APPROX 90 MINUTES

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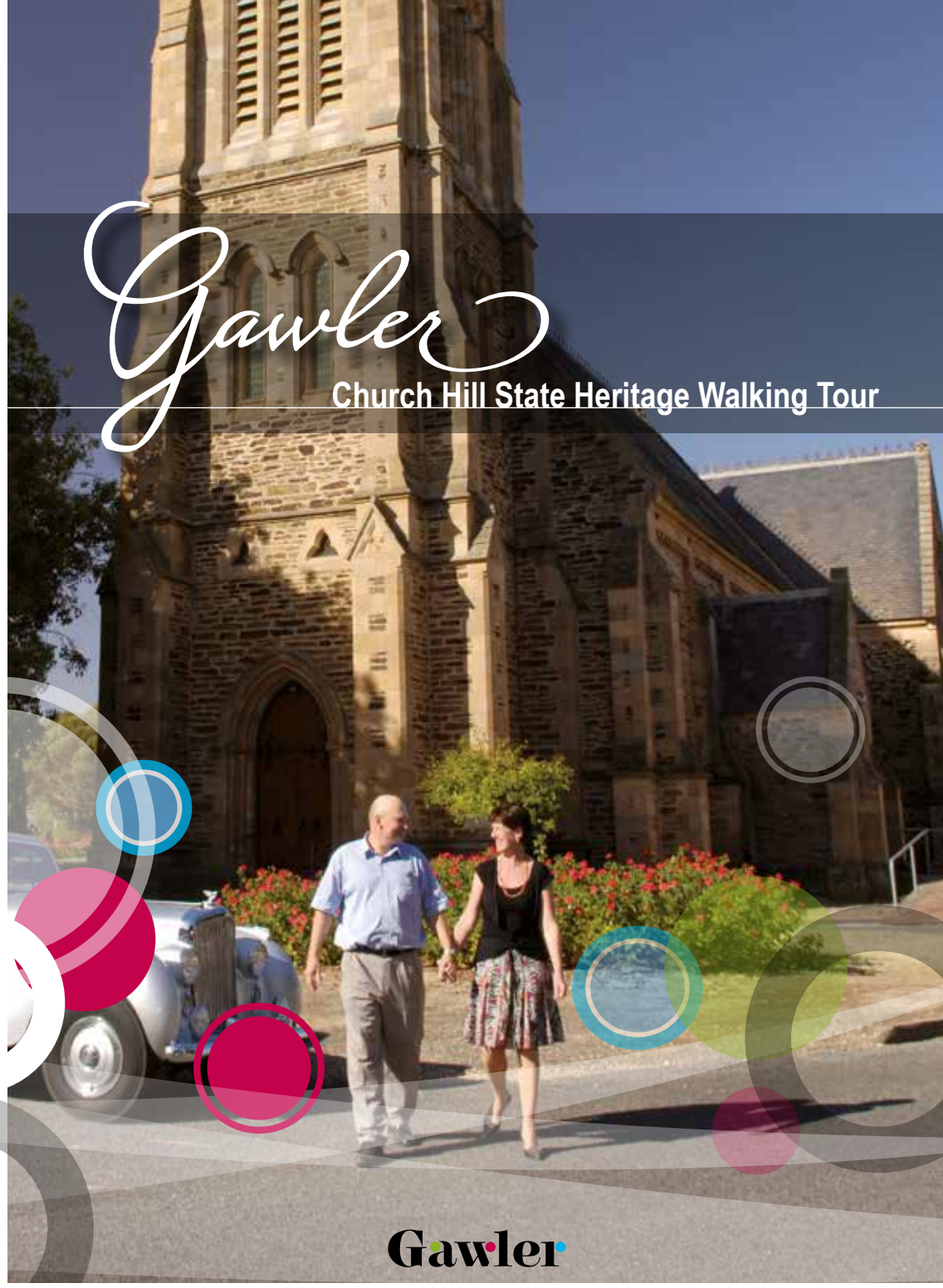
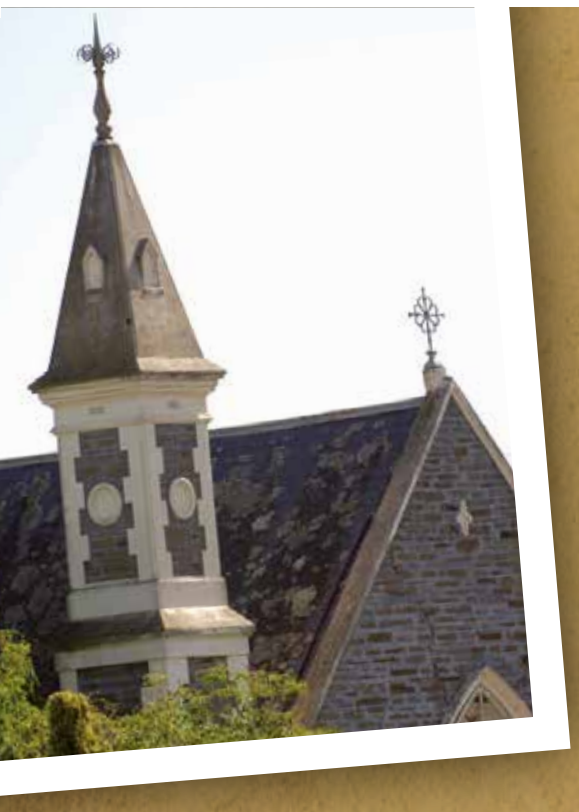
Church Hill State Heritage Walking Tour

