



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Assessment Documentation

PLEASE NOTE: This Assessment Documentation is intended to provide sufficient information to consider the place for inclusion in the State Register.

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue, and the former Helena Farm represent a continuous association with many of the changes which have occurred in the development of agricultural practises in Western Australia since European settlement. These relate to both farming and pastoral activities, and later, associated saleyard, abattoir and live sheep trade industries.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is important for its associations with planned urban development in the creation of the suburb of Bellevue adjacent to Midland which, by contrast, grew in an ad hoc fashion with the development of the railways.

11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is a rare surviving group of farm buildings located within the metropolitan area, and although located in a substantially modified setting has rarity value for its original association with the Belle View group of farm buildings.

The *Belle View* stables are a rare surviving example that illustrates the design, a way of life, process, and the functioning of farm activities no longer practised. They demonstrate a standard of innovation and achievement, with a level of integrity and authenticity that is now rarely found, not only in the metropolitan area, but throughout the State.

11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue, and particularly its stables, are significant for their potential to provide an understanding, and to further knowledge, of farming practices and innovations from the mid to late 19th Century.

The stables at *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* have the potential to reveal an understanding of animal husbandry of the time, particularly in relation to the configuration of stalls, mangers, feed hatches and the use of grass tree timber flooring.

By virtue of its location *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* retains some association with local farming and industry; in particular, the saleyards, live sheep trade and the former abattoirs and their connections back to regional farming and pastoral activities.

11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is representative of a well designed Victorian Regency residence, built at a time prior to the prosperity of the gold boom which saw the first major growth period of quality housing built in WA.

The stables at *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* are representative of past transport and farming practises which were dependant on the use of horses.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is representative of the success of some early settlers being built with profits from early north-west pastoral activities and in advance of the prosperity, and building boom that followed the discovery of gold in Western Australia.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is an excellent representative example of an affluent farming and residential lifestyle of the mid to late 19th Century, which also saw the quality of the establishment carried through to the more utilitarian aspects of the farm as illustrated by the surviving stables.

11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue and the former Helena Farm are one of the remaining tangible links with the politically and socially influential group known as the 'Nor'Westers'. Families such as the Harpers, Brockmans, Hammersleys, Morrisons and Robinsons, built substantial houses on large properties and through membership of parliament, local government, freemasonry, and intermarriage, became an important element in Western Australia's decision making process.

Located in the metropolitan area, *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue*, and the former Helena Farm together with the nearby Clayton Farm, provide links to the earliest land grants in Western Australia in 1829, former rural lifestyles, and illustrate the evolution of development in the State which are valued by the community.

11(f) Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by any group or community;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is significant aesthetically as a fine example of an elegant and substantial Victorian Regency residence. The planning

of the house and the detailing of the principal rooms illustrates a sophistication of design not commonly found in rural or residential buildings of the time.

The aesthetic value of the place is carried through to the stables which demonstrate well thought out approaches to the design of utilitarian buildings.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue contributes to the qualities of its landscape, creating a pleasant setting within the urban boundaries of the metropolitan area.

The remaining buildings at *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* still form a precinct that references late 19th Century lifestyles and the nature of early farming practices.

11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue and the former Helena Farm have close associations with both Governor Stirling and his original land grant, Woodbridge, and explorer, pastoralist, politician and developer, Edward Robinson.

11(h) Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement;

The Stables illustrate a high level of technical and innovative achievement in farming practices in the late 19th Century of which few examples remain.

The design of the Stables reveal a level of technical innovation and achievement of a past era which is not fully understood today because of changed and obsolete practices.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 CONDITION

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is in very good condition following recent conservation and landscaping works. Belle View has undergone a substantial program of works including replacement of roofing, removal of concrete verandah and reconstruction of timber verandah, reinstatement of original windows and doors where extant, and internal reinstatement of flooring, architraves, and cornices.

The Stables are also in very good condition following conservation works, retaining much of the original timber structure and weatherboards although the troughs and other contributing elements are no longer extant.

12.2 INTEGRITY

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue has a moderate degree of integrity as despite being unoccupied for a number of years the original intention is clear; however, the current and future use does not reflect its original use. Recent conservation works would facilitate the return to use as a residence, although appropriate facilities of a contemporary standard would need to be installed. The residence is currently used as a sales office for the Robinson Grove estate, and it is likely its future use will be a commercial one. The stables are currently unused, and being located on a Reserve for Public Recreation it is likely to have a community use in the future.

12.3 AUTHENTICITY

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue has a moderate to high degree of authenticity. Despite the deterioration and vandalism that occurred during the years when it was vacant and in a state of disrepair, many original elements of the residence have been retained or reinstated. The conservation works have been undertaken to a high standard. Missing elements reinstated have been sourced from salvage operators, and although not always matching exact detail they are similar in size and profile. The stables building also has high authenticity and has been rebuilt with much of the existing material and replacing only where necessary. The original timber manger and troughs deteriorated and have not been reinstated, and there was no evidence of the former timber block flooring to the horse stalls.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This assessment was originally compiled by Bruce Callow & Associates Pty Ltd, with supporting documentary evidence compiled by historian Shan Callow, with assistance from Barbara Dundas, Historian.

The assessment has been updated with supporting evidence from the Conservation Plan prepared by Rosemary Rosario Pty Ltd in 2014.

