

Adelaide Park Lands Heritage Places

CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT MONUMENT

TARNDANYANGGA / VICTORIA SQUARE

Place Name and Address: Captain Charles Sturt Monument
Victoria Square
Adelaide

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The monument includes the statue of Captain Charles Sturt and the pedestal on which it stands. It is located in the triangular piece of garden in the north-west corner of Victoria Square

The monument features a life size bronze statue of Captain Charles Sturt represented in the rough clothing appropriate to an explorer, and holding a telescope and map. The pedestal of Murray River granite and Angaston marble features bronze plaques that include important historical information associated with Sturt and his explorations.

Various historical information is included on bronze plaques fixed to the pedestal:

Front Panel

Captain Charles Sturt
Explorer
Born April 28th 1785 — Died June 16th 1869

East Panel

Members of Party 1844–46
Charles Sturt Leader

James Poole Second	John Harris Browne Surgeon
John McDouall Stuart Draughtsman	Louise Piesse Storekeeper
Daniel G Brock	Collector Robert Flood
Joseph Cowley	George Davenport
James Lewis	David Morgan
Hugh Faulkes	John Jones
Richard Turpin	John Mack
John Sullivan	John Kirkby

Rear Panel

Main Exploring Expeditions
1828–29 Macquarie, Darling, Castlereagh, Bogan
1829–30 Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Murray, Lake Alexandrina
1844–45 Central Australia

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West Panel

Members of Party 1829–30

Charles Sturt Leader

Robert Harris

Fraser

Hopkinson

George Macleay Second

John Harris

Clayton

Mulholland

MacNamee

Statement of Heritage Significance:

The monument to Captain Charles Sturt is of heritage value as a memorial to a significant colonist who completed some of the most significant explorations in Australia. The fact that it was funded by public subscription indicates the regard in which Sturt was held. The location of Sturt's monument is also significant. Once it formed part of a triangle with Stuart and Light at the northern end of Victoria Square: it continues to balance the Stuart monument on the eastern side of the Square. The manner in which the monuments complement one another is particularly appropriate since Stuart formed part of Sturt's 1844–46 expedition.

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, especially that of the age of exploration. Sturt's voyage down the River Murray to Lake Alexandrina was a significant factor in the ultimate foundation of South Australia.

(e) It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment as a work of public art.

(g) It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance, namely, explorer Charles Sturt.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the monument to explorer Charles Sturt — statue and pedestal — in Tarndanyangga, Victoria Square, be provisionally entered in the South Australian Heritage Register.

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ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Criteria

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(e) It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment as a work of public art.

(g) It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance, namely, explorer Charles Sturt.

Its heritage value is enhanced by its location at the northern end of Victoria Square in association with that of John McDouall Stuart.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The monument to explorer Charles Sturt, unveiled on 21 December 1916 by Governor Sir Henry Galway, was the third to be erected to significant South Australian explorers after those to John McDouall Stuart and William Light. Indeed, the residue of funds left over after the completion of the monument to Light was used as seed funds for the Sturt monument. The monument committee was formed on 28 February 1907. Fundraising was slow, though assisted by a Pound for pound contribution from the state government.

The statue is the work of the English sculptor Adrian Jones, the same sculptor who designed and sculpted the equestrian statue that forms part of the Boer War monument at the intersection of North Terrace and King William Street. The work was assisted by photographs from Sturt's daughter Charlotte. It was shipped to Adelaide free-of-charge by the P&O company. The pedestal and bronze plaques were crafted in South Australia. The pedestal is of Murray Bridge granite fashioned by GE Morgan.

Adrian Jones (1845–1938), sculptor and artist, specialised in equestrian figures. He was born in Ludlow, Shropshire, studied at the Royal Veterinary College, qualifying in 1866 as a veterinary surgeon, and enrolling in the Army as a veterinary officer in the Royal Horse Artillery the following year.

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Jones served from 1867 to 1890 and saw service during the Abyssinian Expedition of 1868 before joining the 3rd Hussars in 1869. From 1871 to 1881 he served with the Queen's Bays in Ireland and was then attached to the 7th Hussars and fought with them in the Anglo-Transvaal war in 1881. In South Africa he was attached to the Inniskilling Dragoons. In 1884 Jones served in Egypt where he selected camels for the Nile Expedition of 1884 and finally joined the 2nd Life Guards and retired in 1890 with the rank of captain.

