



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION**

### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 3.12.5           Retailing foods and beverages
- 4.5                Making settlements to serve rural Australia
- 8.14             Living in the country and rural settlements

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 107              Settlements
- 308             Commercial & service industries
- 504             Depression & boom
- 603             Early settlers

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Serpentine General Store* is an irregularly planned group of vernacular buildings that evoke a sense of the history of the place as the centre for commerce and trade in a rural community for most of the 20th century. (Criterion 1.1)

*Serpentine General Store* contains fine examples of decorative elements, including original metal framed glazed shop-fronts from the 1920s and 1940s, original leadlights from the former tearooms and the pressed metal ceiling in the original 1926 store. (Criterion 1.1)

*Serpentine General Store* has landmark quality in the main street of Serpentine due to the size and scale of the buildings, and in particular the prominent street awning and distinctive shop-fronts featuring textured glass, leadlights and re-entrant doors. (Criterion 1.3)

#### **11.2. HISTORIC VALUE**

*Serpentine General Store* illustrates the evolution of a small general-purpose rural store and residential quarters over an 80 year period. (Criterion 2.1)

*Serpentine General Store* was built in response to Group Settlement, a significant international immigration scheme that led to the expansion of Serpentine and the south-west region of Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

*Serpentine General Store* was built and operated by A.W. Middleton, member and Chairman of the local Roads Board. With Herbert Hardey, he was

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

instrumental in establishing Serpentine Cheese Factory (1932), whose produce was sold from the store. The Middleton family owned and operated the store until 1982. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Serpentine General Store* is highly valued by the community of Serpentine and the surrounding district for social and cultural reasons, having been the main retail store and a significant place for community interaction since 1926, as evidenced by its inclusion in the Municipal Heritage Inventory and its Classification by the National Trust of Australia (WA). (Criterion 4.1)

The place is valued by the community for aesthetic reasons, particularly for the notable extant features such as the decorative leadlight windows, the shop-fronts and shop-fittings. (Criterion 4.1)

*Serpentine General Store* contributes to the community's sense of place as the largest long standing retail premises in the town, as an integral part of the Wellard Street streetscape, and through its continued use as a meeting place for the community. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Serpentine General Store* contains a rare example of an original 1920s shop-front adjacent to an original 1940s shop-front in the one building. (Criterion 5.1)

*Serpentine General Store* is distinguished from other rural stores of its genre and construction period by its decorative features, including leadlights and metal framed shop-fronts that were more often a feature of shop-fronts in urban areas. (Criterion 5.1)

*Serpentine General Store* is a rare example of a store built with adjacent tearooms, even though the tearooms function was short lived. (Criterion 5.2)

### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Serpentine General Store* is representative of general stores that were once common in rural communities in Western Australia but are now relatively rare. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12. 3 CONDITION**

The buildings that comprise *Serpentine General Store* are generally in fair condition. The fibrous cement, weatherboard and joinery appear generally sound. The corrugated iron roofs show some evidence of rust. The original shop-fronts (1926 and 1940s) are in good condition. The framing for the earlier shop-front is probably copper which has discoloured, and latter is probably nickel-plated. The leadlights in the shop fronts are intact.

### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Serpentine General Store* has high integrity having been used for the same purpose from its inception in 1926 to the present. Only the tearoom function has ceased.

### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Serpentine General Store* has moderate authenticity. The original store (1926) retains original elements including the pressed metal ceiling and the metal framed shop-front with decorative glass. The former tearooms (1926) has been

altered considerably; however, some of the original rose motif leadlights remain extant and the original form of the tearooms is legible. The 1940s addition is extant and remains as constructed with the original shop-front intact other than recent conversion of the entrance doors. The 1947 brick fronted building is extant but has been altered from its original state by the removal of front doors. The internal fit-out is recent. The 1926 residential quarters remain extant, but have been altered in recent years. One original shelving unit remains extant, otherwise fittings are recent.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Robin Chinnery, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Rosemary Rosario, Architectural Heritage Consultant.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Serpentine General Store* comprises a single-storey, timber, fibro cement, brick and iron building containing a store that incorporates the former residential quarters and tearooms; a brick fronted building now used as a post office; a separate free standing transportable house of timber and fibro cement construction; and various ancillary structures and landscape features. In 1926, Albert William Middleton built the store, tearooms and residential quarters. By the late 1920s, there was also a timber-framed house, which was removed c. 1947. In 1938 and 1947, additions were made to the store. In the mid-1980s, the 1960s transportable house was erected on the site of the earlier house.

