

**Place name** Commercial Inn (former)

**Survey Date:** 31/07/2002

**Other name**

**Id:** 704

**Street** 20 Reeve Street

**Last Update** 9/03/2005

**Locality** Tarraville

**Postcode** 3971

**Official Locality**

**Property No**

**Local Government Area** Wellington Shire

**Property Info**

**Precinct:** Not in precinct

**Easting**

**Northing**

**Map** 0

**Workshop number**

**Workshop votes**

**Field survey number**

**Community priority**

**Designer**

**Builder**

**Ownership**

**Built Date** 1854

**Change Date**

**Description** VICTORIAN HERITAGE INVENTORY

Former Use: 1854 ; Commercial ; 1854 ; RESIDENTIAL ; ; Description: Date Started 1854; Date Finished ; Storeys 0; Desc HOTEL;

Ground floor was used as licensed premises and attaic as the accommodation area (W. Caldow).

**Condition**

**Integrity**

**History** Allotment: south of south-east corner McCabe and Reeve Streets, Section 1 First allotment owner. Matthew Absan.

When Michael Monaghan purchased this allotment in November 1856, it contained a "dwelling house under the sign of the Commercial Inn", he paid 265 pounds. A later title deed states that the vendor had been Matthew Absan presumably via his mortgager James J. Hart (1). It is said that Captain Absan opened the hotel in 1854, but owing to his failing health, he advertised the inn for lease: selling it to Monaghan. (Wayne Caldow advises that this text is inaccurate)

Monaghan meanwhile mortgaged the property to Alfred Nicholas, in 1857, and was forced to sell it to Patrick McGrath in 1863 to pay his debt, but this was only after McGrath had presumably been leasing it as he applied unsuccessfully for a licence in 1859 (3) John Collins became the licensee but with McGrath's purchase, McGrath himself was the new proprietor and continued to be until this century (4). His licence application for 1865 describes the house as having three sitting rooms and eleven bedrooms exclusive of the family's occupations.

This double-fronted timber building possesses all the attributes of its presumed age; the high hip roof, the formerly six-panelled double front doors and the extended side lights, to the doors, at dado height (Wayne Caldow advises there were 4-panelled doors; and that the extended side lights are the windows to the front rooms) . Slim verandah posts support a verandah which has been partly closed in over the years (Wayne Caldow disagrees that the verandah has been partly enclosed).

A rambling collection of buildings at the rear are indicative of its use for a telescopic guest population. The square-head picket fence and Australian Cabbage palm (now gone, Wayne Caldow) are probably from this century, but are sympathetic to the earlier of the area in the late 1840s.(6). (Butler 1982:81-2).

Heritage Protections Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Planning Scheme	HO40		Listed
Victorian Heritage Register	600796		Listed

**National Estate**

**Research Required**

**Recommendations**

**Fieldwork priority?**

**Stage 1 Ranking** Assessed & protected **Stage 2 priority** No Action: Already include

**Final Ranking** State significance **Final Recommendation** Amendment C26

**Statement of significance** This building is one of the more important in the study area and among the oldest. As such it is the oldest hotel or former hotel in Gippsland. Its importance lies in its original condition which allows it to illustrate truly, the once thriving shop row of Reeve Street in the township which developed more quickly than Port Albert or Victoria, as the temporary capital of the area in the late 1840s. It possesses high historic importance, and architectural integrity. (Butler 1982:81-2).

**Extent of designation**

**Informant** Wayne Caldwell (owner)

**Notes**

**Follow up**

**Bibliography**

Wayne Caldwell, pers. comm (Oct 2001)  
Butler, G. 1982. References.  
1)  
a) RGO  
b) Conveyance and Mortgage Memorials (AS)  
2)  
a) 1851 Directory  
b) G.G. 18/7/56  
3)  
a) Conveyance and Mortgage Memorials (AS)  
b) G.G. 22/4/59  
5) G.G. 18/4/62  
6) G.G 13/6/65  
7) Lennon, pps.154f.166f  
Butler, G., (1982), Port Albert Conservation Study (Place no. 56), South Gippsland Publishing Company, Foster, 81-2  
Graeme Butler & Associates, (July 2002), Alberton - Port Albert Heritage Review (Wellington Heritage Study)