

CITY OF SOUTH PERTH LOCAL HERITAGE INVENTORY

Management
Category

A+

PLACE RECORD FORM

Prepared by *Heritage Today*, November 2000
Most recent update by City of South Perth, November 2015

Place No: **MPt 4** **Old Mill and Cottage (Former)**



*The Old Mill (left) and Cottage (behind).
(Gina Fraser, City of South Perth, December 2014)*

LOCATION

Name of Place	<i>Old Mill and Cottage (Former)</i>
Other / former names	Alta Gardens
Address	Mill Point Road
Suburb	South Perth
Local Government Authority	City of South Perth
Scope of listing	This heritage listing only applies to the Old Mill, its attached annex, and the former Cottage. It does not apply to any of the more recent structures on the site.

LISTINGS BY OTHER BODIES

Name of Body	Reference No.	Grade of Listing	Date
Heritage Council of Western Australia	2394	Permanent	2 July 1993
National Trust		Classified	3 November 2014
Flour Mills Survey		Recommend RHP	-
<i>Register of the National Estate</i>		<i>This register ceased to have statutory significance 19.2.2012</i>	

LAND DESCRIPTION

Reserve No.	Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio
20804	818	209789	V 3127 F 182
	833	34516	V 3127 F 183

PERIOD	Colonial
Design Style	Industrial
Construction Date	c1835
Source/Details	National Trust Assessment

USE(S) OF PLACE

Original	Flour Mill
Present	Folk Museum
Other / former	Hotel, Tea rooms

HISTORICAL NOTES

The Mill component of the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* was the second Mill built by William Kernot Shenton on 4½ acres (1.8 ha) of land granted to him in April 1833 following his arrival from England in 1829. Shenton became South Perth's first permanent resident. The first Mill, built in 1833, was ransacked by Aborigines in 1834 and burnt down soon after that. The present Mill was built in 1835 by millwrights, Paul and James Lockyer, and was operated by the miller, Mr Steel.

The Mill was developed on Point Belches because of its proximity to the Perth central business district and water transport between Fremantle and Guildford. 'Miller's Pool', a large basin of water to the east of the Mill, had a 12.0 metre wide mouth to the river, and was then deep enough to provide mooring for small boats servicing the Mill. However, floods in 1826 silted up the pool, reducing its workable depth. At its peak, the wind-driven mill produced 680 kg of flour per day. However, the Mill did not prove to be profitable, and stopped production in 1859. At some point, a small brick cottage was built to the north of the Mill, but its date of construction is not known.

In 1870, a colourful South Perth resident, Thomas (Satan) Brown leased the buildings and converted them into a hotel and picnic ground called the 'Alta Gardens'. Brown had also been granted a wine licence. He added a verandah which survived for nearly 80 years. The project did not succeed and the site was later used as a residence, wine saloon and poultry farm until resumed by the Government in 1929 to mark the centenary of Foundation.

In the late 1950s, the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* were in danger of being demolished for the construction of the Kwinana Freeway, but were saved due to the intervention of local residents, the historical society and the then Minister for Works, John Tonkin. The *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* were granted to the City of South Perth to commemorate the centenary of the founding of Local Government in South Perth in 1892. The buildings and site were repaired and upgraded by Brisbane and Wunderlich and maintained as a folk museum from 1957 until vested in the National Trust in 1992.

HISTORICAL NOTES (cont'd)

In 1992, a comprehensive Conservation Plan was prepared, and in 1994-95 extensive restoration of the *Old Mill* was carried out, some of it as a LEAP (Landcare and Environmental Action) project, with the work being done by a group of young people seeking employment skills. The *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* were restored to a close approximation of their appearance as built in the 1830s.

A single-storied verandah, and a later two-storied verandah, once encircled the Mill, which also had a viewing platform on the top when the Mill was used as a pleasure garden. A house, owned by the Hammersley family, once stood to the east of the Mill with a tennis court east of the house. The house was situated facing the former western dog-leg of Suburban Road. Open picket fences separated the house from the Mill, and the Mill site from the former Margaret Street to the west of the Mill. The house was demolished at some time between 1953 and 1959.

