REGISTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE ACT 1978   Item No.:   6628-12683

Former Dwelling – 'Palm House'
Collegiate School of St. Peter
North Terrace
HACKNEY

Statement of Cultural Significance

Built c. 1848, Palm House is an early and remarkably unaltered residence of a prominent citizen, exemplifying the individuality of the early house designs of South Australian settlers and the prosperity through dedicated endeavour of the pioneers of this State.
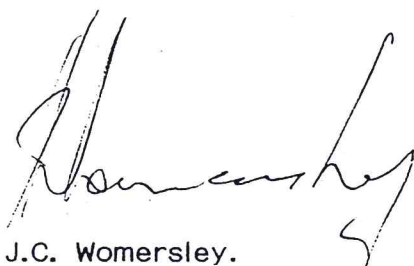

Relevant Criteria

This is a building important to the understanding of the evolution and pattern of South Australia's environmental and social heritage. It is a rare and endangered example of an early Adelaide residence associated with a prominent member of South Australian society and the earliest years of European settlement.

Significant Interest

1.   Historical: Demonstrates an intimate association with a person and an organisation who made a notable contribution to history, that of the Hon. William Peacock and the Collegiate School of St. Peter.

2.   Architectural: Demonstrates an uncommon style in South Australian house design, being a very early colonial bungalow with simple detailing and symmetrical bay wings.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this item be included on the Register of State Heritage Items.

J.C. Womersley.
MANAGER
STATE HERITAGE BRANCH

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HISTORICAL

The historical significance of Palm House is related to two periods of ownership, that of (a) the Peacock Estate, c. 1847-1910, and (b) the Collegiate School of St. Peter, 1918 to the present.

William Peacock

William Peacock (1791-1874) was an English tanner who chartered and freighted his own vessel, the *Glenalvon*, arriving in South Australia on 28 December 1838. He established a tannery in East Grenfell Street and later a fellmongery in Adam Street, Hindmarsh, working in company with his son Joseph.

His firm, W. Peacock and Son, tanners and woolscourers, continued well into the twentieth century until taken over by G.H. Michell in the 1940s. Michell's woolscouring operation is today a major industry in the State, giving a continuity to Peacock's early endeavours.

Peacock's interests extended further into the business world when he became a member of the first Board of Trustees of the Savings Bank of South Australia in 1848, a Building Society Trustee, and in 1850, a director of the Burra Mines of which he was a major shareholder. The Peacock chimney still stands in memory of his contribution to the State's mining industry.

He also served as an Alderman in the Adelaide City Council becoming a Councillor in 1842. He was the Member for Noarlunga in State Parliament from 1851 until the end of 1856. The Honorable William Peacock sat in the Legislative Council in 1861 and continued until his retirement in 1869. Peacock Street, through the southern parklands, is named after his son Caleb Peacock, a later Lord Mayor of Adelaide who grew up at Palm House. Peacock was a voluntaryist in his religious life, first attending the Freeman Street Congregational Church (Stow Memorial, now Pilgrim Church), but later at his own expense he built the Ebenezer Chapel in Rundle Street. He also promoted the formation of the Hindmarsh Square Congregational Church which opened in 1862 and of which he became deacon. (Obituary, Register, 31 January 1874) The prominent pioneers who attended his funeral on 22 January 1874 were Sir Henry Ayers, W.D. Allott the Mayor of Adelaide, Edwin T. Smith, H.C.E. Muecke, and other men of the Adelaide community.

Section 256

The land area, Section 256, now known as the suburb of Hackney, was first bought by the South Australian Company in 1838. Blocks 5-8 along the southern boundary were surveyed in 1846 with Block 5, of eleven and a quarter acres (4.5 ha), being purchased by William Peacock in 1847. Soon after acquiring the land Peacock built a family home known as 'Palm House' and resided there until his death at the age of eighty-four in January 1874.

William was sixty years old when Palm House was built and developed four acres of garden around the house leaving approximately six acres as paddocks for horses and cows.

The late 1860s had been unhappy years for Peacock with two sons Ebenezer and Henry dying in 1868 and his wife Maria joining them in February 1869. Peacock remarried a Mrs. Evans, the daughter of a Congregationalist Minister the Reverend J. Cheetham. After Peacock's death on 20 January 1874, the second Mrs. Peacock lived at Palm House and after her marriage to a family

friend, Carrington Smedley, it continued as their home until the couple retired to Semaphore in 1883. The Evans family have a long connection with St. Peter's College with the second Mrs. Peacock's grandson, A.E.H. Evans, and subsequently his son and grandson L.A.R. Evans and Michael J.B. Evans, being school secretaries from 1899 to the present day.

Peacock was a large holder of property and in a rare example of an early speculative housing estate in Adelaide, he had built, in 1868, fourteen terrace houses in three rows adjacent to his home. His daughter Mrs. Weston occupied one house and his son Caleb another. The Peacock Estate which owned the Palm Place houses let them to a variety of middle class tenants until their sale in 1909.

