

Heritage Overlay No.: 080
Citation No.: 214
Place: Walnut Tree, High Street Melton

Other Names of Place: N/A
Location: 222-230 High Street Melton, on lawn between Shire Chambers and Community Centre (Allotment 8 Section 1)
Critical Dates: 1930s.
Existing Heritage Listings: None
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The Walnut Tree at 222-230 High Street Melton, planted by blacksmith Gordon Macdonald sometime between the 1930s and the early 1950s, is of heritage significance as the only remnant of the once-important blacksmith industry in Melton, and the site of the most historically important blacksmith in the Shire.

The Walnut Tree at 222-230 High Street Melton is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). The tree was planted by Melton's longstanding and final blacksmith, Gordon Macdonald, who operated the old blacksmith for 39 years. It commemorates the important economic role of blacksmiths in the township. Being situated on a major Victorian highway (the first Portland Road, and then the main coach-road to the goldfields of Ballarat and beyond), the township owed its foundation, and much of its subsequent business, to wayside

traffic. The site marks the location of one of the very early blacksmiths, established c.1854 during the goldrush, in an area where a number of other blacksmith shops subsequently established. It recalls the site of by far the longest running blacksmith in the Melton Shire, the site continuing in operation until 1961, its weatherboard building demolished c.1966. Both A Cameron and JB Whittington, prominent blacksmiths in the Shire, learnt their trades from A Blackwood at this site; the site was later associated with other prominent local blacksmiths W Whittington and G Macdonald. Blackwood and Cameron were also very prominent citizens, and leaders of numerous initiatives in the township.

The tree is also a healthy and prominent specimen of a species that is rare in the Shire. At an estimated at c.55 – 70 years of age, it is one of the oldest of the surviving exotic species in High Street.

The Walnut Tree at 222-230 High Street Melton is of social and aesthetic significance at a LOCAL level (AHC E1). The tree was identified as being a place valued by the local community at a heritage study forum.

Overall, the Walnut Tree at 222-230 High Street Melton is of LOCAL significance.