
NAME: Slate Culvert at five-way intersection, High Street, WILLUNGA

CURRENT USE:	Drainage culvert
FORMER USE:	Drainage culvert
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:	Likely mid-19 th century
LOCATION:	Five-way intersection of High Street, WILLUNGA
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Not applicable
OWNER:	City of Onkaparinga
RECOMMENDATION:	Local Heritage Place



Slate culvert at the five-way intersection of High Street, Willunga; GGA, 2022)

NAME: Slate Culvert at five-way intersection, High Street, WILLUNGA

DESCRIPTION:

C.1865/1872 culvert excavated in the mid-2010s constructed of masonry with slate capping and stepped slate slab paving, extending from a 'wishbone'-shaped intersection of the High Street and St Andrews Terrace drains, continuing north under the intersection of High Street and Aldinga Road.

It is recommended that the Slate Culvert at five-way intersection, High Street, Willunga be included on the South Australian Heritage Register as a Local Heritage place.

A delineation of significant historic fabric is provided in the Extent of Listing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The Slate Culvert at five-way intersection, High Street, Willunga is of significance as a substantial and well-documented drainage culvert dating to an early period for the Willunga township. Constructed in the mid-19th century (possibly 1864 and/or 1872) the culvert represents both the use of Willunga slate as a construction material during the township's earliest developments, as well as a well-documented example of drainage infrastructure, a significant theme in the township's history.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (As defined in Section 67(1) of the PDI Act 2016):

- a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area; being a substantial, well-documented example of a drainage culvert constructed using Willunga slate, a highly significant local construction material strongly associated with the Willunga township. The theme of slate constructed engineering and infrastructure, particularly relating to drainage, is significant for the township.
 - b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area; being a significant local example of a slate culvert within the Willunga township. Much of the Willunga township's early infrastructure and buildings are constructed of this material in this manner, a construction method used from the mid-19th century well into the 20th century.
 - d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area; being a large, well-documented culvert constructed of Willunga slate, an important material and construction method for the township, dating from the town's initial developments during the mid-19th century.
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RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales

2.3 Construction using local materials

Theme 8: Transportation and Human Movement

8.4 Early road and drainage infrastructure

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The heritage values of the slate culvert at the five-way intersection of High Street, Willunga does not appear to have been identified or assessed as part of any previous heritage survey.

The Willunga branch of the National Trust have kindly provided brief historical notes within their submitted nomination regarding this item. This history is provided as follows:

Slate culvert at Five-Way Intersection, High Street, Willunga

This slate culvert was uncovered during the Willunga Streetscape project that took place in 2017, and lies between the junction of Aldinga and St Andrews Terrace. The listing should take into account all of the uncovered culvert. According to the Southern Argus, slate is everywhere in evidence in Willunga, "... culverts are topped, bottomed and sided by it, bridges and waterways lined by it ..." (28/ 5/1903, p. 3).

Unfortunately, many of Willunga's culverts have had slate replaced by concrete, and thus this example shows a new aspect of Willunga's past. Although the date of construction of this culvert is not known, the appearance of the slate indicates that the culvert was constructed in the 19th century. An article in the Evening Journal dated 18 May 1872, states that, "... the Central Road Board are also helping by making a fine culvert at the entrance of the town." Slate as a construction material was and still is highly prized in Willunga, and the slate industry is a significant and important part of our heritage. This slate culvert is an extremely fine specimen of a local system of water management using this local material and method of construction. Its location means that it can be easily seen by locals and visitors in all weathers. The City of Onkaparinga have landscaped the area surrounding the culvert. The attached image shows the culvert when first uncovered.

Current research has also identified an historical account dating to 1865 which relates to the construction of a substantial slate culvert at the intersection of the Port Willunga Road (now Aldinga Road) and High Street. It is understood this account and description most likely relates to the subject of this assessment. This account is provided as follows:

On Saturday afternoon, the 5th instant, any stranger passing through this township would at once perceive from the throng of people gathered together at the junction of the main line and the Port Willunga-road, that something of a sensational character was going forward. On proceeding to the scene of operations we found that the ceremony of opening a new culvert for an "infant bridge" (we might term it) was going on. Tenders were a short time ago invited to be sent in to the District Council for the work, the Central Road Board paying one-half of the expense. The culvert – which is 70 feet long, 1 foot 6 inches deep, with 55 feet by 24 feet of metal 6 inches thick – was successfully tendered for by Mr. Cocks, and having been finished to the satisfaction of his employers, was "passed" and formally opened for traffic with all due and fitting ceremony at 3 o'clock.

The work during its progress has been carefully and diligently supervised on behalf of the Central Road Board by Mr. Webb, and the daily supervision of Mr. Sampson Bastian on behalf of the District Council (of which that gentleman is a well-known member), has ensured the construction of a most substantial and creditable piece of work. The slight rise caused by the height of the contract, will doubtless be hereafter ably remedied by the Council, aided by the Central Road Board. The contractor has had great facilities offered to him during the work, on account of the easy access in obtaining plenty of good sound flagging from the well-known slate quarries of Willunga. There are four different lines of road leading into this one, across which the culvert passes, which is the main line to the Port of Willunga, and as a Company is now about forming to work the world-renowned

quarries of this district, the work which the Council and the Central Road Board have so successfully carried out will go far to ensure safety of cartage to the shipping..."

While it is unclear if the 1865 or 1872 account applies to the currently identified fabric of the current slate culvert, it is possible either or both histories may apply; the unusual 'wishbone' intersection of the High Street and St Andrews Terrace culverts may indicate multiple construction periods. Further portions of the mid-19th century culvert evidently remain buried underneath the now-bituminised roads that comprise the five-way intersection.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all early masonry fabric, including stone walls, slate capping and slab flooring to all excavated elements of the 'wishbone'-shaped intersection of the High Street and St Andrews Terrace slate culvert. All later modifications and additions are not included in the listing.

It is recommended that further explorative research should be undertaken to understand the extent of original fabric that may remain to hidden portions of the culvert beneath Aldinga Road, High Street and St Andrews Terrace. Any additional fabric deemed to be of heritage significance should be included in any future heritage listing for the culvert.

REFERENCES:

Willunga, South Australian Weekly Chronicle, Sat 12 Aug 1865, p.3.

National Trust of South Australia, Willunga Branch, historical summary of slate culvert at five-way intersection, High Street, Willunga; provided as part of a local heritage nomination to the City of Onkaparinga.

SITE MAPPING:



Site of slate culvert at five-way intersection of High Street, Willunga; (Planning SA SAPPa)

HISTORIC IMAGES:



C.1870 photograph of site of five-way intersection slate culvert at the bottom of High Street, Willunga (site shown within red rectangle). Note excavated lines of earth on either side of High Street, indicating completion of recent subterranean drainage culverts at that time. There appears to be a small footbridge over the site of the slate culvert, possibly the 'infant bridge' referred to in the 1865 article. (SLSA B 7192)



2017 photograph of then recently-excavated slate culverts at High Street five-way intersection, uncovered during the Willunga streetscape project (National Trust of SA, Willunga Branch)

OTHER IMAGES:



Slate fabric of the culvert dispensing from St Andrews Terrace towards Aldinga Road, looking north (GGA, 2022).