

To: The South Australian Heritage Committee

From: Senior Historical Architect

Subject: REGISTER NOMINATION REPORT -
BUSH INN,
MILLICENT ROAD, ROBE

Date: 20 May 1982

Summary

This report was initiated by a nomination from the current lessee who is carrying out restoration. The Bush Inn is situated on land which was acquired as an Historic Reserve by the Robe District Council in 1976.

Historically, the Bush Inn is significant for its association with the early history of the Historic Town of Robe and its development as the major wool port of the South East. As a roadside Inn, it catered to the teamsters carting wool to the Port. The old Inn is also significant for its association with noted local historian and author, Kathleen Bermingham, who spent part of her youth there after her father bought Section 311 in 1895.

Architecturally, Bush Inn is interesting as the only surviving example of a number of roadside inns built on the main teamster route near Robe.

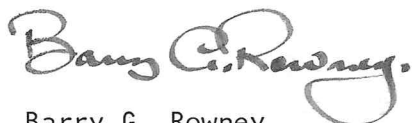
Environmentally, Bush Inn is a visually significant landmark on the only approach to the Historic Town of Robe.

The Integrity of the building is reduced by poor condition but has not as yet been compromised by the current programme of restoration.

Bush Inn is not listed on either the National Trust or National Estate Register but has been noted in the U.E.P.G. Robe Conservation Study.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Bush Inn be included on the Register of State Heritage Items and that it be categorized A2, ~~A3~~, ~~H3~~.



Barry G. Rowney
CW:JD

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures Item BUSH INN, MILLICENT ROAD, ROBE	
Age 1860's Unconfirmed	Theme	Office 6823-10265
Period 1852-1883	Subject TRADE AND COMMERCE - RETAIL & ACCOMMODATION TRANSPORTATION - LAND	Region South East
Building Type Inn	Style VICTORIAN/VERNACULAR	Status U.P.E.G.
<u>Qualitative Data</u>		Conservation Study
Component <u>History</u>	Comment	Grading E VG AG FP NA
1. Context:	Associated with the early history of Robe and its period as the major wool port of the South East. As a roadside inn, served as a stopping place for the teamsters carting wool to Robe.	*
2. Person/Group:	- Associated with Jacob Chambers, publican. - Associated with George Bermingham, and his daughter, local historian and author, Kathleen Bermingham.	* *
3. Event:	Licensed as an inn from 1861 to 1871.	*
4. Architect/Builder:	Not yet established. Not yet established.	* *
5. Design:	Single storey, hipped roofs; appears to have evolved as two separate buildings, timber rear wall.	*
6. Construction:	Coursed limestone facade with segmental arches over openings, limestone rubble side walls. Part of rear wall is timber boarding with hessian lining. Corrugated iron roof over timber shingles.	*
7. Interior:	Not accessible.	*
8. Representation:	The only surviving example of several roadside inns built on the approach to the town.	*

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures						
		Item BUSH INN MILLICENT ROAD, ROBE					
Component Comment		Grading E VG AG FP NA					
<u>Environment</u>							
9. Continuity:	Sited on cleared land surrounded by large poplars, isolated from other buildings.			*			
10. Local Character:	Contributes to the historic character of the town.	*					
11. Landmark:	Location on the approach road and isolation from the town enhances the inn's status as a landmark.	*					
<u>Integrity</u>							
12. Alterations:	Difficult to assess without internal inspection. Although the external form appears intact, the building is known to have suffered earthquake damage in 1897.			*			
13. Condition:	Fair, windows boarded up, some window frames missing. Iron roof recently replaced, guttering unfinished. Timber section in poor state.			*			
14. Compatibility:	Unoccupied at present. It is intended to be re-established as an inn after restoration.			*			
<u>Supplementary Information</u>							
Adaptation:	The current work, unless sensitive, may compromise the building's integrity. In particular, the rear wall of calico and timber may not survive current restoration, but that and the shingle roof are interesting indications of the building's early construction. The building should be studied and proposed work specified prior to commencement.						
Interpretation:	The building has a passive role to Robe. A more active interpretation role would be possible with projected public use as an historic inn.						
Current Situation:	The lessee intends to restore the Inn to working condition and apply for a license. The building is owned by the Robe District Council.						
Evaluated By	Carolyn Wigg Register Architect	Annely Aeuckens Register Historian	Date				
Reviewed By	Ivar Nelsen		Date				
South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization			Date				

