

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops

PLACE: 26245

ADDRESS: Churchill Road, Kilburn

HISTORY

History of Islington Railway Workshops (IRW)

The Islington Railway Workshops (IRW) comprises an extensive complex of buildings built on a large site located north of Adelaide. It played a significant role in the first railway boom of the 1880s, when many new rail lines were built into the wheat-growing areas of the South Australian interior, and the production of rolling stock grew considerably. The IRW supported the state's mineral boom at that time, and also built a rail link to connect with the line from Broken Hill, situated across the border in western New South Wales, which was used to transport rich mineral yields to Port Pirie in South Australia. The great extent of rail development in this period has led it to being described as a 'rail-led boom'.

The South Australia Railway's (SAR) workshops were originally located in the Adelaide railway yard located on North Terrace. The limitations of the Adelaide yard meant that engine and rolling-stock maintenance was 'extravagantly expensive'¹ and that insufficient space was available to upgrade the buildings and appliances required for maintenance activities. Consequently, the site at Islington was selected for new railway workshops, and the first buildings were completed and occupied in 1883. The initial development phase of the IRW was undertaken in-line with the site plan devised by SAR Locomotive Engineer William Thow. William Thow was an English railway engineer who was appointed to the position of SAR Locomotive Engineer in 1876. During his twelve year tenure with the SAR, Thow attempted to modernise and rationalise the locomotive stock and was responsible for introducing the 4-6-0'R' class engine that formed the basis of continued locomotive development in South Australia until the 1920s. Thow also provided direction to the Engineer-in-Chief's department on the design of the buildings while T Roberts, Thow's replacement as Locomotive Engineer in 1888, designed the internal layouts and supervised the construction of the building extensions. During the 1890s the Islington site was reorganised for its labour saving layout, modern equipment and elaborate buildings.

The IRW underwent a major redevelopment in the mid to late 1920s, under the guidance of Chief Commissioner, William Alfred Webb and his Chief Mechanical Engineer, Frederick James Shea. Webb, a North American railwayman with over thirty years experience, was appointed as Chief Commissioner in 1923. Shea, a Victorian railway engineer, was previously involved in modernising the Victorian Railways prior to accepting his appointment with SAR, also in 1923. Webb and Shea totally reorganised IRW into a larger complex of modern, streamlined, electric-powered workshops enabling SAR to become a leading manufacturer of locomotives and other rolling stock. Track layout and buildings were rationalised to create efficient north-south workflow. Building 140 was converted from a foundry and pattern shop to a paint shop as a part of the redevelopment process. As a consequence of the redevelopment, the IRW contributed greatly to the development of heavy industry in South Australia at that time.

From the 1920s to the 1950s SAR — with their largest and most important workshops at Islington — were closely integrated with the economic, industrial and social life of South Australia. Additionally, IRW also played a significant role in the development of the labour movement, and in unemployment relief during the Great Depression. IRW fabricated heavy locomotives, initially steam and later diesel. They also fabricated a great variety of carriage, freight and wagon cars, as well as speciality cars such as the Infant Welfare car in the 1950s and deluxe passenger cars for The Overland Express. IRW also built rolling stock

commissioned by other states, including Victoria, as well as many non-rail vehicles. In addition to manufacture, the workshops were also involved in repairs and maintenance. In 2017, IRW continue to be used for railway purposes, albeit with a large portion of the site to the North and South redeveloped as a retail precinct.

History of Building 140

Building 140 was built as a Foundry and Pattern Shop. The 1884 site plan indicates the building and its proposed extension. However, the SAR Commissioner's Report does not record the completion of the building until 1893.² The building was converted to the Paint Shop during the redevelopment of the site in the mid-1920s. Building 140 is one of several large structures constructed in the establishment phase of the workshops in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, it has similar architectural detailing to many of the early buildings at IRW. Despite its change in roles in the 1920s, it played a fundamental role throughout the life of the workshops from the 1890s, contributing to the success of IRW as a heavy industrial and manufacturing site in South Australia.

Chronology

- 1851: Plans to create a State-owned railway in South Australia.
- 1860s: Mining of copper ore in South Australia.
- 1878: 'Three tenders were opened on Tuesday at the office of the Engineer-in-Chief for the galvanized iron sheds to be erected at Islington for the new railway rolling-stock expected from New Zealand.
- 1878: New carriage shed and workshops to be built at Islington, including workmen's cottages.
- 1882: Architectural plan for 'Carriage and Wagon Works' at Islington, stamped Chief Engineers Office, South Australia.
- 1883: New railway workshops built at Islington. Layout designed by South Australian Railways (SAR) Locomotive Engineer William Thow.
- 1888: On-going debate regarding all manufacture of railway stock to be moved to Islington.
- 1890: The nation-wide Maritime Strike commences in Adelaide and involves transport workers.
- 1891: Completion of the transfer of all machinery and workers from the North Adelaide Locomotive Workshops to new workshops at Islington.
- 1893 Construction of Building 140 completed and building in use.**
- 1922: W A Webb is appointed Chief Commissioner of the South Australian Railways. Webb introduces radical new operating practices based on modernisation and efficiency and appoints Frederick Shea as Chief Mechanical Engineer.
- 1924: Demolition of old buildings and construction of the new workshops at Islington commences.
- 1927: Completion of the newly remodelled workshops at Islington.

- 1930: W A Webb resigns and returns to the United States.
- 1940-45: Islington Workshops are used as a munitions factory. One source claims that during this time, 'Islington railway workshops became possibly the finest industrial machine shop in Australia'.
- 1949: First diesel cars introduced by South Australian Railways.
- 1951: New diesel engine built at Islington is part of a jubilee of Federation parade in Adelaide.
- 1954: Centenary of the South Australian Railways.
- 1962-74: The 'SAR closed approximately ninety stations and sidings to goods traffic and reduced maintenance on several lines'³

DESCRIPTION

Building 140, the Paint Shop, was originally constructed as the Foundry and Pattern Shop as a part of the Thow layout for IRW. The building was later converted to the Paint Shop (Paint Mill, Paint Shop and Spray Shop) during the Webb and Shea redevelopment of the site in the mid-1920s. The building is composed of two parallel bays oriented north-south. It is constructed from coursed, squared bluestone, red brick quoins and corrugated iron gable roofs with ventilators on both ridge-lines. The eastern bay is taller than the western bay.

The eastern and western façades of the building feature red brick pilasters that symmetrically divide each wall. These two façades also have decorative red brick cornices with red brick dentils. There is a series of arched multi-pane windows with red brick surrounds and a sandstone sill and an arched door on the western façade. Due to the additional building height, the eastern façade features a similar pattern of window and door openings that are now bricked up. There is also a row of smaller single and double arched multi-pane windows positioned under the cornice. The row of smaller windows also feature red-brick surrounds that contain bluestone inserts. A similar row of windows have been included in the western wall of the eastern bay.

The northern gable end of the building features sandstone gable ends and red brick dentils. The eastern bay has three multi-pane gable windows while the western bay has only one window. The main door openings are rectilinear in shape and are supported with reinforced concrete lintels and vertical members. The current doors are zincalume sheets attached to a metal frame.

The southern gable end has been extensively modified. Each wall-end is "buttressed" indicating that a section of the building has been demolished. This most likely occurred as a part of the mid-1920s redevelopment. Each buttress is capped. The southern façade contains large zincalume doors and is infilled with sheets of zincalume. The roof and lanterns have also been reclad with zincalume.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

Building 140, formerly known as the Foundry and Pattern Shop and later the Paint Shop, Islington Railway Workshops has been assessed in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993* section 16 and has been found to **not** fulfil any of the criteria for a State Heritage Place. Accordingly, no statement of significance can be attributed to it.

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Building 140 is an example of a late nineteenth century industrial building that was a component of a larger railway complex. There are a number of similar industrial buildings at IRW, already listed or nominated for entry on the State Heritage Register that equally or better represent the types of industrial processes conducted by SAR at IRW. They include:

- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Electrical Shop SHP10709**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**
- **The Old Bulk Store (nominated 2013)**

There are also a number of nineteenth century railway complexes included on the State Heritage Register, including but not limited to:

- **Balaklava Railway Station Complex SHP12942**
- **Gawler Railway Station Complex SHP10379**
- **Former Hamley Bridge Railway Station Complex SHP13000**
- **Hawker Railway Station Complex SHP10998**
- **Strathalbyn Railway Station Complex 14088**

Further, a number of nineteenth century industrial buildings have been listed on the State Heritage Register including but not limited to:

- **Former Elder Smith & Co Wool Store SHP10946**
- **Offices former Grenfell Street Mail Exchange former Warehouse SHP0958**
- **The Gallerie Shopping Centre (façade) former G&R Willis Warehouse SHP13365**
- **Brompton Gas Works SHP11823**
- **Former Megaw and Hoggs Auction Rooms former Warehouse SHP13591**
- **Office former Menz Biscuit Factory SHP10816**

Assessment against 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.

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.

Building 140, constructed in 1892-1893 and modified in the mid-1920s, played a role in the development of the South Australian railways in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, initially as a Foundry and Pattern Shop and later as a Paint Shop. It represents the State's first and second efforts to modernise and improve SAR facilities enabling it to become a leading manufacturer of locomotives in the twentieth century and a heavy industrial site.

