

Stawell Main Street Precinct



DSC08735



Main Street



DSC08816



DSC08685



DSC08933



DSC08614



DSC08562



DSC08519



DSC08664



DSC08592



DSC08650



St Matthews

Location

4 BYRNE ST AND 45-187 & 46-180 MAIN ST AND 9-33 & 12-34 SCALLAN ST AND 2 & 4 SCOTLAND PL AND 1 & 3 VICTORIA PL AND 26-32 WIMMERA ST STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

Heritage Listing

Northern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 29, 2024

What is significant?

The Stawell Main Street Heritage Precinct is significant, comprising 4 Byrne Street (part), 45-187 & 46-180 Main Street, 9-33 & 12-34 Scallan Street, 2 & 4 Scotland Place, 1 & 3 Victoria Place, and 26-32 Wimmera Street, Stawell.

The precinct contains the Victorian, Federation and interwar commercial buildings, with predominantly brick wall construction (face brick or rendered); hipped and gabled roof forms clad in galvanised corrugated iron and with a roof pitch between 20 and 35 degrees; monitor roofs; timber framed double hung rear and first floor windows; prominent brick or rendered brick parapets (decorated by balustrades or other Victorian details of Classical derivation); projecting stringcourses; decorative window and door surrounds, decorative pilasters with stylized capitals, wall rustication or quoinwork, brick chimneys; and some parapet, verandah hoarding and side wall signage. These buildings also have significant rear portions, featuring brick chimneys, porches and verandahs, parapets, timber framed doors and often a domestic scale. In some cases Contributory buildings have a very altered front facade, but retain a largely intact rear section, visible from adjacent streets.

Civic and church buildings have picturesque gabled or hipped roof forms clad in slate tiles or galvanised corrugated iron, brick or stone wall construction, and side buttresses. Most are accompanied by a manse.

The Victorian and interwar houses in the precinct have hipped and gabled roof galvanised corrugated iron forms (with a roof pitch between 25 and 35 degrees), brick or horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding, timber framed double hung windows and timber framed doors, narrow eaves and front or side verandahs.

The heritage status of each property in the precinct is set out in the attached table. Descriptions and histories of all Significant places and most Contributory places are found in precinct 'child records' in the Victorian Heritage Database.

How is it significant?

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is of historical, representative, aesthetic and social significance to the Northern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Stawell Main Street Heritage Precinct is of representative significance (architecturally) for its retention of typical examples of masonry commercial buildings and timber dwellings, largely from the nineteenth century as well as the early twentieth century. They demonstrate the design qualities associated with the commercial, cultural and residential development between the 1860s and the 1930s, and are substantial in size and/or construction in comparison with most early townships in the Shire. (Criterion D)

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is aesthetically significant. It demonstrates unique visual qualities that reflect the historical and cultural development of the township and surrounding areas, and contribute to the setting of the township. These qualities include the landmark clocktower of the Town Hall building and the landmark steeple of St. Matthew's Church, together with the memorials and garden plantings and the uninterrupted views of the rear of the commercial buildings and to the Grampians to the south-west. The precinct is particularly distinguished by its suite of fine churches and associated dwellings on Scallan Street, and by the grandeur of key Victorian-era buildings, such as the Town Hall, Post Office, Mechanics' Institute, and banks. (Criterion E)

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is historically significant. It is associated with the early development of the Reefs area of Stawell (originally known as Pleasant Creek) from the 1850s but more particularly from the 1860s until c.1920 as a result of gold discoveries. The precinct has associations with the survey of the Reefs area in 1866, which was carried out by Fred Smith of the Department of Lands and Survey. Once dominated by surrounding mine poppet heads, mullock heaps, steam engines and miner's cottages, the central core of the precinct, Main Street – with its irregular layout – continues to reflect the importance of gold mining as the road was laid out around the gold mines. Although the early civic and government centre of the Stawell township was originally situated at Pleasant Creek from 1858, the Main Street area soon became a critical commercial focus which by the 1860s featured a number of cultural and commercial buildings. Further commercial buildings were constructed in the ensuing years of the Victorian, Federation and interwar eras. Some of the rear sections of the commercial buildings in Main Street have domestic quarters that may be a lasting legacy of mining accommodation to the gold mines that were once visually connected to these buildings. The name given the town honoured Sir William Foster Stawell, principal law officer of the District of Port Phillip and later Chief Justice of Victoria. (Criterion A)

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is socially significant due to the presence of civic buildings, churches and the war memorial, many of which have been loci of community activity since the nineteenth century. (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant Stawell Main Street Precinct peer review, Landmark Heritage PL, 2024;

Hermes Number 212425

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Precinct Boundaries

The Stawell Main Street Heritage Precinct is largely comprised of Main Street, where there are the main concentrations of commercial buildings. The precinct is bound by the properties fronting the north-western side of Scallan Street and the rear boundaries of the Main Street allotments on the south-eastern side, between Manse and St. George's Streets, and Layzell and Patrick streets.

