

South
Australian
Heritage
Act
1978-80

HERITAGE SURVEY ITEM IDENTIFICATION SHEET

PROJECT
HERITAGE SURVEY REGION 1
Item Ref. No. 71

ITEM NAME: "Freshfields" House and Graves
Former or other

Office Use
ITEM No.
DOCKET No.

DESCRIPTION: This is a stone and brick farmhouse built in stages on a hill beside Antechamber Bay. The original 4-roomed cottage dates from around the time that Nat. Thomas settled in the area, if not 1827 as according to the National Trust, then only a few years later as he was reported to have lived in that same area for seven years in 1834, and must have erected some sturdy dwelling in that time. Much has been added to the building over the years so that the original cottage is completely encircled. The graves are situated in the garden close to the house.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY: Nathaniel Thomas was originally a sealer from Van Diemen's Land, and was a member of the crew of the 'Water Mole' which left Sydney in 1824, bound for Bass Strait. By 1827 he had left the ship and with two Tasmanian aboriginal women had come to Kangaroo Island and settled at Antechamber Bay (then also known as Creek Bay). There, with several other sealers they lived a rough but rewarding life, living off wallabies and homegrown vegetables and sealing and visiting the mainland in two 10 ton whale boats kept in Chapman's Creek. In 1844 Inspector Tolmer wrote in the South Australian:

"At Creek Bay is settled a person named Nat Thomas, who has been on the island 17 years. He has an excellent farm, and a good house and dairy. He has a herd of 300 goats, and a PTO

LOCATION
Address

Town Antechamber Bay
Postcode
Section 63
Hundred Dudley
County
L.G.A. Dudley
S.H.P. Region 14
A.M.G. Ref.

SUBJECT
2.1
4.1

USE

PERIOD
State

Study Area
1802-35

REFERENCES

Cumpston, op. cit. p. 176
Burgess, The Cyclopedia of South Australia Vol. II p. 1021
State Heritage Branch File (first quote)
Display at Penneshaw N.T. Museum
N.T. file 2215
Cumpston, op. cit. p. 123 (second quote)
Verbal Dene Cordes, NPWS 4.2.85
Archival photographs

TYPE OF ITEM

LAND Natural feature ☐
Historical site ☒
Historical Gdn. ☐

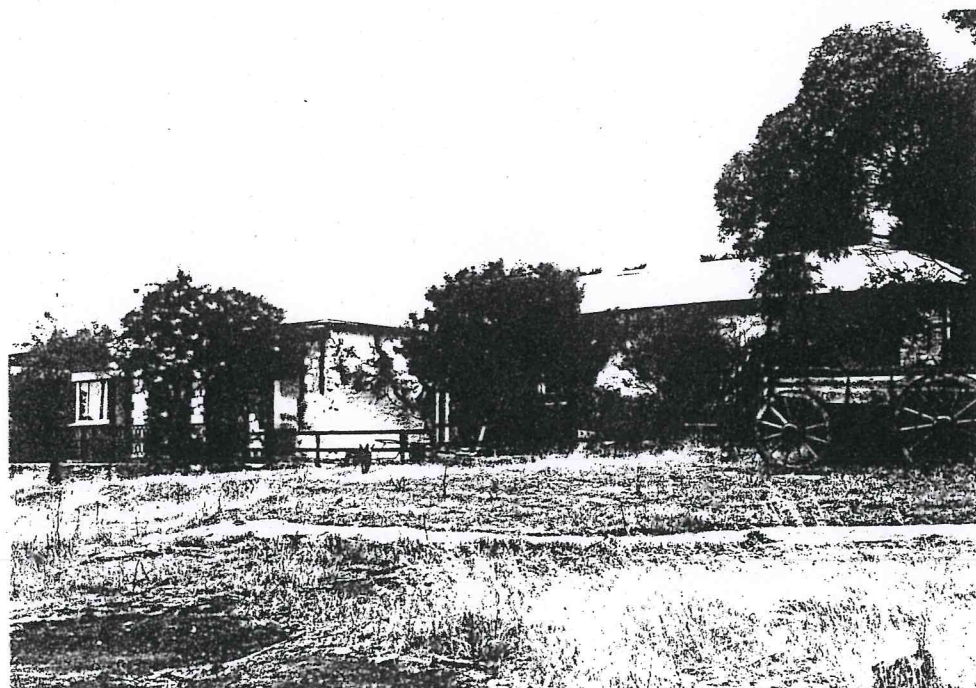
BUILDING ☒

STRUCTURE ☐

PHYSICAL CONDITION ☐

PHOTOGRAPH

Film No. 65 Negative No. 10



STATUS

Reg. of State Her. Items
Reg. ☐ Interim L ☐
Nominated
National Estate
Reg. ☒ Proposed L ☐
National Trust
CL ☒ RL ☒ File ☐
Other ☐

LAND TITLE

CT 1221/38

RECOMMENDATION

(A) State ☒ (B) Local ☐

PREPARED BY
HERITAGE INVESTIGATIONS
AND HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS
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H.I. 19.12.84

great number of fowls. A river of excellent water runs the whole year close past his house. At this place there is a considerable extent of good country, and high, undulating land to the interior. Nat Thomas has a native woman who catches wallaby for him. By her he has three interesting little children, who combine the intelligence of the white with the activity of the native."

By the 1850s, Thomas was styled farmer and grazier, taking up pastoral lease no. 660 in 1858 and later, upon re-sumption, buying agricultural section 63 of 51 acres in 1877. He became a prominent member of society, with his part aboriginal daughters marrying the more respectable settlers who had arrived after colonisation. He died in 1879, and with his wife, "Little Sal" (whose dates of birth and death are unknown), is said to be buried by the river below his house "Freshfields".

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE: Nathaniel Thomas and his family were amongst the very earliest settlers on Kangaroo Island, pre-dating the official colonists by a good ten years. As such their original dwelling is an extremely rare relic from this period of early European contact. The graves site, too, of one of the Island's most famous and enduring residents and his Tasmanian aboriginal wife, is of great memorial value and interest.

PROJECT
HERITAGE SURVEY REGION 14

Item Ref. No. 71

L.G.A.
"Freshfields" House and
Graves

Film No.
Negative No.

Film No.
Negative No.

Film No.
Negative No.



FILM 65
NO 9

"FRESHFIELDS" ANTECHAMBER BAY
FROM SOUTH

KANGAROO ISLAND
26-2-79



FILM 65
NO 10

"FRESHFIELDS" ANTECHAMBER BAY
VIEW FROM NORTH

RANGAROO ISLAND
26-2-79