



**A WALK THROUGH HISTORY**

**MOUNT GAMBIER**

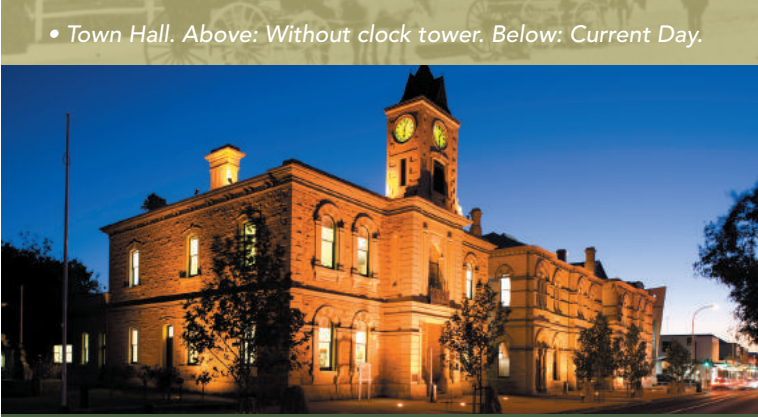
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

The historic bollards featured in this brochure were an idea suggested by McDonald Park Primary School and initiated by the City of Mount Gambier Heritage Committee. The installation of the City Centre historic bollards began in late 2006.



**CITY OF MOUNT GAMBIER**

**CITY HERITAGE WALK**



• Town Hall. Above: Without clock tower. Below: Current Day.

- 1. Former Bank Premises**  
Completed in 1885 for the Commercial Bank of South Australia. It is the only 19th Century building constructed for banking purposes still standing in Mount Gambier.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 2. Mount Gambier Hotel**  
Holds the earliest hotel license (1847) in town. It was transferred to this site from Watson Terrace when the existing building was opened in 1862. Extensions were added in 1867, 1869 and 1883, with the verandah being added in 1902.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 3. Old Post Office**  
Originally built as a telegraph office in 1865. Postal and Telegraph services combined here in 1887. The two wings were added in 1906.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 4. Former Norris Agency Offices**  
Built in 1900 to the plans of Alexander Haig, with an Italianate Style facade for Mr. Sydney Norris, a general agent and accountant.  
LOCAL HERITAGE
- 5. Former S.A. Farmers Union Building**  
Constructed in 1914 as a showroom and offices. It is worth noting how the unpainted limestone has weathered in 100 years.  
LOCAL HERITAGE
- 6. Former Savings Bank of S.A.**  
Constructed in 1906 and was the first independent country branch of the bank. The remnants of the ivy which almost completely covered it until recently, can still be seen.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 7. Christ Church Anglican**  
Completed in 1866. Sunday School built 1869 demolished 2006. Jubilee Hall built 1915, then rebuilt in 1951 after a fire. 1978 saw additions to the vestry from dolomite salvaged from the first hospital which was demolished in 1971.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 8. William Charlisk & Co.**  
A timber and iron extension was added to the rear in 1909, which ran through to the yet to be named Margaret street. A 3 feet wide loading dock ran down the full side of both buildings but has since been removed.  
LOCAL HERITAGE

• Above: Bay Road, 1955. Below: Methodist Church, 1890.



We acknowledge and thank everyone involved in the previous City of Mount Gambier Heritage Committee for the work and research they put in to the historic information enclosed in this brochure.

More information about these and many other historic buildings around the city can be found on the Mount Gambier Library website [www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/](http://www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au/) library and at the Mount Gambier Visitor Centre.

**Mount Gambier Visitor Centre**  
35 Jubilee Highway East  
Mount Gambier SA 5290

**Freecall 1800 087 187**  
Email [visitorcentre@mountgambier.sa.gov.au](mailto:visitorcentre@mountgambier.sa.gov.au)  
Website [www.discovermountgambier.com.au](http://www.discovermountgambier.com.au)

  [mountgambiervisitorcentre](https://www.facebook.com/mountgambiervisitorcentre)

[www.genesiscreative.com.au](http://www.genesiscreative.com.au)

