

GROWING UP: THE RISE OF THE MULTI-STOREY BUILDING IN INTERWAR ADELAIDE

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The great buildings of Adelaide have long served as a point of inspiration. Residents of and visitors to this city have marvelled at its prominent buildings. In 1907, Leonard Samuel Curtis in the book *Adelaide: Queen of the South*, created the following vignette:

The Post and Telegraph Offices rank first in point of prominence and boasts a high tower ... Nearly opposite the Post office stands the Town Hall, a massive stone building with a huge tower and battlements and an imposing frontage abutting the roadway of King William Street.²

These were still the dominant buildings in the city when the Great War came to its conclusion. During the War most construction was carried over from before the conflict began. Indeed, an observer in the Sydney-based architectural magazine *Building* commented: 'In city architecture, Adelaide is yet in a state of suspended development, and the sky-scraper has not yet caused the City Fathers any heart-burning.'³

Such heart-burning had occurred in both Melbourne and Sydney some years beforehand. In 1888, the Melbourne City Council was forced to reduce a proposed 150-foot building by two storeys, and was relieved from the necessity to regulate on the matter by a depression. In Sydney, the erection of a 170-foot building named Culwalla House, in 1912 had, according to Freeland, caused: 'cries of protest as the city's skyline was shattered'.⁴

The tall building, or skyscraper, craze began in the United States of America. Architects in Chicago and, shortly afterwards, New York City led the evolution in skyscrapers in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This development was partly through necessity. Huxtable alluded to the uniquely favourable conditions prevalent in Chicago at that time, and to the fact that the skyscraper's emergence was due to a combination of technical breakthroughs, as well as industrialisation, business and real estate.⁵ Such conditions were not replicated in Adelaide until the boom years of the 1920s – and the pressure had not existed, particularly, with respect to tall buildings for the purpose of residential living. There was plenty of space in which to develop residential areas on the fringes of the existing

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² Curtis, L. S. (1907) *Adelaide: Queen of the South*, Adelaide, Vardon & Sons, p.21.

³ Taylor, F. (1915) 'The Architecture of Adelaide', *Building*, 12 October, pp.65-83.

⁴ Freeland, J. M. (1974) *Architecture in Australia: A History*, Ringwood, Penguin, p.219.

⁵ Huxtable, A. L. (1984). *The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered: The Search for a Skyscraper Style*, New York, Pantheon Books, p.23.

suburbs that better suited the desires of most South Australian residential buyers, who at that time preferred a free-standing dwelling as well as land for a garden.

Important technical innovations, which allowed the dramatic increase in building height, had also emanated from the late 1800s. Electric elevators, or lifts, were incorporated into buildings dating from 1870 in New York.⁶ This innovation allowed higher floors in buildings to be more accessible – and popular with users – as the lower ones.

An enthusiasm for greater height in buildings took place dramatically in Sydney and Melbourne in 1912. Despite the lack of necessary sizes and quality of steel, Australian architects in those cities used what was available to them in order to achieve as much height as possible⁷ and consequently there were numerous examples of buildings in excess of six storeys. For example, the grand hotels, such as the Federal in Melbourne, pushed available construction techniques to the limit in order to visually dominate.

There were subtle hints of the future of Adelaide multi-storey development in the immediate pre-war period, albeit on a smaller scale from what was being developed on the eastern coast. The five-storey residential and retail building Ruthven Mansions, on Pulteney Street, was significant amongst these mainly because of the inclusion of a variety of electrical services, including a lift,⁸ the first to be incorporated in a building in Adelaide. It is also notable that Adelaide City was to be devoid of new residential high-rise constructions during the subsequent war and interwar years.

Architecturally, the City of Adelaide thus entered the interwar period in a subdued and tentative manner. The streetscape remained dominated by the same buildings admired by Curtis and others, with industrial buildings such as warehouses predominant amongst the multi-storey examples. The latter were rarely in excess of four storeys.

