
LEETON·YANCO

WHITTON

HERITAGE TRAILS



LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL
Preserving the Past, Enhancing the Future

LEETON · YANCO

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HERITAGE TRAILS

~ AN INTRODUCTION ~

“THERE IS A UNIFORMITY IN THE BARREN DESOLATION OF THIS COUNTRY WHICH WEARIES ONE MORE THAN I AM ABLE TO EXPRESS – I AM THE FIRST WHITE MAN TO SEE IT AND I THINK I WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE LAST”

Surveyor General, John Oxley’s description of the Murrumbidgee Valley in 1817.

Towards the end of the 19th century due to Australia’s population growth there was a need to increase agricultural productivity. Large-scale irrigation was mooted as a method of solving this problem. A severe drought in 1902 reinforced the need for irrigation. In 1906 parliament passed an Act to establish the present Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area scheme in the most suitable area – John Oxley’s barren desolation. Men of vision and with a local interest, Hugh G McKinney and Samuel McCaughey, helped show the way.

Leeton, established as the administrative headquarters of the scheme was named after the Hon. Charles A Lee, Minister for Public Works (1889-1910).

The scheme was opened on 13th July, 1912 with the turning on of the water at Yanco regulator.

L A B Wade and Frank H Brewster, Murrumbidgee Irrigation Trust draftsman, drew up the first town plan, which was set out by surveyor Henry M Terry.

American architect, Walter Burley Griffin was invited to submit ideas and this resulted in a plan of extension dated September, 1914 published in the Irrigation Record dated May 1, 1915.

Leeton now has a Shire population of 12,000.



LEETON HERITAGE TRAIL



Main Street Buildings

In the early 1920's, brick and plastered parapets were constructed with curved, triangular shaped features in a style known as "free classical". In the late 1920's the more substantial buildings (eg Murrumbidgee Irrigator) were constructed.

Art Deco style decoration became popular between the first and second world wars. The term Art Deco comes from the exhibition of design "L'Exposition Internationale des Art Decoratifs" held in Paris in 1925, however was not used until the 1960's. It was originally known as Modernistic or Moderne style. Many of Leeton's main street buildings were renovated or constructed between the wars, a number are in the Art Deco style (eg Centrepoin). Examples of Art Deco features are mosaic tiling in recessed doorways, pressed metal awning on ceilings, glazed windows, stepped parapets with chevron brickwork and rendered with tin decorative parapets.

The Mediterranean (or Spanish Mission style) was also popular during the period. The Hydro Hotel built in 1919 and the Roxy Theatre built in 1930 are good examples.

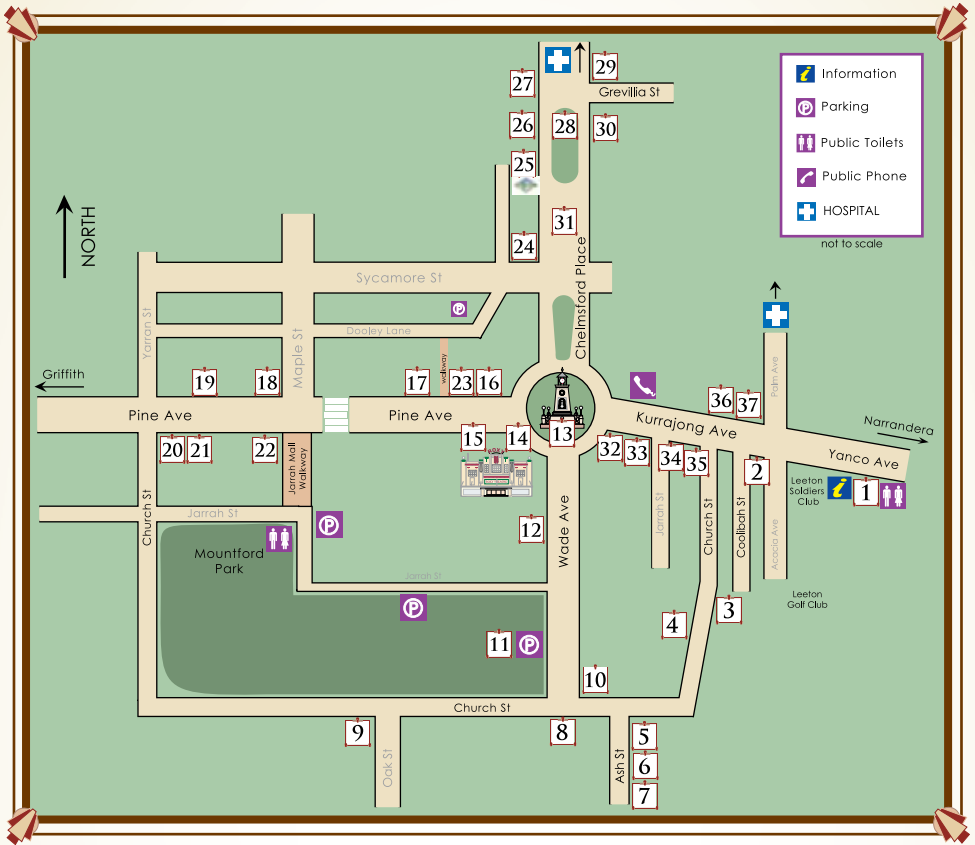


Leeton was fortunate to have an architect with the versatility of George W A Welch, who designed buildings in all three styles.

Buildings constructed in recent years such as the Ambulance Station, Madonna Place, the renovated Leeton Shire Council and the most recent of all, the Federation Stage in Mountford Park, have been influenced by the Art Deco or Moderne period.



LEETON HERITAGE TRAIL



Legend

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1 Leeton Visitors Centre ~ 10 Yanco Avenue

Commenced in 1912 as a home for the Chief Engineer of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Trust. It is a timber framed building with weatherboard external sheeting and corrugated, galvanised iron roof. Internal walls were MACK slabs and surfaced with plaster, most of which has been retained.

Late in 1991 the Water Resources Commission offered the building to the Leeton Shire Council for community use. The building is now the Visitor Information Centre and is surrounded by an attractive park-like garden.

