

## Battunga - house, chapel, barns & entrance

Place no.: 294

---

**Address** lot 757 Strathalbyn Rd, nr Flaxley

---

### ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

#### Description

Large single-storey house with cellars constructed of substantial blocks of coursed local stone with a hipped [tiled] roof (front section) and double-gabled roof with coping (rear section), timber-framed openings with timber doors, French doors and sash windows, and red-brick chimneys. The chapel/school is a red-brick building with a cgi gable roof, a lancet window topped by brick voussoirs to gable end, and timber door and casement windows to side. The timber and stone barn includes stone walls and timber-slab walls with hipped cgi roof and timber-framed openings. The smaller stone barn has stone dressings and a cgi gable roof. The entrance to this estate comprises stone fence-posts and walls flanked by cast iron fencing.

#### Statement of Heritage Value

This is one of the Adelaide Hills' most significant pioneer estates, displays early construction methods, and is closely associated with the significant South Australians Robert Davenport and Professor William Lowrie.

#### Relevant Criteria

- (a) *it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, the Battunga estate has played a significant role in the development of the Flaxley and Macclesfield areas, especially in terms of its agricultural production and its associations with the early cultural, economic and political development of the area.*
- (d) *it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance, being an excellent surviving example of an early estate including 1847 homestead, private chapel, barns & cemetery.*
- (e) *it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics, displaying fine examples of early stonework and brickwork, as well as surviving timber. shingle roof on the chapel, and timber-slab wall in the large barn.*
- (g) *it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance, namely Robert Davenport and Professor William Lowrie.*

### RECOMMENDATION

This place is recommended for inclusion in the State Heritage Register.



Battunga entrance, 2004



Battunga – stone barn, 2004

## Battunga – house, chapel, barns & entrance

Place no.: 294

### ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

**Criterion (a)** *it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.*

Battunga is one of the Adelaide Hills' most significant early estates. After the 'Davenport' Special Survey 33 was completed in 1839-40, Samuel Davenport settled in and established the town of Macclesfield, and his older brother Robert established a property which he called Battunga. Robert purchased the land from George Deane in April 1843, and lived in the existing c1842 timber cottage until his own homestead was completed in 1847. The house was constructed of stone quarried from the property. An avenue of trees was planted along the driveway in 1847, and the house was enlarged in 1850. Robert Davenport was a significant local 'squire' who served on the Legislative Council for three years. By 1880, he had purchased over a dozen sections of land to create a major estate. Not far from the house, he constructed a private chapel which was also used as a school building for many years. There was also a private cemetery at Battunga, and it is there that Robert and his wife Dorothea are buried. The Battunga property remained in the Davenport family until 1914 when it was purchased by Professor William Lowrie. Lowrie was appointed Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1887, and later became the South Australian Director of Agriculture. He was able to carry out much important research at Battunga, including work on the use of super-phosphate on South Australian farms, and specialised sheep-breeding of pure-bred Border Leicesters. Thus the Battunga estate has long been associated with significant farming practises, as well as with the earliest development of the Flaxley area.

**Criterion (d)** *it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.*

This is an outstanding example of a pioneering estate which includes an 1847 stone house, an c1850s chapel and two early barns. There were a number of prominent early settlers who established large estates in South Australia in the 1840s, but apart from Bungaree and Pewsey Vale in the mid-North, there are few surviving examples of estates where private chapels and cemeteries were also established. The stone & iron entrance, stone hay barn and stone and timber-slab barn also make a vital contribution to the completeness of the estate. Due to its distance from the house, the cemetery has not been included in this recommendation.

**Criterion (e)** *it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.*

The stone homestead with its underground cellars provides an excellent example of stone construction methods of the 1840s, while the c1850s red-brick chapel demonstrates significant early construction techniques, especially the surviving timber-shingle roof and fine brickwork around the lancet window. Other representative examples of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular construction include the timber-slab walls in the large barn, the early design and construction of the smaller stone barn, and stone and cast iron front entrance.

**Criterion (g)** *it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.*

The Battunga estate has been associated with two significant South Australians, Robert Davenport & Professor William Lowrie. Davenport was an important pioneer who established and developed a significant estate at Battunga, and was involved in local politics including serving on the Legislative Council for three years. Lowrie was appointed Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1887, and later became the South Australian Director of Agriculture. He was able to carry out much important research at Battunga, including work on the use of super-phosphate on South Australian farms, and specialised sheep-breeding of pure-bred Border Leicesters.

