

Hesse Street Commercial Precinct



Hesse Street looking South
c.1884



72 and 74 Hesse Street
c.1905



Hesse Street looking North
c.1887 showing the lamp post
at the Hobson Street
intersection.



39-41 and 43-45 Hesse
Street c.1882 (Q.H.S.)



Hesse Street looking south
from the Vue Grand c.1981



Hesse Street looking south
from the Vue Grand c.1914
(Q.H.S.)



Borough of Queenscliffe
Heritage Overlay map (note
that a number of the
individual HO sites within the
precinct are not mapped)



View across the undeveloped
Customs Reserve towards
Admans Grand Hotel (now
the Vue Grand Hotel) c.1882.
Source: SLV



Vue Grand Hotel, no. 46-48
Hesse Street



East side of Hesse Street between Hobson and Stokes Streets c. 1910. Source: SLV (a02729)



West side of Hesse Street looking north towards the intersection of Hobson Street c. 1945. Source: SLV (a02744)



View south along Hesse Street towards the junction with Hobson Street.

Location

Stokes Street and Hesse Street and Little Hesse Street and Symonds Street and Hobson Street QUEENSCLIFF, QUEENSCLIFFE BOROUGH

Municipality

QUEENSCLIFFE BOROUGH

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO7

Heritage Listing

Queenscliffe Borough

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 1, 1982

Statement of Significance as recorded under the Queenscliff Heritage Study 2009

What is significant?

The Hesse Street Commercial Precinct is of significance for its diverse collection of predominantly commercial buildings dating from the 1860s through to the present day. The precinct also includes key religious and civic buildings in the township and also has a small scattering of residences.

Specific significant and contributory buildings within the precinct are identified in the attached schedule.

How is it significant?

This precinct is of historical and aesthetic significance to the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Why is it significant?

The Hesse Street Commercial Precinct is of local historical significance as the commercial heart of Queenscliff since the 1850s and 1860s. Having developed in a relatively *ad hoc* manner over a number of decades, through its history, this part of Hesse Street has accommodated everything from stables and boarding houses, hotels, shops, churches, residences, and civic buildings. While in some respects much altered and with some unsympathetic later twentieth century buildings, equally the precinct retains a significant proportion of buildings both from the mid-to late nineteenth century and the Federation and interwar periods. The surviving building stock clearly demonstrates the pattern of commercial development in the township, retaining buildings from all eras in this history, including modest 1860s shops, flamboyant hotels and substantial shops from the boom era of the 1880s, distinctive Federation period commercial buildings and stripped interwar shops.

The precinct is one that contains many buildings with interesting and well-known historical associations.

Notwithstanding that a number of buildings in the precinct have suffered unsympathetic alterations, equally, there are a number of buildings of individual architectural distinction which combine with the more modest contributors to present a streetscape of considerable diversity and interest, which retains a strong heritage character.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Queenscliffe - Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study, Allom Lovell & Associates P/L, Architects, 1982; Queenscliffe - Queenscliffe Heritage Study, Lovell Chen, 2009;
Hermes Number	120875
Property Number	

Usage/Former Usage

This section of Hesse Street developed somewhat haphazardly, as the main commercial centre of Queenscliff over a period of some sixty years. The blocks on the west side of the street were sold off in the first land sales between 1850 and 1856 and by 1864 twelve buildings had been built including Adamson's Hotel on the site of the Vue Grant Guesthouse and Watmough's Hotel on the site of the present SEC Depot. On the east side of the street the whole of Section III was declared a Customs Reserve and it was not until 1865 that this reservation was partially lifted allowing the sale of blocks at the south end. At the north end a market place reserve was created at the same time and this remained until late in the century.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HESSE STREET COMMERCIAL PRECINCT

(i) Building Use:

Historically the area has never had uniformity of use of buildings and currently retains a variety of uses ranging from shops to residential. This variety of uses should be maintained and encouraged as part of the *characteristics* of the area. Control should be placed on uses that will physically detract from the area or that require a building type or form that is alien such as drive-in liquor stores or take-away food chain stores. Conversely where the existing use of a building is no longer economically viable, flexibility should be exercised in consideration of alternative uses to ensure that the building is maintained and does not become physically redundant.

(ii) Traffic and Pedestrian Movement

Vehicle Movement and Parking: The movement of traffic through this section of Hesse Street is not a major problem other than at the peak holiday season and this *is* for a relatively short period. During most of the year vehicles can move relatively freely up and down the street at a moderate speed. The use of angle parking appears to make drivers more cautious than where parallel parking is utilised, helping further to reduce the speed of car movement. Once through the commercial centre vehicles tend to speed up to the south across Stokes

Street, or down the hill past Hobson Street towards the boating area.

