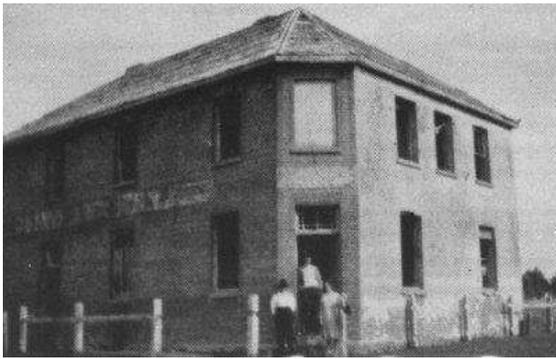


## The 'Rising Sun Hotel' at Hotspur - Victoria

The original Two-Story Rising Sun Hotel



The current Rising Sun Hotel as a private residence



**John McConachy**, the first licensee, built the former **Rising Sun Hotel at Hotspur** in 1857. It was built from handmade bricks, using the clay from the banks of the Crawford River, which runs through the town.

John McConachy was born in 1815 in County Derry, Ireland and married to **Jane McGuinness** at some time prior to 1838, when the first of their four children, Mary was born. The McConachy family emigrated as assisted migrants on the Catherine Jamieson, arriving in Portland in October 1841 (*IRABI 1839-1871*).

From 1842, McConachy was a Constable in the Rural Bench Constabulary at Portland, where he remained until 1848 (*Victorian Police, 2000*). The following year, he successfully applied for the license of the Woodford Inn at Dartmoor, where he remained for two years, until 1851. There is some thought that between 1851 and 1854 (*when he took up the license at the Crawford Inn, Hotspur*) John McConachy tried his luck at the Victorian Goldfields (*Bennett, 1997*).

John McConachy retained his interest in the Crawford Inn until 1858, when the newly completed Rising Sun Hotel was built. The new hotel was a fine two storey building, located conveniently a short distance from the road bridge over the Crawford River. McConachy must either have made a substantial profit from the Crawford Inn or have done well on the Goldfields to construct such a large hotel at such a time. James Bonwick, who passed through in 1857 refers to the two hotels and gives some indication of the type of place Hotspur was at that time: **"Hotspur"** is chiefly peopled by carriers.

Distance from medical assistance reduces ladies to the necessity of aiding each other. I was informed that hardly any of the grown population could read. Twelve houses form the township. The half-acre allotments were bought by speculators in Portland at from £20 to £50 each.

The main trade through the town must have been from Bullock drivers, carters, carriers and people traveling overland to find new selections. McConachy successfully applied for the license for the Rising Sun Hotel again in 1860 and 1861.

John McConachy died in 1862 and was buried at the Hotspur Cemetery. His wife Jane applied for the license after his death, her sureties were the same men who had acted for her husband, Thomas Henry Clarke of Merino and John Stock of Hotspur (*Ballarat Genealogy Hotspur History Timeline*).

In August 1862, Andrew Bourke, squatter from Limestone Ridge Pastoral Run, Dartmoor, died in the **"Rising Sun Hotel"** at Hotspur while talking to David McConachy, son of Jane and John McConachy.

An Inquest was held that same month.

The result of the inquest was that Bourke had suffered a **'ruptured pulmonary artery'** (*Portland Gazette, 23/08/1862*). Jane McConachy renewed her license in April but transferred it to William Charter of Digby in September 1863 (*Ballarat Genealogy Hotspur History Timeline*).

William Charter retained the license of the Rising Sun Hotel for several years. Bailliere's Gazetteer recorded the population of Hotspur as being about 200 people in 1865, and patronage of the hotel is likely to have been strong. The '**new**' iron bridge across the Crawford River was opened in 1870, which must have increased trade through the town. A photograph of the opening of the new Bridge clearly shows the Rising Sun Hotel in the background.

The hotel closed shortly before the upper storey was dismantled in 1945-6 and may have coincided with the decline in the town's population after the Second World War. It has been used as a residence since its closure.

The former Rising Sun Hotel is now a private residence. It is a simple single storey brick building, generally rectangular in plan. It is located on what would have been the most prominent location in the town, on the corner of McDonald and MacKenzie Streets, the traditional intersection, where the traffic moving from Portland to Casterton and Adelaide met the traffic coming from the outlying Stations.

The Hotel was originally a two-storey building, constructed between 1856 and 1857. The decorative use of dichromatic brickwork alternating courses of dark bricks with red bricks, while traditional in Britain and France is very unusual in Victoria before the mid-1860s. Also unusual is that only the east facade of the building has this treatment. The other faces of the building are traditionally laid red bricks.

Early photographs show the dichromatic brickwork extended to the second storey on the eastern facade, facing MacKenzie Street, suggesting that this was the most important street. The former hotel has a traditional corner entrance, with the original 1850s fanlight set above a pair of traditional four paned French doors. An early photograph of the hotel shows that a blank window was located above this on the second storey. This same photograph shows the simple roof form, clad with either shingle, which were replaced in 1913 (*Bennett, G., 2006, Personal Communication*).

The eastern facade has a typical arrangement of two windows, a timber door (*perhaps to the original residence*) and a third window beyond that. All remaining windows are four paned timber sash windows, which appear to date from the 1870s. The second storey had openings arranged in the same locations above, but all were windows. Photographs indicate that the windows were originally twelve pane double hung timber sash windows, typical of the late 1850s.

The facade facing McDonald Street to the north had three windows on the second storey and two windows on the lower level. All the brickwork on the lower-level shows evidence of rising damp, perhaps associated with the annual flood cycle of the earliest days of the hotel. The second storey was removed in 1945-1946 by Wally Heinrich (*the owner at the time*). The reason given for the removal of the upper storey has been recorded as due to a leaking roof, the upper storey was derelict, and it was considered cheaper to demolish the roof and upper storey than repair it (*Ibid.*).

The existing roof (*on the now single storey building*) follows a similar simple plan to the earlier roof of the two-storey building, but a later '**pop up**' has been included in the eastern portion of the roof.

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