

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

**Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the
*Heritage Places Act 1993***

NAME: Repatriation General Hospital PLACE NO.: 26305

**ADDRESS: Daws Road, Daw Park 5041
 CT 6106/369, Allotment 1, DP 89637, Section 7, Hundred of Adelaide**

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Repatriation General Hospital has a significant association with an international event of profound historical importance to the South Australian community: World War II (criterion (g)). The outbreak of World War II created an immediate need for more hospital beds. In June 1940 the South Australian State Cabinet approved construction of a new 880 bed military hospital for injured soldiers and a site near the corner of Daws Road and Goodwood Road, was chosen and resumed under wartime emergency regulations: the 105 Australian Military Hospital (105 AMH) was formed on 10 June 1941.

Despite changes over many years, the essence of the original layout of the site is still discernable in the symmetrical arrangement of the central buildings on the north-south axis, with the original wards to its east. The site is still characterised by comparatively low-scale development interspersed with well-maintained gardens. The surviving wartime buildings and structures, together with later items of a commemorative nature such as the Peace Garden, act as reference points for the unique history of the place.

The Repatriation General Hospital has a strong and ongoing cultural association with veterans who served in World War II and subsequent conflicts: strong links with the Returned and Services League and other ex-service organisations (criterion (f)). This association is discernable in the physical fabric and the culture of the place, by reference to wartime experience (various memorials, naming of wards etc, and in the corporate identity promoted by the Hospital).

For the generation of South Australians who experienced World War II as servicemen and women, and for their families, the 'Repat' played an important role. As part of

their rehabilitation before resuming civilian life, a large number of veterans passed through the Hospital after returning from military service overseas.

A considerable proportion of veterans and war widows returned to the 'Repat' for on-going treatment for decades following their military discharge, as indeed many still do to the present day. In its policies and internal culture the hospital has maintained a strong focus on providing specialised medical and social support services to veterans and war widows, and in this respect it represents a unique association with the veteran community in this state. This association is demonstrated in numerous tangible and intangible references to the connections with military history on the site including the naming of wards after battles, Peace Garden dedication, chapel windows, remembrance ceremonies, and the museum.

The special association with the Repatriation General Hospital has continued for veterans of post-World War II conflicts and for currently serving members of the military forces.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*)

(a) *it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.*

The Repatriation General Hospital is unique in South Australia as the only purpose-built hospital for veterans and serving defence personnel. It is associated with international events that touched an entire generation and left a lasting impression on the lives of thousands of South Australians.

The history of the Hospital is intrinsically linked with World War II, one of the major social upheavals of the twentieth century, and its impact on South Australians. This link is demonstrated in numerous tangible and intangible references to military history on the site (naming of wards after battles, Peace Garden dedication, chapel windows, remembrance ceremonies, museum, etc.).

(d) *it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.*

The Repatriation General Hospital is a well-preserved and largely intact representative of a particular class of South Australian public buildings completed during and after World War II. There are few places in South Australia similar to Repatriation General Hospital with which direct comparisons may be made. Wartime restrictions on materials limited new construction to only essential buildings, and in many cases these were of a temporary nature (many of the original buildings on the hospital site were timber and iron construction – of which the former post office building is probably the sole survivor). Few institutional buildings of the scale of the 'Repat' were built in the 1940s, and it was not until the mid 1950s that larger projects such as the Nurses Home at Glenside Hospital were attempted. Given the circumstances, it is notable that the main buildings of the Repatriation General Hospital were conceived and built as substantially as they were as part of planning for it to become a repatriation hospital after the end of the war.

Although there have been ongoing additions and alterations to the hospital over its history, the central administrative core, comprising A, B, and C Blocks and the former guard House, are well-preserved and largely intact as built in 1942. Later additions and internal reconfigurations have been undertaken in sympathy with the original design and have not significantly impinged upon the integrity of the place. Alterations to the wards have been more intrusive, though the original form and scale is preserved.

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.

