

PLACE: Former Blacksmith's Shop

ADDRESS: 925-927 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (Main Road), Hurstbridge

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1923



Image 1: Former Blacksmith's Shop

Source: HLCD, March 2008

HISTORY

Hurstbridge

Originally 160 acres of land was owned by Cornelius Haley which encompassed the area now known as Hurstbridge.¹ In 1868, Henry Hurst's family purchased Haley's land creating the Allwood run. It spanned from Hurstbridge to Kinglake.² In 1880, the Council acquired land in the vicinity of Main Road (originally named Amos Street) and Cherry Tree Road from Hurst and Amos Taylor.³ Some early buildings and businesses were established prior to the proclamation of the town including a post office, bakery and bank.

Hurstbridge became more easily accessible when the railway line was extended from Eltham in 1912 to service the fruit orchards in the area. In 1924, the township of Hurstbridge was proclaimed.⁴ The town was originally known as Allwood and was slow to develop; only gaining momentum after the Second World War following the provision of electricity in 1952. The name of Hurstbridge came from original settlers to the area, the Hurst Family who resided at Allwood. A bridge was built by Henry Hurst crossing Diamond Creek and was known as Hurst's Bridge.

¹ Alan Marshall, *Pioneers and Painters: one hundred years of Eltham and its Shire*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1971, pp.76-80.

² Chronology of Nillumbik Shire, Hurstbridge District Local History Group, 2002
www.yprl.vic.gov.au/Genealogy/Chronology_%202003.doc accessed, March 2008

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dianne Edwards, *Diamond Valley Story*, Greensborough, 1979, p.159.

Development History of the site

In 1923, David Gordon Graham opened a blacksmith shop from this site in Main Road, Hurstbridge.⁵ A smithy measuring 60 by 120 feet was listed in the rate book and it is assumed that this is the subject building.⁶ Whilst the ratebook search was inconclusive, it appears that the land was owned by Frances Gray who owned a large parcel of land along this road. Frances Gray is also indicated in the ratebooks as being a tenant of the property, which may indicate an attached residence or another commercial building on the site.

Frances and Bill Gray subdivided a large holding of land in Main Road known at the time as Gray's subdivision, which took place in the 1930s. Graham remained as the blacksmith for Hurstbridge until the late 1930s operating from this site. In the rate books for 1935-36, Frances Gray is noted as the owner whilst Graham is the occupying tenant.⁷ In 1938, Bill Gray is listed as the owner of the property whilst Graham is the occupying tenant.⁸

In the 1940s, Leslie Walter Jones was the owner occupier followed by Johanna Euphemia Graham.⁹

Ivan Pepper operated a timber joinery business here from 1948 - 1956, until the Stublely family took over in that year.¹⁰ The property has remained in the Stublely family ownership and is now known as the Glo-brite Hardware store.

DESCRIPTION

The shop at 925 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road is a single-storey, timber-framed building comprising two shopfronts addressing the main street of Hurstbridge, with an extension to the west and north. The shopfronts are built up to the property boundary and abut a public footpath, while the land to the east (929 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road) is currently vacant and bound by a high timber picket fence.

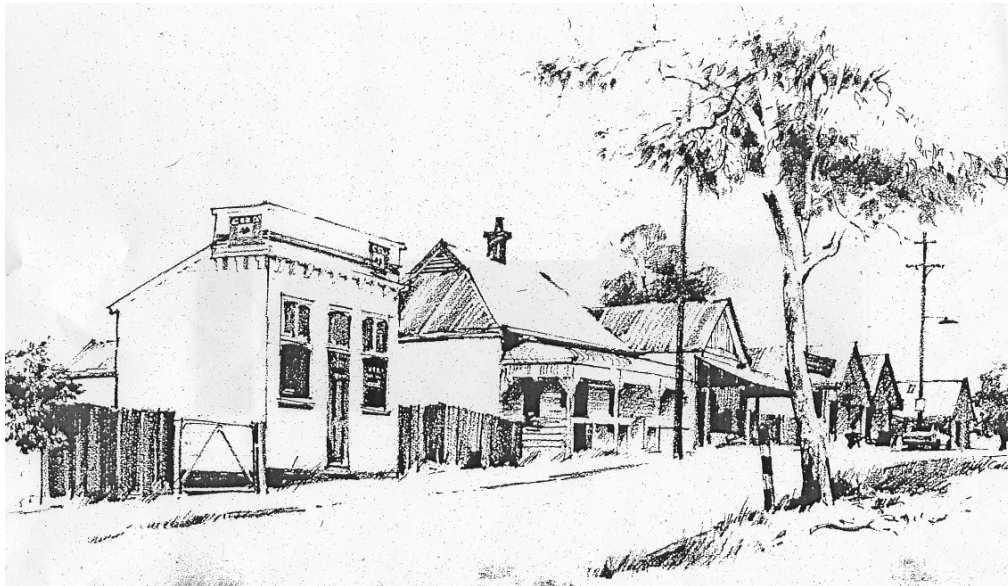


Image 2: Sketch of the Hurstbridge streetscape, 1977 (artist unknown). Note that the double gables of the former Blacksmith's Shop are visible as the second building from the right.
Source: Hurstbridge District Local History Group

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Shire of Eltham Rate Books, 1922-23, Line 301A

⁷ Shire of Eltham Rate Books, 1935-36, Line 539

⁸ Shire of Eltham Rate Books, 1938, Line 766

⁹ Shire of Eltham Heritage Study, Shop – Hardware Store, 925 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, pp.855-857.

