
NAME: 'Old Harbour Master's Cottage' Ruins, Lot 22 Water Street, PORT WILLUNGA

CURRENT USE:	Ruins
FORMER USE:	Dwelling
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:	C. 1850s
LOCATION:	Lot 22 Water Street, PORT WILLUNGA
LAND DESCRIPTION:	CT 5483/607, Section 386, Hundred of Willunga
OWNER:	Minister for Environment & Conservation (Crown Land)
RECOMMENDATION:	Local Heritage Place



Former Harbour Master's Cottage ruins, Lot 22 Water Street, Port Willunga looking north (GGA, 2021)

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DESCRIPTION:

C.1850s former Harbour Master's cottage ruins, comprising freestone masonry of various heights forming a former five-roomed residence. Original fireplace surrounds and slate flooring, various areas of painted render. External freestone paving and steps to the immediate south, various areas of minor retaining walls to the north and south of the site.

It is recommended that the former Harbour Master's cottage ruins at Lot 22 Water Street, Port 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 former Harbour Master cottage ruins at Lot 22 Water Street, Port Willunga is of significance as the former residence of the Port Willunga harbour master, a central role within the township's initial developments in the 1850s as a significant South Australian port. Constructed by Thomas Martin, one of Port Willunga's earliest settlers, the property is strongly associated with the Martin family, who retained the site (formerly including the Pier Hotel and 'Uncle Tom's' log cabin) from 1846 until 1974; an association of nearly 130 years. The ruins are the last surviving remnant of the site's historical usage and now comprise a significant local landmark within Towilla Yerta Reserve.

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 an c.1850s residence constructed as a residence for the local harbour master, an central role to the township's function as an important South Australian port in the mid-to-late 19th century. Likely one of the township's earliest buildings, the dwelling was also built by Thomas Martin, one of Port Willunga's earliest settlers.
 - b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area; being a c.1850s residence constructed for the local harbour master during the township's initial development period as a major port.
 - e) it is associated with a notable local personality or event; being constructed in the early 1850s by Thomas Martin, one of Port Willunga's earliest settlers. Initially settled by Thomas Martin in 1846, the property, in addition to the now demolished Pier Hotel and 'Uncle Tom's' log cabin, was owned by the Martin family until 1974; a significant association of nearly 130 years.
 - (f) it is a notable landmark for the area; the former Harbour Master ruins now being a notable landmark of Towilla Yerta Reserve, effectively demonstrating the history of Port Willunga's initial development from the mid-19th century.
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RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales

2.1 Cottages and small dwellings

Theme 4: Local Settlers & Local Entrepreneurship

4.1 Notable early local families and settlers

Theme 8: Transportation & Human Movement

8.3 Goods movement from the Southern Vales to the Southern Ocean

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The ruins of the old Harbour Master's Cottage (Lot 22 Water Street, Port Willunga, now part of Towilla Yerta Reserve) were identified by the 1997 Willunga District Heritage Survey as one of several identified 'Demolished Places and Sites', including the site of the adjoining Pier Hotel (Uncle Tom's Cabin). While not recommended for listing as a Local Heritage Place, the 1997 Survey recommended the identified 'Demolished Places and Sites', including the old Harbour Master's Cottage ruins, should be marked and interpreted.

The 1997 Survey also provided some basic historic information regarding both the former Pier Hotel and Harbour Master's Cottage, identifying that both buildings were owned by Thomas Martin, though both were then identified as being in ruins. It would appear that the ruins of the former Pier Hotel have been removed since 1997, though the ruins of the old Harbour Master cottage remain.

Current research has identified Lands Title records dating to 1957, when the original allotment was owned by Clarence Francis Martin of Culberra, farmer; the grandson of original owner Thomas Martin. While earlier Land Title records have not been identified, the 1957 Certificate identifies that its allotment delineation matched that of a plan deposited in the General Registry Office No. 560 of 1856; suggesting that Thomas Martin occupied the same allotment prior to 1856. The 'Willunga Now and Then' website records that Thomas Martin had occupied and settled Section 386 of Port Willunga by 1846. Historical photography shows a rough log cabin which may have been constructed as the Martin family's initial residence on the site (likely contributing to the site's later nickname of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin').

