

## Heritage Overlay No.: 121

**Citation No.:** 461

**Place:** Former Rose & Crown Hotel

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<b>Other Names of Place:</b>	Sundowner Caravan Park Office
<b>Location:</b>	2057-2083 Western Highway, Rockbank
<b>Critical Dates:</b>	1875 (constructed)
<b>Existing Heritage Listings:</b>	None
<b>Recommended Level of Significance:</b>	LOCAL



### Statement of Significance:

The Sundowner Caravan Park office building (former Rose and Crown Hotel) at 2057 Western Highway, Rockbank, is significant as one of only two surviving hotel buildings in the Melton Shire. Although considerably altered, the historical significance of the place is embodied in the surviving fabric of both the Victorian and interwar periods.

The Sundowner Caravan Park office building (former Rose and Crown Hotel) at 2057 Western Highway is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2). It is one of only two surviving intact nineteenth century hotels in the Shire. It has been the most substantial and enduring building in Rockbank, a hamlet that had not been identified or surveyed by the colonial government, and whose beginnings and sense of place were closely associated with the hotel. The hotel is also significant as evidence of the purge of Victoria's hotels by the Licence Reduction Board in 1911, a result of the influence of temperance crusaders, medical opinion

*Consultants: David Moloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie (2006)*

and middle class electors. It is also significant for its association with the large extended Missen family, one of the most successful Rockbank farming families, who had, with many others, arrived in Melton from South Australia for the 1860s Selection Act sales.

The Sundowner Caravan Park office building (former Rose and Crown Hotel) at 2057 Western Highway has architectural interest. The building has surviving fabric of the Victorian era and also of significant change during the interwar period. The architectural qualities of interest are the single storey height, bluestone wall construction (but not the painted finish), gable roof forms, skillion form of the front verandah, corrugated profile roof cladding, masonry chimney (but not the painted finish), wide eaves on the gable roof forms, front timber framed double hung multi-paned windows, central timber framed door opening, gable ventilator and the timber strapping.

Overall, the Sundowner Caravan Park office building (former Rose and Crown Hotel) at 2057 Western Highway is of LOCAL significance.

### **Description:**

The Sundowner Caravan Park office building (former Rose and Crown Hotel) at 2057 Western Highway, Rockbank, is surrounded by shrubs and trees at the sides, together with two small shrubs at the front.

The single storey, painted bluestone, altered Victorian styled former hotel building is characterised by a gable roof form, together with a gable wing at the rear. The main gable roof appears to have replaced a nineteenth century roof (possibly a hipped roof) during the interwar (1920s-1940s) period. A skillion verandah projects at the front and may have replaced an earlier verandah. The roofs are clad in green corrugated Colorbond and the verandah is supported by simple timber posts. A curved flat timber picket balustrade forms the verandah boundary. A painted masonry chimney adorns the roofline and there are wide eaves.

Apart from the bluestone construction, other surviving Victorian style features of the design include the front timber framed double hung multi-paned windows and the central timber framed door opening.

Surviving features as a result of the changes possibly during the interwar period include the gable ventilator and possibly the timber strapping. A rectangular sign is also located on the gable end, partially covering the lower parts of the strapping and the ventilator.

The former hotel has been converted to the office of the Sundowner Caravan Park. Although its 'presence' on the highway has been very much altered by the flourishing trees that have flourished as part of the caravan park's borewater, the 'busyness' of its immediate context, and the external alterations to the building itself, its history as a wayside service to travellers on the Ballarat Road / Western Highway has been preserved by its present use.

### **History:**

George and Mary Missen with their family, Jesse, Harriet, Mary, Thomas, Hannah, George and Charlotte from Great Thurlow, Sussex arrived in South Australia in July 1853 and settled at (Encounter Bay) Victor Harbour. They were joined later that year by eldest son Joseph and his wife Eliza and son Thomas. George Missen Senior was a farmer by occupation, but in 1865 he built and opened the Crown Hotel in Victor Harbour.

