

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE: 26573

ADDRESS: Karna Country

233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide 5000

This heritage assessment considers that the place meets criteria (a), (b) and (e). Refer to Summary of State Heritage Place for final approved wording, including criteria statements.



Kelvin Building, 233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide 5000

Source: DEW Files, 6 November 2023

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

The Kelvin Building demonstrates the rapid growth of South Australia's electricity industry during the first half of the twentieth century. Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building was purpose-built to serve as the headquarters of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo), South Australia's principal electricity generator and supplier until it was nationalised to become the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) in 1946. ETSA continued to operate from the Kelvin Building until 1962.

The Kelvin Building is an uncommon example of the first wave of tall buildings that transformed Adelaide's skyline between 1912 and 1943 demonstrating the commercial growth of the State's capital city and consolidating Adelaide as the centre of business in South Australia. Designed by architect Eric McMichael, the Kelvin Building is also an outstanding representative of Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style architecture demonstrating a high degree of creative and aesthetic accomplishment, particularly in its architectural detailing and progressive design features.

Relevant South Australian Historical Themes

4. Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

4.6 Supplying services and utilities

4.7 Marking Phases in development of SA's settlements, towns and cities (including key town planning initiatives and architectural styles)

5. Developing South Australia's Economies

5.1 Developing South Australia's Economy

5.8 Developing manufacturing, engineering and construction and service industries.

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Four main themes are considered in this section:

- Electricity generation and supply, AESCo and ETSA,
- Adelaide's 'first wave' of 'tall buildings',
- 'Inter-War Commercial Palazzo' style buildings, c.1910-1940,
- The architecture of Eric Habershon McMichael.

Each of the above are considered in turn below.

Electricity Generation and Supply, AESCo and ETSA

The Kelvin Building, now known as Security House, was constructed for the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo) between 1923 and 1926. AESCo was South Australia's principal electricity provider from the early twentieth century until 1946, when it was nationalised by the state government and reconfigured as the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). The Kelvin Building was built to serve as AESCO's corporate, operational and consumer headquarters.

Several State and Local heritage places demonstrate the emergence and growth of the provision of electricity in South Australia in the first half of the twentieth century. There are three State Heritage Places associated with AESCo and ETSA, namely:

- Tandanya (former Adelaide Electric Supply Company Power Station), 1901, 241-259 Grenfell Street, Adelaide (SHP 10984, listed 8 November 1984).
- Adelaide Electric Supply Company Converter Station, 1923-1924, 48-51 East Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 10985, listed 8 November 1984).

- Former Adelaide Electric Supply Co Ltd – Four former garages and two double story office/workshop buildings, 1924-1937, 32-56 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Mile End (SHP 26308, listed 25 October 2013).

There are two Local Heritage Places that are associated with the AESCo and ETSA, namely:

- ETSA Warehouse, c.1900, 47-51 Tam-O-Shanter Place, Adelaide and 22-26 Devonshire Place, Adelaide (LHP).
- Electric Supply Company Transformer, c.1917, 107 Port Road, Thebarton (LHP)

Two important places associated with the early history of electricity generation in South Australia, namely the Nile Street powerhouse (1899) and the Osborne Power Station (1923), have both been demolished.



Tandanya (former Adelaide Electric Supply Company Power Station) (SHP 10984) (right), Former Adelaide Electric Supply Company Converter Station (SHP 10985) (middle) and Former Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) No.1 Converter Station (SHP 10986) (left).

Source: Google Street View, 2023



Former Adelaide Electric Supply Co Ltd – Four former garages and two double storey office/workshop buildings (SHP 26308).

Source: Google Street View, 2020

Adelaide's 'First Wave' of 'Tall Buildings', c.1922 - 1943

Architectural historians Julie Collins, Alexander Ibels, Susan Collins and Christine Garnaut define 'tall buildings' as 'those that exceed the general height of buildings in their surroundings'. In the context of Adelaide, the 'first wave' of 'tall buildings' occurred between 1922 and 1943. These buildings range in height from six to ten storeys, average around 132 feet (40 metres) tall, have prominent facades, and footprints that typically cover the whole of their land parcels.¹

Fourteen tall buildings erected during the 'first wave' of construction have been identified.² All are State Heritage Places with the exception of the Kelvin Building (subject of this assessment), the Epworth Building (LHP and identified for assessment by the South Australian Heritage Council on 16 December 2021) and Tobin House (LHP).

- Verco Building, c.1912, 178 North Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 13363, listed on 11 September 1986); South Australia's first 'tall building', designed by E. H. McMichael,
- Executor Trustee Building, 1922, 22 Grenfell Street, Adelaide (SHP 11704, listed 14 February 1985); designed by Woods Bagot Jory and Laybourne Smith with CEW Parsons,
- Hall – Liberal Club (former), 1925, 175 North Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 13362, listed 11 September 1986); designed by F. H. Counsell; since 1989, only the façade remains,
- T & G Building, 1925, 82 King William Street, Adelaide (SHP 11740, listed 8 November 1984); designed by Henderson, Alsop and Martin,
- Kelvin Building (subject of this assessment), 1926, 233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide; designed by E. H. McMichael.
- Bank – New Zealand (Alliance Building), 1927, 18 Grenfell Street, Adelaide (SHP 13592, listed 11 September 1986); designed by J. A. Kenthal with Rutt and Lawson.
- Epworth Building, c.1927, 31-35 Pirie Street, Adelaide (LHP); designed by English and Soward (identified for future assessment by the SA Heritage Council).
- Lister House (now Tobin House), c.1928, 196 North Terrace, Adelaide (LHP); designed by Barlow, Hawkins and Lawson with F. K. Milne, Evans and Russell.
- Shell House, c.1931, 170 North Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 13103, listed 11 September 1986); designed by McMichael and Harris.
- Office – Goldsbrough House, c.1935, 172 North Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 13239, listed 11 September 1986); designed by F. K. Milne.
- Colonial Mutual Life Building, c.1936, 41-49 King William Street, Adelaide (SHP 11637, listed 5 April 1984); designed by Hennessy and Hennessy.
- Office – C.B.A. (former AMP Building), 1936, 19-23 King William Street, Adelaide (SHP 11574, listed 11 September 1986); designed by Woods, Bagot, Laybourne Smith and Irwin.
- Former Westpac Bank (former Bank of New South Wales), c.1942, 2-8 King William Street, Adelaide (SHP 11753, listed under criterion (e) on 8 March 2013); designed by P.R. Claridge and Associates,
- Bank – State Bank of South Australia (former Savings Bank of South Australia), c.1943, 97 King William Street, Adelaide, (SHP 13384, listed 11 September 1986); designed by McMichael and Harris.



Left to right: Verco Building (SHP 13363), Hall – Liberal Club (former) (SHP13362), Goldsbrough House (SHP 13239), and Shell House (SHP 13103).

Source: DEW Files, 2024



Colonial Mutual Life Building (SHP 11637)

Source: DEW Files, 2024



T & G Building (SHP 11740)

Source: DEW Files, 2024

Inter-War Commercial Palazzo Style Buildings, c.1915 – c.1940

Many of Adelaide's 'tall buildings' were designed in the 'Commercial Palazzo' style, including the Kelvin Building (subject of this assessment). Architectural historians Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds establish that the 'Commercial Palazzo' style grew out of the design challenges that American architects began to face during the 1880s. Beginning that decade, American architects were tasked with

designing 'high-rise' commercial buildings, particularly in Chicago. New construction techniques involving the use of steel or reinforced concrete frames gave architects the ability to design buildings much taller than those built previously, which were structurally reliant upon load-bearing external walls.³ The new heights were further enabled by the elevator, invented during the mid-nineteenth century.⁴

Despite these new techniques, 'many façades continued to adopt a traditional expression', largely because the frames still had to be 'clad with stone, brick or terracotta for fireproofing reasons'. Accordingly, many of these architects embraced the 'fifteenth- or sixteenth-century three-storey Italian townhouse or palazzo' as their model. The challenge was to then extend the 'horizontally emphasised, low-rise palazzo into the strongly vertical proportion imposed by the high-rise building'. Their solution was typically to design high-rise buildings with three distinct sections: an 'emphatic' base, a 'simple' and 'neutral' middle, and a top with a 'strong termination'. All detailing and ornamentation 'followed classical precedents'.⁵

The style subsequently spread beyond Chicago and was embraced elsewhere in the United States, as well as in Britain. The Commercial Palazzo style was 'well documented in architectural periodicals' in Australia, and buildings erected in the style throughout the country 'generally followed overseas models'. The style was often favoured by '[b]anks, insurance companies and well-established, conservative financial institutions'.⁶

Apperly, Irving and Reynolds identify the following key style indicators:

- Base emphasised with strong rustication and large openings,
- Neutral, repetitive intermediate storeys emphasising wall plane,
- Top storey differentiated from storeys below,
- Prominent classical cornice,
- Attic floor above cornice,
- Smoothly textured wall,
- String course,
- Minor entablature,
- Aedicule,
- Balcony,
- Cartouche,
- Metal-framed windows,
- Chamfered or round corner,
- Rustication,
- Florentine Arch.⁷

There are at least two State Heritage Places that have been entered in the Register as outstanding examples of the Commercial Palazzo style, namely:

- Woodards House, c.1929, 47-49 Waymouth Street, Adelaide (SHP 13106, listed under criterion (e) on 23 August 2013).⁸



Woodards House (SHP 13106)

Source: DEW Files, February 2024

- Elder House, c.1937, 27 Currie Street, Adelaide (SHP 11655, listed 5 April 1984); listed under the provisions of the *South Australian Heritage Act, 1978*, with a retrospectively validated Statement of Significance that states 'Elder House is a rare and good example of the "commercial palazzo" style of architecture as applied to business/trading house buildings'.



Elder House (SHP 11655)

Source: DEW Files, February 2024

In 1989, Apperley, Irvin and Reynolds included the Kelvin Building and Shell House as exemplars of the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style.¹⁰ While the latter is a State Heritage place, it was listed prior to the publication of Apperley *et al.*'s work.

Apperley, *et al.* also noted 'Art Deco detailing' integrated into the Kelvin Building's façade. More recent research has dated the design of the Kelvin Building's façade to no later than May 1923. The *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* held in Paris in 1925, is considered to be the beginning of what would later be known as Art Deco. Consequently, the Kelvin Building's façade decoration, which predates the exhibition can no longer be considered to be an early example of Art Deco. However, it does draw on the emerging design language that would come to be named Art Deco as well as reflecting simplified Renaissance-style decoration compatible with the Commercial Palazzo style.¹¹

Eric Habershon McMichael

Prominent South Australian architect Eric Habershon McMichael (b. 1884 - d. 1945) was wholly or partially responsible for designing several 'tall buildings', including the Vercò Building (SHP 13363) on North Terrace, the first constructed, and the Savings Bank of South Australia building on King William Street (SHP 13384), the last. McMichael's work in South Australia between 1910 and 1940 was prolific and extended well beyond tall buildings. His designs demonstrate that he was abreast of contemporary architectural trends that developed internationally, eventually including interwar streamlined architecture and interwar Art Deco. His work 'helped to define the character of the city of Adelaide through his designs for many of its early tall buildings.'¹²

Many of the buildings designed by McMichael are extant. Several are listed as State Heritage Places, including three of the 'tall buildings' listed above: Office – Vercò Building (SHP 13363); Shell House (SHP13103); and Bank – State Bank of South Australia (SHP 13384). Some additional examples of McMichael's work include:

- Offices (known as Darling Building), 1916, 28 Franklin Street, Adelaide (SHP 13099, listed 11 September 1986),
- Barker Kindergarten, 1926, 195 Tynte Street, North Adelaide (SHP 13249, listed 11 September 1986),
- Hospital - Memorial, 1920, 1-10 Sir Edwin Smith Avenue, North Adelaide (SHP 13546, listed 11 September 1986).

Local Heritage Places (LHPs) associated with McMichael include:

- Kelvin House (now known as Security House, subject of this assessment),
- Odeon Star Cinema (formerly Wondergraph Picture Palace, later Semaphore Star Theatre), 63-65A Semaphore Road, Semaphore, 1920 (LHP).