The cottage was originally roofed with timber shingles, which was later replaced with corrugated iron, before being restored back to shingles most recently. The walls were originally face brickwork.

In 2005, the City was approached by the Managing Director of Lawrence Associates Architects, Garry Lawrence, who presented a draft concept plan that his firm had devised at their own initiative for the restoration and reuse of the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* and surrounding land as a tourist-oriented heritage precinct. The vision comprised the following key elements:

- Restoration of the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)*, with the Mill being reinstated as a working mill in tandem with a café / bakery.
- Reinstatement of the former Miller's Pool, close to its original shape and location, with an outlet into the Swan River and sedge inlets to create breeding sites for swans.
- Introduction of small-scale commercial and educational buildings, art, and interpretive landscaping and signage.
- A South Perth museum with display areas, including an original South Perth tram.

The original concept also included a 'flying fox' from Mill Point to Kings Park, a pedestrian bridge and a marina as long-term proposals.

Some elements of the concept met with strong opposition from some residents who feared that their river views could be obscured, and were concerned at possible traffic implications resulting from the future popularity of the venture. Following long consideration, briefing sessions and work-shopping with the City's Design Advisory Consultants, and extensive consultation on the general overall concept plan with the community and other stakeholders at various stages, modifications were made to the original concept plan. At a meeting in September 2014, the Council decided to endorse the concept of the reinstatement of Miller's Pool for further design development and community and stakeholder engagement, as a first stage of the project. A budget of \$150,000 was allocated for this design stage.

DESCRIPTION

Much of the following descriptive material is taken from the Old Mill Conservation Plan, October 1992.

The *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)*, built in 1835, is one of the oldest industrial sites in Western Australia. It is situated on the promontory of Point Belches in South Perth, alongside the Narrows Bridge.

The Mill is a circular, stone structure, which has been plastered and painted / lime-washed. The simple clear lines of the Mill make it a picturesque early colonial building. The thick stone walls give it the character of a fortress, which was a necessary attribute in the early pioneering days.

DESCRIPTION (cont'd)

The Mill is approximately 5.0 metres in diameter at the base, and 3.0 metres diameter at the roof line, with walls 600mm thick at the base and 450mm thick at the top. The wall height of the Mill is 8.0 metres, with a 2.5 metre high roof above.

The Mill is constructed in three levels, with external walls tapering towards the top. The roof consists of a timber-framed cap sheeted externally with timber shingles without overhand or gutters. The cap dates from the 1957-59 restoration. It has a contemporary concrete floor slab, housing the mechanism which supports and turns the sails. The mechanism is electrically driven and the sails are modern. A modern wooden ladder leads to the cap level. There is a timber-framed window in the northern wall and two heavy timber ceiling beams remain from the original structure.

The middle level houses mill grinding machinery relocated from Chapman's Mill in Bussleton. It has three timber-framed windows and a door in the northern wall. Heavy timber beams in the ceiling supported the machinery above.

The bottom level has doorways in the northern and southern walls and three heavy timber beams in the ceiling to support the machinery above.

A door in the southern wall of the Mill provides access to an attached room, now 5.0 x 2.0 metres, which is reduced from its original size. The floor is concrete and the walls, much altered, are painted stonework. Two small windows in the eastern and western walls provide some light, with a slightly larger window in the southern wall. The roof comprises low pitched timber framing lined internally with painted metal sheeting with external timber shingles. This roof is a reconstruction dating from 1957-59 and since further restored. The room serves as a workshop and control centre, housing the electrical board and switches.

The cottage is a single storey brick building, 12.5 x 6.0 metres, located 8.5 metres north of the Mill. The date of construction is not known. The building contains a main room with an open fireplace, and two smaller rooms. A skillion-roofed kitchen at the northern end of the cottage is accessed through one of the small rooms. An open fireplace and bread oven project out from the northern wall of the kitchen. Both external and internal walls of the cottage have been rendered and painted. The external roof covering is contemporary terracotta shingles, which have replaced the original timber shingles. Floors throughout the Cottage are oiled timber boarding, some original. Windows and doors are timber, but not original. A timber framed awning protects the main entrance door in the western wall.

