

## ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

**FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE**

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

The curtilage of the place is defined by the map on pp 10 & 11 of this report, and is based on the original title boundaries and fence-line.

The significant fabric includes the whole of the original single-storey stone residence, including stonework; red-brick dressings (quoins and surrounds to original openings), hipped cgi gable roof, red-brick chimneys with graded coursing to top, projecting red-brick string course above verandah, and hipped concave cgi verandah with moulded timber posts and cast-iron brackets [excluding later infill and timber-framed addition]. It also includes original timber-framed openings with timber doors and timber-framed double-hung sash windows [excluding later windows in lounge room]. [The significant fabric does not include the timber-framed cgi-clad lean-to to rear.]

---

### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The former powder magazine keeper's cottage is a rare example of an on-site residence for the manager of a powder magazine which provides information about a now extinct vocation and way of life. It also has significant associations with the City of Adelaide's last surviving powder magazines.

---

### RELEVANT CRITERIA (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*)

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

The provision of gunpowder magazines and associated structures and facilities was an integral part of Colonial life. Gunpowder was used for construction, industry, defence, law & order, personal security and hunting. Providing safe storage facilities for gunpowder and explosives was of considerable concern to the government and community, as evidenced by the newspapers and government records of the time. From the 1840s to the 1940s, scores of powder magazines were constructed as testimony to the importance of explosives and gunpowder to the historical development of South Australia.

Meeting Date: 11 March 2005

Prepared by: Anna Pope

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the use of these magazines was phased out, with the buildings becoming obsolete and being ill-suited for any other uses. Subsequently, most became disused & dilapidated, and many were eventually demolished.

There are currently ten magazines or magazine complexes included in the State Heritage Register: four associated with the military (one of which was also for merchants); five with mining or quarrying; and one with the construction of the SE drainage scheme. Apart from the example in the Adelaide Gaol precinct, none of these have been categorised as 'merchant's magazines', and hence has rarity value. The western magazine and the complex as a whole also has significant associations with South Australia's military development and with the ongoing development of the Adelaide Gaol precinct. The magazine complex also has the distinction of containing the last remaining powder magazines in the City of Adelaide.

The inclusion of a purpose-built keeper's cottage within the Adelaide Gaol powder magazine complex also makes a notable contribution to the unique significance of the complex. This residence is the only located example of a contemporaneous purpose-built magazine keeper's cottage, and provides rare information about the occupation and way of life of magazine keepers in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was not common for the keeper or manager of the magazines to reside so close to their charge, and even less common for their residences to be constructed at the same time as the magazines themselves.

The fact that a residence was included in the design for the magazine complex adjacent to the Adelaide Gaol demonstrates the perceived need for an on-site manager so that merchants could readily access gun-powder. On 18 May 1881, Colonial Commandant MF Downes provided objections to the relocation of existing magazines to the gaol precinct, concluding with:

If the new merchant's magazine is built near the gaol, a house for a storeman will be required, as he must always be on the spot to receive or give ammunition, though hours in each day would be spent in unemployed idleness. *South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*

It is interesting that the reason the new 'relocated' powder magazines were first proposed in 1875 was because the Town Clerk was concerned about:

... the great danger that exists in regard to life and property from the close proximity of the two powder magazines situated on the park lands to the thickly populated part of the city; [and went on to say] the Government... [should] place such a sum on the estimates for 1875-6 as will cover the cost of removal and re-erection of the said magazines in some equally suitable but less dangerous locality. [*South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*]

*Ergo*, the powder magazines were considered to be potentially dangerous to anyone living in their vicinity, and the job of managing and residing beside the magazines would have had an element of danger and insecurity attached to it.

