
IMPERIAL HOTEL



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2008



Imperial Hotel Castlemaine
25 May 2011.jpg



1 former imperial hotel
lyttleton street castlemaine
front view dec1977

Location

56 LYTTLETON STREET CASTLEMAINE, MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Municipality

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0132

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO642

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 23, 2005

What is significant?

The Castlemaine area was sparsely populated until the discovery of gold in the Mount Alexander/Forest Creek area in September 1851. The rapid growth in population demanded some measure of government control. An official Camp Reserve was set up in 1852 and a survey for the town of Castlemaine followed soon after. The easily accessible gold deposits were soon exhausted but the town had by this time become sufficiently diversified to ensure continued existence. The establishment of such industries as the Castlemaine Brewery, the Castlemaine Woollen Mills and Thompson's Foundry from the late 1850s were major sources of employment in Castlemaine and the town continued to prosper.

The Imperial Hotel [also known as the Town Hall Hotel, and later Beck's Richmond Hotel and Beck's Imperial Hotel] was built in 1861. The two storey hotel with attic was erected for Faulder Watson to the design of Melbourne architects Purchas and Swyer. Watson became the first licensee on 21 Dec 1861. Watson retained the licence until about 1866 when the hotel was advertised as [William] Young's Imperial Hotel. Watson apparently retained the ownership of the hotel until c1885 when he sold it to slaughterman Edwin Purches who is recorded as having offices in the premises. By 1887, the hotel was owned by Mrs E Pearson who held the property until at least 1903. In 1892 during Mrs Pearson's ownership, the extant cast iron verandah and balcony to the Lyttleton St facade was constructed in place of the original first floor cantilevered balcony. In the early years of the twentieth century, the hotel had numerous publicans until about 1931 when R W S Beck acquired the hotel licence. The name Beck's Imperial Hotel reflects Reg Beck's long-term ownership of the hotel between about 1931 and 1942. The hotel licence was surrendered in 1968 and in the following year, C S Harrison purchased the property and re-opened the building as tea rooms and a tourist accommodation centre.

The Imperial Hotel is a two storey stuccoed building with an attic storey with iron crestring and dormer windows. The Lyttleton St elevation has a two storey cast iron verandah and balcony which was added in c1892 following the removal of the original cantilevered balcony. The exterior walls, dormer windows and the corner chimneys are elaborately and distinctively detailed.

How is it significant?

The Imperial Hotel is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Imperial Hotel has architectural significance as one of the most innovative classical revival buildings in Victoria. The French Renaissance influence on the design is particularly notable for a building of the early 1860s. The building is distinguished by its iron crested attic storey, the elaborate detailing of both the corner chimneys and dormer windows to the Lyttleton Street and side elevations. The design is an important example of the work of architects Purchas and Swyer who also designed the significant Glenara homestead at Bulla [VHR H0625].

The Imperial Hotel is of historical significance as one of the most distinctive hotel buildings in Victoria and the sophistication of design from a leading firm of Melbourne architects is a reflection of the confidence shown in the development of Castlemaine as a significant post-gold rush regional town. The hotel is a critical element in an important historic townscape.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2005]

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](#).

Construction dates	1861,
Architect/Designer	Purchas & Sawyer,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	268
Property Number	

History

The Castlemaine area was sparsely populated until the discovery of gold in the Mount Alexander/Forest Creek area in September 1851. The rapid growth in population demanded some measure of government control. An official Camp Reserve was set up in 1852 and a survey for the town of Castlemaine followed soon after. The easily accessible gold deposits were soon exhausted but the town had by this time become sufficiently diversified to ensure continued existence. The establishment of such industries as the Castlemaine Brewery, the Castlemaine Woollen Mills and Thompson's Foundry from the late 1850s were major sources of employment in Castlemaine and the town continued to prosper.

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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:

Perrott Lyon Mathieson P/L. City of Castlemaine Architectural and Historical Survey 1979.

Australian Heritage Commission. Register of the National Estate

G Hocking. *Castlemaine From Camp to City...* 1994

R Bradfield. *Castlemaine: A Golden Harvest* 1972

[Butler & Stevens]. *Castlemaine Directory* 1865-66

[Stevens & Bartholomew]. *Castlemaine District Directory* 1866-67

Extent of Registration

City of Castlemaine. No. 132. Former Imperial Hotel, 56 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine.
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3648]

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/>