
NAME: Slate stables, 7 St Lukes Street, WILLUNGA

CURRENT USE:	Shed
FORMER USE:	Stable complex
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:	C.1868
LOCATION:	7 St Lukes Street, WILLUNGA
LAND DESCRIPTION:	CTs 5193/885, Section 258 & 268, Hundred of Willunga
OWNER:	Private ownership
RECOMMENDATION:	Local Heritage Place



Slate stables, 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga (<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/7-st-lukes-st-willunga-sa-5172>, accessed 20/4/2022).

NAME: Slate stables, 7 St Lukes Street, WILLUNGA

DESCRIPTION:

C.1862 stabling complex constructed of rough-hewn timber with later timber roofing and structural elements, externally clad with large sawn sheets of locally-sourced Willunga slate, fixed with metal ties, rods and nails. Aluminium eaves guttering to south elevation, possibly to north elevation.

A site visit was not possible to schedule during the period of this heritage review; as such recent publicly-accessible real estate photography has been used to illustrate the building's current appearance.

It is recommended that the slate stables at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga be included on the South Australian Heritage Register as a Local Heritage place.

A delineation of significant historic fabric is provided in the Extent of Listing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The slate stables at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga are of significance as an example as highly-intact, Willunga slate-constructed stabling complex associated with the local mail coach service between Willunga and Adelaide. Constructed in c.1868 by Henry John Hill (1847-1926) of Cobb & Co mail coaches (later J. Hill & Co), the building was used as stabling for local mail coach horses from the mid-19th century. The Willunga mail coach was an important local source of transportation and communication for local residents until the construction of the Willunga railway in 1915.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (As defined in Section 67(1) of the PDI Act 2016):

a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area, being a significant and highly-intact example of slate-constructed stabling constructed for and used by the local mail coach service of J. Hill & Co., a prominent South Australian mail coach operator of the mid to late 19th century.

b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area; being a significant and highly-intact example of a stabling complex constructed of locally-sourced Willunga slate. The stables were also constructed to provide accommodation for horses associated with the mail coach services of Cobb & Co., later J. Hill & Co., from 1868 onwards; the mail coach being a local source of transportation and communication until the construction of the Willunga railway in 1915.

e) it is associated with a notable local personality of event; the stable complex is strongly associated with the mail coach businesses of Henry John Hill (1847-1926), a prominent South Australian mail contractor and coach proprietor; Hill acquired the site to construct stables for horses associated with his mail coach services which operated in the district from the late 1860s onwards.

RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales

2.6 Communication infrastructure

Theme 5: Food Production in the Southern Vales

5.2 Farming infrastructure

5.4 Animal husbandry

Theme 8: Transportation and Human Movement

8.1 Early roads of the Southern Vales

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The slate stables at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga does not appear to have been identified or assessed as part of any previous heritage survey.

Previous historical information has associated the dwelling with William Hawker, who arrived in Willunga by the mid-1850s and was responsible for the construction of the earliest portions of this residence, now extensively reconstructed presumably in the mid-20th century while retaining minor internal elements of the original structure.

A recent brief historical summary of the slate stables at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga has been provided by the Willunga Branch of National Trust SA and reads as follows:

In January 1868 Henry Hill, esquire of Adelaide, proprietor of Henry Hill & Co Coach Company purchased two adjoining lots (lots 18 and 19) in the township of Willunga from Charles Snellgrove. These lots extended from St Lukes Street at the front to the Willunga Creek at the back. In 1867 Henry Hill, who was one of the partners in Cobb and Co, had purchased William Rounsevell's coaching business, which at that time had been the largest coaching operation in South Australia.

Henry Hill & Company ran the daily passenger and mail coaches from Adelaide to Willunga and return during the late 1860s and into the 1870s. It is likely that the slate stables on Lot 18 were constructed in 1868, or soon thereafter, and that the land was used keep the coach horses.

In 1871 Henry's son John became the Cobb & Co local manager and he established John Hill & Co. In 1874 Henry Hill transferred the property in Willunga to partners Henry Robert (H.R.) Fuller, George Mills and his son (Henry) John Hill and they, in turn, sold it to Thomas Kean (or Kain) in 1882.

The slate stables came to light when the property was opened for inspection in 2020 to potential buyers. The stables were obscured by vegetation, and thus were unknown to many people (including members of the Willunga Branch of the National Trust of South Australia). These stables are an important feature of 19th century transport.

