

Place No:
Sandsprings Homestead Group,
SANDSPRINGS

Management Category
1



PLACE INFORMATION		
Place Name:	Sandsprings Homestead Group	
Previous Place Number:	GR166	
Other Names:		
Place Type:	Individual Building or Group	
SITE LOCATION		
Street Address:	325 Sandsprings Road	
Locality:	SANDSPRINGS	
Location Detail:		
Assessment No:	61168	
Survey:	Lot 722, P231542	
Reserve:	7719	
GPS Coordinates	6812425mN; 301925mE	
HERITAGE LISTING		
State Heritage Office ID:	3944	Parent HCWA ID (if applied):
State Heritage Register:	Yes 29/06/2010	
Other Listing:	Heritage List	
Local Heritage Survey:	Municipal Heritage Inventory Initial Assessment 22/09/1997 Municipal Heritage Inventory Last Assessment 05/04/2005	

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of Significance	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
Management Category	CATEGORY 1 Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.
Statement of Significance	<i>Statement of Significance prepared in 2010 for inclusion in the State Register of Heritage Places</i> Sandsprings Homestead Group, comprising a collection of local stone buildings and structures associated with a pastoral property, including the Homestead (1890) and Kitchen Wing (rebuilt c.1950s), ruins of 1860s-80s farm buildings (Carriage House, Wash House, Shepherd's Cottage and Shearing Shed), a Cup and Saucer Trough (1880s), family Cemetery (1868-1906), concrete horse/cattle Trough and Post (c.1880s-90s) and tennis court remnants (c.1920s), has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons: - the place is associated with the beginnings of pastoral settlement in the Midwest region, being located on a lease taken up in 1860; - the place is associated with six generations of the Sewell family who have worked the place since its establishment in the 1860s and played a large part in the political and public life of the Geraldton-Greenough district; - the place is a picturesque collection of stone farm buildings with significant aesthetic value derived from its historic character, cultural environment and setting; - the place is associated with the use of indentured and freely hired Chinese labour at various times in the 1880s and 1890s, with Chinese characters inscribed in the Homestead wall attesting to their employment in its construction; - the Cemetery, with its four graves of Sewell family members covering the years 1868 to 1906, affords an insight into life of the period; - the place has the potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of its occupation and its function as a pastoral and agricultural property, from its establishment through to the present; and, - the concrete Cup and Saucer Trough is the only known example of its type in Western Australia. The corrugated iron hut on the west side of the Carriage House is of little significance. The corrugated iron shed near the Homestead is of little significance. The various metal clad machinery sheds and outbuildings and the steel framed carport are of little heritage significance.

PLACE USE	
Original Use	Farming/Pastoral: Homestead
Current Use	Vacant/Unused
Other Use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction Date	1868; 1860-1890s; 1920s;
Walls	Limestone
Roof	Corrugated Iron
Architectural Style	Victorian Georgian
Physical Description	<i>This site was not visited in the LHS Review 2026. The following description is from the 2010 Assessment Documentation and the 2005 LHS Review.</i>

Sandsprings Homestead is a large single storey, turn of the century residence of rectangular plan form with verandahs on four sides under the main roof. The internal planning has four main rooms, two either side of a central hall together with some verandah enclosures on the ends.

A kitchen and dining room with ablution facilities have been built in 1956 as a separate wing at the rear and possibly replaces an earlier facility. The entry door into the hall has a stone arch and the rooms internally have plastered walls and pressed metal ceilings. There is also an old timber framed corrugated iron clad wing at the rear of the house opposite the kitchen wing. The house is not as large as some of the more significant homesteads in the region but together with out-buildings forms a substantial complex.

Adjacent to the house a small, delicately detailed stone building contains former bathroom, toilet and laundry facilities and may originally have been a dairy. On the approach into the property a large stone carriage house or barn with 2 rooms separated by a large open space is located just off the driveway. Beyond the residence is an old stone cottage used as shearers/staff accommodation and a large stone shearing shed with vertical slits in the walls for defence and ventilation purposes is without a roof. In the paddock down from the shearing shed is an unusual "cup and saucer" drinking trough. The property also has an old family cemetery.

The building once used for shearer's accommodation consists of 2 large rooms and a verandah to the rear, one end of which is enclosed with a small stone walled room, the other end with a corrugated iron lean-to. Part of the roof is missing from the main section and totally from the verandah and lean-tos.