The South Australian veteran community has maintained a high regard for the Repatriation General Hospital over its 70 year history. A significant proportion of veterans who served in World War II and subsequent conflicts are likely to have had direct contact with the hospital, either as a result of injuries sustained during their service or for medical treatment in later life. The hospital has maintained strong links with the Returned and Services League and other ex-service organisations, which have been involved in decisions about hospital management through representation on the Hospital Board.

Many veterans and their families have maintained a close association with the Repatriation General Hospital since the war years. It has fostered this special relationship with its primary client group through development of medical and surgical specialties appropriate to their needs, along with targeted social services such as the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service and the position of Veterans' Advisor. Though now accepting a higher proportion of 'civilian' patients, the hospital still guarantees priority access for veterans, and promotes itself as 'the Veterans' Choice in South Australia'. This sentiment is reflected in the slogan used on the hospital's website: '*RGH is proudly serving those who have served for us*'. Evidence of the high value placed on the hospital by the contemporary veteran community is observable in its sustained resistance to proposals in recent years to remove high level services from the Hospital and redirect veterans to other public hospitals for certain treatments.

There are a number of specific sites within the Hospital of special significance. The Schools' Patriotic Fund (SPF) Hall has a special significance as it demonstrates the contribution of civilians to the war effort and the support of veterans. It was built using funds raised by the Schools Patriotic Fund and the Red Cross, for the benefit of patients of the hospital, and was opened in August 1943. During the war years the hall was a venue for theatrical performances, concerts and films for the entertainment of inpatients, and helped keep up morale and relieve the boredom which often accompanied lengthy hospital stays. Many popular entertainers volunteered their time to perform there and visit patients. The annexes once housed a library and reading rooms and recreation rooms for the use of ambulatory patients. Over the years it was used for ceremonies and special events, staff meetings and training sessions. The hall retains its proscenium arch stage and fixtures and is still used regularly for theatrical performances by a local amateur theatre group.

The chapel continues in regular use for commemorative services throughout the year, and for funeral services for deceased veterans. Its distinctive decorative elements, particularly the stained glass windows and wall plaques, express the special connection with the veteran community. The Peace Garden, located nearby, also has significance as a sanctuary and place for quiet reflection for hospital patients and their families.

The hospital represents a practical expression of the nation's obligation towards those who served their country in war, and to that extent it is also a memorial.

(g) *it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.*

The Repatriation General Hospital has a special association with an international event of profound historical importance to a significant sector of the South Australian community. During World War II the hospital received thousands of South Australian casualties repatriated from overseas war zones, and it has continued to be associated with the broader veteran community over its entire 70 year history. It has direct personal associations for the patients, including many ex-prisoners of war, who were admitted for treatment and rehabilitation following the traumatic experiences of the war.

SITE PLAN

The attached Site Plans 1 and 2 generally indicate the location and extent of listing for the Place.

The extent of listing *excludes* structures built prior to 1941 and after 1947 (except for the Peace Garden c1970), as well as:

- the interiors of the wards and other buildings, apart from the Schools' Patriotic Fund (SPF) Hall and Chapel.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Physical Description

The Repatriation General Hospital at Daw Park comprises a complex of individual one and two-storey buildings on a large site 7 kms south of the Adelaide CBD. Its construction dates from early 1942. The central administration blocks, comprising Buildings 21 to 25 located at the main entry from Daws Road, were completed in that year. These four buildings, designed in the American colonial style, are of rendered brick with pitched terracotta tiled roofs. The sash windows are timber-framed and small-paned. The Central Administrative Buildings comprise:

- the main administration block known as 'A' Block, (Buildings 21 and 25), which has a central wing of two storeys and an entry portico in classical style, with a balustraded balcony above; a cupola adorns the roof;
- on either side 'B' and 'C' Blocks, (buildings 22 and 23) are also of two storeys and in the same style; and
- Building 24 is a small single-storey room at the entrance; this former gatehouse now serves as the medical library.

To the east of the Central Administration Buildings are Wards 1 to 4 (buildings 71 to 74), comprising four buildings in similar style, of painted brick with pitched terracotta tiled roofs. These four buildings all feature semi-circular 'solariums' at either end, constructed of brick and painted render, with curved metal-framed glass windows and an unusual curved and fluted concrete parapet.

