

January 1995
Number 6



State Heritage

NEWSLETTER

Issues and information on heritage conservation in South Australia



A TOUCH OF NINETEENTH CENTURY CLASS AT BLACKWOOD

The township of Blackwood was formally planned in 1880 with three syndicates purchasing land from Mr Johnson. The syndicate representatives were Mr Earle, Mr Doolette and the Honourable John Carr. Land at Blackwood was subdivided in 1882 and late the next year the railway from Adelaide to Nairne was opened with a station at the new settlement. By 1885 there were 450 residents and 35 homes at Blackwood including one built for John Carr and his wife Anna who had purchased one acre (.4 hectare) of land. The 1883 Mitcham Council Rate Assessment Book notes an eight-roomed dwelling and a stable on the property.

This imposing 'gentleman's residence' has been mainly associated with two prominent South Australian families over the last hundred years; the Carrs and the Vercos.

John Carr was born at Conisbro, Yorkshire in 1819, the second son of a farmer and married Anna Fox from Doncaster, Yorkshire in May 1822. In 1859 he and his wife left for the colony of South Australia, travelling to Melbourne on the *Merchant Prince* and then to Adelaide on board the ill-fated steamer *Admella*, less than a month before she was shipwrecked near Carpenter Rocks on a return journey to Melbourne.

Arriving in Adelaide on 17 July 1859, Carr set about acquiring land and had mercantile interests at Port Adelaide for some time. He took up 200 acres (81 hectares) at Dashwood Gully near Clarendon and with a syndicate, sixteen hundred square miles on the Nullarbor Plains. In 1865 he was elected to the House of Assembly as the Member for Noarlunga and retained this seat for nearly seventeen years. He was the Commissioner of Public Works (1870-71) during the period when Charles Todd was supervising the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line from Port Augusta to Darwin which finally linked Adelaide to London in 1872. Carr was also Commissioner of Crown Lands 1876-77 and was elected the first Chairman of Committees in the House of Assembly. He conducted through the House, the Bill for the construction of the railway from Port Augusta to Beltana, and was active in opening the northern areas to farmers. He left the political

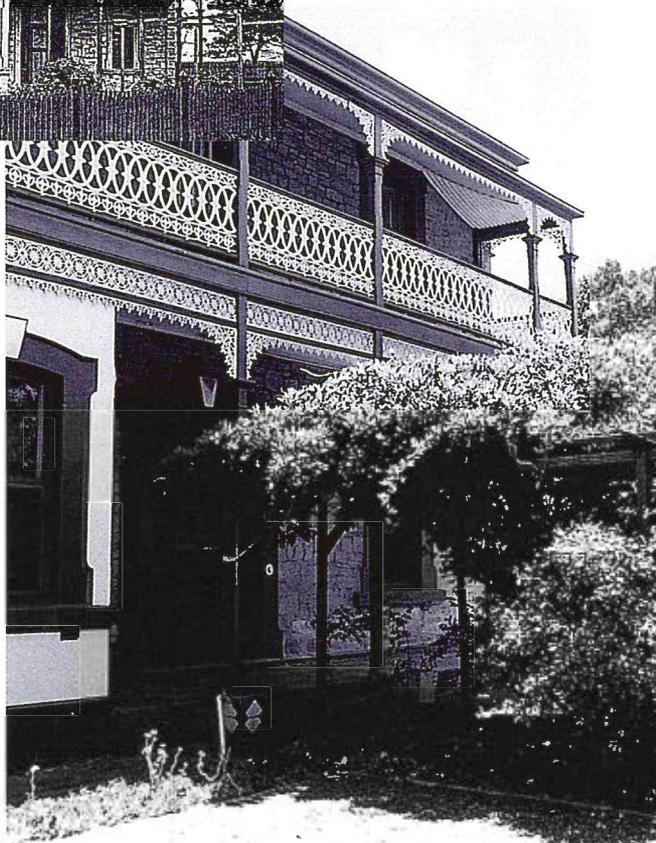
arena for three years then returned to the House as Member for Onkaparinga until his retirement in 1888.

John Carr was the Resident Justice of the Peace in the Mitcham district from 1885 and as well as this duty was a local preacher at the Blackwood Methodist Church. His wife Anna died at Blackwood in March 1891 and Carr lived there in retirement until 1895 when he sold the property to the Roach family who lived there for twelve years. In October 1910 it was sold to Thomas Magarey.

