

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

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**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**ADDRESS:** 68 Goodwood Road, Wayville, 5034

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### DESCRIPTION



**Figure 1. Ridley Memorial Gates after Remodelling**

Source: Heritage South Australia, 2017

*As the Ridley Memorial Gates have been modified the following description outlines the gates as built and then identifies the major changes to them.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates were built in the Interwar Stripped Classical style and feature some Art Deco detailing.<sup>1</sup> They were comprised of a central triumphal arch with gate and two wing walls that were obliquely angled to create a forecourt. Both the arch and walls are constructed from reinforced concrete.

The central portion is composed from a substantial rectilinear arch with two stepped columns to either side. A single door opening on either side of the arch provides access to its interior and space for members of staff. Small windows on both the front and back face of the arch enable a view of either the waiting crowd on Goodwood Road or down the Kingsway into the Showground. The opening created by the arch is filled with a decorative welded steel portcullis that extends from ground to ceiling and opens inwards into the Showground. The gate appears to be formed in four hinged sections. Construction details recorded in the September 1933 issue of *Constructional Review* notes that all the iron work on the structure was welded steel. It is not clear if that assertion is accurate or not as the metal work appears to be wrought iron.<sup>2</sup>

Other decorative elements on the arch include the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society Crest, centrally positioned on top of it; a fluted cornice; 'Ridley

Memorial' written in decorative lettering along its front; shaped, welded steel and glass arrow-shaped lights; welded steel grilles over the windows; and fluted detailing on the inner edges of the arch. Decorative elements on the two stepped columns include a smooth-rendered cornice and cast-concrete air vents at the top of each column. A simple plinth runs along the extent of arch and wall, and is painted a darker shade to the upper section of the structure. The original colour scheme is unknown, however, in the early twenty-first century the upper portion of the structure was painted in pale ochre with the plinth detailed in a burnt orangey-brown.

The two adjoining wing walls were each composed of three spans. The first abutted the triumphal arch and is in alignment with it. The second span angled slightly towards Goodwood Road, while the third angled further towards Goodwood Road to create a forecourt. The wall, like the stepped columns, has a smooth-cement-rendered cornice. The first two spans of the walls each had two doors that enabled access to the Showground through a turnstile housed within the wall. Decorative shaped and welded steel doors of the same design as the main gate were rolled open and closed as required. The third span of each wall was used as a change facility. They had two windows each with a welded steel grille of the same design but larger than those on the windows in the arch. "Change" in decorative lettering is written above the windows, and a cast-concrete air-vent is positioned over each window at the top of the wall. An arrowed-shaped light of the same design as the arch is fixed to the end of each wall and faces Goodwood Road.

The widening of Goodwood Road took place at some point in time between November 2007 and November 2009. At that time the two outer spans of the wing walls were demolished. The remaining two spans of wall, one each side of the arch, were extended. The two new portions of wall were built lower than the original and also stepped slightly forward of it. They were both built to reflect the 'Change' span of the original wall, and to incorporate some of the original features including the decorative lettering and grilles over the windows. The lights and vents have both been lost and new overhead lights have been fixed to the top of each new section of wall (figure 1).

Changes to the arch include the removal of the top sections of the portcullis or gate, the replacement of the Society's crest with a smaller version, the addition of overhead lighting and flagpoles, and the relocation of the bronze plaque to the front of the arch facing Goodwood Road. In addition, the Ridley Memorial Gates were repainted at this time, and the ochre colour-scheme was replaced by a grey one. Inside the structure, the turnstiles have been removed and internal partitioning added.

A report written by Ron Danvers in 2012 for the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society notes that the Ridley Memorial Gates have concrete cancer.<sup>3</sup> While there is currently little visual evidence of concrete cancer externally, it is apparent inside the structure with cracking and some concrete losses. The areas of loss have been painted over.

## HISTORY

### Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia

The South Australian Agricultural Society was formed on 28 October 1839 to further the agricultural potential of the new colony and was modelled on the Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland. A few years later, in early 1842 a permanent agricultural and horticultural society was proposed and on 24 January 1842 became the South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society. While the two organisations ran concurrently for a few years they had merged by February 1846. However as Linn argues, the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia believed that the merger had taken place prior to 1844.<sup>4</sup>

Initially the Agricultural Society struggled, however, through the dedication of early members such as Charles Berkeley and David McLaren (manager of the South Australian Company), the fledgling Society was revitalised and began to flourish. The first display or exhibition of agricultural produce took place during a Society dinner at Fordham's Hotel, Grenfell Street on 8 December 1840. Further exhibitions or displays continued in a similar format until 18 February 1842, when the two Societies held the first Agricultural and Horticultural Show (Show) in the large school room on North Terrace.<sup>5</sup> Mary Thomas, one of South Australia's original colonists from 1836, listed in her diary the wide range of grains, vegetables, fruit and dairy products displayed, and commented that the room 'was crowded, even too much so for my comfort.'<sup>6</sup>

Further Shows were held in various locations around the city until 1844, when Botanic Park became the Show's first official home. In its early years, the exhibits were accommodated in large tents and marquees, until 1860 when the 'Exhibition Building' opened (Figure 2). This purpose-built pavilion was designed by Colonial Architect Edward Angus Hamilton and constructed over the summer of 1859 and 1860 ready for the Show held in March that year, and was located near Frome Road behind the Adelaide Hospital.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 2. Exhibition Building near Frome Road, 1867**

Source: SLSA B8006

In January 1888, the Society began negotiating with the South Australian Government to take over the 'management and use'<sup>8</sup> of the Jubilee Exhibition Building and grounds located on North Terrace between the University of Adelaide and Frome Road. However, it wasn't until August 1894 that permission was officially granted. The Society moved swiftly and the Autumn Show held there in March 1895 was touted a great success (figure 3).<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 3. Spring Show held at the Jubilee Exhibition Building and grounds, 1901**

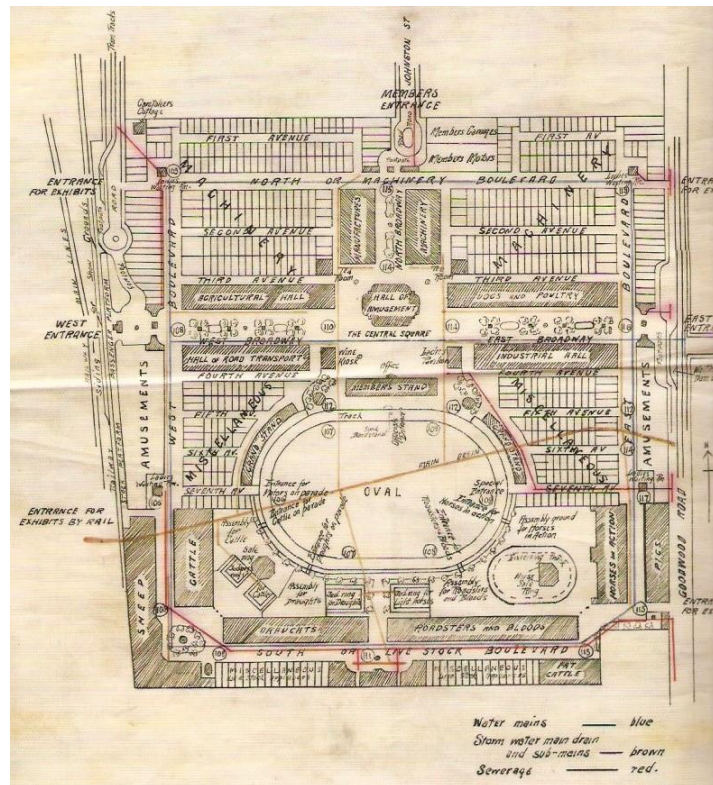
Source: SLSA B9090

By the early 1900s, the Society became increasingly aware of the tenuous nature of their lease arrangement with the Government for the Jubilee Exhibition site. The University of Adelaide, located on the western boundary, had begun negotiating with the Government to take over the Exhibition building and grounds on North Terrace to alleviate its chronic lack of space. At a meeting between Premier Verran and the Society's president William Rounsevell in December 1910, Rounsevell advised the Premier that the Society would consider moving to another location if it was necessary to do so for 'State reasons', and fair compensation was received for the improvements made to the Jubilee Exhibition site. The Society heard little more about the situation until the September 1911 Show, when Premier Verran announced in his toast at the Show's official luncheon that the Government had purchased 50 acres in Wayville with the intent of moving the Society there. The Government offered the Society a 99-year peppercorn lease as well as contributing up to £30,000 for relocation costs and a loan of £40,000 to assist with relocation and buildings. The Society signed the lease on 26 November 1913.<sup>10</sup>

### **Adelaide Showground (Wayville)**

The development of the Adelaide Showground at Wayville began with an architectural competition. Twenty-six entries were received from England, New Zealand and every Australian State. First place was won by Melbourne-based architect Charles Heath, who received £500 for his efforts. Although Heath's plan has been modified over time, it still partly underpins the site layout.<sup>11</sup>





