

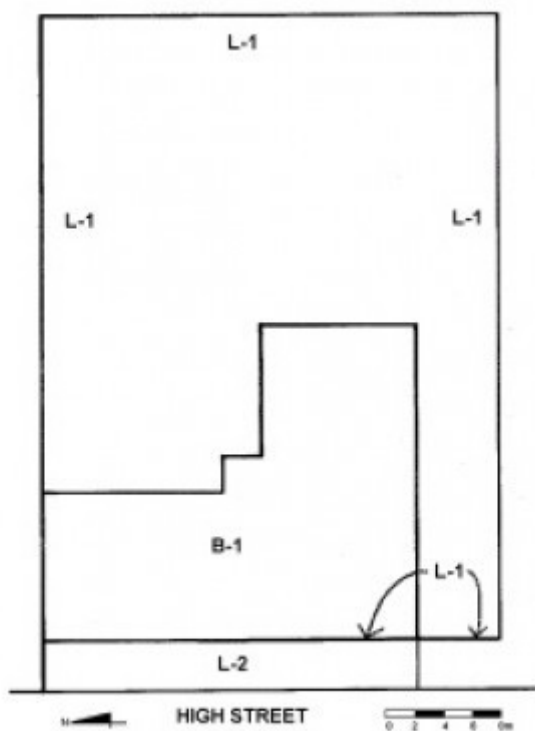
# FORMER ROYAL HOTEL AND THEATRE



FORMER ROYAL HOTEL  
AND THEATRE SOHE 2008



1 former royal hotel &  
theatre high street maldon  
front entrance sep1997



former royal hotel & theatre high street maldon plan

## Location

14-18 HIGH STREET MALDON, MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

## Municipality

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1391

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO118

## VHR Registration

December 11, 1997

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 1, 1999

### STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The original Royal Hotel was one of the first licensed in the area in 1854. The theatre was built in 1857 to replace an earlier structure. In 1862 the architect David Drape designed a new single-storey, brick hotel and the verandah was added in 1863. The theatre was used both for entertainment and as a meeting place for the Masonic movement and church groups. The hotel was closed in 1929 and the theatre was later used as a cinema and dance hall. Both buildings are brick, the front facades rendered, with parapets and mouldings. Apart from the quoin-stones on the theatre's facade, and the front parapets and subtle columns framing the hotel doorways, the buildings have little embellishment. An empty round case in the front wall once housed a clock.

The former Royal Hotel and Theatre is of historical and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

The Royal Hotel and Theatre is historically significant for its associations with the gold rush when this building was the social and cultural hub of a busy goldfields community. Its importance is enhanced by the integrity of the front of the hotel and the cellar. The bar room and the four other small rooms at the front, presumably sitting and dining rooms, offer a rare and essentially intact example of the layout of an early goldfields hotel. The significance of the bar room is enhanced by the survival of the original cedar bar and the "bar" window, a triple arched fixed window, now increasingly rare in hotel architecture. The room also includes important features such as the pressed metal ceiling and the dado board.

The theatre in the Royal Hotel is of particular historical and architectural importance as a rare example of a surviving goldfields theatre in Victoria. Many prominent hotels had music halls or concert rooms where companies performed and meetings and balls were held but relatively few have survived. The Royal Hotel theatre retains a highly decorative coved ceiling with Masonic symbols.

## 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:

### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

#### General Conditions:

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.

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior:

Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc and making good.

Installation or repair of damp proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

#### Interior of theatre:

No permit exemptions.

#### Interior of hotel:

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative schemes.

Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors and skirtings.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.

Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates	1857,
Architect/Designer	Drape, David R,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	2818
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

In the early gold rush period the sale of alcohol was banned on the goldfields. Sly grog tents flourished.

“The hills are crowded with tents, among which are stores, butchers’ and blacksmiths’ shops and places where the initiated may obtain spirits at about 1/- per nobbler. When the police discover a sly grog shop they set fire to the tent and burn it with all it contains; for this reason the grog is generally kept in a small tent adjoining the one in which the proprietor resides, who of course knows nothing about the tent with the grog.”

Prohibition did little to solve the widespread drunkenness on the diggings and many officials, lazy or corrupt, allowed the illegal trade to continue. The first licences to sell alcohol on the goldfields were issued in 1854 and from then on licensed premises proliferated, although the sly grog trade also continued throughout the gold rush period.

Hotels played a vital role in goldfields society. Not all diggers were heavy drinkers and many simply regarded pubs as a warm refuge from a primitive habitation. Apart from the obvious function of providing alcohol and accommodation, pubs were vital meeting places for individuals, sporting groups, political bodies and civic

institutions, particularly before other public buildings such as municipal halls or mechanics' institutes were established in towns. Sometimes a space in hotels was also set aside for the dead, before the provision of morgues. Entertainment was often provided in the form of billiard saloons and theatres or music halls. Most prominent hotels in the goldfield towns had music halls where members of leading musical and dramatic companies from London and Melbourne would perform.