Offices (known as Darling Building) (SHP 13099)

Source: DEW Files, February 2024

**Assessment against Criteria under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.
All Criteria have been assessed using the 2020 Guidelines.**

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building is associated with two historic themes: 'Building Settlements, Towns and Cities', specifically 'Supplying services and utilities', and 'Marking significant phases in development of SA's settlements, towns and cities'; and 'Developing South Australia's Economies', specifically 'Developing South Australia's Economy', and 'Developing manufacturing, engineering and construction and service industries'.

The Kelvin Building is directly related to the expansion of electricity across the State and its popularisation particularly in commercial and consumer applications, the uptake of which grew rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s. The Kelvin Building was purpose-built for the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo), which emerged as South Australia's principal electricity generator and supplier, especially after management and control of AESCo was transferred from London to Adelaide in 1921 and legislation enabled the company to expand its operations outside of Adelaide in 1922.

Along with Former Adelaide Electric Supply Co Ltd – Four former garages and two double story office/workshop buildings (SHP 26308) and Adelaide Electric Supply Company Converter Station (SHP 10985), the Kelvin Building demonstrates the commercial growth of AESCo and the expansion and popularisation of electricity in South Australia from the 1920s.

Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building served as AESCo's purpose-built corporate, operational and consumer headquarters. The Kelvin Building housed AESCo's upper management and, by 1940, the mains control room, where operators oversaw and controlled the company's electricity infrastructure, covering virtually all of South Australia's supply. AESCo also hosted public promotional events in the Kelvin Building, designed to encourage the uptake of electricity and electric household appliances. Consequently, the Kelvin Building stood at the epicentre of South Australia's electricity industry during the inter-war period and is thus integral to the story of AESCo and the expansion of electricity in South Australia.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (a).

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

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building is associated with South Australia's 'first wave' of 'tall buildings', high-rise buildings constructed with steel or reinforced concrete frames of six or more stories which appeared in the United States and spread to Australia by the early twentieth century. These tall buildings are culturally significant to South Australia as they demonstrate the commercial growth of the State's capital city and consolidation of Adelaide as South Australia's Central Business District (CBD). They also reaffirmed Adelaide's intended grid-based layout and transformed the city's skyline, in turn reflecting their advocates' desire to convey South Australia as 'modern' and 'progressive'.

Completed in 1926, the Kelvin Building is the fifth of the fourteen tall buildings erected in South Australia between 1912 and 1946. The construction of new, tall buildings was halted due to the Second World War and the Commonwealth's introduction of building restrictions to conserve resources for the war effort. The Kelvin Building therefore possesses uncommon qualities of cultural significance being one of only a few places that demonstrates the emergence of tall buildings in South Australia and their role in consolidating Adelaide as the business centre of South Australia. While all fourteen tall buildings still remain (see Comparability/Rarity/Comparison), the Kelvin Building is a highly intact example, with some of the other tall buildings, such as the Vercor Building (SHP 13363), and Liberal Club (SHP 13362) remaining as facades only.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (b).

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

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building was built on a portion of Town Acre 24 on North Terrace, Adelaide, which previously contained a row of terraced townhouses. Owing to the construction of the Kelvin Building between 1923 and 1926, including a substantial, full-footprint basement, it is understood that nothing remains of the townhouses, including their footings.

The Kelvin Building is well-documented in photographs, architectural drawings and newspaper and journal articles. There is no evidence (documentary, oral history or physical) to suggest that the place may yield information that will contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the State's history beyond what is readily available.

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.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building is associated with the class of place known as interwar tall office buildings. Inter-war tall office buildings are culturally significant to South Australia because they were the first of their kind in South Australia and helped consolidate Adelaide as the state's Central Business District. They also reflected attempts to convey South Australia as modern and progressive. This class covers structures built during the 'first wave' of high-rise construction in Adelaide, roughly between 1912 and 1943.

Principal characteristics of an inter-war tall office building include:

- a steel or reinforced concrete frame,
- a typical height of between six and ten storeys,
- a maximum height of approximately 132 feet (40 metres), a limitation of the *Building Act 1923*,
- a footprint comprising an entire land parcel,
- an imposing façade,

- a grand foyer,
- open floorplans with partitioned office spaces,
- electric lifts,
- hydraulic water systems,
- a basement,
- a caretaker's quarters.

While the Kelvin Building demonstrates some of these features, such as a reinforced concrete frame, imposing façade and basement, the interior of the building has been substantially altered over the last sixty years.

As a result of these alterations, key features such as the grand foyer, internal floor layout and partitions and the original electric lifts and lift wells have all been lost. The loss of the Kelvin Building's grand foyer is particularly evident when compared against other interwar tall office buildings that have retained their grand foyers, such as Shell House (SHP 13103) and Bank – State Bank of South Australia (SHP 13384). Additionally, besides traces of fibrous plaster decoration and some areas of original floorboards, the interior of the Kelvin Building has been largely stripped of original materials, fittings and finishes. As the interior of the Kelvin Building demonstrates very low integrity, the place is not considered to meet the threshold under this criterion.

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.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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.

Designed by Eric McMichael and constructed between 1923 and 1926, the Kelvin Building is considered to be an outstanding example of the 'Inter-War Commercial Palazzo' style (see Comparability/Rarity/Representation), finely articulating many key attributes of the style, including:

- a base emphasised with strong rustication and large openings, featuring a central colonnade flanked by two porches at the ground level and a balcony, balustrade, string course and steel-framed double-doors at the first storey level,

- neutral, repetitive intermediate storeys emphasising the wall plane between the second and fourth storeys, also featuring coved vertical niches that form 'towers' at the sides,
- a top storey differentiated from storeys below, with a colonnade at the fifth storey and parapet and two 'towers' at the roof level,
- a prominent classical cornice featuring dentils,
- smoothly textured walls with ashlar cement detailing,
- minor entablature above Ionic and Tuscan-order columns,
- aedicules at the fifth-storey with Tuscan-order columns,
- metal-framed windows on all elevations.

In 1989, the Kelvin Building received critical recognition in Apperley, Irving and Reynolds' seminal book *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, the authoritative guide to identifying Australian architectural styles, when it was featured as one of eleven national illustrated examples of the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style, along with Shell House (SHP 13103).

Subsequently in 2009, the Kelvin Building was recognised in *Art Deco: Its Place in South Australia's Architectural Heritage*,¹³ a report prepared by historian Carol Cosgrove and the first comprehensive study of the popular architecture of the inter-war period in South Australia. Cosgrove identified the Kelvin Building as the first South Australian building to demonstrate 'modern' aesthetic tendencies in its simplified Commercial Palazzo style decoration, which set the building apart from its more traditional contemporaries.¹⁴

The interior of the Kelvin Building has undergone considerable change, especially since 1964. A number of minor changes have also occurred to the exterior, notably the relocation of the main entrance doors. However, these changes have not diminished the place's architectural integrity as an example of the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style to the extent that its heritage values can no longer be understood and appreciated.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (e).

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

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building may have cultural associations for former employees of the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA), a government organisation with administrative headquarters based in the Kelvin Building between 1947 and 1962. While former employees of ETSA may be considered a group that resonates broadly across the state, there is no evidence to suggest that all members of this group collectively have a strong cultural or spiritual connection with the Kelvin Building. Any subset of the larger group, with such a connection, would not be considered to resonate broadly across the State as a group of significance to South Australia.

The Kelvin Building has also provided office accommodation for several organisations since 1964, including Security Life Assurances Limited and the University of Adelaide. While it is possible that some individuals who have worked in the building may have a strong cultural and/or spiritual attachment to the place there is no evidence to suggest that they form a group that would be broadly recognised by the South Australian community as being historically important.

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.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

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 Kelvin Building is associated with the architectural work of Eric McMichael (b.1884 - d.1945). McMichael was a prominent South Australian architect who designed many commercial, residential and hospital buildings in South Australia between 1911 and 1943. McMichael is especially associated with the first wave of 'tall buildings' constructed in Adelaide during the inter-war period, including the Kelvin Building. Collectively, interwar tall buildings changed the character of the city and led to the emergence of the Central Business District as a distinctive precinct. Their advocates viewed them as symbols of South Australia's progressiveness and modernity.

The Kelvin Building is one of several buildings designed by Eric McMichael between 1912 and 1943. Other buildings designed by McMichael are considered to have special associations with his work, notably Office - Verco Building (SHP 13363), McMichael's first architectural commission which established him in private practice; Offices (known as Darling Building) (SHP 13099), which McMichael considered his own favourite work; and the Savings Bank of South Australia (SHP 13384), designed in partnership with Alfred C. Harris, his largest and last major commission, which represents the culmination of his career.

In comparison to these other places, the Kelvin Building is not considered to have a special association with Eric McMichael.

The Kelvin Building is also associated with the Adelaide Electric Supply Company (AESCo). The Kelvin Building was purpose-built by AESCo to serve as the company's administrative headquarters and was completed in 1926.

It is evident that the Kelvin Building *did* have a special association with the life and work of AESCo. However, the building's association with AESCo is no longer explicit. After ETSA relocated to Eastwood in 1962 and Security Life Assurances Limited purchased the building the following year, most, if not all traces of its relationship to AESCo and the formative years of South Australia's electricity industry have been progressively diminished. The mains control and other equipment are no longer present and the building was renamed as 'Security House', consequently disassociating the building from electricity. In comparison, there are places that continue to explicitly demonstrate their connection to AESCo, notably Tandanya (former Adelaide Electric Supply Company Power Station) (SHP 10984), Adelaide Electric Supply Company Converter Station (SHP 10985) and Former Adelaide Electric Supply Co Ltd – Four former garages and double storey office/workshop buildings (SHP 26308).

As such, AESCo's association with the Kelvin Building is no longer considered to be a special one, with the historical association demonstrated between AESCo and the Kelvin Building best represented under criterion (a).

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

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Kelvin Building, now known as Security House, is a six-storey office building with a roof space and basement. The Kelvin Building is built of reinforced concrete and brick, with a façade designed in the 'Inter-War Commercial Palazzo' style (see Comparability/Rarity/ Representation).

The building has a dominant, street-facing, symmetrical rendered façade. A large, central, recessed area on the facade is flanked by elements resembling pylons or towers, which return at both ends on the eastern and western elevations (western elevation façade return elements currently hidden by neighbouring building).

The façade features ashlar detailing and pressed cement decoration and comprises a ground-floor plinth, intermediary section, comprising the first through fifth floors, and a parapet at roof level.

The plinth comprises the ground floor and features a central colonnade flanked by porches, with the following additional features:

- colonnade supported by six Ionic-order columns, including four paired columns,
- Ionic-order columns flanking the porches *in antis*,
- three base courses in rough ashlar supporting the columns and porch side walls,
- wrought iron railings to two bays of colonnades (third bay railings removed),
- entablature comprising a plain frieze, architrave and a cornice with dentils separating the ground and first floors,
- three steel-framed arch windows inside the colonnade with cement sills and surrounds,
- entrance doors in the porches fitted with glass sliding doors and surmounted by further glazing (not original fabric),
- two wells in the colonnade lighting the basement,
- a flight of dogleg stairs in the light well from colonnade to basement level, with marble treads, tiled risers and wrought iron railings.

The façade between plinth and parapet demonstrates the following features:

- coved vertical niches in the western face of each tower, extending from the first to the fourth floors, punctuated by window openings at each floor level,
- three door openings between the towers at first floor level with fanlights above, associated with a narrow balcony and pressed cement balustrade,
- pressed cement hood moulding above door openings at first floor level, featuring dentils and contiguous pediments,
- colonnade supported by corbels between the towers at fifth floor level, with Tuscan-order columns, framing window openings,
- niches in towers at fifth floor level, with Tuscan-order columns *in antis*,
- steel-framed sash windows to all window openings, all with glazing bars to upper sashes,

- parapet with rectangular openings containing wrought-iron grilles,
- rectangular openings in towers containing wrought iron grilles,
- extensive pressed cement decoration at parapet level, including entablature, plain frieze and cornice with dentils, stylised festoon-like details, and stepped features at top of towers,
- stylised keystones and sills, with stylised corbels, below most window openings,
- stylised keystones to 'towers' and 'tower' niches,
- ashlar detailing in cement render,
- pressed cement decoration on façade returns echoing northern elevation tower decoration but in low relief,
- partially-rendered eastern elevation,
- flagpoles surmounting towers.

