South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

BETTER HERITAGE INFORMATION SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with either the South Australian Heritage Act 1978 or the Heritage Places Act 1993.

The information contained in this document is provided in accordance with s14(6) and s21 of the Heritage Places Act 1993.

REGISTERED Granny Banks' Cottage **PLACE NO.:** 12646

NAME:

ALSO Granny Banks' Cottage (former Crazy Cottage)

KNOWN AS:

ADDRESS: Bunganditj Country

15 Sturt Street

Robe SA 5276

CT 5979/427 D72218 A1 Hundred of Waterhouse

CONFIRMED IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE REGISTER:

08 November 1984

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Granny Banks' Cottage demonstrates the formative years of Robe as a key South Australian seaport town. The vernacular construction of the original cottage built between 1847-1850 reflects the *ad hoc* nature of early residential buildings in Robe. Paired with the more robust construction of the c.1853 addition, Granny Banks' Cottage captures the early development of Robe and demonstrates how its early residents lived, including government employees, a prominent pastoralist, and a teamster.

INDICATIVE CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

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

Granny Banks' Cottage demonstrates the formative years of Robe during its emergence as a key South Australian seaport town. Located on Sturt Street, it is believed to have been the second permanent residential building constructed in Robe, the first being the Former Government Residency (SHP 12546) on Hagen Street. While the Former Government Residency housed the Government Resident, the earliest section of Granny Banks' Cottage was erected between c.1847-1850 and temporarily housed other government employees. The 1840s cottage is vernacular in construction and reflects the *ad hoc* nature of early residential buildings in Robe. In c.1853, an adjoining addition was erected west of the cottage and is of a more robust structure. Their pairing captures the early progress of Robe's residential development.

Granny Banks' Cottage has housed key figures associated with the town's early history. Reflecting Robe's origins as a government town, government employees were the first to live in the cottage. They were followed by George Ormerod, a prominent pastoralist and merchant. Ormerod lived at the site with his family while they waited for their new house ('Moorakyne' (SHP 10363)) to be constructed further down Sturt Street. During their residency, the second cottage was erected. The site was subsequently owned by Arthur Banks, a teamster, and Sarah Banks, later known as 'Granny Banks'. The latter was a well-known and respected local resident, and the place now bears her name. Granny Banks' Cottage is evidence of how key early figures lived as they contributed to the town's growth as a regional freight and transportation hub.

SITE PLAN

Granny Banks' Cottage 15 Sturt Street, Robe



Granny Banks' Cottage, 15 Sturt Street, Robe SA 5278, CT 5979/427 D72218 A1, Hundred of Waterhouse.

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PLACE NO.: 12646

LEGEND

Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

Physical Description

Granny Banks' Cottage comprises two main structures that were built separately. They are connected and several extensions have been added.

The first structure was erected between 1847-1850 and is located on the western side of the property. It is a vernacular cottage built of stone and weatherboard with a gabled roof clad with flat-iron sheeting and steel flashing. Additional features include:

- A stone chimney at the eastern end,
- Timber casement windows with eight glazed panels,
- External Timber window shutters,
- A timber panelled door with a small, square window towards the top,
- An internal partition wall,
- A fireplace.

The second structure was erected in c.1853 and is located on the eastern side of the property. It is built primarily of stone and has an M-shaped roof clad with corrugated galvanised steel. Additional features include:

- Two prominent chimneys built of stone and brick, one protruding from the adjacent elevations to fit a fireplace or oven,
- Fireplace,
- Smooth rendering to the exterior walls,
- Timber casement windows with eight glazed panels,
- Weatherboard cladding at the eastern end.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The 1840s cottage on the western side,
- The c.1853 stone cottage (addition) on the eastern side,
- All stone and brick chimneys,
- Timber palings on the 1840s cottage,
- Flat-iron roof sheeting on the 1840s cottage,
- The internal partition wall in the 1840s cottage.
- Fireplace/s in the 1840s and c.1853 cottage/s.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Extensions built after the c.1853 structure was erected,
- Non-original fixtures and fittings.
- Additional structures on the property, including outbuildings, fences, etc.