On 21 September 1897, George Anthony Lefroy, Licensed Surveyor, was registered as the sole proprietor of Serpentine Town Lot 22, two roods in area, which had a frontage at its northern boundary of three chains 17 and two-tenths links to Wellard Street. At the east, the Lot was bound by one chain 58 links of Maxwell Street; on the south, by Serpentine Lot 23, measuring three chains 17 and two tenths links; and on the west, by one chain 58 links of a public right-of-way.<sup>1</sup> The first townsite of Serpentine was near the Serpentine River. It was later relocated to its present situation in proximity to the railway line. George Anthony Lefroy (b. 1860, d. 1928), previously recorded as a grazier in the Gascoyne (1887-89), was the son of Henry Maxwell Lefroy, Assistant Superintendent and then Superintendent of the Convict Establishment at Fremantle (1854-59 and 1859-75), who had owned land at Fremantle, York, Spearwood, and Serpentine.<sup>2</sup>

Following World War I, the Group Settlement Scheme was instigated to assist the emigration of ex-servicemen and women to various parts of the British Empire, including Australia. In 1920, as economic conditions deteriorated in Britain, it was decided to widen the assisted migration scheme to include other categories. The Premier of Western Australia, James Mitchell, prepared a comprehensive immigration programme for submission to the other governments, which was implemented after the British Parliament passed the Empire Settlement Act in 1922.<sup>3</sup> This was to be achieved by means of a group settlement scheme intended to settle thousands of farmers in the south-west of the State, much of which had remained heavily timbered and sparsely settled. This included the Serpentine area, and resulted in varying degrees of success or failure in different areas of the State.

As the population of the Serpentine district increased in the wake of Group Settlement, Albert William Middleton (b. 1880), orchardist and farmer of 'Hillside', Keysbrook, who had immigrated from England in 1911, and whose wife, Winifred, had taught at Balgobin School for some years prior to her death, recognised the opportunity to offer his produce for direct sale in the Serpentine township, where he began operations from his delivery truck.<sup>4</sup> When this proved successful,

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<sup>1</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80. Note: This was the first CT issued for this Lot.

<sup>2</sup> Erickson, Rica (Ed.) *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre-1829-1888* University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1988, p. 1840.

<sup>3</sup> Crowley, F. K. *Australia's Western Third: A History of Western Australia from the first settlements to modern times* Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1960, pp. 201-202.

<sup>4</sup> Coy, Neil J. *The Serpentine: A History of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale* Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Mundijong, Western Australia, 1984, p. 147; and Betty Williams, Middleton's step-daughter, conversations with Robin Chinnery, March 2005.

Middleton decided to develop a more permanent presence in the town.<sup>5</sup> To this end, he purchased Serpentine Town Lot 22, which was transferred to him on 16 April 1926.<sup>6</sup> Utilising mostly second-hand materials, he built a store on the lot, fronting Wellard Street, with residential quarters at the rear of the store, a common practice in the period, and tearooms to one side of the store, opening for business in the same year.<sup>7</sup> Named Middleton's Store and Middleton's Tea Rooms, it continued to be known as Middleton's Store until the early 1980s, when it was renamed *Serpentine General Store* after the Middleton family sold it.<sup>8</sup> Since 1927, through into 2005, the place has been a highly valued facility in the local community and an integral part of the streetscape of the town.<sup>9</sup>

On 12 November 1926, a mortgage was registered on Serpentine Town Lot 22<sup>10</sup>, possibly to secure funds to enlarge the original portion of the building and/or to build a house located to the north-east of the store. Betty Williams (nee Mills) was born in the house April 1930. Her mother, Edith Mills, had come to work for Middleton after her husband, who had operated a store at Serpentine, had departed. For some years, Edith and Betty Mills lived in this house, which was relocated to a site in Lefroy Street c. 1947.<sup>11</sup>

