ERSKINE HOUSE

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2008

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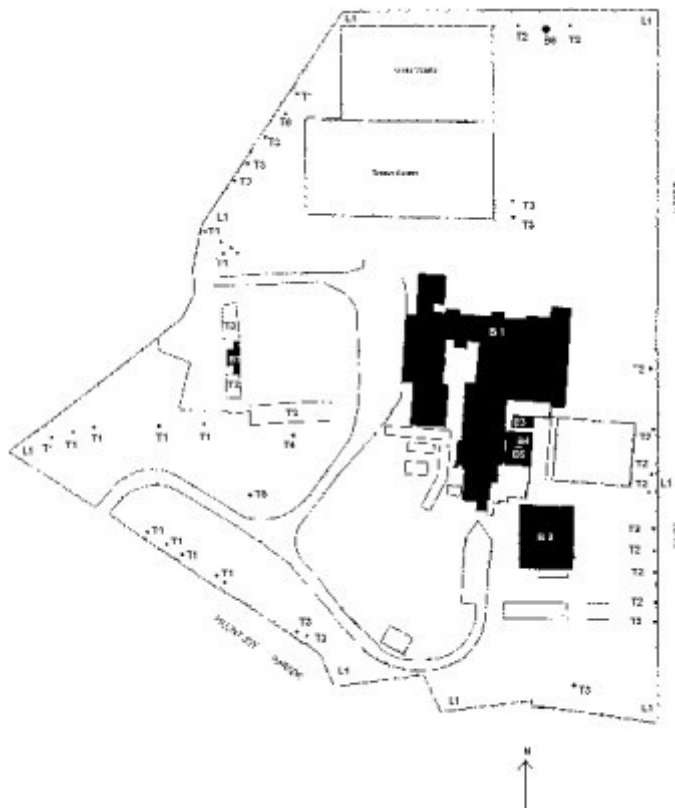2008

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1 erskine house mountjoy
parade lorne front view

plan

Location

35 MOUNTJOY PARADE LORNE, SURF COAST SHIRE

Municipality

SURF COAST SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1812

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO34

VHR Registration

September 30, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 13, 2022

What is significant?

Erskine House is a guest house in the seaside resort of Lorne which has been in continuous operation since the 1860s. Buildings were constructed on the site between 1868 and 1939, with further additions and alterations occurring in the post-World War II period. Some late nineteenth and early twentieth century building fabric survives and the 1939 buildings, designed by Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan are broadly intact. The present entry to Erskine House follows the line of the original drive leading to the existing entrance point where all visitors to the guest house have arrived since its foundation in 1868, and is an important link to its past. The layout of the grounds and some of the plantings are also important. Of particular significance is the beach access, croquet lawn and enclosing hedges, the pavilion, the open lawns to the north and east and the remnant cypress planting on the boundaries.

How is it significant?

Erskine House is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Erskine House is historically and socially significant as the oldest and largest surviving guest house in the state.

Through its fabric and siting, as well as through its documented history, Erskine House provides a reference to a long tradition of such establishments in Victoria, and more broadly to the history of the development of resort accommodation and leisure activities in the state. Erskine House is also historically significant for its association with the history of Lorne and in particular with its development as one of the best-known seaside resorts in Victoria. Erskine House is also of historical significance and has social values as a popular holiday destination for a wide cross-section of Victorian holidaymakers, and for the local Lorne community as a major institution and local employer.

 Though much altered and of limited aesthetic and architectural significance in its own right, Erskine House demonstrates aspects of guesthouse design of the late nineteenth and twentieth century through its evolved form including remnant nineteenth and early twentieth century elements and 1930s buildings. Other elements of particular interest include the driveway alignment, the landscaped character of the grounds with extensive recreational facilities, and a relationship with the beach. The 1930s extensions are relatively intact and are demonstrative of guest house design of the inter-war period, a time when Erskine House attracted record numbers of guests. These buildings are also of architectural interest as relatively intact examples of the work of Geelong architects Laird and Buchan.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions here.

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:
1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
4. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Exterior
* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
* Relocation of octagonal shelter B6 anywhere on site.
* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
* Regular garden/yard maintenance.
* Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering systems, provided the installation of the watering systems do not cause short or long term moisture problems to the building.
* Laying, removal or replacement of paving in the gardens and the courtyards.
* Repair, removal or replacement of existing garden/yard structures.

