

4.0 ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF COMPONENTS

4.1.31 Light Square Assessment



Light Square

Existing Planning / Development Plan Context

Light Square exists within the Light Square Precinct CA11 of the *City of Adelaide Development Plan* (pp. 112-116). Its ‘Environment’ is described as:

DESIRED FUTURE CHARACTER

The Light Square Precinct will developed as an exciting area of commercial, cultural, leisure and educational activity by day and night with educational, entertainment and leisure activities sharing the frontages to the Square with offices, a range of visitor accommodation and residential apartments. The arts will take on a higher profile in Light Square through the Centre for Performing and Visual Arts, and the Precinct will provide an attractive and supportive environment for business enterprise. These activities, including outdoor restaurants and cafes, will generate an active street life around the Square with increasing numbers of students, visitors and workers moving through the area.

A transition in built form height and plot ratio is appropriate on the eastern side of the Square between Currie and Waymouth Street, where Precinct CA5 Western Core adjoins.

The formal public open space of Light Square is a key spatial element within the built fabric of the City, and its landscape and surrounding built-form qualities will be reinforced and enhanced to establish a strong, cohesive, and distinctive landscape character. The Square has a formal urban character provided by lawned areas and tall trees leading to the Light Memorial. Paving, planting, lighting and street furniture will aim to unify the disparate sections, to enhance the less attractive north-west section and to provide areas for informal recreation.

The area should be enhanced with bright lighting of pedestrian paths and landscape elements, signs, flags and building illumination to create a diverse and colourful character, particularly at night.

A high level of accessible will be maintained by pubic transport and from public car parks, and attractive and secure conditions will be further developed for pedestrians movement through the Precinct.

One component in Light Square is identified in the State Heritage Register, comprising:

- ❖ Colonel William Light’s Grave and Monument

Several components adjacent to Light Square are identified in the State Heritage Register, including:

- ❖ 41-49 Light Square, Heritage Hotel
- ❖ 63-67 Light Square, Cobb’s Restaurant/Nightclub (former Tobacco Factory)
- ❖ 69-71 Light Square, Regines (former City Mission Hall)
- ❖ 73-79 Light Square, former Sands & MacDougall Warehouse

No components of Light Square have been identified on the National Trust of South Australia’s Register of Significant Trees.

Significant Components and Places

There are several components of cultural heritage merit in Light Square. They include:

Overall Spatial Pattens

Light Square drew its form from the original design by Colonel William Light that created a rectangular road system and park shape in the Square, with a semi-arc to the northern edge of

the Square. This design remained consistent until 1910 when Currie Street was cut through the Square. The landscape character of Light Square was shaped by City Gardener William O’Brien in the 1860s establishing the Moreton Bay (*Ficus macrophylla*) and Rusty (*Ficus rubiginosa*) Fig specimens of which many have since been removed. It received little attention until City Gardener August Pelzer sought to renovate the Square in 1902 introducing many of his preferred tree species but these appear t have struggled within the shallow layer of limestone evident under the Square and its cover of poor soils resulting in a major renovation of trees in 1952 under City Gardener Benjamin Bone establishing much of the present mature character of the Square today. Despite the latter works, the trees established under the Bone period appear also to have struggled to survive the soil and geological conditions of the Square resulting in poor character and appearance to most of the vegetation in the Square today and a lack of a cohesive landscape design. Light proposed a rectangular space, with a roadway encircling the rectangle, with a cross-axial pathway circulation system within the Square. The former has never been compromised. O’Brien and Pengilly appear to have maintained the latter adding a set of perimeter pathways to meet the axes. Despite this the Square spatially exists today with only two excision creating a cut in the north-western corner to enable ease of electric tramway construction and the larger Currie Street excision in 1910 creating the present roadway. Thus,

- ❖ **Light Square (J&E LA.15):** a rectangular space that has been compromised with a small roadway excision to the north-west and a large east-west excision to create Currie Street in 1910, thereby compromising the original large rectangular square park envisaged by Light. **Of some design, historical and aesthetic merit.**



