

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

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

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

ADDRESS: Karna Country

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide

CT 5129/427, F102327 A13

Hundred of Adelaide

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Kelvin Building demonstrates the rapid growth of South Australia's electricity industry during the first half of the twentieth century. Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building was purpose-built to serve as the headquarters of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo), South Australia's principal electricity generator and supplier until it was nationalised to become the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) in 1946. ETSA continued to operate from the Kelvin Building until 1962.

The Kelvin Building is an uncommon example of the first wave of tall buildings that transformed Adelaide's skyline between 1912 and 1943, demonstrating the commercial growth of the State's capital city and consolidating Adelaide as the centre of business in South Australia. Designed by architect Eric McMichael, the Kelvin Building is also an outstanding representative of Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style architecture demonstrating a high degree of creative and aesthetic accomplishment, particularly in its architectural detailing and progressive design features.

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 Kelvin Building is directly related to the expansion of electricity across the State, the uptake of which grew rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s. The Kelvin Building was purpose-built for the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo), which emerged as South Australia's principal electricity generator and supplier, especially after management and control of AESCo was transferred from London to Adelaide in 1921 and legislation enabled the company to expand its operations outside of Adelaide in 1922.

Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building served as AESCo's purpose-built corporate, operational and consumer headquarters. The Kelvin Building housed AESCo's upper management and, by 1940, the mains control room, where operators oversaw and controlled the company's electricity infrastructure, covering virtually all of South Australia's supply. AESCo also hosted public promotional events in the Kelvin Building, designed to encourage the uptake of electricity and electric household appliances. Consequently, the Kelvin Building stood at the epicentre of South Australia's electricity industry during the inter-war period and is thus integral to the story of AESCo and the expansion of electricity in South Australia.

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

The Kelvin Building is associated with South Australia's 'first wave' of 'tall buildings', high-rise buildings constructed with steel or reinforced concrete frames of six or more stories. These tall buildings are culturally significant to South Australia as they demonstrate the commercial growth of the State's capital city and consolidation of Adelaide as South Australia's Central Business District (CBD). They also reaffirmed Adelaide's intended grid-based layout and transformed the city's skyline, in turn reflecting their advocates' desire to convey South Australia as 'modern' and 'progressive'.

Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building is the fifth of the fourteen tall buildings erected in South Australia between 1912 and 1946. The construction of new, tall buildings was halted due to the Second World War and the Commonwealth's introduction of building restrictions. The Kelvin Building therefore possesses uncommon qualities of cultural significance as it demonstrates the emergence of tall buildings in South Australia and their role in consolidating Adelaide as the business centre of South Australia. While all fourteen tall buildings still remain, the Kelvin Building is a highly intact example, with some of the other tall buildings, such as the Verco Building (SHP 13363), and Liberal Club (SHP 13362), remaining as facades only.

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

Designed by Eric McMichael and constructed between 1923 and 1926, the Kelvin Building is an outstanding and highly intact example of the 'Inter-War Commercial Palazzo' style, finely articulating many key attributes of the style, including:

- a base emphasised with strong rustication and large openings, featuring a central colonnade flanked by two porches at the ground level and a balcony, balustrade, string course and steel-framed double-doors at the first storey level,
- neutral, repetitive intermediate storeys emphasising the wall plane between the second and fourth storeys, also featuring coved vertical niches that form 'towers' at the sides,
- a top storey differentiated from storeys below, with a colonnade at the fifth storey and parapet and two 'towers' at the roof level,
- a prominent classical cornice featuring dentils,
- smoothly textured walls with ashlar cement detailing,
- minor entablature above Ionic and Tuscan-order columns,
- aedicules at the fifth-storey with Tuscan-order columns,
- metal-framed windows on all elevations.

The Kelvin building also demonstrates a high degree of creative and aesthetic accomplishment, particularly in its architectural detailing and progressive design features. It has received critical recognition in Apperley, Irving and Reynolds' seminal book *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, and Carol Cosgrove's *Art Deco: Its Place in South Australia's Architectural Heritage*, the first comprehensive study of the popular architecture of the inter-war period in South Australia.

SITE PLAN

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Kelvin Building 233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide (CT 5129/427, F102327 A13, Hundred of Adelaide)

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




- Kelvin Building office building,
- Original detailing to Façade
- Roof,
- Basement entrance door,
- Original internal fixtures and fittings, including the timber floorboards, picture rails and decorative masonry,
- Steel-framed window casings,
- Basement well or sump.

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

- Non-original fixtures and fittings,
- Lifts.

N ↑

LEGEND

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

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

4 of 44

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 Kelvin Building, now known as Security House, is a six-storey office building with a roof space and basement. The Kelvin Building is built of reinforced concrete and brick, with a façade designed in the 'Inter-War Commercial Palazzo' style.

The building has a dominant, street-facing, symmetrical rendered façade. A large, central, recessed area on the facade is flanked by elements resembling pylons or towers, which return at both ends on the eastern and western elevations (western elevation façade return elements currently hidden by neighbouring building).

The façade features ashlar detailing and pressed cement decoration and comprises a ground-floor plinth, intermediary section, comprising the first through fifth floors, and a parapet at roof level.

The plinth comprises the ground floor and features a central colonnade flanked by porches, with the following additional features:

- colonnade supported by six Ionic-order columns, including four paired columns,
- Ionic-order columns flanking the porches *in antis*,
- three base courses in rough ashlar supporting the columns and porch side walls,
- wrought iron railings to two bays of colonnades (third bay railings removed),
- entablature comprising a plain frieze, architrave and a cornice with dentils separating the ground and first floors,
- three steel-framed arch windows inside the colonnade with cement sills and surrounds,
- entrance doors in the porches fitted with glass sliding doors and surmounted by further glazing (not original fabric),
- two wells in the colonnade lighting the basement,
- a flight of dogleg stairs in the light well from colonnade to basement level, with marble treads, tiled risers and wrought iron railings.

The façade between plinth and parapet demonstrates the following features:

- coved vertical niches in the western face of each tower, extending from the first to the fourth floors, punctuated by window openings at each floor level,
- three door openings between the towers at first floor level with fanlights above, associated with a narrow balcony and pressed cement balustrade,

- pressed cement hood moulding above door openings at first floor level, featuring dentils and contiguous pediments,
- colonnade supported by corbels between the towers at fifth floor level, with Tuscan-order columns, framing window openings,
- niches in towers at fifth floor level, with Tuscan-order columns *in antis*,
- steel-framed sash windows to all window openings, all with glazing bars to upper sashes,
- parapet with rectangular openings containing wrought-iron grilles,
- rectangular openings in towers containing wrought iron grilles,
- extensive pressed cement decoration at parapet level, including entablature, plain frieze and cornice with dentils, stylised festoon-like details, and stepped features at top of towers,
- stylised keystones and sills, with stylised corbels, below most window openings,
- stylised keystones to 'towers' and 'tower' niches,
- ashlar detailing in cement render,
- pressed cement decoration on façade returns echoing northern elevation tower decoration but in low relief,
- partially-rendered eastern elevation,
- flagpoles surmounting towers.

Besides the façade returns, the western, southern and eastern elevations are red face brick, pierced by window openings with reinforced concrete lintels and sills, fitted with steel frames. Deep recesses in the western and eastern elevations serve as light wells and create H-shaped footprints for the above-ground floors.

Additional exterior features include:

- hipped corrugated steel roof with dormer vents,
- external steel fire stairs in the western elevation light well giving access to the roof.

Original interior features include:

- concrete structural columns, plastered, with chamfered corners,
- timber floorboards,
- fibrous plaster wall and ceiling decoration in downstairs lobby,
- a well or sump in the basement.

Elements of Significance:

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

- Kelvin Building office building,
- Original detailing to Façade,
- Roof,
- Basement entrance door,

- Original internal fixtures and fittings, including the timber floorboards, picture rails and decorative masonry,
- Steel-framed window casings,
- Basement well or sump.

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

- Non-original fixtures and fittings,
- Lifts.

