

COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

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Fig. 1 View south from Punt Road to the old palm tree, 1892 Cobram Hotel and former 1909 Grain Store. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003.

LOCATION

Precinct Boundaries and Map

The Cobram Town Centre has two main view lines, one along Punt Road and the other along the railway line. The irregular boundary incorporates historically, socially, aesthetically and scientifically important buildings, views, and parks of Cobram's historic town centre. These are illustrated on the map in Fig 1 and listed in Table 1.



Fig. 2. Map of Cobram Town Centre precinct with location of 43 significant places marked with red dots and views with red arrows.

Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2005

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Table One.

List of culturally significant places, their location, database number and historical context.

Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2005

Historic era	Historic Themes and Events	Dates	Extant Places within the Town Centre Precinct.	DB No.	Location.
Victorian 1880s to 1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport: Opening of railway and telegraph. Private urban subdivision. Infrastructure: Irrigation from the early 1890s. 	1888	Station and Railway Reserve and infrastructure.	200	Punt Road
		1888	Rail Crossing	200	Terminus Street
		1888	Masonic Centre (former Brown Corke and Co. store)	204	Main Street
		1892	Cobram Hotel	201	Main and Station Streets corner.
		1892	Station Street office	205	18 Station Street.
Federation 1901 to 1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure: Road and bridge: Cobram-Barooga Bridge over the River Murray 1902. 	1902	Grand Central Hotel	192	Punt Road and Terminus Street corner.
		1904	Post Office	177	Bank and High Streets corner.
		c1907	Mivo Park and (later) memorials		Punt Road
		1909	ANZ Bank (Bank Street)	179	Bank Street
		c1909	Grain Store (former)	203	Station, Main and Punt corner.
		1912	Courthouse and setting.	074	Punt Road and High Street corner.
		C1900	Bank Street Shops (5) on north side.	178, 180, 182, 183, 184, 186, 190	Bank Street
Post-War 1940s to 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post war immigration from Europe. Post World War II Soldier Settlement Infrastructure: Murray Valley Irrigation activated.. 	1942	Wheat Silos and infrastructure	192,	Market Street
		c1940s	Station Street shops (3) Bank St. shops south side (2)	202	Station Street
		1930	State Savings Bank of Victoria (former)	198	Main and Station Streets.
		C1960 -	Bank Street Clock		Bank street & Punt Road
Late Twentieth Century	.	C1960s	Civic Hall, setting & associated movable heritage.	224	Punt Road
		C1990s	Pioneers Park and movable heritage.	199	Punt Road
		1997	War memorial	224	Bank Street

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Historical Context¹

Settlers moved into the Cobram area in the 1870s but it was not until 1887, when Stewart subdivided land in the area now known as Cobram Town Centre, and the railway was opened in 1888, that a town was built. Cobram Town Centre Precinct is defined by the major streets which have historically been the commercial and geographic centre of Cobram. Punt Road has historically been the main thoroughfare, named after the Cobram punt river crossing. The Precinct boundaries include the intersections of Station and Main streets, Main Street from the **Cobram Hotel** to the **Masonic Centre**; with a second larger section centred on the triangle of shops including Bank Street, Punt Road and High Street. The view along Punt Road towards the Bank Street triangle and **court house** on High Street has been an historic focus of the town. The Precinct also extends across **Mivo Park** and across William Street to include the **War Memorial and Civic Centre** which represent the present day civic centre of the town. The precinct is distinguished by a concentration of significant sites along this fairly contiguous strip from the old train station site and present **Pioneer Park** to the current **Civic Centre**.

Fig. 3. View along Punt Road towards new Grand Central Hotel c.1902. Source: *Martindale (1965)*



The precinct contains one of the earliest shops, formerly **Brown Corke and Co (now the Masonic Centre)** in Main Street, and many of Cobram's earliest shops along Punt Road and Bank Street. Flour milling was an important industry in the town, represented by the **former 1909 grain store** on the corner of Station and Main Streets. That area on the intersection on Main and Station has also been significant for other town activities such as transport, accommodation and banking and these are represented by the proximity of the **station (1888)**, **Cobram Hotel (1892)** and second **Bank of Australasia (1947)**. Further north along Punt Road, the precinct encompasses another important early hotel, the **Grand Central (1902)**. On the corner of Punt and Sydney streets were located an early concentration of stores of the early 1900s. Unfortunately few traces of these original stores remain, though the continuous

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use of these sites for commercial purposes throughout the town's history provides an important historic theme for the precinct. The earliest extant building is the former **Brown Corke and Co. store (1888)** in Main Street, now the **Masonic Centre**. Some of the earliest extant shops are those in Bank Street, particularly the early 1900s storefronts on the 'triangle' between Bank and Punt streets. Bank Street has the earliest extant **National Bank of Australasia** building in Cobram (**1909**) and the **Post Office (1904)**. On William Street the Precinct extends to include the **Court House (1912)** and the strip of shops included in the Punt Road townscape and view. This part of Cobram, developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has numerous sites surviving from this period. There are also markers of later community development, such as additions to **Mivo Park**, the **Civic Centre**, **War Memorial** and **clock**.

Cobram was surveyed in 1873 and proclaimed in 1912.² Population figures recorded for Cobram show an increase during two major periods; in the 1890s following the opening of the Numurkah to Cobram railway line in 1888 and a significant increase with the post World War II Soldier Settlement in the area: 282 (1891), 598 (1901), 864 (1911), 995 (1947), 1,695 (1954) 2,888 (1966) and 3,865 (1996). The Town Centre Precinct dates from the early history of Cobram in the 1880s. Many of the extant heritage sites date to the period of growth around the turn of the twentieth century. A number of buildings in the Town Centre and Church precincts also date to the second period of sustained growth in the post war period.

Cobram is situated on the Murray River and in the Murray-Goulburn irrigation district. It was named after Cobram Station, the main station on Octavius Phillpotts' pastoral run on the bank of the river.

Harry and Emma Farrall erected the first general store on the **corner of Punt Road and Sydney Street**, as **Punt Road** was the main track to the river from the Yarrawonga road (Murray Valley Highway). Farrall was a carpenter who also constructed the extant **grain store c1909 (DB 203)**, and worked on various buildings in the town including the **Grand Central Hotel** and St Margaret's Anglican Church.