A succession of tenants also occupied Palm House after 1883. The first lessee was the architect and politician Rowland Rees who conducted the sale of his possessions from Palm House in November 1885 when he was facing bankruptcy. (Page, p. 83)

John Wrathall Bull, whose 1876 reminiscences form an important record of South Australian history and who claimed to be the inventor of the first South Australian reaping machine, also lived at Palm House.

In June 1909 James Marshall and Company acquired the property for 9,500 pounds to erect a furniture factory to supply the company store later taken over by the Myer Emporium in the 1920s. The northern row of terraces was removed to make way for the factory, the outline of its foundation site still being visible in the present Girdlestone Ground, one of the school ovals, until the automatic sprinkler system was recently installed. (A second row was demolished by the college in 1985 to be replaced by an Art Complex for the Preparatory School and Palm House. Numbers 5-8 remain of the middle terrace with 9-10 demolished in 1983.)

Collegiate School of St. Peter

On 16 October 1918 St. Peter's College purchased the property for 14,000 pounds and again Palm House was leased to tenants including masters of the school until the Reverend K.J.F. Bickersteth established Palm House School in 1933. (Notes of L.A.R. Evans, 1 June 1973)

When the doors closed at the end of term in December 1989, Palm House had served the school for fixty-six years. These years cannot be overlooked in any assessment of the building's historic significance. As an introduction to school years the intimate human scale of the rooms and the homeliness of its separate surrounds must have given security to many a young boy as he began college life.

The garden may also be considered to have a historic significance in the area as Frederick Manson Bailey, a neighbour whose garden later became the basis of the Botanic Gardens, stated that Peacock "was the first to fruit a date in South Australia". (Warburton, p. 4) Two palms and other trees along with an ornamental fountain from the original garden remain in the school grounds on the North Terrace frontage.

Educational methods may change and the classes to Year 4 may have outgrown the space within Palm House, but its place as one of the earliest homes in the area is historically significant.

ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

Palm House, built by William Peacock in c. 1848, is a symmetrically fronted house with classical simplicity and strong Regency influence. The essential characteristics of this dwelling have not been altered, though two internal walls have been removed and some doors and windows changed.

Exterior

The external walls are constructed of brickwork with the front elevation stuccoed with a smooth finish. The stuccoed areas have been coursed to represent large block work. The front elevation is characterised by a strong symmetrical design with two pavilions enclosing the ends of a centrally placed raked verandah. Above two windows on the eastern pavilion are ornamental hood mouldings, which presumably were located above all the windows on the two pavilions.

A fibro-cement built-in verandah is situated on the north-west corner of the building and a solid extension (washroom?), adjacent to the former kitchen, is located under a raked verandah on the rear of the building. A bakehouse of brick construction was attached to the north-east corner of Palm House but was demolished in the mid 1980s.

The roof is hipped and is clad in corrugated galvanised iron with a skylight constructed at the junction of the front hall and the transverse corridor. On the front section of Palm House the gutters are concealed behind timber barge boards. Two brick chimneys are symmetrically placed in the centre of the house servicing four fireplaces in the front rooms of the building.

The majority of the windows of Palm House are double hung sash windows with most of them being multi-paned, particularly on the front elevation. The windows located on the ends of the pavilion sections of the building are unusual and have a larger central section with small side windows, all having multi-paned double hung sashes. The two side panels of the window in the western pavilion have panels of stained glass. Underneath the front verandah are five sets of French doors, two leading into the two pavilion rooms and three into the other three rooms of the front elevation. The French doors have shutters, either of flywire screens or louvred panels. Two windows, on the east and west elevations, also have louvred shutters.

The external brick, stuccoed and fibro-cement walls are painted cream with the joinery painted gloss white. The corrugated iron roof and verandah are painted grey. The French doors underneath the verandah are painted in a turquoise blue, thus adding an unusually bright colour to a fairly traditional colour scheme.

Interior

The principle entrance to Palm House is via the central set of French doors underneath the verandah on the south elevation. There is no imposing front door and thus there is no grand entrance hall inside these French doors. On either side of the entrance hall are two simple rooms with fireplaces. An archway leads to a transverse corridor which runs the complete breadth of the house. The archway has plaster panels with floral decoration in relief and is the major decorative feature within the house.

At either end of the transverse corridor are the internal entrances to the east and west pavilion rooms, which were probably used as a dining/morning room on the east and a drawing room on the west. These rooms are the main entertaining rooms of the house, however, there is little decoration within them and the mantelpieces are very basic in design. The most attractive feature of these spaces is the bay window facing the front garden.

