Directed Study report: Lost Theatres of Adelaide
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This Report has been produced as a part of the assessment for ARCH 8404 Directed Study in Archaeology graduate topic in the Department of Archaeology, Flinders University.
Executive summary

This report represents conclusions and findings based on my directed study within the AusStage project. I was presented with a list of 24 performance venues that were believed to have been lost. The aim of this project was to locate, date and find as much information as possible about the different venues. This information will be used to expand the AusStage database, and build a better understanding of the use and longevity of live performance venues in Adelaide. In order to complete this research the State Library of South Australia and Trove databases were used extensively.

The reports offers short accounts of each venue detailing, where possible, locations, basic descriptions, types of performances, end dates of venues, and what happened to the fabric of the venues was able to be obtained. This document also represents the importance of using newspapers when conducting historical research.
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Introduction
My directed study was completed with the AusStage organisation, which is based at Flinders University, under the immediate supervision of Jenny Fewstar. AusStage is an organisation that focuses on researching live performance in Australia. To showcase the information the organisation has created an openly accessible Internet database, which can be found at http://www.ausstage.edu.au. The database is created and maintained by a variety of independent researchers based at different educational facilities across Australia, as well as some private researchers with an interest in the performing arts.

Aim
The aim of my placement was to research a list of 24 venues, that had either been lost or had little to no information known about them. The names of these venues are: Adelphi, Austral Gardens, Beach’s Rooms, Bijou, Canvas Theatre, Chinese Wintergarden, Empire, Exhibition Hall, Garners/Hudson’s Bijou, Kings Theatre, King’s Ballroom, Majestic Theatre, Palaise de Dance, Queen’s Hall, Regent, Sheridan Theatre, Soundshell, Star Theatre, Studio Theatre, Theatre Royal, Tivoli Gardens, Union Hall, Victoria Hall and White’s Rooms. Jenny Fewstar generated this list, during her time spent researching performance venues in Australia. The list incorporates performance venues of all kinds and is not limited just to theatres. In conjunction with this report, some information was then presented at the joint conference of the International Association of Music Librarians (Australia) (IAML) and Performing Arts Special Interest Group of Museums Australia (PASIG) on the 28 September 2012 at the University of Adelaide. The spoken paper and associated power point projection can be seen in Appendix One.

Literature Review
Prior to my completion of this report, there was little to no information about the majority of these theatres available. The AusStage database did have some information on these theatres, but this was mostly lists of plays and detailed information of the production company and directors. Outside of this database, there is little concise information detailing theatres in Adelaide. The body of literature in
this area consist of images at the State Library of South Australia, an isolated book chapter (Fischer, 1960), historical walking trail snippets by the Rundle Mall Authority (Rundle Mall Management Authority, 2012) and a chapter in a heritage report (McDougall & Vines, 2006).

Fischer presents an account of professional theatre in Adelaide between the years of 1838-1922. She provides an account that encompasses a mini history and highlights of the theatres life (Fischer, 1960). The Rundle Mall Authority created a heritage trail for tourists, which consists of a short paragraph detailing heritage items in the Rundle Mall (Rundle Mall Management Authority, 2012). One of the items on the trail was the Regent theatre, now the Regent Arcade. McDougall & Vines submitted a thematic history of Adelaide to the Adelaide City Council in 2006. This unpublished document provides an excellent overview of the history of Adelaide. It details basic accounts of social life within Adelaide, and a sub section of this refers to theatres and pubs. This document was helpful in understanding the roles of theatres in a broader sense for life in Adelaide, and contextualizing broader historical events and the effects that these had on the theatres of Adelaide (McDougall & Vines, 2006:90).

Methodology

In order to obtain as much information about the theatres as possible I used the Internet and archival collections. As stated previously, the AusStage database has lots of information regarding the titles of plays and production companies. For this reason I did not record the names of any productions. Predominantly I used the Trove database hosted by the National Library of Australia and collections held at the State Library of South Australia. Where possible I have also tried to locate any material remains that may still exist from the venues that were the subject of this investigation.

Trove

While searching the Trove database I initially conducted a broad search to understand the scope of what was available. After this I mostly used the Digitized Newspapers category. Here I used the advanced search option; I searched using the name of the theatre and its location in quotations, limited my results (initially) to just newspapers from South Australia. In order to read and digest these items, I then broke the results
up into decades, and then individual years in order to assess clearly what was going on at the theatres. Once I had read these articles I then did a broader search (keeping the search keywords the same), but removed the geographical parameter in order to retrieve other information.

The Trove database only extends to 1954, so for theatres that were in operation after this date, I had to use information from the State Library, heritage reports, city walking trails and specialised websites dedicated to aspects of performance (such as TheatreOrgans.com) in order to construct a narrative for the theatre sites.

State Library

The State Library held little documentation that helped to locate and retrieve any other information about the theatres. The pictorial collection, etchings and glass plates were very useful in locating the theatres and revealing their appearances, and in some cases even their uses.

Using these methods there were ten venues that I was unable to find precise locations for and one I was unable to find any information for. I was unable to find exact locations for the following venues; Austral Gardens, Canvas theatre, Chinese Gardens, Empire, Exhibition, Queens, Royal Palais de Dance, Soundshell, Tivoli Gardens and Victoria Hall. These approximate locations are shaded on the map below. The Adelphi theatre is the only theatre in which I could not find any substantial information for.

While conducting this research the only problem that I encountered was the names of the venues. Some of the names provided on the list are correct, while others were a fraction or a proportion of the name given. When examining the newspapers, some of the venues were known by owners/managers surname or by the name of the visiting troupe that was currently playing at the venue. This presented an initial problem, but through exposure to the same venues and social groups, this problem was overcome.
Shapes on the Map
Where an exact location was known a pin drop with a circle inside it were used (see Star Theatre), where there is a line on the street, it is indicative that the venue was somewhere on that street. The irregular shaped shaded areas on the map are used to show an approximate area of where the theatre may once have been.

The Floating Palais de Dance uses a pin without a dot inside of it. This was done because this location is indicative of the dancehalls location when it began to take on water in 1928. I was unable to attain if this was its permanent site.

The Legend and data fields
The majority of the venues for research are located on the maps. When more than one theatre was operational in the same address, the original theatre is plotted. The dates of the theatres listed in the legend correspond to overall occupational use on that site as a theatre irrespective, of name changes.

Timelines
Some of the theatres that are listed above show large amounts of time as occupation (i.e White’s Rooms), this is because the venue changed its name many times within this timeframe.

Timeline for 96 King William Street
The venue initially opened as White’s Rooms 1856-1880, this was followed by seven other live performance venues upon the same site. The venues name changes and years are; Garners 1880-1892, Hudson’s Bijou 1892-1900, Tivoli 1900-1916, Majestic 1916-1967, Celebrity theatre Restaurant 1967-1969
The Kings Theatre is listed above as being in operation between 1911-1954. The Kings Theatre was used between 1911-1928, after this refurbishment took place and the building re-opened as the Kings Ballroom.

Results
The results that follow include the information that has been collated on the listed theatres, detailing (where possible) their location, date of construction, primary uses, dates of final use and photographs. Any notable events that occurred at the theatre are also included in the description.
Table One: Locations and years of venues operation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theatre Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Opening year</th>
<th>Closing year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelphi</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austral Gardens</td>
<td>Behind Ayers House</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach’s Rooms</td>
<td>Hindley Street</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvas Theatre</td>
<td>Flinders Street</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Garden</td>
<td>Behind the Exhibition Building</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Theatre</td>
<td>Grote Street</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition building</td>
<td>North Terrace</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garners</td>
<td>96 King William Street</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson’s Bijou</td>
<td>96 King William Street</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Theatre</td>
<td>318 King William Street</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Ballroom</td>
<td>318 King William Street</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majestic Theatre</td>
<td>96 King William Street</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Palais</td>
<td>North Terrace</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating Palais</td>
<td>Under the City bridge</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Hall</td>
<td>Grenfell Street</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent Theatre</td>
<td>Rundle Street</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheridan Theatre</td>
<td>49-50 Mackinnon Parade</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Shell</td>
<td>Bank of Torrens, Elder Park</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Theatre</td>
<td>Corner of The Parade and Queen street</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Still in operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Theatre</td>
<td>North Adelaide</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Royal</td>
<td>Hindley Street</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tivoli Gardens</td>
<td>Adelaide Oval</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Hall</td>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Hall</td>
<td>Gawler Place</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White’s Rooms</td>
<td>96 King William Street</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1880</td>
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</table>
When analyzing the dates of occupation from the table above, the White’s Rooms and all other theatres on this location have been omitted.

