

The changing faces of the
York Hotel, Rundle Street East

Liquid History

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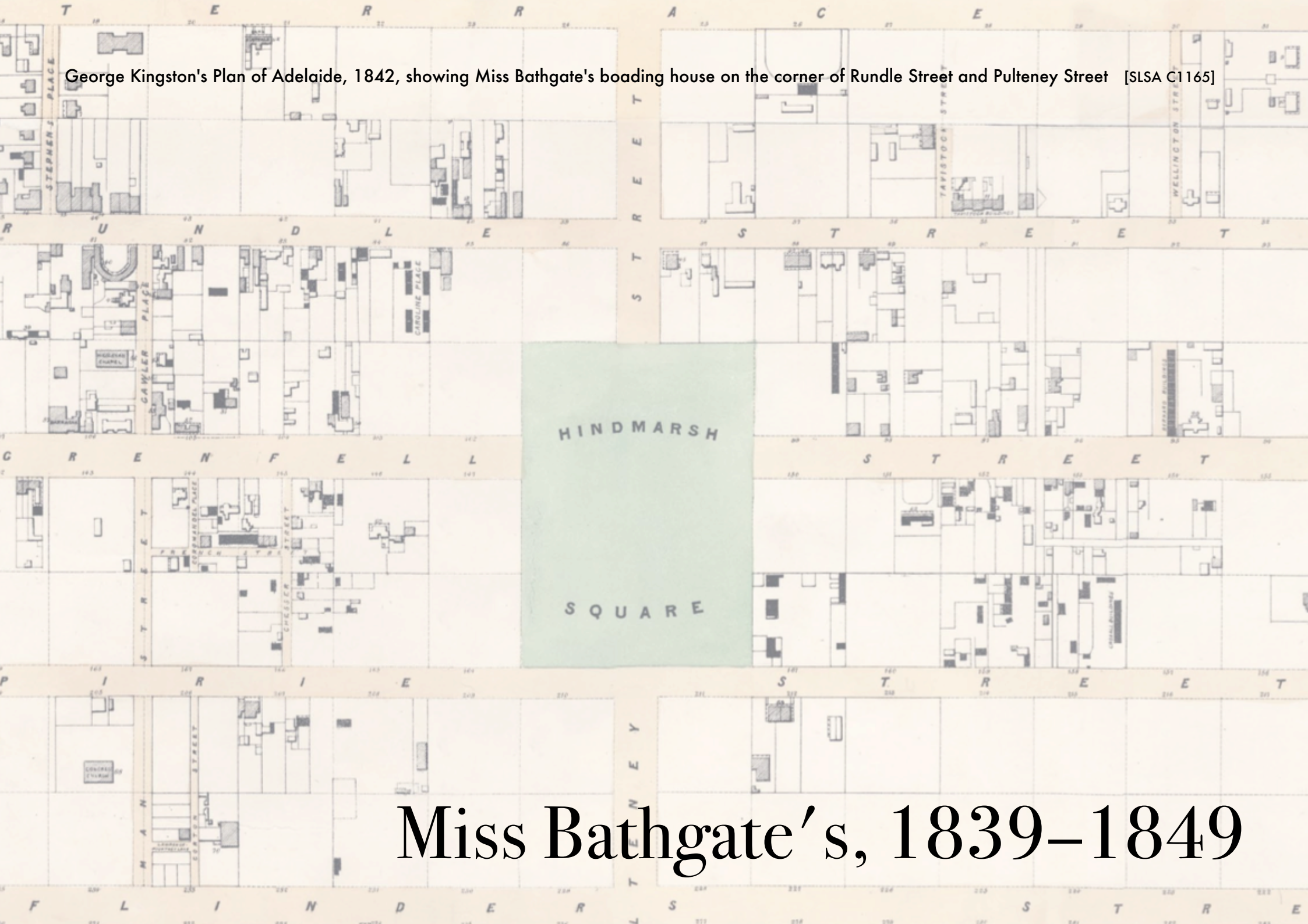
With thanks to the State Library of South Australia (SLSA)

Cover: York Hotel, c.1887? [SLSA PRG-631-2-443]

The SLSA 'information' dates the photograph as 1899. However the barely visible 'VIR' emblem on the corner balcony presumably celebrated Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, June 1887.

The changing faces of the
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George Kingston's Plan of Adelaide, 1842, showing Miss Bathgate's boarding house on the corner of Rundle Street and Pulteney Street [SLSA C1165]