Photographs taken c. 1927, show Middleton's Store and Middleton's Tea Rooms, a single-storey, timber-framed, asbestos-clad building, with a gabled roof of corrugated iron. There is a wide, separately roofed, verandah at the front of the store, supported by square cut timber posts. A brick chimney is visible in the rear ground. At the south side of the store, a pair of cyclone wire gates open to the adjoining skillion roofed area, the exterior wall of which appears to be painted asbestos, with timber latticework above. Signage at the front facade reads 'Middleton's Store', and at either end reads 'Middleton's Tea Rooms'. The tearooms is at the southern side of the store<sup>12</sup>, where the coloured glass leadlight windows were a notable feature, along with those at the front entrance to the store.<sup>13</sup> A separately roofed produce storeroom extends along the north side of the store building, and there is a petrol bowser near its north-west corner. To the north again is an open area, and then a timber-framed, asbestos-clad, gable-roofed garage. Bay Cook operated the garage and petrol bowser service from c. 1926-27, and was also responsible for the 32 volt plant which supplied electricity to the store.<sup>14</sup> During the Depression period, due to reduced demand, the petrol bowsers were taken away. Later, when economic conditions improved, and after closure of the Trading Company, bowsers came back into operation at Middleton's Store.<sup>15</sup>

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5 Betty Williams, Battye Library OH 2893; Municipal Inventory, Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, 2000 and Back-Log Review Form HCWA Place no. 3866, which incorrectly record Middleton's first name as Arthur.

6 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

7 *Wise's Post Office Directory* 1926-27. Note: Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale has no record of any building licences being issued for the place.

8 Betty Williams, step-daughter of A.W. Middleton, oral history, in Mann, Wilma 'Speaking of Serpentine: An Oral History of Serpentine, Hopeland, Keysbrook and Mardella' on behalf of Serpentine Historical Society Inc., 1998; and photographs (c. 1927-82), Collection of Betty Williams.

9 Myra Baldwin, Serpentine Historical Society, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 22 March 2005; and Strelley Hardey, son of Herbert Hardey, conversation with Robin Chinnery, 24 March 2005.

10 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

11 Betty Williams, conversation with Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 24 March 2005.

12 Photographs of Middleton's Store and Tea Rooms, c. 1927 (A. W. Middleton at right in one photograph), Collection of Betty Williams.

13 Strelley Hardey op. cit.

14 Coy, Neil J. *The Serpentine: A History of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale* Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Mundijong, Western Australia, 1984; and Betty Williams, conversation op. cit.

15 Betty Williams *ibid*.

In the interwar period, motor excursions to Serpentine Falls were popular, especially in winter and spring when the falls were in full spate. Middleton hoped the tearooms would prove popular with visitors and locals alike. However, the tearooms were destined to operate for only a few years.<sup>16</sup> Their demise may have been due to the Great Depression, during which period many such businesses foundered. The general store, which had rapidly developed to become the Serpentine district's major retail store, continued to operate through the Depression years. Unlike many shopkeepers, Middleton was prepared to operate on the barter system, accepting produce in kind in payment for goods from the local Group Settlers and others who were experiencing hard times. His generous assistance to many in the local community continues to be remembered.<sup>17</sup>

On 31 January 1931, a further mortgage was registered on Serpentine Town Lot 22.<sup>18</sup> It is probable that this mortgage was to secure funds towards a new business venture, as Middleton, together with Herbert Hardey, was 'instrumental in the establishment' of the Serpentine Cheese Factory in Hall Road, which commenced operations in 1932.<sup>19</sup> The former tearooms was converted to serve as the office and board meeting room for the factory, with a partition to provide separate office accommodation for the store. Produce from the Cheese Factory was sold from the store.<sup>20</sup>

After Edith Mills married Middleton, a widower by this period, she and her young daughter, Betty, moved to share the residential quarters attached to the store. Betty always called Middleton 'Dad', and has clear recollections of the place where she spent her childhood and her entire working life through to 1982. A 1935 photograph shows her atop the chaff truck outside the store.<sup>21</sup> The availability of petrol and tyres from the store was an important facility, and signage across the front of the store included SERVICE STATION.<sup>22</sup>

From 1935 to 1944, Middleton served on the Roads Board, serving as Chairman in 1941-44, and instigated the town water scheme in Serpentine.<sup>23</sup> Middleton's Store was 'the hub where people used to congregate when in town'.<sup>24</sup> It played a central role in the everyday life of the local community, and was also a focal point in various events, such as cycle races in Serpentine, which commenced from the store, and the annual school picnic per trucks to Rockingham, which likewise departed from the store.<sup>25</sup> In the inter-war, World War II and post-war periods, the wide front verandahs at Middleton's Store were utilised by local community groups such as the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and Red Cross, Mrs. Middleton being known as 'a very hard worker for the local Serpentine branch', for fundraising stalls and American Afternoon Teas.<sup>26</sup>

On 10 November 1937, a further mortgage on Serpentine Town Lot 22 was lodged. Registered on 26 November 1937,<sup>27</sup> this may have been to secure funds