In 1884 the newly formed Cobram Railway League petitioned the government for a railway line from Numurkah to Cobram. Although the government had surveyed the "110th Section" for the town of Cobram, in October 1887 they purchased land from John Stewart for the railway station to the south west of the town and outside the crown land area. There were many protests from local farmers against this location however Stewart pre-empted the decision by subdividing part of his 320 acres and offering "159 excellent Business Sites" for auction at Donaldson's Hotel, Numurkah, in April 1887.

Stewart sold eighty allotments at the auction - two months before the government offered blocks in the surveyed town, to the north west of Warkil and Mookarii Streets. There was little interest in the government auction and it was many years before this surveyed town area was developed. In the meantime, businesses, shops and houses were being erected near the railway station. By January 1888 telegraph poles were erected and the townspeople eagerly awaited the opening of the railway line. The town already included a blacksmith's shop, general store, grocery store, butcher's shop, saw mill, foundry, National Bank, golf club, cricket club and athletics club. The business people and farmers celebrated on 1 October 1888 when the railway line was opened. The only known extant commercial building in the heritage precinct from this date is the former Brown Corke and company store, later modified for use as the Masonic Hall.

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1888 was a year of great progress for Cobram. In that year: Dr. Kennedy set up his practice; the first policeman was appointed; State School No. 2881 opened (and was used as a church, town meeting room and entertainment centre); the first Post Office opened; the Bank of Australasia opened; the Royal Victoria Hotel (DB212) was built; the Cobram Football Club played its first game; and the local newspaper, the *Cobram Courier*, started publishing. Businesses advertising in the first issue of the paper included: Fancy Goods Repository, Brick Yards, Timber Yards, Undertaker, Bootmaker, Saddler & Harness maker, Chemist & Druggist, Sawmills, Drapery and Millinery, Coffee Palace offering accommodation, Furniture and Glass suppliers, Tobacconist & Hairdresser including a circulating library, Baker & Confectioner, Blacksmith, Wheelwright, Commission Agent, Plans and Specifications (John McCullagh), Butcher, Auctioneers, Cordial and Aerated Waters, Plumbers, and Carpenters & Builders. Many of these stores were located on sites within the Town Centre Precinct.

The following year, 1889: the police station, lock-up and stables were built from bricks fired in the local kiln; J McNamara & Co established the Cobram Punt Company; the Cobram Agricultural and Pastoral Association was formed and the first show was held on the showgrounds (DB223) ; the first [horse] race meeting was held; the first church, the Wesleyan Church (DB 244), was built; and the first Presbyterian service was held in the school.

The Court of Petty Sessions commenced in 1890 and was held in the local hall, possibly the school, until the Mechanics' Institute was built in 1892 (now demolished). The **law offices** at 28 Station Street were built in 1892. It was 1912 before Cobram had its own **Court House**.

The next major stage in the development of Cobram was the construction of the Cobram-Barooga Bridge over the River Murray which was opened in 1902 and considered a far more important event to the region than the Federation of Australia in 1901. Cobram became the centre of an enlarged farming district both sides of the river due to the combination of the railway line and the bridge over the River Murray. This is reflected in the 1903 Australian Handbook:

COBRAM, a post town, with telegraph, money-order and savings bank office, on the Murray River, in the county of Moira, electoral district of Yarrawonga and Benalla, and police district of Benalla, Shire of Tungamah. It is a terminal station on the Numurkah and Cobram line, 165 miles NE of Melbourne : fares, 27s 8d and 18s 7d, return, 41s 8d and 25s. A coach runs to Berrigan (NSW) every day. Hotels : Cobram and Victoria. Banks: National and Australasia. There are in the township I.O.O.F., A.N.A. societies. Presbyterian, and Wesleyan churches, Roman Catholic and Anglican services held in institute, a State school (No. 2881), police station, Court of Petty Sessions, chemist, saw-mills, foundry, sundry stores and tradesmen's shops, resident physician, Racing, Rowing, Rifle, Football, Tennis, and Bicycle Clubs, mechanics' institute and public hall capable of seating 400 persons. It is an agricultural district. Vine, dairying, fruit and wine industries. The local race club holds its meetings, and shows are held annually under the auspices of the Cobram Agricultural and Pastoral Association. Shooting, fishing and boating. Lighted with kerosene. Formation : clay and sand. Newspapers: Cobram Courier, published every Thursday. Population of district about 2,000.

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HISTORIC DETAILS OF SOME EXTANT HERITAGE PLACES

Masonic Centre (former Brown Corke and Company Store) 1888

The Masonic Lodge on Main Street modified the 1888 Brown Corke and Company store. This included removal of the cast iron verandah, bricking up the front windows and door. Brown Corke was an important business in the early history of Cobram and had several locations. The Freemasons building is the one extant building with most of the 1888 Brown Corke store intact. The side walls, windows, roof, front parapet with pediment, cornice and decorative top ornamentation of the 1888 store's façade remain.

Figs 4&5 The Brown Corke and Co. store (1888) in 1904.

Source: Martindale (1965) and the Masonic Lodge in 2005.

Source: Lorraine Huddle.



The Masonic Lodge (No. 282) moved into the premises in the 1920s. The Lodge was founded in 1921 and originally met in the Mechanics Institute. The site is thus an important link to the early commercial history of Cobram and the development of civic and social institutions from the 1920s.



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Cobram Hotel 1892

Fig 6. Cobram Hotel c. Source: 06455r State Library of NSW.



Michael McNamara built the Cobram Hotel in 1892. Its occupants and licensees over its history included local figures such as Mr Kendall, L. Huggins, Humberstone, Suding, Darcy, R. Donald, D. Spence, K. Ryan and P. Hunter.¹ The building contractor was W. A. Butler of Ascot Vale, and the architect Mr Allan McDonald of Numurkah. The cost outlay for construction was £5000. The bricks were contracted locally to John Stewart, who made the 250,000 bricks required in a kiln constructed at Cobram adjacent to the hotel site.²

Fig 7. Cobram Hotel.
Source: rw003790 SLV.



¹ Martindale, *The Plains Turn Green*, 1965.

² *Cobram Courier*, 21 January 1892.

