

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

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

NAME: Walkerville Brewhouse Tower

PLACE NO.: 26528

ADDRESS: 107 Port Road, Thebarton

CT 6137/685 F103751 A2 & CT 5138/158 D1038 A386
Hundred of Adelaide

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower built in 1886, enlarged in 1898-1899 and then doubled in size in 1901-1903, demonstrates important associations with the brewing industry in South Australia and 135 years of brewing at the site. The introduction of brewhouse towers in the late nineteenth century enabled brewers to implement the gravitational method of brewing and were once a key element of the larger South Australian breweries.

The consolidation and closure of many breweries in the twentieth century and the adoption of newer methods of brewing have led to these structures becoming uncommon. The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is one of a few remaining and one of the largest examples of a brewhouse tower in South Australia.

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower also demonstrates important associations with the Torrenside Brewery (established 1886) and the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company (established 1889). The Torrenside and Walkerville breweries amalgamated in 1898 with brewing continuing at the Thebarton site. The Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company was SABC's biggest competitor and the other major South Australian brewer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was also the first of its kind in South Australia to successfully run a brewery following the cooperative model.

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

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

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower located at the West End brewery (former Southwark/Nathan/Walkerville/Torrenside brewery) demonstrates 135 years of brewing on the same site. The brewery was begun by the Ware family who were, in the nineteenth century, well known for their involvement in brewing in South Australia, firstly Charles and Fanny Ware at Koorunga (Burra) and then at Torrenside where their sons Arthur and Tom established the brewery. The first portion of the Brewhouse Tower was constructed by the two Ware brothers and it is here that the Torrenside brewery brewed its beer. Later Arthur and Tom were joined by their two brothers Charles and George.

The success of Torrenside led to its rapid expansion and then amalgamation with the State's most successful cooperative brewery, Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Co, after which Torrenside became the Walkerville brewery and all brewing was relocated to Thebarton. The success of Walkerville resulted in it becoming the main competition to the South Australian Brewing Company (SABCo), and the Brewhouse and Tower were expanded in 1898-1899 and again in 1901-1903 to keep pace with demand.

During the mid-1920s, Walkerville attempted to counter the success of SABCo's West End Bitter and its own declining beer sales by installing the Nathan system of brewing. The new production method required both substantial financial outlay and the construction of further new buildings at the brewery. However, Walkerville's financial outlay followed by the depression shortly after, led to SABCo's acquisition of Walkerville in 1938. It was at this time that the brewery was renamed the Nathan Brewery. During the following decades, SABCo ran both Nathan, (later renamed Southwark) at Thebarton and its West End brewery on Hindley Street, dominating the industry in South Australia.

While the 'house' behind the tower has been demolished and replaced with newer brewery structures, the tower still demonstrates the gravity feed system used by breweries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While other brewhouse towers are listed as State Heritage Places, such as the Adelaide Brewery (SHP 11635), Pike's Dorset Brewery (SHP 12886), and the Port Dock Hotel (SHP 13289), they represent the smaller brewers' contributions to the industry in South Australia. The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower at the West End Brewery (Thebarton) is the largest remaining structure of its type in the State.

The tower also demonstrates a period of consolidation in the brewing industry when most of the small breweries were acquired by either Walkerville or SABCo

and were closed. By 1915, Walkerville and SABCo dominated the brewing industry, brewing 75% of all beer made in South Australia. Only one of the three State-listed places associated with SABCo also represents this important phase in South Australian history, namely the Office: SABCo's administration and headquarters building (SHP 13354) on Hindley Street.

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

Brewing was one of the earliest industries to become established in South Australia after the foundation of the colony and many breweries were constructed across the colony and then State, including the Torrenside Brewery (1886) and Walkerville Co-operative Brewery (1889). (Torrenside and Walkerville amalgamated in 1898, retaining the Walkerville name and relocating all brewing to the Torrenside location, it was later renamed the West End Brewery (Thebarton)). By 1888, over thirty breweries were operating in South Australia, however, the twentieth century became a period of consolidation for the brewing industry and many of the smaller businesses were acquired and closed by larger breweries, and in particular by the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company and SABCo.

As a result, brewing in South Australia became the domain of these two large companies, with some smaller businesses such as Cooper's providing craft products. When SABCo acquired Walkerville in 1938, this reduced production to a single large company who brewed on an industrial scale at two sites and a few smaller operators.

While breweries are not uncommon, brewhouse towers are. Brewhouse towers are a key structure of a traditional brewery in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and enabled breweries to employ the gravitational system of brewing. Over 20 brewhouse towers were constructed in South Australia, however, due to modern brewing techniques and processes, brewhouse towers are no longer necessary and therefore are no longer constructed.

With the consolidation and closure of many breweries in the twentieth century and the adoption of newer methods of brewing, brewhouse towers are now uncommon. Other examples of brewhouse towers that are also State Heritage Places include: former Pike's Dorset Brewery (SHP 12886), Oakbank Brewery (SHP 12889), Port Dock Brewery Hotel (SHP 13289), former Adelaide Brewery (SHP 11635), and Knappstein Winery (former Clare Brewery and Chimney) (SHP 10105). Consequently, the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is an uncommon example of this once key structure used in the brewing industry in South Australia, it is also the largest surviving example of a brewhouse tower in the State.

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

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower has a special association with the work of the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company. Brewing first began at the Southwark site in 1886, when the Torrenside brewery was established by the Ware family who were well known and regarded in South Australia for their connections with the beer industry. In 1898, the Ware brothers amalgamated with Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company (founded 1889), and all brewing for Walkerville was transferred to Torrenside.

Difficulties in keeping up with demand resulted in the expansion of the brewhouse, its tower, cellars and other facilities in 1898-1899, enabling Walkerville to brew more beer than SABCo at West End. A further major expansion to the brewhouse and tower took place and 1901-1903 when the brewhouse and tower was doubled in size. By 1910, Walkerville was the largest producer of beer in South Australia. SABCo only recorded greater volumes because it included the figures from its Broken Hill brewery.

By 1915, Walkerville and SABCo brewed 75% of South Australia's beer production, however, as Walkerville continued to amalgamate with other smaller breweries, SABCo's directors became increasingly worried about their position and approached Walkerville about the possibility of the two companies amalgamating, a proposal Walkerville declined. Ten years later, in the face of declining sales and the success of SABCO's West End Bitter, Walkerville approached SABCo about the possibility of amalgamating, and it was SABCo's turn to decline.

