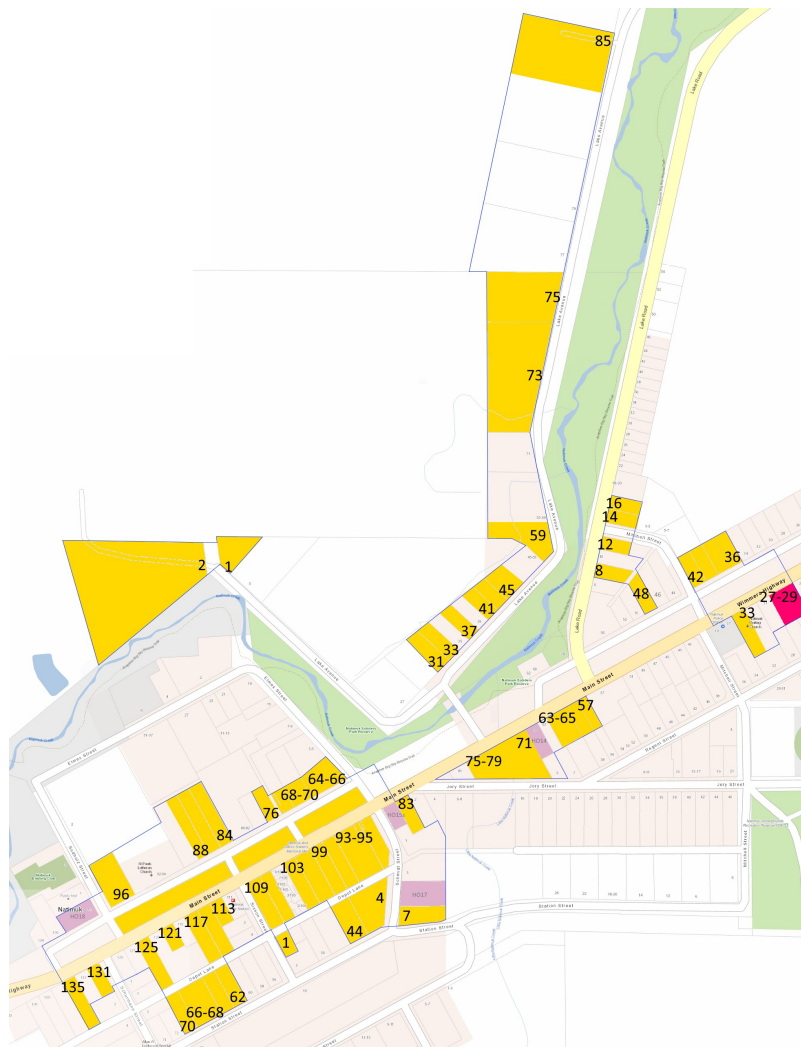


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name: Natimuk Township Precinct
Address: 1, 2 & 31-85 Lake Av NATIMUK
8-16 Lake Rd NATIMUK
27-35, 57-135, 36-42, 48 & 64-76 & 84-106 Main St NATIMUK
1-7 & 4 Schmidt St NATIMUK
1 & 2-4 Sisson St NATIMUK
44 & 62-70 Station St NATIMUK
Place Type: Commercial Precinct
Citation Date: 2022



Natimuk Township Precinct

Recommended **VHR -**
Heritage Protection

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HI -

PS

Yes

Integrity

High - intact town - 80% of places of heritage value within proposed Precinct boundary

History and Historical Context

Following the opening up of new farming land for selection under the selection acts in the late 1860s, a large number of new settlers arrived in the district around Natimuk in 1870-71, many of whom were Germans (Lutherans from Silesia and Saxony) who had travelled across from earlier established farming areas of western Victoria, from Mount Gambier, and from the German settlements such as the Barossa, Hahndorf, Lobethal and Mallee districts in South Australia. It became clear that a service township was required to satisfy the needs of the growing number of settlers. A survey of the town was prepared in 1874 by surveyor Eastone Johnstone, but this first site was abandoned in favour of an alternative site set aside the following year several miles east of the first site, and closer to Lake Natimuk, where there was a pre-existing store built in 1873. The central road, named Main Street, provided the spine of the township. stores of various kinds emerged slowly along this strip, mainly serving the immediate neighbourhood of selectors. By 1880, Natimuk was described as a 'pretty, prosperous village'.