Along the northern side of the transverse corridor were four other rooms with a central bathroom. They were probably disposed as bedrooms with a kitchen being located in the room at the eastern end, adjacent to the dining/morning room. At the eastern end of the corridor is a small room which could have been a butler's pantry. Underneath the former kitchen area is a cellar, access to which is gained via a staircase located outside the 'kitchen' door.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The classical symmetry of Palm House is indicative of the 'bungalow' style of architecture. This style has been one of the most persistent influences on Australian architectural domestic design. It originated in India and was dispersed by the army as well as by British migrants. 'The Bungalows in India ... are for the most part ... built of unbaked bricks ... having a centre hall ... the whole thing being encompassed by a verandah.' (Cox, P. & Lucas, C., p. 11) Other details which have a direct influence from Anglo-Indian architecture are shutters and breezeways which were found in Indian bungalows long before they were seen in Australian architecture.

Australian bungalows are essentially rectangular in plan with the roof springing from the main four walls. Generally they are single-storeyed and incorporate verandahs. There are four main types, with the first type having a verandah on the front elevation with end bays of that side either enclosed or treated as pavilions, giving the verandah a restricted character. (Irving, R. et. al. p. 63)

Other properties in South Australia demonstrating a bungalow style of architecture include:

1.   Ayers House, North Terrace, Adelaide
2.   Collingrove, via Angaston
3.   Dwelling, 1 William Street, Norwood
4.   Hughes Estate, Fullarton Road, Fullarton

Though these buildings have more elaborate decoration and details they have the essential elements of flanking pavilion rooms and verandahs along the front elevation which typify the bungalow style. However, one could describe these dwellings as the maturing of the unsophisticated and purist style that is Palm House. In the case of Ayers House, Collingrove, and 1 William Street, the buildings were not originally built as one sees them today, but have gradually evolved into the symmetrical winged dwellings that presently exist.

CONCLUSION

Palm House has no elaborate decoration and the arrangement of the main rooms is very symmetrical around the north-south access of the building. It has no pretensions to being a grand house though the simplicity of its detailing echoes the style of Regency architecture both in England and in the eastern colonies of Australia, particularly Tasmania.

The general condition of the building is not good as there has been some degree of water penetration, together with structural cracking and wall movement due to expansive soil conditions. However, these problems are not insurmountable and with careful attention to the conservation of the building, Palm House could be fully restored.

Palm House is one of the few known bungalow style houses in its totally unembellished form and at this stage there appears to be no other dwellings that exhibit the same architectural features which typify this early residence. Therefore the importance of Palm House cannot be overestimated in its representation of the style of dwellings built in late 1840s by prosperous colonists.

REFERENCES

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Pikusa, Stefan	The Adelaide House 1836 to 1901 (Adelaide 1986)
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Warburton, E.	St. Peters: A suburban town (Adelaide 1983)

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South Australian Register, 31 January 1874, p. 15C

General Registry Office Application No. 25529

Lands Title Office CT. 243/239
CT. 801/54

REPRESENTATION

There are no dwellings of this size and 'bungalow' style on the Register of State Heritage Items, which are in a pure and unembellished form.