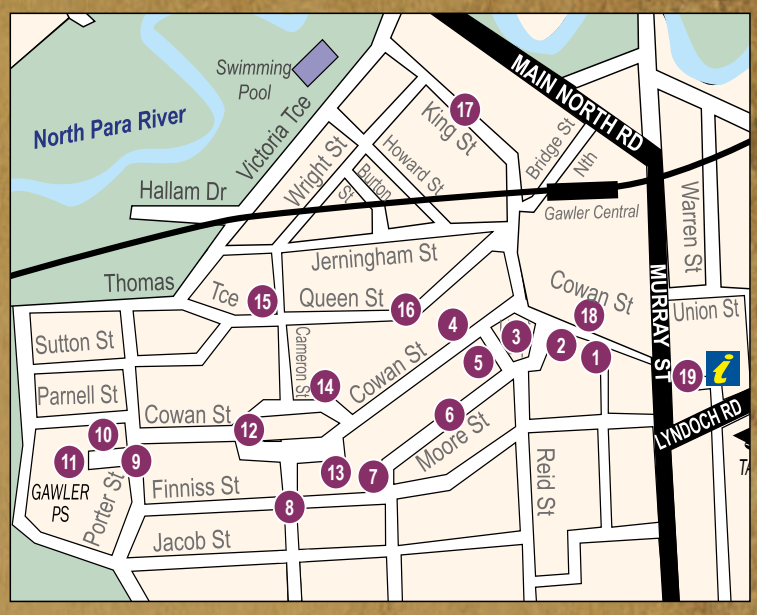


Gawler



The Church Hill area contains the core of Colonel Light's 1839 Gawler town plan. Due to its historical significance and the overall state of preservation, this area was declared a State Heritage Area on 7 June 1985, the third such heritage area in South Australia.

As you experience the true heritage of Gawler, the attractions will be highlighted unfolding for you why the area is called Church Hill. A wide array of dwellings and outbuildings reflect grand to humble circumstances of people who created the area during the 19th century. Original slate and bluestone kerbs, historic fire hydrants and many other treasures of yesteryear will be revealed.



1 Presbyterian Church

Private owners of Gawler in 1839 allocated land in trust for Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches on 3 squares along Cowan Street. Presbyterians who settled in Gawler were mainly from the Free Presbyterian Church not the "Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland". Refused allocated land they built this church in 1854 which is now a Salvation Army Support Centre.

2 Bushman Hotel

The Bushman Hotel, first licensed in 1840 and the second hotel in Gawler was originally a wattle and daub structure, extended in the 1870s with higher ceilings and an upper balcony. Inside you will admire the heritage on offer and outside the well worn slate verandah and original rear stone stables building. Imagine the hustle and excitement around the hotel where Gawler's first sale yard for livestock operated for many years. Tempt your taste buds with culinary delights on offer matched with a famous Barossa red at this Hotel.

3 Light Square

Appreciate the planning of this area by reading the information sign.

4 Cowan Street

21 Cowan Street has been the Rectory for the Anglican Church for over 100 years with its historic horse hitching post on the footpath. The Gawler Court House at 23 Cowan Street, a typical piece of handsome late Victorian architecture built in 1881 by Gawler builder James Peek coincided with the appointment of Mr John Rudall, a prominent lawyer since 1850s, as the first resident Magistrate. The new police station opened in 2005 on the site of the original police and court buildings.