Besides the façade returns, the western, southern and eastern elevations are red face brick, pierced by window openings with reinforced concrete lintels and sills, fitted with steel frames. Deep recesses in the western and eastern elevations serve as light wells and create H-shaped footprints for the above-ground floors.

Additional exterior features include:

- hipped corrugated steel roof with dormer vents,
- external steel fire stairs in the western elevation light well giving access to the roof.

Original interior features include:

- concrete structural columns, plastered, with chamfered corners,
- timber floorboards,
- fibrous plaster wall and ceiling decoration in downstairs lobby,
- a well or sump in the basement.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Kelvin Building office building,
- Original detailing to Façade
- Roof,
- Basement entrance door,
- Original internal fixtures and fittings, including the timber floorboards, picture rails and decorative masonry,
- Steel-framed window casings,
- Basement well or sump.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Non-original fixtures and fittings,
- Lifts.

HISTORY

Electricity Supply, AESCo and ETSA

The use of electricity in South Australia occurred in the mid-1850s and was associated with the development of the telegraph. In 1882 the first public electricity supply bill was assented, creating the South Australian Electric Company. The company proved unsuccessful and never produced electricity, primarily due to opposition from the South Australian Gas Company.¹⁵ In 1895, the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company was registered and entered discussions with the City of Port Adelaide to supply electricity to illuminate the municipality with electric light.¹⁶

An unreliable temporary service began in Port Adelaide at the beginning of 1898, when the first powerhouse located in William Marston's shop on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets began operating. It was soon replaced with a bespoke powerhouse built on Nile Street, Port Adelaide. The Nile Street Powerhouse began supplying electricity on 1 January 1899, but was plagued with problems due to the inexperience of the engineer commissioned to erect it.¹⁷

The arrival of electrical engineer F. W. H. Wheadon from England in July 1899 proved beneficial and while Adelaide's older established businessmen viewed him as 'a mere boy', it was his knowledge, skills and business acumen that enabled the Nile Street Powerhouse to run with fewer issues and allowed the Company to plan for the expansion of the electricity supply in South Australia. A contract to provide electric light to the City of Adelaide for five years was secured in September 1899.¹⁸

The growing acceptance of electricity and its improved supply, as well as a myriad of business dealings between some of Adelaide's most successful businessmen, such as Sir George Brookman and interstate and United Kingdom-based individuals and companies, ultimately resulted in the purchase of the South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company by the UK-based British Electrical Engineering Company Ltd. in September 1899. The Adelaide operations were subsequently bought by the UK-based the Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia Ltd in January 1900.¹⁹

A temporary powerhouse situated in a tin shed was constructed to supply electricity to the city while the powerhouse on Grenfell Street (now Tandanya SHP 10984) was completed. The growth in demand and supply, and subsequent improvements to the company's finances made it a viable proposition and in 1905, the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo), which was incorporated in London, purchased the Company. This was followed by a period of expansion that resulted in the rollout of electricity to the suburbs surrounding the city, such as Thebarton.²⁰

The use of electricity in South Australia was further boosted by the advent of the electric tram network and the government's creation of the Municipal Tramways Trust (MTT) in 1906. The first line opened in March 1909, which was fed electricity from AESCo until the MTT developed their own generators. Outside of Adelaide, the MTT also established a separate, satellite tram network serving Port Adelaide which was

inaugurated in 1917. The MTT had a power station on Ocean Steamer's Road, Port Adelaide, now the vicinity of No. 2 Dock. The power station has since been demolished.²¹

Further demand for supply meant AESCo began looking for a site to build a power station. A site at Osborne was chosen, but the First World War halted planning and construction until 1919. The power station was an engineering feat as much of the land on which it was sited had to be reclaimed and the buildings and facilities supported on 3,000 wooden piles. On 12 August 1923, 'A' power station at Osborne came on line and by 1925 was supplying the city's entire needs, resulting in the closure of the Grenfell Street powerhouse (now Tandanya SHP 10984) in that year.²²



Osborne Power House, c.1927.

Source: SLSA B4574

While electricity had originally been largely used for lighting, by the 1920s it was being increasingly used to power household appliances, heat water and buildings, and power industry. Following an Act of Parliament in 1922 that enabled AESCo to supply electricity 'in any part of the State',²³ the company began to expand beyond Adelaide and quickly became South Australia's principal electricity provider.²⁴ Its expansion across South Australia was greatly facilitated by the 1924 invention of the 'Stobie Pole', a termite-proof electricity pole made of steel and concrete created by James Cyril (J.C.) Stobie, an AESCo engineer.²⁵ Guaranteed electricity supplies became an important factor in the industrialisation of the State in the years following World War Two and led to the nationalisation of the State's electricity and the formation of the Electricity Trust of South Australia in 1946.

At that time, South Australia was reliant on black coal from interstate to generate the State's electricity and miners strikes in New South Wales in the 1940s caused serious disruption to South Australian electricity supplies. Providing a reliable source of electricity was paramount to entice industry to relocate and/or establish in South Australia. To achieve that end Premier Playford supported the establishment of the brown-coal mine at Leigh Creek (c.1943), about 550km north of Adelaide, and assisted ETSA to construct a power station at Port Augusta (1954, now demolished) designed to burn the brown coal from Leigh Creek to supply electricity to industry, businesses and homes across the State.²⁶

Adelaide's First 'Tall Buildings'

'Skyscrapers' first emerged in the United States during the 1880s, particularly in Chicago and New York. These buildings typically comprised ten or more storeys and towered over adjacent buildings.²⁷ Their emergence was spurred by rising land prices and the desire to maximise the use of increasingly limited space, especially for profit.²⁸ They were enabled by new materials and technological innovations, particularly the use of steel or reinforced concrete to build internal frames, rather than load-bearing external walls which had been the norm until then.²⁹ The invention of the elevator, hydraulic plumbing systems and advanced fireproofing also facilitated their creation.³⁰

Similar buildings were soon erected outside of the United States, including in Australia. Although tall buildings with up to six storeys started appearing in Australia in the 1860s, they began to reach up to ten storeys by the 1880s, primarily in Melbourne and Sydney.³¹ They continued to increase in height between the 1890s and early 1910s until state-based height restrictions were implemented, which remained in place until limitations were amended decades later.³²

South Australia's 'first wave of tall building development', known as such as they were usually less than 10 storeys, commenced in 1912 with the construction of the Verco Building on North Terrace, Adelaide, designed by Eric McMichael.³³ However, further construction did not occur until the 1920s,³⁴ the delay likely caused by World War One and post-war social and economic adjustments.

Conditions began to settle by the early 1920s and a general sense of progressiveness and prosperity began to pervade South Australia.³⁵ Reflective of this new outlook, construction of high-rise commercial buildings recommenced. However, in 1923, height restrictions were imposed by the *Building Act* preventing the construction of skyscrapers and resulting in the suite of tall-buildings that emerged in the Adelaide skyline.³⁶

By the middle of the 1920s, the *Australian Home and Builder* noted that '[n]ever in the history of Adelaide has there been in progress such a costly and important programme of commercial buildings'.³⁷ These buildings were concentrated along the middle of North Terrace, though several were also constructed nearby along King William Street and a few on Grenfell and Pirie Streets.³⁸

Observers considered these buildings as symbols of the state's progress and modernity.³⁹ Much of this enthusiasm was buoyed by a desire to 'keep up' with developments occurring in other states, especially Victoria and New South Wales.⁴⁰ Although there 'had been no pressing necessity to build upwards in twentieth century Adelaide',⁴¹ and while some even rejected them outright due to practical, medical or aesthetic concerns, the desire for Adelaide be a 'real city' on par with its eastern counterparts was palpable.⁴²



Three of Adelaide's first 'tall buildings', North Terrace, Adelaide, c.1935: Liberal Club, Goldsbrough House, and Shell House (left to right).

Source: SLSA B7092

Along with transforming the skyline, Adelaide's first 'tall buildings introduced a rectilinear edge of facades' to the streets, which 'helped to redefine and reinforce the order of the original City of Adelaide plan'.⁴³ In the nineteenth century, building throughout Adelaide had developed erratically, which in turn partially compromised the city's grid-based design. The tall buildings generally encompassed the entire land parcels and also had to conform to strict street-frontage requirements, thereby instating orderliness and reaffirming Adelaide's intended rectilinear layout.⁴⁴

Furthermore, tall buildings 'cooperated rather than competed in the process of transforming the capital from a city of mixed uses – administration, industry, manufacture, commerce, trade and housing – to one of commercial specialisation'.⁴⁵ As most of these buildings were erected for large business enterprises, they helped consolidate Adelaide as South Australia's Central Business District (CBD). Together, they conveyed the commercial maturation of the city and secured its distinctiveness from its suburbs.⁴⁶

Though interrupted by the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s,⁴⁷ construction continued and did so until around 1943, when Commonwealth building restrictions were instated during the Second World War halted construction.⁴⁸ Including the Verco Building (1912), fourteen of these buildings were erected during the first wave of development.⁴⁹

Constructing the Kelvin Building

In the early 1920s, AESCo initiated the process of building a new headquarters. This decision came as the company was experiencing substantial growth. At the end of 1923, for instance, AESCo reported that its number of consumers had grown from 4,810 in 1911 to 47,366 in 1923.⁵⁰ Over this period, the company began to expand its reach beyond metropolitan Adelaide to country districts. The decision was made after control and management of the company was transferred from London to Adelaide and while the power station at Osborne was under construction in 1921.⁵¹ A new headquarters was thus in keeping with the company's rapid ascent as a leading South Australian enterprise and a part of its infrastructural overhaul intended to serve the entire state.

On 31 May 1922, the company purchased a portion of Town Acre 24 on North Terrace, Adelaide.⁵² A row of two-storey, nineteenth-century terraced townhouses stood on the site.⁵³ Prior to the twentieth century, such residential buildings were commonplace on the southern side of North Terrace.⁵⁴ Chalmers Church, now known as Scots Church (SHP 13370), neighboured the site on the eastern side.

Either in late 1922 or early 1923, AESCo commissioned architect Eric McMichael to design its new building. McMichael had been responsible for designing the Verco Building on North Terrace, South Australia's first 'tall building',⁵⁵ and this may be why he was hired to design a building of similar scale and grandeur for AESCo. His plans were completed in March 1923.⁵⁶

Like the Verco Building, AESCo's headquarters building had six storeys and a basement. It was designed in the 'Commercial Palazzo' style (see Comparability/Rarity/Representation) and had subtle modern features, notably its stepped pylons and highly stylised decoration derived from classical precedents.⁵⁷ These features set the Kelvin Building apart from the contemporary architecture of the time. At this stage, the internal floorplans were indicative, showing large open floors with a few rooms for management and specialised operations. The plans were submitted to the City of Adelaide's Local Board of Health on 17 September 1923 and were approved exactly one week later.⁵⁸

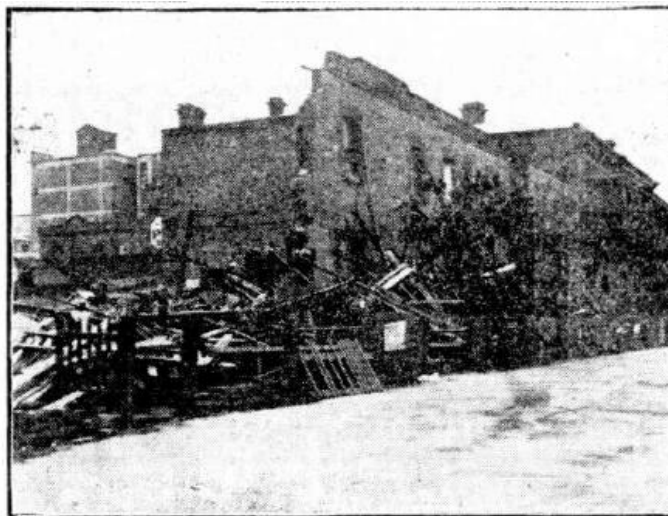


Chalmers Church (now Scots Church (SHP 13370)) on the corner of North Terrace and Pulteney Street and the row of terraced townhouses to its right, c.1911.

Source: SLSA B4381

The plans referred to the headquarters as the 'Kelvin Building' and demonstrate AESCo's desire to draw on associations with electricity.⁵⁹ William Thomson, better known as Lord Kelvin, was a nineteenth century mathematician and scientist known for his mathematical analysis of electricity and magnetism.

