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# PICNIC HOTEL

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## Location

WESTERN HIGHWAY BURRUMBEET, BALLARAT CITY

## Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0322

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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### Interpretation of Site

Historical information points to residential , commercial and agricultural use of the site during the second half of the 19th century. The earliest structures probably date from the arrival of the Dobson family in 1855. These might overlay an Aboriginal site, which is suggested by the presence of some flaked quartz artefacts among historical material found in excavated test holes (currently being registered with AAV). The main building was a substantial, two-storey structure. Today, the most visible features are an area of bluestone paving and a brick, domed cistern that date from the second half of the 19th century, as do most of the subsurface artefacts. To the east of the site, a sheep dip might date from the early 20th century.

Archaeological  
Significance

The site has medium archaeological significance on the basis of its preservation and attributes - in relation to comparable sites at a local and regional scale. At the time of investigation, tall grass prevented a full assessment of the site's features, extent or preservation. The presence of artefacts in excavated pits and the location of standing features allow for an estimate of the site's surface area, demonstrating a number of related, structural components across about 0.6 ha. There is a high likelihood of structural foundations and in situ archaeological deposits below ground. Though the Picnic Hotel was one of at least seven hotels in the Burrumbeet area (James 2007, 109-11), it is the only one (apart from the standing Lambton Arms) whose location and remains can be identified with certainty. At a regional scale, the site has significance as an example of a roadside hotel with associated stables that was in operation during the gold rush period. The site has potential to provide good information on Burrumbeet in the 19th and early 20th century.

There is a high likelihood of preserved archaeological deposits and structures at the site. The site's size and the different uses of the site evident from surviving, above-ground remains suggest extensive subsurface remains.

Historical  
Significance

The Picnic Hotel was one of the larger hotels in the Burrumbeet area and probably one of the oldest. Historical records and photographs provide information on the site's occupation and use from the mid-19th century. The hotel was both a commercial and residential site, associated with Henry and Isabella Dobson, important figures in Burrumbeet's early history, who arrived in the district in 1855, the year that Burrumbeet was established (Watson 2003, 73).

Other Names

PICNIC POINT HOTEL, DOBSON FAMILY RESIDENCE,

Hermes  
Number

162808

Property  
Number

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## History

The Picnic Hotel was one of at least seven 19th-century hotels in the Burrumbeet area that catered for travellers along the east-west route between Ballarat and Beaufort and for holiday-makers. Built by Henry Dobson soon after his arrival in Burrumbeet in July 1855, the site served as a family residence as well as a hotel. According to a local history of Burrumbeet "[the Dobsons'] hotel was a large building with attic rooms in its residential section. It was located on the highway opposite stables built by Henry as a changing post for the coaches that ran between Ballarat and Stawell" (James 2007, 10). The building is thought to have stood until its demolition in the mid-20th century, perhaps at the time of the last Western Highway maintenance in the 1970s.

*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/>*