

To: The South Australian Heritage Committee

From: Head, European Section, Heritage Conservation Branch

Subject: REGISTER NOMINATION:
SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
CORNER DAWSON AND DONALD STREETS, STRATHALBYN

Date: 28 July 1982

SUMMARY

This Report has been prepared as a result of an inspection of Strathalbyn by the Heritage Conservation Branch in relation to a Department of Tourism study of Historic Towns in South Australia. This nomination has been initiated by the Branch.

Historically, the Savings Bank of South Australia Building is significant because it reflects the regional status of Strathalbyn as an economic and trading centre for the rural area surrounding the township. As a Branch of a South Australian Bank it also represents a stage of development in the Bank's operations throughout the State.

Architecturally, the Savings Bank of South Australia Building is significant as an excellent example of Architect A.S. Conrad's work, illustrating a well conceived and well executed design solution. The relative intactness of the interior is also significant.

Environmentally, the Savings Bank of South Australia Building is important as a corner landmark which contributes significantly to Strathalbyn's pleasant character.

The Integrity of the Savings Bank of South Australia Building is very high because of the relating intactness of the building.

The building is listed on the National Trust Recorded List and is contained within the Strathalbyn Conservation Area on the National Estate Register.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Savings Bank of South Australia, corner of Dawson and Donald Streets, Strathalbyn, be placed on the Register of State Heritage Items and that it be categorized A1, A2, A3, H2, H3.



Barry G. Rowney

IN:JD

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures						
	Item	SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, STRATHALBYN.					
Age 1930	Theme		Office 6627-10993				
Period 1928-1945	Subject TRADE AND COMMERCE - FINANCE		Region				
Building Type Commercial	Style TRANSITION/ROMANESQUE		Status N.Tr. (RL)				
<u>Qualitative Data</u>			<u>Grading</u>				
Component		Comment	E	VG	AG	FP	NA
<u>History</u>							
1.	Context:	Built at a time when Strathalbyn was well established, the Bank reflects the importance of the town as an economic, trading and social centre servicing the Angas Plains region.		*			
2.	Person/Group:	Associated with the Savings Bank of South Australia, the Branch building is representative of a period during the 1930's when a growing number of suburban branches reflected the Bank's steady growth.		*			
3.	Event:	1958 - Plaque unveiled to commemorate the first million pounds deposited at Strathalbyn by the Lord Mayor, Mr. H.L. Laucke.		*			
<u>Architecture</u>							
4.	Architect/ Builder:	A.S. Conrad V.A. Trenouth		*			
5.	Design:	Two storey corner building, residence over Bank Chambers, corner entrance, two projecting wings, Ashlar coursed rough stone finish, white cornices and accents, gables prominent in roof, repeating arches and square lattice motif, traditional elements in a non-traditional form.					
6.	Construction:	Stone walls, rough dressed finish laid in ashlar courses, terra cotta roof tiles, timber windows and doors.		*			
7.	Interior:	Basically intact with minor upgradings which do not disrupt visually, counters, writing desks, doors and ceiling treatments, first floor residence not accessible.		*			
8.	Representation:	In the local context of Strathalbyn and the immediate area, the Bank is exceptional, while others of its building type exist, it would be the grandest and most intact.		*			

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		E	VG	AG	FP	NA
<u>Environment</u>						
9. Continuity:	Two storey corner building on the main Commercial Road in Strathalbyn, larger in scale and more interesting in design than adjacent buildings, integral element in town's character.			*		
10. Local Character:	Few two storey buildings, those of such a scale are scattered in the town, scale, design and texture make it an important element in the town's character.		*			
11. Landmark:	Visually prominent, design and colour accent its corner location, basic scale of the town is single storey.		*			
<u>Integrity</u>						
12. Alterations:	Minor upgradings internally in Banking Chamber, minor alterations externally at the rear in regard to the first floor residence, residence is believed to have been modernized.		*			
13. Condition:	No obvious defects.			*		
14. Compatibility:	Still has original use intact.	*				

Supplementary Information

Adaptation: The building's integrity, externally and in the Banking Chambers, should be maintained. Upgradings in the Chambers which may be required should not disrupt the general appearance and atmosphere. Alterations inside the residence portion should not be restricted but contained externally to the rear of the building.