The Schools Patriotic Fund (SPF) Hall (building 55–57) is a single storey building of painted brick with a pitched terracotta tiled roof. Immediately to the north of the SPF Hall is the Chapel (building 59), a red brick building with steeply pitched tiled roof and stained glass windows.

The Central Administrative Buildings, SPF Hall and Chapel are in original and good condition externally, except for extensions to the main block (building 21 and 25) on the western side, a discreetly sited addition to the rear of B Block. The Wards 1 to 4 (buildings 71 to 74) have had exterior alterations and additions and significant internal changes.

The components of the Repatriation General Hospital which are of high significance, and are intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

- Central Administrative Buildings (Daws Road Entrance) – 'A', 'B' and 'C' Blocks and Library (former Guard House) (Buildings 21 to 25);
- the open space between the Central Administrative Buildings;
- Wards 1 to 4 (Buildings 71-74), including sunrooms and rectilinear form and building relationships, but excluding interiors and later additions;
- Schools' Patriotic Fund (SPF) Hall (Buildings 55-57), including annexes to each side of hall, original windows and doors, and the stage and associated areas;
- Chapel (Building 59), including two-way pews, plaques representing various veterans' associations and branches of the armed services, and memorial stained-glass windows,
- 'Peace Garden';
- former Mortuary (now Repat Museum) (Building 119), and
- former Post Office (Building 118).

Other notable items and objects associated with military history at the site include:

- names of wards (after battles);
- Peace Garden dedication;

- museum artefacts; and
- commemorative stained glass windows depicting wartime themes (commissioned in 1991).

(Note the building numbering system is that used in the DEWNR Assessment Report.)

History of the Place

The first sections of the 105 Australian Military Hospital (AMH) (later the Repatriation General Hospital) were constructed and opened in 1942 in response to the need for a new military hospital for injured soldiers. The first buildings included three wards, the administrative block and nurses' quarters. Temporary huts and tents were also erected, and continued to be used for several years. Meanwhile building continued at the site, with the chapel, hall and additional wards being completed by 1944.

When built, 105 AMH at Daws Road was the most modern development of its kind in South Australia. The architectural concept of single-storey pavilion wards was standard for new hospital development at the time and it was only when space became a constraint that hospitals were built in large multi-storey blocks.

105 AMH provided occupational therapists who instructed patients in arts, crafts and practical activities such as carpentry. Sports such as lawn bowls, badminton, table-tennis and archery were encouraged, as well as gardening and animal husbandry. As well as giving patients something useful to do, and achieving significant savings for the hospital kitchens, it was considered that imparting the skills to enable patients to grow their own food at home, or perhaps undertake a new career in farming, would help them make the transition back into civilian life.

After the Japanese surrender brought the war to an end in September 1945, Australian military hospitals were gradually handed over to the Repatriation Commission. This meant the withdrawal of serving army personnel and replacement with civilian administrators and nursing and medical staff, and created some recruitment problems. In September 1946 120 long term patients were transferred from the Keswick Repatriation Hospital, and on 1 February 1947 a formal ceremony marked the official transfer of the 105 AMH from the Army to the Repatriation Commission, which became part of the Commonwealth Public Service in that year. Administration thenceforth came under the Repatriation Department, later the Department for Veterans' Affairs, until the hospital was transferred to become part of the South Australian Health Department in July 1995. At the time of the handover to the Repatriation Commission the newly named Repatriation General Hospital (Springbank) had 485 beds.

Further information about each of the buildings at the place is provided in the Assessment Report referred to below.