Table Two: Activities’ available and years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Year first offered in venues</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short comedies</td>
<td>1851, 1880, 1892, 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxing</td>
<td>1915, 1920, 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse racing</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue hire</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance classes</td>
<td>1915, 1924, 1929, 1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>1870, 1910, 1921, 1922, 1932, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety shows</td>
<td>1880, 1913, 1914, 1934, 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving pictures</td>
<td>1923, 1948, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>1856, 1868, 1929, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live music concerts</td>
<td>1857, 1915, 1945, 1951, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>1863, 1864, 1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Hall</td>
<td>1857, 1881, 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dances &amp; Balls</td>
<td>1864, 1914, 1924, 1928, 1931, 1951, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
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<td>Billiards</td>
<td>1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auction House</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operas &amp; Operettas</td>
<td>1850, 1856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horticulture shows</td>
<td>1856, 1863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Lessons</td>
<td>1859</td>
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Table one shows the years that the venues were in use. The table shows that semi-permanent theatres were much shorter lived than the built permanent structures. The majority of short-lived theatres were the semi-permanent open-air theatres such as the Canvas theatre (in operation for a year), the Tivoli Gardens (in operation for one year) and the Chinese Garden (in operation for three years). On the other hand the permanent built structures had a considerably longer life span, potentially due to more possibilities of reuse for alternate purposes than entertainment.

During times of economic depression the venues were largely reutilized as multifunction performance spaces, which hosted a wide array of entertainment. From Table 2 it can be seen the wide array of entertainment activities that were available at the performance venues. The years that are listed indicate the first year that, that activity was available in the different theatres; plays/pantomimes are excluded from this list as they were put on continually throughout the venues occupation. The table shows loose trends in entertainment activities, throughout this select group of theatres. The use of the venues as meeting places, lectures halls, live music venues and dances is a common theme throughout the duration of the theatres life. Activities that maybe considered ‘cheaper’ (than theatrical performances) to host such as boxing, billiards and moving picture screenings grew in popularity around 1915-1925. This period also shows venue hire being pushed extensively throughout the theatres. There are two key factors that could explain this.

The first is the one set of the First World War (1915-1918). During this period all resources including mass amounts of men and women volunteered to help with the war effort. In turn the standard of daily life suffered and expensive leisure pursuits were not chased. This military during this period needed more space in order to cope with the influx of recruits. During this time, two venues, The Royal Palais and the Tivoli Gardens, were used by the military. The Royal Palais was converted to the military pay office and the Tivoli Gardens (in conjunction with the Cricket Club, which was also located on the Adelaide Oval) was utilised as a 700 men army camp.

The second is the onset of the Great Depression and the effects that it had on social activities throughout the 1920s-1930s. There have been three major macroeconomic depressions in
South Australian history the first in 1840s, the second in the 1890s and the Great Depression of the 1930s (Fisher & Kent, 1999:1). These dates can be seen to correlate with the abandonment of some theatre venues. Table one shows that five theatres closed between 1929-1937 and two closed between 1872-1888. One of the main factors of economic depression is the high rate of unemployment. In South Australia during these periods (1840s, 1890s, 1930s) unemployment rates were at an all time high and without steady income many people lost their homes and had to live in makeshift accommodation (Australian Government, 2009). It is reasonable to conclude that leisurely social activities were not heavily patronized during these periods. Many venues turned to various other avenues instead of theatre performances, including venue hire. A summary of these activities can be seen in table two. The theatres that closed during depression period were done so as a direct response to poor audience attendances, and the inability to cope through the financial difficulty.

The Venues

Adelphi
There are only fleeting references to an Adelphi theatre in Adelaide dating from 1840, with no image or location available. In a single newspaper article from 1840 the theatre is described as being the first built theatre in the colony (SA Register 27 June,1840). This would suggest that this theatre pre-dates the Queens Theatre, which is widely held as being the first purpose-built theatre in mainland Australia (Fischer, 1960:81). I was unable to locate any evidence that would suggest the Adelphi Theatre pre-dates the Queens Theatre. The newspaper article simply states that the theatre is the first in the colony and that a play entitled ‘Duchess de la Van Balliere’ was a huge success (SA Register 27 June,1840). There is another isolated reference to the theatre in February 1851, which states that there will be a comedy entitled ‘Mrs. Bunburys Spoons’ performed that evening (SA Register 22 February,1851). After this any references to the Adelphi theatre are concerned with visiting theatre troupes from various other Adelphi Theatres, and are dated after 1914. When the newspapers advertised the troupes the performance would be referred to as “Adelphi Theatre”; showing a style of theatre, rather than a location. There were two Adelphi Theatre
troupes that visited Adelaide. The first was from Sydney and the second from London. The performances by these troupes usually occurred at the Theatre Royal on Hindley Street.

**Austral Gardens**

Austral Gardens was an open-air theatre that operated between 1914 and 1931. The theatre was located behind Ayers House (State Library Pictorial Collection ID:B68328). Planning for the theatre commenced in June 1914 (*The Advertiser*, 25 June, 1914). It opened on Friday 27 November 1914 with a charity gala, the proceeds of which went to help the ‘relief of the suffering’ (*The Advertiser*, 27 November 1914). The Austral Gardens was extensively used for boxing and horse racing. These were regular fixtures at the theatre and operated almost continually in favourable weather. The theatre was also a great space for dances, with descriptions of a grand dance hall with excellent stage placement. Dance classes were also available at the theatre (*The Advertiser*, 9 January, 1915) and the venue offered rooms and facilities for hire to the general public for events (*The Advertiser*, 12 May, 1915).

The great economic depression of the 1920s greatly affected the Austral Gardens. The venue drops from the entertainment features of the newspapers and was seemingly not putting on any entertainment pieces during this period. In August 1928 the Adelaide Hospital wished to purchase the Austral Gardens in order to ease accommodation pressures at the hospital. This was met with much public backlash (*The Advertiser*, 11 August, 1928). In order to take advantage of this newfound publicity the Austral Gardens held a dance. This dance was the last recorded entertainment venture at the Austral Gardens (*The Advertiser*, 23 August, 1928). The next mention of the Austral Gardens is an auction notice, posted in December 1930 (*The Advertiser*, 10 December, 1930). The notice stated that all items within the building and construction materials were for sale.
Beach’s Rooms
The Beach’s rooms were opened in 1870 and disappear from the newspapers in 1872. Beach’s Rooms was located on Hindley Street (State Library Pictorial Collection ID:PRG1399/1996/5/2/1). The rooms were opened in June of 1870 with a ball (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 11 June, 1870). Beach’s Rooms was largely used as a lecture and meeting hall, not as a theatre. The multifunction performance venue was used almost exclusively by the Australian Natives’ Association (ANA) (*The Advertiser* 29 October, 1889). The ANA was founded as a friendly society whose membership was open to Australian-born males only (Australian Unity, 2012). The association had two aims; first to be a friendly society offering financial support to its members in need, and second to promote
the moral, social and intellectual improvement of its members (Australian Unity, 2012). For this reason the entertainment sessions provided by Beach’s Rooms were mostly lectures on an eclectic array of topics (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 18 October, 1872). The venue was also used sporadically for presentations (*South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail*, 18 June, 1870) and dinners (*South Australian Register*, 2 July, 1870). I was unable to find any evidence of what happened to the Beach’s Rooms after 1889.

**Image Two: Beach’s Rooms, 1908**

![Image of Beach’s Rooms, 1908](image)

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: RRG1399/1996/5/2/1

Inaugural dinner of the ‘Royal Society of St. George’. Taken at Beach’s Rooms on 23 April 1908

**Bijou**

Multiple newspapers refer to the Bijou Theatre in Adelaide, however these often have misleading or contradictory addresses and varying times of occupation. The South Australia Register states that: The White Rooms, was rented out to Mr. A Garner in 1880 for a period of 21 years; with the intention of turning the building into a Bijou Theatre (*SA Register*, 17
March, 1880). This building then became known as the Garners Theatre (*SA Register*, 14 May, 1880). I was unable to find any further reference to a Bijou Theatre in Adelaide (that wasn’t in connection with Garners Theatre or Hudson’s Bijou).

