



Map Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre, 1860 | 15 Dockside Tavern, c1898 | 29 Nile Street Power Station - Footpath Plaque |
| 2 Workers Memorial | 16 SS Admella Memorial - The Navigator | 30 Town Hall, 1866-1884 - Council Offices ◆ |
| 3 Port Admiral Hotel, 1849 | 17 The Waterfront | 31 Annie Duncan Soundpost |
| 4 Warehouses, 1865 | 18 The Adelaide Steamship Building | 32 Courthouse, 1882 ◆ |
| 5 Coach House, Port Admiral Hotel, 1849 | 19 Lighthouse, 1869 ◆ | 33 Port Adelaide Railway Station Site - Footpath Plaque |
| 6 Sailmakers Buildings, 1864 | 20 Boer War Memorial ◆ | 34 Memorial Fountain for Mayor Formby ◆ |
| 7 Poverty Corner Soundpost | 21 Queens Wharf | 35 Savings Bank of South Australia 1905 |
| 8 The Bond & Free Stores, 1857 ◆
South Australian Maritime Museum | 22 Telegraph Office, 1868 ◆ | 36 National Railway Museum |
| 9 The Banks ◆ | 23 First Bridge in Port Adelaide - Footpath Plaque | 37 Port Adelaide Uniting Church |
| 10 Railway Hotel, 1856 ◆ | 24 King Rodney Soundpost | 38 St Mary's Catholic Church |
| 11 St Vincent Chambers, 1883 ◆ | 25 Institute Buildings, 1876 ◆
Custom House, 1879 ◆ | 39 Ozone Picture Theatre - Footpath Plaque |
| 12 Royal Arms Hotel, 1878 ◆ | 26 Government Office and Store, 1882 ◆ | 40 St Paul's Anglican Church |
| 13 Port Dock Brewery Hotel ◆ | 27 Township of Port Adelaide Plaque | 41 Waterside Workers Federation Hall |
| 14 Divett Street Buildings ◆ | 28 Jervois Bridge Control Tower | 42 Professional Fishermen's Memorial |
| Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre | ◆ Heritage Listed Buildings | State Heritage Area |

Port Adelaide

Port Adelaide is a sea port city with a unique, salty tang to its environs.

It is the historic maritime heart of South Australia and home to some of the finest historic buildings in the State.

Officially established in 1840, only four years after the foundation of the State, Port Adelaide played an integral role in the colonial development of South Australia.

The first migrants though, wading through mud of nearby "Port Misery", had a daunting start to a new life in the fledgling colony. By the 1870s however, wharves were built, solid stone warehouses and homes were erected and signs of Port Adelaide's prosperity were evident.

The Port has played host to the dashing sailing ships of yesteryear, steamships and, in recent times, sophisticated container and cruise ships.

Port Adelaide has retained many of its impressive 19th Century buildings, which, within the boundaries of Nelson Street, St Vincent Street, Todd Street and McLaren Parade, form the State's first Heritage Area.

A treasure trove of South Australia's heritage awaits you in Port Adelaide. The best way to discover its delights is to Walk the Port!

Port Adelaide

How to get there...

Bus

Adelaide to Port Adelaide - direct route from North Tce, opposite the Adelaide Railway Station: Bus 150 to Osborne - alight in Port Adelaide at bus stop A

Train

from Adelaide: Outer Harbor Line to Port Adelaide

By Car

- From Adelaide via Port Rd (Route A7)
- From Glenelg via Tapleys Hill Rd (Route A15) or Military Rd
- From northern suburbs via Port River Expressway (A9)

Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre
66 Commercial Road, Port Adelaide SA 5015

Open 7 days a week from 9am to 5pm
(closed Christmas Day)

Tel: (08) 8405 6560

Website: www.portenf.sa.gov.au/tourism
Email: visitorinfo@portenf.sa.gov.au

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Historic Port Adelaide
To find out more about historic Port Adelaide visit:
Local History Room
Port Adelaide Library
2 Church Street
Port Adelaide
Tel: 8405 6580
Open for Researchers
Wednesday 10am-1pm
Thursday 2-5pm
Friday 2-5pm
South Australian Maritime Museum
126 Lipson Street
Port Adelaide
Open: Daily from 10am to 5pm (closed Christmas day)
History of Port Adelaide permanent exhibition
Dept for Environment, Water and Natural Resources
State Heritage Areas of South Australia
Website: www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage
Guided Walks
Port Walks - let a local be your guide
Offered at 2pm every Sunday & Thursday
(weather permitting)
Bookings essential - contact the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre on
Tel: 8405 6560 or Email: visitorinfo@portenf.sa.gov.au



Heritage

Walking Tour

“Walk round corners” and discover The Port’s treasures

...Discover another side of Port Adelaide!

