

To: The Ad Hoc Committee, South Australian Heritage Committee

From: Senior Historic Architect

Subject: REGISTER NOMINATION REPORT:
"THE LEVELS" HOMESTEAD AND STABLES, THE LEVELS

Date: 20 November, 1981

SUMMARY:

This report is prepared as a result of an internal request for the Heritage Conservation Branch to comment on the Salisbury Stock Paddock Supplementary Development Plan. While the homestead itself is not under threat, discussions have taken place with other Departments concerning adjacent proposed developments.

Historically, The Levels Homestead is important because of its former status as, "a stud sheep breeding establishment on which sheep of the highest class have been raised, and which have given "The Levels" brand almost a world-wide reputation". Used also for sheep fattening and horse breeding, "The Levels" estate was unique in being a large agricultural property (3,000 acres) located within the metropolitan area and also quite close to the inner city suburbs until 1909, when it was divided up into lots and auctioned.

Architecturally, The Levels Homestead is an excellent example of a mid Victorian homestead complex. The main house is beautifully designed and built, and the stables blocks are very good examples of their building type.


Environmentally, The Levels Homestead is not a dominant element but its rural nature and setting do not make this a detraction.

The Integrity of The Levels Homestead is outstanding. Although a toilet has been added to the house, it is at the rear and in no way compromises the building's excellent condition and detailing. The stables have suffered somewhat structurally but their integrity has not been obscured.

The Levels Homestead is not currently on the National Trust Register.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that The Levels Homestead, as described below, be placed on the Register of State Heritage Items and be categorised A1, A3, H2, H3. The Homestead includes the main house, the two seat toilet block, both stables blocks and an area of ground 75 metres east, north and west of the Homestead house, 35 metres south and east of the stables and 50 metres north of the stables.


Barry G. Rowney
SENIOR HISTORIC ARCHITECT

MAB:SK

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures Item RESIDENCE - LEVELS ROAD, SALISBURY (THE LEVELS, ELDERS HOMESTEAD)	
Age UNCERTAIN	Theme	Office 36/12/01
Period 1852-1883	Subject PERSONS - Prominent Citizens; PRIMARY INDUSTRY - Production; HABITATION - Associated with Activity	Region ADELAIDE METRO
Building Type RESIDENCE	Style VICTORIAN - HOMESTEAD	Status NONE
Component	Comment	Grading E VG AG FP NA
<u>HISTORY</u>		
1. Context:	Associated with the pastoral industry in South Australia in the C19th, and in particular with the development of the Merino breed of sheep. Emphasised the rural development of the area along the Main North Road beyond Gepps Cross, particularly around Dry Creek, during the C19th.	*
2. Person/Group:	Owned by Charles Brown Fisher, second son of Sir James Hurtle Fisher, who was the first Mayor of Adelaide in 1836. Charles Fisher was a noted pastoralist, Merino Sheep Breeder and race horse breeder. He sold The Levels Estate to Edward William Pitts, former assistant Colonial Architect, who turned the Dry Creek property into one of the most profitable and best regulated Merino sheep breeding establishments in Australia. Edward Pitts also bred trotting horses at "The Levels".	*
3. Event:	The Estate, "comprising nearly 3,000 acres", was sold at auction in December, 1889 to H.W. Morphett, who in turn sold it in 1909. Homestead and stables are now owned by Elders GM.	*
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>		
4. Architect/Builder:	Not readily available, possibly E.W. Pitts.	*
5. Design:	Mid to late Victorian homestead, single storey, verandah on four sides, tiled floor, french windows on front, bracketted sills elsewhere, cellar, simple symmetrical plan around central hall and entry.	*
6. Construction:	Stone rubble walls with dressed stone quoins at corners and openings, 'U' shaped plan corrugated iron roof. Timber verandah with concave corrugated iron roof, projecting dressed stone surrounds at doors and windows.	*
7. Interior:	Very much intact with minor 'obvious' alterations, semi-circular glazing over hall doors, plaster and timber skirtings, cedar architraves and doors, tiled foyer, marble fireplaces, kitchen modernised.	*