Interior
* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
* Repair of plasterwork provided that all new work matches good adjacent work in style, detail and finish.
* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings, eg vinyl.
* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.
Exemptions for Gardens and Trees
*The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants and replanting the same species or cultivar, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants and planting themes
* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard;
Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373
*Replacement planting which conserves the landscape character
*In the event of the loss of any plant specified in the Extent of Registration, replanting with the same species of tree as that removed
*Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings, structures, sculptures, fountains, monuments, ornaments, roads and paths, edges, fences and gates, drainage and irrigation systems
*Works to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed conservation plan or objectives,
*Non-commercial signage, lighting, security, fire safety and other safety requirements, provided no structural building occurs.
*Repainting in the same colour of previously painted surfaces
*Removal of elements/plantings not identified as being significant, or not within the registered land
*Removal of plants listed as Noxious Weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
*Non-structural works and installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems that occur at a distance greater than 5 metres from the canopy edge of a significant tree, plant or hedge,(structural works may require a permit if still on the registered land)
*Pruning or removal of trees in accordance with the Code of Practice for Powerline Clearance[Vegetation] 1996, unless they are identified as significant in the report
*Removal of vegetation to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures
*Maintenanceand replacement of play equipment to meet Australian Standards;
1. Playground equipment for parks, schools and domestic use AS1924

2. Playgrounds - Guide to sitting and to installation and maintenance of equipment AS 2155
3. Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements and test method AS4422

New Buildings and other buildings not registered
*All interior alterions are permit exempt
*Repair, Maintenance and minor alteration works to the exterior are permit exempt provided those works do not change the overall exterior appearance of the non registered buildings and structures in either finish or size.
*Demolition of the non registered structures is permit exempt.

Construction dates	1868,
Architect/Designer	Laird & Buchan,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ERSKINE HOUSE COFFEE PALACE,
Hermes Number	4375
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:
Lorne was originally known as Louttit Bay after Captain Louttit who commanded the first ship that took wool from Port Phillip to London, because he was forced to take shelter in the bay. The earliest settler at Louttit Bay, Mr Herd, established a cattle station there in 1853. Louttit Bay was added to the Winchelsea Road District in 1864.

The township of Louttit Bay was surveyed in 1869 and re-named Lorne. Its official naming coincided with the marriage in 1869 of one of Queen Victoria's daughters, Princess Louise, to the Marquis of Lorne. The first land sales of township allotments took place in 1872 when 29 lots were sold. A post office opened in Erskine House in 1874. Most goods came to Lorne by sea since land access was difficult until the 1930s.

By 1877, Lorne was a popular resort for fishing , sea bathing and bushwalking, with an estimated 3000 visitors. The Lorne Hotel was constructed in that year. By 1885 the township had two large hotels, one large boarding house, a post and telegraph office, an Anglican church and a State School, public baths and a public park. There were general stores, a bootmaker's shop, a photographic business and a good many private cottages.

The Lorne community pressured the government for a jetty for many years. Ready access by coastal shipping would make the town more prosperous, increase their trade in timber and other commodiities and attract tourists. In 1877 a grant towards the cost of a jetty was made by the government, and by July 1878, construction had started. A tramway was planned to run along the centre of the jetty to transport heavy goods.

The seaside resort of Lorne in the nineteenth century grew up in the tradition of many English seaside resorts which became popular as health resorts, as fashionable retreats, as beauty spots and because they offered opportunities for the amateur scientist to study natural features.

Early colonists soon discovered the seaside towns of Victoria. Brighton, named after the English resort of the same name, was attractive to those who wished to escape city living. In 1845, Superintendent La Trobe had a small cottage at Queenscliff to which he took his family at weekends.

Health Resort
Lorne's attractions as a health resort were much publicised. The Australian seaside resorts followed English precedents in advertising themselves as the place for invalids and jaded workers to recuperate in the healthful air and water at the beach. Thus Lorne was extolled as the Australian Torquay. The English Torquay was well-known as a refuge for consumptive invalids. The Lorne Bulletin mentioned in February 1881 that Mrs Mountjoy

was busy caring for several bad cases of consumption amonst the guests. As the infectious nature of tuberculosis was not understood at that time, this news would not have deterred potential guests. Lorne was a suitable place for more robust health seekers who were in need of a change of scene since it had the advantage of offering healthy walks to picturesque waterfalls and fern gullies as well as sea air and healthy sea bathing.'

History of Place:

The Site

Erskine House is located in the main street of Lorne, just over the Erskine River, on a flat site between Mountjoy Parade and the beach. The site originally extended to the Erskine River, but land to extend the Deans Marsh Road was appropriated by the Country Roads Board and the local Caravan Park is now located on what was the orchard and vegetable garden of Erskine House. The Mountjoy land also took in what is the present Mountjoy Parade and in about 1879, an exchange of land was made. The Mountjoys gave up the Mountjoy Parade land betwen Otway Street and Grove Road in exchange for a piece of river flat above the bridge which they used as a market garden until about the Second World War. It is now the site of another caravan park.

The Designers

The details of the early stages of the construction of Erskine House are not known. It is unlikely that an architect was employed in the early years. As an early visitor, Elaine MacDonald, commented:

The first Erskine House was a low building with three gable ends separated by verandahs on to which small bedrooms opened by french doors. .. additions were built without the slightest idea of their looking well or being related in material or design to the previous bits and pieces.

The gardens of Erskine House were first laid out in 1875, when Mr Jesse Allen came to Lorne and was employed by Thomas Mountjoy to lay out the garden and the orchard. The orchard was located beside the Erskine River. The property was fenced in 1875.