Miss Bathgate's, 1839-1849

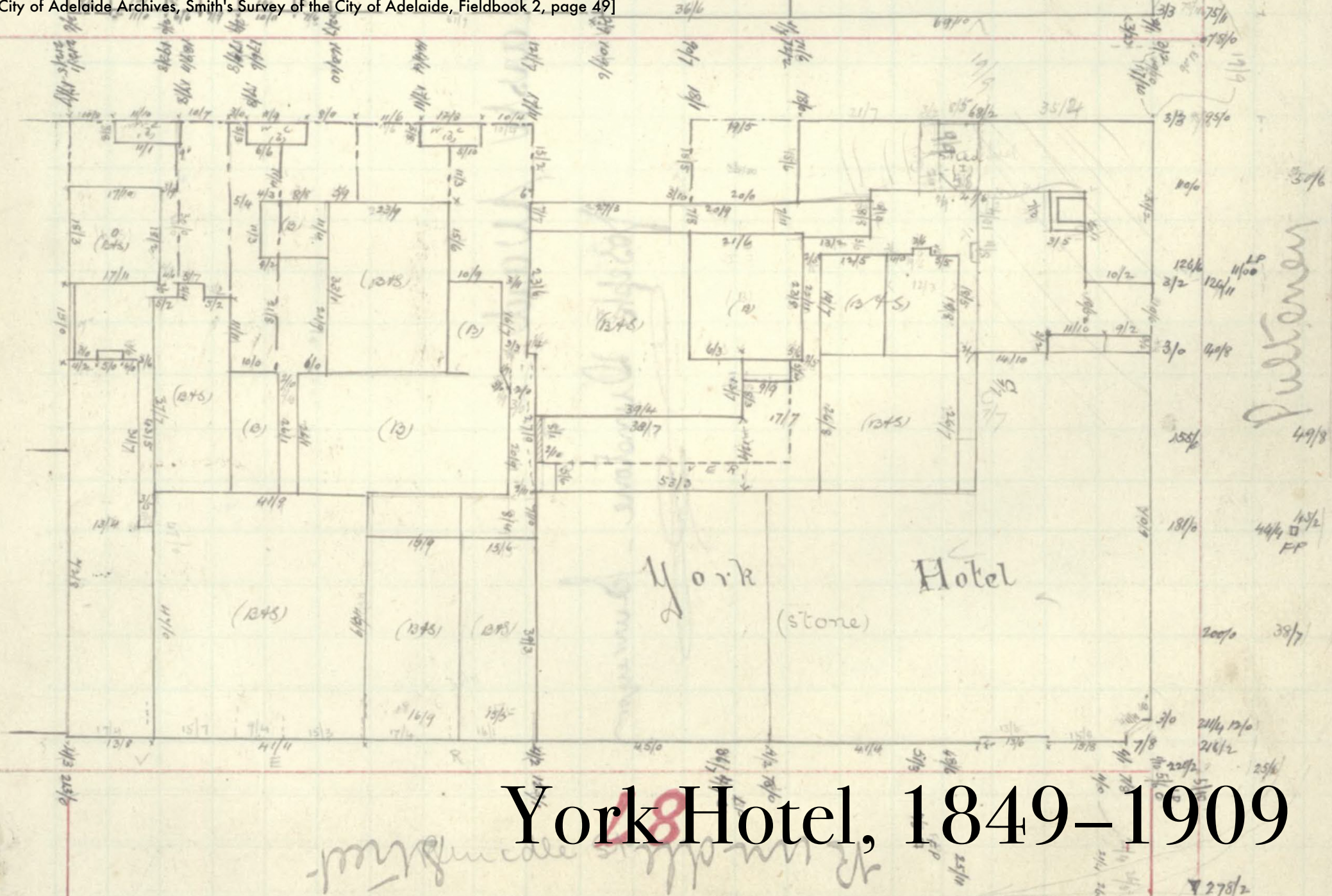


Miss Bathgate's family Boarding House Round (Kultunga street)
South Adelaide East

John Skipper's untitled watercolour of Miss Bathgate's boarding house, 1842; the hotel sign was probably added later [SLSA B-6013]



Plan of Town Acre 87, the corner of Rundle and Pulteney Streets, including the York Hotel, 1880
[City of Adelaide Archives, Smith's Survey of the City of Adelaide, Fieldbook 2, page 49]



York Hotel, 1849-1909

First advertisement for the York Hotel, 1849
[SA Gazette & Mining Journal, 15 December 1849, p.2]

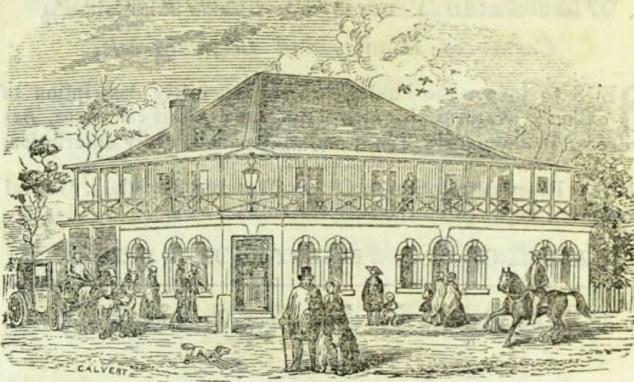
THE YORK HOTEL, RUNDLE-STREET.—
JOHN HORNABROOK takes leave to inform gentlemen from the country, newly-arrived passengers, and the public generally, that he has obtained a licence for those extensive and commodious premises in Rundle-street so long known as MISS BATHGATE'S, which he intends for an Hotel, to be conducted on purely English principles. The house has been known for several years as the most superior residence for private families of respectability in South Australia; and the improvements which the advertiser contemplates making in it, will, he trusts, ensure to the families who have so long frequented it, and to as many others as may honor him with their patronage, the greatest amount of comfort on terms which he flatters himself will be considered reasonable.