AESCo's directors reported on 13 November 1923 that a 'contract [had] been let for the erection of new city offices on North Terrace, and work [had] already been commenced on the site'.⁶⁰ Cheary Brothers were hired to construct the Kelvin Building for £42,975 and work at the site began no later than October 1923 and continued throughout 1924.⁶¹ As the structure was being erected, McMichael completed plans for the interior finishings in January 1925. Further specialised rooms were documented at this time, including facilities for staff on the third floor, such as a kitchen, lunch room, smoking room, demonstration room and all of the building's lavatories.⁶²



Old dwellings on North terrace being demolished to make room for offices for the Electric Supply Co.

The row of terraced townhouses in the process of demolition, October 1923.

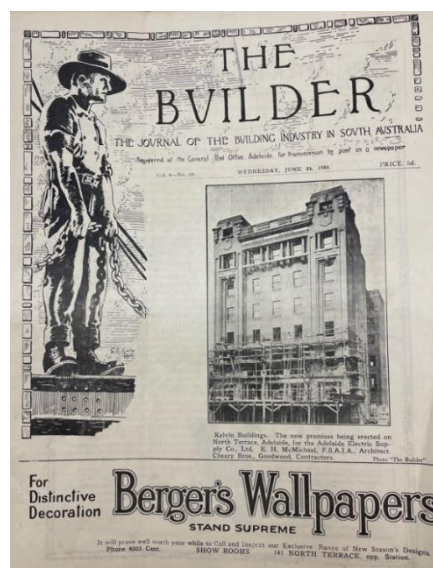
Source: 'Camera News', *Mail*, 6 October 1923, p.32; trove.nla.gov.au

During construction, there was media and professional interest in the Kelvin Building, the *Register* describing it as a 'handsome edifice' with a façade 'peculiarly appropriate to the enterprise which it is to serve'.⁶³ The *Builder* also documented the building's development by including photographs of the Kelvin Building on the cover of its June and October 1925 editions.⁶⁴



Drawing of the Kelvin Building featured in the News, 19 October 1923.

Source: 'Kelvin Building', News, 19 October 1923; trove.nla.gov.au



The Kelvin Building on the cover of the *Builder*, 24 June 1925.

Source: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia

The Kelvin Building was completed and occupied in early 1926.⁶⁵ The company appears to have occupied the entire building except for the basement, which was offered for lease as early as 1925.⁶⁶

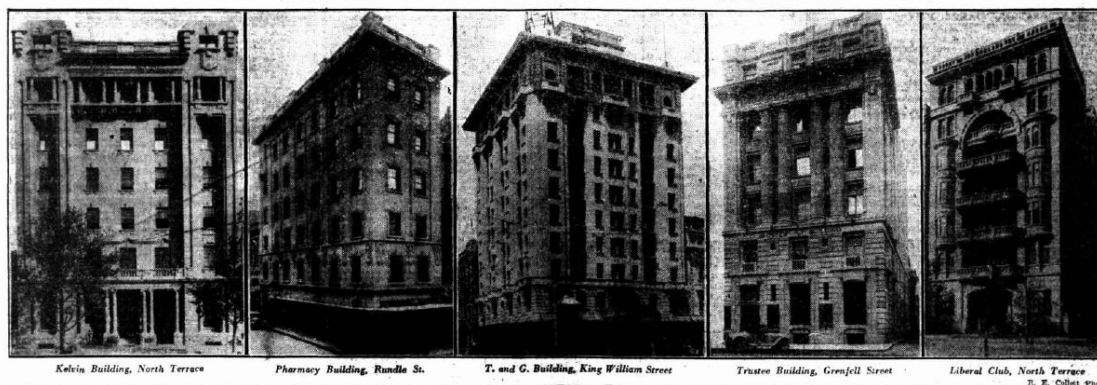
Upon its completion, the Kelvin Building was acclaimed in the media for its modern architectural expression, luxurious appointments and as evidence of the growth of enterprise in Adelaide.⁶⁷



Original ground floor interior at the Kelvin Building, 1926.

Source: *Adelect*, December 1926, p.17.

These Five Buildings, Recent Additions to the Architecture of Adelaide, Typify the Growth of the City



Five buildings the Mail believed exemplified 'Adelaide Growing Up' and showed the 'Remarkable Progress in [the] Metropolis', May 1926.

Source: 'Adelaide Growing Up', Mail, 15 May 1926; trove.nla.gov.au

AESCo and ETSA at the Kelvin Building

On moving into the Kelvin Building, AESCo conveyed this development as a triumph for the company, one that symbolised its rapid ascent as a leading South Australian enterprise. The company's Chairman, Sir George Brookman, captured this sentiment in his speech at the twenty-second annual general meeting held at the Kelvin Building on 10 November 1926. Brookman began his address by pronouncing that:

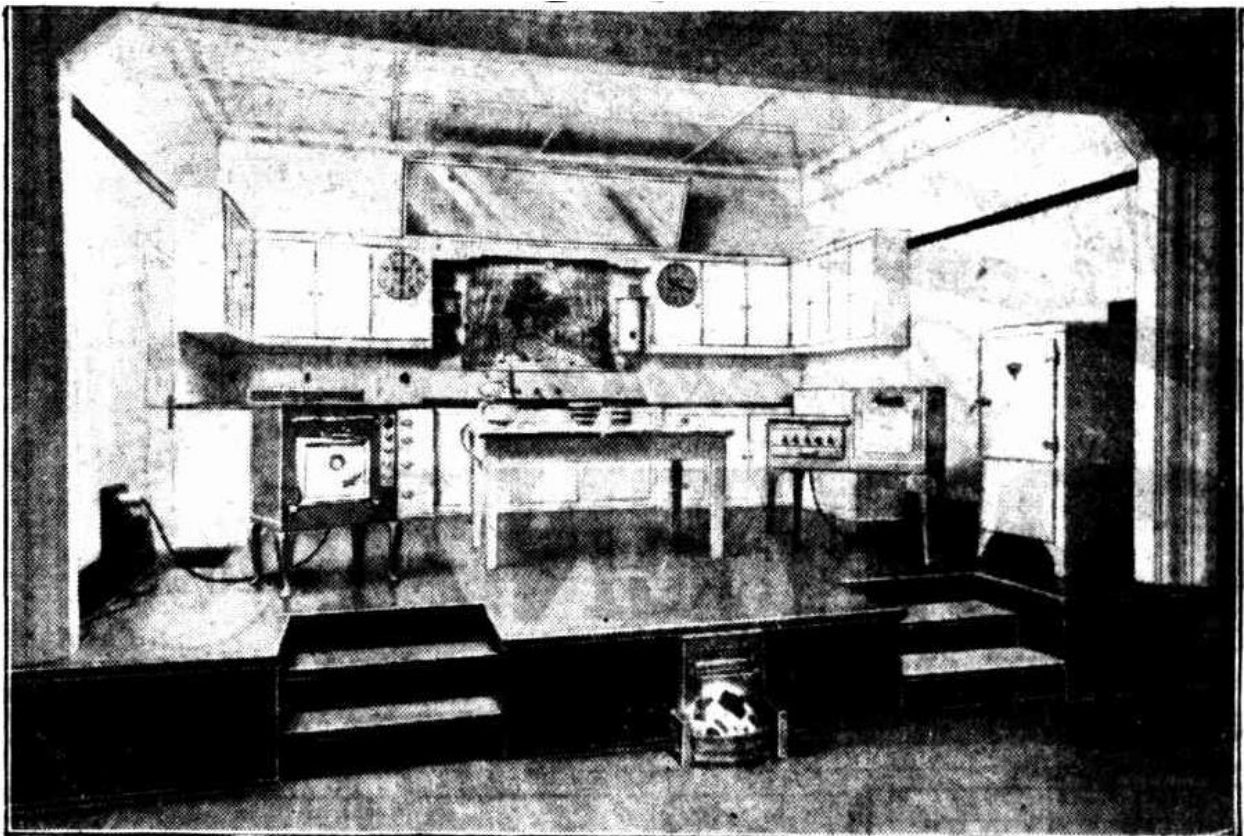
Five years ago I presided at the first annual meeting of the company held in Australia, following the formal transfer of control from London. It is now my pleasure to welcome you to the first meeting held at the Company's new headquarters in Kelvin Building. I hope it will be the privilege of the chairman to unfold a tale of continued prosperity, broad-based upon the goodwill of the consumers.⁶⁸

He went on to note other important developments, such as the company's 'rapid growth', the opening of the Osborne Power House, and expansion into country districts. The latter had 'altered the position of the Company from a metropolitan to almost State-wide undertaking'.⁶⁹ Along with the Osborne plant and the first buildings of the depot complex at Hilton (SHP 26308), the Kelvin Building formed a major part of AESCo's infrastructural development which was initiated to fulfil its emerging role as the state's principal supplier of electricity. Indeed, the building was to be the heart of their entire operation.

The Kelvin Building housed AESCo's corporate and technical operations. Regarding the former, McMichael's 1923 and 1925 plans show that management was located on the first floor and engineers and draughtsmen were on the second floor.⁷⁰ Over time, the Correspondence Branch, Industrial Office and the Personnel Branch were all stationed at the Kelvin Building, as were various figures related to AESCo's business operations.⁷¹ Regarding the latter, communications and some aspects of the network were controlled from the building.⁷² At least from 1940, the Mains Control Office was located in the Kelvin Building on the second floor. The Office contained an 'illuminated diagram board' and a 'control desk', both of which were 'installed in 1940'. The control desk included an 'indicating panel' that instantly displayed 'any faulty operations in the substations'.⁷³

In 1924, the company established the 'Consumers' Engineer's Department' under the direction of A. N. Dawkins, introducing a consumer function that grew over the years. The role of 'Consumers' Engineer' had been established in 1917 to offer advice to consumers 'having problems with their power installations or were considering new ones'.⁷⁴ Amongst its various activities, the department's role expanded to include cooking demonstrations for housewives.⁷⁵ Demonstrations began to be conducted at the Kelvin Building in 1933 and from 1936 were held in a purpose-built 'modern demonstration hall'. A platform in the hall was 'set out as an Ideal Kitchen, equipped with all modern labor [sic] saving appliances', including 'washing machines, vacuum cleaners, bath heaters and other electrical appliances'.⁷⁶ It did so ostensibly to promote its 'Adelect' electric cookers, a loanable product it developed in the early 1930s to expand its revenue stream.⁷⁷

Later, cookers, refrigerators and hot water systems were made available for hire-purchase.⁷⁸ The larger purpose of these products and the demonstrations was to promote the uptake of electricity.⁷⁹ Indeed, the company subsidised the cost of electricity for domestic applications.⁸⁰ Attesting to how important these demonstrations were to the company, as well as to their popularity, by 1941 the Department had a Chief Cookery Demonstrator and six assistant demonstrators.⁸¹



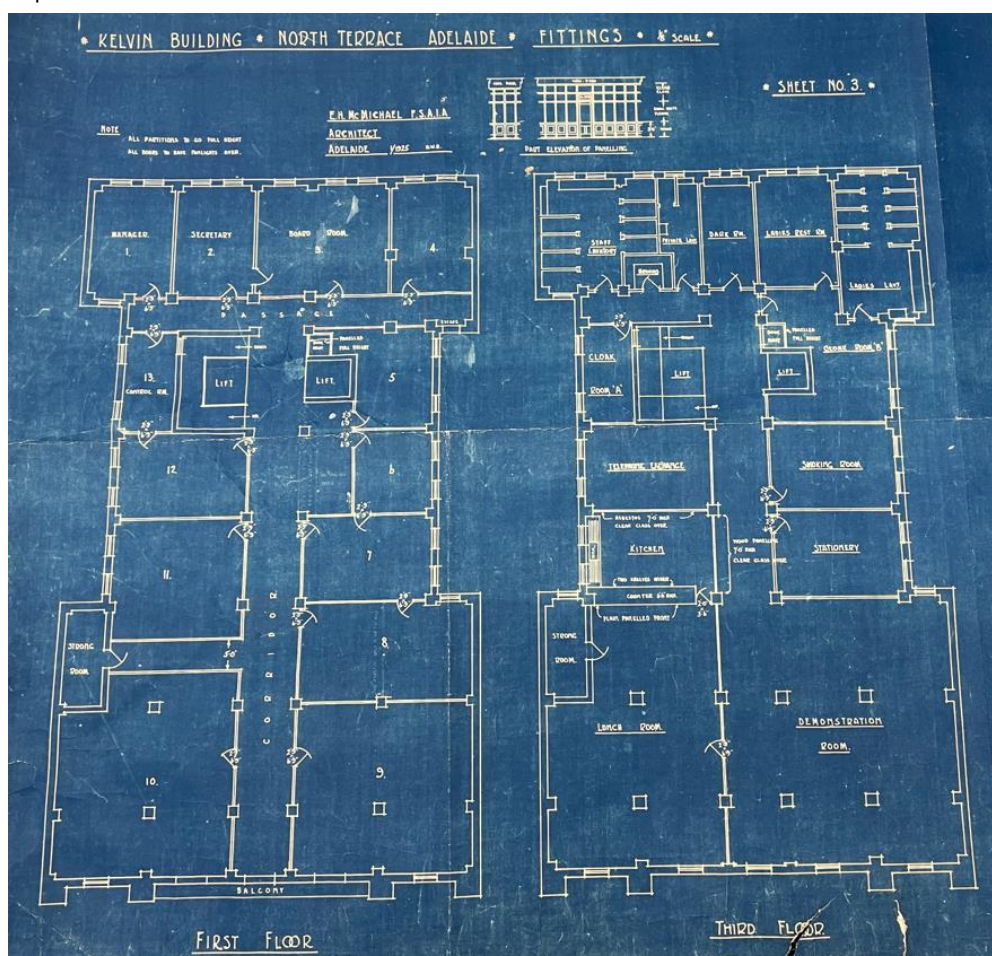
AESCo's 'Ideal Kitchen' showing multiple electric appliances like the 'Adelect' cooker on the left, located in the demonstration hall at the Kelvin Building, 1936.

