

134 Macquarie Street (GPO Box 618)
Hobart Tasmania 7001
Phone: 1300 850 332 (local call cost)
Email: enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au
Web: www.heritage.tas.gov.au

Name: Fernleigh
Status: Provisionally Registered
Tier:

THR ID Number: 12055
Municipality: Hobart City Council
Boundary: CPR11286

Location Addresses

325 DAVEY ST, SOUTH HOBART 7004 TAS
327 DAVEY ST, SOUTH HOBART 7004 TAS

Title References

35637/1
135726/1

Property Id

5573385
5573393



Nos 327 (left) and 325 (right) Davey St
NRE 2022



No 325: the house's north-east elevation, with
the stone outbuilding at right.
NRE 2022



Looking from the south-east at Nos 327 (left) and
325 (right).
NRE 2022



cropped portion of 'Hobart Town from South-west'
Tasmanian Archives NS80/1/11



Elizabeth Allport in Fernleigh garden
Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts



Mary and Joseph Allport in Fernleigh driveway
Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts



Elizabeth and baby Mary Allport in gardens of
Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts



'South Hobart – view from Huon Road' cropped
Tasmanian Archives NS479/1/130

Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)

Fernleigh demonstrates the evolution of housing types in Tasmania, and is a good representative example of a nineteenth-century large Victorian Georgian villa residence. The present-day combined cadastral parcels of Nos 325 and 327 Davey Street preserve the extent of Lot 27 within the 1838 subdivision upon which Fernleigh was built in the mid-1840s. Despite its division into two separate dwellings, the two-storey portion of the houses retains much of its original spatial arrangement and detailing. Externally the street-facing, side and rear elevations display a high level of integrity.

Why is it significant?:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

Fernleigh demonstrates the evolution of housing types in Tasmania. The present-day combined cadastral parcels of Nos 325 and 327 Davey Street preserve the extent of Lot 27 within the 1838 subdivision upon which Fernleigh was built in the mid-1840s - when the larger allotments in South Hobart were sold off and further subdivided due to economic depression, leaving a townscape of varying plot sizes, from large villa residences with spacious gardens, to small, conjoined workers' cottages. Fernleigh was the residence of James A. Thomson and G. T. W. B. Boyes, notable figures within early colonial-period Hobart Town.

- b) **The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.**

No Data Recorded

- c) **The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.**

No Data Recorded

- d) **The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.**

Fernleigh is a good representative example of a nineteenth-century large Victorian Georgian style house. Despite its division into two separate dwellings, the two-storey portion of the houses retains much of its original spatial arrangement and detailing. Externally the street-facing, side and rear elevations display a high level of integrity.

- e) **The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.**

No Data Recorded

- f) **The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.**

No Data Recorded

- g) **The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.**

Fernleigh is significant for its associations with the Colonial Auditor and diarist George Thomas William Blamey Boyes (1786–1853), and with Morton Allport (1830–1878) who with his family lived in the house from later in the 1850s until 1874.

- h) **The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.**

No Data Recorded

Heritage approval is required for work that will result in changes to the nature or appearance of the fabric of a Heritage place, both internal and external.

Please refer to the Heritage Council's Works Guidelines (www.heritage.tas.gov.au) for information about the level of approval required and appropriate outcomes.

Heritage Advisors are also available to answer questions and provide guidance on enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au or Tel 1300850332

This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.

Setting:

Fernleigh is situated close to Davey Street's intersection with D'Arcy Street and Lynton Avenue, on a site about two kilometres to the south-west of Hobart's city centre. This portion of Davey Street aligns with a natural ridge between the Hobart Rivulet to the north-west and the Sandy Bay Rivulet to the south-east. The surrounding suburban area consists mainly of one and two-storey detached houses many of which have established gardens planted with European trees.

