



The former Torrens Lake Police Station has important associations with the development of the police service in this state, and in particular, the management of law and order in the vicinity of the Torrens Lake, River and surrounding parklands. The building and its predecessor were constructed in response to a perceived need for policing along and around the river, and the continued police presence helped to maintain law and order in the area for many decades. The place is also a notable local landmark, demonstrating important aspects of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century development of the Torrens Lake and River.

**(b) *It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.***

The former Torrens Lake Police Station is the only example of a water police station in this state. It was constructed in response to the need for increased police presence in the Torrens Lake area, and survives as a unique reminder of both the development of the Torrens Lake precinct and the expansion of law and order services in South Australia.

As a distinctive example of the Inter-War Spanish Mission style, the building also displays an architectural style which is uncommon for public buildings in South Australia. It also has an unusual design which has been little altered since its original construction.

# SITE PLAN

Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide

PLACE NO: 26365

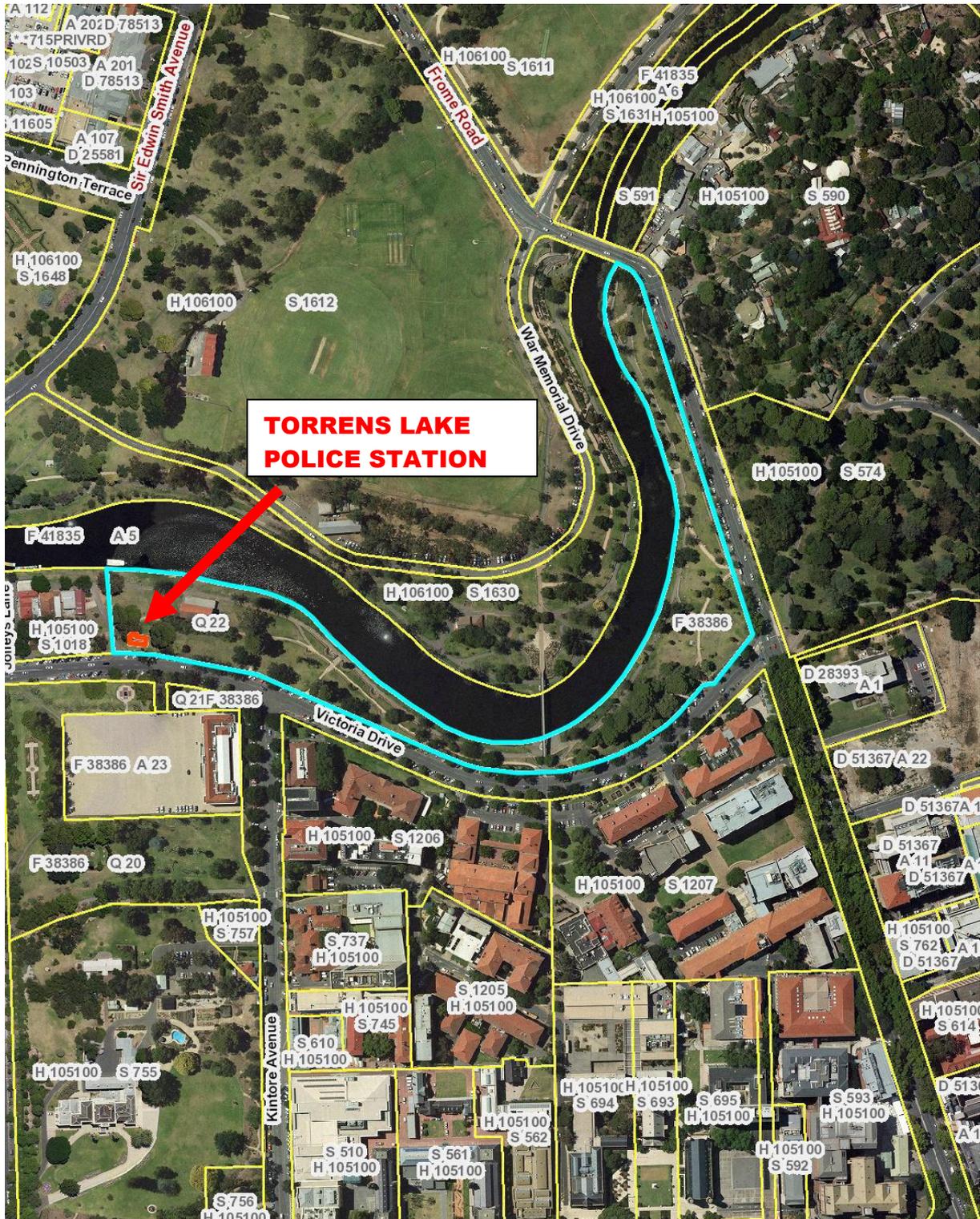


Former Torrens Lake Police Station (Note: Portico obscured by trees)  
**Site plan generally indicating the important elements and features of the place  
(outlined in red)**

# LOCATION PLAN

Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide

PLACE NO: 26365



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## 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*

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#### Physical Description

This is an asymmetric single storey complex that consists of a hipped Marseilles clad tiled roof over the Charge Room, which leads to an open courtyard (or exercise yard with privy) and to a double holding cell.