The hiatus of public and commercial construction during the War provided breathing room for building regulators. However, this was not an adequate state of affairs for proponents of pro-active town planning, who managed to assert themselves sufficiently to facilitate the introduction of South Australia's first town planning legislation in 1920.⁹

Examples of buildings constructed on a new scale for Adelaide began to be completed in the early 1920s. These included the York Theatre on Rundle Street and the Masonic Temple on North Terrace. But it was not until the mid-1920s that the construction of other such tall buildings began in earnest. Then, immediately after the *Building Act* of 1881 had been repealed and the 1923 Act had been brought into force on July 1 1924, one could say that, in Adelaide, the age of the tall building had begun.

⁶ Kostof (1985) *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*, New York, Oxford University Press, p.657.

⁷ Freeland, *Architecture in Australia*, p.219.

⁸ Marsden, S., Stark, P. and Sumerling, P. (eds.) (1990) *Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide*, Adelaide, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, p.119.

⁹ Bond, C. and Ramsey, H. (1978). *Preserving Historic Adelaide*, Adelaide, Rigby, p.53.

From this time a new generation of skyscrapers, led by the Alliance building, and including the T and G building, both on King William Street, pushed the maximum height restriction of 132 feet stipulated for this street, and North Terrace, under the new Act.¹⁰ The width of each city street determined the height limitation of buildings that could be constructed along it. An identical system had been in place in both Sydney and Melbourne and was implemented in order to reduce fire risk or streets becoming too crowded and dark. Indeed, developments in other Australian cities assisted to no small degree in driving the desire to embrace skyscrapers in Adelaide. During the early interwar years there was no pressing necessity to go upwards in Adelaide – but it happened anyway. Both clients and architectural practitioners desired the new and vibrant skyscrapers – and not to be left behind by progress in the other capital cities.

During the mid- to late-1920s the Adelaide City skyline, previously dominated by church spires and the towers of the General Post Office and Town Hall (Albert Tower), was transformed. “Skyscrapers”, especially those on North Terrace and King William Street, now took control, prompting mixed reaction. In 1928 South Australian Governor Sir Tom Bridges recorded his perception of the local effect in a letter to the Lord Mayor of Adelaide. He stated: ‘The citizens proudly call the new buildings “skyscrapers”. ... The site of Adelaide is so beautiful it should be a kind of dream city, rising out of the plain between the hills and the sea. I believe the skyscrapers are a great help to this.’¹¹

The corporate image quickly began to be intermingled with tall buildings. Foy and Gibson’s purchased a former hotel building in 1926 on the corner of Rundle and Pulteney Street and advertised using the image of their new tall building in the manner of a company logo. The enthusiasm for the modernity and power inherent in the skyscraper had translated well from the United States to the Australian urban context. American architect Louis Sullivan wrote in 1896 that a skyscraper must have a ‘force and power of altitude’ and that there must also be ‘the glory and pride of exaltation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line’.¹² The skyscraper was well used by banks, insurance companies and other institutions whose boards wished to convey such a unified, powerful and longevous corporate image.

After the Great Depression and its corresponding dramatic slowdown in construction, a range of powerful and optimistic buildings was constructed – those on a scale that surpassed anything before in Adelaide. This is marked by some of the most significant tall buildings in the city, such as the AMP and CML buildings. Not far into this short recovery, the advance of tall buildings was once again interrupted – this time by the advent of the Second World War in 1939. Development did not cease immediately, but a Federal ban on building in 1942 definitively closed the chapter on tall buildings in the interwar period in Adelaide.

Following are case studies of four notable Adelaide buildings constructed during the interwar period.

¹⁰ *Building Act of 1923*, The Second Schedule, Part 1 – Sites, Heights and Loads of Buildings, pp.45-47.

¹¹ Bridges, T. in M. Page (1986) *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986*, Adelaide, RAIA, p.142.