INTEGRITY

There have been several alterations to Palm House which have changed the internal spaces and the exterior appearance of this dwelling. However, the essential characteristics of Palm House have not altered, despite the alterations to some doors and windows, the removal of two walls and four fireplaces and the changes to the configuration of a section of the roof to incorporate a skylight. In addition, an attached room (washroom?) has been altered, bakehouse demolished and an enclosed verandah added.
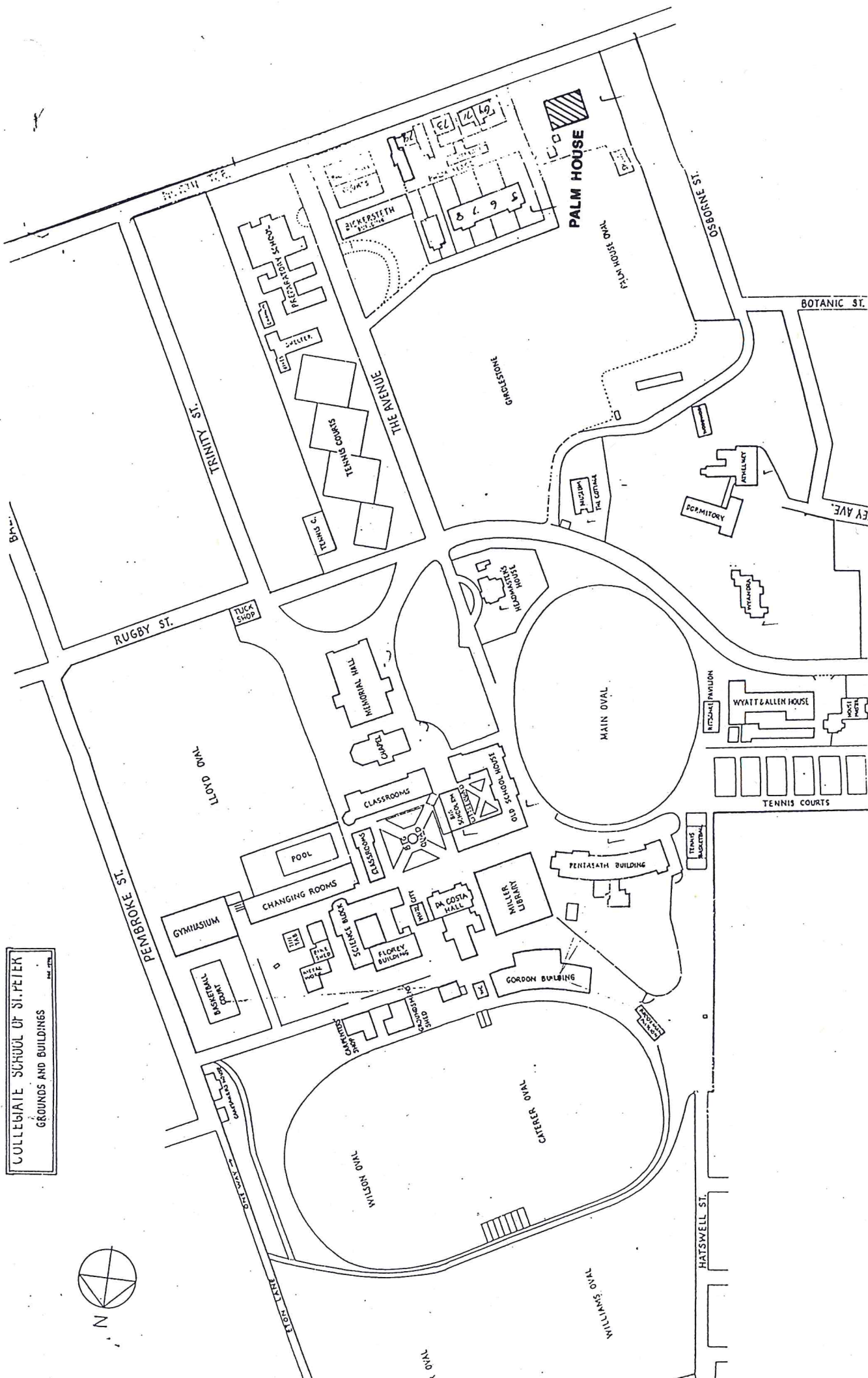
ADAPTATION

It is possible for the present building to be extended, modified and integrated into a sympathetically designed new development to provide for the educational and other needs of the school. The retention of the essence of the original building design features will be important in any adaptation.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The State Heritage Branch began an assessment of Palm House in October 1985, however, the completion of this report was postponed pending the submission of the St. Peter's Heritage Survey being carried out by Danvers Architects. The consultant recommended Palm House for the Register of State Heritage Items, however, this recommendation lapsed due to insufficient documentation. The consultant had difficulty in assessing buildings within the Collegiate School of St. Peter due to the school's decision not to allow access to their property.

In October and November 1989 the State Heritage Branch was contacted by several parents, residents of St. Peters, the National Trust and the Corporation of the Town of St. Peters, all expressing concern of the school's intention to demolish Palm House. Following a meeting with the school, the State Heritage Branch undertook to carry out an assessment of Palm House to be presented to the meeting of the South Australian Heritage Committee on 20 December 1989.

It must be recognised that the Collegiate School of St Peter has many buildings and features of heritage significance and has a substantial ongoing programme for the care and maintenance of those buildings. To maintain this investment, buildings within the school campus must continue to have an ongoing function in the activities of the school. This will on occasions necessitate their sensitive modification and adaptation.

COLLEGIATE SCHOOL OF ST.PETER
GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS

N

PEMBROKE ST.

TRINITY ST.

BAN...

RUGBY ST.

THE AVENUE

OSBORNE ST.

BOTANIC ST.

...LEY AVE.

HATSWELL ST.

ETON LANE

PALM HOUSE

PALM HOUSE OVAL

GRACLESTONE

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

BICKERSTETH BUILDING

SHELTER

TENNIS COURTS

TENNIS C.

TUCK SHOP

MEMORIAL HALL

CHAPEL

LLOYD OVAL

CLASSROOMS

POOL

CHANGING ROOMS

GYMNASIUM

BASKETBALL COURT

SCIENCE BLOCK

FLOREY BUILDING

DA COSTA HALL

MILLER LIBRARY

OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

HEADMASTERS HOUSE

MAIN OVAL

PENTASATH BUILDING

TENNIS BLACKTOP

TENNIS COURTS

WYATT & ALLEN HOUSE

HOUSE HOTEL

RITSONS PAVILION

TYLANDRA

DORMITORY

ATHELNEY

MUSEUM

THE COTTAGE

GORDON BUILDING

CARPENTERS SHOP

GROUNDSMANS SHED

WILSON OVAL

CATERER OVAL

WILLIAMS OVAL

PALM HOUSE
HACKNEY

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Donald Langmead, Dip.Arch., Grad. Dip. TP, M.Sc. (Arch), Ph.D., ARAIA

PALM HOUSE, HACKNEY:
ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

DONALD LANGMEAD, Dip.Arch, Grad. Dip TP, M.Sc. (Arch), Ph.D., ARAIA.,
Principal Lecturer in Architecture,
South Australian Institute of Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

This independent assessment was commissioned by the State Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning on 2 April 1990. It reviews the evidence presented by St. Peter's College and the Heritage Branch. In addition, the writer undertook research to check claims and sources and inspected the building on 5 April. The documents consulted are fully referenced in the notes below.