**Figure 4. Plan showing Heath's Layout for the Wayville Showground**

Source: RAHSSA Archive

Heath estimated the cost of developing the Wayville site at £180,000. Site works commenced in 1914 and included relocating Keswick Creek (that ran diagonally across the site) into an underground drain, and earthworks to level the main arena and provide mounds for spectators. The declaration of war in August 1914 and the ensuing years of warfare slowed the development of the Wayville Showground. In 1915, Adelaide-based architectural firm English and Soward was appointed as site architects and engineers, and by the end of the year ongoing earthworks and the construction of the exterior of the Heavy Horse Pavilion (now Cattle Pavilion/Dairy Cattle Pavilion) was completed. The exterior of the Stud Sheep Pavilion was also finished in 1917 just before a complete halt on all works at the site due to the First World War. Prior to the recommencement of work on site in 1920, the two pavilions were used firstly as stores for wheat and wool, and then as a location for the vocational training of returned soldiers.<sup>12</sup>

While development of the site recommenced in 1920, the Society's limited funds curtailed the extent of works they could undertake, especially given the costs of preparing the site to hold a Show were estimated at £100,000. As a result, the Society considered abandoning Wayville and staying at the Jubilee Exhibition site on North Terrace a prospect the Government and University of Adelaide were greatly concerned by. It was only after negotiations with the Government and an additional grant of £30,000 that the Society committed fully to the Wayville site, and a period of intense building followed.<sup>13</sup> Between 1922 and 1925 the Secretary's Office, Members' Grandstand, Department of Agriculture, Lever Brothers, Cattle, Pig, Dog and Poultry

Pavilions, Hall of Industries and Motor Hall were built. During the same period, some of the light-weight structures from the Jubilee Exhibition site were also moved to Wayville.<sup>14</sup>

The first Show at Wayville opened on 8 September 1925 and was a huge success with record numbers of exhibits. The range of exhibits provided the public with an engaging and practical demonstration of the importance of primary industry to the State's economy. At the time, agriculture and grazing was worth around £10 million of the State's total £13.5 million in exports.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, primary production (excluding mining) between 1840 and 1939 accounted for between 20 and 30 percent of South Australia's gross domestic product.<sup>16</sup>

In the following year, the 1926 Spring Show achieved record visitor numbers of over 200,000 people, and inspired the following comments in the Society's Annual report regarding the enduring significance of the Show to South Australia:

To the farmer the Show means an admirable opportunity to meet old friends and to make new, but it means much more. It is his chance to see the best in all lines, it enables him to establish a standard of competition...

To the city dweller the Show brings an opportunity to appreciate the part which the rural areas play in the well-being and prosperity of the State. It forces onto them a realisation that beyond the smoke haze of the city lies an industry productive of wealth, health and happiness in greater measure than any other.

From the point of view of the businessman – be he machinery merchant, motor salesman, manure distributor or land agent – the Show provides a means for him to bring his wares before his prospective purchases.<sup>17</sup>

The record numbers of exhibitors and visitors also highlighted the urgent need for additional facilities, including a second grandstand, extensions to the Hall of Industries and Secretary's Office, and several new pavilions and buildings.

In October 1925, the Society's longstanding Secretary JA Riley resigned. Riley had been instrumental in the Society's smooth relocation from North Terrace to Wayville as well as initial site development. His replacement, Harrold Jack Finnis, was appointed first permanent Secretary and heralded a new period of development at Wayville. This began in 1926 with the construction of a number of new buildings and site improvements, including: a new public grandstand that also provided retail space, refreshment rooms and facilities for the press and first aid staff as well; the wine kiosk; a bandstand; and a branch of the Commonwealth Bank. At the same time, the Motor pavilion and horse stables were extended, and landscaping improvements included the planting of lawns and trees. Wayville also became a venue for a variety of events such as trotting and speedway racing, and the home ground for the West Adelaide Football Club (1927 and 1939).<sup>18</sup>

A number of further additions and improvements followed in ensuing years until development was halted by the Second World War. The works undertaken up until

the end of 1939 included upgrades and extension of the roadways and drainage system, power and lighting, public telephones, and the addition of a President's Room in the Members' Grandstand; extensions to the Industrial Hall, Stud Sheep Pavilion and the Secretary's Office; the construction of Side Show facilities, pavilion (now known as David Roche Pavilion 1928), pavilion (now known as Technology Centre Pavilion 1929), Home Industries Hall, Dairy Foods Hall (c1931), Beef Cattle Pavilion (1932), Centennial Hall (1936), Dairy Cattle Shed, Elder Smith's Ram Sales Buildings (now known as Old Ram Shed 1933), Derby Stand, Savings Bank of SA, and Elder Pavilion (now known as the Archives 1936). In addition, the clock in the Secretary's Office was donated by Robert Melrose, and a drinking fountain by the Roche families' Adelaide Development Company. Three sets of decorative entrance gates were installed during this period and included the Bonython Gate (1927), Ridley Gate (1933) and Kidman Gate (1937), respectively donated by Sir Langdon Bonython, Ridley Foundation and the Kidman family – the Society also contributed to the cost of the last two (figure 5).<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 5. Aerial of the Wayville Showground, 1936.**

Source: RAHSSA Archive

Shortly after the 1939 Show, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) occupied the Showground and turned the site into a military base. As a consequence, no Shows were held between 1940 and 1946. The number of military personnel billeted at Wayville was initially 4,000, but as other sites became operational the number dropped to around 3,000 for the duration of the war. Collectively, over one million military personnel passed through the Wayville base.

The Showground was primarily used as a Recruit Reception Depot and provided basic training to new army recruits. A number of overseas units were formed there, including the 2/10<sup>th</sup> 2/27<sup>th</sup>, 2/43<sup>rd</sup> and 2/48<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalions, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion and 2/8<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. In addition, Wayville was also used as a Leave and Transit Depot and for evacuees from the Darwin bombings. During the Army's occupation of the site, the pavilions and other buildings were used for accommodation, communications, detention barracks, hospital, records and pay offices, ordnance store, mechanical engineers workshop, transport section and guard room.<sup>20</sup>

After the Army left in 1947, the Society began the slow process of repairing the damage done to the buildings – a process that was hindered by post-war building restrictions due to a lack of building materials. However, despite these obstacles the Society decided to run the Show in 1947. It was a huge success with the 'show hungry'<sup>21</sup> public, and a new attendance record was set, with over half a million people passing through the turnstiles.<sup>22</sup>

In the decades after the war the South Australian Government, under the leadership of Premier Tomas Playford, pursued an industrialisation agenda that transformed the State's economy.<sup>23</sup> Agricultural and horticultural production continued to grow, however, the way it operated changed profoundly. Mechanisation and agricultural science replaced labour in a 'silent revolution'<sup>24</sup>. Farmers found they needed to become businessmen and to adopt new management and business practices to make a viable living.

By the end of the 1960s, these changes had also transformed where South Australian's lived. Prior to the Second World War about half of the population was based outside of Adelaide – by the end of the 1960s about two thirds of South Australians lived in metropolitan Adelaide, and only a sixth in rural areas.<sup>25</sup> The Society, and in particular the Show, remained a vital connection that linked the city and country. The strength of the connection provided by the Show was demonstrated by the ever increasing numbers of exhibitors and visitors to it each year.

To meet the needs of exhibitors and attendees, the Society continued to improve existing facilities as well as to construct a number of new pavilions and buildings. These included: Stirling Hall (1954); Rothmans Theatrette (1964 – now known as the Royal Show Theatre); CWA Café (1966); Angas Pavilion (1967); refurbishment of the Hall of Industries and its renaming as Hamilton Hall (1973, demolished 2001); Animal Nursery (1981); Jubilee Pavilion (1987); replacement of the Pig Pavilion with the Leader Pavilion (1988); and the construction of the Woodcutting Stand (1988). In 1974, several Showground pavilions were used by various Government Departments, the Salvation Army and Red Cross as a distribution centre for food and clothing sent to evacuees from Cyclone Tracey.<sup>26</sup>

Redevelopment of Wayville during the 1990s included the construction of the atrium over the Kingsway (1992), Venue and Management Offices and Workshops (1994), Ridley Pavilion (1995), Dog/Basketball Pavilion (1998) and Goat and Alpaca Pavilion (1999). In 1998, the Society's 99-year lease, due to expire in 2012, was also extended



until 2062. In the early years of the twenty-first century the Kingsway was redeveloped again. However, the biggest change was the demolition of Centennial Hall due to concrete cancer, and the subsequent demolition of Duncan Hall and the International Pavilion to make way for the new Goyder Pavilion and Duncan Gallery that opened in 2008. As it has since 1915, the Showground with its many buildings and spaces continues to provide accommodation for numerous events and activities that happen throughout the year ranging from the weekly Sunday Farmers Market to annual events such as university examinations, craft fairs and home shows.<sup>27</sup>