The Magareys were the first connection of the house with the Verco family. Thomas' mother, Elizabeth, was a Verco, the sister of James Crabb Verco, a builder who arrived in South Australia with his wife Ann on board the barque *Brightman* in December 1840.



Vercos House, built c.1883.
(Photograph c.1900, courtesy
Dr. & Mrs. Caldicott.)



Vercos House as it is today: little has changed except for the prolific growth of Wisteria.

His mother Philippa and sisters Elizabeth and Catherine later joined them in Adelaide where James first became a City Councillor, then in 1863 the Member for West Adelaide in the colony's House of Assembly. Joseph, the son of James and Ann, studied medicine and was the first of a long line of Vercos to follow this career. Joseph Verco was knighted in 1919. The Verco Building on North Terrace in Adelaide has provided professional rooms for many of the family along with members of the Magarey family. Other sons of the Verco family turned to the rural areas of the colony; Thomas selected land at Bordertown and with his sons set up wheat and sheep production and at Balaklava another Verco established a grain merchant business.

In September 1914, Magarey sold the house to Claude, the son of his cousin Thomas Verco. Claude, an accountant with interests in the stock exchange and real estate, and his wife Jessie lived in the house on Coromandel Parade nearly all their married life. In his youth Claude was employed in the interests of Verco Bros. of Balaklava at the New Market located in the east end of Adelaide. The families connected with the market at that time were the Charlicks, Brookers, Magareys, Caldicotts and Vercos. Jessie continued to live at her home in Blackwood for eleven years after Claude Verco's death in 1965 and their daughter Alice, the present owner, acquired the property on her mother's death in May 1976. At that time Alice was living in Toowoomba Queensland, with her husband Dr. Arnold Caldicott and their two children, Jenny and Peter. Since their return to South Australia they have lived in the house at Blackwood until the present day.

Alice is the great grand-daughter of James and Ann Verco and continued the fine medical tradition of the Verco family by serving with distinction as a gold medallist nurse. Alice and her retired husband take a great interest in the history of their families and their home which they refer to as 'Verco House'. In 1970 Dr. Caldicott published *The Verco Story: Hopes We Live By*, a history of the Verco family.

The house has been the scene of inspiration which led to the establishment of two churches at Blackwood; the Wesleyan (later Methodist then Uniting) and the Church of Christ.

John Carr first preached in the town about 1870 and took a major role in the building of a timber Wesleyan chapel which opened in Young Street in February 1881 and in 1917 was moved by bullock team to Five Ways Corner opposite Carr's former home. The Church of Christ congregation first met for Sunday services in Claude Verco's home before a small chapel was built in 1915 on land he donated in Cliff Street (later Shepherds Hill Road). Baptism by immersion in these early days was celebrated in the bathroom of the house.

The two storey house has been little altered over the years and is one of the rare, large nineteenth century dwellings in the Blackwood area. It is on the south-eastern side of the large block and is quite close to the road with a narrow front

garden. The original picket fence has been replaced with tubular fencing and a tennis court formerly located down the northern side has been removed. The large, four bay stable/coach house is still standing on the western boundary and a large underground water tank is located at the side of the house.

The house has central hallways with eight main rooms and seven small service rooms. Twelve foot (3.65m) walls give the rooms a lofty, spacious appearance and the large kitchen features twin range alcoves with slate slab mantle shelf and outer hearth. An under-stair pantry is also accessed from the kitchen. Other interior features include marble mantles in the main rooms and a long staircase of low-rise steps leading to the bedrooms upstairs. The bay windows in the front music room and the dining room appear to be early additions to the rooms.

The exterior of the house has a simplicity of style with the random stonework of the walls and the contrasting rendered quoins and door and window surrounds. The windows and doorway have a shallow arch and are surmounted with an attractive keystone feature. The hip roof is corrugated galvanised iron and twin cornice brackets decorate the eaves. Three impressive tall chimney shafts are rendered and painted brickwork with classical cornices.

The main external features are the front and rear verandahs with their decorative cast iron lacework of balustrade panels, fringes, frieze panel and column brackets. The front verandah and balcony have slender painted timber columns with stop-chamfered edges.

