

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOOKABURRA CAFÉ

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Brown Street Elm Street BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 202

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** PRICE'S RAILWAY CAFÉ

**PRECINCT:** Branxholme

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 1 & 2 **SECTION:** 49

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 473J D; VicRoads 233R3; located on the south-east corner of Brown and Elm Street opposite the former railway station.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Kookaburra Café, Brown Street, Branxholme. Brown Street View.

**Image Date:** 26/03/2002

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All of the building including the interiors of the café and dining room behind and all of the land.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Kookaburra Café is a single storey timber shop and attached dwelling. The walls of the shop are weatherboard and the roof is corrugated iron. The gabled roof is corrugated iron and the gable is weatherboard with no signage. A verandah in front of the shop extends over the footpath. The house which is in the Californian Bungalow Style is symmetrical about the front door but has asymmetrical gables, the largest over the porch. The piers of the porch are rendered brick with some bricks exposed as decoration. The forms and materials used and the detailing of the house are modest but are all well executed. Both the exteriors and interiors of the café and the residence are substantially intact. The colour scheme of the house in particular may predate the Second World War. The buildings are in fair condition. There is a typical privet hedge, (*Lingustrum* sp.) outside the house on the street boundary.

## **HISTORY:**

The Kookaburra Café and its associated residence were built on some of the last land to be subdivided in the township of Branxholme as a result of the arrival of the railway. Branxholme was an important junction for the Hamilton to Portland and the Casterton to Portland lines.

The first railway line through Branxholme was the Portland-Branxholme-Merino-Coleraine line constructed in 1876 by Overend and Robb and opened in 1877. (They were the successful contractors for the Ballarat to Ararat line which was essential for the traffic between gold towns.) The second railway was the line to Casterton which opened in 1884. At a very local level, the arrival of the railway changed the orientation of the town away from the Portland-Hamilton Road, or Creek Street, now the Henty Highway to the new focus of activity. The station and other new buildings were constructed on the higher ground on the western side of the town from 1876.

The café was built in the Interwar period by the Price family to take advantage of the passing trade from the station just as the Junction. It sometimes catered for functions such as weddings. Mrs. Margaret Price, the wife of Joseph Richard Price, ran the café. According to Agnes Walter, in her history of Branxholme, "J. R. Price commenced baking bread in 1898" and the family continued the business into the 1970s. Joseph Richard Price was born in 1879, the sixth child of William and Caroline Price (VPI, Reg. No.14030). Since Joseph was only nineteen years old, it may be that his father William was experienced as a baker. Joseph Price died in 1957 aged 77 and Margaret Price died in 1965 aged 80. Both are buried in the Branxholme cemetery. The Kookaburra Café closed due to the decline in railway traffic, the increase in road traffic and its distance from the Henty Highway. It is still occupied by a member of the Price family.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

3 Developing local, regional and national economies

3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

4 Building settlements, towns and cities

4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

## **CONDITION:**

The buildings are in fair condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

High degree of integrity externally and internally

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Kookaburra Café, at the corner of Brown and Elm Streets, Branxholme and opposite the former railway station, was established in the 1920s. It was established by the Price family, who were local bakers and who

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also owned a guest house. It operated until the 1970s when the business had declined. The café was associated in particular with Mrs. Margaret Price, the wife of the baker, Joseph Richard Price. The shop is a simple timber structure with a simple verandah. The attached weatherboard house is a well detailed example of the Californian Bungalow style. The buildings are substantially intact externally and internally. They are in fair condition.

How is it significant?

The Kookaburra Café is of historical, social and architectural significance to the township of Branxholme and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Kookaburra Café is of historical significance for its association with the Price family, a large and important family in the Branxholme community. It is of social significance for demonstrating a past way of life and the shifting fortunes of those who serve a passing trade. It is of architectural significance for its relatively sophisticated use of the Californian Bungalow style.

## COMPARISON:

218 Price's Bakery, Shop and Residence, McNicol Street, Branxholme

219 Branxholme Coffee Palace, McNicol Street, Branxholme

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

26-Mar-02

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Department of Justice Victoria	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	2001	
Walter, Agnes V.	Branxholme 1843-1973	1973	

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**ALLOTMENT:** 1 & 2 **SECTION:** 49

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**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Kookaburra Café, Brown Street, Branxholme. Brown Street View.

**Image Date:** 26/03/2002

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All of the exterior of all the buildings, the privet hedge at the front of the residence and all of the land, in the allotments, being allotments 1 & 2, Section 49, Township of Branxholme.

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## **HISTORY:**

The Kookaburra Café and its associated residence were built on some of the last land to be subdivided in the township of Branxholme as a result of the arrival of the railway. Branxholme was an important junction for the Hamilton to Portland and the Casterton to Portland lines.

The first railway line through Branxholme was the Portland-Branxholme-Merino-Coleraine line constructed in 1876 by Overend and Robb and opened in 1877. (They were the successful contractors for the Ballarat to Ararat line which was essential for the traffic between gold towns.) The second railway was the line to Casterton which opened in 1884. At a very local level, the arrival of the railway changed the orientation of the town away from the Portland-Hamilton Road, or Creek Street, now the Henty Highway to the new focus of activity. The station and other new buildings were constructed on the higher ground on the western side of the town from 1876.

The café was built in the Interwar period by the Price family to take advantage of the passing trade from the station just as the Junction. It sometimes catered for functions such as weddings. Mrs. Margaret Price, the wife of Joseph Richard Price, ran the café. According to Agnes Walter, in her history of Branxholme, "J. R. Price commenced baking bread in 1898" and the family continued the business into the 1970s. Joseph Richard Price was born in 1879, the sixth child of William and Caroline Price (VPL, Reg. No.14030). Since Joseph was only nineteen years old, it may be that his father William was experienced as a baker. Joseph Price died in 1957 aged 77 and Margaret Price died in 1965 aged 80. Both are buried in the Branxholme cemetery. The Kookaburra Café closed due to the decline in railway traffic, the increase in road traffic and its distance from the Henty Highway. It is still occupied by a member of the Price family.

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## What is significant?

The Kookaburra Café and residence are located at the corner of Brown and Elm Streets, Branhholme and opposite the former railway station, was established in the 1920s. It was established by the Price family, who were local bakers and who also owned a guest house. It operated until the 1970s when the business had declined. The café was associated in particular with Mrs. Margaret Price, the wife of the baker, Joseph Richard Price. The shop is a simple timber structure with a simple verandah. The attached weatherboard house is a well detailed example of the Californian Bungalow style. The buildings are substantially intact externally and internally. They are in fair condition. The Privet hedge at the front of the residence dates from the 1920s, and is typical of the period. It is also in good condition.

## How is it significant?

The Kookaburra Café is of historical, social and architectural significance to the township of Branhholme and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

## Why is it significant?

The Kookaburra Café is of historical significance for its association with the Price family, a large and important family in the Branhholme community. Of further historical significance is the snapshot that the cafe, residence and privet hedge give of a typical small country town business and home from the 1920s. It is of social significance for demonstrating a past way of life and the shifting fortunes of those who serve a passing trade. It is of architectural significance for its relatively sophisticated use of the Californian Bungalow style.

## COMPARISON:

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