However, there are already a number of buildings either listed as State Heritage Places or that are nominated as State Heritage Places at IRW that better represent these claims. The State Heritage Places include:

- **Islington Railway Workshops Apprentice School SHP10708**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office SHP1685)**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Electrical Shop SHP10709**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**
- **Time Office/Correspondence Room (Building 171), Islington Railway Workshops SHP26402**
- **Front Fence, adjacent to Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office, Islington Railway Workshops SHP26389**

The nominated Places include:

- **The Old Bulk Store, Islington Railway Workshops**
- **Traverser 1, Islington Railway Workshops**
- **Traverser 2, Islington Railway Workshops**

This place does **not** fulfil this criteria.

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

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in future.

Building 140, is one of a number of buildings at IRW that represents the manufacturing capabilities of SAR. With the exception of the different heights between its eastern and western bay, Building 140 is also similar in appearance to the other buildings. Further, several of those buildings are already listed as State Heritage Places and better illustrate the manufacturing capabilities of SAR at IRW. They include:

- **Islington Railway Workshop Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshop Electrical Shop SHP 10709**
- **Islington Railway Workshop Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshop Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Apprentice School SHP10708**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office SHP1685**

This place does **not** fulfil this criteria.

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the state's history, including its natural history.

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

There is no visible or documented evidence available at the State Records of South Australia and the State Library of South Australia which suggests that Building 140 could yield information that contributes to the history of the State.

The place does not **fulfil** this criterion.

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

Building 140 is similar to a number of buildings constructed at IRW in the late nineteenth century. However, these examples were listed as State Heritage Places because they meet criteria (a), not criteria (d) and include:

- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**

In addition, there are a number of industrial buildings constructed in the late nineteenth century, listed on the State Heritage Register that are better representatives of this class of building. They include:

- **Former Elder Smith & Co Wool Store SHP10946**
- **Offices former Grenfell Street Mail Exchange former Warehouse SHP0958**
- **The Gallerie Shopping Centre (façade) former G&R Willis Warehouse SHP13365**
- **Brompton Gas Works SHP11823**

- **Former Megaw and Hoggs Auction Rooms former Warehouse SHP13591**
- **Office former Menz Biscuit Factory SHP10816**

This place does **not** fulfil this criteria.

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

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its time. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.

Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.

Building 140 is typical of the masonry industrial buildings constructed at IRW during the late nineteenth century and more broadly in South Australia. Three buildings at IRW, with similar design qualities to Building 140 are already listed as State Heritage Places and include:

- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**

These examples were registered as State Heritage Places because they met criteria (a). Like these three places, Building 140 does not demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment nor is it an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

This place does **not** fulfil this criteria.

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised only by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

IRW, as a site, is held in high regard by some groups and individuals within the community, especially those who either worked at Islington or who consider themselves

to be 'train buffs'. However, there are already a number of State Heritage Places at IRW that readily represent those community associations and include:

- **Islington Railway Workshops Apprentice School SHP10708**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office SHP1685**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Electrical Shop SHP10709**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688**
- **Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687**

There is no evidence to suggest that Building 140 has a strong cultural or spiritual association with a community or a group within it that is not already represented in the listed State Heritage Places at IRW.

The place does **not** fulfil this criterion.

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

In considering this criterion, I have had regard to the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*, that note:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only a brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

Building 140 is associated with the work of three key individuals who directed the growth and success of IRW as a manufacturing and heavy industrial site. Building 140 was built in-line with the site plan devised by SAR Locomotive Engineer William Thow for IRW. IRW as a site, illustrates Thow's ambition to improve the construction and fitting of locomotives and rolling stock in South Australia by streamlining and modernising manufacturing processes in the late nineteenth century.

Building 140 is also associated with the modernisation aims of SAR Chief Commissioner William Alfred Webb and his Chief Mechanical Engineer Frederick James Shea. Webb and Shea totally reorganised IRW in the mid-1920s creating a large complex comprised of modern, streamlined, electric-powered workshops. It was at this time that Building 140 was converted from a Foundry and Pattern Shop into the Paint Shop.

While Building 140 is closely associated with the work of Thow, Webb and Shea and is illustrative of their ambitions to create an efficient and modern manufacturing facility there are already a number of buildings already listed as State Heritage Places on the State Heritage Register that better represent those associations. Those places include:

- Islington Railway Workshops Apprentice School SHP10708
- Islington Railway Workshops Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office SHP1685
- Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop SHP14686
- Islington Railway Workshops Electrical Shop SHP10709
- Islington Railway Workshops Foundry SHP14688
- Islington Railway Workshops Fabrication Shop Annex SHP14687

In addition, there are three nominated places at IRW that similarly better represent the aims of Thow, Webb and Shea. They include:

- The Old Bulk Store
- Traverser 1
- Traverser 2

This place does **not** fulfil this criteria.

