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# FORMER FRASER STREET SHOPS

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## Location

20 FRASER STREET CLUNES, HEPBURN SHIRE

## Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0351

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 2022

### What is significant?

The 20 Fraser Street site is considered to have the potential to contain archaeological deposits associated with early commercial activity in Clunes. The area surrounding and including 20 Fraser Street formed the first commercial centre in Clunes in the early decades of post-contact settlement during the Victorian goldrush.

While there has been late nineteenth century construction on the property, it appears to have been relatively low impact in that the structures do not cover the entire property and do not have basements. Most of the land remains as an open grassed yard.

Documentary evidence indicates that 20 Fraser Street has the potential to contain archaeological remains (in the form of underground deposits) in a condition that may allow information to be obtained that will contribute to an understanding of the site's history. The history of the site is considered to be of local significance under Victoria's framework of historical themes for its associations with:

- 'Building Victoria's industries and workforce' (5.3 – marketing and retailing) – this site formed part of the early commercial centre of Clunes which sprang up during the early years of the Victorian gold rush. It has

the potential to contain the remains of early retail premises and associated artefacts, and

- 'Building town, cities and the garden state' (6.6 – marking significant phases in development of Victoria's settlements, towns and cities) – the potential remains at 20 Fraser Street would be associated with the growth of Clunes that resulted from the discovery of gold there in the early 1850s. These discoveries sparked the Victorian gold rush that resulted in rapid population growth in Melbourne and the creation of new settlements across the Victorian goldfields along with the growth of supporting retail and commercial industries in these new settlements.

#### **How is it significant?**

#### **Why is it significant?**

Hermes Number 208872

Property Number

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## **History**

Gold was officially discovered in the Clunes area in mid 1851, but the initial rush for gold there was hampered by the relatively small amount of alluvial gold there which meant that mining in Clunes required the machinery and investment needed to extract gold from the quartz reef. Despite this, the township had a population of more than 1,000 by 1859 and by that year 'permanent hotels, stores, churches and a school' had replaced the tents that characterised the structures in the early gold mining settlement (Darwin 2005: 94). The town grew steadily 'by 1865 [it supported] 15 hotels, 12 grocers, a baker, 6 butchers, 3 tailors, 4 fruit and confectionary shops, 2 wheelwrights, 4 bootshops, 4 blacksmiths, 3 foundries, 3 drapers, 2 eating establishments...2 doctors, 8 schools and 6 churches...The Clunes Gas Company commenced in 1862' (Darwin 2005: 95).

The early businesses in the mining town tended to be concentrated in 'Lower' Fraser Street – the portion to the west of Templeton Street which includes 20 Fraser Street.

Reid and Reid's (1977) study of the Clunes townscape and it illustrates the gradual shift of the business core of Clunes from west to east along Fraser Street from the 1860s to recent times. It is of note that the 20 Fraser Street study area sits in a location that was a core of business activity in the nineteenth century (see Figure 2).

Reid and Reid note that:

*The west section of Fraser Street was the original main street, which grew from the ford across the creek. It was narrower and heavily built up along the street line with a welter of tiny, quaint timber-fronted shops. The remains of some stood until about eight years ago on the south corner site where a block of flats now stands (Reid and Reid 1977: 48).*

The lower part of Fraser Street was left out of the original (late 1850s) survey of the Clunes township:

*John Templeton's survey had deliberately avoided the commercial area of Lower Fraser Street in the hope that the ad hoc development of this low-lying area would relocate to the surveyed lots on higher ground (Aitkin 1988: 75).*

The businesses already established in this area were allowed to remain but required a special lease. According to Aitkin, this led, inevitably to 'pressure for sale from merchants eager to upgrade their premises (1988: 75).

Property along the south side of Fraser Street between Templeton and Camp Streets was surveyed and then sold in 1874. The division of the lots (uneven and consisting of a number of narrow road frontages which extend to a right of way at the rear) is suggestive of the presence of a number of business premises existing in this

location at that time (Figure 3). This is also indicated by an 1882 engraved depiction of Clunes shown in Figure 4 which shows the south side of Fraser Street, west of Templeton as a high-density jumble of small buildings. The study area alone contained 6 individual properties (lots 29-34 in Section D) (Figure 3).

The 1874 buyers of these lots are outlined in the Table below. The addresses of Shrigley and Chapman suggest that they were already resident on the properties at the time of the land sale.

Lot	Size	Buyer
29	19 4/10 perches	John Alfred Shrigley, Fraser Street, Clunes
30	13 5/10 perches	George Chapman, Fraser Street, Clunes
31	13 7/10 perches	Charles Mitchell, Dowling Forest, Clunes
32		Not sold?
33	21 3/10 perches	Michael Bourke
34		Not sold?

Shrigley, whose property was on the on the far western side of the current 20 Fraser Street address, was a chemist and the Shrigley business remained in this location (with the family name) until the late 1930s or early 1940s (see below). As the mapping by Reid and Reid (1977: 15) suggests most of the other businesses that occupied this lower Fraser Street area appear to have closed or moved by the early twentieth century. The 1904 Sands and McDougall street directory lists one business (W. N. Lean, bootmaker) present between Shrigley's shop and Templeton Street (on the 20 Fraser Street property) in 1904.

O'Brien and O'Brien note the lack of businesses located in lower Fraser Street by the 1930s, and also indicate that the Shrigley shop was a substantial bluestone building:

*The western side of Lower Fraser Street: in the block between Templeton Street and Camp Hill very few businesses still functioned in 1939, but there were two very sturdy bluestone buildings still there. One had once been Shrigley's Chemist Shop. This ceased operations in the early 1930s when the family of chemists died out.*

*The other...was the tank factory belonging to the Weickhardt family (O'Brien and O'Brien 1989: 33)*

These two buildings can be seen in the 1946 aerial photograph shown in Figure 5 .

The bluestone building that had housed the Shrigley chemist shop had been demolished by 1971 when the brick units that currently occupy the site were constructed:

*A census conducted about 1964 revealed that Clunes had the highest percentage of elderly people in Victoria...A public meeting was held in the mid-1960s and was attended by an officer of the Hospital and Charities Commission. She said Clunes was not eligible for a hostel but was for flats or units for the aged.*

*In 1971 four flats were built in Lower Fraser Street, and a few years later a second group of flats was built in Templeton Street (O'Brien and O'Brien 1989: 28)*

*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/>*