I.E.S./D3/211081

HISTORICAL RESEARCH: BUSH INN, MILLICENT ROAD, ROBE

The original Government township of Robe established in 1846 only comprised a small part of what became known as Robe Town. In the mid-1850's a number of "villages" were established in the vicinity of the first settlement. They were called Lordston (created 1856), Syleham and Honeyton (both of which came into being in 1858). These 3 villages quickly became "inner suburbs" and "an integral part of Robe". However, one-and-a-half miles from Robe proper was an inn known as the "Newton Arms" which, "had been intended as the hub of the Village of Newton". This village had arisen from the plans of Benjamin Denning who had built the "Newton Arms" in 1855 but the proposed township never eventuated and the hotel remained alone as a roadside Inn. Within "a stone's throw" from the "Newton Arms" was another Inn, first known as "The Bush Inn" in 1861, then as "Mac's Hotel" from 1862-1864, and finally as the "Carrier's Arms" from 1865-1871.

The "Bush Inn" was a roadside Inn like the "Newton Arms", a stopping place for the teamsters on their last leg carting wool to Robe. Situated some two miles from the town, the Inn appears to have prospered during Robe's heyday as a wool port, declining, as Robe itself did during the 1870's, with the diminished traffic along the main road into the port. The land on which the inn was situated, section 311, was originally granted to Philip Levi, (the same man who first acquired the allotments in Robe Town on which the Free Presbyterian Chapel and St. Peter's Church of England were built), in August, 1857. Thus, it is possible that the inn was built in the 1850's although it does not appear to have been licensed until 1861. Jacob Chambers, publican, acquired the freehold of section 311 in May, 1868. He was the licensee of the inn from 1865-1869 and also for part of 1871.

In March, 1895 Chambers sold section 311 to George Bermingham, Labourer of Robe. George was the father of the well-known local historian and author, Kathleen Bermingham who died at "Grey masts" in Robe in 1974. She spent part of her childhood on this property which included the abandoned inn. In her The Third Eleven Tales of Robe, she describes the building as being "solidly built. It had nine rooms with casement windows, stout doors, lath and plaster ceilings, four open fire-places with strong square chimneys, a back port with (like the kitchen) a lakestone floor, ..." ¹ She lived here until 1912 with her family while her father, "in a small way, bred thoroughbred horses and grazed a few sheep." ² In August 1912 the property was acquired by the South-Eastern Drainage Board and remained in the hands of the State until 1976 when most of the old section 311 was absorbed into Section 394 and a new section, 557, containing the old inn plus a small amount of land was declared a "Reserve for the Preservation of Historic Buildings" (Government Gazette 15 January, 1976) and put under the control of the District Council of Robe.

The old Bush Inn is the only roadside Inn remaining from the early days of Robe's existence as the South East's major wool port. Unlike the inns located within Robe Town and its "villages", the roadside inns specifically catered to the needs of the teamsters who carted wool to the port. The roadside inns, in the order they were reached by the teamsters along the old Penola Road to Robe were, the "Stone Hut Inn" (1856-1866 under various names), Lake Howdon, the "Emu Inn", the "Telegraph Inn" (1862-1873), Lowrie's Hill, then the old Bush Inn and finally the "Newton Arms" (1855?-1873), one-and-a half miles from town. Of these inns, only the "Newton Arms" and the "Bush Inn" were situated on the outskirts of Robe. Thus, the old Inn is an important link with that period of Robe's history when its primary function was as an "export" port, and illustrates the important role played by the teamsters during this time.

Footnotes

1 & 2 The Third Eleven Tales of Robe, Kathleen Bermingham, 1972, Pg. 36 & 37.

Sources: As above plus L.T.O. search (CT 114/122) and Gateway to the South East, A Story of Robe Town and the Guichen Bay District, Kathleen Bermingham, 1961.

A. Aeuckens
Register Historian

19.5.1982

AA:SK



FILM 48
NO 2

NORTH WEST VIEW OF BUSH INN,
MAIN ROAD, EAST OF ROBE
6823-10265

ROBE
19-2-79



FILM NO.

BUSH INN, ROBE
6823-10265