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# ARMSTRONG HOTEL RUINS

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## Location

ARMSTRONG AND WESTERN HIGHWAY AND MILITARY BYPASS ROAD ARMSTRONG, ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Municipality

ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7423-0072

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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Interpretation of Site	Possibly the 'Armstrong Hotel' dating to the 1850s. By 1864 there were no hotels in Armstrong.
Hermes Number	12460
Property Number	

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## History

Possibly the 'Armstrong Hotel' of 1850s but further research is required.

Update provided by Andrew Long and Associates February 2012:

The Armstrong Hotel

According to some historical sources, the ruins of the larger structure investigated in the above studies was a hotel known as Armstrong's or Brine's. Clarke *et al* undertook extensive historical research on this hotel, the results of which are partially reproduced here (Clarke *et al* 2002:7-9). Licensed as a hotel between 1873 and 1921, the building hosted a variety of owners and residents. At least four stages of its transformation from residential dwelling to hotel and store *have* been identified, namely in the years 1866, 1873, 1889 and 1897. In 1863, the Ararat rate books recorded William Brine as having a dwelling at Armstrong's. Brine's name appears on the title deed, dated 7 December 1864, for what was originally known as Crown Allotment 153. In Brine's will the property was described, and in the rate books is given as having a dwelling, brewery and garden in 1866, with a rateable value of £20 in 1869. Notice of application for a publican's license appeared in the *Ararat Advertiser* of 18 November 1873 which read: 'I, William Lane Brine, of Armstrong's, do hereby give notice that I desire to obtain, and will at the next Licensing Meeting apply for a Publican's Licence for a house situated at Armstrong's, containing six rooms, exclusive of those required for the use of the family'. This application is the first official record of Brine's association with a hotel at Armstrong's. It confirms that his property, which already contained a dwelling, was extended for the purposes of establishing a hotel. On 16 December 1873, William L Brine was granted a publican's license. The license was renewed in 1874 and on 2 November 1877, the title deeds for the property were returned to Brine. No information pertaining to license renewals could be found for the period 1874 to 1889; *however*, Brine is noted as holding a 'business license' in 1878.

A rate book entry for 1879 shows a hotel and land with joint ratepayers, William Brine and John Kofoed. According to Freeland (1966) it was not an uncommon alliance for a 'prospective licensee' to 'enlist the help of a brewer to help finance extensions to their existing hotels' (Freeland 1966:143). The licensee would then be obliged to sell the brewer's produce. However, this arrangement would often be more favourable to the brewer - if the hotelkeeper wished to leave the partnership, sometimes the only way was to sell out his business to the brewer. Brine and Kofoed may *have* entered into such an agreement, although a 'sell out' situation does not appear to have occurred. During the 1880s, the Hotel led a more stable existence. There is evidence to suggest that Brine's hotel served as a meeting place to discuss local issues. A letter from Brine to the Secretary of Lands, dated 20 January 1880 - found among the Ararat and Stawell District Mining Board papers - reports that 'a meeting was held at Brine's Armstrong Hotel on the 19th, William Brine in the chair. The subject of the meeting was whether to allow a Mr Rich to graze his sheep on the local farmers' **common extension**.

From 1884 to 1889, the Wise's Post Office Directory contained an entry for 'William Brine, Publican' during which time the annual recorded population of Armstrong's was seven persons. Brine's children had all reached adulthood by this time, and only the youngest, Camilla, was still living at home. During 1886 and 1887 Edward Seymour had lodged and resided with Brine, he being married to Brine's daughter, Jeanetta. After Brine's death in 1889, the title deeds for his property were transferred to his wife, Helena. Brine's will described the property at the time as 'a piece of freehold ... containing two acres two roods and thirty-nine perches ... on which is erected a stone house and building formerly occupied and used by the deceased containing eleven rooms'. In addition to this property, Brine also held another piece of freehold land 'containing one acre on allotment 168, Parish of Congongella, partially used as a vineyard. From 1891 to 1896 Mrs Brine was entered in Wise's as 'Publican, Armstrong's Hotel'. In 1897 the entry was altered to include 'Armstrong's Hotel and store', and remained so until 1900. She also renewed a hotel license annually from 1890 to 1898. Between these years, the recorded population at Armstrong's was eight persons, except in 1893 and 1894 when baker, John Cuthill was added. In 1900, Edward Wilson and Mrs Brine held joint title to both CA 153 and 154. By 1903, the titles had changed hands; Mr Deanes taking CA 154 and Mr Wilson without Mrs Brine - taking on CA 153. A transfer of a Victualler's License by Wilson to George Taylor in 1900 suggests that Wilson may have been operating the hotel for the years just before the turn of the century. From this time, the hotel and the property were subject to a number of ownership and managerial changes, and the allotments had been divided into CA 12 and CA 13, with CA 13 itself being divided in 1903.

Patrick Byrne was said to have been operating the Armstrong Hotel, possibly from 1907. In 1916, Byrne held title to the south portion of CA 13 (on which the hotel was situated) and all of CA 12. Robert Lennox held title of the north portion of CA 13, while the south portion had a succession of owners.

The final change occurred in October 1923 when the Armstrong Hotel went up for auction. The *Ararat Advertiser* gave a description of the remaining buildings: two weatherboard rooms 10x25ft, a weatherboard storeroom 12x ft, three weatherboard rooms 32x31 ft including two passages, wood ceiling and part wood dado, a small weatherboard room 8x6ft, an iron-roofed lean-to 23x7ft, and a stable 29x13ft partly constructed of slab with iron walls and an iron roof. Also on the four acre property were two stone rooms 31x16ft with veranda, and a dam with underground tank. Title deeds were held by Thomson and White, and included CA 12. The last owner of the northern section of CA 13 was a labourer named Robert Lennox. He passed away in 1937, and had left 'freehold

land, being part of CA 153, at Armstrong's, Parish of Ararat, County of Borung, with a hut thereon, valued at £40'. A local Ararat resident bought the weatherboard remains of the Armstrong Hotel and carted it to the town where they occupied a property on Campbell Street.

*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/>*