History of the Place

Electricity Supply, AESCo and ETSA

The use of electricity in South Australia occurred in the mid-1850s and was associated with the development of the telegraph. In 1882 the first public electricity supply bill was assented, creating the South Australian Electric Company. The company proved unsuccessful and never produced electricity, primarily due to of opposition from the South Australian Gas Company.¹ In 1895, the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company was registered and entered discussions with the City of Port Adelaide to supply electricity to illuminate the municipality with electric light.²

An unreliable temporary service began in Port Adelaide at the beginning of 1898, when the first powerhouse located in William Marston's shop on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets began operating. It was soon replaced with a bespoke powerhouse built on Nile Street, Port Adelaide. The Nile Street Powerhouse began supplying electricity on 1 January 1899, but was plagued with problems due to the inexperience of the engineer commissioned to erect it.³

The arrival of electrical engineer F. W. H. Wheadon from England in July 1899 proved beneficial and while Adelaide's older established businessmen viewed him as 'a mere boy', it was his knowledge, skills and business acumen that enabled the Nile Street Powerhouse to run with fewer issues and allowed the Company to plan for the expansion of the electricity supply in South Australia. A contract to provide electric light to the City of Adelaide for five years was secured in September 1899.⁴

The growing acceptance of electricity and its improved supply, as well as a myriad of business dealings between some of Adelaide's most successful businessmen, such as Sir George Brookman and interstate and United Kingdom-based individuals and companies, ultimately resulted in the purchase of the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company by the UK-based British Electrical Engineering Company Ltd. in September 1899. The Adelaide operations were subsequently bought by the UK-based the Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia Ltd in January 1900.⁵

A temporary powerhouse situated in a tin shed was constructed to supply electricity to the city while the powerhouse on Grenfell Street (now Tandanya SHP 10984) was completed. The growth in demand and supply, and subsequent improvements to the company's finances made it a viable proposition and in 1905, the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo), which was incorporated in London, purchased the Company. This was followed by a period of expansion that resulted in the rollout of electricity to the suburbs surrounding the city, such as Thebarton.⁶

The use of electricity in South Australia was further boosted by the advent of the electric tram network and the government's creation of the Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) in 1906. The first line opened in March 1909, which was fed electricity from AESCo until the MTT developed their own generators. Outside of Adelaide, the MTT also established a separate, satellite tram network serving Port Adelaide which was inaugurated in 1917. The MTT had a power station on Ocean Steamer's Road, Port Adelaide, now the vicinity of No. 2 Dock. The power station has since been demolished.⁷

Further demand for supply meant AESCo began looking for a site to build a power station. A site at Osborne was chosen, but the First World War halted planning and construction until 1919. The power station was an engineering feat as much of the land on which it was sited had to be reclaimed and the buildings and facilities supported on 3,000 wooden piles. On 12 August 1923, 'A' power station at Osborne came on line and by 1925 was supplying the city's entire needs, resulting in the closure of the Grenfell Street powerhouse (now Tandanya SHP 10984) in that year.⁸

While electricity had originally been largely used for lighting, by the 1920s it was being increasingly used to power household appliances, heat water and buildings, and power industry. Following an Act of Parliament in 1922 that enabled AESCo to supply electricity 'in any part of the State',⁹ the company began to expand beyond Adelaide and quickly became South Australia's principal electricity provider.¹⁰ Its expansion across South Australia was greatly facilitated by the 1924 invention of the 'Stobie Pole', a termite-proof electricity pole made of steel and concrete created by James Cyril (J.C.) Stobie, an AESCo engineer.¹¹ Guaranteed electricity supplies became an important factor in the industrialisation of the State in the years following World War Two and led to the nationalisation of the State's electricity and the formation of the Electricity Trust of South Australia in 1946.

At that time, South Australia was reliant on black coal from interstate to generate the State's electricity and miners strikes in New South Wales in the 1940s caused serious disruption to South Australian electricity supplies. Providing a reliable source of electricity was paramount to entice industry to relocate and/or establish in South Australia. To achieve that end Premier Playford supported the establishment of the brown-coal mine at Leigh Creek (c.1943), about 550km north of Adelaide, and

assisted ETSA to construct a power station at Port Augusta (1954, now demolished) designed to burn the brown coal from Leigh Creek to supply electricity to industry, businesses and homes across the State.¹²



Osborne Power House, c.1927.

Source: SLSA B4574

Adelaide's First 'Tall Buildings'

'Skyscrapers' first emerged in the United States during the 1880s, particularly in Chicago and New York. These buildings typically comprised ten or more storeys and towered over adjacent buildings.¹³ Their emergence was spurred by rising land prices and the desire to maximise the use of increasingly limited space, especially for profit.¹⁴ They were enabled by new materials and technological innovations, particularly the use of steel or reinforced concrete to build internal frames, rather than load-bearing external walls which had been the norm until then.¹⁵ The invention of the elevator, hydraulic plumbing systems and advanced fireproofing also facilitated their creation.¹⁶

Similar buildings were soon erected outside of the United States, including in Australia. Although tall buildings with up to six storeys started appearing in Australia in the 1860s, they began to reach up to ten storeys by the 1880s, primarily in Melbourne and Sydney.¹⁷ They continued to increase in height between the 1890s and early 1910s

until state-based height restrictions were implemented, which remained in place until limitations were amended decades later.¹⁸

South Australia's 'first wave of tall building development', known as such as they were usually less than 10 storeys, commenced in 1912 with the construction of the Verco Building on North Terrace, Adelaide, designed by Eric McMichael.¹⁹ However, further construction did not occur until the 1920s,²⁰ the delay likely caused by World War One and post-war social and economic adjustments.

Conditions began to settle by the early 1920s and a general sense of progressiveness and prosperity began to pervade South Australia.²¹ Reflective of this new outlook, construction of high-rise commercial buildings recommenced. However, in 1923, height restrictions were imposed by the *Building Act* preventing the construction of skyscrapers and resulting in the suite of tall-buildings that emerged in the Adelaide skyline.²²

By the middle of the 1920s, the *Australian Home and Builder* noted that '[n]ever in the history of Adelaide has there been in progress such a costly and important programme of commercial buildings'.²³ These buildings were concentrated along the middle of North Terrace, though several were also constructed nearby along King William Street and a few on Grenfell and Pirie Streets.²⁴

Observers considered these buildings as symbols of the state's progress and modernity.²⁵ Much of this enthusiasm was buoyed by a desire to 'keep up' with developments occurring in other states, especially Victoria and New South Wales.²⁶ Although there 'had been no pressing necessity to build upwards in twentieth century Adelaide',²⁷ and while some even rejected them outright due to practical, medical or aesthetic concerns, the desire for Adelaide be a 'real city' on par with its eastern counterparts was palpable.²⁸

Along with transforming the skyline, Adelaide's first 'tall buildings introduced a rectilinear edge of facades' to the streets, which 'helped to redefine and reinforce the order of the original City of Adelaide plan'.²⁹ In the nineteenth century, building throughout Adelaide had developed erratically, which in turn partially compromised the city's grid-based design. The tall buildings generally encompassed the entire land parcels and also had to conform to strict street-frontage requirements, thereby instating orderliness and reaffirming Adelaide's intended rectilinear layout.³⁰

Furthermore, tall buildings 'cooperated rather than competed in the process of transforming the capital from a city of mixed uses – administration, industry, manufacture, commerce, trade and housing – to one of commercial specialisation'.³¹ As most of these buildings were erected for large business enterprises, they helped consolidate Adelaide as South Australia's Central Business District (CBD). Together, they conveyed the commercial maturation of the city and secured its distinctiveness from its suburbs.³²



Three of Adelaide's first 'tall buildings', North Terrace, Adelaide, c.1935: Liberal Club, Goldsbrough House, and Shell House (left to right).

Source: SLSA B7092

Though interrupted by the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s,³³ construction continued and did so until around 1943, when Commonwealth building restrictions were instated during the Second World War halted construction.³⁴ Including the Verco Building (1912), fourteen of these buildings were erected during the first wave of development.³⁵

Constructing the Kelvin Building

In the early 1920s, AESCo initiated the process of building a new headquarters. This decision came as the company was experiencing substantial growth. At the end of 1923, for instance, AESCo reported that its number of consumers had grown from 4,810 in 1911 to 47,366 in 1923.³⁶ Over this period, the company began to expand its reach beyond metropolitan Adelaide to country districts. The decision was made after control and management of the company was transferred from London to Adelaide and while the power station at Osborne was under construction in 1921.³⁷ A new headquarters was thus in keeping with the company's rapid ascent as a leading South Australian enterprise and a part of its infrastructural overhaul intended to serve the entire state.

On 31 May 1922, the company purchased a portion of Town Acre 24 on North Terrace, Adelaide.³⁸ A row of two-storey, nineteenth-century terraced townhouses stood on the site.³⁹ Prior to the twentieth century, such residential buildings were commonplace on the southern side of North Terrace.⁴⁰ Chalmers Church, now known as Scots Church (SHP 13370), neighboured the site on the eastern side.



Chalmers Church (now Scots Church (SHP 13370)) on the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney Street and the row of terraced townhouses to its right, c.1911.

