

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Salisbury Civic Centre

PLACE: 26513

ADDRESS: 12 James Place, Salisbury

DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS



Salisbury Civic Centre

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020

The Salisbury Civic Centre is a complex of cream brick structures, designed in the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style and is located on a large site on James Street in the centre of the town of Salisbury. The original design was composed as a series of structures, namely the Civic Centre and Library that are linked by an Exhibition Hall and two separate structures known as the Women's Rest building that accommodates a Mothers and Babies Health Clinic, public toilets and a garage for Council vehicles.

The Civic Centre is a large three-storey building that accommodates Council staff offices on the ground floor, the Council Chamber and associated offices on the first floor and mechanical plant on the second floor. The Library has a mezzanine level that once accommodated journals and magazines and offices for the library staff. The Women's Rest Centre has public toilets accessible from the street, while inside there is a suite of rooms that were once used for a Mothers and Babies Health Clinic and are now used for a variety of community services. The site was extensively

landscaped including a series of courtyard gardens and ornamental ponds where rainwater from the roof was collected.

The original design of the Civic Centre incorporated organic planning that responded to site conditions and the client's functional needs while rejecting historical reference. The aesthetic considerations of the building were achieved through the expression of the structural system and use of natural materials. The buildings feature a series of gently pitched roofs with overhanging eaves, clad in concrete tiles and incorporating clerestory windows. The bricks are used as both structural elements and as face brick decoration. Other structural elements are exposed off-form concrete beams and exposed timber framing to the roof (glulam beams and trusses). The ceilings are lined with Stramit 'wood wool' panels. Partitions, doors and windows all feature exposed timber frames constructed using traditional joinery techniques. Remnant bespoke inbuilt and moveable furniture also reflect high-quality design and craft skills in detailing and joinery.

When Dickson designed the 1975 building he did so with the knowledge that it would be extended¹ and he was engaged in 1980 to undertake major additions that were completed in 1981. The additions infilled the space between the Civic Centre and garage, converted the garage to office use and substantially extended the library. In 1990, a lift tower was added adjacent to the stairwell. During the 1980-1981 additions, the internal spaces of the Civic Centre were totally reorganised, including relocation of the Mayor's office from the first floor to the ground floor. A number of other infill additions have occurred since 1981 and the interior has been totally reorganised many times, including a major refit in 2012. Major changes to the interior configuration included the relocation of the public service area and replacement of the Exhibition Hall front façade brick wall with glazing, reducing its ability to function as an exhibition space. A new exhibition hall was built perpendicular to it. The additions included a similar materials palette but do not have the same level of design detailing and architectural merit.

Later additions have copied stylistic elements of the original Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style features of the building, but most are unsympathetic to the original design of the building. For example, the 1981 major addition to the Civic Centre infilled the space between the original building and the garage and incorporated a sawtooth, rather than deep awning form roof. Other distinctive roof forms were also altered to suit mechanical plant and new, awkward roof junctions were created by the infill additions.

Internally, the additions created large spaces with few windows and a confusing mix of ceiling lines and heights. While the internal reorganisation and fit out of rooms has resulted in a circuitous and often confusing pathway through the space. The loss of the landscape elements that were integral to the design also diminishes the context and setting of the Civic Centre.



Building Stages of the Salisbury Civic Centre

Key

-  Extent of building in 1975
-  Extent of building in 1981
-  Addition of lift tower 1990
-  Later additions

HISTORY

A Very Brief History of Salisbury and Local Government

While the Hundred of Yatala was not proclaimed until October 1846, parcels of land in the Hundred were purchased by special survey from 1839, while others obtained occupation licenses or took their chances and squatted on the land. One squatter was John Harvey, who had arrived in South Australia in 1839. Harvey originally moved to Mount Barker, however from 1843 he relocated to the Para Plains and reputedly managed a run that extended from Port Gawler to Mount Torrens. After the Hundred of Yatala was declared, Harvey decided to purchase some of the land he had previously occupied and in August 1847 he was granted 172 acres in sections 2191 and 2230 on the Little Para River.²

It was section 2191 that Harvey decided to subdivide into the town of Salisbury, named after Salisbury in Wiltshire where his wife Ann had migrated from. Sale of allotments began in June 1848 and by September 1854 the nucleus of the town was well established with 45 allotments sold and the community boasting four publicans, an inn keeper, doctor, schoolmaster, a variety of builders and labourers amongst others.³

The passage of the *District Council Act 1852* enabled local communities to petition the Governor to proclaim a defined area as a District Council. Soon after, 120 residents of the Hundred of Yatala petitioned the government resulting in the formation of the first District Council of Yatala on 15 June 1853. The Council meet in hotels until 1858 when it purchased land at Gepps Cross and built a council chamber there. However, the large extent of the Council area and the diversity of needs of its residents lead to its division into two separate Councils in 1868. The Dry Creek was the dividing line and the new councils were renamed Yatala North and Yatala South. Yatala North would eventually become the City of Salisbury.⁴

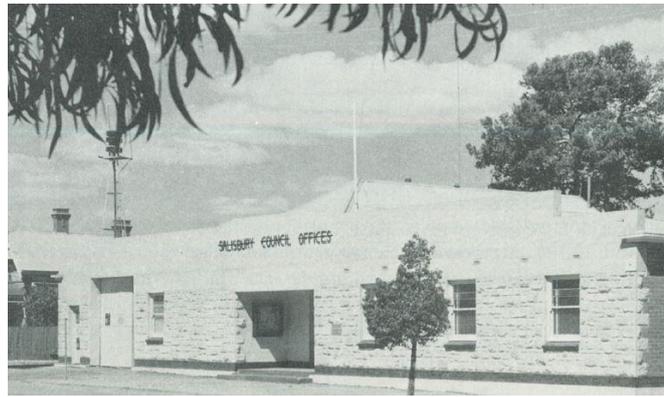
The District Council of Yatala North meet for many years in the parlour of a local hotel at Salisbury, however, in 1889 it was proposed that they relocate their meetings to the Institute, which had been built in 1884.⁵ Although it is not clear if subsequent Council meetings were held at the Institute a Council Office was noted in the 1909 *Cyclopedia of South Australia* as one of Salisbury's many public buildings.⁶ While Lewis states that Council meetings were being conducted at the town clerk's residence prior to the opening of the Council's first purpose built Council Chambers in 1925.⁷