Over the years, many different types of events and entertainments have come and gone, including the 140 children Scottish Dancing on top of horse back, and the Flying Devils brought over from Europe for the Show circuit around Australia. Similarly, the rides in sideshow alley have been modernised and provide thrill seekers with seemingly ever more death-defying experiences. The show bags that once offered the public free samples in a bid to entice them to buy a company's wares are now sold and contain a myriad of foodstuffs, toys and other goods. Yet despite these changes, the Show remains a vital point of contact between the city and country and a means to educate the public about the importance of rural industries and the people who make their livelihood from them.<sup>28</sup>

### **John Ridley**

The Ridley Memorial Gates were officially opened 1 September 1933 as a memorial to South Australian pioneer John Ridley. Ridley, a devout Wesleyan Methodist, is generally acknowledged as the inventor of the stripper or reaper, a machine for harvesting and threshing wheat, as well as for establishing the first flour mill in South Australia. Ridley was born in 1806 at West Boldon in England and migrated with his family to South Australia, arriving in April 1840. Ridley and his family established themselves on Lot 74 Hindmarsh (now the car park for the Entertainment centre). By August 1840 he had set up the Watt's Beam steam engine he had brought with him from England. Ridley used the engine to initially power a saw mill, however, by late 1840 he had converted it to become the Colony's first flour mill. Interestingly, the South Australian Company had also brought milling equipment out to South Australia at this time, however, their machinery was still on Kangaroo Island. By 1841, Dr Kent had established his mill at Hackney and other mills followed soon after, including a mill established at Royston Park by the South Australian Company and run by Ridley.<sup>29</sup> In addition to milling, Ridley also owned shares in the Burra copper mine and purchased land and leased it to tenant farmers (in the area now known as the suburb of Ridleyton). In 1842 Ridley had 300 acres under cultivation.<sup>30</sup>

Ridley's and the other early flour mills were of vital importance to the fledgling Colony's economy as they enabled South Australia to become self-sufficient in the production of flour that was, up until that time, mostly imported at great expense. The early mills also heralded the beginnings of what became a significant export industry for South Australia – the production of flour. By 1884 over 84,000 tons of flour was sold per annum to the other Australian colonies as well as overseas markets.<sup>31</sup>

1843 was a busy year for Ridley, as in addition to running two mills and letting acreage for cropping, he also designed, built, tested and modified his stripper (also known as a reaper). Ridley's desire to invent the reaper arose at a time when concerns had emerged about the capacity of the Colony to harvest the wheat then under cultivation. In a bid to solve the problem, the Corn Exchange Committee offered a prize of £40 to any colonist who came up with a viable model or plan for a harvesting machine by September 1843. Ridley who was already busy working on his machine prior to the announcement of the competition did not enter at that time, and apparently none of the entries received by the Committee were deemed acceptable.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 6. Illustration by Loudon for a mechanical harvester**

Source: *South Australian Register* 30 November 1887, p.6. Source: SLSA B63458/8



**Figure 7. Ridley's Stripper**

Ridley based his design for the reaper on a Roman design he found in John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* and tested his prototype machine for the first time in October, at which time it failed (figure 6). Subsequent modifications included the addition of combs and beaters that swept the grain or corn as it was known from the stalks. Ridley retested the machine that November at one of his tenant's farms, harvesting 70 acres of wheat in a week at a cost of 5 shillings per acre (figure 7).<sup>33</sup> The location of the farm where the successful test took place is reputed to be adjacent to the Showground at Wayville, however this claim, made by Sir Langdon Bonython in his speech at the opening of the Ridley Memorial Gates in 1933, remains unverified. Indeed, Manning suggests the first trial of the machine took place at Salisbury, while Cockburn states it took place at Ridleyton.<sup>34</sup>

*The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* described the operation of the reaper in 1844 as thus:

It is something like a cart, pushed forward by two horses, instead of drawn. In front of the machine is a very large steel comb, which is pushed forward, and seizes the straw of the wheat as an ordinary comb seizes hair. As the machine is moved forward, the straws are by the motion drawn through the comb until the head, or parts containing the grain, is caught in the comb, and dragged upward towards the mouth of the machine. From the peculiar dryness of this

climate, the wheat *shells* very easily; that is the corn or grain falls very readily out of the husk ... the grain is, as it were, combed out, and falls down the comb to the mouth of the machine. That part of the head of the wheat which does not get through ... is ultimately dragged up to the mouth of the machine, when it is knocked off by an apparatus like that of the ordinary threshing machine ... whilst the rapid advance of the machine creates a strong draft, by the aid of which the corn is winnowed. The straw is left standing; so much of it is required for manure [and] is mown, and the remainder is burned.<sup>35</sup>

Aside from Ridley's tests at various farms around the city, Captain Bagot is recognised as the first to use Ridley's stripper to harvest wheat on his property. By 1845, Ridley had not only made three strippers for himself, but had also sold machines to Captain Bagot, The South Australian Company, Dr McDonald and Mr Manfull. These machines were responsible for harvesting 1,700 acres of wheat in 1845, or approximately 9 percent, of the land then under cultivation with wheat in South Australia. Each reaper could harvest nearly an acre of wheat in an hour at a time when it took a man one day to harvest an acre manually.<sup>36</sup>

By 1850, fifty reapers were in operation across South Australia and the other Australian colonies.<sup>37</sup> The reaper not only reduced the cost of harvesting, but also enabled vast tracts of formerly uncultivated land to be planted.<sup>38</sup> The acreage under cultivation shown in Table 1 indicates the rapid rate of growth in the cultivation of wheat during the first forty years of the Colony.

**Table 1 – Acreage under cultivation with wheat in South Australia 1836-1875**

Year	Population	Acres of Wheat
1836	546	0
1840	14,600	1059
1845	21,759	18,838
1850	63,700	41,807
1855	96,982	90,000
1860	124,112	273,672
1865	156,605	410,608
1870	183,979	604,761
1875	210,442	898,820

Source: Davies, p.21

Ridley's machine provided a degree of certainty that crops could be harvested. However, while it was an important factor in agricultural expansion in the early decades of the colony, it was not solely responsible for that growth. Acclimatisation and experimentation resulting in a greater understanding of the South Australian environment also heralded agricultural expansion in the 1840s. Later in the century, the passage of the *Strangways Act 1869* enabled farmers to purchase up to 640 acres on credit, thereby making farms more commercially competitive at a time when

drought, rust (a type of fungal disease) and new competitors for the same export markets were emerging.<sup>39</sup>

It was at the Society's first Show held in Botanic Park in 1844 that Ridley was presented with a special prize of 10 guineas for his reaping machine. At the presentation of the award, Governor Grey stated 'I am firmly convinced that it [the reaper] will be of the utmost importance to the agriculturalists of this country, as it will enable them successfully to compete in corn [wheat] in any part of the world.'<sup>40</sup>

Controversy about who invented the machine ensued when John Wrathall Bull claimed that he had invented the reaper, not Ridley. In particular, Bull claimed that Ridley had taken the comb and beaters from Bull's design presented to the Corn Exchange Committee in 1843. However, Ridley refuted Bull's claims, and given that he had a working machine while Bull only had plans, Ridley was viewed as its inventor.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, Ridley only made money from the sale of the machines he made. In keeping with his position that he invented the machine to aid the fledgling colony, he did not patent his invention. He also turned down the initial prize of £40 offered by the Corn Exchange Committee. Indeed, he added to the money awarded to him by the Society and presented £100 to the Public Library or what is now the State Library of South Australia.<sup>42</sup>

Ridley returned to England with his family in 1853. The Adelaide City Council and Agricultural and Horticultural Society presented him with complimentary addresses in 1858. As a self-made man he was able to spend his time travelling while also working as a lay preacher. He was noted for his charitable works and also wrote, published and distributed religious literature while continuing to indulge his passion for inventing. He died in 1887.<sup>43</sup>

There are a number of ways in which Ridley is commemorated in South Australia. The Hundred of Ridley (located next to the Murray River at Walker Flat) and the suburb of Ridleyton (part section 371, Hundred of Yatala) are both named after him. Ridley purchased the part of section 371 that was later named after him from Osmond Giles in 1842. Manning claims that he applied to bring a portion of it under the provisions of the Real Property Act in 1873 and once successful created the subdivision of Ridleyton.<sup>44</sup>

The silver John Ridley testimonial candelabrum, now in the collection of the University of Adelaide, was also an early memorial to Ridley and his invention of the stripper. The candelabrum was made by Julius Schomburgk and exhibited at the International Exhibition in London in 1862 prior to being presented to Ridley later that same year. It includes a tiny model of Ridley's stripper at its apex.<sup>45</sup> Roseworthy College has a bust of Ridley as well as a John Ridley Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship was established in 1913 by the Public Trustee for the John Ridley Memorial Trust to perpetuate the memory of John Ridley. It is awarded annually to a student studying at Honours level at the Roseworthy Agricultural College, now a campus of the



University of Adelaide.<sup>46</sup> An electoral district for the South Australia government was also named after Ridley in 1938, but due to boundary changes ceased to exist in the late twentieth century. The Society also named one of its new pavilions built in 1995 the Ridley Centre. Another memorial to John Ridley is the entry gate to the Showground on Goodwood Road, Wayville.

