

# HO177 - (1st) Daltheith, Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store - Thomas Young's Post Office Store'1907



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store - Photograph of the building, 1947



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store - Gable and box window of 1915 Section



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store - Relocated 1870's section of the residence



Former Christmas Hills Post Office Store - entry to the residence



The Gossip free across the road



Plan prepared. from recent aerial image (Nillumbik Shire, NTS) contributory elements as shown.

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## **Location**

1524 Eltham Yarra Glen Road CHRISTMAS HILLS, NILLUMBIK SHIRE

## **Municipality**

NILLUMBIK SHIRE

## **Level of significance**

Included in Heritage Overlay

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO177

## **Heritage Listing**

Nillumbik Shire

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - January 8, 2010

**What is significant?**

The former Christmas Hills Post Office Store of 1915 (incorporating a c1874 section) and the surrounding site to the title boundaries.

**How is it significant?**

The former post office is historically significant to the Shire of Nillumbik.

**Why is it significant?**

The building is historically significant because it operated as a post office and store and is associated with the prominent pioneer, Thomas Young and his family (Criteria A & H). Also because it incorporates parts of an earlier c1874 post office and store, which was also located on the site. The reuse of materials in this fashion illustrates the ingenuity, and relative poverty of residents in the area. Since 1947, the dwelling has remained largely unaltered (Criteria A & E). It is also significant because it is one of the remaining civic buildings associated with the development of the Christmas Hills township (Criterion B). In addition to serving as a store and post office, between 1874 and 1880 two of the rooms in the 1874 dwelling were leased by the Christmas Hills school (Criterion A).

**HLCD STUDY**

The former Christmas Hills Post Office Store (now a private residence), constructed in 1915 with the incorporation of a portion of an earlier 1874 building, has local historical significance as one of the remaining civic buildings associated with the development of a small Christmas Hills township from the 1870s (Criteria A4 & 82). Other historic buildings remaining in this early township precinct are the 1894 Mechanics Institute, the nearby 1880 Christmas Hills School No. 1362, and the 1922 War Memorial.

The former Christmas Hills Post Office Store, which is remarkably intact at least from 1947, has local significance for its associations with the development of the area as a Yarra Valley resort town by the first decade of the 20th century. Christmas Hills was one of a number of small rural towns close to Melbourne, located on major tourist roads and close to district railway stations, which became popular holiday resorts (Criterion A4).

The former Post Office Store has local historical significance for its long associations with Thomas Young (1824-1910), who was responsible for the construction of the first Post Office Store. Young and his family owned and operated the store from 1874 until its closure in c1915, when the current building was opened. Portions of the earlier building were incorporated into the 1915 structure. Young was a prominent district resident and was its first official Post Master. He was member of the School committee, gave land for the 1894 Mechanics Institute, and was active in the local Presbyterian Church and the Temperance Movement (Criterion H1).

The former Post Office Store has local historical significance for its associations with the first Christmas Hills School No. 1362, which used rooms in the Post Office Store from 1874 to 1880, when a new school was built (Criterion A4).

The former Post Office Store has social and historical significance as a place where district people met over a number of years to collect their mail and discuss matters of local importance. The Gossip Tree across the road is also important in this regard due to its landmark qualities and for its indication of the social centre of the town around the Post Office Store (Criterion G). Further historical research should be undertaken on the Gossip Tree.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Nillumbik - C13 Heritage Stage 2 Final Report Revised Citation, Graeme Butler and Assoc., 2001;
Other Names	Christmas Hills Post Office, Daltheith,
Hermes Number	118964
Property Number	

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## Physical Conditions

The residence at 1524 Eltham /Yarra Glen Road is a single storey, timber framed, weatherboard-clad building. It is raised on high stumps and has a return verandah around a section of the building. The house is located on a rise and has number of sheds and shelters at the rear.

Historical evidence suggests that part of the existing building was constructed on this site in 1915 with incorporation of a section of the 1874 Post Office Store.

This history is consistent with the fabric of the existing building as the building appears to be made up of two distinct wings constructed at different periods.

The main living room and kitchen wing is enclosed under a single hip roof running perpendicular to the street. The end of this wing facing the street has a gable end with ripple iron and timber strapping. The wide eaves over the gable have timber decorative brackets. There is a central box window on this end wall. The simple square edge framing of the box window and the strapping and ripple iron to the gable end are details consistent with a 1915 date of construction.'

The second wing of the house has a lower hipped roof form and runs perpendicular to the living room wing. It consists of two rooms with a filled in verandah area at the rear providing a bathroom and circulation space. This section of the building has tall timber framed double hung windows similar in location and appearance to those shown in the 1907 photograph of Thomas Young's 1874 Post Office Store (Image 1). It also has a similar roof and verandah form as the building in the 1907 photograph.

This similarity, along with the historical evidence suggests that the left section of the building shown in the 1907 photograph was relocated to form part of this existing residence. A chimney appears in the 1907 photograph of this section, but this would not have survived the relocation. The interior rooms of this wing of the building have beaded timber lined ceilings which would be consistent with a 1870s date of construction. The raised nature of the existing building is also consistent with relocation of a building to connect with the 1915 rooms.

The balustrade to the verandah appears to be of later construction but is evident in the 1947 photograph of the Post Office Store. The exterior appearance of the building does not seem to have altered much since 1947, as the building looks very similar to that shown in the photograph. The 1947 photograph however shows windows and timber board cladding to the lower section of the house. This area may have been the section used as the store. These windows and cladding no longer existing and the area under the house is now open, only containing stumps,

Across the road to the former Post Office Store is a large red box (*E. polyanthemos ssp vestita*) which was supposedly an early Christmas Hills meeting place and coach stop (Image 6). This is inconsistent with this area being the commercial and civic centre of Christmas Hills and as a result it relates to the former Post Office Store.

## Integrity

Integrity

The floor frame stumps have been replaced in concrete recently, the verandah has been partly rebuilt, a gabled west wing, has been superimposed on the Victorian-era west end of the house. The Victorian-era eaves line has been absorbed by the new verandah. The Victorian-era timber framed verandah and a brick chimney have both gone.

## Historical Australian Themes

3.7.1 Establishing postal services

3.12.5 Retailing food and beverages

4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

#### 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

*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/>*