

# FORMER ODDFELLOWS HOTEL



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ\_rear



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ\_rear terrace



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ



Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ\_cellar

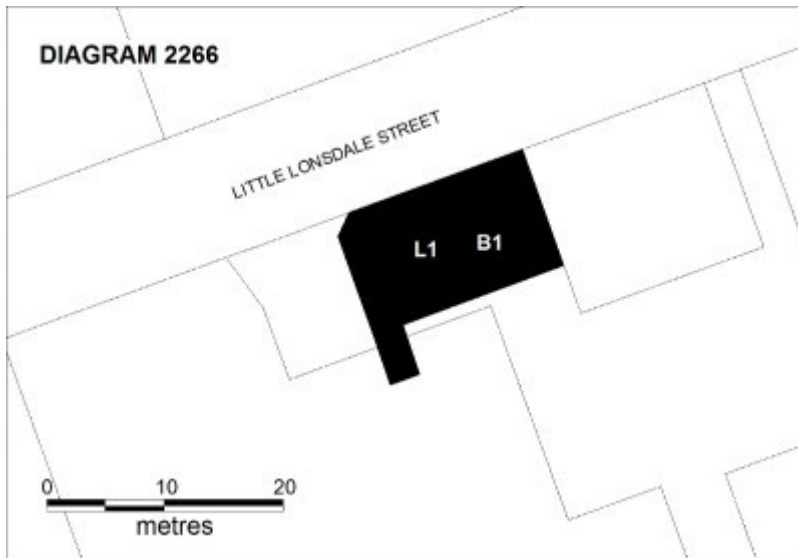


Oddfellows Hotel\_Oct  
2010\_KJ\_cellar\_opening to  
Little Lonsdale now sealed



2010\_Oct\_1\_Oddfellows\_cellar 2010\_Oct\_1\_Oddfellows.jpg





oddfellows plan.jpg

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### **Location**

33-39 LITTLE LONSDALE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H2266

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO707

### **VHR Registration**

March 10, 2011

### **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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### **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on -

### *What is significant?*

The former Oddfellows Hotel is a two storey building constructed in stages between c1848 and 1853. A carpenter, Henry Charles Wills, built a single storey cottage with a carpenter's yard for himself on the eastern end of the site after purchasing the land in 1848, and in 1850 built a similar two-room cottage next to it, which he leased out. In 1852 Wills added a second storey to each of the houses, and in 1853 he constructed on the western part of the site a 'large house stucco, cellar, 15 rooms, bar and stable in yard', known as the Odd Fellows Hotel. The second house became part of the hotel, but the house at the eastern end was always separate and operated at one time as a boarding house and from the late 1890s was leased to Chinese cabinet makers. The hotel lost its license along with many others in the city with the Licenses Reduction laws of 1906 and closed in 1912. After the hotel closed the whole building became a furniture manufacturing workshop and in 1914 the property was bought by the well-known merchant Cheok Hong Cheong, a missionary and social reformer in the Chinese quarter of Melbourne. The building was occupied by Chinese cabinet makers until 1948 when it was acquired by the Commonwealth Government. The elevations on Little Lonsdale Street and the former Little Leichardt Street have remained largely intact but a number of alterations were made to the interior and the rear during its use both as a hotel and factory. The building was restored externally in the 1990s with the interior rearranged for commercial use. In 2005-06 an extension was added at the rear and the interiors were largely gutted as part of its conversion to a bar and restaurant. The city block on which the building is located has been redeveloped, and the former hotel is now almost surrounded by high-rise buildings: the Telstra national headquarters, the Casselden Place office tower and The Urban Workshop.

The former Oddfellows Hotel is a two-storey stuccoed building with a splayed corner entrance, typical of hotels of the period. At the eastern end are the two two-storey parapeted row houses which are attached to the stuccoed rubble bluestone hotel section to the west. The hotel building is readily distinguished from the older former houses by the segmental arches over the large hotel windows and doorways on the ground floor. The bar entrance was on the splayed corner and the residential entrance off Little Lonsdale Street to the east. The doors and most of the twelve-pane double-hung sash windows are 1990s reconstructions of the originals, but the multi-pane window embedded in the south wall is likely to be original. The roof was probably originally slate, but is now clad with corrugated iron. The interior has been largely gutted but the original bluestone rubble cellar remains, with an entrance in the footpath on the former Little Leichardt Street. A large modern addition has been made at the rear but the rear random-coursed bluestone wall of the hotel and an original chimney above it survive. A chimney in mid-roof is also original. Only a few remnants of the original fabric survive internally.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people.

### *How is it significant?*

The former Oddfellows Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the state of Victoria.