In an attempt to stave off decreasing sales, Walkerville invested heavily in the Nathan system and improvements to the brewery to support the new plant. It was a temporary measure and Walkerville was unable to survive such a significant financial outlay, followed by the depression, which further reduced beer sales. In 1938, SABCo acquired Walkerville.

The Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company was SABCo's biggest competitor and the other major South Australian brewer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was the first of its kind in Australia to successfully run a brewery following the cooperative model. Walkerville operated at the Thebarton brewery site for approximately 40 years, beginning in 1898 when it amalgamated with Torrenside and culminating in 1938 when SABCo acquired the company.

The place where Walkerville undertook this work was at the Thebarton site in the brewhouse and tower, a facility it doubled in size in 1901-1903 to meet increasing demand for its beer. While the 'house' portion of the building behind the tower

has been demolished, the tower's role in brewing the product that made Walkerville so successful means that it has a special association with the work of the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company.

SITE PLAN

Walkerville Brewhouse Tower
107 Port Road, Thebarton

PLACE NO.: 26528



Walkerville Brewhouse Tower

CT 6137/685 F103751 A2 & CT 5138/158 D1038 A386, Hundred of Adelaide

N ↑

LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

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

Physical Description

The brewhouse tower is a four-storey brick building with cellar below and lantern above and features a series of small arched windows. The exterior face of the brick walls have been rendered in places and the whole painted a dark-red colour, with some of the arches above the windows, the lintels and surrounds detailed in dark cream paint. Most of the glazing to the windows has been either covered or replaced with timber boards, and the glazing to the lantern has been replaced with corrugated iron panels.

A single-storey entrance and exhibition space has been created at the front of the tower, with rendered brick wall, and metal sheeting to east side with double glazed doors that are accessed by an external ramp. This entrance room has been set up as an exhibition space featuring a range of bottles, labels, documents, and old brewery machinery. The ground floor of the tower has been converted into a brewery bar, merchandising and seating area.

The levels above are no longer used and remain as they were after brewing items were removed from the space. The rear upper wall and roof have been partially removed to enable the copper kettle to be removed from the tower and installed in the brewhouse (Port Road), where it can be seen from the street (see SSHO 26528-01).

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Walkerville Brewhouse Tower
- Brewery machinery and equipment inside the tower

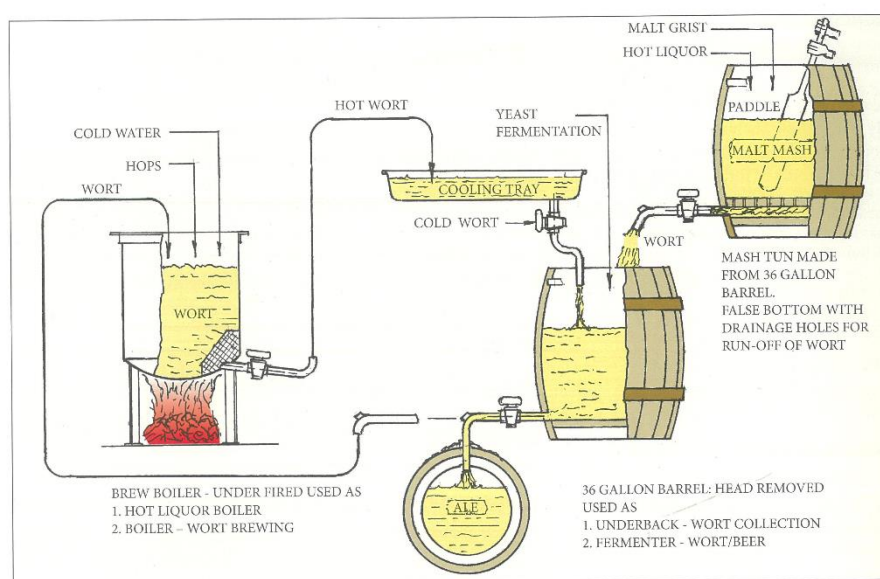
Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Newer West End Brewery structures to the rear of the tower
- Modern addition to the front of the tower
- Bar and merchandising fit-out on ground floor

History of the Place

Torrenside Brewery, Clark, Ware & Co, then Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company Ltd, the origins of the West End Brewery at Thebarton

The brewing of beer for sale began soon after the first colonists arrived in South Australia. Although Warren's brewery, established in the Park Lands in 1841, is often referred to as the first officially sanctioned brewery, the first hotel license had been issued to Guthries Hotel in May 1837 and a number of hotels had begun trading by 1839 and recorded that they had breweries located on the premises.¹



A method for domestic brewing of 9 to 15 gallons of ale or porter. Sketch by John Painter

Basic process for brewing beer.

Source: Painter, p.10.

The number of breweries operating in South Australia proliferated in the following decades and by 1888 there were approximately 30 breweries located in Adelaide and across the State.² Among them were the Torrenside Brewery that had begun operating in 1886 on the southern bank of the Torrens River. Initially the land had been owned by Colonel William Light and the site the brewery occupied was previously Bean's tannery.³

The Torrenside Brewery (hereafter Torrenside) was established by brothers Arthur Wellington and Thomas (Tom) Lincoln Ware, whose parents Charles and Fanny Ware had been brewers at Koorunga (now part of Burra) and proprietors of the World's End Station. After poor seasons between 1865-1868, the family relocated to Adelaide where Charles and Fanny took up the license for the Exchange Hotel in 1869. When Charles died in 1871, Fanny continued to run the hotel and was its licensee for many years, becoming well known and regarded for the assistance she provided to distressed widows and orphans.⁴

