

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Contents

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Numurkah Town Centre PRECINCT

LOCATION	112
• Precinct Boundaries and Map	112
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	113
• List of Culturally Significant Places	113
• Historical Context	113
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	117
• Urban Design, Views and Foci	117
• Culturally Significant Places	119
STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	129
References:	131
Appendix Photo List of culturally significant places in the precinct	

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

LOCATION

Precinct Boundaries And Map

The main commercial street in Numurkah forms a major north-south spine in the precinct. It is intersected by Quinn and Knox Streets. Places face each side of Melville Street, and the west side of McCaskill Street. The west boundary of the precinct extends along the laneway west of the rear of Melville Street properties. Refer to the map in Fig 1 for the boundary details.

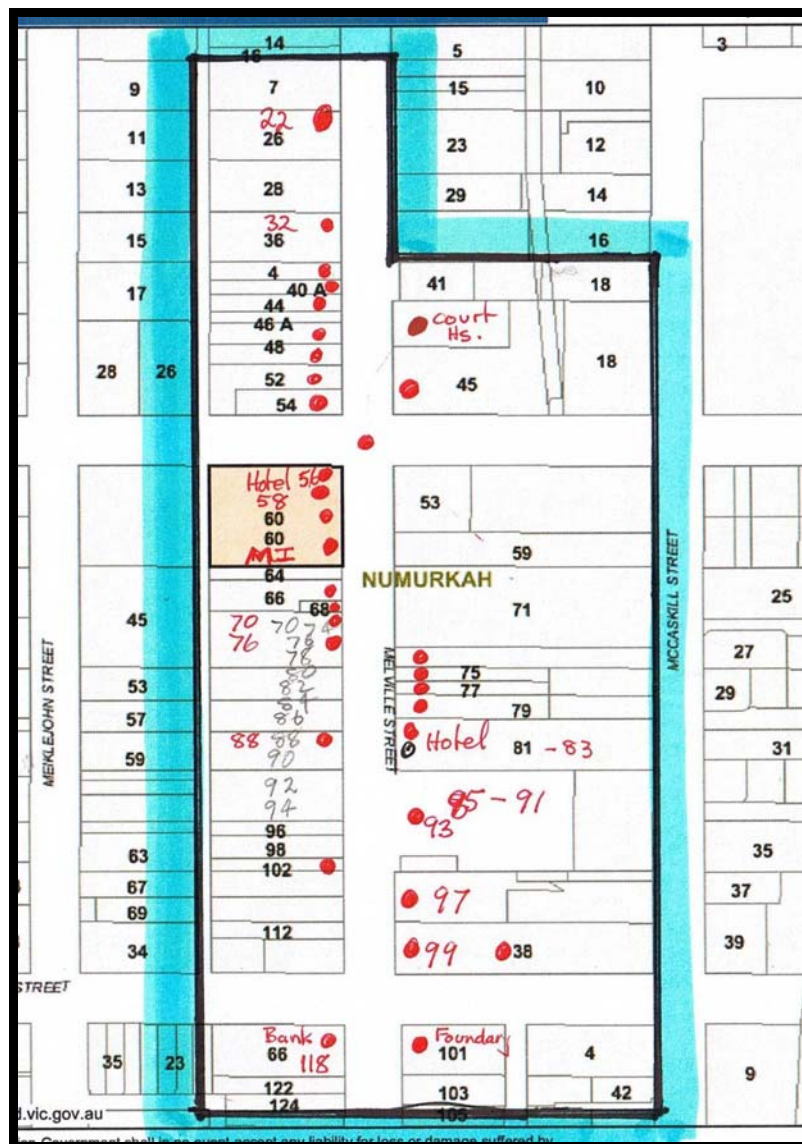


Fig. 1 Map of Numurkah Town Centre Precinct with location of 33 significant places marked with red dots. Refer to the photo list of these places in the appendix.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Table One: List of Culturally Significant Places, their location , database number and historical context. Source Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2006.

Historical Era	Historical Themes and Events	Dates	Extant places within the Numurkah Town Centre precinct	DB No.	Location
Victorian 1880s to 1900	Transport: Opening of railways and telegraph. Private Urban subdivision.	1882	Telegraph Hotel	488	Melville St.
		1883	Mechanics Institute	33/462	Melville St.
		1880s / 1890s	Victorian shops, Crawford's Pharmacy 70 no. 40, 42, 44, 66, 68,	Eg. 456, 461	Melville St.
		1889	Courthouse	82	Melville St.
		1895	Numurkah Leader	455	Melville St.
		1890	Bank of Victoria	516	Melville St.
Federation 1901 to 1914		1910	State Savings Bank	437	Melville St.
		1910	Numurkah Hotel	463	Melville St.
Interwar 1920s to 1930s		1930	Fire Brigade Station	553	Quinn St.
			Town Hall	515	Knox St
Post War 1940s to 1960s	Improved Irrigation Scheme Post war immigration Soldier Settlement	1940s	Kinnaird Building	490	Melville St.
		1950s-60s	Remodelled shops	Eg. 496	Melville St.
					Melville St.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT¹

The location of the Numurkah Town Centre Precinct at Numurkah is historically significant because it marks the area that has formed the commercial and community centre of the town since its formal establishment in 1875. The only streets that were significant at Numurkah in its early history were Melville and Knox. Melville Street was proclaimed a street in 1882 and remained the only officially gazetted street until 1886.