2 Residence ~ 102 Kurrajong Avenue

This bungalow style residence is a timber frame construction with verandah and bay window. It was constructed in 1935, with plans drawn up for its then owner Martin Hogan, Shire Engineer from 1930 to 1945. Following his death in 1964, it remained the home of his widow until her death in 1992.



3 Uniting Church ~ Church Street

(formerly Methodist Church)

In 1937 the original 1913 fibro Church was moved to the back of the block by a band of volunteers supervised by local builder William H Jones, to allow construction of the new church. It is asymmetrical with entry offset to the side. Note the various feature detailing of the brickwork at the façade. His Excellency, Lord Wakehurst, KCMG, Governor of New South Wales laid the foundation stone on 24th August, 1937. It was officially opened on 22nd September, 1937 by Rev Harold Doust, Chairman of the Riverina Synod District.





4 Residence ~ 47 Church Street

Constructed by building contractor A T McKay in 1913 as his family home until sold in 1951. Another bungalow style residence with brick frontage, verandah and tile roof, the feature of this residence is the main front room with bay window and return verandah. Also note the dormer window at the roof for the attic room. With renovations over the years it remains one of the most attractive old homes in Leeton.

5 St. Joseph's Primary School ~ Corner Church & Ash Streets

(Old Catholic Church)

The original Catholic Church was designed by Thomas Jackson, architect from Broken Hill, and was the first completely brick building in Leeton. The Right Rev John Gallagher, Bishop of Goulburn laid the foundation stone on 16th August, 1914 and he officially opened and blessed the Church in May, 1915.

The Sisters of St Joseph conducted a school (100 pupils attending classes from 1-6) in the old Church from 1917.

Following the construction of the second Church in Wade Avenue, extensive remodelling of the original Church was carried out under direction of Wagga architect S J O'Halloran and builders Archer and Robson, when it was converted into a double-storey structure for use as a 4-classroom infant school.

The remodelled building was blessed and officially opened by the most Reverend Dr F A Henschke, Bishop of Wagga Wagga on 20th November, 1961.



6 St. Joseph's School ~ Administration Building, Ash Street

This brick building comprising 6 class rooms was constructed in 1936, by local builder Thomas J Ashton. Right Rev J W Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga Wagga laid and blessed the Foundation Stone and he officially opened the building on 13th September, 1936. It now serves as the School's Administration Building.

7 St. Mary's Convent ~ Ash Street

Plans for this 2-storey brick and timber building were drawn up by Leeton Architect G W A Welch in 1926 and was constructed by G T Taylor of Narrandera. The Right Rev J W Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga Wagga blessed and laid the foundation stone of the Convent of St Joseph, to be known as St Mary's College, on 23rd May, 1926. The feature of this building is its symmetrical façade with central arcade flanked by gable wings with projecting brick bay windows.



His Grace Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne, assisted by His Lordship Right Rev J W Dwyer, Bishop of Wagga Wagga blessed and opened the building on 4th May, 1927. Also in attendance was Father Hartigan (author John O'Brien) of Narrandera.

St Mary's was a boarding school for approximately 30 girls attending St Joseph's School until 1976.

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8 Leeton Court House ~ Church Street

Leeton Court House plans were drawn up by Government Architect, Mr George McRae. The successful tenderer, builder W C Hanson of West Wyalong was awarded the contract on 6th June, 1922. It was opened in August, 1924. Prior to this Births, Deaths and Marriages for Leeton district were registered at the Narrandera Court House.

This impressive brick building has a French pattern tiled roof. The symmetrical façade is designed around the central Court Room, with an area of approximately 110 sq metres. The central portico, which combines Classical and Art Deco elements, is the most striking feature of this building. Weather protective glass entrance doors were installed in 2001.



9 St. Peter's Anglican Church ~ Corner Church & Oak Streets

Ahead is St Peter's Anglican Church, which was constructed in 1973 by Siebel Bros of Wagga Wagga. It is the last church built to plans by noted Church architect Louis Williams of Brighton, Victoria. There is an emphasis on light and space in this Australian Gothic (designed) place of Worship.

Nearby stands a memorial to the old St Peter's Church designed in the symbol of St Peter. The only pise Church in the Riverina, it served the parish from 1915 until 1995.

10 St. Joseph's Catholic Church ~ Church Street

Wagga Architect S J O'Halloran was engaged to design this new development and Council approved the construction on 29th March, 1951. To facilitate the building, the Wagga Wagga diocese purchased the Yanco Brickworks in 1951, which produced 440,000 bricks for the church alone. The Church in Romanesque style is asymmetrical in design, with the bell tower to the left of the main façade and the round stained glass window over the entry as the dominant feature. The presbytery was constructed first and completed in 1952. Church construction commenced in 1953 under the supervision of builder Tom Ashton. The Church was completed in 1955 and dedicated by Bishop Henschke on 1st May of the same year. It was the largest Catholic Church in country NSW. Monsignor Lacey, Parish Priest 1942-1967 was the driving force in having the new church constructed.



11 Mountford Park ~ Corner Church Street and Wade Avenue

Covers an area of almost 2 hectares and from 1913 to 1926 was the site of the original Leeton Public School. A rough stonework fountain designed and constructed by Mr Nicholas Beard, still stands at the site. Nearby stands a rose garden and Memorial to fallen soldiers of World War 2.

Much of the work to establish the park was carried out by volunteers under the direction of Council's engineer Martin Hogan. In December, 1937 the park was officially named honouring the then Shire President Frederick Charles Mountford.



12 Residence ~ 7 Wade Avenue

Tenders were called by G W A Welch in 1925 for the construction of a 2-storey brick house with a corrugated iron roof for solicitor W Rupert Cater. It sits well back from the street in an attractive garden. Note the arched brick, pebbledash render and timber detailing to the projecting entrance structure.



13 War Memorial

To recognise and commemorate the sacrifice of the 66 local men who lost their lives in World War 1, this 'classical' style memorial was constructed for the RSL by Edgar Bacon in 1926. The importance of the contribution of the men who lost their lives is recognised by the memorial holding pride of place in the centre of Leeton. It is maintained for the community by the Leeton Shire Council. A further 99 names were added to the redesigned panels following World War 2.