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The *Cobram Courier* reported its completion on 22 September 1892:

The Entrance	The grandiose structure is now completed, and was opened for business on Monday last [...] On approaching the main entrance we enter through a black and white arch and a pair of handsomely polished cedar swing doors with elaborate cut-glass handles, and bring us into the hall, which is 8 feet wide and terminates with a handsome arch with sunk and moulded panels and spandrills to match. On our left we enter the commercial room – 20 x 14ft and 14ft high.
Commercial, Vestibule and ornamentation	This room has two large semicircular windows lighted from the street, a plastered ceiling with handsome centreflowers, and deep and massive skirtings, mantlepiece etc. On passing under the arch in the hall previously mentioned, we enter the vestibule, which is decorated with arches...and from which the broad staircase leads to the upper storey...From the vestibule we enter the spacious billiard room – 27ft x 19ft. This, without doubt, is one of the most beautiful rooms of this kind we have ever seen. The ceiling is of narrow kauri boards, varnished and finished around with a neat wooden cornice. The windows are extra large and placed so as to always ensure a good and uniform light. Foundation stones on the floor support the table, in order to prevent any depression that might take place in the flooring. There is also a raised platform around three sides of the room for seats. On returning to the vestibule we proceed along a capacious corridor – 5ft 6in wide, which is adorned with arches and pillars, and off which open the commercial dining room -19ft x 11ft, and the ordinary dining room – 21ft x 13ft. Both these rooms have plastered ceilings and centreflowers, etc., and are well situated and lighted. There are divided by a passage 4ft 6in wide, which leads to the kitchen [which is] 10ft x 16ft...the floor is brick tiled and the ceiling wooden, and it contains a large Pullinger range. There is also a pantry placed as to be always sheltered from the excessive heat, and adjacent to the dining room. The servants quarters are conveniently situated near the kitchen...There is also a large sample room 21 x 16ft, for commercial travellers, which can be entered privately if desired. This room can also be used as a meeting, bridge or dining room.
Billiards room	We now return to the bar parlors. The counter and shelving are all of the best workmanship and design. The bar is placed so that the barman can command and serve all parts of the hotel and attend to the requirements of his customers without them coming in contact with each other. There are also two conveniently placed bar parlors with egress and ingress from street and corridor. Under the bar is a large brick cellar, the full size of the bar, having brick walls and floor and being well ventilated. We now proceed to the upper storey, which is reached by a most handsome and massive staircase, having curtailed steps and handrails and centre-landing. The handrails and balustrade are all of polished cedar of chaste design. The upper portion of the building is divided into private sitting rooms and bedrooms, with bathrooms, lavatories, sink and linen closets etc. [...]
Dining rooms	The corridors, vestibule and hall are lighted with ornamental glazed windows and fanlights of green, gold, ruby and embossed glasses, artistically fixed and shedding a soft and pleasing light...The front of the building has a verandah and balcony 10ft wide, of substantial and imposing design. The building is generally constructed in the Italian style, having circular headed windows and doors in front. The top is surmounted with a pediment with dentilled cornices, etc., and is supported at the sides with piers, on which are draped finials, along with balustrading, cornices, necking, panels.etc. The date and name, "1892 Cobram Hotel" is put on raised letters of cement and gilded.
Kitchen	We understand that the building is most substantially constructed throughout so that another storey can be added at a future time if required. All the rooms on the ground floor are 14ft high in the clear, and the rooms of the upper storey are 13ft clear.
Bar parlors	Commodious stabling and horse-boxes have also been erected.
Staircase	
Lighting and ornamentation	
Facade	

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Railways (Crossing, Station and Reserve) 1888

In 1884 the newly formed Cobram Railway League petitioned the government for a railway line from Numurkah to Cobram. The business people and farmers celebrated on 1 October 1888 when the railway line opened. As referred to in the Contextual (above) and Environmental History, this was a year of great significance to Cobram, with marked growth in the commerce and population of the town. The railways were a great marker of progress, prestige and economic gain for regional towns and the remnants of this are of great historical significance to the town, with a clearly visible railway reserve, railway crossing and station. The railway crossing was also socially significant as a site where festivities and celebrations would often launch, such as the processions of the fire brigade or that welcoming Archbishop Mannix and similar dignitaries in 1922. **Fig 8. Scene typical of a country railway station such as Cobram's.** Source. SLV.



Grand Central Hotel (1902)



Fig. 9. Etching of Grand Central Hotel 1902. Source: *Cobram Courier*.

William Stewart ordered the construction of the Grand Central Hotel on the corner of Punt Road and Terminus Street and it was completed in 1902 with Mr Stewart as its first operator. The architect was P. G. Fick, of Messrs Laver, Fick, and Vauce of 525 Collins Street, Melbourne. The contractor was W. J. Fisher of Richmond, who had been a local resident some years previously. The hotel was long associated with the Walters family, and earlier licensees were important local figures such as L. Gedye and L. Farrell.

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The following extract appeared in the *Cobram Courier* on 10 June 1902, before the hotel was completed:

Its character	Whatever has been said of the general character, design and condition of the majority of buildings in Cobram it has always been admitted that this town can boast of having handsome hotels, equal in size to anything in the Valley, and now, as can be gleaned from the above etching [Fig. 3] our reputation in this respect is to be enhanced by the completion in a few months time of the Grand Central Hotel [...]
Number & dimensions of rooms	There are 40 rooms in all in the building, the majority of them being capacious, lofty and well lighted, with every provision supplied for the prevention of fire. The dimensions show a frontage of 77ft to Punt Rd by a depth of 144 ft along Terminus St. A public bar, 19ft by 17ft, occupies the ground floor corner of the building, while a second bar, 18ft by 8ft, is but a little distance off. On the ground floor are situated commercial, sample, first and second dining, and billiard rooms, kitchen, servery, parlors, etc., the ares of the principal rooms being as follows: - Commercial 14ft x 12ft, 1 st dining 21ft x 14ft, 2 nd dining 21ft x 17ft, billiard room 27ft x 17ft, with raised platforms, the average height of all rooms on the floor being 13ft. There are two public and three private entrances [...] What is called a 'servery' is located near the dining rooms [...] An up to date range is specified for the kitchen from which hot water can be supplied to the bathrooms, scullery, etc. at all reasonable hours. The cellar, of course, claims attention, and this is planned with a view to the utmost coolness, it being practicable to admit or shut off currents of air when desired. The size of this important part of the building is 19ft x 17ft x 11ft high. An office, larder, and baggage room are also situated on this floor, the latter being connected with upstairs by a goods lift.
The cellar and lift.	
Upper floor	A broad stairway leads to the upper floor, whereon are 15 bedrooms, besides drawing room and parlors, linen presses, etc. These rooms are large and designed to admit perfect light and ventilation, while sanitary conveniences, lavatory, hot and cold water baths are placed near at hand. A feature of the design however is the precautions against fire, two accessible escapes leading down into a courtyard, while an electric alarm is placed to notify the whole household. And further, the ceilings of all the rooms are specified to be of embossed zinc, which in addition to being attractive will serve to prevent a conflagration spreading. Standpipes with lengths of hose and nozzle attachments will form portion of the equipment on both floors.
Precautions against fire	[The building design also allows for] the complete installation of the building, courtyard and stables with acetylene gas. [...] A handsome balcony surrounds the street facades of the building, which will provide a splendid promenade, 8ft wide. The floors throughout are constructed of kauri pine, fastened in a manner known as 'secret nailing'. There is not an over-abundance of ornamentation about the street sides, this being reserved for inside, but it will be seen from the above view that the design will take a lot of beating, even by first class city hotels.
Balcony	
Ornamentation	
Stables	Two asphalted yards are designed, and also loose boxes, stables and stall accommodation for 40 horses. The stable house, already erected, provides a man's room, harness and chaff rooms, besides a loft, the whole being ornamental in appearance.