Buildings & Significant Details

Refer also to precinct child records in the Victorian Heritage Database prepared for the majority of properties within the precinct, including descriptions and brief histories.

Buildings

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is characterised by its retail centre along Main Street, with its concentration of 19th and early 20th century buildings, and a number of civic and church buildings in Main and Scallan streets. Most of the significant single or double storey Victorian and interwar commercial buildings in Main Street have unpainted or rendered brick wall construction and prominent parapets or eaves overhangs. These buildings have gabled or hipped roofs clad in galvanised corrugated iron (and with a roof pitch between 20 and 35 degrees), with some examples of early monitor roofs that contribute to the picturesque nature of the roofscapes. Early unpainted or rendered brick chimneys adorn the rooflines of several buildings, while timber double-hung windows are a

feature of most upper floor facades and at the rear. Of critical importance to these buildings and the precinct are the surviving rear building portions. These sections are largely intact, and some retain domestic quarters that survive from the 19th century. Furthermore, these rear sections provide an architectural and historical link to the nearby mining sites that have long since disappeared.

While new buildings, the many altered shopfronts, reclad and oversized parapets and new verandahs or canopies have intruded on the original and early commercial streetscape, a number of fine 19th and early 20th century buildings are largely intact. In addition to the architectural features already listed, the principal facades of intact buildings ranging from a rudimentary Victorian commercial type to the Late Victorian Boom Classical style display characteristic constructional and stylistic details. The intact features include the parapet details (balustraded or solid), window and door architraves, stringcourses and several Victorian decorative details (often with Classical origins) including arches punctuated by keystones, rustication or quoins, pilasters or piers with stylized capitals, and window or parapet pediments. Some of the most prominent and intact commercial buildings include the former State Savings Bank (60 Main St), Town Hall Hotel (62-68 Main St) former Club Hotel (180 Main St), Post Office (87 Main St), former Union Bank (153-155 Main St), former Bank of Victoria (163 Main St), and the former Oriental Bank (171-173 Main St). These buildings are noteworthy examples of Significant buildings in the Stawell Main Street Precinct.

There is a large number of commercial buildings that retain a largely intact front facade, and secondary elevations, though often they do not retain an original or early shopfront. These include single storey shops in Main Street at 70, 88 (former Post Office Hotel (now Arcade)), 90-92, 100-102, 107 ('Cambrian Hall'), 133-137 (former Star Hotel), and 164-168. Interspersed among them are two-storey shops with intact upper storeys on Main Street at 72-74 (former Victoria House), 102-104, 113-115 (former Brown Furniture Warehouse), 134, 148, and 177, as well as the three-storey former McKellar Building at 174-178. These buildings are Contributory to the precinct.

Only two shops appear to retain their original shopfront, both interwar. They are the Midway Shop at 132 Main Street, built in 1935 in the Spanish Mission style, and the diminutive shop at 4 Byrne Street (whose facade is between 171-173 and 177 Main Street). A number of Victorian-era buildings have early shopfronts, dating from the Edwardian and early interwar eras, which are also of heritage value. They are found on Main Street at 107, 121-123 (former 'Mitchell's Men's and Ladies Wear Emporium'), 152 (former Laxton's Boot Factory), 157-161 (former 'Chadwick's Drapers'), and 177 (former Punchard Furniture Warehouse; continuous with the shopfront at 4 Byrne Street).

There are also a substantial number of 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings in Main Street that have experienced considerable shopfront and front facade alteration and change. However, the three-dimensional gabled or hipped form (mainly following a rectangular plan), brick wall and galvanised corrugated iron roof construction, and rear sections of several of these buildings are intact. They survive beyond the introduced street facades of steel deck and aluminium cladding or brick construction, aluminium framed shopfronts (some with in-goes), introduced canopies, over-sized metal-clad parapets and other introduced details. These buildings include the former Chadwick and Company building (1/157 Main St), Shop building (108 Main St), Miner's Pick store (112-114 Main St), Civic Store (118 Main St), Specsavers (120 Main St) and a shop with a small residential wing to its rear (125-127 Main St). These buildings are examples of Contributory buildings in the Stawell Main Street Precinct. Apart from the front elevation, the majority of the building fabric contributes to the architectural and historical value of the precinct.

There are also a large number of cultural and civic buildings surviving in the Stawell Main Street Precinct. The most prominent is the Stawell Town Hall in Main Street, together with the Post Office. The Town Hall is a substantial brick building, with rendered front facade, built in two phases. The front section, of 1872, is eclectic Victorian Classical in style, with an interwar Art Deco clocktower added in 1939. The Post Office is two-storey rendered masonry building of 1874 in a Victorian Italianate palazzo style. Another notable cultural and architectural building is the two storey, Mechanics' Institute, with face brick walls and fine pressed-cement enrichments. Along the southern end of Main Street is the Salvation Army Citadel of 1934, representing interwar development. It is free classical in style, with dressings in an unusual rock-faced bricks. These buildings are Significant.

