

\*\*\* FAX MESSAGE \*\*\*

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From : Graeme Butler

Attention : Paul Laughton

To : Footscray City Council Town Planning

Subject : Pioneer Hotel citation

PIONEER HOTEL (FORMER PUNT INN SITE)  
2 Ballarat Road, Footscray,

The 30 acre Crown Grant surrounding this hotel was sold to Michael Lynch, in 1849, for 60 pounds<\$F RGO SN 34642, grant 24157>. Lynch advertised the relocation of his punt to 'a part of the Salt Water River a mile higher up, and a little beyond the edge of the racecourse in July 1849. The punt would 'ply between the north bank of the river and the land lately purchased from the government by the advertiser'. Lynch told of the new government bridge, which would adjoin his new property, on the Williamstown road (via the Flemington Inn through Mr. Watson's property) <\$F Carstairs & Lane p.13, cite a Melbourne daily paper (?) 7.7.1849>.

The <MI>Melbourne Morning Herald<D> is cited as announcing removal of William Pickett's hotel licence from the Ship Inn and punt site at the base of Bunbury Street to the new punt and Punt Inn site near the racecourse <\$F op.cit, p.24>. Pickett's eventual fall from favour appears to be underscored by Lynch's ejection of Mrs. Pickett from the punt in March 1853 <\$F ibid.>, just prior to leasing the hotel to Anne Delaney <\$F SN 34642 (Mem. Y-87)>. Pickett acquired land elsewhere,

Eventually all but 2 acres was to be reserved for Footscray Park but meanwhile Lynch leased his 30 acres to Anne Delaney for 580 pounds annually, from 1853 (presumably the punt and the Punt Hotel) <\$F RGO loc. cit.; see <MI>Carstairs & Lane, Pubs, Pints & Pastures<D>, p.24>.

In his advertisement of 1849, Lynch had announced the forthcoming construction of a government bridge but reputedly Lynch himself had to construct one in 1864, after the threat to both his hotel and punt businesses posed by the government Hopkins Street bridge built in 1863,

Lynch's death soon afterwards, in 1871, left Kate Lynch with the Punt Inn. Kate Houston was her next name and, acting with John Houston to administer the estate, she entrusted all of Michael's property to Francis Quinlan and William Lynch. James Byrne (died 1901) replaced Quinlan in 1897. In 1902 Septimus Miller, acting as chairman of the committee of the Victorian Racing Club, purchased the grant for 2100 pounds <\$F ibid.>.

In 1877 the Footscray Borough Plan shows the inn as a rectangle at the end of a fenced inlet in the Ballarat Road. Lynch's bridge had already replaced the punt nearby <\$F CPO MRP41>. In 1895 the hotel

is depicted by the MMBW <MI>Record Plan 4<D> as built in five main sections. Masonry wings were at the front (a bayed wing trimming the end of a verandahed one) and rear, linked by a timber section. Timber out-buildings lined the irregularly shaped fenceline. To the north-east of the hotel was Lynch's bridge (c1864) (and possibly also the old punt site) which joined a road curving east to join Smithfield Road. Today this is marked by a tree on the south side of the river and a gate on the north.

The same plan showed Ballarat Road continuing to meet the river, much as it does now, to cross over a single lane bridge into Smithfield Road. Both locations show evidence of amendment to the original plan <\$F CPO M387(4)>.

Another plan of 1906 shows the Punt Hotel's first sewer connection, showing two stables (one not used) and water closets with urinals in distant outhouses. The new owner- occupier was Thomas William O'Shea, now on a much reduced land area (2 acres) <\$F MMBW <MI>Plan of Drainage<D> 51811>. The hotel valuation more than doubled in the period 1910- 1914 <\$F RB 1910, 2341; RB 1914, 2762>.

Owned by Sarah Jane O'Shea, the hotel was shown in 1924 as all brick, with the front verandah built-in possibly as part of the refacing of the old hotel (now called the Pioneer Hotel). Plumbing fitting schedules cite two building levels and new fitments.

A further plan drawn in 1925 shows a more sweeping revision, with today's verandahs extending along the south, east and north sides of the hotel. The old bayed plan had changed but the rear outline was similar. Prolific hotel architects, Sydney Smith Ogg & Serpell were responsible for the design.

The plumbing was inspected as completed by April 1928 but it is likely that the hotel reopened sooner <\$F ibid>. Rate entries show a valuation jump between 1920 and 1924-5 (400%) although the description changed more subtly: nine rooms wood and brick to nine rooms brick and wood <\$F RB 1922-3, 3289; RB 1924-5, 3541; RB 1925-6, 3443>. Throughout the early 20th century, the licensee was Thomas O'Callaghan, followed by Sarah O'Shea and Thomas E. O'Shea (son?) <\$F ibid>. Arthur and Edward Donovan also W.J. Campbell, were subsequent licensees <\$F D1930-65>.

Another phase of the hotel's history lay with Eric Welch sports journalist and broadcaster for the ABC (1927-32) and 3DB (1933-1954) <\$F WWA 1950, 1959>. Reputedly (during his 3DB tenure?) when excluded from the broadcasting box at Flemington Race Course, Welch occupied a small, gabled box built on top of the hotel's rear verandah. Reached from a narrow ladder, up through the verandah roof, Welch could call the races without going on to the course, carrying on the old tradition of Scotchman's Hill <\$F site inspection; Peter Somerville verbal>. Tales of Bingo tents, set up in the hotel grounds, during the 1930s forms another part of the building's folklore <\$F Keilor Historical Society 'Maribyrnong River Cruise' n.p.>.

#### Description

Adorned with Greek revival detailing across its Ballarat Road parapetted facade, the hotel reverts to a more domestic image on its other elevations. Using Indian Bungalow imagery particularly on its wide verandahs, the design gains distinction from its bold timber verandah brackets. Despite the 1924-5 styling, the floor plan still reflects some of the old 19th century massing, suggesting that the renovations at least followed the original outline or possibly maintained parts of the old hotel. This is born out at the rear where some sections appear from the 19th century but not early 19th century.