References

The principal references for this Summary were:

- DEWNR, *Assessment Report for the Repatriation General Hospital*, 2012

- P Bell, C Cosgrove, S Marsden, J McCarthy, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey, Stage Two (1928-1945)* 2008, Vol 2
- Peter Last, *The Repat: a biography of Repatriation General Hospital*, 1994.
- Website: <http://www.rgh.sa.gov.au/media/internet/HISTORYOFREPAT.pdf>

SITE RECORD

Repatriation General Hospital
Daws Road, Daw Park

PLACE NO: 26305

FORMER NAME:	105 AMH (Australian Military Hospital); 105 AGH (Australian General Hospital); 105 (Adel) MH (Adelaide Military Hospital); RGH (S) Springbank; RGH (DP) Daw Park; 'The Repat'
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	A complex of single and double storey brick and terracotta tile buildings, including administration buildings, hospital wards, chapel, hall, former post office and former mortuary.
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1942–1944 (buildings). c1970 (Peace Garden)
SA HERITAGE REGISTER STATUS:	Description: Provisionally entered Date: 7 December 2012
LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS	Local Heritage Place (part) City of Mitcham DPA authorised 22 September 2005
CURRENT USE:	Description: Hospital Dates: 1942 - present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description: Agriculture/ vineyard Dates: Pre 1942
ARCHITECT:	Name: Stephenson & Turner (Melbourne); Woods, Bagot, Laybourne-Smith and Irwin Dates: 1942
BUILDER:	Name: unknown Dates: 1940–47
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description: City of Mitcham
LOCATION:	Unit No.: – Street No.: – Street Name: Daws Road Town/Suburb: Daw Park Post Code: 5041
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type: CT Volume: 6106 Folio: 369 Lot No.: 1 Plan: D89637 Hundred: Adelaide

PHOTOS

Repatriation General Hospital
Daws Road, Daw Park

PLACE NO: 26305



Repatriation General Hospital
Main Administration Block and Cupola (A Block, Building 21) (viewed from the south).



Repatriation General Hospital
Administration Block (B Block, Building 22) (viewed from the east)

PHOTOS

Repatriation General Hospital
Daws Road, Daw Park

PLACE NO: 26305



Repatriation General Hospital
Chapel (Building 59) (viewed from north-east)

