State Heritage Areas
of South Australia

Hampton Township Precinct
north-east of Redruth, Burra
SAHR 10359 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 1 September 1983

Today the former township of Hampton is an extensive collection of ruins, walls, foundations and quarry sites on the outskirts of Burra North, but during Burra's peak mining period from the 1860s to the 1870s it was a bustling settlement of up to 30 dwellings.

During the mid-1850s, as miners returned to Burra from the eastern goldfields, the 'Monster Mine', as well as the three principal townships (Kooringa, Redruth and Aberdeen), experienced new growth.

With the renewed prosperity and increased population, many subsidiary mining settlements were planned. Not all were

Entrance to Hampton Township Precinct

developed, but of the new areas settled, the village of Hampton was the most substantial and the 'longest lived'. Of these outlying settlements few survived into the 1870s. Most were made of temporary buildings or shelters (such as tents) that quickly disappeared leaving no physical traces. Hampton, with its stone buildings, was not completely abandoned until the 1960s.

Bertram House, 2005

Hampton was laid out by Thomas Powell in 1857, in a style similar to that of many English villages. It was named after Edward Hampton, an assayer at the smelting works.

A Township Plan was deposited at the General Registry Office in 1857, and in 1858 the sale of allotments, by Powell, was begun. What appears to be a copy of the original town plan indicates that there were 56 allotments, and surviving indentures show that blocks 55 and 56 sold respectively for £12/12/- in 1858 and £10 in 1859.

The plan included blocks set aside for three churches. Being close to the township of Redruth, Hampton provided the opportunity for a group of miners and their families to create their own community, while still being near the facilities of a larger centre.

The village of Hampton was not an affluent one. It was an austere settlement for Cornish miners and Welsh and German smelters, with the majority of dwellings being simple two- or three-roomed cottages, built from locally quarried stone, as were most in the town of Burra.

By 1866 Hampton was described as a small village inhabited by copper miners and a few farmers, with about 30 dwellings, a Bible Christian Chapel and an excellent stone quarry (*Bailliere's S.A. Gazetteer and Road Guide of 1866*). The Bible Christian Chapel was later owned by the Wesleyans, while allotments for the Church of England and a German Chapel remained vacant. Assessment books give no indication of shops or stores being built in Hampton at any time.

Overlooking ruins and quarry, 2005

As a township, Hampton survived the closure of the Burra Mine (1877). By 1873 the number of dwellings had dropped to 22, mirroring the copper mine's decline. Records show that by 1883 several men had acquired relatively large areas of township land, and it seems evident that, as mining ceased and miners left, the pastoral industry became more dominant, with land acquired for grazing and farming.

Jacka House, 2005

By the 1890s Hampton had transformed from the relatively busy mining town of the 1860s, to a poor and fairly run-down settlement of Burra, with the houses largely occupied by widows and labourers. Indications are that Hampton's decline took another 50-60 years before the township was completely abandoned – the last two families departed in the mid-1960s.

The Hampton ruins are now a familiar local landmark, with the site visible for some distance. The former settlement is a reasonably unique South Australian example of a completely abandoned town, where the original surveyed plan is still intact.

Many of the man-made elements are clearly evident, including the street and allotment layout, fences, walls and stone domestic buildings in various stages of decay. There are also numerous introduced trees, such as almond, pine, olive and pepper trees, as well as the remains of quarries that provided stone for the dwellings. One quarry has traces of a house built into the wall, and there is visible evidence of past workings.

Fruit trees behind house ruins, 2005

Jacka House, 2005

Looking north along High Street, 2005