

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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Bridge Street Mall / Bakery Hill



BRIDGE MALL-BAKERY HILL HERITAGE PRECINCT

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO176

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct is **historically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion A & H.1).

A The place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;

A.4 & H.1 Importance for association with events, developments, cultural phases and individuals which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the region.

The Precinct is historically significant as the oldest commercial retail area in Ballarat, located in the river flats of Yarrowee River. The Precinct was the narrow pivotal meeting point in the 1850s, between Main Road and the chaotic alluvial mining and commercial centre which spread over Ballarat Flats, Yarrowee Creek and Golden Point, and the official government township surveyed in 1851 and the police camp on the high basalt escarpment

overlooking Yarrowee River to the west.

The Precinct is historically significant for its association with the early settlement of East Ballarat from the 1850s as a result of gold discoveries in the area, and with the early development of this particular area of East Ballarat as a focus of commercial and cultural/community activities in contrast with the contemporary government town that was being established under neoclassical auspices of hierarchy and axial ordering in West Ballarat.

The Precinct is historically significant for its association with Bakery Hill located on the high ground at the eastern end of the precinct, the site of the much analyzed place in Australian history as the meeting point for miners during the Eureka Rebellion, which took place on the Ballarat goldfields in November and December 1854. Defiant miners gathered at Bakery Hill in their thousands, in full view of the government camp, to air their grievances over mining licenses and corrupt officialdom. They stood together on Bakery Hill as Peter Lalor symbolically raised the Eureka Flag, with its design modeled on the stars of the Southern Cross. No physical evidence of this event remains at Bakery Hill, but the location nevertheless maintains its historical importance. Bakery Hill was also the site of an important deep lead, which although rich, was difficult to work due to high water levels.

The Precinct is historically significant for its association with the early un-planned area of East Ballarat that was subject to major flooding, noise, proliferation of mine shafts, pudding machines, debris, noxious fumes, polluted water and general environmental degradation associated with gold mining. A basic bridge was erected across Yarrowee River in 1862 to provide passage over this area. The width of the bridge is reported to have determined the width of Bridge Street and accordingly, storekeepers built the frontages of their shops to align with the bridge. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, floods regularly harassed Bridge and Main Street retailers and in the 1860s engineering works were carried out to raise the level of the street, up to six feet in some places. The present day level of Bridge Street is considerably higher than it was during the 1850s and 1860s.

In particular the continuing commercial activities along Main Road are an important reminder of its early role as a flourishing commercial and retail thoroughfare in the 1850s. The commercial buildings in Main Road, Bridge Mall and Victoria Street are also associated with continuing commercial developments in the precinct from the 1860s and into the early decades of the twentieth century. Associations with the cultural/community developments in the precinct from the 1860s and into the early decades of the twentieth century are identified by St Paul's Anglican Church, its associated Parish Hall and the former ANA Hall, which was formerly a Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct is **architecturally** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments; (e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;

The Precinct is architecturally important because it demonstrates many original and intact historic architectural design qualities associated with the commercial and cultural/community development of the area between the 1850s and the late 1930s.

The commercial buildings in the Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct range in their period of construction from Victorian to Federation to Inter-war, although a number of 19th century facades have been remodeled. There is an outstanding group of very early 19th century two storey shops in the eastern area, which may date to the 1850s/60s and which are a scarce example of a particular type of shop design that is no longer common. Although most of the commercial buildings are two storey in height there are a number of historic single story buildings within the precinct. There is also a pair of notable semi-detached three storey buildings at 24-26 Bridge Mall and the distinctive three storey hotel at 92 Bridge Mall (on the corner of Peel Street). Many of the historic commercial buildings feature parapets, which are a dominant element in the streetscape. The dominant style of heritage buildings in this precinct is commercial Victorian erected from c.1865-c.1900. There is also a small number of commercial Federation styled buildings erected from c.1890-c.1918 and a small number of commercial Inter-war styled buildings. Some of these were erected on the sites of earlier buildings from c.1920-c.1940 while others are nineteenth century buildings that have been substantially refaced.

The Precinct is architecturally important for the fine example of St Paul's Anglican Church in Humffray Street South, which forms a dramatic landmark on the skyline. Its architectural development is also important as an example of how the design and construction of buildings in this area were adapted to the risks associated with mining conditions of its site.

The Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct is **aesthetically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments; (e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;

The Precinct is aesthetically significant for its distinctive heritage visual qualities that assist in understanding the historical, cultural and architectural development of the area, particularly in contrast with Ballarat West, and contribute to the gold mining townscape of Ballarat. These views include the dramatic rear views of the buildings on the western basalt escarpment of Lydiard Street and Camp Street as well as internal rear views of the buildings within the precinct.

Most of these views originate from the distinctive topography of the Precinct whereby the rising ground in both directions provide enclosed vistas at each end and reinforce the sense of enclosure formed by the contrasting narrowness of Bridge Mall. These views include (but are not limited) to the confined commercial streetscape along Bridge Mall between Grenville Street and Peel Street South contrasted with the vista westwards up the wide boulevard of Sturt Street with its mature trees, memorials and dominant towers of the Town Hall and former Post Office on top of the escarpment; the views into and along Bridge Mall and Victoria Street from the eastern and western edges of the Precinct; the stepped facades of the significantly intact early buildings along the northern side of Victoria Street as it changes alignment from its intersection with Bridge Mall and inclines upwards towards the intersection with Humffray Street South; the complex vistas northwards along Humffray Street South and Main Road from the point where they intersect at a sharp angle on the southeastern edge of the precinct; and the dynamic appearance of the rear facades of the commercial buildings throughout the Precinct, which can be seen from many locations both within and outside of the precinct, and comprise a variety of shapes, heights, sizes and building materials.