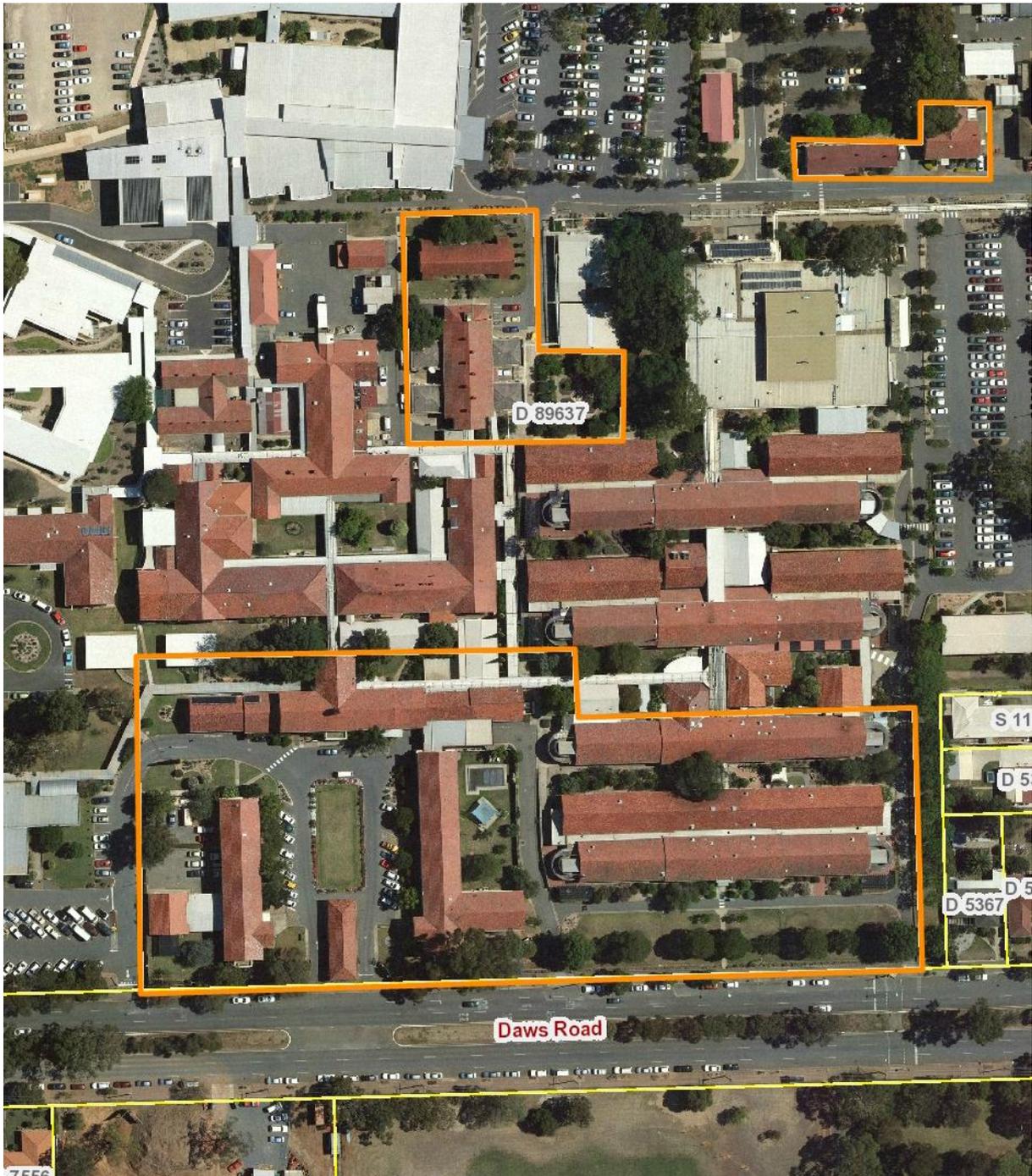


Repatriation General Hospital
Peace Garden

SITE PLAN 1

Repatriation General Hospital
Daws Road, Daw Park

PLACE NO: 26305

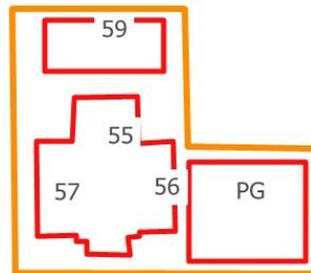


Site Plan 1 of Repatriation General Hospital, with extent of listing outlined in orange

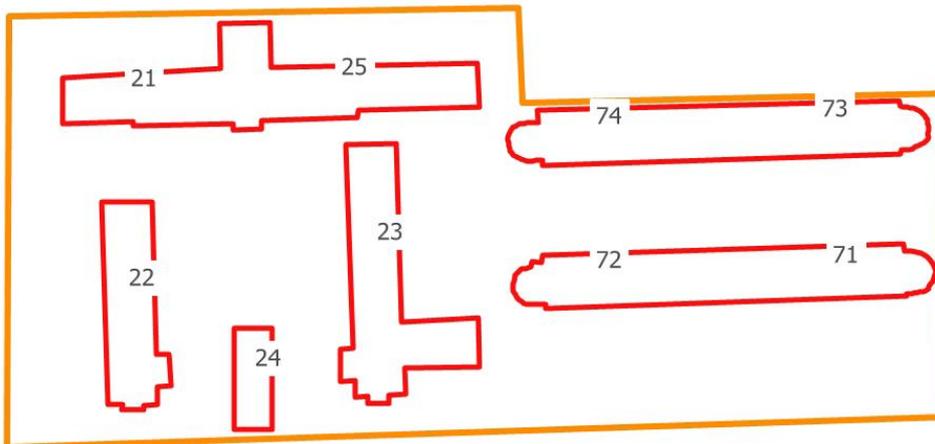
SITE PLAN 2

Repatriation General Hospital
Daws Road, Daw Park

PLACE NO: 26305



- KEY
- 21 & 25 Admin 'A' Block
 - 22 Admin 'B' Block
 - 23 Admin 'C' Block
 - 24 Library (former Guard House)
 - 55 – 57 SPF Hall & Annexes
 - 59 Chapel
 - 71 – 74 Wards 1 – 4
 - 118 Former Post Office
 - 119 Former Mortuary (now Museum)
 - PG Peace Garden



Daws Road

Site plan generally indicating important features and elements of the place.