The physical evidence was originally compiled by Bruce Callow, architect. It has been updated by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage following a site inspection on 24 November 2022.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue, located at Lot 799 Wilkins Street, Bellevue, are the remaining elements of the former Helena Farm. The place comprises a single-storey, brick and corrugated steel Victorian Regency style residence and timber framed stables, set among a residential landscaped setting in the suburb of Bellevue. Helena Farm also known as Belle View previously comprised the main house (1887), stables (believed to pre-date the main house but construction date unknown¹), barn (n.d.), a second house (c. early 1950s) and metal clad machinery sheds. Since its inclusion in the State Register of Heritage Places in 1997, extensive demolition and alterations have taken place which have impacted on the original rural setting of the place.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue is located in Whadjuk Noongar country in the vicinity of the Helena River, which is a mythological and ceremonial site of significance, acknowledged by inclusion in the Register of Aboriginal Sites. Noongar people living in the southwest of the continent during the pre- and early contact period can broadly be described as comprising small family groups moving through the landscape in response to seasonal change, utilising a toolkit of wooden and flaked stone tools and grinding stones, notably of quartz, dolerite and chert. The artistic culture of the Noongar people was expressed in painted and engraved art in a wide variety of forms, relating to a complex spiritual worldview that incorporated a connection to the natural world, and the remembrance or ongoing influence of ancestral and spiritual figures.²

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue was originally part of Swan Location 16, Governor James Stirling's Woodbridge grant which originally covered 4,000 acres (1,619 ha), stretching from the Swan River at Guildford, east to Greenmount Hill, and south to the Helena River. During the 1840s a house of mud brick construction was built in the vicinity of the existing residence and it became known as 'Helena Farm'.³ In 1883, Henry Brockman purchased a portion of the original location and

¹ Rosario Pty Ltd, Rosemary: 2014, *Belle View (Former Helena Farm) Lot 800 Wilkins and Katherine Streets, Bellevue*, updated Conservation Plan, prepared for Taliska Securities Pty Ltd, p1.

² Crawford, I M, 'Aboriginal cultures in Western Australia', & Hallam, S, 'The First West Australians', in *A New History of Western Australia*, C T Stannage (ed.), UWA Press, 1981, pp.16-20, 56-66; Meagher, S & Ride, W D L, 'Use of natural resources by the Aborigines of south-western Australia', & Berndt, R M 'Aborigines of the South-West', in *Aborigines of the West: Their Past and Present*, R M Berndt & C H Berndt, (eds.), UWA Press, 1908, p. 76-77, 81-86; Vinnicombe, P, 'Gooninup: a site complex on the southern side of Mount Eliza: an historical perspective of land use and associations in the old Swan Brewery area, Western Australian Museum', 1989, pp.8-9; Strawbridge, L, *Aboriginal Sites in the Perth Metropolitan Area: A Management Scheme*, Department of Aboriginal Sites, Western Australian Museum, 1988, pp. 10-16.

³ Rosario, R. op. cit. pl.

subdivided the property into smaller land holdings.⁴ In October 1886, Edward Robinson purchased 750 acres (303.5ha) of Swan Location 16, then known as Helena Farm⁵, from Brockman. This followed the sale of his pastoral interests in the North West stations Mount Florence, Langwell and Croydon near Roebourne to his nephew William Edward Robinson.⁶ In 1887, Edward built Belle View, a substantial single-storey residence with a wide, wrap-around verandah, constructed of local clay bricks made on the property.⁷ This replaced the mud brick cottage (c.1840s), built west of the surviving stables which was still visible in aerial photographs before in 1974.⁸ Adjacent to the existing eight roomed house and attached off the south-west corner of the verandah, was a building containing the kitchen, maid's rooms, servant's dining room, laundry, a 20 loaf capacity baker's oven and underneath, a cellar and smoke room.⁹ Also, out to the south-west, an underground brick-lined tank/well with an exposed domed cover, collected water for the house from its roof.¹⁰ Other elements constructed during this period include the stables, dairy and several large sheds south of the stables (the residence and stables being the only remaining structures).¹¹

The construction of *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue*, and the development of the property, took place against a background of four major influences in the development of Western Australia. Firstly, moves intensified towards responsible government, which, when granted in 1890, affected the colony's direct decision making and capital raising capacity. Secondly, after 1885, when gold was discovered in the Kimberley, there was a general confidence boost in the broader economy. Thirdly, the construction of several privately financed railway systems, including the Eastern Railway (1881-1885), the Great Southern Railway (1886-1889) and the Midland Railway (1886-1894), impacted both on the State and the Bellevue area. Finally, the population increase resulting from these developments, combined with a preceding downturn in development in South Australia and then the Eastern States, provided both the skilled labour and demand base to fuel growth and confidence.¹² Additionally, in nearby Midland Junction, the final relocation in 1904/5 of the Government railway workshops from Fremantle and the activity associated with the Goldfields Water Supply scheme, encouraged Edward Robinson to subdivide and sell or lease the northern sections of his land for brick making and residential subdivision of Bellevue.¹³

⁴ Rosario, R. op. cit, p11

⁵ Certificates of Title, Vol. 17 Folio 108, and Vol. 20 Folio 203, DOLA; Metropolitan area aerial photographs, 1948-1974, Central Map Agency, DOLA; Elliot, I. *Mundaring a History of the Shire* Mundaring Shire, Mundaring, 1983, p. 221.