The precinct includes the northern portion of the first nine town allotments sold in 1878, which included most of the blocks on both sides of Melville Street between Brenion and Knox Street. This area is marked on the Numurkah, Parish of Katunga map 1918, Lands Department. Later in the year further allotments were sold along Melville Street. The name of the main street derives from that of a selector from the south side of the creek, who was subsequently indicted for acting as a dummy bidder at the land sale.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

The significance of the area of Melville Street as a whole within the precinct can also be seen in the prominence given to this particular streetscape in photographs, paintings and postcards of the town throughout its history.



Figs 2 and 3: Typical Postcard views of Numurkah in the early 1900s and 1910.
Source: State Library of Victoria



Founding and Early Owners on Melville Street

Alfred Leahy surveyed Numurkah township in 1875 and was among the first buyers, purchasing five allotments for £4 each in the first sale on 11 January 1878, and subsequently purchasing land on both sides of Melville Street north of Knox Street. Leahy took up the entire west side of Melville Street south of Knox Street in the first sale. Other purchasers in the first sale were J. Nelson, J. Morressy and J. Haynes.² The original town allotments purchased are shown in the 1918 map, the northern section of which is included in the southern end of the Precinct.

Peter McCaskill however was the first person to take up residence in the newly proclaimed township.³ He purchased land on either side of Quinn Street and opened the first hotel and store. His brother Hugh McCaskill opened the first butcher in a bark hut nearby. Peter McCaskill's first Numurkah Hotel opened in 1878 on the corner of Melville and Quinn (56 Melville Street). It consisted of a tarpaulin and cart bar with a bark hut. The first weatherboard building was built soon after by John Walters.⁴ While no extant structures

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

survive from this period, several present buildings continue to be associated historically with these early businesses, such as the Numurkah Hotel and Kinnaird's butchery. John Walters was also responsible for building Kinnaird's butchery, Block's bootery, Argall's shop and Johnson and Forge's general store. Other early landholders at this time were Joseph Crow (bookseller), George Currie, Oliver Dolphin (cordial manufacturer), J. Hardy, E. W. Lightfoot, S. J. Stewart, W. H. Swallow and S. McDonald.