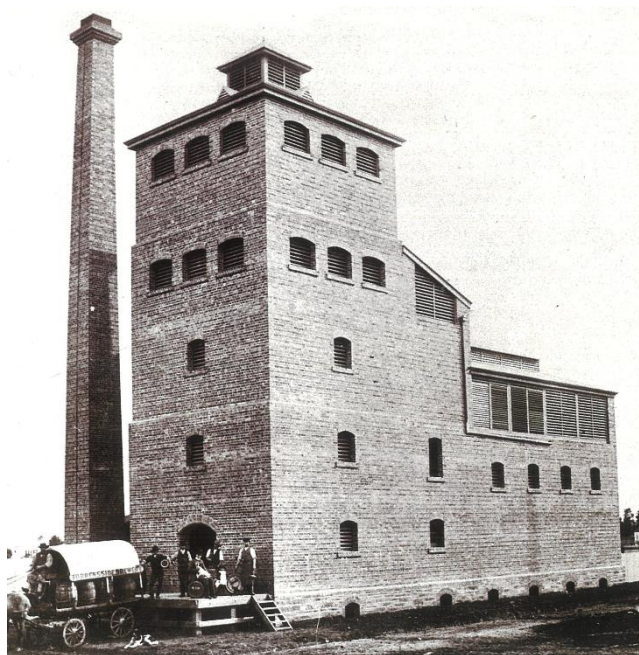
Summary of State Heritage Place: 26528

8 of 29

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 20 May 2021

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 4 November 2021

Torrenside was initially comprised of a brick building with four-storey tower, an 80ft chimney, a platform 8ft taller than the fourth storey of the tower that held an 800 gallon water tank, a wash shed, cellar (underneath the brewery building with tower), stables and other outbuildings. The brewery was constructed from local red-brick by builders Furner and Stevens under the supervision of architects Wright and Reed following the design of the Ware brothers. The malt mill was supplied by Forwood Down & Co and the machinery by Francis Clark & Sons. There was also a well that supplied water for refrigeration during summer.⁵



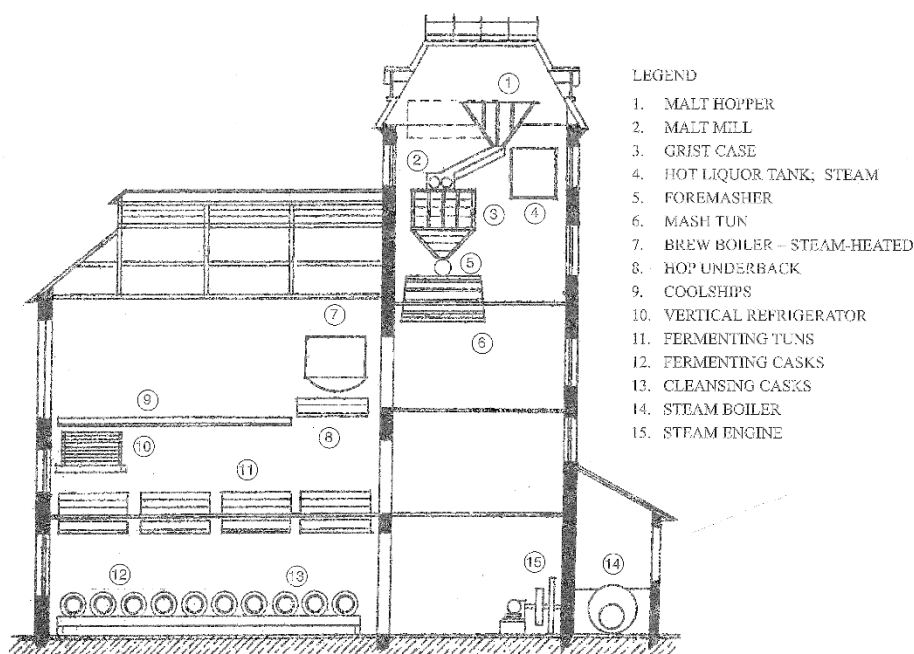
Torrenside Brewery c.1890, showing the brewhouse and tower with cellars underneath. At this early stage in the history of the brewery, brewing took place within this single structure.

Source: Painter, p.147.

The brewing was undertaken by head brewer Tom Ware and Charles Robinson, both of whom had worked as brewers at Castlemaine in Victoria. Tom was noted as being a good brewer who had 'imagination and flair', however at that stage Charles had 16 years of experience at Castlemaine while Tom was only 21 years old.⁶

The brewery was capable of producing 15 hogsheads (a cask that holds approx. 250l) daily and after seven brews had nearly filled the cellar. The first beer was supplied to the Exchange Hotel, run by Fanny Ware.⁷ In 1888, Torrenside ale and stout won a gold medal at the Melbourne Exhibition and then in 1889 a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition. Tom would later die from a seizure caused by heatstroke in December 1896 aged 32.⁸

After previously serving as a Councillor for the City of Adelaide, Arthur Ware became an Alderman in 1895 (and later Mayor of Adelaide 1898-1900) and as a part of a Council tour of the Park Lands took the Mayor of Adelaide and several other Aldermen for a tour of the Torrenside Brewery.⁹ They were met by George and Charles Boxer Ware (later also the Mayor of Thebarton 1897-1901), who had both joined the brewery, Charles as assistant brewer to Tom. George and Charles showed the tour group the new storage vats for the beer (1,600 gallon wooden vats like those used by Guinness), new bottler for beer and aerated waters, and discussed the proposed new packing shed and premises for brewing non-alcoholic drinks. Yet again, cellarage was nearly at capacity and would need to be increased as their exports of bottled beer to Western Australia and supply into the local market was growing.¹⁰



Brewhouse with tower showing the layout and functions for the gravitational method of brewing used in South Australia.

Source: Painter, p.99 (from Scamell & Colyer, 1880).

In early 1898, Torrenside merged with the East Adelaide Brewery (hereafter East Adelaide). East Adelaide had been established in 1895 by William Warren on behalf of wholesale grocers G. Wood, Son & Co and a group of publicans. The brewery was located on the corner of Stephen Terrace and Seventh Ave, St Peters and enticed Edward Clark, the head brewer at Walkerville Co-operative Brewery (hereafter Walkerville Co-operative) to join East Adelaide. East Adelaide's beers became so popular that within three years they had reached production capacity and began examining expansion. Without the financial resources to fund the facilities required to expand, Warren and Clark began discussions with Torrenside and the two breweries

merged to become Clark, Ware & Co with the intention of expanding the Southwark site.¹¹

While the amalgamation placed Clark, Ware & Co in a position to compete with the larger breweries, such as the South Australian Brewing Company (known as SABCo) and Walkerville Co-operative, Painter also suggests that the Ware brothers would have found it attractive to gain the experience of East Adelaide's head brewer Edward Clark, as Charles Ware was still too relatively inexperienced to solo as head brewer after Tom Ware died.¹²

Within months of the amalgamation between East Adelaide and Torrensidge to create Clark, Ware & Co, the new company began amalgamation discussions with the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd (hereafter Walkerville). The Walkerville cooperative had been founded in 1889 (it was not yet a limited company), by four publicans - Sam Harris, Robert Hyman, John Crocker and Vincent Simpson, who began brewing at the old Walkerville Brewery site (Fuller Street, established 1844).¹³