The original *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* fell into a state of considerable disrepair, and restoration work in the late 1950s and in 1994-5 remodelled the Mill and Cottage almost to their original form as an early 1830s industrial structure, despite some original fabric being replacement with modern materials. Originally wind-driven, the Mill is now electrically powered, and wooden struts have replaced the original sails which were lost many years ago. The original machinery also has been altered or lost.

ASSOCIATIONS**ASSOCIATION TYPE**

William Kernot Shenton	Original owner of the Old Mill (1833 – 1842)
Lockyer and Sons (Paul and James)	Millwrights who built the Old Mill
Mr Steel	Miller
Edward Hammersley and family	Owners (1842 – 1925)
Thomas (Satan) Brown	Operator of 'Alta Gardens' hotel and picnic grounds (from 1870)
W J Green	Owner (1925 – 1929)
National Trust of Australia (WA)	Previous owner

HISTORIC THEME / Sub-theme**CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Occupations/ <i>Rural industries</i>	Aesthetic
	Historic
	Social
	Representative
	Rarity

RATING AND ASSESSMENT**High****Low**

Aesthetic value (streetscape, setting)	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Architectural merit (design features)	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Rarity value	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Value as part of a group/precinct	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Condition	1 ✓	2	3	4	5
Integrity	1	2 ✓	3	4	5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)*, built in 1835, have aesthetic, historic, social, representative and rarity cultural heritage significance. The Mill is a well-known landmark, even though it is partly obscured by the Kwinana Freeway and the Narrows Bridge. It has historic value as one of the first wind-driven flour mills in Western Australia, and also has social value. However, it has very limited scientific value, as all the original machinery is altered or lost. The Mill is a rare example of its type. Demolition was halted in 1957 as a result of local support for the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)*, and the Mill complex provides insight into early milling practices. It still has the potential to be reconstructed as an operating wind-driven Mill.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**Management Category A+ : Exceptional significance – Registered**

