

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

**TIVOLI HOTEL (INCLUDING FORMER BALLROOM/THEATRE)
261-269 PIRIE STREET
ADELAIDE**

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

The hotel is a two storeyed gabled building fronting Pirie Street with a cantilevered timber balcony running the length of the front facade. Constructed in three stages, this building has been rendered to conceal the various materials used in the additions. Internally the ground floor layout has been extensively modified over time, although the first floor layout is more intact. Accordingly only the external walls and features of the building are the subject of this assessment.

Attached to the rear of the hotel building is a single storeyed gabled roofed structure which was the theatre/ballroom constructed in c. 1855. This structure incorporates a barrel vaulted roof lined with lath and plaster and supported internally on sawn red gum posts encased in timber panels. The stage area remains.

The more recent structure to the west of the theatre and the cold room on the eastern side is excluded from this assessment.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Tivoli Hotel is indicative of the provision and increasing need for hotel accommodation in the early years of Adelaide's development and was an essential element of the cultural life of early German society in Adelaide, located in the local neighbourhood known as 'Little Germany'. More significantly, the hotel retains one of the very few remaining large rooms which were attached to many 1850s and 1860s hotels in South Australia which were used as theatres or assembly rooms. These spaces were provided at hotels before town halls, institute halls and later purpose-built theatres were constructed, and represent the provision of social facilities in the young colony. The Tivoli's theatre/ballroom is believed to be one of the last remaining of its kind both in the City of Adelaide and throughout the state.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*)

a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the state's history

The Tivoli Hotel, located at the eastern end of Pirie Street in Adelaide, was first licensed in 1850, operating from premises built for Johannes Schirmer. Over the following years several extensive alterations and additions were made to the hotel

Meeting Date: 27 May 2005

Prepared by: Sarah Laurence

building itself, as well as improvements to other facilities on the site over time, including stables, a garden, a gymnasium, a theatre/ballroom, a skittle alley and a lodge room. Substantial additions were made to the original 1850 hotel building in 1877-78 which included the addition of a second storey, and it was again extended in 1883 to produce the hotel building evident today. The Tivoli is among the oldest and longest licensed hotels in the City of Adelaide and reflects the increasing need for hotel accommodation in the early years of Adelaide's development.

This hotel was a favourite focus for the large German population which had established itself in the area and which was regularly boosted by German settlers from the hills who were bringing produce to the nearby East End Markets: this part of Adelaide was known for a time as 'Little Germany'.

With its ballroom/theatre, skittle alley and gymnasium, which was patronised by Adolph Leschen, described as the 'father of gymnastics' in South Australia, the hotel has been a focus for recreation/entertainment in eastern Adelaide for over 140 years.

b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance

The remaining fabric of the theatre/ballroom is a rare example of what was once a common feature of many hotels throughout South Australia, when large meeting rooms, ball rooms or theatres were attached to hotel premises to provide meeting places for local community groups as well as an entertainment venue for the hotel's customers.

Hotels no longer, or rarely, provide the level of entertainment found in them in the mid 19th century, which included theatrical displays, animal exhibitions, curiosity shows and games. Once this form of entertainment became unpopular and redundant, the space in which it occurred also became redundant and was converted to other uses or demolished.

Only one other such structure is known to remain in South Australia (the Assembly Hall at the rear of the International Hotel at Port Pirie) and only a few are likely to remain. The theatre/ballroom at the rear of the Tivoli Hotel is therefore a rare example of an entertainment space associated with a hotel dating from the 19th century.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Tivoli Hotel

The majority of this report is based on the document 'Brief Conservation Study, Tivoli' Hotel, 261-269 Pirie Street, Adelaide' prepared by McDougall & Vines for the Adelaide City Council in 2003.

An application for a licence for a hotel on Town Acre 216 in Pirie Street was advertised in the *South Australian* on 29 September 1850. The hotel, then known as

the Swiss Hotel, was established on the site by December of that year and was re-named the Tivoli Hotel in early 1852 (Hoad, p. 473).

At the time of the establishment of the hotel the land was owned by the South Australian Company. From May 1850 the land was leased from the South Australian Company by Johannes Schirmer for a period of 21 years at £31 a year. Schirmer eventually purchased the land in 1861 with A J Tolley. As part of the lease agreement with the South Australian Company, Schirmer was required to build within two years 'a good and substantial building of brick or stone that was to be of a value not less than £200'. (Real Property Act Application No. 11741; First Torrens Title CT 161/160).