JOHN HORNABROOK has made arrangements by which he will be enabled to supply wines and spirits of all descriptions, of the best quality.

ADVERTISEMENT.—MISS BATHGATE desires to express her favourable opinion of Mr Hornabrook, to whom she has let her Establishment.

Advertisement for the York Hotel, 1852
[The South Australian almanack, 1852, (p.178)]

YORK HOTEL,



**RUNDLE-ST., CORNER OF PULTNEY-ST.,
ADELAIDE,**

BY J. HORNABROOK.

J. H. begs to return thanks for the very liberal encouragement he has received since opening the above establishment, and begs to state that he has made great improvements in the Premises, and additional alterations being in progress, he trusts that his endeavours will meet with a continuance of that support so long experienced by him.

Advertisement for the York, 1851
[SA Register, 15 March 1851, p.2]

**YORK HOTEL, RUNDLE-STREET,
(LATE MISS BATHGATE'S.)**

J. HORNABROOK returns his most grateful acknowledgments for the liberal support he has enjoyed since his commencement in business, and assures the Public that no exertion shall be wanting, or expense spared, for the comfort of all who may honour him with their patronage.

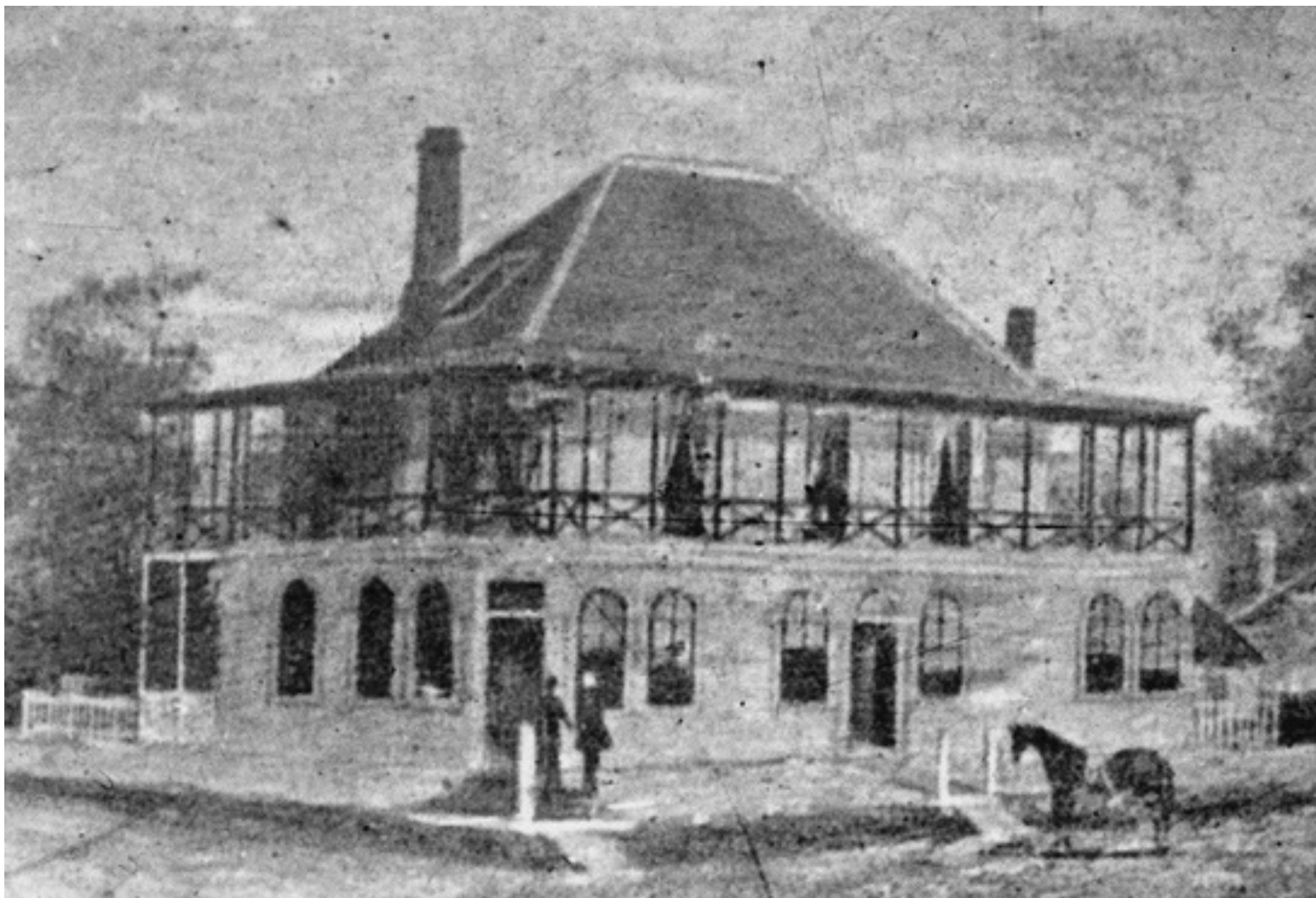
The "York," as a Family Hotel, is equal to any in the colony; situated within five minutes' walk of all the Public Offices, Families may have all the comforts of an Hotel with the seclusion of a Private Residence. Newly-arrived Immigrants are particularly invited to take up their quarters there, the Hotel being conducted in the true Old English Style, and all who favour the house with a call will not fail to repeat it, as the utmost attention is paid to promote the comfort of its guests.