As the first quote suggests in the phrasing ‘into a Bijou Theatre’, Bijou is a style of theatre, not an individual location. It is a style of Victorian theatre construction, design and decoration; in a bijou theatre these three factors work to create a grand theatre style that was popularized in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Bijou theatres were small and highly decorated venues that tended to have two, three or four levels, poles, curved balconies and very ornate paint and plaster work. There were once many bijou theatres and cinemas across America and Australia (Munro, 03/12/2012). The Theatre Royal in Hobart, Tasmania (1834), is hailed as being Australia’s only remaining example of Victorian Bijou Theatre style (Australian Performing Arts Centers Association, 2012).

**Canvas Theatre**
The Canvas Theatre was located on Flinders Street approximately ‘two doors down’ from Pulteney Street (*The Advertiser*, 15 March, 1939), and operated between 1939-1940. The Canvas Theatre was fully waterproof, warm and very comfortable (*The Advertiser*, 15 March, 1939). Multiple entertainment groups frequently occupied the Theatre; the first was the Coles Variety group (*The Advertiser*, 2 September 1838), then there was a troupe known as the Frisco Frolics (*The Advertiser*, 9 July 1940). The Frolics were a ‘all-star’ entertainment group with musicians, actors, magicians and everything and anything in between. The Canvas Theatre often held charity functions and dances in order to raise money for deserving funds. From August 1940 – December 1940, the stage was used for charitable needs, the venue could be rented free of charge to any charity that wished to use it (*The Advertiser*, 31 August, 1940). After this mention in August of 1940, the theatre is not featured in any more newspapers. I was unable to find an evidence to suggest what may have happened to the theatre after 1940.
Chinese Wintergarden
The initial list of performance venues lists a Chinese Wintergarden Theatre, I was unable to find a Chinese Wintergarden; but there was a Chinese Gardens in operation in Adelaide. The Chinese Gardens was designed to be the most spectacular open-air theatre in Australia during the 30s; and was operated between 1934-1937. The theatre was behind the Exhibition Building (on the northern side of North Terrace, opposite Pulteney Street). The theatre was managed in conjunction with the Theatre Royal, and was owned and run under the direction of SA Theatres Ltd (The Advertiser, 22 November, 1934). The theatre was opened on Wednesday 28 November 1934 (The Advertiser, 26 November, 1934) but presumably closed in 1937/1938. Following public petition and an order from the Department of Education, the Chinese Garden had to be moved in the summer of 1938 so that the students of the Adelaide Technical High School could have an exercise space (The Advertiser, 8 December, 1937).

After a newspaper article announcing that the decision to redistribute the land to the high school there is no mention of the Chinese Gardens or what happened to its limited structural remains. The Chinese Gardens is recognised as the only known open-air theatre in Australia to have a full sized organ installed (VintageHammond, NDA).

Empire
The Empire theatre was located on Grote Street, Victoria Square; and was used between 1909-1952. The theatre was designed to show moving pictures as well as theatrical performances (The Advertiser, 27 December, 1909). The theatre remained in operation until 1952 (Adelaide City Council, ND). The theatre screened local and international movies and on at least one occasion Russian films were screened at the theatre. (The Advertiser, 17 September 1948). As with most of the theatres, this venue was multifunctional and was capable of hosting large meetings such as union meetings (The Advertiser, 14 March 1950), ‘Anti-Christ in Action’ meetings/lectures (The Advertiser, 10 June, 1950). The ‘Anti-Christ’ meetings and lectures were themed information session that facilitated religious debate and bible studies, not lectures on the occult as the name may suggest. The venue also held live music and dancing (The Advertiser, 3 May, 1951), health wellness campaigns and information evenings (The Advertiser, 9 September, 1950).
In December of 1928 the owner (MR.L.E.Rowe) was taken to court by his employees concerning a wage dispute. The employees claimed they were paid below what they were initially contracted for and were not entitled to any bonuses. He was found guilty and had to pay the employees the money that he owed them, the conviction was noted on his record but he did not serve a punishment (The Advertiser, 19 December, 1928). After this the theatre was closed for a year.

The Empire Theatre reopened in December of 1929. The venue had been especially redeveloped for boxing matches and championships (The Register News-Pictorial, 9 December, 1929). Initially the Theatre held twice-weekly boxing matches (The Register News-Pictorial, 8 January, 1930), but this was suspended after roughly a month due to poor ticket sales and attendance (The Register News-Pictorial, 5 February, 1930). Boxing matches came back in October of 1930, when there were up to five fights performed a night with extra entertainment in between rounds (The Advertiser, 31 October, 1930). There is no mention of the theatre for almost 10 years until 1945 when there is a concert performance and presentation of prize money to the French film association was reported (The Advertiser, 7 December 1945). After 1945 the venue is not reported in the newspapers until the People Stores Ltd purchases the building in 1952.
Image Three: Exterior of Empire Theatre, 1952

Image Four: Interior of Empire Theatre, 1952

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B13019

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B13020
Exhibition Hall
I could not find any evidence of an Exhibition Hall in operation in Adelaide. The only building that featured prominently in the Adelaide social scene with ‘exhibition’ in the title was the Jubilee Exhibition Building.

Exhibition building
The exhibition building, aka Jubilee Exhibition Building, was located on the northern end of North Terrace, and was only open for a year (1887-1888). The building was specially designed to host the Adelaide Jubilee exhibition in celebration of the colony's fiftieth birthday, and Queen Victoria’s jubilee, the building opened in June 1887 and closed in June 1888 (Government of South Australia, 2009). The building housed exhibits that showcased local, national and international industrial, technological, manufacturing and cultural achievements (Architects of South Australia, 2008). In order to transport the exhibits and visitors to the building, a new stretch of railway line was built from the Adelaide Railway Station to the venue (Government of South Australia, 2009A). The Exhibition was very popular with 789,672 people attending the exhibition, which in 1888 was more than twice Adelaide's population of 309,820 (Government of South Australia, 2009).

The hall was modeled on the Great Exhibition of 1851 staged in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London (Government of South Australia, 2009). The two-story building was in a classical style with stucco decorations. Pilasters separated the semi-circular headed windows on each floor, and an imposing dome that rose from the middle of the building, (Government of South Australia, 2009). The top of the dome measured 115 feet (35.05 meters) from the street and at 63 feet (19.20 meters) there was an observational look out which enabled panoramic views of the city (Illustrated Australian , 23 July, 1887).

The Exhibition Building was used for numerous other public and institutional uses before being demolished in the 1960s to make way for the Napier building, car park and plaza at the University of Adelaide (Architects of South Australia, 2008). During times of Depression (1880s, 1920s) and widespread homelessness people were permitted to sleep within the
Exhibition Building. There were so many people sleeping here that the building has been described as ‘a huge temporary dormitory for the unemployed’ (McDougall & Vines, 2006:51).

Only two material remains of the Jubilee Exhibition Building can be found. The first is a typical late Victorian fountain that once stood outside the main entrance way. This fountain is now located in Rundle Mall and is known as the Rundle Mall Fountain (Rundle Mall Management Authority, 2012). Secondly, a set of steps into the Napier building are part of the original entranceway into the Exhibition Building (McDougall & Vines, 2006:51).

Image Five: Exhibition Building, 1886
Garners theatre, aka Garners Bijou Theatre (*South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail*, 22 May, 1880), was in operation between 1880-1892. The venue used to be the venue known as White’s Room’s. After extensive renovation the theatre was recognised as a bijou theatre (*SA Register*, 15 May 1880). The theatre was renovated and appeared to be almost twice the size of Whites Rooms, Garners had a capacity of 1300 people. The venue was decorated in Jacobean style, with a color scheme of French grey and yellow, and multiple grand chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. The renovations tried to avoid bright and garish colors and flamboyant metal and glass work. The balustrades and seats were covered in red velvet. There were separate entrances for the stalls and dress circle and separate cloakrooms for the ladies and gentleman (*South Australian Register*, 15 May, 1880). The stage was 42 feet (12.8 meters) wide and 23 feet (7 meters) deep (*SA Register*, 15 May 1880). The grand opening of the theatre was on Monday 17 May 1880 (*South Australian Register*, 15 May,1880).
The multi-function theatre was used for plays and pantomimes but also featured short comedic plays and operettas (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 21 May 1880), minstrels (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 3 August, 1880), magicians and illusionists (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 11 October, 1880). The venue also acted as an Auction House (*South Australian Register*, 22 October, 1883) and as an exam hall and presentation venue for the North Adelaide Grammar School (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 23 September, 1881). The theatre was the primary residence for the Adelaide Dramatic Club (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 10 November, 1883).