Description:

Fernleigh is a property containing a Victorian Georgian villa residence sited within extensive gardens. The house has two above-ground storeys – with single-storey extensions to its north-west side – and a basement. At the time of this assessment in 2022 the house and the site are subdivided into two separate cadastral parcels and dwellings: No. 325 Davey Street to the north-east, and No. 327 Davey Street to the south-west. At the south-west corner of No. 327's ground-floor storey is a six-room conjoined dwelling, known in the present day as 'the cottage'. This cottage, built without foundations, has two small rooms and a 1950s bathroom extension.

The external walls are of stucco-finished brickwork, with window architraves – and quoins at some external wall corners – of unpainted sandstone. Portions of the basement walls that are visible above natural ground level are of

unpainted squared sandstone rubble built to courses.

Above the top storey, the house's roof comprises abutting hipped volumes, clad with painted corrugated galvanised iron – comprising short sheets on No. 325, and continuous sheets on No. 327. The roof has three chimneys of sandstone ashlar, each with projecting courses of fine mouldings near its top.

The house appears to retain much of its original room layout and many significant internal features, including its finely finished timber doors, windows and architraves, fireplaces, and stairs. The stair linking the ground-floor and upper storeys in No. 327 may be an intact remnant of the house's initial construction in the mid-1840s, whereas the appearance of No. 325's stair matches the likely early 1920s date of its construction.

To the north of the house is a gable-roofed outbuilding with external walls of unpainted sandstone. Its south-west elevation contains two pairs of large, timber board-clad hinged doors. The outbuilding, which has a floor of stone cobbles, abuts a boundary wall of unpainted sandstone along No. 325's boundary with Islington (THR 3097).

To the north-west, the majority of No. 327's allotment remains as an established garden area. To the north-west of No. 325, the late twentieth and early twenty-first century built additions and the swimming pool are not of historic cultural heritage significance in the context of this place.

History:

The Hobart area is in the country of the Mouheneenner clan of Aboriginal people (Ryan 2012, pp.17 and 40).

Hobart Town and South Hobart

Hobart Town was established by British settlers at Sullivans Cove in February 1804, following initial exploration at Risdon Cove. Sullivans Cove had a deep and sheltered harbour, and accessible streams of fresh water. During the early nineteenth century, Hobart Town developed as the capital and the administrative centre of Van Diemen's Land. Most of Hobart's earliest settlement was centred upon Sullivans Cove.

South Hobart is one of the oldest suburbs in Hobart, with development spreading slowly up the Hobart Rivulet valley from the 1820s through to the post-World War II period. During the mid-nineteenth century South Hobart evolved into a residential area, with development thinning up toward the forested backdrop of kunanyi / Mount Wellington (HOB-C6.2.10.5; Terry 1999, p.29).

The establishment of Birch's Farm

The first land grant in South Hobart was Lieutenant Edward Lord's 100-acre allotment in 1806. The grant was later acquired by prominent shipowner, timber merchant and land speculator Thomas William Birch (Stancombe 1966; Terry 1999, p. 7). The 100 acres proved largely unsuitable for farming – but the Hobart Rivulet ran through it, and this in combination with its abundance of timber made it a good location for local industries. By the 1820s portions of Birch's 'Farm' were being leased for industrial purposes (HOB-C6.2.10.6).

Sub-division of Birch's Farm into suburban house-and-garden allotments

Thomas William Birch died in 1821. Late in 1838 a subdivision of Birch's Farm into 75 separate lots for sale was first advertised. The subdivision originally comprised house-and-garden allotments ranging from half an acre up to six acres, sizes that were intended to continue those of the suburban blocks that by the late 1830s had already been established in the adjacent area of Macquarie Street between Antill and Elboden Streets (Green 1993).

The sale of Birch's Farm was re-advertised in early 1839, at which time sixteen of the allotments were sold. The remainder were re-advertised in March 1840, and – following extensive modifications to the subdivision plan – again in November 1844 and March 1847 (Green 1993).

Incremental subdivision and development around Upper Davey Street

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century the Upper Davey Street area became one of Hobart's most prestigious residential areas (HOB-C6.2.10.5). Upper Davey Street with its wealthy residents and grand mansions and villas contrasted strongly with other nearby South Hobart streets which contained workers' cottages located close to the industries on the Hobart Rivulet (HOB-C6.2.10.7).

