

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE OBJECT

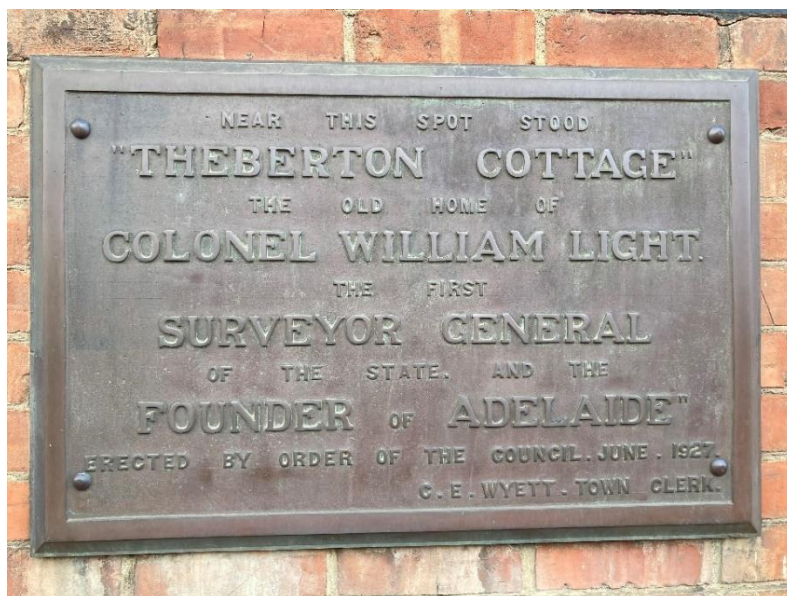
REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Plaque Commemorating 'Theberton Cottage' (the home of Colonel William Light) **OBJECT NO.:** 26527-01

Object intrinsically related to Remains of 'Theberton Cottage', Colonel Light's House (including underground room, tank, well and outbuildings)

ADDRESS: Kaurna Country
West End Brewery, 107 Port Road, Thebarton
Attached to a building facing Walsh Street (formerly Cawthorne Street).
CT 5941/298 A2 D64225 Hundred of Adelaide



Plaque 'Theberton Cottage' the home of Colonel William Light

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Place: Remains of 'Theberton Cottage', Colonel Light's House (including underground room, tank, well and outbuildings) (SHP 26527)

Theberton Cottage was the bespoke home of Colonel William Light, the first Surveyor General of South Australia and the founder of Adelaide, and his partner Maria Gandy. Light was the first colonist in South Australia to choose a section, namely Section 1 of the Hundred of Adelaide where he began building Theberton Cottage in 1838. The home was still being constructed in January 1839 when William and Maria's temporary hut on North Terrace was destroyed by fire, resulting in the loss of most of Light's personal and professional records. The couple first moved into the dairy at Theberton Cottage until the house with its 'four lofty rooms' was completed in February and lived there together until Light died from tuberculosis 6 October 1839.

The existing documentary evidence of Theberton Cottage has proven insufficient to understand and interpret the bespoke home William Light and Maria Gandy built, and misrepresentations of his home and subsequently aspects of his life have abounded. While Theberton Cottage was demolished in 1926, subsequent redevelopment of the site has been minimal and there is a reasonable likelihood that the place will yield archaeological evidence that contributes meaningfully to our understanding of the life of Colonel William Light, one of South Australia's most profoundly important figures.

Object

The plaque was unveiled on 6 August 1927 and is intrinsically related to 'Theberton Cottage', the home of Colonel William Light the first Surveyor General of South Australia and founder of Adelaide and his partner Maria Gandy. The plaque is a response by the community, in the 1920s, to the demolition of 'Theberton Cottage' specifically and more broadly the need to preserve sites of historic importance in South Australia.

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to an object entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Physical Description

Simply-styled, embossed rectangular bronze plaque affixed to a red-brick wall bearing the inscription:

**Near this spot stood
"Theberton Cottage"
The old home of
Colonel William Light
the first
Surveyor General
Of the state and the
Founder of Adelaide
Erected by order of the Council June 1927
CE Wyatt Town Clerk**

Elements of Significance:

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

- The plaque

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

- The former West End Brewery (former Colton Palmer Preston) building the plaque is attached to.