It was only in 1890, having achieved the rank of captain, that he retired, and in 1891 set himself up in Chelsea, London, as an artist. He had no formal art training, but prospered with commissions for horse portraits. Jones had a profound knowledge of equine anatomy. His most important work is the 40-ton "Peace in her Quadriga" (i.e. four-horsed chariot), dating from 1912 and on top of the Arch at Hyde Park Corner, a photograph of this is shown below but his Cavalry Memorial has long been regarded as one of the best pieces of sculpture to be seen in London.

([http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Adrian_Jones_\(1845-1938\),_sculptor](http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Adrian_Jones_(1845-1938),_sculptor))

The project of commissioning the monument was not without controversy. The representation of Sturt was not favoured by the committee, but insisted upon by Sturt's daughter Charlotte, then living in England. Fund raising remained a constant issue: the £950 cost of the statue was more than the committee anticipated, which, together with the £620 cost of the pedestal, left the committee with a £200 deficit: the Adelaide City Council funded the monument's erection.

A brief biography of Captain Charles Sturt outlining his contribution to Australian exploration and that of South Australia is featured in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

STURT, CHARLES (1795-1869), explorer, soldier and public servant, was born on 28 April 1795 in India, eldest of eight sons and one of thirteen children of Thomas Lenox Napier Sturt, a judge in Bengal under the East India Co. Although his Sturt and Napier ancestors were both Dorsetshire families of some standing, his father had reached India too late to share in the golden harvest reaped by many early officials and his life is described by Sturt's biographer as '45 years of clouded fortunes'.

Charles was sent at 5 to relations in England and at 15 entered Harrow. His father's economic difficulties prevented his entry to Cambridge and in 1813 he procured, through the intercession of his aunt with the Prince Regent, a commission as ensign in the 39th Regiment. He served in the Pyrenees late in the Peninsular war, fought against the Americans in Canada and returned to Europe a few days after Waterloo. He spent the next three years with the army of occupation in France and in 1818 was sent with his regiment to Ireland on garrison duties. On 7 April 1823 he was gazetted lieutenant and promoted captain on 15 December 1825. In December 1826 after a brief sojourn in England he embarked with a detachment of his regiment in the *Mariner* in charge of convicts for New South Wales and arrived at Sydney on 23 May 1827. In Sydney the two main subjects of discussion among intelligent people were politics and the mysteries of Australian geography. The savagely personal nature of local politics did not attract Sturt but the great unknown did. John Oxley and Allan Cunningham had charted a series of rivers, their

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courses directed towards the centre of the continent; the inference was that an inland sea lay beyond the horizon. Sturt and others longed for the honour of discovering it.

Soon after his arrival Sturt was appointed military secretary to the governor and major of brigade to the garrison. With these offices he could have taken an active part in politics, but preferred to interest himself in exploration and by November 1827 was able to write to his cousin, Isaac Wood, that the governor had agreed to his leading an expedition into the interior. Because (Sir) Ralph Darling had few officers on whom he felt that he could rely, he did not formally authorize the expedition for nearly twelve months. Meanwhile Sturt had, perhaps naively, discussed the proposal with the newly-appointed surveyor-general, (Sir) Thomas Mitchell, who felt that he had been slighted, and argued with some justice that Sturt, who had no qualifications, was being pushed by influence into a task which offered the prospect of honour, and which was his *ex officio*. Darling rejected this contention out of hand and Sturt acquired a lifelong enemy in Mitchell.