The Branch made available to the writer the file and all the documents relating to the matter. The College gave access to its own archival records and pictorial material was made available by architect Mr. C.N. Norton of the Brown Falconer Group.

The sole terms of reference are the *South Australian Heritage Act, 1978* together with the expanded criteria statement used in the assessment of properties for the Register of State Heritage Items. Development issues have not been taken into account in reaching the conclusion expressed below. The question addressed is whether the property is of heritage significance within the meaning of *Heritage Act.*

2. RELEVANT CRITERIA

The criteria identified as relevant in the Register Assessment Report are two:

(a) Historical interest: does the building demonstrate an intimate association with a person or organisation who made a notable contribution to history?

(b) Architectural interest: does the building demonstrate or represent important development, style or period in architecture?

I agree with that premise. They are the only relevant criteria.

2.1 Historical Interest

The Register Assessment Report stresses the association of Palm House with William Peacock rather than its links with short-term tenants like Bull and Rees. That is an appropriate emphasis and avoids the "Queen Victoria slept here" mentality. Very little is made in the Assessment Report of the house's role in St. Peter's College, an issue altogether ignored in the Register Objection Report. One must therefore conclude that the critical question is: "Did Peacock make a notable contribution to history?"

2.1.1. Association with William Peacock

Peacock arrived in South Australia on the *Glenalvon* in December, 1838.[1] Historian Douglas Pike categorises him (with the grocer Thomas Reynolds) as part of the "second stratum of settlers"; others in the class included the more important of the S.A. Company's farming tenants and skilled tradesmen who had free passage to the colony.[2]

His association with the incipient Adelaide Corporation was hardly a notable achievement. Elected in October, 1840, the first Council was dominated by the "superior" colonists. The municipal body was plagued by debt, dissent and disorganisation and most Councillors retired after a year, making way for tradesmen like Peacock to move up the social ladder. When he became a Councillor in 1842 the Corporation was £600 in the red, and finding it hard to get a quorum for meetings. Only 135 voters enrolled for the October 1842 election and no vote was taken; within a year the Corporation was defunct.[3]

After abortive attempts to get rich--schemes included the Adelaide Gas Light and Coke Co. and an English-based consortium to build a railway between Adelaide and the Port--Peacock finally made money after 1845 through investing in the Burra "Monster Mine". He was the lowest subscriber amongst its Directors, originally holding only 71 (less than 3%) of the 2464 shares issued.[4]

The Assessment Report notes, "Peacock's interests extended further in the business world" when he became a trustee of the Savings Bank of South Australia and of a Building Society. Established in 1848, the former institution replaced the remarkably unsuccessful 1841 venture of the South Australian Assurance Company. Peacock was one of the three private directors who with two government appointments replaced the original 109.[5] But the new bank was no financial giant. Total deposits in the first six months barely reached £800 and by 1850 the figure grew to £8600 - the average account was £13 - and the bank paid 5% interest. Most of the capital was lent out as mortgages at twice that rate.[6] In 1850 the South Australian Building and Investment Society was founded, with a membership of 360. Members bought shares, usually for around £60, by small weekly payments (say 5/-). When a house was completed, members tendered for it, the highest bidder winning and paying off the balance at an agreed rate. Pike comments:

> Successful tenders were in the vicinity of £50. As house after house went to members like Colton, Peacock, Faulding, Breeze, Forster and Hack, poorer members began to complain of their inability to compete. ... By 1850 scarcely a meeting of any building society was held without protests against the plural voting of bigger shareholders, the secretaries who trafficked in shares and the heavy fees paid to directors.[7]

The Register Objection Report claims that Peacock and his peers "had a vision as a group to better their fledgling settlement".[8] I could not disagree more. All the evidence indicates that Peacock had a vision to better himself. There is nothing to suggest philanthropy or a social conscience. He was intent upon increasing his personal wealth, sometimes at the expense of poorer colonists. If in that pursuit he had some beneficial effect - for example, in the number of people he employed (more than 60 by 1859) - that was mere coincidence. The getting of wealth cannot be equated with historical significance; it is the way money is used that makes its owner socially important.