The Theatre was heavily criticised for its entrances and walkways; numerous surveys concluded that there were not enough fire exits or wide doorways in case of fire. The fire marshals claimed that the evacuation time was too long, and that something needed to be done immediately (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 20 January 1882). This was a reoccurring problem for Garners and crops up several more times that year (*South Australian Weekly Chronicle*, 13 May, 1882). There is no evidence of this being fixed while the venue traded as Garners. The Theatre was closed and its name changed to Hudson’s Bijou on Monday 27 June 1892 (*South Australia Register*, 27 June, 1892).

**Hudson’s Bijou**

The Garners Theatre venue was leased from Mr. Garner (the owner of the theatre) by Mr. Hudson for seven years; the Hudsons Bijou operated between 1892-1900. The ceiling was repainted in light art tint with large handsomely coloured flowers, which had rich glassy chandeliers hanging from the centre of them. Above the proscenium arch was a bald eagle with the flags of ‘all nations’ flanked by the American and imperial shields. The walls were decorated with flouted columns with panels of art in between each column. The chairs were re-upholstered in red plush velvet. The Hudson’s Bijou boasted of the giant escape doors and wide doorways that had been installed. The Hudson’s Bijou was officially opened on August 6 1892 (*The Advertiser*, 12 July, 1892). The venue was continually used for pantomimes and theatrical events, and was very rarely used for anything outside of this realm. The last performance at the Hudson’s Bijou was on Wednesday 21 June 1898 (*South Australian Register*, 21 December, 1898). The theatre was purchased by Mr. Rickards, who turned the
Hudson’s into the Tivoli Theatre, which opened following renovations on Thursday 21 June 1900 (*The Advertiser*, 13 June, 1900)

**Image Seven: Interior of Hudson’s Bijou, 1892**

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B13272

**Kings Theatre**
The Theatre was located on the corner of King William Street and Sturt Street at 318 King William street, and opened in February of 1911 and closed in 1928 (State Library Pictorial Collection ID:B1827). The Theatre was built as a direct result of increasing public demand for superior places of entertainment equipped with modern technologies (i.e electric lightning). There were main entrances on King William Street and Carrington Street, the venue was large enough to seat 1500 people. The inside of the venue has seats were upholstered in blue velvet, a proscenium arch 26 feet (7.92 meters) by 28 feet (8.53 meters) and a verandah out front. The theatre was opened on 1 March 1911 (*The Register*, 14 February, 1911).
The theatre regularly showcased comedic acts, sketch artists, pantomime plays (*The Register*, 4 January, 1913), boxing matches and championships (*The Mail*, 18 January, 1919). The theatre was closed with the intention to be remodeled on 28 March 1928 (*The Register*, 15 March, 1928). The Theatre was completely rebuilt into a two-story building. The bottom Floor was transformed into an up to date ballroom, featuring a rubber buffered floor. The top floor was to remain as a theatre. There was a ball to celebrate the grand opening of the venue on 22 August 1928. (*The Advertiser*, 13 August 1928). When the theatre could no longer sustain an audience, the primary focus became the ballroom. This building was renamed the Kings Ballroom in August of 1928 (*The Advertiser*, 20 August, 1928) and was only assessable to people wearing suitable attire (*The Advertiser*, 20 August, 1928). Dance classes were offered at the ballroom. Following a serious fire, it remained vacant for many years before being transformed successfully into legal offices in the 1980s.

Image Eight: Kings Theatre, 1911

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B1827
King’s Ballroom
The Kings Ballroom was initially the Kings Theatre; and was in operation between 1928-1954. Following an almost complete renovation of the building, it reopened as the Kings Ballroom in August 1928. There were regular dances held at the location including, fancy dress parties (The Advertiser, 24 August, 1931) dance competitions (The Advertiser, 6 October, 1931) and Benefit Balls (The Advertiser, 15 October, 1931). Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the theatre supplemented its income by hosting dance lessons (The Advertiser, 20 December, 1954). After 1954 there is no mention of the ballroom, until its conversion into Law Offices in the 1980s.

Majestic Theatre
The Majestic Theatre was located in King William Street, Adelaide city center. The Majestic Theatre is the same venue that was previously known as White’s Rooms, Garners, Hudson’s Bijou and Tivoli Theatres. The new restorations were designed to make the Majestic Theatre the most modern theatre in Adelaide during 1916 (The Advertiser, 1916). After renovations the premises reopened as the Celebrity Theatre Restaurant on 24 November 1967. This lasted for two years when a new owner of the theatre again made adjustments and reopened it in 1969 as The Warner Theatre. The Warner theatre operated as a cinema and as a live theatre venue. It closed on 31 March 1979, and from 14 June 1979 till 1980 the theatre was sublet by a branch of drive in theatres (CAARP, 2012).

Despite much public petition (Mosler, 2005:51) for heritage listing and protection, the building was demolished in 1981 (AusStage, 2012C; Mosler, 2005:51). A Commonwealth Bank was built on the site of the theatre (the bank lists its address as 96 King William Street) in 1984. Following this, much debate ensued regarding the irregularity of the design, which some see as a blot on the landscape and detracting from the historic context of the city’s heart (Mosler, 2005:77).
Palais de Dance
There were two theatres known as the Palais de Dance that were in operation at the same time. One was a conventional theatre and dance hall located on Pirie Street (The Advertiser, 22 May, 1915) (also known as the Royal Palais), the other floated on the River Torrens, moored near to the Royal Palaise, and was known as the Floating Palais de Dance.

Royal Palaise
The Royal Palaise was an open-air theatre with a sliding roof, which was built in 1914 and closed in 1929. The venue covered an area of half an acre with dancing room for 1500 people (seating for 1700 people). The dancing at the ballroom was supervised so that there was nothing of ‘inappropriate character’ (The Mail, 27 June, 1914). The theatre was described as
being very delicate and ornate with only ‘refined entertainment’ being offered (The Mail, 27 June, 1914). There was no expense spared in the furnishing of the theatre. There were tables outside of the theatre where refreshments could be served, four decorated entrances to the theatre, and motorcar and carriage parking capacity (The Mail, 27 June, 1914). Intermittently there was also a skating rink inside the venue (The Advertiser, 15 May, 1915). After May of 1915 there is little to no mention of entertainment being offered at the ballroom. From article extracts it can be inferred that the management and staff of the ballroom were serving during the First World War. The only mentions of the place are adverts for its hire on a weekly (if not more frequent basis) from early July 1915 until November 1916. The only event held there during this time was a fundraising ball for nurses at war in August 1915 (The Mail, 28 August, 1915).

In December of 1916 the military commenced occupation of the building. From here the pay office and coupon control operated (The Mail, 23 December, 1916). It is unclear when the military vacated the building however there was a dance on Wednesday 10 Dec 1919 in aid of the French Red Cross Appeal (The Register, 10 December, 1919) as well as markets, fetes and dances held throughout December. It is reasonable to conclude that the military left in November/December of 1919. The theatre closed on January 25 1920 for renovations (The Register, 14 January, 1920). The renovated theatre opened on 20 April 1920 (The Advertiser, 24 April, 1920). The new interior boasted stalls inside that sold sweets, smokes, balloons, flowers, refreshments, confetti and streamers (The Mail, 24 April, 1920).
Image Ten: Opening night of the Royal Palais, 1920

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: PRG 280/1/28/382

Image 11: Royal Palais, 1928

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B5229
Floating Palais de Dance

Construction of the Floating Palais de Dance started on 09 October 1924 (The Register, 9 October, 1924); the venue opened on December 5 1924 (The Advertiser, 28 November, 1924) and closed in 1929. The building was in a Moorish style with 5 domes, a dance floor on upper deck and a promenade on the lower deck (State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B4278). The floating Palaise possessed several novel features (excluding its floating foundations), first the Palaise had a roof top garden were patrons could sit and relax (The Advertiser, 28 November, 1924). Secondly, the dance floor was unique in that the patrons danced around the orchestra (the orchestra pit was in the middle of the floor). The new ballroom was open till 11pm every night of the week (The Advertiser, 18 November 1924).

An accident caused the venue to take on large amounts of water on the 27 November 1928 (The Advertiser, 27 November, 1928). A few days later the theatre was laying partially submerged, the water pumps were failing to bail out enough water (The Register, 31 November, 1928). No one knows what caused the accident which lead to this; it was suggested and widely believed to be the work of vandals, yet some even suggest that there may have been a bomb (The Chronicle, 1 December, 1928). In the days proceeding the incident there was a ‘stash’ of ammunition shells found on the bank of the River Torrens (The Chronicle, 1 December, 1928). The water pumps worked tirelessly to stop the building from completely sinking and made the theatre stable enough so that it could be renovated and reopened on the 1 December 1928 (The Advertiser, 1 December 1928). This cost a lot of money and as a direct result of the financial strain caused by the incident, the Royal Palaise and the Palaise de Dance was closed on January 4 1929 (The Advertiser, 5 February, 1929). The Floating Palaise was sold in April 1929, with the intention of the hall being demolished (The Register News-Pictorial, 23 May, 1929). The building materials were then sold on 13 June 1929 (The Register News-Pictorial, 12 June, 1929).