The dwelling reflects the period when prominent 'men of the city' were choosing to reside within commuter distance from Adelaide in outer areas where their families could have the benefit of rural surroundings. With the opening of the railways, it was possible to have 'the best of both worlds' with ease.

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- Callen, Janet *Blackwood, Do You Remember?* Hawthorndene SA: Investigator Press, 1985.
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The National Trust of South Australia, File no. 2895.

Yve Reynolds
Architectural Historian.
State Heritage Branch

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS

Current work on the *Santiago* and *Solway* shipwrecks

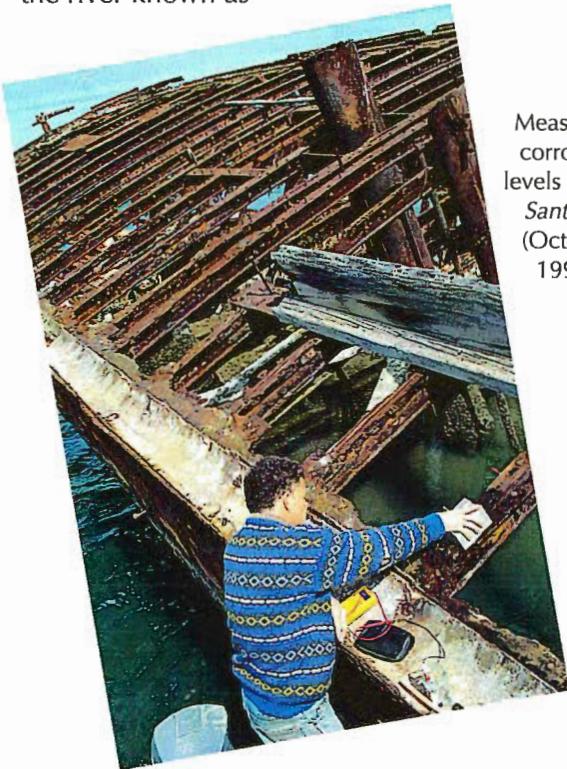
Santiago

Located in the North Arm of the Port Adelaide river—about 2 kilometres east of the Torrens Island Power Station—rests the remains of the 460 ton, iron hull, sailing barque *Santiago*. Built in Scotland in 1856 and used around the world to carry general cargo, the *Santiago* was deliberately scuttled about 1945 in a section of the river known as

the ships' graveyard. The vessel is of international significance being one of the oldest iron ships in existence and it is protected under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1981*.

During the last ten years numerous hours have been spent recording the shape and construction details of the vessel. In the last 12 months the University of South Australia has been investigating and initiating a project to slow down the corrosion of the iron structure. A National Estate grant was obtained to support the project. Ten, sacrificial anodes—each being 20 kg of Zinc—have been attached to the underwater section of the hull. This system is well recognised in stopping the deterioration of metal hulls of operating vessels of all sizes. It is a new innovation for a 138 year old historic ship and corrosion measurements taken recently suggest the system is working well for the underwater section. However about 70% of the hull is above the water, and that strip of the hull that is sometimes wet then dry—from the rise and fall of the tide—cannot take advantage of this method. In this case some investigation is being carried out on the use of painting systems.

Measuring corrosion levels on the *Santiago* (October 1994).



Santiago shipwreck (1985)



The *Santiago* is recorded on an international list of historic vessels as being highly significant and every year enquiries are made about what is being done to restore the vessel. While the work the University of South Australia are doing will not restore the vessel, it will slow down the vessel's deterioration much like other work the State Heritage Branch is doing on the building ruins in the north of South Australia.

Solway

The *Solway* was wrecked in Rosetta Harbor, Encounter Bay on 21 December 1837. It was the second ship to be wrecked in South Australia, the first being the *South Australian* which was wrecked within a kilometre of the *Solway* and only 13 days earlier.

A three masted wooden ship of 337 tons and built in England in 1829 the *Solway* brought 52 German immigrants to Kangaroo Island on the 16 October 1837. The vessel went onto Rosetta Harbor in December under charter from the South Australian Company to take delivery of the whale oil and bone produced by the Company's whaling station. While loading at anchor in the harbor the *Solway* was blown onto the same reef as the *South Australian* and wrecked.