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items	
	ITEM EVALUATION SHEET	
	Buildings and Structures	
	Item RESIDENCE - LEVELS ROAD, SALISBURY (THE LEVELS, ELDERS HOMESTEAD)	

Component	Comment	Grading				
		E	VG	AG	FP	NA
8. Representation:	A scarce example of an intact homestead close to Adelaide. The building type is relatively common.		*			
9. Continuity:	Largest and most imposing building on the property. The focal building in an attractive setting.		*			
10. Local Character:	Visible from Levels Road, Cross Keys Road and Main North Road in a distant landscaped setting.			*		
11. Landmark:	Of little importance.				*	
<u>INTEGRITY</u>						
12. Alterations:	Laundry addition off back verandah, new bathroom closes off recess at rear of building, new door opening between kitchen and middle room, alterations visually obvious.		*			
13. Condition:	Very good, no obvious defects.		*			
14. Compatibility:	Present residential function associated with the homestead is the original function.	*				

Supplementary Information

Adaptability: This depends upon specific proposals but the grounds and the location relative to Adelaide would indicate good potential.

Interpretation: The location, relative to Adelaide, would imply a considerable potential when seen with the intactness of the house and the complex.

Current Situation: The residence is under no threat but the adjacent land is intended to be developed. Negotiations are underway to control such development to limit any disruption.

Evaluated By	Ivar Nelsen Register Architect	Annely Aeuckens Register Historian	Date 24/11/81
Reviewed By	Mark Butcher Development Architect		Date 23/11/81
South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization			Date

1.E.S./D3/211001

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures						
	Item	STABLES - PART OF THE LEVELS HOMESTEAD, SALISBURY					
Age UNCERTAIN	Theme		Office 36/12/01				
Period 1882-1883	Subject PERSONS - Prominent Citizens PRIMARY INDUSTRY - Horses & Sheep		Region ADELAIDE METRO				
Building Type STABLES	Style PRIMITIVE - VICTORIAN		Status NONE				
Component		Comment	Grading E VG AG FP NA				
<u>HISTORY</u>							
1, 2, 3:		Refer to assessment of Homestead residence.					
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>							
4. Architect/ Builder:		Unknown at present.					*
5. Design:		Vernacular stables, two blocks, rubble stone with projecting gable at ends, south sides roofed but open, north sides enclosed with stable doors, stone paving throughout and stone forecourt on north side, hay racks, trainer/jockey accommodation in west block.	*				
6. Construction:		Rubble stone walls with brick quoins at corners and openings, corrugated iron gable roofs, stone floors.			*		
7. Interior:		Rubble stone walls, stone floors, harness hooks and hay racks, accommodation has timber floors, plaster walls and timber ceiling, fire places and sky lights.	*				
8. Representation:		Part of an intact homestead complex close to Adelaide now relatively scarce. Nonetheless a common building type.	*				
<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>							
9. Continuity:		Similar to homestead in scale and materials. A supporting building to the main homestead.			*		
10. Local Character:		The stables are indicative of the present rural character in its building type, scale and materials.			*		
11. Landmark:		Of little importance.				*	
<u>INTEGRITY</u>							
12. Alterations:		Accommodation portion of west block has been added onto at the rear, west end of same block has been adapted for shearing, minor door changes or filling in, all of the above work is obvious.			*		

I.E.S./D3/211081

South
Australian
Heritage
Act
1978-80

Register of State Heritage Items
ITEM EVALUATION SHEET
Buildings and Structures

Item STABLES - PART OF THE LEVELS HOMESTEAD,
SALISBURY

Component

Comment

Grading

E VG AG FP NA

13. Condition: Cracking in end walls, random failure of
timber posts and/or beams on south elevations.

14. Compatibility: The present use is sympathetic to the original
building and area.

*

*

Supplementary Information

Adaptability: Simple plan would lend itself to adaption.