In September 1933, after various amalgamations and boundary redistributions the District Council of Salisbury was constituted. A new Council Chamber was built in 1955 and opened in the June of that year. Nine years later in 1964, the Council was conferred city status and became the City of Salisbury.⁸ A new multi-purpose Civic Centre (subject of this assessment) was opened by Premier Don Dunstan on 21 June 1975.



Salisbury Council Building, 1925

Source: Lewis, p.296.



Salisbury Council Offices, 1955

Source: Lewis, p.296.

Dickson & Platten Architects and the Salisbury Civic Centre

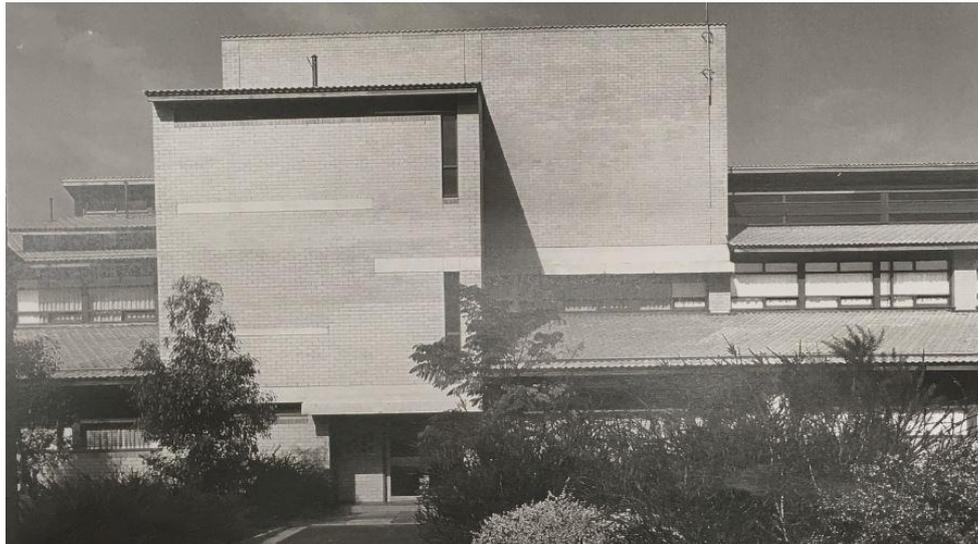
In 1972, the City of Salisbury asked for submissions for the design of a new Civic Centre. While a number of Adelaide architectural firms presented submissions the project was awarded to Robert Dickson from notable firm Dickson & Platten. The Civic Centre is one of the last commissions for Dickson & Platten and first for Robert Dickson & Associates as in 1973, the partnership between Dickson and Newell Platten was amicably dissolved.

Newell Platten and Robert Dickson are important architectural practitioners in South Australia and during their partnership, which began in 1958, they were leaders in the evolution of modern architecture locally, to create what is recognised nationally as the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style. Most of the critical research on Dickson & Platten has been undertaken by Dr Rachel Hurst, Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the School of Art Architecture and Design, UniSA who described Dickson as 'one of the most significant practitioners of modern architecture in Adelaide'.⁹

While Dickson and Platten were in partnership they tended to work individually, however, the similarity of their philosophy to design resulted in an approach employed by both that was based on 'close site relationships, simple planning, economical use of materials and construction, innovative detail and low energy considerations'.¹⁰ They honed this approach in the early years of their practice through the design of houses and later applied it and a domestic scale to many of the medium and larger projects they were commissioned to design.¹¹ See Comparability, Rarity and Representation for further information.

As previously mentioned the complex was designed in 1973 and opened in 1975. In 1976 Robert Dickson & Associates was awarded an Award of Merit by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects for the Salisbury Civic Centre. It was followed by a Certificate of Merit by the Civic Trust of South Australia in 1977, however, it should be noted that Platten was instrumental in establishing the Civic Trust of South Australia in 1969. The Civic Centre was featured in *Architecture Australia* in 1977 and noted in the

architect's comments that the Civic Centre and Library had been 'planned to allow for expansion to the north'.¹²



View of the northern elevation (rear) c1975. The courtyard was infilled with the sawtooth roof buildings in 1981

Source: Architecture Museum Dickson Collection S272

In the following years Dickson had more than ten commissions to alter the Civic Centre or reorganise its internal layout, the most substantial occurred in 1980 (completed 1981) and included large additions to the Civic Centre, Library and conversion of the garage into office space and file storage. A major reorganisation of office space and the relocation of the Mayor's Office from the first floor to the ground floor also occurred at this time. The construction of a lift tower adjacent to the stairwell at the front of the building followed in 1990. Since then further modification to the complex have occurred including a major interior refit in 2012.¹³

In the mid-2010s, the City of Salisbury decided to construct a new multi-purpose building to suit the growing needs of the community. At that time the Civic Centre was in need of costly repairs and it was not unusual for staff to keep a large plastic bag under their desk to cover their computers to protect them from the leaking roof when it rained.¹⁴ There was some opposition to the Council's proposal to construct the Salisbury City Centre Community Hub including a petition, however community concerns were not related to the loss of the Civic Centre *per se* but rather the cost of the new building and an associated increase in rates.¹⁵ Other members of the community were concerned about the rehousing of the goldfish in the two ponds at the front of the building.¹⁶ The Hub was officially opened over the weekend of 30 November – 1 December 2019.¹⁷