The shipwreck was of interest to divers and the local Victor Harbor community from the 1960s onwards. They recovered anchors, ship's fittings, some items used aboard (ceramic plates, cutlery) and personal material (pipes, shoes). The site was declared an historic

shipwreck in 1983 so as to protect the remaining material, which included 25 x 10 metres of the bottom part of the timber hull.

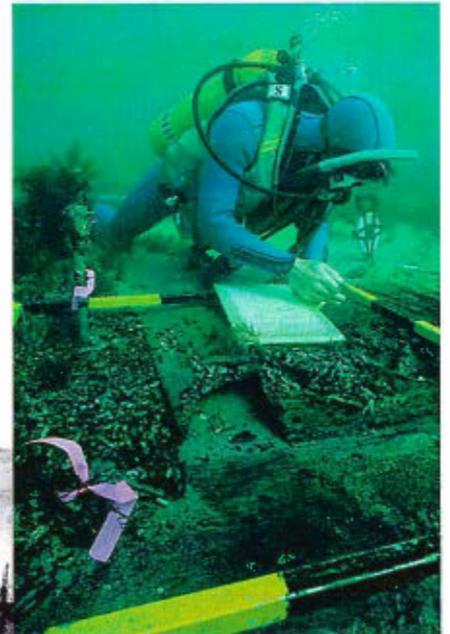
During 1994 as part of the Backstairs Passage shipwreck regional survey a small archaeological excavation was carried out on the site to ascertain the condition and extent of the remains. This work found both good and bad factors about the site.

Material covered was found to be in good condition whereas the remaining timber exposed on the sea bed was badly deteriorated and infested with the teredo worm. It was decided that the exposed timber should be buried and about 250 sand bags were laid over them.

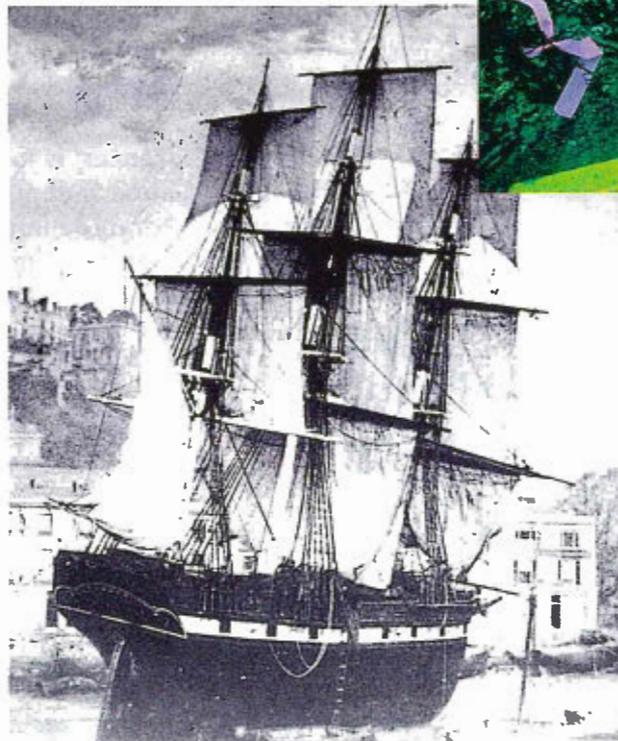
During the next 1-2 years a monitoring program is to be

carried out on the site to gauge the effectiveness of the burial project. The *Solway* is an important archaeological site that one day could provide some information about whalers and the Encounter Bay whaling station not found elsewhere.

Bill Jeffery
Senior Maritime Archaeologist
State Heritage Branch



Surveying the *Solway* shipwreck, April 1994.



Solway, mid-nineteenth century. (Courtesy the A.D. Edwardes Collection in the State Library of South Australia.)

NOTES ON HERITAGE CONSERVATION: which fence for which house ?

The first of a regular section on conservation advice to owners of heritage properties. The following is an extract from the Heritage Conservation publication on 'Fences' produced by the State Heritage Branch and the Adelaide City Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW FENCES

Because of the wide range of styles of fences for all periods of residential design which can be seen in early photographs of South Australian places, the choice from amongst the appropriate fence styles (where there is no evidence of the original) rests very much with the individual owner of the house. However, certain principles should be followed to ensure that the final choice is a style suitable for the house's age and design and is not just an imported fashion from interstate.