- 9. Blue Lake Mill**  
A.A. Brice & Co., and Thomas Borthwicks & Sons both operated from this site. Constructed of dressed limestone and rock face dolomite. The successful tenders for the works were Messrs. Hosking & Jones, Masons; Mr. J. Boothey, Carpenter; and Mr. H. Wheeler, Painter.  
STATE HERITAGE
- 10. Railway Station**  
Built to the design of Mr. C.E.Owen Smyth by Mr. R.H. Hewitt, Mason and Mr. W. Essery, Carpenter. It replaced the first station built in 1879 to service the newly opened Beachport line. Situated approximately 100 metres to the east, it was demolished in 1955.  
LOCAL HERITAGE
- 11. Shipping Office**  
Captain Edward French (senior) and his young son, also Edward, arrived in Adelaide in 1854. Edward senior died in 1877. The family were always connected with shipping and were agents for the Adelaide Steamship Company, and also operated the ship "Flinders" running weekly trips between Port MacDonnell and Melbourne.  
LOCAL HERITAGE
- 12. Her Majesty's Gaol**  
Calls for Mount Gambier to have its own gaol started in the early 1860's. The youngest prisoner admitted to the gaol was a nine year old boy in 1895. The most frequent prisoner admitted was to enter the gates 43 times between 1867 and 1890. Today the building is used as an award winning accommodation and function centre.  
STATE HERITAGE



• Old Post Office. Above: 1869. Below: Current Day.



• Convent of Mercy. Above: 1918. Below: Current Day.





# A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

## CITY OF MOUNT GAMBIER

### 13. Old Court House

This building was last used in its official capacity in 1974 and was given into the care of the National Trust by S.A Premier Mr. Don Dunstan in 1975. It has seen many varied cases, from three murderers condemned to death, to children accused of stealing a canary or throwing stones! The inside retains many original features.

STATE HERITAGE

### 14. Roller Flour Mill 1885

Some of the equipment for the new flour mill came from Mr. Williams previous mills (he operated five in all) but he installed new porcelain rollers in this one. Thomas Henry Williams was on the first town council in 1876 and Mayor from 1881-1882. He became the first man to own a motor car in Mount Gambier.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 15. Mac’s Hotel

First commenced on this site in 1864. The current hotel was opened for business in 1882. It was named after the first two licensees, Mr. MacDonald and Mr. McKenzie.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 16. Former Varcoe Foundry

This building was erected for T.H. Varcoe in 1911 using rare yellow dolomite. It was one of the early brass and iron foundries to operate in town.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 17. Jens Hotel

Built in 1884 on the site of the town’s first hotel (1847) and was called the Town Hall Hotel. An eastern extension was added in 1904. The limestone section was built in 1927.

STATE HERITAGE

### 18. Jens Annexe

Constructed in 1902 as a Coffee Palace for Adolf Rubenkonig. It was purchased by the Jens family in 1922 and the upper storey used as staff quarters for the hotel. The two buildings were connected by an underground tunnel.

STATE HERITAGE

### 19. The Gardiner Fountain

Made in Carlton, Vic., by A.A. Sleight & Co., at a cost of £600 and given as a gift to the town in 1884 by Captain Robert Gardiner. It is claimed to be the first large marble fountain made in the colony.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 20. Old Town Hall

Constructed in 1882 and used as a Council office and meeting rooms. The clock and tower was donated by T.C. Ellis of Benara Station and were added in 1883. Civic use ceased in 1981.

STATE HERITAGE

### 21. Institute Library & Hall

Constructed in 1869. The upper storey was added in 1886. The building was used as a library and also between 1911 and 1926 as a silent movie theatre. The building features a stained glass/leadlight ceiling.

STATE HERITAGE

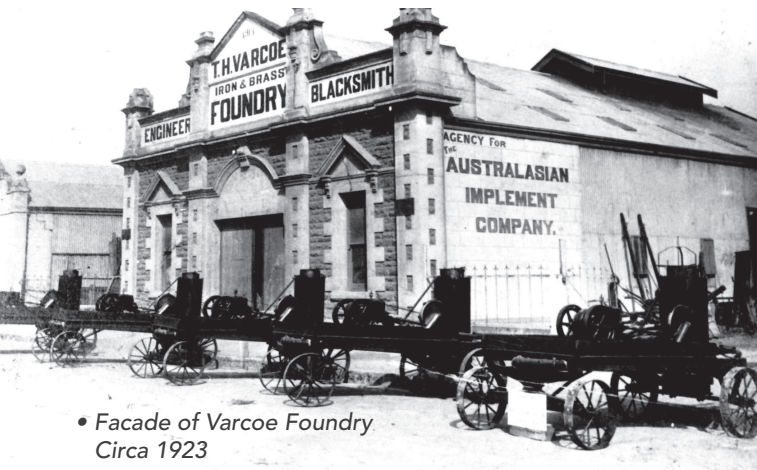
### 22. City Hall

(Located at the rear of the Institute building) Constructed as part of the Library and Hall in 1869. Major alterations and additions were completed to the City Hall in 2003/04.

