

State Heritage Areas of South Australia



Port Adelaide Enfield Council Buildings *former Town Hall, Police Station & Courthouse*

Within the area of the Government Reserve bounded by St Vincent Street, Commercial Road and Nile Street are three former Government and Civic buildings that have recently been renovated for council use. The former Port Adelaide Town Hall (1866) is now part of the Port Adelaide Enfield Council Offices, the Courthouse (1882) serves as Council Chambers, and the long-term Port Adelaide Police Station (1860) welcomes visitors to the Port as the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre. Each of these buildings is a State Heritage place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register.



*Council Offices and Town Hall, Port Adelaide 1939
Photo B 9103: State Library of SA*

Port Adelaide Enfield Council Offices

former Port Adelaide Town Hall

163 St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide

SAHR 10931 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 24 July 1980



Former Port Adelaide Town Hall, 2005

For many years after first settlement, Port Adelaide was administered by the somewhat dictatorial Captain Thomas Lipson, who seems to have been a 'one-man corporation'. His authority came from his official positions as Harbor Master, Chief Naval Officer, Collector of Customs and Master of the local Trinity House.

In 1855 the citizens of Port Adelaide petitioned the Government for corporate status, which was granted in December 1855. A public meeting was held at the Ship Inn and, after a heated debate, the first council was elected. Most of the official council documents from the years before 1857 were destroyed by fire, but it seems that the first council meetings were held in Coppin's White Horse Cellars (southwest corner of Commercial Road and St Vincent Street), and that there was an early town hall on North Parade.

The imposing Town Hall on St Vincent Street, with clock tower and belfry, was opened on 29 August 1866, to accommodate 1 000 people.

It was designed by architects Woods and Wright, and the foundation stone was laid by Sir James H. Fisher on 10 June 1865. The clock was imported from London aboard the *Indes* in 1867.

Extensions to the Town Hall date from 1884, when Council Chambers, a Mayoral Room and offices were added. New, separate Municipal Offices and Council Chambers were opened in March 1940 (foundation stone laid 24 July 1939). Further extensions were carried out in 1959, and more recent extensions and detailed renovations (completed 1997) have both modernised and restored this important building as Council Offices for the Port Adelaide Enfield Council.



*Town Hall, Port Adelaide 1872
Photo B 8249: State Library of SA*

Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre
former Police Station, Customs House & Courthouse
66 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide
SAHR 10880 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 24 July 1980

The building that is now the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre was completed in 1860 to the design of colonial architect, Edward A. Hamilton. It was originally built to serve three Government agencies – the central portion was the Courthouse, the north wing housed the Customs Department and the south wing was Port Adelaide's Police Station.



Commercial Road façade, 2005

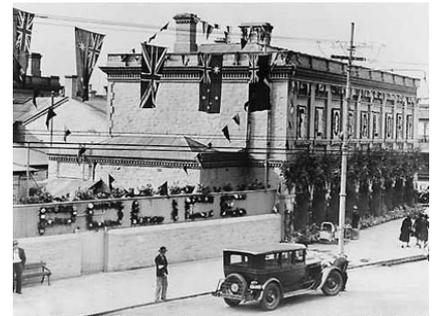


Police Court, Port Adelaide 1870
Photo B 1874: State Library of SA

A new [Customs House](#) was completed further north on Commercial Road in 1879, and a new Courthouse was opened on land adjacent to this site in 1882. This building then served as the area's police station until the early 1990s, when a new, modern station was built on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets.

The former Police Station, Customs House and Courthouse building was constructed by contractors English and Brown, at a cost of £7,500. It is described as Italian style, with an arched facade and solid plinths. Like many other buildings in this precinct, the structure sits on a raft of red gum timbers, embedded in lime concrete, and intended to provide stability on the recently (in 1860) reclaimed land. A notable feature of this building is that it is situated below street level, the footpath and roads being built up after 1860.

Externally the building has changed little, although the original slate roof has been replaced with iron. The original building had a cupola over the central portion, but this was demolished prior to 1918. The brick and bluestone detail had been hidden by paint over the years, but this was removed during renovations in the 1990s. The building was re-opened as the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre by the Governor, Sir Eric Neale, on 9 November 1997.



Police Station on Floral Day 1938
Photo B 27544: State Library of SA

Port Adelaide Enfield Council Chambers
former Port Adelaide Courthouse
62 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide
SAHR 10881 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 27 November 1981

The Courthouse, with classic Victorian architecture and feature urns, was designed by Architect-in-Chief, E.J. Woods. It was built by contractor R. Honey, on the site of the old Marine Board Offices, and opened in 1882. The building originally consisted of the central portion and northern wing, but a southern extension was added at a later date.

In the early 1990s the Port Adelaide courts moved to a new building, further east along St Vincent Street. This building was used for a short time by a local arts group, before being restored in 1997 as the Council Chambers for the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.



Former Courthouse, 2005