After January 4 1929 there is no mention of the Royal Palaise being utilised for anything, it would be reasonable to assume that it lay abandoned. This building was eventually demolished in 1967. The site is now a car park (Government of South Australia, 2009B).
Queen’s Hall
The Queens Hall (1915-1933) was located on the north side of Grenfell Street, approximately 12 yards (10.97 meters) west of Wyatt street (State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B6398) and boasted 900 chairs (The Mail, 28 August, 1915). The Grand opening of the Queens Hall was on August 1, 1915 (The Mall, 31 July, 1915).

There are mentions of the Queens Hall being used as a theatre in 1903. There are four mentions of this. The first states that the Edison Company were concluding their time at the theatre (The Register, 15 January, 1903) and a farewell performance was to be given on Wednesday 21 January 1903 (The Register, 21 January, 1903). The third states that Wonderscope were at the theatre (The Register, 4 February, 1903). The forth states that there was a variety show at the theatre (The Advertiser, 12 March, 1903). After these mentions there is no other account of the Theatre before 1915.
The theatre was utilised for a variety of purposes including farewell events to soldiers on their way to war (The Register, 21 March, 1916), Red Cross concerts (The Register, 5 August, 1915), Dances and theatrical performances, Dance classes (in Modern and old style) (The Advertiser, 5 April, 1929), University socials for the University of Adelaide (The Register, 7 March, 1925), amateur state billiards competition (The Register, 6 July, 1926), Auction House (The Register, 22 November 1920), Boxing arena (The Register, 30 March, 1921) and a Lecture Hall (The Register, 18 May, 1921). The Queens Hall was instrumental in communicating war information to the people of Adelaide; important war announcements were made at the theatre as well as analytical lectures on the war, government and tactics (The Advertiser, 14 December, 1916).

Sadly fire broke out in the rooms above the hall destroying several rooms, furniture and décor (The Register, 23 May, 1921). The building was not utilised until renovations and remodeling occurred in 1933. The Queens Hall now boasted one of the best dance floors in Australia. After these renovations the theatre was known as the Embassy Ballroom. (The Advertiser, 2 December 1933).
Image 13: Queens Hall, 1933

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B6398

Image 14: Queens Hall, with soldiers waiting outside, 1918

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: PRG 280/1/15/1053
Regent

The Regent Theatre is located on the south side of Rundle Street (State Library Pictorial Collection ID:B8347), the venue opened in 1928 and closed in 2004. The movie theatre opened in June 1928 and was described as Australia's most luxurious theatre. The Regent theatre bore a very strong resemblance to the Sydney Regent, which opened three months earlier. The theatre was described as a "Palace of Art" (*The Advertiser*, 29 June, 1928), and contained tapestries, paintings, statuary and other miscellaneous objects of art that enhanced the idea of grandeur and cultural prominence in the theatre (VintageHammond, ND B).

The theatre had an orchestra pit that could accommodate a full size orchestra, and in 1930 a huge Wurlitzer organ was installed. In December 1953, the first CinemaScope film “The Robe” opened for an eight week run. After the introduction of TV in South Australia in late 1959 early 1960, the theatre noticed an economic down turn. As a response to this the theatre sold off 298 seats, which enabled six shops to be built along one side of the stalls (CinemaTreasures, 2000A).

In 1967, there were still dwindling theatre audiences so a plan was made to create an arcade in the stalls area of the theatre which would accommodate 38 shops at ground level. During this time the theatre was remodeled and was reopened on 30th May 1968 with seating for 894 people on one level. The theatre eventually closed in 2004 where it was gutted and incorporated in to the Arcade. The Arcade is The Regent Arcade (CinemaTreasures, 2000A). Recently there has been expressed desire to build a new movie theatre within the arcade (Higgins, 2012).
The Sheridan theatre is located on 49-50 Mackinnon Parade in North Adelaide, this venue was used as a theatre between 1946-1984 (McDougall & Vines, 2006:98). The front portion of this building is on the City of Adelaide Heritage Register; and is recorded on Kingston's Map of 1842, making it one of less than a dozen structures in the city built before this date (McDougall & Vines, 2004:14).

Between 1842 and 1882 the building was owned by Dr. John Sheridan and operated as a school, offering tuition for all ages. Dr. Sheridan was instrumental in fueling the cultural life of North Adelaide residents and established many creative outlets for the city’s youth. When the remaining children of Sheridan died the land and house passed to the Institute Association of South Australia, who refurbished it and re opened the building in February 1925 as a
community hall (McDougall & Vines, 2004:14).

In 1946 much of the surrounding land was sold off and the institute became an important center for live theatre. The Adelaide Theatre Group was resident at this address from 1963 to 1984. They called their theatre the Keith Sheridan Theatre. The theatre has been described as being intimate and flexible, without fixed seating. It is noted that the audience often sat on tables (McDougall & Vines, 2004:14). The building also operated as a kindergarten throughout the 1950s (The Advertiser, 7 December, 1954).

The building ceased to be used as a theatre in 1984 (McDougall & Vines, 2006:98), and is now a private dance studio.

Image 16: Sheridan Theatre, 1925

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B2443
Sound Shell

The Sound Shell (1954-1970) is the name given to a large open-air semicircular shaped stage in which performers (usually an orchestra or a choir) sit underneath. The Adelaide Sound Shell was paid for by the newspaper, The Advertiser and donated to the community of Adelaide. The venue was located in Elder Park on the bank of the Torrens (The Advertiser, 25 November, 1953). There was much public protest in order to get this venue built. Initially there were public appeals to the council offices, which asked for a renovation and beatification of the banks of the Torrens including a dance floor, colorful tress and a sound shell (The Advertiser, 8 February, 1950). This did not happen. To ease public scrutiny the council installed a temporary sound shell at the Colley Reserve in Glenelg in 1952 (The Mail, 20 December, 1952).

Construction of the Sound Shell at Elder Park started in early 1954 and was handed over to the SA orchestra on Friday 17 December 1954, and produced an extraordinary sound (The Advertiser, 18 December, 1954). From then on this was the yearly venue for the Carols by Candlelight concert (The Advertiser, 24 December, 1954). The remainder of the year the Sound Shell was used intermittently for dance and birthday parties as well as public open-air art exhibitions (The Advertiser, 3 March, 1963). The Sound Shell was demolished sometime between 1970-1972 in order for the festival Centre to be built (dmgRadioAustralia, 2009). I was unable to find an accurate date for demolition but, it is known that work for the building of the Festival Centre started in 1970 and on 2 June 1973 the Festival Theatre opened (Adelaide Festival Centre, 2008).
Star Theatre

The Star Theatre is located on the corner of The Parade and Queen Street, Norwood and was opened on 16 May 1923 (The Register, 16 May, 1923). The movie theatre was in operations on a daily basis up until 1937. Between 1937-1943, the theatre was used almost exclusively for benefits to raise money for varying causes (The Advertiser, 1 January, 1937, The Advertiser, 10 August, 1937, The Advertiser 10 February, 1938, The Mail, 29 June, 1940, The Advertiser, 4 July, 1940, The Advertiser, 15 February, 1943). The theatre also made hefty donations to war time charity groups and benefit associations (The Mail, 29 June, 1940). The theatre reopened on Friday 16 December 1949 as the Odeon Star Theatre (The Advertiser, 17 December, 1949). The Odeon Star Theatre closed in 1985, and in its place the Odeon Theatre opened. The Odeon Theatre was only in operation for a year, and closed in early 1986. Later in the 1986 the Star Theatre opened once again (Hunter, 2012).

The theatre reopened as a live theatre, specialising in children’s productions, (CinemaTreasures, 2000B) the underage theatre and performance group known as Theatrebugs is based out of the Star Theatre (Hunter, 2012). The entrance to the theatre
moved around the corner onto Queen Street, and the original entrance/foyer on The Parade is now a restaurant (CinemaTreasures, 2000B).

