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# FORMER PRINCE OF WALES HOTEL SITE

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## Location

6116 WESTERN HIGHWAY MIDDLE CREEK, ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Municipality

ARARAT RURAL CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7523-0088

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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Interpretation of Site	The location of the hotel is reported in both Allender 1996 (pg.110) and by Edward who indicated the location at the front of the property, -40m S of the shed. The hotel burnt down in the early 20th century but there is the potential for subsurface remains to be present.
Archaeological Significance	Middle Creek Complex is of low archaeological significance due to the limited potential of the site to contain archaeological features and deposits associated with the Prince of Wales Hotel in the south of the property. The precise location of the hotel is vague; however both the available historical source and the property owner agree on the general location within 50m of the stone shed (Aliender 1996).
Historical Significance	The former Prince of Wales Hotel is notable historically for the circumstances of its destruction by fire .
Hermes Number	191843

## History

### Middle Creek Homestead Complex

Located some 5.5 kilometres south east of Buangor, Middle Creek is a seasonal waterway in an upland valley flat. It is situated in the Parishes of Buangor and Woodnaggerak, and the Local Government Areas of Ararat and Pyrenees. It was centred on the main road linking the towns of Ballarat and Stawell that was first constructed during the gold rushes of the 1850s which attracted a huge influx of miners into western Victoria. This Main Road eventually became known as the Western Highway. A comparison of present day maps and parish maps dating from the 19th century demonstrates that the road followed much the same route as it does today. Early descriptions of the agricultural potential of the area are not flattering, depicting it as parched in the summer and blasted by chill winds in the winter (*The Argus*, 24 September 1866). As a consequence, pastoral activities predominated in the area well past the Ararat gold-rush of 1857 and into the mid 1860 - 1870's. Elsewhere in Victoria, permanent settlement of land had largely taken place by this time: often by failed or retired miners in Ararat and other goldmining regions. In the Middle Creek area however, the last pastoralist of the Buangor Run, Mr Henry Miller, took licence in 1877. Nevertheless, early land sales for selection and residence were eagerly attended, and predominantly from 1865 local land was divided into relatively small holdings amidst rowdy, at times violently competitive bidding (*The Argus*, 6 July 1865, 24 September 1866). Grazing of cattle and *sheep*, with some grain production were the primary local agricultural industries. The Middle Creek Complex currently includes the Dunn Family homestead on the north of the Great Western Highway, associated with their lands on the southern side of the Western Highway - being Crown Allotments 29B and 29AI in the parish of Woodnaggerak. These allotments were owned by David Dunn who purchased Allotment 29B in 1875 when 35 acres of oats had been cultivated and it contained a weatherboard house with a shingle roof where William (or John) Foster', the previous owner had resided. William Forster leased Allotment 29AI in 1873, but transferred it to Dunn in 1877 as it was 'not sufficient extent to *make* a living'. Initially, Dunn was not resident on the land as *he* kept a hotel about a quarter of a mile away. At that time, 8 acres had been cultivated with potatoes and carrots but most of the land was being used for stock grazing. Forster lived in a threeroom hard wood house with a stone and brick chimney. There was also a blacksmith shop on the allotment. Forster was himself a blacksmith, but also worked at a saw mill at nearby Mount Cole.

The Dunn family have maintained an unbroken connection with this property and were frequently mentioned in press articles as prominent local citizens and members of the Australian Natives Association (*The Ararat Advertiser* 30 October 1915). Two generations of the Dunn family served on the Middle Creek School committee for 40 years from 1911 to 1951 (Allender & Brennan 1996. 168- 170). *The* Dunn family and their attachment to their land provide an insight to Australian history during *the* war years. In 1916, David Dunn's sons Harry and Robert Aubrey claimed exemption from conscription to the AIF due to their need to continue working their land in order to repay their father and keep him and their families. Despite the cynical remarks of the military representative, both were exempted from military service (*The Ararat Advertiser* 28 October 1916), and likely owed their lives to this. David's grandson, Edward Dunn is still resident in their homestead in the Middle Creek Complex. He reported that his father owned the Prince of Wales Hotel which also stood in the Middle Creek Complex close to the family homestead, and which operated until burning down on a winter's night in 1904 (E . Dunn *Pers Comm*, Allender et al 1996:110). It was also reported that the stone shed was constructed by Edwards grandfather who was a stone mason (E Dunn *Pers Comm*)

*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.*

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