The elongated town plan provided essentially one main road, running in a south-east to north-west direction. Small building allotments were provided on the south-west side of the road, which were all taken up after the first land sales in 1875. These blocks correspond to Section 1 and Section 2 in the Parish of Natimuk, and contained respectively 19 and 17 town allotments. With the exception of the irregularly shaped corner blocks, these all had frontages of 100ft, making them suitable for shops or dwellings. Amongst the first purchasers of these town blocks are several German names, including Schmidt, Schumann, Sudholz, Finnberg and Bretag. Larger allotments were provided on the north-east side of the road, suggesting that there was initially no intention of developing this side of the road for commercial or residential purposes.

Prominent early buildings in Main Street, Natimuk, included the first store opened in 1873. The Natimuk Hotel, 64-66 Main Street, built by Sudholz in 1876 from limestone, was rebuilt after a fire in 1884 in stone and brick. The double-storey Colonial Bank, 83 Main Street, was also built of stone in 1876. John Wilson opened his store in 1880 (later known as Schurmann's Store, at 69 Main Street). A second hotel in Main Street, the two storey National, at 63-65 Main Street, initially with extensive front verandahs, was erected in 1877 or 1887 by Hinneberg, and rebuilt after a fire in 1892. Other early shop buildings were rough constructions that used bush poles and local timber. Vernacular building methods were probably employed, especially by the German settlers, who are estimated to have made up about 50 per cent of the population during the early period of development of Natimuk township. Dwellings in Schmidt Street and Main Street are mud in construction, probably dating from this period. This includes the Schmidt family house, 'Flowerdale', at 5 Schmidt Street.

There was a strong church presence in Main Street, Natimuk, from the late nineteenth century. Significantly, there were two German Lutheran churches, St Paul's Lutheran Church, built in 1876, and St James Lutheran Church built in 1890. Other churches were St John's Catholic Church built in 1889 (but rebuilt in 1916), and St Aidan's Anglican Church, built in 1890. The Natimuk Methodist Church was built close to the butcher shop in 1890. There were also parish halls and other structures associated with these buildings, for example St James Lutheran Church also operated a pre-school group.

Other public services established in Main Street included a police reserve set aside in 1880 on the south side of High Street. The court house was erected 1891. The police building was erected in 1877, and Mechanics' Institute in 1909 (now Memorial Hall). The Shire of Arapiles, which was established in the 1880s, used Natimuk as its administrative centre, which gave the town additional local importance and encouraged further

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development. Also in Main Street was the office of the *West Wimmera Mail* the local newspaper established in 1887, and the local Masonic hall.

Natimuk's most important industry was its foundry, located next to the Colonial Bank and established in 1879. It achieved its greatest output of strippers, winnowers and wagons in 1894. The greater number of its implements was exported by rail and the partners, Beard and Sisson, also had foundries at Dimboola and Nhill. The Natimuk foundry also manufactured cast iron verandah posts for the streets of Horsham, but it eventually fell victim to competition from the larger centres, closing its doors in 1910. It is recalled, however, by the surviving shed at 84 Main Street. Other industries in Main Street included Thomas Jelbart's coach factory, sold to HC Woolmer who relocated the business to Schmidt Street in 1908. It is understood this building was on the site of the surviving Natimuk Motor Garage at 42 Station Street (now part of 4 Schmidt Street). Next to it at 44 Station Street, is the old power house of 1927, and a small timber building once the office of Newton and Miller, carriers, strategically positioned across from the site of the (former) railway station.