¹⁰ Hurstbridge Heritage Trail, <http://www.hurstbridgeheritagetrail.websyte.com.au/> accessed March 2008



Image 3: Former Blacksmith's Shop

Source: HLCD, March 2008

The building is essentially rectangular in plan form. A double gabled roof over the main building emphasises the distinction between the two shopfronts, while skillion roofs extend over the additions to the west and rear. The roof and eastern elevation of the main building are clad with sheets of painted corrugated iron. The front elevation is glazed and clad with painted timber weatherboards below the window sills and fibrous plaster sheets to the side panels and gable ends. The extensions to the west and north are clad with a variety of corrugated fibreglass and steel sheets.

Each shopfront comprises a door opening on the western side and a fixed, timber-framed window divided into two large panes. The double door to the eastern shopfront is timber-framed and glazed. Each leaf of the door is divided vertically into four panes. A sign currently conceals the door to the western shopfront.

The roof over the western shopfront is clad with short sheets of corrugated iron, while the roof over the eastern shopfront is clad with longer sheets, indicating that this half of the building has been re-roofed. The application of fibrous plaster sheets to the front elevation is also a later modification. The use of short sheets of corrugated iron to clad the east elevation suggests that these may be original.

The documentary evidence indicates that the main building with the two gabled roof forms was initially built as a blacksmith's shop in 1923. This history is consistent with the fabric of the existing building. The general building form and materials are very simple and utilitarian, typical of the type of building constructed in the 1920s for a blacksmith. The shopfront windows and doors are more typical of the mid-twentieth century and this elevation appears to have been altered at this time to support the building's new use as a hardware store. The extensions to the west and north are typical of basic additions of the late twentieth century.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Blacksmith's shops are a building type which were once a common feature in nineteenth and early twentieth century towns. In cities and larger towns during the Victorian period, purpose-built blacksmith's shops were often decorative buildings, such as D. Fowler's Blacksmith and Wheelwright's Shop in Ararat (refer to Image 4).



Image 4: Ararat Blacksmith's Shop, c.1890.

Source: State Library of Victoria, Image No. pi00376

In smaller towns and rural settings; however, these buildings tended to be more humble, such as those illustrated in Images 5, 6 and 7. These more utilitarian buildings were typically built of timber and corrugated iron, with a simple rectangular plan form and a gabled roof. The buildings also featured large doorways and a relatively high ceiling space to allow horses and possibly horse-drawn vehicles inside.

No other blacksmith's shops are known to have survived in the Shire of Nillumbik. The Apted Farm Buildings in Strathewen were originally described in the Eltham Heritage Study as including a Forge, but a review in 2000 noted that the forge had been removed from its simple open shed enclosure (rebuilt c.1997) and donated to the Whittlesea Historical Society.¹¹ In the nearby City of Manningham, the museum complex at Schramms Cottage in Doncaster has a chimney from Mullen's Blacksmith shop at Templestowe; the chimney was relocated to its current site when the shop closed in 1972.¹²



Image 5: Village Blacksmith, Gembrook, c.1908.

Source: State Library of Victoria, Image No. a04105

¹¹ Graeme Butler and Associates, *Investigation of Selected Heritage Places, Shire of Nillumbik*, 2000, pp. 12-15.

¹² HLCD, *Rieschiecks Reserve Conservation Management Plan, Stage 2 Draft Feb 2008*, p.22.



Image 6: Blacksmith's Shop, Burgundy St, Heidelberg, undated.

Source: Yarra Plenty Regional Library, ID No7444.



Image 7: Eltham Blacksmith's Shop, 1923.

Source: Yarra Plenty Regional Library, Photo No. 753.

As a simple, timber-framed building with a gabled roof form, 925-927 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road is typical of the type of building constructed in the early twentieth century for small town blacksmiths. While this building type is now rare, it is noted that the front elevation and interior have been significantly altered.