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Mivo Park commenced c. 1907 and Don Campbell Rose Garden 1997

The creation and maintenance of parkland and open recreation areas has been an important part of the civic development of Cobram. Closely following the introduction of a town water supply in 1906 and the creation of the permanent Fire Brigade in 1907, the area of the present Mivo Park was given over to parkland 'with shrubs on land' bounded by Punt Road and High Street, Market and William Streets, the whole 'fringed by wattle trees'.³ Following the First World War a flag pole and a captured German machine gun were placed in the park.

The park is named after the Mivo River in Borneo, where some serving men from Cobram fought soldiers from the Imperial Japanese Army. The beautification of Mivo Park was a community project by the Rotary Club of Cobram. The designs submitted by June Banks-Smith and Margaret Donegan were combined as the winning entry of a competition. Rotarian Tom Bisogni constructed the brick retaining walls to support 150 floribunda roses. "Mivo Park" and the Rotary wheel are fixed to the apex of the elegant metal arch.⁴



The Mivo Park site is important as a continuous site of outdoor recreation and civic beautification since the early twentieth century. 'Cobram Town Plan' was vigorously debated in the 1940s and included generous provision of open recreation areas for children and adults, but was never fully realised due to costs, marking an ongoing struggle in the town for public recreation spaces.

Figs 10&11. Mivo Park Gateway
looking down avenue of trees and showing brick retaining wall. . Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

The placing of significant memorial structures, plaques and trees during that time is a further testament to the role of the Park as a focus of civic pride. These include the Mivo Park Rotary Gateway and fence [Date TBC], [Possible Avenue of Honour TBC], Red Cross Centenary plaque (1959), and a rose garden dedicated to Don Campbell, Town Gardener from 1981 to 97.



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Bank Street Shops 1900 – 1920s

The Bank Street shops are significant as they include notable examples of shops from the early 1900s-1920s. This was a period of marked growth both commercially and in terms of population for the town. (See also Significant Views)



Fig 12&13. Bank Street shops. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2005



Fig Showing allotments with shops between Bank Street and Punt Road. Source: No. rw003793 SLV

Post Office

The Cobram Post Office was, according to the Cobram Progress Association which suggested the addition of a memorial clock tower in 1909, the 'first in the Commonwealth to be built out of revenue'.⁵ Prior to its construction in 1904 the postal service operated out of a 'little room' at the railway station, which was long deplored as 'utterly inefficient' by the Cobram Progress Association.⁶ The building once also served as a postmaster's residence and it underwent a major renovation and enlargement in 1962.⁷



Fig 14. Cobram Post Office c.1917. Source: No. b24904, State Library of Victoria

Bank of Australasia (former) 1909 Now the ANZ

The Bank of Australasia is associated with two main heritage sites in Cobram, both within the Town Centre Precinct. The original building in Main Street, where the bank had first been established on the premises of W. H. Curtis was also the site of the early Masonic building,

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but it was demolished after the bank moved, in 1909, to their new building, adjacent to the 1904 Post Office building in Bank Street.



Fig. 15. The National Bank of Australasia on Bank Street in the 1940s, with trees outside. Source: *Martindale* 1965.

The original building was designed by Messrs Harry H. Gibbs and Finlay of Melbourne, and built by E. Weiland, contractor of Footscray. The Bank Street site was open until 1942.³ Three years later in 1947 the bank reopened on the corner of Main Street and Station Street. The ANZ Bank remodelled the earlier premises in Bank Street in 1961-2.

The *Cobram Courier* described the opening of the original building on the Bank Street site on 3 June 1909:

Yesterday afternoon the handsome new premises in Cobram just completed for the National Bank of Australasia Limited were officially opened in the presence of a large number of people, despite that the sloppy state of the roads and streets mitigated against attendance... The building is situated in Bank Street, adjoining the post office, on land having a frontage of 81ft by 160ft to the right of way. The business portion consists of a large and spacious banking chamber, 22 ft square, entered from the street by means of a porch fitted with large panelled entrance doors and embossed plate glass swing doors into the chamber, which is fitted up with massive and handsomely panelled and moulded screens and fittings of Californian red wood, with brass book rests complete. Off the banking chamber is the manager's room, with Chubb's strong room door, rendering same safe against fire...The dwelling portion, which is connected, consists of necessary apartments for general requirements; having drawing room, dining room, and 3 bedrooms shut off from the kitchen, scullery, pantry (cellar under etc.), entered by means of a glass swing door in the passage. The elevation is a free and bold treatment of renaissance architecture, being constructed of brick and cement dressings, with panelled entrance doors in the porch, and large embossed plate glass windows on each side. The walls are all built with a 2in. cavity, and the building is covered with a bungalow roof, with a big projection finishing off to a verandah 7ft 6in wide on three sides...The ceilings throughout are stamped steel supplied by Messrs Wunderlich Limited. There are dark and light blinds to all windows. The joinery throughout is of Californian red wood, specially selected in grain and finished with a wax polish.⁴

³ Martindale, *The Plains Turn Green*, 1965.

