



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Permanent Entry

1. **Data Base No.** 0936
2. **Name.** *Lenaville* (c.1885)
3. **Description of elements included in this entry.** House (*Lenaville*) and associated cottage and shop and the land on which they stand, being Fremantle Town Lot 925, comprised in Certificate of Title Volume 1808 Folio 198.
4. **Local Government Area.** City of Fremantle
5. **Location.** 186 High Street, (corner High & Ord Streets) Fremantle
6. **Owner.** Seddon, G. & Wallace, M.
7. **Statement of Significance of Place (Assessment in Detail)**

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The site comprises three buildings: a two storey house, a cottage and a shop. Although the property had been given the name "Shenton House", at one time, it appears evident that there has been no connection to the Shenton family at all.¹

On 8 June 1882, Mr Henry Blinco, was granted Fremantle Town Lot 925 in consideration of the sum of £62/17/3.² The rate books show that for 1883, the lot remained undeveloped. The next recording, in 1886, notes a 'house building', thereby dating construction to 1884 or 1885.³

¹ Seddon, G. *A House, A Cottage and A Shop: 186 High Street, Fremantle, A case history of three buildings, their precinct, their social history, and the "Fremantle Transitional" domestic architecture 1870 - 1880 in context.* (Book Mark Publishing House, Guildford, 1993) p.2; An article on 5 October 1975 in the *Sunday Independent*, with accompanying photograph of 186 High Street, states, "Shenton House, which was built by the original Mayor of Perth, John Shenton, has been classified by the National Trust as essential to the heritage of Australia..." (*Sunday Independent* 5 October 1992) This error in research may be responsible for some of the confusion. The Shenton House mentioned in this article is in fact the Shenton House situated within the grounds of the University of Western Australia.

² Lanyon, M. *Lenaville 1885; 186 High Street, Fremantle* (for Fremantle City Council c.1984) p.1

³ Fremantle Rate books.

The House

Lenaville was built in two stages: the first, the southern section, in approximately 1884 and the second stage, the northern section, in 1895.⁴

Professor George Seddon, one of the present owners, has identified *Lenaville* as an example of that which he describes as the 'Fremantle transitional' style of building⁵ during the period that broadly marked the time between the cessation of convictism in 1868 and the boom years of the gold rushes. Although transportation of convicts ceased in 1868, convicts remained in Fremantle and were used to construct buildings in the later years including St. Johns Church in Kings Square (1879-82) and the Fremantle Town Hall (1885-87). *Lenaville* was built for Mr Henry Blinco, the then Acting Chief Warder of Fremantle Gaol and, given his authority within the Gaol, there is good reason to suppose that convict labour was used in the building.⁶ Seddon suggests that the major characteristics of this transitional style are: the buildings are symmetrical, and of random rubble limestone construction. There are usually no brick quoins around the windows, the style addresses the street with a set back of only a metre or so, and the sash windows were made up of six (usually) or eight panes and that the buildings were originally shingled.⁷

Blinco owned the house until his death in 1907, when probate of his will was granted to his son, Harry Blinco who retained the property until 1910.

On 12 March 1910, Lena Valeska Blacker became the third owner of the property (joint owner with William Horatio Blacker, caretaker). It is from her that the name of "Lenaville" originated.⁸

There are indications from the rate books that the Blackers kept the property as a boarding house or that parts of the house were rented out.⁹ Documentation shows that the property was also listed as a private hospital, although this may have been a euphemism for the boarding house. The land surrounding the house was used to grow produce and run chickens.¹⁰

Lena died in 1938. She had been the owner of the house for 28 years. The property was subsequently held in joint ownership by her children (Pearce, Brennan & Davidson), followed by Ivan Clausen, the Hardings, the Cannings and, currently, the Seddons.¹¹

The Cottage

⁴ Seddon, *op.cit.* pp.3-4.

⁵ *ibid.* pp.4-6.

⁶ *ibid.* p.1

⁷ *ibid.* p.6.

⁸ Lena was also known as Eleanor Blacker, and later as Lena or Valeska Skopp after the death of William Horatio Blacker and her marriage to Lawrence Skopp. *ibid.* p.15

⁹ Lanyon *op.cit.* p.2

¹⁰ Fremantle City Council, Minutes March 1914 p.13. Seddon *op.cit.* p.26

¹¹ Lanyon *op.cit.* pp.3-5 see also Seddon, *op.cit.* p.15. For further detail on the owners and occupiers refer to Seddon.

The age of the cottage is uncertain, with some newspaper sources citing 1830, however, the land in the area was not granted until 1882 so this seems unlikely.¹² More significantly, there are a number of stylistic similarities between the cottage and the main house - the same doors, internally and externally, the same window types, and identical chimney pots. In fact, the cottage lacks only the forms of adornment such as the verandah decorations (having no verandahs), and the quoins at the corners, doors and windows. Seddon assumes that the cottage was built as kitchen and servants quarters at the same time as the house.¹³ From 1920 onwards, the cottage has a shadowy existence in the Rate Books as this is when the shop, (built after the cottage) which fronts directly onto Ord St, is listed as No. 2 Ord St. It is not until 1947-48 that the cottage makes a specific appearance as 'residence rear No. 4' leased to V. Murphy.

