LAUREL HOTEL

The Laurel Hotel

The Laurel Hotel c1907.

Location

289 Mt Alexander Road Ascot Vale, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Municipality

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO361

Heritage Listing

Moonee Valley City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 30, 2012

What is significant?
The Laurel Hotel at 289 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale. A hotel was first opened on this site in 1853 or '54 and the main part of the hotel- fronting Mt Alexander Road - was constructed between 1857 and 1862. An extension with identical detailing was constructed facing Middle Street, possibly in 1867. The Laurel has operated as a hotel uninterrupted to the present day (2013).

The building is two-storeys in height, with an irregular plan which reflects its comet site and construction in two stages. It has ruled rendered walls an exposed hipped slate roof. The ground floor is articulated by simple corner pilastets (probably of bluestone), while the first floor has massive quoins to the corners and the windows.

The single-storey, 20th-century additions to the south and west sides are not of significance. The verandah is also of no significance.

How is it significant?
The Laurel Hotel is of rarity value, historical, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?
The Laurel Hotel is a rare early surviving hotel building. The business was started on this site in 1853 or '54 to serve the passing goldrush trade en route to the Castlemaine goldfields, as were many others on Mt Alexander Road. The present building was constructed for publican Patrick Dolan between 1857 and '62, making it the earliest surviving hotel building in Moonee Valley, and one of the longest operating businesses in the area. (Criteria B & A)

Historically, also for its links to the racing industry which characterises the southern part of Moonee Valley. Publican Thomas Chadwick, who took up the license in 1866, had close links with Flemington Racecourse and expanded the premises onto Middle Street to accommodate both jockeys and their horses. Champion horses visiting for the Melbourne Cup and other local race meetings at Flemington were regularly accommodated in the hotel stables. The Laurel also served as a venue for viewing prize racehorses displayed for sale. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, it is an attractive and intact example of an early Victorian commercial building, distinguished by bold quoins to the first floor. (Criterion D)

Socially, as a focus for community recreation continuously since the early 1850s, particularly for the racing fraternity. (Criterion G)

Theme

3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

Heritage Study/Consultant	Moonee Valley - Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay Places Review, David Helms Heritage Planning, 2012;
Construction dates	1859,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	192324
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Laurel Hotel stands on the south-west corner of Mt Alexander Road and Middle Street. This corner has an oblique angle, which is reflected in the irregular plan of the hotel.

The 19th-century extent of the hotel is two-storeys, with no setback from the footpath (apart from a small jog where two wings meet on Middle Street). It has a hipped roof covered in slates. The plan suggests that the two-storey extent of the hotel was built in two stages, with two distinct hipped roofs which meet at a parapet wall. Both wings have chamfered corners addressing its corner site. While the earliest part of the building is believed to date from c1857- 62, the later wing may date from 1867 when accommodation for jockeys was created.

The external details, however, are largely consistent between the two wings. The walls are rendered with ruling to imitate ashlar. The ground floor is without other embellishment apart from simple pilasters at the multiple comers, and a render beltcourse at the top. The first floor is embellished by bold quoius to the multiple comers and quoius of a similar scale to the windows (one-over-one double-hung sashes, as had been installed by 1907). The windows appear to have bluestone sills (overpainted). The ground-floor pilasters and the first-floor quoius may also be bluestone, as seen at a c1860 terrace with similar details at 434-438 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill (Individually Significant to preciuct H0330, City of Yarra).

The only significant external difference of note between the two sections is the chimneys. The larger two-storey wing, which fronts onto Mt Alexander Road, has two simple corbelled chimneys that appear to have been facebrick originally and given a simple render coat later in life. In contrast, the smaller wing, fronting onto Middle Street, has a chimney on its west wall that retains its original decorative render, with ashlar ruling and a moulded cornice, typical of the 1870s and 1880s, suggesting that this wing was the later phase of construction.

Alterations to the building, when compared to the 1904 MMBW plan and 1907 photograph, include: the installation of a posted verandah to the east elevation, the removal of louvered shutters to some ground-floor windows and replacement of the double-hung windows with single fixed panes, replacement of the comer door with a window, enlargement of one window opening facing Middle Street to create a doorway, demolition of the stables at the rear construction of a c1930s single-storey extension to the south side which has apparently enveloped the small residence seen on the 1904 plan (its gabled roof is still visible), and more recent single-storey extensions to the rear (west side).

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/