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16 Betty Williams, conversation with Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 24 March 2005.  
17 Strelley Hardey *ibid*; and Coy, Neil J. *op. cit.*  
18 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.  
19 Connie Senior 'Serpentine Snippets down Memory Lane', oral history, in Mann, Wilma *op. cit.*, 25 November 1997.  
20 Betty Williams, conversation with Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 24 March 2005.  
21 Photograph in Collection of Betty Williams, c. 1935.  
22 Photograph in Collection of Betty Williams, 1936.  
23 Coy, Neil J. *op. cit.*  
24 Connie Senior *op. cit.*  
25 Photographs in Collection of Betty Williams, 1936; and Betty Williams, conversation *op. cit.*  
26 Connie Senior *op. cit.*  
27 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

for alterations and additions made to Middleton's Stores in 1938.<sup>28</sup> On 23 January 1939, a further mortgage on the place was registered.<sup>29</sup>

By the early 1940s, the scope of Middleton's enterprise operating from the store had widened further, encompassing a wider variety of business operations than was the norm in most general store businesses. As shown in photographs signage across the front of the store advertised the following: service station, produce, groceries, hardware, insurance, and building material. Photographs at this period also show the alteration to the former tearooms, where the western end had been enclosed.<sup>30</sup>

During World War Two, Middleton was responsible for organising the Volunteer Air Observer Corps (VAOC) in the Serpentine area, and his stepdaughter Betty served in the corps. A control post was located on the tank stand at the rear of the store.<sup>31</sup>

In 1947, alterations and additions were made to Middleton's Store. A gable roof, lower and less steeply pitched, than the existing gable roof was added to the northern side of the store, and the fibro garage was replaced with a new brick fronted building. An opening to the store was made in the wall from the drapery section. Changes made to the residential quarters saw the earlier bathroom and bedroom converted to a lounge room, with a new bathroom and bedroom added, the latter serving as the office in 2006.<sup>32</sup>

Photographs taken c. 1947-48 show the exterior and interior of the place on completion of these works. One photograph of the interior shows the drapery, located in the earliest portion of the building, with the original metal ceiling and shop windows, a large timber showcase cabinet, substantial timber counter and other shop furnishings. In the far rear-ground, beyond the opening to the former tearooms, one of the original leadlight windows in the southern wall is visible.<sup>33</sup> A second photograph of the interior shows the view looking from the drapery through the wide opening to the grocery section, where Edith Middleton is standing behind the timber counter. Along the wall behind her is ample timber shelving extending upward from floor level for more than two metres. In the foreground is a counter in the drapery section, behind which there is timber shelving extends along the wall.<sup>34</sup> These aspects of the place remained more or less unchanged throughout the remainder of the Middleton family's ownership.<sup>35</sup>

On 7 October 1948, discharge of the four aforementioned mortgages on the place was registered.<sup>36</sup> Around this period, Middleton's nephew and his wife immigrated, moving to Serpentine, where he built them a house. The nephew worked in the store for a period before relocating to Darlington, after which Edith Middleton's sister, Dorothy Robinson, resided at this house, which became Betty's home, following her marriage in 1953. She resided there with her family for many years until her mother became ill, when Betty moved back to the residential quarters at the store to more readily care for her.<sup>37</sup>

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28 Betty Williams, *op. cit.*

29 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

30 Photographs outside Middleton's Cash Store, Collection of Betty Williams c. 1940 and c. 1942.

31 Betty Williams conversation *op. cit.*; and Aviation Museum's acknowledgment of submission, 17 March 1983, Collection of Betty Williams.

32 Betty Williams *ibid.*

33 Photograph looking towards drapery, Collection of Betty Williams c. 1947-48.

34 Photograph inside shop, looking towards grocery, Collection of Betty Williams c. 1947-48.

35 Betty Williams conversation *op. cit.*; and Strelley Hardey *op. cit.*

36 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

37 Betty Williams, OH 2893, *op. cit.*

On 31 March 1954, the place was transferred from Albert William Middleton's sole proprietorship to a joint tenancy in common in equal shares with his wife, Edith Alice Middleton. At this date, he was recorded as 'Merchant and Storekeeper'.<sup>38</sup> Photographs of the place show the front of the store, where signage reads 'Middleton's Stores 7 Agencies', with a verandah at the south side of the former tearooms.<sup>39</sup>