Wines, Beers, and Spirits of exquisite quality, equal to any other house.

J. B. takes leave to inform his friends further, that Mr. T. B. SHARP, V.S., has rented his Stables, and Gentlemen patronising the Hotel may safely depend on having their Horses well tended, Mr. Sharp's reputation being sufficient guarantee.

**J. HORNABROOK,
York Hotel, Rundle-street,
(Late Miss Bathgate's).**

Unattributed sketch of the York Hotel in 1852 [SLSA B-2024]



City Improvements: the York Hotel, 1863
[*South Australian Register*, 18 June 1863, p.2]

CITY IMPROVEMENTS.—Two large buildings have been commenced since our last notice of city improvements. One is an addition to the York Hotel, which Mr. Hornabrook finds insufficient for the accommodation of his country guests. It consists of a suite of rooms to the eastward of the present building, and intended to be kept entirely apart from the business premises. There will be a private entrance from Rundle-street, and on the ground-floor will be three sitting-rooms, 25 x 12 and 19 x 11, and three bedrooms. On the upper floor it is intended to have seven bedrooms, some of which will be 18 x 10 and others 14 x 12, and a bathroom. Mr. Soward is the architect and Mr. Farr the builder, and it is expected the whole structure will be finished in about three months. The area covered is 46 x 45 feet, and the total cost will be £1,300. A balcony will project over the footpath, to which there will be separate entrances from the bedrooms. When this building is complete, the entire house will comprise between 50 and 60 rooms, including a well-filled library.

York Hotel with eastern extension (on left), c.1862 [SLSA B-30206]



York Hotel, c.1865 [SLSA B-7849]



Within the last year very extensive additions and alterations have been completed at the York Hotel, for the proprietor, Mr. Charles Hornabrook. The new building occupies an area of 75 feet frontage to Pulteney-street, and 35 feet frontage to Rundle-street. The old front of the dining-room in Rundle-street has been remodelled in accordance with the new design, thus giving a double frontage of 75 feet of external new work. The new building consists of basement, ground floor, and first floor. In the basement are extensive vaults for wines, &c., perfectly ventilated and drained, a large kitchen, servants' hall, scullery, larder, coal cellar, &c. The ground floor includes the bar, placed at the corner of Pulteney and Rundle streets, with jug-room contiguous, also large public room, library, and smoking-room, proprietor's office, linen closet, and staircase to first floor, besides other conveniences. The first floor contains 12 large rooms to be used as bedrooms or sitting-rooms, as the case may be. Ample hot and cold bath and closet accommodation are likewise provided; and placed outside the landing of the staircase is a platform,

communicating with stairs for use as an escape in the case of fire—in which latter event provision is made for a large supply of water, taps being fixed in several parts of the building for affixing hoses to. The rooms on all the floors are very lofty, and special provision is made in each for thorough ventilation. The external facade to the building, which is similar on both fronts, is designed in the Italian style. The fronts are executed in cement, and the dressings are finished white, relieved by a darker background, the effect of which is pleasing. The entrances are marked by projections, flanked by quoins on ground floor and by pilasters on the first floor, surmounted by pediments enriched with well executed ornaments—the rose, shamrock, and thistle being entwined. In the projection on the ground floor are three arcaded openings, and on the first floor a triplet window, the centre light being surmounted by a cornice and enriched coronet. The bar door is placed at the angle of the building, and is semi-circular, with bracketed cornice over. The other windows on the facade are—for the ground floor, plain architraved windows,

with enriched keystones; and for the first floor, square-shaped pedimented windows, having enriched cantilevers on pilasters and enriched friezes. The building is surmounted by cantilevered cornice and plain blocking, broken at the pediments and at the angle of the building. The internal fittings are designed more for substantiality than ornament, although the latter has not been neglected. All the principal rooms have plain or enriched cornices and centre flowers; also handsome marble mantelpieces. The staircase is constructed of Tasmanian blackwood, which, besides being very hard and durable, is very beautiful when polished. The whole of the work has been designed and carried out under the superintendence of Mr. D. Garlick, architect, by Mr. C. Farr, builder, whose name is a sufficient guarantee of the excellency of the work.

York Hotel, c.1868 [SLSA B-37983]



Alterations to the York Hotel, 1868 [South Australian Advertiser, 18 May 1868, p.3]

We learn that Mr. C. Farr's tender for £3,156 has been accepted for alterations which are about to be made to the York Hotel. Mr. Hornabrook intends to pull down the old portion of the building, and erect in its place a very handsome looking pile at the corner of Rundle and Pulteney streets, to each of which streets there will be a front. Mr. Garlick is the architect, and the alterations are to be carried out by November next.

Advertisement for the York Hotel 1870 [Boothby's South Australian Almanack, 1870, p.373]

68 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ALMANACK ADVERTISEE.

YORK HOTEL

Charles A. Hornabrook,
PROPRIETOR.