Chronology

- 1839** A special survey is completed and some of the land in what becomes the Hundred of Yatala is sold.
John Harvey arrives in South Australia.
- 1843 John Harvey relocates from Mount Barker to the Para Plains, where he manages a run that extends from Port Gawler to Mount Torrens.
- 1846 Hundred of Yatala proclaimed.
- 1847 John Harvey purchases land in the Hundred of Yatala including section 2191, which he subdivides into the township of Salisbury.**
- 1848 Sale of allotments at Salisbury begins.
- 1852 *District Council Act 1852* is assented.
- 1853 The residents of the Hundred of Yatala petition the government to form a district council. The District Council of Yatala is proclaimed on 15 June.**
- 1854 45 allotments at Salisbury have been sold and the nucleus of a town has formed.**
- 1858 DC Yatala purchases land at Gepps Cross and builds its first Council Chambers.
- 1868 DC Yatala is divided into two separate councils, DC Yatala South and DC Yatala North.
- 1884 An Institute building is constructed at Salisbury.
- 1889 There is a proposal that DC Yatala North meet in the Institute building rather than local hotel parlours. It is unclear if this occurred.
- 1909 The *Cyclopedia of South Australia* notes a Council Office as one of Salisbury's public buildings.
- 1925 The first purpose built Council Chamber is built at Salisbury, prior to its opening the Council met at the District Clerk's home.**
- 1933 Council boundary redistributions and amalgamations are finalised and the District Council of Salisbury is proclaimed.**
- 1955 A new Council Chambers is constructed at Salisbury.
- 1956 The first councillor to represent the residents of the Elizabeth new town is elected to Salisbury DC and nearly a decade of turmoil between Elizabeth and Salisbury begins.
- 1958 Robert Dickson and Newell Platten go into partnership and form the architectural practice Dickson & Platten.
- 1964 Severance between Elizabeth and Salisbury finalised and the City of Salisbury declared.
- 1969 Newell Platten is instrumental in the formation of the Civic Trust of South Australia.

- 1973 Robert Dickson is awarded the commission to design a new Civic Centre for the City of Salisbury.
- 1975 Salisbury Civic Centre officially opened by Premier Don Dunstan 21 June.**
- 1976 Robert Dickson & Associated is given an Award of Merit by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects for the Salisbury Civic Centre.**
- 1977 Salisbury Civic Centre is awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Civic Trust of South Australia.
- 1980- Robert Dickson is commissioned to undertake a major extension to the**
1981 Salisbury Civic Centre
- 1990 Robert Dickson is commissioned to add a lift at the Salisbury Civic Centre.
- 2012 A major interior reorganisation and fit out on the Salisbury Civic Centre occurs.
- 2019 1 December the new Salisbury City Centre Community Hub opens.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

The recommendation to the South Australian Heritage Council is that the Salisbury Civic Centre does not meet any of the s16 criteria in the *Heritage Places Act 1993* for listing as a State Heritage Place. Therefore a Statement of Heritage Significance has been not been prepared for the nominated place.

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Key stylistic indicators of the Late-Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional Style

The Late-Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style is a local response to modernism that is adapted to climate, site and lifestyle. As previously noted, Robert Dickson and Newell Platten were leaders in the evolution of the style. Other key practitioners were John Chappel and JD Craven.

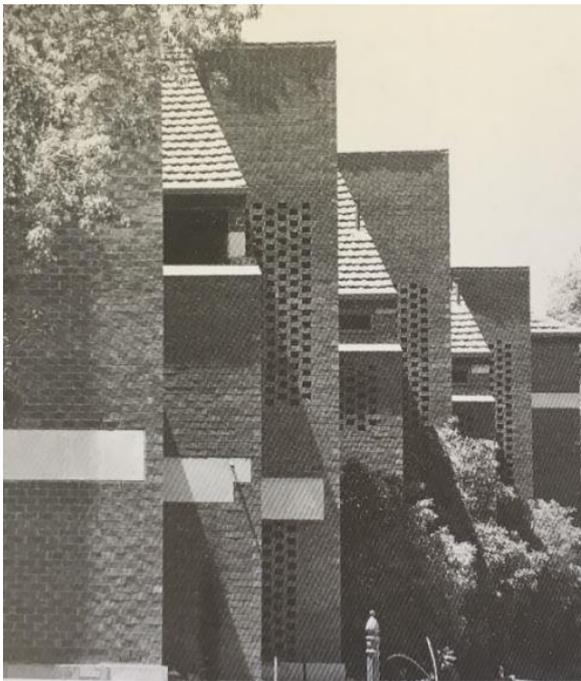
Apperly et al note the following attributes that define the style:

- Mainly domestic
- Textured walls of painted or face brick or blockwork
- Timber windows and door joinery
- Simple shapes freely composed
- Low-pitched gable roofs with wide eaves clad in terracotta or concrete tiles
- Clerestory windows
- Well-shaded verandahs with timber posts and screens
- Off-form concrete columns and balustrades

Key stylistic indicators of Dickson & Platten:

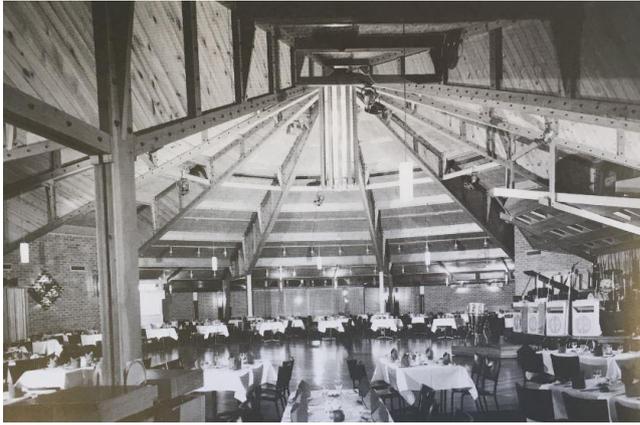
- Structural expression and materials palette reminiscent of the work of Alvar Aalto and the Sydney School

