

# HOTEL WINDSOR



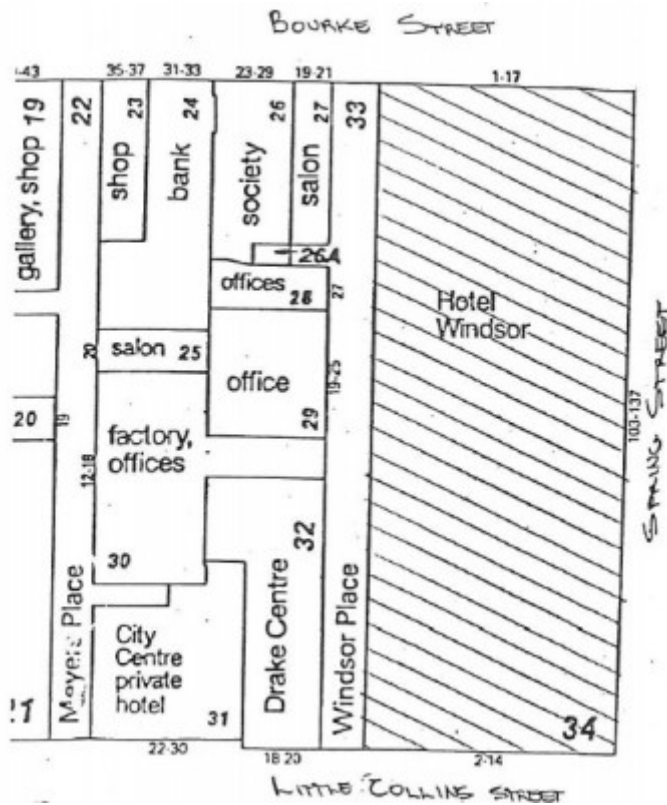
HOTEL WINDSOR SOHE  
2008



1 hotel windsor spring street  
melbourne front view



hotel windsor spring street  
melbourne front elevation



H0764 H0764 plan

## Location

103-137 SPRING STREET AND 1-17 BOURKE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0764

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO739

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Amendment to Registration

October 12, 1988

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 23, 2008

### What is significant?

Construction of the Hotel Windsor commenced in 1883 for George Nipper of the shipping firm Nipper and See. Designed by Charles Webb and built by Thomas Cockram and Company, it was originally known as the Grand Hotel. The building was extended and became known as the Grand Coffee Palace in time to accommodate visitors to the Centenary Exhibition of 1888. It was re-named the Windsor Hotel in 1920.

The Grand Coffee Palace Company Limited, headed by James Munro and James Balfour, was formed to purchase the Grand Hotel and convert it into a temperance hotel in 1886. Renamed the Grand Coffee Palace, liquor was banned from the premises and the hotel became the flagship of the temperance movement. James Munro, Premier of Victoria in 1890, and James Balfour, who entered parliament in 1866, were both well known leaders in the temperance movement in Victoria.

The original section of the hotel was built on the corner of Spring and Little Collins Streets in a Renaissance Revival style. The main Spring Street facade was symmetrical, with a five-storey central section containing three arcaded lower levels, flanked by six-storey corner towers. In 1887-88 the building was extended to the north along Spring Street, by the same architect, Charles Webb. A symmetrical facade was again achieved with the duplication of the existing facade and the addition of a central entrance bay. Mansard roofs were added to the central towers flanking the entrance, providing a French Renaissance character, and a stone sculpture was installed above a segmental pediment of the main entrance. Attributed to John Simpson Mackennal, who also worked on the interior and exterior decoration of Parliament House, the sculpture of 'Peace and Plenty' incorporates two reclining figures and a central shield containing the English and Australian Coat of Arms.

In 1897 an application was made to remove the prohibition of alcohol and change the name back to the Grand Hotel. In 1920 a new company, Melbourne Hotels Limited, was formed with the chairman, Sir John Monash. This company purchased the Grand Hotel and the adjoining Old White Hart Hotel to the north, which became an annexe to the Grand. Sydney architects Robertson and Marks, in conjunction with Henry H Kemp of Melbourne, undertook major refurbishments to both buildings, and the whole complex was renamed the Windsor Hotel.

Further alterations were made to the buildings in the 1940s and 1950s, and in 1961 the Old White Hart Hotel annexe was demolished and replaced with a new annexe building designed by Harry A. Norris.

The Hotel Windsor was bought by the Victorian Government in 1976 due to the threat of demolition and has been in private ownership since 1990.

How is it significant?

The Windsor Hotel is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria. Why is it significant?

The Hotel Windsor is of architectural significance as the only surviving illustrative example of the opulent style adopted for a nineteenth century luxury hotel in Melbourne in the 1880s. When constructed it was one of the largest and grandest hotels in Victoria.

The Hotel Windsor is of architectural significance as one of the finest, although unusual, examples of Charles Webb's work. Over more than thirty years in practice, Webb produced a substantial number of important buildings, focussing on ecclesiastical, institutional and domestic work. The Windsor Hotel is the largest of his relatively few commercial commissions.

The Hotel Windsor is of historical significance for its association with the temperance movement in Victoria, in particular with the well known leaders, James Munro and James Balfour. The conversion of the building to a coffee palace in the late 1880s reflects the strong values held by the movement, and the opulence of the building illustrates the mores of society at the time, with the combination of lavish speculation and a display of temperance.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2008]

## Permit 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. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

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 must 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.

Construction dates 1883, 1920, 1961, 1887, 1940, 1950,

Architect/Designer Kemp, Henry H, Webb, Charles, Norris, Harry A,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Other Names GRAND HOTEL, GRAND COFFEE PALACE, WINDSOR HOTEL,  
Hermes Number 804  
Property Number

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## History

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### **The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2008. Sources were as follows:**

Allom Lovell and Associates. *The Hotel Windsor. An Assessment of Cultural Significance and the Impact of Proposed Refurbishment Works*. Melbourne 1991

A. Sutherland. *Victoria and its Metropolis*. Vol IIB, Melbourne 1888

Contextual History:History of Place:

The Windsor Hotel is one of the great remnants of Marvellous Melbourne and, through its associations with James Munro and James Balfour, and as a coffee palace, epitomised the connections between temperance and entrepreneurship that dominated Melbourne political and business life in the boom years.

Designed along the lines of contemporary American and English luxury hotels, the Windsor is focussed on the main dining room at ground level and the central light court above.

In the 1970s the hotel was struggling to survive. Its owners proposed redevelopment of the site, but were opposed by the National Trust and the Builders Laborers Federation which imposed a ban on the site. In 1976 the State Government purchased the building, ensuring its continuation as a grand hotel.

Associated People: Assoc.People JAMES MUNRO, JAMES BALFOUR, SIR JOHN MONASH

## Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 764.

WINDSOR HOTEL (Former Grand Hotel Coffee Palace)

103-107 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000.

(Buildings and land to the extent shown hatched in the plan hereunder).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G50 20 December 1989 pp.3347-3348]

*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/>*