Corner of
RUNDLE & PULTENEY STREETS,
ADELAIDE.

A Separate Hotel for Families,
INCLUDING
Sitting, Dining, Bed, and Bath Rooms, and a well-selected Library.

The Large and extensive improvements that have been made to this well-known and favourite Hotel enables the proprietor to offer better accommodation at a reduced price, and to make arrangements with persons wishing to stay for a lengthened period, or as permanent boarders.

Wishing also to encourage the Colonial Wine Trade, he has opened Wine Shades, where both Colonial and Foreign Wines of the very best quality can be had wholesale and retail at the lowest possible prices. Particular attention will be paid to this branch of the business, and families can be supplied with cases of assorted Wines and Spirits. A List of Prices can be had on application.

The BATH ROOMS are fitted up with
HOT, COLD, & SHOWER BATHS.

Attached are Excellent Stables with Coach-houses.

York Hotel in early 1870s [SLSA B-953]



Pulteney Street extension, 1879
[Evening Journal, 28 September 1879, p.3]

YORK HOTEL.—Persons passing the York Hotel lately must have noticed that extensive additions are being made to this well-known hotel. Mr. Ford intends adding a number of rooms at the Pulteney-street end of the building, including, on the ground-floor, a smoking-room, a library, and, at the back of that, a room where various games will be provided for the visitors staying at the hotel. On the upper story a number of large bedrooms, provided with all necessary accommodation, will be erected. The front of the building will be similar to that of the old part of the hotel; and between the new and old structures there will be a large arch, with an office at the side. The main building has been renovated very considerably, and Mr. Ford purposes enlarging the present bar almost twice its present size, and by this means will do away to a great extent with the library south of the bar. Mr. Ford's cellar is one of the specialities of the hotel, and a visitor would be considerably surprised at its size. It is divided into three departments—the bottling, wholesale, and hotel cellars—and it is a picture of neatness and method. To the other conveniences of the place Mr. Ford has now added the York Hotel stables, the lease of which has been purchased by him. Messrs. Baker and Humbley are the successful tenderers, at a cost of something over £2,000, and Mr. McMinn is the architect.

York [Hotel] livery and stables with Pulteney Street addition to the hotel under construction on left, 1879 [SLSA B-2476]



York Hotel, 1880 [Illustrated Adelaide News, 1 May 1880, p.4]



THE YORK HOTEL, RUNDLE-STREET.

The spirit of enterprise which actuates many of our citizens and causes them to make improvements and alterations in the buildings they occupy so as to keep pace with the times, was never better exemplified than in the many changes recently effected by the spirited host (W. E. Ford, Esq.), of the York Hotel. This edifice has long been regarded as one of the most prominent and striking objects in Rundle-street, and has established a high character as a favourite house of call with visitors to the metropolis. Extensive additions had been for some time in contemplation, and these now being nearly completed, call for more than ordinary mention. Our illustration shows both sides of the hotel, but it is in that portion facing Pulteney-street that the chief additions and improvements have taken place. If the external appearance is pleasing to contemplate, much more so is the interior, which is entered by a spacious and elegant portal, on the right of which are three rooms. The first is a comfortable apartment designated "The Smoking-room," and like all the rest, is appropriately furnished. Adjacent to it are the library and writing-room, cosy, and quiet retreats for those who have business to transact. Mr. Ford's office, and that of his clerk are on the other side, adjacent to the bar; commercial, sample, and store-rooms are also important specialities on this floor, and highly appreciated by those for whose benefit they are intended. The bar is, without exception, the largest in the colonies, as will be surmised from the statement that it is between 55 and 60 feet in length, with a capacious counter running through the whole, at which attractive waiters dispense creature comforts of various kinds to those who know there is no place like the "York" for the best brands in wines, spirits, or beers. The bar decorations are most elaborate, the fittings handsome and recherche, the ceiling lofty, whilst the stained glass windows give a good effect to the whole. All the old rooms have been repapered and painted, and everything bears an aspect of newness and cleanliness.