History of the Place

Establishing Colonial Robe

Guichen Bay in the South East of South Australia forms part of the traditional lands of the Bungandidj people, who have been present in the area for at least 30,000 years.¹ Europeans first charted the coastline of the region in 1802 during the Baudin and Flinders expeditions and sealers established a presence at Guichen Bay in 1831.²

European exploration of the South East took place from 1839 and settlement began as early as 1840.3 Much of the South East was initially settled by pastoralists and by 1847 approximately half of the region was held under pastoral licences. As primary production expanded the colonial government began to provide a series of government towns as service and staging centres. The provision of ports to ship goods to market was also viewed as essential and Robe was established in 1846, to provide a port for the burgeoning wool clip then being obtained from the South East.4 Robe was officially declared as a port by the government in 1847.5

Situated towards the south of Guichen Bay, the town at Robe (or Robetown) went on to become the first major town of the South East.⁶ Robe became the administrative centre of the region when a Government Resident was appointed in 1846.⁷ Over the next two decades, Robe developed as an international port that serviced the local wool industry and import and export markets. It also facilitated the arrival of thousands of immigrants, including British and Irish people, as well as Chinese prospectors during the Victorian gold rush.⁸

Origins of the Cottage*

Months after Robe was surveyed by the government in April 1846, the first township allotments were auctioned on 17 October 1846. Section 79 was purchased for four and a half pounds by pastoralist John Baker, later a member of the Legislative Council and the second Premier of South Australia, where he held office for twelve days.⁹

The earliest part of the existing building on Section 79 is the westernmost portion, which was 'built as a self-contained cottage'. Located on Sturt Street, the cottage featured calico ceilings and lime-ash floors and its roof was clad with 'heavy square flat-iron'. Although located some distance away from the shoreline, it initially had an open view of the bay. It is unknown who was responsible for its construction.

A plaque placed on the building by the District Council of Robe claims that the cottage was erected in 'about 1846' and 'is thought to be Robe's second oldest dwelling'. ¹³ There is evidence that the first permanent dwelling built in Robe was the Government Residency (SHP 12546) on Hagen Street. ¹⁴ This building was intended to

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^{*} The following sections are revisions and extensions of Carolyn Wigg and Kathleen Patitsas, 'History and Sources' in 'Item Evaluation Sheet: Dwelling, Granny Banks, Cottage, Sturt Street Robe, 1983, Ref. No. 823-12646.

house the Government Resident, then Captain Gerard Villiers Butler, and construction commenced in January 1847.¹⁵ Accordingly, this means that the cottage could not have been built in 1846.

It is possible, however, that the original cottage was the second permanent dwelling erected in Robe. According to local historian Kathleen Bermingham, the original cottage was 'used as a temporary dwelling for Government personnel'. ¹⁶ Given that the Government Resident had arrived at Robe with a clerk and doctor, ¹⁷ it is feasible that the original cottage was built to house them around the time the Government Residency was constructed in early 1847. The two structures both originally featured calico ceilings and lime-ash floors, thus further suggesting they are contemporaneous. ¹⁸

Expanding the Cottage and George Ormerod's Occupancy

In 1853, the property was acquired by Robert Denford, then the proprietor of the Robe Hotel. That same year the second part of the dwelling was built by Henry Smith before George Ormerod and his family moved in.¹⁹

Ormerod was an important figure in the early South East, being a pioneer pastoralist, merchant, financier and shipping agent, with his headquarters located at Robe.²⁰ In the town 'all the export and most of the import trade passed through the hands of George Ormerod and Co.'²¹

The Ormerods apparently lived at the dwelling temporarily while they waited for their new house to be built further down Sturt Street, which was completed no later than 1855 and named 'Moorakyne', now a State Heritage Place (SHP 10363). 22 While some historians believe that Ormerod was responsible for initiating the cottage's new section, 23 the land title specifies that he purchased the property, 'together with all edifices', in 1860 for £150. 24 By this point, Ormerod had been living primarily at Moorakyne since at least 1855. 25 As such, while it is generally accepted that he briefly lived at the property, there is some uncertainty as to when he acquired it and whether he built any structures.