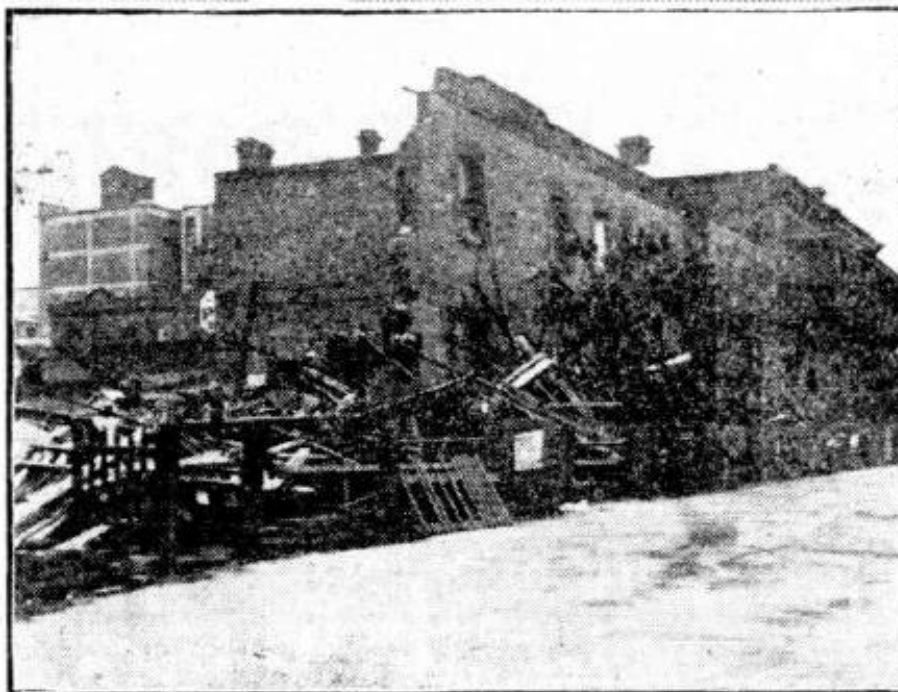
Source: SLSA B4381

Either in late 1922 or early 1923, AESCo commissioned architect Eric McMichael to design its new building. McMichael had been responsible for designing the Verco Building on North Terrace, South Australia's first 'tall building',⁴¹ and this may be why he was hired to design a building of similar scale and grandeur for AESCo. His plans were completed in March 1923.⁴²

Like the Verco Building, AESCo's headquarters building had six storeys and a basement. It was designed in the 'Commercial Palazzo' style and had subtle modern features, notably its stepped pylons and highly stylised decoration derived from classical precedents.⁴³ These features set the Kelvin Building apart from the contemporary architecture of the time. At this stage, the internal floorplans were indicative, showing large open floors with a few rooms for management and specialised operations. The plans were submitted to the City of Adelaide's Local Board of Health on 17 September 1923 and were approved exactly one week later.⁴⁴

The plans referred to the headquarters as the 'Kelvin Building' and demonstrate AESCo's desire to draw on associations with electricity.⁴⁵ William Thomson, better known as Lord Kelvin, was a nineteenth century mathematician and scientist known for his mathematical analysis of electricity and magnetism.

AESCo's directors reported on 13 November 1923 that a 'contract [had] been let for the erection of new city offices on North Terrace, and work [had] already been commenced on the site'.⁴⁶ Cheary Brothers were hired to construct the Kelvin Building for £42,975 and work at the site began no later than October 1923 and continued throughout 1924.⁴⁷ As the structure was being erected, McMichael completed plans for the interior finishings in January 1925. Further specialised rooms were documented at this time, including facilities for staff on the third floor, such as a kitchen, lunch room, smoking room, demonstration room and all of the building's lavatories.⁴⁸



Old dwellings on North terrace being demolished to make room for offices for the Electric Supply Co.

The row of terraced townhouses in the process of demolition, October 1923.

Source: 'Camera News', *Mail*, 6 October 1923, p.32; trove.nla.gov.au

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

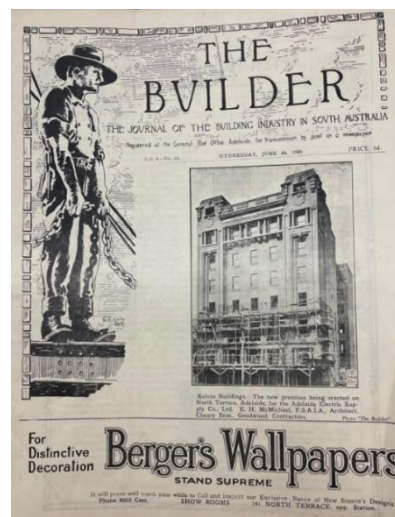
Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

During construction, there was media and professional interest in the Kelvin Building, the *Register* describing it as a 'handsome edifice' with a façade 'peculiarly appropriate to the enterprise which it is to serve'.⁴⁹ The *Builder* also documented the building's development by including photographs of the Kelvin Building on the cover of its June and October 1925 editions.⁵⁰



Drawing of the Kelvin Building featured in the News, 19 October 1923.

Source: 'Kelvin Building', News, 19 October 1923; trove.nla.gov.au

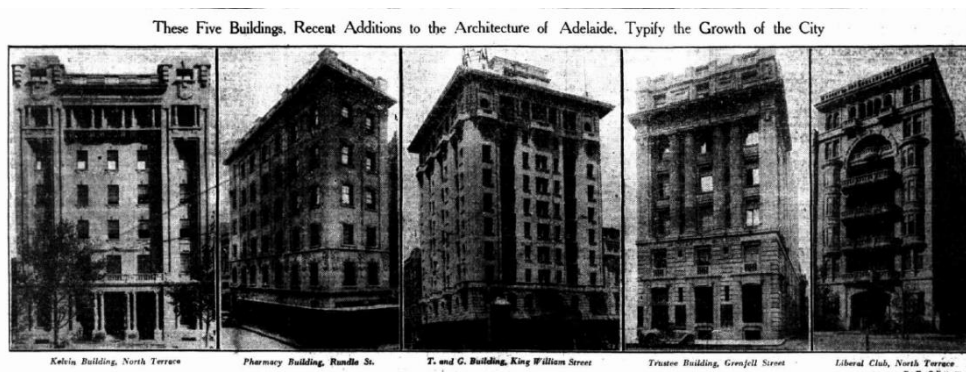


The Kelvin Building on the cover of the Builder, 24 June 1925.

Source: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

The Kelvin Building was completed and occupied in early 1926.⁵¹ The company appears to have occupied the entire building except for the basement, which was offered for lease as early as 1925.⁵²

Upon its completion, the Kelvin Building was acclaimed in the media for its modern architectural expression, luxurious appointments and as evidence of the growth of enterprise in Adelaide.⁵³



Five buildings the Mail believed exemplified 'Adelaide Growing Up' and showed the 'Remarkable Progress in [the] Metropolis', May 1926.

Source: 'Adelaide Growing Up', Mail, 15 May 1926; trove.nla.gov.au



Original ground floor interior at the Kelvin Building, 1926.

Source: *Adelect*, December 1926, p.17.

AESCo and ETSA at the Kelvin Building

On moving into the Kelvin Building, AESCo conveyed this development as a triumph for the company, one that symbolised its rapid ascent as a leading South Australian enterprise. The company's Chairman, Sir George Brookman, captured this sentiment in his speech at the twenty-second annual general meeting held at the Kelvin Building on 10 November 1926. Brookman began his address by pronouncing that:

Five years ago I presided at the first annual meeting of the company held in Australia, following the formal transfer of control from London. It is now my pleasure to welcome you to the first meeting held at the Company's new headquarters in Kelvin Building. I hope it will be the privilege of the chairman to unfold a tale of continued prosperity, broad-based upon the goodwill of the consumers.⁵⁴

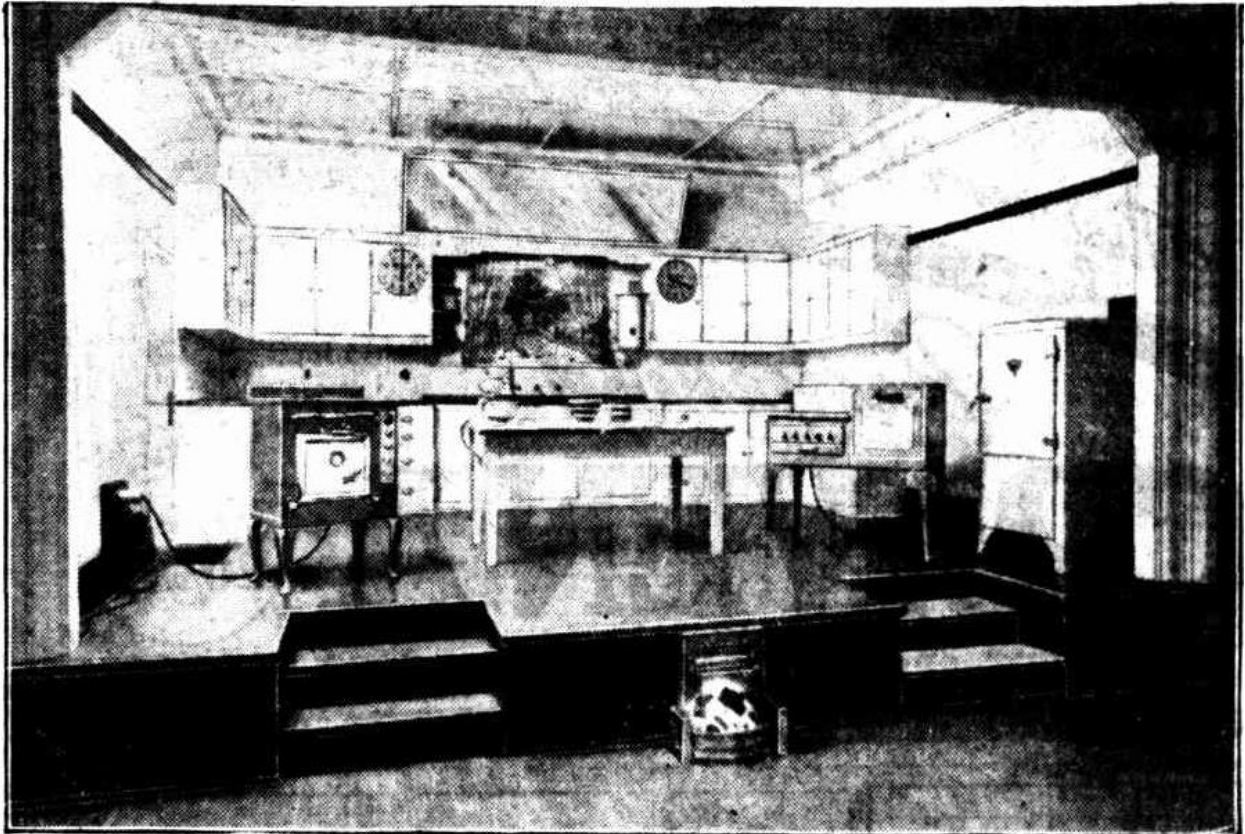
He went on to note other important developments, such as the company's 'rapid growth', the opening of the Osborne Power House, and expansion into country districts. The latter had 'altered the position of the Company from a metropolitan to almost State-wide undertaking'.⁵⁵ Along with the Osborne plant and the first buildings