On 4 November 1828 Sturt received approval to proceed with his proposal to trace the course of the Macquarie River. Prudently he selected as his assistant the native-born Hamilton Hume, who had already shared leadership of a major expedition to the south coast. With three soldiers and eight convicts Sturt left Sydney on 10 November. Hume joined them at Bathurst and, after collecting equipment from the government station at Wellington Valley, they moved on 7 December to what became virtually the base camp at Mount Harris. On 22 December the expedition started down the Macquarie through country blasted by drought and searing heat. Having unsuccessfully tried to use a light boat, on 31 December Sturt and Hume began independent reconnaissances in which Hume established the limits of the Macquarie marshes and Sturt examined the country across the Bogan River. They then proceeded north along the Bogan and on 2 February came suddenly on 'a noble river' flowing to the west; Sturt named it the Darling. Unhappily its waters were undrinkable at that point because of salt springs. They followed the Darling downstream until 9 February, then returned to Mount Harris and from there traced the Castlereagh northward until it too joined the Darling. They then returned to Wellington Valley down the eastern side of the Macquarie marshes, having sketched in the main outlines of the northern river system and discovered the previously unknown Darling River. The expedition, however, had discovered no extensive good country. Although Sturt was ill on his return to Sydney he was scrupulous in recommending the convicts in his party for such indulgences as the colonial government could grant. Darling granted some remissions of sentence and in his dispatches commended Sturt's patience and zeal.

The Darling River had offered a new challenge and Sturt soon sought permission to lead another expedition to trace the Darling to its assumed outlet in the inland sea. However, it was decided instead that he should investigate the Lachlan-Murrumbidgee river system discovered by Oxley and proceed to the Darling only if the Murrumbidgee proved impassable.

On 3 November 1829 the second expedition left Sydney. In Sturt's party were George Macleay, son of the colonial secretary, Harris, Hopkinson, Fraser and Clayton, who had all been in his first expedition, and several soldiers and convicts. They moved through country which was partly settled until 28 November when they left Warby's station near Gundagai which was then the limit of settlement and set off into the unknown country. After many crossings of the Murrumbidgee to find suitable tracks for the drays they moved down the north bank of the river and on Christmas Day arrived at its junction with the Lachlan. There difficult marshes raised the question whether they should

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follow the governor's instructions or go to the Darling. Since the Murrumbidgee was still fairly clear Sturt decided to use the whale-boat which he had brought with him and to build a small skiff from local timber. On 7 January 1830 he set out with seven men in the two boats on the Murrumbidgee.

Apart from the complete loss of the skiff soon after embarkation the journey was uneventful until 14 January when the rapid current of the Murrumbidgee carried them to a 'broad and noble river' which Sturt later named in honour of Sir George Murray, secretary of state for the colonies. Further down the Murray they had two threatening encounters with Aboriginals, and on 23 January came to a new large stream flowing in from the north. After rowing up it for a few miles Sturt was convinced that it was the Darling and returned to the Murray. An uneventful voyage brought them on 9 February to Lake Alexandrina whence they walked over the sandhills to the southern coast. They reached the channel where the lake entered the sea but were dismayed to find it impracticable for shipping. Depressed by failing to find either an effective inland waterway or the ship which Darling had promised to send from Sydney, Sturt now faced the appalling prospect of rowing more than 900 miles (1448 km) against a strong current with his weary men and certain food shortage. They began the return journey on 12 February and on 23 March arrived at the Murrumbidgee depot only to find it deserted by the base party which had been left there. The starving crew struggled on until 11 April when Sturt abandoned the boat and sent two men to seek the relief party which he believed to be near. A week later the two men returned with supplies and the revived expedition reached Sydney safely on 25 May.

Although an interim dispatch carried by Macleay in advance of the main party had been published in the *Sydney Gazette* Darling did not report to England on the expedition until February 1831. Meanwhile Sturt, after a short illness, had been sent to Norfolk Island as commandant of the garrison. There he took part in the rescue of the occupants of a wrecked boat and, though active in quelling a convict mutiny, had nevertheless earned the respect even of the mutineers for his generally humane outlook. In July he was relieved by F. C. Crotty, captain in the 39th Regiment.

Sturt's return to Sydney was delayed by illness until October; already there had been proposals to send him to New Zealand as Resident or on another journey to the Darling, but his health was so bad that he was immediately granted leave to go to England. On the voyage his eyesight, which had been failing, broke down completely leaving him totally blind. While undergoing crude but moderately successful treatment for his condition he published an account of his two journeys and after many petitions to the Colonial Office was promised a grant of 5000 acres (2024 ha) in New South Wales on condition that he sold his commission and renounced all other rights arising from his military service. On 20 September 1834 he married Charlotte Greene, the daughter of an old family friend.