⁶ Seabrook, J. M. 'John Seabrook of Brookton House' in *Early Days*, Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Vol. 9, part 1, 1983, p.101.

⁷ Rosario, R. op. cit, p.13.

⁸ Elliot, I. op. cit., p. 221; Metropolitan area aerial photographs, WA1465 and 1523, DOLA.

⁹ Elliot, I. op. cit., p. 221; Goodchild, Jack Transcript of oral history tape, Battye Library OH 2603/5, 2 March 1995, Shire of Swan, p. 5; telephone interviews with Elsie, Joe and Doris Goodchild, May 1997.

¹⁰ Metropolitan area aerial photographs, op. cit., 1948, 1953; telephone interview with David Dick of Clayton Farm Helena Valley, 3 May 1997

¹¹ Rosario, R. op. cit. p.13.

¹² Crowley, F. K. *Australia's Western Third* Macmillian, London, 1960, pp.82-83; Watson, Lindsay *The Railway History of Midland Junction* L. & S. Drafting, Shire of Swan, Swan View, 1995, p.18.

¹³ Dundas, Barbara 'Social Differentiation in Midland Junction- a comparative study of two residential suburbs from 1895 to 1945' M. Phil Urban Studies Dissertation, UWA, 1996 pp. 16-19, 41-43, & appendix information; Crowley, F. K. op. cit., pp. 126-128, 135.

Edward Robinson was born in Brompton, East Suffolk, England in 1839, and arrived in the colony on board the *Success* on 22 March 1843, with his mother Mary Margaret and four siblings. His father William, a veterinary surgeon, died on the voyage out.¹⁴ Around 1846, soon after his mother married widower John Seabrook Snr, the family of eleven including Edward and his older brother William Albert, moved from Guildford to Brookton, south of Beverley.¹⁵ Edward had no formal education and after working for his stepfather as a labourer, accompanied Henry Maxwell Lefroy on two expeditions. The first, c.1860, traced the Williams River from its source near what is now Narrogin, and through to the Peel Inlet. The second, between May and July of 1863, and sponsored by the York Agricultural Society, went east to the vicinity of present-day Kalgoorlie, searching for suitable pastoral areas. Waterholes shown to the men by local Aboriginal people and recorded on maps of this and subsequent journeys by Charles Hunt, John and Alexander Forrest, and Ernest Giles were useful in the Eastern Goldfields in the early 1890s.¹⁶

In the 1860s and 1870s, the enterprising Edward and his step-brother John Seabrook Jnr of Winarlin near Moorambine, north-east of what is now Pingelly, operated a weekly wagon freight service to and from Perth, via Beverley and York. In 1864, following his journey with Charles Hunt east to Lake Lefroy, he joined his brother William on 2,000 acres (809ha) at Sunning Hill, south-west of what is now Brookton. In 1873, Edward and others were responsible for funding the construction by builder W. Atkins, of St. Patrick's Anglican Church at Moorambine.¹⁷

In 1872-73, coinciding with poor seasons in the Great Southern¹⁸, Edward, exchanged his share of the lease on Sunning Hill and some stock, for his brother William's lease on Mount Florence, 75 miles (121kms) south-east of Roebourne. In late 1876, Edward assisted John Seabrook Jnr to move about 2,000 sheep from Winarlin to John's newly acquired property Croydon, near Mount Florence. He left part way through the nine month journey to marry 41 year old widow Beverley Sophia ('Sophie') Pennel Badcock (nee Wells) at St Patrick's Anglican Church, Moorambine, on 15 March 1877.¹⁹ Subsequently they lived at Mount Florence, leaving the Roebourne area in 1886, when Edward sold his leases in Mount Florence, Langwell (acquired 1881) and the recently purchased Croydon, to his nephew William Edward Robinson.²⁰

By purchasing a large land holding and building a substantial house in the Guildford/Midland Junction area, Edward Robinson mirrored other influential 'Nor'Westers' such as Harper, Brockman, Hammersley and Morrison.²¹ He

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- 14 Erickson, R. The Bicentennial Biography of West Australians pre 1829-1888 vol. IV R-Z UWA Press, 1988, p.2648; Bolton, G. C. and Black, D. Biographical Register of Members of Parliament of Western Australia vol. 1. 1870-1930, p.169.
- 15 Seabrook, J. op. cit., p.90-91; 'A pioneer settler the late Mr. Edward Robinson', *Western Mail* 14 February 1913, p.47, columns a and b.
- 16 Cowan, Dircksey 'Eastwards From York Lefroy Expedition of 1863' in *Early Days*, vol. 1 October 1938, p.50; Henn, P. U. 'Memoirs of Henry Maxwell Lefroy 1818-1879' in *Early Days* vol. 1 December 1942, p.23; Crowley, op. cit., p.86.
- 17 *Early Days* vol. 9 part 1 1983, cover and p.117; Seabrook, J. M. op. cit., pp. 94-95.
- 18 Crowley, F. K. op. cit., pp. 60-62.
- 19 Erickson, R. op. cit.; Bolton, G. C. and Black, D. op. cit.; Seabrook, J. M. op. cit., pp.96-97.
- 20 Seabrook, J. M. op. cit., p.101.
- 21 Dundas, B. op. cit., p.17.

