HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: TARRINGTON HERITAGE PRECINCT

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Hamilton Highway TARRINGTON

STUDY NUMBER: 404   **HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: HOCHKIRCH

PRECINCT: Tarrington
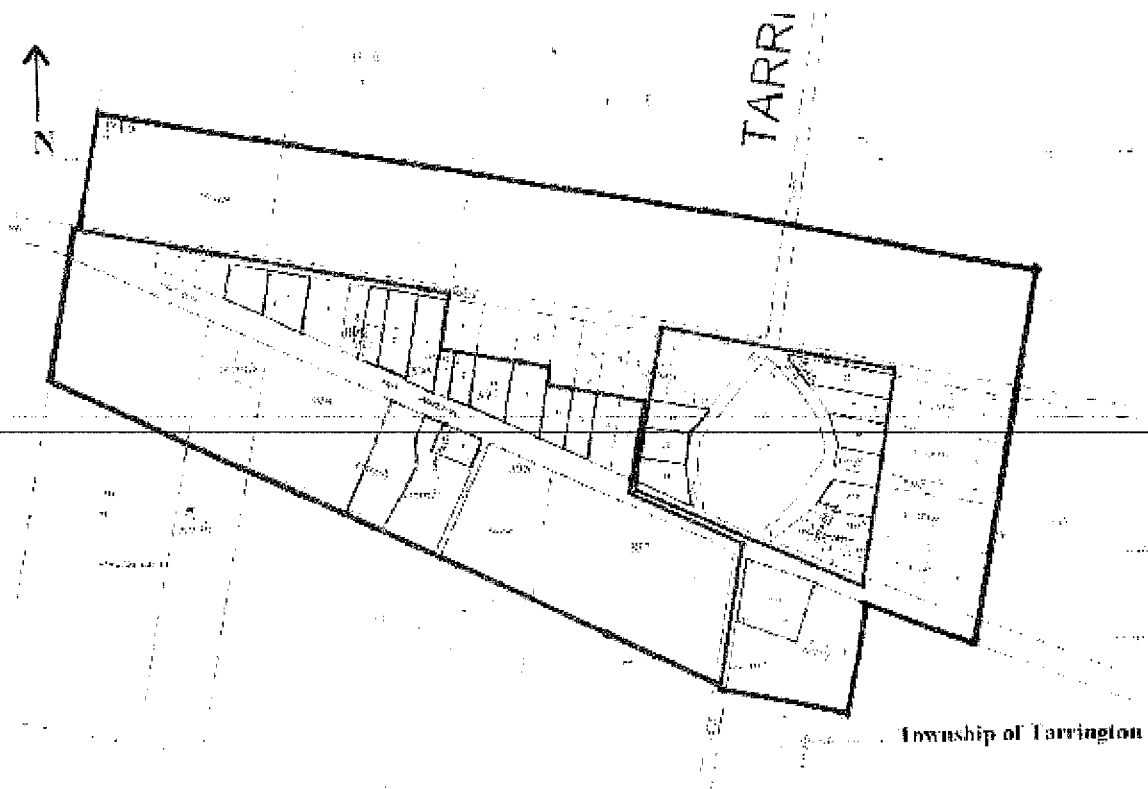
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

                    PARISH: PARISH OF HAMILTON SOUTH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:
CFA 474J; VicRoads 73C6; located on the Hamilton Highway 8.0 kms south-east of Hamilton and 20kms north-west of Penshurst.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local

Tarrington Heritage Precinct: Red = Heritage Overlay * Green = Significant Landscape Overlay

Image Date:

EXTENT OF LISTING:
To the extent of: 1. All the buildings and infrastructure constructed before 1954 including not only the places specifically identified as typical or outstanding examples of their type, but also those which contribute in a minor way. 2. All the land, both public and private, which is included within the precinct boundaries defined by the red and green lines on the plan of the Tarrington Heritage Precinct.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The township of Tarrington has developed a linear form along the highway and is now about 3.0kms long, beginning at the intersection of Thompson's Road and Caldow's Road with the Hamilton Highway in the west and Yatchaw Road in the east. It is bounded on the north by Walkenhorst Road and by the rear of properties facing the highway on the south. The town is intersected by Picnic Road and the Tarrington-Strathkellar Road which run north-south through the important open space created by the former Hochkirch swamp, now the Tarrington Recreation Reserve. Oval Avenue encircles the playing field and other sporting and recreation facilities. The town is dominated by the mass of St Michael's Lutheran Church. Its spire acts as an important landmark.