To help overcome this problem and to provide a demarcation between the central commercial area and the north and south sections of the street, it is recommended that a central roundabout be placed at the Hesse Street/Stokes Street intersection and the Hesse Street/Hobson Street intersection. There is clearly historic precedent for this in the latter case where early photographs indicate that there was a central lamp standard in the intersection. The lamp standard used is similar to those in Field Park and Hodgetts reserve had these existing standards could be reused in the intersections. The standard should be placed on a raised area with basalt block kerbing around it. Low planting could be provided around the base. This type of treatment would be preferable to creating bottlenecks at these intersections which would totally change the character of the street and would also tend to put greater pressure on the through streets to the east and west of Hesse Street. The current parking arrangement in Hesse Street provides adequately for car parking for most of the year and it is only at the peak periods that there is a problem. Given the relatively small size of the shopping centre and the shortness of the peak holiday period, it is not considered to be desirable to create large areas of additional parking which would remain empty for much of the year. The new Council carpark will cater for any immediate overflow needs and creation of further parking area around the shopping centre is not recommended.

Pedestrian Movement:
Pedestrian movement across Hesse Street is basically at random locations, with slightly higher concentrations between the butcher at 38 Hesse Street and the grocer at 43-45 Hesse Street and between the shops around 72 Hesse Street and the grocer at 73 Hesse Street. For this reason it would be difficult to determine a point at which a pedestrian crossing should be provided, given the tendency to enable shoppers to cross the street at any location. Given these factors, the width of the street and the slowness at which traffic moves, it is not recommended that any special provision be made for pedestrian movement across the street.

(iii) Street Paving:

The existing paving material along the full length of Hesse Street from King Street to Symonds Street is bitumen to the road and footpaths. This type of paving should be maintained and not replaced by or intermixed with alternative paving materials such as concrete or paving blocks. Similarly the existing bluestone kerb and channel and deep spoon drains should be retained and re-levelled as required. Where blocks are reset they should be repointed in a cement mortar coloured up to the colour of the stone. The basic alignment and layout of the gutters should not be altered as is the case with the footpath and road widths.

(iv) Street Planting

To increase the amenity of the area and soften the harshness of the bitumen paving, street trees should be introduced to the street. These should be the same as the trees at the southern end of the street such as the European Elm, or a similar tree such as the Plane tree. The planting should be in avenue form oriented to fit in with the verandah layout in the street. Trees should be planted within the roadway set a distance of 2 to 3 metres from the existing kerb outline to avoid potential problems with overhead wires, and verandahs. Each tree should be surrounded by an open grate at least 1.5 metres x 1.5 metres for watering. Trees of a minimum of 3 metres in height should be planted and protected from vehicles with a picket surround. The alignment of gutters and footpaths should remain in their present position. The existing concrete tubs should be removed from the street.

(v) Street Furniture:

The existing street furniture consists of concrete and wide timber slatted seats and metal rubbish bins. These are placed randomly along the street. No evidence of early seating or rubbish bins has been located and the recommended alternative to the existing one is a traditional painted slatted timber seat on a curved wrought iron frame and cylindrical slatted timber metal rubbish bin containers. These should be painted in preference to stained or unfinished timber.

The position of such items of street furniture is important to maintaining uniformity to the street and an overall cohesiveness. Where possible groupings of a rubbish bin, seat and street tree should be used, and the placing of individual items by themselves avoided. Additional items of street furniture that could be introduced include bicycle racks with one rack for five bicycles on either side of the street and a fresh water drinking fountain. There are no early examples of either of these items within the street and traditional designs should be used.

(vi) Field Park:

Field Park on the east side of Hesse Street is of the utmost importance to the street as an area in which there is both visual and physical relief from the wide expanses of bitumen. It provides a resting spot for tired shoppers from the noise and heat of the street, a meeting place for friends, a quiet spot for sunning oneself early in the morning or a place for children to play. It is a high amenity area in the street and should be retained. A number of works should be carried out to reinforce this amenity and its character. These include:

- (a) the planting of a number of large shade trees to provide shelter from the summer sun and to break the harshness of the Historical Centre facade. These should be deciduous trees to allow sunlight to penetrate. The species should preferably be the same as the street trees.
- (b) the existing drinking fountain and wishing well and planter boxes should be removed and replaced with flower beds at ground level. These beds should be in the centre of the lawn and not on the edge of the footpath.
- (c) Red Gum edging timber should be provided to the edges of all paved surfaces against grassed surfaces.
- (d) the existing seats should be replaced with narrow slatted timber seats.
- (e) a timber picket fence should be installed across the front of the park between the two entry paths. The fence design should be based on the design of the original picket fence to the market reserve in this area.
- (f) the existing tourist guide map to the north of the park should be replaced with a more appropriately designed and lit map.

