

State Heritage Areas of South Australia



Burra State Heritage Area Hotels

State Heritage Places entered in the South Australian Heritage Register

Burra has four large hotels and another former hotel, which are particularly significant as State Heritage Places entered in the South Australian Heritage Register. If considered chronologically, this group of buildings traces Burra's history as a mining town and its transition to become an important rural centre and mid-north transportation hub.

Burra Hotel, formerly Miners Arms Hotel

5 Market Street, Burra

SAHR 10404 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984

The Burra Hotel was originally built in 1847 as the single-storey Miners Arms Hotel. Located in the hub of the main road system in Kooronga, the hotel became a focus of after-work celebrations by the miners. Free ginger beer was supplied for miners who competed in regular wrestling matches in the hotel's stable yards, and a whole bullock was often roasted. Many of these contests continued throughout the night and were known to last up to three days during Christmas holiday breaks.

The hotel also provided refreshments and accommodation for coach travellers. One of its more famous visitors was the explorer [John McDouall Stuart](#), who stayed overnight on 16 December 1862, as he returned from his successful crossing of Australia from south to north.

In 1878, the same year as the railway extension from Burra to Hallett was opened, the hotel was badly damaged by fire. In 1880, after it was rebuilt, it became the Burra Hotel. A second storey was added in 1912, and the verandah in 1920.

(Another hotel in the town, opened in 1846, was previously known as the Burra Hotel but this later became the Burra Hospital in the 1870s.)



Burra Hotel, 2005

former Smelter's Home Hotel

Market Street, Burra

SAHR 10419 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984



Former Smelts Hotel, 1994

The establishment of this hotel (as its name implies) coincided with the opening of the new smelting works in 1849. Located near the mine, the former Smelters Home Hotel (at one time also known as Opie's Hotel) is situated in what was the township of Graham, subdivided by the SA Mining Association. It was designed by William Paxton and is a large single-storey building, with a simple 'domestic' appearance.

In 1917 the hotel's licence was transferred to the Booborowie Hotel and the building became private residential accommodation.

Commercial Hotel

22 Commercial Street, Burra

SAHR 12668 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984

The Commercial Hotel was built by W.L. Bruse in 1876. It is historically significant as a hotel providing accommodation during the 1870s, a period when Burra was adjusting from a major mining town to a rural service centre. It is also associated with development in Burra at this time (the 1870s) following the South Australian Mining Association's decision to freehold land in the Koorunga township.



Commercial Hotel, 2005



Commercial Hotel, Burra 1890
Photo B 27695: State Library of SA

Architecturally, this building is interesting as a small, refined hotel in a large country town. While its width is comparatively narrow, the two-storey height and the decorative features create a distinctive building. Following the hotel's opening, the *Northern Mail* (8 September 1876) provided a detailed description of its layout and features:

This building was opened on Wednesday, September 6th but no great stir was made on the occasion. The hotel is the property of Mr. W.L. Bruse of Koorunga and has been erected more especially for the accommodation of travellers and families, the bar trade being made secondary consideration although not neglected. It contains in all 22 rooms, and the outside arrangements comprise commodious stone stables. The ground floor consists of a bar, tap room, parlour, billiard room, dining room and box room. There are also, but detached, 6 bed-rooms and a large kitchen. On the first floor a broad passage runs through the building, having on one side a large front bedroom and two smaller ones, and a first class dining room, and on the other a large parlour and three bedrooms. The front end of this passage opens to a broad covered balcony extending across the front of the hotel. The place is well fitted up in every department and will doubtless secure a good share of support.

Royal Exchange Hotel

1 Bests Place, Burra

SAHR 12664 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984

Historically, the Royal Exchange Hotel played a significant role in Burra's adjustment to a trade and supply centre, following the closure of the mine in 1877. This large, relatively ornate Victorian hotel, on a corner allotment, was built in 1880 and incorporates an earlier bank building. The Royal Exchange seems to have taken over the trade of the Aberdeen Hotel, which was situated further south on the allotment and had burnt in 1878. This included a regular transport service between the hotel and the railway terminus.



Royal Exchange Hotel, 2005

Kooringa Hotel

4 Kingston Street, Burra

SAHR 10410 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 8 November 1984



Kooringa Hotel, 2005

Between 1845 and 1877 the mining town of Burra had many hotels to cater for the thirsts of the miners, smelters and teamsters who populated the town. During the 1850s, for example, there were 13 hotels in Burra.

The Kooringa Hotel is a notable latecomer to the group, having been built c1884, about seven years after the mine's closure. The building is an unusual design, on a corner block that had originally been the site of the Burra Grammar School (1864-1873).

The hotel was built by local brewers G.H. Catchlove & Co (later registered as E.C. Lockyer & Co) and is significant for its association with the town's brewing industry. In 1878 the company had taken over the [Unicorn Brewery](#), which amalgamated with the Walkerville Brewery in 1902. By 1905, when Lockyer & Co sold all its properties, the company owned all the hotels in Burra.