

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

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

NAME: Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School **PLACE NO.:** 26306

ADDRESS: 505 Fullarton Road Netherby 5062

CT 5540/952 A332 F12138 Section 466 Hundred of Adelaide

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Urrbrae Agricultural High School is significant as the first agricultural high school to be established in South Australia. The Original School Building for the school, incorporating the former headmaster's residence, and dormitory and kitchen facilities for boarders, was built on land previously owned by Peter Waite, a prominent South Australian pastoralist. In 1913 he donated his inner suburban property known as Urrbrae to the South Australian Government for use as an agricultural and forestry research unit, as well as 114 acres of adjoining land for use as an agricultural high school. Opened in 1932, the headmaster's residence (with planned dormitory used as classrooms), was the only one of five planned buildings to be erected, due to the effects of the Depression. In original condition, and still used for the purpose for which it was built, the School has continued to educate South Australian secondary school aged students in an agriculturally focused curriculum to the present.

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 Urrbrae Agricultural High School, with its agriculturally focused curriculum, was the first of its type in South Australia.

With its establishment in 1932, students in South Australia then had access to an secondary education in agricultural practices, which provided them with a foundation to pursue a career in farming/pastoralism or to go on to higher educational training in agricultural studies at the Roseworthy Agricultural College or at the University of Adelaide.

Today Urrbrae Agricultural High School is a comprehensive secondary school focusing on agriculture, technology and the environment. It has continued to educate South Australian secondary aged students in an agriculturally focused curriculum from 1932 to the present and provides more comprehensive courses in agriculture and horticulture than other secondary schools in South Australia.

EXTENT OF LISTING

The extent of listing is the Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School as generally indicated on the attached site plan. The extent of listing does not include interiors.

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

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

This is a large two-storey building of red brick with Marseilles tiled hipped roof, five brick chimneys, cement rendered columns and small-paned double hung sash windows. The former headmaster's residence faces east and there are porches with upper balconies under the roof on either side. An emblem in the shape of a wheat sheaf above the entrance door, at the northern end of this side, has the date 1930 on it. There are single-storey rooms on the northern and southern sides. Internally, there have been some changes to the proposed use for the rooms; for example, the part of the school designed for boarders is used for laboratories. However, neither the interior structure nor the exterior has been altered.

The components currently identified as being intrinsic to the heritage significance of the Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School include:

- The front facade and side walls, including windows, roof form and material, chimneys, porch and balcony, and decorative detailing to exterior.

History of the Place

Prominent agriculturalist, Peter Waite, purchased a property at Urrbrae in 1874 and built his own grand residence there for his family. He recognised the need for scientific training in agriculture and donated the property to the University of Adelaide in 1913, subject to life tenancy for him and his wife. Half the estate was to be for agricultural research and teaching and half for a public park. Waite also donated additional nearby estates that he purchased and his gift, valued at £100,000, was one of the largest public donations by a South Australian colonist. In addition, he donated 114 acres to the State Government to establish the Urrbrae Agricultural High School. He wished for some arrangement to be made for the boys (it was a single sex school) who distinguished themselves at the Agricultural School to continue their training at the nearby university.

The land donated to the University of Adelaide, which now forms the Waite Agricultural Research Institute and the Waite Arboretum, is on the eastern side of Fullarton Road. The land on which Urrbrae Agricultural High School is located is on the western side of Fullarton Road. Twenty acres of this land was originally owned by the Hon George Hall, MLC, who built a large two storey house on the property for himself in 1853 and named it 'Woodside'.

In 1915 Waite purchased the adjoining estate of "Claremont" and part of the "Netherby" estate, and added them to his bequest. The estates passed to the respective recipients when Waite died in 1922 but no building activity occurred for several years. The house at 'Woodside' was demolished in 1930 and the Department of Education and Children's Services prepared plans for a boarding and day school. Building commenced in 1930 but the effects of the Depression meant that further work was suspended in 1931, as loan funds were unavailable to continue the building. The headmaster's residence, kitchen quarters of the school and some dormitory accommodation was all that was completed of the five proposed buildings, at a cost of £11,064. The first headmaster, Mr AR Hilton, urged that the school open in these limited quarters, and it did so on 2 February 1932 with 60 students.

