



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.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

The projecting windows, the convex profile roofs over the encircling verandah and the formal symmetry of *Ocean View* are characteristics of the Victorian Regency style and produce an elegant composition. (Criterion 1.1)

Some decorative roof detailing and external wall embellishments contrast against the simple and generously proportioned building elements introducing interest to the overall composition. (Criterion 1.2)

Set behind the original masonry gate posts, it is a residence of imposing size which adds significantly to the landscape. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Ocean View is an example of a substantial dwelling built in what was a semi-rural area in the second half of the nineteenth century, with some of the original outbuildings extant. (Criterion 2.1)

Ocean View is significant for service as a maternity hospital during the inter-war years. (Criterion 2.2)

Ocean View has close associations with Elias Solomon, who was a figure of influence in the public and business life of Fremantle in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Elias Solomon was also a significant figure in the Western Australian Jewish community of that time. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

Ocean View is socially significant for its use as a military hospital from 1917 to 1920, then as a maternity hospital for the following 20 years. (Criterion 4.1)

* 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* North Ryde NSW, Angus & Robertson 1989.

Ocean View was one of the early residences in the Beaconsfield area. Situated on a hill, it is a substantial landmark that contributes to the local community's sense of place. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Ocean View is a rare extant example in the metropolitan area, of a generously proportioned, late nineteenth century residence which is complemented by expansive grounds with associated outbuildings, providing evidence of an earlier, semi-rural function. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Ocean View is a large and imposing residence that is representative of a way of life for a socially prominent family in the late nineteenth century. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Although the residence is occupied and generally in sound condition some of the fabric and fine detailing are deteriorating through exposure and lack of maintenance. The verandah enclosures are constructed in lightweight materials, some of which is dilapidated. Interior spaces are largely intact but portions of the ceilings are collapsing. The outbuildings and landscaping at the rear of the site are in poor condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Ocean View is being used as a residence after a period operating as a maternity hospital in the inter war years. The encroaching residential growth to the north has meant the house is no longer sited centrally on the site and detracts from the impact of symmetry of the grand residence on a large block. The outbuildings behind the house no longer fulfil their original function as animal enclosures but provide substantial evidence of the former way of life and land use, enhancing the integrity. Overall, the place has moderate integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

The place has a high degree of authenticity as much of the original form and fabric of the building are evident although not in exemplary condition.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Ham-Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Katrina Chisholm, Graduate Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Ocean View is a single-storey residence constructed in Victorian Regency Style, in 1887, for Elias Solomon.¹ *Ocean View* is built of stone with an iron roof, and verandahs on all sides. The outbuildings originally consisted of a stone dairy, stone wash-house, stables and windmill, most of which still exist.

The land on which *Ocean View* stands is part of Cockburn Sound Location 7, a parcel of 100 acres granted to Marshall McDermott in 1839.² McDermott was a pioneer settler of Fremantle, and one of its first storekeepers.³

Fremantle developed as a port and a stopover place for crews, but growth was slow. After 1850 the convicts built many public amenities, including a road bridge over the Swan River. In the 1870s, there was an increase in shipbuilding, and the development of the mining and pastoral industries in the North-West provided opportunities for Fremantle's merchants.⁴

In 1881, the railway line between Fremantle and Guildford was opened. Fremantle's population increased from 4133, in 1881, to 7077 ten years later.⁵ In that year, 1891, C. Y. O'Connor was commissioned to build a deepwater port at the mouth of the Swan River and employment opportunities received a boost. Expansion beyond South Street, the then southern boundary of Fremantle township, came about because of this growth and development.

Elias Solomon arrived in South Australia with his parents, at the age of two. His uncle, Emanuel Solomon, was already established in Adelaide, and Elias joined his uncle's business when he finished his schooling. In 1868, at the age of 29, Elias came to Western Australia where he was joined by two of his nephews. They formed Solomon and Nephews, Auctioneers and Agents. The business was partly financed by Elias's brother-in-law, Isaac, and half-brother, Judah, who were the fathers of the two nephews. This business closed in 1871 and Elias concentrated, successfully, on 'the Auctioneering and Commission business'.