Peacock's political career must be examined. His "well and truly prominent" position in the first elected Legislative Council "representing a population of approximately 67,000" in the colony[9] is simply hyperbole. The facts are these: there were 7,279 registered voters - about 37% of the adult male population; the Noarlunga electorate consisted of 564 voters, 262 of whom chose Peacock against 220 for his opponent T.S. O'Halloran. The tanner was what G.S. Kingston would have called "a flying candidate": the Noarlunga electors had rejected the first nominee determined to find someone to fight against state aid for religion. As a Voluntaryist, Peacock suited their needs. He had little political sense, espousing such impractical causes as free trade and industry and franchise by character rather than property.[10] In government he was a follower, not a leader, as shown by his *volte-face* on this question of suffrage. His staunch maintenance of the separation between church and state, the *raison d'etre* of Congregationalism, descended to "a farrago of abuse and scandal aimed at the government and Anglican and Catholic bishops".

Historians have all but ignored William Peacock, and that must be taken as a measure of his contribution to the history of South Australia. Loyau's brief biography is characteristically laudatory.[11] But the claim that "from the first he was identified with public affairs" is misleading if not simply untrue. So is Loyau's statement that the meeting held in 1841 importantly "considered the best position for the province". The location of the primary settlement was already well established.[12] The only other substantial published source, also short, is the tanner's obituary notice; expectedly, it speaks no ill of the dead.[13] No objective assessment of Peacock's historical importance should be based solely upon such sources.

Hodder mentions him in a list in his 1893 *History of South Australia*. Of later historians, Pike alone draws attention to him and as the foregoing references demonstrate, does not place him in a favourable light. He is mentioned in passing in the *Flinders History*.[14] Perhaps most significant of all, there is no reference to Peacock in the Biographical Index of the Mortlock Library. Although he was successful in business, wealthy and took a small part in the colony's public life, the tanner did not make a notable contribution to its history. The attempt made in the Objection Assessment to bolster his importance by reference to the careers of his sons Joseph and Caleb seems to me irrelevant and slightly cynical.[15] Anyway, it did not form part of the argument in the original Register Assessment Report.

2.1.2 Association with St. Peter's College

The various uses to which the house has been put since 1909 - accommodation for a furniture manufacturer, masters' houses, schoolrooms - have implications for its integrity, as noted below. The comment that "the intimate human scale of the rooms and the homeliness of the separate surrounds must have given security to many a young boy as he began college life"[16] is opened to challenge. On the contrary, 5-year-olds may have been quite threatened by the large rooms and the lofty ceilings. As noted, the significance of this link has been rather glossed over in reports prepared by the Heritage Branch. Long ownership and expedient use should not be construed as a "notable contribution to history".

2.2 Architectural interest

2.2.1. Date

There is a gradual regression in the dates of construction suggested in the Branch's file No. 6628-12683. The Item Evaluation sheet gives c.1850. Danvers' Heritage Survey of the area gives as c.1849 (a nice differentiation), as does the nomination form of October, 1989. By December it had been set at c.1848[17], a date thereafter accepted. Peacock acquired the land in January 1847, but the first documentary evidence (only by implication) that he was living on it is dated January 1852.[18] It may be assumed - and only assumed - that Palm House was standing in 1851.[19] That it was not noticed by the contemporary press is a comment upon its ordinariness and perhaps upon the status of its owner.

2.2.2. Authorship

No document links the house with a particular architect. Most early buildings in and around Adelaide were designed by the people who physically built them.

2.2.3. Probable sources of the design.

An important medium for the transmission of architectural design ideas was the pattern book and after about 1780 more than 60 volumes of relatively simple farmhouses, rural buildings, cottages and villas were published. Often a vehicle for promoting the picturesque movement but also publishing more austere - and therefore easier to build - "Regency" designs, they were succeeded by such periodicals as J.C. Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* (1834-1839), the *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* (1837-1867) and *The Builder,* after 1842. Pattern books were brought to the colonies by amateur and professional architects but mostly by building craftsmen. Historian A.P. Baggs believes that their importance can be measured "by the frequency with which they were reprinted and the condition in which they are now found".

Yet actual buildings are hard to trace to them for two main reasons: provenance is obscure, and many builders made their own combinations of plans and elevations rather than using entire designs.

Much more than a pattern book, the most widely used reference was Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture.* First appearing in 1833, it included everything from park layouts to finished, covering aesthetic and technical matters in equal depth. Much of Adelaide's earliest architecture is attributable to these publications, and it is most probable that Palm House was a pattern book design.

2.2.4 Architectural significance

In the course of considerable research into South Australia's early colonial architecture I have found the expression "bungalow" rarely used in historical documents. Its introduction to the present discussion seems to have obscured the issue. Anyway, it is perhaps appropriate to address its definition, not in terms of its Bengali origins but in contemporary English usage: that is, "a one-storeyed house". There is at least one indisputable fact.