The Geelong firm of Laird and Buchan were employed to design the extensions of 1936 and 1939, and their design of the facade has remained to the present day. The firm was established in Geelong in 1890 as Laird and Barlow. John Angus Laird was born in 1862 at Eddington Station in the Western District. After an apprenticeship with architect Joseph Watts, he rose to become Watts' supervising architect. He commenced practice in Geelong on his own account in December 1890 and took New Zealand architect Fred J.Barlow into partnership in 1891. The practice gained early success by winning first prize of the open design competition for the Geelong Show Grounds and Grandstand. Laird taught at the Gordon Technical College within the Department of Architecture and was also on the Council. Buchan was apprenticed to the firm in the 1890s and became a partner in 1908, when the Laird and Barlow partnership was dissolved.

The practice of Laird and Buchan was a prolific one with work of every description, mainly in Geelong and the Western District until 1938 when the firm opened an office in Melbourne. Their work in religious architecture included Sunday Schools and churches for every denomination. The firm were architects for Geelong Grammar School over a long period, designing some buildings and superintending the erection of others by outside architects. The firm had strong connections with the Gordon Institute in Geelong and designed several of the Institute buildings, such as the Lascelles Chemical Laboratories (1921) and the Bostock Memorial Building (1928).

The choice of Laird and Buchan as the architects for the 1930s extensions to Erskine House was understandable, since not only was it a major local architectural firm. but Mr Tom Buchan and his wife had been guests at Erskine House from at least 1911.

The extensions to Erskine House of 1936 and 1939 received favorable attention in the architectural columns of the Argus in 1939. The architects had designed the exterior and interior of the new section of Erskine House. The detailed descriptions of colour schemes, carpet, tiling and textiles used in the furnishing of the principal rooms demonstrate the close attention Laird and Buchan gave to the integration of the exterior and interior of their design. Robin Boyd includes Erskine House in his 1947 publication "Victorian Modern" as example of the "Victorian type" of modern architecture, projected up to three stories.

The Building of Erskine House

The Mountjoy family went to Lorne in 1864 to take up the Louttit Bay run of 17,280 acres. The first building on the site was a two-room house belonging to the Mountjoys. This was added to as the family found that "summer visitors would be more profitable than chancy crops grown twenty miles from a country railway station" In 1865,

Mountjoy paid rates of £2.1.3 for a large house and £55 for land. By 1868, the Mountjoys had enlarged their premises and have started to take paying guests. In 1870-71 Thomas and Caleb Mountjoy paid £18 in rates on 44 acres freehold and a house. In 1872 stables were built.

A visitor in 1872 described a visit to Erskine House :

I found that Mr Mountjoy had erected a large, substantial wooden building (there is a fine cellar underneath) in which he can, when required, provide 40 beds. During the summer he will, doubtless, find his catering abilities taxed to their utmost - for few will care to camp out when they can obtain clean beds, and substantial meals, at 1/- each. I was really surprised at the low charges made, and the liberal manner in which we were treated - having unpleasant reminiscences of paying 4/- for a chop, at a certain fashionable seaside township.

The Mountjoys were paying rates of £25 in 1872. From 1873 until 1875, the property was described as "44 acres land, boarding house and Stables. (Temperance Hotel)" and the rates were increased to £40. In 1876 the description was for "44 acres boarding house and gardens fenced".

By 1875, the premises were "about to undergo enlargement". The rates increased to £45, and the rate collector's description mentioned gardens and an orchard, fencing and outbuildings. In 1876, the rates increased again to £56.

The name Erskine House is first used in 1877. At this time, another dining room and a long suite of bedrooms were added. The rates were now £100 for the "boarding house". The rates increased to £200 in 1878-79. In June 1882, a two-storey brick front and a billiard room was to be added to Mountjoy's Hotel.

In 1888, Mountjoy sold to the Mountjoy Lorne Estate Company and William Mountjoy stayed on as Manager at £350 a year. In 1890, the ballroom was constructed. A septic system of sewerage was installed in 1903.

A newspaper report of 1907 mentioned a raspberry tea given by Mrs Long of Bendigo in the cafe. (Now Meeting Room No. 4. 5 or 6) In 1908 gas lighting for ballroom and tennis court, balconies and croquet lawns was installed. Reference was made in 1908 to the quadrangle , or the Old Quad, as a gathering place for the visitors. A motor garage for 20 automobiles was constructed in 1916. The first mention of the Recreation Hall came in 1916.

In September 1929 , the erection of a spacious lounge and additional rooms was announced.

Use of the Buildings and Land
Erskine House is in a central position in Lorne on Mountjoy Parade. The Post and Telegraph Office was located there from April 1874 until 1888, when the Post Office moved to Mountjoy Parade. Thomas Mountjoy was the first Post Master at a salary of £10 a year. He was succeeded by Miss Alice Fyans in 1882. The Mountjoys encouraged the use of Erskine House for concerts and entertainments, for church services and as the local post office, making it the hub of the small community of Lorne all year round. Erskine House was a significant employer in Lorne: local people were employed in building and maintenance, in the provision of food, and as housemaids, kitchen staff and waiters.

James T. Anderson, who arrived in Lorne in 1878, remembered meeting on some Sundays for service and hymn-singing in Mountjoy's [Erskine House] dining room. His sister was christened there. Anglican services were held there until St Cuthbert's Church of England was built in 1880. In turn, the guests at Erskine House contributed to the life of Lorne during the season. The largest part of the congregation at the Presbyterian Church in February 1918 came from Erskine House.

The Mountjoy family were active in Lorne affairs. Thomas Mountjoy was one of the first trustees for the Cemetery gazetted in 1878. Thomas was also a member of a committee to build the Anglican Church and one of those who petitioned for a footbridge over the Erskine River. Mrs F. Mountjoy and Mrs K. Mountjoy were part of a Ladies Committee working to establish a Free Library in 1884.

The Journey to Erskine House
The coaching service operated by the Mountjoys to bring visitors from the Melbourne train to Lorne by coach began in 1878. Cobb and Co 's service, under the name of the Western Stage Company, began in November 1877, locating their stables near the Grand Pacific Hotel. They advertised a tri-weekly service between Winchelsea and Louttit Bay, advertising in conjunction with the Grand Pacific. The company was soon edged out by Mountjoys. Mountjoy employed drivers and grooms to look after the ninety horses kept for the service. Eight

men were employed in the blacksmith shop at Erskine House. A livery stables accommodated visitors ' horses. The extension of the Melbourne -Geelong railway to Winchelsea in 1876 made the journey a little easier, and in 1891, the line was extended to Dean's Marsh. The journey from Melbourne began by an early train to Geelong , a stop for breakfast, back on the train as far as Birregurra, before changing to a little train for the branch line to Deans Marsh, and finally a two and a half hour's coach journey to Lorne. The red mail coach drawn by a team of six horses gave the visitors a hot and dusty journey over the twenty miles to Lorne. Despite the lack of creature comforts, the rigours of the journey were soon forgotten as the visitors threw themselves into the social life of Erskine House.

The first car to arrive in Lorne was on 16 February 1906. The first visitor to Erskine House who arrived by car over "the tortuous mountain track to Lorne safely and without mishap" was Mr J. Bell of Geelong. Mr Bell had to spread canvas over one or two pieces of the road and took five hours for the journey. By 1916, visitors were assured that a motor garage was available to accommodate their cars during their stay.

The Visitors
The first visitors to Lorne were attracted by the sea and river fishing. Most of these visitors came by rough mountain tracks from the plains of the Western District.

A visit from the Governor of Victoria, Sir George Bowen, in 1873, publicised not only Lorne but the Mountjoy guest house.

By the early years of the twentieth century, fishing, shooting, bushwalking and sightseeing were the main attractions at Lorne. In January 1907, Erskine House guests numbered 163, with visitors from every state of Australia.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, visitors to Lorne tended to come from the leisured classes. As a holiday place, Lorne's appeal was not universal. It catered mainly for a well-to-do middle class who had the means and the leisure to enjoy it. The upper class frequently owned their own holiday houses at seaside resorts. The working class generally could not afford holidays; they worked a six day week and if they did visit the seaside, it was to places accessible by public transport and as a day-trip.

The arduous journey from Melbourne deterred many, but at the same time added to its charms for those who appreciated the exclusivity of Lorne. Paradoxically, part of Lorne's appeal was its very difficult access at least up until the completion of the Great Ocean Road. That it was known to a small number of Victoria's population gave it value to those who were fortunate enough to go there.

Eight guest houses in Lorne were advertised in the tourist guide Where to Go in 1915, nine in 1926, 15 in 1941, 16 in 1950. By 1961, the number had decreased to 13. During the 1920s, the guest house was at its most popular in Victoria. Numbers of visitors to guest houses declined during the depression of the 1930s and during the Second World War, but revived for a time after the war.

Photography at Lorne
The presence of a resident photographer at Lorne by 1885 testifies to the popularity of the resort. Many tourists sought a photographic record of their visit. During the tourist season a photographer used to go out to Erskine Falls to photograph the regular tourist party from Erskine House eating their picnic lunch. He would develop the prints during the afternoon and take them up to the Erskine House dining room in the evening to take orders from the diners. Another popular spot used as a photographic backdrop was the foot bridge built in 1880.

Holiday Activites
Activities at Erskine House consisted of outdoor activities and indoor entertainments for the guests. Walking to inspect the various beauty spots around Lorne was an essential component of a stay at Erskine House. The range of outdoor activities available in Lorne included fishing, especially crayfishing in the rock pools, swimming and later surfing, walking and picnicking. Back at Erskine House, the hosts offered golf, croquet, cricket and tennis.