¹² Goldberger, P. (1982) *The Skyscraper*, London, Allen Lane, p.18.

REPCO (FORMER HOLDEN) BUILDING

The Repco (former Holden) building stood until late last year (2003) on the corner of King William and Gilles Streets. Although strictly not a tall building in most respects, it is an important structure in Adelaide City's history for a number of reasons.

Industrial buildings and warehouses constitute a number of Adelaide's early tall buildings. At the time that it was built, this factory was taller than most buildings in the city – it was also a very large building by Adelaide City standards. The time that the Repco building was completed, 1919, is also significant – it was the first major construction in the city immediately after the Great War and represents the beginning of the postwar period and a renewed optimism for development in Adelaide.

Examples of this type of industrial or warehouse tall building survive, despite the tendency for authorities not to assign them heritage protection. Undoubtedly what has protected some of them are their low-profile addresses, for example French Street, Fisher Place and Gilles Arcade, all backstreets and places away from major thoroughfares.

Adelaide's early tall buildings, particularly warehouses and factories, were often of brick construction. The Repco building, although its position was more prominent than most industrial sites, is a good example of the use of local red brick, 'with reinforced cement bonds.'¹³

Warehouses fit into Huxtable's three-stage categorisation of skyscraper development and into what she describes as the first or functional phase.¹⁴ This is marked by buildings that extend existing techniques, with the assistance of new methods, in more efficiently using the space available, a primary concern for the bulk storage of goods in or near the higher-priced business and retail districts. Because economics was the driving force behind the construction of these buildings, style was of secondary importance. Hence, the building facades are simple and uncluttered, reflecting their indisputably functional intent.

The former Repco building was originally commissioned for, and occupied by, the Holden company, one of few that thrived during the Great War. Having bought an existing car bodyworks occupying the site, the company soon outgrew it and required new premises. Edward Holden obtained a loan for £50,000¹⁵ and, having acquired adjoining houses and commercial buildings on Gilles Street, had them and the existing factory demolished to make way for the new building.¹⁶

The new factory, comprising some four storeys, was designed by Adelaide architect, Eric Harbeson McMichael, a personal friend of Holden.¹⁷ The choice of architect was notable because McMichael went on to be one of the most prolific designers of tall

¹³ 'The Pride of Adelaide. – The Biggest Motor Body Works in the Southern Hemisphere', *Register*, 28 June 1923, p.7.

¹⁴ Huxtable, *The Tall Building*, p.23.

¹⁵ Nairn, B. and Searle, G. (1983), *Australian Dictionary of Biography: Volume 9, 1891-1939*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, p.330.

¹⁶ Birney, S. (1985) *Australia's Own: The History of Holden*, Sydney, Golden Press, p.27.

¹⁷ Buttfeld, N. (1979) *So Great a Challenge: The Story of the Holden Family in Australia*, Sydney, Ure Smith, p.185.

buildings in Adelaide over the subsequent twenty years. Holden's continued interwar growth meant that it quickly outgrew its new King William Street factory as early as 1922.¹⁸ This led to the purchase of further adjoining property along Gilles Street, to which significant extensions were added.¹⁹

Soon after the extensions had been completed, in mid-1923, a *Register* article declared the site to be 'The Pride of Adelaide – The Biggest Motor Body Works in the Southern Hemisphere'.²⁰ The entire building constituted something of a milestone for brick construction in Adelaide. Its scale was impressive, comprising more than 700,000 bricks and a floor space of 4.5 acres.²¹ At the time it was most likely the largest factory in South Australia.²²

In addition to extending the city premises, Holden also began development on an alternative manufacturing site then on the metropolitan fringe – in Woodville. This site was in operation by 1924 and after a few years that site began to overtake the production of the King William factory – especially as growth in the company slowed.²³ Having changed hands a couple of times in the interim, the building was purchased in 1984 with the intention of converting it into residential flats. This, of course, never happened, and another residential conversion proposal a few years ago also failed. The building was demolished in late 2003 to make way for a multi-storey carpark and offices.