Interpretation: Moderate potential for interpretation.

Current Situation: The stables were to be demolished as part of an adjacent
industrial development but the planners have designed
around them now. The stables will be under separate
ownership from the main house.

Evaluated By

Ivar Nelsen

Register Architect

Annely Aeuckens

Register Historian

Date 23/10/81

Reviewed By

Mark Butcher

Development Architect

Mark A Butcher

Date

23/10/81

South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization

Date

I.E.S./03/211081

CITY of SALISBURY HERITAGE SURVEY

The Levels Homestead and Stables
Levels Road, The Levels, 5095

Item No L / 7

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The complex is significant because of its association with South Australia's early pastoral industry, and particularly its identification with Charles B. Fisher. The property became one of South Australia's leading studs. The homestead is also an excellent example of a mid-Victorian homestead; it is a common design, but has been well built, with numbers of notable features. The present significance is enhanced because of the property's proximity to the capital.

Significant Interest

- **Historical** The Levels homestead is important because of its earlier status as 'a stud sheep breeding establishment on which sheep of the highest class have been raised, and which have given "The Levels" brand almost a world-wide reputation'. [Auction Notice of 1889, SAA] The station was used for the fattening of sheep and for horse breeding. The Levels was unusual in that it was such a large agricultural property located so close to the city. It was subdivided in 1909.
- **Architectural** The Levels is an excellent example of a mid-Victorian homestead complex. The main house is well designed and built, and the stables blocks are very good examples of their building type.
- **Environmental** The homestead is not a dominant element, but it is enhanced by its rural nature and setting.

The Levels Homestead and Stables

Heritage Theme Pastoralism
Theme Homestead

ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

HISTORICAL

Original Use Pastoralism

This complex was associated with the pastoral industry in South Australia in the nineteenth century, particularly with the development of merino sheep. The station reflected the pastoral development of the area to the north of the city.

This property was particularly noteworthy because it was owned by Charles Brown Fisher, the second son of James Hurtle Fisher, and one of South Australia's notable pastoralists and race horse breeders.

Fisher passed the property to Edward William Pitts, a former assistant Colonial Architect who extended the fame of the Levels as a Merino stud.

The estate of nearly 3000 acres was sold to H.W. Morphett at auction in December 1889.

It passed to the pastoral company, Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort.

ARCHITECTURAL

Homestead

Size Single storey

Wall Materials Rubble walls with dressed stones quoins and surrounds.

Roof Form Hipped

Roof Material Corrugated galvanised iron

Window type Timber-framed sash

Other features Timber verandah posts with concave corrugated iron roof.

The homestead retained a fine interior, with semi-circular glazing over hall doors, plaster and timber skirtings, cedar architraves and doors, tiled foyer and marble fireplaces.

The homestead is of typical mid-to-late Victorian villa design. It has verandahs on four sides, tiled floor and french windows at the front, bracketted sills elsewhere. It is symmetrical in plan around a central hall and entry.

Stables

Size Single storey, but comprising two blocks

Wall Materials Random rubble, brick quoins and surrounds

Roof Form Gabled

Roof Material Corrugated galvanised iron

At the time of listing the stables were described as being of vernacular design and built as two blocks of rubble stone and with projecting gables at the ends. The south side was roofed but open, the north side was enclosed with stable doors. The stables were stone paved throughout with a stone forecourt on the north side. The interior features harness hooks and hay racks. The accommodation areas had timber floors, plaster walls and timber ceilings with fire places and sky lights.

The stables have been converted for use as office accommodation.

REFERENCES

State Heritage Branch Files

The Levels Homestead and Stables

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

CIRCUMSTANCES

The item was nominated for inclusion on the Register of State Heritage Items on 6 July 1978. It was placed on the Interim List on 27 January 1983 and the Register on 1 September 1983.

The complex has since been incorporated into the development of the Technology Park at the Levels, though new developments there have effectively divorced the stables from the homestead.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of this item is very high. A toilet has been added to the house, but it is at the rear and does not compromise the building's excellent condition and detailing. The stables have been altered but their integrity remains high.