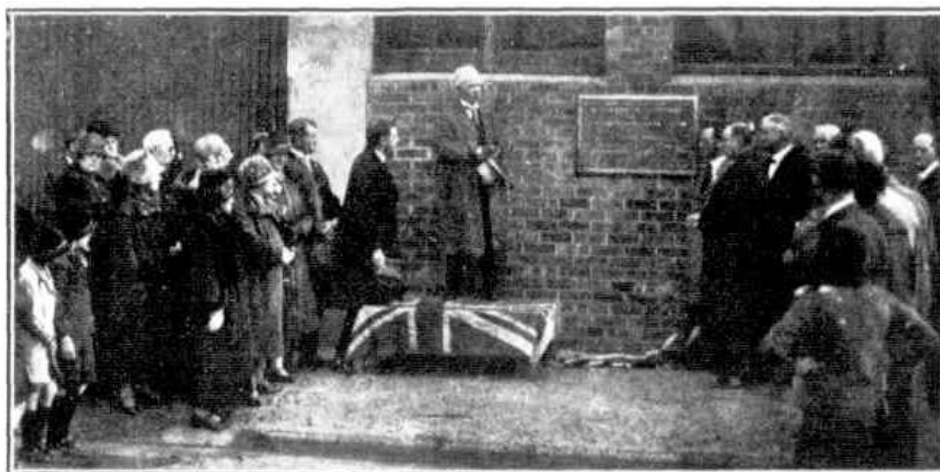
History of the Object

Light chose Section 1 of the Hundred of Adelaide and began construction of Theberton Cottage in late 1838. On 22 January 1839, a fire destroyed the hut Light and Maria were living in forcing them to relocate to Theberton Cottage before it was completed. They lived in the dairy for about a month before being able to move into the house. Light left Theberton Cottage to Maria when he died in October 1839. Maria continued to live in the house for a short time after her marriage to Dr George Mayo and left the property to her children with George. They then sold the land to the National Building Society and Light's house to the Hone family. It was acquired in the 1920s by Colton, Palmer and Preston Ltd to build facilities for a metal foundry.¹

In 1922, Ernest Harndes wrote in *The Advertiser* about the loss of places associated with the early history of the state noting 'it is regrettable to see Colonel Light's home not only in a state of demolition, but partly occupied as a carrier's stable'. While acknowledging the monument to Light over his grave in Light Square, Mr Harndes suggested that repairing his home might be a 'greater memorial'.²

In 1926, when Colton, Palmer and Preston Ltd announced plans to demolish Light's house to enable them to build a steel foundry at Southwark there was a public outcry and requests were made to the Premier, Lionel Hill and both the Mayors of Thebarton and Adelaide to see what could be done to save the property as a 'historic landmark'.³ With little recourse to save the property, which was in a dilapidated state, it was demolished soon after.

The loss of Light's house and the reuse of the bricks from it for road building was viewed with disgruntlement and the City of Thebarton then negotiated with Colton, Palmer, and Preston Ltd to be allowed to affix a 'memorial tablet' (the plaque that is the subject of this assessment) to the front of their new building located closest to the original site of Light's home. The unveiling ceremony took place on 6 August 1927 and included a number of invited guests. The Mayor of Thebarton, HS Hatwell, unveiled the memorial and both Hatwell and the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide, Sir Wallace Bruce, addressed the gathering. Mr Hatwell stating 'that he was pleased to do homage to one who had rendered such service to the State.'⁴



Mayor Hatwell addressing the gathering at the unveiling of the 'memorial tablet'

Source: *The Observer*, 13 August 1927, p.33

The demolition of Theberton Cottage initiated discussions in the newspapers of the day, raising concerns about the potential loss of other 'precious memorials'⁵ in South Australia. One article in *The Mail* stated 'In the march of progress there is surely room for the exercise of a wholesome check, in order to ensure the preservation of valuable

historical landmarks'.⁶ Examples of the landmarks included four that are now State Heritage Places, namely:

- Old Gum Tree Site (Supposed site of proclamation of the establishment of government in 1836) (SHP 10547)
- Former Glen Osmond Tollgate' (SHP 10526)
- Charles Sturt Memorial Museum (former dwelling 'The Grange') (SHP 10567)
- Dingley Dell Museum (former dwelling of Adam Lindsay Gordon). Dingley Dell Conservation Park House (SHP 10256)

Dingley Dell had been purchased by the South Australian government in the early 1920s to preserve it for future generations. While EM Smith who was at one time in his career Surveyor General of SA, began working with the Geographical Society to investigate the possibilities of preserving The Grange.

In 1996, the *Thebarton Heritage Review* recommended the 'Plaque: Site of Colonel Light's Cottage' should be listed as a local heritage place. Local heritage listing subsequently took place on 13 December 2001.

Chronology

Date	Event
1838	Construction of Theberton Cottage begins
October 1839	Colonel William Light dies leaving Theberton Cottage to his partner Maria Gandy.
1841	Maria Gandy and her new husband Dr George Mayo move from Theberton Cottage to Carrington Street and the Cottage is let.
1844	Maria dies and leaves Theberton Cottage to her three children.
1878	The Mayo children sell Theberton Cottage to the Hone family.
1926	Theberton Cottage is purchased by Colton Palmer Preston Ltd, and after a failed public campaign to save it, is demolished.
6 August 1927	The 'memorial tablet' (plaque) is unveiled by Mayor Hatwell (Thebarton). In attendance are also Adelaide Lord Mayor Sir Wallace Bruce, members of the Adelaide and Thebarton Councils and other guests.
Late 1990s	Cawthorne Street is closed to the public, preventing access to the plaque.
December 2001	The plaque is listed as a local heritage place.

References

Assessment Report 'Remains of 'Theberton Hall' Colonel William Light's House (including Underground Room, Underground Tank and Well)', (May 2021)(DEW Files: SHP 26527)

'Colonel Light's Home', *The Advertiser* 27 June 1922, p.9.

'Colonel Light's Homestead', *The Register* 29 November 1926, p.8.

'Colonel Lights' Residence', *The Advertiser* 1 December 1926, p.14.

'Historic Home Sturt's Domicile at Grange Permanent Preservation Suggested', *The Mail* 22 January 1937, p.3.

'Colonel Light Memorial Tablet Unveiled Ceremony at Thebarton', *The Mail* 6 August 1927, p.10.

OBJECT DETAILS

Plaque Commemorating 'Theberton Cottage' (the OBJECT NO.: 26527-001 home of Colonel William Light)

107 Port Road Thebarton (located Cawthorne Street (now closed))

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT:	Embossed, rectangular bronze memorial plaque to 'Theberton Cottage' the home of Colonel William Light.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1927		
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 27 November 2020 [Date of Provisional Entry TBA]		
LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS:	Local Heritage Place 13 December 2001		
CURRENT USE:	Memorial plaque 1927-present		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of West Torrens		
LOCATION:	Street No.:	107 Port Road	
	Post Code:	Thebarton	
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title	CT 5941/298 D64225 A2	
	Reference:		
	Hundred:	Adelaide	

¹ Refer to Assessment Report for Remains of 'Theberton Hall' Colonel William Light's House (including Underground Room, Underground Tank and Well), SHP 26527

² 'Colonel Light's Home', *The Advertiser* 27 June 1922, p.9.

³ 'Colonel Lights' Residence', *The Advertiser* 1 December 1926, p.14. 'Colonel Light's Homestead', *The Register* 29 November 1926, p.8.

⁴ 'Colonel Light Memorial Tablet Unveiled Ceremony at Thebarton', *The Mail* 6 August 1927, p.10.

⁵ 'Historic Home Sturt's Domicile at Grange Permanent Preservation Suggested', *The Mail* 22 January 1937, p.3.

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