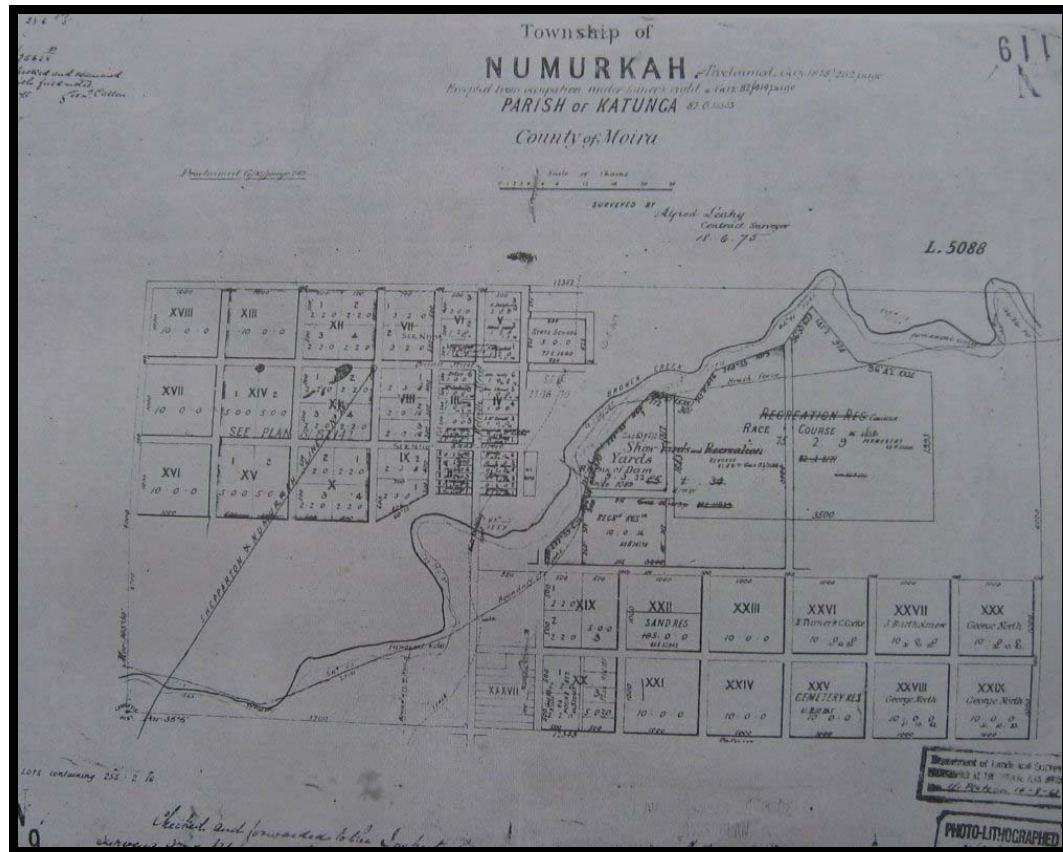


Fig 4: 1875 Town Survey Map showing original allotments. Source: Back-To-Committee 1970.

Numurkah is in the Parishes of Katunga and Drumanure and in 1994 was the administrative centre of the former Shire of Numurkah. The town was surveyed and proclaimed in 1875 (above). Population figures recorded for Numurkah show a dramatic increase in the 1880s following the opening of the Shepparton to Numurkah railway line in 1881 and extensions in 1888 to Cobram and Picola, and a further significant increase with the post World War II Soldier Settlement in the area: 96 (1881), 1,011 (1891), 1,174 (1901), 1,519 (1947), 2,658 (1976) and 3,128 (1991). The major periods of development in the Numurkah Town Centre Precinct coincided with the main periods of population growth in the 1880s to early 1900s and during the postwar period.

The railway opened in 1881, triggering a decade of growth for Numurkah. In 1881 Numurkah had four hotels, a Bible Christian Church, general store, butcher, baker, newsagent and its own newspaper, the *Numurkah Standard*. Numurkah benefited from being the railway terminus for seven years until 1888 and was the focal point for the north west of the Shire. From a population of just 96 in 1881, Numurkah reached a staggering 1,011 by 1891. This dramatic increase is reflected in the Post Office Directory for 1888-89 which lists ten hotels: Globe, Terminus, Railway Gate, Telegraph, Farmers, Victoria, Numurkah, Royal Mail, Commercial and Shamrock; seven boarding houses; and the Numurkah Coffee Palace, Boarding House and Restaurant. The large number of hotels and boarding houses was obviously essential for providing

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

accommodation for the increasing population until such time as house building caught up with the needs. The greater part of the buildings named were located along Melville Street.

In 1890 the *Numurkah Standard* reported on the view of Numurkah from the newly constructed pedestrian overpass above the railway line. Although some buildings were constructed of brick, Numurkah was predominantly a weatherboard town. The journalist criticised the “meanly arranged” street widths; the “wretchedly arranged ... building areas ... due to the natural desire to crowd as many houses as possible for letting purposes on a block”; the general architecture with “buildings small, badly fronted, dingy back lanes are narrow and at times dirty”; and that the town was “absolutely innocent of anything in the way of arboreal beautification”. The crowding of houses was compared to “a back alley in a poor quarter in a large city” and it was difficult to understand in a country area with room to expand why the town was so crowded that “we have no room for pure air, so restricted that we cannot find room for a few health-giving trees in our gardens.” The crowded weatherboard buildings contributed to a number of large fires in the town where a row of businesses would be lost in a single blaze, sometimes only stopped by the presence of a brick building. The local fire brigade was particularly active in the mid 1880s when hotels were particularly susceptible to fire. As a result, some weatherboard buildings destroyed in fires were replaced with brick or iron buildings. It is only the significant brick buildings that have survived from this period. Over the decade from 1890 as well, there was also clearly some effort given to the condition of Melville Street both in terms of its buildings and arboreal beautification.

Two of the brick buildings erected in this period were the Mechanics’ Institute in 1883 and used for the first Church of England service, court house, balls, concerts, lectures and a variety of entertainment, and the Numurkah Court House built in 1889-90 at a cost of £1931. The Telegraph Hotel and Crawford’s Chemist are also surviving brick buildings from the 1880s growth period. The array of late Victorian brick shops along Melville Street also date to the late 1880s and early 1890s building period. Among these are the Numurkah Leader (1895) office in Melville Street. Established in 1895, the *Numurkah Leader* advertised as ‘owned by farmers, directed by farmers and conducted entirely in the interest of farmers’.