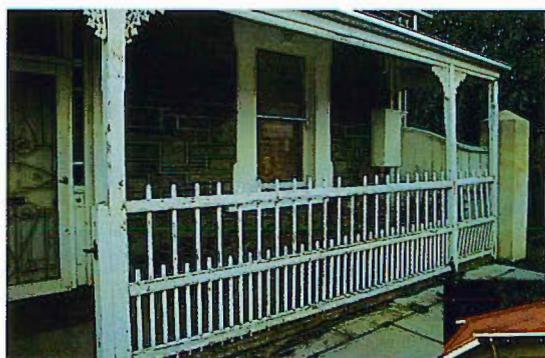
Consideration should be given to the size of the house and the degree of formality which is required of the front fence. Avoid creating a fence which is too formal or monumental in style for the house type or is too complicated and detailed for the design of the house. A small cottage does not look comfortable behind a large masonry and heavy cast iron fence, and a house built later than the 1920s will look equally uncomfortable with a new fancy picket fence.

The erection of high walling in concrete, masonry or timber is not encouraged, as this obscures the building from the street and disrupts any existing early streetscape. It can also create a security problem. It is recommended that front fences are no higher than 1200mm to allow the appreciation of detailing to the residences behind. Side fences can be up to 1800mm high. Hedges may be used for privacy behind front fences of open design.

It is also important to note that there should be a fence to the front street alignment for houses of these early periods. Leaving out the fence is not appropriate for an historic streetscape.

Undertaking an examination for remnants of earlier fences or evidence of materials that may be at fence line is a worthwhile process, as this will give an indication of the original base of the fence and may possibly show the original location of posts and gates. This information can be used as a guide for a new fence, although current requirements may mean the alteration of the location of such things as entrance gates, particularly when vehicle access is required.

'Fences' is just one publication of a series of important guidelines on heritage conservation. For more information on where to purchase these Heritage Conservation publications please ring (08) 207 2380.



HERITAGE FUNDING *in* SOUTH AUSTRALIA

how and where to apply

To assist the conservation of places which form part of the heritage of South Australia, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources administers two programs which provide grants and loans (or a combination of both).

The two programs are the State Heritage Fund and the National Estate Grants Program. A tax incentive scheme is also in place for owners of Heritage properties, this is administered by the Commonwealth government, but applications can be made through the State Heritage Branch. This scheme gives a rebate of 20 cents in the dollar for conservation work.

Below is a table of criteria, closing dates and contacts for the particular funds, please note that not all criteria is listed here. It is useful to ring these contacts for further information and advice on the most effective way to apply for these funds.

One word of advice is not to start on conservation work until funding is approved: it is also important to read the rules carefully! Please feel free to ring the State Heritage Branch staff for further information and advice.

N.B. Some councils have financial incentives schemes for owners of heritage places. Check your local friendly council to make sure!!

Fund	Eligibility Criteria	Closing Dates	Contact
State Heritage Fund	Owners of a place entered in the <i>State Heritage Register</i> , or if your place is situated in a State Heritage Area **	Applications accepted at any time during the year	State Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (08)2072391
National Estate Grants Program	Owners of places entered in the <i>Register of National Estate</i> **	Fourth Friday in March every year	Community Education & Policy Development Group, Department Environment and Natural Resources (08)2072085
Tax Incentive for Heritage Conservation	Owners of places listed in the <i>Register of the National Estate</i> or the <i>State Heritage Register</i>	May 1994? (Because this scheme is new, dates have not been firmly fixed.)	State Heritage Branch (08)2072391 or Australian Heritage Commission (06)2712111 or Australian Cultural Development Office (06)2753000

** These funds can also be used for interpretation or documentation of sites.

The State Heritage Branch is moving...

Where?

Chesser House, 8th floor, 91-97 Grenfell St. Adelaide 5000

When?

April 1995

DANVERS

ARCHITECTS

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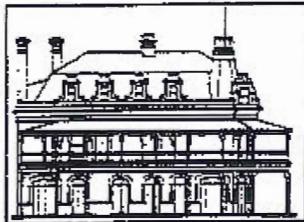
Founded in 1964, Danvers Architects have long provided services for owners of heritage listed buildings, including

- advice on restoration and alterations
- designs for places in sensitive urban environments
- reports of heritage significance
- conservation management plans

Recent examples of building conservation include

- Government House facades
- Waverly House, South Terrace
- Grange Cottage, Penfolds Winery
- Building 32, Keswick Barracks
- East End Markets

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HERITAGE IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local heritage, as defined in the Development Act, is the subject of a project initiated by the National Trust of South Australia to provide information and training for local government on the listing and management of heritage. A course is being prepared which will assist local governments in determining their heritage strategies.

