



Approximately 10 years later Merrill Properties purchased Mt Breckan to be used as a Country Club and Hotel, but this did not eventuate going into receivership in 1992.

Mt Breckan was registered as a Heritage building during this time.

In 1996 the Baron and Baroness of Ballintober who hailed from the United Kingdom purchased the run down property and spent 2 - 3 years restoring and refurbishing this grand building successfully returning it to its former glory.

From 1999 to early 2004

Mt Breckan was used as a conference and function centre and many weddings were held in this stately building.

During this time four luxury apartments were also opened within the building for Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Tours by appointment were also conducted for interested groups.

In March 2004 Mt Breckan returned to use as a private residence and the building is no longer open to the public

In September 2011 Mt Breckan was on the market for sale.

The property was reclaimed by the bank and for sale at mortgage price.

A third of the applicants were interstate and overseas investors, interested in being the owner of an historical building in a popular tourism destination.

THE HISTORY OF MT BRECKAN



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VICTOR HARBOR

FEEL IT CALLING

Mount Breckan, built in 1879, was the stately holiday home of Mr Alexander Hay and his family.

A Scotsman born in 1820 who came to Adelaide by assisted passage in 1839, Alexander Hay sold implements to the Australian Gold Diggers from his hardware shop in Rundle Street, Adelaide.

He soon became one of the wealthiest men in the colony with his pastoral interests and several years in Parliament, he commissioned a young architect, William Minn, to design the home consisting of 22 rooms with an 80 foot tower above the entrance.

The foundations were laid in July 1879.

The original site where the home was to be erected comprised 260 acres and was owned by the first Governor of South Australia, Sir John Hindmarsh. Covered by bracken fern the property was named Mt Breckan the "Gaelic" form of the word.

Like a symbol of a new era for the township, the Port Victor people were enthusiastic of the new gleaming white mansion standing impressively a - top this prominent hill boasting the most spectacular views.

At a grand sum of 25,000 pounds the building was completed and the Hays finally settled into Mt Breckan in 1881. It is said that it was paid for with the return for one years wool clip from all of his sheep properties.

The great hall measured 35 x 48 feet and reached up through the centre of the house to a vaulted and beamed ceiling.

Bathrooms on each floor were supplied by tanks in the roof, water being pumped to them from the underground storage tanks.

Wooden shutters on the windows, ran smoothly back inside the walls and peacocks roamed the gardens.

Valuable treasures and paintings imported from Europe graced the house.

The Hay family travelled annually with 32 servants to spend summer months at Mt Breckan and a new trend developed with other wealthy colonists flocking to hotels and guesthouses to spend the summer months in Port Victor.



Alexander Hay died in 1898 at the age of 78 years, Mrs Agnes Hay, the second wife of Alexander continued on the tradition at Mt Breckan with their children until 1909 when the house was almost destroyed by fire.

A sizeable insurance policy that Mrs Hay had been depending upon was only worth 8,000 pounds and so the final loss was enormous.

Mrs Hay and one of her daughters left on a cruise ship "The Waratah" for London in August 1909, alas tragedy struck once more and the Waratah was lost at sea. So ended the era of the Hays at Mt Breckan.

In 1912 Mr Fred Connell, an Irish immigrant, brought Mt Breckan in ruins for 5,600 pounds and in 1913 it was rebuilt as a Country Club. The refurbished home contained now 38 rooms and a golf course. Fifty seven housing blocks were sold on a 20 pound deposit (average cost for a block being 120 pounds). Further additions were completed in 1920 and sadly the large estate was gradually subdivided.

In 1940 the Commonwealth Government purchased Mt Breckan to be used as an Air Force training camp and rehabilitation centre. During the war 5,595 young men and women graduated from the number 4 initial training school.

The Bible College occupied Mt Breckan from 1962 - 1978 with an annual intake of 100 students.

In 1978 Greg Francis converted Mt Breckan into a Recreation Centre and it was used by many sporting groups, clubs and schools.