There is no permanent source of water, which, in the past, limited certain activities and industries in the town. The town also lacks certain typical public buildings and facilities because these were provided at the St Michael's Church complex. Similarly, only the Lutheran denomination is represented by a church. The main hotel was delicensed in 1895 and no other took its place, presumably due to lack of custom. Hamilton has largely eclipsed the commercial activities of the town and there are now no shops or stores.

Because the town was largely destroyed by a bushfire on 14th January 1944, relatively few buildings survive from before that date with important exceptions. These include St Michael's Lutheran Church complex, a blacksmith's shop and cottage, and several houses such as Boonar, Glenhope, and Wenlock. Other houses, such as the group of four cream brick veneer houses on north side of the Hamilton Highway at eastern end of the town date from after the fire and represent the post-World War Two prosperity of the wool-boom.

List of Contributory Buildings
7650 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??)
7859 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??)
7824 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 70)
7828 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 69)
7844 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 63)
7848 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 62)
7850 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 61)
7852 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 60)
7905 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 81)
7911 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 80)
7932 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??)
7946 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 31)
7950 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??) Fairview
7961 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??)
7962 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J ??)
8049 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 20)
8054 Hamilton Highway (CFA 474J 3)
Oval Avenue (CFA 474J 54)

HISTORY:

Tarrington, formerly known as Hochkirch, has always been closely associated with the German Lutheran migrants who settled in the area from the early 1850s. Many of the original families continue to live there and the St Michael's Lutheran Church complex, which dominates the town and the surrounding landscape, remains the focus of the community. Because of its different origin and subsequent organic growth, Tarrington provides a contrast to those towns, such as Penshurst, Coleraine and Dunkeld, which were planned and developed systematically. It has never had a public hall, relying on the church facilities instead, and no other denomination has been represented in the town. Relatively little historical fabric survives as a result of

HERITAGE PLACE

bushfires, particularly the devastating fire that occurred on 14th January 1944 during the Second World War.

Pastor Clamor W. Schurmann purchased allotment 2 of section 16 of the Parish of South Hamilton from the Crown in 1857. It comprised just over 112 acres. The north-eastern corner of the allotment was used for the development of the St Michael's Lutheran church and school from 1858. The remainder of the land was sub-divided into smaller blocks facing the highway and became known firstly as German Town, then Hochkirch and, because of anti-German sentiment during the First World War, as Tarrington (Garden, 47-8). It was the beginning of the township. Significantly, it was not associated with a river or creek crossing. There was a swamp on the north side of the highway at the eastern end of the town.

The Post Office Directory of 1868 lists over one hundred names in the Hochkirch area, each name representing a family or household (Bailliere's, 1868; Huf, 2003, 65-7). By 1865, Hochkirch was described officially as "a German settlement, and postal village" and that "there are no hotels in the village, and the population of the district is about 1000 persons, who are engaged in cultivating the fine country on which they are settled" (Bailliere's, 1865, 184). The first public house, the National Hotel was established by Wilhelm and Fredricka Noske who bought a store from Hermann Kook early in 1862 and, at least by 1866 but probably earlier (Huf, 2003, 47). The couple failed, became bankrupt and, in July 1867, the hotel, its outbuildings and 4 acres of land were auctioned. The next important large building was, in fact, the Crosskeys Hotel, which was built in 1867 along with the post office, a general store and a new church (Garden, 82 & 110).

The Crosskeys was located on allotment 34 of section C of the Parish of South Hamilton, the south-east corner of the 'town', immediately south-east of the swamp and opposite the Lutheran manse. It was a long low, single-storey weatherboard building similar to the early hotels in other towns, such as the Koroite Inn, established as early as 1846 at Coleraine or John McLennan's hotel at Glenthompson established as late as the 1870s. The first owner was Ferdinand Zerbst, a farmer who managed the hotel until 1870 when he tried to sell it. Failing to find a buyer, the licence was transferred to James Kirby, then to Johann Rottger and then back to Zerbst. In 1877, the license passed to Heinrich Hinneberg and Zerbst moved to Vectis in the Wimmera (Huf, 2003, 49).