14 Roxy Theatre ~ Pine Avenue

Mr George Conson purchased this vacant block in March, 1927 to construct a film theatre. Architects Kaberry and Chard, specialists in theatre designing drew up the plans. The theatre was designed to accommodate 1000 patrons and its construction was supervised by local Architect G W A Welch, the builder was Mr William Jones. The Roxy was built in modified Spanish style, with large red neon signs (installed in 1933) and decorative plasterwork being dominant features. The first film screening was on Monday, 7th April, 1930. The movie shown was "The Black Watch".

One of the few theatres still operating in NSW for the purpose of which it was built, the Roxy is of particular historical interest due to it's continued function as a cultural, social and entertainment venue for the people of Leeton. It now seats approximately 750 people.

15 Shops now Movie Café ~ Pine Avenue

Of particular interest is the original 'art deco' leadlight glazing in the shopfronts. Local jeweller James Sharpe had these shops built as investment properties. Architect G W A Welch drew up the plans and they were constructed in 1934 by R J Gillies (Sydney).

16 Commonwealth Bank ~ 123 Pine Avenue

Formerly the Government Savings Bank, built in 1921 by Taylor & Creamer. The Architects were Ross & Rowe (Sydney).

During the depression, the Government Savings Bank ran into difficulties and was amalgamated with the Commonwealth Bank, who took over the premises on December 15, 1931. Alterations in Art Deco Style were carried out during 1939, which include stylised decoration of columns, spandrel, window and doors at entry.



17 The Irrigator building ~ 103-107 Pine Avenue

Site of one of Leeton's original businesses (butchers shops), this property was purchased in 1919 to accommodate the relocation of the local newspaper, the Murrumbidgee Irrigator. The original building housed the Irrigator from 1919 until 1928 when a new building comprising three shops was completed. The Irrigator still occupies a portion building.

18 Centrepoint Arcade ~ Corner Pine Avenue & Maple Street *(formerly S Richards & Co)*

An arcade since the late 1970's, this building was formerly the business premises of pioneer shopkeeper, S Richards & Co. In 1936 Architect G W A Welch drew up plans for a building constructed by T J Ashton (both of Leeton). The plans required the new building to be erected around and over the original buildings without closing the business.

Of interest is the corner façade in the 'Art Deco' style, where the combination of cream and light brown Sydney bricks is laid emphasising the horizontal lines, with the herringbone brick treatment flanked by projecting brick courses creates a distinctive feature to highlight the building entry.



19 Hotel Leeton ~ 71 Pine Avenue

Built in 1925 its plans are attributed to architect J H Robertson and construction to Kell & Rigby. The first license was issued on 23rd March, 1926 to James A Alexander. Included in the design are 'Art Deco' features such as window rendered parapet and decorative arches.

20 Wade Hotel ~ Corner Pine Avenue & Church Street

Opened in 1937, this two-storey brick building was designed by architects Rudder & Grant of Sydney in conjunction with G W A Welch of Leeton and constructed by Lipscombe & Price of Bowral. 'Art Deco' features remain on its upper front and side elevations, including rendered ornate recessed panels and detailed brick work at projecting parapets.

21 Former Wade Chambers ~ 44-52 Pine Avenue

This two-storey brick building was built in 1937 for business and accommodation purposes. The architects were Rudder & Price of Sydney in conjunction with G W A Welch of Leeton and was built by Lipscombe and Price of Bowral. The building still has 'Art Deco' features including rendered façade motifs and detailed brickwork.

22 Raine & Horne Building ~ 76 Pine Avenue

This impressive single storey rendered brick building was constructed in 1926 by Mr Grainger from plans by architects Daldrick & Sinclair of Sydney and Thomas H Owen. A Butchers Shop from 1926 until 2002, it is now a Real Estate Agency. Of special interest is the cattle head feature in the dentil and cornice detailing at the parapet.





23 Art Deco Tiles at 119 & 121 Pine Avenue

The tiles, which were laid during renovations in 1932, are a good example of Art Deco features. Tiled shopfronts with strong colours and geometric patterns were hallmarks of the Art Deco style.

24 Fire Station ~ 19 Chelmsford Place

A substantial brick and rendered building was constructed by Messrs McDonald and Brown and officially opened on 24th September, 1938 by the Hon T D Mutch, M.I.A. member of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

The main feature is the centrally located dominant brick portico structure with folding doors. Also note the detailing in the brickwork.

25 Leeton Shire Council Chambers ~ 23-25 Chelmsford Place

In 1963 Shelbulton Pty Ltd from Sydney constructed new Chambers in Chelmsford Place. Extensions and renovations to the building, including the Art Deco features, were carried out in 1998 by Griffith builders T G Forlico Pty Ltd to plans by Steven Murray, also from Griffith.



26 Government Offices ~ 27-33 Chelmsford Place

Built in 1938 as the Administrative headquarters of the Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission (WC & IC), it was designed by John K Miller, WC & IC Architect, and draftsmen, and constructed by H T Brown of Lidcombe. This Art Deco style building is symmetrical in proportions and features stylised render detailing at the main entry. Also of note is the ornamental cement frieze around the parapet of the building.



27 Leeton Ambulance Station ~ 35-37 Chelmsford Place

Single storey brick building with a tiled roof was opened in 1953. The main feature is the curved brick wall and windows in the centre of the façade.

The Architect of the building was S J O'Halloran of Wagga Wagga and the contractor C Churchill of Newcastle.

28 Water Towers ~ Chelmsford Place

The first water tower was constructed in 1912, the second was completed in 1937 and the third in 1973. An important feature is the 'neo-Gothic' frieze, which was designed by Walter Burley Griffin. In Walter Burley Griffin's original plan for Leeton, the concrete crowns for each water tower were designed to enhance their role as portals to the town from the proposed entrance to the town.



29 Residence ~ Corner Wade Avenue & Grevillia Street

Built in 1936, this impressive single storey Art Deco style residence was designed by G W A Welch and constructed by Murray Beer for Auctioneer Thomas E Wright. This residence was constructed of brick with rendered finish, 'framed' windows, terracotta tiled roof and prominent portico entry structure.