Interpretation: As a public building the Bank has a high potential for an active interpretative role as well as its passive one in relation to the streetscape. Interpretative measures should be low keyed and not disrupt the building.

Current Situation: There are no known threats to the building which is owned by the Savings Bank of South Australia.

Evaluated By	Ivar Nelsen Register Architect	Iris Iwanicki Register Historian	Date
Reviewed By	Mark A. Butcher Register Supervisor		Date
South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization			Date

I.E.S./D3/211081

HISTORICAL RESEARCH: SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Savings Bank of S.A. building situated on the corner of Dawson and Donald Streets, Strathalbyn, was designed by J. Conrad and built in 1930. The township at the time of the Bank's construction was a well established and important centre for the fertile and productive surrounding area, with Institute Hall, Library, Theatre, Churches, Banks, Flour Mill, Butter Factory, Hotels and Stock Yards. It had originated as a private township situated on parts of land set aside by the Scottish settlers William Rankine and Col. James Dawson, for the purpose in 1840.

A survey plan of the proposed township by E.W. Cross depicts the Presbyterian Church overlooking a central reserve through which the Angas River meanders, with the main road diagonally intersecting the central reserve and surrounding township allotments.¹ A total of 110 allotments were provided in the initial plan, and neighbouring landholders were granted one town acre for every 80 acres of the rural holdings.

Between 1850-70, the township established itself firmly as the centre of supply for pastoral and agricultural activities on the Angas Plains. During this period a Mill built in 1849 processed local wheat, goldmining commenced in the district, the Britannia Foundry was established by Thomas Rowe in 1855 and Strathalbyn was incorporated as a Municipal Council in 1868. The township reflected both the industry and values of the Scottish settlers in its form and style. It was one of the first country towns in the State to have its own weekly newspaper "The Southern Argus" which shifted there from Port Elliot in 1870, after four years of operation. Despite some changes, the township retains many old buildings and in this upholds the sentiments of "J.E.W." who wrote in the Southern Argus (Jan. 29th, 1914):

"We have not a big fund to draw upon, the accumulation being those of comparatively few years, and we should be chary of destroying anything which might in future years be of historic importance or interest".

In 1912 the Savings Bank of South Australia rented an office at Lot 17, Albyn Terrace, with Mr. K.M. Torr as Manager. After four years, Block 29 in Dawson Street was purchased at a cost of £150 with the intention of building a handsome banking edifice. Tenders were called for by the Architect, Mr. J. Conrad, in September 1929. From the 28 tenders submitted, Mr. V.A. Trenouth of Ashford was chosen as builder. Built of local quarry stone, the new bank cost £4,000 to construct. The new Branch was officially opened by the Mayor of Strathalbyn, Mr. J.W. Elliott, on the 17th December 1930. At the time the Bank Manager was Mr. C. Letchford.

1. G.R.O. Plan 91 of 1867.

The Savings Bank of South Australia, which commenced in 1848, had utilised telegraphic offices as agencies between 1867 and 1912. The move had been facilitated by the appointment of Mr. (later Sir) Charles Todd as Trustee of the Bank in February 1867, at a time when he was Postmaster General and Superintendent of Telegraphs. Earlier attempts prior to 1867 to establish Branches had not been successful, and the arrangement with local agencies in telegraphic offices worked well until the advent of the Commonwealth Bank Savings Bank Department in 1912. This effectively displaced the Savings Bank of South Australia's right of agency in the local P.O., installing the Commonwealth Savings Bank's agency in its stead. In any event, the use of agencies gave the Savings Bank of South Australia the much needed scope of operation and in 1906 the first Branch had been established at Port Adelaide. Despite the effects of the depression, a marked increase in the number of Branches occurred during the 1930's, with 16 more country and suburban centres converted to full Branch status.

At Strathalbyn, the Branch achieved a total of a million pounds in deposits by December 1958 and a plaque on the building was unveiled by the Mayor, Mr. H.L. Laucke, to commemorate the event.

Historically, the Savings Bank of South Australia reflects the changing development of a South Australian Bank's services to country areas in the State and appears to be a conscious attempt to build according to the tenor of the existing architecture of the town at the time, which has many fine stone buildings. It also reflects Strathalbyn's role as a major centre for the area on the Angas Plains.

Sources:

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Iris Iwanicki
Register Historian

7/7/82



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