remained at Belle View from 1887 until 1905 when he and his wife Sophie moved into the newly constructed Melita to the immediate north of the Belle View property.²² This and the nearby Church of the Good Shepherd, built in 1909 following the death of his wife, were located on land which he appears to have originally set aside as a cricket oval, east of the adjacent Bellevue School.²³ In late 1902, he was responsible for the donation of a quarter acre block to the Education Department for the construction of the Bellevue Primary School.²⁴ Whilst at Belle View, Robinson's involvement in the community extended to his work as a Justice of the Peace, membership of the Freemasons, MLC for North Province (16 July 1894 - 27 July 1896), and member of the Greenmount Road Board (1908 - 1913).²⁵ In 1906, he is reported as addressing the Bellevue section of the Labor Party on the importance of the local brickmaking and related industries to Bellevue.²⁶

Robinson was integral in the development of the suburb of Bellevue, which took its name from the Belle View property. It became known as its current name from as early as 1897.²⁷ The property also has associations with nearby Midland Junction, which was declared a townsite in 1890 following resumption of work on the Midland Railway. Following the opening of the Guildford-Walkaway railway line in 1891, Certificates of Title show the line bordering the northern section of the Belle View property, and in 1896 a deviation railway line included the junction at Bellevue as a stop and a platform was built the following year. Subsequently the development of the brick industry in the area as a result of the clay pits led to a boom in the local building industry, and the suburb of Bellevue developed around the railway junction. As a result, the northern section of Belle View was subdivided, and the street names of Bellevue reflect this association today.²⁸

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue has been described as a model of its era.²⁹ Its outbuildings, and in particular the stables, were an important part of this and other similar establishments. This reflected the pivotal position played by the horse in transport and production on Western Australian farms in the late 19th and early 20th century. Further research is required before an accurate construction date can be ascertained for the stables.

Members of the Goodchild family, whose parents John (Jack) and Nellie worked for Edward Robinson before his death on 27 February 1913, and who subsequently lived in the 1887 house until John's death in 1959, remember a railway system to feed stock on the river flats, a thick plumbago hedge around the house, extensive outbuildings including stables, barn and a dairy. They also recall a 'flume' system of wooden troughs to reticulate water from a bore to irrigate stock and gardens.³⁰ The extent of activities on the property can be summarised by offerings for sale at

22 Rosario, 2014: p.15.

23 Dundas, B. op. cit., p.42, plan of Bellevue subdivision c.1905; Elliot, I. op. cit., p. 221.

24 Swan Express 14 October 1902.

25 Elliot, I. op. cit., p.221; Bolton G. C. and Black, D. op. cit.; 'A Pioneer Settler-Death of Mr. Edward Robinson' *Swan Express* 7 February 1913, p.3.

26 Swan Express 18 August 1906.

27 Rosario, R. op. cit., p13

28 Rosario, R. op. cit., p14

29 Elliot, I. op. cit., p.221.

30 Telephone interviews with Joe and Doris Goodchild May 1997; *Swan Express* 24 February 1906.

an auction after Edward's death, including pigs, cattle, horses and farm implements.³¹

In March 1921, Elder Smith & Co purchased the property comprising approximately 349 acres then known as Bellevue Holding Paddocks, from Edward's surviving executor Percy Robinson, a nephew living at nearby Undercliffe, and retained both Jack Goodchild and his brother Joe as stockman and manager respectively.³² In the 1920s, Elders and Goldsborough Mort & Co Pty Ltd were responsible for the purchase of extensive amounts of land adjacent to the Helena River where stock were held in transition to the Midland saleyards, various abattoirs and wholesale butchers, and later, the live sheep trade. Belle View was also used for the annual Elders picnic during this period.³³ Jack Goodchild died following a riding accident in July 1959 at the age of 80, and the Goodchild family left Belle View soon after.³⁴

During the mid 1960s, Elders began to sell off their paddocks including nearby Clayton Farm.³⁵ A number of early structures were also demolished during the 1960s and 70s, including the original Helena Farm homestead and the kitchen and servant's quarters to the rear of Belle View. Elders sold Belle View in 1987, and it subsequently had several owners who rented out the house, and used or leased the surrounding land for stock. Taliska Securities Pty Ltd purchased the property in 2001 with plans to develop a residential estate. The house remained vacant at that time, and the surrounding paddocks continued to be used for stock purposes.

The National Trust of Australia (WA) classified the property in August 1992, at which time it was vacant and in a state of deterioration. The Shire of Mundaring subsequently issued a demolition licence for Belle View in June 1996, apparently a case of mistaken identity due to different street addresses for the same property.³⁶ Following the commencement of internal demolition work the public raised concerns and a Conservation Order was put in place to protect the property on 25 April 1997. The place was subsequently entered in the State Register of Heritage Places on 3 June 1997 (permanent basis on 2 June 1998). Fabric removed from the property at this time included mouldings, timber doors, architraves, skirtings, floor boards, window and door frames.³⁷

Following the change in ownership, in 2005 an amendment was proposed to the Metropolitan Region Scheme for the purpose of rezoning the land including the homestead and associated buildings from 'rural' to 'urban', with the purpose of residential subdivision.

In January 2018 the Western Australian Planning Commission endorsed a Structure Plan for the Belle View Estate. Works commenced on the civil works for the residential estate in 2019.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

³¹ Swan Express 14th March 1913, p. 4, column b.

³² Elliot, I op. cit., pp.218-221.