Through the 1950s, the Middletons continued to reside at the place. As his health deteriorated, the day-to-day running of the business was increasingly left to his wife, assisted by her daughter, Betty Williams (née Mills).<sup>40</sup>

On 20 November 1960, Albert William Middleton died.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, his widow and her daughter continued to operate the store.<sup>42</sup> On 29 May 1961, Probate of Albert William Middleton's Will was granted to the Executrix, his widow, and the place was transferred to her on 23 August 1961.<sup>43</sup> She and her daughter continued to operate the business as Middleton's Store & Tearooms through to late 1982.<sup>44</sup> The easternmost of the leadlight windows in the former tearooms was damaged beyond repair in a break-in, so replacement glass was fitted. Later, another leadlight window was broken, towards the west, near the office, which had been located in this area since the 1930s.<sup>45</sup>

In the early 1980s, photographs show the place was well maintained, including the rear garden, and the timber shelving and shop fittings remained in situ. Since the 1947 photographs, a doorway had been made in the front wall at the southern end of the main building. Signage notes newsagent and groceries in this period when the place operated as a Save Way store whilst continuing to retain the name Middleton's Store.<sup>46</sup>

On 10 January 1983, the place was transferred to George Joseph Seredynski, sales representative, and Susan Louise Seredynski, married woman, both of Willowmead Way, Kelmscott, as joint tenants.<sup>47</sup> They took up occupation of the residential quarters and took over operation of the business. No major changes were made to the place. The interior and exterior were painted, including the roof, as per the earlier colour scheme. The Seredynskis planted some trees in the grounds and installed a swimming pool for their children.<sup>48</sup>

On 15 January 1985, the place was transferred to John Joseph McGrath, retired, and Mary Josephine McGrath, married woman, both of Lot 562 Firns Road, Serpentine, as joint tenants.<sup>49</sup> During their brief ownership a 1960s transportable dwelling of timber and fibro cement construction was erected on the site of the earlier house to provide accommodation for their parents.<sup>50</sup> Otherwise there was little change to the place.<sup>51</sup>

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38 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

39 Photograph Collection of Betty Williams c. 1954-55.

40 Betty Williams, Battye Library OH 2893.

41 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80.

42 Betty Williams, Battye Library OH 2893.

43 Certificate of Title Vol. CXIX Fol. 80 and Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

44 Betty Williams conversation op. cit.

45 *ibid.*

46 Photograph Collection of Betty Williams, 1982.

47 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

48 G. J. Seredynski, telephone conversation with Robin Chinnery, 17 May 2005.

49 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

50 Strelley Hardey op. cit.; and G. J. Seredynski op. cit.

51 Myra Baldwin op. cit.

On 8 April 1986, the place was transferred to Peter Kingsley Hardey and Pamela Jean Hardey, farmers, both of Hardey Road, Serpentine.<sup>52</sup> They were members of the Hardey family, after whom the road was named, who had long been associated with the Middleton family. During their ownership some changes were made in the operation of the store and some of the original shop furniture was removed, including the substantial timber counter from the drapery section (still in the ownership of the Hardey family in 2005) and the large showcase from the drapery section, which was sold.<sup>53</sup>

On 6 November 1989, the place was transferred to Andrew John Thompson, of Newton Road, Cranbrook, and David James Dean, of Lot 146 Hideaway Vale, Yalgorup, as tenants in common. By late November 1990, Thompson had taken up residence at the place.<sup>54</sup>

On 2 February 1996, the place was transferred to Alan Donald Pascall and Jeanette Anne Pascall, as joint tenants of one undivided half share, and Frank Gadja and Francine Jane Gadja, as joint tenants of one undivided half share, all of 1 George Street, Jarrahdale, as tenants in common.<sup>55</sup>

In December 1997, the place, including chattels, was sold and transferred to Robert Henry Foster and Margaret Jean Foster, both of Lot 4 South West Highway, Serpentine, as joint tenants, on 5 January 1998.<sup>56</sup> On 31 July 1998, *Serpentine General Store* was classified by the National Trust (WA).<sup>57</sup>

In September 2000, *Serpentine General Store* was included in the Municipal Inventory for the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, with the recommendation that it be considered for Entry in the Register of Heritage Places. The integrity of the place was considered to be high, its authenticity to be high/moderate, and its condition sound/poor.<sup>58</sup>