It is naive to believe that because Palm House was rectangular in plan with a front verandah it was therefore inspired by the Indian bungalow house form. As noted, simplicity was an important characteristic of many of the pattern-book designs, not only in terms of finishes, detail and ornament but also in the ground plans of the houses. A rectangle of walls predicated a very simple roof construction. It is therefore suggested that its builder's need for a straightforward design is the real source of the so-called "unsophisticated and purist style that is Palm House".[20] Its "totally unembellished form" is rather the result of architectural ignorance than restrained good taste, or the first stage in the revolution of a house type.

Peacock's mining colleague J.B. Graham - another *nouveau riche* merchant - had announced his success by employing Thomas Price to design a sumptuous "castle" at Prospect. Perhaps the tanner's Puritan ethic or his parsimony forbade such indulgence and he employed a builder, untrained in design, to make his house. There may have been tension between a desire for ostentation and common sense. The latter prevailed. The "simplicity and lack of elaborate detailing" speaks builders' primitive (to coin a style) rather than Regency. This view is supported by the absurdity of the plan.

The symmetry of the layout is Palladian in origin. The commonness of that connection has been demonstrated by architectural historian Donald Leslie Johnson, who has traced the development of such "double-pile" plans from early seventeenth century English models.[21] Palladian systems were widely used in South Australia by architects and other designers.[22] Palm House is simply another variation upon a very popular theme.[23] It is submitted that Ayers House, Collingrove and the other examples cited in the Register Assessment Report are not the "maturing" of the style (as suggested) but simply the work of more competent and confident designers.

But while it fit the Palladian pattern, the plan of Palm House made little practical sense. The south entrance - presumably the main door - gave into a cramped hall, whose archway led to an east-west corridor and also the the rear door. Two small rooms flanked the hall but they were not anterooms of what may be taken to be the principal entertaining spaces, forming pavilions at the ends of the house. There was therefore little sense of arrival at Palm House. The other means of access to the "pavilion" rooms was the verandah, but its southern exposure made it very unsuitable as a corridor in the winter. The clumsiness of the plan exposes the naivete of the designer, if not that of his client. It is inadmissable to compare Palm House with say, Ayers House, in which the organisation of the spaces was carefully worked out.[25]

Much of the foregoing addresses the discussion of the bungalow house form in the Register Assessment Report under "Comparative Analysis". With due respect to the accuracy of Robert Irving's claim about the persistent influence of the bungalow[26], a lot of nonsense has been elsewhere written on the subject. The wraith of the Anglo-Indian version in the present case seems to have been conjured up by the notoriously arbitrary stylistic categorization methods employed by the National Trust in days gone by. Some of the blame may be apportioned to Morgan and Gilbert's *Early Adelaide Architecture.*[27] The verandah--admittedly of Indian origin--originally served no different purpose from a classical *loggia.* Concord between verandahs attached to Palladian plans in Adelaide and those in Bangalore came about through British architects applying a climatic device to their ubiquitous Imperial architecture. In the case of Palm House, that was superfluous. The verandah faced south.

2.3 Integrity and Condition

The most cursory inspection of the building and associated historical documents casts doubt upon the Register Assessment Report claim that the house is a "remarkably unaltered" residence.

Many alterations have been accurately listed by Brown Falconer.[28] None has been sympathetic to the fabric of the house. Some are minor but such things as re-covering the roof, adding the verandah and French doors to the north facade, changing the main entrance and demolishing internal walls, fireplaces and chimneys must be regarded as a major insult to the house's integrity.

Internally, the replacement of ceilings and cornices, particularly in the "front rooms" has severely reduced the significance of the house as an example of early Victorian architecture. There have also been, as noted, substantial changes to the north and south facades and the minor alterations to the east facade.

The changes enumerated by Brown Falconer seem to have been discovered by comparing the existing fabric with the drawing supplied by Jackman Gooden Architects and dated c.1920. They do not take account of alterations made before St. Peter's College acquired the property. It is unlikely, for example, that the kitchen was originally part of the main house. It appears to have been part of what was usually called the "offices", near the northeast corner of the house. The location of the chimneys c.1880 support the belief that the room in the northeast corner was altered before 1920.[29] The room indicated as bathroom in the Jackman plan was probably a passageway to the rear garden. There was originally no verandah on the north side.

In the light of the above, any claim that the house is "remarkably unaltered" is analogous to the perhaps apocryphal tale of George Washington's famous hatchet, which apart from having had three new heads and five new handles, is said to be in its original condition.

The structural and general condition of the building is extremely poor. No issue is taken with the Heritage Assessment's Report claim that "with careful attention to the conservation of the building Palm House could be fully restored." Neither is there any objection to the thorough schedule of dilapidations prepared by Brown Falconer. That returns us to the question of the heritage value of the building. Is it worth preserving or restoring?

