

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE OBJECT

REGISTER ENTRY

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

NAME: Copper Kettle **OBJECT NO.:** 26528-01
Walkerville Brewhouse Tower (SHP 26522)

ADDRESS: 107 Port Road, Thebarton

Currently located in the West End Brewhouse (modern) which is sited across three consecutive CTs: CT 6064/474 D1038 A381, CT 6064/474 D1038 A382, CT 6064/472 D82670 A31 Hundred of Adelaide

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Place

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower built in 1886, enlarged in 1898-1899 and then doubled in size in 1901-1903, demonstrates important associations with the brewing industry in South Australia. The introduction of brewhouse towers in the late nineteenth century enabled brewers to implement the gravitational method of brewing and were once a key element of the larger South Australian breweries.

The consolidation and closure of many breweries in the twentieth century and the adoption of newer methods of brewing have led to these structures becoming uncommon. The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is one of a few remaining and one of the largest examples of a brewhouse tower in South Australia.

The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower also demonstrates important associations with the Torrenside Brewery (established 1886) and the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company (established 1889). The Torrenside and Walkerville breweries amalgamated in 1898 with brewing continuing at the Thebarton site. The Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company was SABCo's biggest competitor and the other major South Australian brewer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Object

The Copper Kettle was installed in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower in the 1930s and was an integral part of the brewing operations at the Walkerville Brewery (later Nathan Brewery and then Southwark Brewery) at Thebarton until it was decommissioned in 1962. The kettle is a traditional component of the equipment installed in a brewhouse tower and aides in demonstrating how beer was made in this type of facility.

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

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

Physical Description

The copper kettle is a large cylindrical vessel used to heat the wort during the brewing process. The vessel has been constructed by riveting panels of copper together and features a rounded base onto which a large copper pipe has been secured to enable liquid to be emptied, and a rounded lid with chimney.

Elements of Significance:

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

- Copper vessel and its chimney.

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

- West End Brewery Brewhouse (modern – current location) facing Port Road.

History of the Object

The copper kettle was installed in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower (SHP 26528) in the 1930s and was used in the brewing process until 1962. It remained unused in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower until it was removed in the mid-2010s for restoration as a part of the Lion upgrade of the West End (Southwark) brewery brewhouse (facing Port Road). A portion of the West End Brewhouse was glazed as a part of the brewhouse upgrade and the copper kettle is now prominently displayed.¹

Short History of the Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company

(See Assessment Report for West End Brewery (former Southwark Brewery) no 26522 for a more detailed history).

The Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company was founded in 1889 (it was not yet a limited company), by four publicans - Sam Harris, Robert Hyman, John Crocker and Vincent Simpson, who began brewing at the old Walkerville Brewery site (Fuller Street, established 1844).²

In July 1898, Walkerville amalgamated with Clark, Ware & Co who were operating the Torrenside Brewery at Southwark (Thebarton). Three month prior, the Torrenside brewery had amalgamated with the East Adelaide Brewery and Walkerville now

found it owned three breweries leaving it with the decision about which to retain and expand, and which to sell.³

Of the three sites, Southwark provided the greatest potential for expansion as the adjacent land along the Torrens River to the east of Torrenside had already been purchased and expansion of the facilities were already being planned. Opportunities to extend to the south were still also plentiful as land sales in the Southwark subdivision had not been as rapid as the National Building Society might have wished.⁴

Brewing continued at all three sites for a short while, however, by January 1899, brewing was taking place at the Thebarton site. In December 1898, all three breweries were collectively producing 350 hogsheads per week. In January 1899, Southwark brewed 1412 hogsheads and was barely able to keep up with demand. However, the expansion of the brewery was well underway with the construction of new production facilities to brew 60 hogsheads at a time, increasing total brewery capacity to 100 hogsheads per brew. This was achieved through significant expansion of the original Torrenside brewery and tower.⁵

Two new cellars measuring respectively 50x300ft and 40x120ft were also completed and all works were to the plans of architect Alfred Wells.⁶ Prior to the amalgamation, Wells had been engaged to consider the expansion of the Walkerville site. Interestingly, using only the facilities at Southwark, Walkerville brewed 852,590 gallons of beer in 1899, compared to the 740,230 gallons produced by SABCo at their West End Brewery on Hindley Street. Painter notes that the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd was the first of its kind in Australia and the only one to be successful.⁷ Although there were approximately 28 breweries still in operation at the close of the nineteenth century, the South Australian market was dominated by three main breweries, namely SABCo, Walkerville and Haussens at Hindmarsh, while Lion in North Adelaide had become the main supplier of malt.⁸

