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## Former George Hotel



B5728 George Hotel

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### Location

123-127 Fitzroy Street (Cnr Grey Street),, ST KILDA VIC 3182 - Property No B5728

### Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

### Level of significance

State

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0706

### Heritage Listing

National Trust

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 15, 2008

Constructed in stages between 1880 and 1930, the George Hotel is significant at the State level as having been one of the largest and grandest hotels in Victoria, for the architectural interest of the 1886 sections, and for its interesting and colourful history.

The George has a long history on the site. The first section, (now demolished), known as the Terminus Hotel, was built in 1857 opposite the newly opened St. Kilda railway line terminus. By 1930 successive additions created a 169 room hotel. By then known as the George, it was one of the largest and most well known hotels in Victoria, and certainly the largest in Melbourne outside the city.

Architecturally, the corner section, which was built in 1886 to the designs of Harry B Gibbs, is a notably large and

ornate example of Boom style Italianate architecture, decorated in the Corinthian order, with arcaded loggias on both elevations, and a curved corner capped by a circular tower (which has lost its mansard domed capping). The rear wing, also constructed in 1886, contains the large dining room, now known as the Ballroom, which is also highly decorated. Corinthian pilasters, and deep bracketed beams, make this one of the most important 19th century hotel dining rooms in Victoria. The marble clad main foyer and stairs, created in 1924, are also notable as a relatively impressive and intact hotel space of the 1920s. Many 19th century interior details also survive in the 1880 and 1886 sections.

While the facades of the 1924 and 1930 additions are not architecturally significant, they helped to make the George a landmark structure in St Kilda, and one of the largest and grandest hotels in Melbourne in the interwar years. It was also considered one of the premier "cordon bleu" hotels in Melbourne in this period.

Unusually for such a large institution, the George was a family concern for much of its life, being developed by Frederick Wimpole from 1874, and his son, also Frederick, from the 1900s to the 1960s.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the George, renamed the Seaview in 1976, became the major home of Melbourne's alternative and punk music scenes, along with the nearby Prince of Wales hotel. By this stage, it no longer operated as a hotel, and the rooms above the first floor were largely abandoned. The former dining room became known as the Seaview Ballroom, and was the band venue along with other spaces on the ground and first floors. Many popular bands were fostered there, notably the Birthday Party, featuring the lead singer Nick Cave. De-licensed and closed in 1987 for also becoming an important drug dealing venue, the hotel was redeveloped in 1995/1996 as apartments, with bars, cafes and shops at ground level, and the ballroom becoming a function room by restaurant entrepreneur Donlevy Fitzpatrick.

Classified: 29/10/1987

Revised: 09/06/1988

Other Names      Seaview Hotel,

Hermes Number    66573

Property Number

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*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*