While the exact construction date of the former Harbor Master's cottage has not been identified, the cottage was likely constructed in the early 1850s as part of the district's initial development. The township of Port Willunga was declared in 1850; by 1851 a newspaper article describes the town's early development:

Along a tolerably level road, nearly west of the Aldinga plains, and (an) outlet of a gorge called White's Gulley, a spot opens out to the gulf upon a beach eligible for a port from which to ship the grain of these localities to Adelaide, and where a township is about to be formed, to be called Port Willunga. It is in part laid out, 20 to 30 buildings being planned and in the course of erection, and several houses – one or two of which (are) even visible from Willunga – being already built and occupied. (Sketches of the Present State of South Australia, No. V.- Willunga, South Australian Register, Wed 26 Mar 1851, p.3).

As Martin is referred to as the local port 'master' by May 1852, it is presumed that the former Harbour Master's cottage, evidently one of the district's early buildings, was constructed and occupied (likely by Thomas Martin) by this time, possibly as a replacement residence for the site's documented log cabin. A September 1853 newspaper notice identifies a "Thomas Martin, Pier Hotel, Section 396 (386), Port Willunga", indicating the Pier Hotel had been completed at this time, likely in association with the nearby jetty which was also constructed by late 1853.

The site of former Pier Hotel, Harbour Master's cottage and 'Uncle Tom's' log cabin was retained by the Martin family until the death of Clarence Martin in 1974, though photography from the mid-20th century demonstrate the dilapidated condition of the site's buildings. As previously mentioned, the ruins of both the Pier Hotel and the former Harbour Master's cottage were documented in

1997, though only the ruins of the cottage survive today. The site today forms a central portion of Towilla Yerta Reserve.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all surviving freestone masonry, including all walls, slate floors, fireplace surrounds, retaining walls, steps and verandah plinth, are included in the listing.

A maintenance schedule relating to the condition of the ruins should be established and maintained, resulting in repairs as necessary.

It is recommended that the City of Onkaparinga should install appropriate signage to the immediate south of the former Harbour Master's cottage ruins, in addition to the sites of the former Pier Hotel and former 'Uncle Tom's' log cabin, to allow for an informed understanding of the site's history.

REFERENCES:

CTs 2516/159; 4105/621, etc.

Sketches of the Present State of South Australia, No. V.- Willunga, South Australian Register, Wed 26 Mar 1851, p.3.

Shipping Intelligence, The Argus, Mon 31 May 1852, p.4.

Bench of Magistrates, South Australian Register, Tue 13 Sep 1853, p.3.

[https://willunga.nowandthen.net.au/Martin,_Thomas_\(Port_Willunga\)](https://willunga.nowandthen.net.au/Martin,_Thomas_(Port_Willunga))

SITE MAPPING:



Site of Lot 22 Water Street, Port Willunga (Planning SA SAPPa)



Enhancement of SAPPA satellite mapping of Lot 22 Water Street, Port Willunga, showing former Harbour Master cottage ruins highlighted in red box (Planning SA SAPPA)

HISTORICAL IMAGES:



C.1910 photograph of Martin family's Port Willunga property looking north, showing the former Pier Hotel (left), early log cabin ('Uncle Tom's Cabin') (centre) and former Harbour Master cottage (extreme right) (SLSA, B 25664)



Dilapidated former Pier Hotel, photographed in 1933 looking east; former Harbour Master cottage in background to extreme right (SLSA, B 8885).



West elevation of former Harbour Master's cottage in 1933 (SLSA, B 8885).



C.1895 photograph of former log cabin immediately south-east of former Pier Hotel (likely the originator of the local nickname 'Uncle Tom's Cabin') (SLSA, B 45380/4).



Former Harbour Master's cottage ruins, looking south; various areas of render over freestone ruins (GGA, 2021).



Former Harbour Master's cottage ruins, looking east; former fireplace surrounds with later painted render (GGA, 2021).



Former Harbour Master's cottage ruins, looking south-west; original slate paved flooring to various former rooms (GGA, 2021).



Former Harbor Master's cottage ruins, looking north; freestone retaining walls and verandah plinth to immediate south of former cottage (GGA, 2021).