The project is being undertaken jointly by heritage consultant Kate McDougall of Mc Dougall and Vines, social planner Ann Shaw Rungie of Rust PPI and communications consultant Kay Hannaford, with funding obtained by the National Trust from the National Estate Grants Program.

After consultation with state and local government departments, heritage advisers and planners, training materials and courses will be developed as part of the project and the first training program will be offered to all local councils in February/March 1995. Specific details will be forwarded directly to all councils early in the new year.

Anyone wishing to discuss this project or offer suggestions for the course contact
Kate McDougall on (08) 362 6399.

If any one would like to advertise in this Newsletter please contact the Editor, State Heritage Newsletter GPO Box 1047, Adelaide, 5001.

Products and services advertised are not necessarily endorsed by the State Heritage Branch.

Editor: Francesca Stropin

Front Cover: Tiver's Row cottage at Burra, built c.1855. (photography: Peter Wells.)
Tiver's Row cottages are available for overnight accommodation and extended stays.
Ring (088) 922 461 for more information.

Newsletter of the State Heritage Branch of the
Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

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HERITAGE ADVISERS

who are they and what do they do?

South Australia's Heritage Advisory Service was initiated by the State Heritage Branch in July 1987, with the appointment of an adviser on a trial basis to the District Council of Burra Burra. This area was chosen because of its high concentration of heritage places and its pending declaration as South Australia's next State Heritage Area (since formalised in 1993).

The purpose of the scheme was to provide professional heritage and conservation advice at the local level, doing away with the need for owners of heritage properties to consult the Branch's staff in Adelaide.

The principal roles of the advisers are to:-

- provide advice to Council on Development Applications concerning places on the State Heritage Register, which would normally be referred to State Heritage Branch staff;
- assist Council with the formulation of local heritage policy, including the establishment and administration of Historic (Conservation) Zones;
- create local awareness and responsibility for the care of heritage places;
- provide a free advisory service to owners to assist in the care of heritage places.

The pilot scheme in Burra was successful in building good relationships within the local community and increasing public awareness of heritage issues. By mid-1991, appointments had been formalised to extend the scheme into the following State Heritage Areas:-

- Mintaro
- Gawler's Church Hill
- Goolwa
- Port Adelaide
- Hahndorf

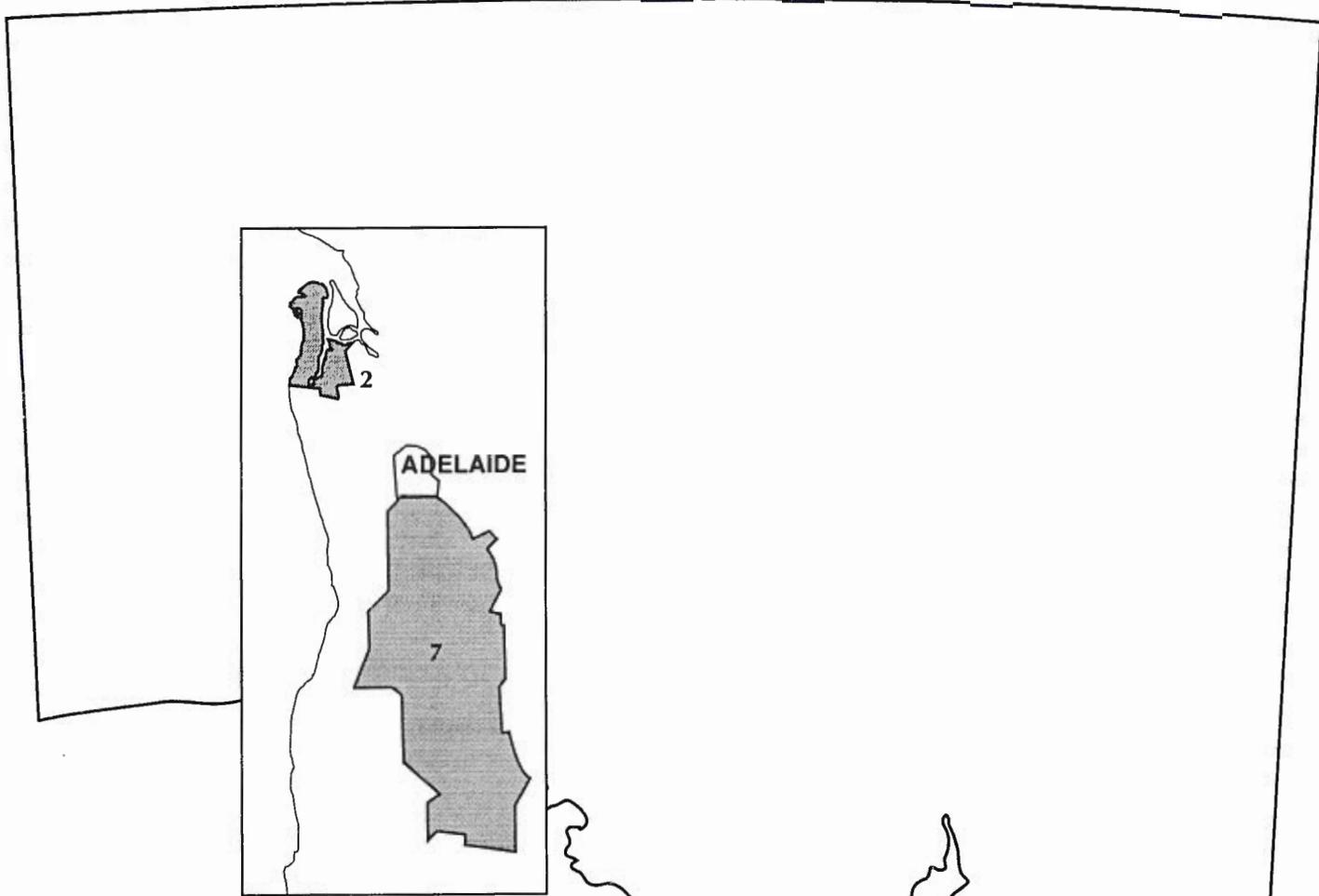
In 1992, negotiations with Mitcham, Unley and Happy Valley Councils resulted in the appointment of an adviser to work jointly in all three areas. An important part of this position is to work closely with the residents of Colonel Light Gardens to ensure the retention of its qualities as a prime example of "Garden City" planning. Colonel Light Gardens is currently being considered as the next State Heritage Area.

Later in 1992, four of the councils in the South East of the State joined the scheme, sharing the services of one new adviser. The most recent addition was the Willunga area in 1993.

All the areas covered by the scheme are shown on the map. If you haven't already met your local Heritage Adviser, their names and contact numbers are given. They are available for consultation on any matter regarding local or State heritage, but please ring and make an appointment first. The advisers work part-time, so you will need to book ahead. There is no charge for their services.

The State Heritage Branch intends to continue the expansion of the scheme, and is currently negotiating with several councils who are keen to appoint a Heritage Adviser within the next couple of years.

Peter Wells
Conservation Architect
State Heritage Branch



- 1 District Council of Burra Burra
Douglas Alexander, tel. (088) 92 2100
- 2 City of Port Adelaide
Elizabeth Vines, tel. (08) 47 9811
- 3 District Council of Clare
John Hawke, tel. (088) 42 2700
- 4 City of Gawler
Simon Weidenhofer, tel. (085)22 1533
- 5 District Council of Port Elliot & Goolwa
Richard Woods, tel. (085) 55 2202
- 6 District Council of Mount Barker
Bruce Harry, tel. (08) 391 1633
- 7 City of Mitcham
City of Unley
City of Happy Valley
Simon Weidenhofer, tel. (08) 272 8888 (Mitcham)
372 5111 (Unley)
2702655 (Happy Valley)
- 8 City of Mount Gambier
District Council of Naracoorte
District Council of Penola
District Council of Robe
Richard Woods, tel. (087) 24 1711 (Mount Gambier)
62 2133 (Naracoorte)
37 2391 (Penola)
68 2003 (Robe)
- 9 District Council of Willunga
Mark Butcher, tel. (085) 56 2202