Becoming 'Granny Banks' Cottage'

In 1864, Ormerod sold the property to Arthur Banks senior for less than what he had paid for it.²⁶ Banks occupation is described in the land records simply as a 'carrier', though it appears that he had delivered the mail and was later a bullock-driver on one of Ormerod's stations.²⁷ Originally from Scotland, Arthur and his wife Sarah Rachel, along with their four children, had arrived in South Australia from England in 1855 aboard the ship 'Octavia'.²⁸

One of Arthur and Sarah's sons, Arthur Banks junior, worked for George Ormerod and Co. In around 1880, he was placed in charge of the company's business in Robe and operated from the store located at the Royal Circus, since demolished.²⁹

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Arthur Banks senior continued working as a teamster until his death in 1882.³⁰ Thereafter Sarah lived at the property by herself. Bermingham recalls that Sarah's 'small lace cap on her well-brushed hair was often linked with her smile' which was 'beloved by the schoolchildren of all ages'.³¹ Locals came to know her as 'Granny Banks',³² hence 'Granny Banks' Cottage'. Both Arthur Banks senior and Sarah are buried in the Robe cemetery.³³

Subsequent History

After Sarah's death in 1908, the property was bought for thirty pounds by Ruth McIntyre, of Lake Hawdon Station. The property was apparently used by the family as a holiday home until it was sold to Abraham and Rosina Evans in 1960. Abe and Rosina then renovated it, adding a new verandah. Other changes included relining the walls and blocking in the baking oven which is in the large chimney on the southern side. In 1977, the property was transferred to Richard and Kathleen Wiltshire and was subsequently acquired by John and Cicely Fenton in 1981. Since the first section was first built around 1847, multiple extensions and renovations have been made to the property over the ensuing years.

The property was confirmed as a State Heritage Place on 5 April 1984 under the name Dwelling – 'Granny Banks'. Beginning in the 1980s, the Fentons undertook extensive and much needed conservation work on the original cottage.³⁶ Their efforts were later documented within a Heritage SA newsletter.³⁷ The property has since changed hands and the various sections have been divided to create a complex of rental holiday apartments.

Chronology

Year	Event
1840	European settlers begin to populate the South East.
1846	Counties of Grey and Robe are proclaimed by the colonial government and are opened to claim under pastoral license.
	The Government of South Australia establishes Robe as the administrative centre of the South East.
	Section 79 of Robe Town is sold to John Baker.
1847	Over half of the South East is settled under pastoral license.
	Robe is officially gazetted as a port by the government.
	The Former Government Residency (SHP 12546) is erected, making it the first permanent dwelling built in Robe.
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- c.1847- The first section of Granny Banks' Cottage is erected as a vernacular,
 standalone cottage to house government employees.
- c.1853 Local publican Robert Denford purchases Granny Banks' Cottage.

 Henry Smith erects the second section of Granny Banks' Cottage and George Ormerod and his family occupy the property temporarily until their new home, 'Moorakyne' is built.
- c.1856 George Ormerod and his family relocate to their new home, Moorakyne.
- St Peter's Anglican Church on the corner of Sturt and Morphett Streets opens. It is located immediately across the road from Granny Banks' Cottage.
- 1864 Arthur and Sarah Banks purchase Granny Banks' Cottage.
- 1969 The District Council of Robe is formed on 28 October.
- 1882 Arthur Banks passes away. Sarah Banks remains at Granny Banks' Cottage.
- 1908 Sarah Banks passes away. Ruth McIntyre of Hawdon Station purchases Granny Banks' Cottage and uses it as a holiday home.
- 1960 'Abe' and Rosina Evans purchase Granny Banks' Cottage and add a verandah, reline the walls and block in the baking oven.
- John and Cicely Fenton purchase Granny Banks' Cottage and commence conservation works to restore the 1840s built section, which had become delipidated.
- 1993 The State Heritage Branch approves conservations works on the condition that significant original materials are retained and/or restored during the process.
- Heritage SA awards a \$5,000 grant to the owners of Granny Banks' Cottage to assist cover the costs of necessary conservation works.
- Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/29/12 to undertake 'repair and maintenance' on Granny Banks' Cottage.
- 2006 Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/D019/2005 to subdivide the land where Granny Banks' Cottage is located into two lots.

 Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/0037/2006 to build a garage, driveway and detached dwelling adjacent to Granny Banks' Cottage.

- Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/81/12 to make alterations and additions to Granny Banks' Cottage, including refurbishments to the kitchen and bathroom 'zones', new windows, a timber deck, the demolition of an internal partition and repairs.
- Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/36/16 to convert the use of an existing outbuilding into tourist accommodation.
- Heritage SA approves Development Application 822/96/17 to build a timber deck and garden wall at Granny Banks' Cottage.