The Shop

The shop is the smallest and most recent of the three buildings. It is not shown on the 1913 map of Fremantle and Frank Wandinger is recorded as the first occupier in 1920-21.¹⁴ The description of the property is listed as 'shop and room'. It is thought that it was not regularly used as a shop, for the rate book of 1947-48 describes it as a residence.

A study of the neighbouring buildings, and their occupants, over the period 1880-1920 gives an indication of the social changes that were occurring.¹⁵ Seddon's study indicates that for nearly two decades the surrounding precinct was the province of wealthy and established families on large plots. By the 1920s the area had become more developed and the area had become a solid family area. It remained so until the 1960s. Today some of the family homes now house professional offices.

In 1988, *Lenaville* was being used as offices, when purchased by the Seddons, who conserved and renovated the place in consultation with the Heritage Council of W.A. This consultation is ongoing.

The property was classified by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in 1974. The property has been assessed and entered into the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission. In 1993, *Lenaville* won an Award of Merit in the Conservation/Recycled section of the Architecture Design Award, of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (W.A. Chapter).

For further details of the documentary evidence of *Lenaville* and the history of the house and the associated buildings refer to Seddon, G. *A House, A Cottage and A Shop: 186 High Street, Fremantle, A case history of three buildings, their precinct, their social history, and the "Fremantle Transitional" domestic architecture 1870 - 1880 in context.* (Book Mark Publishing House, Guildford, 1993).

¹² Lanyon, *op.cit.* p.7. There is some dispute as to this evidence from the current owners. pp.1-18 for a detailed discussion of *ibid.* and its internal features.

¹³ *ibid.* p.7. Seddon disputes this : see Seddon, G. *op.cit.* pp 2ff.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p.29

¹⁵ *ibid.* pp.30-36 for additional detail on the social change taking place.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The place comprises three structures: a house, a cottage and a shop, all built from limestone quarried on site. The house is located on the corner of High and Ord Streets, near the crest of a hill. The site has views across Fremantle.

The House

A major feature of the construction detail of the house is that it was built in two parts.¹⁶ The original house, the southern part, was virtually square, with one storey to the south, two storeys to the north, with four rooms up and two rooms down, a central hall upstairs, shorter central hall downstairs and stairs offset to the east.

The walls are 600 mm thick, built of random rubble limestone cap rock with a lime mortar, rusticated at the corners and ruled into rectangular blocks of uneven size by indenting the mortar. The facade is symmetrical, with a central front door and a window on each side. The front door-step is of stone, and there is a simple arrow incised in one corner. This may be evidence of convict labour but is uncertain. The original roof may have been of shingle, although corrugated iron was readily available in the 1880's. The current roof is of corrugated iron.¹⁷

Seddon suggests there are a number of architectural details within the house that are probably the craftsmanship of prisoners from the nearby Fremantle Gaol because within the general community such skills were scarce. These features include the timber surround of the fireplaces and detailed ceiling roses and a delicate crossed timber balustrading.¹⁸

The second part of the house, appears to have been added a decade or so later. It consists of an addition to the western wing, comprising two rooms, one above and one below, so that the house became an L-shape, opening to the north-east. This addition differs from the rest of the house in detailing: the verandah does not continue around the northern (sunny) side, the external doors differ, the chimney has no chimney pot (although this may be missing), and there was no internal connection between the north wing and main house at the upper level. There is also a quoin at the junction of the north wing which one would expect at a corner and not half way along a wall. Cracking at this junction is consistent with the movement of new construction against old.¹⁹

In the 1970s, the house was completely renovated internally. A doorway was made between the most northerly room and the room adjacent in the upper storey and a kitchen fitted. A bathroom was installed downstairs.²⁰

After 1976, a window was put in the east wall of the house in the upstairs kitchen and the original verandahs removed.²¹

¹⁶ Details for this section are taken from, Seddon, G. *ibid.* pp.7, 10, 25, 26, 29 & 30.

¹⁷ National Trust Assessment Exposition.

¹⁸ Seddon, G. *op.cit.*

¹⁹ Lanyon, M. *op.cit.* pp.7,8..

²⁰ *ibid.* p.4.

²¹ *ibid.* p.5.

The Cottage

The construction details of the cottage shows that, like the house, it was not all built at the same time. It seems to have been built in two parts. The oldest part consists of the two rooms at the southern end. This is supported by the fact that a joint in the west end wall is clearly visible. From the construction method in evidence, it is probable that the two northern rooms were added when the northern extension was made to the house, around 1895.

