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# CALEDONIAN HOTEL



CALEDONIAN HOTEL SOHE 2008



caledonian hotel bank street port fairy  
corner view nov1999



caledonian hotel bank street port fairy  
entrance nov1999



caledonian hotel bank street port fairy  
side view nov1999

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## Location

41-43 BANK STREET PORT FAIRY, MOYNE SHIRE

## Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0247

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO16

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 31, 1999

#### What is significant?

Whalers and sealers working out of Launceston had been visiting the coastal areas around Port Fairy and Portland areas throughout the 1830s and some had set up camps and huts during their stays. The informal settlement situation at Port Fairy Bay changed dramatically in 1843 when James Atkinson formally acquired title to 5,120 acres west of the Moyne River, most of which Atkinson had taken up under licence in 1839. In 1841, Atkinson, having completed the clearing of the town area, began survey work for town streets, blocks and allotments. The few existing settlers at Atkinson's new town of Belfast had no rights to title to their land, but Atkinson quickly established leasing arrangements in order to provide some commercial return to Atkinson and his partners and to encourage further settlement.

The Scottish-born David McLaws entered into a lease for the block at the corner of Bank and James Streets in 1844 and is first recorded as the licensee of the Caledonian Hotel in the same year. The size of the hotel held by McLaws at this time is not known, but the hotel was apparently constructed in stages as the interior of the whole of the attic storey to the James Street elevation remains unfinished as the workmen reputedly abandoned the site and departed for the goldfields. Despite holding a twenty one year lease with an option of a further fourteen years, McLaws purchased the acre block from Atkinson in 1850 for £200. McLaws personally held the licence for the hotel for the majority of the time between 1844 and about 1860 and the hotel remained in the McLaws estate until 1887.

The Caledonian Inn became well known as the venue for horse sales, including those of Thomas Browne, more well-known as the writer Rolf Boldrewood, who lived in the Port Fairy district from 1843 to 1856. In 1856, sales were conducted for William Rutledge & Co and in November 1872, the Western Horse Bazaar was opened there by William O'Brien. Meetings of the Belfast Racing Club, Belfast Rifle Club and Belfast Rowing Club were held also held at the Caledonian Inn. The hotel was used for functions as varied as inquest hearings, commercial auctions and entertainment such as the Tradesmen and Farmer's Ball in 1855. The hotel remains an important element in the social life of Port Fairy and continues to be a venue for musical performances.

In 1970, the hotel was renovated and a substantial addition made to the elevation on Bank Street in a style replicating the original Georgian form. Requirements of the Victorian Liquor Commission were partially waived to effect preservation of the basic character of the hotel.

The original section of the Caledonian Inn is constructed of rubble stone with a steep pitched hip roof enclosing attic bedrooms lit by dormer windows. The angled corner door, the Georgian window sashes and plain internal joinery are all characteristic of early colonial architecture in Victoria. The form of the hotel, with its several doors onto the street frontages and the unfinished state of the attic storey, indicates that the building may have been constructed in stages prior to 1861. One of the early dormers has been removed and the original timber shingle roof has been replaced with corrugated iron. While the replication of Georgian form and detail in the 1970 addition is detrimental to the understanding of the form of the original building, the external appearance of the early portion appears to have changed little since at least 1861.

#### How is it significant?

The Caledonian Inn is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

#### Why is it significant?

The Caledonian Inn is of historical significance as probably the oldest continuously licensed hotel in the State having operated without interruption since 1844. The corner portion of the existing hotel probably dates from that year, making it one of the earliest hotels in Victoria. The name Caledonian Inn is a reflection of the Scottish origins of the original owner David McLaws and the long-term association of the hotel with the McLaws family. The hotel

is significant as a venue for social, commercial and official functions for more than one hundred and sixty years and remains a central element in the interpretation of the early development of Port Fairy, one of Victoria's earliest townships.

The Caledonian Inn is of architectural significance for the retention of the early colonial forms such as simple shape, the chamfered entrance corner, and multi-pane sashes which are all essential characteristics of hotels in the pre-separation Victorian Georgian style. Although the major portion of the hotel appears to have been built in stages before 1861, the overall form reflects the style of its 1844 origins. The hotel is significant for the survival of the numerous hipped roof dormers to the attic storey, some of which retain their original sashes.

*[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]*

## 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	1844, 1970,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	The Stump,
Hermes Number	2607
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 2005. Sources were as follows:

Marten A Syme. *Seeds of a Settlement*..1991

J W Powling. *Port Fairy The First Fifty Years* 1980

Personal communication: Marten A Syme, 11 April 2005

National Trust of Australia [Vic]. Statement of Significance. File No 763

Australian Heritage Commission. *Register of the National Estate*

## Extent of Registration

*Borough of Port Fairy*. No. 247. Caledonian Hotel, Cnr. James and Bank Streets, Port Fairy.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3649]

*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/>*