

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: ROYAL MAIL HOTEL

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: 102-108 Parker Street DUNKELD

STUDY NUMBER: 266

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Dunkeld

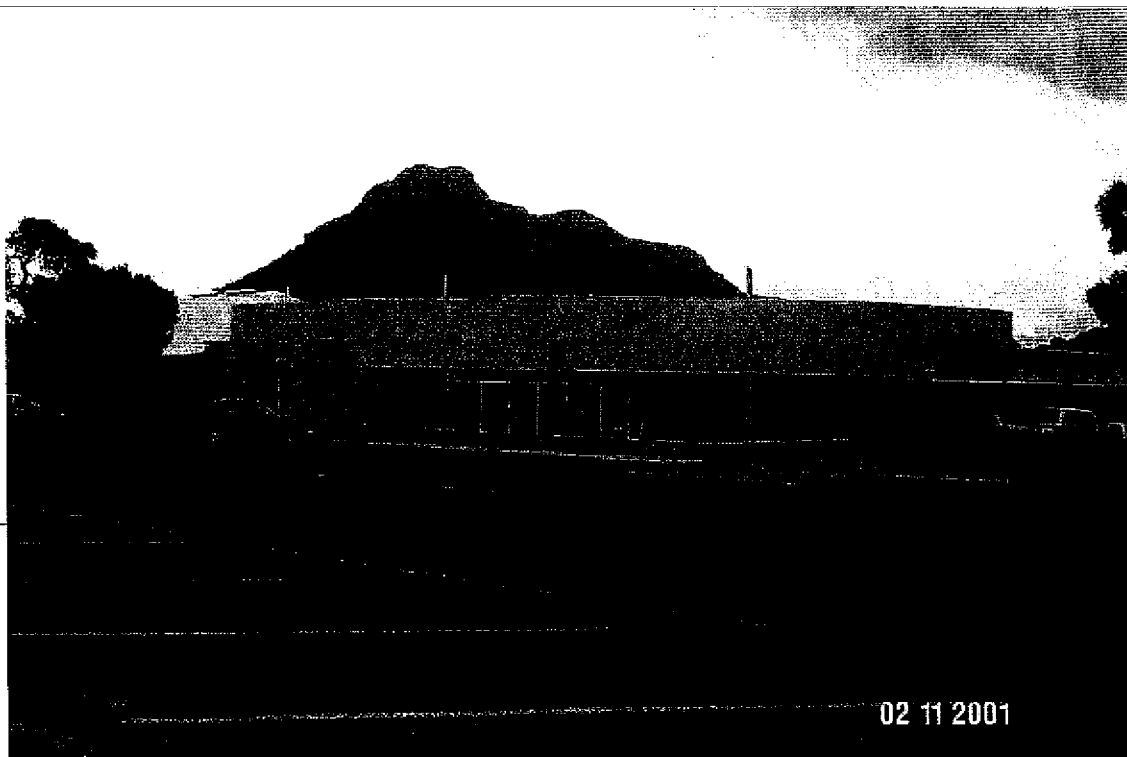
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 7-10 **SECTION:** 2 **PARISH:** PARISH OF DUNKELD

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 433J7; VicRoads 229 S4; north-west corner of Parker and Dunlop Streets, Dunkeld on the western side of the township.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Contributory Signi



Royal Mail Hotel, Parker Street, Dunkeld

Image Date: 02/11/01

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Royal Mail Hotel is located in a prominent position on the Melbourne to Hamilton road in Dunkeld. Although the building has been extensively redeveloped, the original frontage to the road remains, albeit considerably altered. The original front wall containing three windows and two doorways remains, as does a rock faced bluestone wall with two windows adjoining the footpath on Parker Street. The window glazing has been altered on at least two occasions in the 20th century. The original roof line was destroyed in the 1960s, but has been recreated.

Behind the front bar, the stone walls and chimney of the 1850s dining room survive, despite considerable alterations during the 20th century. The interiors of the 19th century hotel have not survived. Motel rooms have been built at the rear of the front wing to take advantage of the spectacular view towards Mount Sturgeon.

The hotel has been extensively rebuilt and extended in recent years to create a prestige tourist facility. The complex demonstrates a concerted effort to integrate the remaining 19th century elements with the new.

HISTORY:

There appears to have been some sort of hostelry at the foot of Mount Abrupt from the earliest times but the exact site cannot be certain. On an early map of squatting runs one is noted as Templeton's Inn and on Thomas Ham's Map of Australia Felix, dated 1847, one is listed as No. 103, Finn's Inn. This may have been the Woolpack Inn, long since demolished. Charles La Trobe stayed at the inn in 1850.