### 23. Riddoch Art Gallery

(Formerly the Star, Ozone and King’s theatres) Built in 1906 to cater for the growing needs of public entertainment space. It was used as a movie theatre from 1926 until 1966. Live productions continued until 1981 when the Sir Robert Helpmann theatre was opened. Major interior and exterior renovations and additions have taken place since 2009, which were officially opened on 11 December 2011.

STATE HERITAGE



• Facade of Varcoe Foundry  
Circa 1923



### 24. Catholic Church of St. Paul the Apostle

The foundation stone was laid by the Right Rev. Dr. Reynolds, Roman Catholic Bishop of S.A. Provision was made for the future erection of a spire on top of the tower but it never came to fruition. With a final cost of over £10,000 it was dedicated on 19th April 1885.

STATE HERITAGE

### The Catholic Deanery

The original plans drawn by Thomas Hall showed 11 main large rooms with 13 foot high ceilings, including a Library, Reception Room, a Parlour, and Dining Room. There were also to be servants’ rooms, kitchen and pantries (with a cellar), a bathroom and storerooms which had 11 foot ceilings.

STATE HERITAGE

### 25. Convent of Mercy

12 Sisters of Mercy arrived in May 1880 from Ireland via Buenos Aires, landing at Beachport , then by train to Mount Gambier. They set up a school in Crouch’s former store which was soon too small. It was decided to build a new convent. It cost nearly £7,000 and was built by Henry Knight.

STATE HERITAGE

### St. Paul’s Hall

The style of the hall is Grecian and its prominent feature is the ornamental portico. It was opened by the Most Reverend Archbishop Spence in 1916, at a cost of £2,400 and was designed by architect Mr. A.P. Daniel.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 26. Frew Park

In March of 1886, a deputation of about 30 men called on John Frew at his home “Hedley Park” on Bay Road to ask him to “make the Cricket Oval over to the town”, as there was no more suitable place in town for cricket, athletics and other recreations. He thought on it for several days and then wrote to the Mayor agreeing to their request.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 27. Lecture Hall and Sunday School 1904

The pilasters, facings and mouldings are of white limestone, filled in between with rock faced red dolomite. The base is of rock faced gray dolomite and the moulded base and jambs to the doorway are of red and gray dolomite.

STATE HERITAGE

### Methodist Church

In 1880, a small fire at the rear of the church destroyed the bell shed and the ‘water closet’. The bell which originated from a sailing ship, was then sent to the Kalangadoo Methodist church. The Manse for this church was built in 1868 in Gray Street, and still stands today. The church was designed by George Pannell.

STATE HERITAGE

### 28. District Council Chambers

The foundation stone was laid on 18th August 1933 by the Chairman Mr. A.F.Sutton. At that time the District Council had 96 miles of main roads and 383 miles of district roads. The architect was Walter White, who was Mount Gambier’s “modernist” and he designed it in an unadorned style.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 29. The Mount Gambier Club

Prior to the official opening of the Mount Gambier Club, it had ‘comfortably furnished reading and writing rooms’ and a billiard table had been installed. Mr. J. Botterill (President) was entrusted with the honour of formally declaring the club open.

LOCAL HERITAGE

### 30. Caledonian Hall

This is a fine example of a substantial classical revival building constructed in rock face limestone and gray dolomite, with rusticated bases to paired pilasters and heavy pediment and parapet treatment. Note – the original leadlight windows.

STATE HERITAGE

### 31. Executor Trustee

This building, which is in stark contrast to its neighbours, represents the continuing development of commercial activity after the second world war.

STATE HERITAGE

### 32. Commercial Mills

All milling operations ceased by 1975. In 1984 Mr. Leon Riquier purchased the near derelict site and commenced restoration which saw these wonderful old buildings begin their new life as a food and entertainment hub. Several buildings have been demolished and were replaced with a cinema by then owner Mr. Vince Versace in 1997.

STATE HERITAGE