Integrity of the item is complete.

NOMINATION SOURCE/THREAT/OWNER

This report has been prepared in response to an application for assistance with restoration. The church is on the National Estate Register, Classified by the National Trust, and recommended for the City of Adelaide Heritage Register. It is owned by the Uniting Church in Australia and is under no threat.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION BRANCH RECOMMENDATION:


.....
Manager

It is recommended that this item be included/~~not be included~~ on the Register of State Heritage Items, and that it be categorized A1, A3, H2.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

.....
Chairman

Pilgrim Church, Flinders Street.

6628-10983

(Former Stow Memorial Church)

The present Pilgrim Church was built in the 1860's as a memorial to South Australia's first Congregational minister, the Reverend Thomas Quinton Stow. Born in Suffolk in 1801, Stow was educated at Missionary College, Gosport, and achieved some prominence as a theologian. In 1836 he was appointed to Adelaide by the newly-formed Colonial Missionary Society, and arrived in October 1837, the second minister of religion to come to the colony.

In the following nineteen years, Stow played an important role in fostering religious and educational activity in South Australia. He was active in forming new churches and recruiting ministers, building the Congregational church from nothing to a cohesive and influential body. However, he was ecumenical in outlook, and probably made a major contribution to the tradition of religious tolerance established in early Adelaide. His biographer, Brian Jones, described him as "evangelical in his aims and unsectarian in his desires . . . , hence he is held in honoured remembrance by all the Churches". He opened a classical academy, credited as the first higher education offered in South Australia, and was made a member of the first Board of Education in 1846.

~~The first Congregational chapel in Adelaide was a tent by the Torrens, later replaced by a thatched chapel of logs on North Terrace. Stow raised finance for the more substantial Freeman Street chapel (at the corner of Pirie Street and Gawler Place) which opened in October 1840, and until the commencement of Brougham Place twenty years later, remained the principal Congregational church of Adelaide. Saddled with debt, Stow raised money through his farm, Felixstow. Ill-health forced Stow to retire in 1856. He died in Sydney in 1862, and his body was returned to Adelaide for burial.~~

His former congregation erected the Stow Memorial Church in Flinders Street to commemorate his services to the community. The foundation stone was laid on 7 February 1865, and the church was dedicated on 12 April, 1867. Designed by Robert Thomas and Daniel Garlick, the building is in relatively simple Early English Gothic style with a distinctive entrance porch in Caen limestone by Sydney stone carver Samuel Peters. A separate lecture hall and schoolroom were completed in 1872. The church's Flinders Street facade, sides and interior are unaltered, but sympathetic additions have been made in recent years to the north end of the building.

Sources:

E. & R. Jensen, Colonial Architecture in South Australia

B.L. Jones, History of Stow Memorial Church, typescript 1954 (SAA A1248/C2)

E.J.R. Morgan & S.H. Gilbert, Early Adelaide Architecture

National Trust file 100

Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2, pp.491-92

S.A. Register, 24 February 1865, 27 April, 1867.

Peter Bell

November 1983

ITEM No. 75

PILGRIM CHURCH
2-10 Flinders Street.

This item, drawn from the Register of the National Trust of South Australia, was considered and recommended for heritage listing by the Lord Mayor's Heritage Advisory Committee at its meeting on 28th January, 1982.

The inclusion of this item was considered justifiable in the light of its undeniable heritage significance. At present only a curtilage plan for this item has been drawn up in order to indicate the location and extent of listing, although it is recognised that such items of heritage significance in the City will be fully documented both to record the historical development of the City and to provide complete representation by a City of Adelaide Heritage Register. This documentation is still in the course of preparation.

At the same meeting, items considered to be of marginal significance or those deemed to have been designated by the National Trust on the basis of insufficient or contradictory historical evidence, were set aside for additional research by Council's Historical Analysis Consultants (for Stage I of the City of Adelaide Heritage Study) Donovan, Marsden and Stark, and are fully documented in these volumes. There are some fifty such items.