3. CONCLUSION

Upon careful consideration of the available evidence I cannot accept that William Peacock made a notable, much less "highly significant", contribution to South Australian history. Neither do I believe that Palm House, for the reasons set out above, is by any artistic, historical or other standard a significant architectural type, "particularly rare in the range of South Australia's architectural styles of residences remaining today." I would not recommend the house's inclusion in the Register of State Heritage Items.

4. NOTES

1. It was claimed in K.Peake-Jones *et al., St. Peter's College, South Australia,* Adelaide, 1983, p.24, and cited in the Assessment Report, that Peacock "chartered and freighted" the ship. No primary evidence supports this. See Passenger Arrival Sources No.1, p.52; No.25, Vol.1, pp 172-173; No.58, 5 January 1839, Mortlock. The *Glenalvon* carried the Peacock family of eight, three more cabin passengers and 16 in steerage. Half her freight was consigned to other settlers. The earliest reference to the "charter" appears to have been in the *Register* c.1924. (Typescript copy in St. Peter's College archive, dated 1957).

2. Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent,* Melbourne, 1967, p.149

3. *Ibid.,* p.332-333.

4. *Ibid.,* p.425. See also Langmead, "George Strickland Kingston: Pioneer and Architect", Ph.D dissertation, Flinders University, 1985, chapter XVI.

5. See Langmead, "George Strickland Kingston", chapter XVI, where references are given in full.

6. Pike, *Paradise,* p.340. At around the same time, Peacock had a deposit of £40,000 in the Bank of South Australia.

7. *Ibid,* p.351.

8. Register Objection Report, p.4, para 5.

9. *Ibid,* p.5, para 1.

10. Pike, *Paradise,* p.431, where full references are given.

11. George Loyau, *Representative Men of South Australia,* Adelaide, 1883, p.193.

12. This question is convincingly argued in J.A. Dibden, "George Strickland Kingston and the Provision of a Permanent Outfit for South Australia", B.A. Hons. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1965. Cf. Langmead, *Nails in a Sure Place,* (forthcoming), chapter 1.

13. *Register,* 23 January 1874, p.5, reprinted *verbatim* in the *Observer*, the following day.

14. He is not mentioned in Dean Jaensch (ed), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Political History,* Adelaide, 1986 and only in a list of Burra mine directors in the companion *Social History* volume.

15. Register Objection Report, p.5, last para ff.

16. Register Assessment Report, p.3.

17. *Ibid.,* p.1.

18. *Register,* 23 July 1852, published correspondence of the previous January over an incident in which Peacock complained about the behaviour of St. Peter's schoolboys. (Typescript copy in St. Peter's College archive). See also Elizabeth Warburton, *St. Peters: a Suburban Town,* Adelaide, 1983, p.14 which notes the existence of Peacock's garden in September 1851.

19. The house is first described in 1854-1855 rates assessment of the District of East Torrens; Peacock is named as owner and occupier. Colonial directories first list Peacock at East Torrens in 1854 (*Garran's Almanack,* 1855).

20. Register Assessment Report, p.5.

21. Donald L. Johnson, "The Theory of Hybridization in Vernacular Architecture", *Building Preservation and Restoration,* University of N.S.W., 1979, p.10-12.

22. See Langmead, "George Strickland Kingston", chapter XXIV, where plan types are illustrated.

23. Morton Herman, *The Early Australian Architects and their Work,* Sydney, 1973, publishes many examples of the plan form: e.g., Elizabeth Farm, Parramatta (p.19); Horsley, near Prospect (p.137); and even a national school designed by Mortimer Lewis (p.198).

24. See also "Valencia" Lower North East Road, Paradise, completed c.1881. (Rachel Wharldall, "This Splendid Estate", B.Arch. thesis, S.A. Institute of Technology, 1978, p.76 ff.) and "Glanville Hall", Semaphore (date uncertain; architect unknown). These houses are simply stylistic variations upon the same theme. "Kurralta", Burnside (after 1843; architect unknown) and "Nibley House", Morphett Street (1863, now demolished; architect Williams) add an upper floor to the same plan system.

25. Langmead, "George Strickland Kingston", Fig. XXIII.25. See also Gavin Walkley, "Ayers House", unpublished MS., Adelaide, 1981.

26. Robert Irving, "Georgian Australia", Irving (comp.) *The History and Design of the Australian House,* Melbourne, 1985, p.63.

27. For example, they remark of G.S. Kingston's houses that "their characteristic porches and ... colonnaded verandahs" were similar to the "early nineteenth-century Indian bungalow". Kingston had no professional connections with India and only remote familial ones, so unless indirect to the point of inscrutability, the bungalow was an unlikely influence.

28.   Brown Falconer, "Assessment of Integrity of Palm House", 11 December 1989.

29.   The earliest available image of the house is in a photograph, "Panoramic view looking south from St. Peter's College 1872 - 1886", B10773, Mortlock Library. The writer was given access to an enlarged detail in the possession of Brown Falconer. There is no sign of the palm trees.

DONALD LANGMEAD
12 APRIL, 1990

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