5 Congregational Churches

The Congregational Church complex consists of the smaller church built in 1851 and converted to a hall when the large church with high gabled roof and triple stained glass gothic window was built in 1861. The smaller building alongside the hall was built in 1912/13 and served as a kindergarten, operated by Elsie Ey. Observe the perimeter stone wall and cast metal gates.

6 Moore Street/Dundas Street

Marvel at the range of dwellings, sheds, perimeter walls and fence styles along the streets. The attached cottages at 2 and 4 Moore Street were used as servants quarters for the grander house of 6 Moore Street. Also note the substantial stone horse stables with loft set back at 9 Moore Street. The intersection with Finniss Street showcase the spectacular stone walls and entrances built to match the varying architecture.

7 Lutheran Church Complex

While walking onto Finniss Street you will notice the Zion Lutheran Church built in 1921 at a cost of £3000 and the Church hall built in 1954. On the site, facing Orleana Square are older buildings converted to the Zion kindergarten and the Lutheran Study Centre.

8 Finniss Street (after BT Finniss of Light Finniss & Co)

22 Finniss Street was built in 1847 by Gawler founder, Stephen King of Kingsford, as a manager's residence for the 1845 Victoria flour mill located in adjacent Jacob Street. Walter Duffield bought the mill in 1848, eventually owning 2 mills in Gawler. A local Member of Parliament and a major supporter of the Congregational Church, Duffield lived in this house until he moved to Para Para mansion in 1861. Many of the cottages and houses along Finnis Street were built in the 1850s for workers at the flour mill. The small attached cottage at 3/36 Finniss Street was home to the first Sisters of St Joseph in Gawler in 1868. The cottage at 41 Finniss Street was Mrs Broderick's tuckshop serving school children for many years.

9 Porter Street

The first Sisters of St Joseph moved to their new premises at 6a Porter Street around 1870 and a new school building on the corner of Porter and Cowan Streets was opened in 1882. Mary MacKillop and the Sisters set many schools throughout South Australia, aiming to educate poorer children. Mary MacKillop visited Gawler on a number of occasions and her first letter following the lifting of her ex-communication was from Gawler. Other buildings comprise the 2-storey Convent built in 1910 for the Sisters of the Good Samaritan who took over running the St Joseph's school until it was relocated in 1971 and the Presbytery buildings established at 1 Parnell Square from the early 1870s.

10 Roman Catholic Church buildings

Along Porter Street is the magnificent St Peter and St Paul's Roman Catholic Church built by the Carmelite Fathers in 1897/8. Constructed mainly with red brick and local blue stone it features an arcade of gothic arches and twin towers. The stone cross in the grounds originally graced the roof of the first Catholic Church built on this same site in the early 1850s. The perimeter stone wall dates from the 1860s.

11 Gawler Primary School

Wander down School Road to Gawler Primary School, established as one of the first Model Schools after the commencement of public education in South Australia in 1875. This solid bluestone building with distinctive belfry was constructed in 1877 at a cost of nearly £5000. Note also the restored c1878 wooden flagpole and shelter shed. Parnell Square, the area set aside for the Catholic Church by Light was reduced significantly in 1950 when the western end was acquired for the Gawler Primary School. The 2005 redevelopment removed all buildings from that area and again opened up the vistas to the Gawler Parklands.

12 Orleana Square/Saint George's Anglican Church

Continue along Cowan Street to Orleana Square – the central square, named after the sailing ship 'Orleana', which dropped anchor in Holdfast Bay in January 1839. On board were the principal pioneer Gawler landowners John Reid, Henry Dundas Murray and Stephen King. The distinctive St Georges Anglican Church is built on the site allocated by these first Gawler landowners. Constructed of local bluestone, sandstone quoins and slate tiled roof in 1864 to replace the first Anglican church built on this site in 1848. The tall buttressed tower, belfry and parapet was built in 1910, with bells finally installed in 1921. The church has stained glass windows lit up at night which display the Gawler Coat of Arms and a memorial to the Reid family amongst others.

13 St George's Hall

The church hall on Orleana Square was built in 1866 and used for many years as part of the St George's School. Trinity College, now a major local school, commenced its operations in 1984 with just 27 students in the St George's Hall.

14 St George's School

A plaque on the northern side of Orleana Square records the site of the main St George's school site which closed in 1877 with the opening of the Gawler Model School. The sandstone shed on this site is a reminder of a very busy school with some 200 students.