- Design response to site and function; aesthetics arise from the built solutions to the problem
- Rejection of historic allusion and irrelevant beautification
- Plan resolution is fundamental, is zoned and defines site relationships
- Use of filtered light in circulation corridors to blur edges (clerestory windows)
- Direct journey through the space
- Thickened walls
- Overlapping framed views
- Built-in furniture
- Shaded living spaces, slatted and shaded verandas
- Courtyards
- Roof is emblematic and expresses function of the internal spaces while shaping interesting volumes, module based on width of 'Solomit' compressed straw panelling that was used as a ceiling lining and was often varnished, roof clad in terracotta or concrete tiles
- Interesting use of brick both as face-brick and load-bearing walls, early works characterised by the use of red brick, cream brick used in later works. Brick is used as a textural element often as brick-on-edge lintels and grilles (best example according to Platten is Union House)
- Extensive use of exposed timber for trusses and robust internal carpentry
- Use of off-form concrete for structural elements
- Landscape elements/setting¹⁸



University of Adelaide Union Building (SHP 17619), showing an example of the brick grille and internal timber framing to roof and 'Solomit' compressed straw panelling to ceiling

Source: Dickson, p.136.



Interior images of the Arkaba Hotel (left) and Dickson & Platten Office (right), note the use of timber, off-form concrete and brick structural elements

Source: Dickson, pp.110,163.



Associated Securities Limited (demolished) showing the use of off-form concrete

Source: Dickson, p.160.

Oeuvre of Dickson & Platten and representation on the SA Heritage Register

The series list of items in the Dickson Collection held by the Architecture Museum, UniSA includes the plans for hundreds of commissions undertaken by Dickson & Platten and later Robert Dickson & Associates. While they designed nearly a hundred houses, their oeuvre also contains many different building types including schools, libraries, sporting clubs and facilities, civic buildings, water treatment plants, landscaping, office buildings and hotels. While many of their houses and practice office building best express their work, notable larger commissions include the highly intact, State Heritage listed Kathleen Lumley College, North Adelaide, 1968 (SHP26350) (Platten) and Union House, 1967-1975 University of Adelaide (Dickson) - a part of the listing for the Union

Building Group (SHP17619). Unlisted notable examples of their work include the now demolished Associated Limited Securities building located adjacent to Hindmarsh Square (Dickson) and the substantially altered Arkaba Hotel, Fullarton (Dickson). Two further State Heritage Places associated with Robert Dickson are his own home and the Dickson family beach house:

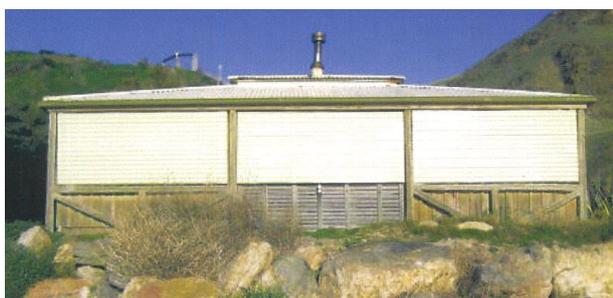
- Dwelling designed by Robert Dickson, 1 Wandilla Drive, Rostrevor, 1952 (SHP26194)
- Dickson Beach House, Little Gorge Beach, main South Rd, Normanville, late 1950s (SHP26195)

The four State Heritage Places associated with Dickson & Platten entered on the Register were all found to meet criteria (e) & (g).



Dickson House, 1952 (SHP 26194)

Source: Dickson, p.29.



Dickson Beach House (SHP26195)

Source: Dickson, p.90.

Heritage Places in the City of Salisbury

The City of Salisbury does not have a local heritage register, however, twenty-four places in the Council area have been entered in the State Heritage Register as State Heritage Places. Over a quarter of those places are associated with munitions, while nearly half are dwellings, farms and associated outbuildings. The remainder are institutions and public buildings, while there is a single hotel, and church and cemetery. A sample of State Heritage Places in Salisbury include:

- First and Second St John's Anglican Church & Cemetery, Mary St, Salisbury, (SHP10580), 1850 & 1865
- Former Levels Homestead Stables, 15 Park Way, Mawson Lakes, (SHP25051), 1870s
- Former Salisbury Primary School, 2-22 Mary St, Salisbury, (SHP14509), 1877
- Former Powder Magazine, Dry Creek Reserve, Walkley Heights, (SHP10578), 1879
- Salisbury Institute, Wiltshire St, Salisbury, (SHP10636), 1884
- Dwelling ('Grove Crescent'), 27 Prunus Ave, Elizabeth Vale, (SHP14518), 1893
- Old Spot Hotel, 1955 Main North Rd, Salisbury Heights, (SHP14524), 1899
- Garden College (former Angas Home), 95 Shepherdson Rd, Parafield Gardens, (SHP10650), 1899
- DSTO (former Explosives Factory) Site, Taranaki Rd, (SHP26028), 1940s

Council Chambers, Institutes, Civic Centres & Municipal Facilities

The Salisbury Civic Centre is a multi-purpose community facility built by the City of Salisbury for its residents. Local government has played a vital role in community development in South Australia and has supported those activities with built infrastructure.