After this time, repairs were made to the corrugated iron roof, the front guttering and the front fascia was replaced. The Fosters have altered the layout of the store, including the post office area and the former tearooms and the residential quarters have been converted to other uses including retail spaces and an office. In the two latter areas, some doors have been removed to facilitate access for the new uses and some new openings made, most notably from the former tearooms portion of the building and the adjoining area, as these areas are now incorporated in the main area of the store. Some of the original leadlight windows in the former tearooms remain in situ, whilst others have been removed and are currently stored in the bathroom area. The original timber framed entrance doors have been converted to sliding doors, and the heavy timber framed flywire doors removed to be 'done up' by the store-holder across the road, but have yet to be returned.<sup>59</sup> In 2005, the ridge-capping to the roof is in need of repair. The Fosters are proposing to build a 30m x 30m addition to the south side of the place, which will require removal of the tearooms portion of the building, and have had meetings with the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale to discuss this proposal.<sup>60</sup>

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52 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

53 Strelley Hardey op. cit.; and Betty Williams conversation op. cit. Note: the showcase is believed to be at Williams.

54 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

55 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

56 Certificate of Title Vol. 1253 Fol. 468.

57 HCWA Place No. 3866.

58 Backlog Assessment Review Form HCWA Place No. 3866.

59 R. H. and M. J. Foster, conversations with Robin Chinnery, 24 March 2005.

60 R. H. Foster *ibid*.

In autumn 2005, the shelving along the northern wall of the former drapery section of the store is the only original shelving extant.<sup>61</sup> The place continues in use as a general store incorporating a newsagency and a post office. The transportable dwelling is occupied as a residence by the Fosters' son.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Serpentine General Store* is a complex of buildings comprising the general store, including the former tearooms and former residential quarters (1926 and 1947), store additions (1940s), brick fronted building now used as a post office (c. 1947), 1960s transportable home (c. 1985) and various ancillary structures and landscape features. Other than the c. 1947 brick façade, the buildings are generally constructed of timber frame with walls clad with fibrous cement sheet and/or timber weatherboard, and with corrugated galvanized iron gabled roofs. There is a timber-framed awning over the footpath along the north elevation of the store (1926 and 1940s section) and timber framed verandahs to the west elevations of the former tearooms and former residence. The various open areas around the buildings contain a number of ancillary structures, fencing types, concrete paving, trees and landscape features.

*Serpentine General Store* is located on the southern side of Wellard Street in the centre of the small town of Serpentine, on the outskirts of the Perth metropolitan area approximately 50 kilometers from the CBD. The store is located on the south-western corner of the intersection with Maxwell Street. There is a bitumen sealed area on the corner of the site adjacent to the intersection, with petrol bowsers and several bins for recycled clothes belonging to a range of charitable organizations. The store is constructed on the boundary line of the street, with angled street parking in front. There is a similar angled parking area under mature trees on the opposite side of Wellard Street with commercial premises behind.

Lot 22, containing *Serpentine General Store*, comprises an area of approximately 5,000sqm and measures approximately 96.6m x 51.2m. The store buildings are located approximately centrally on the lot on the boundary line of the brick paved footpath. There is an open bitumen area on the eastern end, where petrol bowsers are located, and a cleared gravel area on the western end, separated from the footpath by a timber picket fence.

The westernmost structure is the former tearooms (1926). This section of the building has an open timber framed verandah on the western side. The former tearooms is attached to the original section of the store (1926) which opens into the more recent (1940s) portion of the store. This in turn leads into the building with the brick facade (1947) that currently houses the post office. At the rear of the store (south) is the former residential quarters (1926 and 1947). The entrance to the former residence is from either the back of the 1940s section of the store, or from the backyard.

Approximately in line with the former residence and on the western side of the site is a fibrous cement clad laundry. On the southern side of the former residence is a metal shed. On the southeast corner of the site, behind a timber picket screen fence that separates the bitumen sealed petrol station area from the remainder of the site, is the relocated 1960s transportable house. This has been erected to address Maxwell Street, with a front garden area between the house and the street and a grassed yard separating it from the former residence to the west.

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<sup>61</sup> Site visit, Robin Chinnery and Rosemary Rosario, 24 March 2005.

The site features a variety of fencing types. There is a timber, closed picket fence on the southern side of the bitumen sealed area. There is an open timber picket fence on a low corrugated fibrous cement fence along the street boundary from the former tearooms to the western side boundary and extending approximately half way along the western boundary to the side gate. From this point a super-six fibrous cement fence continues to the southern boundary, and along the southern boundary to the back of the former residence. Here there is a gate to allow vehicular access. To the east of the gate the fencing style changes to pine post and rail. This style continues for the remainder of the southern boundary and along the eastern boundary in front of the relocated 1960s transportable. There is also a section of wire fencing on pine posts from the southern boundary to the fibrous cement laundry on the western side of the site.