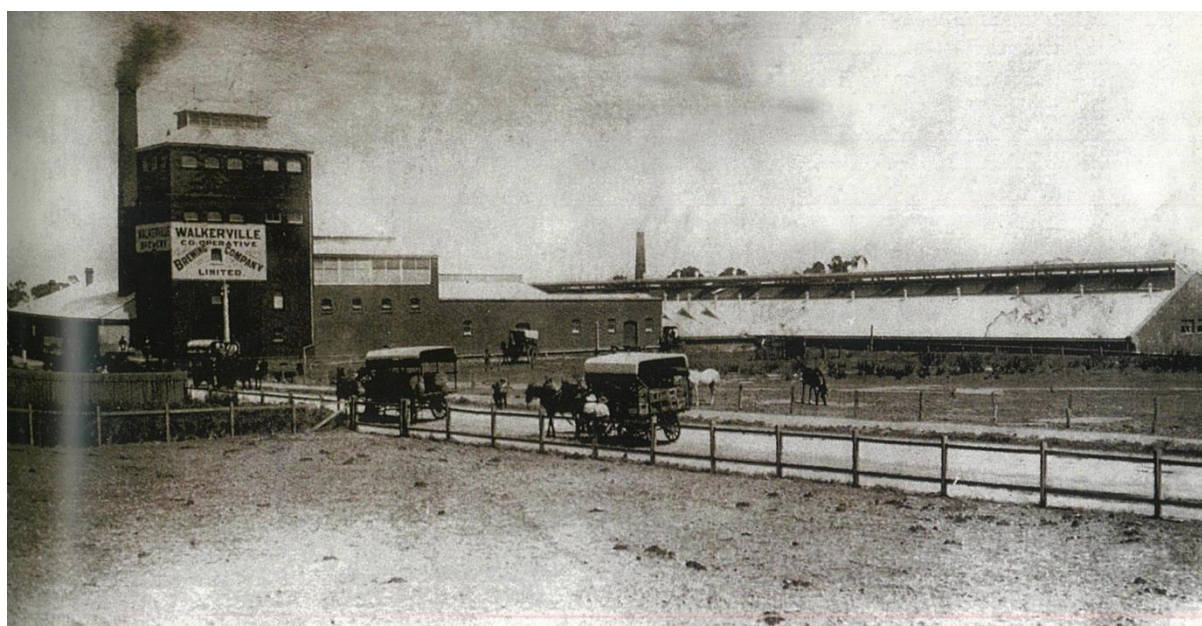
Following cooperative principles, other publicans were invited to join them and received a proportion of the profits and beer at cheaper prices. The cost of beer at that time had been fixed by the South Australian Brewers' Association. This association formed in 1894 after meeting at Fanny Ware's Exchange Hotel in response to government legislation and duties. The idea was to ensure that brewers would receive a minimum price for their products, however, not all breweries joined nor did all breweries follow the set pricing for all products at all times, creating considerable angst within the industry.¹⁴

The Walkerville Co-operative did so well in the first four years of operation that they considered forming a company. In 1895, the nine partners decided to incorporate when they achieved twenty partners, with the aim of meeting that number within two years. They did so by December 1897 and a plan to incorporate was finalised in May 1898, creating the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd (Walkerville). Unlike the other breweries and in particular the large breweries such as SABCo, Walkerville did not own hotels and could redirect their profits solely into their brewery facilities. While hotels were not tied to Walkerville, they introduced a members' share which continued the rebates received prior to forming the limited company and many hotels chose Walkerville's products over the larger brewers.¹⁵

Walkerville's head brewer was Charles Williams, who brewed at Laura before moving to the Lion in 1891 and then Walkerville in 1895, when Edward Clark moved to East Adelaide. Williams was paid £12 a week, however, in April 1898 just before amalgamation he asked for an annual salary of £1,000. The decision to increase his salary was placed on hold until after the amalgamation and he signed a two-year

contract at the lower rate when the directors would not countenance the higher amount.

In July 1898, Clark, Ware & Co amalgamated with Walkerville. The Walkerville name was retained with William Warren and Charles Ware joining the Walkerville board of directors. It is not clear what Edward Clark's role was after the amalgamation and before he died in 1900. As the amalgamations had taken place within three months, Walkerville now owned three breweries and had to decide which to retain and expand, and which to sell.¹⁶



Walkerville Brewery c.1900, showing the first extension of the brewhouse and tower, and the new facilities including the new long cellar (mid-right of image). The extension has taken place at the rear of the tower, increasing its size and substantially increasing the facilities behind it. The horses and carts are on Winwood Street.

Source: Painter, p.193.

Of the three sites, Southwark provided the greatest potential for expansion as the adjacent land along the Torrens River to the east of Torrenside had already been purchased by the Ware's and expansion of the facilities were already being planned. Opportunities to extend to the south were still also plentiful as land sales in the Southwark subdivision had not been as rapid as the National Building Society might have wished.¹⁷

Brewing continued at all three sites for a short while, however, by January 1899, brewing was taking place at Southwark only. In December 1898, all three breweries were collectively producing 350 hogsheads per week. In January 1899, Southwark brewed 1412 hogsheads and was barely able to keep up with demand. However, the

expansion of the brewery was well underway with the construction of new production facilities to brew 60 hogsheads at a time, increasing total brewery capacity to 100 hogsheads per brew. This was achieved through significant expansion of the original Torrenside brewery and tower.¹⁸

Two new cellars measuring respectively 50x300ft and 40x120ft were also completed and all works were to the plans of architect Alfred Wells.¹⁹ Prior to the amalgamation, Wells had been engaged to consider the expansion of the Walkerville site. Interestingly, using only the facilities at Southwark, Walkerville brewed 852,590 gallons of beer in 1899, compared to the 740,230 gallons produced by SABCo at their West End Brewery on Hindley Street. Painter notes that the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd was the first of its kind in Australia and the only one to be successful.²⁰ Although there were approximately 28 breweries still in operation at the close of the nineteenth century, the South Australian market was dominated by three main breweries, namely SABCo, Walkerville and Haussens at Hindmarsh, while Lion in North Adelaide had become the main supplier of malt.²¹