In 1901, demand had again outgrown supply and Walkerville's board consulted with head brewer Charles Williams on what was required to meet demand. He proposed substantial additions that essentially doubled brewing capacity, recommending steel vats, a 60 hp boiler, increased water supply from both the well and mains, and a new engine. Additional office accommodation, coopers' sheds and cellars were also built, and by 1903 they were also manufacturing a range of non-alcoholic products named Kola Dandelion Ale, Jubilee Tonic, Dandy Lion Ale and Ginger Stout. Walkerville also actively sought further amalgamations with other breweries, closing their facilities and effectively reducing competition.⁹

In mid-1901, Charles Williams (head brewer) unexpectedly handed in his notice, and through convoluted means became the new owner of the old Walkerville brewery on

Fuller Street, establishing Williams Walkerville Brewery along co-operative lines. His replacement at Walkerville was paid the annual salary Williams had asked for two years prior but been refused – a whopping £1,000. Walkerville attempted to eliminate Williams' business and prevent him from competing against them and he went into liquidation in 1906. As part of the liquidation, Walkerville acquired the Walkerville site from Williams who received a considerable financial sum but was also prevented from brewing in competition with Walkerville for 10 years.¹⁰

By 1910, Walkerville had become SABCo's major competitor and was producing 1.5 million gallons each year with over 200 'single-share members' buying their beer from them. Walkerville's cooperative system continued to cause concerns for other brewers who complained to the South Australian Brewers Association. The issue continued to remain unresolved in the short-term.

In comparison, SABCo produced 67,000 gallons more, however, it only achieved that figure by combining outputs from both the West End and Broken Hill breweries. Walkerville, continued to improve its facilities ordering new vats and bottling machinery and a refrigeration plant and SABCo also continued implementing improvements to its West End site.¹¹

By 1915, Walkerville and SABCo between them supplied about 75 percent of the hotels in South Australia, Walkerville with its 280 members and SABCo with 190-tied houses. While SABCo had successfully introduced its West End Bitter Beer, Walkerville's absorption of Lion and Johnstons in 1914 caused its directors sufficient concern that in 1915 they proposed to Walkerville that the two companies combine to operate a joint venture company for manufacturing. Walkerville declined.¹²

The situation was reversed just ten years later when Walkerville, in the face of declining sales, approached SABCo with a merger proposal. As Walkerville had done 10 years prior, SABCo now refused to even hold initial discussions. The merger proposal arose due to declining sales caused by the growing popularity of West End beers, a situation that by 1919, could no longer be ignored by Walkerville. A change in head brewer did not stave off the decline, and so Walkerville began investigating the introduction of the Nathan process to compete with West End Bitter. When the costs exceeded what had been anticipated, they considered merger as a solution.¹³

When their merger proposal was declined, Walkerville implemented the major acquisition and building works to install the Nathan plant, including £9,505 for the system, £2,000 in royalties to the Nathan Institute and £11,500 for the reinforced concrete buildings to house the system. To build the Nathan plant, the long cellars built at the turn of the century were demolished. There were also additional expenses to make improvements to the brewhouse, bottling facility and refrigeration.¹⁴

The depression had a major impact on breweries as beer consumption decreased by thirty percent. Unlike SABCo and other smaller breweries that owned hotels, Walkerville did not have the added financial pressures that arose when licensees requested rent reductions. However, after financing some upgrades to the brewery, installing the Nathan plant in the mid-1920s at considerable cost, and the need for further significant plant upgrades to remain viable, the arrival of the depression left Walkerville in a difficult position. In 1938, Walkerville's board 'offered "to dispose of the business" to SABCo' at a rate of one SABCo share for two of Walkerville's. The offer was accepted and the Walkerville Co-operative Brewing Company Ltd ceased to exist, the brewery at Southwark becoming a part of SABCo.¹⁵

South Australian Brewing Company at Southwark/Thebarton

The 1938 acquisition of Walkerville by SABCo meant the company operated two brewery sites, with the Walkerville brewery being renamed 'Nathan Brewery' after the Nathan plant. The two sites operated independently until 1949 when administration was centralised in the SABCo head office on Hindley Street (SHP 13354). At the time of acquisition, the Nathan Brewery at Thebarton was in poor condition, however, reduced production during the Second World War enabled the brewery to still meet demand. However, the brewery required significant upgrades to meet increased demand after the war ended.¹⁶

During the late 1940s, a new 200 hogshead brewing kettle was installed to replace the old wooden one, the existing mash tun and cooker were refitted, and cold cellars were built between the brewhouse and Nathan block to house the glass-lined filter, storage tanks and filter room. Four Nathan fermenters were added to the Nathan plant, making 18 in total, and a new bottling line, bottle washer, filler and pasteuriser were installed.¹⁷

