

South Australian Heritage Council

Submission on whether the entry of **Australian Education Union Building (Raggatt House; SAIT Building)** should be confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register

A place is eligible for entry in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the criteria in Section 16(1) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (Act). Using the table below, please provide your evidence or further information to explain why you believe the place does or does not meet said criteria. For help in making a submission, please refer to the Guidelines for Interpreting State Heritage Criteria (**Attachment E**) and also available online: [Guidelines-for-Interpreting-State-Heritage-Criteria-Final-2024.pdf](#)

Criteria

Criteria under the <i>Heritage Places Act 1993</i> , section 16(1)	Provide evidence or other information why you believe criteria applies or does not apply to this place
(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history	<p>While the authors of this submission are not historians, we believe that there is evidence to support the contention that Raggatt House contributes to an understanding of the State's History.</p> <p>Of course some of the Union's activities, such as support for individual teachers in a disagreement with school management, would be conducted at a school, and the largest mass-meetings, involving hundreds of member teachers</p>

to discuss industrial action, took place in Victoria Square.

However, many of SAIT/ AEU's activities that are of significance on a State-wide basis were conducted in the building. These would include teacher conferences, some aspects of teacher professional development and the training provided to SAIT/AEU Union representatives.

In addition, a headquarters is the nerve centre of an organisation. The former SAIT/AEU building was designed to be and functioned as the State headquarters of the one the State's largest unions. It is in the very nature of a State headquarters building that decisions made about directions and action [while based on input from members] will be made by an executive team working within that building. Still more importantly, the implementation of the actions will be coordinated and monitored from there. This is especially true of State-wide initiatives such as the decision to take industrial action.

It is clear that such activities such as those mentioned above were held at Raggart House.

Teacher Registration.

Teacher registration was a State-wide topic of concern for teachers as the Government of South Australia drafted a new Education Act in 1972 and followed this by gazetting, in 1975, new teacher registration requirements.

In November 1975, the Victor Harbor Times reported on a meeting of the Southern Teachers group. "Some spirited discussion ensued on the topic of registration and its implications, during which the president, Mr. Walsh,

Yankalilla, stated that a **mass meeting of teachers was being held on Wednesday, 29th October, at S.A.I.T. headquarters to discuss these matters. Depending on the attitude of this meeting, a special Conference could be called."**

[Victor Harbor times Wed 5th Nov 1975, p. 7]

Industrial Action.

From June until October 1989, SAIT was involved in industrial action against the State Government, with the key issues being: curriculum guarantees,, career structures for teachers, country conditions of employment and the contract teaching system. *[Port Lincoln Times, Thurs 29th June 1989, Tues 8 August 1989, and also Tues 8 August 1989, p. 3. Teacher Strike Necessary.]*

SAIT's efforts to represent female teachers,

Issues facing female teachers [who comprised a large percentage of the Union's membership], was also a focus of concern to SAIT and one of State importance, given the concomitant changes in the status of women in South Australia during the twentieth century. It would appear that SAIT undertook many activities, such as holding conferences to give members an opportunity to learn about the issues and contribute their experiences. The National Archives of Australia contain the following volumes on this topic.

 **Book - 2 editions: 1978**

[Submission to the Committee to Examine Discrimination in Education / by the Status of Women Committee](#)

	<p> Periodical, Periodical/ Journal, magazine, other - 1900-2024 Report of SAIT Women's Conference</p> <p> At National Library</p> <p> Not available online</p> <hr/> <p> Conference Proceedings, Book - 2 editions: 1986 Working for change : women workers, unions and affirmative action, report of a SAIT Conference, August 9, 1986</p> <p> Not available online</p> <hr/> <p> Conference Proceedings - 2 editions: 1988-1989 Looking back- moving forward- facing challenge! : report of SAIT Women's Conference July 30, 1988</p> <p>-</p> <p>In summary, the material outlined above indicates the importance of a careful and systematic evaluation, by a professional historian, of SAIT/AEU's role in the history of Education in South Australia, and of the building that has served as its headquarters from 1967.</p>
(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance	<p>The Australian Education Union Building, South Australian Institute of Teachers Building or Raggatt House is a significant representative of a construction method and technology, that is Brutalist (beton brut) applied concrete, which emerged in South Australia in the post 1945 period.</p> <p>[See pp. 27-31 in Kevin O'Sullivan [2013] Concrete Expression- Brutalism</p>

in the Government Buildings Precinct, Adelaide. Architecture Museum, School of Architecture and Design, University of South Australia,]

The forms and qualities of this class of concrete was very much a product of South Australian industrial innovation which had a real national influence on Australian building technology and design at that time. It is an area of South Australian design and building history that is seriously under researched and underappreciated but one of major cultural significance architecture wise. At least some of these techniques and methods are now almost lost yet they contributed fundamentally to the development of an innovative and pervasive South Australian regional school of architecture involving many of the state's most prominent architects over the course of the 1960s and 1970s.

Keith Neighbour's Raggatt House embodies key traits of this regional Brutalist movement in its design, materials and construction with working knowledge of some of these construction techniques now very limited or even endangered.