⁴ *Cobram Courier*, 3 June 1909.

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Grain Store c1909

The old grain store, constructed 1909 by Harry H Farrall on the triangle between Main and Station streets is significant as a relic of the town's early grain storage system. Located between the train station and the Cobram Hotel, the site was ideal given the trade that ran between the two, with the Cobram Hotel advertising to purchase agricultural produce as well as selling goods to the district in the 1890s.



Fig. 16. Grain store (1909). Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

Court House 1912

Prior to the construction of the 1912 courthouse, Court of Petty Sessions hearings were held in the Mechanics' Institute hall. The site of the courthouse was the subject of long deliberation due to the Victorian Attorney-General's early determination to include a police station adjoining the court on a whole acre. The final quarter acre block was chosen upon the abandonment of this plan and the insistence by residents that the court be located at the town centre rather than at its edge as initially suggested. The land was purchased by the government from L. Gedye for £100.⁸



Fig. 17. Court House (1912) with adjacent tree. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005

The courthouse was built by contractors Messrs Frogley and Smith of Mont Albert, who also built courthouses at Box Hill and Leongatha. The *Cobram Courier* described the new building at its completion in November 1912:

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The exterior design of the new building in Cobram which is to be used as a courthouse is of such a mixed character that we are unable to give it a name, but as that will not affect the dignity or solidity of the structure we content ourselves with describing it as moderately handsome, with a quaintness about it which impels one to give it a second look. Its overhanging eaves, tapering chimneys, and scrolled and pedestalled facade give it a somewhat fanciful appearance, but it is unquestionably a welcome addition to the architecture of this town. The interior is well suited for the purpose for which it was designed, and the district can at last boast of a building which permits of the impressiveness, dignity, and convenience necessary to a Hall of Justice being fittingly sustained. Entrance to the courtroom is gained through a porch 20ft by 7ft, which has doors on the northern and southern sides, and after passing over a tiled floor a pair of swing doors lead into the main room, which is 35ft long by 20ft wide by 17ft high, and has a ceiling of Wunderlich steel. A raised bench for the magistrates extends right across the eastern end of the room, and a desk for the Clerk of Courts is placed in front of the centre. In the body of the court space is provided for solicitors, clients, pressmen, and witnesses, which a small railed-off enclosure is for the use of the public. The room is well lighted, and has a fireplace for use in winter, also ample ventilation for the summer. Doors lead from the courtroom into the magistrates room (16ft x 12ft), clerk's room (13ft x 13ft), and witness' room (13ft x 11ft 6in.) The two first mentioned of these rooms are provided with fireplaces and lavatories, while the clerk's room is fitted up with lockers for keeping Gazettes, law books, etc., and also has a desk for the clerk's use. The building, which is built of brick on a reinforced concrete foundation, with 14in. walls, is ceiled throughout with Wunderlich steel, while all the walls are plastered.⁵

Wheat Silos 1942

The 1942 wheat silos were managed by R. Eaton and controlled by the Grain Elevators Board.

Bank 1930



Fig 18. Intersection Station and Main St, showing view of 1947 bank, 1892 Cobram Hotel and palm trees
Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

⁵ Cobram Courier, 28 November 1912.

COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Civic Centre (1971) and War Memorial (1997)

Following the Second World War there was a protracted and sometimes heated discussion over the form of a suitable memorial to those who had fought for Australia in two world wars. Eventually the present site opposite Mivo Park was chosen and the site includes a flagpole and war memorial.



Fig 19. Cobram Civic Centre and War Memorial. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005

Pioneers Park 1978

The Pioneers Park is significant as a site of recent civic beautification, which has several plaques that serve as a monument to 'pioneering days' in the Cobram area, with a reconstructed log cabin and memorial plaques, movable heritage and aesthetic features. In 1987 a local women's group erected a plaque to the pioneering women of the Cobram district.



Significant Trees

Early views of Cobram show the use of trees, particularly palms and peppercorns, to beautify and shade the main thoroughfares of the town. In 1909 the Cobram Progress Association protested to the telephone department against the 'vandalisation of trees' in its erection of telephone cables, showing an early civic pride in the town's trees. Pictures from the 1920s also show rows of palm trees along Punt Road, and Station Street from which the large palm trees in these streets and Mivo Park are likely survivors. Another particularly mature tall tree is that located on the nature strip beside the Court House, on Punt Road across from the park.



Fig. 20. View from the park towards the courthouse, probably c. 1960s, showing large palm trees. Source: Martindale 1965.

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Significant Views



Fig. 21. A postcard c. 1910 showing Punt Rd. Note Grand Central Hotel on left and trees lining street.

Source: No. a06990, State Library of Victoria.

Several views, particularly those encompassing streetscapes have been emblematic of Cobram over the years, as evidenced in their use for publicity, postcards and souvenirs.

These include:

- (a) Railway strip, which represents the railway heritage of Cobram (See railways)
- (b) Bank Street (Pictured Below), one of the main streets, with post office and bank, and beautifications and monuments (Clock tower and war memorial). Punt Road (Pictured Below), the principal thoroughfare of Cobram and site of its earliest stores and hotels such as the Grand Central.
- (d) Station St, with its view of the Cobram Hotel, 1940s bank and nineteenth century grain store.



Fig. 22. Corner Sydney and Punt Road 1912 showing the old core of the town. Source:



Fig 23. Bank Street, 1960, showing shop fronts, clock tower, bank and post office. Source: Martindale 1965.

COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Urban Design

Layout and Orientation

Cobram Town Centre precinct is unusual in Victorian towns as it was a private subdivision and does not follow the typical grid road and allotment layout. The design is dominated by the forty-five degree angle of the railway reserve running nor-north-east, and the main (Punt) road which is parallel to it. These prominent thoroughfares cut across the north-south and east-west grid layout of commercial allotments thus forming complex intersections with triangular allotments and trapezoid shaped allotments facing Punt Road. Buildings are aligned with the allotment boundaries and this forms a strong part of the visual character of the area. These building and street alignments are an important setting of this precinct.