In June 1850 Schirmer sub-let one third of the Town Acre on the western side to Julius Hase (formerly known as Julius Haase) for 21 years at £10 per year. On this piece of land, measuring 210 x 70 feet, Schirmer built a six roomed brick and stone structure for use as a public house. A bricklayer by trade, it is possible that Schirmer actually erected the building himself. It seems that this building formed part of the lease agreement with Hase (McDougall & Vines, p. 3)

Emilius Ammann made an agreement with Hase to run the hotel and in September 1850 Ammann made an application to the Bench of Magistrates for a licence, which was refused (*South Australian*, 26 September 1850). On 20 November Hase transferred his lease to Ammann as well as an inventory of items which included '16 bedsteads, 10 tables, 2 kitchen tables, one water tank, kitchen utensils, curtains, crockery, fittings and utensils of the bar, several stools and benches, poultry, 2 spades, one axe.' (GRO, RPA Application 11741).

As sub-lessee Amman re-applied for a general publican's licence in early December 1850. This application was supported by a memorial 'signed by more than 100 Germans who expressed their desire to have a house in their neighbourhood kept by one of their own countrymen.' The application was approved, despite opposition by the publican of the nearby Golden Rule Hotel (*South Australian*, 12 December 1850, p. 4). Amman's Swiss Hotel was opened on 18 December 1850. After Julius Hase's death in 1851 his widow sold the hotel business back to Johannes Schirmer, who in turned sub-leased it to two other publicans (William Boesenberg from June 1851 to early 1852 and Thomas Schirmer from March 1853). Johannes Schirmer was recorded as the licensee from March 1854 (Hoad, p. 472).

It appears that additions were made to the building between 1855 and 1856 as the rateable value recorded in the ACC rate assessments rose from £60 to £100. The exact nature of these additions is not known, but an undated lithograph advertising the Tivoli Hotel suggests that Schirmer established 'pleasure gardens', a 'commodious ballroom', 'billiards' and 'American Bowling Alley' at the hotel during his time as publican from 1854 to early 1868 (McDougall & Vines, p. 4; lithograph reproduced in Marsden et al, p. 147). The 'bowling' or 'skittle' alley was located along the western side of the ballroom.

Schirmer purchased Town Acre 216 from the South Australian Company for £700 in 1861, apparently using funds provided by A J Tolley. At that time the hotel and

associated yards occupied a parcel of land measuring 140 x 210 feet or two thirds of the Town Acre (McDougall & Vines, p. 7). Schirmer owned the property until selling it to Heinrich Wilhelm Ehmcke in August 1864. Ehmcke, a notable German timber merchant, and his descendants, owned the Town Acre until 1956.

Ehmcke had arrived in South Australia in 1848 and, following a time spent farming and then mining on the Victorian Goldfields, returned to Adelaide where he established a sawmill and timber yards in Hindmarsh Square. Also actively involved in the German Club, the Liedertafel (an all male German choir) and the Oddfellows, Ehmcke was both a successful and popular German immigrant, as evidenced by his funeral in August 1877 which was described as one of the largest ever witnessed in Adelaide (Loyau, p. 274).

Schirmer continued as licensee until 1868 and was succeeded by a number of publicans, including Ehmcke himself in 1872 and 1876 (Hoad, p. 472). In late 1869 it seems that extensive additions and improvements were made to the premises. The Adelaide City Council rate assessments show an increase in rateable value from £160 to £220 and include the description of 'gymnasium' in the entry for the hotel site in 1871 (McDougall & Vines, p. 7; ACC Rate Assessment Books, TA 216). The gymnasium was located to the rear of the theatre and was patronised by the 'father of gymnastics in South Australia', Adolph Leschen. The gym was used until the onset of six o'clock closing and Leschen's death forced its closure during the First World War (Daly).

In June 1876 the hotel was subleased to Albert Keidel, who held the licence for four years. Keidel had the hotel 'entirely renovated and refurnished' which included repairs to the skittle alley (*Register*, 2 January 1877, p. 3g). This work transformed the hotel building from a single storey to two storeys. The *Register* reported that:

In Pirie Street Keidel's National Hotel has been almost entirely rebuilt and another storey added with a neat balcony running the whole width of the front. The house now contains 26 rooms, and beside the large hall, a new lodge room has been added 30 x 20'.

Register, 23 March 1878, supp. p. 11g

The Lodge Room was located to the rear of the gymnasium (McDougall & Vines).