³³ Rosario, R. op. cit., p17

³⁴ Rosario, R. op. cit., p17

³⁵ David Dick 3 May 1997.

³⁶ Rosario, R. op. cit., p17

³⁷ Rosario, R. op. cit., p18

The physical evidence is based on a physical inspection of *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* undertaken on 24 November 2022, and informed by the Conservation Plan prepared by Rosemary Rosario Pty Ltd and the original *Belle View* physical evidence compiled by Bruce Callow.

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue comprises a single storey brick and steel-roof residence in the Victorian Regency style built in 1887 and a reconstructed timber framed weatherboard-clad stables building (date unknown), both set in a landscaped area incorporating an arbour, limestone paving, and cottage garden. The residence is approached via Pascoe Street from the north and sits high on the embankment above the wide flood plain of the Helena River to the south. The original northern portion of the landholding encompasses the suburb of Bellevue. The original land holding has been redeveloped for residential subdivision and the setting has been substantially impacted.

The entrance to the residential estate is signified with a limestone feature wall on the east side of Pascoe Street with the name 'Robinson Grove'. The former flame tree-lined driveway to Belle View has been replaced on the same alignment with a residential road lined with ornamental plum trees and low shrubs. Either side of Pascoe Street are new residential lots. Low limestone walls are located to the front boundary on select display lots, with examples of the types of fence infill. *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue* is visible from the entrance of Robinson Grove Estate, and together the buildings and landscaping form a feature as the road branches off into Armstrong Approach around the east and west boundaries.

Belle View – setting

The Belle View residence is located on Lot 304 and forms the focus of the view on approach from the north along Pascoe Street. The house is set in an extensive lawn area and is surrounded on the north, east and south by a white timber picket fence. To the south the land drops away and there are extensive views across to the Darling Ranges to the east and Helena River flood plain to the south. To the west of the house and accessed from Armstrong Approach is a bitumen driveway and parking area, with a large remnant pepper tree set in a garden on the south side of the driveway.

Belle View – exterior

Located near the edge of the bank dropping down to the flood plain, Belle View is a single-storeyed, red brick, English bond residence designed in a restrained Victorian Regency style. The roof has recently been replaced with short sheet galvanised, and comprises three main roofs on the northern, southern and eastern sides connected by a valley running the east-west axis of the building. The house has undergone a recent program of substantial conservation works, and as a result it is in very good condition.

The house was built on brick and stone footings and used a bitumen damp course at the base of brick walls.³⁸ On the corners of the building, and around major window openings, tuck pointed quoining has been incorporated. The lower 5 or 6 courses of the external walls step out one course to form a plinth around the verandah. Heads of windows and doors have shallow arches with two course headers and frames are built into the inside leaf behind the front leaf of brickwork.

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Personal communication with owner Leah Smith, 28 November 2022.

The asymmetrical building is surrounded by a concave, corrugated metal roofed verandah supported at the wall and on the perimeter verandah beam. No timber roof framing runs between the wall and outer beam. The verandah sheeting is tucked in under a brick string course, 4 or 5 courses below the narrow eaves overhang of the main roof. The verandah beam is supported on reinstated stop chamfered timber posts. A timber floor to the verandah has been reinstated, replacing the previous intrusive concrete verandah likely installed in the 1960s at the same time as other works to the residence were undertaken.³⁹ A photograph from the 1950s shows the original timber verandah to the west elevation.⁴⁰ The verandah extends around the entirety of the house, with steps up from the west and north to entrance doors, and a limestone step to the south runs along four bays of the verandah. The main roof is a double hipped roof with a box gutter detail forming an 'M' shape, which discharges onto the west verandah roof. Roof sheeting and rainwater goods including guttering and downpipes have replaced the previous red-painted corrugated iron roof and intrusive PVC downpipes where they existed. Three tall, rendered brick chimneys with rendered corbelling complete the roofscape. Wall vents have been reinstated based on the evidence of original damaged vents.

The northern elevation is asymmetrical and features the entrance to the building towards the eastern end. A gable parapet above the projecting window at the east end of the verandah features a reinstated marble plaque with '1887', the construction date of the building (the original was stolen sometime between 1997 and 2006). The windows, previously removed and stored in the former barn, have been reinstated to original openings. Doors were not stored in the barn, and have been replaced to match original. The window to the east is a double hung sash central panel flanked by two smaller double hung sashes, and the two windows to the west are also double hung sash windows. The main entrance is immediately west of the projecting window and comprises a single leaf door with six ripple glazed panels, transom and sidelights. Further west along the north elevation, in between the two sash windows, is a double door with a transom.

The east elevation features a pair of faceted bays incorporating three sash windows at angles, with the central window to each bay extending to the floor and containing infill to the lower section of the opening above a brick and timber threshold. There was previously a decorative feature to the east elevation brickwork comprising dark bricks in a diamond pattern located between the two bays; however, little evidence of this remains. The south elevation, which is oriented across the Helena River floodplain, incorporates two double doors with transoms, three sash windows and a non-original casement window. The west elevation has a single leaf door with transom located centrally with sash windows either side.