The cemetery has headstones commemorating Catherine Frances Elizabeth Sewell, died 4 November 1868, Rose Matilda Sewell died 17 December 1891, Caleb Sewell died 15 October 1899 and Clayton Stanley Sewell died 28 February 1906.

Condition	Poor
Integrity	Moderate
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The name 'Sandsprings' comes from the beautiful fresh water springs on the sand plain of the property. The property has been occupied by the Sewell family since 1854, when George Sewell came from the Chittering Valley with his wife and two children, Caleb and Ernest.

George Sewell had arrived in the Colony in 1834 as an eighteen year old with his twenty one year old brother John (Jr). They share-farmed on properties in the Avon Valley and in 1841, their parents, John (Sr) and Ann Sewell, and eight brothers and sisters arrived. George married Elizabeth Frances Logue in 1845, and farmed first at Chittering and the Swan Valley.

The family are recorded as having brought stock to Sandsprings in 1860, when Caleb was ten years old, but they did not settle permanently until the later 1860s. In the meantime, the property was managed by married couples, mainly expiress and conditional pardon men.

The principal operation at Sandsprings in the early years was raising sheep. Horses were kept for working and riding, and there were cattle for meat and dairy. Agriculture comprised growing hay for fodder. Nothing is known of the buildings on the property during the early years and none appear to have survived.

Around 1879, Caleb married his cousin Frances Elizabeth (Lizzie) Logue. They had three children: Rose Matilda (1880), Walter Vernon (1882) and Clayton Stanley (1894).

By 1879, a producing orchard had been established at Sandsprings Homestead Group on a spring near the current Homestead. A vegetable garden was also established, and produce from both the garden and the orchard was sold to shops in Geraldton and Walkaway and direct to neighbours.

Labour was provided by permanent and seasonal workers. Chinese labour is known to have been employed on the place at various times in the nineteenth century, but the only official record for Sandsprings Homestead Group is the employment in late 1882 of three Chinese workmen.

The employment of Chinese labour in the early 1880s coincides with the attributed construction date of the Shearing Shed, while other of the farm buildings are likely to have been constructed during this decade, replacing earlier less substantial structures. The concrete Cup and Saucer Trough is believed to date from around this period.

Development in the 1880s was encouraged by the construction of the Geraldton-Walkaway railway, which opened in 1887.

Diaries of farm activities and daily life were kept by Caleb Sewell from August 1890. By this time, Sandsprings Homestead Group was well established with its farm buildings and attention had been turned to constructing a new Homestead. Caleb did this work himself, but in the mortar in the east wall of the Homestead there are Chinese characters, attesting to the employment of Chinese workers on at least part of the building work. Stone for the buildings came from a quarry on the property, located about a mile from the Homestead.

In 1903, Walter Vernon took control of Sandsprings Homestead Group. His diary entries from 1903 to 1906 more closely followed the form of his father's, reflecting his new responsibility for the property.

Probably in the late 1910s or 1920s, the Shearing Shed was upgraded with a two stand mechanised plant, which replaced the five blade-shearers previously employed. Old sheds that were mechanised usually ended up with a lesser number of shearing positions than previous. The merino stud operation was gradually reduced in the 1930s and was abandoned during World War II. The concrete tennis court was installed by Walter Vernon.

Sandsprings is referred to in Randolph Stow's "Merry-Go-Round in the Sea" as he was a frequent visitor to the property which he refers to as 'Andarra'.

The property covers 5,000 acres and is mainly used for mixed farming.

In 2008, the homestead was unoccupied and the other buildings and structures having declined in condition and in stages of ruin. By 2026, the place has continued to deteriorate.

Historic Themes:	Peopling WA: Demographic Development Economy: Rural Occupations 605 Famous and infamous people.	
Associations	Sewell family	Owners, builders and occupants
Sources:	City of Greater Geraldton Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places 2019. P3944 Sandsprings Homestead Group, Assessment Documentation for inclusion the RHP, 29 June 2010.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



PREVIOUS HERITAGE SURVEYS



Municipal Heritage Inventory, 2005. Homestead



Municipal Heritage Inventory 2005. Shearing Shed



Municipal Heritage Inventory 2005. Carriage House