The architect A R Hamilton advertised for tenders for substantial additions to the hotel in September 1882 (*Register*, 29 September 1882, 2c). This work included the construction of an addition to the eastern end of the two storey hotel building, extending its length by 30 feet to give the building the form that it presently retains. The *Licensed Victualler's Gazette* reported that the licensee, Horst Wicklein, gave an "exhibition billiard match... to inaugurate a new room and 2 billiard tables by Alcock, the contestants being J Hill of King of Hanover and H A Albers the champion of SA. About 100 men were present for the occasion.' (*Licensed Victualler's Gazette*, 14 July 1883, p. 8).

Rate assessment books indicate, with a doubling of the rateable value of the property, that further alterations to the site were undertaken between 1922 and 1925.

It seems that this work did not radically affect the general form of the hotel building. It is suggested that the rear wall of the current site (which once separated the theatre space from the gymnasium) was built at this time, as the brickwork is typical of the 1920s and is different to the early brickwork of the hotel building (McDougall & Vines, p. 8). It is not clear when the gymnasium, lodge room and skittle alley were demolished. The Town Acre was subdivided for the first time in 1962 and photographs held by the ACC suggest that the gymnasium was still standing in the early 1990s prior to its demolition for construction of the Salvation Army car park.

There were no further major works on the hotel site until the 1970s, when patronage improved with a revival of entertainment at the hotel and the use of the theatre for live entertainment. Prior to this there had been a decline in activity at the hotel, triggered by a downturn in the German population of the area as well as the population of the city generally and the effects of the introduction of six o'clock closing.

Hotel Ballrooms, Theatres and Assembly Rooms

It was common for many hotels in the 19th century to have a large room or hall attached to the premises which often served a variety of functions, and were referred to as 'long rooms, assembly rooms, ballrooms or theatres' (McDougall & Vines, p. 9).

The Tivoli was no exception:

The fascination of the place for the young folk lay in the rear premises. A huge ballroom, equipped with stage and scenery, was used at times by a Turn Verein [gymnastics club] and various clubs and lodges for dances and concerts...Beyond the ballroom was Leschen's famous gymnasium...

Advertiser, 27 September 1949, 4h

In many cases the 'room' was an addition to the building, rather than part of the original structure. Interestingly, the Tivoli theatre/ballroom, which was added to the original hotel building in c. 1855, does not rate a separate mention in the ACC Assessment Books, although the later gymnasium does. This is possibly because the extension was not large enough or its function was directly associated with hotel, whereas the gym was something outside of normal hotel activities.

Not only did such hotels provide accommodation, meals and a place to drink but also provided entertainment in the form of theatrical displays, animal exhibitions, curiosities and games (Heritage Branch Assessment Report 12862). The popularity of such venues is reflected in Thomas Boddington's advertisement for his Shamrock Hotel in the Boothby's 1872 Directory which announced that he had 'at great expense altered the entire features of the Establishment by fitting up a Theatre and Concert Hall for Musical Entertainments, in which the best talent in the colonies will nightly perform.'

During the mid 1880s there was much debate in the newspapers regarding the licensing of public house concert halls. Representatives of the Adelaide City Council considered that 'it is at present undesirable to license any of the concert-halls in the

city where such concert halls are attached to or form part of public houses' and that the abolition of such music halls would reduce the level of immorality that existed at 'such public houses as the Shamrock Hotel' (*Register*, 2 March 1883, 5b). The Licensed Victuallers Association lobbied strongly that 'instead of doing harm to the community, concert halls in connection with public houses, if properly conducted, positively did good, affording opportunities for a social chat or song, when otherwise the social chat would take place immediately over the bar counter.' The Association argued that this would lessen the 'vice' of drunkenness, and the bad reputation of a few such places should not be justification in refusing licences to them all (*Advertiser*, 6 August 1884, 6a). The outcome of the debate is unknown. At the time it was illegal, under the provisions of the Licensed Victuallers Act, to use any portion of a licensed premises as a theatre, concert-room or ballroom for public entertainment without the written permission of two Justices (*Register* 16 Feb 1886, 5b).

Although once a popular addition to hotels, both in Adelaide and throughout the state, it is apparent from an analysis of remaining hotels, that very few concert-halls or ballrooms have survived.

The North Kapunda Hotel (SHR 14583) boasted a large meeting hall dating from the period of the licence of James Crase (1850-60 and 1864-86) which, with other facilities, made the hotel a community centre for social and political purposes. The meeting room was demolished in the 1940s (Historical Consultants Pty Ltd, p. 355).