Belle View – interior

The internal layout of Belle View comprises eight rooms arranged along two main internal passageways forming a 'T' shaped configuration. The long axis runs east-west along the passageway of the former bedroom wing accessed from the west verandah, while the shorter north-south axis runs from a front entry hallway through to the rear passage to the south verandah. A secondary entry hall

³⁹ Rosario, R. op. cit. p17

⁴⁰ Rosario, R. op. cit., p21

accessed via double doors to the west end of the north verandah directly connects with the east-west passage. At the intersection of the main entry hall and east-west passage, pilastered square columns with Corinthian capitals supporting an arch define the extent of the hall. At the junction of the long passage and the small passage is an arch supported on decorative, moulded plaster corbels.

The main front entry hall is accessed through the reinstated four panel door off the front north verandah and the arch, described above, to the south. Throughout the house the skirtings, floorboards, cornices, and architraves have been reinstated or replaced close to the original detail. Most of the missing elements that have been reinstated were sourced from salvage contractors from similar residences.⁴¹ Window and door frames were for the most part extant prior to the conservation works and have been retained. The entry hall and main drawing room has plain, 300mm high skirtings with a small top moulding and splay. These size skirtings were originally only located to the principal rooms, whilst shallower 220mm skirtings of similar detail ran throughout the rest of the house; however, skirtings throughout the house have been reinstated in one profile and size. Deeply moulded architraves measuring 50mm x 180mm, and complete with architrave blocks at the skirting, have been reinstated to the doorways. The ceilings, which were originally lathe and plaster, have been replaced with plasterboard throughout. The main entrance hall has a central, decorative rose, and ceiling roses are also extant in the two main living rooms to the east although it is noted that the original ceiling roses were not reinstated. At the junction between wall and ceilings a deep 'Victorian' cornice formerly accommodated ceiling vents in a wide cove between deep mouldings to the former drawing room, although this latter detail has not been reinstated. There are no cornices in any of the other rooms which utilise high level wall vents. The wall vents in these other rooms are generally located, two each on opposite walls, just below the ceiling on external walls and through the internal walls into the central passage.

Off the east of the entry hall is the main drawing room, which is detailed as described above for the entrance hall. The original ceiling rose, which was larger in diameter, deeply moulded and built in segments, has been replaced. This room is one of the two principal rooms, both of which face the east looking up the valley to the Darling Ranges. They both have a large arch formed in the external wall to frame a splayed bay window as described above (externally). The drawing room also has a full height, square projecting bay window to the north under the parapet gable to the north elevation. This bay has a large, north facing window comprising a centre fixed light flanked either side by narrow double hung sashes. A large fireplace breast remains on the south wall, although its marble fireplace surround and mantle has been replaced with a salvaged⁴² timber surround and mantle.⁴³

The dining room is the other principal east-facing room and is located adjacent to the drawing room to the south of the drawing room accessed via the north-south passage. Its level of finish is very similar but with a less flamboyant ceiling rose. Its bay window was virtually identical, and the fireplace opposite on the west wall, also believed to have been marble, has also been replaced with a timber surround and

⁴¹ Personal communication, Leah Smith, 24 November 2022

⁴² Personal communication, Leah Smith, 24 November 2022

⁴³ Bush, Fiona & Stephens, J. National Trust Assessment 1992; and oral interviews with Goodchild family as previous occupants, May 1997.

mantle. A door each side of the fireplace would have provided family access from the north and staff access from the south.

Across from the drawing room, and oriented to the north verandah are two bedrooms separated by the minor entry hall. The first bedroom to the east has a door from both the internal passage and the minor hall. The finishes to these bedrooms, as well as the ones on the south are simpler than the living rooms; they do not have cornices or ceiling roses, but they have the same heavy architraves. Both bedrooms have fireplaces with only the hearth remaining. The minor hall is also similarly finished, and features a high level, wide, undecorated arch. This is an unusual device which serves to combine the two separate chimney flues across the hall from the bedroom fireplaces backing onto it. The arch then supports a single chimney roof penetration which is suspended above the centre of the hall. Two more rooms on the south side of the house are similarly finished but without fireplaces.

The current kitchenette/server room is off the bedroom passageway to the southeast and would originally have been a room of similar dimensions to the others on the south side. The room was converted into a kitchen and bathroom in the 1960s after the removal of the external kitchen sometime between 1953 and 1965.⁴⁴ The former bathroom is now used as a small storeroom and is accessed via the north-south passage. There is a small opening between the kitchenette/server room and storeroom that dates from the 1960s, although the architrave is a recent addition. As a bathroom it appears to have functioned for a considerable time until the fittings were removed in the most recent works.

The overall character of the house, with its high standard of finish, its well-proportioned rooms, and high ceilings, is one of elegance and substance especially for its time prior to the prosperity of the gold boom. It has recently been conserved to a high level of detail and standard. Elements removed and stored in the barn have been reinstated or replaced based on physical and documentary evidence, and missing elements have been sourced from demolition contractors and although not always an exact match, have some authenticity due to their origins.

Stables

The stables are very well detailed and constructed of timber frame and lined with weatherboards. The rectangular building is oriented so that the long axis runs east-west. The structure is supported on a central row of columns and framed wall acting as a king post to trusses that reach out to an outer support beam and columns down the long perimeter. A new short-sheet galvanised steel roof has replaced the earlier iron roof sheeting that bore insignias on the underside of 'Avon Bristol' and 'Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Co.'. The stables are open to the south side, except for enclosed store rooms at the west end and northeast corner. The horse stalls are located on the north side of the central wall with two large openings at full height. Fittings associated with the former use including timber boarded mangers and troughs have been removed. Evidence of the former remnants of the grass tree block flooring was not identified during the recent works.⁴⁵ Believed to have provided protection to the horses' hoofs, this type of

⁴⁴ DOLA, Aerial Photos, op. cit..