By the late 1880s, Natimuk was entering its most prosperous years. There were wheelwrights, a saddler, bootmaker, building contractors and tradesmen, storekeepers, a baker and a post office. The arrival of the railway and the establishment of a creamery by the early 1890s, did much to advance development in Natimuk, with the town extended in 1888 and High Street being further developed in this period. Several new buildings were erected in Main Street in the late 1890s and early 1900s, including the impressive new double-storey building of the Natimuk branch of the National Bank of Australia in 1908. New public buildings included a mechanics institute (1909), a single-storey brick post and telegraph office (1899) and a court house (1891). This collection of public buildings, although small-scale, but well-designed, intermixed with the single-storey timber shopfronts and the double-storey Colonial Bank, added some solidity, but at the same a modest elegance, to the developing streetscape.

It is difficult to discern a particular 'German' character to the streetscape, with the physical appearance of the individual buildings being constrained by the standard designs and building regulations relating to public buildings, hotels, etc. The names for streets and commercial premises provided the best clue as to the cultural origins of the townspeople of Natimuk.

In the 1920s efforts were made to beautify Main Street, Natimuk. The road was ornamented with a street tree plantation in the centre of the road reserve; there were presumably already street trees by this time. Opposite the post office was the Memorial Band Rotunda erected in 1920-21, which created a civic precinct. The safety of pedestrians and vehicles was improved with the street lighting being converted to electricity, which was introduced in 1927 (very early for a small country town). The 1920s (up until 1929) was a period of prosperity for Natimuk, reflecting the overall rural prosperity.

Natimuk was well provided for in terms of quality eating establishments, which can probably be attributed to the strong German influence in the town. There were a number of cafes and bakeries that were operated by those with a German background. In the 1930s places to eat included Dulcette's Café operated by D J Weidner, as well as a wine saloon.

Main Street, Natimuk, continued to serve as the main service and commercial centre for a wide rural area into the twentieth century. Whereas in the nineteenth century many settlers relied on hawkers and deliveries, the advent of motor cars in the 1920s and 1930s encouraged more people to do their shopping in town. Demand increased commercial activity during this period so that by the 1940s and 1950s Main Street, Natimuk, was a busy and prosperous commercial centre. Several car service centres were also established. Many of the early settlement and early 20th century buildings of the town remain today, probably due to a lack of development pressure (Horsham is in close proximity). The town stands as evidence of an intact, late 19th and early 20th century regional town, with a community with strong Germanic ancestral roots.

REFERENCES

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Description

Physical Description

High number of 1880 – 1920s era buildings along Main Street, between Shurmann Street and Mitchell Street. Buildings vary in scale from one to double storey and most are concentrated on the south side of Main Street. They are a mix of residential, commercial and community buildings. The early and now lost mill, later saleyards the public school were located on the north side of Main Street. Development also centred around Station Street after the arrival of the railway by 1890. A store/ goods building remains today near the Schmidt St corner. The railway station and rail line is now removed, but the concrete 'silos remain within the rail reserve as a landmark feature of the area. Lake Road and Lake Avenue feature late 19th and early 20th Century villas and Arts-and-Crafts style dwellings, most set on generous allotments. Timber churches (Anglican, Uniting and Roman Catholic) are also located in this area. A memorial rotunda is featured in the road verge of Main Street and remains a key early 20th century landscape feature within the streetscape. Of note is the high historic integrity of many of the extant buildings of Natimuk – contributing to the historic streetscape setting of the place.

Other dwellings of architectural interest (outside the period of significance of the Precinct) include the fire station (with its butterfly roof) and the current Catholic Church (with its portal 'squashed A-frame' roof form).