In the early 1860s, at the age of 17 years, son Thomas and a mate arrived overland in Victoria, using packhorses. The family made the decision to follow. In the 1860s unsold Crown Land in the district was being opened up for Selection. Much of the land sold during this period was in the Parish of Kororoit, around Rockbank and the Kororoit and Toolern Creeks, and around Melton township.<sup>1</sup> Although often swampy or forested, these sites were still highly sought after. Hjorth relates the atmosphere of a ‘great Fair’ at the sale of the Long Forest west of Melton, and swampier land to its east in about 1865. An influx of selectors from as far away as South Australia arrived in all sorts of conveyances, a good many in covered wagons.<sup>2</sup> The Missen family would have been one of these; and ‘George Missen the younger’ was one of the lucky ones in the ballot, obtaining a lease in 1867 for 287.5 acres.<sup>3</sup> By the mid 1870s he and his father George Senior were able to successfully apply for freehold grants to their selected allotments, which exceeded 535 acres in total.<sup>4</sup> Other brothers also received grants.<sup>5</sup>

The Missens were engaged in hay making, dairying, poultry and pig raising, and carting produce to Melbourne for sale. They were successful farmers and increased their land holdings greatly in Rockbank<sup>6</sup> as well as securing acres in Tarneit and Rowsley districts where they had a butchering business and were involved in the breeding of draft, and later, pacing horses.

Membership of the family grew with the marriage of each of the children and many of the ‘old’ local names of the district are in their family tree:- Radford, Minns, Harrison, Cobbledick, Campbell, Peacock, Phelan, and Hilet. (The names, George, Thomas, Joseph are repeated through each family for three generations.) After six generations since the arrival of George senior in the early 1860s, the last of the Missen’s left Rockbank in 1987, as twice Melton Shire President Alf Missen, whose family had donated the land for the Mechanic’s Institute Hall where he and his wife subsequently courted, left for a farm near Ballarat.<sup>7</sup>

In April 1875 the *Express* published notification of an application by T Missen to the Licensing Court for the Rose and Crown Hotel.<sup>8</sup> On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November of that year George Missen Junior gave formal notice that he desired to obtain at the next Licensing Meeting a ‘Publican’s License, for a house situate at Rockbank, Ballaarat Road, containing eight rooms, exclusive of those required for the use of the family.’<sup>9</sup>

In 1876 the *Australasian’s* ‘travelling reporter’ visited Rockbank and reported George Missen Junior had a farm of 500 acres. This farm had considerable frontage to the main road and ‘a substantial stone residence occupied by the proprietor who combines the business of publican with that of farmer.’ George Missen had then about 70 head of cattle and about 300 sheep about 80 of which were Lincolns from the stock of Mr Benson at Cabbage Tree, the rams coming from Mr Evans flock.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Parish Plans.

<sup>2</sup> Anders Hjorth, ‘Recollections of Melton 1861-67’, reproduced in M&DHS Newsletter, Feb.2001.

<sup>3</sup> Board of Land and Works, Lease, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1867

<sup>4</sup> Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit.

<sup>5</sup> Starr, J, *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Shire of Melton, nd, c.1985), p.115

<sup>6</sup> See eg, Shire Map Series 1892, Parish of Kororoit.

<sup>7</sup> *The Melton Express*, 28/10/1987

<sup>8</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 10/4/1875

<sup>9</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 27/11/1875

<sup>10</sup> *The Australasian*, October 1876, p.471

George Junior applied for the renewal of his license, approval of which was published 16<sup>th</sup> December 1882. In 1885 he advertised a Clearing Sale ‘to sell by auction at his hotel, at Rockbank, near Melton, on Friday 9 April at 12 o’clock, the whole of his cattle, farming implements, etc. consisting of 50 cows in milk, 50 heifers, 2 stooks of hay, 1 stack of straw, 2 ploughs, 1 hay dray and frame, 1 tip dray, 1 draft mare, 3 light harness horses, pigs, poultry, harness, etc. The sale is in consequence of the proprietor having let his property.’<sup>11</sup>

In 1875 George Senior had leased his farm and lived at the hotel until his death in 1883. His wife then moved out of the hotel to live with one of her sons. George Junior’s son William obtained the licence after his father.<sup>12</sup>

Soon afterwards the lease and licence of the hotel passed to T. Derham of Braybrook whose father, TB Derham, had the hotel there. A Coplestone leased the hotel in 1890-91. In December 1893 he advertised a Clearing Sale of the ‘whole of furniture and fittings, stock and implements at Rose and Crown hotel.’ The hotel was then taken over by the E. Keating whose family had once held the Old Rockbank Inn on Beatys Road.<sup>13</sup> In 1898 the Stipendary Magistrate at Melton Court issued a warrant for a Mrs O’Brien to give up possession of the hotel premises.<sup>14</sup> Another Braybrook Derham – William – then acquired the license.

