

RUTHVEN MANSIONS

17-31 Pulteney Street

Ruthven Mansions have had a history that 'borders on the bizarre' if the events leading up to the renovation of the buildings in 1979-80 are taken at face value. Built in two stages (1911-12 and circa 1914) the property was sold in 1954 to the state government and rapidly fell into disrepair. By 1976 the buildings had been shorn of their distinctive balconettes, the interior had been declared unsafe and the Chest Clinic which had occupied the ground floor had moved to new premises. After protracted negotiations the buildings were renovated internally and partially rebuilt externally to closely approximate the external form of the original buildings. The remarkable change in circumstances is closely identified with the cycle of a fall in city population during the earlier part of this century, then a renewed interest in city living in the 1970s generated during the first five years of the Council's City of Adelaide Plan.



(CD Ref 3974/85)

The mansions are historically important because when they were built they represented a benchmark in providing luxury accommodation in Australia, with central vacuum cleaning, automated doors, mechanical ventilation, electric light and an electric lift. The mansions are now greatly subdivided and refurbished, retaining few original internal details. They are nevertheless of great importance to this 'style of residential accommodation' and are among the earliest of Australia's multi-storey apartments.

The mansions were erected for Ruthven Frederic Ruthven Smith whose name is also commemorated by a development of semidetached and detached cottages grouped around Ruthven Avenue off Grote Street. Stage one of the mansions originally consisted of twelve large apartments, one of which was occupied by the prominent Kyffin Thomas family (of *Register* newspaper fame). It was also the address of W.A. Webb, commissioner of Railways, such residents attesting to the desirability of these apartments by well-to-do and prominent Adelaide families. The mansions were designed by architects Black and Fuller and constructed by A.R. Maddern and Son. Stage two of five storeys was built by W.C. Torode

Heritage of the City of Adelaide

and consisted of about twenty-eight flats, the facades to Pulteney and Austin streets continuing the design of the earlier four storey section to the south.



(CD Ref 3974/84)

The design, strongly residential in character is a distinctive full bodied interpretation of the Gothic and art nouveau styles without parallel in South Australia. The complex is one of the most successful recycling projects in the city.

The streetscape importance of these buildings is partially determined by their strong residential character, the facades forming an important and long-recognised backdrop to Scots Church.

Advertiser, 8 June 1976, 21 April 1978 (article by John Chappel); Beck, E., *Adelaide architecture 1903-27*, pp. 8-9; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 24).

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.

Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	RUTHVEN MANSIONS	Building No	3/0413
Address	15-27 Pulteney Street; 1-7 Austin Street	CT	4170/349

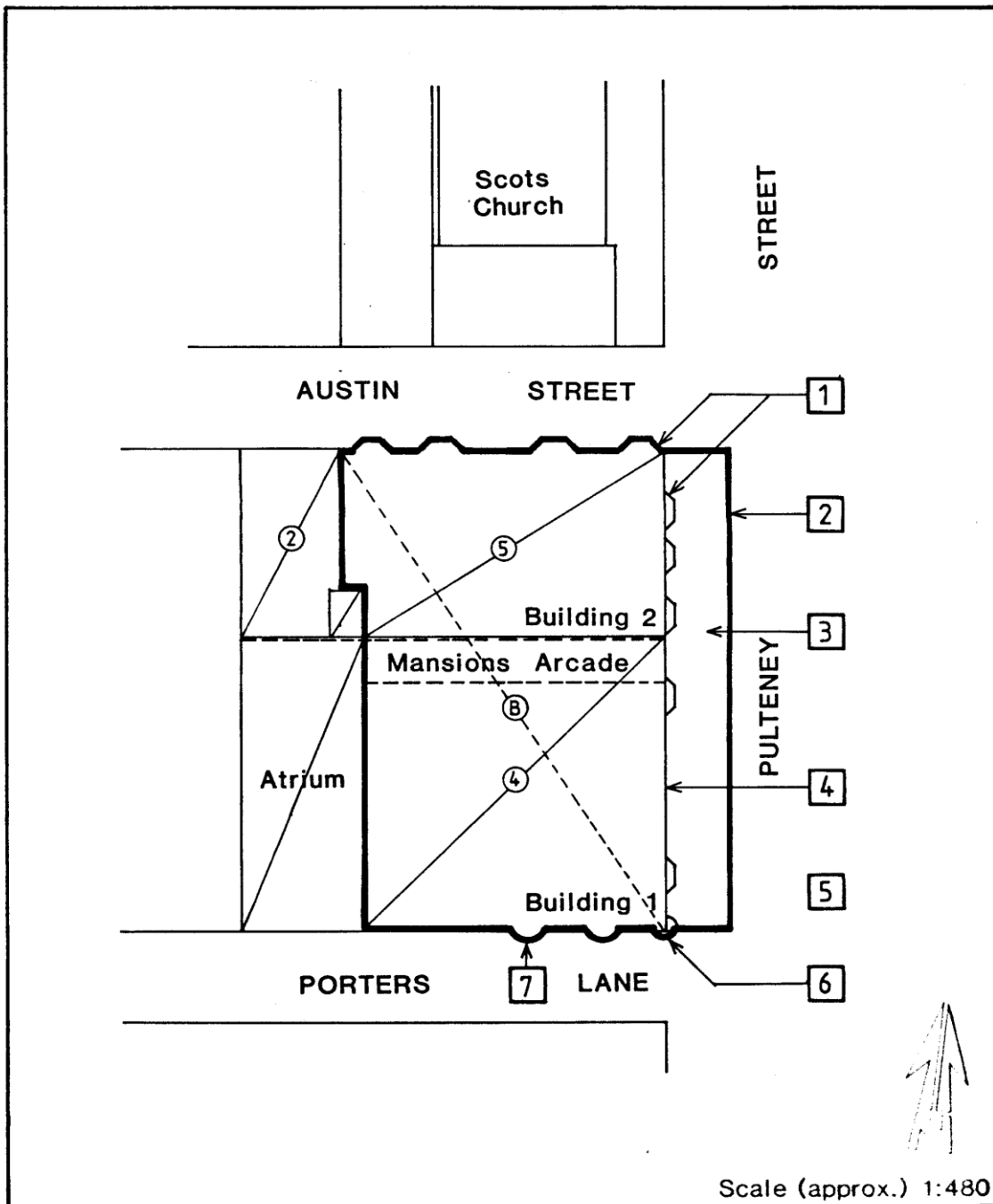


Image scanned - not to stated scale.

This Curtilage Map has been prepared as a guide only and no warranty or assurance is given about the accuracy of the content as it may contain obsolete information. The Corporation excludes all liability [including for negligence] in relation to your use of these documents.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	RUTHVEN MANSIONS	Building No 3/0413
Address	15-27 Pulteney Street; 1-7 Austin Street	CT 4170/349

NOTES:

1. Note Rendered bay windows with bell shaped metal roofs and balustraded balconies above ground floor level.
2. Wide verandah (ground floor).
3. Verandah gables with cast iron inserts.
4. Brick construction (English bond). Note rendered balustraded parapet with dormer windows. Terra cotta tiled roof.
5. Completely refurbished at ground floor level.
6. Turret with faceted conical roof.
7. Brick bow windows.