

## FORMER BLACK EAGLE HOTEL



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_rear



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October  
2010landing window



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_attic



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_attic



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_attic  
laths



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October  
2010\_attic\_roof timbers



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_attic



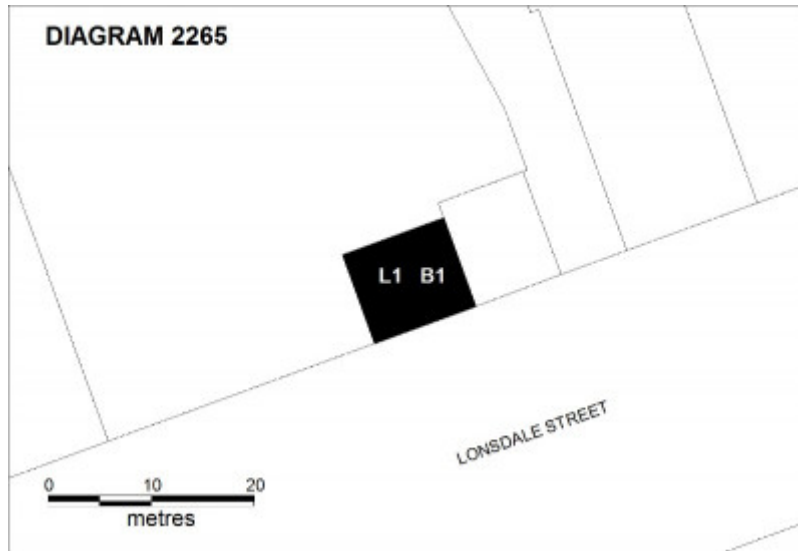
Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October  
2010\_attic\_wall paper



Black Eagle  
Hotel\_KJ\_October 2010\_attic



2010\_Oct\_1\_Black  
Eagle\_wallpaper remnants



black eagle plan.jpg

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## Location

42-44 LONSDALE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2265

## 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 Black Eagle Hotel is a two storey building in the once notorious 'Little Lon' district of Melbourne. It was built in 1850 by William Kennon as a pair of two-storey bluestone and brick dwellings, but was probably used as a hotel from the beginning, though it was not described as such until 1853. The first licensee was William Brandt who held it until 1858, when the owner, Kennon, took over the license, and held it with his son Hugh until 1882, when the hotel was purchased by the Melbourne Brewing and Malting Company. It closed down in 1908, along with many others in the city, following the Licenses Reduction laws of 1906, and after this was home to various businesses. It was a lodging house for some years and from 1918 was occupied by a Chinese cabinet maker, W H Chinn. In 1919 the property was purchased by the printer Joshua McClelland who in 1920 built a large single-storey brick printing shed (now demolished) at the rear and operated a printing business here until 1977. In 1948 the building was acquired by the Commonwealth Government. The building has been restored and is now used as a shop on the ground floor with storage and office space above. The rear facade has been incorporated into the new commercial development at 50 **Lonsdale** Street, part of which is built over what was the back courtyard of the hotel. 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 Black Eagle Hotel is a Colonial Georgian style building of two storeys and an attic with a gabled slate roof. The Lonsdale Street exterior appears as a pair of two-storey buildings built to the footpath, with 42 Lonsdale appearing as a residence and 44 Lonsdale as a shop front with residence above, but the two have been joined into one. The walls are random coursed bluestone rubble with a thin render finish. On the street facade there is quoining around the doors and building edges and the render is ruled. The windows are double-hung sashes. The plate glass shop window is of recent origin and has Doric style timber pilasters on each side which replicate the original timber work, which had almost disappeared by the 1980s. On the western corner are remnants of early twentieth century painted signs. Internally the timber ceilings and floors have been replaced but some original, though fire-damaged, floor and ceiling joists remain. There are two original fireplaces, now closed over, on the ground floor and **two** open hearths on the first floor. Some early features survive in the attic, including the main roof purlins and rafters, laths of the original plastered ceilings and a section of beaded pine wall and floor. Some of the walls are lined with illustrations taken from nineteenth century newspapers and magazines. Over this was mid- to late-Victorian period wallpaper, now partly burnt off. On the lower floors are remnants of wallpaper, some fragments from the early twentieth century, and some larger sections from the period when the building was a bar although none of these are historically significant.

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

#### *How is it significant?*

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

#### *Why is it significant?*

The former Black Eagle Hotel is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving buildings in the City of Melbourne, and one of the few to survive from before the gold rush period. It is largely intact externally and is now a rare demonstration of the many modest buildings once common in the city, most of which have now been either demolished or significantly altered, and is of great importance in helping to understand the way of life in the city during the nineteenth century. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Little Lon district, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was home to the city's poorest residents and many immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese, and was 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 many buildings in this part of Melbourne was occupied by Chinese cabinet makers.

The former Black Eagle Hotel is architecturally significant as a rare surviving example of a small 1850s residence cum hotel building in a Colonial Georgian style which has retained its scale and external form.

## 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.

#### Interior Works

. Electrical works, provided no works damage external fabric and wiring is not run between the interior and the exterior;

- . Plumbing works provided all plumbing lines, wastes, services, vents, drains and the like are internally arranged;
- . Flooring: repair and replacement of flooring in pine tongue and groove boarding and subsequent finishes and coverings to the floors and stairs;
- . Works to the stairs including any changes to treads risers and handrails;
- . The installation of cornices and simple floated ceilings on the ground and first floor (such as fibrous plaster and plasterboard sheets);
- . The replacement of internal doors (with the exception of the attic door) as required (none on ground or first floor are original);
- . All refinishing, repainting and internal decoration;
- . The installation of equipment and all forms of shelving, sinks and benching provided damage to original fabric is minimised and the items are not permanently fixed to the fabric of the building.