Sturt sailed with his wife and arrived at Sydney in mid-1835. With intentions of settling down to country life he located his grant at Ginninderra (near Canberra) in June and in August bought 1950 acres (789 ha) at Mittagong, where he lived for two years. In this time he was appointed a justice of the peace, became a passive member of the governing body of the Australian Museum, was recommended unsuccessfully for appointment to the Legislative Council, and christened his first child Napier George. Early in 1837 he bought 1000 acres (405 ha) at Varroville between Liverpool and Campbelltown, where he soon established another home.

In 1838 financial difficulties forced him to sell his Mittagong property and induced him to join in a venture for overlanding cattle to South Australia.

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Although in the process he was able to add something to knowledge of the Murray River, the journey almost ended in disaster. Breeding cows in the herd delayed the party and it ran short of supplies and had to be rescued by his friend, Edward John Eyre. The venture was also a financial failure. Sturt was greeted in Adelaide by flattering attention which brought balm to his pride injured by recent failures. Incautiously he became associated with an attempted land transaction which some colonists thought was questionable. On 30 October he returned to Sydney to learn of the birth of his second son, Charles.

In Adelaide he had been invited to join the South Australian public service and on 8 November 1838 was formally offered the position of surveyor-general. Despite his lack of technical qualifications and some doubts about Governor George Gawler's power to make the appointment, he accepted, sold his property in New South Wales and sailed with his family for Adelaide on 27 February 1839. In spite of sickness and continuing financial worries all seemed to go well. The first shattering blow came in September when Lieutenant Edward Frome arrived from London with a commission as surveyor-general. Gawler, in a loyal attempt to help Sturt, appointed him assistant commissioner of lands, though at a reduced salary. In November he and his wife joined Gawler in what was intended to be a short excursion up the Murray valley. On his expedition a young man lost his life and the governor was placed in serious danger. Although Sturt was not responsible the tragedy affected him deeply.

In 1841 Sturt was offered the resident management of the South Australian Co., but refused. Soon afterwards he committed what was probably the most serious error of judgment in his life: when news arrived that Captain George Grey was to replace Gawler as governor, Sturt wrote to the Colonial Office complaining of Grey's youth and offering himself as an alternative candidate for vice-regal office. Grey, who could not tolerate opposition, never forgave him this clumsy affront.

From that time Sturt's affairs worsened. Grey confirmed his provisional appointment as assistant commissioner, but later refused him the office of colonial secretary on the grounds that his sight was too poor. The Colonial Office then decided to abolish the assistant commissionership, leaving Sturt with the inferior post of registrar-general at a much lower salary. To a man of Sturt's temperament the situation was now intolerable. He was at loggerheads with the governor, deeply in debt, inadequately paid, and could see no hope of improving his prospects. He petitioned the Colonial Office for financial compensation or transfer to another colony. When refused, he decided that the only course left to him was to establish by some bold stroke a claim on the government for special consideration. His best chance of doing this was in exploration and, since he still believed in the existence of an inland sea, he prepared a grandiose plan for exploring and surveying, within two years, the entire unknown interior of the continent, and in 1843 forwarded it to the Colonial Office through his old friend, Sir Ralph Darling. While waiting for a reply he and Grey had a series of minor clashes which culminated in Sturt's censure by the Executive Council for an incautious letter. In May 1844 the secretary of state rejected Sturt's original plan but approved a more limited proposal to penetrate the centre of the continent in an attempt to establish the existence of a mountain range near latitude 28°S.

On 10 August 1844 Sturt left Adelaide with 15 men, 6 drays, a boat and 200 sheep. In eight days the party reached Moorundie and then followed the Murray River to its junction with the Darling, and up the Darling to the vicinity of Lake Cawndilla, where they camped for two months making several scouting expeditions into and beyond the Barrier Range. In December the

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party was short of water and some of the men showed signs of scurvy but they moved further north into the Grey Range. There they made a camp on permanent water fortunately found at Depot Glen on Preservation Creek. By that time summer heat had dried up all other water within reach and from 27 January 1845 to 16 July they were literally trapped in inhospitable country; men and equipment suffered terribly from the heat and Sturt's second-in-command, James Poole, died of scurvy.