**Meeting Date:** 11 March 2005

**Prepared by:** Anna Pope

The reason that two separate magazines were to be built was because of the volume of powder in Adelaide's three existing magazines, and because in 1879, Colonial Commandant MF Downe claimed that:

... it will be most undesirable to put the merchant's powder, even if there were room, into the military magazine. This is never done in the Imperial Service *South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*

The provision of an on-site keeper was also intended to provide an additional level of security in an area notorious for unruly behaviour. On 13 May 1881, Architect in Chief EJ Woods raised concerns about the proximity of the newly proposed magazine site to the gaol. One concern regarded:

... the matter of control during certain hours. In the proposed position, extra precautions would be necessary to guard against persons wilfully breaking in for the purpose of abstracting goods, or with more dangerous intentions. [*South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*]

In a letter of 18 May 1881, MF Downe agreed that:

... on the site proposed they [the magazines] would be devoid of all protection, and any evil-disposed person could readily break into them to carry out the purpose he had in view. [*Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*]

In a letter of 30 May 1882, Chief Architect EJ Woods commented:

I am told that the reserve is the resort of innumerable "larrikins" and idlers, and the magazine-keeper will to some extent be able to prevent their trespassing if sufficient powers are given to him with respect to the site on the north side of the railway. [*Parliamentary Paper No. 95, 27 July 1882*]

Thus the keeper's cottage provided the dual purpose of allowing merchants to access their powder at any time, and providing some security for the precious and dangerous stores located in a relatively remote section of the parklands. The keeper who managed the magazines was presumably a person of courage and resilience, possibly with military training or experience in law enforcement. At times it would have been a lonely occupation, and one which was probably ill-suited to a family man. No records have been located regarding the actual qualifications, way of life and experiences of these magazine keepers. Only the building itself and a handful of government papers (quoted above) survive to tell the story of an occupation which is now extinct, and a way of life which can be glimpsed only rarely.

There are very few other cases of on-site magazine keeper's residences. One other South Australian example survives near the Dry Creek explosive magazines. However, in this case the magazines were constructed in c1902, whereas the keeper's residence was not constructed until 1914, more than a decade later. [MLSA PRG 280/1/12/132]. This increases the relative significance of the keeper's cottage in the Adelaide Gaol precinct, as that is certainly a rare example of a purpose-built and contemporaneous Magazine Keeper's residence.

Meeting Date: 11 March 2005

Prepared by: Anna Pope

## BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The gunpowder magazine complex is a significant addition to the interpretative qualities of the greater Adelaide Gaol complex. The gaol itself is one of South Australia's most significant colonial buildings and is also one of the two oldest surviving stone structures in the City of Adelaide. Construction began in 1840, and by 1846, commentators criticised the Colony's greatest 'folly', an expensive gaol designed for 140 prisoners, yet never accommodating more than two dozen at a time. However, the grand plan of the original Colonial structure was eventually vindicated, and the generous design ensured that the gaol needed relatively few additions over the next few decades.

In line with the Colony's general expansion, the last major stage of building works occurred at the gaol in the early 1880s. In 1880 and 1881, a two-storey T-shaped accommodation block was constructed outside of the original radial design of the gaol. The year after the completion of the new gaol additions, the Government Architect's office (EJ Woods) prepared plans for a new complex to be constructed alongside the gaol precinct.

This was a separate adjacent complex comprising two powder magazines (one for the military and one for merchants) separated by an earth bund and surrounded by a stone wall. This walled enclosure was then within a fenced enclosure which included a stone magazine keeper's residence, garden, and paths for access to the two magazine gates, as well as a path around the stone magazine enclosure. This complex was designed in 1882 and completed by 1883.

The magazines and keeper's cottage were constructed by William Camens and completed by 1883. The residence was subject to relatively minor alterations during the next few decades, including painting in 1884, sewer connection in 1885, cgi-clad extension in 1886, new door in 1889, and two new windows added in 1949.

From 1896, the property was owned by the Marine Board of South Australia. In 1943, the magazines were converted for use as detention quarters, during which period the earth bund between the magazines was razed and the magazine buildings were modified (including the addition of WCs and windows). From this period, the cottage was no longer used as a magazine keeper's residence. Later owners and occupants of the complex included the Army (1943-46), Salvage Commission (1946-48) and Post-Master General's Department (1948-70s). During the PMG period, the magazine enclosure was used as a depot for postal installation equipment (among other things). Meanwhile, the former magazine keeper's residence was used by Adelaide Gaol for the convenient accommodation of prison warders. During the 1980s, the magazine complex reverted to its original Crown land status. The land is managed by the DEH in conjunction with the Adelaide Gaol Preservation Society. The residence is now surrounded by the Dame Roma Mitchell Gardens, which are leased and managed by the Adelaide Day Centre for homeless persons.