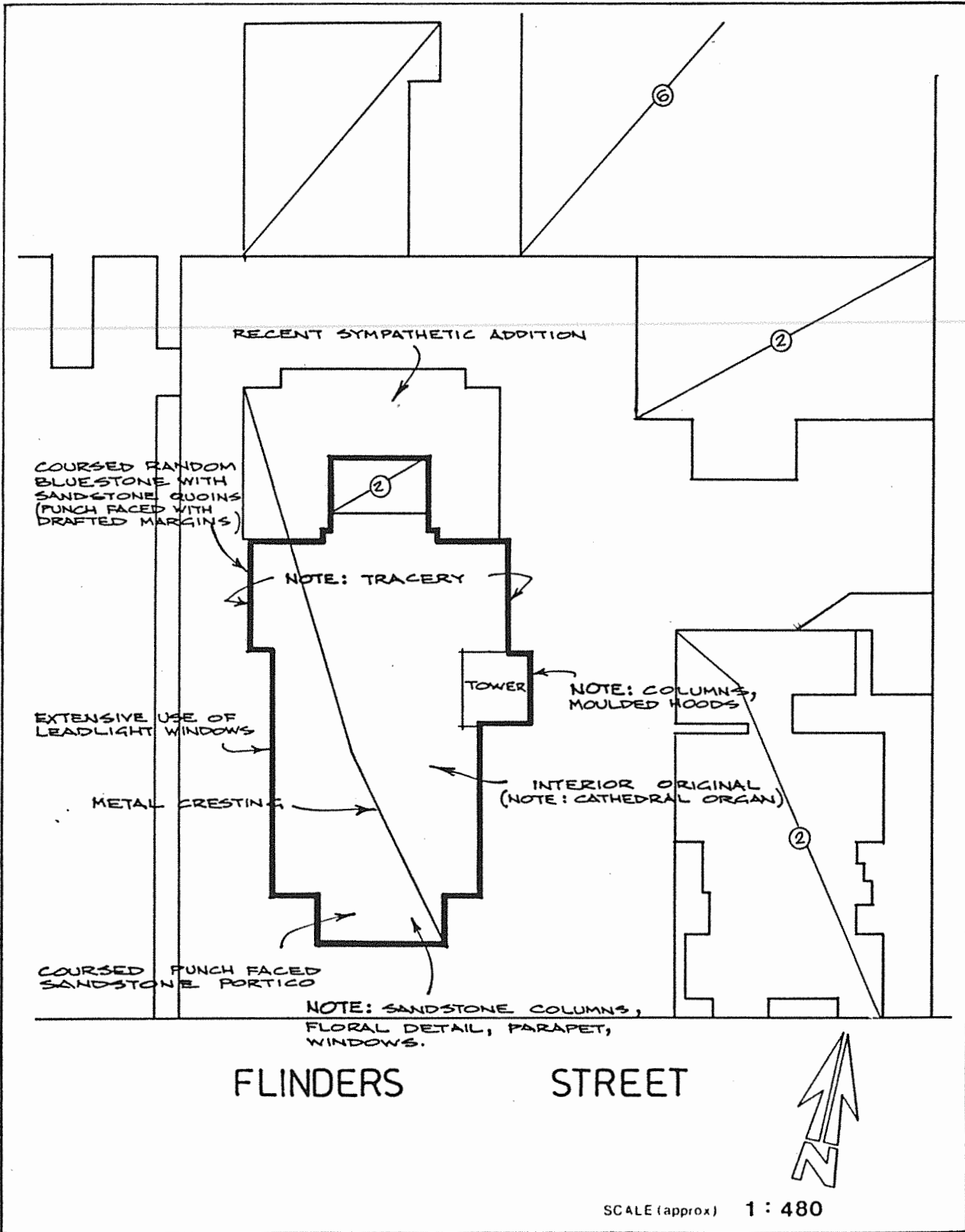
Department of City Planning.
(26/9/83)
2:DCP10C/T



CITY of ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

THE CITY HERITAGE REGISTER — DEFINITION OF ITEMS

ITEM	PILGRIM CHURCH	BUILDING NO.
ADDRESS	2-10 Flinders Street	7/2010
		CT 1313/164



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY
 DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING 1984

ITEM No. 75

PILGRIM CHURCH (FORMERLY STOW MEMORIAL)
 Flinders Street.

