

# MACS HOTEL



MACS HOTEL SOHE 2008



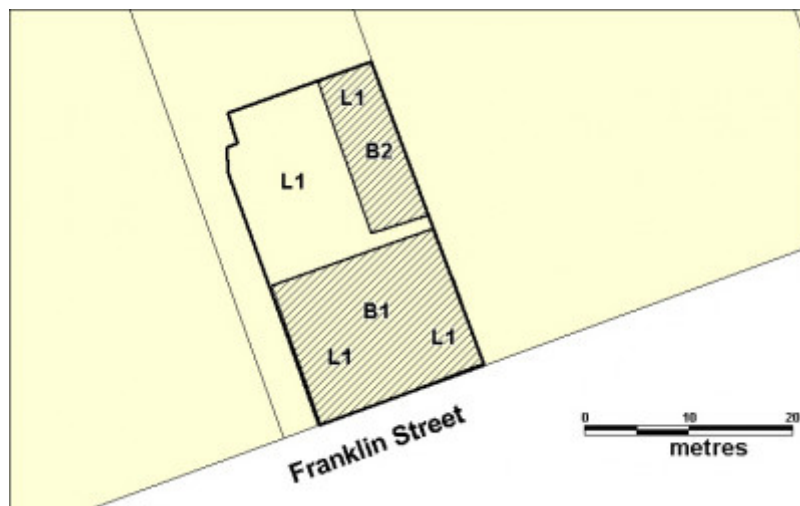
Macs Hotel Franklin Street Melbourne  
Exterior Front



macs hotel franklin street verandah  
january 2000



macs hotel franklin street east facade  
january 2000



Macs Hotel H51 extent diagram

## Location

34-38 FRANKLIN STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0051

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO663

## **VHR Registration**

October 9, 1974

## **Amendment to Registration**

May 11, 2000

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - March 6, 2000

What is significant?

Mac's Hotel is a two-storey bluestone coaching hotel built for John McMillan in 1853 to a design by architects James & Charles Webb. The name of the hotel derives from the original owner and has continued unchanged since the first day of opening. The style of the hotel is typical of hotels of the 1850s, symmetrical with simple openings and a plain parapet. Articulation of the facades is restricted to dropped keystones above the ground floor openings and quoins to the corners of the building. The stonework to the main facade was elaborated with vermiculated rustication, but this is now barely discernible due to sandblasting in the 1970s. The present hotel with its associated bluestone and brick rear wing is now all that survives of a once larger complex incorporating stabling for about one hundred horses, accommodation for the gold escort, and a lock-up and yards. The surviving rear wing may possibly have been a laundry and kitchen area. The verandah at the front of the hotel was a late addition in c1914.

Mac's Hotel has been substantially altered over the years. Alterations have been required to accommodate both the changing requirements of the licensing laws as well as the needs of different owners. Some ground floor windows have been altered to become openings. Internally the bar area is now completely open and dividing walls have been removed. Fireplaces and wall nibs survive to indicate the location of the four original rooms and the central passageway. The first floor layout is divided by a central passageway running on an east-west axis, dividing the floor into rooms with north or south aspects. Pressed metal ceilings, possibly dating from around 1914, have been added to some areas.

How is it significant?

Mac's Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Mac's Hotel is historically significant as the oldest surviving purpose-built hotel in continuous use within the city. The Mitre Tavern in Bank Place was not established until 1867 and neither the Duke of Wellington Hotel on Flinders Street nor Young and Jackson's on the corner of Flinders Street and Swanston Street were purpose built as hotels. Tavistock house has changed uses since 1850. At the end of nineteenth century there were hundreds of pubs in Melbourne and Mac's Hotel now survives as a rare example of a once prolific type.

Mac's Hotel is significant for its clear continuity with its origins because it retains both its original name and function. It is historically significant as a link to the gold rush period, when its first patrons were not only diggers returning from the gold fields but also the gold escort companies bringing the gold back to Melbourne.

Mac's Hotel is architecturally significant as one of the earliest known works of architect Charles Webb, who became one of Melbourne's most prominent architects. Notable later works by Webb include the South Melbourne Town Hall, the Windsor Hotel and Tasma Terrace.

The design of the hotel is in a Georgian style, evoking some of the tradition of British public houses. The simple styling of the hotel, including a symmetrical composition, simple openings and a parapet with the name of the hotel inscribed, is highly representative of hotel design in the 1850s. Subsequent alterations to the hotel's internal fabric demonstrate the changing requirements of licensing laws since the early 1850s.

## 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.
2. 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.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. 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.

Exteriors

- \* 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.

Interiors

- \* Refurbishment to the bars and associated bar furniture, lighting, shelving, storage, fixtures, piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the earlier paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and or en suites 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.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* 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.
- \* 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.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of security locks to doors and windows.