**Image 18: Odeon Theatre, Norwood**

Source: http://cinematreasures.org/Theatres/35468

**Studio Theatre**

The Studio Theatre opened in 1940 with a Ballet performance (The Advertiser, 29 May, 1940), and closed in 1961. The Theatre was located in North Adelaide; it is unclear when the theatre stopped operation. The theatre was used as a training space and was one of Adelaide’s first locations for composing original music and choreographing original dances (mostly ballets). These would then be performed at the theatre and occasionally (owing to popularity) at the Theatre Royal (The Advertiser, 1 June, 1940). Outside performances were also held at the theatre these were mostly British and French music, dance performances, while tenor’s also occasionally performed at the theatre (The Advertiser, 27 June, 1940). Inside the theatre was a separate room called the “Arts Club” the arts club was an instrumental and vocal chamber, and was periodically referred to as a soundshell (The Advertiser, 4 November,
1940). Performances and operettas were running continually at the theatre until 1945 (*The Advertiser*, 19 November, 1945), but after 1945 there is no mention of the theatre until Thursday 22 July 1954. The article posted on 22 July 1954 states that a variety of dance classes were to be held at the theatre (*The Chronicle*, 22 July, 1954). In September there is an announcement of a renovation and remodeling of the theatre, which opened October 6, known as the New Studio Theatre (*The Advertiser*, 7 September, 1954). The new theatre was to be non-commercial and focused as an educational facility for those wishing to focus on theatrical performances (*The Advertiser*, 6 October, 1954). The new theatre is described as an enchanting, intimate theatre, decorated in soft green velvet tones. (*The Advertiser*, 7 October, 1954).

It is unknown what happened to the theatre. The last mention of it that could be located is a video of a children’s performance at the theatre in 1961, which is stored at the national library of Australia (Morris, 1961).

**Theatre Royal**
The Theatre Royal was located on Hindley Street in the city centre and was opened on the 13 April 1868. This was Adelaide’s second purpose built theatre; possibly the third purpose built theatre if more information could be connected to the Adelphi theatre. The theatre was enlarged to fit 3000 people, and was reopened on the 25 March 1878. The new theatre emerged with some new luxurious additions such as a gold star speckled blue domed ceiling, and dress circle seats made of white and gold cushioned backings with red plush embroidery (Painter, ND).

The theatre underwent another remodeling and reopened on 11 April 1914 (*AusStage*, 2012B). In May 1955, the owners of Miller Anderson, the department store located next door to the theatre, bought the theatre for £175,000. By this time the theatre was dilapidated and in desperate need of many costly improvements (Painter, ND). The company was concerned about the structural safety of the proscenium wall; and this was the determining factor in the decision to demolish the theatre by the end of 1962. The old theatre site is now a car park (Painter, ND).
The Theatre Royal played a significant role in the entertainment industry of South Australia. It was the first venue to screen a moving picture show, which was screened on the 19th October 1896 (Cinema And Theatre Historical Society Inc. Australia, ND)-98 (Painter, ND). It was also the home of countless theatre productions and lectures within Adelaide for almost a century.

Image 20: Theatre Royal, 1881

State Library Pictorial Collection ID: B58005/50
Tivoli Gardens
The Tivoli Gardens was located on the Adelaide Oval; and was in operation for a year between 1914-1915. The Tivoli Gardens was designed to be one the most modern open-air theatres in the colony. The theatre opened on Saturday January 17 1914 (The Register, 10 January, 1914). The Tivoli Gardens was used as the summer residence for performers from the New Tivoli Theatre on Grote Street. It was decided that during the summer months, that the New Tivoli would close and the Tivoli Gardens would be used instead (The Advertiser, 15 January, 1914). The Tivoli Gardens experienced sold out nights ever since its opening, the shows were that crowded that on the 21 January 1914, the New Tivoli had to reopen(less than a week after it was closed), with performers performing two shows a night, in order to cater for demand (The Register, 21 January, 1914). The most popular novelty acts that performed at the theatre were DuCalion a comedian who wobbled about on a ladder, Rosa Roma a gypsy violinist from continental Europe and Alberto & Co magicians (The Register, 21
January, 1914). During the winter months the theatre was not used and performances were once again transferred back to the New Tivoli Theatre.

The Tivoli Gardens reopened its doors for the summer season on November 2, 1914 (The Mail, 2 November, 1914). The theatre had a dramatic decline in numbers and performances were more sporadic. In August of 1915 the military took possession of the Adelaide oval, including the Tivoli Gardens and the Cricket grounds. The military created a camp were 700 soldiers were to be based. The military utilised all the built structures they could. The Entrance building into the theatre became a barbers; the dressing rooms were utilised as the quarter masters office; The stage was used as a storage space with bulk store for all material required by the camp; the refreshment booth was used as a gun room and the stands of the Tivoli Gardens and cricket ground were used as sleeping quarters. (The Advertiser, 25 August 1915). After 1915 there is no mention of the Tivoli Gardens again.

Union Hall
Union Hall was built by the University of Adelaide and was officially opened on the 8 August 1958 with a ball (AusStage, 2012), the venue closed in 2007. During this 48-year period there was 334 different performances held at the theatre. The Theatre was initially built as a place to house theatre guild productions of the Australian University Union (AusStage, 2012), and was designed to hold 499 people (Goers, 2009). This number was reduced to 415 in 2007 when the building was converted from a theatre into a lecture hall (Harris, 2009). The hall was then demolished in November 2010. The building was an example of 1950s Functionalism, and was designed by Adelaide architect Louis Laybourne Smith (Goers, 2009). Union Hall was the selected venue for the first Festival of Arts in the 1960s, and was also the venue for the first 10 Adelaide Film Festivals between 1959-1968 (Akerman, 2010). During the period of 2007-2010, the theatre was used as lecture hall by the University of Adelaide, as well as by various community groups. The layout of lecture halls was unsuitable for theatre and dance performances thus they were ceased during this period.

When the announcement of the intention to destroy the theatre was made, public backlash resulted in community action, and the theatre was awarded a 3-month provisional heritage listing in February 2010. This allowed more time for submissions for a permanent spot on the
heritage list (Akerman, 2010). Heritage listing had been sought for the theatre a decade earlier but this application was dismissed. At the end of the 3-month probationary period, the theatre was removed from the state heritage list, and in September 2010 the University of Adelaide demolished Union Hall in order to make way for a $77 million science centre (Goers, 2009).

Image 22: Union Hall, 2012

Source: Battenbough, G. 2010

Victoria Hall
The Victoria Hall was located on Gawler place and was known by a variety of different names such as the Working Men's Association Hall, the Association Hall (South Australian Register, 30 July, 1880), and the YMCA Hall (The Register, 28 April 1919). The first mention of the name Victoria Hall was in 1887, during an advert of the next St. John Ambulance meetings (South Australian Register, 30 September, 1887). Prior to this the venue dates back to at least 1873, where it was known as the Working Men's Association Hall.
Articles related to this venue during this time frame pertain to job advertisements, where in order to apply the person had to present themselves to the Hall (The South Australian Advertiser, 20 September, 1873).

The Victoria Hall (1887-1950) was a multifunctioning and versatile venue. The theatre was used for children’s plays (The Advertiser, 26 August, 1911), meetings by the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) (The Register, 19 Thursday, 1915) and the ANA (The Advertiser, 15 September, 1910), religious lectures (The Register News-Pictorial, 3 July, 1929), meetings for the YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) (The Register News-Pictorial, 31 October, 1929), short comedies and plays (The Mail, 6 November, 1926), travelling performers (The Register, 13 July 1925) and history lectures (The Register, 15 August, 1922).

By the 1930s the venue is used almost entirely for music recitals/competitions, eisteddfods and student concerts from local schools. Occasionally the venue was used for gymnastic contests (The Advertiser, 7 November, 1938) and lectures. Donald Bradman gave a lecture here on Cricket in 1932 (The Advertiser, 30 January, 1932). This trend continued during the 1940s and 1950s where recitals were only interrupted by volleyball (The Advertiser, 4 August, 1950) and weightlifting contests (The Advertiser, 28 July, 1950). I was unable to attain what happened to the theatre after this point.

White’s Rooms
Whites Rooms was located on King William Street, Adelaide city centre, and was also known as Adelaide’s concert and Assembly Rooms. The venue was in operation between 1856-1880. The rooms were designed to be the most comfy and well-presented rooms in the colony. The rooms were used for concerts, Balls, Exhibitions, Bazaars, charitable purposes, public meetings and dinners. There was a large ball/dinning room, which boasted a grand piano, with several smaller rooms annexing the main building. There was also a large cellar underneath the rooms and individual rooms were offered for either short or long term lease (South Australian Register, 31 July, 1856). The Rooms opened on Saturday 16 August 1856, and was a huge success (South Australian Register, 18 August, 1856). Another huge
celebration ensued on Tuesday 9 September 1856 when the Rooms were granted its liquor license (*South Australian Register*, 9 September 1856).