In 1844 the sale plan for Birch's Farm was redrawn to extend Adelaide Street through to D'Arcy Street (Green 1993). The land within the resultant block (bounded by Davey, D'Arcy, Adelaide and Anglesea Streets) was subsequently sold in four parcels: an L-shaped allotment of about 4 acres upon which the large house 'Islington' (THR 3097) was built by c.1847, with the remainder in three separate lots to James Alexander Thompson (source: Town Grant Chart).

Mid-1840s until early 1850s: Fernleigh's construction and first tenants

Transported convict James A. Thomson (1805–1860) arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1825. Between 1827 and 1832 he was employed in the Colonial Architect's office under John Lee Archer. By 1839 he had acquired a free pardon and set up in private practice as an architect, surveyor and 'agent' (Neale 2012, pp. 703-704; Preston 1967).

The available evidence indicates that in 1845, at public auction, James A. Thomson purchased Lots 27 and 28 of the Birch's Farm subdivision (*Hobart Town Advertiser* 22nd Aug 1845, p.1). A large house upon Lot 27, with its garden areas extending across both Lots 27 and 28 – which later became known as 'Fernleigh' – was ready for occupation by

mid-1846. A 'to be let' advertisement in the *Courier* (24th June 1846, p. 3) described, 'That substantial and delightfully situated FAMILY HOUSE, in Holebrook Place, adjoining the residence of A. C. G. Smith, and near the residences of the Lord Bishop of Tasmania, the Solicitor-General, the Chief Police Magistrate and W. T. Macmichael, Esq. The House contains thirteen apartments, with detached stabling and extensive pleasure-ground. The premises have been completed regardless of expense, and are fit for immediate occupation. For particulars, and cards to view, apply to James A. Thomson.'

One of Thomson's tenants was the Colonial Auditor, G. T. W. B. Boyes (1786–1853), who with his wife and children lived in the house for a period until their deaths there from Scarlet Fever in 1853. Boyes, celebrated in the present day as a prolific diarist, recorded his experiences in the neighbourhood – including an unpleasant 'extensive robbery' of his home in which 'property to a great amount was carried off' (Boyes 1853; *Courier* 23rd Feb 1853). An enthusiastic and accomplished amateur watercolourist, Boyes often went sketching and painting with John Skinner Prout and William Porden Kay. At least two of Boyes' surviving paintings appear to be of Fernleigh (Library Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office SD-ILS:142677, SD_ILS:142687).

1850s until mid-1870s: Morton Allport and family as Fernleigh's tenants

From some point later in the 1850s, and certainly by early 1858 (*Hobart Town Gazette* 16th Mar 1858, p. 276), the house was rented and occupied by Morton Allport (1830–1878). A solicitor with enthusiastic interests in botany and zoology, Allport was also a keen amateur photographer. The photographs he took of his family and local scenery, dating from 1855, are among the earliest of their kind in Tasmania (Stilwell 1969). A number of these photographs are of scenes within Fernleigh's large garden – which extended from the house to the property's long boundary along D'Arcy Street – and others depict the property's many outbuildings.

Together with his wife Elizabeth and their children, Morton Allport lived at Fernleigh until 1874 (*Hobart Town Gazette* 2nd Jan 1874, p. 25). It is likely that the Allport family named the house 'Fernleigh'.

Mid-1870s until the 1920s

In 1874 Fernleigh was purchased by prominent Hobart Town insurance company and bank director Thomas Giblin (*Hobart Town Gazette* 1st Jan 1875, p. 25). He lived in the house with his family until his death in 1880 (*Cornwall Chronicle* 23rd Aug 1880, p. 2) and his widow Mary Ann Giblin remained at Fernleigh until her death in 1912 (*Mercury* 27 Aug 1912 p1).