The State Heritage Area walk takes approximately one hour to complete. To explore more sites take the extended walk which commences in front of the Police Station in St Vincent Street and finishes at the waterfront, west of the Birkenhead Bridge. Allow two hours to complete both walks. Start at the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre and follow the numbers.

◆ Heritage Listed Buildings

1 Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre, 1860 ◆

Completed in 1860 at a cost of 7,000 pounds, the building was designed to house the Customs, Police and Courts. Externally, it has changed little since then, though the original slate roof has been replaced with iron and a central dome removed. The Governor, Sir Eric Neale, officially opened the building as the Port Adelaide Visitor Information Centre on 9 November 1997.

2 Workers Memorial

Unveiled in 1921, the Workers Memorial is a white marble Statue of “Justice” which stands on a massive grey granite base. Funds for the Memorial came from many parties, including unionists, businessmen, lodges and other organisations. The people of Port Adelaide built the Workers Memorial to honour the pioneers of the Labor movement.

3 Port Admiral Hotel, 1849

Situated on the famous Black Diamond Corner, this was the original “Railway Hotel” and is the oldest building in The Port. Its coach house can be seen in Calton Street.

4 Warehouses, 1865

These old stone warehouses played an important role in The Port’s early commercial life when sailing ships worked the coasts. The overhanging beams in Calton Street are reminders of the horse-drawn era when block and tackle were the only way to lift heavy goods.

5 Coach House, Port Admiral Hotel, 1849

The old coach house was originally part of the Port Admiral Hotel. It now houses a gallery.

6 Sailmakers Buildings, 1864

This group of buildings once formed part of Henry Weman’s sailmaking business. The shop in Lipson Street is virtually unchanged since the 1880s and features an interesting use of “colonial bond” brickwork with a corrugated iron second storey. A café now graces a building that is little more than a front facade and a roof. The walls are those of adjoining buildings.

7 Poverty Corner Soundpost

The northern wall of the (South Australian Maritime Museum) warehouse was the site where men waited to show that they were available for casual labouring work on the ships or around the docks. Press the button on the soundpost and hear the Poverty Corner story.

8 The Bond & Free Stores, 1857 ◆ South Australian Maritime Museum

Elder & Co built the southern store in 1857 and the corner building was added at a later date. These buildings, excellent examples of early Victorian warehouse construction with massive timber floors and posts, now house the main displays of the South Australian Maritime Museum. A replica of the ketch Active forms a major display - a reminder of the ships that once sailed along the South Australian coastline.



South Australian Maritime Museum

9 The Banks

Lipson Street is the most interesting street in The Port. The continuous frontage of 19th century buildings range from the humble Sailmakers shop to the ornate banks. The two bank buildings were the ANZ Bank that opened in 1859 as the Union Bank, and the Bank of Adelaide, built in 1885. These buildings contrast dramatically with the diminutive McLachlan building which housed the Bank of Adelaide prior to 1885. Examples in Lipson Street show how much the streets were built up from March 1870.

10 Railway Hotel, 1856 ◆

Located on the corner of St Vincent Street & Lipson Street the Railway Hotel is Port Adelaide’s second Railway Hotel. It opened in the year the Adelaide to Port Adelaide railway was completed. This fine building retains its early Victorian character.

11 St Vincent Chambers, 1883 ◆

These shops were built for the Hon. Alexander Hay, a successful merchant, pastoralist and politician, whose home, Mount Breckan, still stands at Victor Harbor. Given the pressures of modern commerce, it is rare for shopfronts to remain in original condition, but these appear to be, although the verandah has been replaced.

12 Royal Arms Hotel, 1878 ◆

When renovated in 1907, it was reported that almost every room had a telephone and that the “hot and cold baths are of newest kind”. There was also a writing room for ship skippers. Below the present hotel are the stone walls of an old inn of ten rooms. The area next to this hotel, where the Todd Street Business Chambers now stands, used to be called Little Jerusalem because many Jewish families lived there in small houses. When the street was built up, it was possible to step off the road onto the verandah roofs of the cottages.

13 Port Dock Brewery Hotel ◆

First known as the Wharf Dock Hotel from 1855 to 1860, then as the Dock Hotel from 1860 to 1909. The hotel lost its licence in 1909 during a crusade against the large number of hotels in The Port. Later it became a bordello of some repute. Restoration of the hotel and construction of the micro brewery were completed in 1986, the State’s Jubilee year.