In July they were released by heavy rain. Sturt moved his party in a north-westerly direction to Fort Grey, whence he made a series of reconnoitring expeditions culminating in a 450-mile (724 km) journey towards the centre of the continent. Repulsed by the sand dunes of the Simpson desert he at last reluctantly abandoned the idea of an inland sea.

Sturt and his party returned exhausted to Fort Grey and after another trip to the Cooper's Creek area from 9 October to 17 November they found the waterhole was rapidly drying. Return to the River Murray became imperative but nevertheless Sturt proposed that the main party should go home, while he and John McDouall Stuart made a do-or-die trip towards the centre. The surgeon, J. H. Browne, resisted so strongly that these heroics were dropped and the whole party went off together. At this point Sturt then succumbed to a serious attack of scurvy and Browne took command through the most difficult part of the journey. By using Aboriginal foods Sturt had almost recovered when the expedition reached Moorundie on 15 January. He arrived at Adelaide on 19 January 1846 ahead of his party, which followed a few days later.

In his absence Grey had been replaced by Major Robe and Sturt had been appointed colonial treasurer. His position was now more comfortable and early in 1847 he applied for leave. He left for England on 8 May and arrived in London just too late to receive personally the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society, but was able to complete a published account of the expedition. On his return to Adelaide in August 1849 he was soon appointed colonial secretary but unfortunately his sight began to fail and at the end of 1851 he retired on a pension of £600.

Sturt had often expressed his love for Australia and his determination never to return to England, but the need to secure the future of his children forced him to change his mind and he left Australia on 19 March 1853. He spent his last years peacefully at Cheltenham, being widely respected and continually consulted about Australian affairs, particularly the preparations for the North Australian expedition of 1854. He applied unsuccessfully for the governorship of Victoria in 1855 and of Queensland in 1858. In 1869 at the instigation of his friends he sought a knighthood, but died on 16 June before the formalities were completed. Later the Queen permitted his widow to use the title Lady Sturt. He was pursued to the end by financial difficulties and it was said that had his old friend George Macleay not come forward, there would not have been enough in his estate for a decent burial.

Although Sturt probably entered his career as an explorer through influence, his selection was justified by results. He was a careful and accurate observer and an intelligent interpreter of what he saw, and it was unfortunate that much of his work revealed nothing but desolation. He prided himself with some justice on his impeccable treatment of the Aboriginals, and earned the respect and liking of his men by his courtesy and care for their well-being. Indeed his capacity for arousing and retaining affection was remarkable; it made him an ideal family man but a failure in public life. Without toughness and egocentricity to balance his poor judgment and business capacity he had little chance of success in colonial politics. In this sphere he might well be

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described as a born loser. He remained throughout his life an English Tory gentleman with an unshakeable faith in God. Despite his passionate interest in Australia, his inability to appreciate the attitudes of the colonial community was shown by his proposal in 1858 for a colony of Asiatic convicts in the north. He will always be remembered, however, as the first to chart the Murray River.

REFERENCES:

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Simon Cameron, *Silent Witnesses: Adelaide's Statues and Monuments*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1997, pp. 68–73.

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HJ Gibbney, 'Sturt, Charles (1795 - 1869)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp 495-498.

Register, 22.12.1916.

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SITE RECORD:

FORMER NAME:	Charles Sturt Monument
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Monument
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1916
REGISTER STATUS:	Description: n/a
CURRENT USE:	Description: Monument Dates:
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description: n/a Dates: n/a
SCULPTOR:	Name: Adrian Jones Dates: 1916
BUILDER:	Name: GE Morgan Dates: 1916
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group: Category:
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description: Adelaide City Council
LOCATION:	Unit No.: - Street No.: n/a Street Name: Victoria Square Town/Suburb: Adelaide Post Code: 5000 Region No.: n/a Region: Adelaide
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type: CROWN Volume: 5779 Folio: 247 Lot No.: n/a Section: n/a Hundred: Adelaide

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CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT MONUMENT TARNDANYANGGA / VICTORIA SQUARE