---

Meeting Date: 11 March 2005

Prepared by: Anna Pope

## REFERENCES

- Flightpath Architects, 2002, *Conservation Plan Adelaide Gaol Reserve: Powder Magazine and Keepers Cottage Conservation and Maintenance Strategy, Volume 8 – Conservation Policies*, Department for Environment and Heritage.
- National Trust of South Australia, file 1945.

### Public records & legislation

- Bierbaum File 102A
- *Explosives Act* 1936
- *Commonwealth Gazette* 6 February 1904, p. 90; 17 June 1954; 22 January 1959, p. 345.
- Mortlock Library of SA, PRG 280/1/12/132.
- Plan No. 473/49.
- Powder Magazine Adjacent Adelaide Gaol, Disposal from Department of Army to PMG Department, D4404/1, National Archives of Australia.
- Record of Public Buildings GRG 38/15 Records SA.
- site plans D1051/1 National Archives of Australia.
- *SA Government Gazette*, 5 November 1896, p. 1052; 18 November 1937.
- *South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 29 of 1882*, p. 91.
- *South Australian Parliamentary Paper No. 95*, 27 July 1882.
- State Records, Research note 841.
- *The Adelaide Gunpowder Magazines Act, 1882* [247].

### Lands Titles Office

- Land Grant 2406/95.
- Transfer 4564545 on Certificate of Title 2832/144.
- Area 'A' contained in Land Grant 246/95.
- Area 'C' together with the Right of Way contained in Certificate of Title 2832/144.

### Newspapers

- *Register*, 1 January 1859, 1 April 1882 & 31 December 1883.

### Secondary sources

- Jensen, Elfrida & Rolf 1980, *Colonial Architecture in South Australia*, pp 135 & 225.
- Marsden, S, P Stark & P Sumerling [eds.] 1990, *Heritage of the City of Adelaide*, p 240.

Report location: s:\heritagesa\pink files\places under consideration\20798 powder keepers cottage\assessment\20798rep final.doc

Meeting Date: 11 March 2005

Prepared by: Anna Pope

**SITE RECORD**

**FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE**

---

**FORMER NAME:** Powder Magazine Keeper's Residence, Gaol Road

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:** Residence including fenced enclosure

**DATE OF COMPLETION:** 1883

**REGISTER STATUS:** **Description:** Nominated  
**Date:** 26 August 2004

**CURRENT USE:** **Description:** Day Centre for Homeless Persons  
**Dates:** Since 1980s or 90s

**PREVIOUS USE(S):** **Description:** Magazine Keeper's Residence  
**Dates:** 1883-1943

**ARCHITECT:** **Name:** Edward John Woods, Government Architect  
**Dates:** 1882

**BUILDER:** **Name:** William Camens  
**Dates:** 1882-83

**SUBJECT INDEXING:** **Group:** Dwelling (Utilities/Military)  
**Category:**

**MISCELLANEOUS INDEX:**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** **Description:** Adelaide

**LOCATION:** **Street Name:** Gaol Road  
**Town/Suburb:** Adelaide  
**Post Code:** 5000  
**Region No.:** 1  
**Region Name:** Adelaide

**Meeting Date:** 11 March 2005

**Prepared by:** Anna Pope

**SITE RECORD (Cont.)**

**FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE**

---

<b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Title Type:</b>	CR
	<b>Volume:</b>	5760
	<b>Folio:</b>	638
	<b>Zone:</b>	City of Adelaide PL16
	<b>Section:</b>	1203
	<b>Hundred:</b>	Adelaide
<b>AMG REFERENCE:</b>	<b>Zone:</b>	54
	<b>Easting:</b>	279262 E (WGS 84)
	<b>Northing:</b>	6133546 N
<b>OWNER:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	Department for Environment & Heritage (for The Crown)
	<b>Address:</b>	GPO Box 1047
	<b>Town/Suburb:</b>	Adelaide
	<b>Post Code:</b>	5001
<b>PHOTOGRAPHS:</b>	<b>Image No.:</b>	I:\heritagesa\pink files\places under consideration\20798 powder keepers cottage\20798#1-4.doc
	<b>Image Type:</b>	Digital
	<b>Photographer:</b>	Anna Pope
	<b>Date:</b>	16 February 2005