of the depot complex at Hilton (SHP 26308), the Kelvin Building formed a major part of AESCo's infrastructural development which was initiated to fulfil its emerging role as the state's principal supplier of electricity. Indeed, the building was to be the heart of their entire operation.

The Kelvin Building housed AESCo's corporate and technical operations. Regarding the former, McMichael's 1923 and 1925 plans show that management was located on the first floor and engineers and draughtsmen were on the second floor.⁵⁶ Over time, the Correspondence Branch, Industrial Office and the Personnel Branch were all stationed at the Kelvin Building, as were various figures related to AESCo's business operations.⁵⁷ Regarding the latter, communications and some aspects of the network were controlled from the building.⁵⁸ At least from 1940, the Mains Control Office was located in the Kelvin Building on the second floor. The Office contained an 'illuminated diagram board' and a 'control desk', both of which were 'installed in 1940'. The control desk included an 'indicating panel' that instantly displayed 'any faulty operations in the substations'.⁵⁹

In 1924, the company established the 'Consumers' Engineer's Department' under the direction of A. N. Dawkins, introducing a consumer function that grew over the years. The role of 'Consumers' Engineer' had been established in 1917 to offer advice to consumers 'having problems with their power installations or were considering new ones'.⁶⁰ Amongst its various activities, the department's role expanded to include cooking demonstrations for housewives.⁶¹ Demonstrations began to be conducted at the Kelvin Building in 1933 and from 1936 were held in a purpose-built 'modern demonstration hall'. A platform in the hall was 'set out as an Ideal Kitchen, equipped with all modern labor [sic] saving appliances', including 'washing machines, vacuum cleaners, bath heaters and other electrical appliances'.⁶² It did so ostensibly to promote its 'Adelect' electric cookers, a loanable product it developed in the early 1930s to expand its revenue stream.⁶³

Later, cookers, refrigerators and hot water systems were made available for hire-purchase.⁶⁴ The larger purpose of these products and the demonstrations was to promote the uptake of electricity.⁶⁵ Indeed, the company subsidised the cost of electricity for domestic applications.⁶⁶ Attesting to how important these demonstrations were to the company, as well as to their popularity, by 1941 the Department had a Chief Cookery Demonstrator and six assistant demonstrators.⁶⁷



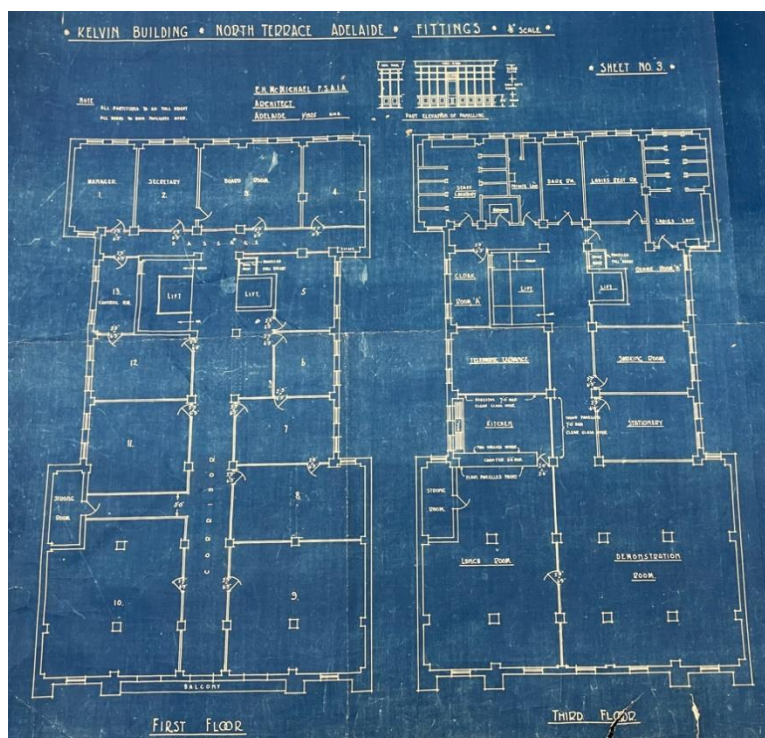
AESCo's 'Ideal Kitchen' showing multiple electric appliances like the 'Adelect' cooker on the left, located in the demonstration hall at the Kelvin Building, 1936.

Source: News, 9 June 1936; trove.nla.gov.au

In addition to its immediate connection to AESCo's business operations, the Kelvin Building was intertwined with the company's broader efforts to establish and maintain an internal corporate culture, one premised on a 'unitarist' identity between management and staff.⁶⁸ Towards this end, a staff magazine titled *Adelect* was established in 1926 and was 'conducted by the employees' of AESCo.⁶⁹ It included general interest items and reported on social and recreational developments throughout the entire company.⁷⁰ The first edition featured the Kelvin Building on the cover, which later reappeared as a recurring logo beginning in 1931.⁷¹

Other initiatives included annual balls, picnics and swimming carnivals.⁷² There were AESCo cricket teams, as well as recreation and debating clubs.⁷³ Notably, a voluntary 'A.E.S' Employees' Sick and Accident Society' was established to provide workplace insurance to staff.⁷⁴ Taken together, whether initiated or administered by the company or its employees, it is clear all such measures were to create an AESCo culture, one that was seemingly beneficial to employers and employees.

This philosophy was embedded in the layout of the building as demonstrated by the extensive facilities provided for staff that took up most of the third floor, including ladies' and men's lavatories, rest rooms, cloak rooms, a smoking room, a kitchen and a sizeable lunch room.⁷⁵ A recreation room was added sometime after the building was completed.⁷⁶



E. H. McMichael's 1925 plans for the Kelvin Building's interior fittings, the left side showing staff facilities on third floor.

Source: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia



AESCo's Recreation Room in the Kelvin Building, 1927.

Source: *Adelect*, June 1927, p.21.

The Kelvin Building continued to serve as AESCo's corporate, operational and consumer headquarters until the company was nationalised by the Government of South Australia in 1946 and reconfigured as the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). The handover between these two organisations took place at the Kelvin Building on 2 September 1946.⁷⁷ ETSA acquired AESCo's assets,⁷⁸ including the Kelvin Building.

ETSA retained the building as South Australia's electricity headquarters immediately following its acquisition. Between 1947 and 1949, ETSA initiated changes to the building, including the installation of a new air-conditioning system, new windows on the third and fourth floors, a professional kitchen and cafeteria on the third floor, and a new staircase in the basement.⁷⁹

Despite these alterations the Kelvin Building was not large enough to sufficiently accommodate ETSA's staff. As an interim solution, ETSA purchased the Hindmarsh Building, located at the corner of Grenfell Street and Hindmarsh Square in Adelaide.⁸⁰ ETSA's long-term solution was to erect an entirely new headquarters. Although this idea was floated as early as April 1949,⁸¹ construction of ETSA's new headquarters in Eastwood commenced much later in 1961 and was completed the following year.⁸² ETSA then relocated from the Kelvin and Hindmarsh Buildings. It sold the former to Security and Life Assurances Limited (SLAL) in 1963,⁸³ effectively ending the Kelvin Building's role in South Australia's electricity industry.

Becoming Security House and Subsequent History

SLAL's acquisition of the Kelvin Building occurred during the Australia-wide expansion of the life insurance industry in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁴ After purchasing the Kelvin Building, SLAL changed the building's name to Security House and embarked on extensive renovations from 1964. In addition to relatively basic changes to office arrangements, the lifts were relocated from either side of the rear corridor and were paired together towards the north-west of the building near the entrance; the internal stairs were moved to the same location; toilets were added to each floor, alternating between male and female facilities; and the main entrance was repositioned away from the centre to the western porch.⁸⁵ These changes have remained into the twenty-first century, including the change of name.