The Rooms offered a variety of entertainment such as operatic singers and tenors (*South Australian Register*, 30 September, 1856), singing lessons (*South Australian Register*, 1 October, 1856) Societal meetings ‘South Australian Auxiliary piple society’ (*South Australian Register*, 15 October, 1856), Horticulture shows (*South Australian Register*, 7 November, 1856), South Australian Institute meetings (*South Australian Register*, 11 August, 1857), Frequent concerts (*South Australian Register*, 26 August, 1857), violin and piano lessons (*South Australian Register*, 21 January 1859) art exhibitions, dioramas of the American War (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 27 June, 1864), Masonic Balls (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 22 August 1864) Temperance society meetings (*South Australian Register*, 7 April, 1868), Flower show (*South Australian Register*,27 November, 1863 ), Anatomical museum (that had been specially arranged for ladies viewing) and lecture hall (*South Australian Register*, 30 November, 1863).The Rooms were also used as a place of worship by the Baptist Church, until the church on Flinders Street was built; services were every Sunday (*South Australian Weekly Chronicle*, 20 July, 1861).

The Rooms also functioned as an exam Hall for the Adelaide Education Institute (*South Australian Register*, 15 December, 1857). The Rooms were also the first social building to be lit with gas in 1859 (*South Australian Register*, 5 September, 1859). In 1865 there was a proposal to enlarge the Assembly Rooms to seat 1,500 people but nothing came of this (Government of South Australia, 2012).

By the 1880, White Assembly Rooms had been extensively remodeled and converted into a bijou theatre (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 13 May, 1880). The remodeling included the addition of a dress circle and some private boxes (Government of South Australia, 2012). After the remodel the Whites Rooms became known as the Garners Theatre (*The South Australian Advertiser*, 13 May, 1880), after several more changes of management, title and function the building was demolished in 1981 (Government of South Australia, 2012).
Conclusion
Through researching online newspapers I have revealed the locations, some activities and end dates of the theatres were possible. This report presents a short and semi-concise overview of a group of theatres in Adelaide that were believed to have been lost. I have demonstrated that the theatres were not lost; they just needed to be extracted from the historical record. It can be seen that all of the venues operated as multi-function venues. This meant that the venues could change depending on the needs of its patrons or the type of entertainment it was to offer. This continual changing nature of the venues meant that some spaces were occupied as entertainment spaces for a long period (Such as the initial White’s Rooms), while other were only in operation for a few short months. The venues that were brick built structures generally lasted longer that the open-air tent like theatres. It is reasonable to assume that the built theatres lasted longer due to their ability to adapt and host events on a broader scale, than what the open-air venues could accommodate.
Many of the venues were adapted to facilitate a wide array of entertainment options, that directly responded to the contemporary social, economic and political conditions of the time; this can be clearly seen in the entertainment that is being offered and the lectures that were presented at the venues. During times of hardships for the South Australian/Australian economy a rise in events such as boxing, dancing and billiards, is noted, as they may be considered cheaper to host then traditional theatre and pantomimes. Some activities such as plays and lectures were popular at all times in the life span of the venues studied. The lectures that were on offer in these public spaces were often connected with a poignant contemporary issue. During the World Wars the themes of lectures mainly concerns itself to the war effort, but occasionally also included discussions on tactics, and analysis of the movements in Europe. In the aftermath of World War 2, the lectures became more religious in nature, with debates for and against religion being hosted in Adelaide. By using the popularity of lectures, politicians were able to engage the voters, and hear policies being debated. The ability to adapt quickly to changing cultural climates is apparent in all of the multi function venues, the theatres adapted, generally as a response to financial pressure, in order to stay in business in Adelaide.

This report also illustrates the importance of online newspapers. Without the digitized collections of Trove, very little information would have been able to be gathered on the theatres. When utilizing this contemporary approach to historical documentary research, it can be seen just how much information and potential for other avenues of research can be found hidden in old newspapers.
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Conversions were made using this website:

http://www.sciencemadesimple.net/conversions.html

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Appendix One: PASIG paper and power point

Introduction
Good Morning my name is Louise Harris, and I am here to talk to you today about the lost theatres of Adelaide. I shall speak about heritage legislation and its role in the lack of protection of the theatres then I shall speak to you about 3 theatres namely The Union Hall, The Theatre Royal and The Majestic Theatre. These theatres have all been demolished and no trace of their fabric can now be seen.

These three theatres represent vital parts of South Australian Theatre history that have been lost, due to interest from high profit private enterprise and failed legislation. Theatres are invaluable sources of information, they can tell us so much about the living, political, social, economic, and moral and, in some cases even, religious conditions of the time. The opportunity to research all of these factors from one site is a rare context and should be treasured as invaluable sources of knowledge.

History of heritage legislation in South Australia
In order to understand why and how the destruction of the theatres was allowed to go unnoticed on such a large scale throughout Australia, not just South Australia, the history and force of heritage legislation must be examined. Here I shall just discuss South Australia, as it is far too early for a legislation lecture.

Heritage protection in South Australia began with the establishment of the national trust in 1955. Prior to this there was no legislation concerning the protection of old buildings in South Australia (Davison,1991:17). The first buildings to come under National Trust control and therefore protection were Ayers House on North Terrace (Davison,1991:19) and Marble Hill in Norton Summit (Marble Hill,2009). For 20 years the Trust remained the only voice of protection in South Australia.

In 1978 the State Heritage act was passed, this gave the commission a voice to protect and preserve sites significant to the Commonwealth (Davison,1991:23). The Heritage act provides for a register of significance that covers buildings, structures and land including archaeological sites (Yelland, 1991:56). Items submitted to the register go on an interim list for a 12-month period before being placed on the register; this is to allow for public comment (Pearson and Sullivan, 2006:66). Items are then assessed and either recorded or removed from the list entirely, which was the case for The Union Hall. The Act was amended in 1993 then again in 2005, the new changes ensure that heritage professionals sit on the consulting committee and the register was maintained efficiently and effectively (Federation of Australian Historical Societies Inc. ND).

In order to be put on the register a place must meet the conditions shown here. These conditions must be met for a place to be offered protection under the state heritage law. To date only seven theatres that were in operation in the Adelaide city center have made it on to the heritage list. The protected theatres are the Former Sturt Theatre in Rundle Mall (Government of South Australia, 2008A), The Royalty Theatre Angas St (Government of
South Australia, 2008B), Her Majesty’s/Opera Theatre on Grote St (Government of South Australia, 2008C), The Adelaide Festival Centre on King William Road (Government of South Australia, 2008D), The Q Theatre on Halifax street (Government of South Australia, 2008E), The façade of the Regent Theatre in Rundle Mall (Government of South Australia, 2008F) and finally the Queens Theatre on Gilles Arcade (Government of South Australia, 2008G).

The others have been demolished or adapted to be re-used in varying contexts. What was once a vibrant industry is now lost forever, and represented by only a handful of original sites. Theatres can reveal a plethora of information about contemporary issues such as socio-economic conditions during the life of the theatre, which need to be persevered and conserved to enable further study and understanding of all sanctions of history.

The Union Hall

The Union Hall was built by the University of Adelaide and was officially opened on the 8 August 1958 with a ball (Ausstage, 2012). During this 48 year period there was 334 different performances held at the theatre. Androlices and the Lion, The Happy Journey was the first performance at the theatre and took place on the 9th August 1958. The Hall finally fell silent on the 22nd May 2007 after the performance of The Gondoliers (Ausstage, 2012).

The Theatre was initially built as a place to house theatre guild productions of the Australian University Union (Ausstage, 2012), and was designed to hold 499 people (Goers, 2009). 499 seems like a strange number but legislation at the time dictated that buildings with a capacity of 500 people or more had to have a resident fireman in case of disaster (On Dit,1958). This number was reduced to 415 in 2007 when the building was converted from a theatre into a lecture hall (Harris, 2009). The hall was then demolished in November 2010.

The building was an exquisite example of 1950s' Functionalism, and was designed by Adelaide architect Louis Laybourne Smith (Goers, 2009). Initially the theatre had a stage 22m that spanned from front to back and a proscenium arch of 12 m. Under the stage was an extensive basement which held the cast’s dressing rooms, and an electrical room in conjunction with a workshop (On Dit,1958).