The district was described as "purely agricultural" and the surrounding country "undulating, and lightly timbered with Blackwood" (Bailliere's, 184). Farms in the area were relatively small, compared with the great squatting runs, and mixed. Wool, wheat and vegetable crops were standard, with some cattle grazing along with the limited production of milk. The nearest butter factories were at Hamilton and Penshurst. Wool would have been sold to dealers in Hamilton. There was no flourmill in Hochkirch because there was no substantial source of water. Wheat would have been taken to the steam flourmills either in Hamilton or, more likely, to the large mill at Prestonholme. Grapes were also grown in the district and wine was produced and bottled locally. John Mackiehan advertised wine produced at Yulungah regularly. "A few connoisseurs had a tasting of McKiehan [sic] 1871 vintage of Yulungah Riesling grown near Mt Rouse. It proved to be a very clean sample of a dry light Aust.[sic] wine without the slightest trace of acidity, clear as crystal & of a fine straw colour & possessing a nice bouquet. The wine is equal to the lighter wines of the Murray district in condition & general treatment. ... Mr. McKiehan [sic] has successfully demonstrated that good wine may be produced in these districts if only the proper attention is given to the industry" (MR&DHS, notes). Grapes were also grown in the orchard of the Crosskeys Hotel and in the garden of the Lutheran manse. Two men, M. O. L. [Moritz Oscar Louis] Mueller who was known as Oscar Muller, and Carl Sievert, described themselves as vine-dressers (Bailliere's, 1868). Much later the town received a continuing boost as the production of flax was promoted in the Strathkellar, Penshurst and Warrayure areas especially leading up to the Second World War (Garden, 217-8, 237).

The Hochkirch-Tarrington State School No. 1908 was built in 1877, a single storey, symmetrical timber building which included a teacher's residence (Huf, 2003, 62). The first head teacher was James McCann and his wife, Harriet, was the work mistress. There were 45 pupils enrolled in the first year but the average attendance was only 27. McCann also offered night classes, a substitute for the services normally provided by a mechanics institute (Huf, 2003, 65). Such an institution never existed in Hochkirch, reflecting its German

origin rather than the British if not specifically Scottish origin of the mechanics institute movement. The McCanns taught at the state school until 1879. The next teacher was Olive Farrer who stayed for over twenty years (Huf, 2003, 62). She continued the night school but it petered out about 1880. By 1884, there were 64 enrolments at the state school and an average attendance of 29. During the First World War, when the school was a focus for patriotic display, there were 17 children enrolled. A joint Peace Celebration was held with the children of the St Michael's school in 1919.

Hochkirch was plagued by diphtheria in the late 1870s (HS, 8 April 1879). It affected young and old and continued into 1880. The state school was closed even though there was a popular belief that the disease was not contagious. In less than a year, 24 people had died prompting a formal enquiry (Huf, 1997, 468). It found the sanitation to be inadequate in some of the homes and at the hotel, concluded that this had led to the spread of the disease and made recommendations. The disease abated but not before it had spread to Hamilton, Port Fairy and Cavendish (ibid.). There was no public cemetery at Hochkirch, one of the important differences with most towns, because the dead were usually buried at the south Hamilton Lutheran cemetery.

One of those to die in the outbreak was the licensee of the Crosskeys Hotel, Heinrich Christof Hinneberg, also known as Henry Christopher. Born in Magdeburg, he was married in 1868 to Kate, nee Goodland, who came from London (VPI, Reg. No. 4549). They had seven children, including one born just before Heinrich died. The publican's license passed briefly to August Huf when he bought the premises. "At the end of 1882, George Russell, the son-in-law of Christoph Noske, became the new licensee, followed by Frances Patterson in 1884 and Christoph Noske in 1885" (Huf, 2003, 49). He lost the licence in 1885 and the hotel became a private residence. Although it survived the 1944 bushfire, it was dismantled in 1953 and rebuilt in parts on properties in and around Tarrington (ibid.).