TOBIN (former LISTER) HOUSE

In July 1926 *Smiths Weekly* proclaimed that 'Adelaide is having the biggest building boom of its quiet career' and predicted that 'in another three years Adelaide will begin to look like a real city'.²⁴ It is within this climate that the design of Lister House was announced in the *Mail* with the headline: 'Six Storeys – North Terrace Addition – Another New Building'.²⁵ Designed by architects Messrs. Barlow and Hawkins of Melbourne the new building in fact went to seven storeys. The façade was said to 'be in harmony with the fine architecture for which North Terrace is noted'.²⁶ Lister House can be considered as Gothic skyscraper,²⁷ a style for which Marcus Barlow was particularly well known, having designed the Manchester Unity building in Melbourne at about the same time.²⁸ The Woolworth building in New York (1913) is arguably the best-known example of Gothic skyscraper and was compared by *Building* magazine to a 'commercial cathedral'.²⁹ Lister House's closely spaced vertical elements, decoration and embellishment at street level and the skyline all make it a building expressed in this style.

¹⁸ Birney, *Australia's Own*, p.27.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.29.

²⁰ 'The Pride of Adelaide'.

²¹ 'The Pride of Adelaide'.

²² 'Holden's Motor Body Builders', *The Bulletin*, 19 July 1923, p.24.

²³ Page, *Sculptors in Space*, p.30.

²⁴ 'Building Boom Enrages Adelaide Architects', *Smiths Weekly*, 15 July 1926, Milne clippings book p.21, S4, LLSSAA.

²⁵ 'Six Storeys – North Terrace Addition – Another New Building', *Mail*, 28 February 1926, Milne clippings book p.21, S4, LLSSAA.

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. (1989) *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: styles and terms from 1788 to the present*, North Ryde, Angus and Robertson, p.192.

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ 'The Beauty of the Skyscraper', *Building*, 12 February 1914, p.57.

Barlow was a vocal advocate for the skyscraper, writing articles in the Royal Institute of Victorian Architects' Journal in support of the tall building.³⁰ Yet his colleagues did not lend their universal support. Some objected to tall buildings on the grounds that they would block out sunlight both for the streets below and for the inhabitants of the offices on lower storeys, because of perceived construction and fire risks and for aesthetic reasons.³¹

Lister House was named after Lord Lister, the British surgeon who pioneered antiseptic surgery (and after whom the well known mouth wash is named). As such it is perhaps fitting, as noted by the *News*, that the newly constructed building had every effort 'made to make it fire and germ proof'.³²

Although originally designed by Barlow and Hawkins the title block on the architectural drawings³³ show another name soon being added, that of George Gavin Lawson a partner in the Adelaide-based firm Barlow, Hawkins and Lawson. By September 1928 F.K. Milne, Evans and Russell had become associated with the project as supervising architects overseeing construction, a change reflected in the later drawing title blocks. The builders William Essery and Sons erected the reinforced concrete seven-storey block using predominantly Australian materials including steel windows made by Perry's. Lister House is an example of a building where the street front elevation was designed to be seen and the sides and rear were not. Whether this is as a result of the architect believing it would soon be surrounded by neighbouring tall buildings or a budgetary constraint is not known.