SLAL, later known as Lumley's,⁸⁶ owned the building for just over two decades and looks to have rented out its unused floorspace to other organisations, notably the Commonwealth Department of Housing.⁸⁷ The University of Adelaide purchased the building in 1986 and sold it in 1993,⁸⁸ though continued to hold a caveat and lease office space until around 2015.⁸⁹ The building has changed hands several times since and has had multiple tenants over the years including, most recently, the History Trust of South Australia.⁹⁰ Over the years, additional adjustments have been made to the

building, particularly the construction of a new main entrance on the eastern side, replacing the original, and changes to the internal layout. In 2013 the Kelvin Building was listed as a Local Heritage Place and in 2016 conservation works were undertaken to the façade.

Chronology

Year	Event
1882	First public electricity supply bill is assented.
1895	South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company is registered and begins discussions to supply electric light to the municipality of Port Adelaide.
1898	First (temporary) powerhouse is established at William Marston's shop on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets, Port Adelaide.
1899	Nile Street Powerhouse begins operating. Electrical Engineer FWH Wheadon arrives in July bringing the knowledge and expertise to successfully expand the State's electricity network. Contract to supply electric lighting to the City of Adelaide is secured. UK-based Electrical Engineering Company of Australia Ltd purchases South Australian Electric Light and Motive Company.
1900	Electric Lighting and Traction Company Ltd purchase all of Adelaide's electricity operations.
1901	Powerhouse on Grenfell Street (Tandanya) becomes operational.
1902	First suburban power supply provided to North Adelaide via underground cables.
1905	Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo) is incorporated in London and purchases Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia Ltd operations.
1907	Nile Street Powerhouse is closed.
1911	Parliament reviews Adelaide's building legislation and the Building Bill is introduced but does not pass until 1923. The Verco Building, architect Eric McMichael's first commission and South Australia's first 'tall building,' is erected on North Terrace.
1914	Consumers of electricity increased from 585 in 1904 to 13,192 in 1914.
1916	J. C. Stobie joins AESCo.
1919	Land reclamation and construction of the Osborn power station begins.
1921	The control and management of AESCo is transferred from London to Adelaide on 1 March.

- 1922 AESCo purchases a portion of Town Acre 24, City of Adelaide, on North Terrace.**
- 1922-1923 Architect Eric McMichael is commissioned to design the Kelvin Building for AESCo.**
- 1923** Osborne 'A' power station begins generating electricity.
The Building Bill is assented.
Construction of Kelvin Building commences.
- 1924 J. C. Stobie patents the termite-resistant 'Stobie pole' which is used extensively across South Australia and facilitates the rapid expansion of electricity supply.
- 1925 The Grenfell Street powerhouse is closed.
The Liberal Club Building is erected on North Terrace.
- 1926 The Kelvin Building is completed and becomes the AESCo headquarters.**
- 1931 Shell House is erected on North Terrace.
- 1932 The SA government commissions AESCo to prepare a report on the state of electricity in South Australia. Engineering workshops contribute substantially to the State's economy and concerns are raised about competition from the Government Workshops and interstate firms.
- 1933 Cooking demonstrations at Kelvin House begin.
- 1935 Goldsbrough House is erected on North Terrace.
- 1946 The SA Government nationalises the State's electricity supply, establishing the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). It further establishes the Leigh Creek Coal Mine and the Port Augusta power station.
ETSA acquires the Kelvin Building.
- 1947-1949 ETSA makes several alterations to Kelvin House, such as installing a new air-conditioning system, replacing windows, improving the staff kitchen and cafeteria, and erecting new stairs in the basement.**
- 1949 ETSA purchases the Hindmarsh Building to ease crowding in the Kelvin Building.
ETSA announces that it intends to construct a new building.
- 1961 Construction of a new ETSA headquarters at Eastwood begins.
- 1962 ETSA Relocates to its new headquarters at Eastwood.**
- 1963 The Kelvin Building is sold to Security Life Assurances Limited (SLAL), which renames it 'Security House'.**
- 1964 SLAS initiates major alterations to the building. Designed by architects Stephenson and Turner, the lifts are relocated from either side of the rear**

corridor and are instead paired together towards the north-west of the building near the entrance; the internal stairs are moved to same location; toilets are added to each floor, alternating between male and female facilities; and the main entrance is repositioned away from the centre to the western porch.

- 1986 The Kelvin Building, now Security House, is sold to the University of Adelaide.
- 1993 The University of Adelaide sells the Kelvin Building but continues to hold a caveat and lease office space until around 2015.
- c.1997 Demolition of the Osborne Power Station.
- 1999 The government privatises ETSA.
- 2013 The Kelvin Building is listed as a Local Heritage Place under the name 'Security House'.**
- c.2016 Conservation work is undertaken on the façade.**

References

Books and Chapters

- Apperly, Richard, Irving, Robert, and Reynolds, Peter. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*. North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1989.
- Cosgrove, Carol. *Moving to the Modern: Art Deco in South Australian Architecture*. Adelaide: Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design, 2009.
- Jackson, Davina. *Australian Architecture: A History*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2022.
- Klaassen, Nic. 'The Battle for Leigh Creek', in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*. Eds. O'Neil, Bernard; Raftery, Judith; and Round, Kerrie. Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996.
- Linn, Rob. *ETSA: The Story of Electricity in South Australia*. Blackwood: Historical Consultants Pty Ltd, 1996.
- Linn, Rob. *Pathways for Power: The Story of ElectraNet SA*. Cherry Gardens, SA: Historical Consultants Pty for ElectraNet, 2000.
- Page, Michael. *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986*. Adelaide: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1986.
- Rich, David C. 'Tom's Vision? Playford and Industrialisation', in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*. Eds. O'Neil, Bernard; Raftery, Judith; and Round, Kerrie. Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996.
- Wright, Christopher. *The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Journal Articles

- Burns, Chris. 'Beacon of Modernity: A New Façade for Sands & McDougall Pty Ltd, Adelaide'. *Spirit of Progress* 82 (2020).
- Collins, Julie; Ibels, Alexander; Collins, Susan; and Garnaut, Christine. 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain: Perspectives on the Emergence of Tall Buildings in South Australia's Capital City'. *Australian Planner* 43:3 (2006): 24-33.
- Keneley, Monica. 'Adaptation and Change in the Australian Life Insurance Industry: An Historical Perspective'. *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 14:1 (2004), pp.91-109.

Periodicals

- 'New Commercial Edifices in Adelaide: Some Striking Additions to City Architecture', *Australian Home and Builder* No. 8 (September 1924), pp.24-25.
- 'Kelvin Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 25 (24 June 1925), cover. (Via Architecture Museum, University of South Australia).
- 'The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's New Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 43, cover. (Via Architecture Museum, University of South Australia).
- Seymour, Colin. 'The Port Adelaide Tramways 1879-1935'. *Trolley Wire* No.262 (August 1995): pp.6-9

Company Documents

- Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd. *Report of the Directions and Statement of Accounts to 31st August, 1923*. Adelaide: Self-published, 1923.
- Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd. *Report of the Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting held at the Kelvin Building, North Terrace, Adelaide*. Adelaide: Self-published, 1926.
- Adelect Magazine*
- Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd. *Instruction Book for 'Adelect' Electric Cookers: Hints and Recipes*. Adelaide: Self-published, 1935.
- Brookman, George. 'Chairman's Address' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited. *Report of Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting held at the Kelvin Building, North Terrace Adelaide*. Adelaide: self-published, 1926.
- Sprigg, C. A. M. 'Report of the Directors' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company, Limited: *Report of the Directors and Statement of Accounts to 31st August 1923*. Adelaide: self-published, 1923.
- Wakelin, D. *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited: Fifty Years of Progress; Being a History of the Foundation and Development of the Company, 1896-1946*. Adelaide: Adelaide Electric Supply Co., 1946.

Reports

- 'Security House, 233-236 North Terrace, Former Kelvin House' in Donovan and Associates, *City of Adelaide Heritage Survey: 2008-2009, Volume Two*.

Archival

Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

E. H. McMichael, *Proposed Offices, North Terrace, For the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd.*, March 1923, blueprints, drawing numbers 1, 2 and 4.

E. H. McMichael, *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited; Kelvin Building, North Terrace, Adelaide: Fittings*, January 1925, blueprints, Sheet No. 3.

City of Adelaide Archives

Electricity Trust of South Australia, *New Windows, Third and Fourth Floors, Kelvin Building*, 1 January 1948, blueprints, drawing no. D8150.

Electricity Trust of South Australia, *Kitchen & Cafeteria, 3rd Floor, Kelvin Building*, 17 January 1947, blueprints, drawing no. C7938.

Electricity Trust of South Australia, *Stairs, Basement to Ground Floor, Kelvin Building*, 18 October 1948, blueprints, drawing no. C8944.

'Month Ending 30th September 1923, No.195. A.E.S.Co Ltd' in *City of Adelaide, Return of Plans Submitted to Council and Local Board of Health under Sections 27, 28 and 53 of the Building Act, 1881*.

Stephenson and Turner, *Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide*, 6 May 1964, blueprints, drawing numbers 4164, 4165 and 4167.

Stephenson and Turner, *Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide*, 8 May 1964, blueprints, drawing number 4175.

