
HO80 - Walnut Tree, High Street, Melton



Walnut Tree



Whittington's Blacksmith and Wheelwright (early twentieth century) The aproned blacksmith on the right is thought to be Gordon Macdonald, who planted the Walnut Tree. (Starr, p.145)

Location

In front of Civic Centre High Street MELTON, MELTON SHIRE

Municipality

MELTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO80

Heritage Listing

Melton City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

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.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007;
Construction dates	1930,
Other Names	222-230 High Street Melton, on lawn between Shire Chambers and Community Centre (Allotment 8 Section 1),
Hermes Number	30118
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Physical Description -

The tree is a c.60 year old specimen of a walnut tree (*Juglans regia*), sited on the lawn between the Shire Council Chamber and the Mechanics Institute. It recalls the site of an early blacksmith. Its health has suffered in the recent drought and the tree shows evidence of some dieback.

Integrity

Integrity - Substantially Intact

Physical Conditions

Physical Condition - Fair

Historical Australian Themes

Melton Historical Themes: 'Community'

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>