APPROX 80 MINUTES

APPROX 2 KMS

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Gawler Public Library

Gawler

Gawler
Historic Main Street Walking Tour

Gawler's Historic Main Street reflects Colonel William Lights vision; to create a settlement that could prosper on the banks of the North and South Para Rivers, bounded by rolling hills and within close proximity to Adelaide. Today you can witness the remarkable eras from the historical buildings that line Gawler's Main Street.

The attractive setting, coupled with major roles in the mining and agricultural booms of the 1860's, 70's and 80's saw Gawler blossom into a town of broad streets, peaceful parklands and distinctive architecture. As the walk unfolds you will gain an appreciation of the achievements that our ancestors accomplished in times of challenging environmental and social harshness.

1 Pioneer Park

Your first stop adjacent to the Gawler Visitor Information Centre is this attractive park. Originally planned as the town cemetery which closed in 1870 and the headstones removed. It is now a pleasant park in easy reach of the town centre.

2 McKinlay Memorial

Strolling west down to Murray Street you will come across The McKinlay Memorial. This memorial was erected by Gawler residents in 1874 as a tribute to explorer John McKinlay. 'Big John', as he was known to other explorers, led the expedition in 1861 to search for the ill-fated Burke and Wills. This is a significant and unusual landmark that is a prominent feature of the town.

3 Charles Sturt Memorial

Stop outside the Exchange Hotel and look across the road to see the Charles Sturt memorial plaque fixed to the wall in the alcove area. The plaque was originally located on a cairn on the corner of Murray and Cowan Streets. It was erected in August 1944 to mark the centenary of Sturt's exploration into Central Australia and the passing of his party through the district.
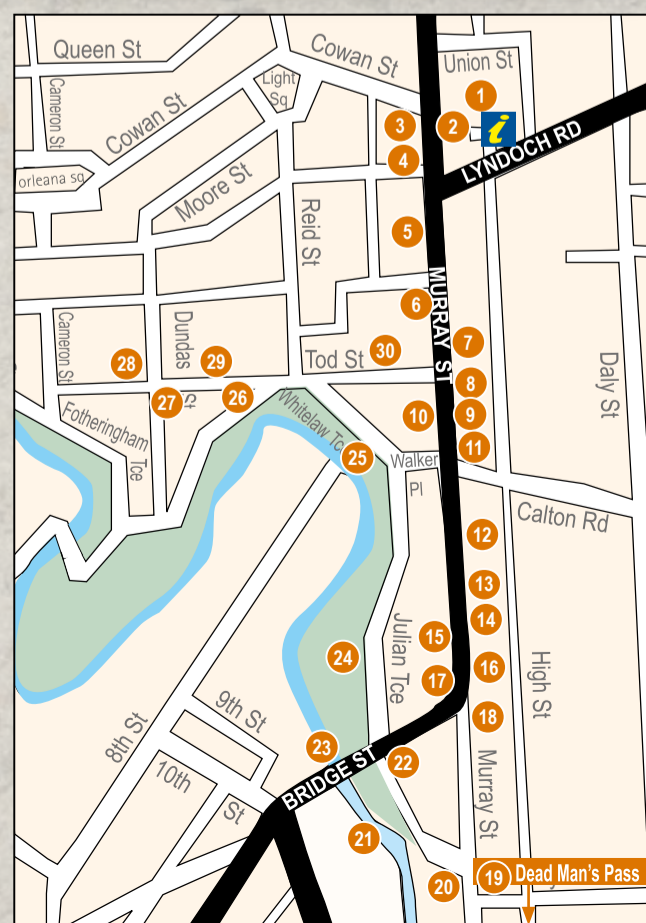
4 Pile's Building

Next to the memorial is the magnificent Pile's Building built in 1878 for James Pile, a wealthy pastoralist and resident of Gawler. His daughter, Jane, married John McKinlay, the explorer.

5 The Bunyip

As you continue down Murray Street you will see the home of The Bunyip newspaper which was first published on Saturday 5 September 1863 under the management of Mr William Barnet and the editorship of Dr Nott. It was a unique publication that reflected the wit and satire of some of the members of 'The Humbug Society'. The first issue resulted in a libel action. Over the years the publication changed to become a more orthodox and sober chronicle. The Bunyip is still produced today; pick it up from the nearest newsagent and read all about the local happenings in Gawler and surrounding towns. The building was erected in the late 1870s as part of a group of shops known as Jones' Buildings.

