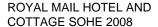# FORMER ROYAL MAIL HOTEL AND COTTAGE

ROYAL MAIL HOTEL AND COTTAGE SOHE 2008

h00335 1 former royal mail hotel avenel sl03

Location

26 HENRY STREET AVENEL, STRATHBOGIE SHIRE

Municipality

STRATHBOGIE SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0335

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

What is significant?
The township of Avenel carries the name of the pastoral run of Henry Kent Hughes, one the earliest settlers in the district and the creek which divides the township is named after him. Travellers forded the shallow creek crossing on Hughes's property, used his station sheds for shelter and also changed horses at the run. The construction of a timber bridge across the creek in 1847 formalised the importance of the location on the overland route and provided a further impetus for settlement of the area. In 1850 Assistant-surveyor Wedge laid out town allotments either side of the creek and the first town allotments were sold In May 1851. The replacement of the timber bridge with a substantial stone bridge by 1859 consolidated the importance of the place to both drovers and coach travellers.

The Royal Mail Hotel was constructed near the bridge over Hughes Creek by James Hilt in 1855-56 and originally operated as a store before Hilet was granted a District Publicans licence in 1857. The strategic location of the hotel ensured its popularity and the hotel was further buoyed by the increase in coach activity between Melbourne and the gold town of Beechworth. Hilet remained as publican until 1860 when Frederick Ruffy, an early settler with other interests in the town, took over the licence of the hotel. Like Hilet, Ruffy retained the licence for only a short time before transferring it to Esau Shelton in 1862 -63. By 1868, the coach change station had transferred from the Royal Mail to the Avenel Arms on the other side of the creek, but the opening of the railway line through Avenel in 1872 ensured the continued development of the town. The location of the Avenel railway station on a site about one and half kilometres north of the existing town on Hughes Creek however, drew business activity away from the old town to the area around the new station. Recognizing the significance of the shift in town focus, Shelton concentrated his commercial activity on his newly-erected Imperial Hotel near the station. Travellers now stayed at the Imperial and other hotels in the new area of town and the Royal Mail became a quieter community orientated hotel providing long-term accommodation. Shelton ran the hotel until his death in 1899. The Royal Mail hotel was run by Shelton's family until its closure as a hotel in 1903. The family then ran the former hotel as boarding house until 1913. In subsequent ownerships, the hotel became a family residence until 1980 when it was purchased as a weekender but later converted to bed and breakfast accommodation

Elsau Shelton was one of Avenel's most respected citizens. Elsau Shelton and his wife Margaret took a strong interest in the customs and welfare of local aboriginals and Elsau Shelton became a Justice of the Peace and the first Avenel resident to be elected as Seymour Shire President. The Shelton family also has an incidental association with Kelly history when the ten-year old Ned Kelly rescued the Shelton's son from drowning in the rain swollen Hughes Creek.

How is it significant?
The Royal Mail Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?
The Royal Mail Hotel is of historical significance as a prominent 1850s coach staging post on route to the Beechworth goldfields and the early overland route to Sydney, and remains a critical element in the understanding of the now relatively isolated old portion of the town of Avenel. The location of the hotel near the site of the first bridge over Hughes Creek and the substantial stone bridge which had replaced it is a significant reminder of the short-lived commercial importance of the old town and its subsequent decline following the construction of the railway station one and half kilometres to the north in the early 1870s.

The Royal Mail Hotel is of architectural significance as a verandahed country hotel in the Victorian Georgian style which retains much of its original external form and detail and some internal finishes. The hotel has splayed corner entrance characteristic of hotels of the period, and retains, unusually for a hotel building of its age, varied remnants of early interior finishes and wallpapers.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2005]

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. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and planall works shall be in accordance with it. Note:A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1855,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	33
Property Number	

History

From Matthew Chamberlain *Transport and Transformation: a study of structural evolution of the former Royal Mail Hotel Avenel* Victoria; Archaeology Honours Thesis; La Trobe University, 2000