⁴⁵ Email communication with Leah Smith, 28 November 2022

flooring is said to have existed in and around Guildford, Midland and the Swan Valley, but examples are rare.⁴⁶ Recycled bricks have instead been laid in a basket weave pattern to the original dirt floors. Seven feed hatches on hinged doors opening from the south side allowed access to the mangers, the eastern-most one being accessible from the small room on the northeast. The stables have been carefully conserved, although the north facing stalls were originally entirely open and the east side of the south elevation was partially enclosed. Despite these changes the stables serve to demonstrate the quality of the original workmanship. It is still unclear when the stables were built exactly, and although further research has been undertaken since its original 1997 registration this is not able to be determined.

A barn was previously located 10 metres south of the stables, which was demolished in 2017. It is likely the space between the barn and stables may have provided a forecourt for the original Helena Farm house that was located approximately 25 metres west. A dairy building, further to the south, is also referred to in oral history interviews and this may have been located on or near the site of a former metal clad machinery shed.⁴⁷ The machinery shed and various other physical elements including stock yards, fencing, silos and so on had been removed by early 2021.⁴⁸

Archaeological evidence

The following information is based on the original physical evidence and 2014 Conservation Plan update, with additional information from “Report on the preliminary archaeological investigation of Belle View Estate”, prepared by Terra Rosa Consulting dated January 2018.

South of the Belle View residence, off the south-west corner of the verandah, is the site of the former servants’ quarters/kitchen, cellar and smoke house. The building was of stone construction with the remnants of a fireplace/chimney for the baker’s oven or smoke house previously visible at the upper ground level until at least 1997. Although archaeological investigations have identified some elements of this structure, further archaeological work would be required to establish the full extent of the cellar, and the location of the kitchen and servants’ quarters above. These are referred to in oral history interviews and a structure is discernible in a 1953 aerial photograph⁴⁹. It was also reported that a toilet existed further to the west of the kitchen and slightly down the hill.⁵⁰ No evidence was found of this during archaeological investigations, although a small building identified in this location on aerial photos may help to locate it. Similarly, a domed roof water tank/well off the west end of the house was mentioned and can be seen in 1948 photographs. Archaeological investigations into these two areas were undertaken between December 2017 and January 2018 to inform sub-surface investigations and establish if archaeological features could be identified prior to civil works for subdivision. The investigations focussed on two areas of interest: the original

⁴⁶ Dundas, B., research into early Swan Valley farming properties, eg Spring Park.

⁴⁷ Telephone interview by Barbara Dundas with Joe Goodchild of Doubleview, 3 May 1997.

⁴⁸ [Landgate Map Viewer Plus](https://map-viewer-plus.app.landgate.wa.gov.au/index.html), Perth Metropolitan Area Central, capture 24 February 2021, <https://map-viewer-plus.app.landgate.wa.gov.au/index.html>, accessed 22 November 2022

⁴⁹ Landgate Map Viewer Plus, Metropolitan Area Central, capture 27 November 1953, <https://map-viewer-plus.app.landgate.wa.gov.au/index.html>, accessed 29 November 2022

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

Helena Farm homestead site (southwest of the stables, outside the current curtilage), and the kitchen/servants' quarters south of the residence.

An open area excavation (15 x 13m) was undertaken at the site of the original Helena Farm homestead, and a rectangular feature approximately 40cm wide assumed to be the remains of the original homestead walls was identified. The location of the original brick chimney was also identified in the northwest corner, and refuse was found in two pits outside the main rectangular feature.⁵¹

The site of the former servants' quarters and kitchen off the southwest corner of Belle View was also investigated. Evidence of a substantial limestone wall foundation measuring 45 cm width and 15 cm deep was identified, as well as a drainpipe located approximately 30cm from the verandah. Due to the location of a septic tank to the east further investigation to this area was not undertaken. Evidence of a cellar was not found, nor was the southern extent of the structures. Investigations in this area were minimal due to the area not being impacted by the subdivision works; however, photographs indicate that the contours of this area have been substantially altered.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Principal Australian Historic Theme(s)

- 3.5.1 Grazing stock
- 3.9 Farming for commercial profit
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

Heritage Council of Western Australia Theme(s)

Peopling WA – Colonisation
Economy – Rural Occupations
Cultural Life – Domestic Life

Comparative Analysis

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue comprises a fine example of a substantial residence in the Victorian Regency style and an excellent example of a vernacular farm building, formerly in a rural setting close to the Perth metropolitan area. The place is associated with Edward Robinson, who migrated to Western Australia as a child and was subsequently involved in the opening up of the northwest for the pastoral industry. He settled with his family at the original Helena Farm homestead until Belle View was built in 1887. Robinson is associated with the development of the suburb of Bellevue, which takes its name from Belle View homestead. The place also has associations with the Goodchild family and Elders Smith & Co.

Victorian Regency style residences

A search for Victorian Regency residences with a similar construction date (1870 to 1900) returned 25 entries in the Historic Heritage database, including a small number of places that are comparable to *Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue*:

⁵¹ Terra Rosa Consulting. 2018. Report on the preliminary archaeological investigation of Belle View Estate (formerly Helena Farm), Lot 50 Wilkins Street Bellevue, p3.