G.E. Loyau in Representative Men of South Australia commented on this building by stating that a "... lasting tribute of the respect and esteem in which he (Rev. T.Q. Stow) was held was shown in the building of the Stow Memorial Church, Flinders Street which forms so prominent and attractive an object in that busy thoroughfare".

Erected in 1865-1867 as a memorial to Stow, the building succeeded the Congregational place of worship erected in 1839/40 in Freeman Street, now Gawler Place. Although not directly associated with the building now known as Pilgrim Church, Stow was of immense importance to Congregationalism in South Australia, his efforts in the cause of establishing this denomination being comparable with the energy and devotion which characterised C.B. Howard's contemporaneous Anglican endeavours.

The Reverend C.W. Evan arrived in South Australia in 1855 and soon after assumed the pastorate when Stow was compelled to resign owing to ill-health. After Stow's death in 1862 several prominent congregationalist met at the invitation of Evan to discuss the question of erecting a memorial to Stow. It was decided to erect a Church, in addition to the grave memorial tablet. As a result on 26th January, 1864, the following notice appeared in the South Australia Register.

"To architects - the Committee for the Stow Memorial Church will be prepared on and after 28th instant to furnish on application to the Secretary, particulars of the accommodation required, and the amount intended to be expended on the proposed building, in order to (allow) the preparation of plans and specifications accompanied by estimates, at an early date."

In June 1864 it was reported that seven designs had been received by architects for the design of Stow Church, the constraints (rarely adhered to) being that the structure should not cost more than £ 6,000 with the provision for seating of 800 persons, exclusive of galleries. A spire was considered very desirable. On 25th June, 1864, it was announced that the design "Excelsior" by the architect R.G. Thomas had received first prize, that of Wright and Woods "Adelaide" gaining second prize.

In January 1865, the concrete foundations were in the process of being laid and on 7th February, 1865, the foundation stone of Stow Church was laid by Alexander Hay, the building committee consisting of the Rev. C.W. Evan, R.D. Hanson, Thomas Graves, John Brown, John Davis, Horace Dean, Robert and Samuel Davenport, William Parkin, Thomas Barlow, William Berry, William Hanson, Henry Giles, Matthew Goode, Carrington Smedley, Clement Sabine, Robert Stuckey, Charles Todd, George White and Alexander Hay.

At the time of the opening of the building in 1867 the building was described extensively in the South Australian Register of 17th April.

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"The building now so far completed is in the early English Gothic style, with adaptations from the same period of French Gothic, and is wholly constructed of stone, without "compo" or "stucco" in any shape to the exterior. The plan differs much from the usual arrangement of nave and aisles, the nave being much wider than usual, in fact equalling in width some of the English Cathedrals; whilst the aisles, instead of being half the width of the nave as is customary are only one quarter the width leaving very nearly the whole of the sittings unobstructed by pillars, and open to the view of the minister. This plan, whilst adopting the appropriately constructive arrangements of nave, aisle and clerestory, has not its disadvantages, for the side aisles are reduced to passages, with sittings to be only occasionally used. The general exterior plan is about 140 ft. in length by a breadth across the nave of 60 ft., and at the transept of 80 ft. A tower and spire, of which two storeys are now built and roofed in, abuts on the eastern transept, but on the other 3 sides is clear of the building, and when completed will rise to a height of 170 ft. from the pavement to the top of the vane. The building is constructed upon massive foundations of concrete, and the whole of the works are of the most durable and substantial character, none of the walls of the church being less than 2 ft. 4 in. thick, and varying from that dimension to 3 ft., whilst the tower rests on a wide concrete foundation, formed with Portland cement in place of lime, and has walls exclusive of buttresses 5 ft. thick, diminishing to 4 ft. where the tower is now roofed in. The interior of the Church is, within the nave, from the orchestra arch to the south window 98 ft. 6 in. by a breadth in the clear of the columns of 35 ft., the whole interior breadth of the nave being 52 ft. which is increased at the transepts to 73 ft., the interior being also 44 ft. high from the floor. Galleries are proposed over the vestibule at the south end and over the transepts, but they are not yet constructed. At the back of the minister's platform is a lofty arch, for the organ and orchestra, which is constructed over the vestries. The platform is raised about 2 ft., and has a handsome pulpit. The whole accommodation including the galleries and orchestra, will be for about 1200. At present there are sittings for about 800 on the ground floor. The whole of the interior fittings are of Sydney cedar, and are in good taste. A handsome clock has been presented by Mr. Perryman.

