

## Maldon Statement of Significance

<b>Heritage Place:</b>	All heritage places in Maldon and surrounds. ]	<b>PS ref no:</b>	HO01 – HO26, HO28 – HO245, HO247 – HO284, HO286 – HO354; HO362, HO364, HO375; HO387 – HO398, HO400 – HO416; HO426 – HO433; HO435, HO438, HO440, HO443, HO444, HO445, HO446 – HO459, HO461 – HO475; HO480–HO482, HO491 – HO569 and HO981
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### What is significant?

Maldon lies within the traditional country of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the first inhabitants, who have lived in the area for many tens of millennium.

Maldon is a former 19th Century gold mining town. It was founded in 1853 and built on the eastern slopes of ancient volcano of Mt Tarrengower, one of the last of the Uplands of Central Victoria. It overlooks the vast flat Murray River plain extending to the north and the complex deep leads system of the newer volcanic province to the west. Maldon has a rich geological past which has influenced its evolution and defines its present character. The Mt Tarrengower goldfield is regarded as one of Victoria's great quartz mining districts, where over 40 gold mines operated at one time. The Maldon gold deposits are very complex and unusual in comparison with other gold fields. They appear to have formed from a single geological event resulting in many different zones of mineralization.

It is rare to find so many different types of stone in one area that have been creatively used in a diverse range of traditional construction practices. The alluvial sediment and soft sandstone sourced from the gold mined gullies and creeks have been used in local brick kilns and adobe and pise mud buildings. These soft, plastic materials add another dimension to the rich natural fabric of the place. The town layout is distinguished by the blend of formal colonial geometric subdivision pattern with the informality and haphazard nature of the long winding main street. The gold mining origins of the place are visually reinforced by the close proximity of mined alluvial gullies, creeks, abandoned mullock heaps, tunnels, quartz kilns, Beehive Mine chimney, tailings and relic structures that surround the town.

Particular to the specificity of the place are environmental conditions that result from the rain shadow cast by Mt Tarrengower. The extreme arid summer conditions and low rainfall has influenced the development of the local mining industry and the building and urban design response to the place. The many ephemeral creeks that run off the mountain are captured by a network of water channels within the town and outlying dams.

Discovery of gold was reported in December 1853, when approximately 20,000 people rushed to the area in search of first alluvial then quartz gold. Quartz reef mining started early. Easily won wealth from relatively shallow quartz reef mines allowed the town to flourish early with the construction of fine Colonial Regency style buildings. A second mining boom followed the introduction of the rock drill in the 1880s, continuing until 1926 when the last gold mine closed. With the cessation of most mining by the mid 1920s, many inhabitants left, relocating their houses. Gold dredging operations continued in the area until 1985 as the population dwindled.

Little economic development during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century left the town of Maldon untouched by later expansion. It has an exceptionally high integrity and authenticity dating to its 19<sup>th</sup> Century configuration.

## How is it significant?

Maldon has historic, rarity, aesthetic, representative and social significance to Mount Alexander Shire and Victoria.

## Why is it significant?

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Maldon has historic and rarity significance for the evolution of mining operations during key periods associated with the 1850s, 1860s and 1880- early 1900 quartz mining boom on a very complex geological formation which is unlike other gold mining districts. The high level of extant archaeological relics and tunnels is unusual (Criterion A and C)

It has outstanding aesthetic significance and rarity value for its collection of very early residential, commercial, government and ecclesiastical buildings that display a high level of individual creativity and architectural excellence dating to the 1850s and 1870s (Criterion B).

It has representative significance for examples of water management systems and outstanding collection of drainage channels and gutters constructed from stone sourced from the underground mines and nearby quarries. The Welsh traditional stonework used in the channels and the design response to the particular characteristics of the local topography and climate is rare in Australia (Criterion B and D).

Maldon has significance for demonstrating the principle characteristics of an evolving gold mining town which experienced cyclic periods of boom and bust. Its symbiotic relationship to the local farming area and provision of residential accommodation in close proximity to mine work is intricately linked to changing mining operations and local mine labour patterns. The development of increasingly larger quartz mining companies, use of the Cornish 'Tribute' system and 'Truck' system of mining sustained a stable town population over a long period. The 'Truck' system of payment resulted in the construction of the Maldon Co-operative Trading Company and store in 1866 (Criterion D).

It has aesthetic significance for its mining landscapes associated with the bulk, scale of mining infrastructure and Miners Residency Areas in close proximity to 19th and early 20th Century architecture and the sweeping vistas of the town from various look out spots such as Mt Tarrengower and nearby hills such as Anzac Hill and the main road approaches (Criterion E).

It has aesthetic significance for its unusual urban qualities including the tightly built up historic commercial centre, narrow street of mid 19th to early 20th Century retail premises linked by verandahs, deep stone gutters and the scattered informal and often isolated former miner's cottages and gardens, the excellent examples of civic and religious buildings, the tree lined avenues, deep drains, parks, gardens and sweeping vistas across the plains (Criterion E).

Maldon has social value for its strong community spirit symbolized by the enduring and deeply felt connections to the town's past that is marked by the National Trust listing Maldon as the first 'Notable Town' in Australia in 1966 (Criterion D).