15 Cameron Street

From Orleana Square walk onto Cameron Street, named after the Captain of the 'Orleana'. No 32 Cameron Street is formerly the residence of the Forgie family (Funeral Directors operating in Gawler since 1855). The stables building housed the Taylor and Forgie horse drawn hearse. This street also displays bluestone kerbing and the remnants of cobblestone guttering.

16 Queen Street

Wander past more historic buildings including the traditional villa residence at 15 Queen Street built c1864 by Reverend John Jones the first Methodist minister based in Gawler who helped establish the Methodist Church complex in Tod Street after coming to Gawler in 1848. At the rear of the Police Station is the wonderful police stables building, built in 1858, the oldest public building remaining in Gawler.

17 King Street

Although outside the official Church Hill State Heritage area this street is well worth a look. As you commence along King Street note the unusual curved roof at No 7. 12-16 King Street is Hemingby, the home of LS Burton, Master of St George's School for 24 years before becoming the first Headmaster of the new public school in Gawler. In 1880, he resigned from the public school and opened a new private school on this site. Condemned to demolition in the 1970s Hemingby was rescued by a community group and is now State Heritage listed. Eagle Foundry 23-25 King Street (now a Bed and Breakfast), built in 1870 for David Thomson, was a manufacturing centre for more than 100 years - castings for agricultural implements, plough shares, garden seats and verandah columns, as well as much of the cast iron lacework and fences and gates seen on your tour. 27 King Street was established as a private maternity hospital in 1904 by Sister Greenslade. Return along King Street and take note of No 5 the Station House which was used as the stationmasters home from 1911, earlier this house was used by Taylor and Forgie Funeral Directors now located opposite.

18 Albion Flour Mill Mill Stone

As you continue back towards Cowan Street and opposite the Presbyterian Church you will see the only remains of the Albion Flour Mill built on the shopping centre site by James Dawson in 1868. The large mill stone was uncovered during the shopping centre excavation. Gawler was the second largest milling town in South Australia for most of the 19th century. The Albion Flour Mill went into liquidation in 1893. The site became Gawler's main market centre until 1980.

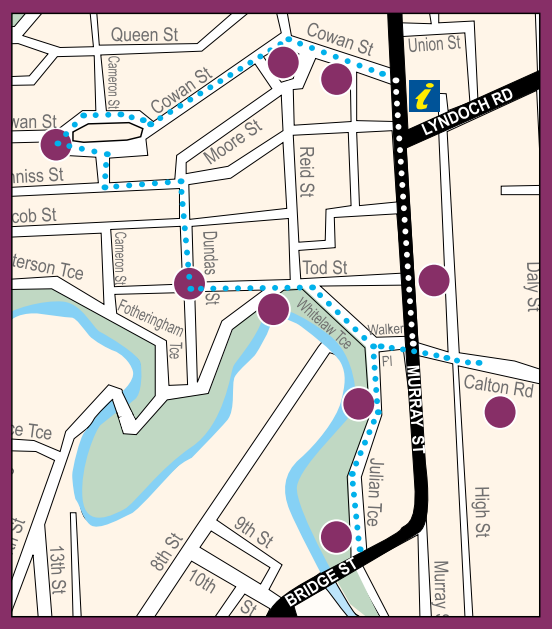
19 McKinlay Memorial

John McKinlay was Gawler's most famous explorer. McKinlay was engaged by the colonial government in 1861 to look for the lost members of the Burke and Will's expedition. McKinlay succeeded in this expedition and also continued to the Gulf of Carpentaria before returning by ship to a heroes welcome in Adelaide and Gawler. McKinlay also later made a memorable expedition looking for land for towns and agriculture in the Northern Territory. When he died in 1875 a government sponsored committee raised funds for this memorial. McKinlay is buried in the Willaston cemetery.

We hope you have enjoyed just some of our hidden treasures on your walking tour of Gawler's Church Hill State Heritage Area. Interested in discovering more?

Gawler Cultural Walk

While in this historical area you may extend your walk and include Gawler's Cultural Walking Trail. By following the Trail you will discover more amazing facts about the town's culture and history, as well as experiencing the best of our parks, riversides and attractions.

On Gawler's Cultural Walking Trail there are a number of must-sees and dos.

- Take in the beautiful setting on Gawler's riverside
- Stop for a photo opportunity out the front of beautiful Tortola House
- Pack a picnic lunch and dine among the magnificent Moreton Bay fig trees in Apex Park
- Browse through some amazing shops on Gawler's Main Street, Murray Street
- Relax in Light Square, which is fittingly named after Colonel William Light, planner of Gawler
- Take a walk through time in Gawler's Church Hill State Heritage Area