30 Historic Hydro Motor Inn

Was designed by the Department of Works and built for the WC & IC by Contractor Andrew Eaton as accommodation for commission officers and visitors. It was officially opened as the "Hydro Accommodation House" on 28th August, 1919.

This impressive two-storey 'Mediterranean' style building features verandah colonnades on both levels, prominent arched and gabled entrance and terracotta tile roof. The double brick walls with a central cavity are cement rendered on the interior. The rough appearance of the exterior walls was achieved by mixing cinders from the Yanco Power House with the cement.

The Hydro is still in use for accommodation, wedding receptions, conferences and other functions.



31 Band Rotunda ~ Chelmsford Place

Constructed by volunteers in 1935 under the supervision of G W A Welch and Charles Mountford. Mr Crosby from Albury was the expert bricklayer choosing bricks for a mottled effect with layers of black mortar.



32 16-22 Kurrajong Avenue

(formerly Rural Bank of NSW/Colonial State Bank)

This two-storey 'Interwar' free classical style brick building was constructed by Sydney builders Kennedy and Bird and was officially opened in 1935 for the Rural Bank.

The massive entrance, flanked by synthetic stone panels, which contained powdered 'mother of pearl', gave a sparkling effect to the material. Of interest is the rams head and horns of plenty spilling products of the irrigation area – clusters of fruit, vegetables and golden grain.



33 Barwick's Shop ~ 36 Kurrajong Avenue

This single storey commercial brick building was constructed in circa 1920's. Note the rendered curved parapets, cantilevered awning, shopfront windows and original tiles typical of the period.

34 St. Vincent de Paul ~ 42-44 Kurrajong Avenue

A Grocery Store from 1913 until 1976 when it became St Vincent de Paul. Brick frontage was constructed and renovations were carried out in 1922. This two-storey brick building consisted of two shops at ground level with cantilevered awning over footpath. The upper level of building is of symmetrical design.



35 Hairmasters ~ 48 Kurrajong Avenue

Constructed late 1935 by T H Owen for Selwyn Bell to replace original temporary business buildings. This two-storey 'Art Deco' style commercial building has distinctive 'herringbone' header, stack and stretcher bond brickwork patterns to the upper levels.





36 Residence ~ 71 Kurrajong Avenue

An attractive rendered brick home constructed in 1935 by local master builder and architectural draftsman T H Owen. It is a fine example of the 'interwar' housing style with rough-cast render walls, bay window, terracotta tile roof and curved entry portico.

37 Medical Centre ~ 81 Kurrajong Avenue

This single storey building was originally constructed as a surgery and residence in 1912 for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Trust's first doctor. Constructed internally and externally of MACK slabs, it has 'federation' style features including verandah with timber posts and fretwork.





HENRY LAWSON



ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN AUSTRALIAN POETS AND FICTION WRITERS OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD, HENRY LAWSON SPENT NEARLY TWO YEARS LIVING IN LEETON FROM 1916-17.

IN 1915, AT THE REQUEST OF TOP NEWSPAPER JOURNALISTS FROM SYDNEY, THE STATE PREMIER, W.A. HOLMAN, AGREED TO HELP HENRY LAWSON ESCAPE FROM THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE DRINK AND TO FIND THE FREEDOM TO WRITE AGAIN.

Since the tragic death in 1902 of the woman Lawson loved, he had become increasingly depressed and his destitution and drinking had led to stays in gaols and mental institutions.

Due to the personal involvement of the Premier, the position of Publicist was created for Lawson and he was offered the job. Totally unaware of the arrangement, Lawson travelled down to Yanco by train with his friend, Mrs Byers, in January 1916. They were accommodated in a house in Pine Avenue until their furniture arrived, and then moved to the cottage at Farm 418, Daalbata Road, Leeton now known as the "Henry Lawson Cottage".

Lawson took his work for the M.I.A seriously, and over the following 20 months produced around 30 poems and 10 prose sketches - an average of one major work every two weeks. Not all related directly to Leeton, and some were not published, but among them were some important pieces, including "Leeton Town" and "A Letter From Leeton". The latter, published in a book distributed to soldiers at the front, was credited by a government report as having had "inestimable value" in attracting settlers to the M.I.A. after World War 1.

Lawson wrote of Leeton in 1916:

"The growing impression of Leeton is as the most cosmopolitan place I have ever been in, and perhaps the most naturally intellectual and democratic. The townspeople all seem extremely kind and cheerful..."

Lawson began to find it increasingly difficult to tailor his writings to include references to Leeton and the M.I.A. When the writer found that the government was reviewing his contract in November 1916, he impetuously resigned. He was persuaded by management to remain in his position until he eventually left Leeton in September, 1917.

Lawson enjoyed life in Leeton, despite recommending running once around the house in wet clothes to dry them due to the heat. He made many friends among the locals and remade an old friendship with

HENRY LAWSON

Jim Grahame, whom he knew from Bourke in the 1890's. He also met writer Mary Gilmore and a journalist who visited him in 1916 remarked on his health and vigour compared to a few years previously.

Although the M.I.A. was officially a 'dry' area, Lawson was a frequent visitor, as were many others, to Whitton and Narrandera, and there was a significant sly grog trade that made liquor readily available in Leeton itself. Despite this, Lawson's Leeton stay was a positive and productive time and the last significant creative period of his life. He returned to Sydney where he died in 1922.





YANCO HERITAGE TRAIL



YANCO WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTRE OF THE MURRUMBIDGEE IRRIGATION AREA.