Land Use

The land use has remained consistently, as proposed by Light, as a public park or village common. There is one area of significance evident in terms of its use and function:

- ❖ **Light Square Park Use (J&E LA.15):** the overall Square has retained its design intent and purpose as proposed by Light in 1836. **Of some design and cultural merit.**



Natural Features Responsiveness

Light Square exists within a relatively flat expanse of plateau but harbours a distinctive north-receding slope within its form. The significant natural features in the Square are:

- ❖ **Light Square Slope:** a subtle slope that increases as one moves northwards across the Square and which progressively slightly increases in its slope degree, that visually falsely appears to commence at the Currie Street curtilledge. Provides some geographical interest to the Square. **Of some geographical and aesthetic merit.**



Circulation Networks

Historically Light Square was proposed by Light as a rectangular common encircled by a roadway with a north-south- east-west axis internal pathway system. These components were developed in accordance with this plan and have remained consistent since not being compromised by any vehicular, pedestrian or infrastructure needs. These circulation routes include:

- ❖ **Light Square Road System:** a very open tree-lined roadway system that encircles the Square that has experienced a partial modification in the north-western corner. **Of some design, aesthetic and engineering merit.**
- ❖ **Currie Street Roadscape:** a very open tree-lined road expanse constructed in 1910 enabling through Currie Street movement thereby changing the road system of Light's original Square design. **Of some engineering merit.**



- ❖ **Light Square Pathway System:** an internal pathway system consisting of cross-axis as proposed by Light in 1836, with a basic union jack configuration of a north-south and east-west pedestrian pathway system laid on top established in the 1860s-70s, 1920-30s under O'Brien and Pelzer respectively. **Of some design, aesthetic and engineering merit.**
- ❖ **Light Square Promenade:** an internal north-south promenade as proposed by Light in 1836 that was created in the 1860s-70s under O'Brien and maintained by Pelzer, Orchard and Bone respectively. **Of some design, aesthetic and engineering merit.**



Boundary Demarcations

No evidence is present of past demarcation devices and fencing apart from the fundamental road boundaries.

Vegetation

There are numerous vegetation elements in Light Square that possess cultural heritage merit:

- ❖ **Indian Coral Tree (*Erythrina indica*) specimen:** located in the inner south-western corner of the Square, a good specimen of an Indian Coral Tree (*Erythrina indica*) planted in the 1950s under Bone. In good form and condition. **Of some botanical merit.**
- ❖ **Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) specimen:** located in the inner south-western corner of the Square, a poorly and elderly specimen of a Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) tree displaying signs of dieback, deterioration and age. Probably planted in the 1860s under O'Brien. **Of some botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Swamp She Oak (*Allocasuarina cunninghamiana*) specimen** (J&E TA.34): located on the inner south-western flank of the Square, a robust tall specimen of a River She Oak (*Allocasuarina cunninghamiana*) probably planted in the 1950s during tree renovation works in the Square under Bone. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**
- ❖ **Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) specimen:** located on the inner south-western flank of the Square, a poorly and elderly specimen of an Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) probably planted in the 1870s by O'Brien, displaying extensive signs of dieback and evidence of root disturbance due to underground irrigation works. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) specimen** (J&E TA.35): located in the inner north-western corner of the Square, a robust specimen of a Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) that was planted by O'Brien in the 1860s occupying a visually prominent position on a curve in the Light Square roadway and also seen arriving from the north along the Morphett Street Bridge. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**
- ❖ **Rusty Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) specimen (1):** located in the inner north-eastern corner of the Square, a robust specimen of a Rusty Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) that was planted by O'Brien in the 1860s occupying a visually prominent position on a curve in the Light Square roadway and also seen arriving from the north along the Morphett Street Bridge, displaying some evidence of dead wood and early dieback. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Italian Poplar (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') avenue:** located in the middle north-south axis line of Light Square, some 24 Italian Poplar (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') trees displaying signs of aging, dieback and extensive deterioration, planted in 1952 under Bone. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Irish Strawberry (*Arbutus unedo*) specimen:** located in the inner eastern flank of the Square, an Irish Strawberry (*Arbutus unedo*) specimen planted in 1952 under Bone displaying good form and health. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) specimen:** located on the inner eastern flank of the Square, a poorly and elderly specimen of a Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) tree displaying signs of dieback, deterioration and age. Probably planted in the 1860s under O'Brien. **Of some botanical merit.**
- ❖ **Rusty Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) specimen (2):** located in the inner south-eastern corner of the Square, a specimen of a Rusty Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) that was planted by O'Brien in the 1860s occupying a visually prominent position on a curve in the Light Square roadway, displaying some evidence of dead wood and early dieback. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) avenue:** located on the inner eastern flank of Light Square, a line of 14 young Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) trees in relatively good health and form resulting in a strong visual line of one specimen tree that is in horticultural contrast to trees in the rest of the Square. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **White Poplar (*Populus alba*) specimen:** located in the inner south-eastern corner of Light Square, a specimen of a White Poplar (*Populus alba*) probably being *Populus alba* 'Bolleana' a subspecies extensively used by Pelzer in the early 1930s in the Squares and Park Lands but this specimen potentially planted in 1952 under City Gardener Bone. A specimen in good form but displaying signs of deterioration, aging and dieback. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) avenue:** located on the inner south-western corner of Light Square, a curved line of 10 young Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) trees in relatively good health and form resulting in a strong visual line of one specimen tree that is in horticultural contrast to trees in the rest of the Square. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) specimen:** located in the south-western inner corner of the Square, an excellent example of a Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) specimen in good form and health. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) specimen:** located in the inner north-western corner of the Square, an elderly specimen of a Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) tree probably dating from the 1910s-20s period under Pelzer. In poor condition. **Of some botanical merit.**



Spatial Arrangements

Two areas are present:

- ❖ **Light Square South:** the main portion of the Square created as a consequence of the Currie Street excision in 1910 that shapes the larger character of the Square today. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Light Square North:** the smaller portion of the Square possessing the dominant mature and visually strong Fig (*Ficus* spp) specimens that provides an important landscape entrance to travellers arriving from the north of the Square now possessing a somewhat different character to Light Square South by virtue of its difference in topography and plantings. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



Structures

There are no structures in Light Square of significance.

Small Scale Elements

There are numerous elements in Light Square that have merit. These include:

- ❖ **Light Memorial (J&E OA.3):** located in the centre of the Square, a memorial structure to Colonel William Light under which his remains are buried. Comprising a sculpture 2.7m high, by Scottish sculptor W Birnie Rhind of Edinburgh and a pedestal by architects Messrs Garlick Silbley & Wooldridge with an inscription on the pedestal reading “Colonel William Light first surveyor general, fixed the site and laid out the city of Adelaide in 1836. Erected by citizens 1906.” The statue was unveiled by the state Governor Le Hunte on 27 November 1906. The installation replaced an earlier Gothic pillar structure erected in February 1843 to a design by George Kingston that was later added to with an inscription in 1876. The construction of a moat-fountain around the base of the memorial occurred later. Fountain constructed with City of Adelaide embossed drain access covers. **Of some design, historical, and social merit.**



