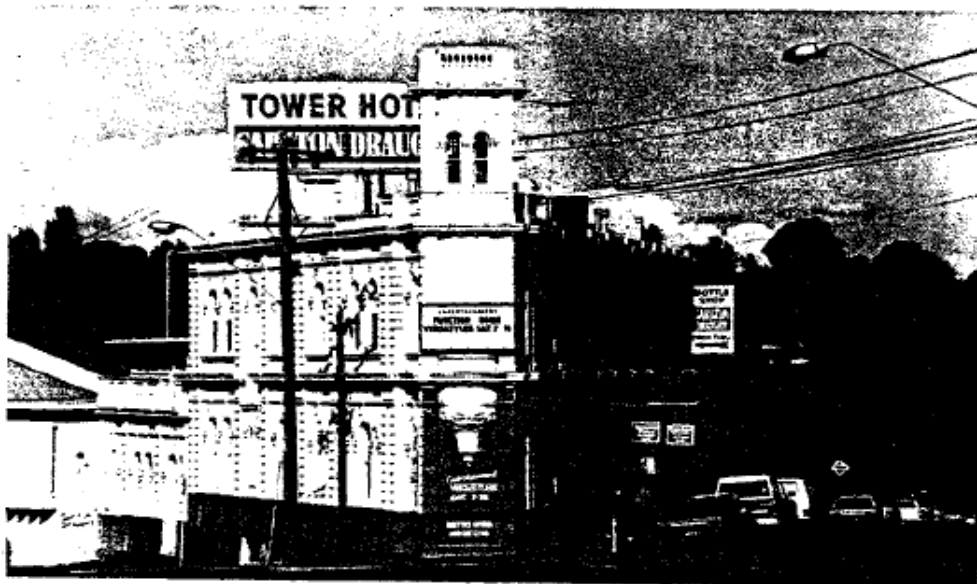


Hotels were established along the Heidelberg Road, at Alphenington, from the early 1850's and appear to have arisen with Manning's first urban subdivision of Charles Boomer's rural paddocks. Across the Darebin Creek, the Darebin Bridge Hotel had been owned by William Dunn since the 1850's. In the 1860's, Joseph G. Foulkes owned the Alphenington Hotel (further west) which still survives, and Thomas H. Bear leased a wine shop to publicans such as Emmanuel King and Roger Croker: he called it the Vine Tree Hotel.

Further east and, not far from the Darebin Bridge Hotel, Thomas Wills of Lucerne Farm leased a modest hotel to John Leas in the late 1860's. It was possibly these premises that William Luskcombe provided over as the Half-way House Hotel in the 1880's, and Bridget Fawcett owned and occupied up until 1891.

In that year William George Frew purchased the hotel and rebuilt it as the Tower Hotel, possibly to the design of architect, T. Anthouess. Two years later Frew had sold to Ellen Murphy and, after her, came Eliza Peters. Changes of licensees were followed by the change in route of the Heidelberg Road over the Darebin. What had been the original ford crossing, prior to 1856, had again become a crossing place after 1903 such that the road traversed the north side of the hotel.

The Tower Hotel is a two-level stucco brick building designed in the manner of the Italian Renaissance. Arched fenestration is dominant; being set against a trabeated facade where shallow pilasters, with extensive verniculated quoins, support a heavy bracketed cornice and string course. Corinthian order pilaster capitals serve as the impost mouldings for the arches which lie within this trabeation.



The building emulates, in plan, and takes full advantage of, its corner siting with the placement of an Elizabethan inspired oriel, at the corner, and a square tower, with a balustraded parapet, above.

The corner stucco is also verniculated and arched windowpairs fill each face. Alterations include the blocking of ground and first level openings and additions have been placed in the north. The extensive signage detracts from the building, particularly at the corner face. The Tower Hotel is a success-

fully composed and highly decorated building which has the advantage of corner siting and a creek valley setting. Sited on the axis of Heidelberg Road, it serves as the subject of vistas, both from the east and the west and is one of two hotels in Alphenington which evolved from the 1860's subdivision whilst, in the Tower's case, building on a site occupied by a hotel since the 1860's.