6 Essex House

One of the most well-known buildings in Murray street, Essex House, is a particularly fine building enlarged and improved by Mr Alfred Sheard in 1905. The name "Essex House" has been synonymous with drapery, general merchandise and fashion since the 1880's. It has survived a number of changes of ownership, demolition, alterations and additions - even "removal" from one side of Murray street to the other. Originally Essex House was a humble store on the eastern side of the street where Victory square now stands. The last example of a flying fox money carrier is inside the premises.

7 ANZ Bank

This Italianate villa style building originally the Bank of Adelaide was constructed in 1873 from local bluestone and features pointed and lined stucco corner blockings and dressings. The fence and gates were manufactured in Gawler by James Martin and Co in 1874.

8 Gawler Institute

Next to the ANZ Bank is the Gawler Institute which was built in 1870 from local bluestone rubble. Looking closely, you will see two plaques on the walls, one refers to the building as the home of 'Song of Australia' and the other, to the iron balustrade, which was cast from the first iron smelted in the colony at James Martin and Co in Gawler in 1871. The Balustrade was presented by James Martin in 1879. This building is now home to the Gawler Public Library and magnificent Reading Room.

9 Gawler Town Hall

Next to the Gawler Institute is the Gawler Town Hall, built in 1878 again from local bluestone rubble. On this impressive edifice you can see an elaborate balustrade parapet with ornate urns and false central pediment containing the Coat of Arms. Call in and view the magnificent Walk of Honour, dedicated to those who have served, in the front foyer.

10 National Australia Bank

Opposite, you will notice another fine stone building with front facade in Ashlar work with stucco dressings in an Italianate style. This building, the National Australia Bank was designed by Daniel Garlick and built by J Kelly in 1881-82.

11 Golden Fleece

The Golden Fleece was the first building constructed along Murray Street and also the first hotel in Gawler, opening its doors in 1840. It was the stopping place for travellers passing through the town and at various times served as the town's mortuary, post office and meeting place. Step in and enjoy a cold beverage in this historic hotel.

12 Oddfellows Hall

As you head south across Calton Road, just before the building with the clock tower you will come to the Hall. It was here in the hall upstairs, that the Song of Australia was first performed in 1859 by twelve-year-old Mary Ann Allen.

13 Old Post Office

The old Gawler Post Office built from local stone in 1866. The unusual thing to observe is the eastern face of the clock, which has numerals the wrong way round: the numerals "IV" appear where the number "VI" should be. Also take note of the plaque on the clock tower.

14 Old Telegraph Station

Next to the old Post Office is the Old Telegraph Station built in 1860 of local stone. Telegraph operations were moved to the Post Office when it opened and this building was subsequently used as the letter carrier's residence, the Gawler School of Mines, Technical School and Commonwealth Electoral Office. It is now the home of the National Trust Museum. When entering the building be sure to view the original gaslight above the front entrance. Inside you will find a mural of one of May Bros machinery.

15 Kingsford Hotel

Kingsford Hotel can be seen on the western side, originally the Globe Hotel, built in about 1851. The hotel possesses a distinctive architectural style with artistic cast iron work on the balcony. This building was the venue for meetings of many early societies including The Humbug Society, the Freemason and the Oddfellows. The telegraph operated from the building from 1857 to 1860. This hotel is worth stopping at for lunch or dinner.

16 Bank SA

Next stop is the Bank SA building built in 1911. The lower level openings of this building are classic semicircular arches with keystone. The roof is made from Marseilles tiles and the upper level has rectangular windows, balustrades and columns to the balcony. Another beautiful historic building that displays Gawler's Heritage, it is in a strong French Renaissance style combining Edwardian elements (the roof tiles).

17 Baptist Church

Further down Murray Street is the Baptist Church. Services began in the Oddfellows Hall in 1866. The first part of this stone and brick building was built in 1870, it was then extended in 1873, classrooms were added in 1879 and a kitchen and lecture hall in 1900. The Gawler Baptist Church holds services Sunday mornings and evenings and is a popular venue for weddings.

18 Professional Chambers

Continuing on is Gawler's Professional Chambers. Built in 1859, the original owners were the South Australian Banking Company. This building is in formal Italian style with dome pilasters. In 1892 the building was purchased by the Union Bank and was sold in 1938 to Rudall and Rudall.