### **Ridley Memorial Gates**

Calls for a physical memorial to John Ridley began to take shape in 1928 with the formation of the Ridley Memorial Committee. The Committee's membership was, at the time, comprised of some of South Australia's most well-known names including, Sir Langdon Bonython (chair), who had already donated the Bonython Gates at the northern entrance of the Showground in 1927; Hon WG Duncan MLC and President of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society; Hon HS Hudd MP and Commissioner of Public Works; E Anthony MP; Dr Grenfell Price; FN Simpson; Guy Fisher; HJ Finnis also Secretary of the Society; and, Stephen Parsons, the Committee's honorary secretary and stalwart whose actions resulted in the memorial being built.

An obelisk was originally proposed as a memorial to Ridley and an appeal to the general public for donations was made. By November 1932, the Committee had received £80. Ultimately, fifty-four of South Australia's most prominent citizens and companies donated money to the fund. Additional and substantial contributions by the Butler Government and the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society meant that rather than a simple obelisk, the imposing entry gates were able to be built.

Gavin Lawson of the newly formed Adelaide-based architectural firm Lawson and Cheesman was commissioned to design the memorial gates in 1933. Lawson practiced as an architect in South Australia primarily between 1921 and 1952. He was born in Scotland in 1882 and studied architecture in the UK before moving to South Africa in 1905. He relocated to Queensland prior to enlisting in the AIF in 1914. After the war, he moved to Adelaide (1921) and is known for introducing the South African Dutch Colonial style to the State.<sup>47</sup> The gates were constructed using reinforced concrete by locally prominent firm Fricker Brothers at a cost of £757 (figure 8).<sup>48</sup> The Ridley Memorial Gates and a Tablet inset into them, were opened on 1 September 1933 by His Excellency the Governor Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven (later the Governor General - Lord Gowrie).<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 8. The Ridley Memorial Gates, 1933.**

Source: Architecture Museum, UniSA, Cheesman Collection S327/9/4

The Ridley Memorial Gates are a dominant feature along Goodwood Road. The large structure was composed from an imposing concrete entry with a welded steel 'portcullis' and two angled wing walls. However, the widening of Goodwood Road between 2007 and 2009 resulted in the demolition of the angled section of each wing wall and the reconfiguration of the Memorial Gates. The interior of the gates was also extensively modified and, in particular, the turnstiles removed.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the Ridley Memorial Gates, the Showground at Wayville had a number of imposing entrances that are now either rebuilt or demolished. In 1927, Sir Langdon Bonython donated the northern entrance gates in response to a request from the Society's President Sir Lancelot Stirling and Chairman AE Hamilton. The Bonython Gates were an imposing brown-brick structure with Marseille roof tiles, including a change office with four windows, four turnstiles and a paved forecourt flanked by 10 foot high walls.<sup>51</sup> The Bonython Gates have since been demolished and replaced with a remodelled and reduced version of the other notable entrance to the showground, the Kidman Gates.

Like the Ridley Memorial Gates, the Kidman Gates were also built on the eastern side of the Showground adjacent to Goodwood Road. The gates were opened in 1937 as a memorial to South Australian pastoralist Sir Sidney Kidman and were located in front of the 1936 Centennial Hall (now demolished). The Kidman Gates were an imposing structure designed by architectural firm Caradoc Ashton & Fisher and featuring substantial Art Deco piers, wrought iron gates and fencing.<sup>52</sup> The Kidman Gates were remodelled and moved to become the Showground's northern entrance after Centennial Hall was demolished in 2007.

## Chronology

- 1839      Agricultural Society of South Australia formed and modelled on the Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland.
- 1840      **John Ridley and his family arrive in South Australia and establish the colony's first flour mill at Lot 74 Hindmarsh.**  
The Society's first display of agricultural products at Fordham's Hotel. Regular displays follow.
- 1842      South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society forms.  
The first Agricultural Show is held in the large school room on North Terrace, Mary Thomas notes that the event was very crowded.
- 1843      The Corn Exchange offers a prize for a viable model of a mechanical harvester.  
**Ridley invents a mechanical harvester known as the Ridley Stripper or Ridley Reaper. He refuses the prize money offered by the Corn Exchange and decides not to Patent his invention.**
- 1844      The two societies merge becoming the Agricultural and Horticultural Society.

The Society holds its first Show in Botanic Park and marquees and tents provide shelter for the exhibits.

**The Agricultural and Horticultural Society present Ridley with 10 guineas in recognition of his invention of a mechanical harvester.**

**1845 Ridley sells strippers manufactured by himself to Captain Bagot, the South Australian Company, Mr Manfull and Dr McDonald.**

**1850 50 of Ridley's Strippers are in operation across Australia.**

**1853 Ridley and his family return to England.**

1860 The 'Exhibition Building' designed by Colonial Architect Edward Angus Hamilton is completed ready for the Show held in March that year.

**1862 John Ridley testimonial candelabrum is exhibited at the London Exhibition.**

**1887 John Ridley dies.**

1888 The Society begin negotiations with the Colonial Government to lease the Jubilee Exhibition building and grounds, located on North Terrace between the University of Adelaide and Frome Road, as their Showground.

1894 Permission is granted by the Government for the Society to use the Jubilee Exhibition Building and grounds.

1895 The first Show is held at the Jubilee Exhibition site.

c1900 The Society become aware of the tenuous nature of their lease for the Jubilee Exhibition site as the University of Adelaide pursues more space.

1910 Society President William Rounsevell advises Premier Verran that the Society would consider relocating to another site if it is necessary and the Society is fairly compensated for the improvements to the Jubilee Exhibition site.

1911 Premier Verran announces that the State Government have purchased 50 acres at Wayville with the intention that the Society move there.

1913 The Society signs a 99 year peppercorn lease for the Wayville site.

**Establishment of the John Ridley Memorial Scholarship.**

1914 Design competition for the layout of the Wayville Showground is won by Melbourne-based architect Charles Heath.

1915 Adelaide firm English and Soward are appointed as the architects and engineers for the development of the Wayville site.

1915 Heavy Horse Pavilion (now the Brick Cattle/Dairy Cattle Pavilion) is built.

1915-1920 First World War and aftermath prevents the development of the Showground at Wayville with the exception of the already started Sheep Pavilion.

1915-1917 The Stud Sheep Pavilion is constructed and the building is used to store bales of wool and bags of wheat.

- 1919 Pavilions are used to support vocational training for returned soldiers.
- 1920 Redevelopment of the Showground at Wayville recommences.
- 1921 The Society considers abandoning the Wayville site and staying on at the Jubilee Exhibition site. The Government offers additional funding to assist with the move to Wayville.
- 1922-1925 Secretary's Office; Members' Grandstand; Department of Agriculture, Lever Brothers, Pig Dog, Poultry and Stock Sales Pavilions; Hall of Industries and Motor Hall are constructed. Some of the light-weight structures are also moved from North Terrace to Wayville.
- 1925 The first Show is held at the Adelaide Showground, Wayville, and is a huge success with record numbers of exhibits.**
- 1925 The Society's longstanding secretary JA Riley resigns. Riley played a pivotal role in the relocation to Wayville. He is replaced by the Society's first permanent secretary Harold Jack Finnis. Finnis heralds a new era a development for the Showground.
- 1926 Public Grandstand, Wine Kiosk and Horse Stables built.
- 1927 Bonython Gates built.
- 1928 The need for a suitable memorial to John Ridley is publicly proposed.**  
David Roche Centre built, Hall of Industries extended.
- 1929 Technology Centre built.
- 1930 Home Industries Hall built.
- c1931 Dairy Foods Hall built.
- 1932 Beef Cattle Pavilion built.
- 1933 The John Ridley Memorial Gate is opened in time for the Spring Show.**  
Stud Sheep Pavilion is extended by 88ft and includes a 6ft cellar beneath the addition.
- 1933 Ridley Gates and Elder Smith Ram Sales building constructed.
- 1934 Secretary's office extended including the addition of a second storey.
- 1936 Centennial Hall, corrugated-iron Dairy Cattle shed, Derby Stand, Savings Bank of South Australia and Elder Pavilion constructed.
- 1937 Kidman Gates built.
- 1939 The Stud Sheep Pavilion is extended by 102ft increasing the number of sheep that can be exhibited to 1000.
- 1939-1947 Last Show held (1939) before the AIF occupies the Showground.
- 1947 First Show held since 1939.
- 1954 Stirling Hall built.
- 1964 Heavy Horse Memorial and Rothmans Theatrette built.