Walker and Sons, *E.T.S.A. Kelvin House, Adelaide*, 20 October 1948, blueprints, drawing no. 130.

State Library of South Australia

'Chalmers Church, North Terrace, Adelaide', c.1911, photograph, Acre 24 Collection, B4381.

Krischock, Henry. 'North Terrace, Adelaide', c.1935, photograph, Acre 18 Collection, B 7092.

'Osborne Power House', c.1927, photograph, Osborne Collection, B 4574.

Sweet, Samuel White. 'North Terrace', c.1873, photograph, Acre 24 Collection, B 9161.

Newspapers

'Adelaide Architecture: Some City Buildings', *Adelaide Chronicle*, 7 July 1928, p.39.

'Adelaide Growing Up: Remarkable Progress in Metropolis', *Mail (Adelaide)*, 15 May 1926, p.1.

'Adelaide Electric Co.', *Register (Adelaide)*, 12 November 1924, p.6.

'Adelaide Electric Supply Company. A Successful Year', *Advertiser (Adelaide)*, 11 November 1926, p.14.

'Adelaide Expansion: Residential and Commercial', *News (Adelaide)*, 17 October 1923, p.4.

'Altering Adelaide's Skyline; Million Pounds' Worth of New Buildings; Modern Structures for a Progressive City', *News (Adelaide)*, 10 June 1925, p.8

- 'Building Progress During 1925: Busy Year for Architects and Builders', *Register* (Adelaide), 14 January 1926, p.4.
- 'Camera News', *Mail* (Adelaide), 6 October 1923, p.32.
- 'Commonwealth of Australia Department of Housing (notice)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 4 October 1968, p.6.
- 'Company Meeting: More Electrical Energy Used Now than Formerly ... Street Lighting', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 November 1933, p.29.
- Compensation of Shareholders: Question of Disposal of A.E.S.C. English Assets', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 4 September 1946, p.10.
- 'Cooking for Victory', *News* (Adelaide), 10 August 1942, p.5.
- 'Electric Cooking in Schools', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 4 May 1933, p.10.
- 'Electric Supply Company Executives Hand Over to Trust', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 3 September 1946, p.6.
- 'The Electrical Age – A Visit to Osborne', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 30 May 1925, p.11.
- 'Electricity Trust's £½m. Building', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 April 1949, p.1.
- 'Imposing Additions to Adelaide's Architecture', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31.
- 'Imposing Entrances', *Register* (Adelaide), 29 June 1928, p.13.
- 'Improving North-Terrace', *Chronicle* (Adelaide), 27 October 1923, p.48.
- 'Kelvin Building', *Register* (Adelaide), 30 July 1925, p.5.
- 'Kelvin Building: New Electric Light Offices"', *News* (Adelaide), 19 October 1923, p.9.
- 'Kelvin Building, North Terrace (advertisement)', *Register* (Adelaide), 6 August 1925, p.5.
- 'Lumley's, Insuring South Australians for Over 50 Years (advertisement)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 26 November 1980, p.4.
- 'New Home of Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited', *News* (Adelaide), 1 February 1926, p.9.
- 'Pen Portraits of People... A Noted Architect', *News* (Adelaide), 20 October 1923, p.6.
- 'Popularity of Electricity for Cooking: Adelaide Women Enthusiastic; Modern Demonstration Hall Opened by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd', *News* (Adelaide), 9 June 1936, p.5.
- 'Resumption Shortly of Electric Cooking Demonstrations', *News* (Adelaide), 12 January 1942, p.5.
- 'Saving for your First Home? (advertisement)', *Port Lincoln Times*, 4 June 1980, p.10.
- 'Seven Firms Ordered to Quit Building', *News* (Adelaide), 29 April, p.2.

Legislation

The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's Act, 1922, Private Act (SA).

Building Act, 1923, No. 1600 (SA).

Commonwealth Government of Australia, Statutory Rules 1941, No. 131, *National Security Act*, 1939-1940.

Land Titles

Certificate of Title Vol. 419, Folio 44.

Certificate of Title Vol. 1430, Folio 128.

Certificate of Title Vol. 3236, Folio 19.

Certificate of Title Vol. 5129, Folio 427.

Websites

Collins, Julie. 'McMichael, Eric Habershon', Architects of South Australia, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2008.

https://architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=47. Accessed 23 January 2024.

'Elder House', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia, Department of Environment and Water.

https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/HeritageItem.aspx?p_heritageno=1283
Accessed 23 January 2024.

Linn, Rob. 'Electricity', SA History Hub, History SA, 16 June 2015.

<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/electricity> Accessed 23 January 2024.

'The Municipal Tramways Trust: Formation of the Municipal Tramways Trust', Tramway Museum, St Kilda, SA.

<https://www.trammuseumadelaide.com/the-mtt> Accessed 29 February 2024.

'Security and General Insurance Company Limited', delisted Australia, Investogain Pty. Ltd., 2024.

<https://www.delisted.com.au/company/security-and-general-insurance-company-limited/>
Accessed 24 January 2024.

Security and General Insurance Company Limited, Annual Report: The Security and General Insurance Company Limited (incorporated in Victoria) including its Wholly Owned Subsidiary Security Life Assurances Limited (incorporated in New South Wales) (Melbourne: self-published, 1965).

<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/361406> Accessed 24 January 2024.

Security House, North Terrace. Graduate School of Management/Commerce, c.1990, photograph, Adelaide Connect, University of Adelaide Special Collections.

<https://connect.adelaide.edu.au/nodes/view/4300> Accessed 24 January 2024.

'New North Terrace home for History Trust of South Australia', History Trust of South Australia.

<https://www.history.sa.gov.au/new-north-terrace-home-for-history-trust-of-south-australia/>
Accessed 24 January 2024.

'Woodards House', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia.

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

26 of 44

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/HeritageItem.aspx?p_heritageno=26326.

Accessed 23 January 2024.

SITE DETAILS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Six-storey reinforced concrete and red-brick office building with basement and featuring rendered front elevation designed in Commercial Palazzo-style style.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1926

REGISTER STATUS: Identified 5 August 2021
Provisionally entered 14 March 2024
Confirmed 5 September 2024

LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS: LHP, listed 27 March 2013

CURRENT USE: Office building, 1926 -

ARCHITECT: Eric Habershon McMichael, 1923

BUILDER: Cheary Bros., 1923-1926

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: City of Adelaide

LOCATION:

Street No.:	233-236
Street Name:	North Terrace
Town/Suburb:	Adelaide
Post Code:	5000

LAND DESCRIPTION:

Title	CT 5129/427, F102327 A13
Reference:	
Hundred:	Adelaide

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Façade of the Kelvin Building nearing completion in 1925, showing the building's name towards the top and the company's name towards the bottom.

Source: Adelaide Electric Supply Company, *Report of the Directors and Statements of Accounts to 31st August 1925*, (Adelaide: self-published, 1925).

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

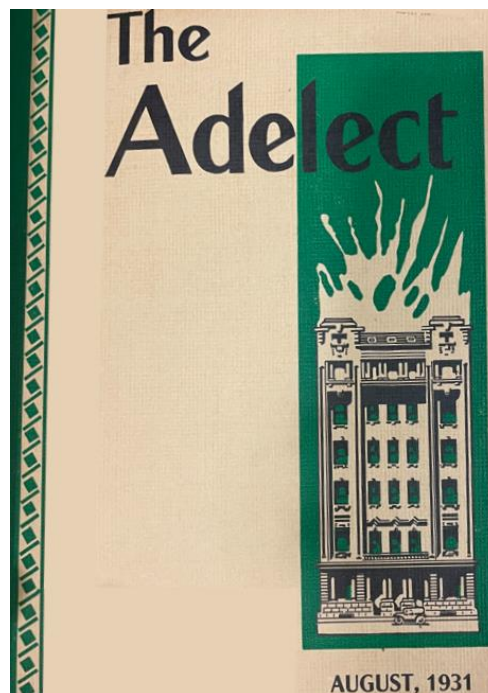
PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



View of the Kelvin Building facing towards the east, c.1925-1927.

Source: SLSA B4327



Cover of the Adelect magazine featuring the Kelvin Building as its logo, 1931.

Source: Adelect, August 1931, cover.

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



The Kelvin Building with floral decorations for the Royal Visit in 1958; although the building was owned by ETSA at this time, it retains the Kelvin House name and Adelaide Electric Supply Company is still visible towards the bottom.