---

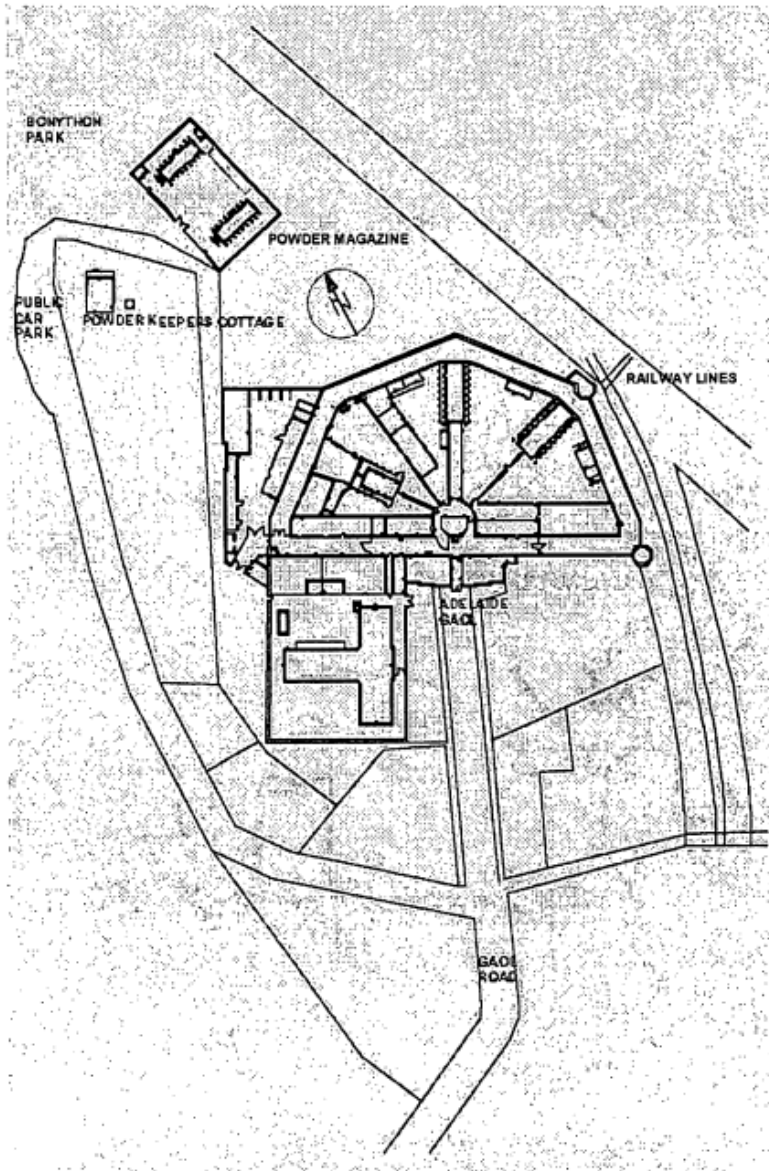
**Meeting Date:** 11 March 2005

**Prepared by:** Anna Pope

**LOCATION PLAN**

**FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE**

---



*Plan showing location of powder magazine complex in context with Adelaide Gaol*

*From: Flightpath Architects, 2002, Conservation Plan Adelaide Gaol Reserve: Powder Magazine and Keepers Cottage Conservation and Maintenance Strategy, Volume 8 - Conservation Policies, Department for Environment & Heritage p 6*