Other important aesthetic qualities are substantially demonstrated by the significant urban foci. Notably the distinctive former East Ballarat Post Office which forms a significant corner streetscape element at the south-eastern entry to the Precinct; St Paul's Anglican Church in Humffray Street South, which due to its position on the highest point of the precinct and its imposing tower, forms a dramatic landmark on the skyline and can be seen from many vantage points both within and outside of the Precinct; the Bakery Hill Tavern (the former Munster Arms Hotel) at 10 Victoria Street, and the stepped series of face brick buildings at 19-27 Victoria Street, which are both on prominent corner locations at the main eastern entry to the Precinct; the three-storey Bridge Mall Tavern (the former North Grand Hotel) at 92 Bridge Mall, which is also on a prominent corner location; the former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 95-99 Bridge Mall, which concludes the northern vista along Main Road; and the notable three-storey pair of buildings at 24-26 Bridge Mall, which can be seen from a number of vantage points both within and outside of the Precinct.

Further important aesthetic qualities are contributed by the well detailed, stepped face brick retaining wall with a bluestone base and a rendered moulded capping and the short lengths of cast iron palisade fence with a bluestone plinth and piers of the former Ballarat East Post Office; and by the cast iron gates with heavy bluestone piers and the substantial and intricate cast iron palisade fence on a bluestone plinth of the St Paul's Anglican church site.

The Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct is **scientifically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion C.2).

(c) the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history.

(f) the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

The Precinct is of importance for contributing to a history of the infrastructure development of Ballarat East, as identified by the significantly intact bluestone lanes, channels, gutters and kerbs. The kerbstones are of additional significance for the markings left in them by former verandah posts.

The Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill Precinct is **socially** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion G.1).

(g) the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

The Precinct is recognized and highly valued by the local community for commercial and religious reasons.

Hermes Number 140650

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Bridge Mall / Bakery Hill is a central Ballarat precinct comprising a predominantly built up commercial area with a few cultural/community and residential buildings.

The precinct focuses around Bridge Mall extending through to Curtis Street (which defines the northern border) and Little Bridge Street (which defines the southern border). The eastern section of the precinct includes the western ends of Porter Street, Main Road, Humffray Street South and Hopetoun Street (see map above). Grenville Street provides the western boundary.

Bridge Mall/Bakery Hill is one of the oldest commercial areas in Ballarat. The area was the main thoroughfare between the diggings in Ballarat Flat and the official township in Ballarat in the west. Bakery Hill played an important place in Australian history as being the meeting place for miners during the Eureka rebellion.

Buildings were known to exist along Main Road early as 1852. The first sale of land in Main Road occurred in February 1857. The government survey taken in 1857 shows mining activity occurring in this area.

Prior to 1862, Main Road extended to Grenville Street. The construction of the basic bridge over the Yarrowee Creek and the road became known as Bridge Street. The width of the bridge determined the narrow width of the road and traders built their premises in line with the road frontage. Regular flooding in the 1850's - 1860's required the level of Bridge Street to be raised by six feet during that time.

The improved access Bridge Street afforded and improvements to Victoria Street encouraged traders to relocate from the further end of Main Road, consolidating Bridge Street as the main commercial focus. The horse drawn tram service and its later electrification opened Bridge Street to the Ballarat west population. Public transport also enabled shopkeepers to relocate their families further out of the central Ballarat area.

By the 1960's Bridge Street had changed substantially and the verandahs were removed at this time and shopfronts altered. The pedestrian mall was created in 1981. Typically, the commercial and cultural/commercial buildings are 2 storey (some are 1 and 3 storey), constructed from brick or horizontal weatherboard, with hipped and/or gabled roof forms clad in galvanised corrugated iron; or tile and slate for cultural/community buildings. The buildings also feature dominant parapeted front facades, substantial clerestory rooflights, unpainted or rendered chimneys, early or original recessed shop fronts, timber or metal framed windows and individual detailing and decorations.

The key features of the precinct are the boulevard views west along Sturt Street and narrowed views east along Bridge Mall. Views to the rear of the buildings are seen from Little Bridge Street, Curtis, Victoria and Peel Streets. The precinct also retains some of the intact bluestone lanes, channels, gutters and kerbs. The kerbstones also important for the markings left in them by former verandah posts.

The precinct is architecturally important as it contains many original and early examples of Victorian, Federation and Interwar era commercial, cultural/community and residential buildings.

These include key landmark buildings such as the former Ballarat East Post Office, the former Munster Arms Hotel, the stepped series of brick buildings at 19 - 27 Victoria Street, the Bridge Mall Tavern, the former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 95-99 Bridge Mall and the 3 storey pair of buildings at 24 - 26 Bridge Mall.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place data owner.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>