Source: News, 9 June 1936; trove.nla.gov.au

In addition to its immediate connection to AESCo's business operations, the Kelvin Building was intertwined with the company's broader efforts to establish and maintain an internal corporate culture, one premised on a 'unitarist' identity between management and staff.⁸² Towards this end, a staff magazine titled *Adelect* was established in 1926 and was 'conducted by the employees' of AESCo.⁸³ It included general interest items and reported on social and recreational developments throughout the entire company.⁸⁴ The first edition featured the Kelvin Building on the cover, which later reappeared as a recurring logo beginning in 1931.⁸⁵

Other initiatives included annual balls, picnics and swimming carnivals.⁸⁶ There were AESCo cricket teams, as well as recreation and debating clubs.⁸⁷ Notably, a voluntary 'A.E.S' Employees' Sick and Accident Society' was established to provide workplace insurance to staff.⁸⁸ Taken together, whether initiated or administered by the company or its employees, it is clear all such measures were to create an AESCo culture, one that was seemingly beneficial to employers and employees.

This philosophy was embedded in the layout of the building as demonstrated by the extensive facilities provided for staff that took up most of the third floor, including ladies' and men's lavatories, rest rooms, cloak rooms, a smoking room, a kitchen and a sizeable lunch room.⁸⁹ A recreation room was added sometime after the building was completed.⁹⁰



E. H. McMichael's 1925 plans for the Kelvin Building's interior fittings, the left side showing staff facilities on third floor.

Source: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia



AESCo's Recreation Room in the Kelvin Building, 1927.

Source: *Adelect*, June 1927, p.21.

The Kelvin Building continued to serve as AESCo's corporate, operational and consumer headquarters until the company was nationalised by the Government of South Australia in 1946 and reconfigured as the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). The handover between these two organisations took place at the Kelvin Building on 2 September 1946.⁹¹ ETSA acquired AESCo's assets,⁹² including the Kelvin Building.

ETSA retained the building as South Australia's electricity headquarters immediately following its acquisition. Between 1947 and 1949, ETSA initiated changes to the building, including the installation of a new air-conditioning system, new windows on the third and fourth floors, a professional kitchen and cafeteria on the third floor, and a new staircase in the basement.⁹³

Despite these alterations the Kelvin Building was not large enough to sufficiently accommodate ETSA's staff. As an interim solution, ETSA purchased the Hindmarsh Building, located at the corner of Grenfell Street and Hindmarsh Square in Adelaide.⁹⁴ ETSA's long-term solution was to erect an entirely new headquarters. Although this idea was floated as early as April 1949,⁹⁵ construction of ETSA's new headquarters in Eastwood commenced much later in 1961 and was completed the following year.⁹⁶ ETSA then relocated from the Kelvin and Hindmarsh Buildings. It sold the former to Security and Life Assurances Limited (SLAL) in 1963,⁹⁷ effectively ending the Kelvin Building's role in South Australia's electricity industry.

Becoming Security House and Subsequent History

SLAL's acquisition of the Kelvin Building occurred during the Australia-wide expansion of the life insurance industry in the 1950s and 1960s.⁹⁸ After purchasing the Kelvin Building, SLAL changed the building's name to Security House and embarked on extensive renovations from 1964. In addition to relatively basic changes to office

arrangements, the lifts were relocated from either side of the rear corridor and were paired together towards the north-west of the building near the entrance; the internal stairs were moved to the same location; toilets were added to each floor, alternating between male and female facilities; and the main entrance was repositioned away from the centre to the western porch.⁹⁹ These changes have remained into the twenty-first century, including the change of name.

SLAL, later known as Lumley's,¹⁰⁰ owned the building for just over two decades and looks to have rented out its unused floorspace to other organisations, notably the Commonwealth Department of Housing.¹⁰¹ The University of Adelaide purchased the building in 1986 and sold it in 1993,¹⁰² though continued to hold a caveat and lease office space until around 2015.¹⁰³ The building has changed hands several times since and has had multiple tenants over the years including, most recently, the History Trust of South Australia.¹⁰⁴ Over the years, additional adjustments have been made to the building, particularly the construction of a new main entrance on the eastern side, replacing the original, and changes to the internal layout. In 2013 the Kelvin Building was listed as a Local Heritage Place and in 2016 conservation works were undertaken to the façade.

Chronology

Year	Event
1882	First public electricity supply bill is assented.
1895	South Australian Electric Light and Motive Power Company is registered and begins discussions to supply electric light to the municipality of Port Adelaide.
1898	First (temporary) powerhouse is established at William Marston's shop on the corner of St Vincent and Lipson Streets, Port Adelaide.
1899	Nile Street Powerhouse begins operating. Electrical Engineer FWH Wheadon arrives in July bringing the knowledge and expertise to successfully expand the State's electricity network. Contract to supply electric lighting to the City of Adelaide is secured. UK-based Electrical Engineering Company of Australia Ltd purchases South Australian Electric Light and Motive Company.
1900	Electric Lighting and Traction Company Ltd purchase all of Adelaide's electricity operations.
1901	Powerhouse on Grenfell Street (Tandanya) becomes operational.
1902	First suburban power supply provided to North Adelaide via underground cables.
1905	Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd (AESCo) is incorporated in London and purchases Electric Lighting and Traction Company of Australia Ltd operations.
1907	Nile Street Powerhouse is closed.

- 1911 Parliament reviews Adelaide's building legislation and the Building Bill is introduced but does not pass until 1923.
The Verco Building, architect Eric McMichael's first commission and South Australia's first 'tall building,' is erected on North Terrace.
- 1914 Consumers of electricity increased from 585 in 1904 to 13,192 in 1914.
- 1916 J. C. Stobie joins AESCo.
- 1919 Land reclamation and construction of the Osborn power station begins.
- 1921 The control and management of AESCo is transferred from London to Adelaide on 1 March.
- 1922 AESCo purchases a portion of Town Acre 24, City of Adelaide, on North Terrace.**
- 1922-1923 Architect Eric McMichael is commissioned to design the Kelvin Building for AESCo.**
- 1923** Osborne 'A' power station begins generating electricity.
The Building Bill is assented.
Construction of Kelvin Building commences.
- 1924 J. C. Stobie patents the termite-resistant 'Stobie pole' which is used extensively across South Australia and facilitates the rapid expansion of electricity supply.
- 1925 The Grenfell Street powerhouse is closed.
The Liberal Club Building is erected on North Terrace.
- 1926 The Kelvin Building is completed and becomes the AESCo headquarters.**
- 1931 Shell House is erected on North Terrace.
- 1932 The SA government commissions AESCo to prepare a report on the state of electricity in South Australia. Engineering workshops contribute substantially to the State's economy and concerns are raised about competition from the Government Workshops and interstate firms.
- 1933 Cooking demonstrations at Kelvin House begin.
- 1935 Goldsbrough House is erected on North Terrace.
- 1946 The SA Government nationalises the State's electricity supply, establishing the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). It further establishes the Leigh Creek Coal Mine and the Port Augusta power station.
ETSA acquires the Kelvin Building.
- 1947-1949 ETSA makes several alterations to Kelvin House, such as installing a new air-conditioning system, replacing windows, improving the staff kitchen and cafeteria, and erecting new stairs in the basement.**
- 1949 ETSA purchases the Hindmarsh Building to ease crowding in the Kelvin Building.
ETSA announces that it intends to construct a new building.

- 1961 Construction of a new ETSA headquarters at Eastwood begins.
- 1962 ETSA Relocates to its new headquarters at Eastwood.**
- 1963 The Kelvin Building is sold to Security Life Assurances Limited (SLAL), which renames it 'Security House'.**
- 1964 SLAS initiates major alterations to the building. Designed by architects Stephenson and Turner, the lifts are relocated from either side of the rear corridor and are instead paired together towards the north-west of the building near the entrance; the internal stairs are moved to same location; toilets are added to each floor, alternating between male and female facilities; and the main entrance is repositioned away from the centre to the western porch.**
- 1986 The Kelvin Building, now Security House, is sold to the University of Adelaide.
- 1993 The University of Adelaide sells the Kelvin Building but continues to hold a caveat and lease office space until around 2015.
- c.1997 Demolition of the Osborne Power Station.
- 1999 The government privatises ETSA.
- 2013 The Kelvin Building is listed as a Local Heritage Place under the name 'Security House'.**
- c.2016 Conservation work is undertaken on the façade.**

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SITE RECORD

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Six-storey reinforced concrete and red-brick office building with basement and featuring rendered front elevation designed in Commercial Palazzo-style style.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1926

REGISTER STATUS: Identified 5 August 2021
Provisionally entered 14 March 2024

LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS: LHP, listed 27 March 2013

CURRENT USE: Office building, 1926 -

ARCHITECT: Eric Habershon McMichael, 1923

BUILDER: Cheary Bros., 1923-1926

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: City of Adelaide

LOCATION:

Street No.:	233-236
Street Name:	North Terrace
Town/Suburb:	Adelaide
Post Code:	5000

LAND DESCRIPTION:

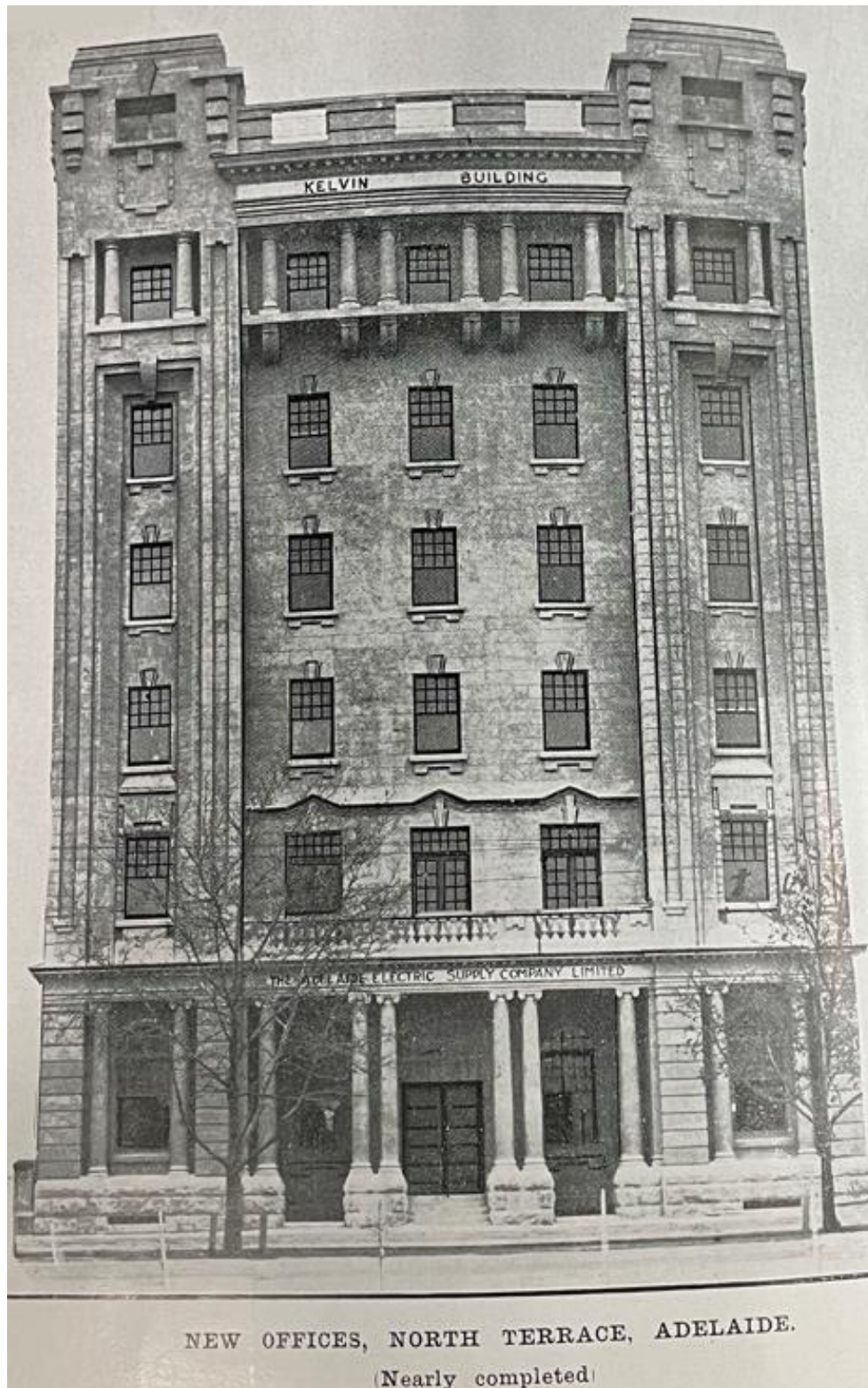
Title	CT 5129/427, F102327 A13
Reference:	
Hundred:	Adelaide

MAP REFERENCE 34°55'17"S 138°36'17"E

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



Façade of the Kelvin Building nearing completion in 1925, showing the building's name towards the top and the company's name towards the bottom.

Source: Adelaide Electric Supply Company, *Report of the Directors and Statements of Accounts to 31st August 1925*, (Adelaide: self-published, 1925).

PHOTOS

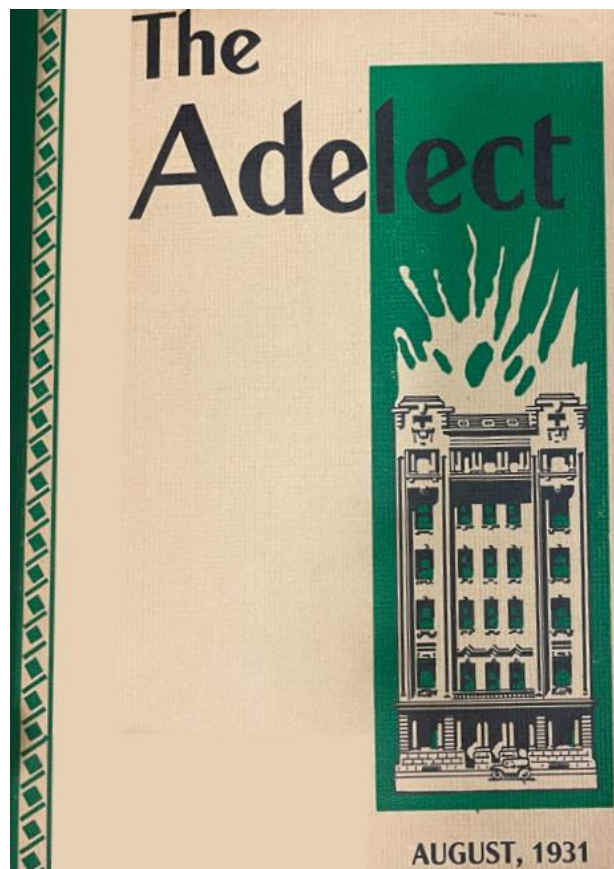
NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



View of the Kelvin Building facing towards the east, c.1925-1927.

Source: SLSA B4327



Cover of the Adelect magazine featuring the Kelvin Building as its logo, 1931.

Source: Adelect, August 1931, cover.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



The Kelvin Building with floral decorations for the Royal Visit in 1958; although the building was owned by ETSA at this time, it retains the Kelvin House name and Adelaide Electric Supply Company is still visible towards the bottom.

Source: SLSA PRG560/68/59

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573

* All of the following images were taken by DEW staff on 6 November 2023.



Front elevation of the Kelvin Building facing North Terrace.



North-eastern corner of the Kelvin Building showing the front elevation and depth of return to eastern elevation and unrendered red-brick portion of the building, with internal bay to provide natural illumination.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

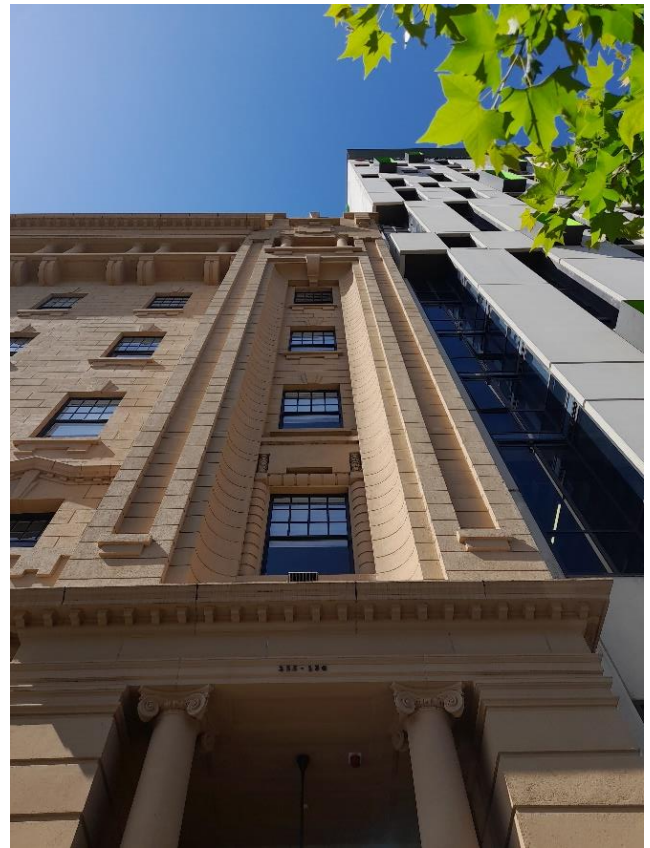
PLACE NO.: 26573



View of the front showing Ionic columns, rustication, and balustrade.



'Security House' on the frieze.



Detail showing western 'tower'.

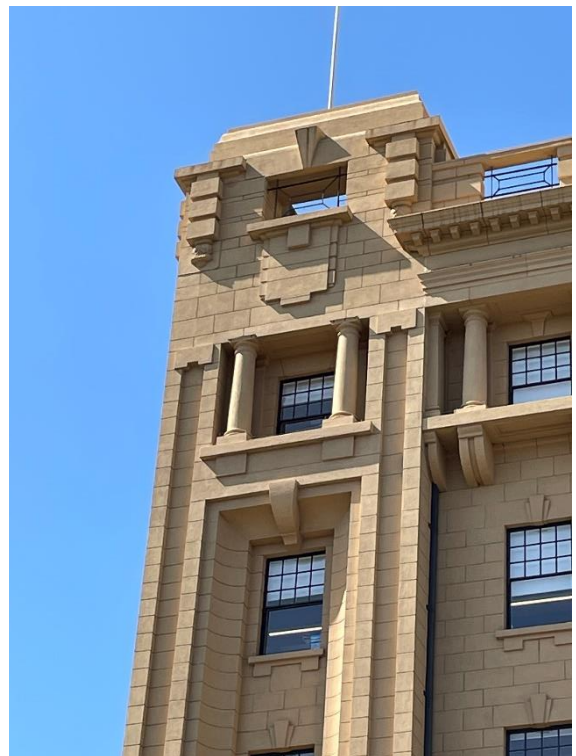
PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



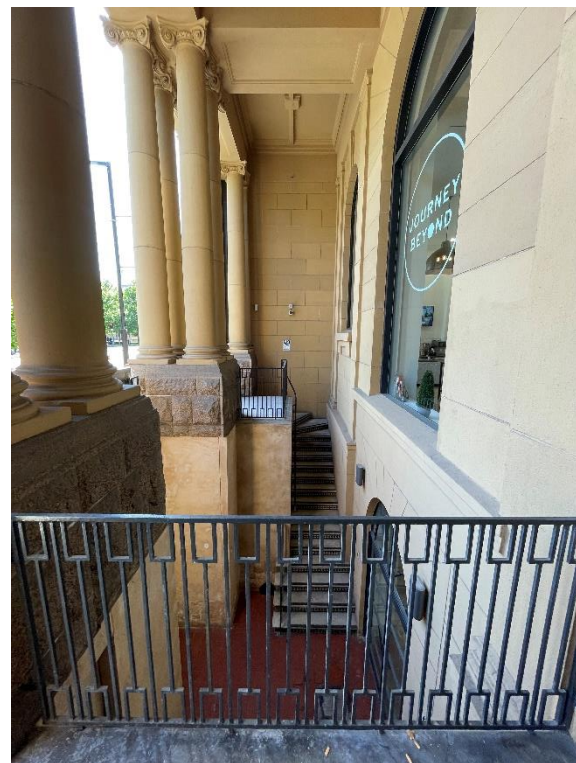
Left front porch on eastern elevation.



Eastern tower aedicule.



Steel-framed basement entrance.



View of the basement entrance area.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



Southern elevation at the rear showing roller door garage entrances.

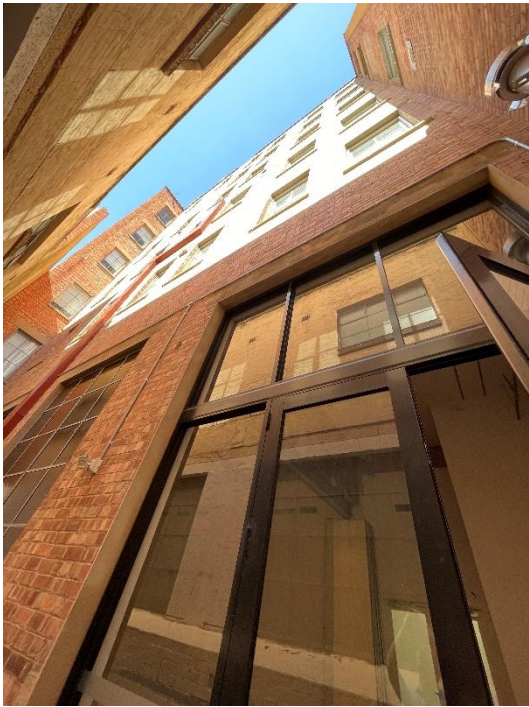


Southern rear elevation at the rear showing red-brick construction.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



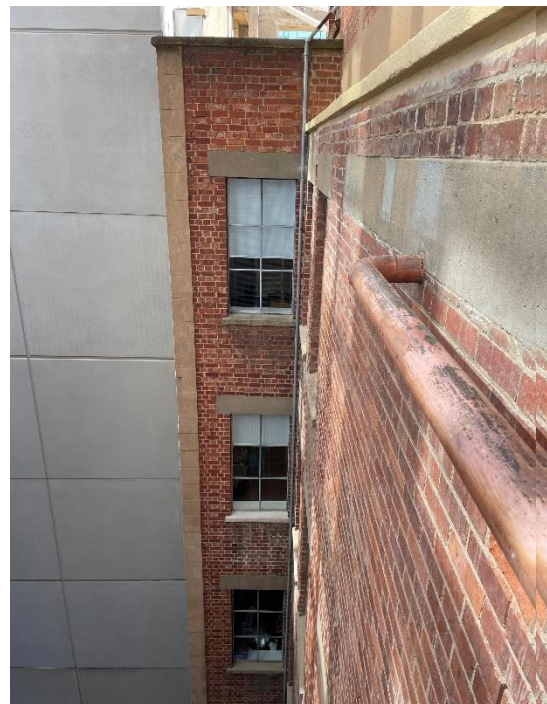
Retrofitted steel doorframe on the east.