In 1951, the Nathan Brewery was renamed Southwark after the nineteenth century subdivision and all products brewed there bore the Southwark name. At that time, Southwark produced about a third of the volume of beer as West End and further expansions of the Southwark site were planned as soon as building materials could be procured. This included two enormous, steel-framed curved-roof buildings named No 1 and No 2 Clearspans, purchased from the Clearspan Pty Ltd Melbourne and respectively installed in 1952 and 1953 for packaging and warehousing, and racking and distribution.¹⁸

The copper kettle in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower was decommissioned in 1962 and annual reports from the 1960s indicate a range of new facilities and plant were built and/or installed during the decade, including a new brewhouse (1962), the installation of two new automatic boilers in the new boiler house (1963), a major upgrade to the garden for the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip (1963), a new

filter room (1964) and the installation of the first outdoor vertical stainless steel storage tanks (1969). Each tank was 46ft high, with 80,000 gallon capacity and began a process that would radically alter the site as more tanks were installed in the 1970s.¹⁹

In 1971, SABCo restructured to become a holding company and was renamed South Australian Brewing Holdings Limited, with brewing conducted by the South Australian Brewing Company (hereafter SA Brewing). The new structure enabled the company to diversify, an action that later led to the sale of the brewing component of the business.

In the meantime, brewing was the main business operation and significant improvements and expansion occurred at Southwark in the 1970s, and in particular, after the decision was made in 1974 to focus on the Southwark site and close West End.²⁰ In anticipation of the closure of West End, the land adjacent to Southwark (southern side of Winwood Street) was purchased in 1971-1972 to enable expansion and while the aim was to achieve the transition from West End to Southwark by 1982, in the end West End was closed in 1980.

During the late 1970s and 1980s SA Brewing experimented with a variety of packaging types and sizes including introducing aluminium cans and different bottle sizes. They also produced a variety of beers such as Southwark Special Diet Beer, LA Drought, West End Export, Old Southwark Stout and West End Extra Light among others, the light beers being lower alcohol products. New products and containers required new and upgraded plant and the buildings to house them and the site has been constantly redeveloped since then.

By the early 1990s, SA Brewing sold the brewery to Lion Nathan and in 2009, Lion Nathan was acquired by Japanese company Kirin Holdings Co Ltd.²¹ As SA Brewing did before them, Lion have continued to modernise the plant and in 2015, the restored copper kettle was unveiled in its new home, the new brewhouse (facing Port Road) where it can be seen from the road.

On 14 October 2020, Lion announcement of the closure of the West End Brewery (Southwark). Brewing at the Thebarton site will cease mid-2021 and the West End and Southwark ranges will be brewed interstate. The site will most likely be redeveloped for residential and retail developments.

Chronology

- Date:** **Event:**
- 1886 Torrensides Brewery is established at Southwark (Thebarton).
- 1889 Walkerville Co-Operative Brewery is established and begins brewing at the old Walkerville Brewery Site (est. 1844) Fuller Street, Walkerville.**
- 1897 Walkerville Co-Operative Brewery becomes a limited company, but continue following the cooperative model.
- 1898 Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company amalgamates with the Torrensides Brewery.
- 1901 Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company, closes the other two breweries it owns and operates moving all brewing to the Thebarton site.
- 1901-1903 The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower, is expanded for a second time, doubling its size.**
- 1915 Between them Walkerville Co-Operative Brewery and SABCo brew 75% of the beer made in South Australia.
- 1925 Walkerville Co-Operative Brewery purchases the Nathan system and over the next two years builds a further brewhouse to install the Nathan plant into. The Nathan system produces lager style beer. Unfortunately, WB Lager made by Walkerville doesn't prove as popular as hoped.
- 1930s Copper Kettle is installed in the Walkerville Brewhouse Tower. The Walkerville Brewhouse Tower is where traditional beers such as ale is brewed.**
- 1938 SABCo acquires Walkerville Co-Operative Brewing Company.
- 1962 The Copper Kettle is decommissioned.**
- 2015 The Copper Kettle is unveiled in the new brewhouse at the West End Brewery after undergoing restoration.**

References

- Cudmore, Michael (1988), *History of the South Australian Brewing Company Limited*, (SABCo: Adelaide).
- Lion (2015), 'South Australian Premier unveils Lion's new West End Brewhouse', <https://lionco.com/2015/11/16/south-australian-premier-unveils-lions-new-west-end-brewhouse/>
- Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050.Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing>
- Painter, Alison (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts? Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide).
- South Australian Brewing Company and South Australian Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports, 1950s-1992.
- Southcorp (1993), Annual Report.

Stubbs, Brett J, 'The Nathan System in Australia', BrewNews
<https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/07/29/the-nathan-system-in-australia/> [accessed 5
May 2021]

Plan of the Township of Southwark, SLSA, C 377.

'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4.

'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4.