Before the school officially opened, students from the nearby Unley High School, which was overloaded by an enrolment of over 1,000 students in 1931, were accommodated there. For several weeks, three classes and three teachers were located at Urrbrae, which was about 1.6 kilometres from Unley High School. During 1932, 80 of the Unley High School students enrolled at Urrbrae, and Unley did not relocate any of its own students there. Unley High School's difficulties with numbers were resolved when fees were introduced for all high school students in 1934. The building at Urrbrae High School continued to be used as a headmaster's residence and classrooms; it has never operated as a boarding school as originally proposed (Creswell, pers. comm. 2007).

As the Depression also meant that the supply of materials to schools was curtailed, the Director of the Botanic Gardens, Mr Bailey, and the Director of the Waite research Institute, Dr A.E.V. Richardson, both volunteered to provide equipment and materials to assist in practical training for students at Urrbrae. Although this training was limited at first, headmaster Hilton arranged visits to factories, farms and orchards around Adelaide and the school gradually began to make small profits from its produce. School records show that the average number of students from 1932 to 1948 was 82, but this had increased to over 300 by 1954 and over 500 in 1964 (Norman, 1954, p. 146). A grove of 18 Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) trees was planted near the school on 26 July 1946 as a memorial to those students who died in the Second World War.

The first Year 12 class was formed in 1967 and in 1983 Urrbrae had 806 students. The first female students were admitted in 1974. Until 1966 the University of Adelaide rented most of the School's 134 acres for a peppercorn rental to conduct field experiments. This severely restricted the amount of practical farming the School could undertake. With the granting of land at Mintaro to Waite for experimental use, the land was gradually returned to the School and it was able to expand its agricultural activities. In 1969-70 a rebuilding programme replaced pre-fabricated classrooms with 18 new brick classrooms, 6 laboratories and a hall. The School added a swimming pool in 1968 and a gymnasium in 1985.

It has retained the original 46 hectares (114 acres) at Netherby, and this now includes defined areas for farming, plant and animal husbandry, environmental land, pasture, horticulture and arboriculture paddocks, and an extensive flood mitigation and a wetlands education and land management project.

References

This Summary has been adapted from the assessment report in:

- Peter Bell, Carol Cosgrove, Susan Marsden & Justin McCarthy, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey – Stage 2 (1928-1945)* (2008)

SITE RECORD

FILE NO: 26306

Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence,
Urrbrae Agricultural High School
505 Fullarton Road FULLARTON 5062

FORMER NAME:	N/A
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	A large two-storey building of red brick with Marseilles tiled hipped roof, five brick chimneys, cement rendered columns and small-paned double hung sash windows.
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1932
SA HERITAGE REGISTER STATUS:	Description: Provisionally Entered Date: 10 April 2013
LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS	Local Heritage Place City of Mitcham Heritage DPA authorised 22 Sept 2005
CURRENT USE:	Description: School Dates: 1932 - present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description: School and residence Dates: 1932 - ?
ARCHITECT:	Name: unknown Dates:
BUILDER:	Name: unknown Dates:
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description: City of Mitcham
LOCATION:	Unit No.: N/A Street No.: 505 Street Name: Fullarton Road Town/Suburb: Netherby Post Code: 5062
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type: CT Volume: 5540 Folio: 952 Lot No.: Lot 332, Filed Plan F12138 Area: Netherby Hundred: Adelaide

PHOTOS

FILE NO: 26306

Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence,
Urrbrae Agricultural High School
505 Fullarton Road FULLARTON 5062



Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School
(looking south-west from Fullarton Road)



Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School

(rear view, looking east)

SITE PLAN

FILE NO: 26306

Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence,
Urrbrae Agricultural High School
505 Fullarton Road FULLARTON 5062



Satellite image showing location of Original School Building/Headmaster's Residence, Urrbrae Agricultural High School, addressing Fullarton Road.