With floors totalling a height of 89 feet it was designed with 'provision to take the structure to the building height limit'³⁴ of 132 feet; hence making possible the recent addition of another two storeys of modern apartments. Lister House incorporated a caretaker's residence on the top level along with 14-foot lift housing which took the total height to 103 feet. With one of the key concerns of the day being natural light, the importance of the light court so that all offices could have natural light cannot be underplayed. One interesting feature is the use of prismatic glass as a ceiling for the floor below the light court. Prismatic glass can still be seen today embedded in the footpath of North Terrace and providing light to the rooms below. Two rooms on the first floor had access to this and as the *Register* noted they would make 'excellent operating rooms'.³⁵

The client for the project was Peeks Limited, a tailor and mantle specialist³⁶ who occupied the front part of the ground, and some offices on the first, floor. Designed principally for the occupation of doctors and dentists the modern conveniences incorporated in the building were emphasised with conduits for electricity, lighting

³⁰ Schrader, B. (1997) 'Paris or New York? Contesting Melbourne's Twentieth Century Skyline', in R. Freestone (ed) *The Twentieth Century Urban Planning Experience, Proceedings of the 8th International Planning Society Conference and the 4th Australian Planning/Urban History Conference*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 15-18 July 1998, Sydney, Faculty of the Built Environment, pp.781-786.

³¹ Kent, H.C. (1911) 'Skyscrapers', *Building*, 13 March, p.45.

³² *News*, n.d., Milne clippings book p.24, S4, LLSSAA.

³³ Lister House architectural drawings, S5/3, LLSSAA.

³⁴ *Mail* 28 February 1926, Milne clippings book p.21, S4, LLSSAA.

³⁵ 'Lister House on North Terrace', *Register- News Pictorial*, 16 May 1929, Milne clippings book p.21, S4, LLSSAA.

³⁶ *Sands and McDougall's South Australian Directory* (1930), Adelaide, Sands and McDougall.

and water designed in the office layout. Other services included a ‘modern fast lift’, instantaneous electric hot water heaters in every office, incinerator chutes, and ‘sanitary, airy and silent’³⁷ lavatories on each floor. These services were an important selling point in Lister House since it was, in the main, designed to be rented. Amongst the tenants listed in the *Sands and McDougall’s Directory* of 1930 are physicians and dentists with a J.R. Tobin, Physician, on the fourth floor.

The incorporation of the elevator in tall buildings was supposed to make the top floors as desirable as the lower ones. Architect J.F. Hennessey emphasised this point when he wrote in 1932 that elevators ‘as revenue producing, elements offer a great value’.³⁸ Whether this was true for Lister House can be questioned as in 1930 not only was the fifth floor vacant but the sixth was occupied not by physicians but by a Miss Davy, designer, and Angela’s Dressmakers.

GOLDSBROUGH HOUSE

Goldsbrough Mort & Co. Ltd. were well-known Australian pioneer wool brokers³⁹ and were one of the predecessor companies of Elders. Goldsbrough House, built in 1935, is located on North Terrace between the former Liberal Club building (built 1925) and Shell House (built 1931). The building facade has been retained and currently provides an entrance to the Myer department store.⁴⁰

Goldsbrough House was designed by F. Kenneth Milne who recalled that the plans were drawn ‘six years before it eventuated’⁴¹ and that building was halted by the 1929 Depression. The site for the proposed building was originally home to Gonville Chambers, a two-storey structure. Gonville and Caius Chambers (the latter located adjacent) housed doctors’ consulting rooms and surgeries, and were built c1850s. Caius Chambers was located on the site of present day Shell House. *The South Australian* documents the demolition of the Chambers in late 1929.⁴² In 1934 the *Advertiser* claimed that the new building ‘will incorporate many of the latest ideas in modern office construction seen by Mr. Milne during his recent visit to England and the Continent’.⁴³

Goldsbrough House was constructed by the builders Stuart Bros. Ltd., a Sydney firm. Milne later discovered that he was employed by Goldsbrough Mort & Co. Ltd. because Stuart, the builder, said ‘when I read your name was Milne that was Scotch enough for me, so that’s why you got the job’.⁴⁴ The building has been described as ‘another example of Mr. Milne’s Georgian work, but more free and modern in treatment’.⁴⁵ The Ionic columns dominate the façade and Milne’s architectural drawings reveal that he drew these at full size, presumably to ensure clarity of the design for the builder and client.⁴⁶

³⁷ ‘Lister House on North Terrace’.

