

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

**name:** Ovens Hotel  
**Address:** 4994 Great Alpine Road OVENS  
**Place Type:** Hotel  
**Citation Date:** 2007

**File No:** AS0319

**Significance Level:** Local



*Ovens Hotel*

**Recommended  
Heritage Protection**      **VHR -**

**HI -**

**PS -**

## History and Historical Context

In late 1853, rich gold was discovered in the Buckland Valley and the subsequent rush of some 6000 to 8000 miners brought significant numbers of Europeans into the Alpine Shire for the first time. Several shanties or inns were opened along the road to the Buckland to serve the influx of diggers. Sites included Barwidgee Creek Crossing, Happy Valley Creek Crossing, Black Springs (later Eurobin) and Ovens Crossing (later Porepunkah).

The exact date of opening of the inn at Happy Valley Creek is not known, but it is no later than mid 1854, and may be as early as late 1853. A Mr Johnson first established a restaurant and afterwards obtained an hotel licence.

By the mid-1860s, the publican was Adam Schlichtweg (also referred to as 'Schulfect'), assisted by his wife Augusta, whom he had married in 1862. Adam died aged 46 years in 1874 of a liver complaint, and was buried at Beechworth. Augusta then married Michael Carley, who demolished the old timber hotel in 1875 and built the present brick building. The Shire of Bright Rate Books show that in 1876 Carley was the publican, with the premises listed as an hotel and offices. It appears that John B May was briefly the publican, having purchased



the land in 1879, but a note pencilled in under May's name in the 1879 Shire of Bright Rate Book says "now Michael Carley". Carley later sold out to Mr M B Duane. In 1905, the publican is listed as Mathias B Duane, with Mary C Duane as an hotel-keeper.

The Happy Valley (Ovens) Hotel site is the oldest continuously-operating hotel site in the Alpine Shire, from c1853/54 to the present day. The chronology of the building complex has not been precisely determined, but the most recent of the three early sections appears to date to around the turn of the 20th century (c1900).

## References:

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Bright Museum, Hotels file

1929, Back to Myrtleford Souvenir Easter 1929

Shire of Bright & Buckland District Road Board, Rate Books, 1864-66(BDRB); 1876,79,1905 (SB)

Stapleton, M & I, 1997, Australian House Styles, The Flannel Flower Press P/L

## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

3.22 Lodging people

3.12.5 Retailing foods and beverages

4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities

## Description

### Physical Description

The Happy Valley Hotel (now Ovens Hotel) is situated beside the Great Alpine Road, on the south east side of the bridge over Happy Valley Creek at Ovens. The building complex consists of three units of different ages. The main hotel section is a large, hipped roof, face brick building facing the highway. It has bracketed eaves, and a typical Victorian-period front door assembly (double-doors). There are two decorative brick chimneys, with plinths, corbels and dentil course. Style is indicative of c1900 construction.

On the creek side of this and closer to the road is a small building, with no front entry. This is possibly the 'offices' referred to in the 1876 Rate Books. The building is white-painted brick with a corrugated iron roof. The roof is hipped, with a gablet insert at each end of the ridge line. Eaves are unsupported, and the two road-facing sash windows are shuttered.

The third section is at the rear of the main hotel section. It is a simple brick building on a rectangular plan, with a corrugated iron, gabled roof and a brick chimney at one end. A modern brick lean-to has been attached to the south side of the building.

### Physical Condition

Good

### Usage / Former Usage

c1853/54 - present: inn/hotel

### Intactness

Good



## Recommended Management

Retain facades on Great Alpine Road in their present form and styles, including architectural detailing.

## Comparative Analysis

The Happy Valley (Ovens) Hotel has been continuously operated since the early 1850s, making it the oldest 'premises' in the Alpine Shire, and it has strong historical associations to the Buckland River gold rush. The present built fabric dates to the period 1875-1900, approx, and there are several hotels from this period in the Shire. However, few if any have the integrity of the Happy Valley (Ovens) Hotel.

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The Happy Valley (Ovens) Hotel is a complex of brick buildings on a site where a shanty or inn was started in 1853/54 on the then Buckland Road, in the first year of the rush to the Buckland Valley Goldfield. The timber building was replaced with a new brick hotel in about 1875, by licensee Michael Carley. Other sections were added, and the hotel has remained in continuous operation till the present day.

### How is it significant?

The Happy Valley Hotel is of historical, social and architectural significance to the Alpine Shire.

### Why is it significant?

The Happy Valley Hotel is historically and socially significant to the Alpine Shire as the oldest continuously operated 'hotel' in the Alpine Shire. The site is historically significant as the location of an early shanty on the road to Buckland diggings c1853/54, serving travellers in the first great exodus of Europeans into the Alpine Shire. The present buildings are socially and historically significant as a very familiar landmark to locals and travellers for over 100 years, and there is some architectural significance in the varying 19th century styles of the complex.

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion A

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE COURSE, OR PATTERN, OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

A.1 Importance in the evolution of Australian flora, fauna, landscapes or climate.

A.2 Importance in maintaining existing processes or natural systems at the regional or national scale.

A.3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscapes or cultural features.

A.4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

### Criterion B

ITS POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

B.1 Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon flora, fauna, communities, ecosystems, natural landscapes or phenomena, or as a wilderness.

B.2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest

### Criterion C

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ITS POTENTIAL TO YIELD INFORMATION THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

C.1 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of Australian natural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.

C.2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia

Criterion D

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF: (I) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL PLACES; OR (II) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

D.1 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of landscapes, environments or ecosystems, the attributes of which identify them as being characteristic of their class.

D.2 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land use, function, design or technique).

Criterion E

ITS IMPORTANCE IN EXHIBITING PARTICULAR AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS VALUED BY A COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP

E.1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community

Criterion F

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING A HIGH DEGREE OF CREATIVE OR TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AT A PARTICULAR PERIOD

F.1 Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement

Criterion G

ITS STRONG OR SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR SPIRITUAL REASONS

G.1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational, or social associations.

Criterion H

ITS SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

H.1 Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, State or region

## Recommendations 2007

<b>External Paint Controls</b>	No
<b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls</b>	No
<b>Fences &amp; Outbuildings</b>	No

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**Prohibited uses may be permitted**

No

**Incorporated Plan**

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**Aboriginal Heritage Place**

No