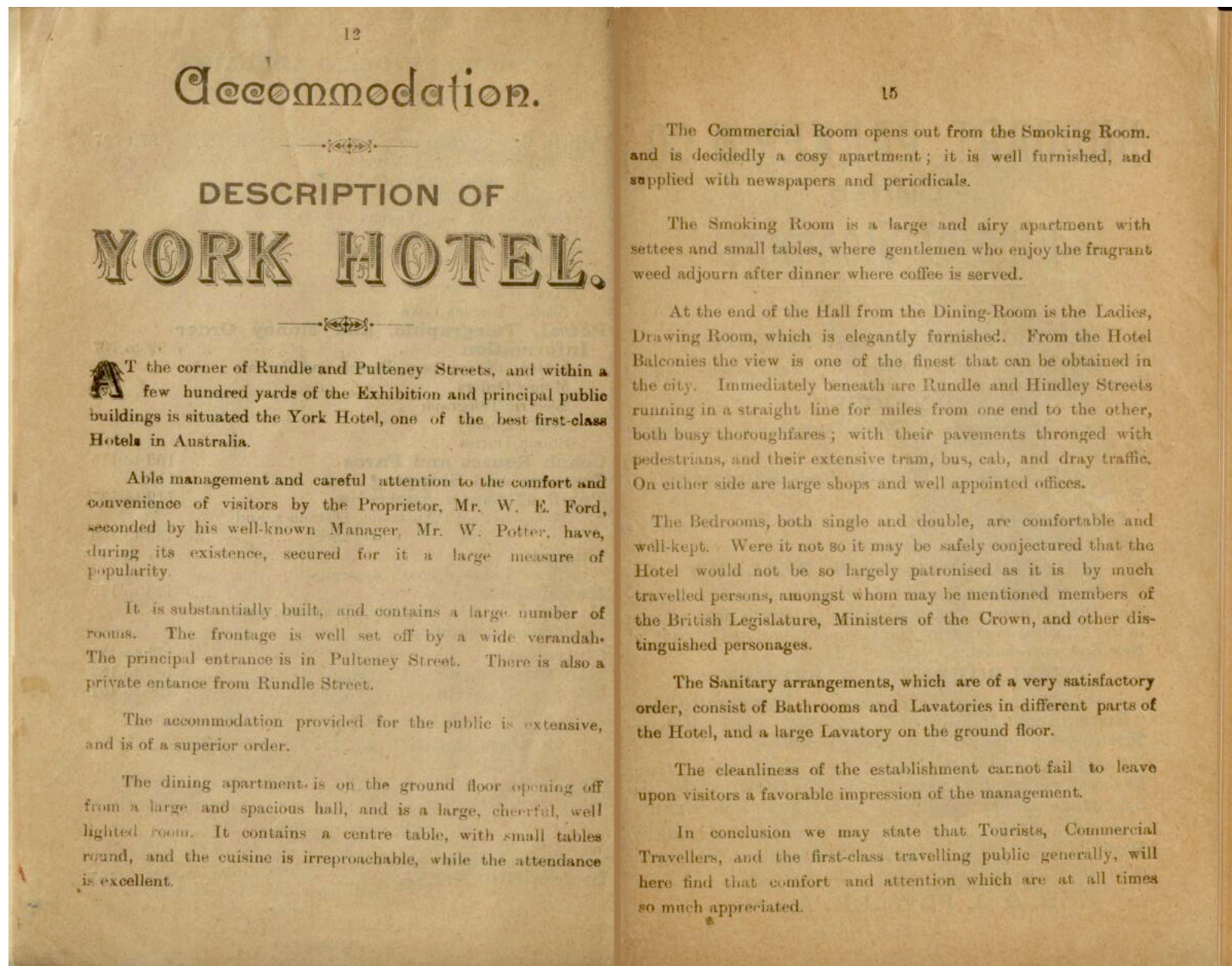
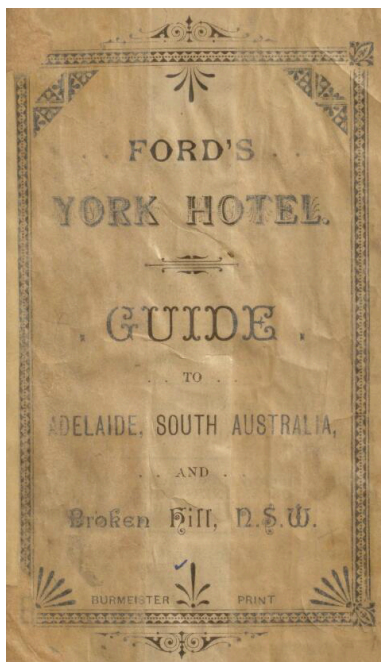
The bedrooms are forty in number, capacious, well ventilated, and comfortable, and supplied with all necessary requisites for toilet. The furniture is elegant, and of a corresponding class to that met with at Mivart's, and other London hotels, or in those superior palace-like establishments in America, in which grandeur is a predominant feature. The best bed-room is superbly fitted up, its size is 24 by 15 feet, and it presents a magnificent appearance, even to those who have travelled round the world and beheld the elegant bed-chambers in hotels across the atlantic, with which indeed it would compare favourably. All that art and skill combined can effect in adornment is here lavished, and if the dreams of those who occupy it occasionally are only in harmony with the surroundings, the acme of perfection will have been reached. Among important adjuncts to the hotel are bath rooms, in which the water can be supplied at any temperature, to suit either summer or winter, lavatorial purposes. A fine billiard room is being erected, and will, when completed, be fitted in keeping with the rest of the improvements. To enumerate everything worthy of observation at the York Hotel would require more space than can at present be devoted to it, but sufficient has been said to show that it is one of the best hostelries in the city. The host has spared no expense in the work of transformation, and the outlay of £4,000, which is the sum such has cost him, must ensure its reward in increased public patronage. Extensive stabling, with every accommodation for the steeds of visitors and patrons, is formed at the end of the premises on the Pulteney-street side. In one portion there are 22 stalls, and at the back four horse-boxes and a coach-house. Mr. McMinn is the architect, and the manner in which the work has been performed under his supervision, is indeed creditable to him.

York Hotel, c.1880, including extension on Pulteney Street [SLSA B-2585]



York Hotel, c.1894 [SLSA B-135]





AT the corner of Rundle and Pulteney Streets, and within a few hundred yards of the Exhibition and principal public buildings is situated the York Hotel, one of the best first-class Hotels in Australia.