³⁸ Hennessey, J.F. (1932) ‘Some Aspects of Recent Architecture’, *Architecture*, 1 September, p.201.

³⁹ Marsden, Stark, and Sumerling (eds) *Heritage of the City of Adelaide*, p.110.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp.109, 111.

⁴¹ ‘Kenneth Milne Architects – May 4th 1979 Reminiscences’, Milne S75, LLSSAA.

⁴² ‘Old buildings to Go’, *The South Australian*, 11 July 1929, Milne clippings book p.35, S4, LLSSAA.

⁴³ ‘Goldsbrough Mort’s New Building’, *Advertiser*, 17 May 1934, Milne clippings book p.47, S4, LLSSAA.

⁴⁴ ‘Kenneth Milne Architects – May 4th 1979 Reminiscences’, Milne S75, LLSSAA.

⁴⁵ Unpublished typescript, Milne S18, LLSSAA.

⁴⁶ Goldsbrough Mort North Terrace architectural drawings, Milne S5/33/1-48, LLSSAA.

As published in the *Advertiser* in June 1934, Goldsbrough House was originally designed with six storeys, the caption declaring that there was ‘provision in the design and the foundations for the building to be taken ultimately to the full height allowed on North Terrace – 132 feet. It will be a steel frame and reinforced concrete structure with a stone front’.⁴⁷ Later drawings show the building as seven storeys from street level. In fact it was eventually constructed with eight storeys not including the basement level or the partial roof level. The addition of this extra storey appears to have occurred during construction with the architect and builder simply adding another level before the top one was constructed. Interestingly, even with the additional storeys, the building did not reach the maximum allowable height of 132 feet. This is clearly shown by the height of neighbouring Shell House that exceeds Goldsbrough House.

The 1934 and 1935 architectural drawings reveal that the building was designed with two elevators, two sets of stairs, and modern services, such as hot and cold water throughout the building, panel heating, fire hoses, a water pump and underground tank, an incinerator and flue, and ‘facilities for posting letters’⁴⁸ on each floor.

The 1935 floor plans show a range of different uses including: Shipping, Merchandise, Stock, Land and Produce Departments, Merchandise Travellers Room and Fat Store and Stock Department – all on the Ground Floor, Wool Travellers, Wool Clerks on the Second Floor, Share Department and Confidential Typists on the Third Floor and on the Seventh Floor a caretaker’s residence comprising of two Bedrooms, a Living Room, Kitchen, Bathroom and Laundry.

Goldsbrough House illustrates the dramatic multiplication of commercial space that occurred during the period from 1912 to 1935, from low-rise doctors’ surgeries to multi-storey commercial construction along North Terrace. This section of North Terrace underwent transformation initially with the Verco Building (built as ‘Adelaide’s tallest building’⁴⁹ in 1912), the former Liberal Club Building (built in 1925), Shell House (built in 1931) and finally the construction of Goldsbrough House in 1935.

SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

It took six years from 1938 to 1943 for the new Savings Bank of South Australia Head Office on King William Street to be completed owing to the wartime shortages both of materials and labour. The new office building was McMichael and Harris architects’ largest-ever commission⁵⁰ and came in 1938 prior to the outbreak of World War Two. The pair had already designed such tall buildings as the Holden building, previously mentioned, the Darling building, Kelvin House, the Shell building and the Verco building, and so were well qualified to take on what was to become Adelaide’s tallest building.

According to the centenary history of the Savings Bank of South Australia (1948)⁵¹ the bank’s head office was designed after McMichael and the bank’s trustees and

⁴⁷ ‘A New Five-Storey Building’, *Advertiser*, 8 June 1934, Milne clippings book p.47, S4, LLSSAA.

⁴⁸ ‘Goldsbrough Mort’s New Building’.

