

HOUSE - FMRLY KNOWN AS BROOKLYN, KONETA AND LEONI

104-110 Barnard Street



(CD Ref 1347/1)

This large house was built in 1867 for the prosperous Grenfell Street grocer, Frederick William Thomas. Thomas commissioned the architect Daniel Garlick to design the house, which was constructed by Mr Tapson.

Thomas arrived in South Australia in 1839 in his early twenties. He established the business of A. & W.D. Thomas, which operated from its Grenfell Street site for over 50 years. The building in which the business was housed was demolished in 1919, to make way for the expansion of Harris Scarfe's.

Thomas was a prominent member of the Wesleyan Church in Pirie Street and was interested in benevolent and religious movements. He was a Councillor with the City of Adelaide from 1855 to 1861. He died in Hobart in 1871.

The family sold the house in the early 1890s to the building contractor, John Joseph Leahy. Leahy arrived in South Australia in 1877 and built up a very successful contracting business, erecting such structures as St Dominic Priory, Chapel and Chapter house in Molesworth Street and the additions to St Peter's Cathedral. Leahy is reputed to have named his new house 'Brooklyn', because he and his wife met in the place of the same name in the United States of America.

Many mansions in the early twentieth century (especially in North Adelaide) were converted for institutional use and this large house was no exception. In 1908 two nurses, Sophia Amelia Best and Florence Elizabeth Pearce, converted the property for use as a lying-in house catering for six women at a time. In 1915 a former matron of the Queen's Home (now Queen Victoria Hospital), Edith Christine Sketheway joined the establishment. The house was known as 'Koneta', a private midwifery hospital until the mid 1920s. It was then sold to the Misses Martin who converted the property into nine separate flats. During the years that the house was used as a hospital and flats, many unsympathetic additions and alterations occurred, which have largely been reversed.

The mansion is an important, distinctive and early example of this style of housing associated with the well-to-do in North Adelaide. It is set well back from the street and is a very large two storeyed Victorian house, with an architectural form typical of Classically derived design of the time. The house as a central corridor with symmetrically placed



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windows either side of the main entrance. There are double chimneys at the ends of the hipped roof. It is constructed of bluestone with painted and rendered surrounds to windows, doors and quoins and a rendered plinth. The house has a return verandah and balcony with simple geometric railing to the balustrade. The balcony is supported by metal posts with Corinthian capitals decorated with delicate cast iron lacework, and a series of volutes richly decorated with flowers and foliage. The volutes extend for the full depth of the balcony above. The house features a fine cast iron and stone fence to Barnard Street.

The house is currently a private residence and has been recently restored. It now has a large two storey extension to the rear and is enclosed by a high masonry wall.

Smith Survey 1880; Rate Assessment Books; Statton, J. Entry for Frederic William Thomas, *Biographical Index of South Australians*, Vol 4, p 1591; *South Australian Register*, building improvements for 1867, 6 January 1868; *South Australian Register*, obituary for F.W. Thomas, 28 February 1871; Mortlock Library of South Australia, Private Record Group for G. Rhodes, PGR 430/9; *South Australian Register*, information concerning Thomas' business, 16 October 1919; Biography of J.J. Leahy, *Aldine History of South Australia*, Vol 2, p 757; South Australian Trained Nurses Committee, *Nursing in South Australia 1837-1937*, biographical details for E.C. Sketheway, p 117; South Australian Trained Nurses Committee, *Nursing in South Australia 1837-1937*, biographical details for

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S.A. Best, p 201; Public Record Office, Government Record Group 27/15, Licensed lying-in homes, Inspectress' Report Book, 1899-1910.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **City of Adelaide Heritage Study**, October 1990, Volume Two, part of a review of the City of Adelaide Plan 1986-1991. The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.

Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.