Views and Significant Foci

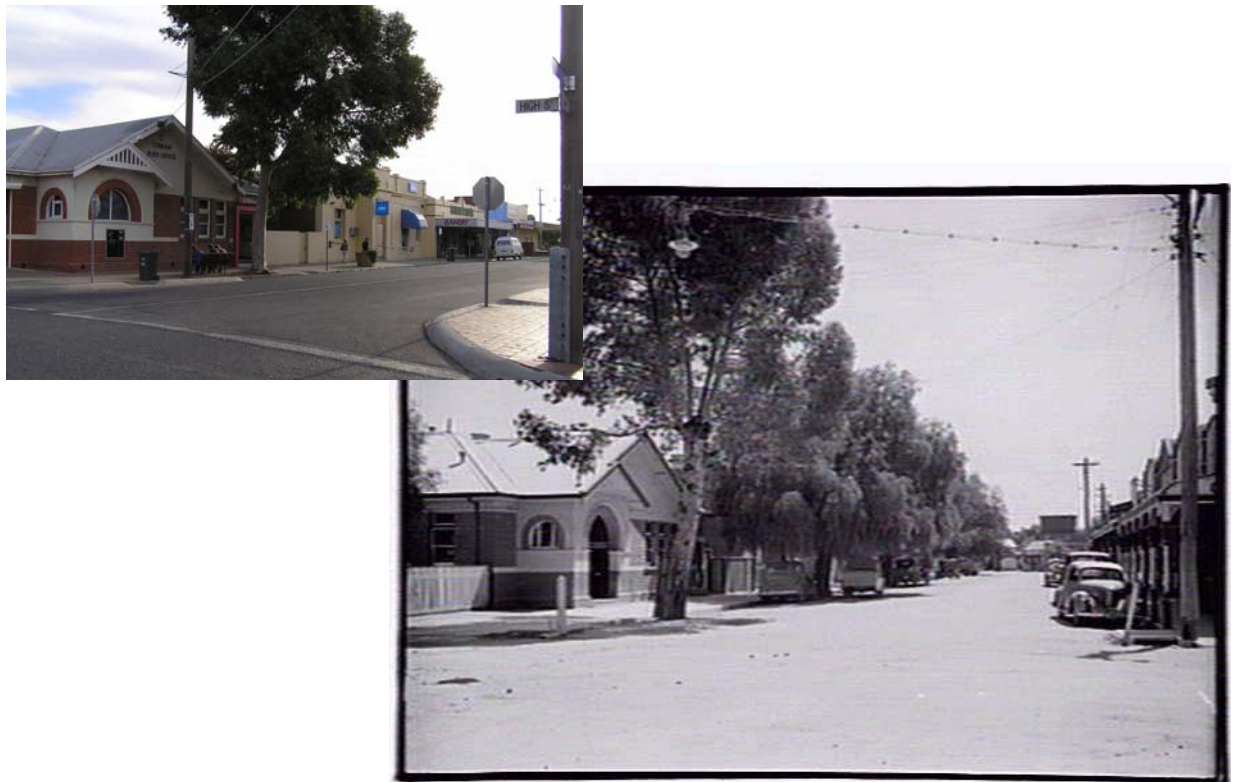
Significant views within the precinct include various views to the historic hotels, views east along Bank Street (including the clock) from the Punt Road and Bank Street intersection, views of the streetscapes in Bank Street, views in both directions (NNE and SSW) along the railway line from each end of the precinct and from the station, particularly to the wheat silos and road crossing and to the historic buildings at the intersections of Station and Main Streets and Punt Road. Another significant view is NNE along Punt Road to the architecturally significant Court House.

The tall wheat silos are a significant focus throughout the precinct and mark the location of the town centre from outside the precinct.

Fig 24. View West along Bank Street toward intersection with Punt Road. Left: 2005 and Right, c1950s. note the intact posted verandahs on the north side of Bank Street.

Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2005.

Source: SLV



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Fig 25. View NNE to the Court House and trees in the park beyond. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2005



Fig. 26. Views NNE along Punt Road and East along Bank Street showing the triangular allotment with the clock at the apex. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2005

Views to and from the Railway Station and reserve.



Figs 27&28. Views SSW (left) and NNE (right) from the Cobram railway station along the historic railway reserve showing the view to the 1942 grain silos.
Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

Note the railway tracks, platform, station buildings, and other infrastructure, such as the 'Westinghouse, McKenzie Holland Pty Ltd Melbourne' scales are intact. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2005.

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Figs 29-32 show the views from the railway station, Pioneer Park, and Punt Road towards the important historic buildings and mature palm trees and allotment layout on the corners of Station Street and Main Streets and Punt Road.

Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003



COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Culturally Significant Places - Details

There are several culturally significant structures in the precinct which reinforce the town centre theme of this precinct.

Infrastructure and associated machinery.

Some railway track and machinery associated with the importance of transporting goods to and from Cobram using the railway, has survived. This includes: the tracks running from the station across Terminus Street and behind the 1942 concrete silos. The weighbridge platform, scales and building and the point change lever sit near the railway station.



Figs 33-36 Rail track behind the silos.
Weighbridge, scales and building.
Silos
Point lever for tracks. Railway
Station.

Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2003.



COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Architectural styles

The architectural styles are mainly from c 1900 the Federation period, and post war c 1940s to 1960s.

Victorian era

The earliest building is the former Brown Corke and company store. Although the front façade is altered, the walls, roof and three dimensional design is mostly intact. The early photograph (Fig) provides sufficient evidence for the reconstruction of the verandah, windows and door, on this substantial building, if desired. Less than four years later work commenced on the Cobram Hotel and it was completed by 1892. It was, and remains, one of the most substantial buildings in the precinct. It is designed in the Victorian Italianate Filigree style with cast iron verandah decoration contrasting with the cement rendered front elevation and red brickwork along the Main Street elevation, and balustraded parapet surmounted by a pediment similar to the one on Brown Corke and Co's store. A contemporary description of the building is on page nine which provides detailed descriptions of significant interior design and finishes.



Figs 37-40. Cobram Hotel and Masonic Centre above, Cobram Railway Station building below .
Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003



COBRAM TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Federation Period.



Fig. 41. 1902 Federation Free Style, Grand Central Hotel Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003.

As can be seen in the contemporary sketch below, and comparing it with the photograph taken approximately 100 years later, the hotel is substantially intact. Alterations that have occurred are the loss of some of the timber verandah decoration and painting the brickwork. The original finish would have been unpainted red brickwork, which was fashionable in the Federation period.