There are 34 State Heritage Places in the South Australian Heritage Register that are associated with the provision of civic and/or community facilities by local government, including town halls, libraries, institutes, theatres and various combinations of those facilities. There are a further 26 local heritage places that have similar associations. Of the 34 State Heritage Places 19 are nineteenth century buildings, 8 are twentieth century buildings, 6 are nineteenth century buildings with twentieth century alterations or additions and 1 is a twenty-first century building. The Hindmarsh Town Hall (including town hall, assembly hall, library and façade of skating rink) (SHP 11794) built in 1936 is the youngest of the twentieth century buildings.

A selected sample include:

- Angaston Town Hall, 2 Sturt Street ANGASTON, (1850s), SHP 12220
- Adelaide Town Hall Complex - Comprising of Town Hall, Prince Alfred, Eagle and Gladstone Chambers, 128-138 King William Street Adelaide, (1863-66), SHP 10859
- Penola Public Library and Mechanics Institute, 23 Arthur Street PENOLA, (1869), SHP 11571
- Glenelg Town Hall (originally the Glenelg Institute), Moseley Square GLENELG, (1877), SHP 12003
- Victor Harbor Town Hall & Library (former Institute), 8-12 Coral Street VICTOR HARBOR, (1878, 1904-05), SHP 14055
- Norwood Town Hall, 175 The Parade NORWOOD, (1884, 1914), SHP 12721
- St Peters Town Hall & Banquet Hall (both now part of a larger Civic Centre), 101 Payneham Road ST PETERS, (1886, 1965), SHP 12727
- Port Augusta Town Hall, 54 Commercial Road PORT AUGUSTA, (1887, 1946), SHP 10199
- Henley Beach Town Hall, Council Chambers & War Memorial, 378 Seaview Road HENLEY BEACH, (1921-22), SHP 10558
- Former Clare Town Hall, 203 Main North Road CLARE, (1925), SHP 14554
- Peterborough Town Hall, 108 Main Street PETERBOROUGH, (1927), SHP 14237
- Thebarton Theatre (Thebarton Town Hall), 112 Henley Beach Road TORRENSVILLE, (1928), SHP 10645
- Hindmarsh Town Hall (including Town Hall Building, Assembly Hall, Library and Facade of Skating Rink), 2 Milner Street HINDMARSH, (1936), SHP 11794

A sample of Local Heritage Places include:

- Former Sturt District Hall, 288 Sturt Road, MARION,
- Dwelling former Marion Council Chambers, 290 Sturt Road, MARION,
- Institute Building and Library, Part Lot 164 The Strand PORT ELLIOT, (1880, 1882, 1905, 1927)
- Town Hall & Council Chambers, 72 Woodville Road WOODVILLE, (1903, 1926),

- Community Arts Centre, former Port Noarlunga Institute and Library, 22 Gawler Street PORT NOARLUNGA, (1924, 1930s)

A number of civic centres that incorporated a variety of community facilities such as libraries and theatres were built in the decades after World War Two in response to the rapid growth of the Adelaide metropolitan area. A number of the new civic centres were co-located with or sited adjacent to shopping centres and other community facilities to create a regional centre, the Salisbury Civic Centre is an example of such a facility. Some other examples include:

- Elizabeth Town Centre that incorporated a shopping centre adjacent to a civic centre and the Octagon Theatre, now the Playford Civic Centre and Shedley Theatre (LHP), Playford Boulevard, ELIZABETH (1960s and late 20th century)
- Noarlunga Regional Centre that includes the Colonnades Shopping Centre, Noarlunga Civic Centre (now the City of Onkaparinga Civic Centre and Offices), TAFE facilities, Hoppood Theatre, Beach Road, NOARLUNGA, (1970s-2000s)
- Millicent Civic and Art Centre, Ridge Terrace, MILLICENT, civic offices, library, art gallery, (1970s)
- City of Tea Tree Gully Civic Centre including a library and town park, Montague Road, MODBURY (late 20th century), adjacent to the Tea Tree Plaza



Noarlunga Civic Centre was the first building constructed at the Noarlunga Regional Centre

Source: Architecture and Building

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.

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is associated with and demonstrates the ongoing importance of the provision of community and local government services in South Australia and specifically for the local Salisbury community. In particular, it demonstrates aspects of the creation of multipurpose buildings/complexes that provided both civic and community facilities. A notable example of a similar earlier facility is the Hindmarsh Town Hall (including Town Hall Building, Assembly Hall, Library and Facade of Skating Rink), (SHP 11794) that opened in 1936.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is the third council chamber and civic office building constructed by local government at Salisbury in the twentieth century, the others were opened in 1925 and 1955. Although the Civic Centre is the first civic building/complex at Salisbury to provide the community with a multipurpose facility, the co-location of civic and community facilities in the same complex was a well-established pattern in South Australia by the 1970s. Further, the simple combination of offices, Council Chamber, Library and Mothers' and Babies' Health Clinic in the Civic Centre was typical of the range of services offered by civic centres constructed in South Australia in the later decades of the twentieth century. While the Salisbury Civic Centre is a good example of the civic buildings constructed by local government in the twentieth century it has not made a strong or influential contribution to the evolution of the pattern of South Australia's history.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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 the future.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is a multi-purpose council building that contains Council Chambers, offices, Library, Mothers' and Babies' Health Clinic (later used for other community purposes) and an exhibition space and is associated with the provision of local government services in South Australia, in this instance for the City of Salisbury. There are numerous places in South Australia that have the same or similar associations including 59 that are either State or Local Heritage Places (see comparability, rarity, representation). Therefore, the Salisbury Civic Centre cannot be considered to be a rare or uncommon example of local government facilities. Both within the context of the building providing multiple functions, i.e. as a multi-purpose civic facility or if each of those separate functions are considered individually.