During its life the Rose and Crown had likely been similar to most nineteenth century country hotels: small, serving a few travellers and locals, and typically with proprietors who were part-time, combining hotel-keeping with farming. Many of these small and economically marginal hotels became victims of an early twentieth century purge. Hotels had begun to fall from favour as places of entertainment and leisure in the 1880s and 90s, under the influence of church temperance crusaders, medical opinion, and middle class electors.<sup>15</sup> A great many were delicensed and closed in the State’s rationalisation of liquor licences around 1911. The Rose and Crown was one of them. And yet the family had obviously thought the Rose and Crown had been a class above ‘Beaty’s down on the creek’ [the Rockbank Inn], which ‘was what called a beer house and the bullock drivers used to go that way through to Keilor Road Station’.<sup>16</sup> And they had also had a problem of competition with a neighbour William Pratt who sold alcohol without a licence.<sup>17</sup> But perhaps the hotel’s respectability had declined a little by 1911, when the hotel was ‘closed by order’ of the License Reduction Board: ‘Compensation £320’. In January 1912 publican W Derham gave notice of a clearing sale all of his plant and furniture at the Rose and Crown hotel.<sup>18</sup>

The hotel was thereafter used as a residence by various Missen families, and then the Harrison family and others.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 3/4/1885. There is different account of the career of George Junior which has him in Rockbank only 9 years, then keeping the Point Hotel in Footscray before purchasing a farm at Truganina in 1879, which he rented out in 1887 when he built a home in Laverton; at one time he owned the Metropole hotel in Bourke Street. (Sutherland, A, *Victoria and its Metropolis, Past and Present, The Colony and its People*, Vol 2, 1888)

<sup>12</sup> Starr, *op cit*, p.117

<sup>13</sup> *The Melton Express*, 9/12/1893

<sup>14</sup> *The Melton Express*, 31/10/1898

<sup>15</sup> Blainey, G, ‘The History of Leisure in Australia: The late Colonial Era’, in *The Victorian Historical Journal* (Vol 49, Feb 1978), p 18.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Mary Missen’s Diray’ (Typescript, MDHS).

<sup>17</sup> Olwen Ford, ‘Voices From Below: Family, School and Community on the Braybrook Plains 1854-1892’, M.Ed. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993, p.253

<sup>18</sup> *The Melton Express*, 6/1/1912.

In 1959 the *Melton Express* announced that plans had been submitted by Mr and Mrs F Proud for a 20 bay caravan park at Rockbank, and approved in principle by the Melton Shire Council. The plans incorporated an ablution-laundry toilets pavilion and reticulation of borewater to numerous taps. Rows of trees would be planted. The Shire Engineer, Mr E. Carberry told the Council that the layout complied with the minimum requirements of the Town Plan ordinance, and the development was approved subject to resolution of the engineer's reservations about the width of roadways, caravan bays, and turning spaces.<sup>19</sup>

**Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:**

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes:* 'Transport'; 'Community'.

*Known Comparable Examples:*

Although altered, the former Rose and Crown Hotel represents only one of two surviving early hotel buildings in the Melton Shire. The other surviving hotel building is the Diggers Rest Hotel, Calder Highway, Diggers Rest. The Diggers Rest Hotel still functions as a hotel, is larger (two stories), older, and considerably more intact, although it has been considerably modified in the early-mid twentieth century.

**Condition:**

Good

**Integrity:**

Substantially altered

**Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>No</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>No</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>No</i>

Other Recommendations:

- Opportunities are available to remove the painted finish on the bluestone walls by approved chemical method.

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<sup>19</sup> *The Melton Express*, 3/7/1959.