Fig. 42. Grand Central Hotel.

Source: *Cobram Courier*.

The 1904 post office building, is a domestic scale single storey brick structure, designed in the Federation Free Style, and it has a high degree of architectural integrity. Some changes have occurred including the loss of the picket fence, insertion of many post boxes, painting the previously unpainted cement render, and the application of the corporate image branding of Australia Post. (Refer to Figs on pages 13 and 19.)



Fig 43. 1904 Post Office. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003.

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The ANZ bank in Bank Street and the Office in Station Street are similar interpretations of the Federation Georgian style



Figs 44&45. Side and front elevations. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

The 1909 Federation Georgian Revival bank facade has been altered from the unpainted, un-rendered face brick (similar to the office in Fig. 47). However, the side elevation and tall chimney has retained the Federation period finishes and design, such as the square timber posts with simple timber brackets, unpainted red brick walls and timber verandah floor.



Fig 46. Station Street office. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

The 1892 Station Street office has an intact Federation Free Style design in face red brickwork and (originally) unpainted cement render trims.

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Figs 47&48. Grain store interior and exterior. The steeply raked ceiling is clad in polished lining boards and pressed zinc clad the upper wall in the unusual interior space. These are all significant features. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2003.



Fig. 49. 1912 Cobram Court House. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

The 1912 Court House is a fine example of the Federation Anglo-Dutch style and the only building in this style of architecture in the precinct. It has excellent integrity and is still used for its original purpose. Noticeable alterations include the painting of the previously unpainted cement render and roughcast.

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Federation era shops, Bank Street.



Fig. 50. Bank Street shops, north side. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

All of the parapets of the Federation Free Style shops are intact except one, which could be reinstated to match the one on the nearest corner. However, the ground floor elevations appear to have been altered to various degrees. Leak Printing (far left in the photo above) may be the most intact. Removal of the blank board above the glass may reveal upper windows similar to those on the Beauty Centre adjacent. Furthermore, the posted verandahs have been replaced with cantilever verandahs. Reinstatement of the original design is possible using the available early photograph (see page 19).

Post-War Era Shops, Station Street.



Fig. 51. Station Street shops. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

The Post-War Functionalist style of this strip of three shops typifies shops of this period. There are several others in Cobram, outside the precinct. The clean horizontal line is

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emphasised by the thin contrasting band of bricks on the top of the plain rendered parapet and long cantilevered verandah.



Fig. 52. former 1949 State Savings Bank. Source. Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd. 2003

The Post-War Free Classical design is superbly designed for maximum effect as a prestigious, classically elegant bank on a prominent and visible corner site. The use of the classical style has enabled the development of a building which exhibits the impression of strength and permanence.

The majority of the culturally significant buildings are Federation or Post-War in design, and are rectangular, single storey with steep hipped or gabled roofs, and positioned parallel to the rectangular or trapezoid shaped allotments. They are mostly constructed of unpainted red brick walls, with roofs clad in galvanised corrugated iron or terra cotta tiles.

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STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE⁹

Cobram Town Centre precinct

The other culturally significant places within the precinct, not specifically mentioned in this documentation are listed in Appendix xx and are documented in the accompanying database. The history and description that precedes this Statement of Cultural Significance is the source of the evidence for the statement below.

The **Cobram Town Centre** is **historically** significant on a **local** level through its association with the commercial and economic development of the area. (AHC Criterion **A.4**) It contains extant examples of buildings from various significant eras in the town's development, from the late nineteenth century, to the early decades of the twentieth century and the 1940s. The area around Bank Street and the Courthouse are particularly associated with the early twentieth century.

The Precinct also contains a variety of sites related to different aspects of the town's development, from sites associated with agricultural heritage (grain stores and silos), commercial heritage (shops and banks), public and private service industry development (hotels, post office), law and order (courthouse) and transport (railways). Public places, (parks, trees, reserves, hall, clock and memorials) are also important both aesthetically and historically as continuing sites of civic beautification. The precinct thus represents a range of historical influences important in the development of Cobram from the late 1880s to the 1990s.

The former Brown Cork and company building (known as the **Cobram Masonic Lodge** since c1920s) is **historically** significant on a **local** level as the only remaining commercial building from the commercial history of the town in the late 1880s and early 1890s, a period of marked economic development and growth, and is particularly associated with the cultural and social development of the town through its association with the local Masonic Lodge after the adaptation of the building in the 1920s. (AHC Criterion **A.4, H.1**)

The **War Memorial** is **historically** and **socially** significant on a **local** level for its association with the contribution of the local community to the defence forces of Australia, and **socially** significant on a **local** level as a valued monument to the war time sacrifices and experience of the community and as a site of communal ritual and memory. (AHC Criteria **A.4; H.1; G.1**)

The **Pioneers Park** is **historically** and **socially** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for its association with contemporary and continuing efforts at civic beautification and as a contemporary site valued by the community for its association with various examples of movable heritage of the town. (AHC Criteria **A.4, D.2, G.1**)

The **railway reserve** and views are **historically** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the railway heritage of the town from the late nineteenth to late twentieth centuries, a central element in the economic development of Cobram during that period and provides interpretative visual links to the associated infrastructure. (AHC Criterion **A.4, D2**)

Bank Street is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its associations with the early economic and commercial development of the town. Aesthetically it is significant for its streetscape association with the early twentieth century history of Cobram, with its contiguous

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line of shop fronts, opposite the post office and bank dating to this period. (AHC Criteria **A.4; E.1**)

Punt Road is **historically** significant on a **local** level through its association with the earliest history of the town's economic and commercial development and **aesthetically** significant at **local** level with significant views towards the silos, the Grand Central Hotel and the Courthouse. (AHC Criteria **A.4; E.1**)

The **Station Street** view is **historically** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level which includes the views to the station, and as an intersection bringing together three different architectural periods of the town's development in the early grain store, the Cobram Hotel and the 1940s bank, illustrating the agricultural, service and commercial development of the town. (AHC Criterion **A.4, D2**)

Mivo Park is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its association with important community groups such the Rotary Club and individuals such as Don Campbell, who have all played an important role in the beautification and development of the town. As a site of memorials and community activities, the park is also **socially** significant on a **local** level, and **aesthetically** significant as a cultural landscape of continuous development of civic pride and beautification since the early part of the twentieth century. (AHC Criteria **A.4; H.1, E1**)

The **Civic Hall** is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the development of local civic, cultural and political institutions. It is **socially** significant on a **local** level as a valued site of continuing social and cultural activity. The **war memorial** is also **historically** and **socially** significant for its association with the history of defending Australia and as a site of local commemoration and participation in nation building rituals and memory. (AHC Criterion **A.4**).