Roof forms, where evident, are bold, geometric and sculptural, deepening the sense of scale and solidity of the design.

Furthermore, the eucalyptus trees date to the design of the building and were no doubt chosen for their open, drooping form and light coloured smooth bark. They look exactly as the architect would have sketched them and complement the bold raw form of the architecture perfectly. One wonders if the staging was deliberately evocative, conjuring up cliff faces and

	<p>boulders in a uniquely Australian bush setting, one we are aware the architect Keith Neighbour favoured. The trees are an integral component of the design when viewed from the north.</p>
<p>(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history</p>	
<p>(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance</p>	
<p>(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics</p>	<p>In evaluating the creative, aesthetic and technical accomplishment of the Australian Education Union Building or Raggatt House it is important to place this edifice designed by Keith Neighbour in its broader architectural context.</p> <p>Raggatt House is an exemplar of the building style characterized as 'Brutalism' which first emerged in Australia with the 'Sydney School' of architects in the 1950s. Advocated by young American influenced architects as an expression of post 1945 internationalism modernism the first buildings in the Brutalist ethos were experiments in house design inspired by contemporary trends in the USA, UK</p>

and Sweden. Such houses like Bill Lucas's Glass House in Castlecrag, Tony Moore's North Sydney House and Peter Johnson's home in Chatswood clearly expressed their structures with simple, untreated materials; brick was brick, concrete was concrete and timber was its grain.

By the 1960's international modernism was firmly established in Sydney through architects of the calibre of Harry Seidler, Eva and Hugh Buhrich and Jorn Utzon. Brutalism now emerged as a major stream of Australian international modernism and was embraced by such groups as the NSW Government's Architect's Branch (GAB) in the construction of public buildings. (Dokulil, H. Sydney Brutalism. New South Publishing Sydney, 2023)

During the 1960's South Australian architecture also reflected the growing vitality of Brutalism as major architectural firms like Cheesman, Doley, Brabham & Neighbour; Hassell, McConnell & Partner and Woods, Bagot, Laybourne Smith & Irwin moved away from the sleek steel and glass international style of the 1940s and 1950s towards heavier, organic forms in buildings like the Highways Department, Immanuel Lutheran College Chapel and the later Motor Registration Centre. These structures rejoiced in the application of exposed reinforced concrete frequently textured with exposed aggregates or off-form board marked finishes in the beton brut (raw concrete) manner.

By the 1970s Brutalism had become a dominant style for public and commercial buildings in South Australia

	<p>greatly aided by the rise of an innovative state concrete industry which had national influence. The evolution of the state's concrete industry in the post war period is not well reported but its practitioners devised a series of original techniques that enabled the imaginative use of concrete materials in a variety of formats and styles. Consequently, many South Australian architects including Keith Neighbour, readily embraced the sculptural and structural opportunities afforded by concrete within the Brutalist genre. (Symons, S. Modernist Adelaide 1940s-1970s. House of Ralph. Adelaide, 2019)</p> <p>Raggatt House embodies the essential facets of South Australian Brutalism as a distinct regional architectural school designed by one of this school's most prominent practitioners, Keith Neighbour. The building has vertical off-form board impressed concrete surfaces, massed forms structurally speaking that merge organically with its site and the surrounding vegetation, vertical columns punctuating light and shade along the exterior, concrete sunhoods that respond to the Adelaide climate and an open arrangement of the offices and auditorium to facilitate an informal way of working.</p>
<p>(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it</p>	

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance	Keith Neighbour AM was one of South Australia's foremost architects of the second half of the 20 th century. A POW survivor of the Burma Death Railway he would assume a highly influential position in the state's building industry and in the architectural profession. He was a leading member of the South Australian mid-century regional school of architecture with his use of Brutalist designs. Raggatt House is a one of his most visible works and was designed during an important period in the history of South Australian education. It stands as a key work of this architect and of a particularly original era in South Australian architecture and building.
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Declaration

The South Australian Heritage Council is committed to transparency in relation to the listing process and wishes to enhance public confidence in the nomination, listing and decision-making process. The Council's policy is to make nominations for State heritage listing and submissions on provisional entries publicly available via webpage or to interested parties. The Council will adhere to the Privacy Principles and your name and personal details will not be released.

I [REDACTED], on behalf of the [REDACTED] wish to make a written representation regarding the provisional entry of **Australian Education Union Building (Raggatt House; SAIT Building)**. The information I have provided is correct to my knowledge.

- I **support** the confirmation of this provisional entry.
 I **do not support** the confirmation of this provisional entry.

I **do not** wish to appear personally before the Council to make oral representations.

Signature: [REDACTED] Date: 22-5-25_

Please attach any relevant documents and be aware that a heritage officer may contact you to discuss your submission.

Please provide your contact details here:

Phone:

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BOTH THE ABOVE EMAIL ADDRESSES

Address: [REDACTED]

This form must be received by 5pm on **4 June 2025**.

Please return completed submission form to the
Board and Policy Officer, South Australian Heritage Council

Via email: **DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au**

Or via post: **GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001**