- 1966 CWA café built.
- 1967 Angus Pavilion constructed.
- 1973 Hall of industries is refurbished and renamed Hamilton Hall.
- 1980 Wayville Pavilion built.
- 1981 Animal Nursery constructed.
- 1982 Hamilton Hall is damaged by fire and rebuilt
- 1987 Jubilee Pavilion constructed.
- 1988 Woodcutters Stand and Leader Pavilion constructed.
- 1989 Bonython entrance is demolished
- 1992 Atrium constructed.
- 1994 Venue Management Offices and Workshops built.
- 1995 Ridley Pavilion constructed.**
- 1998 The State Government extends the Society's lease until 2062. The Dog/Basketball Pavilion is built.
- 1999 Goat and Alpaca Pavilion constructed.
- 2001 Hamilton Hall demolished.
- 2002 Hamilton Boulevard developed and the Jubilee Pavilion is extended.
- 2005 Kingsway developed.
- 2007 Centennial Hall and Department of Agriculture Pavilion demolished.
- 2008 The widening of Goodwood Road necessitates the reduction and remodelling of the Ridley Memorial Gates.**
- Goyder Pavilion and Duncan Gallery constructed.
- 2009 Kidman Gates moved to Rose Terrace.

## **ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Statement of Heritage Significance:**

There is no statement of heritage significance as the recommendation from Heritage South Australia is that the gates do not meet any of the criteria for State heritage listing.

### **Comparability / Rarity / Representation:**

#### **Showground Structures**

Many of South Australia's rural communities once had, and in some cases still have, active Agricultural or Agricultural and Horticultural Societies who ran/run an annual Show. Consequently, there are a number of showgrounds scattered across the State. These small showgrounds provided their communities with a variety of facilities ranging from a walled or fenced space to slightly larger complexes that included a few buildings such as a grandstand and/or pavilion or hall. However, it was the Adelaide

Show, also known at times as the Royal Show or Royal Adelaide Show, that was and still is the pre-eminent event. As a result, the Society's showground located at Wayville is the foremost showground facility in the State.

There are a number of structures listed as either State or Local heritage places that broadly represent showground structures including:

- Grandstand and masonry building, Balaklava Showground, Balaklava, LHP, c1910
- Grandstand and block work additions, Bordertown, LHP
- Show Pavilion, Freeling Recreation Ground, Freeling, LHP
- Pavilion and wall, former Kapunda Showground, 1900, SHP 14582
- Pavilion and Grandstand, Minlaton Showground, 1882, SHP10186
- Grandstand, Mount Gambier Showgrounds, Mount Gambier, 1885 & 1954, LHP
- Hall and gates, Strathalbyn Showground, Strathalbyn, 1910 LHP

### **Memorials/ Memorial Gates/Wall and Ticket Offices**

Memorial gates or a combination of gates and walls and/or ticket offices feature prominently on both the South Australian Heritage Register as well as Local heritage lists. A sample of State heritage listed gates, gates and walls and/or ticket offices include:

- Main Gates and Walling, Adelaide Zoo, Frome Road, Adelaide, 1882, SHP 13648
- Victoria Park Racecourse (North-East Precinct including Gates and Turnstile Building), Adelaide, 1926, SHP 26393
- Pioneers Memorial, Mosley Square, Glenelg, 1936, SHP 12002
- Main Entrance Gates to Adelaide Botanic Garden, North Terrace, Adelaide, 1880, SHP 10843
- South Australian Museum (former Armoury & Archway), North Terrace, Adelaide, 1851, SHP 13667
- Mitchell Gates and Victoria Drive and Frome Road Fences, The University of Adelaide and University of South Australia, Victoria Drive, Adelaide, 1934, SHP 13653
- Soldier's Memorial Gates, Main North Road, Clare, 1922, SHP 11781
- Former Z Ward, Perimeter Trench, Wall & Gates, Glenside Hospital (former Parkside Lunatic Asylum), 226 Fullarton Road, Glenside, 1885, SHP 16191
- Elliott Memorial Gates and Stone Fence, Dutton Park, Baker Street, Kapunda, 1906, SHP 14579
- Second World War Memorial Gates, Memorial Drive, Port Pirie, 1959, SHP 19047
- Gate/Ticket Office, Thebarton Soldiers Memorial Recreation Ground, Ashley Street, Torrensville, 1922, SHP 11835

Of particular note is the decorative ironwork on the Mitchell Gates (SHP 13653); the combination of gate and ticket office at the Thebarton Soldiers Memorial Recreation Ground (SHP 11835); the gates at the Victoria Park Racecourse (SHP 26393); and the Second World War Memorial Gates at Port Pirie (SHP 19047).



**Second World War Memorial Gates, Port Pirie SHP 19047**

Source: Googlemaps, 2018



**Thebarton Soldiers Memorial  
Recreation Ground, Torrensville SHP  
11835**

Source: Googlemaps, 2018



**Victoria Park Racecourse Gates, Adelaide  
Park Lands SHP 26393**

Source: Googlemaps, 2018



**Mitchell Gates, University of  
Adelaide Victoria Dr, SHP13653**

Source: Googlemaps, 2018

In addition to the above State Heritage Places, there are numerous memorial gates, gate and walls and/or ticket offices recognised as local heritage places. A sample includes:

- Carriageway entrance gates, Hackney Road Botanic Park, Adelaide, LHP
- Government House Gate House, Piers and Walling, North Terrace, Adelaide, LHP
- Brighton Bowling Club Memorial Gates, 11-17 Keelara Street, Brighton, LHP
- Burnside School Memorial Gates, 1 High Street, Burnside, LHP
- Cheltenham Park Racecourse Entrance Gates and Fence (located on Cheltenham Parade, approximately 230 metres from the South Eastern corner of Cheltenham Parade and Torrens Road), 615 Torrens Road, Cheltenham, LHP
- Tabernacle Cemetery/ Newland Memorial Gates, Lot 91 Tabernacle Road, Encounter Bay, LHP
- Memorial Gates, Kingswood Recreation Reserve, Lot 32 Belair Road, Kingswood, LHP
- Original High School & War Memorial gates, 1 Wellington Road, Mount Barker, LHP
- Rotunda, Memorial Gates Garden and Grandstand, Vansittart Park, 106 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier, LHP

- McCorquindale Park (1930s-1940s), Rymill Memorial Hall (1940s) & Memorial Entrance Gates (1950s), Cameron Street, Penola, LHP
- Park Street Entrance and Gateway, Park Street, Peterborough, LHP
- Victoria Park Gates, Queen Street Part Lot 20, Peterborough, LHP
- Memorial Gates, Cnr. Memorial Drive and Gertrude Street, Port Pirie, LHP
- Memorial Arch, Port Wakefield, LHP
- Prospect Memorial Gardens, Flora Terrace, Prospect, LHP
- Gates of Remembrance, Robert Street Corner of Robert Street and Raglan Avenue, South Plympton, LHP
- Showgrounds, Hall & Gates, 11-25 Coronation Road, Strathalbyn, LHP
- Unley Oval (McKay Grandstand, Sturt Lawn Tennis Club and entrance gate, and Sturt Bowling Club and entrance gate), Trimmer Terrace, Unley, LHP
- Virginia Oval including memorial gates, Lot 255 Old Port Wakefield Road, Virginia, LHP
- Belt Memorial Garden, Church Terrace, Walkerville, LHP
- **Wayville Showgrounds - Ridley Memorial Gates and fencing, 68 Goodwood Road, Wayville, LHP**
- Wayville Showgrounds – Iron fence panels associated with new Kidman Entrance from Hamilton Boulevard, 68 Goodwood Road, Wayville, LHP
- Gates to Batchelor Reserve, 1 Norseman Avenue, Westbourne Park, LHP

Of particular note are the Cheltenham Park Racecourse gates and the Memorial Gates in Port Pirie, as well as the existing local heritage listing of the Ridley Memorial Gates and the decorative wrought iron panelling from the Kidman Gates.



**Memorial Gates Port Pirie, LHP.**



**Cheltenham Park Racecourse Gates, LHP.**

Source:<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/memorials/723>

Source: Googlemaps, 2018





**Detail of the Kidman Gates  
Adelaide Showground showing the  
listed wrought iron panels.**

Source: Googlemaps 2018

## Gavin Lawson

Gavin Lawson was responsible for the design of numerous buildings in South Australia as well as at least one other memorial. There are currently three buildings designed by Lawson on the State Heritage Register and two local heritage places. Most of these places were constructed during a similar time to the Ridley Memorial Gates, namely the 1920s and 1930s. The following list provides surviving examples of his work from that time:

- Hartley Building (originally Adelaide Teachers College), The University of Adelaide, Kintore Avenue, Adelaide, SHP 13652
- Bice Building at Royal Adelaide Hospital (South-West Precinct) [including Sheridan Building (former Kiosk), Bice Building, Women's Health Centre (former Outpatients' Department), Allied Health Services Building (former Admissions and Casualty Department), McEwin Building, Former Margaret Graham Nurses' Home SHP 13093, remnant iron-railling fence to North Terrace, and brick boundary wall to Frome Road], North Terrace, Adelaide SHP 26413
- Kiribilli - House, Garage and Gate Posts, 7 The Common Beaumont, SHP 26300
- House, 2-4 Lawson Avenue, Clearview, LHP
- Burnside Council Chambers and Town Hall, Greenhill Road, Burnside, 1922 (unlisted)
- Light Horse Memorial, East Parklands, Adelaide, 1925 (unlisted)
- Young's Shoe Store, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, 1925 (unlisted)
- Lister House now Tobin House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 1928 (unlisted)
- **Wayville Showgrounds - Ridley Memorial Gates and fencing, 68 Goodwood Road, Wayville, 1933, (LHP)**
- Co-operative Insurance Offices, Bentham Street, Adelaide, 1934, (LHP)
- HH Tandy Confectionary Company, now WEA building, Angas Street , Adelaide, nd, (unlisted)

Of particular interest is the Co-operative Insurance Offices on Bentham Street, Adelaide. The offices were designed by Lawson in a mixture of the interwar free classical and Art Deco styles at a similar time to the Ridley Memorial Gates.



