

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**Name** Hall  
**Address** 94 High Street AXEDALE **Grading** 2008 Local  
**Building Type** Hall Public  
**Assessment by** Context Pty Ltd




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

**Architectural Style** Postwar Period (1945-1965)

**Maker / Builder** Unknown

### Integrity

High

### History and Historical Context

#### History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

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 the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.<sup>[1]</sup>

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The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral runs. Most of the area around the town of Axedale and the numerous small towns in its vicinity was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. A portion of Campaspe Plains was licensed to A. Jennings and George Playne in 1840 and the 67,000 acre station became known as Axedale. In the coming decade the holders of the license changed a number of times. By the time the leasehold over the land was cancelled in 1865, the run had greatly reduced in size.[2]

Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. The discovery of gold at Bendigo and the surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.[3]

The Strathfieldsaye Road District was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on the 12th August 1861, and encompassed within it the parishes of Axedale, Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock, Mandurang, Sedgwick and Lyell.[4] The process of election of the board was punctuated by rivalries between Catholic and Protestant faiths, a characteristic of the district which infiltrates much of its history. Strathfieldsaye met the criterion prescribed to become a Shire in 1863, a transition that was officially proclaimed on the 17th September of that year.[5]

In 1864, Strathfieldsaye Shire was divided into three wards; Mandurang, Strathfieldsaye and Axedale.[6]

## History of Axedale

The plan of the township of Axedale, with its characteristic crescent ends, was laid out circa 1856. Axedale was included in the district of Mandurang and under the control of the Strathfieldsaye Roads Board. Patrick Drake had built the Campaspe Hotel in 1855, and by 1865, the district had developed to the extent that it was able to support a further six hotels.[7] Goldfields were typically rough and lawless places, and hotels were big business in their midst. Patterns of settlement continued to reflect the status of Axedale as a centre of support for surrounding farm lands and mining pursuits, and by the 1860s, there were some 500 residents.[8]

Axedale was proclaimed a district on the 20th August 1861, and then a Shire on the 25th September 1866.[9] Much of the population of Axedale was of Irish origin, and tensions between Catholics and Protestants were articulated through the establishment and development of separate facilities for both religions. Facilities in the town were established to cater for, or became associated with, either the Catholic or Protestant communities, so much so that Axedale duplicated its cemeteries, hotels and schools in order to cater for both sectors.[10]

Religious facilities were first established in Axedale with the opening of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Axedale in 1862. The Catholics also ran a school from the Church, catering for the children of waves of settlers that continued to arrive in the area. By the end of the 1860s, pressure from the Common School Committee led to their acquisition of Crown Land, that was gazetted as the site for the Axedale Common School in 1869. The school opened in 1871.[11] Alongside the establishment of religious and educational facilities was the construction of the Axedale Police Station, which opened in 1866.

The rich soils of the Campaspe River allowed for the continuation of farming as a mainstay for the area. Alongside the maintenance of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, residents of Axedale developed other industries. Naphthali Ingham established a bluestone quarry on his land in the 1860s, and a further quarry was opened in by Riley, Brazier and Nelson in 1905.[12] Vineyards and orchards were important developments in the district.

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Development of the district and its industries were further enhanced with the construction of the railway from Bendigo to Heathcote, which opened in 1884. The railway was vital means of connecting a number of small towns in the district. The station at Axedale was opened on the 1st October 1888, and continued to be serviced until its closure during the Second World War.[13]

In the 1930s, construction of a weir at the Campaspe River was commenced, though work was suspended at the height of the depression.[14] Proximity to Lake Eppalock, constructed in 1960-65, also proved a source of employment for the town.

The marked development of the region culminated in the decision in 1994 to amalgamate the Shire of Strathfieldsaye with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

## **History of Axedale Assembly Hall, 94 High Street, Axedale**

The land upon which the Axedale Assembly Hall was built was granted to Patrick Drake as part of the first land sales in the newly surveyed township. Drake's land covered two allotments on the corner of High and Mitchell Streets.[15] The Drake's were associated with the Campaspe Hotel, one of the earliest established hotels in the district.

The land was held by the Drake family until it was donated circa 1945 by J. Drake for the construction of the Axedale Assembly Hall. A plan dated 1945 records this building as the Axedale Assembly Hall, indicating that it was built in association with the school at Axedale. Construction of the Hall was financed by a government grant and public donation, both contributing equal halves of the costs involved. The Hall cost a total of £6,000 to build.[16]

The foundation stone for the Shire of Strathfieldsaye Axedale Public Hall was laid on 30 June 1945 by the Minister of Public Works the Hon.J.H.Lienhop. Also in attendance at the ceremony were the Shire Secretary M.Brennan and the Shire President.

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, p. 1.

[2] Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p. 150

[3] Spreadborough and Anderson, (1983), p. 31.

[4] Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria, pp. 11 - 12.

[5] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 18.

[6] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 107.

[7] Whitworth, Robert P. (1879). *Bailliere's Victorian Gazeteer and Road Guide*, F. F. Bailliere, Melbourne, p. 17.

[8] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale*, Axedale, Victoria, p. 8.

[9] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.

[10] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo, p. 10.

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[11] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 16.

[12] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.

[13] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 28.

[14] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 115.

[15] Plan of the Township of Axedale, undated.

[16] Information from Prue Hawkey, Greater City of Bendigo.

## Primary sources

Plan of the Township of Axedale, undated

## Secondary sources

Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo.

Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria.

Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale*, Axedale, Victoria.

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

Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale.

Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock weir*, Hermes entry 6482

## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8. Building community

8.3 Providing health and welfare services.

## Description

### Physical Description

The Axedale public hall is a conservatively styled red brick building of eight bays in length. There are expressed piers and a continuous concrete lintel in the form of a ring beam at the top of the walls and the across the window heads. A smaller concrete string course also encircles the building at mid wall height. The windows have horizontal transoms. There is a porch with chevron shaped window and concrete steps. A small flat roofed extension has been added to the side of the porch. There are toilets at the rear of the property that are contemporary with the hall itself.

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## Physical Condition

Good

## Conservation Policy

### Guidelines (Specific)

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

The brickwork should not be painted.

Original window frames should be retained or replaced with those of a matching design if required.

## Comparative Analysis

Axedale Hall is one of a number of public halls in the study area. Others are at Mia Mia and Costerfield. Although a very late example, it is highly intact and is the only one representative of the post war period.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The Axedale Assembly Hall site, including all the fabric of the 1945 brick building, is significant.

*How is it significant?*

The Axedale Assembly Hall is of local historic and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

The site of the Axedale Assembly Hall is of historical significance for its association with the Drake family whose business interests in Axedale included the Campaspe Hotel (now the Axedale Tavern). *Criterion A*

It is of social significance to the Axedale community as a building with ongoing community use for over sixty years. *Criterion G*

## Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

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Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Criterion D Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

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

Criterion G 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 their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

## Recommendations 2008

**External Paint Controls**

No

**Internal Alteration Controls**

No

**Tree Controls**

No

**Fences & Outbuildings**

No

**Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted**

No

**Incorporated Plan**

None specified

**Aboriginal Heritage Place**

No

## Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the hall at 94 High Street, Axedale 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.