

4.0 ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF COMPONENTS

4.1.35 Whitmore Square Assessment



Whitmore Square

Existing Planning / Development Plan Context

Whitmore Square exists within the Whitmore Square Precinct R23 of the *City of Adelaide Development Plan* (pp. 390-394). Its ‘Environment’ is described as:

DESIRED FUTURE CHARACTER

Whitmore Square will continue to be the focus of residential activity in the south-west of the City. Built form in the Precinct will be required to reinforce this role and be residential in character and scale.

The landscaped space of Whitmore Square has a traditional urban residential character provided by lawned areas and tall trees. Paving, planting, lighting and street furniture are to enhance the Square and provide areas for recreation.

The existing pedestrian network will be progressively improved to allow more convenient and safe access to the Square itself, the Central Market and the South Park Lands. Opportunities will be taken to reduce the amount of land given over to parking or roadways, and traffic will continue to be restricted to the perimeter of the Square.

No components in Whitmore Square are identified in the State Heritage Register.

No components of Wellington Square are identified on the National Trust of South Australia’s Register of Significant Trees.

Significant Components and Places

There are various components of Whitmore Square of cultural heritage merit including:

Overall Spatial Patterns

Whitmore Square uniquely maintains the majority of its spatial footprint and dominant circulation system as originally proposed by Light and revised by Pelzer. Light proposed a rectangular space, with a roadway encircling the rectangle, with a north-south east-west 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 diagonal pathways to meet the axes, together with an internal perimeter pathway. Plantings reinforced these axes and newer pathways, and a scatter of Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) trees together with other ornamental species were planted in the 1860s-70s many of which were removed progressively in the 1940s the remnants of which remain today. There are remnants of these plantings today together with plantings the Pelzer added in the 1900s-1930s. With Pelzer’s departure, the internal perimeter pathways were removed to cut maintenance costs but the rest of the pathway system was retained. Overall, Whitmore Square retains its spatial pattern and form as proposed by Light and has been partially compromised in its overall and circulation system design with a road alignment change to the north-west corner. Plantings have changed over the years but their basic spatial locations and design intent have remained consistent. Accordingly, the Square holds cultural landscape merit because of its design and spatial integrity.

- ❖ **Whitmore Square Spatial Pattern** (J&E LB.12): the overall spatial form and internal circulation systems of the Square that hail from the design intent of Light and were created by O’Brien and Pengilly in their capacities as City Gardeners. **Of some design and cultural 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:

- ❖ **Whitmore Square Park Use** (J&E LA.12): 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

Whitmore Square is a relatively level rectangular space with no topographical feature. No significant features are evident.

Circulation Networks

Historically Whitmore 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:

- ❖ **Whitmore 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.**

- ❖ **Whitmore Square Pathway System:** an internal pathway system consisting of a basic union jack configuration of a north-south and east-west pedestrian paths, as proposed by Light in 1836, with a cross-axis pathway system laid on top established in the 1860s-70s under O'Brien. **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 several vegetation elements in Whitmore Square that possess cultural heritage merit:

- ❖ **Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) specimens (J&E TA.32):** 6 mature Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) specimens in the Square located partially in a scatter but mainly located in the southern portion of the Square. The central southern three and northern specimen are in relatively good condition and form, whereas the most eastern and western specimens are in a poor condition and health and display evidence of extensive dieback. These specimens were planted in the 1860s under O'Brien and probably were a series of avenue plantings along the extant north-south and east-west pedestrian pathways. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Olive (*Olea europaea*) Tree specimen:** an elderly mature specimen of an Olive (*Olea* spp) located in the south-eastern corner of the Square that is possibly an African Olive (*Olea africana*) rather than a Mediterranean Olive (*Olea europaea*) given its characteristics. Specimen needs to be properly identified. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**
- ❖ **Queensland Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) specimens:** two specimens of the Queensland Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) planted in the outer western perimeter

nature strip of Whitmore Square in the 1960s. **Of some aesthetic and botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) specimens:** two specimens of the Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*), a favourite ornamental specimen tree of Pelzer, planted in the 1890s and in relatively good condition and health today. **Of some botanical merit.**



- ❖ **Pepper (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*) Tree Avenue:** an avenue of 6 mature Pepper (*Schinus aerea* var *molle*) Trees aligned to the north-eastern pedestrian axis pathway in an aged but good condition framing the pathway. Probably planted in the 1890s-1910s by Pelzer. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Desert Ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia* var *oxycarpa*) line:** a line of 8 mature Desert Ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia* var *oxycarpa*) specimens planted on a north-south line immediately adjacent to the eastern roadway of Whitmore Square within the Square. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Camphor Laurel (*Camphora cinnamomum*) specimen:** an elderly specimen of a Camphor Laurel (*Camphora cinnamomum*) planted in the 1920s-30s by Pelzer displaying evidence of age and dieback. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) specimen:** a large specimen of an evergreen Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) located in the north-western corner of Whitmore Square in relatively good condition and form despite its proximity to the roadway, probably planted in the 1920s by Pelzer. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