The highly organised holidays followed a time-honoured tradition, though there were opportunities for incorporating new ideas for recreation in the programme. A new committee set up from amongst the guests each week in the high season to organise their own fun lessened work for the staff. For example, guest Mr H.V. McKay, the inventor of the Sunshine Harvester, was chairman of the activities committee in January 1916. Tennis, golf and croquet tournaments were regular events. A cricket match between Erskine House and the rest

of Lorne was a popular fixture. Sports programmes were popular, featuring potato races, sack races and Siamese races, with afternoon tea served on the lawns and the prizes distributed in the quadrangle. The names of the winners were published in the Geelong papers.

Concerts were a way of showing off the talents of the guests and also a way of raising funds for local causes. A grand concert was held in February 1890 in aid of the All Saints Church of England parsonage building fund. Guests provided much of the music for dances and concerts. At the New Year's Eve ball at Erskine House in 1911music was supplied by visitors at Erskine and from the Grand Pacific Hotel. An Erskine House orchestra was formed one year and a pianist was always in demand for dancing. In 1914 the Spaghoni Choral Society was formed, presumably by an enthusiastic group of visitors who would perform "at any time or place in which the spirit moves them. They would burst into song at afternoon tea, they can improvise an air to commemorate a croquet match, they can awake the morn or sentinel the night."

A typical week at Erskine House in 1906 offered guests a dance each evening, a progressive euchre party, an impromptu fancy dress ball, a dance with tableaux and charades, and a minstrel entertainment. During the day, excursions to beauty spots around Lorne , and a croquet tournament were available. In January 1907, "picnics, fishing, shooting parties and driving excursions" were arranged for the guests. Lorne's fern gullies and fairy glens attracted many walking parties and a report by the columnist "Penelope" in January 1907 noted that "One never sees a solitary individual going exploring. No, the welkin rings with the laughter and merry chatter of twos and threes, who with improvised Alpine stocks sally forth".

The annual fancy dress ball was sometimes held in February, sometimes in April. The later date had some advantages because guests could occupy themselves devising costumes if the uncertain weather prevented outdoor activities. Prizes were awarded for the most ingenious. Favourite costumes included "Chinamen", geisha girls, shepherdesses and Indian squaws. A Salmagundi Evening was held in February 1906 which combined concert and dance, tableaux and charades.

At Christmas and Easter, a semi-sacred concert was considered suitable for the occasion. At the Christmas Eve dance and concert, Father Christmas distributed gifts to the children at nine o'clock.

The entertainments at Erskine House were often organised to benefit local or national causes. The Erskine House Pierrots gave two performances in February 1918 in aid of the Coast Road Memorial for Fallen Soldiers, raising almost £20. On New Year's Day 1916 the whole of Erskine House was given over to fundraising for the war effort. The profits from this and other functions enabled the committee to send £35 to the local branch of the Red Cross, £25 to the Lady Mayoress's Patriotic Fund and £25 to the Defence Department to endow a cot in the Base Hospital.

The association of Erskine House with Lorne was so strong that at times the Geelong newspaper column "Jottings from Lorne" consisted only of happenings at Erskine House. The activities at Erskine House often involved visitors staying at the Grand Pacific Hotel , the Lorne Hotel or from private houses. For example the annual "Track Concert" in January 1911 to raise money for the Lorne Progress Association for the opening up and maintenance of local walking tracks and suspension bridges was a cooperative effort. Parties from the Lorne, Pacific Hotel and various houses as well as the Erskine House guests packed the Erskine ballroom and "standing room was at a premium". Other local causes for which Erskine House guests raised money were for a Bush Nurse to be employed at Lorne and for a life line for the beginnings of the life saving club in 1911. Both these endeavours would be beneficial to Erskine House, the guests and the local community. The habit of many families to stay at Erskine House year after year must have encouraged participation in such local causes.

Links with Geelong and the Western District were also strong. The lists of Erskine House visitors published in the press included many Geelong families, such as the Bells and the Carrs. The meetings of the Mountjoy Lorne Estate Company were held twice yearly in the Exhibition Hall, Geelong, and several of the directors were Geelong businessmen. The company was also involved in the land subdivision of Lorne in the 1890s. This would tend to intensify their interest in improvements for Erskine House as well as for the town. The Secretary in 1890 was Horace Frank Richardson (1854-1935). Richardson was a Geelong produce merchant and auctioneer, who became a Member of the Legislative Council for the South-Western Province from 1912 to 1934 electorate. He was the largest shareholder in the Company and later became the chairman. Richardson was frequently noted in the press as staying at Erskine House with his wife. His produce company supplied provisions for the guest house. In 1915 the Honorable Mr Richardson was urging the Minister for Public Works to construct a weir to dam the waters of the Little Erskine River about a mile from the township and form a lake "which would add considerably to Lorne' natural attractions". He arranged an inspection at which Mr J. T. Anderson, President of

the Lorne Progress Association , Mr Birchnell, Chairman of the Erskine House Amusement Committee, and Donald MacDonald, journalist were present. This move, although it came to nothing, illustrates the merging of the interests of Lorne and Erskine House as well as the business interests of the Geelong shareholders.

