

## FORMER NMLA BUILDING

89-93 King William Street

For most of its existence this building has been associated with the National Mutual Life Association. In 1968 it was taken over by the Bank of Adelaide which was subsumed in the ANZ Bank in 1979.

The National Mutual Life Association of Australia began in Melbourne in 1869 and is the oldest such business institution in Victoria. The business opened a branch office in Adelaide in 1878 and erected its first building in Victoria Square in 1884. The company soon realised that the commercial hub of Adelaide was nearer Hindley Street and accordingly in 1898 had a bigger and more florid building designed using the services of local architect Edward Davies.

Edward Davies was born in Wales in 1852 and in his infancy travelled to Melbourne with his parents. He served an apprenticeship with Melbourne architect Albert Purchas and then joined the architectural branch of the Victorian Education Department. Davies came to South Australia in 1876 and worked as a senior draughtsman in the South Australian Education Department under E.J. Woods. He then entered the architectural firm of James Cummings, later became a partner in the firm, and by 1884 had set up his own practice. He won a design competition for Clayton Church and the East Adelaide Congregational Church. The former head office of the Savings Bank of South Australia, 23 Currie Street, was also signed by him in 1902. He died in 1927.

This building is architecturally significant because of the unusual design and detailing. The arcading to the facade is unusual in Adelaide. Though basically of a classical design, the architect has drawn freely from many sources for the detailing which is shown in the upper gables, the elliptical arches and the semicircular headed openings. The steeply pitched roof is distinctive in the King William Street streetscape, as is the facade with its sharp interplay of light and shade and the dressed limestone facade with granite accents (now painted).

The building has been truncated as part of the redevelopment in 1986-87 of this and adjacent sites for the State Bank. Its integrity has suffered due to loss of fabric and the juxtaposition of old and new. However, the building makes a positive contribution to the King William Street streetscape in association with the bank building to the north.

ACA, *Digest of Proceedings*, 24 March 1898, p. 78; Burgess, H.T., *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, Vol. 1, 1909, pp. 538-40; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 140); PRO, GRG 18/1/1.2.1876/67, 5.1.1876/6, GRG 50/1/8/1.2.1876.

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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.

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*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.*

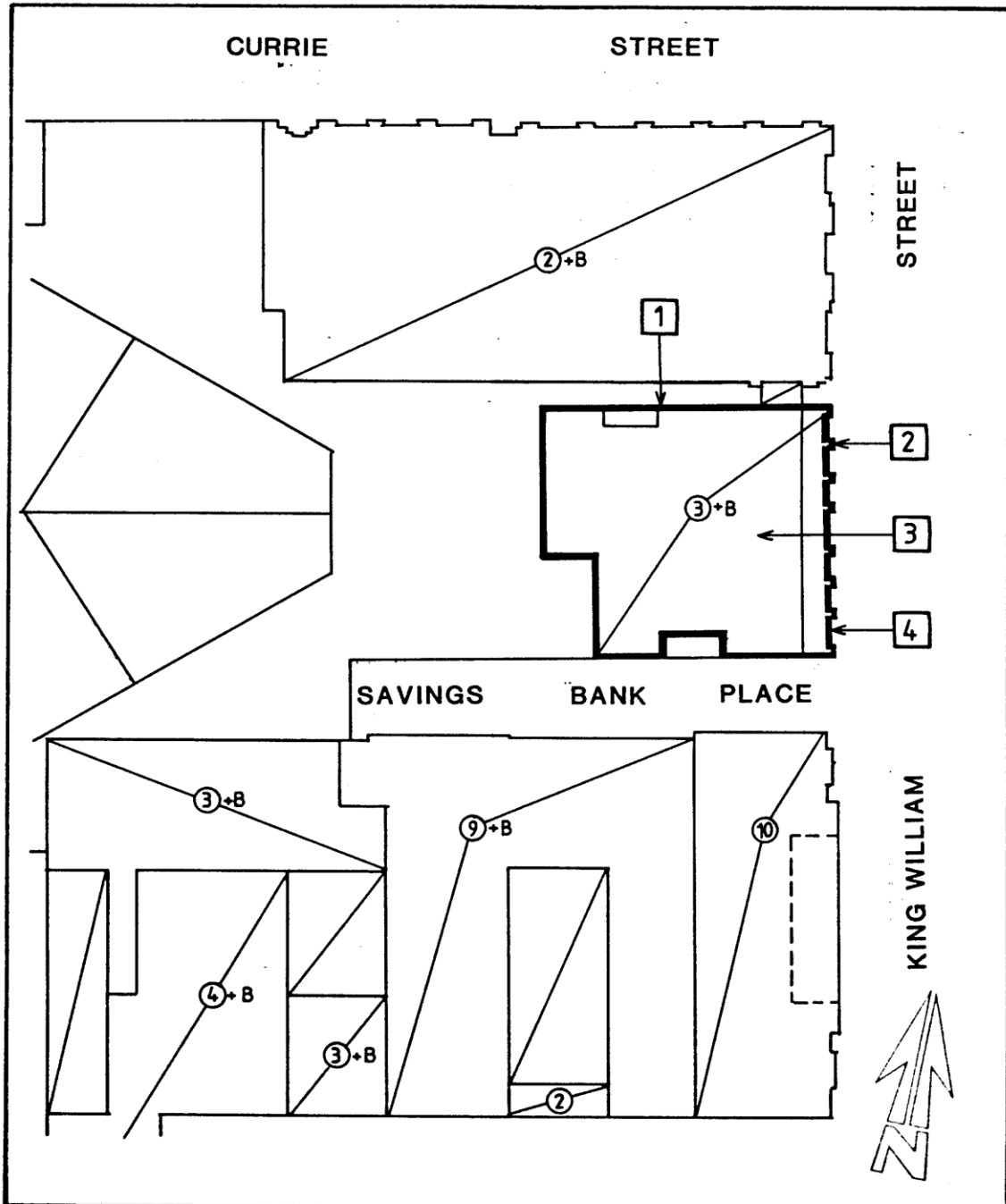


# CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

## The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	Fmr. NATIONAL MUTUAL BUILDING	Building No 6/0407
Address	89-93 King William Street	CT 1938/190



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#### NOTES:

1. Brick.
2. Rendered facade with stucco enrichment strongly rusticated with some vermiculation, rock faced and polished granite plinth.
3. Gabled tiled roof.
4. Note pediment over main door, balustraded balconies, arches, pilasters, moulded string courses.

## FORMER HEAD OFFICE OF THE SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

21-25 Currie Street

Banking was well established in South Australia when this building was erected in 1902-04 as the headquarters of the Savings Bank of South Australia. During the Second World War the building was state headquarters of the Manpower and National Service Organisation, and later became offices for the Commercial Bank of Australia. It was then occupied by the Commonwealth Bank until its new offices in King William Street were completed in 1983.

The Savings Bank of South Australia commenced business in 1848. In the word of the originating ordinance, it was considered:

*... desirable for the encouragement of frugality that persons possessing small sums of money, beyond what they require for the supply of their immediate wants, should be afforded an opportunity of depositing the same on good security, to accumulate an interest, and to form a provision for themselves and families.*

The bank began in a room in Gawler Place, later moving to Gresham Chambers in King William Street and then to new premises in King William Street, erected in 1860. In 1875 those premises were partially rebuilt, the exchange room (now the Lady Mayoress' Room) in the Town Hall being used briefly by the bank during the renovations. By the time of the great economic crash of 1893, the bank was solidly established: indeed, accommodation in the thrice altered building had become inadequate.

In October 1901 the site of the present building was purchased for £18 000. Architects were invited to submit designs for a suitable structure, the first prize being awarded to Edward Davies.

In 1902 the tender of P. Rodger and Co. of Melbourne was accepted to carry out construction costing £27 587. The foundation stone was laid by Lieutenant Governor Sir Samuel Way on 15 January 1903, and the building was officially opened by Governor Sir George Le Hunte on 28 April of the following year. The bank trustees were undecided whether Murray Bridge or Pyrmont (New South Wales) stone should be used in construction. After four architects had been consulted and an inspection of the Schools of Mines (South Australian Institute of Technology) and the Art Gallery had been undertaken the superior Pyrmont stone was used (resulting in the present high state of preservation of the Currie Street frontage). This decision led to much controversy in the public press, although by 1915 the true qualities of the building had been noted. The magazine *Building* of 12 October 1915 commented that the new bank was:

*... perhaps the finest feature in Adelaide's architecture, for in it the Classical style has been used and adapted - and while the correct proportions have been maintained, the distribution of the columns and the grouping of the features give the beauty of style and originality of adaptation.*

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Those comments are still appropriate, especially with the demise of other structures with which comparisons could have been made. It is an important composition by Edward Davies which can be identified with contemporary interest in revival styles. This is one of the few commercial buildings which express this architectural phase in Adelaide, the only other comparable structure being Electra House in King William Street.

The architectural significance of the bank building is enhanced by its position in a prominent group of commercial buildings which form one of the most important streetscapes in Adelaide. It is a particularly strong element of the Currie Street frontage, the grain and texture of which is now sadly lacking in comparable areas of the Central Business District such as Pirie Street and Grenfell Street.