The conjoined single-storey 'cottage' at Fernleigh's south-west corner appears on Metropolitan Drainage Board plan drawing which was prepared c.1905 to 1909, yet the contemporaneous City of Hobart Assessment Rolls show no correlated change in property value.

Following Mary Ann Giblin's death, the house for a time provided 'superior accommodation' at moderate terms for permanent boarders (*Mercury* 20 March 1914, p.1). In 1913, a part of the property's garden was subdivided and sold to Sarah Moncur (Historic Deed 13/1946), this appears to have created what is now No. 331 Davey Street. In mid-1920, the remaining 35½ perches, which is the present-day combined extent of Nos 325 and 327, was bought by builder Thomas Reynolds (Historic Deed 14/9534).

The available evidence indicates that following the completion of Thomas Reynold's alterations to Fernleigh, the land and the house were subdivided in 1923. The two separate titles – one each for what in the present day are No. 325 (Historic Deed 16/1302) and No. 327 Davey Street (Historic Deed 15/7322) – were sold to different owners.

Fernleigh in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century

In 1989-90, and again in c.2005, single-storey additions were made to the north-west side of No. 325 Davey Street. Otherwise, the exterior portions and features of the main house at Fernleigh that are visible from the public realm have undergone little discernible change since the house's construction in the mid-1840s.

Comparative Analysis: villa residences

Fernleigh was built as a villa residence on the outskirts of Hobart, in keeping with other nineteenth-century villas and grand residences in Upper Davey Street (formerly Holebrook Place). These include Islington (THR#3097) a c1847 Regency villa directly adjacent to Fernleigh built for Sarah and Edmond Hodgson, and Holebrook (THR#3111) built for Robert James Lacy in 1846. Upper Davey Street also has several grand residences built in the later nineteenth century designed by Henry Hunter - Varuna (THR#3109) in 1887, Lebrana (THR#3105) the home of Morton Allport, and Ashleigh (THR#3092), built for Lord Mayor John Watchorn.

Ratcliffe states that the term 'villa' can be applied to the larger suburban estates around Hobart and Launceston, establishments such as Swanston House (New Town Park THR#2762), Runnymede (THR#2652) and Lauderdale (THR#2736) in New Town. Other examples north of Hobart include JJ Overell's Leura (THR#TBC), Henry Hopkins' Summerhome (THR#1632), Robert Giblin's Claremont House (THR#1636), Edward Burgess's Bowerabine (aka Martin Manor, THR#1633) and William Rout's Prospect House (THR#1635). Other nineteenth-century villa residences on the outskirts of the population centres of Hobart and Launceston (as they then were) include John Crookes' Mount Pleasant (THR#4440) at Prospect.

All the villas were within carriage drive of the towns where most of their owners had founded their fortunes. A villa was to do with living where you wanted to and could afford to, and not where you had to (Ratcliffe Vol.3 p.1327).

What distinguishes Fernleigh from the others is its conversion into two separate dwellings in the 1920s by then owner and builder Thomas Reynolds.