Source: SLSA PRG560/68/59

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

31 of 44

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

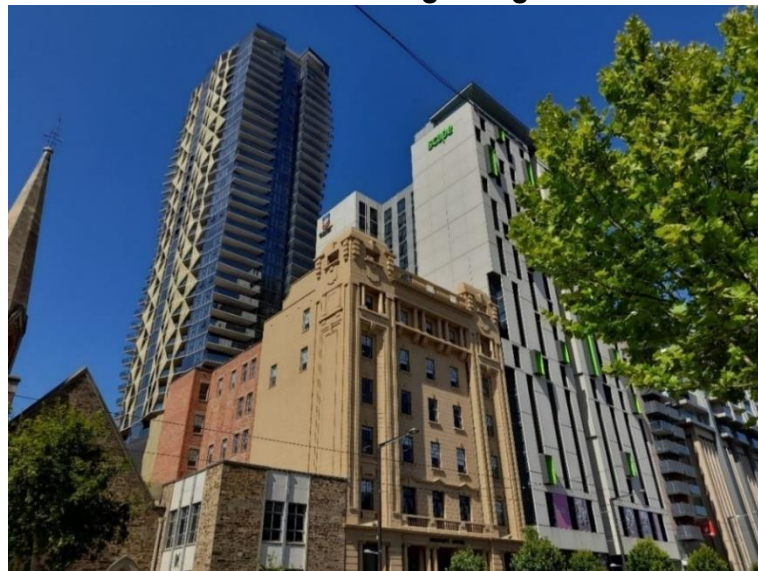
PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide

* All of the following images were taken by DEW staff on 6 November 2023.



Front elevation of the Kelvin Building facing North Terrace.



North-eastern corner of the Kelvin Building showing the front elevation and depth of return to eastern elevation and unrendered red-brick portion of the building, with internal bay to provide natural illumination.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

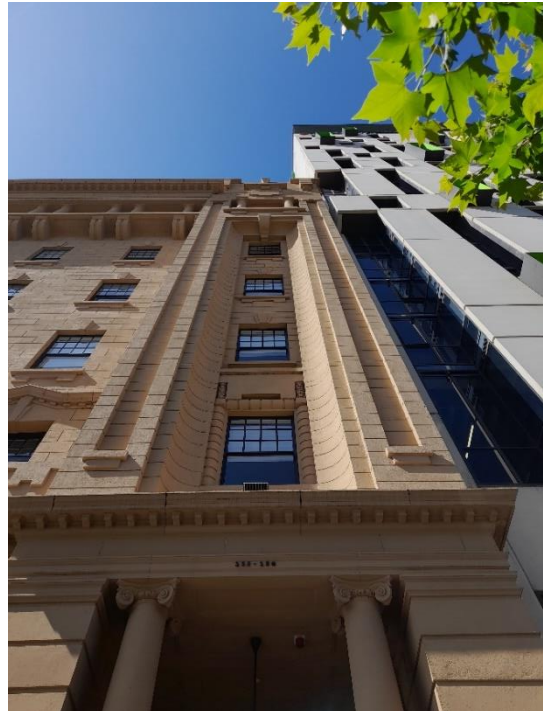
233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



View of the front showing Ionic columns, rustication, and balustrade.



'Security House' on the frieze.



Detail showing western 'tower'.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



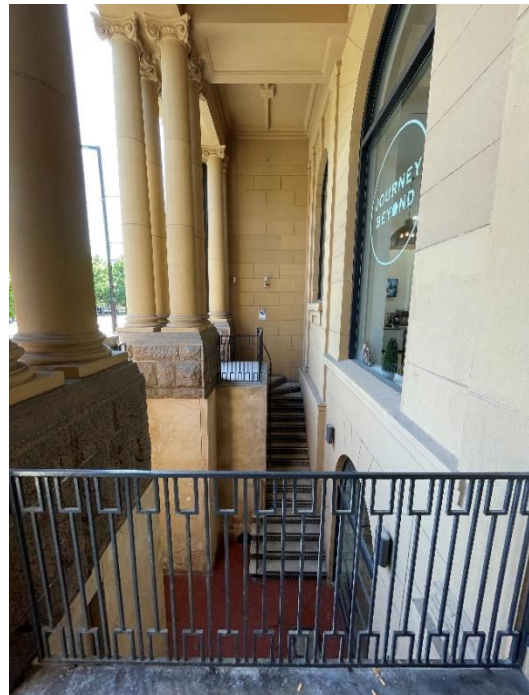
Left front porch on eastern elevation.



Eastern tower aedicule.



Steel-framed basement entrance.



View of the basement entrance area.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Southern elevation at the rear showing roller door garage entrances.



Southern rear elevation at the rear showing red-brick construction.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



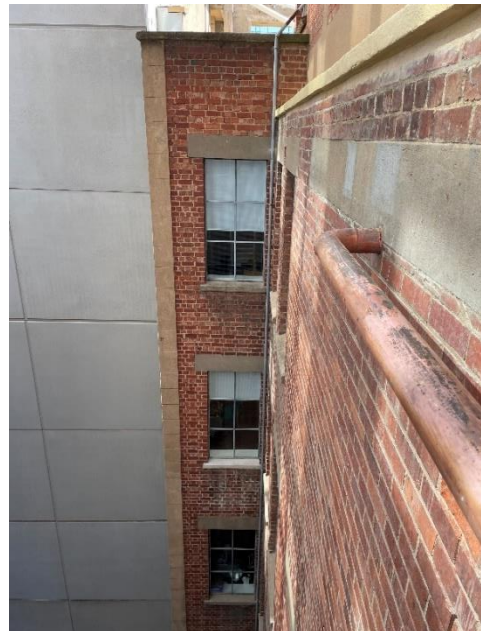
Retrofitted steel doorframe on the east.



Eastern elevation revealing H-shape.



Partial view of the parapet wall from the rear.



1960s steel-framed windows on western wall.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Partial view of the ground-floor interior showing remnant interior decoration.



An upper-floor corridor.



An upper-floor lift lobby.



An upper-floor staff area.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



View of the basement entrance showing the steel-framed door facing north.



Interior of the sump located in the basement.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Hipped-roof and rear of the parapet wall.



Hipped-roof at rear showing H-shape.



Roof-access area.



Entrance to roof.

PHOTOS

Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide



Rising damp damage in the basement.

-
- ¹ Rob Linn, 'Electricity', SA History Hub, History SA, 16 June 2015. <https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/electricity>. Accessed 23 January 2024
- ² Rob Linn, *ETSA: The Story of Electricity in South Australia* (Blackwood: Historical Consultants Pty Ltd, 1996), p.17.
- ³ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.20.
- ⁴ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.20-23.
- ⁵ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.23-24.
- ⁶ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.27-29.
- ⁷ See Colin Seymour, 'The Port Adelaide Tramways 1879-1935', *Trolley Wire* No.262 (August 1995): pp.6-9; Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.28; 'The Municipal Tramways Trust: Formation of the Municipal Tramways Trust', Tramway Museum, St Kilda, SA. <https://www.trammuseumadelaide.com/the-mtt>
- ⁸ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.31-32.
- ⁹ *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's Act, 1922, Private Act (SA)*.
- ¹⁰ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.36-38 and p.42.
- ¹¹ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.38-39.
- ¹² Nic Klaassen, 'The Battle for Leigh Creek', in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*, Eds. Bernard O'Neil, Judith Raftery, and Kerrie Round (Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996); David C Rich, 'Tom's Vision? Playford and Industrialisation', in *Playford's South Australia*.
- ¹³ See Julie Collins, Alexander Ibels, Susan Collins and Christine Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain: Perspectives on the Emergence of Tall Buildings in South Australia's Capital City', *Australian Planner* 43:3 (2006), pp.24-25; Charles Sheppard, *Skyscrapers: Masterpieces of Architecture* (London: Bracken Books, 1996), pp.18-49; Lynn Curlee, *Skyscraper* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007), pp.2-20; The Editors of the Encyclopedia of Britannica, 'Skyscraper', Britannica, 8 January 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/skyscraper> Accessed 23 January 2024.
- ¹⁴ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25.
- ¹⁵ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25; Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1989), p.168.
- ¹⁶ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25; Sarah Bradford Landau, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.19-61.
- ¹⁷ Davina Jackson, *Australian Architecture: A History* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2022), pp.131-133 and pp.173-175.
- ¹⁸ Jackson, *Australian Architecture*, p.132 and p.173.
- ¹⁹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.27 and p.29.
- ²⁰ The next 'tall building', the Executor Trustee Building on Grenfell Street, was constructed in 1922. Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ²¹ Michael Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986* (Adelaide: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1986), pp. 133-134.
- ²² Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.28-31; *Building Act, 1923*, No. 1600 (SA).
- ²³ 'New Commercial Edifices in Adelaide: Some Striking Additions to City Architecture', *Australian Home and Builder* No. 8 (September 1924), p.24.
- ²⁴ See Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.29.
- ²⁵ See 'Adelaide Growing Up; Remarkable Progress in Metropolis', *Mail* (Adelaide), 15 May 1926, p.1 and 'Altering Adelaide's Skyline; Million Pounds' Worth of New Buildings; Modern Structures for a Progressive City', *News* (Adelaide), 10 June 1925, p.8. Skyscrapers and 'tall buildings' were generally conveyed by their advocates to be beacons of progress and modernity. See Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.25-26.

