
NAME: Slate Culvert, Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, WILLUNGA

CURRENT USE:	culvert
FORMER USE:	Culvert
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:	C. 1850s/1860s with later additions
LOCATION:	Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, WILLUNGA
LAND DESCRIPTION:	CT 5747/457, Sections 258 & 268, Hundred of Willunga
OWNER:	City of Onkaparinga
RECOMMENDATION:	Local Heritage Place



Substantial slate culvert located at Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, Willunga (GGA, 2022)

NAME: Slate Culvert, Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, WILLUNGA

DESCRIPTION:

C.1850s/1860s slate culvert constructed of slate with 'book-leaf' dry stone wall construction with slate capping and slate slab paving.

It is recommended that the Slate Culvert, Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges 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, Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, Willunga is of significance as a substantial and well-documented drainage culvert dating to an early period for the Willunga township. 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. Initially constructed in c.1850s/1860s, the culvert is associated with the figure of Richard Polkinghorne, a significant local settler, resident and quarryman of the Willunga district in the 19th century.

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 of Willunga slate, a highly significant local construction material strongly associated with the Willunga township. The theme of slate constructed 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.

e) it is associated with a notable local personality or event; being strongly associated with the figure of Richard Polkinghorne, a significant early settler, resident and quarryman of the Willunga district in the 19th century. Residing at nearby 22 St Georges Street, Polkinghorne is understood to have constructed the earliest parts of the culvert in the 1850s or 1860s as part of his butchering premises on this site.

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 slate culvert at Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, Willunga does not appear to have been identified or assessed as part of any previous heritage survey.

While little information regarding the culvert has been historically available, it is understood that the culvert was initially built in the late 1850s or 1860s by Richard Polkinghorne, a significant local quarryman who constructed the nearby residence at 22 St Georges Street during this period. It is understood that Polkinghorne ran butcher's premises near his home for many years, current information suggests that the culvert may have been constructed to provide both run-off drainage from the hill above and for drainage purposes associated with the adjoining timber shed, likely used by Polkinghorne as a slaughter house.

Current research has identified Lands Title records dating to December 1867 when a Torrens Title certificate was formed for Richard Polkinghorne, farmer of Willunga. The certificate indicates as the owner of the site from 1857. The allotment was owned by the Polkinghorne family until 1890 when the site transferred to the Male family, who had recently also acquired the Polkinghorne's residence at 22 St Georges Street at this time. The property was held by the Male family until 1937 when ownership of the residence and vacant Lot 2 was transferred to Rose Foreman. Lot 2 St Georges Street has remained in the hands of the Foreman family since this time.

No further information regarding the culvert's construction could be identified, though the proposed initial construction for stormwater run-off and slaughterhouse drainage purposes are likely reasons for the culvert's sizeable construction. The current owner has advised that portions of the current culvert have been expanded during the late 20th century to increase its capacity though the original culvert remains intact. This is a common practice for slate culverts in the district and represents their continued usage and usefulness from the mid-19th century onwards. The current owner has also advised that the slate culvert originally ran beneath St Georges Street, now replaced with a concrete pipe running under the street.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all masonry fabric, including dry stone slate walls, slate capping and slab flooring.

REFERENCES:

CT 108/91; etc.

Oral history provided by current owner during site visit on 23/3/2022.

SITE MAPPING:



Site of Lot 2 (21-25) St Georges Street, Willunga; approximate site of slate culvert shown in red rectangle (Planning SA SAPP)

OTHER IMAGES:



Mid-19th century 'book leaf' slate construction to culvert, looking east (GGA, 2022).



Primary mid-19th century culvert wall and associated drain, with original subterranean slate slab flooring (GGA, 2022)



Slate wall construction with slate capping immediately beneath St Georges Street, looking west (GGA, 2022)