In 1901, demand had again outgrown supply and Walkerville's board consulted with head brewer Charles Williams on what was required to meet demand. He proposed substantial additions that essentially doubled brewing capacity, recommending steel vats, a 60 hp boiler, increased water supply from both the well and mains, and a new engine. Additional office accommodation, coopers' sheds and cellars were also built, and by 1903 they were also manufacturing a range of non-alcoholic products named Kola Dandelion Ale, Jubilee Tonic, Dandy Lion Ale and Ginger Stout. Walkerville also actively sought further amalgamations with other breweries, closing their facilities and effectively reducing competition.²²

In mid-1901, Charles Williams (head brewer) unexpectedly handed in his notice, and through convoluted means became the new owner of the old Walkerville brewery on Fuller Street, establishing Williams Walkerville Brewery along co-operative lines. His replacement at Walkerville was paid the annual salary Williams had asked for two years prior but been refused – a whopping £1,000. Walkerville attempted to eliminate Williams' business and prevent him from competing against them and he went into liquidation in 1906. As part of the liquidation, Walkerville acquired the Walkerville site from Williams who received a considerable financial sum but was also prevented from brewing in competition with Walkerville for 10 years.²³



Walkerville Brewery c.1903 showing the doubling of the brewhouse and tower and new facilities at the brewery (to the east of the site). The chimney bellowing smoke is a new addition (the original can be seen just peaking over the top of the tower roof).

Source: Painter, p.206.

By 1910, Walkerville had become SABCo's major competitor and was producing 1.5 million gallons each year with over 200 'single-share members' buying their beer from them. Walkerville's cooperative system continued to cause concerns for other brewers who complained to the South Australian Brewers Association. The issue continued to remain unresolved in the short-term.

In comparison, SABCo produced 67,000 gallons more, however, it only achieved that figure by combining outputs from both the West End and Broken Hill breweries. Walkerville, continued to improve its facilities ordering new vats and bottling machinery and a refrigeration plant and SABCo also continued implementing improvements to its West End site.²⁴

By 1915, Walkerville and SABCo between them supplied about 75 percent of the hotels in South Australia, Walkerville with its 280 members and SABCo with 190-tied houses. While SABCo had successfully introduced its West End Bitter Beer, Walkerville's absorption of Lion and Johnstons in 1914 caused its directors sufficient concern that in 1915 they proposed to Walkerville that the two companies combine to operate a joint venture company for manufacturing. Walkerville declined.²⁵

The situation was reversed just ten years later when Walkerville, in the face of declining sales, approached SABCo with a merger proposal. As Walkerville had done 10 years prior, SABCo now refused to even hold initial discussions. The merger proposal arose due to declining sales caused by the growing popularity of West End beers, a situation

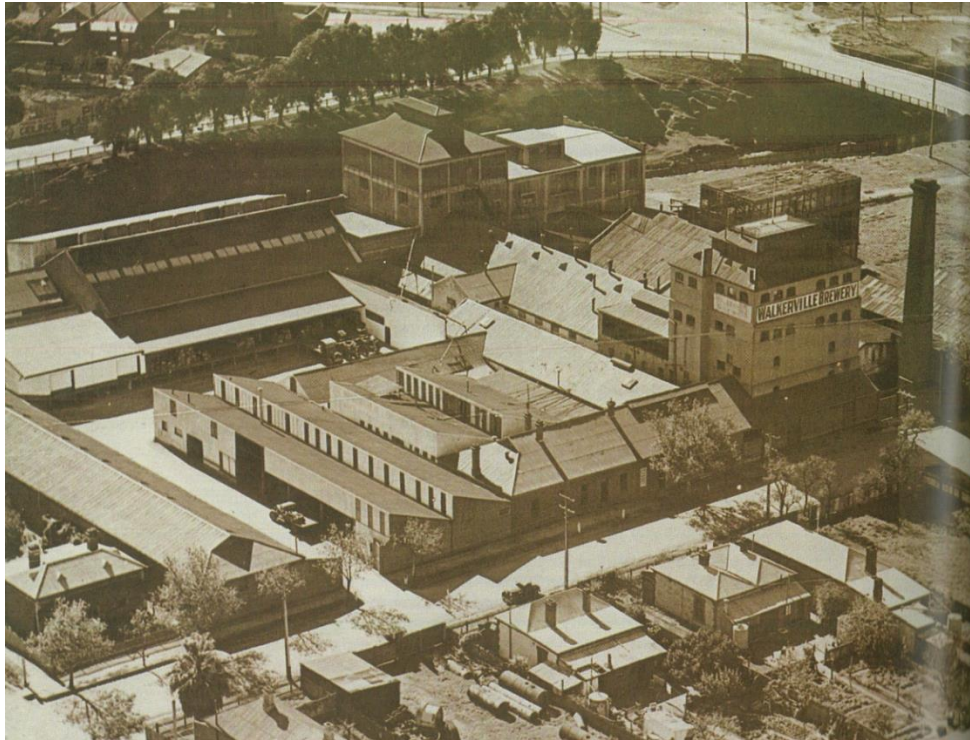
that by 1919, could no longer be ignored by Walkerville. A change in head brewer did not stave off the decline, and so Walkerville began investigating the introduction of the Nathan process to compete with West End Bitter. When the costs exceeded what had been anticipated, they considered merger as a solution.²⁶

When their merger proposal was declined, Walkerville implemented the major acquisition and building works to install the Nathan plant, including £9,505 for the system, £2,000 in royalties to the Nathan Institute and £11,500 for the reinforced concrete buildings to house the system. To build the Nathan plant, the long cellars built at the turn of the century were demolished. There were also additional expenses to make improvements to the brewhouse, bottling facility and refrigeration. The order was placed on 10 November 1925 and the Nathan Institute sent Walter Hensel to install the system and Ralph Weidlich to demonstrate how to brew with it. Weidlich agreed to remain in Adelaide for four years to assist head brewer Alfred Ballenger to brew WB lager.²⁷ Walkerville was apparently the first brewery in Australia to install the Nathan system in Australia, although others followed soon after.²⁸

Briefly, the Nathan system was developed by Swiss chemist Leopold Nathan to brew lager. The Nathan system is a cold fermentation process that isolates the wort or liquor infused with malt from the atmosphere, thereby removing potential contaminants during fermentation. A pure cultured yeast is then added to start fermentation. A further benefit of the Nathan method is that it takes less time to brew a saleable beer than traditional open vat methods.²⁹