**Co-Operative Insurance Offices, Bentham Street**

Source: Googlemaps, 2018.

### **Reinforced Concrete structure**

Reinforced concrete has been used as a building technique in South Australia since the earliest years of the twentieth century. *The Critic* noted that Frank Hedley Counsell was the first architect in South Australia to use reinforced concrete in Adelaide when he designed the addition to the Advertiser Office (now demolished) in 1906 using the Hennebique principle.<sup>53</sup> Local builder Walter Torode was also well known for his experiments with reinforced concrete in residential buildings constructed in the 1910s. Subsequently, the South Australian Railways Department adopted Torode's system to construct low cost homes for its workers.<sup>54</sup> CE Owen Smyth, Superintendent of the South Australian government Works and Building Department, designed the Margaret Graham Nurses Quarters (SHP 13093) in 1908 with reinforced concrete stairways and floors.<sup>55</sup>

The use of reinforced concrete in structures such as bridges and tanks became increasingly typical as the twentieth century progressed. The South Australian Reinforced Concrete Co. established in 1906 by Victorian engineer John Monash (later Sir) with South Australian partners EH Bakewell, David Mitchell, John Gibson and CH Angas became leaders in the construction of reinforced concrete structures in South Australia including bridges, tanks, wharves and buildings.<sup>56</sup> During the 1930s and 1940s, Hurren Langman and James, one of South Australia's most prominent structural engineering firms during the middle third of the twentieth century, were leaders in the design and use of reinforced concrete. Some of the reinforced concrete buildings the firm undertook the structural engineering for include: Grand Lodge of Freemasons on North Terrace; Barr Smith Library (roof), University of Adelaide; Munitions plant at Salisbury; and the Adelaide Steam Ship Company building in Port Adelaide.<sup>57</sup>

There are a number of places in the South Australian Heritage Register that are noted for the use of reinforced concrete in their structure including:

- Watsons Gap Railway Bridge, Port Elliot, 1907, SHP 11183
- Office (former Dwelling built by WC Torode), 34 Unley Road, Unley, 1908, SHP 14095
- Margaret Graham Nurses Home, Old Royal Adelaide Hospital, Frome Road, Adelaide, 1908, SHP 13093
- Sir William Goodman Bridge, Holland Street, Hindmarsh, 1909, SHP 10987
- Dwelling built and designed by WC Torode, 8 Bellevue Place, Unley Park, 1910, SHP 14097
- Dwelling (former 'Amphi Cosma') built and designed by WC Torode, 305 Young Street, Wayville, 1914, SHP 10725
- Sir Samuel Way Building (former Moore's Department Store), Victoria Square, 1916, SHP 13412
- Office (former Liberal Club Building), North Terrace, Adelaide, 1923, SHP 13362
- Office (former Alliance Assurance Company Building), Grenfell Street, Adelaide, 1926, SHP 13592
- Grand Lodge of Freemasons Adelaide Masonic Centre, 254 North Terrace, Adelaide, 1927, SHP 10956
- Office, East End Market, East Terrace, Adelaide, 1929, SHP 13921
- Adelaide Bridge over the River Torrens, King William Street, Adelaide, 1930, SHP 13640
- Centennial Hall (deemed to be of state heritage value but not listed due to severe concrete cancer, now demolished), Adelaide Showground, Wayville, 1936
- Woodlands Apartments, 125 Jeffcott Street, North Adelaide, 1940, SHP 26299

The Co-operative Insurance Offices designed by Lawson on Bentham Street (pictured above) were also constructed using reinforced concrete.

In some instances, both a poor understanding of the technique and quality of building materials has resulted in some buildings developing concrete cancer. Concrete cancer occurs when the steel reinforcing is inadequately treated or isolated from moisture, causing it to rust. The corrosion process causes the metal reinforcing to expand resulting in cracking and losses. If the concrete cancer is severe enough, it reduces the building's structural integrity and requires either costly remediation works or building demolition. A notable example is Centennial Hall, built in 1936 at the Adelaide Showground. Although assessed as being of State heritage value, it was not listed on the South Australian Heritage Register due to the severity of its concrete cancer.

## **Assessment against 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.**

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates were built in 1933 as a memorial to John Ridley, significant early South Australian colonist. The gates were built to recognise the significant contribution Ridley made to the development of agriculture in South Australia, particularly through the 1843 invention and subsequent manufacture of a mechanical harvester known as the Ridley Stripper or Ridley Reaper. While Ridley also built the first operational flour mill in the Colony in 1840 and had other mining and agricultural interests that made him a wealthy man, it is for his invention of the stripper that he is most well-known.

At the time the stripper was invented there were grave concerns in the Colony about the lack of labour to harvest the crop. Figures published in 1845 suggest that the stripper could harvest an acre in an hour, whereas it took a man about a day to achieve the same result. Therefore the stripper essentially guaranteed that extensive new crops could be planted without fear of having insufficient labour to harvest it. The certainty that crops could be harvested was a significant factor in increasing the amount of wheat under cultivation, although not the only factor. Subsequently, both grain and flour became important export commodities for South Australia during the nineteenth century.

In 1933 during his speech at the opening of the Ridley Memorial Gates, Sir Langdon Bonython claimed that the Gates face the property on which the reaper was tested. However, these claims remain unsubstantiated. Furthermore, both Manning and Cockburn suggest that testing of the machine took place respectively at Salisbury and Ridleyton. Therefore, while it is possible that testing did take place on the land adjacent to the Showground, it is equally likely that it took place at Salisbury, Ridleyton or all three locations. This in itself is not

considered to be strong enough evidence for the place to be considered of State significance. However, the connection has been recognised by the local heritage listing of the Ridley Memorial Gates by the City of Unley.

In addition to the gates, there are a number of other means of commemorating or remembering the contribution of Ridley to South Australia, including the Hundred of Ridley, suburb of Ridleyton, the candelabra in the University of Adelaide collection, the Ridley Centre, and the John Ridley Memorial Scholarship at the Roseworthy Campus of the University of Adelaide. In particular, the latter continues the tradition of furthering the agricultural development of the State as it supports agricultural or animal science research. However, the object most closely associated with Ridley is his stripper. Unfortunately, none of the original or early strippers built by Ridley have been located, although there is a modern replica in the collection of the Adelaide Hills Motor Restorers Club.<sup>58</sup>

The Ridley Memorial gates are a memorial to John Ridley and illustrate the desire of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society and other interested members of the public to ensure that his contribution to the agricultural and economic development of South Australia is remembered. However, they are not a place directly associated with his work and were built 80 years after he returned to the UK and 90 years after the successful testing of his stripper. Furthermore, the extensive modifications to the gates due to road widening c2008, including the demolition of two thirds of the wing walls and loss of the forecourt, as well as modifications to the interior including loss of the turnstiles, has substantially diminished their integrity.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have*

*been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates were built to publicly recognise the vital contribution that John Ridley made to the agricultural development of the colony as a result of his invention of a mechanical harvester. The Ridley stripper provided a degree of certainty that wheat crops could be harvested at a time when there were grave concerns about the lack of labour to do so. As a result, the amount of land under cultivation increased, and wheat became an important export commodity for South Australia both as flour and grain.

However, memorials and, in particular, memorial gates are neither rare, uncommon, nor in danger of being lost. Memorial gates were a popular means of commemorating both people and events, particularly wars, and there are numerous examples across South Australia. A number of memorial gates are listed as either State or Local heritage places and a sample is included in the Comparability, Rarity and Representation section above. In addition, there are also a number of other memorials to John Ridley, including a candelabrum, the Ridley Centre at the Adelaide Showgrounds, and the John Ridley Memorial Scholarship at the University of Adelaide.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

**(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.**

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.*

There is nothing visible in the physical fabric, documentary evidence or oral histories with regard to the Ridley Memorial Gates to suggest that there is any



physical evidence not currently visible that will contribute meaningfully to an understanding of South Australia's history. The gates are not directly associated with the work of John Ridley and the contribution he made to the expansion of the cultivation of wheat and flour milling in South Australia. Rather they are a memorial to his work.