Physical Condition

Fair condition. Most buildings have lost early verandahs. Many late 19thC shops still retain early shopfronts.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria

Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of our cultural or natural history. (early buildings remaining illustrate the settlement and early physical of the Horsham district due to pastoral and agricultural prosperity)

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. (intact late 19thC town for Horsham shire – illustrating the settlement and growth of post-contact period in western Victoria)

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. (late 19thC buildings of design merit

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and moderate integrity)

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. (local centre for the early German/ Lutheran farming community of the Wimmera – within the context of the Shire)

Comparative Analysis

The project team identified several potential HO Precincts in Stage 1 of the Horsham Heritage Study (2014), including Natimuk, Jung, Dooen/Natimuk Roads, Firebrace St and several suburban streetscapes north of Baillie Street in Horsham. The Project Team agreed that Jung township did not meet the threshold for local significance, as the remnant building stock was in poor condition and historic themes (19th century town in developing agricultural district) were better illustrated by the more intact town of Natimuk. On this basis, the Natimuk Heritage Precinct was recommended as a HO Precinct, as it was the most intact country town in the Rural City of Horsham and it played a key role in the history of the whole municipality.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Natimuk Township Precinct comprising 1, 2 & 31-85 Lake Avenue; 8-16 Lake Road; 27-35, 57-135, 36-42, 48 & 64-76 & 84-106 Main Street; 1-7 & 4 Schmidt Street; 1 & 2-4 Sisson Street; and 44 & 62-70 Station Street, Natimuk, is significant.

The elements of heritage value include:

. Commercial, civic and residential buildings constructed between 1875 and the 1920s, including associated outbuildings such as the former Bakehouse at the rear of 95 Main Street.

. Elements of the public domain, including the tree plantations and the Memorial Band Rotunda in the Main Street median reserve

Individually significant places in the precinct include the former St John's Catholic Church (27-29 Main Street), HO14 former Wilson's Store (69 Main Street), HO15 Post Office (85 Main Street), HO18 former Natimuk School (106 Main Street), and the mud-brick house HO17 'Flowerdale' (5 Schmidt Street).

Contributory properties are at 1, 2, 31, 33, 37, 41-45, 55-69 (part), 73, 75 & 85 Lake Avenue; 8 & 12-16 Lake Road; 33 (part), 57-65, 71-79, 83, 87-103, 107, 109, 113-117, 121, 125, 131 & 135 and 36-42, 48, 64-76, 84-88 & 96 Main Street; 7 & 4 Schmidt Street; 1 Sisson Street; and 44 & 62-70 Station Street. Among these properties are many of particular note including the former Natimuk Hotel at 64-66 Main Street, the former Colonial Bank at 93 Main Street, the Soldiers Memorial Hall at 101 Main Street, and the substantial Arts & Crafts residences at 2 and 85 Lake Avenue.

How is it significant?

The Natimuk Township Precinct, Horsham Rural City, is of local historic, associational and aesthetic significance to Horsham Rural City.

Why is it significant?

The Natimuk Township Precinct illustrates:

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- remnant, early commercial, civic and residential Natimuk, settled from 1875. The extant 1880 -1920s era buildings along Main Street, Schmidt Street, Lake Road and Lake Avenue illustrate the scale, prosperity and needs of the late 19th century town and the surrounding agricultural community, as pastoralism gave way to closer settlement and high yield grain production. Natimuk grew from an 1875 survey to become a substantial town in the Horsham district by the end of the 19th century, home to many German/Silesian settlers from South Australia and other parts of Western Victoria. While there are no 'German style' buildings in the town, the names of streets and of most local residents reflect their collective origins in Silesia and Saxony. (Criteria A and H)
- Many buildings of historic and architectural interest survive from this early period, marking the scale, activities, prosperity and aspirations of the town during this time. Buildings of historic and architectural merit include: a primary school, two hotels, several churches, shops and dwellings from both the early and post WW1 period. At least two early dwellings are in construction. Alternately, several substantial early 20th Century residences were constructed out of bricks manufactured in the local area. (Criterion D)
- It is of aesthetic significance thanks to the juxtaposition of imposing commercial and civic buildings with the winding course of the Natimuk Creek, which imparts a sense of identity to Natimuk that distinguishes it from comparable remote rural townships. (Criterion E)

Recommendations 2022

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes Cypresses in Main St road reserve
Fences & Outbuildings	Yes Bakehouse at rear of 95 Main St
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.