An assembly room was built behind the Crooked Billet Hotel (SHR 13943) in Nairne in the 1850s which served several purposes including Council meetings, council offices and political gatherings. It is not known if this room still exists (Heritage Branch File).

A more formal large theatre was constructed for George Coppin in association with the White Horse Cellar Inn at Port Adelaide (now the Central Buildings, SHR 14698). Coppin, known as 'the father of Australian theatre', opened his theatre at the Inn in 1851. Beside the theatre a large meeting room at the Inn provided the venue for community functions. The theatre continued in use until the mid 1860s and was converted to a brewery when the Port Adelaide Town Hall was completed in 1867 (McDougall & Vines, *Port Adelaide Centre Heritage Survey*).

There was an assembly hall at the Arnella Guest House (formerly Port Elliot Hotel) (SHR 14164) from the 1850s, which has since been demolished, and there is no conclusive evidence remaining of the entertainment room (originally described as a 'large pale building used as a circus') at the rear of the former Colonel Light Hotel in Light Square (Heritage Branch Assessment report, 12862). There was a concert hall associated with the Galatea Hotel (later the Rio International) in Hindley Street in the mid 1880s (*Register*, 20 March 1883, 5b). In Kadina the Wombat Hotel boasted a room which was the largest hall on Yorke Peninsula at the time of its construction in 1866. It was demolished in the 1950s (Taylor Weidenhofer).

The large assembly hall at the rear of the International Hotel at Port Pirie is one of the few known to still exist. It was built in 1878 as a separate structure at the rear of the hotel then known as Howe's Hotel and was linked to the hotel building in the

1890s. The hall could accommodate 400 people and was used for concerts, banquets, auctions and church services (Austral Archaeology, vol. 7, p. 105).

It is apparent that during the mid-19th century there were many hotels with 'theatres' or large entertainment spaces attached to them and that they provided entertainment venues and meeting places for many communities throughout the state. However, as the popularity of these venues waned, these places were demolished or converted to new uses and only a small handful of them remain in anything like their original form.

REFERENCES

McDougall & Vines, 2003, *Brief Conservation Study, Tivoli Hotel, 261-69 Pirie Street, Adelaide*, Adelaide City Council, December 2003

Hoad, J L, 1999, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia*, 2nd ed. (revised), Author, Adelaide

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Lands Titles Office, Real Property Act Application No. 11741; CT 161/160

South Australian, 26 September 1850, p. 4d; 12 December 1850, p. 4f

Register, 2 January 1877, p. 3g; 23 March 1878, supp. p. 11g; 29 September 1882,
p. 2c

Licensed Victuallers Gazette, 14 July 1883, p. 8

Advertiser, 27 September 1949, p. 4h; 5 October 1949, p. 4; 11 October 1949, p. 4;

Adelaide City Archives, Adelaide City Council Rate Assessment Books for TA 216

Adelaide City Archives, Smith Survey 1880

SITE RECORD

**TIVOLI HOTEL (INCLUDING FORMER BALLROOM/THEATRE)
261-269 PIRIE STREET
ADELAIDE**

FORMER NAME: Swiss Hotel; National Hotel

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Two storey brick and stone hotel building including ballroom/theatre addition to rear.

DATE OF COMPLETION:

REGISTER STATUS: **Description:** Nominated
Date: 28 February 2004

CURRENT USE: **Description:** Hotel
Dates:

PREVIOUS USE(S): **Description:** Hotel
Dates:

ARCHITECT: **Name:** Hamillton, A R
Dates: 1882 (additions)

BUILDER: **Name:** Unknown
Dates:

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Hotels, motels & accommodation
Category: Hotel

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Recreation and entertainment
Category: Theatre

MISCELLANEOUS INDEX:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: **Description:** Adelaide

LOCATION: **Unit No.:**
Street No.: 261-269
Street Name: Pirie Street
Town/Suburb: Adelaide
Post Code: 5000
Region No.: 1
Region Name: Adelaide City

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Type:** CT
Volume: 5842
Folio: 551
Lot No.: 14
Section: PTA 216

Meeting Date: 27 May 2005

Prepared by: Sarah Laurence

Hundred: Adelaide

AMG REFERENCE:

Zone: 54
Easting: 281671 (WGS 84)
Northing: 6132604
Map Sheet No.: 6628-3
Map Scale: 1 : 50,000

OWNER:

Name:
Address:



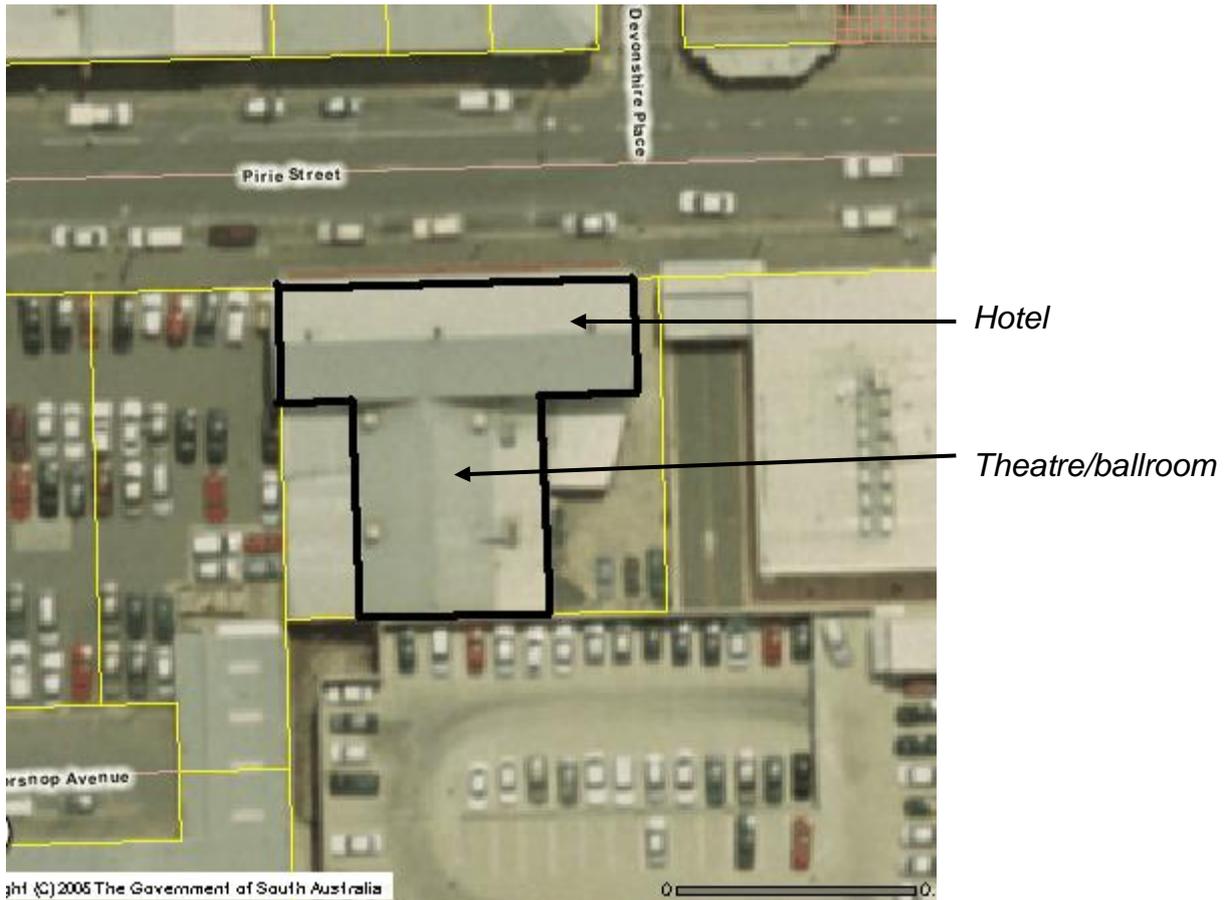
Town/Suburb:
Post Code:

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Image No.:
Image Type:
Photographer:
Date:

LOCATION PLAN

**TIVOLI HOTEL (INCLUDING FORMER BALLROOM/THEATRE)
261-269 PIRIE STREET
ADELAIDE**



PHOTOGRAPHS

TIVOLI HOTEL (INCLUDING FORMER BALLROOM/THEATRE)
261-269 PIRIE STREET
ADELAIDE



Tivoli Hotel, Pirie Street frontage



Tivoli Hotel, with roof and rear wall of theatre/ballroom behind

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PHOTOGRAPHS

**TIVOLI HOTEL (INCLUDING FORMER BALLROOM/THEATRE)
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Theatre/Ballroom interior showing barrel vaulted ceiling



Theatre/Ballroom interior showing decorative timber columns