ENVIRONMENT / PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The complex was not a landmark feature but reflected a typical arrangement of pastoral buildings.

The Levels Homestead and Stables

Address Levels Road, The Levels, 5095

Allotment Nos 101+103

Section 2185

Hundred Yatala

CT Nos 4190/299+300

Local Government Area Salisbury

Ward Levels

Boundary The items and the are in their immediate vicinity

Owner(s) Government of South Australia

State Heritage Status Register of State Heritage Items

Other Assessments Nil

Current Use Offices

Condition Exterior Good

Known Threats Nil

Conservation action identified Nil

Associated item(s) Nil

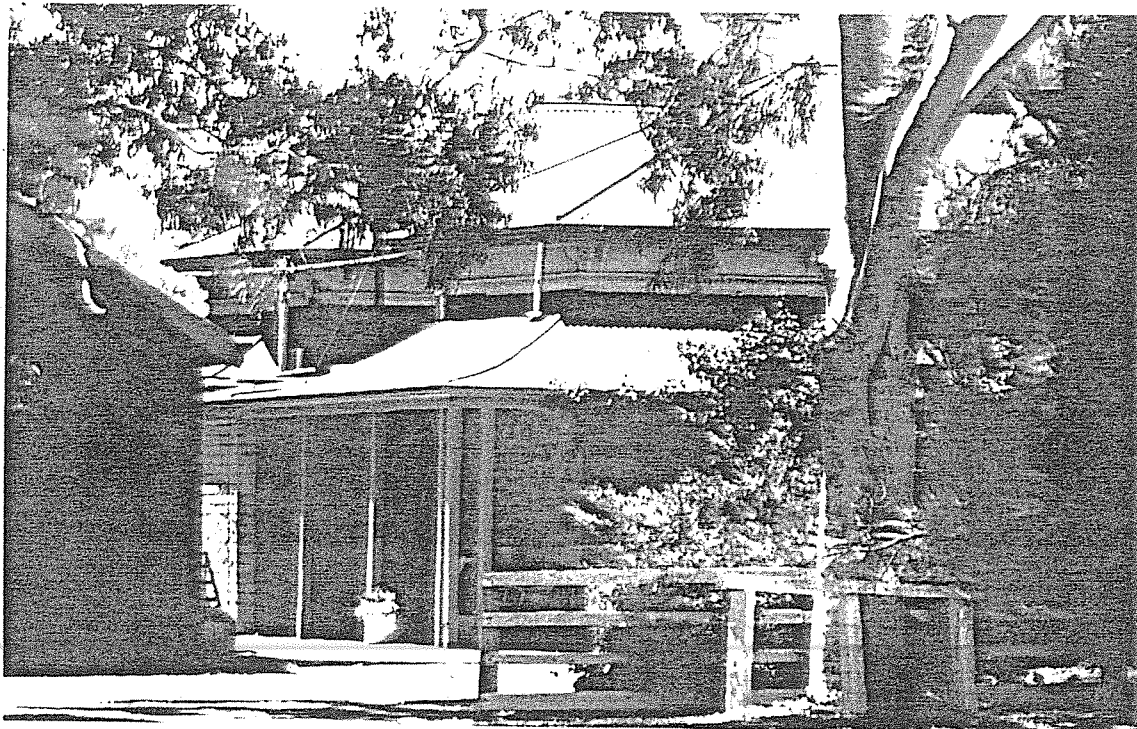
Comments

This item is already included on the Register of State Heritage Items. It was visited but not examined during the course of this project. The information is included here for the sake of completeness and has been taken from the nomination reports of the State Heritage Branch.

The Levels Homestead and Stables

Film / Neg Number SHS 7 / 14
Photographer Peter Donovan
Subject Name Levels Homestead

Direction of View To the north-east



Film / Neg Number SHS 5 / 35
Photographer Peter Donovan
Subject Name Levels Stables

Direction of View To the east