The ceremony for the beginning of the construction of the Great Ocean Road in 1919 illustrates the involvement of Erskine House in community events. The Premier and his party travelled as far as Deans Marsh by train, and were taken by Mountjoy coaches to the place of ceremony at Lorne. Lunch was provided by the Mayor of Lorne at the site, but the inaugural dinner and speeches took place at Erskine House.

Families tended to return to Erskine House year after year: they formed friendships and attachments to Lorne which lasted a lifetime in some cases. The close attachment to the guest house and Lorne was such that some guests had "made Erskine House their holiday home since childhood". One man is reported to have come to Erskine House every year for sixty years; another, Mr Tom Mullins, was "a mere new boy of 27 years".

The pen and ink sketches of Lorne by Public Works Department architect, George Brougham Herbert Austin, include views of Erskine House in about 1890. Austin was the architect for the the Melbourne State College building (1888), the Melbourne Magistrates Court (1911) and the Mount Buffalo Chalet (1909). His design for the Chalet may well have been influenced by his knowledge of Erskine House.

One of the best known Australian journalists of the time, sporting and nature writer, Donald MacDonald started coming to Erskine House as a bachelor in the early 1880s, when he stayed in the original farmhouse. He continued to visit every year until his death in 1932. MacDonald was the first Australian war correspondent at the South African war during which he was beseiged at Ladysmith. "His despatches were discussed in every home and hotel bar". MacDonald's nature writing for children was particularly influential for generations of Australian children, because it encouraged them to appreciate Australian flora and fauna. It is likely that his annual visits to Lorne and the beauties of its surroundings inspired some of his nature writing. The untouched and unspoilt quality of the wilderness around Lorne was of particular appeal to him. His attachment to Lorne and Erskine House was a local legend. In 1899, he saved the life of another visitor, well-known singer Adelaide Bruce, who was in danger of drowning, but refused publicity for his action. His name appears as a performer in the newspaper reports of Erskine House concerts, and his enthusiastic participation made many an Erskine House dance a success. He led the daily walks to Erskine Falls and elsewhere during his stay, acting as unofficial guide to newcomers. MacDonald wrote the text of architect G.B. Austin's Pen and Ink Sketches of Lorne, published in 1890. The autobiography of MacDonald's daughter, Elaine, includes an acerbic account of her family's annual visits to Erskine House from the 1880s. She describes the change in atmosphere after the Mountjoys retired. "For many years afterwards we had to put up with an extraordinary degree of inconvenience and discomfort". The bedrooms were "wretched, dark little kennels", furnished with narrow iron bedsteads and washstands but no wardrobes . The weekly tariff of 35 shillings for a single room and two guineas for a double, was similar to any good seaside hotel, but, she implies, the rooms were less comfortable.

Despite her negativity about the physical comforts of Erskine House, MacDonald is captivated by Lorne and its beautiful surroundings, as well as by the convivial atmosphere of Erskine House, which remained even after the retirement of the Mountjoys, She notes that the clientele of Erskine House were well-to-do. Wealthy city and country people

put up with it and came year after year with their families, and the children grew up and married and still went there every summer with their children, Nowhere else did old and young have so good a time and the place had grown a tradition - the January and February crowd anyway - being one big family. As there were no cars people did not rush off to the next place down the coast after two or three days. After a journey so long and arduous they stayed put for weeks, isolated from the rest of the world.

Matchmaking
Newspaper columnist "Penelope" suggested in 1907 that many marriages were made in Lorne. "All over our fair Australia, we meet folks ... who say "Oh, yes. We met at Lorne, didn't we, dear."" The meeting of suitable partners was possible at Erskine House since visitors seemed to come from a homogenous social background and the many activities arranged for guests gave opportunities for young people to meet and make friends. The isolation of Lorne before the days of the motor car made for conviviality as the guests made their own fun.

Change at Erskine House
Between the two world wars, and especially after the official opening of the Great Ocean Road in 1932, the outside world started to impinge on the cosy atmosphere of Erskine House. Exhibition tennis matches at Erskine

House between four Victorian players in January 1919 drew a large crowd. International champion Alf Dunlop and local Geelong champion Victor Carr played interstate players England and Baird and a singles match delighted local supporteers of Carr who defeated Tasmanian champion, S.P. England. Dunlop, who had been captain of the first Australasian Davis Cup team to reach the finals in 1906 and was in the winning teams of 1909 and 1911, was a well-known figure. But what looks like an innovation turns out to be linked with the traditional family atmosphere of Erskine House. The report of festivities in the summer of 1907 record Victor Carr and A. L. Baird as winners of tennis tournaments. The Carr family had been regular and active visitors to Erskine House over many years. Alf Dunlop was married to Lucille Treadway, the daughter of the owner of Treadways' Department Store in Melbourne. Mrs Treadway was listed amongst the guests at Erskine House in 1916.