Two principal entrances are provided; one leading by two doors under the handsome portico in the south front and the other leading from a lobby formed by the lower part of the tower. The principal entrance, fronting Victoria Square, has a projecting portico with freestone columns, supporting pointed arches and open parapet, above which is a large fan-light window with geometrical tracery. The two transepts have wheel windows in their gables with similar tracery. The interior of the church is divided into nave and aisles by columns supporting pointed Gothic arches and a clerestory from which the principal light to the nave is derived.

The columns nowhere interrupt the view of the platform. The interior is lofty; the ceiling is of hexagonal shape, and is constructed of open timber work with plastered panels painted blue. The clerestory

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is lighted by eight windows of three lights each having geometrical tracery. There are three vestries behind the platform also staircases leading to the proposed transept galleries and to the organ gallery. The building has been entirely constructed of Glen Osmond stone and Glen Ewin freestone, the front portico being entirely of freestone. The whole is of the most substantial and durable character, and is chaste and elegant in design. The contracts, which do not include the upper part of the tower and spire amount to about £10,000, exclusive of the land.

The builders are Messrs. Brown and Thompson, formerly English and Brown, and they have carried out the work in the most creditable manner.

The beautiful carving was done by Mr. Peters formerly of Dublin and the whole of the works have been designed and carried out under the superintendence of Mr. R.G. Thomas, FRSBA, lately assisted by Mr. Garlick, architect of Adelaide. The exquisite beauty and chasteness of the Church have been the subject of remark for sometime past; and now that it is so far completed as to be opened for public worship its harmonious proportions and grand effect have been admitted by all who have seen it. The building is a real ornament to the City, it is far superior in effect to any other ecclesiastical edifice in the Colony, and does great credit to the architect who designed it, to the builder's who erected it, and to the congregation who have been spirited enough to carry it out."

It is significant that two churches designed by Thomas exist on Flinders Street; Stow Church and the Baptist Church (only separated by some four years, in terms of construction). Robert George Thomas son of Robert Thomas of Register newspaper fame and elder brother of William Kyffin Thomas left England at the age of sixteen in 1836 on the Rapid and was engaged as a draftsman on Light's staff. He remained in South Australia for some years and was associated with the surveying of the Colony. He returned to England to complete his education as civil engineer and architect and designed a number of prominent churches and buildings. He practised in Newport, Monmouthshire (Wales) and the influence of this experience and the then current architectural aesthetic is to be found in these two Churches. Following his return to Adelaide in 1860, Thomas joined the public service in 1866. He became Architect-in-Chief, designing the Supreme Court in conjunction with William McMinn and superintending the erection of the General Post Office. He left this post in 1870. From 1874, until his death in 1884, he was the Secretary to the Board of Health.

Stow Church (now Pilgrim Church) remains an important part of the Victoria Square environs and part of the important enclosure of historic and architecturally significant buildings which form an essential boundary condition to Victoria Square. The building is of intrinsic merit with bluestone walling well-dressed with sandstone. The detailing of the porch is exceptionally fine, the capitals being of Caen limestone (France) and quatrefoils in Bath limestone (England). The contrast between the materials, and the crisp detailing and robustly carved relief, all of which remains in good condition, considering the age of the building,

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still attract the eye, the building showing the virtuosity of the mason's craft. The building of interesting composition is a significant departure from the primarily axial Gothic Churches, the small aisles behind a well detailed "screen" of arcading and the relatively large transepts, achieving a surprisingly intimate interior. The composition, if completed with the spire over the tower, would be dramatic, stamping the building as architecturally "fashionable" for the 1860's even in Britain. It justifiably won the acclaim of critics and remains significant to the historical development of the Congregational Church and the quality of architecture in South Australia at a time when the Colony was gaining confidence and prosperity.

Paul Stark.
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING.

2:DCP101/G
(18/5/84)