(vii) Street Lighting and Overhead Wires:

In the long term it would be highly desirable to remove all overhead wiring from the street and either place it underground or at the rear of properties. In addition street lighting could be modified to a more sympathetic design.

(viii) Shop Signs:

One of the most visually intrusive aspects of the street is the plethora of assorted plastic, metal and neon shop signs on the facades of many of the buildings. While the street is certainly not the worst example of this type of problem a number of the signs detract markedly from the exterior of important buildings. Particularly intrusive are the signs that project perpendicularly to the face of the upper facades of buildings. In general nineteenth century signs were painted on the facade just above verandah level and in some cases on the parapets of buildings, additional signage was provided around verandahs on the fascias and sides. Signs to the sides of buildings were also used where the side facade was exposed.

For many of the early buildings in the street it is possible to determine the type of original signage used from early photographs. Where this cannot be done the positioning, type and suitable lettering should be determined from the National Trust, Technical Bulletin 2.1, Lettering and Signs on Buildings c1850-1900. For buildings constructed after this period, signs should be of a style to suit the age of the building or compatible modern signs. Timber and Sheet metal signs should be used for all signboards to early buildings and plastic and neon signs restricted to use under the verandah or appropriate buildings.

Physical Description 1

Streetscapes

This section of Hesse Street historically has been relatively harsh in appearance with hard paved footpaths and roads and no street trees until well before the turn of the century. Up to the time of construction of the Post Office and Library in 1887 and 1888 respectively there was some softening on the east side with the presence of the picket fence enclosed market reserve. The reserve was subsequently renamed Field Park and was more recently partially occupied by the Historical Centre building. The remains of the park in front of this building should be maintained as an open space. Apart from individual buildings the only major loss to the street over 100 years has been the posted street verandahs and these only in recent times. Historically it could therefore be argued that this section of Hesse Street should be maintained in its present form and that where appropriate posted verandahs should be reinstated on buildings. In terms of urban design, however, this is seen as a very restricted approach

and an alternative approach is outlined in the urban design guidelines for Hesse Street in Section 5 of this report.

Physical Description 2

Existing Conditions:

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HESSE STREET COMMERCIAL PRECINCT

The appearance of Hesse Street in the nineteenth century was one of a wide gravel, and later bitumen, street with bluestone pitcher kerbing and gutters on both sides of the street. The street was flanked on each side by buildings of a great variety of styles, materials and sizes, many with timber posted verandahs decorated with timber fretwork or cast iron friezes and brackets. From early photographic records there appear to have been few other embellishments to street other than the occasional gas light later in the century.

By this time the commercial centre of the town was firmly established between Stokes and Hobson Streets. To the north, the shops continued part way down the hill toward Symonds Street but petered out in the centre of this section of the street, being supplemented by hotels and guest houses. A secondary commercial area existed on the corner of Hesse and Symonds Street, presided over by the grand Jubilee Terrace (now demolished) and progressing around the corner along the south side of Symonds Street between Hesse and Gellibrand Streets. This area is purported to have been patronised by the fishermen on the Flat who did not venture up into the centre of the town. The only remnants of shops that survived from this area are a two-storey shop in Symonds Street and the newly verandahed hardware shop at 17 Hesse Street.

At the opposite end of the main shopping centre, to the south of Stokes Street, the area has always been predominantly a residential area, with the notable exception of St. Andrews Church.

The outward appearance of the commercial centre of Hesse Street at present is a drab, slightly down at heel shopping centre, with little cohesion between shops and a dull streetscape. The intrusion of a number of unsympathetic new buildings has intensified this lacklustre appearance and detracted from the character of earlier buildings. The odd concrete seat and dried-up bush in a concrete tub has done little to improve the outlook.

Traffic problems in the street relate primarily to the provision of parking and the movement of cars through the surrounding streets. During much of the year there is sufficient parking within the street to cater for local shoppers' parking with the peaks at lunchtime being catered for by use of Hobson and Stokes Streets. During the summer and with the influx of tourists the parking situation becomes far more acute as does the general congestion of traffic. In the future this will be partially catered for by a new Council car park in Learmonth Street although this will affect the residential amenity of this street.

Physical Description 3

Existing Buildings:

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HESSE STREET COMMERCIAL PRECINCT

The majority of existing buildings in the street is pre-1920 and a number considerably earlier. The predominant feature of these buildings at street level was their posted verandahs which interlinked many otherwise unrelated buildings. Emphasis should be placed on reinstating these original verandahs where they existed previously. Where shops have original awning-type verandahs as in the case of no. 70, The Centreway and 64-68, Eddie George and Sons, both with ornate pressed metal ceilings, these should be restored. Where known, the verandahs should be reinstated to match exactly the detail of the original and in their original position.

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 source.

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