In addition to its original use as a blacksmith's shop, the building is also one of the few remaining shop buildings built in Hurstbridge at the time of its initial development as a township. Five existing shops on the Heidelberg-Kinglake Road are listed in the Heritage Overlay and all of these were built in the 1910s or 1920s. These include the Weatherboard Milk Bar and attached house at 804 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H069), the Former Butcher's Shop and house at 919 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H075), the Weatherboard Shop and dwelling at 956 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H077), the Weatherboard Shop at 960 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H078) and the Weatherboard Shop and residence at 964 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H079).

The former Blacksmith's Shop at 925-929 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road shares many similar characteristics with the other five existing shops built on this street in the same period and listed in the Heritage Overlay. All of the shops are timber-framed buildings, clad with weatherboards or corrugated iron and featuring simple hipped or gabled corrugated iron roofs. While most of the buildings have

simple skillion awnings over the footpath or verandahs, the wide eaves over the former Blacksmith's Shop provides a similar sense of shelter. In this respect, the former Blacksmith's Shop is considered a contributory part of the streetscape associated with the early development of Hurstbridge.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building at 925-927 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, Hurstbridge, has historical and aesthetic significance at a local level to the Shire of Nillumbik.

The building, constructed in 1923 with later alterations and additions, has local historical significance as one of the few remaining buildings associated with the main period of the development of the township of Hurstbridge (Criteria A4 & B2). Similar historic shops or shops with adjacent dwellings dating from the 1910s and 1920s are located at 804, 919, 956, 960 and 964 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (H069, H075, H077, H078 and H079).

The building was originally constructed to accommodate the requirements of a local blacksmith, but as lifestyles changed, particularly with the redundancy of horses for transport and farming, and with increasing industrialisation, the local blacksmith became obsolete in small communities.

As a former blacksmith's shop, the structure demonstrates the important service provided by blacksmiths in small communities. This service is no longer practiced. No similar buildings are known to have survived in the Shire of Nillumbik. Therefore, the building is a rare surviving example of an early twentieth century blacksmith's shop (Criterion B2).

The building's change in use from a blacksmith's shop to a joiner's workshop in 1948 and then to a hardware shop in 1956, and its continued use as a hardware shop up to the present, reflects the changes that occurred in small communities throughout Australia. In this way, the building contributes to a greater understanding of the development of the region and has local historical significance as an example of the evolution of local businesses (Criterion A4).

The front elevation and interior of the building have been significantly altered in its adaptation from blacksmith's shop and workshop to hardware shop. The size of the building has also increased as additions have been added to the side and rear. However, the general form of the original building, best represented by the double gabled roof, and the use of simple corrugated iron and timber, still indicate its original use. The building demonstrates the principal characteristics of a humble commercial building which has been adapted to suit changes in our way of life (Criterion D2).

The shop-like appearance of the building contributes to the understanding of the development of Hurstbridge's town centre and the village-like character of the streetscape. The former Blacksmith's Shop has local aesthetic significance for the features which demonstrate its early establishment, including its double-gabled form, wide eaves and simple materials (Criterion E1).

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The building at 925-927 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, has local historical significance as a rare example of a former blacksmith's shop and as an early commercial building in the development of Hurstbridge. That being said, it is also significant for the way it has evolved to suit changes to our way of life, and these changes have resulted in a loss of original fabric and integrity. It is therefore considered appropriate that alterations to the structure are permitted, if necessary, as long as the key characteristics, which physically represent the building's significance, are retained and respected.

To retain these key characteristics, the following guidelines are provided:

- The double gabled roof form should be retained and be clearly identifiable from Heidelberg-Kinglake Road;

- The front elevation, including the shopfronts, may be altered, as long as the double gabled roof form and wide eaves remain dominant, and that the changes respect the existing characteristics of the streetscape;
- The interior may be altered as desired;
- The later additions to the side and rear of the building may be removed and replaced as desired, but any new additions should be constructed of similar materials (ie. brickwork would be inappropriate);
- The building should remain predominantly single-storey as viewed from Heidelberg-Kinglake Road; and
- Existing corrugated iron and weatherboard cladding to the exterior of the original building should only be replaced using like-for-like materials.

In considering opportunities for change, it is also strongly recommended that the building continue to be used for commercial purposes.

It is also strongly recommended that the building be interpreted to help communicate its heritage significance to the local community and visitors. As a minimum, a small sign should be added to the exterior, matching existing signs on similar heritage buildings in the street. This sign should explain the building's original use and date of construction as a minimum.

SOURCES

Edwards, D., *Diamond Valley Story*, Greensborough, 1979.

Chronology of Nillumbik Shire, Hurstbridge District Local History Group, 2002
www.yprl.vic.gov.au/Genealogy/Chronology_%202003.doc accessed, March 2008

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Marshall, A., *Pioneers and Painters: one hundred years of Eltham and its Shire*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1971.

Shire of Eltham Heritage Study, Shop – Hardware Store, 925 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, pp.855-857.

Shire of Eltham Rate Books, North Riding, 1921-1941, VPRS 9705/P1 held at the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV)