

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**Name** Redesdale Tavern  
**Address** 2640 Kyneton-Redesdale Road REDESDALE **Grading** 2008 Local  
**Building Type** Inn/Tavern  
**Assessment by** Context Pty Ltd




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**Recommended Heritage Protection** VHR No HI No PS Yes

**Architectural Style** Victorian Period (1851-1901)  
Vernacular

**Maker / Builder** Unknown

### Integrity

High

### History and Historical Context

#### History of the Shire of Metcalfe

Note: The following history is a series of excerpts from *Twigg, K. and Jacobs, W (1994) Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study Volume 1 Environmental History, Ballarat.*

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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the land, Mitchell named the area Australia Felix.

Less than a year after Mitchell's return to Sydney with glowing reports of the stocking capabilities of the land in the south, the first overlanders arrived in the district and soon thereafter laid claim to the rich basaltic plains of the Campaspe and Coliban Rivers. The pastoral occupation of the Shire was completed by 1843 and the process of shaping the landscape to fit the demands of white settlement, gathered pace.

Over the next decade many of the earliest pastoral runs were subdivided; Bowman's Run, for instance, was split in two to form Stratford Lodge and Sutton Grange [1]. It was also a period of improvements around homesteads.

During the 1850s the pressure of supplying sufficient food to the newly discovered gold diggings and the growing demand for land by miners led to the survey and sale of large areas of land in proximity to the gold fields.[2] At the time of the first land sales in the 1850s there were no restrictions on the amount of land an individual could buy and most squatters managed to purchase between 3,000 and 6,000 acres of the old leasehold. However the land sales also attracted wealthy entrepreneurs and successful miners. At Stratford Lodge almost the entire leasehold was offered for sale and between 1856 and 1857, William Degraives, successful flour miller and William Williamson created something of a stir by buying between 12000 and 13000 acres each.

In September 1851 the Mount Alexander gold rush exploded after a small notice in the Argus announced a discovery in the Mount Alexander Ranges. Serle has suggested the Alexander rush set the standard for all subsequent rushes and argues that at no other gold field was gold spread so shallowly and liberally over such a large area.[3] The temporary nature of many early gold rush workings is witnessed by isolated ruins or a cluster of buildings which once formed a small settlement. By contrast the townships which survive from this period still retain the layout, the commercial street design and many of the residences and solid public buildings of their gold field origins.

By the late 1850s it was clear that road making was needed and it was agreed that the responsibility for works should be given to each local district. The Metcalfe Roads board was proclaimed on 14 August 1860 and wasted little time in seeking money for road construction. At its first meeting it was moved that the Board 'with as little delay as possible.obtain a portion of the government grant for the present year.'[4] Rates were also levied on residents and by 1865 this must have amounted to over £1000 for this level had to be reached before a district could be proclaimed a Shire. The Shire was proclaimed in July 1865 and at this time its area was substantially increased by the voluntary addition of Elphinstone, West Faraday, Harcourt and Barkers Creek.

A seventeen mile branch line was opened to Redesdale in 1891 leaving the Melbourne-Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway at Redesdale Junction to the north of Kyneton, and then continuing through the stations of Green Hill, Edgecombe, East Metcalfe , Emberton and Barfold before terminating at Redesdale . The stations consisted of little more than a tin shed and a water tank but they rapidly became a focal point for the surrounding communities.

## History of Redesdale

The first scattered buildings of the township of Redesdale grew up near Monro's Crossing (Campaspe River) on the Kyneton Heathcote Road, catering to miners en route to the Heathcote old fields. During the early 1860s telegraph coaches followed this route daily carrying mail between the gold fields and Kyneton. Nevertheless, Redesdale was scarcely considered a place of significance and when Mr Bain suggested making a road to Redesdale in 1860 there was much amusement with someone responding he might as well make a road to the moon.[5]

More extensive settlement of the area in the 1860s by the Catholic settlers prompted the survey of the Redesdale Township and the sale of the first township blocks in 1871. Building work was characterized by the use of bluestone and by 1870 the main road boasted a police station, hotel, a Catholic Church, a post office, a bakery, a drapery and butchery with slaughter yards out the back.

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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During this period Redesdale established itself as a solid agricultural township. After the construction of a branch line railway in 1891 the township became an important railhead.

## **History of Redesdale Tavern, 2640 Kyneton Redesdale Road, Redesdale**

The Redesdale Tavern was established by John McNiff in the 1860s. McNiff later acquired land adjoining the hotel and is recorded in the rates books of 1866 as rated jointly for a hotel and farm valued at £88.[6] By 1872, McNiff had extended his allotment to cover 106 acres adjoining the hotel, upon which he grazed a number of cows and presumably ran a small dairy.[7] He established twelve bail stalls in bluestone stables next to the hotel, and this building and another bluestone outbuilding probably used as stables remains on site

By the 1860s, Redesdale had undergone some development and a predominantly Catholic group of settlers moved into the fledgling township. Redesdale was surveyed in 1871 and the first township blocks auctioned soon thereafter.[8] The increase in population brought more business to the Redesdale Tavern, and McNiff undertook renovations at the hotel to cater for his increased clientele. The original timber construction was extended with bluestone in 1876.[9]

John McNiff died on the 3rd March 1901, at the age of sixty six. His widow, Anne, managed the hotel for a number of years until 1909, when it passed to Daniel McNiff, her son.[10] Over the subsequent years the hotel was licensed to a rapid series of managers, listed as follows:

George Henly from 25/10/1920

Getrude Kilroy from 11/05/1922

Francis Smith from 19/3/1923

Alexander Duff from 20/8/1923

George Whatman from 30/9/1932

Frederick Burge from 19/2/1935

John Barton Brady from 29/11/1939

Francis John Took from 25/11/1943

Ernest Harding from 6/12/1948

Fran Comer from 21/2/1950

Owen Hackett from 1/2/1951 and

Edith May and James May from 21/9/1953.[11]

The license for the hotel was surrendered in March 1970 and Ernie and Claire Reid became the owners. The hotel was reopened in 1988.[12]

[1] Randell, J. O. (1982), *Pastoral settlement in northern Victoria, Vol. 2: The Campaspe District*, Chandos, Burwood. p.138

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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[2] Powell, J.M. (1970) *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains* Melbourne, New York, Oxford University Press.

[3] Serle (1963), *The Golden Age, A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861*, Melbourne University Press, p. 23

[4] Metcalfe Roads Board Minutes, 10 September 1860

[5] *Taradale Express*, 16 December 1871

[6] Shire of Metcalfe Rate Books, as cited in Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study*, Ballarat, Victoria, p. 96.

[7] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study*, Ballarat, Victoria p. 96.

[8] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), p. 96.

[9] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), p. 96, also evident in photographs supplied to City of Greater Bendigo.

[10] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), p. 96.

[11] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), p. 96.

[12] Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), p. 96.

## Secondary sources

Powell, J.M. (1970) *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains* Melbourne, New York, Oxford University Press.

Rowe, Bill (1989), *Redesdale: Yesterday and Today My Last Hurrah*, the Author, Redesdale, Victoria.

Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor.

Randell, J. O. (1982), *Pastoral settlement in northern Victoria, Vol. 2: The Campaspe District*, Chandos, Burwood.

Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study*, Ballarat, Victoria.

## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

6.0 Building towns, cities and the garden state

6.5 Living in country towns

## Description

### Physical Description

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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2640 Kyneton Redesdale Road, known as the Redesdale Tavern exhibits the typical long plan form of the hotels in several other townships in the study area. It is built of bluestone as are most of the early buildings in Redesdale. There is a distinctive square window with glazing bars, as well as the more common double hung sashes. There are two door openings as is common for hotels and each of these has a small fanlight above the door. The verandah is supported on timber posts with small solid timber brackets, however it is likely that this is a later addition. The verandah has been paved with concrete, however there is a stone lined drainage channel across the front of the building.

There are two stone outbuildings associated with the hotel and probably used as stables and cow bails. A stone wall extends from the stable forming a semi-enclosed yard. The stonework of the wall appears to be of more recent origin than the stables. A recently constructed stone wall also fronts the road adjacent to the hotel. The stables has a gable roof with a skillion where horse stalls are located. The remains of the stone floor is still in evidence.

This site is notable for the existence of both the hotel and the outbuildings, and the fact that it is still in use as a hotel.

## Physical Condition

Good

## Conservation Policy

### Guidelines (Specific)

The following specific conservation actions are recommended, should the opportunity arise:

- Retention and conservation of the outbuildings would be desirable.
- Removal of the advertising sign from the roof would be desirable.

## Comparative Analysis

The Redesdale Tavern may be compared with other early hotels in Axedale at 106 High Street and with the former hotel in Redesdale at 2132 Kyneton Redesdale Road. All are good examples of the more substantial stone hotels that served the needs of the townships.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The Redesdale Tavern site, including all the fabric of 1860s building, stone stables, cow bails and yard is significant.

*How is it significant?*

The Redesdale Tavern is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

The Redesdale Tavern is of historic significance for its long association with the McNiff family. The McNiff's ran the

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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Redesdale Tavern from the 1860s until the license was taken over by George Henly in 1920, which demonstrates a strong commitment to family enterprise and tradition, especially when contrasted with rapid changes in management after 1920. Even though there was a break in the license from 1970 to 1988, the Redesdale Tavern is of historic significance for its continuous use as a hotel. The Redesdale Tavern is also socially significant as an ongoing part of Redesdale's social life. *Criterion A*

The Redesdale Tavern is built of local stone, is largely intact and in good condition. The site is notable for the existence of both the stable, cow bails and the hotel. The long plan form, and two door openings of the hotel are typical of other hotels in the study area. The bluestone building with its distinctive square window, fanlights above the doors, as well as the double hung sashes and verandah supported on timber posts are architecturally significant and form an important streetscape element in Redesdale. The stone lined drainage channel across the front of the building, the stone stables, remains of a stone floor, stone wall and semi-enclosed yard are also of architectural significance. *Criterion D*

The Redesdale Tavern is of social significance for its ongoing use as a hotel for the Redesdale community. *Criterion G*

## Assessment Against Criteria

### HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. *Criterion D*

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. *Criterion F*

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions. *Criterion G*

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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## Recommendations 2008

<b>External Paint Controls</b>	No
<b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls</b>	No
<b>Fences &amp; Outbuildings</b>	Yes
<b>Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan</b>	Yes
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>	No

## Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the Redesdale Tavern at 2640 Kyneton - Redesdale Road, Redesdale be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'