Prior to the development of the Adelaide Showground site, the area where the gates are located remained undeveloped. The gates were built at the Kingsway entrance to the Showground on Goodwood Road. Heath's 1914 master plan illustrates his intention that the area where the gates were built would be a main entrance. The 1924 site plan and the Showground maps from when the show was first held at Wayville in 1925 until the gates were built in 1933 indicate the site was an entrance with turnstiles. The area immediately adjacent to the north and south of the gates also remained unbuilt with the exception of hard surfacing and was used for the open-air display of automobiles. Therefore the likelihood that the gates can provide further information not currently known that will also greatly contribute to our knowledge of the past is low.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (c).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.*

*Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates are associated with John Ridley and are a memorial to him and the contribution he made to the agricultural development of the South Australia in the first decade of the colony. The gates are an example of two different classes of place. The first is memorials and specifically memorial gates; the other is entry gates. There are numerous examples of memorials in South Australia built to commemorate either a person or an event, and they take

many forms including gates and walls, sculptures and statues, and gardens and buildings, amongst others. During the first half of the twentieth century, numerous memorial gates were constructed, often to commemorate either one or both of the World Wars. A number are listed as either State or Local Heritage Places and a sample are included in the Comparability, Rarity and Representation section above.

While many of the memorial gates built between the 1920s and 1950s are simple structures, the two sets of memorial gates built in Port Pirie respectively for World War One (LHP) and the Second World War Memorial Gates (SHP 19047) represent notable designs. There are also a number of pioneer memorials, other than statues or sculptures, that are outstanding representatives of memorials, for example the Pioneers Memorial, Glenelg (SHP 12002), Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, King William Street (SHP 16177) and Colonel William Light's Grave and Memorial, Light Square (SHP 14139).

Prior to the widening of Goodwood Road c2008, the Ridley Memorial Gates were an outstanding representative of both a memorial and entrance gates. However, the modifications that occurred at that time have greatly reduced its integrity. In particular, the demolition of two thirds of the wing walls and their remodelling has resulted in the loss of the imposing forecourt. The new section of wall is far less substantial than the original, and while some of the original features from the ticket office like the wrought iron grilles are incorporated into the new sections of wall, others like the lights and decorative vents were lost. Further, the upper panels of wrought iron from the main gate or portcullis as it was known were removed, and the Society's crest modified. The entrance turnstiles inside the gates have also been removed. Evidence of concrete cancer inside the structure also further diminishes the gates' integrity. Consequently, the gates are no longer considered to be an outstanding representative of memorial gates or entrance gates in the State context.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (d).

**(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.**

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.*

*Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates were designed by Adelaide architect Gavin Lawson in the Interwar Stripped Classical style structure and were built using reinforced concrete. While the gates are a good example of his design oeuvre and exhibit some interesting detailing, such as the metal work of the portcullis, it is not beyond the ordinary for the style or the period of time in which the structure was built. Furthermore, the degree of modification to the gates in c2008 when two thirds of the wing walls were demolished, and the addition of the smaller walls has diminished the integrity of Lawson's original design.

Reinforced concrete was a new construction technique in South Australia in the early twentieth century, and during the following decades, architects, engineers and builders expanded their knowledge of and skills in its use. However, while the use of reinforced concrete was still a relatively new construction technique in 1933 when the Ridley Memorial Gates were constructed, it was not uncommon and was being increasingly used in tall buildings. By the mid-1930s, a number of buildings and structures had been built using reinforced concrete that were also far more complex structures than the Ridley Memorial Gates. A number of those buildings or structures are now State heritage places and are listed in the Comparability, Rarity and Representation section above. In contrast, the gates are considered to be a typical rather than an outstanding representative of the technique.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (e).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.*

*Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of*

*people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates were, at the time of their construction, closely associated with a limited number of prominent individuals who felt that a suitable memorial to John Ridley needed to be built to recognise his contribution to the agricultural development of South Australia. These men including Sir Langdon Bonython, Hon WG Duncan MLC, Hon HS Hudd MP, E Anthony MP, Dr Grenfell Price, FN Simpson, Guy Fisher, HJ Finnis and Stephen Parsons formed the committee responsible for establishing the memorial. However, while the memorial meant a lot to them and some others, notably the list of people who contributed money so that it could be built their association is a passing rather than an enduring one.

Since 1933, the Ridley Memorial Gates have formed a part of many South Australian's experiences of attending the Show or other events held at the Showgrounds. The gates are one of four main entrances to the Showgrounds, and are a distinctive landmark on Goodwood Road. However, while some may feel an attachment to the gates, it is more likely that they would feel a strong or special association to the Showgrounds as a whole site, or the event, rather than for specific buildings or structures at the Showground.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

*The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.*

*Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person*

*will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.*

The Ridley Memorial Gates are most closely associated with John Ridley and his invention of the mechanical harvester known as the Ridley Stripper or Ridley Reaper; the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia; and architect Gavin Lawson.

### **John Ridley**

The gates were constructed as a memorial to John Ridley to recognise his significant contribution to the agricultural and economic development of South Australia, and in particular, his invention of the mechanical harvester known as the Ridley Stripper or Ridley Reaper. However, the gates were constructed 80 years after Ridley left the Colony and 90 years after he invented his machine. Other than bearing his name and a plaque commemorating his achievements, the gates do not demonstrate Ridley's life or work via their physical fabric.

With regard to the significance of the location itself, it is possible that Ridley may have tested his machine on a farm located opposite to where the gates were subsequently built, however that claim remains unsubstantiated. Indeed, Manning and Cockburn suggest that testing of the machine took place respectively at Salisbury and Ridleyton. Therefore, while it is possible that testing did take place on the land adjacent to the Showground, it is equally likely that it took place at Salisbury, Ridleyton or all three locations. This in itself is not considered to be strong enough evidence for the place to be considered of State significance, however, the connection has been recognised by the local heritage listing of the Ridley Memorial Gates by the City of Unley.

### **Adelaide Showground**

The gates were one of three ornamental entrance gates built at the Adelaide Showground during the inter-war period with the permission, and in the case of the Ridley Gates also financial support, of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia. The other two gates were the Bonython Gates (1927) and the Kidman Gates (1937). All three gates were built in recognition of individuals who made a significant contribution to either the agricultural or pastoral industries, and therefore also the economic development of South Australia.

The Ridley Memorial Gates, with their grand styling and central location, have played an important role in the ongoing life of the Society and the Adelaide Show. The gates served an important function, providing an imposing entrance with ticket offices and turnstiles, however, they are not considered to demonstrate the work of the Society in the way that some of the buildings they

constructed themselves would be. Pavilions like the Stud Sheep Pavilion and Heavy Horse now Cattle/Dairy Cattle Pavilion were specifically built for the display and judging of livestock, while others were built for the exhibition of crops and other agricultural products. In turn, the pavilions contributed to the Society's aim to improve the quality and quantity of the livestock and crops produced in South Australia and thereby support the State's economy. Further, the Secretary's Office has been the administrative heart of the Show since 1925, and the place from which the Society has organised the annual Adelaide Show. Consequently, there are a number of places that are considered to better demonstrate the work of the Society than the Ridley gates.

### **Gavin Lawson**

Gavin Lawson is a well-known Adelaide architect who worked primarily from the 1920s until the early 1950s, and is noted for introducing the South African Dutch Colonial style to South Australia. During his career as an architect, Lawson designed numerous buildings and structures including the Ridley Memorial Gates. Consequently, there are many places in South Australia that Lawson is closely associated with. Of particular note are the three State heritage places and two local heritage places that he designed, including the Hartley Building (SHP 13652) which is an outstanding example of his design capabilities, and Kirribilli House (SHP 26300) at Beaumont, designed in the South African Dutch Colonial style. In addition, there are a number of other places listed in the Comparability, Rarity and Representation above, including some unlisted places, that also illustrate the diversity of Lawson's oeuvre, including a memorial. Overall, while the Ridley Memorial Gates are a good example of Lawson's architectural work and his ability to execute high quality designs, the modifications to the gates as a result of road widening has greatly diminished their integrity and ability to faithfully represent the calibre of his work.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).

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## SITE RECORD

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**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:** Rendered, reinforced-concrete memorial gate with central triumphal arch and decorative iron work.