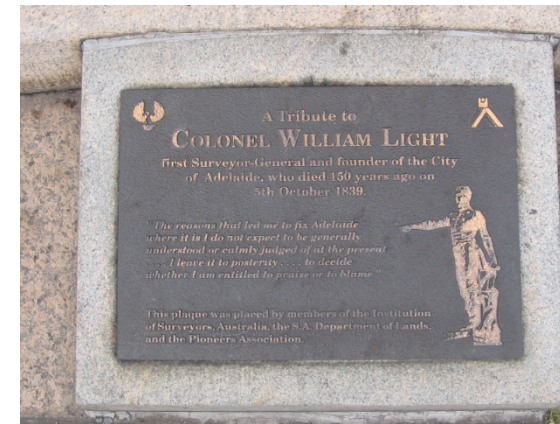
- ❖ **‘Knot’ Sculpture:** located in the inner northern portion of the Square, a chrome metal sculpture work prepared by artist Bert Flugelman in 1975, and located in the visual entrance to the Square from the north. **Of some design and aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **‘Knot’ Sculpture Plaque:** located in the inner northern portion of the Square, a bronze plaque associated with a metal sculpture work prepared by artist Bert Flugelman in 1975. **Of some social merit.**



- ❖ **Institute of Surveyors of South Australia Plaque:** located on the northern flank of the Light Memorial, a bronze plaque to the Institute of Surveyors of South Australia,

South Australian Department of Lands, and the Pioneers Association, unveiled on the 150th anniversary of 1836. **Of some social and historical merit.**

- ❖ **Light Memorial North Plaque:** a bronze plaque recording the life of Colonel William Light, attached to the memorial, buried at this site on 10 October 1839, and died on 5 October 1839. **Of some historical merit.**



- ❖ **Light Memorial South Plaque:** a bronze plaque recording the role of Colonel William Light by the people of South Australia, the state Government and the City, attached to the memorial, with the memorial first raised by the Pioneers Association of South Australia in 1844, and the plaque unveiled by Lord Mayor Theodore Bruce on 21 June 1905. **Of some historical merit.**
- ❖ **Re-Designed Light Square Plaque:** a bronze plaque recording the re-design of the landscape of Light Square in the mid 1980s by Council, located in the centre of Light Square, unveiled by Lord Mayor James Jarvis on 19 October 1986. **Of some historical merit.**



- ❖ **The Eternal Question Sculpture:** located on the inner western flank of the Square, a set of 7 black granite sculpture pieces entitled The Eternal Question commissioned for the Adelaide Festival in 1986, a gift of Barbara and William F Stewart through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation in 1984, on loan to the City of Adelaide Council from the Art Gallery of South Australia since 2003, with the artist being Richard Kelly Tipping (b.1949). **Of some design merit.**
- ❖ **The Eternal Question Plaque:** located on the inner western flank of the Square, a plaque associated with The Eternal Question sculpture piece recording that the sculpture was commissioned for the Adelaide Festival in 1986, a gift of Barbara and William F Stewart through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation in 1984, on loan to the City of Adelaide Council from the Art Gallery of South Australia since 2003, with the artist being Richard Kelly Tipping (b.1949). **Of some social merit.**



- ❖ **Catherine Helen Spence Statue:** located in the inner south-western corner of the Square, a commission given to artist Ieva Pocius in 1986 by the Women's Executive Committee of the Jubilee 150 Board and the Council involving a life-size bronze sculpture, carrying the inscription 'Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1910 social and political reformer, writer and preacher who worked for children', dressed in severe Victorian costume, was positioned in the south-western corner of the Square. Unveiled on 10 March 1986 by Queen Elizabeth II. **Of some design, historical and social merit.**
- ❖ **Catherine Helen Spence Statue Plaque:** brass plaque affixed to the Catherine Helen Spence statue recording a brief historical overview of Spence. **Of some social merit.**



Historical Views and Aesthetic Qualities

Light Square is relatively undulating progressively sloping downhill as you move north across the Square resulting in several views and aesthetic places:

- ❖ **Currie Street West Vista:** a vista looking westwards along Currie Street, through a wide relatively un-treed chamber of two to three storey buildings edging the visual corridor terminating in a vista of the blue skyline beyond as the view crosses West Terrace. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Currie Street East Vista:** a vista looking eastwards along Currie Street, through a wide relatively un-treed chamber of two to five storey buildings edging the visual corridor that

appears to increase in scale and reduce in width, and terminating in a blue skyline and a distant haze of the Adelaide Hills escarpment. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Morphett Street Bridge North Vista:** a vista looking northwards from the Square, and also from the curved roadway of Light Square, resulting in a wide open vista of the northern blue skyline as the roadway appears to disappear with its increase in height to span Lake Torrens with no feature in the backdrop. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Morphett Street South Vista:** a vista looking southwards from Light Square, down the two-storey building-lined vehicular route of Morphett Street with a distant green termination apparition of the Square at Whitmore Square. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



Cultural Landscape Heritage Significance Evaluation

The following table summarises the cultural landscape heritage components present in Light Square. A separate assessment, in the Main Report, positions Light Square's cultural landscapes in the context of the wider Adelaide Park Land.

The Eternal Question Sculpture	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Eternal Question Plaque	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catherine Helen Spence Statue	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Catherine Helen Spence Statue Plaque	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Currie Street West Vista	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Currie Street East Vista	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morphett Street Bridge North Vista	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morphett Street South Vista	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Statement of Cultural Significance

Light Square represents a high symbolic place in harbouring the remains of Colonel William Light, the surveyor of the City of Adelaide. It represents a good example of the Park Land square concept that Colonel William Light was seeking to create, as depicted in his 1836 survey plans for Adelaide, including roadway and pathway system configurations. George Francis and City Gardener William O’Brien sought to establish the latter and undertook period plantings that would create a mid-Victorian styled public park that appropriated the union jack as the pedestrian pathway design and used Victorian era plant species including Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrocarpa*) and Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) in single ornamental and avenue styles of plantings. Pelzer reinforced this planting strategy with period plantings together with other of his preferred species to conserve the spatial pattern and update the landscape style to a more robust Gardenesque atmosphere and character. Despite these plantings vegetation in the Square struggled due to the shallow soils and the ridge of limestone close to the ground surface that stifles strong tree growth. This resulted in a major replanting renovation of the Square in 1952 under Bone and it is clear that a further renovation of plantings must soon be entertained. Despite this, the Square still possesses the original rectangular village green or commonage form and character as proposed by Light. It has been severely compromised by vehicular and tramway alignment changes or excisions, including the Currie Street roadscape, but has retained much of its original pedestrian pathway configuration. Accordingly, it is a moderately intact version of the Square as envisaged by Light as a designed and functional space.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Prohibit the erection of Corporation maintenance infrastructure in Light Square;
- ❖ Remove all overhead wires and stobie poles from Light Square;

- ❖ Revise *City of Adelaide Development Plan* citations pertaining to CA11 to reflect the above conclusions and recommendations;
- ❖ Prepare a Landscape Master Plan for Light Square that seeks to renovate the tree planting strategy, including replacements and new plantings, for the Square, conserves the existing pedestrian pathway system, establishes policy for any additional memorial plaques or similar, enables the positioning of a fountain, enables the use of mid Victorian – early Edwardian style bollards, fencing, gates, paving, edging, light standards furniture, signage, and which seeks to craft a mid Victorian – early Edwardian style public park including the choice of plantings and detailing, and considers any works necessary to conserve and enhance the Light Memorial and its presence in the Square;
- ❖ That the Corporation reviews its underground irrigation and infrastructure policy as it relates to all Squares and seeks to prioritise all infrastructure placement under existing pathways and not through lawns or under the drip-lines of any Significant Tree under the *Development Act 1993* or identified in this Assessment;
- ❖ Review and reconsider all 1960s-2000s street tree planting species and species scales in the inner and outer perimeters of Light Square roadscape in line with the above recommendation, and seek appropriate implementation actions;
- ❖ That the Corporation consider the dual naming of Light Square, as proposed under Amery, to Wauwe/Light Square.
- ❖ Remove all Lemon-scented Gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) specimens, generally planted in the 1970s-80s, from the Square as they result in a incongruous visual setting in contract to the rest of the vegetation palette in the Square.