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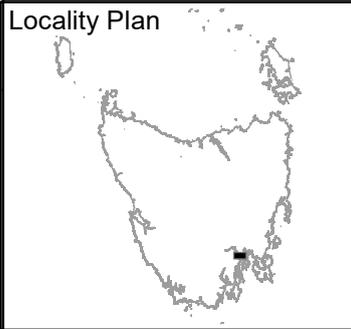
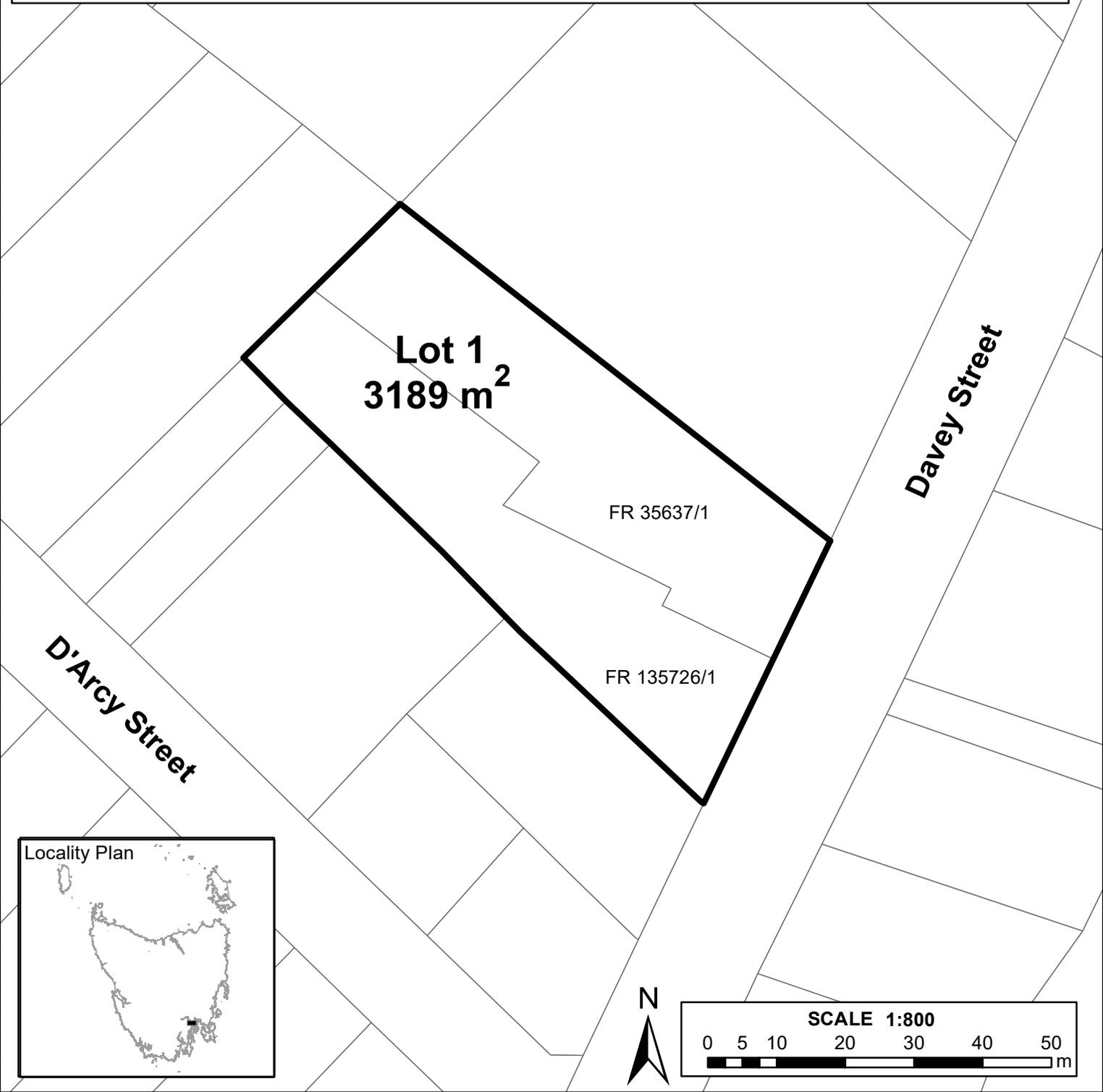
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Note

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for 'Fernleigh', #12055 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of parcels FR 35637/1 & 135726/1 the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise described, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).
4. For the purpose of S15(4)(b) of the Historic Cultural Act 1995, this plan replaces any previous registered boundary.



TASMAP: HOBART - 5225 GRID: MGA94 / ZONE 55 DATUM: AHD CONTOUR INTERVAL: N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	12055	AW	A.ROBERTS	17.10.22



Fernleigh
 325 and 327 Davey St, Hobart

PREPARED BY
 HERITAGE TASMANIA

CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General: *[Signature]*

Date Registered: 24.10.22

**CPR
 11286**