Union Hall was the selected venue for the first Festival of Arts in the 1960s, and was also the venue for the first 10 Adelaide Film Festivals between 1959-1968 (Akerman, 2010). During the period of 2007-2010, the theatre was used as lecture hall by the University of Adelaide, as well as by various community groups. The layout of lecture halls was unsuitable for theatre and dance performances thus they were ceased during this period.

When the announcement of the intention to destroy the theatre was made, public backlash resulted in community action, and the theatre was awarded a 3 month provisional heritage listing in February of 2010. This allowed more time for submissions for a permanent spot on the heritage list (Akerman, 2010).
Heritage listing had been sought for the theatre a decade earlier but this application was dismissed. At the end of the 3 month probationary period, the theatre was removed from the state heritage list, because it did not fulfill the requirements needed to remain under the protection of the heritage act (ABC, 2010). In September of 2010 the University of Adelaide received permission to demolish the Union Hall in order to make way for a 77 million dollar science center (Goers, 2009).

**Theatre Royal**

The Theatre Royal was located on Hindley Street in the city Centre and was opened on the 13 April 1868. This was Adelaide’s second purpose built theatre after the Queens Theatre, which was built in 1840. The theatre had a stage measuring 13 by 15 meters and a proscenium arch measuring 9m. The auditoriums sat 1500 persons, with 12 dressing rooms being able to cater for many performers. There was three entrances to the theatre, the first will feature ornamental gateway entrance that lead to a large vestibule measuring 8 by 14 m, which housed a saloon and 2 parlors. Sitting on top of the vestibule was another saloon larger and ‘more comfortable’ saloon. The second entrance gave access to the boxes, the third was the entrance for the gallery and featured a separate bar. There were several boxes available in the theatre, but one was the most grand, and was reserved for the upmost important visitors (SA Register, 1867:3).

The theatre was enlarged to fit 3000 people, and was reopened on the 25 March 1878. The new theatre emerged with some new luxurious additions such as a gold star speckled blue domed ceiling, and dress circle seats made of white and gold cushioned backings with red plush embroidery (Painter, ND).

The theatre underwent another remodeling and re opened on 11 April 1914 (Ausstage, 2012B). In May of 1955, the owners of Miller Anderson, the department store located next door to the theatre, bought the theatre for £175,000. By this time the theatre was dilapidated and in desperate need of many costly improvements (Painter, ND). The company was concerned about the structural safety of the proscenium wall; and this was the determining factor in the decision to demolish the theatre by the end of 1962. The old theatre site is now a car park (Painter, ND).

The Theatre Royal played a significant role in the entertainment industry of South Australia. It was the first venue to screen a moving picture show, which was screened on the 19th October 1896 (Cinema And Theatre Historical Society Inc. Australia ,ND)-98 (Painter, ND). It was also the home of countless theatre productions and lectures within Adelaide for almost a century.

**Majestic Theatre**

The Majestic Theatre was located in King William Street, Adelaide city center. While the site of the theatre shows continued occupation on the site for leisure purposes, the site was regenerated and renamed continually throughout its history. Until 1916 the venue was known as White’s Rooms, which was opened in 1856 (Painter,1996). Following extensive renovations, the site was renamed Majestic Theatre in 1916. The new
restorations were designed to bolster the Majestic Theatre into being the most modern theatre in Adelaide (The Advertiser, 1916). The new building was designed with all the innovative ideas for architecture of the day (The Advertiser, 1916).

The building was approximately 38 m by 19m, and included four ornamental boxes on each side of the proscenium opening, measuring 9m wide by a height of 7m. Around the floor line of the dress circle and stalls there was an oak dado rail. The theatre boasted two spacious entrances off of King William st, the main entrance had an ornamental tiled floor, with majolica tiled dado on each side and a spacious marble staircase leading up to the dress-circle. The seating was considered to be quite an innovation at the time. The seats were tip-up leather upholstered chairs, The theatre also had an impressive ventilation cooling and heating system with 68 air vents distributed throughout the theatre, which allowed for a complete change of air every 7 minutes. With this renovation the theatre also introduced "Cameo" lighting to the theatre scene of Adelaide (The Advertiser, 1916). This lent space and an opulent atmosphere to the interior of the building.

After renovations the premises reopened as the Celebrity Theatre Restaurant on 24 November 1967. This lasted for 2 years when a new owner of the theatre again made adjustments and reopened it in 1969 as the Warner Theatre. The Warner theatre operated as a cinema and as a live theatre venue. It closed on 31 March 1979, and from 14 June, 1979 till 1980 the theatre was sublet by a branch of drive in theatres (CAARP, 2012).

Despite much public petition (Mosler, 2005:51) for heritage listing and protection, the building was demolished in 1981 (Ausstage, 2012C & Mosler, 2005:51). A Commonwealth Bank, designed by contemporary standards was built on the site in 1984. Following this, much debate has ensued regarding the irregularity of the design, which some see as a blot on the landscape and detracting from the historic context of the city’s heart (Mosler, 2005:77).

**Conclusion**

These three theatres are just a sample of the many that once existed in Adelaide. Throughout Adelaide’s history the city has boasted many Theatre venues, as well as assembly rooms and dance halls. As well as the three I’ve discussed here, they included the Adelphi theatre, the Austral Gardens, Beach’s Rooms, Bijou, Canvas Theatre, The Chinese Wintergarden, Empire theatre, Exhibition Hall, Garners, Kings Theatre, Kings Ballroom, Palaise de Dance, Queens Hall, Sheridan Theatre, Soundshell, Star Theatre, Studio Theatre, Tivoli Gardens, Victoria hall, Her Majesty’s theatre and of course the Queens Theatre.

Historically, theatres have been utilised extensively as outlets for entertainment and relief from the hardships of daily life. In history and archaeology, they are important in revealing patterns of social relations and cultural interchange, insights into popular entertainment, economic factors through ticketing pricing, and much more - if the venues are allowed a thorough and proper investigation.

I am currently re-analyzing the artefacts, the construction and the contemporary adaptive reuse of the Queens Theatre on Giles Arcade for my masters thesis. Through this I hope to develop an understanding of the socio-economic and cultural conditions that were in operation between the years of 1840-1877. So far I have analyzed 106 pieces of clay tobacco
pipes, comprising of mostly of stems and bowls. These clay pipes are called cutty pipes and were oval clay bowls with a relatively short stem. The pipes represented at the theatre are largely mass-produced, mostly in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and cheap pipes (Gojak & Stuart, 1999).

They could either have been bought separately cheaply or were free when larger amounts of tobacco were purchased. The bowls were largely undecorated, and wider research in Australia has suggested that this style of plain pipe was more popular with people of a lower social economic status. There were a few highly decorated pipes within the assemblage, which would allude to being used by someone with a higher degree of social standing. These pipes featured cultural connotations possibly linked to the person’s background. Featured on some of the bowls are Union Jack flags in conjunction with sailing ships, Anchors, Thistles, Celtic harp and shamrocks and carton wheels that has a prominent Dutch connotation.

Other decorations include a bowl shaped like a squirrel, a steam that joins the bowl in the shape of an eagle claw and simple geometric patterns. When this is taken into account it can be seen that there was a mixed patronage at the Queens Theatre, in cultural backgrounds and economic status, yet the style of the pipe was the same. Possibly because the shorted stem was more ideal in crowds, or smaller stemmed pipes were more acceptable during this period, but without further research its hard to determine accurately although I think it maybe the first point.

Without the chance to study and excavate below the theatre, these pipes would have been lost and the information that they can tell us would have been left to conjecture through historical documentary records. Destroying sites to allow a more profitable private interest to take over, or even not seeing a venue as significant due to a subjective interpretation of guidelines, is a misjudgment. This approach to heritage is not in the interests of those who cherish our history and who hold in high esteem the places that played a part in helping to create the common culture of a city. While these theatres may be lost to us today, with their stories condemned to newspaper articles, and fleeting advertisements; we should take some solace in the theatres that are protected and will survive for future generations.
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Lost Theatres of Adelaide

By Louise Harris & Jenny Fewster

Structure

- Heritage Legislation
- The Union Hall
- The Theatre Royal
- The Majestic Theatre
- Queens Theatre

Heritage Legislation

- National Trust 1955
  - Limited Protection
- State Heritage Act 1978
  - Establishment of a register of all heritage places (European and Indigenous) in the state.
- Heritage Places Act 1993
  - Heritage Places Regulation 2005

Criteria for Inclusion on Register

- It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.
- It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.
- It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.
- It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
- It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.
- It has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.
- It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organization or an event of historical importance

Former Sturt Theatre

Royalty Theatre

State Library of South Australia, 2006