Adjacent to the Holy Trinity Anglican Church near the St. Georges Street end of Main Street, there is an important church precinct in Scallan Street. The surviving church buildings include St. Matthew's Uniting (former Presbyterian) with its landmark Gothic spire, the modest classical revival Welsh Baptist Chapel, and the modest

Gothic St. Peter's Lutheran (former Congregational) Church. The churches are of brick or rendered construction like the commercial buildings, with gabled roofs clad in slate tiles or galvanised corrugated iron, often steeply pitched (between 25 and 40 degrees), and picturesque in form and detail with side buttresses. These buildings are Significant, except for the altered Holy Trinity Anglican Church Parish Hall which is Contributory. Beside two of the churches are residences, including the Victorian Italianate timber villa at 23 Scallan Street (former Congregational Manse), and the late Federation red brick villa at 9 Scallan Street (former St Matthew's Manse), both of which are also Significant due to their historical associations and intactness.

The other dwellings on Scallan Street are mostly Victorian era, found in a row at Nos. 27-33. They are constructed of rendered brick or horizontal timber weatherboards, and also have hipped or gabled roofs clad predominantly in galvanised corrugated steel (with roof pitches between 25 and 35 degrees). They have timber framed double hung windows and timber framed doors, narrow eaves, brick chimneys that adorn the roofline and front or side verandahs. The earliest of them is 'Glenariffe' (29 Scallan Street), built prior to 1878, with a long transverse gabled roof, slightly concave verandah roof, and a combination of sash and French windows to the front facade. The other houses in this group are all timber, mostly illustrating the symmetrical version of the typical Italianate house, though No. 33 has a projecting canted bay to the side elevation. There is also an interwar house, a brick California Bungalow with a typical transverse gabled roof and minor gable forming the front porch. These houses are all Contributory.

UrbanDesign&EngineeringInfrastructure

The Stawell Main Street Precinct is largely a built-up Victorian and interwar commercial area (particularly Main Street), with some cultural and residential sections in Main and Scallan streets.

The allotment sizes within the precinct vary considerably, with Main Street forming the central core. The allotment and street configuration of the primary and secondary streets broadly follows the original 1866 survey. Along Main Street, the commercial buildings predominantly take up the full width of the narrow and wide allotments.

These blocks are reasonably deep, and while most of the commercial buildings are attached and semi-detached, there are some narrow drives and walkways that punctuate the strip of commercial activity. The residential allotments are comparatively large, with most front setbacks ranging from 2 to 4 metres. There is a large allotment on Main Street forming the municipal reserve for the Town Hall and neighbouring car park (formerly the site of a church, whose granite front fence survives along the southern boundary).

A significant urban focus in Main Street is the Stawell Town Hall and clocktower. There are also significant views to the Grampians along the south-western end, to the RSL building in Scallan Street, the steeple of St. Matthew's Uniting Church in Scallan Street, the chimney stack of the Stawell brickworks to the west, and to the Baptist Church in Scallan Street from Main Street through the Town Hall carpark. The memorials and garden plantings near the southern end of the precinct form another significant landmark that can be viewed from a number of different locations in the precinct. The uninterrupted views of the rear of the commercial shops from Church and Bayliss streets - with their picturesque gabled and hipped galvanised corrugated iron roof forms and intact construction and details - also makes a critical and unusual contribution to the rural, commercial architectural character of the precinct. The former Powder Magazine is located in the central reserve of Church Street. It is a small utilitarian structure of face brick with a cement-rendered barrel vaulted roof.

Throughout the precinct is a mixture of non-original concrete footpaths, concrete flagged footpaths and polychrome brick paving to the central commercial core of Main Street. There is also introduced concrete kerb and channel and concrete roll over kerbs, with some shallow spoon drains. Recent traffic islands form an intrusive street feature at the junction of Main and Wimmera streets.

No early Stawell stone kerbs or spoon drains survive in the precinct, although there is an early 'pyramid style' post box in Main Street (near Patrick Street).

Landscaping

Throughout the precinct are pockets of both significant as well as recent landscaping. The memorials and garden plantings in Main Street, at the triangular junction with Victoria Street, forms an important landscape, with its grassed area, pond, flagpoles, rose garden and perimeter flower beds. It contains a stripped classical granite

cenotaph upon which stands a statue of a digger in repose, in remembrance of the Great War (WWI). Beside it is a second granite memorial, for WWII and the Korean War.

Landscaping introduced in recent time includes the Town Hall Gardens (although the granite fence is early but altered), brick planter boxes and seating, and the young trees in projecting islands on Main Street.

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/>