Apart from his running such premises, August Huf was typical of the German Lutheran migrants of the area. He and his wife Caroline, nee Grossman both arrived in South Australia as children. They married in 1868 and had fourteen children, two of whom died in the diphtheria outbreak. He bought land and farmed it in the usual way, probably in association with his brother Friedrich (Huf, 1993, 467 & 471). Typically for their generation, they moved to Vectis in the Wimmera in the early 1870s but then they returned, perhaps due to the death of August's father, Johann Huf Senior. While he was licensee of the Crosskeys, August arranged Boxing Day horse races (Huf, 2003, 53). It is interesting to note that, of the four stewards, judge, starter and handicapper, his name, as secretary is the only one with a German background. The others, headed by William Henty, seem to represent the squattocracy. This division between squatters and selectors is reinforced by the British names of the owners of winning horses. The report on the 1881 races in the Western Agriculturalist commended the licensee's catering (WA, 31 Dec. 1881). August soon returned to sheep farming on land nearby at Warrayure but apparently without success being declared insolvent in 1888, a rare thing for the hard working Lutherans (Huf, 1993, 470). In 1901, August and Caroline migrated again to Birchip (Huf, 1993, 471). He died there in 1907 at the age of sixty. Caroline eventually retired to Horsham where she died in 1931.

Another important business was Oscar Mueller's printery which, from 1895, published one of the most important German language newspaper in the Australia, the Lutherische Kirchenbote (Garden, 149; Huf, 2003, 58). He was also a book agent, was the postmaster and taught at St Michael's school. From 1863, Mueller grew grapes commercially and was so successful that between 1877 and 1882 he stopped teaching and became a vigneron (Huf, 2003, 69). He lived in the former National Hotel but, although there was the remnant sign "Bar" over one door, he did not have a licence to sell wine. He possibly sold his wine wholesale to Carl Klug in Hamilton (Huf, 2003, 69). The production of wine has returned to Tarrington with the establishment of the Hochkirch label in 1990 at Croxton Park and the Tarrington label in 1993 at Gosford. A new winery was built at the Hochkirch vineyard in 2003.

German secondary migration to the Wimmera sapped the population of the town and there were only 300 people by 1876 (Garden, 110). There were still 29 children at the state school in 1890 (Garden, 149). Some

people, due to personal circumstances, returned to Tarrington. Susanna Huf, known as Susie returned in 1910 with her widowed mother after leaving with her parents as a child in 1882 (Huf, 354). Her mother had died within two years. Susie opened a small confectionery shop on the west side of St Michael's and also gave piano lessons to support herself (ibid.). According to sign above the simple shop verandah, she sold "Soft Drinks, Confectionery, Groceries and Cigarettes" (ibid.).

The name of the town was changed officially in early 1918 as a result of anti-German sentiment (Garden, 192; Huf, 2003, 81ff.). It was an extremely sensitive and offensive issue to the townsfolk. Various new names were considered, including 'Borrine', an Aboriginal word meaning 'night'. The name Tarrington was taken, in a rather manorial style, from the nearby property once owned by Stephen Henty and located about 3.5kms south of the town. The name Hochkirch continued to be used by the St Michael's congregation until 1957 (Huf, 2003, 86). More offensive were the dismissal of Phillip Mueller, son of Oscar Mueller, the former postmaster and the relocation of the post office, telegraph and telephone from his residence to the former teacher's residence, part of the state school (Huf, 2003, 68). The Mueller family had provided postal services for over fifty years and Phillipp Mueller had built new premises only a few years before. Mrs Margaret Shore was appointed the new postmaster. The Shore family operated the post office for the next 19 years. The next postmaster was Emily Prest who served in that position for 47 years (Huf, 2003. 88). From 1945, the post office was located in the newly built Tarrington Store.