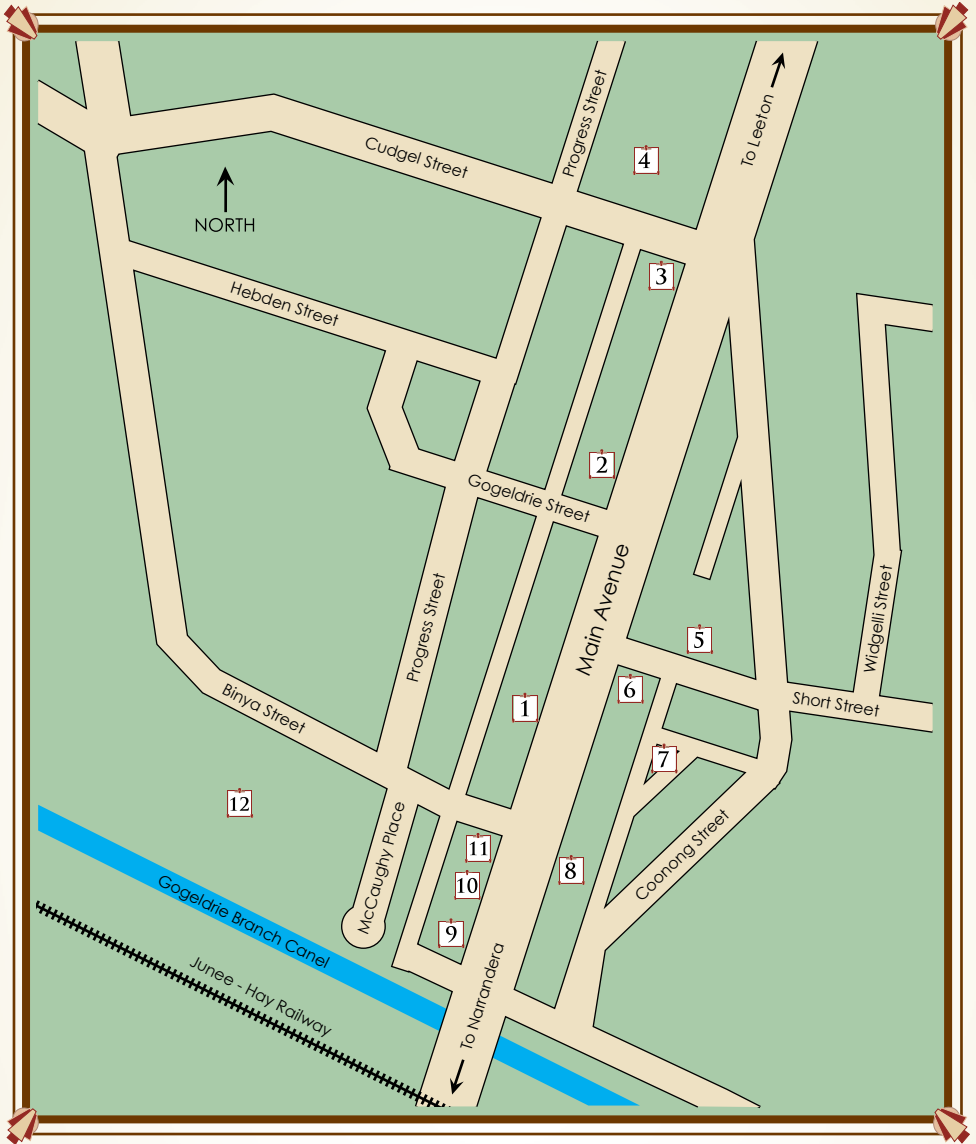
THE TOWN TOOK ITS NAME FROM ‘NORTH YANCO’ STATION AND WAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE NARRANDERA TO HAY RAILWAY, WHICH REACHED THE AREA IN 1881. CONSTRUCTION OF GOGELDRIE CANAL AND THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM BEGAN IN 1908 WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WATER CONSERVATION & IRRIGATION COMMISSION (WC&IC), WHO BEGAN CONSTRUCTION WORKS FOR HOUSING IN JULY 1911.

Yanco Public School was established in 1909 on land provided by Sir Samuel McCaughey and, by 1913, new school buildings were erected and in use. The concrete water tower was erected in 1912 and the Yanco Power Station was constructed in 1913 to supply power to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

By 1915 Yanco Hall, Police Station and Post Office were operating, with a newer Yanco Post Office opened in 1926. In 1914 the Presbyterian Church was located in Main Avenue – Originally a timber structure supplied by McCaughey, now private residence with extensions it is almost unrecognisable. The Roman Catholic Church was constructed in 1923, followed by the Anglican Church. The impressive two storey Yanco Hotel was opened in 1929 and is still prominently located at the end of the Main Street.



YANCO HERITAGE TRAIL



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Former WC & IC Cottage | 6 Former Anglican Church | 11 Former Post Office |
| 2 Former Police Station | 7 Water Tower | 12 Former Yanco Power Station |
| 3 School Residence | 8 Group of shops | |
| 4 Yanco Public School | 9 Yanco Hotel | |
| 5 Roman Catholic Church | 10 Yanco Public Hall | |

1 Former WC&IC Cottages ~ Main Avenue

Six WC&IC homes erected for Superintendent of Works, Mr Taylor, became known as Cromwell Row. These cottages all share the same design and, while many have had renovations, the original form is clearly identifiable.

Adjacent is the Country Women's Association Rooms. The Yanco CWA formed in 1936, the rooms were constructed by voluntary labour and opened 30 July 1955 by state President of CWA Mrs Gordon.

On the corner of Binya Street is the Yanco All-Servicemen's Club, first established on the site 1946 in a renovated garage. Foundation of the present building was laid by Sir John Northcott, Governor of NSW, and the Club officially opened by Colonel Ramsey on 19 December 1958.

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2 Former Police Station ~ Main Avenue

A temporary Police Station at Yanco was established in 1915 on portion 166 in a three-room tent with a small galvanised iron kitchen. Land in Main Avenue was reserved for Police Station in 1919. A single storey 'Bungalow'-style brick building with projecting gable, veranda to street and terracotta-tiled roof was constructed in 1922 and was opened on 22 September 1923. The building comprises a front office with separate entry, three-bedroom residence plus separate cell block at rear. This building is now a private dwelling as was sold early 2006, however the flagpole remains.

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3 School Residence ~ Main Avenue

Construction of the 'Federation'-style residence for the Yanco Public School Headmaster on the corner of Cudgel Street was completed late 1914. This weatherboard residence has a high pitched corrugated iron roof with a large verandah facing the street. It remains relatively intact.