14 Divett Street Buildings ◆

- Australasia Chambers, built in 1891 for the Bank of Australasia which later united with the Union Bank to form the ANZ.
- Divett Chambers, Port Adelaide’s only example of secular Gothic revival architecture, built for the Advertiser Newspapers about 1881.
- The building at No. 9 was originally yet another bank, opening in 1866 for the National Bank. Remember, when admiring this streetscape, the buildings span twenty-five years. Would buildings of the last twenty-five years be such compatible neighbours?
- The First Commercial Inn, c1880, first obtained its licence in 1840, but the original hotel was gutted by fire in 1857, remained empty for 11 years, then reopened in 1869.
- Note the TB Oliver Building in Commercial Road is a delightful relic of an old-style iron shop.



Steam tugboat “Yelta” in front of Docksider Tavern

15 Dockside Tavern, c 1898

The Dockside opened as the Britannia in 1850 and was rebuilt on the same site in 1898. It is one of the very few late Victorian buildings in The Port. The fine iron lace-work and verandah treatment are features of note.

16 SS Admella Memorial – The Navigator

The SS Admella set sail from Port Adelaide on 5 August 1859 for its fateful last voyage. The following day the sailing ship struck Carpenter Reef near Mount Gambier. In 8 days of turbulent seas 24 were rescued and 89 lives were lost. It was one of the worst maritime tragedies in Australia’s history. With its large ship’s wheel, longitude and latitude markers, compass points and black granite block, The Navigator memorial is a salient tribute to this tragedy.

17 The Waterfront

This is the usual mooring place for the steam tugboat “Yelta”, historic ketch “Falie” and sail training ship “One & All”.

18 The Adelaide Steamship Building

The Adelaide Steamship Company building was opened on 15 January 1936. As headquarters of a powerful shipping firm, its architecture includes many luxurious nautical features. It now houses the Country Arts SA.

19 Lighthouse, 1869 ◆

First erected at the entrance to the Port River, this attractive marine signal was re-erected on South Neptune Island in 1901. The lighthouse was dismantled in 1985 and placed on its present site in 1986. It can be climbed and inspected.

20 Boer War Memorial ◆

Adjacent to this wharf, the first contingent of the South Australian Infantry (SAI) boarded the “PS Yatala” for transfer and embarkation on the troopship “Medic”. The contingent sailed for the war in South Africa on 31 October 1899.

21 Queens Wharf

Sunday markets now operate in the Queens Wharf Shed. River cruises depart from this wharf.

22 Telegraph Office, 1868 ◆

The Telegraph Office housed the telephone exchange which first opened in 1883. It then became headquarters for the Lighthouse Service and, in turn, part of the Customs Service complex.

23 First Bridge in Port Adelaide - Footpath Plaque

The first bridge in Port Adelaide spanned a tidal inlet that came up to the present Black Diamond Corner, along the alignment of Commercial Road. Captain Lipson, The Port’s first harbourmaster, is thought to have initiated the bridge construction. He lived on the western side of the inlet, but worked in close liaison with the South Australian Company whose offices and warehouse were on the eastern side of the inlet.

24 King Rodney Soundpost

“The Kaurna leader called King Rodney was here with his family when the Europeans first sailed up the Port River, Kaurna people wouldn’t have given him that title because we did not recognise ‘chiefs’. Rodney’s Kaurna names were Pamatarja and Itymaltipinna and he used to camp on the prime riverfront land, where the Visitor Information Centre is now. As a young man he was captured from the riverbank by sailors and taken on board. They dressed him up in a European sailor costume and paraded him around. When they released him, his own people ran away from him”. *Uncle Lewis O’Brien - Kaurna Elder and local resident* Press the button on the soundpost and hear King Rodney’s story.

25 Institute Buildings, 1876 ◆ Customs House, 1879 ◆

The northern portion was completed in 1879 and designed by the Architect-in-Chief’s Office who reported - “This building will be somewhat pretentious with cut stone dressings and cornices, etc and will form a prominent object on approaching The Port from the river”. Until the 1950’s the southern portion (1876 and 1899) housed the Port Adelaide Institute, an organisation which played a key role in the cultural development of the colony.

26 Government Office and Store, 1882 ◆

A dignified building that housed the Waterworks until 1914 and passed to the control of the Harbors Board after World War 2. For many years the Store was a lighthouse store. In recent times both buildings were incorporated into the Customs complex.