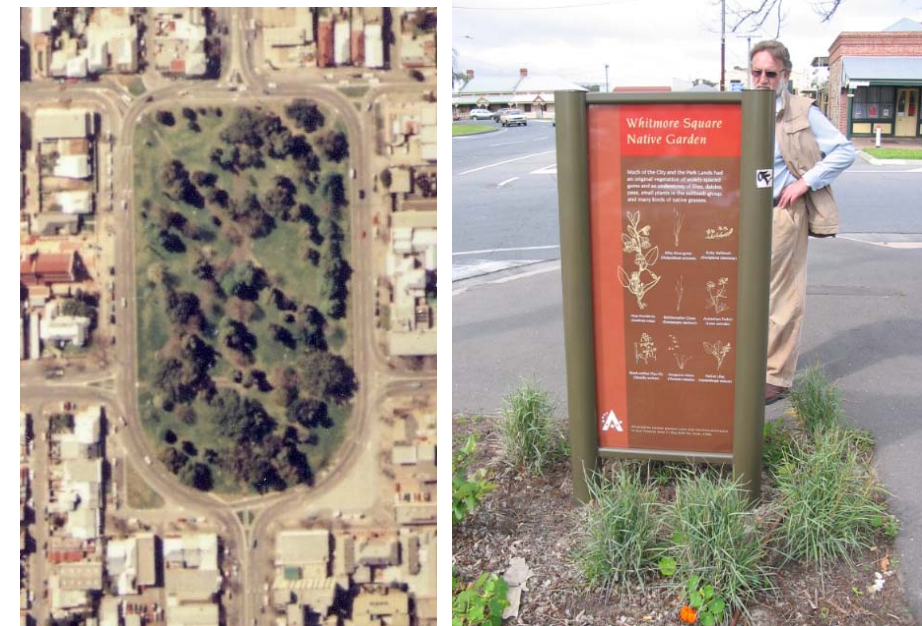
- ❖ **Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) specimen:** a large Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) specimen, located in the north-eastern corner of Whitmore Square, probably planted in the 1890s and possessing a healthy, tall and wide large appearance. It serves as a evergreen feature on the northern vehicular passage through the Square. **Of some horticultural and aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Olive (*Olea europaea*) Tree specimen:** a large Olive (*Olea europaea*) tree specimen in good form and health in the centre of the Square, dating from the 1860s-70s under O'Brien. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



Spatial Arrangements

Several areas are present:

- ❖ **Whitmore Square:** the larger Square itself bounded by the Whitmore Square roadway representing a clearly identifiable landscaped space. **Of some social merit.**
- ❖ **Whitmore Square Native Garden:** a small space located on the outer perimeter western footpath and nature strip of Whitmore Square that has been specially planted with native shrubs and grasses representative of the Adelaide Plains vegetation by the Council and the community developed in 2003 onwards. **Of some botanical and social merit.**



Structures

There are several structures in Whitmore Square of significance:

- ❖ **Excel Loo:** an Excel Loo unisex toilet erected on the northern flank of Whitmore Square next to an older toilet structure. **Of some design merit.**
- ❖ **Whitmore Square Toilet:** a red brick galvanised iron roofed small toilet structure, probably erected in the 1890s with renovations since, located on the northern flank of Whitmore Square. **Of some design merit.**



Small Scale Elements

There are several elements in Whitmore Square that have merit. These include:

- ❖ **Brown Street Memorial:** a bronze plaque memorial erected in August 1967 as a consequence of the Council decision to re-name the southern section, Sturt Street to South Terrace from Brown Street to Morphett Street, that continues the honour to and John Brown Esq after whom the street was originally named. **Of some social merit.**
- ❖ **Whitmore Square Chess Board:** a chess board or black coloured and natural concrete coloured pavers arranged in a chess board pattern, a 16 feet x 16 feet (4.8 x 4.8m), with associated oblong-shaped timber panelled seat benches, to enable the activity of draughts constructed in 1968-69. **Of some social merit.**



- ❖ **Lamp Post Base:** a Victorian era cast iron lamp post, painted dull orange, located in the south-west portion of Whitmore Square. **Of some design merit.**
- ❖ **'Strength' Art Installation:** a terra cotta tile dual-triangular art installation, called 'Strength', located on the northern flank of Whitmore Square and "created by members of the transient community of the City of Adelaide". **Of some design and social merit.**



- ❖ **Whitmore Square Seats:** two metal framed bench seats with art paintings thereon, located on the outer perimeter footpath of the western flank of Whitmore Square, as prepared by Roy Ananda, Anna Souvertjis, and Laura Wills from Carclew in 2004, positioned on a grey paver plaza space. **Of some design merit.**
- ❖ **Electricity Standard:** a remnant of an old 1920s-30s electricity light pole located in the south-western corner of the Square. **Of some engineering merit.**



