

RECORD OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Mill House

PLACE NO.: 26418

ADDRESS: 5 Goolwa Road, Middleton

Physical Description

The place known as Mill House, currently used as a medical centre, comprises a large single-storey stone residence occupying a prominent corner site in the centre of the southern seaside township of Middleton on the Fleurieu Peninsula. It is located immediately next to the former Middleton Flour Mill (State Heritage Place No 10356), a landmark structure in the township, and is visually linked with it as part of a complex of stone buildings comprising the former mill.

Mill House is a substantial double-fronted symmetrical stone cottage with a hipped corrugated-iron roof and verandah running the length of the main frontage to Goolwa Road. It is constructed using local stone and lime mortar, with brick quoins and rendered surrounds to door and window openings. The exterior walls have been re-finished at some time with a wet dash stucco on the front section and rough float stucco to the rear. Some original timber casement windows survive along the Mill Terrace frontage, with twelve-pane sash windows to the front section. One of these has been replaced with French doors opening on to the verandah. The south-eastern wing features small casement windows.

All external walls are painted and the property has been re-roofed in corrugated profile zincalume with zincalume fascias, barges and roofwater goods, replacing the original slate roof. The two symmetrically-placed chimneys in the front section, and single shorter one at the rear, are all rendered with brick capping. The rear section has a double-gabled 'valley' roof, the change in the roof-line suggesting that the structure was probably built in several stages possibly commencing with the south eastern wing located closest to the Mill itself. Evidence from archival photographs indicates that the building was completed in more or less its present form prior to 1869.

Internally the building features eight or nine rooms leading off an unusually wide central hallway. The timber-framed fibro extension in the south west corner appears to be a later addition. A small stone and brick outbuilding to the rear appears to be an early structure on the site and may have been a domestic store or laundry.

Statement of Heritage Significance

Mill House was built as part of the c1855 Middleton flour mill complex known also as Bowman's Mill, the largest steam-driven flour mill on the Fleurieu Peninsula. The complex includes the Middleton Flour Mill (State Heritage Place No 10356).

Mill House and the flour mill complex is significant because of its association with the history of the region and the important role of grain and flour production in the early economic development of the colony of South Australia. The mill was founded soon after the construction of the railway from Goolwa to Port Elliot, and flourished during that time when the area south of Adelaide was the chief grain-growing region of South Australia, supplying flour to other colonies and overseas.

Mill House, as one of the few surviving purpose-built mill owner's residences that remain in its original context and setting, provides an insight into the workings of an early industrial site with integrated domestic structures. The significance of Mill House is enhanced by, and contributes to, the other buildings that form part of the mill complex.

Relevant 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***, particularly its economic history. As part of an intact surviving example of a flour milling complex, Mill House demonstrates the domestic and social aspect of one of the colony's earliest and most important industries - grain and flour production.

- (b) *It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance*** as one of the few surviving purpose-built mill owner's residences that remain in its original context and setting.

In its location in close proximity to the mill building, Mill House is a rare example of the intimate association with the industrial activity carried out within a mill complex. The juxtaposition of domestic and industrial buildings within a group which also includes stables and other outbuildings gives an important insight into a way of working and a personal relationship with the workplace which is no longer common.

(d) *It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance*, as part of an historically and functionally integrated complex with the capacity to demonstrate aspects of typical milling operations in a way that other flour mills (which may have lost their residence and outbuildings) do not.

Mill House is part of an outstanding example of a large nineteenth century flour mill, whose heritage significance is recognised by the inclusion of another building in the complex, the Middleton Four Mill, as a State Heritage Place in the South Australian Heritage Register. The significance of Mill House is enhanced by, and contributes to, the other buildings that form part of the mill complex.

Extent of Listing

The components that are critical to the heritage significance of the Mill House include its external form including walls, verandah, roof and chimneys, windows and doors.

The cellular internal layout and unusually wide entrance hall contribute to its comprehensibility and context.

Views of the Mill and Mill House from the main road and the eastern Mill Terrace frontage should be preserved.

The extent of listing *excludes* the later timber-framed extension on the western side of the building.

History of the Place

It is likely that Mill House was built in stages commencing at the same time or soon after the mill, between 1855 and 1860. A photograph from around 1869 shows it was complete in its present form by that time.