In addition to Weidlich, the Nathan Institute also sent out Ralph Opekar to assist Walkerville. Both men provided scathing reports to the Board about Walkerville's operations, including poor housekeeping standards, and recommended they needed to improve the plant at great additional cost. Unfortunately, the WB lager produced did not become popular and to compete with West End Bitter, Walkerville used the Nathan plant to create a top-fermented bitter using cold filtration. The new bitter provided a temporary reprieve in Walkerville's declining sales.³⁰

The depression had a major impact on breweries as beer consumption decreased by thirty percent. Unlike SABCo and other smaller breweries that owned hotels, Walkerville did not have the added financial pressures that arose when licensees requested rent reductions. However, after financing some upgrades to the brewery, installing the Nathan plant in the mid-1920s at considerable cost, and the need for further significant plant upgrades to remain viable, the arrival of the depression left Walkerville in a difficult position. In 1938, Walkerville's board 'offered "to dispose of the business" to SABCo' at a rate of one SABCo share for two of Walkerville's. The offer was accepted and the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd ceased to exist, the brewery at Southwark becoming a part of SABCo.³¹



Walkerville Brewery 1936, showing the extent of the brewery just prior to its acquisition by SABCo in 1938, with the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower (centre right). The long cellar was demolished for the new brewhouse and tower (made from reinforced concrete) to house the plant for the Nathan system (behind).

Source: Painter, p.262.

South Australian Brewing Company at Southwark/Thebarton

In 1888, William Simms, owner of the West End Brewery on Hindley Street; Sir Edwin Smith, the owner of the Kent Town Brewery located on the corner of Rundle Street and Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town; and William Rounsevell, owner of a wine and spirit business, announced the merger of their respective businesses to create the South Australian Brewing, Malting & Wine & Spirit Company Ltd. After a thorough investigation and consideration of each site, the new company decided to retain both its Kent Town and West End breweries, however, Kent Town would be converted and expanded for malting only, while West End would expand its brewery.³²

In 1893, the wine and spirits portion of the business was sold and the South Australian Brewing Company Ltd (SABCo) came into being. The year after, the government assented the *Beer Duty Act 1894* which required breweries to supply the production figures for the past 12 months. The records show that SABCo produced 797,586 gallons of beer at the West End brewery and was the largest brewer (by production) in South Australia, their next closest competitor, Haussens producing less than half that quantity of beer.³³

By the end of the decade, the growth of Walkerville began to challenge SABCo's position as the leading brewery in South Australia, and in 1902, SABCo began production of Konig lager beer as the SABCo directors believed lager beers were the future of the industry.³⁴ Interestingly, it was this decision that would ultimately result in SABCo's continued success and their ability to acquire Walkerville in 1938. Walkerville's head brewer Charles Williams did not believe that the German-style lager would prove popular, and it wasn't until sales were affected that Walkerville began to brew lager style beer.

Lager beers do not include added sugar, use a bottom fermentation process, and require a different yeast and cooler fermentation and storage conditions than the ales and stouts brewed in South Australia at that time. The other critical factor that would assist SABCo in retaining their position as the industry leader was the appointment of Thomas Nation as head brewer in 1908. SABCo's production of the Konig lager did not provide the desired advantage over Walkerville, proving Williams somewhat correct, however the plant to produce it did enable Nation to experiment.³⁵

In 1910-1911, Nation created West End Bitter using a top-fermentation method and wort with added sugar, however he controlled the fermentation process using the vacuum tanks and cold cellar from the lager process. The beer was then filtered and carbonated.³⁶ As discussed above, it was this beer that Walkerville attempted to compete against and that led to the installation of the Nathan plant in the mid-1920s. By 1924, West End Bitter was the mainstay of SABCO's increased production, which was now fourteen percent above Walkerville's. The success of West End Bitter also necessitated the improvement and expansion of the West End brewery site. The bottling plant was expanded to three lines, while new plant was installed to produce the West End Bitter and a new lager called West End Lager that was introduced to compete with Walkerville's WB Lager.³⁷

The 1938 acquisition of Walkerville by SABCo meant the company operated two brewery sites, with the Walkerville brewery being renamed 'Nathan Brewery' after the Nathan plant. The two sites operated independently until 1949 when administration was centralised in the SABCo head office on Hindley Street (SHP 13354). At the time of acquisition, the Nathan Brewery at Thebarton was in poor condition, however, reduced production during the Second World War enabled the brewery to still meet demand. However, the brewery required significant upgrades to meet increased demand after the war ended.³⁸

During the late 1940s, a new 200 hogshead brewing kettle was installed to replace the old wooden one, the existing mash tun and cooker were refitted, and cold cellars

were built between the brewhouse and Nathan block to house the glass-lined filter, storage tanks and filter room. Four Nathan fermenters were added to the Nathan plant, making 18 in total, and a new bottling line, bottle washer, filler and pasteuriser were installed.³⁹

In 1951, the Nathan Brewery was renamed Southwark after the nineteenth century subdivision and all products brewed there bore the Southwark name. At that time, Southwark produced about a third of the volume of beer as West End and further expansions of the Southwark site were planned as soon as building materials could be procured.⁴⁰

The copper kettle in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower was decommissioned in 1962 and annual reports from the 1960s indicate a range of new facilities and plant were built and/or installed during the decade, including a new brewhouse (1962), the installation of two new automatic boilers in the new boiler house (1963), a major upgrade to the garden for the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip (1963), a new filter room (1964) and the installation of the first outdoor vertical stainless steel storage tanks (1969). Each tank was 46ft high, with 80,000 gallon capacity and began a process that would radically alter the site as more tanks were installed in the 1970s.⁴¹

In 1971, SABCo restructured to become a holding company and was renamed South Australian Brewing Holdings Limited, with brewing conducted by the South Australian Brewing Company (hereafter SA Brewing). The new structure enabled the company to diversify, an action that later led to the sale of the brewing component of the business.

In the meantime, brewing was the main business operation and significant improvements and expansion occurred at Southwark in the 1970s, and in particular, after the decision was made in 1974 to focus on the Southwark site and close West End.⁴² In anticipation of the closure of West End, the land adjacent to Southwark (southern side of Winwood Street) was purchased in 1971-1972 to enable expansion and while the aim was to achieve the transition from West End to Southwark by 1982, in the end West End was closed in 1980.

During the late 1970s and 1980s SA Brewing experimented with a variety of packaging types and sizes including introducing aluminium cans and different bottle sizes. They also produced a variety of beers such as Southwark Special Diet Beer, LA Drought, West End Export, Old Southwark Stout and West End Extra Light among others, the light beers being lower alcohol products. New products and containers required new and upgraded plant and the buildings to house them and the site has been constantly redeveloped since then.