The current owners (Seddon & Wallace) have added a kitchen and bathroom with an entry passage and small laundry between them, on the east end. The new addition was built in the same style as the old, using cap-rock and lime-mortar. However, a jarrah post set into the north and south walls, provides a clear demarcation between the new and old work.

The Shop

The shop is the smallest of the three buildings and also the most recent. It is also built of random rubble limestone construction, with brick quoins and a simple chimney. Internally there is a simple timber overmantel. Of particular interest is a small cellar with a trap door, wooden steps and lime-washed walls hewn from solid limestone.

In 1988, the shop was in poor repair; termites had caused considerable damage and the roof and gutters needed replacement. The current owners restored the shop front. The parapet was removed, and was replaced with a hip roof, more in conformity with the form of the house which it adjoins and the streetscape of which it is a part. It is thought that this is the original roof form judging from a blurred 1930s photograph.²²

In 1993, a replacement awning to the front of the shop and a new window, were created. The new window is the same width as that of the existing doorway and detailed in a manner similar to the existing window on the southern wall of the shop.²³

Renovation of the place since 1988, has included replacement of the house verandahs, the construction of a toilet block as a separate element to the building, cleaning, painting and replacing old materials keeping with the styles and colour schemes of the time and as far as possible to conserve and match with the existing and landscaping and provision of car parking.

For further details of the physical evidence of *Lenaville* and the conservation of the fabric of the associated buildings refer to Seddon, G. *A House, A Cottage and A Shop*:

²² Seddon *op.cit.* pp.30-32.

²³ detailing is similar to that shown on a WWII plan and in the 1992 Seddon evaluation. Heritage Council of W.A. correspondence 25 October, 1993.

186 High Street, Fremantle, A case history of three buildings, their precinct, their social history, and the "Fremantle Transitional" domestic architecture 1870 - 1880 in context. (Book Mark Publishing House, Guildford, 1993)

ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

1. AESTHETIC VALUE

Lenaville house, occupies a prominent location, being at the top of a hill overlooking Fremantle and defines the corner of High and Ord Street. It is a local landmark in the area.

Lenaville is a well crafted, substantial private home in a style described as the *transitional* style of the pre-gold rush era. It is in marked contrast with the neighbouring *Samson House* and demonstrates the diversity of architectural form in late nineteenth century Fremantle.

Lenaville exhibits interesting and delicate detailing of a simple but impressive nature.

Lenaville and associated buildings maintain the streetscape elements of limestone buildings with a low scale that are typical of Fremantle in the way in which they address the street. They provide an interesting diversity of shape and form to the street.

2. HISTORIC VALUE

Lenaville is a fine example of a convict built residence, with good examples of their skilled labour used and, as such, is associated with the history of the Fremantle Gaol.

Lenaville has a close association with Henry Blinco, original owner of the property, and Acting Principal Warden of Fremantle Gaol.

The place illustrates the historic development of a parcel of land through differing stages of domestic growth and continues a Fremantle tradition of mixed land use for domestic and small-scale commercial purposes.

3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The three buildings on the property demonstrate diverse aspects of nineteenth century domestic architecture.

4. SOCIAL VALUE

The study of the occupants of *Lenaville* and the associated buildings illustrates the social change that occurred over time within this precinct.

5. RARITY

Lenaville is one of only a small number of substantial, two-storey houses in the metropolitan area, built with the use of convict labour, that are still lived in today.

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

CONDITION

The present owners have conserved and now maintain the buildings in sound condition.

INTEGRITY

The history of the occupancy of the property has been varied but has allowed *Lenaville* to stay relatively intact. All three buildings have had some renovations. Additions and alterations have, in the main, been handled in a sympathetic manner, thereby ensuring that the buildings have retained their cultural significance. Unsympathetic alterations have been rectified in the conservation work done by the present owners. Conservation has been undertaken in liaison with the Heritage Council.

AUTHENTICITY

The place has a high degree of authenticity retaining many original features. Later unsympathetic interventions have been replaced or restored in a manner harmonious to the original fabric.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The place has cultural heritage significance for the following:

Lenaville, occupies a prominent site, at the top of a hill overlooking Fremantle and situated at a major intersection. It is a local landmark;

Lenaville is one of the few surviving convict built houses in the Fremantle area in the *transitional* style of the pre-gold rush era;

Lenaville has a close association with Henry Blinco, original owner of the property, and Acting Principal Warden of Fremantle Gaol; and,

the three buildings represent the diversity of architectural form in late nineteenth century Fremantle

8. Register of Heritage Places

Interim Entry	29/01/1993
Permanent Entry	11/01/1994

9. Conservation Order

10. Heritage Agreement

11. References

National Trust Assessment Exposition

Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet

Seddon, G. *A House, A Cottage and A Shop: 186 High Street, Fremantle, A case history of three buildings, their precinct, their social history, and the "Fremantle Transitional" domestic architecture 1870 - 1880 in context.* (Book Mark Publishing House, Guildford, 1993)