Elias Solomon actively participated in many areas of public life. He was present at the first committee meeting of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, held on 2 June 1873, and was on the first Board of Directors of the Fremantle Building Society, founded 17 February 1875.⁶ He was a Fremantle Town Councillor 1877-1883, Chairman in 1881, Mayor 1889-1891, 1896-1898,

¹ Apperly, R., Irving, R. & Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and terms from 1788 to the present* Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1994. p.46-49.

² Description Books for Land Grants Vol. No. 510, 1833-1849.

³ Hitchcock, J. K. *The History of Fremantle: The Front Gate of Australia, 1829-1929*. Fremantle City Council, 1929, p.16.

⁴ Websdane, Peter. *The Beaconsfield Primary School: The First Hundred Years 1890-1990* Perth, The Print Cell, Cockburn, Melville, Willetton District Education Offices, 1990, pp.2-4.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Silbert, Olisch. 'Elias Solomon: A Fremantle Pioneer'. *The Westralian Judean* 1 September 1933 p.46.

1900-1901, MLA for South Fremantle 1892-1901, and MHR for Fremantle 1901-1903. He was the first chairman of the Fremantle Municipal Tramway Board, President of the Fremantle Literature Institute, Chairman of the Hospital Board and the Cemetery Board, a member of the Technical School Board, and visiting justice to the Fremantle and Rottneest prisons.⁷

Elias was president of the Fremantle Hebrew Congregation from its inception. In 1890, a site was granted to Elias Solomon and William Samson for the purpose of a Jewish cemetery, and another site, on the corner of Norfolk Street and South Terrace, was granted for a synagogue in 1896. Solomon laid the memorial stone of the synagogue on 8 January 1908.⁸

He married Agnes Elizabeth Bickley in 1877 and the couple had four surviving children at the time of her death in 1886. In 1887, he married Elizabeth Stokes, and added another five children to his family.⁹ The Solomon family originally lived in Fremantle, in Queen Victoria Street, near Edward Street.¹⁰

Cockburn Sound Location 7 was subdivided in 1875, and Solomon purchased four parcels of land from James Fordham, between 14 May 1881 and 15 April 1882, which made up all of Lot 35, consisting of over 5 acres.¹¹ The thoroughfare now known as Solomon Street was named Mary Road when the subdivision was first designed. Solomon Street first appears in the Post Office Directory in 1894/5.¹²

Ocean View was built in 1887.¹³ *Ocean View* is constructed of stone, with a corrugated iron roof, and wide verandahs on all sides. It has two large bay windows, and shutters to the front windows, which face west. The design is symmetrical, around a central room which has no windows. Built on high ground, it has views to the ocean, hence its name.¹⁴ Most rooms had fireplaces, with a grate for coal, and some had marble mantelpieces.¹⁵

After Solomon's death on 23 May 1909, his estate was administered by the West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Co. Ltd.¹⁶ In 1914, the ownership of Lot 35 and *Ocean View* was transferred to Frank Biddles of Fremantle. Biddles was a sea captain who arrived in Western Australia c.1886, and was recorded that year as owning a schooner and two luggers and employing 24 men. He was a master pearler, and a JP.¹⁷ *Ocean View* was rented out to a J.

⁷ *ibid*; *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians* Vol. 4, p.2895.

⁸ Silbert, Olisch *op. cit.*

⁹ *Bicentennial Dictionary* *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Lee, Bruce 'Historic Families of Fremantle: Investor becomes Mayor and MP'. *Daily News* c.1970, *Ocean View/Elias Solomon Files*, Fremantle City Library Local History Collection.

¹¹ DOLA Plan No. 16, 19 June 1875; Certificates of Title Vol. 20, Fol. 138 & Vol. 156, Fol. 138; 'Plan of Lots at Beaconsfield Fremantle, having uninterrupted panoramic views of the ocean and surrounding scenery', HCWA File PD1033.