The function of Mill House was to provide living quarters on site for the mill owner. He was expected to be on-call day and night because the mill worked 24 hours per day for 6 months a year (Ridgeway 2003, p.138). The owner was required to live on site to fix any problems which arose at the mill and to ensure that during peak times it continued to operate at maximum capacity. Thus Mill House, together with the Middleton Flour Mill, is significant in forming a complex that illustrates early flour milling - a process which has disappeared from South Australia's manufacturing industry.

Mill House is one of the earliest substantial dwellings in the township, and indicative of the importance of the mill owners, who contributed to the social as well as the economic development of the town through their investment in the mill.

The Middleton Flour Mill complex demonstrates a once-common industrial process which is no longer practised. Flour milling was crucial to developing self-generating local economies which operated in the agricultural districts of the state in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century. Mill House was part of this substantial flour mill complex and its construction is representative of the fluctuating affluence associated with the early flour milling industry in South Australia. Not only was the mill itself constructed but also the mill owner's house, the adjacent outbuilding and the stables. The complex as a whole reflects a significant investment made by the mill's founders because the mill was seen as part of a long term, viable, and profitable flour milling industry. This investment is perhaps more notable given that at the time of the mill's construction the town of Middleton consisted of only eight houses and was yet to be surveyed, which occurred in 1856. The size and scale of the entire complex built in this location at this time illustrates that flour milling was a major secondary industry in the State.

This complex illustrates the entire operation of the flour mill, which otherwise would not be evident when viewing the flour mill in isolation. The other buildings in the complex housed functions that were critical to the operation of the flour mill. The structures included the stables, an outbuilding, brick lined well, chimney base (only just evident), and Mill House. The stables housed draught horses used in harness for heavy work such as carting grain, flour or firewood. The well adjacent Middleton Creek was used to draw water for the boiler to provide steam power.

On the 14 December 1855 the *South Australian Register* reported that:

The large and commodious new steam flour-Mill at Middleton is now completed, and has added much to the appearance and importance of this rising township. The engine is an elegant piece of workmanship, manufactured by Messrs Tuxford, and is the first, I believe, erected in the colony upon the new expansive principle. Its power is computed at 12 horse, with a boiler upon the most improved tubular construction.

Middleton at that time comprised eight houses, a general store, and a railway siding and station alongside the double track where horse drawn carriages of the Goolwa to Port Elliot Railway were able to pass. The handsome three storey Mill was built adjacent to the station providing access by rail to the river port of Goolwa or the jetty at Port Elliot. Flour was transported; from Goolwa by paddlesteamer to River Murray towns and from Port Elliot to national and international destinations. The Mill was close to the original ford across the creek, later replaced by the Mill Terrace Bridge, which was the main thoroughfare from the Mill and Railway Station to the Railway Station and Batson's Brickyard, and beyond to the beach.

The town was officially laid out in 1856 on part section 2262, Hundred of Goolwa, purchased in 1849 by the pioneer of the district Thomas Walter Higgins of Currency Creek. There were already a number of residents and businesses in the locality in

addition to the Mill, including a brewery and brick works. The town gained a school in 1856, and a year later its first hotel was licensed. When the tramline was extended to Victor Harbor in 1864, and then to Strathalbyn in 1869, Middleton gained further importance as the junction between the two lines, where passengers had to change trains.

The mill complex of which Mill House was a part was built for brothers William and Alexander Bowman, early settlers who had farmed in the area for some years previously. William Bowman (1812-1894) was the older of the two brothers who arrived in South Australia aboard the *Glenswilly* in 1839. It may have been the younger brother Alexander (1817-1896) who was in residence in Mill Cottage in December 1859, when it was reported that his young wife Helen, aged 23, had died 'after a long, protracted and painful illness' at the residence of his brother William Bowman in Strathalbyn (*South Australian Advertiser*, 8 December 1859). Alternatively this may suggest the mill house had not yet been completed at that date.

The Bowman brothers were pioneers in the southern region and were influential in the early establishment of the town of Middleton, providing local employment and taking a leading role in its social development through their involvement in religious and civic activities. The township developed around the Mill, which has remained its major landmark.

With a run of good seasons the Bowmans' enterprise did well and within a few years the Mill was expanded. In February 1863 the *Register* reported that the quantity of wheat expected to be harvested in the area was expected to be 'immense', and that:

Large quantities are being stored at the Middleton Mill, the spirited proprietors of which, in order to give every accommodation to the settlers, are building a very large and substantial storehouse adjoining the mill.
(*Register*, 13 February 1863)

By October that year William was apparently living at the mill cottage when his seventh daughter Jane aged four years died of scarlatina (*SA Advertiser*, 23 October 1863). Four years later his son Archibald died suddenly at the age of 12, at North Adelaide, where he was possibly attending school (*SA Register*, 30 April 1867).