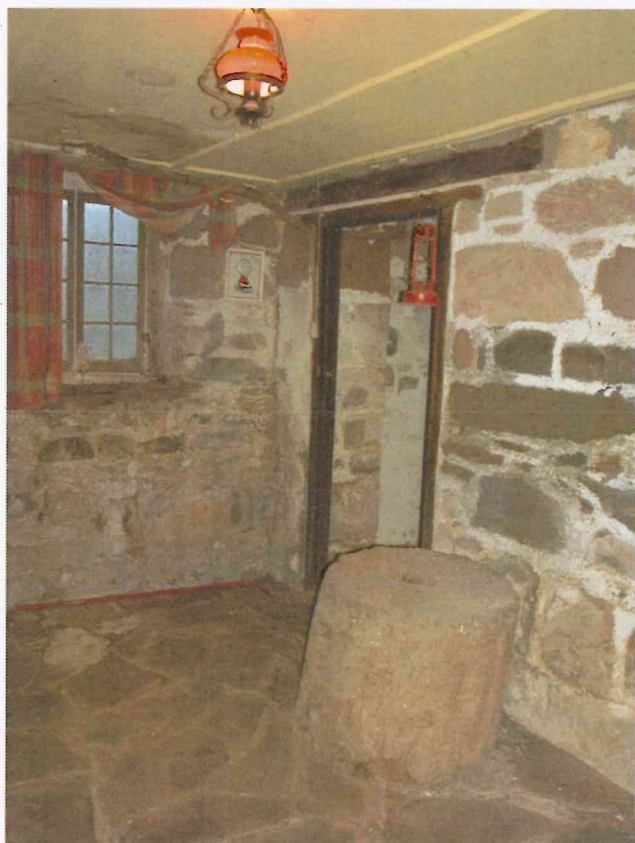
**Battunga – house, chapel, barns & entrance**

**Place no.: 294**

---

**REFERENCES**

- Berry, D W & S H Gilbert 1981, *Pioneer Building Techniques in South Australia*.
- Cox, Philip & J Freeland 1980, *Rude Timber Buildings in Australia*.
- Faull, Jim [ed.] 1980, *Macclesfield, reflections along the Angas*, esp. pp 41-49.
- Faull, Jim & Gordon Young, 1986, *People Places & Buildings*, p 99.
- Hallack, EH 1892, *Our Townships, Farms & Homesteads, Southern Districts of SA*, WK Thomas & Co.
- Hignett & Co. 1983, *Mount Barker District Heritage Survey*, S138.
- Lewis, Miles 1977, *Victorian Primitive*.
- Local History Centre, heritage files & photographs.
- McEwin, G G 1990, *Macclesfield & Surrounds: A Title Search from alienation to current*, pp 99-109.
- Oral history: Andrew Kebble.
- Stark, Paul 1983, *Meadows Heritage*, A 5.2.1.
- Veenstra, Paul c1995, *Mount Barker District Heritage Survey* [Report files], Item 8/08
- [www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi](http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi), [www.slsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au), [www.southaustralianhistory.com.au](http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au)



*Battunga – cellar interior, 2004*



*Battunga – cellar interior, 2004*

## Battunga - house, chapel, barns & entrance

Place no.: 294

---

### SITE RECORD

Location	lot 757 Strathalbyn Rd, nr Flaxley
Description	Stone house with cellar, former chapel (brick), stone and timber-framed barn, stone hay barn, and stone & cast-iron property entrance.
Significant fabric	House: stone walls including fireplaces, hipped roof-form [excluding tiles], timber-framed windows and timber doors, red-brick chimney. Former chapel: brick walls, timber-shingle roof, timber-framed doors and windows, including lancet windows. Barn: stone and timber-slab walls, cgi roof. Hay barn: stone walls and cgi roof. Entrance: stone walls and fence posts, cast-iron fencing.
Condition	Stone and timber-slab barns are vulnerable
Land Description	Allot 769 F5984 Sec 2214 Hundred of Macclesfield CT 5865-254
Local Government Area	District Council of Mount Barker
Current Use	House, outbuildings & entrance
Original Use	House, chapel, barns & entrance
State Heritage Status	Nil
State Heritage File No.	Nil
Other Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stark, P 1983, <i>Meadows Heritage Survey</i>, A 5.2.1</li><li>• Veenstra, Paul c1995, <i>Mount Barker District Heritage Survey</i> [Report files], Item 8/08</li></ul>
Photograph File	Mt Barker Heritage Survey\MBHS Photos\Flaxley\FL Strath Battunga
Report by	Anna Pope / Claire Booth



*Battunga – stone & timber barn, 2004*



*Battunga – barn interior showing timber-slab wall*

**Battunga - house, chapel, barns & entrance**

**Place no.: 294**

---



*Battunga – side of house, 2004*



*Battunga, 2004*

**Battunga - house, chapel, barns & entrance**

**Place no.: 294**



*Battunga chapel, 2004*



*Fossilised stone used for detailing adjacent house window, Battunga, 2004*