The early hotels were often makeshift affairs but were soon replaced with more substantial structures. The gold rush period saw the emergence of a more sophisticated approach to hotel design. Hotels of the 1850s were increasingly built of stone and brick, replacing the early timber and canvas structures, although the Colonial Georgian style was still characteristic of this period. However, "the decade also saw the beginning of a more architecturally ambitious approach. The gold rush period saw the emergence of a new bourgeoisie and an enlarged architectural fraternity, who sought to add a sophisticated classical note to all buildings, including hotels." Among the many migrants were architects trained in the latest architectural philosophy. The gold rush introduced some American ideas about hotel style. Pub architecture was at first restrained but reached the heights of extravagance in the 1880s.

#### History of Place:

The original Royal Hotel was possibly one of those initially licensed in 1854. The earliest reference to it was in September 1854 when the hotel was described as being weatherboard, with zinc roof, dining room, bar parlour, parlour, five bedrooms, detached kitchen and stable. By 1856 the licensee was George Chapman who announced he was opening a new concert hall. This was the scene for wrestling matches, theatrical entertainments and balls. By 1857 the new proprietor, James McIntosh, replaced it with the present brick structure, measuring 15 x 7.5 metres. The opening was celebrated with a grand ball.

In 1862 the new owners J.C. Bury and Thomas Evans employed local architect David Drape to design a new hotel building. It comprised a bar, billiards room, four sitting rooms and nine bedrooms, in addition to the stables, detached servants' room, kitchen, outhouses and concert hall already built. The next owner, Robert Page, advertised for tenders for a verandah in October 1863. In 1866 tenders were called for alterations and additions to the Masonic Hall. The hall became the meeting place for the freemasons, both the Mackenzie Lodge and the Southern Cross Lodge of Tararegower.

The hall was also used by the Methodists and Congregationalists as a meeting place. After the freemasons had their own hall built early this century, the hall was used as dining room and a commercial travellers' room, as well as for entertainment. The hotel was closed in December 1930 and partly demolished. The hall was later used as cinema and dance hall. The bio-box which was cantilevered out precariously above the verandah was only

COMPARISON:

The former Royal Hotel and Theatre should be considered in the light of its historical significance as a goldfields hotel with a surviving theatre. Once common in the goldfields, there are few survivors of this type.

Other goldfields hotels which incorporate theatres or music halls include:

Star Hotel and Theatre, Chiltern, 1859, 1866 (H278). The complex included a theatre, billiard room and stables. A rare example of the extensive facilities provided by prosperous hotelkeepers in the gold rush. A feature of the building is the early timber bar.

Former Victoria Hotel and Theatre, 1861-62 (H778). Now the Tarnagulla Public Hall. The statement of significance notes that it is: "The oldest known purpose built theatre attached to a hotel in Australia." It includes an intact timber sloping stage and high coved plaster ceiling.

Guildford Hotel, Music Hall and Stables, c.1856, 1860 (H 739). A significant example of a prominent goldfields hotel with an 1860s music hall.

Red Hill Hotel and Music Hall, 1856. The music hall is a rare survivor of what was a typical feature of a hotel in the gold fields. Currently under examination.

Other goldfields hotels include:

The former Bendigo Hotel, Dunolly, 1857-58 (H863). This building retains a high level of integrity and is an

outstanding representative example of the goldfields hotel.

London Tavern, Beechworth, 1859-62 (H350). Possibly the most intact example of mid-nineteenth hotel architecture in Victoria. It also includes a unique bath house.

Imperial Hotel, Castlemaine, 1861 (H132). One of the most important and distinctive hotels in the state.

Plough Inn and stables, Tarawingee, 1864 (H360). The complex retains many original features and is a landmark on the Beechworth Road.

Goldmines Hotel, Bendigo, 1872 (H827). Historically significant for its associations with individuals, the architect Vahland and with life in the goldfields. in the 1970s. The hotel was used a location for the film "Break of Day" in 1975. The verandah was restored in the 1970s.

Associated People:

## **Extent of Registration**

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1391 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Former Royal Hotel And Theatre, High Street, Maldon, Mt Alexander Shire Council.

#### EXTENT:

1. All of the building known as the former Royal Hotel and Theatre marked B-1 on Diagram 603120 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the land marked L-1 on Diagram 603120 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Memorial Book 895 No. 989 and the flagstones under the verandah canopy forming the footpath in High Street marked L-2 and being part of the road reserve.

Dated 4 December 1997

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G49 11 December 1997 p.3435]

*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/>*