(National Trust of South Australia, Willunga Branch)

Current research largely confirms the findings of the above historical summary; Henry Hill, Esquire of Adelaide acquired the site in January 1868, transferring ownership to Henry John Hill, Henry Robert Fuller and George Wills, coach proprietors in November 1874. Ownership was transferred to Thomas Kean who retained the site until his death in 1902. The site was acquired by the Hill family in 1911 who retained the site until 1946. The allotment was subsequently owned by members of the Aldam family from 1946; the site of the stables (now allotment 18) was transferred to the Litchfield family in 1954 who likely constructed the mid-20th century brick residence on the site around this time. Ownership was transferred to the Buchanan family who retained the site until the late 20th century. The property has most recently sold in 2020.

The mid-19th century slate stables are strongly associated with the mail coach enterprise of Henry John Hill (1847-1926) a prominent South Australian figure of the mid-19th to early 20th century. The Australian Dictionary of Biography's account of Hill's life reads as follows:

Henry John Hill (1847-1926) mail contractor and coach proprietor, was born on 26 March 1847 at Walkerville, South Australia, son of Henry John Hill and his wife Susanna, nee Rofe. Known as John he was educated at a Presbyterian school at Alberton and then joined his father's carrying

business, Henry Hill & Co. After training in office work John went into outside management. In 1866 Cobb & Co., of which his father was a member, bought out the coaching business of William Rounsevell. Hill became local manager of Cobb & Co., bought their branch in 1871 and formed the new firm, John Hill & Co., which included H. R. Fuller and George Wills with Hill as the active manager. The business boomed and by 1882 it was sold to John Hill & Co. Ltd. Hill's coaches served most of South Australia and despite competition from the railways, especially in the south and south-east, the firm opened many new routes to offset the loss in trade. Hill often had a thousand horses at work and he opened large service stables at Broken Hill. Before World War I the firm amalgamated with H. Graves to form Graves, Hill & Co. Ltd. In 1877 Hill was a partner of Charles Fisher in at least three Queensland runs. In 1888-95 he served as a railway commissioner at a salary of 1000 pounds then resumed his work with Hill & Co.

Hill was president of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1905-06, became a life member and chaired its finance and horse committees for thirty years. He was prominent in the Pirie Street Methodist Church and Sunday school for over sixty years and was elected a member of the General Wesleyan Conference in 1884, 1890 and 1894. He was also trustee of the Savings Bank. A keen cricketer for North Adelaide, he scored one of the first centuries on the Adelaide Oval in a match against Kent Club in January 1875. He was also active in the Adelaide Bowls Club. On 9 October 1867 he had married Rebecca Eliza Saunders. She died in February 1921 aged 73. Hill died at his home in North Adelaide on 18 September 1926. He left an estate of 16,300 pounds to his surviving seven daughters and six sons, one of whom was the Test cricketer, Clem Hill (1877-1945).

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all slate elements to the stables. Early timber structural elements supporting all slate elements are considered of significance and are included in the listing. When replacement is considered necessary, early timbers should be replaced with timberwork of matching size and profile, taking into account the early 'rough-hewn' nature of the early timbers.

All later alterations and additions, including later timber structural elements to the outbuilding, are not considered of significance and are not included in the listing.

REFERENCES:

CTs 110/7; 2363/108; etc.

https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ehq-production-australia/f98a06ad73744cc1e459e0e22529219b03b22e04/original/1610949981/Slate_Culvert_Go_vt_Quarry.pdf_6b78189a7e75495541a9fcdcfb4b7840?1610949981, accessed 20/04/2022.

<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/7-st-lukes-st-willunga-sa-5172>, accessed 20/04/2022.

'Hill, Henry John (1847-1926)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hill-henry-john-3770>, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 20 April, 2022.

SITE MAPPING:



7 St Lukes Street, Willunga; site of slate stables shown within red rectangle (SAPPA, Planning SA).

HISTORICAL IMAGES:



Willunga mail coach on Main South Road, in c.1885; presumably operating as part of J. Hill & Co's local service. It is possible that the horses of this coach were rested at the Company's stabling complex now located at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga (SLSA, B 19173)

OTHER IMAGES:



South elevation of slate stables, 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga, looking east (<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/7-st-lukes-st-willunga-sa-5172>, accessed 20/4/2022).



Internal timberwork and slate external fabric of slate stables at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga, looking north (<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/7-st-lukes-st-willunga-sa-5172>, accessed 20/4/2022).



External slate cladding with early metal ties and rods at 7 St Lukes Street, Willunga, looking east (<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/7-st-lukes-st-willunga-sa-5172>, accessed 20/4/2022).