Eastern elevation revealing H-shape.



Partial view of the parapet wall from the rear.



1960s steel-framed windows on western wall.

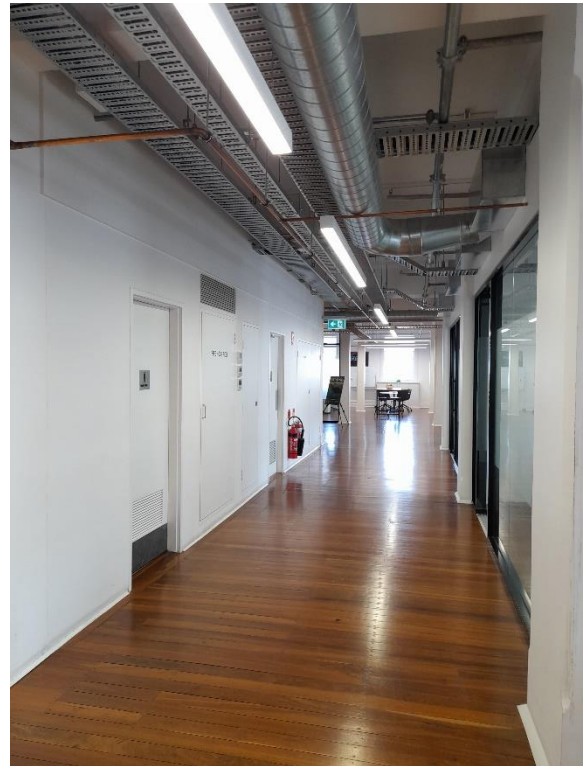
PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



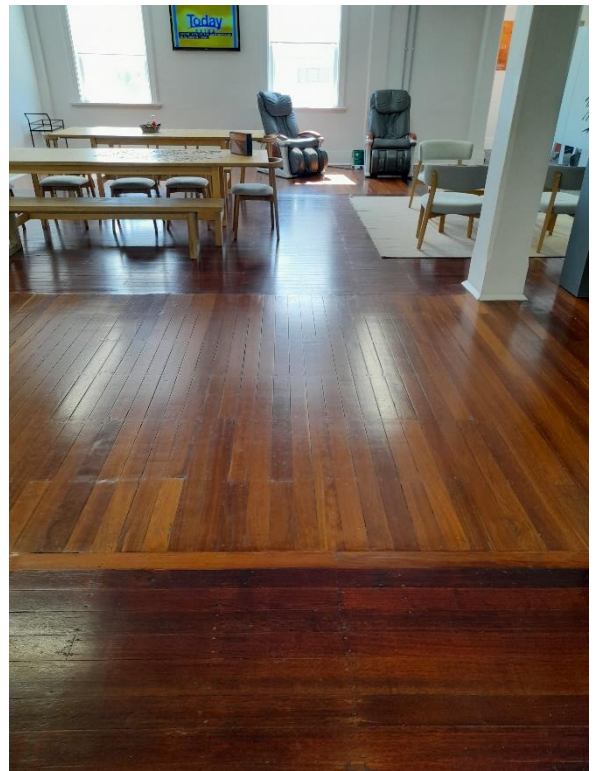
Partial view of the ground-floor interior showing remnant interior decoration.



An upper-floor corridor.



An upper-floor lift lobby.

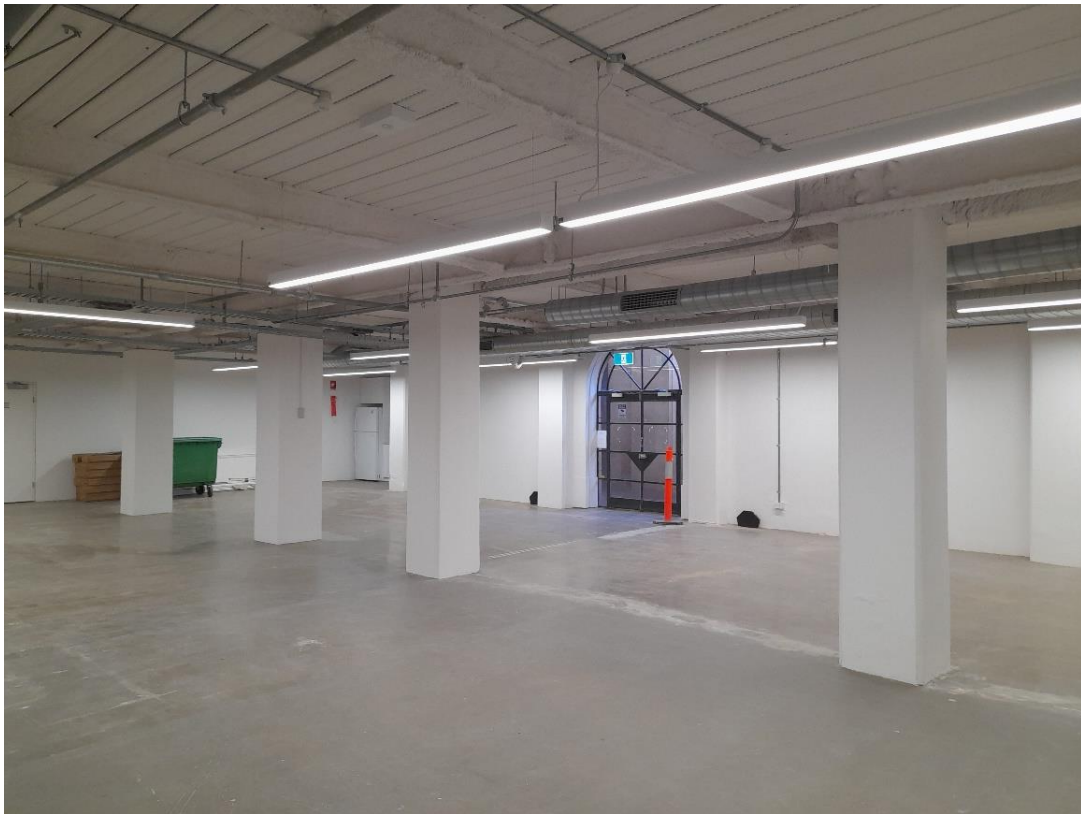


An upper-floor staff area.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



View of the basement entrance showing the steel-framed door facing north.



Interior of the sump located in the basement.

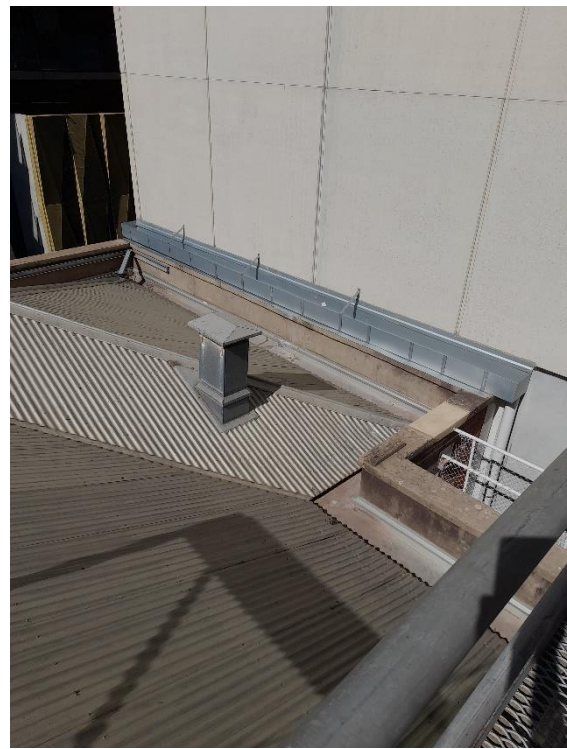
PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



Hipped-roof and rear of the parapet wall.

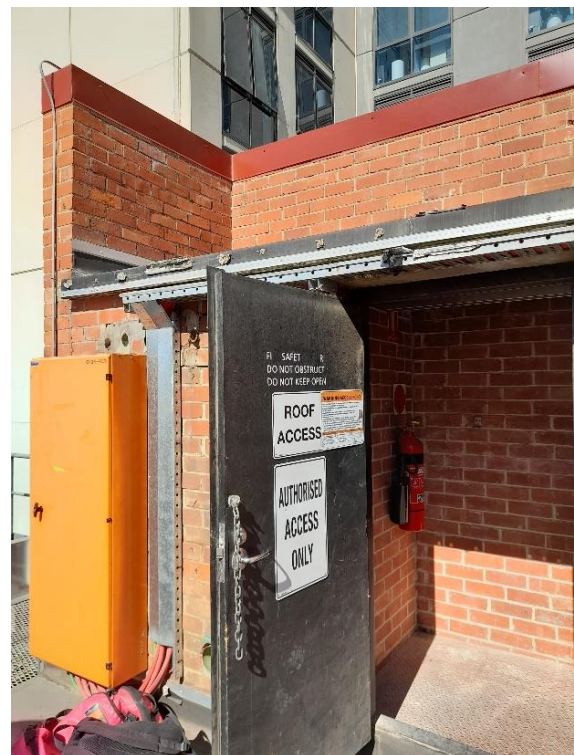


Hipped-roof at rear showing H-



shape.

Roof-access area.



Entrance to roof.

PHOTOS

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



Rising damp damage in the basement.

SITE PLAN

NAME: Kelvin Building

PLACE NO.: 26573



Kelvin Building 233-236 North Terrace, Adelaide (CT 5129/427, F103237 A13, Hundred of Adelaide)

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):




- Kelvin Building office building,
- Original detailing to Façade
- Roof,
- Basement entrance door,
- Original internal fixtures and fittings, including the timber floorboards, picture rails and decorative masonry,
- Steel-framed window casings,
- Basement well or sump.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Non-original fixtures and fittings,
- Lifts.

N ↑

LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Existing State Heritage Place(s)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

-
- ¹ Julie Collins, Alexander Ibels, Susan Collins and Christine Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain: Perspectives on the Emergence of Tall Buildings in South Australia's Capital City', *Australian Planner* 43:3 (2006): p.24.
- ² Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.29 and p.31.
- ³ Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1989), p.168.
- ⁴ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.171; Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25
- ⁵ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.168.
- ⁶ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.168.
- ⁷ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.170. See pp.168-171 for the full entry.
- ⁸ 'Woodards House', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia, Department of Environment and Water.
https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/Heritageltem.aspx?p_heritageno=26326. Accessed 23 January 2024.
- ⁹ 'Elder House', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia, Department of Environment and Water.
https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/Heritageltem.aspx?p_heritageno=1283 Accessed 23 January 2024.
- ¹⁰ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, pp.168-169.
- ¹¹ Chris Burns, 'Beacon of Modernity: A New Façade for Sands & McDougall Pty Ltd, Adelaide', *Spirit of Progress* 82 (2020).
- ¹² Julie Collins, 'McMichael, Eric Habershon', Architects of South Australia, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2008.
https://architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/arch_full.asp?Arch_ID=47. Accessed 23 January 2024.
- ¹³ Cosgrove, 'Art Deco'.
- ¹⁴ Cosgrove, *Moving to the Modern*, p.25.
- ¹⁵ Rob Linn, 'Electricity', SA History Hub, History SA, 16 June 2015.
<https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/electricity>. Accessed 23 January 2024
- ¹⁶ Rob Linn, *ETSA: The Story of Electricity in South Australia* (Blackwood: Historical Consultants Pty Ltd, 1996), p.17.
- ¹⁷ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.20.
- ¹⁸ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.20-23.
- ¹⁹ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.23-24.
- ²⁰ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.27-29.
- ²¹ See Colin Seymour, 'The Port Adelaide Tramways 1879-1935', *Trolley Wire* No.262 (August 1995): pp.6-9; Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.28; 'The Municipal Tramways Trust: Formation of the Municipal Tramways Trust', Tramway Museum, St Kilda, SA.
<https://www.trammuseumadelaide.com/the-mtt>
- ²² Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.31-32.
- ²³ *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's Act, 1922*, Private Act (SA).
- ²⁴ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.36-38 and p.42.
- ²⁵ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.38-39.
- ²⁶ Nic Klaassen, 'The Battle for Leigh Creek', in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*, Eds. Bernard O'Neil, Judith Raftery, and Kerrie Round (Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996); David C Rich, 'Tom's Vision? Playford and Industrialisation', in *Playford's South Australia*.
- ²⁷ See Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25; Charles Sheppard, *Skyscrapers: Masterpieces of Architecture* (London: Bracken Books, 1996), pp.18-49; Lynn Curlee, *Skyscraper* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007), pp.2-20; The Editors of the Encyclopedia of Britannica, 'Skyscraper', Britannica, 8 January 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/technology/skyscraper> Accessed 23 January 2024.
- ²⁸ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25.
- ²⁹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25; Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.168.