¹² *Wise's Post Office Directories* 1894/95.

¹³ ~~*Ocean View/Elias Solomon Files* *op. cit.* suggest that the house was built in 1884, but Rate Books establish the date of completion as 1887.~~

¹⁴ National Trust assessment, October 1980 HCWA File PD1033.

¹⁵ Oral history notes on Kathleen Vagg (nee Dean), by M. Howroyd, 4 February 1986. *Ocean View* File. *op. cit.* [Kathleen Dean was born at *Ocean View* in 1920, and lived there with Nurse Sheedy for 17 years].

¹⁶ DOLA Certificate of Title Vol. 396, Fol. 176.

¹⁷ *Bicentennial Dictionary* *op. cit.* p. 215.

Farrell until 1917, when it became a military hospital, the No. 2 Auxiliary Hospital.¹⁸

In 1920, *Ocean View* came under the management of Nurse Annie Jane Sheedy and, for the next 20 years, it operated as a maternity hospital.¹⁹ An advertisement in the *Sunday Times*, 28 November 1920, read:

Ocean View Maternity Hospital. Solomon Street, Fremantle. Homely accommodation for ladies during accouchement. Terms moderate. Fresh milk daily from own cows. Nurse Sheedy. Phone B790.²⁰

Annie Sheedy came to Western Australia from Cessnock, NSW, with her husband, who was a baker. She had five sons, and when her husband died she opened her hospital at their home in Hampton Road, near Wray Avenue, before moving to *Ocean View*. At *Ocean View* the patient's rooms were along the verandahs on the south and east sides of the house.²¹

Ocean View was a very busy obstetrical unit for many years. Some families, particularly the Italians and Yugoslavs, bartered for payment, often paying in vegetables and fish. Annie Sheedy's youngest son, Arthur Francis Sheedy, married Hilda Bee, whose mother worked at the hospital as a cook. Arthur's son, John (Jack) Cameron Sheedy, was born at *Ocean View* Hospital. Jack was a Fremantle footballer who won the Lynne medal four times, and was the publican of the Savoy Hotel in Perth and, later, the Plympton Hotel in Fremantle.²²

Mrs Annie Jane Sheedy became Mrs Annie Jane Clune in 1933 or 1934, but there is no record of her husband.²³

Lot 35 had been subject to a further subdivision in 1921 and was rapidly being built out. In 1937, Annie Clune purchased *Ocean View* and Lot 9, consisting of almost one and a half acres, on which it now stood.²⁴

In 1941, on Annie Clune's death, *Ocean View* passed to her son, Arthur Sheedy.²⁵ He rented out the property as a residence. Oral evidence indicates that *Ocean View* was divided into three flats.²⁶ There were three people listed as residing at *Ocean View* in 1940/41, a Mrs Evelyn Hutch, William Richardson and William Barratt, but Mrs Hutch lived in the house on her own for another two years and, between 1944 and 1949, a George Miller was the only occupant.²⁷ There appears to be little documentary evidence to support the claim that the house was divided into flats.

In 1950, *Ocean View* was purchased by Hubert Lancelot Dobinson. On his death, in 1969, the property passed to his wife, Evelyn. Evelyn Dobinson died in 1996 and the property is in the hands of her executors. The son, Kenneth, takes an interest in the place.

¹⁸ *Wise's Post Office Directories* 1917-1920.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 1921-1939/40.

²⁰ Advertisement in *Sunday Times* 28 November 1920.

²¹ Oral history notes on Kathleen Vagg *op. cit.*

²² Oral history notes on John (Jack) Cameron Sheedy by M. Howroyd, 12 November 1985, *Ocean View* File, *op. cit.*

²³ *Wise's Post Office Directories* 1933/34-1940.

²⁴ DOLA Plan No. 4558, 16 April 1921; Certificate of Title Vol. 773, Fol. 29.

²⁵ DOLA Certificate of Title Vol. 1055, Fol. 604.