Local government in South Australia continues to provide a wide range of services to their communities and in recent years a number have invested in new multi-purpose civic and community buildings. The City of Salisbury has just opened a new building called the Salisbury City Centre Community Hub. The Hub is the fourth civic building constructed by the Salisbury Council (previously Yatala North) in the past century. Consequently, civic buildings cannot be considered to be endangered.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre was constructed on a parcel of land on James Street located adjacent to the Salisbury township. The subdivision plan for the township, which was deposited with the General Registry Office in 1854, indicates that the land was at that time a paddock. Later, aerial images taken from 1949 until the present indicate that while the surrounding land had been and continued to be slowly developed, the site of the Civic Centre remained a paddock. Other undeveloped land in the vicinity was used to grow crops and fruit trees.

The history of the Salisbury area is well documented through a variety of primary and secondary sources. The likelihood that the site would yield any information not already known that would contribute meaningfully to the history of South Australia that cannot be acquired through other means is very unlikely.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (c).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is associated with a class of places known as local government or civic buildings including council chambers and offices and mixed use civic centres. The Salisbury Civic Centre is a multipurpose civic building/complex that provided local government and community facilities, namely Council Chambers and offices for staff and mayor, an exhibition space,

Library and Mothers and Babies Health Clinic for the residents of Salisbury. It is the third of four such places built by local government in Salisbury in the past century.

As the metropolitan area and rural centres grew in the decades after the end of World War Two, a number of new multi-purpose civic centres were built in South Australia. A number were co-located with shopping centres and other community facilities to create regional centres such as at Elizabeth, Salisbury and Noarlunga. While the Salisbury Civic centre is a good example of a civic centre it is not a notable example of a civic centre facility.

The need to extend the complex so soon after the initial buildings were completed and the relocation of principal office spaces such as the Mayor's indicates that the design and layout of the Civic Centre only met the Council's and community's needs for a very short period of time. Further additions to the complex and reorganisation of the internal spaces continued after the major extension was completed in 1981. While it is not unreasonable for a building to be extended to meet the needs of a growing community, the number of additions to and reorganisation of internal spaces to the Salisbury Civic Centre to make the complex fit for purpose means that it cannot be considered a notable example of the class of place.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (d).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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 times. 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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is an example of the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style and was designed by Robert Dickson, one of the key practitioners associated with the style in South Australia. While the 1975 Civic Centre was a notable example of the style and won a number of awards from the architectural fraternity, it has since been compromised by a number of major

infill additions and internal reorganisations and fit out works. The 1975 design attributes of merit are no longer intact.

In particular, the major additions designed by Dickson in 1980 and completed in 1981 are surprisingly incompatible in design, considering Dickson was aware that the Civic Centre would be extended when designing the original complex. These additions have resulted in awkward roof junctions, a confusing mix of ceiling lines and heights, and reduction in natural lighting.

The building has been substantially altered and enlarged over the years and the designed spatial relationship between rooms and landscaped gardens at ground floor level is now lost. The initial Council Chamber and upstairs rooms remain intact, but the 1975 main entry, public foyer, library and exhibition hall have all be altered beyond recognition and the 1975 spatial design solution is not no longer recognisable at ground level. Further, original timber detailing to counters, wall partitions, doors and all fittings in the library have been removed, so understanding of Dickson's signature timber detailing associated with the style is lost. The intactness of Dickson's Adelaide University Union House (SHP17619) is much higher than that of the Civic Centre, with the original design footprint still intact, spatial arrangement and circulation patterns still evident, signature original timber detailing to doors, walls and windows still extant and few building additions undertaken since construction.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (e).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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 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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is associated with the residents and employees of the City of Salisbury and supporters of the architecture of Robert Dickson and the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style. Members of the Salisbury community launched a petition to stop the construction of the new Community Hub two years ago, which attracted just over 800 signatures. However, the

petition was not in support of the architectural merit of the existing Civic Centre *per se* but rather opposed to the cost of constructing a new building and the subsequent increase in rates. While there are individuals who may have a strong attachment to the Civic Centre there is no evidence to suggest that there are any groups that have an ongoing strong and direct attachment to the place as would be evidenced through their long-term use or engagement with it.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

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

With regard to this criterion, consideration has been given to *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 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.

The Salisbury Civic Centre is associated with noted Adelaide architect Robert Dickson who designed the original building in 1973 and a number of the additions including those in 1980 and 1990. Dickson is a significant practitioner of modern era architecture in Adelaide and as a partner of Dickson & Platten was instrumental in the evolution of the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style. During his career Dickson designed hundreds of buildings, however it was through his work with the design of domestic architecture that he and Platten developed many of the tenets of the style. Many of these tenets as well as a domestic scale was then incorporated into his larger commissions including the Arkaba Hotel (1957-1967), Adelaide University Union House (SHP17619) (1967-1975), Commercial Associated Securities building (1969-1972) (demolished) and Salisbury Civic Centre (1973-1975).

Three acknowledged exemplars of Dickson's work are State Heritage Places, namely his own house, the family beach house and Union House (see comparability, rarity and representation for further details). A fourth unlisted place intrinsically related to Robert Dickson that also closely follows the design tenets of Dickson & Platten and the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style is the Dickson & Platten office located on Mackinnon Parade in North Adelaide.

While the Salisbury Civic Centre is a good example of Dickson's work as an architect, other projects are considered exemplars that best represent his work - including the two houses he built for himself and family, the practice office, Union House, Arkaba Hotel and Commercial Associated Securities building (demolished). It is these places and the houses he designed that assisted him and Platten to develop the Late Twentieth Century Adelaide Regional style that has made an enduring contribution to South Australian history and enables that contribution to be readily understood and not the Salisbury Civic Centre.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).

References:

Books & Journals

Architecture Australia, (1977) vol.66 no.2, p.33.