4 Yanco Public School ~ Cudgel Street

Sir Samuel McCaughey offered to provide land for establishment of a school in 1909 and also paid for the transport of the Gobbo Goula School (S.E. of Narrandera and not in use) to the N.W. corner of what was Farm 591. Furniture came from the disused 'Eroly' School. In 1913 the new School building was erected on N.E. part of current site on land provided by WC & IC. On 27 January 1936 the School was destroyed by fire and a three-room brick School was constructed in 1936. Further buildings added in 1964 and in 1979 with a library and administration block also erected along with a new toilet block.

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5 Roman Catholic Church ~ Short Street

Early Services for the Roman Catholic Church were conducted in the North Yanco Woolshed and at the School of Arts. On 12 June 1923 Rev Father Galvin celebrated mass before leading a procession of those present to the site of a new Church/School in Short Street, where construction had begun. The foundation stone was blessed and laid by the Rev Father McMullen, supervisor of the Redemptionist Monastery Galong. The contract included a classroom (located behind the church), a convent and a presbytery. The church/school opened on 23 November 1923 by Rev J Dwyer, the Bishop of Wagga Wagga. Rev Father McMullen conducted the mass and Father Reidy was present. It closed in 1970 and the buildings were removed in 1976 to St Josephs Leeton.

The adjacent convent was built late 1923-24 by Mr W M Cullen (with R Watts and volunteers). Watts' family are thought to have assisted Sr Bonaventora construct a stone grotto in convent garden. In later years the convent became a hostel for girls attending St Francis College in Leeton. The convent was sold in 1986 and is now a private residence.

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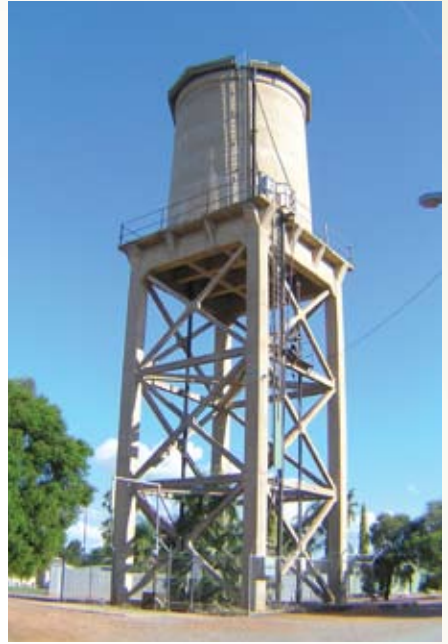
6 Former Anglican Church ~ Main Avenue

The former Anglican Church is a red brick building with pitched corrugated gable roof and smaller entry portico. The foundation stone for St Mary's Anglican Church, Main Avenue, was inscribed as a gift from Mr T Ashton and laid on 11 August 1935 by Rev Canon Thompson. The church was designed to be extended to the east by inclusion of a Gothic arch in the wall.

In 1963 the Parish purchased the block on the right-hand side (Main Avenue) and a residence was erected for assistant priest. This was sold in the 1970's.

7 Water Tower ~ Reserve

The Yanco Water Tower has a strong industrial aesthetic and contributes a landmark presence to the town. The tower and water tank is believed to have been constructed in 1912.



8 Group of Shops ~ Main Avenue

A number of shops in Main Avenue were constructed c.1925 and retain characteristics of their early establishment. The palm trees are distinctive and create an attractive civic landscape – to some extent they signify entry to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA).

Early main street shops retain their original fenestration and recessed central entry. Note the single storey brick facade shop has a parapet that appears to be in relatively original condition, although the awning and shop front are newer.

9 Yanco Hotel ~ Main Avenue

The Yanco Hotel is a two-storey building constructed in 1929 by Leeton builder William H Jones. The Hotel has fine 'Inter-war' classical features, including arched windows and porch with decorative keystones, 'Tuscan' style columns and symmetrical facade. Other interesting features include the pronounced cornice and slightly raised pediment, the good original condition of windows and doors and the attractive period tiling at street level.





10 Yanco Public Hall ~ Main Avenue

The Yanco Hall was constructed in 1913 by the Yanco Works and opened as the Yanco School of Arts in 1914. The former School of Arts building was a timber-framed building that has been completely overwhelmed by the additions including the 'modern' brick facade and kitchen extensions. Yanco Public Hall commemoration stone was laid on 25 April 1951 by Colonel RL Hutchens DSO. The Hall currently houses the Yanco WWI & WWII Memorial Board and markets are held last Sunday of the month.

11 Former Post Office ~ Main Avenue

The Yanco Post Office opened 10 August 1926 by Mr J Seabrook, Manager of WC & IC. The Post Office closed in 2000 and postal services were transferred to Yanco Newsagent/Store. The former Post Office is a simple building with a classically detailed entry, with Tuscan style columns, roundels and prominently coursed brickwork. Having been sold in 2002, the building is now a private residence.

12 Former Yanco Power Station ~ Binya Street

The Yanco Power Station was built in 1913 to supply power to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, when power was required for general lightning and for the Leeton Butter Factory. The site on which it was constructed was chosen as it was close to the Yanco railway line for obtaining coal and close to a water source which would be used for condensing water using a secondhand 75Kw generator. 6.5 kilometres of transmission lines were installed on flexible steel poles erected which were the first of their kind in Australia. The station's construction is concrete and is a fine example of an industrial building that has robust expression and presence. In 1937 the five storey building was extended. It was decommissioned in 1957 when the Snowy Mountains Scheme was completed. Currently used as the Yanco Powerhouse Museum.

Yanco Agricultural Institute

Yanco Agricultural Institute was founded in 1908 as the Yanco Experiment Farm, when the NSW Department of Agriculture purchased 323 acres of 'North Yanco' Station from Sir Samuel McCaughey. Three years later, a further 1500 acres was purchased and smaller land parcels purchased from adjoining properties between 1911 and 1920 to bring the Experiment Farm to its current area of 813 hectares. Accommodation for 18 apprentices was constructed soon after Yanco Experiment Farm was established.

In May 1928 the property was transferred to the Child Welfare Department, named the Riverina Welfare Farm and became a home for delinquent boys. Further accommodation facilities were erected to house a total of 128 boys. The Department of Agriculture continued to conduct crop trials on the property during this period.