The summer of 1930-31 attracted throngs of visitors to Lorne. The surf was excellent and the weather perfect. The guest houses were "packed to their utmost" and many were turned away from the camping ground. The number staying at Erskine House rose to 300. At that time, a change in the organisation of Erskine House's entertainment may be discerned. Instead of amateur music and theatricals organised by the visitors themselves, professional entertainers were engaged for New Year. The Warrick Lever Golden Night Band was engaged to play on New Year's Eve. Miss Audrey Esmond (English contralto) and the well-known London comedian, Mr Dean Chant were also appearing. As well as arranging sporting activities amongst themselves, guests were invited to watch sporting celebrities. An exhibition of diving and swimming was given by Miss L. Beaurepaire and Mr Shippen and Mr Levison , who were arranging a swimming gala on New Year's Day 1931.

Seabathing to Surfing
The Lorne Sea Bathing Company operated a sea bathing establishment in about 1879 on the beach opposite the present Uniting Church in Mountjoy Parade. This was a Mountjoy enterprise: in 1880 the Company employed a local woman, Polly Gay, as the caretaker. The saltwater pool. with some form of sharkproof fencing around it, was divided in two, to separate men and women bathers, with male change-rooms on one side and female change-rooms on the other. It was described in a newspaper report of February 1882 as enclosed by high fencing extending 300 feet into the bay which gave "both safety and comfort to the luxury of sea bathing within the enclosure". The baths were destroyed by the vicious easterlies in the early 1880s and were not replaced.

At about the same time, the Mountjoys built a male bathing house or change room at one end of the beach in front of Erskine House for their male guests and a female bathing house at the other. As Elaine MacDonald explained, mixed bathing was still many years away in the 1890s: the girls and the men bathed half a mile apart. The etiquette of the time required that, although the garden gate of Erskine House opened on to the sand, no one ran across the sand in bathers and a wrap. "Dear me, no! One went to the bathing shed and returned from it fully dressed. Even in a dressing gown that covered her from neck to toe, a lady would have been too undressed to risk being seen by a gentleman."

Until the late eighteenth century, seaside resorts in Europe hardly existed. The sea was feared as dangerous, not as a source of health or pleasure. But by 1800, seabathing and breathing the healthy air at the seaside was regarded as a healthful exercise, recommended to those enervated souls who needed the stimulus of sea air and water. The restorative seaside holiday became a familiar prescription in nineteenth century fiction for heroines who were ailing.

Sea air and sea water were seen as medicinal, rather than a means of enjoyment. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the beaches were used by the leisured classes for picnicking, paddling and promenading , breathing the healthful sea air. Seabathing was recommended as a health measure, not a pleasurable experience; it consisted of a short immersion in cold water, repeated at suitable intervals according to a doctor's prescription. The shock experienced from the coldness of the water in the early morning was considered part of the treatment. Sea bathing for pleasure alone was somewhat suspect, an activity associated with the lower classes.

In 1880, a petition was sent to the Winchelsea Council from Lorne residents complaining that persons were bathing in the Erskine River at all hours of the day and asking for a police
constable to be stationed at Lorne "to remedy this nuisance". This was because some were bathing "in a nude state", and the respectable could not walk by the river or the sea without being shocked. Bathing at all hours of the day was looked on as offensive to respectable people. In the early morning, bathers could bathe in private. Even those who wore swimming costumes avoided the company of the opposite sex, because the neck to knee costumes of the 1890s were transparent when wet, making the wearer look like "a nude figure painted navy-blue." In 1903 the regulation forbidding daytime bathing was repealed. Mixed sea bathing was viewed with deep misgivings, but gradually gained acceptance. An account of changing mores is given in a newspaper report of

1911 when a female bather fainted in the water at Lorne. The reporter stressed how fortunate it was that the "two stalwart young swimmers"' [male] were present to carry her to safety.

Surfing is mentioned as an activity enjoyed by Erskine House guests in 1916. This probably means surf bathing rather than board surfing. Surfing was slow to take off in Australia: it grew out of the use of boards within the life saving movement. The introduction of the Malibu board in the summer of 1956-57 began the popularisation of surfing. The materials used for making surfboards started out heavy and solid in the 1920s , then changed to a cumbersome hollow plywood. Rubber surfboards began to appear in the 1930s. In the later 1950s, short lightweight balsa surfboards reinforced by fibreglass, revolutionised Australian beach culture. It did not become a recognised sport in Australia until the early 1960s.

Tourism in Lorne
During the Second World War, petrol rationing affected the number of visitors to Lorne and Erskine House. Since the 1950s, increases in car ownership and access to air travel has meant that holiday destinations of Victorians have diversified, within Australia and overseas. Nevertheless, Lorne remains a popular tourist resort. Lorne is more accessible from Melbourne since the building of the West Gate Bridge, and numbers of visitors have increased. Around 85,000 people visit Lorne each year.

Since Erskine House was purchased by the Victorian State Government in 1974, it has been used as a guest house in the high season and as a conference venue for small community, professional, church and school groups for the rest of the year. Only two major guest houses remain in Lorne, Erskine House and the Chalet.