Construction dates        1850,  
 Heritage Act Categories   Registered place,  
 Hermes Number            154900  
 Property Number

## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

From as early as the 1840s this part of the city, known as Little Lon, was a mixed working class residential and business area. The block bounded by Spring, Lonsdale, Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets was subdivided and sold in 1847, and the first buildings constructed in 1848. By 1850 most of the blocks had been sold and most of the sites between the ubiquitous corner hotels were occupied by small shops, office and houses. Behind in the newly named little lanes were an increasing number of small new cottages and shops, sometimes of only one or two rooms.

Although there were some larger industries established in Lonsdale Street, including an iron foundry, a dye works and a sawmill and timber yard, the area overwhelmingly was characterised by small businesses and dwellings, and by a noticeably high proportion of single ladies. Lonsdale Street east was the centre of the better class of prostitutes, including the famous houses kept by Scotch Maude, Biddy O'Connor and Madam Brussels, who occupied a house at 32-6 Lonsdale Street (replaced in 1914) with the rear entrance off Casselden Place.

In the 1860s the area was perceived as an overcrowded slum, housing the poorest residents and immigrants. During the late 1800s the area became an extension of Chinatown and many Chinese businesses moved into the area, particularly cabinet-makers making cheap furniture, and by 1900 occupied many buildings in the area. This trade also declined in the 1900s, and there was much building of substantial red brick commercial buildings along the street frontages. Sanitation measures were crude and most houses had an outdoor cesspit and no piped water. An underground water and sewerage system was not begun until the 1890s and until then problems with health and sanitation were widespread. Between 1886 and 1900 many houses in the block were declared unfit for habitation and demolished.

Immigrants were attracted to the area in the early twentieth century, mainly Chinese, Syrians, Italians and Indians.

The area has from its beginnings contained only modest structures. Land values were always less than in other parts of the city, and redevelopment pressure in the second half of the twentieth century when many Victorian-era buildings in other parts of Melbourne were being demolished, was also less, so that many of the modest buildings

typical of the area in the mid- to late-nineteenth century were retained.

The block between Spring, Lonsdale, Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets was purchased by the Commonwealth Government in 1948 and became known as the Commonwealth Block. Until then it had not been the subject of major redevelopment and retained its mid to late nineteenth century character. In the early 1960s most buildings in the area were demolished for car parking and in 1988 the western and eastern parts of the block were redeveloped, following an extensive archaeological excavation, but two of the oldest buildings, the Black Eagle Hotel (1850) and Oddfellows Hotel (early 1850s), were retained.

The Commonwealth Government sold the land to Industry Superannuation Property Trustees in 1999-2000.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

[from the Heritage Alliance 'Conservation Plan HO710. Black Eagle Hotel 42-44 Lonsdale Street'; and Terry Sawyer & Ivar Nelson, 'Conservation Management Plan. Former Black Eagle Hotel', July 1994.]

During the Crown Grants of 1848, William Kennon, a stonemason, acquired this land at 42-44 Lonsdale Street. He subsequently built two two-storey bluestone and brick dwellings on the site. From its beginnings the building was used as a hotel, although the first rate description in 1851 does not indicate this. It is not until 1853 that the Black Eagle is given its official public house status. In order to increase its facilities, a loft, additional sheds and Blacksmith's shop at the rear were added in 1854. The first licensee was William Brandt who held the license until 1858, when William Kennon took it over, and he and his son Hugh held the licence until 1882, when the hotel was purchased by the Melbourne Brewing and Malting Company.

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 Black Eagle, like many hotels in the area, was closed down in 1908.

The former hotel was home to a number of businesses after the hotel closure. It became a lodging house run by Mrs E M de Grimbert for some years, and from 1918 was occupied by the cabinet maker W H Chinn. The property was purchased by the printer Joshua McClelland in 1919, and he operated a printing business here until 1977. After taking over the premises, he demolished all the yard structures bar the toilet and urinal in the north-east corner of the site. A large single-storey red brick printing shed (now demolished) was constructed in the yard using the west and east garden walls as support for the new roof and a new northern wall with large hopper windows. These works are recorded as taking place in 1920 (McCarthy, 1990:9).

Ryan (1979:68) provides the following description of the property as it was in 1979:

When originally built in 1859, the premises were two two-storey exposed bluestone and brick dwellings which were later finished with stucco. The simple facade, almost Georgian, is original except for the ground floor windows which have been altered. The separate entrances are original. A blocked window in the west side of the building [since restored] indicates an attic storey. A fire in the building at some stage either destroyed or forced the closure of access to the loft.

In 1990 an archaeological investigation was conducted at the site (known as Site B in McCarthy report). Restoration work begun in 1994 was completed in 1995 and the property was further fitted out in 1998.

The building is now used as a shop on the ground floor with storage and office space above. The rear facade has been incorporated into the new commercial building at 50 Collins Street, which is built over what was once the back yard of the hotel.

## Plaque Citation

Built in 1850 as a pair of houses in the then-notorious Little Lon area, but used as a hotel, this is now one of the oldest buildings in the city and demonstrates the small scale of Melbourne's pre-gold rush buildings.

## Assessment Against Criteria

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

The former Black Eagle Hotel is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the City of Melbourne, and one of the few to survive from before the gold rush period. It is largely intact externally and is now a rare demonstration of the many modest buildings once common in the city, most of which have now been either demolished or significantly altered, and is of great importance in helping to understand the way of life in the city during the nineteenth century. It is significant for its association with Melbourne's Little Lon district, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was home to the city's poorest residents and many immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese, and was 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 many buildings in 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 Black Eagle Hotel is a rare surviving example of a small 1850s hotel building in a Colonial Georgian style which has retained its scale and external form.

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 2265 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 2265 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/>*