Able management and careful attention to the comfort and convenience of visitors by the Proprietor, Mr. W. E. Ford, seconded by his well-known Manager, Mr. W. Potter, have, during its existence, secured for it a large measure of popularity.

It is substantially built, and contains a large number of rooms. The frontage is well set off by a wide verandah. The principal entrance is in Pulteney Street. There is also a private entrance from Rundle Street.

The accommodation provided for the public is extensive, and is of a superior order.

The dining apartment is on the ground floor opening off from a large and spacious hall, and is a large, cheerful, well lighted room. It contains a centre table, with small tables round, and the cuisine is irreproachable, while the attendance is excellent.

The Commercial Room opens out from the Smoking Room, and is decidedly a cosy apartment; it is well furnished, and supplied with newspapers and periodicals.

The Smoking Room is a large and airy apartment with settees and small tables, where gentlemen who enjoy the fragrant weed adjourn after dinner where coffee is served.

At the end of the Hall from the Dining-Room is the Ladies, Drawing Room, which is elegantly furnished. From the Hotel Balconies the view is one of the finest that can be obtained in the city. Immediately beneath are Rundle and Hindley Streets running in a straight line for miles from one end to the other, both busy thoroughfares; with their pavements thronged with pedestrians, and their extensive tram, bus, cab, and dray traffic. On either side are large shops and well appointed offices.

The Bedrooms, both single and double, are comfortable and well-kept. Were it not so it may be safely conjectured that the Hotel would not be so largely patronised as it is by much travelled persons, amongst whom may be mentioned members of the British Legislature, Ministers of the Crown, and other distinguished personages.

The Sanitary arrangements, which are of a very satisfactory order, consist of Bathrooms and Lavatories in different parts of the Hotel, and a large Lavatory on the ground floor.

The cleanliness of the establishment cannot fail to leave upon visitors a favorable impression of the management.

In conclusion we may state that Tourists, Commercial Travellers, and the first-class travelling public generally, will here find that comfort and attention which are at all times so much appreciated.

Ford's York Hotel, 1887 [Ford's York Hotel Guide to Adelaide, South Australia, and Broken Hill, 1887]



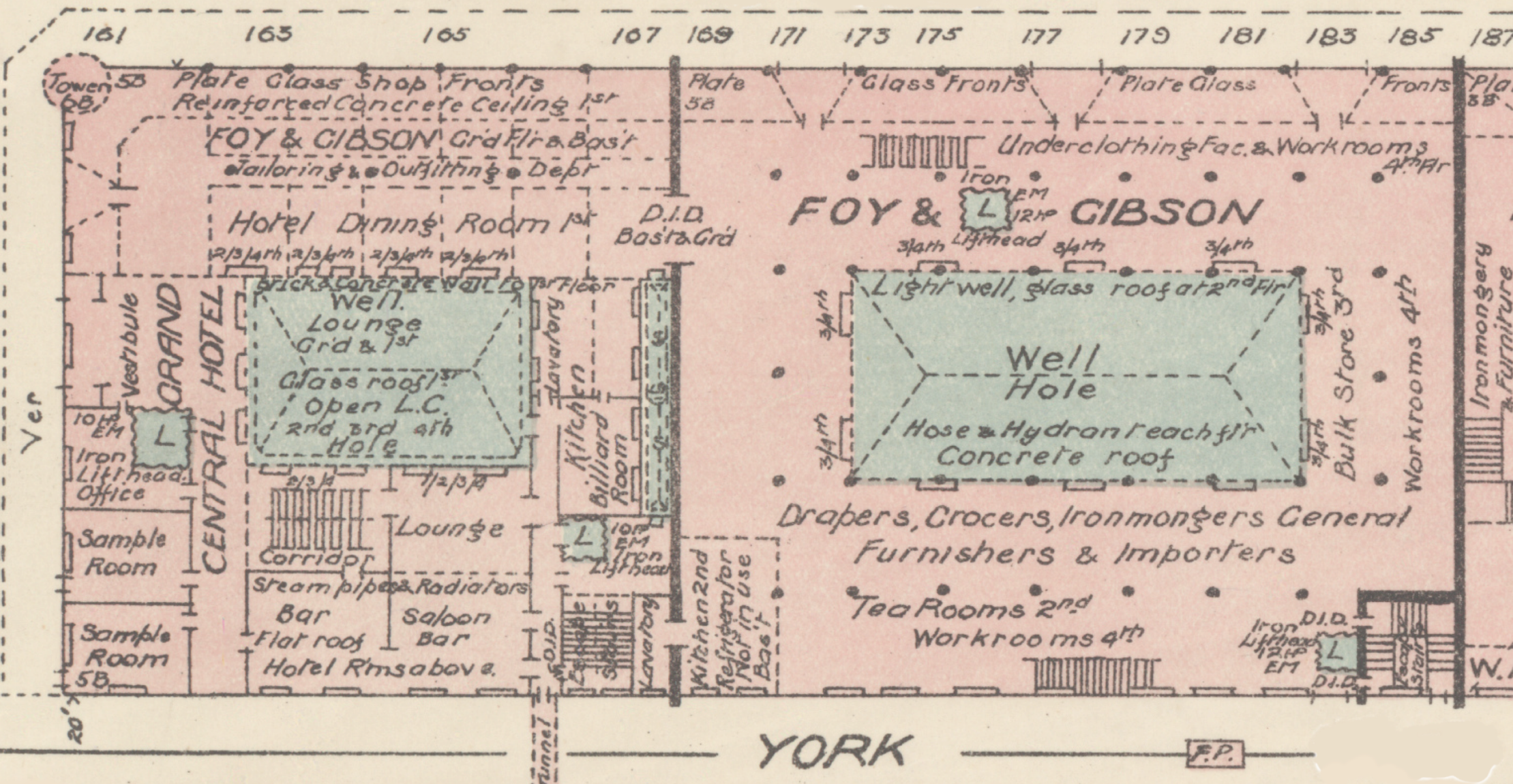
FORD'S YORK HOTEL, RUNDLE & PULTENEY STREETS, ADELAIDE.