### *Why is it significant?*

The former Oddfellows Hotel is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving buildings in the City of Melbourne. The facades on Little Lonsdale and the former Little Leichardt Streets are largely intact externally and the building is a now rare demonstration of the many modest buildings once common in the city, most of which have now been either demolished or significantly altered. It is of great importance in understanding the way of life in the poorer parts of the city in the past. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Little Lon district, home to the city's poorest residents and many immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and once notorious for its poverty, crime and prostitution. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Chinatown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when much of this part of Melbourne was occupied by Chinese cabinet makers.

The former Oddfellows Hotel is architecturally significant as a rare surviving example of the external form of a small 1850s hotel building in a Colonial Georgian style. Its street facades are largely intact and it is a now rare demonstration of the many modest commercial buildings once common in the city. It is typical of the many small hotels built throughout Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century, which were often built on corners and had a splayed corner entrance.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

**General Conditions:** 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. **General Conditions:** 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. **General Conditions:** 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. **General Conditions:** 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. **General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. **Minor Works :** Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

**Specific exemptions:** These exemptions relate to the general intactness of the exterior facades on Little Lonsdale and the former Little Leichardt Streets and the low intactness of the interior.

#### Interior Works

- . The installation, demolition or removal of dry framed walls and plasterboard provided new installations do not intersect with original window openings;
- . The repair and replacement of all floating floors with new floating floors;
- . The installation of all floor coverings and floor finishes;
- . All refinishing, repainting and resurfacing;

- . Electrical works provided they do not damage external fabric and are not run between the interior and the exterior through original fabric;
- . Plumbing works provided all plumbing lines, wastes, services, vents, drains and the like are internally arranged;
- . The installation of all internal equipment provided no structural work involving original masonry or integrated concrete slabs are required;
- . Rearrangements of the existing internal staircase in its current location provided the original window in the south wall is not covered over internally;
- . Flooring, floor coverings, electrical and hydraulic installations, dry walls, equipment and all other facilities in the new south extension of the building.

#### Exterior Works original Building

- . Replacement, removal or alteration of the large non-original windows on the former rear wall alignment;
- . Repairs or replacement of the roof cladding using traditional materials (lead work, galvanised iron, galvanised corrugated sheet steel (not zincalume or colorbond metal)).

#### Exterior Works (South Extension Area)

- . Roof & floor deck coverings: repair and replacement of the south extension waterproof flooring covering;
- . The installation of windows and doors, their removal or their change of appearance.

Construction dates        1848, 1850, 1852, 1853,

Heritage Act Categories   Registered place,

Hermes Number            154899

Property Number

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

[Based on information in 'Heritage Assessment of Buildings at 116-132 Little Lonsdale St, Melbourne', Graeme Butler & Associates 2010.]

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The population boom in Melbourne following the gold rushes saw increased subdivision in Melbourne's 'Little' streets and lanes for residential use, particularly in the north-east part of the town. By the early 1850s most of the sites between the ubiquitous corner hotels had been occupied by small shops and homes. Central Melbourne was still to a significant extent a residential area, and it was occupied largely with terraces, lodging houses and medium density accommodation.

By the 1860s specific districts with special types of occupancies began to form: the eastern end of Collins Street attracted the medical profession; the central and western parts the insurance companies, banks and building societies; the western end of Little Collins Street the legal profession. Bourke Street had its theatres and music halls and from this sprang the reputation of the nearby little streets such as Little Bourke and Little Lonsdale. 'The theatres and dance halls were in Bourke Street, and the brothels in Exhibition Street. By the 1880s . the brothels were Stephen [Exhibition] Street and the areas opening off it, until the time of the clean-up preparatory to the 1880 Exhibition, when they were displaced to Fitzroy and elsewhere.' (Bates, *Essential but unplanned*, pp 93, 12.)

The early dubious reputation of the area and its later absorption into Chinatown led in part to the singling out of the district as being distinct from others in the city, and the naming of it as 'Little Lon'. This was the name covering the streets running through the then notorious north-east corner of Melbourne during the 1860s, with recent emphasis on that part east of Exhibition Street. Gradually the area began to be seen as a world apart, known for its crime and debauchery.

### Greater Chinatown

While today's Chinatown is centred along Little Bourke Street between Swanston and Exhibition Streets during the period c1891-1907 Chinatown extended over a larger area, reaching north beyond Little Lonsdale Street. By 1907 the Sands & McDougall Directory recorded what is thought to be the greatest number of Chinese-occupied buildings in the city: a total of 378, 122 of these in Little Lonsdale Street and the lanes running off it. The buildings along Little Lonsdale Street between Russell and Spring Streets were almost all occupied by people with Chinese names.