References

Books and Chapters

- Bermingham, Kathleen. Gateway to the South East: A Story of Robetown and the Guichen Bay District. Millicent: The South Eastern Times Ltd., 1961.
- Bermingham, Kathleen. The Second Eleven Tales of Robe. Robe: self-published, 1971.
- Cockburn, Rodney. *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia, Vol.* 2, facsimile edition indexed by A. Dorothy Aldersey. 1925; Blackwood, SA: Lynton Publications, 1974.
- Harfull, Liz. Almost an Island: The Story of Robe, reprinted edition. 2013; Mile End: Wakefield press, 2015.
- Williams, Michael. The Making of the South Australian Landscape: A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia. London; New York: Academic Press, 1974.

Reports and Theses

- Dallwitz, John, and Marsden, Susan. Robe Historical Interpretation Study: Stage 1 in the Establishment of the Robe Historical Interpretation Centre. Adelaide: Department of Environment and Planning, 1983.
- Patitsas, Kathleen, and Wigg, Wigg. 'Item Evaluation Sheet: Dwelling, Granny Banks, Cottage, Sturt Street Robe', State Heritage Branch, 1983, Ref. No. 823-12646.

Newspapers

- Campbell, Roland. 'The Days Before Yesterday: Early Identities'. *Narracoorte Herald*, 14 October 1941, p.4.
- Underwood, E. 'The New Townships', South Australian Register (Adelaide), 23 January 1847, p.2.

Periodicals

'Reviving Granny Banks Cottage'. Heritage South Australia Newsletter no.22 (January 2003), pp.8-9.

Land Titles

Certificate of Title Vol. 5979/427

Certificate of Title Vol. 5709/670

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Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register on 08 November 1984

The South Australian Heritage Council endorsed the content of this BHI - SSHP on 23 May 2024.

Certificate of Title Vol. 1935/105

Websites

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'John Baker (1813-1872)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/baker-john-2920 Accessed 5 March 2024.

'Octavia: Arrived July 19, 1855', 35/1855, Passenger Lists 1845-1940, State Records of South Australia.

https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0003/831603/GRG35 48 1 55-24 Octavia.pdf Accessed 5 March 2024.

'Banks, Arthur Senior', Plot 39, Cemetery Search, District Council of Robe. https://www.robe.sa.gov.au/services/cemetery/cemetery-search?action=grave&id=223845 Accessed 5 March 2024

'Banks, Sarah Rachael', Plot 39, Cemetery Search, District Council of Robe. https://www.robe.sa.gov.au/services/cemetery/cemetery-search?action=grave&id=223852 Accessed 5 March 2024.

SITE DETAILS

Granny Banks' Cottage

15 Sturt Street, Robe

PLACE NO.: 12646

FORMER NAME: 'Crazy Cottage'

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Two conjoined cottage structures built of timber and

stone, one with a gabled roof partially clad with sheetiron, the other with hipped roofs clad with corrugated

steel.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c.1847-1853

REGISTER STATUS: Provisionally entered 26 April 1984

Confirmed 08 November 1984

CURRENT USE: Holiday Accommodation, c.1980s -

PREVIOUS USE(S): Dwelling, c.1847 – 1908; c.1960s – 1980s

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

AREA:

District Council of Robe

LOCATION: Street No.: 15

Street Name: Sturt Street

Town/Suburb: Robe

Post Code: 5276

LAND DESCRIPTION: Title CT 5979/427 D72218 A1

Reference:

Hundred: Waterhouse

PHOTOS

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Granny Banks' Cottage
15 Sturt Street, Robe



Front elevation of the c.1853 section of Granny Banks' Cottage, c.1982.

Source: DEW Files



Two chimneys built of brick and stone on the c.1853 section, c.1982.



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Roof of the 1840s cottage (left), c.1982.

Source: DEW Files



Rear of 1840s cottage and c.1853 addition c.1982.





Eastern half of the 1840s cottage, c.2012.

Western half of the 1840s cottage, c.2012.

Source: DEW Files

Source: DEW Files



Rear of the 1840s cottage, c.2012.



Rear of the 1840s cottage showing the eastern elevation, c.2012.

Source: DEW Files



Eastern elevation of the 1840s cottage showing chimney, c.2012.



Two chimneys built of brick and stone on the c.1853 addition, c.2012.

Source: DEW Files



Front elevation of the c.1853 addition of Granny Banks' Cottage, c.1982.

¹ Liz Harfull, Almost an Island: The Story of Robe, reprinted edition (2013; Mile End: Wakefield press, 2015), 12-14; Susan Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days (Robe: District Council of Robe, 1985), pp.11-12.

- ² Harfull, Almost an Island, p.11; Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days, p.12.
- ³ Harfull, Almost an Island, pp.14-16; Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days, p.14.
- ⁴ Roger André, 'Wool', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia, 19 March 2014. https://sahistoryhub.history.sa.gov.au/subjects/wool; Michael Williams, The Making of the South Australian Landscape: A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia (London; New York: Academic Press, 1974), pp. 339-341.
- ⁵ Dallwitz and Marsden, Robe Historical Interpretation, pp.4-10.
- ⁶ Dallwitz and Marsden, Robe Historical Interpretation, pp.4-10.
- ⁷ Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days, pp.21-24.
- 8 Dallwitz and Marsden, Robe Historical Interpretation, pp.10-16.
- ⁹ Kathleen Bermingham, *The Second Eleven Tales of Robe* (Robe: self-published, 1971), p.9; 'John Baker (1813-1872)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/baker-john-2920 Accessed 5 March 2024.

- ¹⁰ Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9.
- 11 Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9.
- ¹² Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9.
- ¹³ 'Granny Banks Cottage, Robe, SA, Australia Image', Waymarking, 2024.

https://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=5241e5c3-8f52-4884-96fc-0b2068dbf90a Accessed 14 March 2024.

- ¹⁴ E. Underwood, 'The New Townships', *South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 23 January 1847, p.2.
- ¹⁵ Underwood, 'The New Townships', p.2.
- ¹⁶ Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9.
- ¹⁷ Kathleen Bermingham, Gateway to the South East: A Story of Robetown and the Guichen Bay District (Millicent: South Eastern Times Ltd, 1961), pp.83-84.
- ¹⁸ Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p. 7 and p.9.
- 19 Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9.
- ²⁰ See Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days, pp.26-27 and Harfull, Almost an Island, pp.30-34.
- ²¹ Rodney Cockburn, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, *Vol.* 2, facsimile edition indexed by A. Dorothy Aldersey (1925; Blackwood, SA: Lynton Publications, 1974), p.20.
- ²² Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.9; Harfull, Almost an Island, p.214.
- ²³ Bermingham, *The Second Eleven Tales*, p.9; Roland Campbell, 'Oldest Occupied House: Structures at Robe', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 29 October 1937, p.32.
- ²⁴ 'George Ormerod, Merchant', 30 August 1860, Search Number 81 at GRO, No. 310, Book 167.
- ²⁵ Susan Marsden suggests 1853 whereas Liz Harfull suggests 1855. Marsden, A Glimpse of Golden Days, p.30; Harfull, Almost an Island, p.38.
- ²⁶ Wigg and Patitsas, 'History and Sources'.
- ²⁷ Wigg and Patitsas, 'History and Sources'.
- ²⁸ Roland Campbell, 'The Days Before Yesterday: Early Identities', *Narracoorte Herald*, 14 October 1941, p.4; 'Octavia: Arrived July 19, 1855', 35/1855, Passenger Lists 1845-1940, State Records of South Australia.

https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0003/831603/GRG35 48 1 55-24_Octavia.pdf Accessed 5 March 2024.

- ²⁹ Campbell, 'The Days Before Yesterday', p.4.
- 30 Campbell, 'The Days Before Yesterday', p.4.
- 31 Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.10.
- ³² Bermingham, The Second Eleven Tales, p.10.
- ³³ 'Banks, Arthur Senior', Plot 39, Cemetery Search, District Council of Robe.

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https://www.robe.sa.gov.au/services/cemetery/cemetery-search?action=grave&id=223845 Accessed 5 March 2024;

- ³⁴ Kathleen Patitsas, interview with Abraham Evans, 17 July 1983.
- 35 Certificate of Title Vol. 1935/105.
- ³⁶ Harfull, Almost an Island, p.210 and p.214.
- ³⁷ 'Reviving Granny Banks Cottage', *Heritage South Australia Newsletter* no.22 (January 2003), pp.8-9.

^{&#}x27;Banks, Sarah Rachael', Plot 39, Cemetery Search, District Council of Robe. https://www.robe.sa.gov.au/services/cemetery/cemetery-search?action=grave&id=223852 Accessed 5 March 2024.