In 1942 the Riverina Welfare Farm ceased operation, the boys transferred to Gosford and the property became POW Camp 15 – eventually holding over 700 Italian prisoners of war. The farm was still managed by the Department of Agriculture and the prisoners grew vegetables to assist the Allied war effort.

Between 1948 and 1951 the farm was used partly for the training of returned soldiers under the Commonwealth Rural Training Scheme.

The property was renamed Yanco Agricultural Research Station in 1961 but was subsequently renamed Yanco Agricultural Institute. In 1961 it was decided to establish an agricultural college on the site, and Yanco Agricultural College commenced operations in 1963 with a full initial intake of 38 students studying a 42-week Farm Certificate Course.

In 1980 the name of the college was changed to Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture. The college continued to offer residential courses in agriculture until it ceased operations in 2003.

◆

Yanco Agricultural High School

(formerly McCaughey Homestead)

McCaughey's elaborate two-storey mansion was possibly designed by Herbert E Ross and built by McFadgcom of Narrandera. The homestead formed the basis of the Yanco Agricultural High School (Y.A.H.S) in 1922. Tenders were called 1926 for construction of the Principal's residence. Y.A.H.S is a major co-educational agricultural secondary school and is one of only four located in New South Wales.

Samuel McCaughey pioneered irrigated agriculture in the area through construction of about 200 miles of channels to irrigate 40,000 acres (160 km₂). The success of this scheme is believed to have encouraged the New South Wales government to proceed with the dam at Burrinjuck and development of the M.I.A. McCaughey had become a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1899, and in 1905 he was made a Knight Bachelor. McCaughey suffered from nephritis and he died from heart failure at Yanco on 25 July 1919 and was buried in the grounds of St John's Presbyterian Church in Narrandera. He never married.



WHITTON HERITAGE TRAIL



THE TOWNSHIP WAS ESTABLISHED AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE EXTENSION OF THE SOUTH WEST RAILWAY FROM NARRANDERA TO HAY IN 1881-1882, AS THE RAILWAY STATION BECAME THE NUCLEUS OF THE TOWN AFTER IT OPENED SEPTEMBER 1881.

THE TOWN WAS ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS HULONG, DUE TO THE STATION BEING ON THE HULONG PASTORAL HOLDING, AND IN EARLY 1883 TOWNSHIP BLOCKS WERE OFFERED FOR SALE. THAT YEAR THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT CHANGED HULONG TO WHITTON, IN HONOUR OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR RAILWAYS, MR JOHN WHITTON, AND DUE TO SIMILARITY WITH HOWLONG, A TOWN ON THE MURRAY RIVER EAST OF ALBURY. THIS NAME WAS ADOPTED BY MID-1883 AND THE TOWNSHIP WAS RAPIDLY GROWING, WITH THE HOTELS AND SCHOOLS BEING ESTABLISHED. THE GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POST OFFICE WAS OPENED IN 1884.

Whitton was declared a village on 20 March 1885 and the Australian Joint Stock Bank opened at newly erected premises in 1889. In 1891-1892 a new Parish was created by the Church of England and a new church building was constructed. The Roman Catholic Church conducted regular services in 1895 and the McGaw Presbyterian Church opened that year.

In December 1898 tenders were called for the erection of a Courthouse and Lockup in Gogeldrie Street (last used as a court of Petty Sessions in 1974). It was obtained by the Historical Society in 1977 and the site officially opened as the Whitton Museum in 1988. The railway Station was saved from demolition and relocated to the site in 1983.

Disastrous bushfires swept through the town in 1892 and 1922. The fires in 1922 destroyed most of the main street buildings including the Commercial Hotel and CB Scott's Store. This is the reason while many of the buildings in Benerembah Street have 'Art Deco'-style features.



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Park / Memorial Gates | 8 Masonic Hall | 15 Robins Nest Shop |
| 2 Former AJS Bank | 9 McGaw Church | 16 Post Office |
| 3 Catholic Church | 10 Residence | 17 Whitton Shops |
| 4 Rice Bowl Hotel | 11 Residence | 18 Former Garager |
| 5 Anglican Church | 12 Former Café | 19 Shops |
| 6 Former Railway Station | 13 Butchers Shop | |
| 7 Former Courthouse | 14 Former Shop | |

1 Park and Memorial Gates ~ Benerembah Street

Located in a prominent position in the centre of Whitton in Benerembah Street is the park with WWI and WWII memorial gates at the entry. An amenities block and several historical information boards depicting early life in Whitton can be found here.

2 Residence (former AJS Bank) ~ Melbergen Street

This 'Victorian'-style with prominent arched windows and door (minus its front verandah) was constructed in 1890 as the Australian Joint Stock Bank. The two front rooms were for banking, with the three remaining rooms and a detached kitchen used as a residence. After a chequered history and amalgamations the bank closed in 1933. It was the Australian Bank of Commerce for a period and then Bank of NSW until its closure. An agency for Bank of NSW opened in Benerembah St in 1938.



3 St Carthage Catholic Church ~ Benerembah Street

St Carthage Roman Catholic Church stands on the corner of Bringan St and was constructed in 1963 by Leeton builder Frank Mirabelli. The architect was Peter. R O'Halloran of Wagga Wagga. Front of the Church features a 10ft x 10ft black and white Mosaic. The Church was blessed and opened on the 18 August 1963 by the Rev. F.A Henschke, who was the Bishop of Wagga at the time and the local Parish Priest, Rev T Shanley.





4 Rice Bowl Hotel ~ Benerembah Street

(formerly Commercial Hotel)

John Robertson constructed the Commercial Hotel on this site in 1892 which was destroyed in the fire of 1922. This c.1925 hotel was erected as the new Commercial Hotel and later became the Rice Bowl Hotel.

5 St Johns Evangelist Anglican Church ~ Melbergen Street

The St Johns Evangelist Anglican Church was established in 1883 and served from Narrandera. The first resident minister was the Rev G Nobbs from Norfolk Island. The Rev Joseph Ward died in 1929 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Whitton Section of Whitton Cemetery. He is remembered by a 'memorial plaque' near the front gate. The Rev M Maurice Waugh was killed whilst serving as an Army Chaplain in New Guinea 1945. Behind the church in Bringan St is the former St Johns vicarage. This was last used as such by the Rev Maurice Waugh (1902-1945).