The Cobram **Post Office** is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the period of significant civic development and growth in amenities in the second decade of the twentieth century. (AHC Criterion **A.4**). It is **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level as a good example of a Federation Free Style public building in this precinct, with a high degree of architectural integrity. (AHC Criterion **E 1**).

The exterior and interior of the **Cobram Courthouse** is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its continuous use as a court house and association with the period of significant civic development and growth in amenities in the second decade of the twentieth century. (AHC Criterion **A.4**) It is **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level as a fine example of the Federation Anglo-Dutch style public building in the precinct. (AHC Criterion **E 1**).

The former 1909 National Bank of Australasia building and the Station Street office are **historically** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for their association with the commercial development of the town in the early twentieth century, and the relatively intact Federation Georgian Revival of the facades, while the former 1949 State Savings bank on Main and Station streets is **historically** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the post-war commercial history of the town (AHC Criterion **A.4**) and as a representative example of the post-war Free Classical style. (AHC Criterion **D.2**).

The exterior and interior of the nineteenth century grain store is **historically and aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the early agricultural and

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trading heritage of Cobram and the accomplished design of a building on the triangular allotment with an internal space which is rare in Cobram. (AHC Criterion **A.4, D.2**)

The interior and exterior of the **Cobram Hotel** is **historically** significant on a **local** level for its association with the commercial history and development of services from the 1890s onwards. It is socially significant on a local level through its valued connection with the social and cultural life of Cobram. (AHC Criteria **A.4**) It is **aesthetically** significant on a local level as a very good representative example of a substantial Victorian Italianate Filigree style building with some significant interiors. (AHC Criterion **D 2**).

The interior and exterior of the **Grand Central Hotel** is **historically** significant on a **local** level through its association with the commercial and services history of the town from the early twentieth century. It is **socially** significant on a **local** level through its association with the social and cultural life of Cobram. (AHC Criterion **A.4**). It is **aesthetically** significant on a local level as a very good representative example of a substantial Federation Anglo-Dutch style building with some significant interiors. (AHC Criterion **D 2**).

The Wheat silos are **historically** significant on a **local** level for their association with the post war development of the area's agricultural production and Cobram's centrality to agricultural industry and transportation during the period. (AHC Criterion **A.4**) They are **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level as a pivotal focus in the Cobram townscape. (AHC Criterion **E 1**).

Mature trees including the street trees beside the Court House and the old palm trees, and mature trees in the parks and reserves in the precinct, are **historically** and **aesthetically** significant on a **local level** for their association with the early attempts to beautify and improve public spaces, and for the beauty that they provide which contrasts with and complements the hard surfaces of buildings and infrastructure associated with town development. (AHC Criterion **A.4, E.1**)

The **Railway sites and infrastructure**, namely the station, railway reserve, tracks, points, weighbridge, points lever and railway crossing are **historically** significant on a **local** level for their strong association with the history of developing railways in the area from 1888 into the twentieth century, and the central importance of this to the economic and commercial development of the area. They are also **socially** significant on a **local** level for their historical association with social and cultural events. They are **aesthetically** significant on a **local** level for the views in both directions along the reserve which illustrate the flat and lineal nature of the transport system and the importance of the railway to the location and functionality of the wheat silos. (AHC Criterion **A.4, G.1, E 1**)

The **Cobram Town Centre** precinct is **aesthetically** significant at the **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion E1). The precinct retains significant foci, townscape and streetscape views, within the precinct, to the imposing 1942 concrete silos, the Cobram and Grand Central Hotels, the Court House, and views along the railway reserve, and along Bank Street, including views of the clock. These views cumulatively reinforce the historic early and mid twentieth century character of the precinct. The architecture of many of the culturally significant places are good representative examples of their type and provide important architectural integrity and focal points to the precinct. The interior of the hotels, court house, grain store and 1949 State Savings bank are also aesthetically significant particularly for the interior spaces and intact detailing.

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The aesthetic character of the precinct is formed by the majority of the culturally significant buildings being Federation or Post-War in design, and are rectangular, single storey with steep hipped or gabled roofs, and positioned parallel to the rectangular and trapezoid shaped allotments.

The materials and workmanship in the significant buildings and infrastructure, are technically important and increasingly rare examples in Cobram. The Cobram Town Centre precinct is **scientifically** significant at the **LOCAL** level (Criteria C2 and F1).

Overall, Cobram Town Centre precinct is culturally significant at the LOCAL level.

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- ¹ Includes text from Environmental History.
- ² Settlers moved into the region in the 1870s when land became available for selection and the area now known as Cobram East near the Cobram Station bore the name of Cobram. The name was soon changed to Cobram East when the current township of Cobram was established. Cobram East was also the location of the cemetery and the original burial site for the Station. The first school (SS2166) opened in 1879 in a portable classroom and by 1882 there were 56 children enrolled. Cobram East School moved to a new permanent site in 1892. By the early 1900s numbers had declined and the school closed and re-opened several times before it was permanently closed in 1946 when the students travelled to the Cobram Consolidated School. St Joseph's Catholic School in the Church Precinct dates from a later period, opening in 1922.
- ³ Martindale, 1965
- ⁴ *50 Year History of the Rotary Club of Cobram*. Bob Cornish 2005. p48.
- ⁵ *Cobram Courier*, 22 April 1909.
- ⁶ *Cobram Courier*, 24 January 1889.
- ⁷ Martindale, p.44.
- ⁸ *Cobram Courier*, 28 March 1912.
- ⁹ Definitions used are from the Burra Charter 1999; historical themes relate to the Principal Australian Themes – Australian Heritage Commission; criteria for Locally Significant places are from the Australian Heritage Commission and in the case of State Significant places, from Heritage Victoria; levels of significance used are State and Local, which directly relate to the two legislative authorities who administer the protection of heritage places, the State Government and Local Government respectively.