The Bowman brothers both shared in the running of the mill for the next few years, during which time they introduced several technical innovations and additions to the business, including a silk dressing apparatus and a bone-crushing apparatus, both run off the mill machinery (*SA Advertiser*, 24 January 1862 & 8 November 1869). They were quick to grasp an opportunity too, purchasing the salvaged cargo of wheat and flour from the wreck of the *Athol* off Port Elliot in April 1864 for a knock down price (*Cornwall Chronicle*, Launceston, Tas, 16 April 1864).

As one of the earliest substantial dwellings in the township, Mill House is indicative of the importance of the mill owners, who contributed to the social history as well as the economic development of the town through their investment in the Mill. The brothers were men of considerable standing and influence in the district, and took a prominent role in local affairs. Before the construction of halls or churches in the area the Bowmans offered the use of the store and their home for meetings and public gatherings. Between 1862 and the 1880s, members of the Presbyterian congregation met in the wide front passage of Mill House to hear services conducted by the Rev John Anderson of Strathalbyn.

After Alexander returned to farming in 1870, William continued in partnership with his son-in-law Arthur Addison as William Bowman and Co. During this period the family lived in Mill House, which was extended to accommodate William's large family of ten children. William was for many years a leading citizen of the south coast district, serving as a Justice of the Peace and a judge for agricultural shows, and was active in many local causes including the extension of the railways and road improvements. He continued to have an active interest in machinery, and put considerable money and effort into developing improvements for the Ridley reaper in his later years.

In 1880 the mill property was sold to Frederick Ellis for £1,000. Henry Miller Shand, the town's doctor, occupied the house for a period prior to 1889. In that year, Frederick Ellis was killed when working at the mill, when he was run over by a railway truck on the loop which ran under the mill verandah. His son Henry Ivan Ellis continued the business, and was living in Mill House in November 1905, when the *Register* reported that his wife was delivered of a stillborn son (*Register*, 28 November 1905). Henry Ellis continued to operate the mill until 1915, when it closed due to drought and shortage of manpower during World War I, and its machinery was sold off.

In later years the mill buildings were used for retailing stock feed and farm supplies and equipment, with successive mill owners occupying Mill House up until 1972, when the house was separated from the mill property and sold. In recent years it has been adapted for use as a medical centre.

REFERENCES:

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- Davis, Elizabeth, *Flour Milling in South Australia: A History*, Millers' Produce Co of SA, Adelaide 1988

- Hodge, Charles R, *Encounter Bay: The Miniature Naples of Australia*, Adelaide, 1932
- Peake, Jack and Humby, Peter, *Middleton South Australis: History at a Glance 1849-2009*, published by the author, Middleton, 2008
- Ridgway, Nigel, 'Mills, millers and mill engineers', *Australian Journal of Multi-disciplinary Engineering*, Vol.3, No.1 2004, pp. 63-74.
- *South Australian Register*, *The Advertiser*, and the *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas) various dates, accessed through <http://trove.nla.gov.au>

SITE RECORD

Mill House
5 Goolwa Road, Middleton

FILE NO: 26418

FORMER NAME: Mill Cottage / Mill House

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Substantial single-storey rendered stone former residence, occupying a prominent corner site next to the Middleton Flour Mill.

DATE OF COMPLETION: 1855-60

SA HERITAGE REGISTER STATUS: **Description:** Confirmed Entry
Date: 18 July 2013

LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS: n/a

CURRENT USE: **Description:** Medical Centre
Dates: c2000 –

PREVIOUS USE(S): **Description:** Residence
Dates: c1860 - 2000

ARCHITECT: **Name:** unknown
Dates: n/a

BUILDER: **Name:** unknown
Dates: n/a

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: **Description:** Alexandrina Council

LOCATION: **Unit No.:** -
Street No.: 5
Street Name: Goolwa Road
Town/Suburb: Middleton
Post Code: 5213

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Type:** CT
Volume: 5791
Folio: 33
Lot & Plan No.: Lot 151, F166525
Section:
Hundred: Goolwa

PHOTOS

Mill House
5 Goolwa Road, Middleton

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Mill House, with Middleton Mill in the background, c1869 (SLSA collection).



Mill House Medical Centre, Middleton (October 2012 - DEWNR).

SITE PLAN

Mill House
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Location of Mill House, Middleton (showing extent of listing outlined in red)