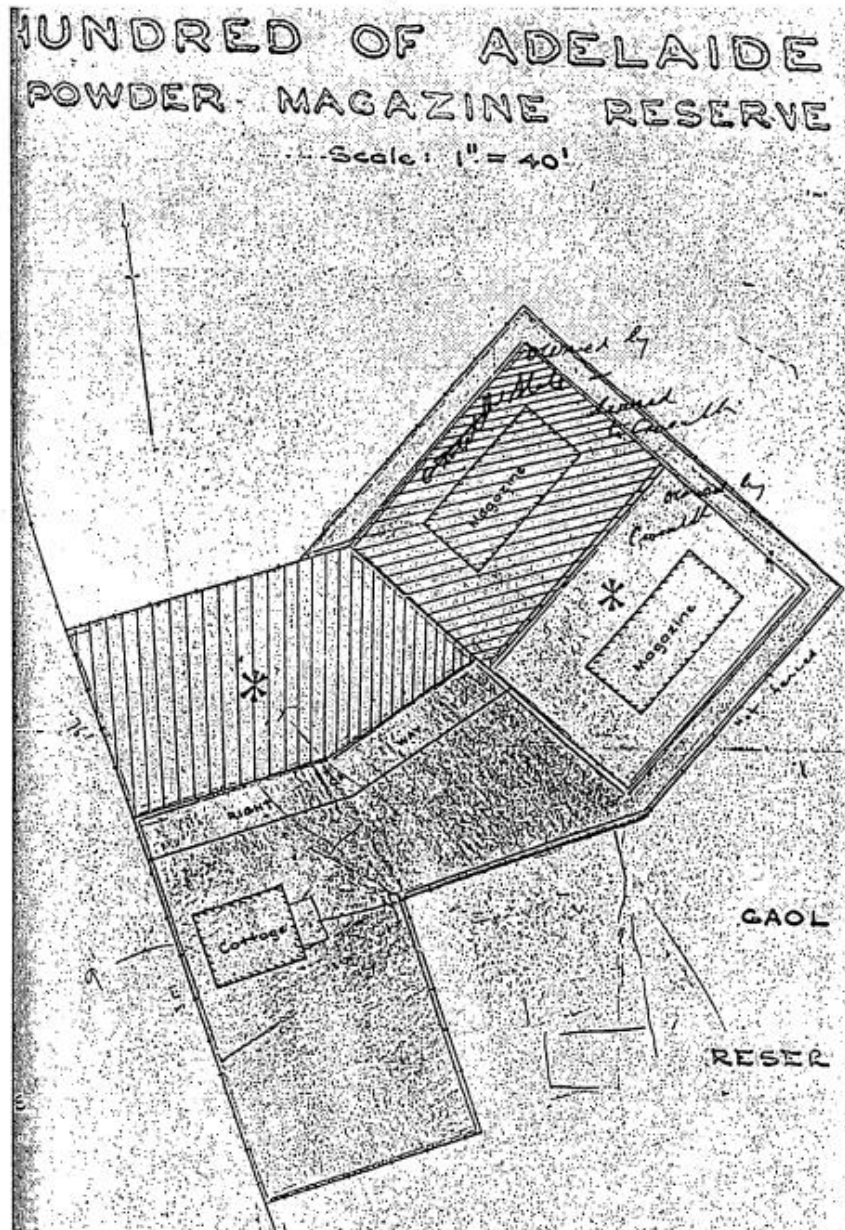
Meeting Date: 11 March 2005

Prepared by: Anna Pope



## LOCATION PLAN

FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE



Site plan from Certificate of Title showing location of cottage in context  
with powder magazines

Meeting Date:

11 March 2005

Prepared by:

Anna Pope

PHOTOGRAPHS

FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE

---



*Former Magazine Keeper's Residence including part of fencing*



*Rear of former Magazine Keeper's Residence including fence & tank*

Meeting Date:

11 March 2005

Prepared by:

Anna Pope

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**FORMER POWDER MAGAZINE KEEPER'S RESIDENCE  
GAOL ROAD  
ADELAIDE**

---



*Fence and WC to rear former Magazine Keeper's Residence*



*Former Magazine Keeper's Residence including part of fencing*

**Meeting Date:**

11 March 2005

**Prepared by:**

Anna Pope