There had been several stores in Hochkirch. Perhaps the first was that of Julius Zerbst who described himself on his letterhead as "Draper, Grocer, Ironmonger, and General Storekeeper" (Huf, 2003, 60). He sold out to Johann Wagner who operated the store until 1878 when Otto Krueger ran it for a year (ibid.). Moritz Jonas and Hermann Leschke were in partnership in a store, which opened in 1865, but they appear to have soon failed (ibid.). Thomas Pratt and Rudolph Schurmann, the son of Pastor Schurmann, opened a general store about 1868 soon after the partnership had opened a store in Hamilton (ibid.). It operated until 1875. Another business in Hochkirch was Peter Zschech's blacksmith's shop. He had come to Hochkirch with his family from Saxony about 1856 and started his business in the early 1860s. "He was a general blacksmith and wheelwright, and made and repaired agricultural instruments" (ibid.). His letterhead stated "Horses Scientifically Shod". He died in 1878 at the age of 38 and his widow remained in the cottage with their five children until the early twentieth century (VPI, Reg. No. 5414; Huf, 2003, 61). The smithy and cottage were amongst the few buildings to survive the 1944 bushfire. Peter Zschech was not the only blacksmith. Wilhelm Funk is listed in the official Post Office Directory and there were at least two other wheelwrights, H. Bunge and Phillipp Schottler (Bailliere, 1865).

The Hochkirch swamp was used for grazing animals and supplying some water to the township but it was something of a nuisance. During the 1920s, children from both the state school and St Michael had planted trees in the reserve to mark Arbor Day. In 1929, the area was fenced and, finally, in 1969 it was drained. A toilet block was built and other improvements such as the tennis courts, a pavilion, picnic facilities and ane electric barbecue were added later. The Tarrington Recreation reserve is now the focus of local sporting clubs and is the venue for Australia Day celebrations (Huf, 2003, 95).

The 1944 bushfire was a disaster for Tarrington. It burnt out much of the town including Susie Huf's timber cottage and shop, the 1860s bluestone church then used as a hall, the post office and the former state school, and about fifteen houses as well as woolsheds and fences (Huf, 2003, 110). The town's store was rebuilt immediately and new houses, such as those at the eastern end of the town, were built reflecting not only a determination to continue after the natural disaster but, in the quality, style and form of their architecture, the post-World War Two prosperity of the wool-boom. While the population is now not exclusively of German descent, there is a strong revival of German culture in the town, including discussion about the possible renaming of the town as Hochkirch.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

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Theme 2 Peopling Australia
2.4 Migrating
2.4.1 Migrating to save or preserve a way of life
2.4.2 Migrating to seek opportunity
2.4.3 Migrating to escape oppression
2.4.4 Migrating through organised Colonisation
2.4.5 Changing the face of rural and urban Australia through migration
2.5 Promoting settlement

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies
3.5 Developing primary production
3.5.1 Grazing stock
3.5.2 Breeding animals
3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working
5.8 Working on the land

Theme 6 Educating
6.2 Establishing schools
6.5 Educating people in remote places

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life
8.6 Worshipping
8.6.1 Worshipping together
8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions
8.6.4 Making places for worship
8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

INTEGRITY:

Relatively low degree of integrity due to the 1944 bush fire and subsequent demolitions.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?
The township of Tarrington, formerly known as Hochkirch is located on the Hamilton Highway, approximately 8.0kms south-east of Hamilton and 20.0kms north-west of Penshurst. It is within the Parish of South Hamilton. The town was not positioned on a watercourse nor planned on a grid by the colonial government but rather grew organically from the purchase of land by German Lutheran settlers and, in particular, by their spiritual leader, Pastor Clamor W. Schurmann. Effectively it was a private township. It can be contrasted with Belfast (Port Fairy) or Brighton and the other towns established under the Special Surveys of the 1840s which were laid out formally. Alternatively, it can be compared with any number of the spontaneous settlements that emerged from gold mining, such as Chewton, Maldon or Walhalla.