6 Former Railway Station ~ Gogeldrie Street

The timber railway station was constructed in Brunell Street for the Department of Public Works by Mr A.H Scouler and opened on 1 September 1881. The former railway station building consisted of Waiting, Station Masters, Porters, Kitchen and Lamp rooms. The present Station building was in use by the Railways up until its closure in 1974 and it was saved from demolition by the historical society in 1977. After a great challenge, it was relocated to its current positioning 1983 under the guidance of first president Reg Winkler and the museum was officially opened in 1988.

7 Former Courthouse ~ Gogeldrie Street

The first Court of Petty Sessions was established in 1890 in a lock-up that stood to the right of the Anglican Church in Melbergen Street. In December 1898, drawings were prepared by the Government Architect Mr W L Vernon and tenders called for the erection of a Courthouse and Lock-up in Gogeldrie Street. The layout consisted of the Court room in the prominent location facing Gogeldrie Street, with attached Lock-up Keepers Quarters of three bedrooms, living, kitchen, enclosed back Verandah and bathroom, a lock-up including two cells, exercise yard and single men's room and separate toilet building.

The Courthouse was the last used as a Court of Petty Sessions in 1974. The new Police Station and separate residence adjoining the former courthouse and lock-up keepers residence were constructed in 1974. The Courthouse, Lock-up Keepers Quarters and Lock-up and surrounding land was obtained by the Whitton Historical & Cultural Society in 1977 as a museum and officially opened on 23 January 1988.



8 Former Masonic Hall ~ Gogeldrie Street

The timber framed and clad Masonic Hall was constructed in Gogeldrie St in 1967 and used as a Lodge until its closure and sale - sold in March 2008 and now a private residence.

The petition for a Masonic Lodge at Whitton, named Gogeldrie, was approved by the Grand Master John Goulston on 26 February 1925. It met in the Presbyterian church in Whitton until the mid 1960's, but by 1967 meetings were being held in its own Temple.

9 McGaw Presbyterian Church ~ Beechworth Street

The McGaw Presbyterian Church was established in 1895. Mrs Newson and her daughter donated land towards creation of a Church while Mrs Sarah McGaw of "Marinella" and Kooba Station donated 1000 guineas through the 'centenary of thanksgiving fund' to construct a church in memory of her late husband William McGaw (1834-1894) who with his brother owned Kooba Station. Tenders were called in July 1901 and construction of this unique-styled church was undertaken. The official dedication was conducted on 31 March 1902 by Rev John Walker, Mr W Esler and Mrs M McLachlan. The people of Whitton donated the stain glass window installed in the western wall depicting 'the burning bush'. Over the years the upkeep of the church was covered by the interest that remained of the thanksgiving fund. Electricity was installed in the church in 1929. In 1977 the McGaw Memorial church was taken over by the "Uniting Church" and attached to the Leeton diocese in 1984. Since 1999, restoration of the stained glass window has been completed and painting of the exterior carried out.



10 Residence ~ Benerembah Street

This c1900 'Victorian' style timber cottage was constructed in a prominent location on the corner of Benerembah and Beechworth Streets. It has a very high pitched pyramidal roof form clad in corrugated iron, a separate wide verandah supported on detailed posts and clad with weatherboards.

11 Residence ~ Benerembah Street

This residence was once the railway gate keeper's cottage, probably the first keeper Alexander Burnet's home (1806-1885), who was a Scottish-born convict who arrived in NSW in 1830. Burnett's son in law was a Whitton Station Master.

12 Residence (former Cafe) ~ Binyah Street

This c.1920 large double-fronted former Café is of masonry construction has a high parapet with pitched cantilevered awning over the pavement. It operated as a cafe for many years until its closure.

13 Butchers Shop ~ Benerembah Street

This c.1900 single storey timber-framed shop is of simple proportions with a prominent but simple parapet and a posted veranda over the footpath. In the parapet signage board appears the name GA Kelly Family Butcher, who operated this shop prior to its closure.

14 Former Shop ~ Benerembah Street

This c.1900 single storey timber framed shop is of simple classical proportions with a prominent but simple parapet and a central recessed entry. Note the missing veranda.

15 Robins Nest (shop) ~ off Benerembah Street

This c.1920 single storey shop has a masonry facade and parapet with detailed cappings. In the parapet signage board appears the name Robins Nest. The building is well-proportioned with large shopfront windows and recessed entry and steel posted veranda over the pavement.

16 Post Office ~ off Benerembah Street

Tenders were called for the erection of a new Post and Telegraph Office in Whitton in September 1898. The first Post Office was serviced from the Railway Station. This single storey timber framed 'Victorian' Post Office is of classical proportions with a prominent central gable facing the street and original symmetrical bullnose verandas on each side but now removed. It is still in use, providing over 100 years of service to the community.



17 Whitton Shop ~ Benerembah Street

This single storey timber framed shop appears to have been extended to the west. Also adjoining the shop to the east is the Whitton Memorial Hall. The hall is of timber framed construction with 'fibro' cladding and opened in 1960 by Dr Merrylees.

18 Former Garages ~ Benerembah Street

Located beside each other are the Garage and the Motor Spares & Accessories buildings. Both feature painted metal claddings and have raised parapets with an 'Art Deco' feature at centre. The side treatment of the parapet at Motor Spares building and detailing in fibro sheets and coverings is unique. Mr Ray Wells once operated this thriving garage prior to its closure; his name is still visible on the parapet.

19 Former Shops ~ Benerembah Street

On the corner of Melbergen and Benerembah Streets stands the empty shop once known as The Cosy Corner. This c.1920 shop is of masonry construction with a very high parapet and capping details on the pilasters, double corner entry and cantilever awning. Further along Benerembah Street, is an unoccupied single storey timber-framed shop with a triangulated parapet mock columns and a cantilevered awning over a recessed entry.



LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Preserving the Past, Enhancing the Future

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