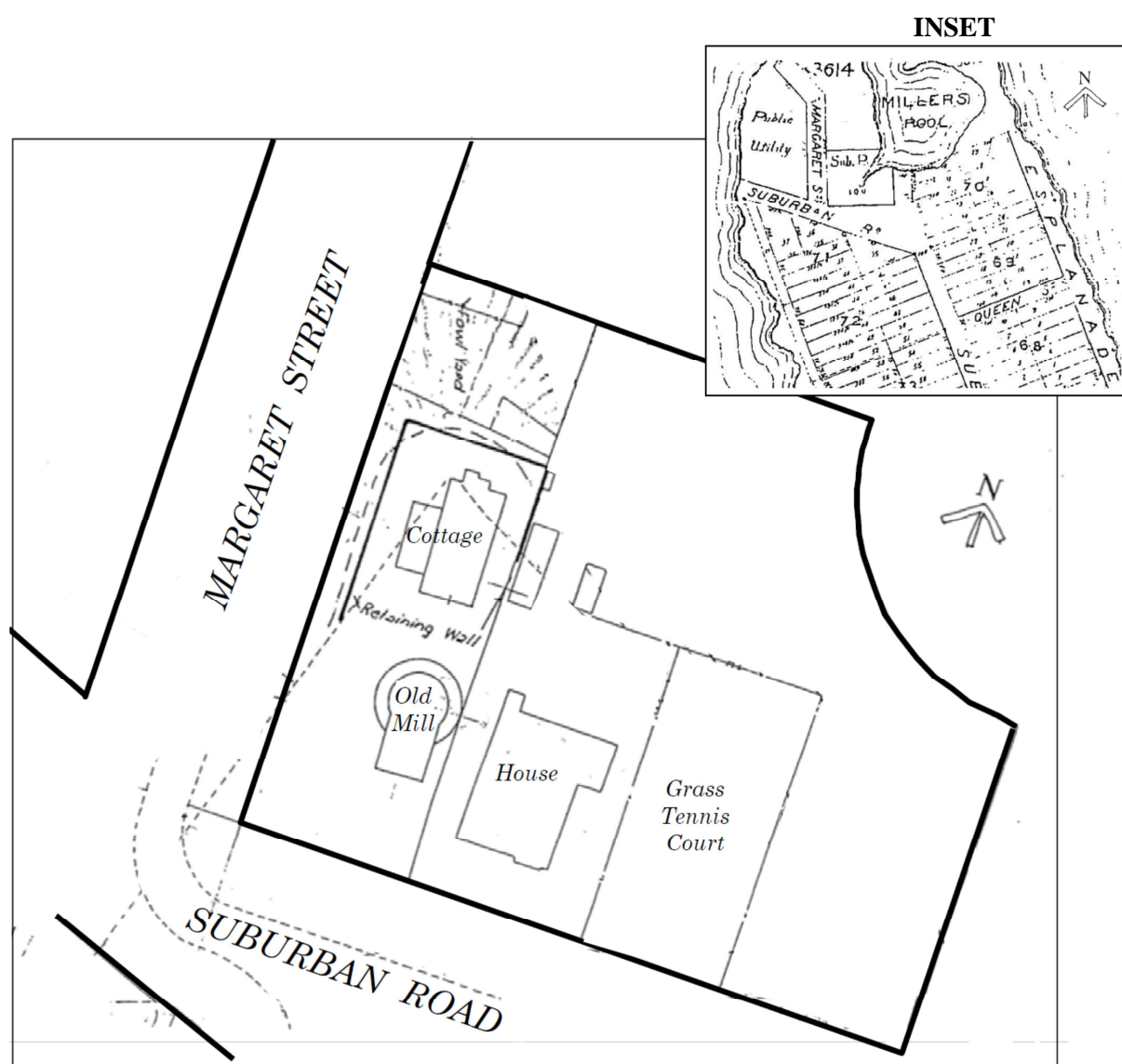
Conservation essential. Essential to the heritage of the locality. Rare or outstanding example. Registered by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. Demolition or significant alteration to a place in Management Category A+ of the Heritage List is not permitted. Any alterations or additions are to be guided by a Conservation Plan, if any, and reinforce the heritage values of the place.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION / BIBLIOGRAPHY

- National Trust Assessment Report.
- City of South Perth Municipal Heritage Inventory (No. 1) 1994.
- Reviews of Municipal Heritage Inventory by *Heritage Today* in 2000 and 2006.
- Newspaper Articles: *Southern Gazette* 29 October 1991, 14 April 1992, 26 May 1992, 4 October 1994.
- Oldham, R. and J. *Western Heritage* pp. 8 – 11, Paterson Brokensha Pty. Ltd., Perth, WA.
- Council Minutes.
- *The Old Mill Conservation Plan*, prepared for the National Trust of Australia (WA) by Ronald Bodycoat, Duncan Stephan and Mercer Architects, October 1992.

HISTORY OF HERITAGE LISTING BY CITY OF SOUTH PERTH

	Date Adopted by Council
Town Planning Scheme No. 5 – Schedule G	Gazetted 25 September 1986
Initial listing in MHI	December 1994
Update of MHI	February 1996
Update of MHI	December 1996
Update of MHI	December 1997
Review of MHI by <i>Heritage Today</i>	June 2000
Update of MHI	June 2002
Update of MHI	March 2003
Review of MHI by <i>Heritage Today</i>	February 2006
Interim Heritage List – Policy P313 ‘Local Heritage Listing’	April 2013
Updated in renamed LHI	November 2015



1950s site plan showing the *Old Mill and Cottage (Former)* at the corner of Suburban Road (former western dog-leg) and Margaret Street. The former house and tennis court owned by the Hammersley family are also shown. The inset, an extract from a 1912 plan of the surrounding area, shows the site in context with its surroundings.
(*The Old Mill Conservation Plan*)



The Old Mill (left) and Cottage (right).
(Gina Fraser, City of South Perth December 2014)