Avenel
The township of Avenel was born as a convenient stopping place for travellers. When the town was surveyed in 1850 by Thomas Wedge, the ground that he pegged out was already a recognised camping ground for overlanding drovers; one day's ride from Seymour with cattle and horses (Burgoyne 1954: 17). The first Europeans through the area were the explorers Hume and Hovell who crossed Hughes Creek at a shallow ford at Avenel in 1824. In June 1838 Henry Kent Hughes, one of the earliest settlers in the area, took up a 60,000 acre lease astride the creek which bears his name and christened his run' Avenel' after his former property in England (Martindale 1982: 165). By 1846 the station sheds were being used by travellers as shelter while they changed horses at Hughes's run (Martindale 1982: 165). The importance of the crossing was eventually marked by the 1847 completion of a wooden bridge across the creek (Melbourne Argus, 1st June 1847). Settlers such as W.H. Mutton and J. Burrows began to arrive in the area in 1849 (Burgoyne 1954: 14), followed the next year by Assistant-surveyor. Wedge, who laid out town lots on both sides of the creek. The first sale of these allotments was conducted in Melbourne in May 1851 (Department of Lands and Survey Map, 1954).

The Royal Mail Hotel
The Royal Mail Hotel entered the life of Avenel some time in the early to mid-1850s. It was built and originally operated as a store by James Hilet (Burgoyne 1954: 22, Martindale 1982: 166). Hilet arrived in Avenel late in 1851, purchasing a block at the second land sales in October of that year (Department of Lands and Survey Map, 1954), and built the Royal Mail sometime between then and 1856. In September of that year Hilet was recorded as a storekeeper when named as executor of William Mutton's will (Burgoyne 1954: 25). On January 27, 1857 he was granted a slaughtering licence as a storekeeper, and a District Publicans licence for the Royal Mail Hotel, the first such licence granted for the building (Petty Sessions Book, Avenel Court 1856-59).

The actual date that the Royal Mail was built is difficult to ascertain clearly from historical documents. A lithographed map of Avenel, dated May 1855, and produced by the Surveyor-General's office, probably for the sale of town allotments held on the 30th of May 1855, shows the Royal Mail block clearly marked 'Reserve'. This obviously suggests that the block was being held for town or government; purposes and that the hotel had not been built by this time. But this is not cut and dried.

When Assistant-surveyor J.G. W. Wilmot, the man in charge of the survey of the Sydney Road section between Broadford and Longwood, set up his survey camp at Avenel in August of 1854, he was surprised to find that the 1850 survey pegs had been pulled out, and no-one on the south side of Hughes Creek knew where the true boundaries of their allotments lay. He wrote a letter to his superiors in Melbourne on September 2- "I thought it advisable to point out the proper boundaries to those parties who had purchased land, to enable them to put up their fences on the correct line" (Victorian Public Records Series 44 P / Unit 5, File 54/15). Wilmot completed his work in the area in December 1854 and returned to Melbourne. The 1855 lithograph is undoubtedly based in part on his re-survey.

As of 1855, James Hilet owned or was in control of five town allotments on the south side of Hughes Creek (Amended original survey map of Avenel, Department of Natural Resources and Environment A71). One of these was located directly behind the Royal Mail block. Given this, Wilmot's discovery of the incorrect line of boundaries, and the 1855 marking of the Royal Mail block as 'Reserve', we have several possible scenarios. Firstly, Hilet had built, or at least commenced building, the Royal Mail by the time of Wilmot's arrival, but had unintentionally built on the block in front of his own, being unaware of where the boundary lay. This does not explain the 'reserve' marking though, as this term was usually only employed for blocks reserved for government purposes. Secondly, Hilet had secured the land by this point through a lease, though no evidence of such a lease can be found. In this case the 'reserve' marking would apply to government land, but land that had been leased. Within this scenario, the hotel could already have been built. Or thirdly, the 'reserve' marking applies to government land that Hilet had not yet become involved with, thus the hotel had not been built as of May 1855.

