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Architectural Historian

Former General Store and Post Office
Wimmera Highway, Dooen



Photo: 1997

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Existing Registrations:

Victorian Heritage Register: nil
National Estate Register: nil
National Trust Register: nil

History: The General Store and post office is presumed to have been built by Joseph Davidson around the turn of the century and following the arrival of the railway in 1879. It remained in the hands of his descendants as late as 1951 (Sands and McDougall Directory) and was the principal commercial building of the township. It was run subsequently by the Woolman family.

Description: A single building consisting of two shops and residence at the rear and with timber posted verandahs. The timber parapet, now part demolished, has horizontal t and g linings and a bracketed cornice. The southernmost shop, which served as the post office, retains its original shop front with panelled stall boards and central four panelled door. Inside, the walls and ceilings are timber lined. The northern shop, previously incorporating the general store, has a recent front and pressed metal ceiling linings.

The north facing residence at the rear has a timber posted verandah and two doors which open onto it, the verandah floor having been removed and the posts having tapered chamfers.

Integrity: Medium, parapet and verandah defaced, one shop front replaced.

Condition: Poor, lack of essential maintenance puts this building at risk.

Comparative examples: Comparable stores include Winton's store at Miram, also on the Western Railway. Within the municipality, however, there are no small town stores remaining with this level of integrity.

Significance: The Davidsons' General Store and post office is historically important as the principal commercial building of this township, offering insights into small town life in Western Victoria at least from around the turn of the century (Criterion A). Together with the nearby hotel it constitutes the most complete surviving nineteenth century rural township centre in the municipality. As a surviving combined general store and post office in the Municipality it is now rare (Criterion B).

References: Horsham and District Historical Society: *Memories of Dooen* (1990).

Data sheet prepared by Andrew Ward 2/98