In 1972-1973, plans were finalised to build a new bottling line and the new building and plant was opened in 1975. Further upgrades to the site during the 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the demolition of the Nathan tower and a large proportion of the building associated with the Nathan plant and the eastern clearspan to enable the construction of new plant, a new brewhouse and addition of numerous external steel storage tanks. The introduction of computerisation in the early 1980s required an entire room to house the new computer system.⁴³

In 1984, the ground floor of the brewhouse tower was converted into a space for merchandising and later a bar and function space (the SABCo archive would later also be stored in the tower). Between 1985-1990, new cellars with a fermentation cellar block, new bright beer facilities, new water treatment plant, and a new filling plant to fill 50l kegs to supplement the 10 and 18 gallon kegs were all completed. Around the same time, the 20-year-old canning line was replaced and upgrades to the stubby plant began. Throughout the continued development of the Southwark brewery, SA Brewing Holdings Ltd had been continuously diversifying, acquiring a variety of businesses.

By the early 1990s, SA Brewing had become one of the largest manufacturers of water heaters in the world and appliances in Australia, and owned numerous packaging and beverage companies. The nature of these business acquisitions was such that brewing became a minor sideline for the company, and in 1993 SA Brewing announced a complete restructure. SA Brewing Holdings Ltd became Southcorp Holdings Limited and divided the business into four portfolios, namely, Southcorp Wines, Southcorp Packaging, Southcorp Appliances, and Southcorp International. The Brewing division with Southwark brewery was sold to Lion Nathan, originally a New Zealand Company that would eventually acquire many Australian breweries. In 2009, Lion Nathan was acquired by Japanese company Kirin Holdings Co Ltd.⁴⁴

In recent years, the ground floor of the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower has been used as a bar, and merchandising space and an addition to the front of the tower has been fitted out as a museum where a variety of items demonstrating the brewery's history are displayed.



West End Brewery 2004, note the modification to the Walkerville Brewhouse and loss of the 'house' behind the Tower (centre of image).

Source: Painter, p.287.

However, reduced sales led to the 14 October 2020 announcement of the closure of the Southwark site. Brewing at the Thebarton site will cease mid-2021 and the West End and Southwark ranges will be brewed interstate. The site will most likely be redeveloped for residential and retail developments.

Chronology

Year	Event
1837	Guthries hotel is granted the first hotel license in South Australia.
1839	A number of hotels trading on Hindley Street have onsite breweries.
1841	Warren's brewery in the Park Lands is the first officially sanctioned brewery in South Australia.
1869	Fanny and Charles Ware become the licensee's for the Exchange hotel.
1886	The Ware brothers establish the Torrenside Brewery adjacent to the River Torrens at Southwark (Thebarton), including the Brewhouse Tower.
1888	Torrenside ale and stout wins a gold medal at the Melbourne Exhibition. The South Australian Brewing, Malting & Wine & Spirit Company is formed through the merger of the West End Brewery, Kent Town Brewery and William Rounsevell's wine and spirit business.
1889	Torrenside Brewery wins a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition for its beers. Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company is established.
1893	The South Australian Brewing Company (SABCo) is established after the wine and spirit portion of the business is sold.
1894	South Australian Brewers' Association is formed and attempts to set a minimum price for the sale of beer in South Australia. Not all breweries follow the pricing, causing considerable angst in the industry for many years.
1895	East Adelaide brewery is established.
1898	Torrenside and the East Adelaide breweries merge to become Clark, Ware & Co. Walkerville Co-Operative and Clark, Ware & Co amalgamate and become the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company Limited (still run on cooperative principles). The Torrenside brewery is expanded.
c.1900	While approximately 28 breweries are still brewing in South Australia, the industry is dominated by three main breweries – SABCo, Walkerville Co-Operative and Haussens breweries.
1901	Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company Ltd closes all but the Torrenside (Thebarton) brewery and continue expanding the brewery, including doubling the size of the brewhouse and tower (1901-1903).
Mid-1901	Walkerville Co-Operative's head brewer resigns.

- 1915 Collectively Walkerville Co-Operative and SABCo are responsible for brewing 75% of the beer brewed in South Australia and dominate the industry. As the smaller breweries struggle to remain viable, they will either close or be absorbed by one or the other of these two major breweries. SABCo suggest it and Walkerville Co-Operative Brewery amalgamate, the suggestion is declined.
- 1925 Walkerville approaches SABCo with an offer for the two breweries to amalgamate, SABCo declines Walkerville's offer. Walkerville orders the Nathan system in an attempt to compete with SABCo's West End Bitter and begins extensive additions to the brewery to accommodate it.
- 1938 SABCo acquires Walkerville Co-Operative and operates two breweries, its West End Brewery on Hindley Street and the Walkerville Brewery, which it will rename Nathan Brewery after the Nathan system installed there.
- 1951 The Nathan Brewery is renamed the Southwark Brewery.
- 1962 Copper kettle in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is decommissioned and a new brewhouse is built.**
- 1963 New boiler house is built and two new automatic boilers are installed. The Brewery Garden is upgraded for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.
- 1964 A new filer room is built.
- 1969 The first of the outside vertical stainless steel storage tanks are installed.
- 1971 SABCo restructures to become a holding company and changes its name to SA Brewing Company. It begins to diversify its business portfolio.
- 1971- The land to the south of Winwood Street is purchased to expand the
1972 Southwark Brewery in anticipation of closing the West End Brewery.
- 1974 The closure of the West End Brewery by 1982 is announced.
- 1975 The new buildings and bottling plant open.
- 1980 The West End Brewery closes early after the expansion of the Southwark brewery occurs more quickly than anticipated.
- 1980s Further site expansion and modification results in a large portion of the Nathan Brewhouse being demolished or incorporated into other structures. The eastern Clearspan is removed for additional tank storage.
- 1982 The tradition of painting the SANFL premiership teams' colours at the top of the chimney is transferred from West End to Southwark.
- 1984 The ground floor of the Brewhouse Tower is converted into a sales and merchandising space.**

- 1985- 1990 New cellars, fermentation cellar block, bright beer facilities, water treatment plant and filling plant are constructed. The 20 year old bottling plant is replaced.
- 1993 SA Brewing Holdings become Southcorp and sells the West End/Southwark Brewery (Thebarton site) to Lion Nathan.
- 2009 Lion Nathan is acquired by Kirin.
- 2015 The brewhouse (modern) is extensively upgraded and the copper kettle from the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is restored and prominently displayed in the new brewhouse.**
- 2020 Lion announces the closure of the West End Brewery, to take effect mid-2021.