Schurmann purchased allotment 2 of section 16 of the Parish of South Hamilton from the Crown in 1857. It comprised just over 112 acres. The north-eastern corner of the allotment was used for the development of the St Michael's Lutheran church and school from 1858. Being the cultural and social focus for the settlers, at something of a crossroad, and near the only natural water supply, this became the centre of the town. The remainder of this land and the land on the north side of the highway were sub-divided into relatively large

allotments. The settlement became known firstly as German Town, then Hochkirch and, because of anti-German sentiment during the First World War, as Tarrington, after the name of the home of Stephen Henty, several kilometres to the south. At its peak, the population may have been as much as 1,000 made up of some 100 households. There was a decline in the population when many families, especially younger generations, migrated to the Wimmera and later to the Mallee as land opened for selection there. Close links survived, however, through the return of children for their education at St Michael's and the return of some older people in their retirement. As the centre of Pastor Schurmann's vast parish, Hochkirch was also the focus of smaller congregations, established firstly at Tabor, Gnadenthal and Byaduk, then later at Warrayure and Lake Linlithgow. He even serviced congregations as far away as Freshwater near Geelong, Willaura (Wickliffe Road), Warrnambool and Allansford, Sandford, Coleraine and Merino, and even in the Wimmera and Mallee before others took the Call to serve the congregations directly.

Because the population was almost exclusively German and without other influences, the town developed differently from most in Victoria. There were no public institutions such as a mechanics institute, a public hall, recreational facilities or even banks. There was only one church, St Michael's and it was the community's focus. State School No. 1908 was built in 1877 but was always eclipsed by the school at St Michael's and closed in 1929. The town did have the usual shops and services such as blacksmiths and wheelwrights. A printery was established in the 1880s, which published the most important German language newspaper in the Australia, the Lutherische Kirchenbote. Its editor, Oscar Mueller was also the local postmaster and a vigneron. There was a small winemaking industry including grapes grown domestically in the town and commercially by John Mackiehan at Yulungah to the south-east.

Oscar Mueller's son, Phillipp was at the centre of anti-German sentiments, which reached a peak towards the end of the First World War and caused great distress to the population. He was dismissed as postmaster after many years of dedicated service and, in a symbolic gesture, the post office was relocated from the Mueller family home, still used as the printery, and put into the redundant teacher's residence at the state school. The new postmaster was Mrs Margaret Shore. During the Second World War, the Tarrington-Strathkellar-Penshurst district became an important area for growing flax but the industry did not survive in peacetime conditions. Rather, wool growing, cereals and root cropping continue to be the main agricultural industries. There has never been major dairy production. Winemaking is now returning to the area.

A bushfire on the 14th January, 1944 devastated the town, destroying the state school and post office, the printery, St Michael's hall which was formerly the church, and about fifteen houses as well as woolsheds and fences. Several important buildings did survive including most of the St Michael's Lutheran Church complex, a blacksmith's shop and cottage, and several houses such as Boonar, Glenhope, and Wenlock. While the population is now not exclusively of German descent, there is a strong revival of German culture in the town, including discussion about the possible renaming of the town as Hochkirch.

How is it significant?
The Tarrington Heritage Precinct is of historic, cultural, social and architectural significance to the community of Coleraine and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?
The Tarrington Heritage Precinct is of historic significance as a township dating from the mid-1850s, as one of the satellite settlements around Hamilton, and for representing the emergence of various aspects of agriculture in the area. It is of cultural significance as an exclusively German Lutheran settlement, possibly the most important in the state and comparable with settlements in the Barossa Valley, which means that it has assumed a distinctive form, different from most small towns in Victoria. It is of social significance as the first and as the continuing focus for the German Lutheran community in the Western District, acting as the leader of nearby communities at Tabor, Gnadenthal, Byaduk and Warrayure as well as far beyond the present Southern Grampians Shire. It also has social significance for its links through further migration with the Wimmera and

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Mallee. The architectural significance of the town lies not only in various substantial buildings, especially the St Michael's complex, but also in the form of its urban development.

ASSESSED BY: tfh   **ASSESSMENT DATE:**   06-Apr-04

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
Don Garden	Hamilton A Western District History	1984	var.
Elizabeth (Betty) Huf	Huf: 150 Years in Australia 1847 - 1997	1997	448-50
Elizabeth Huf	Courage Patience and Persistance-150 Years of German Settlement in Western Victoria	2003	var.
Macbeth Genealogical Services	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	1998	
Robert P. Whitworth, comp.	Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide, Containing the most recent and accurate information as to every place in the Colony	1865	349
The Western Agriculturalist	31 Dec. 1881	1886	