OBJECT DETAILS

**Copper Kettle intrinsically related to the Walkerville
Brewhouse Tower (SHP 26528)** **OBJECT NO.: 26528-01**

107 Port Road, Thebarton

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT: Large copper kettle made from riveted panels with rounded bottom and top, with attached chimney.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1930s, decommissioned 1962

REGISTER STATUS: Identified during site visit of West End Brewery, 24 March 2021. Provisionally entered 20 May 2021. Confirmed 4 November 2021.

CURRENT USE: Display 2015-2021

LOCAL GOVERNMENT City of West Torrens

AREA:

LOCATION: **Street Name:** 107 Port Road

Town/Suburb: Thebarton

Post Code: 3031

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title** CT 6064/474 D1038 A381, CT 6064/474

Reference: D1038 A382, CT 6064/472 D82670 A31

Hundred: Adelaide

PHOTOS

Copper Kettle (Walkerville Brewhouse Tower)

OBJECT NO.: 26528-01

107 Port Road, Thebarton



Copper kettle as seen from Port Road in the modern brewhouse West End Brewery

Source: DEW Files 21 April 2021



Copper kettle, showing riveting and rounded base.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

Copper Kettle (Walkerville Brewhouse Tower)

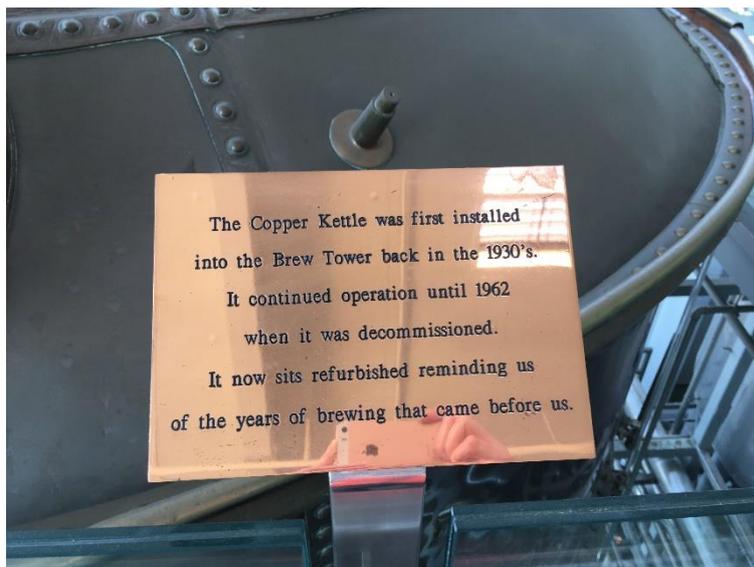
OBJECT NO.: 26528-01

107 Port Road, Thebarton



Detail showing the chimney of the copper kettle.

Source: DEW Files 21 March 2021



Plaque displaying the history of the copper kettle.

Source: DEW Files 24 March 2021

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- ¹ Lion (2015), 'South Australian Premier unveils Lion's new West End Brewhouse', <https://lionco.com/2015/11/16/south-australian-premier-unveils-lions-new-west-end-brewhouse/>
- ² Alison Painter (2012), *Beer Barons or Bankrupts? Early Brewers in South Australia*, (Alison Painter: Adelaide), pp.172, 186-188.
- ³ Painter, pp.190-191.
- ⁴ Plan of the Township of Southwark, SLSA, C 377.
- ⁵ 'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4. Painter, p.191. 'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4.
- ⁶ 'The Walkerville Brewing Company', *Advertiser* 25 November 1899, p.4. Painter, p.191.
- ⁷ Painter, p.194.
- ⁸ Painter, p.196.
- ⁹ 'Amalgamation of Breweries', *The Advertiser* 10 May 1901, p.4. Painter, p.206.
- ¹⁰ Painter, pp.201-209.
- ¹¹ Painter, pp.218-219,222.
- ¹² Painter, p.228.
- ¹³ Painter, pp.237-241.
- ¹⁴ Brett J Stubbs, 'The Nathan System in Australia', *BrewNews* <https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/07/29/the-nathan-system-in-australia/> [accessed 5 May 2021]
- ¹⁵ Painter, pp253-254, 261.
- ¹⁶ Painter, p.277.
- ¹⁷ Painter, p.277.
- ¹⁸ Painter, p.277.
- ¹⁹ SABCo and SA Brewing Holdings, Annual Reports (1950s-1992). Cudmore, p.131.
- ²⁰ Cudmore, p.130-131.
- ²¹ Southcorp (1993), Annual Report. Lion 'Our History', <https://lionco.com/who-we-are/our-history/#:~:text=Lion%20Nathan%20is%20formed%20when,and%20hotel%20operator%2C%20Lion%20Breweries.&text=Lion%20Nathan%20buys%20a%2050,Castlemaine%20Tooheys%20and%20Swan%20Brewing.>