-
- ²⁶ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ²⁷ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ²⁸ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ²⁹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.31.
- ³⁰ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.31-32.
- ³¹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.32.
- ³² Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.32.
- ³³ Except for Shell House (SHP 13103), constructed around 1931, there is a noticeable chronological gap between tall buildings erected during the 1920s and the 1930s/40s. The 'first wave' could thus be subdivided into two periods: one between 1922-1928 and the other between 1935 and 1943. The Great Depression almost certainly explains this division. Although the Wall Street Crash did not take place until October 1929 and the Great Depression swept much of the world thereafter, economic conditions had been declining in South Australia since 1927. Conditions only began to improve around 1934.
- ³⁴ Commonwealth Government of Australia, Statutory Rules 1941, No. 131, *National Security Act, 1939-1940*.
- ³⁵ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.29 and p.31.
- ³⁶ C. A. M. Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company, Limited: *Report of the Directors and Statement of Accounts to 31st August 1923* (Adelaide: self-published, 1923), p.2 (of report).
- ³⁷ See Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.32-40.
- ³⁸ Certificate of Title Vol. 419, Folio 44, transfer no. 818143, 31 May 1922.
- ³⁹ See Samuel White Sweet, 'North Terrace', c.1873, photograph, Acre 24 Collection, State Library of South Australia, B 9161.
- ⁴⁰ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ⁴¹ Page, *Sculptors in Space*, pp.149-150; Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ⁴² E. H. McMichael, *Proposed Offices, North Terrace, For the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd.*, March 1923, blueprints, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, drawings 1, 2 and 4.
- ⁴³ 'Security House, 233-236 North Terrace, Former Kelvin House' in Donovan and Associates, *City of Adelaide Heritage Survey: 2008-2009, Volume Two; Cosgrove, Moving to the Modern*, p.25.
- ⁴⁴ 'Month Ending 30th September 1923, No.195. A.E.S.Co Ltd' in City of Adelaide, Return of Plans Submitted to Council and Local Board of Health under Sections 27, 28 and 53 of the Building Act, 1881, City of Adelaide Archives.
- ⁴⁵ McMichael, *Proposed Offices*, Drawings No. 1, No. 2, and No. 4.
- ⁴⁶ Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors', p.3 (of report).
- ⁴⁷ D. Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited: Fifty Years of Progress; Being a History of the Foundation and Development of the Company, 1896-1946* (Adelaide: Adelaide Electric Supply Co, 1946, p.58.
- ⁴⁸ E. H. McMichael, *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited; Kelvin Building, North Terrace, Adelaide: Fittings*, January 1925, blueprints, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, Sheet No. 3.
- ⁴⁹ 'Kelvin Building', 30 July 1925, p. 5. Also see 'Altering Adelaide's Skyline', 10 June 1925, p.8.
- ⁵⁰ 'Kelvin Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 25 (24 June 1925), p.1; 'The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's New Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 43, p.1.
- ⁵¹ The *Register* reported on 14 January 1926 that the Kelvin Building had been completed and was 'under occupation'. Conversely, the *News* reported on 1 February 1926 that the company would 'take possession' of the building on 2 February 1926. D. Wakelin and Rob Linn both state that the company moved in during January 1926. 'Building Progress During 1925: A Busy Year for Architects and Builders', *Register* (Adelaide), 14 January 1926, p.4; 'New Home of Adelaide

Electric Supply Company Limited', *News* (Adelaide), 1 February 1926, p.9; Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited*, p.58; and Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.40.

⁵² 'Kelvin Building, North Terrace (advertisement)', *Register* (Adelaide), 6 August 1925, p.5.

⁵³ See Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp. 40-42; 'New Home of Adelaide Electric Supply', 1 February 1926, p.9; 'Adelaide Growing Up', 15 May 1926, p.1. Also see 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31; 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31; and 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31.

⁵⁴ George Brookman, 'Chairman's Address' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited, *Report of Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting held at the Kelvin Building, North Terrace Adelaide* (Adelaide: self-published, 1926), p. 1.

⁵⁵ Brookman, 'Chairman's Address', pp.1-2.

⁵⁶ McMichael, *Proposed Offices*, drawing No. 1; Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.80-82.

⁵⁷ See Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.87-90; pp.82-83; p.90; pp.89-90; pp.83; pp.84-85; and pp.83-84.

⁵⁸ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.79-80.

⁵⁹ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.74.

⁶⁰ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.90-91.

⁶¹ 'Company Meeting: More Electrical Energy Used Now than Formerly ... Street Lighting', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 November 1933, p.29.

⁶² 'Popularity of Electricity for Cooking: Adelaide Women Enthusiastic; Modern Demonstration Hall Opened by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd', *News* (Adelaide), 9 June 1936, p.5.

⁶³ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.42-45.

⁶⁴ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.93.

⁶⁵ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.42-45.

⁶⁶ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.44-45.

⁶⁷ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.91.

⁶⁸ Such facilities and activities were based upon what political economic historian Christopher Wright calls 'welfarism', a business strategy that started to become widespread throughout Australia in the 1920s and emerged in response to an increasingly powerful labour movement. Wright notes that welfarism 'sought to gain the loyalty of the workforce through demonstrations of employer benevolence'. Towards this end, employers offered things like the 'provision of superior amenities, encouragement of social and recreational activities, profit-sharing schemes, sickness and accident benefits, or company provided services and housing'. Some employers adopted the strategy believing that a 'contented and healthy workforce ... was also a more productive one', while others thought it would 'disseminate managerial values amongst the workforce' and assist 'in the promotion of a unitarist workplace culture'. Christopher Wright, *The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.21.

⁶⁹ *Adelect* Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1926), cover.

⁷⁰ The September 1926 edition of *Adelect*, for example, included items covering diverse topics like the Ashes, investment securities and 'Radio and Telephony in California' as well as general updates within the company. See *Adelect* Vol. 1, No. 4 (1926), p.20 and p.21.

⁷¹ See *Adelect* (June 1926), cover; *Adelect* (August 1931), cover.

⁷² See 'Our First Annual Ball', *Adelect* (September 1926), p.23; 'Annual Picnic', *Adelect* (December 1928), p.26; and 'Third Annual Swimming Carnival', *Adelect* (April 1929), pp.19-21.

⁷³ See 'Cricket', *Adelect* (March 1927), p.22; 'Recreation Club', *Adelect* (June 1928), pp.24-25; 'The Adelect Debating Society', *Adelect* (September 1928), p.3; and 'Ladies' Debating Society', *Adelect* (September 1928), p.27.

⁷⁴ See 'A.E.S. Employees' Sick and Accident Society', *Adelect* (December 1926), pp.30-31.

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26573

43 of 44

Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 14 March 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 5 September 2024

-
- ⁷⁵ McMichael, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, Sheet No. 3.
- ⁷⁶ 'Recreation Room, Kelvin Buildings [sic]', *Adelect* (June 1927), p.21.
- ⁷⁷ 'Electric Company Executives Hand Over to Trust', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 3 September 1946, p.6.
- ⁷⁸ 'Compensation of Shareholders: Question of Disposal of A.E.S.C. English Assets', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 4 September 1946, p.10.
- ⁷⁹ Walker and Sons, *E.T.S.A. Kelvin House, Adelaide, 20 October 1948*, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing no. 130; Electricity Trust of South Australia, New Windows, Third and Fourth Floors, Kelvin Building, 1 January 1948, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number D8150; Electricity Trust of South Australia, Kitchen & Cafeteria, 3rd Floor, Kelvin Building, 17 January 1947, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number C7938; Electricity Trust of South Australia, Stairs, Basement to Ground Floor, Kelvin Building, 18 October 1948, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number C8944.
- ⁸⁰ The News reported on 29 April 1949 that the 'Electricity Trust' had ordered the vacation of seven firms located in the building. An ETSA spokesperson informed the News that it was 'taking over only the floors urgently needed to relieve the overcrowded situation in [the] Kelvin Building'. 'Seven Firms Ordered to Quit Building', *News* (Adelaide), 29 April 1949, p.2.
- ⁸¹ 'Electricity Trust's £½m. Building', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 April 1949, p.1.
- ⁸² Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.132.
- ⁸³ Certificate of Title Vol. 1430, Folio 128, Transfer No.2492501, 18 December 1963.
- ⁸⁴ Monica Keneley, 'Adaptation and Change in the Australian Life Insurance Industry: An Historical Perspective', *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 14:1 (2004), p.94.
- ⁸⁵ See Stephenson and Turner, Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 6 May 1964, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, Drawing Number 4164, Drawing Number 4165 and Drawing Number 4167; and Stephenson and Turner, Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 8 May 1964, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, Drawing Number 4175.
- ⁸⁶ See 'Lumley's, Insuring South Australians for Over 50 Years (advertisement)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 26 November 1980, p.4.
- ⁸⁷ For instance, the Commonwealth of Australia Department of Housing, later the Department of Housing and Construction, was located on the fifth floor at least since the late 1960s. 'Commonwealth of Australia Department of Housing (notice)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 4 October 1968, p.6; 'Saving for your First Home? (advertisement)', *Port Lincoln Times*, 4 June 1980, p.10.
- ⁸⁸ Certificate of Title Vol. 3236, Folio 19, transfer no. 6279643 and Certificate of Title Vol.5129, Folio 427, dealing number 7524315.
- ⁸⁹ Certificate of Title Vol. 5129, Folio 427, dealing number 12298207.
- ⁹⁰ 'New North Terrace home for History Trust of South Australia', History Trust of South Australia. <https://www.history.sa.gov.au/new-north-terrace-home-for-history-trust-of-south-australia/> Accessed 24 January 2024.