⁴⁹ Marsden, Stark, and Summerling (eds) *Heritage of the City of Adelaide*, p.112.

⁵⁰ Page, *Sculptors in Space*, p.180.

⁵¹ Savings Bank of South Australia (1948) *Our Century 1848-1948*, SBSA, Adelaide, p.55.

executives had visited Sydney and Melbourne to inspect the most modern buildings there. The design of the building was praised by the Governor of South Australia at the centenary celebrations: 'The massive building of the Bank's Head Office in King William Street, is an adornment to the architecture of the City of Adelaide and symbolic of the soundness and solidity it represents.'⁵² As it was also considered to be physically the strongest building in Adelaide, the State Civil Defence organisation set up its headquarters there during the war and a sub-control centre with emergency communications system was established in the basement. The roof of the building became a fire-watching post, being manned through the night by officers and tenants on four-hourly watches.⁵³

The style is Art Deco with Classical elements. The motifs depicting South Australian agriculture are significant in defining this style as is the use of the parallel line motif, the polished granite base and the monumental entrance.⁵⁴

South Australian materials were used in the construction and furnishing of the bank as a priority with an estimated 92% being Australian. The builders, Fricker Brothers, used Murray Bridge Granite for the ground floor façade, Waikerie stone for the upper floor façade facings, and Macclesfield Marble for the floor of the banking chamber.⁵⁵ The structure of the nine-storey building rises to 153 feet. Although exceeding the maximum allowed by the *Building Act*, as astute architects knew, 132 feet was only the measurement to the ceiling of the uppermost floor and did not include such extras as lift motor rooms, decorative features and flagpoles, which all add a further 21 feet to this building. It is of steel frame construction combined with brick infill walls and reinforced concrete floors.

As South Australia's largest financial institution the Savings Bank prided itself on encouraging savings and thrift. This was especially true during the war years when as part of its recording of the erection of its new head office it released a film of the process entitled *The House that Thrift Built*.⁵⁶ The opening ceremony on 2 February 1943 was in keeping with the theme with a short speech from the Governor Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey and the bank opening at precisely 10 o'clock in the morning.⁵⁷

The Savings Bank's head office was used as an image on the tin money box many South Australians remember from childhood. According to the centenary history, about £97,000 pounds were credited to accounts from money boxes opened at the bank in the previous financial year.⁵⁸ The building itself became a symbol and icon and, as such, a form of corporate advertising. This function continues today as the Santos building towers over what was, at the close of the interwar period, Adelaide's tallest building.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.1.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.60.

⁵⁴ Apperly, Irving, and Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide*, p.191.

⁵⁵ Savings Bank of South Australia, Architectural drawings and specifications, Hurren, Langman and James collection, S248/2/7, LLSSAA.

⁵⁶ Savings Bank of South Australia, *Our Century*, p.60.

⁵⁷ Savings Bank of South Australia (1943) *The Savings Bank of South Australia, Souvenir of Opening of New Head Office*, SBSA, Adelaide, p.4.

⁵⁸ Savings Bank of South Australia, *Our Century*, p.71.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In order to become a city in the interwar years, Adelaide, like Sydney and Melbourne grew upwards with buildings in the Central Business District becoming increasingly commercial as they grew increasingly taller. 'The evolution of a modern city automatically brings the tall building into existence'⁵⁹ wrote architect, F.W. Fitzpatrick in 1912 at the beginning of the growing up of the Australian city. In the interwar years, central Adelaide started on its journey from a mixed-use site of housing, manufacturing and trading to a place of specialisation where commercial uses were encouraged and the buildings advertised the corporation. The city and the suburbs became differentiated in both use and form and the city began to rise, as Governor Bridges had forecast, dreamlike from the plains.

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⁵⁹ Fitzpatrick, F.W. (1912) 'The Skyscraper. Is it to be denied to Australia? Reasons why it should be sanctioned', *Building*, 12 October, p.43.