Burgess, HT (1909), *The Cyclopedia of South Australia*, (Alfred G Selway: Adelaide).

Dickson, Robert (2010), *Addicted to Architecture*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town).

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Newspapers & Archival & Online Sources

'Salisbury', *Observer* 7 September 1889, p.35.

Dickson Robert Harold Collection, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, S272.

City of Salisbury, 'List of Development Applications 1998-2018', see DEW Files.

Personal Communication with Terry Sutcliffe General Manager City Development 16 January 2020.

'Stop City of Salisbury Council wasting \$43 million Ratepayer Dollars on a new "Hub"' at <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-gillian-aldrige-and-councillors-stop-city-of-salisbury-council-wasting-43-million-ratepayer-dollars-on-a-new-hub> [accessed 13 January 2020].

'Salisbury Community Hub Opening' at <http://discoversalisbury.com.au/event/salisbury-community-hub-opening/2019-11-30/> [accessed 20 January 2020].

SITE RECORD

NAME: Salisbury Civic Centre

PLACE: 16513

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Multi-function local government civic centre including council offices, council chamber, library, health clinic, and exhibition space.

DATE OF COMPLETION: 1975, 1981, 1990, and later additions

REGISTER STATUS: Nominated/Provisional Entry
Date nominated/entered

CURRENT USE: Civic Centre
1975-2019

ARCHITECT: Robert Dickson (Dickson & Platten, Robert Dickson & Associates).
1975, 1981, 1990.

BUILDER: Marshall & Brougham Pty Ltd
1975

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Community facilities / Government / Health
Category: Public Library, Public Lavatory / Council Chambers, Office Building / Clinic

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: City of Salisbury

LOCATION: **Street No.:** 12
Street Name: James Street
Town/Suburb: Salisbury
Post Code: 5108

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title** CT 5608/704 A2 D50015
Reference:
Hundred: Yatala

OWNER: **Name:** [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
Town/Suburb: [REDACTED]
Post Code: [REDACTED]

SITE PLAN

NAME: Salisbury Civic Centre

PLACE: 26513



Salisbury Civic Centre, 12 James Street, Salisbury CT 5608/704 D50015 A2

Legend

N ↑

 CT boundary

 Salisbury Civic Centre (a portion of the built form and landscape elements extend onto the road reserve)

PHOTOS

NAME: Salisbury Civic Centre

PLACE: 26513



View of northern elevation showing the addition of the lift tower, off-form concrete as a decorative structural element and cream face brick.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Women's Rest Centre.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



View of the eastern elevation showing the later additions to the side of the building.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



View of the northern elevation (rear) showing what was the garage (left) and a portion of the 1981 additions (right).

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Portion of the eastern façade showing the 1981 infill between the main building and the garage.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Council Chambers note the timber framing to roof and bespoke tables, lighting gantry is a newer addition.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



First Floor, note the original window framing.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



First Floor, note the 'wood wool' ceiling panels, timber beam and original bespoke light fitting that was used throughout the 1975 building.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Ceiling in the 1981 addition, note the use of similar materials to the 1975 section, however, the quality of the detailing is not as high and the bespoke light fittings, which are a feature of the building are not included.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Office space in the converted garage.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



View of office space in the Salisbury Civic Centre view from 1981 addition to 1975 building, note the dropped ceiling in the transition between the two spaces.

Source: 16 January 2020



View of the front of the 1975 building, this space was once the Exhibition Hall, the wall has been slightly pushed out and replaced with glass. Note the difference in the framing between the original windows above.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



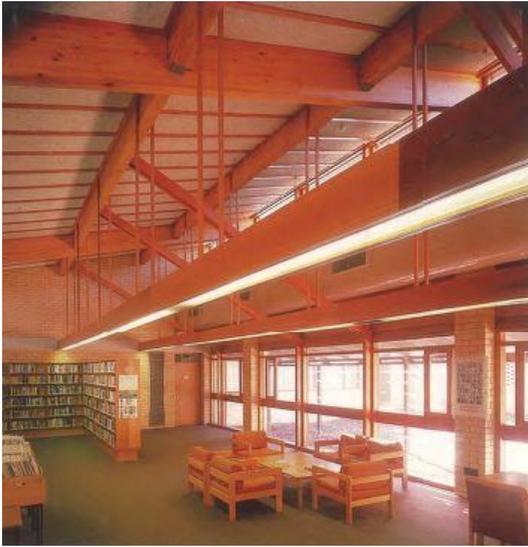
New internal fit out of the exhibition hall to convert it into a public space.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



Example of new interior fit out to create office space, this area was originally the public area.