Historical Views and Aesthetic Qualities

Whitmore Square is relatively flat landscape within no internal vistas. But the roadways accessing the Square enable vistas outwards, framed by street trees resulting in numerous framed views:

- ❖ **Morphett Street vista north:** an open street tree-framed vista from Whitmore Square northwards towards the city skyline but with little visual evidence of buildings. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Morphett Street vista south:** an open street tree-framed vista from Whitmore Square southwards towards the South Park Lands and the Adelaide Hills escarpment, with little visual evidence of the Park Lands and distant escarpment. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



- ❖ **Sturt Street vista west:** an open street tree-framed vista from Whitmore Square westwards towards the coast but with little visual evidence of buildings or visual features. **Of some aesthetic merit.**
- ❖ **Sturt Street vista east:** an open street tree-framed vista from Whitmore Square eastwards towards the Adelaide Hills escarpment with some visual evidence of the escarpment in the distance. **Of some aesthetic merit.**



Cultural Landscape Heritage Significance Evaluation

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

	Recommended: Preparation of a Conservation Study	Proposed: National Trust of South Australia / Significant Tree Register	Recommended: Adelaide City Development Plan	(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance	(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.	(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics	(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance	(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history	(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance	(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history	Recommended: State Heritage Register	Recommended: Register of the National Estate	Vulnerable	Low Significance	Medium Significance	High Significance	Existing: National Trust of South Australia / Significant Tree Register	Existing: Adelaide City Development Plan	Existing: State Heritage Register	Existing: Register of the National Estate	Park – Whitmore Square Item / Component / Place
Whitmore Square overall	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Spatial Pattern	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Park Use	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Road System	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Pathway System	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moreton Bay Fig (<i>Ficus macrophylla</i>) specimens	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	V	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) specimen	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Queensland Bottle Tree (<i>Brachychiton rupestre</i>) specimens	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona Cypress (<i>Cupressus arizonica</i>) specimens	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pepper (<i>Schinus aerea</i> var <i>molle</i>) avenue	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Desert Ash (<i>Fraxinus angustifolia</i> var <i>oxycarpa</i>) line	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Camphor Laurel (<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>) specimen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	V	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Holm Oak (<i>Quercus ilex</i>) specimen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kurrajong (<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>) specimen	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-
Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) specimen	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-

Whitmore Square	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-
Whitmore Square Native Garden	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Excel Loo	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Toilets	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-
Brown Street Memorial	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Chess Board	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lamp Post Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
‘Strength’ Art Installation	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whitmore Square Seats	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electricity Standard	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	V	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morphett Street Vista North	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morphett Street Vista South	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-
Sturt Street Vista West	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sturt Street Vista East	-	-	-	-	-	-	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Statement of Cultural Significance

Whitmore Square 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. 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*), Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*), Olive (*Olea europaea*), Pepper (*Schinus aeria* var *molle*) trees, and Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) in single ornamental and avenue styles of plantings. Pelzer reinforced this planting strategy with period plantings of English Elms (*Ulmus procera*), Italian Poplar (*Populus nigra* ‘Italica’), Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*), Pink Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus* x *acerifolius*), Arizona Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) 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 changes in vegetation largely due to age and condition deterioration, and transportation changes, the Square still possesses the original rectangular village green or commonage form and character as proposed by Light. It is only one of two Squares in the Park Lands, the other being Wellington Square, that has not been severely compromised by vehicular and tramway alignment changes or excisions, and has as a consequence retained its original pedestrian pathway configuration. Accordingly, it is a relatively intact version of the Square as envisaged by Light as a designed and functional space.

- Recommendations:**
- ❖ Conserve and reinforce the strong roadside tree plantings along Whitmore Square and seek to strengthen the roadscape character paying particular attention to views, co-ordinated tree planting strategies, and display of adjacent features and views;
 - ❖ Prohibit the erection of Council maintenance infrastructure in Whitmore Square;

- ❖ Remove all overhead wires and stobie poles from Whitmore Square;
- ❖ Revise City of Adelaide Development Plan citations pertaining to R23 to reflect the above conclusions and recommendations;
- ❖ Prepare a Landscape Master Plan for Whitmore Square that seeks to renovate the tree planting strategy, including replacements and new plantings, for the Square, conserves the existing pedestrian pathway system, prohibits any 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;
- ❖ That Council 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-1990s street tree planting species and species scales in the inner and outer perimeters of Whitmore Square roadscape in line with the above recommendation, and seek appropriate implementation actions;
- ❖ That the Council consider the dual naming of Whitmore Square, as proposed under Amery (1997), to *Ivariti: Whitmore Square*.