Bicentennial plaque at the Old Mill and Cottage (Former).
(Gina Fraser, City of South Perth, December 2014)



ABOVE: The derelict *Old Mill* and the remains of the former Hammersley family house in the foreground (possibly dated 1950s).
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



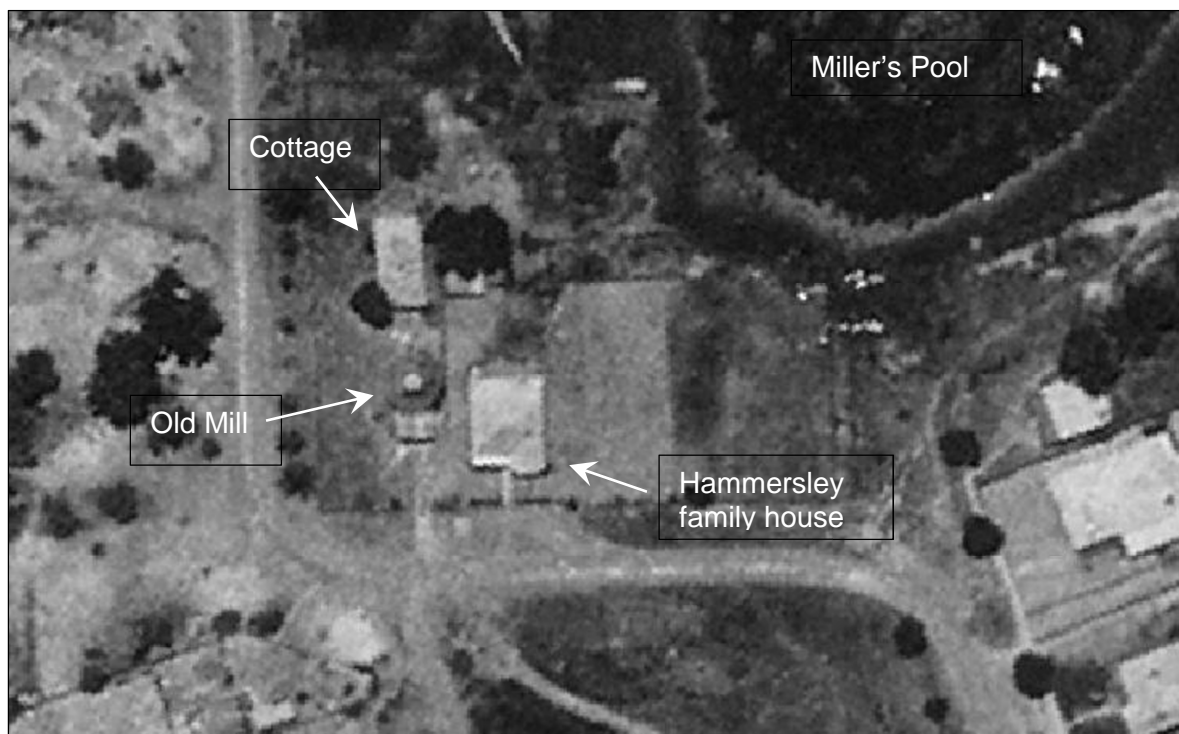
The *Old Mill*, featuring the verandah added by Thomas 'Satan' Brown when he was operating the buildings as the 'Alta Gardens' hotel and picnic grounds. ca. 1930.
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



The Old Mill, 1916. The Cottage is also visible to the left of the Mill, with the Hammersley family house on the right.
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



The Old Mill and the house owned by the Hammersley family, situated to the east of the Mill, in the western dog-leg of Suburban Road. Date of photograph unknown – possibly 1870s (house demolished 1953-59).
(Picture South Perth Photograph Collection)



1930 aerial view of the area surrounding the *Old Mill*, showing the Cottage to the north of the Mill, and the Hammersley family house with tennis court, to the east, facing the western dog-leg of Suburban Road. Miller's Pool is visible at top right.

LOCATION MAP



(Digital Cadastral Data supplied by Landgate, WA. P295)