

**BACCHUS MARSH HERITAGE STUDY.**

**Ref:** 153

Richard Peterson Architect & Conservation Consultant. Daniel Catrice Historian 1994.

**NAME:** The Border Inn.

**ADDRESS:** 141 Main Street (SW cnr Graham Street).

**TITLE DETAILS:**

**USE:** Hotel

**SIGNIFICANT DATE:** 1856 **CONSTRUCTION DATE:** 1850 **SOURCE:** 1

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** **DATE:** 1863, c1866, c1883, 1904, 1911 & 1936  
**SOURCE:** 5.

**DESIGNER:** -, John B Grut; Hughes & Orme **SOURCE:** 5

**CRITERIA:** H2,3,5,6/ H4/ H1, So3.

**HISTORIC THEME:** Townships. Transport. Community life.

**DESCRIPTION:** **STYLE:** Medieval **STORIES:** 2 **DETACHED.**

**MATERIALS:** **WALLS** Masonry & timber **ROOF** Iron

**STRUCTURE** Lb, stud.

**CONDITION:** Reasonable **INTACTNESS:** 1F Good **THREATS:**

**SIGNIFICANT INTACT ELEMENTS:**

FORM. FACADE. VERANDAH. ROOF FORM. USE.

VERANDAH DECORATION.

WALL DECORATION. DOORS. 1F WINDOWS. 1F

STREET FURNITURE.

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

**TYPE:** HISTORICAL. ARCHITECTURAL. SOCIAL.

**LEVEL:** STATE.

**DESIGNATION EXISTING:** Nil

**RECOMMENDED CONTROL/NOMINATION:** HBR. RNE. PLANNING SCHEME.  
AREA 1.

**MAP NO:** U4.07 **SURVEY:** RP & DC **DATE:** 15.1.94 **NEGS:** 12.12-14, 8.15-1019



**HISTORY:** The Border Inn was built in 1850 by John Pilmer, native of the border district between England and Scotland.<sup>1</sup> A later photograph (before 1866) shows it as a central pavilion of five bays flanked by symmetrical pavilions of two bays each. Pilmer leased the premises to James Watt, a man of foresight and initiative, who in 1851 established the first coaching service in Victoria:

to the diggings twice a week. Mr James Watt of the Border Inn, Bacchus Marsh begs to notify the public that he has made arrangements to start a coach service twice a week from Melbourne to Ballarat.<sup>2</sup>

A favoured gathering place for residents also, the Border Inn hosted the first meeting of the Bacchus Marsh Road Board in September 1856 and the inauguration of the Ivy Lodge of Tree Gardeners.<sup>3</sup>

In 1863, John Pilmer added a second storey to the central section of the hotel with Italianate eaves bracket pairs and added parapets to the side wings. Three years later, when the premises was offered for sale after Pilmer's death, the building was described "as an old English looking Hostelry, of brick and stone with a slate roof. Admitted to be one of the best hotels within a days ride west of the Metropolis".<sup>4</sup> By 1883, there is a central second storey wing extending at the rear. The hotel was purchased by Edward Jones, in whose family it remained until 1939 when sold to the Carlton and United Brewery. In 1904, a second storey was erected over the west section of the hotel, and in 1911, a verandah balcony was completed to the design of John B. Grut. Between 1886 and 1913, Mr Brut designed at least eighteen hotels and houses in Melbourne.<sup>5</sup> A second storey was added to the east side of the hotel in 1936, designed by Hughes and Orme to cater for guests attending the Bacchus Marsh Centenary celebrations.<sup>6</sup>

**VISUAL DESCRIPTION:** A two-storey hotel developed over almost 145 years, most recently in the Old English style. It presents 7 bays to Main Street: the end pairs of bays project, with a double-storied timber verandah between, and a splayed corner. The ground floor verandah has a latticed valance over curved transoms with drilled decoration (now obscured). The first floor has small timber brackets and balustrade.

The first floor of each end bay jettys forward some 750mm on joists and quadrant curved brackets in pairs and at the corner over the splay. These wings are timbered at first floor, with weatherboards and vent in the upper gables. First floor windows, of the centre bays

<sup>1</sup> "Border Inn", Local History File, BMDHS.

<sup>2</sup> *Argus*, 3 October 1851.

<sup>3</sup> "Border Inn", Local History File, BMDHS; *Cole Collection of Hotel Records*, State Library of Victoria.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Moore and Oomes, *Bacchus Marsh: A Pictorial Chronicle*, pp. 21 & 84; Lewis, M. (Ed.), *Australian Architects' Index* (School of Architecture and Building, University of Melbourne) & Lewis, M., *Architectural Survey Final Report*, University of Melbourne, Melbourne 1977, p.43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

have nineteenth century architrave moulds, with 12-pane double-hung sashes. All of the ground floor is masonry, rendered and ruled ashlar. The timbering returns along the Graham Street front with a skillion matching canopy over the entry on decorative brackets. The eaves generally have exposed rafters, except the two storey nineteenth century section, visible at rear, which has Italianate eaves bracket pairs, a deeply moulded chimney and a slate roof.<sup>7</sup> One small outbuilding is also nineteenth century. No particular interiors survive, apparently.

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:** There are five old town hotels still trading in Bacchus Marsh (with ref: 71, 72, 149 and 157). All are significant in their own ways and of these, four developed gradually from smaller nineteenth century buildings. The Border Inn is easily the oldest and the largest operating hotel, still partly in its original 1850 building in Bacchus Marsh. This section is a rare (in Victoria) pre-gold rush building, and still is used for its original purpose.

Old English designs are now rare for hotels in Victoria. The best is the Riverside Inn, Richmond, Robert H. McIntyre (1857, 1939); also the Mitre Tavern, 1-3 Bank Place, Melbourne (1920s) and the Club Hotel, Ringwood, now altered. Also Toorak Village shops, Robert Hamilton (1930s).

The Old English style was developed in London by Norman Shaw, with W.E. Nesfield from 1865, by mixing Streetian Gothic and farmhouse vernacular, with a little Elizabethan. It had a revival in the 1920s with E.T. Hall's Liberty's store, London of 1924 as an example to the Empire.

There are seven pre-gold rush buildings in Bacchus Marsh (also ref: 172, 174, 191, 218, 249 and 354). Mr Grut was also architect for the Court House Hotel (ref: 149) in the same year, 1911.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** A two-storey early brick hotel, built in stages between 1850 and 1936, latterly in the Old English style. The 1850 section presumably still survives. It was from here that in 1851, James Watt established the first coaching service in Victoria, from Melbourne to Ballarat. The first meeting of municipal government in Bacchus Marsh, the Road Board, was held here in 1856.

The Border Inn is of state historical significance as a pioneering pre-gold rush building, on the route to the Ballarat goldfields. It is the representative embodiment of several historical periods and their way of life. It demonstrates a complex changing sequence of patterns of occupancy and architectural styles. Its development at this location, demonstrates the effect of a social movement, the gold rush, as a transport stopover. It is also historically significant for its association with the first rural public transport in Victoria.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a remnant of how the front once appeared following the 1863 alterations.

Locally, the hotel is significance for its association with the first meeting of municipal government, and also for its social significance as a traditional community, visitor focus and meeting place.

**INTACTNESS:** Good. The building continues to develop over time as needs change, but these are comparatively minor alterations. all Edwardian windows have been replaced and ground floor window openings lowered to floor level.

**CONDITIONS & THREATS:** Reasonable.

MAIN STREET

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