While the construction date is unclear, we know that the building was there by September 1856, and had been converted to the Royal Mail Hotel by January 1857. It was the second hotel opened in the town, following the 'Avenel Arms', owned by John Bignall and located on the opposite bank of the Creek (Martindale 1982: 166).

The First Owners
James Hilet, a native of Berkshire, England, had been in Australia since at least the early 1840s, having married his, wife Ann, from Cork, Ireland, at Sydney in 1841 (Register of Births, Avenel No. 180). His movements between this point and his arrival in Avenel are unclear, but once in the town he set about making his pile with a number of diverse interests. In the earliest period of Avenel's existence Hilet had the foresight to occupy or purchase five allotments on, or within a stone's throw of, the southern approach to the bridge ideal ground for business activity, such as the store and hotel he would soon open. In the mid-1850s he was contracted to build two of the towns more important buildings - the Courthouse and the Police Barracks, which he had completed by 1856 (Martindale 1982: 167). He was also a racehorse owner, his horse 'Zango' taking out the main event on the 1860 Boxing Day card at Avenel (Martindale1982: 168). In 1857 Hilet, along with Henry Matthews, Alexander Corbett and William Parker, claimed to have found gold at Avenel. Parker wrote to the Government "...saying that if a goldfield were found in that locality their claim as the discoverers could not be dismissed" (Flett 1970: 74).

Hilet opened the Royal Mail in 1857 and quickly cashed in on the passing trade brought by the coaching companies. He continued running the hotel until at least the beginning of 1860, being granted another Publicans licence in June 1859 (Petty Sessions Book, Avenel Court 1856-59). It seems that he gave up hotelkeeping sometime during 1860 and settled on the land – the birth certificate for his daughter Anna (Register of Births, Avenel No. 180) , born on March 15th 1861, records him as a farmer.

The second owner, Frederick Ruffy, was also a fairly early settler in the region, having taken up 'Tarcombe' run, next door to Lloyd Jones's 'Avenel' Run in January 1851 (Eddy 1995: 19). He appears in the Port Phillip directory in 1851 as a 'settler' at Seymour, and in the 1854 directory as a 'squatter' at 'Tarcombe, Murray'. He left Tarcombe Run in 1856, and it is clear from maps of Avenel township that he was granted one of the blocks opposite the Royal Mail early in 1857, and had been in control of this block since at least 1854 (Department of Natural Resources and Environment Map A71). Apparently he erected a store here that was run for a time by Esau Shelton (Martindale 1982: 167). He took over the Royal Mail in around 1860 and stayed there until 1862/63. He was still living at Avenel in 1868 as a 'gentleman' (Baillieres Post Office Directory 1868), but after this point little is known of him, though the township of Ruffy, in the Strathbogie Ranges to the southeast of Avenel, bears his name (Eddy 1995).

The next owner of the Royal Mail was Esau Shelton. Shelton, originally from Staffordshire in England, arrived in Avenel in 1858, after a number of years working as a drover and carrier in northern Victoria. He married his wife Margaret, from Westmeath, Ireland, in Melbourne in 1857 (Register of Births, Avenel No. 200). He took up the running of a store owned by Frederick Ruffy in May 1858, and was again granted a slaughtering licence as a storekeeper in January 1859 (Petty Sessions Book Avenel Court 1856-59). He stayed at this store until 1861/ 63 when he took over the Royal Mail. The birth certificate for his son Esau, born in February 1862 (Register of .Births, Avenel No. 195), records him as a 'Storekeeper', while that for his next son George, born in December 1863 (Register of Births, Avenel No. 200), records him as 'Hotel & Storekeeper'. Shelton was eventually granted the Title for the Royal Mail block in November 1882 (Certificate of Title Vol. 1443 Folio 288490), and he ran the hotel until his death in 1899. From his arrival in the town he became one of Avenel's most respected citizens, becoming the first Seymour Shire President from Avenel in 1871, a position he held for another two terms during the 1870s, as well as being a regular churchgoer and J.P. (Martindale 1982: 183). After his death, the Shelton family retained the hotel, running it as the Royal Mail until 1903, and then as a boarding house until 1913.

Coaching Days
As Avenel had begun as an important stopping place for travellers, so it remained during the reign of the passenger coaches along the Sydney road, providing a perfect ten-mile stage between Seymour and Longwood. The increasing traffic throughout the 1850s spelled the end for the old wooden bridge; replaced by 1859 by the six arched stone bridge that still spans Hughes Creek. From the time it opened the Royal Mail boomed from the trade that passed through Avenel aboard the coaches "The Royal Mail became one of the best known public houses on the Old Sydney Road, as it was a "coach-change" for Cobb & Co.'s famous "Telegraph" line of coaches, carrying mail and passengers from Melbourne to the Beechworth diggings..." (Burgoyne 1954: 22). In fact, the reference to Cobb & Co. might be misleading, as many other companies plied the line to Beechworth, both in opposition to Cobb & Co. and its subsidiaries, and before and after they arrived. The line was originally operated by Hopkins and Co., then Fosters and McCowans. The Cobb & Co. franchise operated by Watson and Hewitt took over the line in 1858 and in the late 1860s the service transferred to Robertson and Wagner (Turton 1973: 12). William Kelly, in 1858, made note of the battles of the coaching companies, and the passengers whose coin kept tills, like that of the Royal Mail, ringing up and down the line "..: contemplated the journey to Beechworth with anything but pleasurable anticipations, for a spirited coaching opposition on the line had recently been concluded, and I felt perfectly assured our conveyance would be packed with passengers as closely as the

pieces in a Chinese puzzle-box. And so it turned out; every place was engaged" (Kelly 1977: 336-337). While he referred to Avenel as a "... pretty, cleanly little village" (1977: 338), Kelly made no mention of Hilet's Royal Mail, where the weary and cramped passengers, "... waddling about like ducks with lumbago" (1977: 337), would have stretched their legs and taken refreshments ". liquid or solid, in the short time available before the coach moved on to the next stage of its long journey'" (Burgoyne 1954: 22-23). With one coach in each direction daily, the rewards for the Royal Mail would have been significant. Little wonder Hilet, certainly a man with an eye for a money- spinner, took up hotel-keeping.

However, whilst the coaches brought good paying customers, it seems they also brought some trouble. On the 4th of June 1857, James Hilet had four men: Nicolas Sheene, James Daly', Thomas McCann and William Lander, charged in the Avenel court for making a disturbance and assaulting him in his hotel. Perhaps these were over-anxious gold seekers on the way to Beechworth; if so, they would have to hope their luck held, as all were fined - Lander, seemingly the ringleader, forfeiting a hefty sixty pounds (Petty Sessions Book Avenel Court 1856-59). Nor was this a one-off. Esau Shelton also saw his share of rowdy punters; John Davis was convicted of assault and sentenced to one month in Kilmore gaol with hard labour, after an incident at the Royal Mail in November 1866. In October 1867, Esau also had Richard Alfred charged for attempting to steal a keg of brandy from the hotel. Alfred was also imprisoned (petty Sessions Book Avenel Court 1865-70).

Despite these undesirable elements, Esau and Margaret Shelton seem to have been keen to spread the wealth brought by the passing coach traffic, encouraging the local community, and especially local aborigines, to become involved. Shelton had taken 'great interest in Aboriginal customs and traditions during his time as a drover (Jones 1995: 18). He continued this interest with his arrival at Avenel, apparently befriending the local tribe members, probably of the Natrakboolok clan (Chambers 1985: 19), who camped along the banks of Hughes Creek nearby to the Hotel. He "...encouraged the women to sell rush baskets to coach passengers during their stopovers at the Royal Mail" (Jones 1995: 18).

Passenger coaches were not the only coaches moving down the Sydney Road during this period. Avenel-ites also witnessed the gold escort bringing its booty through to Melbourne, and the Police coach loaded with prisoners on the way to the city for trial (Burgoyne 1954: 32). The gold escort was of course the favoured prey of Bushrangers, and the town met at least one of these: Harry Power, who brazenly attended the Avenel races in 1865 (Burgoyne 1954: 40). However, Shelton's Royal Mail had a close encounter with an outlaw of the future; Edward Kelly, whose family had moved to Avenel from Beveridge in early 1864. In what is now a quite well known tale of the young Ned Kelly, Esau and Margaret's son Richard was rescued by Ned from drowning in the rain swollen Hughes Creek in August of 1865. Upon the arrival of the drenched children at the Royal Mail the grateful Shelton parents presented ten-year old Ned with a green silk cummerbund, a trophy that "... would remain one of Ned's most treasured possessions, to be worn only on very special occasions" (Jones 1995: 21). In fact, Kelly was wearing the sash when he was shot down at Glenrowan 15 years later (Jones 1995: 229).

Perhaps Esau tired of rowdy travellers, or perhaps he anticipated the, demise of the coaches, because by 1868 the Royal Mail was no longer operating as the coach change station in Avenel. That role had transferred to the Avenel Arms, on the other side of the creek (Baillieres Post Office Directory 1868, Seymour Shire Rate Book 1868).This need not have been a major drama for the Shelton family, as the railway was coming soon, and with it would come not only a new role for the Royal Mail, but a complete re-arrangement of the whole town of Avenel.

Railway
Esau Shelton was probably quite aware of the impending arrival of the railway, as plans for a line through Avenel to Albury were mooted as early as 1863 (Turton 1973: 15). After years of debate over the preferred route, track gauge, and funding, parliamentary approval was given for the construction of the Essendon and Upper Murray Railway on November 11, 1869, and work commenced at Essendon,on June 20,1870 (Turton 1973: 20-24). With construction of the line to Seymour still underway, the contractors set up the main construction camp at Avenel in May 1871, and over the next eighteen months work continued apace around the town, clearing the line, sinking piles for a rail bridge over Hughes Creek, and ballasting. The line opened to Longwood on November 20, 1872, and to Benalla in August the following year (Turton 1973: 36-39).

The new railway station, however, was situated around a mile to the north of the hamlet on Hughes Creek, and this instigated a rapid shift of business activity from around the bridge to opposite the railway station. New allotments were laid out around the station and these were sold off in March and April 1873 (Department of Lands and Survey Map 1954). New shops, a bank, and several new hotels, including the 'Harvest Home' and the 'Plough Inn' went up. Esau Shelton was also not slow in investing in the new town, buying a corner block opposite the station and erecting two stores, a butcher shop, and a new hotel the 'Imperial'.

With the opening of the railway Avenel boomed, and continued to do so until the opening of the Goulburn Valley line from Mangalore, a few kilometres south of Avenel, to Numurkah in 1881. Until this time Avenel acted as the railhead for all the produce of the Goulburn valley, largely wheat, transported down by bullock waggons (Martindale 1982: 168). The Murchison road leading into Avenel was where these carts queued up to unload their goods, and this road earned for a time the nickname 'Cranky Lane'; one would assume that this was in honour of the bullock drivers, well known for their oaths and expletives. These were also thirsty men; local legend has it that the bullockies would leave their charges to follow the queue down the Murchison road to the railhead alone, while they ;I crawled through the hotels in the new town (Lyn Norris: Pers. Comm).

Community Venue

With business now shifted to the new town, and the Sheltons ensconced there with their new hotel, the Royal Mail settled into a quieter, more community-oriented period. With travellers now more likely to stay in the new town, the Sheltons went from advertising "...First-class Accommodation for Commercial Travellers" (Nagambie Herald, April 13, 1873), to letting out rooms long-term.

From 1874 to 1879, Amelia Davies rented out five rooms at the Royal Mail (Seymour Shire Rate Books). Davies was a school teacher, who opened a 'Ladies Seminary' late in 1873 in the old Avenel Arms (Nagambie Herald, October 23, 1873), which had closed down in the rush to the new town. Both she and the Sheltons must have been pleased with the arrangement, Davies being only minutes from her workplace, and the Sheltons gaining a regular income for the Royal Mail. Others came and went, like John Hume, a labourer who rented another room at the hotel throughout 1875 (Seymour Shire Rate Books). The Royal Mail also began to host community events and meetings. The wedding banquet of William Gibbs and Sarah Shelton was held at the hotel in the late 1870s, and was attended by virtually the whole town (Burgoyne 1954: 32). In October 1873, "... a good attendance of 'lovers of the bat'" formed the Avenel Cricket Club at Shelton's Royal Mail, with H.J. Wilkinson, manager of the local bank, being elected president, and Esau Shelton vice-president (Nagambie Herald, October 23, 1873).

With the end of the railway boom period the town of Avenel became a much quieter town and the Royal Mail continued operating quietly as a hotel until 1903. After Esau died in 1899, Margaret Shelton continued to operate the hotel briefly, before converting it to a 'temperance hotel' or boarding house (Sands & MacDougaJl directory 1906 & 1907, Seymour Shire Rate Book 1911). The building continued on like this until Margaret's death in 1913.

Residence

'When Margaret Shelton died her estate passed to her son Richard and son-in-law William Gibbs. These two sold the Royal Mail property to John Herbert Plummer in November 1915. Plummer, originally from Echuca, was a butcher by trade. In fact he had long rented the butcher shop owned by Esau Shelton in the centre of the new Avenel, and the two had regularly conducted business (Probate documents, Esau Shelton 1899). Now Plummer turned his hand to running sheep, taking up land several miles outside Avenel. The former hotel was to be the family home and the Plummers raised six children there.

Throughout the years of Plummers residence at the house, the growing popularity of motor cars had increased traffic along the Sydney road, and it also brought about a small shift in the town. Businesses re-opened along the old Sydney road; the 'Imperial Hotel' opened its doors in the old 'Avenel Arms' building in the 1930s and a garage and roadhouse opened opposite it. During the 1930s the larrikin Plummer boys had their fun on that now busy road. After sneaking out for nights out in Seymour, on the return journey they would turn off the motor of their car at the top of the hill leading into Avenel and coast home silently, so that they could creep stealthily back into their verandah sleep-out, their parents none the wiser (Beryl Towt: Pers. Comm.).

Undoubtedly, youthful shenanigans like this were commonplace throughout the remainder of the 20th century, for the old Royal Mail remained a family residence until the 1980s. After the Plummer family left in 1939, the property was taken over by John Clarence Smith. However, the Smith family were only at the home briefly before having to rent it out and move to Mangalore to manage a farm while the owner was away at the war. They returned in 1944. In 1947 the block was reincarnated as a stopping place for travellers when Smith built a garage immediately to the west of the house Avenel Motors and conducted mechanical repairs for motorists passing on the Hume Highway. Initially this was all that the garage offered but shortly afterwards the Ampol company put petrol bowsers in at the garage, thus adding filling station to the mechanical repairs already carried out (Lorraine Cambrey: Pers. Comm.).

A serious accident in the early 1950's which injured Clarrie's legs limited the amount of work he could do at the garage, and it closed down in 1957/58. (It was still operating in 1957 according to Martindale (1982: 183), but Lorraine Cambrey, Clarrie Smith's daughter, suggests that it closed around that time). Clarrie died in 1959, but

his wife Alice took over and maintained the house as a private residence until she sold the property on to Peter Drummond.

Bed and Breakfast
Peter Drummond bought the house in 1980 and it remained vacant for many years while he renovated and altered various sections of the building. Avenel by now has become, not only a short term stopping place for travellers on the Hume, but also the centre of an area renowned for horse breeding and wineries, and the town has focussed on attracting people connected with these activities. In 1995, as a result of the growing popularity of the town as a weekend getaway, Peter Drummond opened the house as a Bed & Breakfast, a role that it still plays.

Extent of Registration

Shire of Seymour. No.335. Cottage, Hume Highway, Avenel.
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3650]

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/