Construction dates            1853,

Architect/Designer            Webb, James,

Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	MAC'S HOTEL,
Hermes Number	759
Property Number	

## History

History of Place: Tenders were called for the erection of a bluestone hotel on 10 March and 14 March 1853. (1) In July 1853 a building permit was issued to builders Lawrence & Co. to construct a tap room, kitchen, laundry and stables for 28 horses. (2) The design of Mac's Hotel in 1853 clearly incorporates the provisions of the Melbourne Building Act which came into effect in 1850. The Act dictated that city buildings were to be built of stone or brick, were to include a parapet and were not to incorporate overhanging eaves. In 1855 the complex is described in the rates book as having 22 rooms, although throughout the 1850s the number of rooms varies between 14 and 21. John McMillan is listed as the ratepayer for the last time in 1860, but Mac's Hotel continued to carry his name. (3) Mac's Hotel has been substantially altered over the years to accommodate the changing requirements of the licensing laws and the changing needs of different owners, but it has continued its function as a city hotel. In 1880 tenders were called for repairs to the hotel and the construction of an adjoining shop. (4) The 1895 MMBW plan shows a large complex of buildings behind the main hotel, including the surviving two storey rear wing and stabling for up to one hundred horses. (5) In the 1850s there had also been accommodation for the gold escort, and a lock-up. The lock-up was for prisoners being brought back from the gold fields for trial in Melbourne. The surviving rear wing may possibly have been a laundry and kitchen area. They needed secure accommodation whilst their escort rested at the hotel. The present two storey bluestone building and rear wing of bluestone and brick is now all that survives of that complex. The verandah was a late addition in c1914. The hotel and the half-acre (0.2ha) site it sat on was bought by Trans-Australia Airlines in December 1970 for \$720,000. They wanted to redevelop the whole site and demolish or relocate the hotel. The building unions indicated that they would make the hotel a 'green ban' site were the proposal to go ahead.

(1) Herald 10 March 1853 and Argus 14 March 1853. (2) National Trust Report No.122, C Kellaway, August 1978 (3) Ibid National Trust (4) Argus 30 April 1880 (5) Submission to HBC by Trans-Australia Airlines, 6 January 1978 (6) Age 14 December 1973

**CONTEXTUAL HISTORY**

In the early years of Port Phillip hotels did not merely serve alcohol and provide food and lodging but were also social centres. They were frequently the setting for political meetings or the venue for other interest groups. The hotel was often one of the largest of the early buildings in a township or suburb and a natural meeting place. In urban areas they frequently predated later community buildings such as municipal town halls, libraries and mechanics' institutes. In rural areas the pub was located at river crossings or on water fronts, and the publican often operated the local punt. (Hotels in Victoria Thematic Typology, Chris McConville & Assoc. 1994, p.viii)

In the absence of newspapers the hotel was a place for exchange of information. As a result the landlord had a powerful position. He was the earpiece and editor of news. He could of course supply or withhold information from the police too. (Inner Metropolitan Hotels, Bryce Raworth in association with Allom Lovell & Associates, Melbourne 1992, p12)

Pubs were often associated with particular interest groups. These could be political groups, religious groups or trade organisations. Prominent among these were the Freemasons, the Orange Lodge and the Oddfellows. The publican or landlord would be a prominent member of the lodge which met at his hotel. The pub was a centre of working-class culture and trade unionism. Pubs with a large trade-based clientele may have taken their names from the associated trade, e.g. The Bakers' Arms, Bricklayers' Arms, Builders' Arms, Carters' Arms, Engineers' Arms, Mechanics' Arms. The pub was a labour exchange for these tradesmen and a rallying place. The Belvedere Hotel (on the corner of Victoria Parade and Brunswick Street, now the Eastern Hotel?) was the venue for stonemasons antagonising for an eight hour day.

Until 1854 hotels were the venues for polling booths during elections. John Pascoe Fawkner was a publican and local government candidate in the 1841 election. He kept open house at a hotel in Collins Street and provided free drinks for electors wearing his ribbons. After 1854 polling booths continued to operate close to hotels and the influence of hotels and publicans continued. (Raworth p.14)

Liquor licensing laws have made fundamental impacts on the evolution of pubs. Constant changes to the laws have dictated frequent physical alterations to the fabric of pubs to accommodate new or changing requirements of the law. The first liquor licences were issued by Captain Lonsdale in 1836 based on the New South Wales Licensing Act of that

year. Public houses had to close by 9pm and all day on Sundays. In June 1839 there were 81 licensed houses in Port Phillip. The 1849 Licensing Act passed in Sydney also applied to the Port Phillip District and continued to do so for a while after separation. The Victorian Legislature tinkered with the fees, and once gold was discovered and the rushes began the fee was put at 100 pounds for an annual licence and 50 pounds to transfer a licence. These figures were not considered a hardship by landlords whose hotels thronged with diggers. After the initial rushes died down the fees were reduced. The Act required two moderate-sized sitting rooms and two sleeping rooms (not for the landlord's family use) and stabling for six horses. The 1885 Licensing Act meant that licensing benches run by magistrates were replaced by separate licensing courts for each licensing district. These were presided over by police magistrates. The exceptions were Melbourne, Geelong and Sandhurst which were presided by the County Court judge. The Act also provided for a separate entrance to the hotel for outside trade, six rooms for public accommodation, a meal room, public urinal, stabling for three horses and a bath and toilet for every ten lodgers. All bedrooms had to be constructed of stone, brick or plaster. The intention of the Act was to make it difficult for pubs with doubtful reputations to stay open.

Associated People: James and Charles Webb. Charles Webb was born in Suffolk, England in 1821. He worked for a London architect Thomas Allom before emigrating to Australia in 1849 and entering into partnership with his brother James. Charles Webb designed Christ Church, South Yarra with Thomas Taylor in 1856-58. Webb was a prolific architect whose other notable works include Burlington Terrace, East Melbourne (1866-71), Tasma Terrace (1878), South Melbourne Town Hall (1880) and part of the Windsor Hotel in 1884 (finished by his son in 1888).

## 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 in that the Heritage Register Number 51 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Macs Hotel, 34-40 Franklin Street, Melbourne, Melbourne City Council.

### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings and structures being B1 and B2, as marked on Diagram 51 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 51 held by the Executive Director, being described in Vol. 10408 Fol. 439, being Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision No.419702G.

Dated: 4 May 2000

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 19 11 May 2000 p.932]

*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/>*