References

Cudmore, Michael (1988), *History of the South Australian Brewing Company Limited*, (SABCo: Adelaide).

Ward, Maurice (1950-1951), *Some Brief Records of Brewing in South Australia*, (The Pioneers Association of South Australia: Adelaide).

Painter, Alison (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide).

SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports (1950s-1992).

Southcorp (1993), Annual Report.

Newspapers, Archival and Websites

'The Torrenside Brewery', *The Register* 12 May 1886, p.7.

'The Torrenside Brewery', *The Advertiser* 12 May 1886, p.6.

'Biographical', *The Register* 3 December 1895, p.6.

'Corporation Inspection', *Express and Telegraph* 23 January 1896, p.2.

'Sudden Death of Mr TL Ware', *The Observer* 26 December 1896, p.30.

'Death of Mrs F Ware', *The Register* 8 April 1898, p.6.

'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4.

'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4.

Plan of the Township of Southwark, SLSA, C 377.

Brett J Stubbs, 'The Nathan System in Australia', *BrewNews*

<https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/07/29/the-nathan-system-in-australia/> [accessed 5 May 2021]

'The Chimney Tradition', <https://s3.amazonaws.com/west-end-draught/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/06143043/SAB-CHIMNEY-TRADITION.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/sanflofficial>,

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=406207010777941>

Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050,Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing.>

SITE DETAILS

Walkerville Brewhouse Tower
107 Port Road, Thebarton

PLACE NO.: 26528

FORMER NAME:	Torrenside Brewery
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Four-storey brewhouse tower with lantern and cellar, constructed from brick and painted dark red, with cream detailing to arched windows.
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1886, 1898-1899, 1901-1903
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 27 November 2020
CURRENT USE:	Bar and merchandising, event space and museum displays 1984-2021.
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Brewhouse 1886-1962
ARCHITECT:	Wright and Reed (1886), Alfred Wells (1898-1899)
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of West Torrens
LOCATION:	Street Name: 107 Port Road Town/Suburb: Thebarton Post Code: 5031
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title CT 6137/685 F103751 A2 Reference: CT 5138/158 D1038 A386 Hundred: Adelaide

PHOTOS

Walkerville Brewhouse Tower

PLACE NO.: 26528

107 Port Road, Thebarton



Walkerville Brewhouse Tower showing eastern and southern elevations.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2020



Walkerville Brewhouse Tower showing the addition to the front for the museum exhibition space.

Source: DEW Files 24 October 2021



Southern elevation (facing Winwood Street now closed)

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

Walkerville Brewhouse Tower

PLACE NO.: 26528

107 Port Road, Thebarton



View of brewery buildings with the Brewhouse Tower.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021



Inside the Brewhouse Tower, showing the space as it remains after decommissioning.

Source: DEW 24 March 2021



Examples of brewery machinery and equipment inside the Brewhouse Tower.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021



Walkerville Brewhouse Tower

PLACE NO.: 26528

107 Port Road, Thebarton



Merchandising space on the ground floor of the tower and museum space at front.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021



Tower Bar on the ground floor of the Brewhouse Tower.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

-
- ¹ Maurice Ward (1950-1951), *Some Brief Records of Brewing in South Australia*, (The Pioneers Association of South Australia: Adelaide), pp.4-5.
 - ² Michael Cudmore (1988), *History of the South Australian Brewing Company Limited*, (SABCo: Adelaide), p.13 .
 - ³ Alison Painter (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide), p.146
 - ⁴ 'Death of Mrs F Ware', *The Register* 8 April 1898, p.6.
 - ⁵ 'The Torrenside Brewery', *The Register* 12 May 1886, p.7.
 - ⁶ Painter, p148.
 - ⁷ 'The Torrenside Brewery', *The Register* 12 May 1886, p.7. 'The Torrenside Brewery', *The Advertiser* 12 May 1886, p.6.
 - ⁸ 'Sudden Death of Mr TL Ware', *The Observer* 26 December 896, p.30. Painter, p.190.
 - ⁹ 'Biographical', *The Register* 3 December 1895, p.6.
 - ¹⁰ 'Corporation Inspection', *Express and Telegraph* 23 January 1896, p.2.
 - ¹¹ Painter, p.185,189-190.
 - ¹² Painter, p.190.
 - ¹³ Painter, pp.172, 186-188.
 - ¹⁴ Painter, pp.172, 186-188.
 - ¹⁵ Painter, pp. 186-187.
 - ¹⁶ Painter, pp.190-191.
 - ¹⁷ Plan of the Township of Southwark, SLSA, C 377.
 - ¹⁸ 'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4. Painter, p.191. 'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4.
 - ¹⁹ 'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4. Painter, p.191.
 - ²⁰ Painter, p.194.
 - ²¹ Painter, p.196.
 - ²² 'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4. Painter, p.206.
 - ²³ Painter, pp.201-209.
 - ²⁴ Painter, pp.218-219,222.
 - ²⁵ Painter, p.228.
 - ²⁶ Painter, pp.237-241.
 - ²⁷ Painter, pp.240-241.
 - ²⁸ Brett J Stubbs, 'The Nathan System in Australia', BrewNews <https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/07/29/the-nathan-system-in-australia/> [accessed 5 May 2021]
 - ²⁹ Brett J Stubbs (2013), 'The Nathan System in Australia', BrewNews <https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/07/29/the-nathan-system-in-australia/> [accessed 5 May 2021]
 - ³⁰ Painter, pp.241-243.
 - ³¹ Painter, pp.253-254, 261.
 - ³² Painter, pp.148-154.
 - ³³ Painter, pp.166-167
 - ³⁴ Painter, pp.209-211.
 - ³⁵ Painter, pp.209-211, 223.
 - ³⁶ Painter, p.223.
 - ³⁷ Painter pp.244-247.
 - ³⁸ Painter, p.277.
 - ³⁹ Painter, p.277.
 - ⁴⁰ Painter, p.277.
 - ⁴¹ SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports (1950s-1992). Cudmore, p.131.
 - ⁴² Cudmore, p.130-131.
 - ⁴³ SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports (1950s-1992).

⁴⁴ Southcorp (1993), Annual Report. Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050,Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing>.