Rundle Street looking east, the York Hotel on the right, c.1890 [SLSA B-702]





Demolition of the York Hotel, 1909
[SLSA B-64333]



Grand Central Hotel, 1911-1924

Building the Grand Central,
1910 [SLSA B-40796]



YORK HOTEL.

OLD AND NEW HOUSES.

The almost complete demolition of the York Hotel, with the exception of a rude-looking bar, which has to be maintained so as to sustain the licence and conform with the Licensing Act, will recall innumerable memories to old colonists. Many years ago the old hotel was one of the best-managed and most exclusive houses in Australia. Wealthy squatters made it their headquarters when in Adelaide; while well-known identities resided there for years.

—An Interesting History.—

Chatting to a representative of The Register on Wednesday morning, Mr. L. A. Jessop said:—"In 1865 I came over to Adelaide with a well-known hotel keeper, who kept the old Criterion in Collins street. I remember the York as a two-storied building. I believe the house originally belonged to Miss Bathgate. Mr. C. A. Hornabrook's father kept it before him, and the son had the right of purchase, which he exercised. When he gave up Mr. W. E. Ford, who had become well-known in the leading hostelry at Clare, took the York, and as you know, he conducted it for years on quite the best lines. Among those who resided there were Mr. Abraham Abrahams, Mr. Lovell the engineer, old Mr. Heriot, of Heriot, Fullarton, and Co., a well-known mercantile firm, Dr. Walker, Protector of Aborigines in the early sixties, Fitzroy (now the Earl of Euston), and many squatters. Two names which occur to my mind are Fielder King, who married one of the Hon. A. McCulloch's daughters, and two fine young fellows named T. Gething. Fielder and the Gethings were among the early settlers of the Barrier Range district. I stayed at the York from 1867 for about 10 years. I remember the place being rebuilt."

Mr. J. T. Hackett, of the firm of Bray and Hackett, showed our representative a lease of the York from Mr. C. A. Hornabrook to Mr. W. K. Simms. It was dated 1878, and was for 10 years. There was an agreement for extensive additions and alterations in 1879. Several presided over the destinies of the old York after Mr. Ford died, and the last one was Mr. Sid Ferry.

—A New Structure.—

The present owners of the land are Messrs. Foy & Gibson, and, under the direction of their building manager (Mr. T. T. Baxter), is being erected an hotel which will have the distinction of being the largest in South Australia. The structure will consist of six floors, including the basement, and will be on similar lines to the firm's shop in Rundle street. The outside walls will be of brick, and the subdividing walls reinforced concrete. According to the plans, the edifice will present a most attractive appearance, and represent a fine addition to the architecture of the city. The face will be finished in cement, with suitable ornamentation. On the Rundle-Pulteney street corner there will stand a tall circular tower, which should serve to enhance the stateliness of the building. The whole of the Rundle street frontage and 50 ft. in Pulteney street, on the ground floor, will be utilized in connection with the existing warehouse; while the basement, and all the floors above that on a level with the streets, will be devoted to hotel purposes. The main public bar will be on the corner of Pulteney street and York lane, and provision has been made for a saloon bar on the opposite side of the entrance hall. It is intended that the hotel shall be modern in every respect, and no expense will be spared in the attainment of that end. In addition to the bars, there will be spacious, well lit and ventilated lounge rooms, excellent dining rooms, about 100 bedrooms, electric lifts, and, indeed, every convenience deemed essential and advisable in an up-to-date residential hotel. It was originally proposed to have the construction work completed in time to enable the place to be opened for general use by September, 1910; but, owing to the inadequate supply of bricks, this will be impossible. When the large shop in Rundle street was in course of erection as many as 75,000 bricks were laid in one week; but altogether only 65,000 bricks have been obtained during the last month. Consequently, instead of there being about a dozen bricklayers, besides numerous labourers, at work, only two bricklayers are now employed, and there are scarcely sufficient bricks to keep them fully engaged.




Grand Central Hotel, c.1920 [SLSA B-72783]



RUNDLE STREET.

TEL. 364.

YORK HOTEL ADELAIDE
ESTD 1854



SYDNEY W. FERRY, PROPRIETOR.