According to the Dunkeld and District Historical Museum the Royal Mail Hotel was under construction for Thomas Keegan in 1845 but this may have been a primitive or temporary structure. The core of the present Royal Mail Hotel appears to have been built in 1855 for Norman Ross. In 1859, when it was offered for public auction, it was described as a "house substantially built of stone, contains 10 rooms, has an excellent 10-stalled stable attached and is possessed of every convenience necessary for carrying on a large and profitable trade which it commands in an eminent degree - being centrally situated on the main road from Melbourne to Portland, at the southern point of the Grampian Range." (HHC, Hotels file).

The sequence of ownership and management of the hotel is not perfectly clear, with some contradictory sources. In 1860 Henry Cook(e) of Hamilton became the owner and licensee and remained the owner for at least ten years but with different licensees. Marriott states that the licence was let to Edwin Collins between 1865 and 66 and again between 1871 and 72. He had moved to Dunkeld with his wife, Mary in 1860 to take up a position as resident butcher at the Royal Mail Hotel (Marriott, 168ff). In 1874 he held the licence of the Family Inn and in 1877 he opened a new hotel, the Railway Inn when the Ararat to Hamilton railway opened. The Shire of Mount Rouse rate books list James Hucks as the publican in 1871 and 1872 (SMRRB, 1871, 182b; 1872, 198). He had married Lavinia Oakley in 1863 and they had three children, all born in Hamilton rather than Dunkeld, in 1865, 1869 and 1871 (VPI, Reg. No. 8902, 2725, and 23682). James Hucks died in Ballarat in 1882, aged 68 (VPI, Reg. No. 299).

The Royal Mail was managed by a number of other licensees during the later 19th century, usually for only a few years. One, Joseph Tooke, who took over the licence in 1880, died in Dunkeld in 1882 (VPI, Reg. No. 8381). Robert Kennedy held the licence from 1884 to 1896. D. Looker held the licence from 1906 until 1912 followed by J. R. Palmer from 1912-15. The Lookers were a well-known racing family. Despite its name the hotel was never a Cobb and Co staging post.

The Royal Mail Hotel survived the bush fire in 1943, which destroyed much of Dunkeld, but the historical

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fabric was largely destroyed in the 1960s and early 1970s. Only two sections of the front wall and the kitchen/dining room survived. The front wall has been restored, with the recreation of the original fenestration, which was lost in the 1960s. The hotel was extensively rebuilt and extended in 2000 to create a prestige tourist facility. The redevelopment, designed by Barrack Douglas & Co, architects and planners was a finalist in the RAI A awards in 2001.

The Royal Mail Hotel has been continually licensed since 1855, and is the only surviving hotel in Dunkeld.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.12 Feeding people

3.12.5 Retailing foods and beverages

3.22 Lodging people

CONDITION:

Recently refurbished, the physical condition of the surviving 19th century elements is excellent. However the historical integrity of the hotel is low.

INTEGRITY:

Recently refurbished, the physical condition of the surviving 19th century elements is excellent. However the historical integrity of the hotel is low.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Royal Mail Hotel, located on the western edge of Dunkeld on the Hamilton Highway, dates from 1855. Although now the oldest surviving hotel building in Dunkeld, the Woolpack Inn was the first established. The stone core of the present Royal Mail Hotel was built for Norman Ross. In 1859 it was described as having ten rooms and a ten-stall stable. In 1860 Henry Cook purchased the hotel and he owned it for at least ten years. In that time James Hucks and Edwin Collins were the publicans. The latter had been its resident butcher from 1860 and left the Royal Mail to establish the new Railway Hotel in 1877. The Royal Mail Hotel survived the 1943 bush fire, which destroyed much of Dunkeld, but much of its fabric was demolished subsequently. Only two sections of the front wall and the kitchen/dining room survive. The hotel was substantially altered and extended in 2000 to the design of Barrack Douglas & Co, architects and planners and was a finalist in the RAI A awards in 2001.

How is it significant?

The Royal Mail Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the township of Dunkeld and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Royal Mail Hotel is of historical significance as one of the many hotels and the oldest surviving in Dunkeld. They served as important meeting places for the community in the early stage of the town's development, a role which continues, especially after its refurbishment in 2000. The Royal Mail Hotel is of architectural significance for the quality of that work, which was recognised in the RAI A awards of 2001.

COMPARISON:

035 Black Horse Inn (Former), 66 Whyte Street, Coleraine

014 Coleraine Hotel, Whyte Street, Coleraine

122 Penshurst Hotel, SW Cnr. Bell & Martin Street, Penshurst

357 Bunyip Hotel, NW cnr Scott & Barker Streets, Cavendish

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ASSESSED BY: mgt

ASSESSMENT DATE: 2/02/2002

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
	Michael Myers	2002	
Department of Justice Victoria	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	2001	
Elise Clabburn, et al.	Dunkeld and District: A Short History	1989	27
Hamilton History Centre	Hotels in the Western District file		
Pamela Marriott	Time Gentlemen Please! An history of Western District Inns 1840- 2001 1915		