By 1900 Numurkah was notable for its large number of Hotels, with no less than ten listed by *Wise’s Post Office Directory* for 1899/1900. These included the Numurkah Hotel and Telegraph Hotel.⁵

The *Municipal Directory* of 1901 listed the population of Numurkah as 1,125 (out of a total population of 7,600 in the Numurkah shire). The town was described as ‘an agricultural township with telegraph station, savings bank, post and money order office, shire and masonic hall, state school, three banks, five churches, a Mechanics Institute with library carrying 2300 volumes, free reading room, court house, public parks and two newspapers’.⁶ The region was an important agricultural, pastoral and horsebreeding area. Although the area was predominantly wheat growing, other farming activities developed in the late 1800s including pigs, dairy cattle, Clydesdale horses, orchards and grape vines. The Shire was predominantly a dry farming region for the next fifty years.

In the first decade of the 1900s Numurkah’s population and economy remained relatively stable, with several businesses moving, and some newer buildings, such as the Numurkah Hotel (1910) replacing older structures. The Savings Bank (1910) also dates from this period.

The population of the town, after its initial ten-year explosion, grew to only about 1,400 by the late 1930s. The depression of the 1930s, the wheat crisis (oversupply and low prices) and World War II impacted the Shire with many small towns virtually disappearing and the population stagnating or declining.

As with Cobram and Nathalia, the Soldier Settlement Scheme and Murray-Goulburn Irrigation scheme had a huge impact on Numurkah. In 1946 a camp for 300 workers was set up at the northern end of the town and the administrative headquarters for the Soldier Settlers was established at Numurkah. The task for these workers was to prepare “The Settlement”. Many of the 300 workers were post-war immigrants and on the completion of the work, many also settled in the area. In the next thirty years the population almost doubled,

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

making the post war period one of significant growth for the town, as evidenced by the building activity of the 1950s to 1960s.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

URBAN DESIGN, VIEWS AND FOCI

The Melville Streetscape

The Melville Streetscape is a view of high significance in the history of Numurkah, valued by the local community throughout its history as an indicator of civic progress and development. Early postcards from the 1890s and early 1900s testify to the aesthetic importance of the view for pride in the town. Melville Street was also the scene of many significant historical, social and cultural events, such as the Caledonian Parade and processions associated with the Back-To and other local celebrations.

In 1942 the *Numurkah Leader* extolled the streetscapes of Numurkah:

In Melville Street one finds a representative and excellent number of buildings and shops fronting a well made street with concrete footways [...] The streets are all well kept and the most of them are planted with shapely trees.⁷

Neighbouring Micklejohn Street was similarly noted for its 'fine avenue of currajong trees'. Numurkah shared the controversies of many country towns over the state of its main thoroughfares, but Numurkah was notable from 1887 for its sixteen cast iron public street lamps.



Fig. 5 Melville Street in 1949 looking south. Source: Bossence 1966.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT



Fig. 6 1914 Caledonian Parade in Melville Street. Source: Sigley 2001/ Numurkah Historical Society.

Much of the historic streetscape dates from culturally significant eras of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the post war period. This is confined to the buildings and subdivision layout of streets and allotments and some views of these. The streetscape engineering infrastructure such as the road surface, kerbs, gutters, footpaths and round-a-bouts date from recent decades. The significant views are towards the dominant two storey buildings as seen looking north in Figs 5 and 6 and at the other end of the precinct, it is looking south towards the two storey, former Bank of Victoria building.



Fig. 7 2005. Melville Street looking south. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd.

Fig 8. Below. Early view. Source: State Library of Victoria.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT



In the photograph above, note the parapets are intact on the shops and hotel but the posted verandahs are not apparent at this end of the streetscape.

The area is characterized by the original rectangular allotment configuration with buildings sited parallel to, and on, the street boundary. The posted verandahs, as seen in Fig 3, were most likely removed in the 1960s, during the State wide push to make the streets more car-friendly, arguably at the expense of pedestrian comfort.

There are two tall palm trees near the north end of the precinct however, there is no other distinguishing vegetation. There are several examples of each of the main periods of development and many buildings are excellent local examples of contemporary architecture at the time of their construction.

CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT PLACES

The Numurkah Town Centre Precinct contains numerous significant sites associated with the heritage of Numurkah. These can primarily be divided into hotels, shops, civic and community structures. These are indicated by a red dot in Fig 1, and a complete photo list is at the end of this section, however, several principal examples are included in further detail below:

Some of the sites have a good to excellent degree of integrity while a few have poor integrity however, most have good to fair integrity. The condition of most of the places is excellent to good.

Telegraph Hotel 1882 (1880s Hotels) DB 488

The Telegraph Hotel appears to be the oldest surviving hotel in Melville Street, and in Numurkah. It was first built for John Parsons in 1882 in blended-red bricks and is a fine example in the Victorian Classical style with ornate rendered facades, parapets, and tall decorative chimneys. The arched windows at ground level are spaced between the vertical pilasters and horizontal rusticated render plinth and stringcourse. The Telegraph Hotel is listed among the ten hotels operating in Numurkah during the 1880/90s period and is significant as a representative of the booming hotel business in the town during its early growth period. Many of the other hotels from this period were either burnt down in the 1880s/90s or later demolished.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT



Fig9. Telegraph Hotel 1882. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Numurkah Hotel 1910 (Federation building/ Hotels) DB 463

The Numurkah Hotel is associated with the oldest business in the town, the first Numurkah Hotel being run by Peter McCaskill, the first European resident of Numurkah in 1878. The present building however was built in 1910, and as such is in fact an excellent example of the early twentieth century architecture of Numurkah. It was built in the same year, and by the same eminent architect, Allan McDonald, as the adjacent Savings Bank. The large arched window openings on the ground floor are typical of architecture of the Federation period.