19 Dead Man's Pass

One of Gawler's best known locations is Dead Man's Pass. Theories abound as to the naming of Dead Man's Pass but the story centres around the finding of a man's body near or in a gum tree in the area. If you would like more information the Gawler Public Library has produced a Historical Pamphlet titled Dead Man's Pass which is available from – the Library, Visitor Information Centre or Council's website. Until 1849, the shallow ford across the river was the only southern access to Gawler. Today, it is a pleasant park beside the river. There are shelters, seating and toilet facilities which make it an ideal spot for a picnic.

20 Waterworks Building

At the corner of Julian Terrace and Murray Street you will see a stone and brick building with a galvanized roof which was originally the Waterworks building. Completed in 1882, it housed the pumping plant and well which fed Gawler's first water supply system. The original well is concealed beneath the floorboards. Today, the building is the SA Water Depot.

21 Gas Works

As you head along Julian Terrace stop and look across the South Para River, you will see the old building and stable of gas works. The Provincial Gas Co. began in 1869 and the building was constructed at about the same time. The business was taken over by the SA Gas Company from August 1877 and continued to operate until 30 November 1917. The gasometer was removed in 1918 but the building you now see was converted to a private residence. The stable features circular opening vent, rendered walls, curved corrugated iron roof and ornate parapet.

22 Union Mill Complex

Along Julian Terrace to the corner of Bridge Street, this large brick and stone complex was originally the Union Mill. The original building on this site was erected by Harrison Brothers in about 1853 but was destroyed by fire in 1914. The present building was erected in 1915. Much of the machinery used in the milling process was manufactured locally by James Martin and Co. Adjacent to the mill are the original Mill Offices which were constructed in 1868.

23 South Para Bridge

Cross over the South Para Bridge taking in the beautiful views. The bridge was declared open on 22 January 1908 by the Governor of South Australia, Sir George Le Hunte. It has also been known as the "Mill Inn Bridge", "Gawler South Bridge' and 'Tramway Bridge'.

24 Apex Park

You may like to sit for a while and enjoy the scenery of Apex Park. This park offers a walking track along the banks of the South Para River and is a great spot for a family picnic with a children's playground, barbecue, picnic tables and seating. You will be impressed by the huge Moreton Bay Fig trees which were planted in the late 1870's.

25 James Martin Statue

North along Julian Terrace, you will come to the marble monument which was erected as a public tribute to James Martin who founded the largest engineering and agricultural implement-manufacturing establishment in South Australia. This statue first occupied the position on the south-eastern corner of Murray Street and Calton Road where it was unveiled in August 1903. It was moved to its current position in 1969.

26 Methodist Hall

Near the corner of Julian Terrace and Tod Street you will see the original Wesleyan Chapel. The first section dated 1850 was opened on 20 October of that year. The transept was added in 1858 and the two storey classroom was built in 1875. The original parsonage facing Scheibener Terrace was built in 1858.

27 Tortola House

Tortola House is the next stop on Tod Street. During the early 1870's Mr William F Wincey, an ex-mayor of Gawler and successful businessman built the two-storey section which adjoins the cottage he purchased in 1867. The architecture is Venetian Gothic Revival with French-Byzantine influences. The iron lacework to the front fence was added by Alfred May when he occupied the premises at the turn of the century. The lacework was manufactured in the May Brothers Foundry at Gawler West. The building was purchased in 1912 by the Tod Street Methodist Church to use as a manse for £1000. It is also said that the bricks for the front of this house were imported from Florence, Italy.

28 Solid Construction Cottages

Coming to the end of the walking tour, you will see a set of cottages. These cottages used to house mill workers and formed part of the 'Victoria Mill' complex, erected by Mr S King in 1845. A fire unfortunately destroyed the Mill in 1867.

29 Uniting Church

Financed by local businessman William Wincey, this church was built in 1867-69 with stone from Clement's quarry in Hill Street, Gawler. It was opened on 28 March 1869 by Reverend John Walford.

30 1 Tod Street

As you head east back towards Murray Street, the last stop on Gawler's Historic Main Street Walking Tour is number 1 Tod Street. Built around 1858, it was a carpenter and builder's workshop which was established by William S Taylor and expanded into undertaking in the 1890's. The horse-drawn hearse was stored in the large shed at the rear of the premises.

We hope you have enjoyed just some of our hidden treasures on your walking tour of Gawler's Historic Main Street