The Spanish Mission style of the construction is emphasised by the white painted plastering with clusters of tile inserts, wrought iron window grilles and scalloped parapets. Entry to the station is by means of a round arched loggia, a modestly tiled floor and multi-paned main door. The charge room also has a chimney. Modern services have been added to the building, but its physical integrity remains high.

The former police station is located in Karrawirra / Park 12, close to Victoria Drive on the southern side of the River Torrens and to the east of the Adelaide Bridge.

The components identified as being intrinsic to the heritage significance of the Former Torrens Lake Police Station include:

- Original brick building including loggia, charge room with chimney, double holding cell and exercise yard with privy;
- Spanish Mission detailing including plastered walls, scalloped parapets, wrought-iron window grilles, timber-framed doors and windows, and Marseilles-tiled roof.

The extent of listing excludes later additions (modern services).

#### History of the Place

South Australia's first water police station was constructed near the Adelaide Bridge in 1881. This timber structure was demolished in 1904, and in June 1914, the Police Department commenced a 42-year lease of the site of the current building. The new water police station was not constructed until 1928. It was designed by the Architect-in-Chief, and built by contractor EVF Dobbie at a total cost of £823 8s 5d.

The police station was constructed in the inter-War Spanish Mission style with an asymmetrical façade and functional layout. The building was constructed of brick with 'white Medusa cement finish', decorative iron work and a gable roof with red shingle tiles. The station comprised a charge room, a double holding cell at the rear of the exercise yard that contained toilet facilities. The Inter-war Spanish Mission style

of the building was not commonly used for public buildings, but reflects interest at the time in developing an Australian vernacular related to warm-climate styles of architecture, rather than English styles. This style was mainly associated with residential buildings, and its use for this police station perhaps reflects an increased interest in architectural trends by the Architect-in-Chief or South Australian Public Buildings Department. The 1920s building was contemporaneous with the now-demolished toilets in Victoria Square and the former Education Building in Kintore Avenue, also designed in the Inter-war Spanish Mission style.

A report on the work of the Water Police at the time appeared in South Australian Parliamentary Paper 53–1926:

*Torrens Lake and adjacent gardens have been under the constant supervision of two constables during the year. An additional constable was stationed there during the summer months. Attention was given by them to the protection of the numerous boat houses and other buildings in the vicinity of the lake as well as supervision at all band concerts on the Rotunda, and assisting in the regulation of traffic at functions held on Adelaide Oval. They have been very successful in preventing serious damage to the above-mentioned property, besides attending to the recovery of dead bodies from the lake. They were responsible for detecting 49 persons for various offences.*

The station remained in use until 1956 when the lease reverted to the Adelaide City Council. The former Water Police Station continues to be used by the Adelaide City Council as an office and store for its Parks and Gardens officers and a northern office for parking inspectors.

## **References**

- Donovan & Associates, *Adelaide Park Lands Heritage Places*, 2011.
- David Jones, *Adelaide Park Lands & Squares Cultural Landscape Assessment Study*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, October 2007, pp. 197, 202, 207, 215.
- Patricia Sumerling, *The Adelaide Parklands: a social history*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2011, p. 45, 54.
- *South Australian Parliamentary Papers*, 53–1926; 53-1928; 53–1929
- *Advertiser*, 3.8.1928
- State Records, *Account book*, GRG 38/32/1

## SITE DETAILS

Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide

PLACE NO: 26365

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|                                     |   |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| <b>FORMER NAME:</b>                 | Torrens Lake Police Station   |                           |
| <b>DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:</b>        | Single-storey rendered brick police station comprising loggia, charge room, double holding cell, exercise yard with privy, and Spanish Mission detailing including scalloped parapets, wrought-iron window grilles, timber-framed doors and windows, and Marseilles-tiled roof. |                           |
| <b>DATE OF COMPLETION:</b>          | 1928  |                           |
| <b>SA HERITAGE REGISTER STATUS:</b> | <b>Description:</b>   | Confirmed                 |
|                                     | <b>Date:</b>  | 7 March 2014              |
| <b>LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS</b>        | N/A   |                           |
| <b>CURRENT USE:</b>                 | <b>Description:</b>   | ACC Parks & Gardens store |
|                                     | <b>Dates:</b>   | 1956 to present           |
| <b>PREVIOUS USE(S):</b>             | <b>Description:</b>   | Police Station            |
|                                     | <b>Dates:</b>   | 1928 - 1956               |
| <b>ARCHITECT:</b>                   | <b>Name:</b>  | Architect in Chief        |
|                                     | <b>Dates:</b>   | 1928                      |
| <b>BUILDER:</b>                     | <b>Name:</b>  | EVF Dobbie                |
|                                     | <b>Dates:</b>   | 1928                      |
| <b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:</b>       | <b>Description:</b>   | Adelaide City Council     |
| <b>LOCATION:</b>                    | <b>Street No.:</b>  |                           |
|                                     | <b>Street Name:</b>   | Victoria Drive            |
|                                     | <b>Town/Suburb:</b>   | Adelaide                  |
|                                     | <b>Post Code:</b>   | 5000                      |
| <b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>            | <b>Title Type:</b>  | CR                        |
|                                     | <b>Volume:</b>  | 6102                      |
|                                     | <b>Folio:</b>   | 717                       |
|                                     | <b>Plan No.:</b>  | F38386                    |
|                                     | <b>Lot No.:</b>   | Q22                       |
|                                     | <b>Section:</b>   | 509                       |
|                                     | <b>Hundred:</b>   | Adelaide                  |