27 Township of Port Adelaide Plaque

On the 8th of January 1856 the town of Port Adelaide was proclaimed and its first Council elected. This plaque was erected in 2006 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of this significant event which marked the formal start of a glorious history that saw the town grow and prosper to become a city and a major regional centre, eventually to amalgamate in 1996 with the City of Enfield to form the city as it is known today.

28 Jervois Bridge Control Tower ◆

The Control Tower (Bridge Keeper’s Gallery and Box) was part of the old Jervois Bridge. The structure was a swing bridge, built of iron and opened in 1878 by Governor Jervois. It was 220 metres long between abutments and had a swing span of 50 metres. The bridge was the only one of its type built in South Australia and an engineering milestone.

29 Nile Street Power Station - Footpath Plaque

This is the site of the first power station in South Australia that was built for the Adelaide Electric Supply Company in 1898. The power station closed in 1907.

30 Town Hall, 1866 - 1884 ◆ Council Offices

The Town Hall, designed by architects Woods & Wright, was completed in 1866 as a cost of 4,980 pounds. The Council offices fronting Nile Street were built in 1884. The bluestone cottage next door, also built in 1884, was The Port’s casualty hospital for many decades; prior to this injured people had to travel by train to the Royal Adelaide Hospital!

31 Annie Duncan Soundpost

Annie Duncan was the daughter of the Medical Officer of Port Adelaide in the early 1900s. She kept diaries of her observations of life in the early years of the Port. The family home remains in St Vincent Street. Press the button on the soundpost and hear Annie’s story.

32 Courthouse, 1882

With its classic Victorian colonial architecture, this building was erected on the old Marine Board Offices site. It was originally asymmetrical in design, with only the central portion and northern wing.

33 Port Adelaide Railway Station Site - Footpath Plaque

The first Port Adelaide Railway Station was built on this site in 1856 when the line from Adelaide opened. In 1878 an extension line was built from the Lipson Street side to carry trains down St Vincent Street, over the newly erected Jervois Swing Bridge to Semaphore. In 1916 the elevated Commercial Road Railway Station was opened. The station on this site, commemorated by this plaque, became known as the Port Dock Railway Station. It was closed and later demolished in the mid 1970’s.

34 Memorial Fountain for Mayor Formby

“Erected by public subscription to John Formby Esq Mayor, 1869-1873”, this drinking fountain was designed for human use. It nevertheless complemented the horse troughs that once stood on almost every corner in The Port. The memorial fountain is a cast iron structure that sits on a base of Macclesfield marble and Mintaro slate.

35 Savings Bank of South Australia, 1905 ◆

This red brick building was originally built for the Savings Bank of South Australia and the architectural detailing on the facade gives the building an unusual oriental style.

36 National Railway Museum

The National Railway Museum has the finest collection of rolling stock and artefacts in Australia. Located on the site of the 1856 Port Adelaide Railway yard, it includes the original goods shed and many vehicles used in The Port.

37 Port Adelaide Uniting Church

This fine building, which is the fourth church of the Congregationalists in The Port, was completed in 1868 with the capacity to seat 750 people. The first building, built in 1839 at the original port which is now in the West Lakes area, is said to have been made of native pine posts and palings. Their second chapel proved too small and the third was burnt down. Reverend Joseph Kirby was the third pastor from 1880-1908 and is best remembered as a strong campaigner on many social issues in South Australia. This church is now the Port Adelaide Uniting Church.

38 St Mary’s Catholic Church

The church was officially opened in 1858. The little hall next door was built in 1869. The Josephite nuns ran a school next to the church and lived in Howard House, the two-storey home further along. When Mary MacKillop arrived in Port Adelaide in 1867, she stopped at St Mary’s Church before later travelling to Adelaide.

39 Ozone Picture Theatre - Footpath Plaque

On this site stood the first purpose-built picture theatre in South Australia operating from 1913 to 1979. It was the first of Sir Hugh Waterman’s famous chain of “Ozone” theatres.

40 St Paul’s Anglican Church

This building is the third Anglican Church on the site. The first was St Pauls-on-Piles 1841, the second dated 1852 and the current one was completed in 1905. The stained glass windows were especially shipped from England.

41 Waterside Workers Federation Hall

Built in 1926, the hall represents the importance of the trade union movement amongst wharf labourers, ie: the Port Adelaide Working Men’s Association (1872-1989) which affiliated with the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia in the early 1920’s.

42 Professional Fishermen’s Memorial

The Professional Fishermen’s Memorial stands proudly on the waterfront to pay tribute to those who lost their lives at sea in the South Australian fishing industry. Since 1884, 176 lives have been lost. This monument is testament to the perils of the ocean and acts as a reminder of the need for adequate training for the industry.