- P533 *Manning Estate, Hamilton Hill* (c.1850s, 1866, c.1900) – comprises the c.1900 Azelia Ley Homestead, the ruins of Davilak Homestead Complex, and sub-surface archaeological remains of the original 1850s homestead complex. The place is an uncommon and intact example of a precinct of farm buildings in the Perth metropolitan area, and has associations with the Manning family including Azelia Ley (nee Manning), for whom the homestead was built. Azelia Ley Homestead is a well-proportioned example of the Victorian Regency style applied to a residence.
- P1798 *Edenvale Group*, Pinjarra (c.1865, 1874, and 1888) – has close associations with the McLarty family, who contributed to the development of political life in the state from 1894 to 1962 and contributes to the local Pinjarra community's sense of place. Edenvale Homestead, which forms a part of the Edenvale Group, is a good example of Victorian Regency style of architecture that has been adapted to include an unusual symmetrical spreading and faceted homestead. The place is representative of nineteenth century homestead development, incorporating responses to change over time. Edenvale Homestead is in good condition with a high degree of integrity and authenticity.
- P1033 *Ocean View*, Beaconsfield (1887) – substantial single storey stone and iron residence in the Victorian Regency style, its imposing scale adds significantly to the landscape and contributes to the Fremantle community's sense of place. Built in a semi-rural area at the second half of the nineteenth century, it has close associations with Elias Solomon, an influential figure in the Fremantle and Western Australian (Jewish) community. It was used for a military hospital during WW1 and as a maternity hospital during the inter-war period.
- P936 *Lenaville*, Fremantle – built in two stages (1884 and 1895), a prominent single-storey limestone and iron residence at the corner of High and Ord Streets, Fremantle, and built for Henry Blinco the Acting Chief Wader of Fremantle Gaol.
- P2531 *Belvoir Homestead Group*, Middle Swan (1880, 1887-97, c.1900) – single-storey residence, farm buildings including stables and barns, archaeological sites and extant plantings, has a rich layering of historic fabric exhibiting characteristics of a farm building group from the late nineteenth century. The homestead is a fine example of Victorian Regency style built in stages with a unified visual treatment.
- P2494 *Spring Park*, Henley Brook (1830s-90s) – comprises archaeological sites, grave, mid 1850s stable and tack room and fruit-drying shed, has significance as one of the first rural land grants associated with every significant phase of agricultural development in the Swan district. The stables building is a fine example of a simple Victorian Georgian style farm building, and is a rare example of timber cheese block flooring.

Stables

A search for stables with a similar construction date (1870 to 1900) returned 13 entries in the Historic Heritage database, including a small number of places that are relevant:

- P533 *Manning Estate, Hamilton Hill* – limestone and brick stables building (c.1900) forms part of a precinct of farm buildings that is an uncommon and intact example in the Cockburn and Perth metropolitan area.
- P802 *Aldgate House & Stables, East Fremantle* – Federation Queen Anne Residence, rare as an example of a substantial residence with its original random rubble limestone stables in situ.
- P803 *Knocknagow, East Fremantle* – Federation Queen Anne bungalow style residence and associated former limestone stables. The potential demolition of the stables as a result of subdivision led to public concern. Subsequently the stables have been converted for different uses.
- P2494 *Spring Park, Henley Brook* – brick and iron stables building (c.1841) is a very fine example of simple Victorian Georgian style containing rare use of timber cheese block flooring.
- P3726 *Glengarry Station Complex, Moonyoonooka* – Victorian Georgian stables complex with whitewashed walls and varied roofscape, adds a rustic addition to the setting and contributes to the place's aesthetic value.
- P3943 *Summer Hill Group, New Norcia* – random rubble stone stables in Victorian Georgian style, it remains in use (in 2002).
- P4184 *Korrawilla Homestead Group, Greenhills* – stables and barn c.1875 in English bond brickwork with bush timber poles around a central courtyard, the building represents the original workings of a late nineteenth century farm.

Edward Robinson

Belle View House and Stables, Bellevue was built for Edward and Sophie Robinson. A search of the Historic Heritage database for other places associated with the Robinsons revealed one place:

- P2458 *Church of the Good Shepherd, Bellevue* - following the death of his wife Sophie in 1909 Robinson donated the land and funds for construction of the Church of the Good Shepherd for the local community, in her memory.⁵²

A search of the Historic Heritage database did not reveal any places associated with the Goodchild family or Elders Smith & Co.

13. 4 KEY REFERENCES

Bush, Fiona and Stephens, J. 'National Trust of Australia Historic Places Assessment "*Belle View*"' National Trust of Australia (W.A.), Perth, 1992. 13. 4

Rosario, Rosemary: 2014. *Belle View (former Helena Farm) Lot 800 Wilkins and Katherine Streets, Bellevue, Updated Conservation Plan*, prepared for Taliska Securities Pty Ltd

Terra Rosa Consulting: 2018. *Report on the Preliminary archaeological investigation of Belle View Estate (formerly Helena Farm), Lot 50 Wilkins Street, Bellevue Western Australia*, prepared for The Strategic Planning Institute Pty Ltd

⁵² Rosario, R. op. cit., p15 and Register entry P2458

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Archaeology of former Servants' Quarters/Kitchen.

Construction date of stables

Original Helena Farm 1840s homestead