ACA, Assessments 1902-04; *Building*, 12 October 1915; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 140); Savings Bank of South Australia, *Our century*, 1948.

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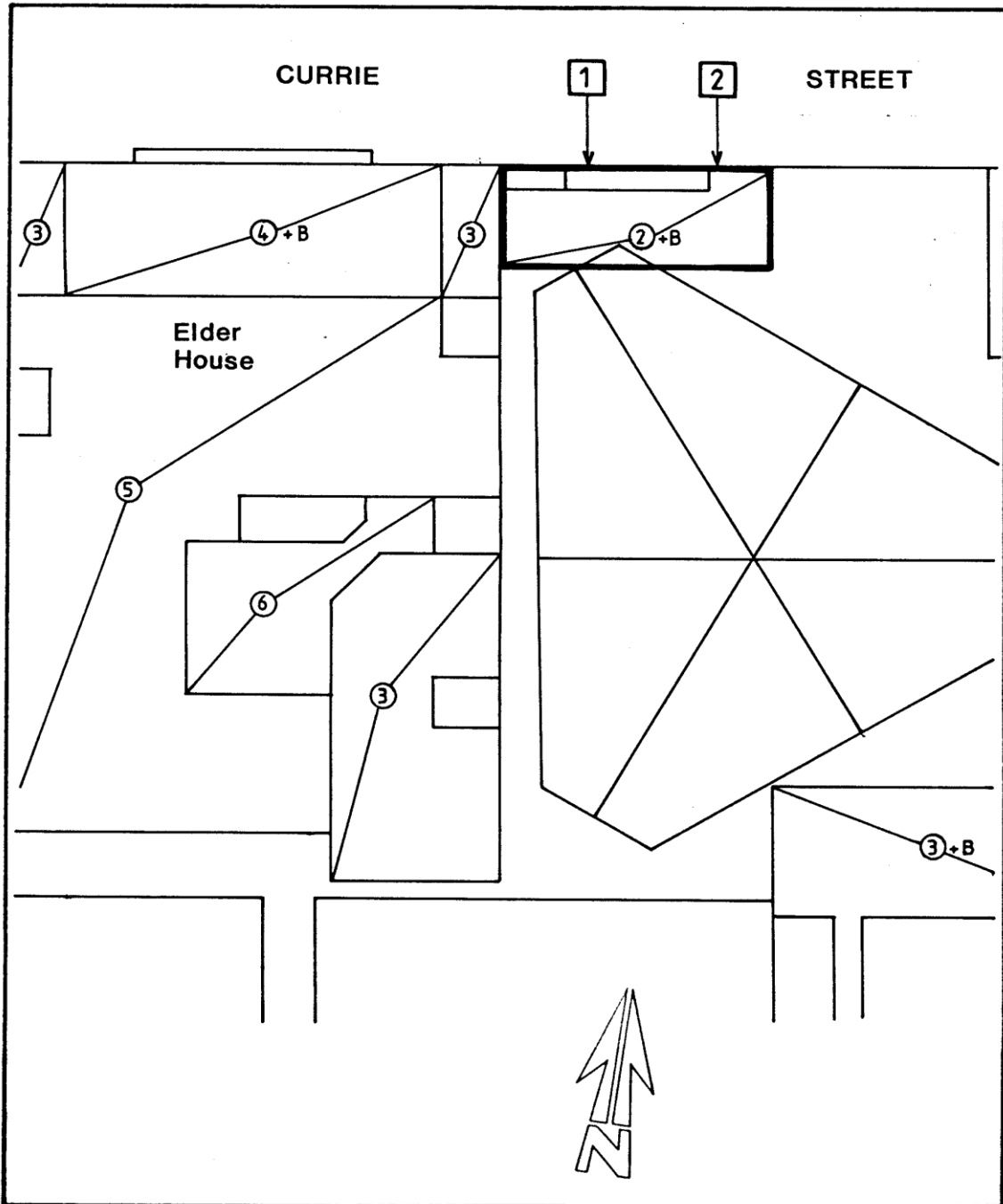


# CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

## The City Heritage Register-Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	former COMMONWEALTH SAVINGS BANK (former SAVINGS BANK OF S.A.)	Building No 6/0404
Address	21-25 Currie Street	CT 1950/183



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<b>Address</b>	21-25 Currie Street	CT 1950/183

### NOTES:

1. Note Ionic columns balustraded balconies to first floor windows, floral enrichment to entablature and parapet.
2. Ashlar Pyrmont (N.S.W.) Sandstone with granite plinth.