Source: DEW Files



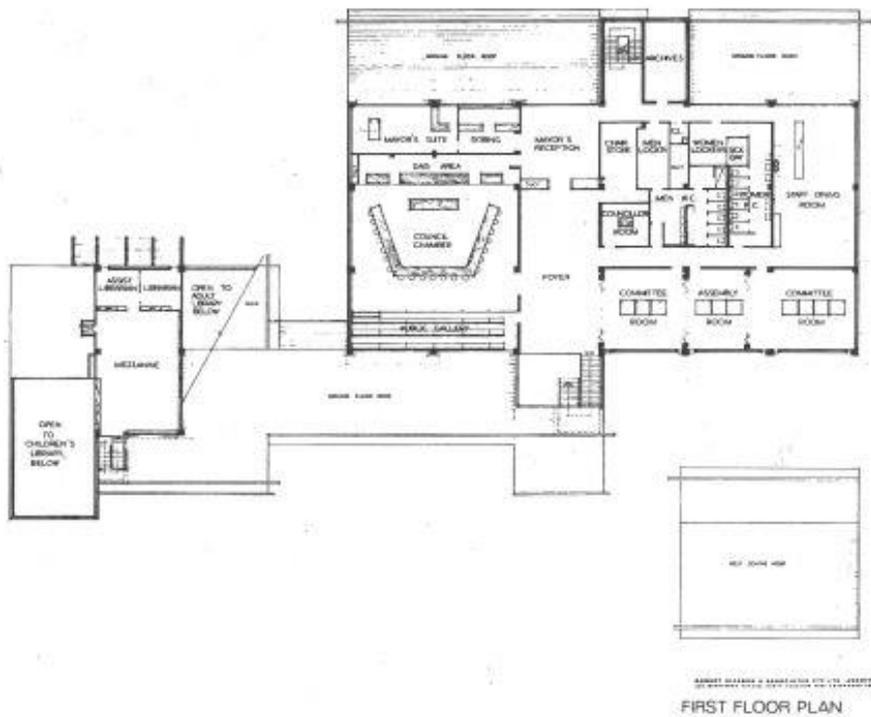
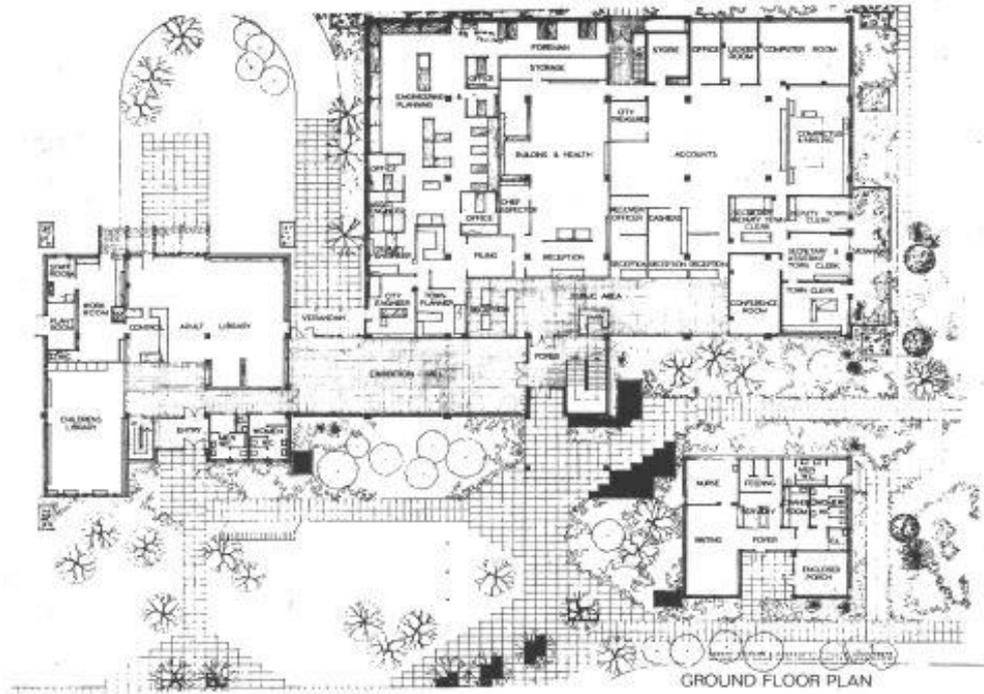
Interior images of the library taken soon after the building opened, note the bespoke furniture and fittings and plentiful natural light.

Source: *Wood World*, July 1984



View from library mezzanine to ground floor library space now converted for office use.

Source: DEW Files 16 January 2020



1975 plan of the Salisbury Civic Centre.

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- ¹ *Architecture Australia*, (1977), vol. 66 no.2, p.33.
- ² John Lewis (1980), *Salisbury South Australia A History of Town and District*, (Investigator Press: Hawthorndene), pp.15-26, 41-48.
- ³ Lewis, pp.41-48.
- ⁴ Lewis, pp.27-36.
- ⁵ 'Salisbury', *Observer* 7 September 1889, p.35.
- ⁶ HT Burgess (1909), *The Cyclopaedia of South Australia*, (Alfred G Selway: Adelaide), p.342.
- ⁷ Lewis, p299.
- ⁸ Lewis, pp.295-296.
- ⁹ Rachel Hurst (2002), 'An Unselfconscious Architecture the work of Robert Dickson', in *Additions to architectural history the proceedings of the XIXth conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Brisbane), p.2.
- ¹⁰ Hurst (2002), p.4.
- ¹¹ Hurst (2002), p.4.
- ¹² *Architecture Australia*, p.33.
- ¹³ Robert Dickson (2010), *Addicted to Architecture*, (Wakefield Press: Kent Town), pp.164-166. Dickson Robert Harold Collection, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, S272. City of Salisbury, 'List of Development Applications 1998-2018', see DEW Files.
- ¹⁴ Personal Communication with Terry Sutcliffe General Manager City Development 16 January 2020.
- ¹⁵ 'Stop City of Salisbury Council wasting \$43 million Ratepayer Dollars on a new "Hub"' at <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-gillian-aldridge-and-councillors-stop-city-of-salisbury-council-wasting-43-million-ratepayer-dollars-on-a-new-hub> [accessed 13 January 2020].
- ¹⁶ Personal Communication with Terry Sutcliffe General Manager City Development 16 January 2020.
- ¹⁷ 'Salisbury Community Hub Opening' at <http://discoversalisbury.com.au/event/salisbury-community-hub-opening/2019-11-30/> [accessed 20 January 2020].
- ¹⁸ Hurst (2002). Rachel Hurst (2004), 'Modest Revolutionaries: The Architecture of Dickson & Platten' in *Limits the proceedings of the XXIst conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Melbourne). Rachel Hurst (2009), 'Stories of Gardens and Dolls: Dickson & Platten's Kathleen Lumley College' in *Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand Conference* (Auckland).