Fig. 10 Numurkah Hotel. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004 and below, **Fig 11. part of Melville Street in 1954.** Source: State Library of Victoria.



NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Crawford's Pharmacy est. 1881 DB 456 (Melville Street Shops – 1880/90s)

Crawford's Pharmacy (established 1881) at 70 Melville Street is notable as one of the oldest surviving brick shops in Melville Street and Numurkah. The Classically styled building dates to at least 1890 and probably earlier – Number 70 Melville Street has been noted as the 'first brick building' in Numurkah, and is recorded as containing a disastrous fire along Melville Street in 1885.⁸ The rendered façade is well proportioned and highly decorative. It is surmounted by a fine parapet with balusters and raised arched tympanum above the centrally placed arched door, which is flanked by Corinthian pilasters. The parapet most likely had urns on top as can be seen on a similarly styled building in Fig 12. It is an excellent and elaborate example of a late Victorian era shop. Many of the surviving early brick buildings in Melville Street date from the reconstruction after the 1885 fire in particular. As such, Crawford's Pharmacy building and others like it are also excellent examples of the 1880s/ early 1890s commercial buildings of the town, several of which survive in close proximity to each other along Melville Street.



Fig 12. Left. Crawford's Pharmacy Building (est 1881) at 70 Melville Street Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004.
Right. Nathalia Water Sewerage Map. Source: Nathalia Historical Society.

Other shops from the late nineteenth century include those at number 66, 68, 42 and 44 Melville Street. 1882 was a year of particular building activity as described by the *Numurkah Standard*:

There has been considerable activity in buildings operations in Numurkah during the past few months. In Melville Street that new residence of Dr O'Sullivan is nearly finished, and a very imposing structure is is. ... The four principal cash stores in the main street have all been making additions and alterations in view of the approaching busy season [...] Mrs Summers completed a few weeks ago the erection of three brick shops, which improve the appearance of this end of the street wonderfully. It speaks volumes for the enterprise of the proprietess and of the business capacity of the town ...⁹

Many of the earliest shops were later demolished, and consequently many of the surviving early shops in Numurkah date to the late 1880s and early 1890s when a combination of fires and commercial progress saw many original weatherboard and wooden buildings on Melville Street rebuilt in brick in the ornamental late Victorian style. It was also common for additions or remodelling of these earlier buildings during the 1890s.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT



Fig 13. Shop, 66 Melville Street Numurkah. (1880s). Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004

Numurkah Leader DB 455 (1895/ Businesses 1890s)

Numurkah began with the *Numurkah Standard* which ran from 1880 to 1918. The *Numurkah Guardian and Wunghnu Observer* commenced in March 1884 before merging with the *Shepparton Advertiser* in October 1885. The long-running *Numurkah Leader* began in April 1895. Its building in Melville Street dates to the 1890s. It has similar design characteristics to Crawford's Pharmacy in Fig 10, and is probably by the same architect. Both buildings are highly decorative and excellent examples of Numurkah's late Victorian era commercial architecture.



Fig. 14 88 Melville Street Numurkah. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Kinnaird's Building DB 490 (Butcher est. 1879/ building - shops 1940s)

The Kinnaird name is associated with one of Numurkah's early and longest running businesses, the Kinnaird butcher established in 1879 in a wooden shop on Melville Street. The present building however carried that name into a new period, [as one of the town's finer examples of art deco design dating to the 1940s.]



Fig 15. Kinnaird Building 1940s. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005

Postwar Remodelling 1950s-60s

In the post war period the booming population from a combination of Soldier Settlement, improved irrigation and immigration led to a boom in development along Melville Street and Numurkah more generally. This saw many of the older shops 'remodelled' in a more contemporary style, which stripped the parapets of decoration, simple, clean horizontal lines and large expanses of wall and glass being typical examples which abound in Melville Street. During this time the street itself was curbed (1966), many verandahs removed and shops set back further from the street.



Fig 16. Shops remodelled in postwar style, Melville Street. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Courthouse 1889 DB 82 (Civic Buildings 1880s)

The Numurkah Courthouse was built in 1889 and served as a court until 1986. It was constructed by the Public Works Department, designed by C. K. Gilchrist and G. W. Watson, the district architect 'in the Queen Anne style with bricks from Clark Brothers of Numurkah'.¹⁰ The contractors were Crocker and Lewis. In 1992 it was occupied by the Numurkah Community Learning Centre.

