
Esplanade Hotel



B6136 Esplanade Hotel



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Protest



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Location

11 - 12 The Esplanade,, ST KILDA VIC 3182 - Property No B6136

Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 3, 2008

The Esplanade Hotel by Smith & Johnson, completed in 1878, and altered in 1921, is significant at the State level for its historical, architectural and social values.

Historically, the Esplanade is the earliest, and is one of the largest and most prominent 19th century resort hotels in Victoria. Though originally intended to be three large terraces, the building was altered to become a hotel during construction, and became one of the premier hotels in Melbourne outside the city. The alterations of 1921 are significant as representing the change from exclusively residential uses for the wealthy to the incorporation of entertainment for the middle classes, with the addition at the ground floor of a grand staircase, larger lounges, and bars.

The Esplanade Hotel is also well known as the home of the wealthy philanthropist Alfred Felton from 1892 until his death in 1904. More than half of his estate went to the National Gallery of Victoria as the Felton Bequest. The Hotel also reputedly hosted many famous visitors, such as Mark Twain and Sarah Bernhart, and was the permanent home for 30 to 80 people right up until the 1950s.

Architecturally, the hotel is designed in a conservative Italianate style, but is grandly conceived, and is somewhat influenced by the resort architecture in 19th century Britain, especially Brighton. The interior of the dining room, enlarged and redecorated c.1910-13, is notable for the Art Nouveau plasterwork to the ceiling and cornices. The alterations of 1921 unfortunately detract from the character of the lower facade.

The hotel is also a major landmark in St. Kilda, located on a rise opposite the St Kilda Pier.

Socially, the Esplanade Hotel is significant for having been an important live music venue at various times. Between 1920 and 1925, under T S Carlyon the "Eastern Tent Ballroom" (constructed to the rear of the site, but later converted to the block of flats now known as Baymour Court) became an important jazz venue, as well as one of the major dance venues in St. Kilda, then the main entertainment district in Melbourne. In the early 1980s, the Esplanade became important in the Melbourne 'alternative music' scene by providing for a huge range of sub-cultural music genres, as well as comedy, radio and other creative endeavours, which continues to this day. It was also a well known and well patronised hotel for simply having a drink or other refreshment. The various rooms, especially the lounge bar created in 1921, with its bay views, have been a popular meeting place for Melbournians up to the present day.

Classified: 01/10/1990

Revised: 07/09/1998

Other Names The Espy, Carlyon's Esplanade Hotel, Baymour Court Flats,

Hermes Number 66696

Property Number

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/>