Site Plan



CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT MONUMENT

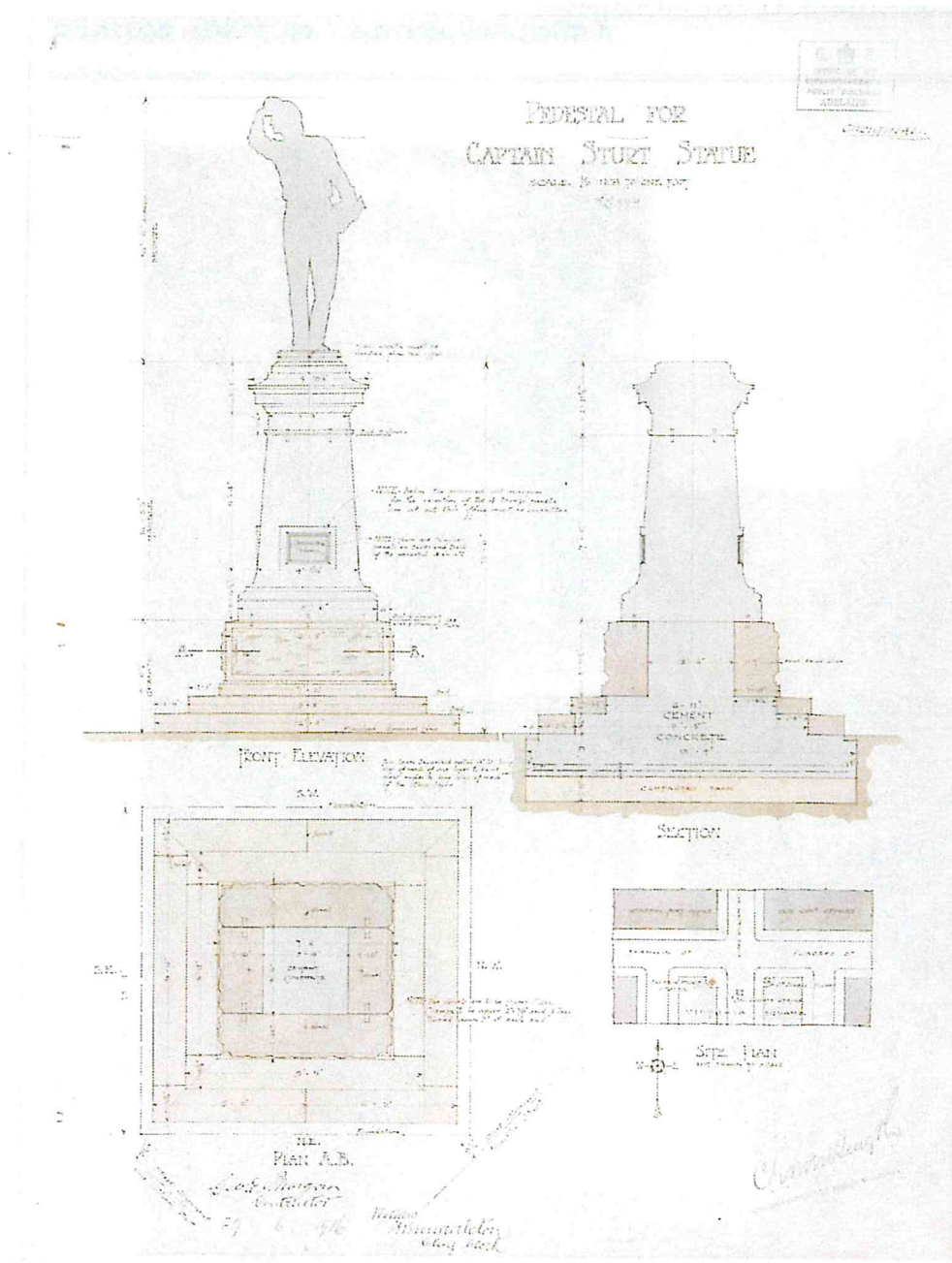
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Archival Plan



Sketch design for the Sturt statue; State Records GRS_10956_1_1_3

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Design for the Sturt Statue pedestal, State Records, GRS_10956_1_1_5

CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT MONUMENT

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Front elevation of the Charles Sturt monument: view to southwest

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Rear of the Charles Sturt monument: view to the north-east