## PHOTOS

**Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide**

**PLACE NO: 26365**



Former Torrens Lake Police Station - View to the north-west showing exterior of the wall to the exercise yard and holding cell with entry to the yard.



Former Torrens Lake Police Station – view to the south-east

## PHOTOS

**Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide**

**PLACE NO: 26365**



Former Torrens Lake Police Station - view to the south-west



Former Torrens Lake Police Station - interior of former charge room



View to west from the holding cell,  
now store to the exercise yard

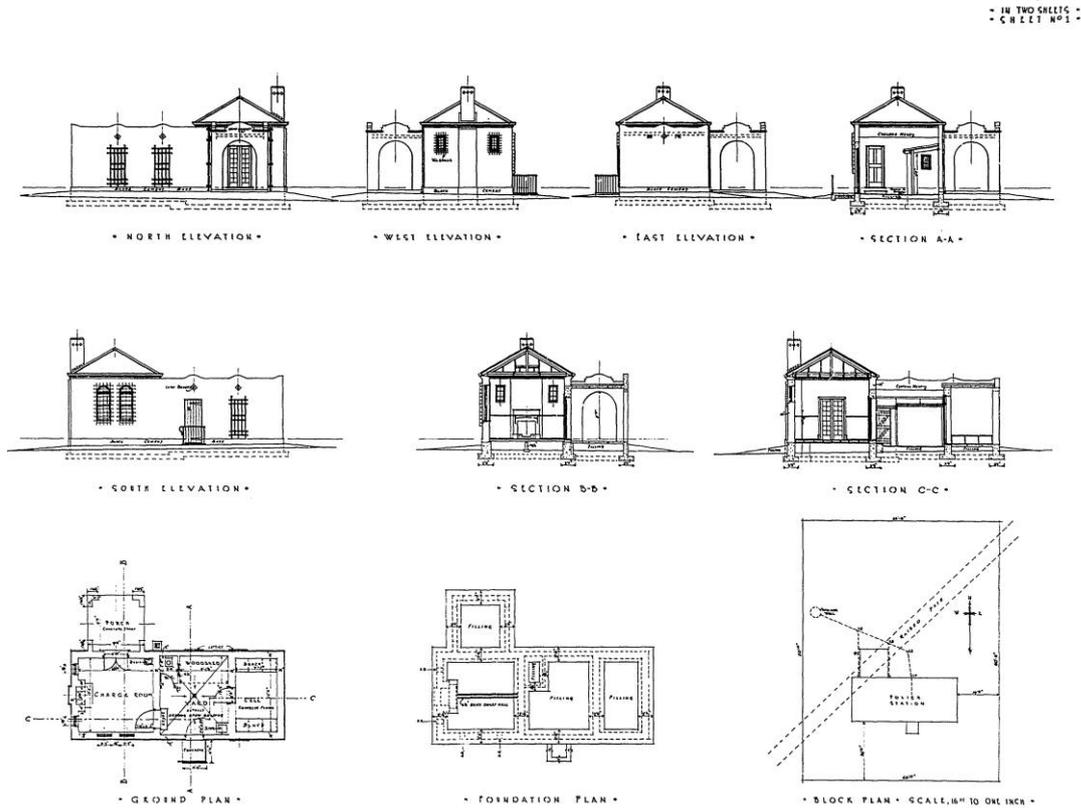


View north from the exercise yard  
showing toilet

# ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

Former Torrens Lake Police Station  
Victoria Drive, Adelaide

PLACE NO: 26365



- TORRENS LAKE ADELAIDE -  
- NEW POLICE STATION -  
- SCALE: 8 FEET TO ONE INCH -

*Handwritten signature*  
149/26

Plan of former Torrens Lake Police Station  
[Adelaide City Archives, Box 5800 Item 0003]