The register of the National Estate describes the courthouse thus:

This is a fine example of late nineteenth century Public Works Department design. The projecting gable form is typical of the Department and in this and similar examples reaches an interesting culmination. The gable expresses the court room. A distinctive feature of the building is the attention to detail, particularly with regard to the diverse decoration which is applied liberally to facades and rooftops. The design marks an early appearance of vertical ribs as a decorative motif.



Fig 17. Numurkah Courthouse 1888. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004.

Mechanics Institute 1883 (Civic Buildings 1880s)) DB 33/462

The first subscribers to the Numurkah Mechanics' Institute met on 21 June 1882 and the building was constructed within the following year. Bossence describes the foundation thus:

Land for the M. I. was sold to the trustees by Catherine McCaskill, Peter's widow. The block had a forty nine foot frontage to Melville Street, the price was L2 a foot and Mrs McCaskill refunded L50 of the purchase money as a donation. The transfer was signed on 20 Dec 1882, the trustees of the Institute being M.U. O'Sullivan, and Messrs Alfred Day, T. Livingstone, Frank May and George Salas.¹¹

The Mechanics' Institute was the site of the first Church of England service in the town ahead of the construction of the church, and was also used as a court house and a venue for balls, concerts, lectures, the Numurkah Dramatic Club, Fire Brigade concerts and the Choral Union. The Numurkah Shire also met there before the Shire Hall was built, up to 1889. The site is thus associated with a wide variety of cultural, social, religious, recreational and political events and groups from the earliest period of the town's history.

The building was constructed by T. E. Draper, initially with a single storey. A second storey that included a billiards hall was added after 1887. A much noted feature of the early building was its proscenium, described in 1887 by the *Numurkah Standard* as:

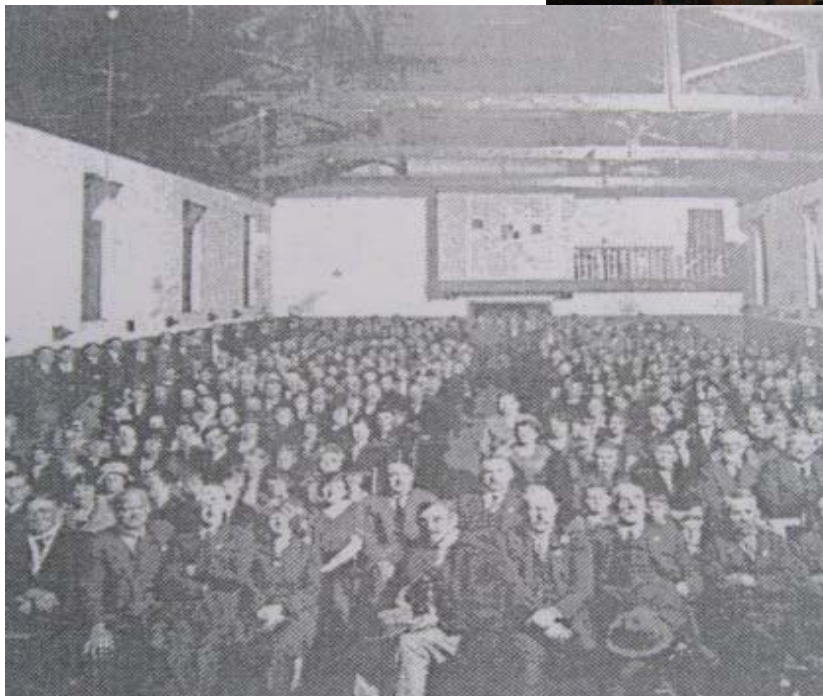
NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

...the 'divine William's' portrait occupies the centre position of the top of the proscenium and on both sides are pictured statuettes and the usual scroll work in imitation of plaster moulding. The valance is of crimson rep. with old gold fringe and the other colours harmonise well with the rich colour of the drapery. Mr S. H. Edwards has furnished a handsome piece of scroll-work of his own design and execution as an additional embellishment to Shakespeare's portrait. The British coat of arms is hung above the centre piece.¹²

In 1885 a reading room was added. From 1885 to 1890 the Institute served as the Rupertswood Freemason's Lodge, in keeping with its multiple uses over its history. The building was gifted by the Institute to the Shire in 1938 and auctioned by them in 1957, when it was valued at £18,000. It was eventually sold for £16,250 and used as a hardware shop. Sold again, the building remained a hardware until 1980. The building has since been renovated but retains a few original features, for example the timber ceiling, pressed metal rear wall surrounding what was once the stage.¹³

Fig 18. Former Numurkah Mechanic's Institute.
Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004.

Fig 19. Below, Interior of the Mechanic's Institute in 1922. Source: Sigley 2001/ Numurkah Historical Society.



NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Bank of Victoria 1892 DB 516

The Bank of Victoria occupied premises in Numurkah as early as 1882, but the present building dates to 1890 when it opened on 1 December. The bank closed due to the financial crash of the 1890 Depression, which saw the bank's payments suspended.¹⁴ It is now used by the Numurkah Historical Society, the bank vault being an excellent place to store important and rare documents such as minute books from early days of Numurkah's history. It is a very large and imposing classically derived building which addresses the corner by the use of an angled entry and recessed bays towards the rear of both street facades, but the exposed red brick on all façades is a distinctive feature of Federation era architecture.



Fig 20. Former Bank of Victoria 1892. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004.

State Savings Bank 1910 DB 437

Opened on the 1 November 1912, the state savings bank was built on the site of the old Numurkah Hotel, known as 'Morley's Corner' and purchased for the record price of £4 per foot, and designed by eminent local architect Allan McDonald who was also the architect of the new Numurkah Hotel (1910) beside it. The first manager was E. E. Cutler, and the 'solid brick' building matched the new Numurkah Hotel.



Fig. 21 Former State Savings Bank of 1910. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2004.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

Fire Brigade 1930 DB 553

The Numurkah voluntary fire brigade was first established in 1884, following a public meeting at the Mechanic's Institute. Fire was a persistent threat and recurring event in Numurkah, particularly among the old wooden and weatherboard shops of Melville Street, to which the station had to be kept close. While the first station was built in 1885, the present building in Quinn Street dates to 1930. The new building (1930) was necessary to house the new fire truck acquired in 1926. It was built by local builders George Dudley and William Tuttle to a typical interwar classically derived design used for many such buildings in the State.

15



Fig. 22 Fire Brigade Station 1930. Source: Lorraine Huddle 2005.

Town Hall, 38 Knox Street

By 1930 the population of Numurkah had grown to about 1,400. While the population had grown slowly throughout the early twentieth century from the 1,174 population in 1901, there had long been demand for a larger public meeting space than that afforded by the now demolished Shire Hall of 1889. The new town hall was required with 'up to date seating for over 700 and supper seating for 200'¹ and was designed in fashionable art deco style. It cost £13,000, a large sum for the time, and was opened on 15 November 1938. The more recent extensions and office space were added in 1978.



Fig. 23 Numurkah Town Hall 1938 Knox Street. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd 2005.

1 Bossence, *Numurkah*, 1979.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE¹⁶

Numurkah Town Centre Precinct

The history and description, which precedes this Statement of Cultural Significance, is the source of evidence for the statement below.

The **Numurkah Town Centre Precinct** is **aesthetically significant** at the **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1). It demonstrates many original and early design qualities associated with the commercial development of Melville Street, between the 1880s and 1950s. It is a stylistic mix of predominantly Victorian, Federation and post war architectural styles that have been built and maintained throughout most of the precinct. These qualities include predominantly brick wall construction, hipped or gabled galvanised corrugated iron roof forms, one storey and some two storey heights, decorative parapets, posted verandahs, some cantilever verandahs from the interwar and post war period, picturesque skylines created by the pitched rooflines with chimneys and parapets, and accented by a backdrop of sky forming a consistent streetscape.

The area is enhanced by several architecturally fine buildings such as the former Mechanics' Institute Hall and Library, the two storey Telegraph Hotel, Numurkah Hotel, and former Bank of Victoria and State Savings Bank, and single storey, Fire Brigade Station, former Court House, Kinnaird Building, Numurkah Leader and various shops including Crawford's Pharmacy, and views along Melville Street to these buildings.

The **Numurkah Town Centre Precinct** is **historically and socially significant** on a **LOCAL** level. (AHC A.4, G.1, H.1) It is strongly associated with all the major periods of the development of the township of Numurkah since European settlement, particularly the late Victorian, Federation and Post War eras. It contains sites and structures that are socially, culturally and historically significant on a local level, through their association with all these aspects of the development of Numurkah and in some cases through their association with particular events and individuals that played an important role in the history of the town. The Melville Street view in particular has a longstanding and socially valued connection with the heritage of Numurkah.