Extent of Listing / Significant Fabric / Curtilage:

As Building 140 fails to fulfil any of the criteria required to be listed as a State Heritage Place, there is no extent of listing, significant fabric or curtilage to consider here.

REFERENCES:

Anon, 'The Locomotive Workshops at Islington', *The Register*, 25 February 1892, p.6.

Donovan, P and O'Neil, B (1992), *the Long Haul: Australian National 1978-1988*, (Adelaide, Focus Books).

Donovan and Associates, 1992 *Railway Heritage of South Australia* vols 1&2, National Trust of South Australia.

Marshall, D, Brassil, T, Doyle, H 2012 *Heritage Assessment Of The Former Islington Railway Workshops, Front Fence & Building 171*, Report for the Heritage Policy Unit, SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

Morgan, D, 'Research Notes IRW Central Buildings' (Adelaide: State Heritage Unit).

'Railway Workshop Islington', January 1929.

South Australian Railways (1893), *Annual Report*, p.68.

Walker, JD (1990), 'Thow, William (1842-1926)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ANU, <http://adb.anu.edu/biography/thow-william-8801/text1535>, accessed 12 December 2016.

NAME: Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops

PLACE NO.: 26245

SITE RECORD:

FORMER NAME: Foundry and Pattern Shop, later Paint Shop.

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Building 140 is composed of two parallel bays and is constructed from bluestone and has red brick and sandstone details.

DATE OF COMPLETION: 1893.

REGISTER STATUS: Description: Nominated.
Date: 25 June 2013.

CURRENT USE: Description: Paint Shop.
Dates:

PREVIOUS USE(S): Description: Foundry, Pattern Shop, Paint Mill, Paint Shop and Spray Shop.
Dates: 1893-present.

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Name: South Australian Railways.
Dates: 1892-1893/ mid-1920s.

SUBJECT INDEXING: Group: Transport (Rail).
Category: Railway Workshop.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Description: Port Adelaide Enfield.

LOCATION: Street Name: Churchill Road
Town/Suburb: Kilburn
Post Code: 5084

LAND DESCRIPTION: Title Type: CT
Volume: 6179
Folio: 405
Lot No.: A144
Plan No.: D95846
Hundred: Yatala

SITE PLAN

NAME: Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops

PLACE: 26245



Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops

Legend

-  Extent of nominated place
-  State Heritage Places at Islington Railway Workshops
-  Parcel boundaries

N ↑

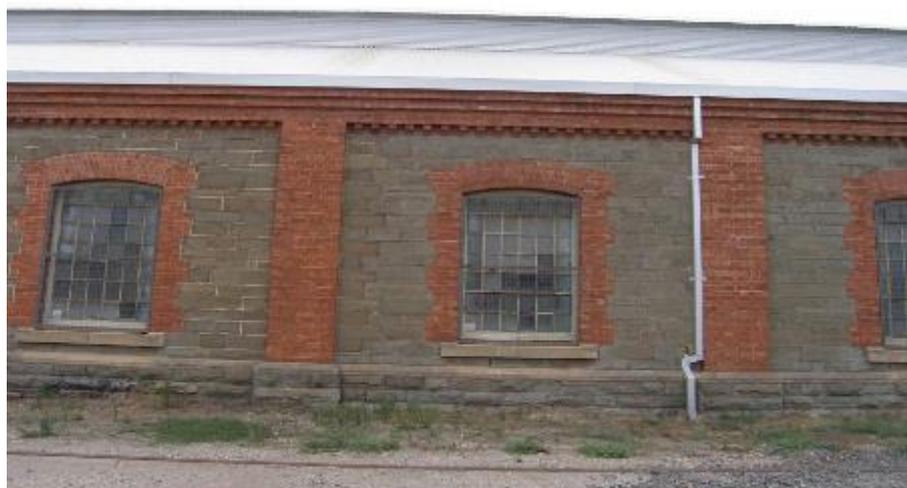
PHOTOS

NAME: Building 140 , Islington Railway Workshops

PLACE: 26245



Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops, northern façade.



Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops, western façade.



Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops, southern façade.



Building 140, Islington Railway Workshops, eastern façade.

¹ Anon, 'The Locomotive Workshops at Islington', *The Register*, 25 February 1892, p.6.

² South Australian Railways (1893), *Annual Report*, p.68.

³ Donovan and O'Neil (1992), *The Long Haul*, p.34.