Chinese cabinet-makers had been located in this part of the city since the 1880s, sometimes renting workshops from European furniture dealers, who then sold their produce. Many of the area's buildings were occupied from the later nineteenth century into the inter-war period by Chinese cabinet-makers.

The Chinese had numbered some 25,000 in Victoria at the beginning of the 1870s, declining with the decrease of alluvial gold in the Colony to about 5,000 in the early 1880s. In 1891 there were about 2,500 in Melbourne, or about 30% of the colony's Chinese population, showing that they had retired to an urban environment to serve the boom time prosperity in such occupations as cabinet making and laundries.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Little Lon was an area of great diversity, with cramped housing for dozens of families of the multi-cultural poor community mixed with brothels, pubs, workshops and small warehouses. Following the passing of the *Immigration Restriction Act* in 1901 there was a gradual shift of Chinese businesses and residents out of the city. By the 1930s the Chinese population had declined.

### HISTORY OF PLACE

[from Ivar Nelson & Terry Sawyer, 'Conservation Management Plan Former Oddfellows Hotel. 33-39 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria', for Australian Estate Management, July 2010.]

The land on which the former Oddfellows Hotel is located was first sold in 1848 to William Kennon, who subdivided it almost immediately and sold the site in September 1848 to Henry Charles Wills.

Wills built a small house on the block, and in October 1850 lodged a 'Notice of Intention to Build' an addition to the dwelling. By 1851-52 the rate records show that there were two separate two-room, presumably single-storey cottages. These appear to have been on the eastern end of the present site.

In March 1853 Wills applied to build a dwelling on the western part of the site, and the three structures were amalgamated and a second storey added to the earlier houses, to form a building which was presumably the present hotel, and which in the 1853 rate records was described as being a 'large house stucco, cellar, 15 rooms, bar and stable in yard'. Wills retained ownership of the land, but the license for the hotel, first identified in the 1854 rate book as the Odd Fellows Hotel, changed hands frequently. Wills sold the property in 1874 to John Wood.

The large number of hotels in the Little Lon area and their notorious reputation for unruly behaviour attracted widespread concern, reaching a peak in the 1890s. A Licenses Reduction Board was established in Victoria in 1906 to enable the withdrawing of licenses from hotels which did not meet certain standards. Between 1907 and 1912 the number of licenses dropped from 3562 to about a thousand less. The Oddfellows Hotel was among these, and closed its doors on 31 December 1912.

From the late 1890s the hotel had only been operating in the western part of the building, with the eastern part leased to Chinese cabinet makers. After the hotel closed the whole building became a furniture manufacturing workshop. In 1914 the Wood family sold the property to Cheok Hong Cheong. Cheong was a missionary and social reformer in the Chinese quarter of Melbourne and was well known for his fund-raising efforts for the construction of Chinese mission buildings and training centres for Chinese evangelists of the Church of England. The building was occupied until at least 1918 by the cabinet maker Quong Hing, and the building continued to be used for this purpose until it was acquired by the Commonwealth in 1948, at which time it was occupied by Sun

Cheong Loong & Co, Eastern Furniture Manufacturers.

The building was largely neglected after its acquisition by the Commonwealth, as it was expected that it would be demolished as part of the redevelopment of the entire block, but its significance began to be recognised and it was retained because of its historical and architectural significance.

The building underwent a number of alterations and some extensions during its use both as a hotel and factory. While the north and west elevations have remained largely intact, the southern side has been altered more. In 2009 an extension was added at the rear and the interior of the old hotel was largely gutted as part of its conversion to a modern bar and restaurant.

## **Plaque Citation**

Built in stages from c1848 to 1853 as a house, but used from c1853 as a hotel and later by Chinese cabinet makers, who occupied much of this part of Chinatown, this is now one of the oldest buildings in the city.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The former Oddfellows Hotel is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the City of Melbourne. The building is largely intact externally and is a now rare demonstration of the many modest buildings once common in the city, most of which have now been either demolished or significantly altered. It is of great importance in helping to understand the way of life in the poorer parts of the city in the past. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Little Lon district, home to the city's poorest residents and many immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and once notorious for its poverty, crime and prostitution. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Chinatown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when much of this part of Melbourne was occupied by Chinese cabinet makers.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

The former Oddfellows Hotel is a rare surviving example of a small 1850s hotel building in a Colonial Georgian style. It has retained its original scale and external form and is a now rare demonstration of the many modest commercial buildings once common in the city. It is typical of the many small hotels built throughout Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century, which were often built on corners and had a splayed corner entrance.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

g. Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2266 held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described as Lot 2 on Title Plan 446765C.

2. All the building marked B1 on Diagram 2266 held by the Executive Director.

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*