HOTELS

The **Telegraph Hotel** (1882) is architecturally and historically significant on a local level as the oldest surviving hotel in Numurkah. (AHC , A.4, D2) The **Numurkah Hotel** (1910) is historically significant on a local level through its association with the original hotel in Numurkah of that name, established by Peter McCaskill in 1878 and as such the business is recognised by the community for its association with the earliest history of the township. (AHC G.1) The present building however is architecturally and historically significant on a local level as a representative of the early twentieth century buildings constructed during a period of economic stability and consolidation in the town, and particularly through its association with the local architect Allan McDonald, who also designed several other buildings at this time. (AHC A.4, D2, H.1)

BANKS

The **Savings Bank** (1910) is similarly associated with McDonald and with the commercial development of the town in the Federation period. (AHC A.4, D2) The **Bank of Victoria** (1892) is historically significant on a local level through its association with the commercial development of the town and as the oldest bank in Numurkah. (AHC A.4) The architecture, including the interior, with its vault, is also well preserved, and the association with the Historical Society further testifies to its local value as a recognised site associated with the heritage of the town. (AHC D2, G.1)

SHOPS

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

The former **Crawford's Pharmacy** at 70 Melville Street, and the **Victorian era shops** more generally, are historically and architecturally significant on a local level through their association with the economic development of the town in the 1880s and 1890s, dating to a period of rapid building and growth for Numurkah. (AHC A.4, D2) The former pharmacy is also reputed to be one of the oldest brick shops in Numurkah. The **Kinnaird's Building** is historically and architecturally significant on a local level through its association with a specific early business and individual in the commercial life of the town, while the structure itself is associated with the art deco style of architecture, and the construction period of the 1940s. (AHC A.4, D2) The while the array of 1960s 'remodelled' shops are historically significant on a local level through their association with the post war building and population boom in Numurkah associated with Soldier Settlement, Improved Irrigation and Immigration. (AHC A.4)

CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

The former **Mechanic's Institute** (1883) is historically significant on a local level through its association with the early cultural and civic community of Numurkah and as a site associated with key historical events in the history of the town and with the Mechanics Institute movement which played an important role in the educational, cultural associations and civic life of the area. (AHC A.4, H.1, G.1)

The **Courthouse** (1892) is historically and architecturally significant on a local level for its association with the development of law and order, and with the late Victorian prosperity of Numurkah. (AHC A.4, D2, E1)

The **Numurkah Leader** building is historically significant and architecturally on a local level through its association with the development of early newspapers and cultural associations in Numurkah, dating back to 1895, making the building also an example of late Victorian architecture in the town. (AHC A.4, G.1)

The **Fire Brigade Station** (1930) is historically significant on a local level through its association with the vital service of the voluntary fire brigade in the history of Numurkah. This service goes back to the 1880s, while the building itself is associated with the interwar period in Numurkah and the development of service institutions in the town. (AHC A.4)

The **Numurkah Town Hall** (1938) is historically significant on a local level for its association with the civic development of the town in the twentieth century, and with the steady growth of settled institutions in the town during the interwar period. (AHC A.1) It is socially significant on a local level for its ongoing association with the social life and events of the town and as such its history has been interwoven with the history of Numurkah since 1938. (AHC G.1) The Town Hall is aesthetically significant as a well preserved example inside and out of Art Deco design. (AHC E1).

The **Numurkah Town Centre Precinct** is scientifically significant on a LOCAL level (Criteria C2, F1) . The materials and workmanship in the significant buildings are technically important and increasingly rare examples in Numurkah.

Overall, the Numurkah Town Centre Precinct is culturally significant at the LOCAL level.

NUMURKAH TOWN CENTRE PRECINCT

- 1 Incorporating material from *Moira Shire Thematic Environmental History*. Sources: *VMD*, 1994, p. 649; Watson, *Forgotten Towns*, p. 347; *Vision and Realisation*, Vol. 3. pp. 799, 866-7; *VMD*, various years - see Appendix A; Gazetteer of Australian Cities; Wise's Victoria Post Office Directory 1884-1885, 1888-1889; Bossence, *Numurkah*, pp. 97, 105, 119-21, 146, 155, 334-5, 341-3; Plan of Township of Numurkah, 1918. Source: State Library of Victoria, Maps collection; Baragwanath, Pam, *If The Walls Could Speak : A Social History of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria*, Mechanics Institute Inc., Windsor, 2000, p. 221; Challinger, *Historic Court Houses of Victoria*, p. 147; Clark, Ian & Heydon, Toby, *Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria*, Database on CD-Rom, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, Melbourne, 2002.
- 2 Numurkah, Parish of Katunga map 1918, Lands Department.
- 3 Back-To-Committee, *Shaping a Shire: The Story of Numurkah*, 1970, p.16.
- 4 Bossence, *Numurkah*, p.65.
- 5 *Wise's Post Office Directory* 1899/1900.
- 6 *Municipal Directory of Victoria* 1901.
- 7 *Numurkah Leader*, 22 September 1942.
- 8 Bossence, p.121.
- 9 *Numurkah Standard*, 3 November 1882.
- 10 *Numurkah Standard*, 22 November 1889.
- 11 Bossence, p.80-81.
- 12 Bossence, p.80-81; Baragwanath, Pam. (2000). "If These Walls Could Talk." Publishing Solutions Pty Ltd. p.221.
- 13 MI DB.
- 14 Bossence, p.229.
- 15 Bossence, p.251; *Shaping a Shire*.
- 16 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