²⁶ Oral history notes on Kathleen Vagg *op. cit.*

²⁷ *Wise's Post Office Directories* 1940/41- 1949.

The street number for *Ocean View* changed more than once. The property had no number until 1936, when the area around it became largely built out. In that year it was listed as No. 16. The following year it was listed as No. 8 and, two years later, No. 6. It remained as No. 6 until 1951, when it was re-numbered 134 Solomon Street.²⁸

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Ocean View is situated on the east side of Solomon Street and is constructed in the Victorian Regency Style.²⁹ The single-storey residence is built in stone with a corrugated iron roof and concave verandah awnings. The house commands good ocean views to the west and has an imposing presence as it is situated well back from the street on high ground behind sloping lawn which falls to the road. The large suburban site extends from Solomon Street through to Trafford Street at the rear and is surrounded by residential buildings on smaller, residential lots. Various crude, stone structures are also situated on the site with the former stables located on the east boundary, hard up against a limestone wall on Trafford Street. The stone wash-house and a windmill, water tower and water tank are situated to the south-east of the house. A low limestone retaining wall is located on the front boundary with masonry gate posts, topped with ornamental balls, defining the concrete path to the front entrance. The semi-circular driveway from Solomon Street which swept past the front verandah is no longer evident and has been replaced by a less formal driveway on the southern boundary. Vehicular access is also available from Trafford Street.

The house presents a symmetrical front facade. A set of concrete stairs ascend to the wide timber verandah which has a diagonally braced balustrade and surrounds the two half-hexagon bay windows on either side of the central front entrance. The walls of the bay windows rise above the verandah awning and have applied stucco ornamentation beneath the eaves. The sloping roofs of these projecting forms are separate elements from the main roof. Richly decorated barge boards and finials are significant features of the roof construction. The wide, horizontal ridge bridging the two gables emphasises the generous spirit of the place. The location of a prominent, rendered chimney at each side of the roof further emphasises the symmetry of the house. The function of the brick chimney stack which has cement rendered corners and adjoins the house at the south-east corner, is unclear.

The external walls are rendered and have large scale decorative stucco ornamentation around the timber windows. Folding timber shutters, fitted externally, form part of the window construction. French doors opening onto the verandah are located in the central facet of the bay windows with double hung, single-pane windows in the lateral facets. The front door has side and fanlights.

Internally, the residence comprises a central entrance hall immediately behind the front door providing access to the three generously proportioned rooms at the front of the house. The finishes in each of these rooms are similar comprising timber floors, high skirtings, plastered walls and lathe and plaster ceilings with decorative roses. Fireplaces with feature surrounds are located

²⁸ *Wise's Post Office Directories 1900-1949*; Ocean View File, op. cit.

²⁹ Apperly, R. Irving, R., Reynolds, P. op.cit., pp.46-49.

in each of these significant rooms although heaters have been inserted into the openings. Unusually, the central sitting room is entirely internal with elaborately moulded architraves and glazed side lights to the sets of doors on both the east and west sides of the room. The southern room has full height folding partitions located approximately mid-way along the length of the room. The rooms at the back of the house are more modest and accommodate a variety of functions. The verandah along the north face of the house has been enclosed and partitioned with lightweight building materials to provide further miscellaneous accommodation. A masonry wall housing the stove divides the kitchen from the pantry located at the rear of the building. Two weather board rooms are located at either end of the concrete, back verandah. A pergola and garden greenhouse extend from the verandah to the north of the site.

Alterations to *Ocean View* since construction have occurred predominantly at the back of the building and to the north verandah which has been enclosed. The principal rooms retain many of their fine features, particularly their grand proportions, although portions of the ceilings are collapsing exposing the roof construction. The external decorative joinery requires maintenance and the outbuildings at the rear of the site are in poor condition. *Ocean View* is no longer positioned centrally on the block of land and loses some of the impact of symmetry through proximity to neighbouring residential buildings to the north.

13.3 REFERENCES

No key references.

13.4 FURTHER RESEARCH