Historical Associations -Social Value
The social value attached to Erskine House has much to do with the thousands of people who stayed in or visited the place since it was built.

Social value has been defined as having meaning for a community. Erskine House has had meaning for the community of Lorne from its beginnings in 1868. Although it was not the only guest house in Lorne, it was the first and the largest and its activities involved not only Erskine House guests but the patrons of other guest houses and hotels and those staying in private houses as well as those who were permanent residents of Lorne. Its entertainments included fundraising for the benefit of the town. E.g for walking tracks, Bush Nurse, life saving equipment. Although its importance to the town is less because of the changes in the way Lorne operates in the 1990s, it still is an icon to many.

Erskine House has social value for many people outside Lorne. Those who visited Erskine House from all over Victoria over many years became very attached to the place. There is a continuity of attachment in that many people still visit the place where they spent happy holidays. It is remembered fondly as an important meeting place. Erskine House retains landmark significance for those who visit the town, whether or not they have stayed there. Part of Lorne's attraction has been that it is a place where the beauties of the surrounding area exemplify the diversity of Australian landscape. Lorne brings together coastal and mountain scenery. Its siting on the coast, surrounded by steep and heavily wooded country, has limited the size of the town. Unlike most Australian towns, it cannot stretch out further and further as it grows: its land resources are finite.

There is a revival of interest in staying in guest houses and bed-and-breakfast establishments in the 1990s. The particular atmosphere of a guest house rather than the impersonal nature of motel accommodation is sought after once more. Thus the social value attached to a guest house that has been operating for more than 130 years applies both to the past and the present.

The identification of Erskine House with Lorne is no longer as strong as it was. Lorne has grown into a cafe and surf town, a town which is inundated with tourists for most of the year. It depends on tourism for its life, yet the permanent community has its own culture. However, Erskine House has a strong historical association with the development of Lorne into one of the best-known seaside resorts in Victoria.

A place exists because people continue to interact with it. The holiday activities associated with Erskine House have taken place both within the grounds and in the wider area of Lorne. Thus cooperative enterprises have regularly involved permanent residents, visitors from private houses and other guest houses and hotels. The fund raising activities at Erskine House for local and national causes have brought together a range of people. Associated People:

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A
The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.
* Erskine House is of historical importance because it is representative of the guest house as a social phenomenon in Victoria. It has been in continuous operation as a guest house for over one hundred and thirty years
* It demonstrates a way of life and function which has existed in Victoria since the 1860s and which continues to operate today.
* Erskine House is of historical importance because of its relationship with the town of Lorne, which is one of Victoria's most popular seaside resorts

Criterion B
The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.
* Erskine House, the oldest and largest guest house in Victoria, has a strong historical association with the development of Lorne into one of the best-known seaside resorts in Victoria.

Criterion C
The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D
The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.
* Erskine House exhibits the principal characteristics of the nineteenth and twentieth century guest house and demonstrates the development of resort accommodation and leisure activities in Victoria.
* Erskine House retains some of the elements of the building and grounds dating back to its earliest phase as a guest house. Its 1930s elements are relatively intact and are demonstrative of guest house design of the period. These relate to the period when Erskine House attracted the largest number of guests.

Criterion E
The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

Criterion F
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.
* Erskine House demonstrates social associations for the people of Lorne and for those who have stayed there. It retains significance while it continues to be used for the same purpose as well as having landmark significance for those who visit Lorne today. Its social significance relies on its remaining on the existing site. Its social significance does not necessarily rely on retaining exactly the same form as it exists today, but on retaining elements which date back to the original establishment or relate to the various phases of its development.
* Erskine House is particularly associated with the prominent Australian journalist, nature-writer and war correspondent, Donald MacDonald (1857-1932), who visited the guest house annually from the early 1880s to his death.
* Erskine House in its 1930s extensions is a relatively intact example of the work of the prominent Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan.

Criterion H
Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1812 in the category described as a

Heritage place:

Erskine House, Mountjoy Parade, Lorne, Surf Coast Shire Council

EXTENT:

1. All the buildings known as Erskine House, Lorne marked as follows on Diagram 1812 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Main Building
B2 Ballroom
B3 Meeting Room 4
B4 Meeting Room 5
B5 Meeting Room 6
B6 Hexagonal Garden Pavilion
B7 Croquet Pavilion

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1812 held by the Executive Director being part of the land described on the former Certificate of Title Vol 8053 Folio 411.

3. All the trees marked as follows on Diagram 605399 held by the Executive Director:

T1 Eucalyptus sp. - Gum
T2. Araucaria heterophylla - Norfolk Island Pine
T3 Cupressus macrocarpa - Montery Cypress
T4 Salix sp. - Willow
T5 Pittosporum sp.- Pittosporum
T6 Allocasuarina verticullata - Coast Sheoak

Dated: 17 September 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 39 30 September 1999 pp.2202-2203]