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- ³⁰ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.24-25; Sarah Bradford Landau, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp.19-61.
- ³¹ Davina Jackson, *Australian Architecture: A History* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2022), pp.131-133 and pp.173-175.
- ³² Jackson, *Australian Architecture*, p.132 and p.173.
- ³³ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.27 and p.29.
- ³⁴ The next 'tall building', the Executor Trustee Building on Grenfell Street, was constructed in 1922. Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ³⁵ Michael Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986* (Adelaide: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1986), pp. 133-134.
- ³⁶ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.28-31; *Building Act, 1923*, No. 1600 (SA).
- ³⁷ 'New Commercial Edifices in Adelaide: Some Striking Additions to City Architecture', *Australian Home and Builder* No. 8 (September 1924), p.24.
- ³⁸ See Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.29.
- ³⁹ See 'Adelaide Growing Up; Remarkable Progress in Metropolis', *Mail* (Adelaide), 15 May 1926, p.1 and 'Altering Adelaide's Skyline; Million Pounds' Worth of New Buildings; Modern Structures for a Progressive City', *News* (Adelaide), 10 June 1925, p.8. Skyscrapers and 'tall buildings' were generally conveyed by their advocates to be beacons of progress and modernity. See Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.25-26.
- ⁴⁰ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ⁴¹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ⁴² Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.26.
- ⁴³ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.31.
- ⁴⁴ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', pp.31-32.
- ⁴⁵ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.32.
- ⁴⁶ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.32.
- ⁴⁷ Except for Shell House (SHP 13103), constructed around 1931, there is a noticeable chronological gap between tall buildings erected during the 1920s and the 1930s/40s. The 'first wave' could thus be subdivided into two periods: one between 1922-1928 and the other between 1935 and 1943. The Great Depression almost certainly explains this division. Although the Wall Street Crash did not take place until October 1929 and the Great Depression swept much of the world thereafter, economic conditions had been declining in South Australia since 1927. Conditions only began to improve around 1934.
- ⁴⁸ Commonwealth Government of Australia, Statutory Rules 1941, No. 131, *National Security Act, 1939-1940*.
- ⁴⁹ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.29 and p.31.
- ⁵⁰ C. A. M. Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors' in Adelaide Electric Supply Company, Limited: *Report of the Directors and Statement of Accounts to 31st August 1923* (Adelaide: self-published, 1923), p.2 (of report).
- ⁵¹ See Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.32-40.
- ⁵² Certificate of Title Vol. 419, Folio 44, transfer no. 818143, 31 May 1922.
- ⁵³ See Samuel White Sweet, 'North Terrace', c.1873, photograph, Acre 24 Collection, State Library of South Australia, B 9161.
- ⁵⁴ Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ⁵⁵ Page, *Sculptors in Space*, pp.149-150; Collins, Ibels, Collins and Garnaut, 'Adelaide Rises from the Plain', p.28.
- ⁵⁶ E. H. McMichael, *Proposed Offices, North Terrace, For the Adelaide Electric Supply Co. Ltd.*, March 1923, blueprints, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, drawings 1, 2 and 4.
- ⁵⁷ 'Security House, 233-236 North Terrace, Former Kelvin House' in Donovan and Associates, *City of Adelaide Heritage Survey: 2008-2009*, Volume Two; Cosgrove, *Moving to the Modern*, p.25.
- ⁵⁸ 'Month Ending 30th September 1923, No.195. A.E.S.Co Ltd' in City of Adelaide, Return of Plans Submitted to Council and Local Board of Health under Sections 27, 28 and 53 of the Building Act, 1881, City of Adelaide Archives.

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- ⁵⁹ McMichael, *Proposed Offices*, Drawings No. 1, No. 2, and No. 4.
- ⁶⁰ Sprigg, 'Report of the Directors', p.3 (of report).
- ⁶¹ D. Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited: Fifty Years of Progress; Being a History of the Foundation and Development of the Company, 1896-1946* (Adelaide: Adelaide Electric Supply Co, 1946, p.58.
- ⁶² E. H. McMichael, *The Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited; Kelvin Building, North Terrace, Adelaide: Fittings*, January 1925, blueprints, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, Sheet No. 3.
- ⁶³ 'Kelvin Building', 30 July 1925, p. 5. Also see 'Altering Adelaide's Skyline', 10 June 1925, p.8.
- ⁶⁴ 'Kelvin Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 25 (24 June 1925), p.1; 'The Adelaide Electric Supply Company's New Building...', *Builder* Vol. 6, No. 43, p.1.
- ⁶⁵ The *Register* reported on 14 January 1926 that the Kelvin Building had been completed and was 'under occupation'. Conversely, the *News* reported on 1 February 1926 that the company would 'take possession' of the building on 2 February 1926. D. Wakelin and Rob Linn both state that the company moved in during January 1926. 'Building Progress During 1925: A Busy Year for Architects and Builders', *Register* (Adelaide), 14 January 1926, p.4; 'New Home of Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited', *News* (Adelaide), 1 February 1926, p.9; Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited*, p.58; and Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.40.
- ⁶⁶ 'Kelvin Building, North Terrace (advertisement)', *Register* (Adelaide), 6 August 1925, p.5.
- ⁶⁷ See Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp. 40-42; 'New Home of Adelaide Electric Supply', 1 February 1926, p.9; 'Adelaide Growing Up', 15 May 1926, p.1. Also see 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31; 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31; and 'IMPOSING ADDITIONS TO ADELAIDE'S ARCHITECTURE', *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 February 1926, p.31.
- ⁶⁸ George Brookman, 'Chairman's Address' in *Adelaide Electric Supply Company Limited, Report of Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting held at the Kelvin Building, North Terrace Adelaide* (Adelaide: self-published, 1926), p. 1.
- ⁶⁹ Brookman, 'Chairman's Address', pp.1-2.
- ⁷⁰ McMichael, *Proposed Offices*, drawing No. 1; Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.80-82.
- ⁷¹ See Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.87-90; pp.82-83; p.90; pp.89-90; pp.83; pp.84-85; and pp.83-84.
- ⁷² Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.79-80.
- ⁷³ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.74.
- ⁷⁴ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, pp.90-91.
- ⁷⁵ 'Company Meeting: More Electrical Energy Used Now than Formerly ... Street Lighting', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 November 1933, p.29.
- ⁷⁶ 'Popularity of Electricity for Cooking: Adelaide Women Enthusiastic; Modern Demonstration Hall Opened by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company Ltd', *News* (Adelaide), 9 June 1936, p.5.
- ⁷⁷ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.42-45.
- ⁷⁸ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.93.
- ⁷⁹ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.42-45.
- ⁸⁰ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, pp.44-45.
- ⁸¹ Wakelin, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, p.91.
- ⁸² Such facilities and activities were based upon what political economic historian Christopher Wright calls 'welfarism', a business strategy that started to become widespread throughout Australia in the 1920s and emerged in response to an increasingly powerful labour movement. Wright notes that welfarism 'sought to gain the loyalty of the workforce through demonstrations of employer benevolence'. Towards this end, employers offered things like the 'provision of superior amenities, encouragement of social and recreational activities, profit-sharing schemes, sickness and accident benefits, or company provided services and housing'. Some employers adopted the strategy believing that a 'contented and healthy workforce ... was also a more productive one', while others thought it would 'disseminate managerial values amongst the workforce' and assist 'in the promotion of a unitarist workplace culture'. Christopher Wright, *The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers* (Melbourne:

Oxford University Press, 1995), p.21.

⁸³ *Adelect* Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1926), cover.

⁸⁴ The September 1926 edition of *Adelect*, for example, included items covering diverse topics like the Ashes, investment securities and 'Radio and Telephony in California' as well as general updates within the company. See *Adelect* Vol. 1, No. 4 (1926), p.20 and p.21.

⁸⁵ See *Adelect* (June 1926), cover; *Adelect* (August 1931), cover.

⁸⁶ See 'Our First Annual Ball', *Adelect* (September 1926), p.23; 'Annual Picnic', *Adelect* (December 1928), p.26; and 'Third Annual Swimming Carnival', *Adelect* (April 1929), pp.19-21.

⁸⁷ See 'Cricket', *Adelect* (March 1927), p.22; 'Recreation Club', *Adelect* (June 1928), pp.24-25; 'The Adelect Debating Society', *Adelect* (September 1928), p.3; and 'Ladies' Debating Society', *Adelect* (September 1928), p.27.

⁸⁸ See 'A.E.S. Employees' Sick and Accident Society', *Adelect* (December 1926), pp.30-31.

⁸⁹ McMichael, *Adelaide Electric Supply Company*, Sheet No. 3.

⁹⁰ 'Recreation Room, Kelvin Buildings [sic]', *Adelect* (June 1927), p.21.

⁹¹ 'Electric Company Executives Hand Over to Trust', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 3 September 1946, p.6.

⁹² 'Compensation of Shareholders: Question of Disposal of A.E.S.C. English Assets', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 4 September 1946, p.10.

⁹³ Walker and Sons, *E.T.S.A. Kelvin House, Adelaide, 20 October 1948*, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing no. 130; Electricity Trust of South Australia, New Windows, Third and Fourth Floors, Kelvin Building, 1 January 1948, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number D8150; Electricity Trust of South Australia, Kitchen & Cafeteria, 3rd Floor, Kelvin Building, 17 January 1947, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number C7938; Electricity Trust of South Australia, Stairs, Basement to Ground Floor, Kelvin Building, 18 October 1948, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, drawing number C8944.

⁹⁴ The News reported on 29 April 1949 that the 'Electricity Trust' had ordered the vacation of seven firms located in the building. An ETSA spokesperson informed the News that it was 'taking over only the floors urgently needed to relieve the overcrowded situation in [the] Kelvin Building'. 'Seven Firms Ordered to Quit Building', *News* (Adelaide), 29 April 1949, p.2.

⁹⁵ 'Electricity Trust's £½m. Building', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 April 1949, p.1.

⁹⁶ Linn, *Story of Electricity*, p.132.

⁹⁷ Certificate of Title Vol. 1430, Folio 128, Transfer No.2492501, 18 December 1963.

⁹⁸ Monica Keneley, 'Adaptation and Change in the Australian Life Insurance Industry: An Historical Perspective', *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 14:1 (2004), p.94.

⁹⁹ See Stephenson and Turner, Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 6 May 1964, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, Drawing Number 4164, Drawing Number 4165 and Drawing Number 4167; and Stephenson and Turner, Security House, North Terrace, Adelaide, 8 May 1964, blueprints, City of Adelaide Archives, Drawing Number 4175.

¹⁰⁰ See 'Lumley's, Insuring South Australians for Over 50 Years (advertisement)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 26 November 1980, p.4.

¹⁰¹ For instance, the Commonwealth of Australia Department of Housing, later the Department of Housing and Construction, was located on the fifth floor at least since the late 1960s. 'Commonwealth of Australia Department of Housing (notice)', *Victor Harbour Times*, 4 October 1968, p.6; 'Saving for your First Home? (advertisement)', *Port Lincoln Times*, 4 June 1980, p.10.

¹⁰² Certificate of Title Vol. 3236, Folio 19, transfer no. 6279643 and Certificate of Title Vol.5129, Folio 427, dealing number 7524315.

¹⁰³ Certificate of Title Vol. 5129, Folio 427, dealing number 12298207.

¹⁰⁴ 'New North Terrace home for History Trust of South Australia', History Trust of South Australia. <https://www.history.sa.gov.au/new-north-terrace-home-for-history-trust-of-south-australia/> Accessed 24 January 2024.