There is no consistent landscape scheme, paving style or other element to unite the external areas of the site. There is gravel to the open area to the north-west corner. A concrete slab has been laid on the south-west corner behind the laundry. The area behind the original store (1926) features a concrete slab floored covered walkway or verandah along the back and around the western side of the former residence. Between these buildings is an area of grass with a brick edged planter. There is a palm tree behind the laundry and another in the grassed area behind the original store. There is a water tank on the south-west corner of the original store.

On the eastern side of the former residence and behind the more recent store buildings, is another grassed area with a basketball ring on a steel pole at the northern end. At the southern end of this area are a number of mature trees. The eastern side of this space is enclosed by the 1960s transportable. Rubbish bins are located in the space between the transportable and the fence to the bitumen sealed area.

On the south-east corner of the site, in front of the 1960s transportable home, is a domestic garden associated with the recent house. There is a gravel driveway and crossover accessing Maxwell Street.

The buildings on the site are generally modest commercial buildings, best described as commercial vernacular, typical of stores constructed in rural areas in the early to mid-20th century.

The original store and tearooms (1926) comprises the western portion of the building as it addresses Wellard Street. The tearooms comprises a fibrous cement clad skillion on the side of the original store with a more recent verandah awning on the west supported on five square timber posts. The western wall of the former tearooms contains some original leadlight windows featuring pairs of casements with red roses, rosebuds and green leaves. Some of the windows have been broken, but some remain intact. Internally the former tearooms now contains the hardware display, and is part of the store. Walls are concealed behind shelving, but appear to be lined with timber battened fibrous plaster or cement. There are internal posts supporting the fibrous cement lined ceiling. Floors are timber tongued and grooved boards. There is an internal partition separating the back section, which contains groceries. The wall between the former tearooms and the original store has been partially removed.

The original store is a timber framed, fibrous cement clad structure with a steeply pitched corrugated iron clad gabled roof. There is an original, probably copper, framed shop-front featuring windows either side of a re-entrant door. The highlight windows are textured glass and there is a glass frieze featuring coloured leadlights along the top of the windows and over the door.

Internally the 1926 store retains the original pressed metal ceiling and timber floorboards. Internal walls have been partially removed over the years as the store has expanded. The re-entrant door to this section of the store is not used and is blocked by stock displays. This section of the store contains the one original timber display unit that remains extant in the building.

Adjacent to the original store is the store addition (1940s). This section of the store is timber framed, with a lower pitched gabled roof and an east facing skylight window. There is a probably nickel-plated, framed original shop-front to this section of the store with obscure glass to the highlight windows and the word 'Middletons' over the door. The façade of this section has rendered masonry supports to either side of the shop-front and a masonry plinth to the base.

The fibrous cement sheet lined roof is supported on a series of timber trusses. The walls are lined with fibrous cement and the floor is timber floorboards. There are several cold stores set into the back and east sidewalls for ice creams, drinks etc. All the display cabinets and internal shop fittings are recent. The wall to the adjacent building, the current post office, has been partially removed.

There is a timber framed, corrugated iron roofed, awning over the pavement in front of the 1926 and the 1940s sections of the store. This is supported on six square timber posts. There is a sign across the front of the awning that reads SERPENTINE GENERAL STORE. The façade of the building is painted cream with green joinery.

The brick façade building on the eastern end of the store is a simple rectangular structure with a gabled corrugated iron roof. The eastern elevation is timber framed and clad with weatherboard and fibrous cement. There are a series of post office boxes set into the eastern wall. Internally this section of the building has a suspended plasterboard ceiling, plasterboard wall linings and vinyl sheet flooring. There is a recent counter and recent display stands. The area is used as a post office.

Behind the store is the former residence/residential quarters (1926 and 1947). This comprises three main rooms opening onto a verandah on the western side. There is a brick w.c. at the southern end of the verandah. This portion of the building is timber framed and weatherboard and fibrous cement clad, with a corrugated iron gabled roof and brick chimney. It is no longer used for residential purposes and has been adapted for use as an office and for storage.

On the eastern side of the former residence and behind the store, are two storage areas. One is timber framed and the other is brick. These are concrete floored and contain cold rooms and miscellaneous items.