**DATE OF COMPLETION:** 1933

**REGISTER STATUS:** SA Heritage Council nomination based on recommendation from Twentieth Century Heritage Survey (2008)

**CURRENT USE:** Entrance gate and memorial to John Ridley  
1933 to present

**ARCHITECT:** Gavin Lawson  
1933

**BUILDER:** Fricker Brothers  
1933

**SUBJECT INDEXING:** **Group:** Miscellaneous  
**Category:** Gate

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Unley

**LOCATION:** **Street No.:** 68  
**Street Name:** Goodwood Road  
**Town/Suburb:** Wayville  
**Post Code:** 5034

**LAND DESCRIPTION:** **Title** CT/6083/257  
**Reference:**

**Lot No.:** A506  
**Plan No.:** D86063  
**Hundred:** Adelaide

**MAP REFERENCE:** **MGA Zone** 52  
**Easting (X)** 1376997.5208  
**Northing (Y)** 6090747.0344

**OWNER:** **Name:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Address:**

**Town/Suburb:**

**Post Code:**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

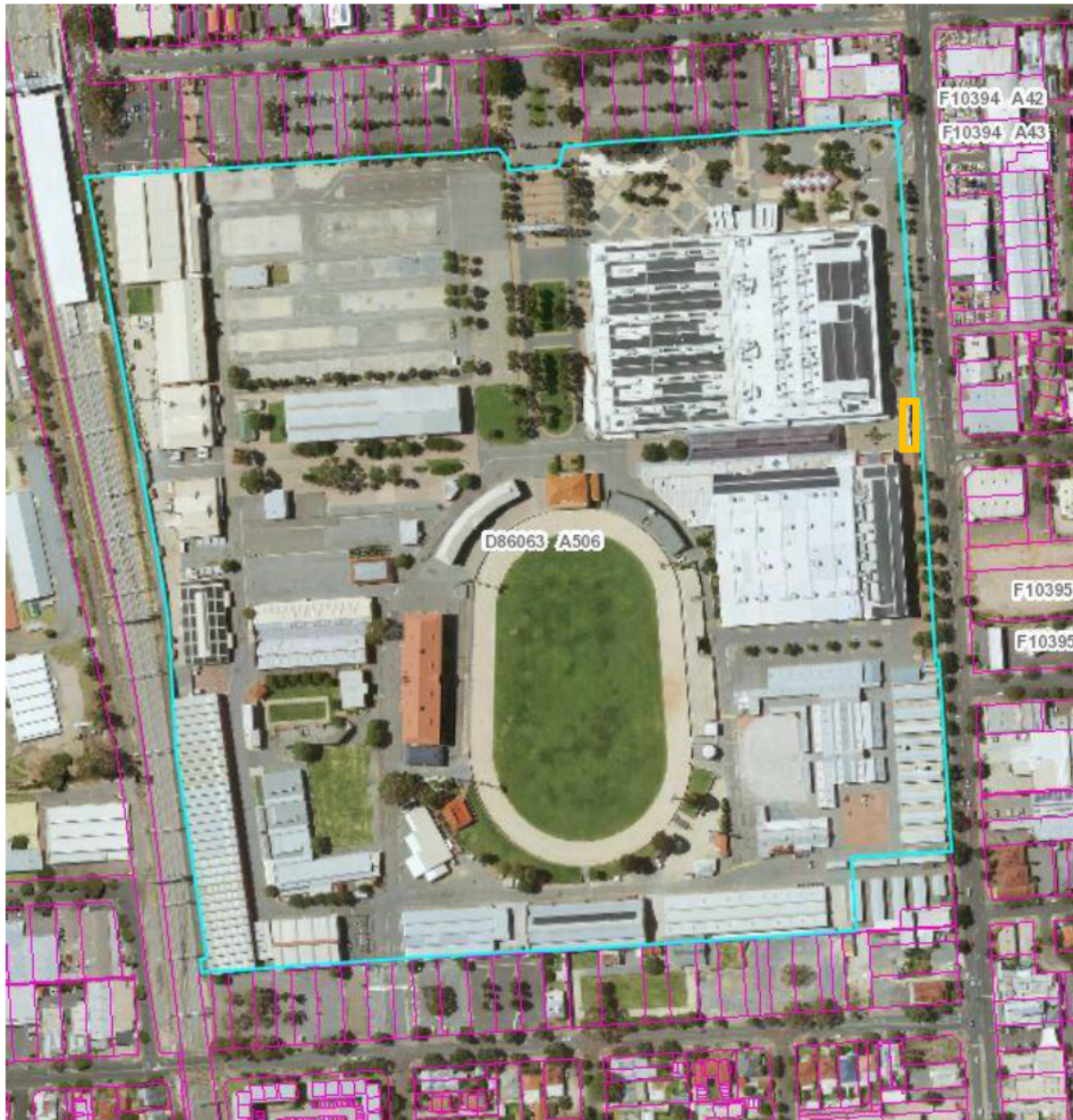
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## SITE PLAN

**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491



**Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground,  
68 Goodwood Road, Wayville, SA, 5034**

### Legend

-  Adelaide Showground, CT/6083/257 A506 D86063
-  Ridley Memorial Gates

**N↑**



## PHOTOS

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**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**Aerial photo showing former imposing forecourt of Ridley Memorial Gates, 1936**

Source: SLSA B21668



**Ridley Memorial Gates, 1933 showing the triumphal arch, iron work and detailing.**

Source: SLSA B8899

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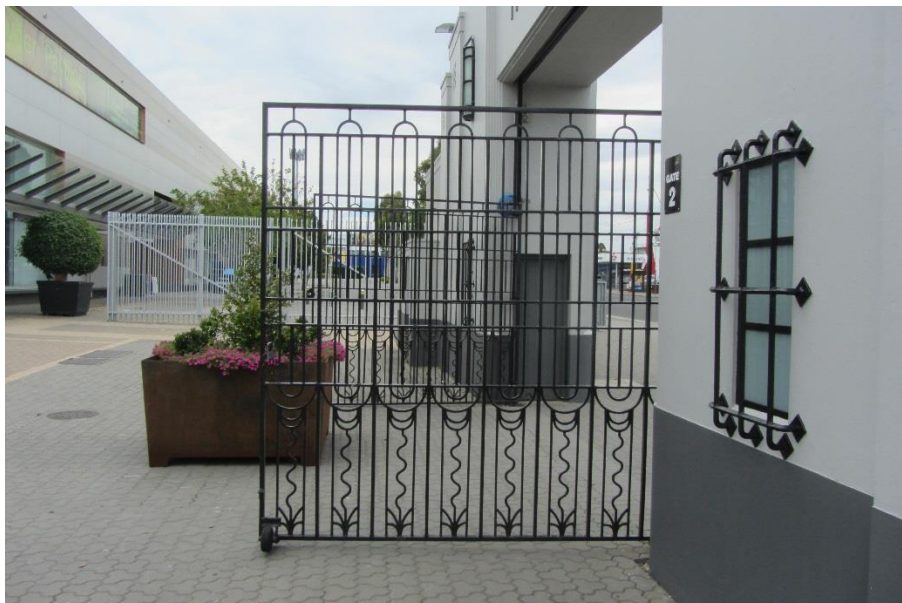
**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**Ridley Memorial Gates in 2017, note the change to the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society crest, the new portion of wall for the 'Change' windows, and original details on the triumphal arch**

Source: Heritage South Australia



**Ridley Memorial Gates showing the 'portcullis', the loss of the top panels from the gate, and light and window grille details**

Source: Heritage South Australia, 2017

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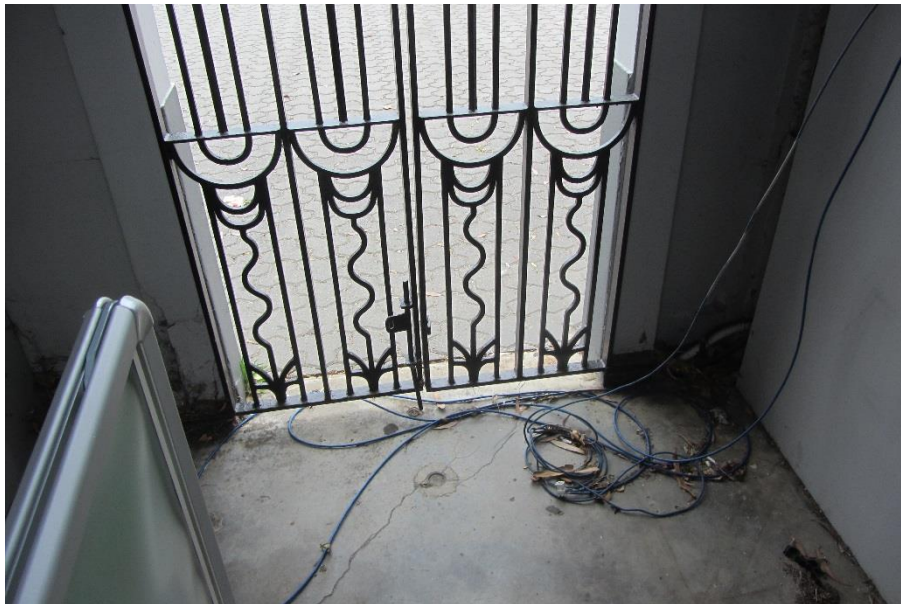
**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**Ridley Memorial Gates showing the opening day plaque**

Source: Heritage South Australia, 2017



**Interior of the Ridley Memorial Gates showing former location of turnstiles**

Source: Heritage South Australia, 2017



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**NAME:** Ridley Memorial Gates, Adelaide Showground **PLACE:** 26491

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**Interior of Ridley Memorial Gates showing damage caused by concrete cancer**

Source: Heritage South Australia, 2017



**John Ridley Testimonial Candelabrum  
made by Julius Schomburgk in silver,  
gold, malachite and blackwood**

Source: *Adelaidean* Spring/Summer 2015

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