The 1960s transportable home is located on the south-east portion of the site. It has an entrance porch addressing Maxwell Street and a back verandah on the western side. It is timber framed and fibrous cement clad and contains a living room, kitchen study, three bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom. It is currently used as a residence.

*Serpentine General Store* has developed over various periods of construction. The original store (1926) remains intact and retains original elements including the pressed metal ceiling and the metal framed shop-front with decorative glass. The former tearooms (1926) have been altered considerably; however, some of the original rose motif leadlights remain extant. The 1940s addition is extant and remains as constructed, with the original shop-front intact. This building appears to have replaced additions constructed in the 1930s. The 1947 brick fronted building is extant but has been altered from its original state by the removal of front doors. The internal fit-out is recent. The 1926 and 1947 residential quarters

remain extant, but have been altered in recent years. One original timber shelving unit remains in the store, otherwise fittings are recent.

The buildings that comprise *Serpentine General Store* are generally in fair condition. The fibrous cement and weatherboard finishes are painted and joinery appears generally sound. The corrugated iron roofs show some evidence of rust. The original shop-fronts (1926 and 1940s) are in good condition. The framing for the earlier shop-front is probably copper which has discoloured and the later shop-front is probably nickel-plated. The leadlights in the shop fronts are intact. Generally, the site contains a range of features that are not significant and are in poor condition, including the laundry and other outbuildings. The shop is currently in use and is managed as a commercial enterprise. As such, areas that are accessed by the public are well presented for this purpose.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The HCWA Database lists 1050 stores, of which 50 are included in the Register of Heritage Places (RHP), 24 of which are located in the metropolitan area and 26 in various regions, but none are located in the Peel Region. Nine of the 50 stores on the RHP were purpose built and continue in operation as stores. In common with *Serpentine General Store*, two of these places, P03142 *Store, Northcliffe* (1924) and P04946 *Darnell's General Store* (1927) at Witchcliffe, were purpose-built to serve rural communities during the period of Group Settlement in their respective areas of the South-West.

The HCWA database lists 17 other places that are associated with the Group Settlement Scheme, in addition to *Serpentine General Store*. Eleven of these places are on the RHP, including *Store, Northcliffe* and *Darnell's General Store* mentioned above. The other registered places are P00405 *Office of the Department of Agriculture*, P00418 *Old Vasse Primary School Precinct*, P00499 *Quarantine Station*, P01510 *St Erney's Homestead*, P01523 *Mill Workers Hall*, P03314 *Old Hospital Complex*, P03568 *Old Butter Factory*, P04637 *Pemberton-Northcliffe Railway Station* and P05299 *Lady Champion Hostel* (fmr). Ten of the 11 registered places associated with Group Settlement are in the South-West region and one is in the Metropolitan region.

In the Peel Region, Tuckey's Store & House (1870) at Mandurah pre-dates *Serpentine General Store* and Jarrahdale General Store, each of which are included in the respective Municipal Inventories, but the latter has not been recommended for RHP. In common with portions of *Serpentine General Store*, it is constructed of fibro sheeting.

By comparison, *Store, Northcliffe* and *Darnell's General Store* are timber-framed buildings of a fairly utilitarian nature, and neither contain decorative elements of the type found at *Serpentine General Store*, which is distinguished from other rural stores of its genre and construction period by its aforementioned decorative features, including leadlights and metal-framed shop-fronts, that were more often a feature of shop-fronts in urban areas.

*Serpentine General Store* contains a rare example of an original 1920s shop-front adjacent to an original 1940s shop-front in the one building.

*Serpentine General Store* is a rare example of a store built with adjacent tearooms, even though the tearooms function was short lived.

### 13.4 KEY REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition, July 1998

### 13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale has been unable to locate any early records of the place or any subsequent building records. Little documentary evidence has been located in other sources. Consequently, oral evidence has been the major source of information. Other than the original date for the construction of the store, tearooms and residence, all dates are based on oral evidence and as such are approximate. Generally the physical evidence supports the documentary evidence regarding the sequence of development of the place. Additions noted as carried out in the 1930s have not been clearly identified in the physical assessment. It may be that these were removed for the subsequent development that occurred in c. 1947. Further research is required to establish this, and to accurately date other physical changes that have occurred.

Further research would be necessary to ascertain whether Henry Maxwell Lefroy, who had owned land at Fremantle, York, Spearwood, and Serpentine, owned Serpentine Town Lot 22, the site on which *Serpentine General Store* was built.