

BUILDING TITLE GEORGE HOTEL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA CITY OF BALLARAT

NATIONAL ESTATE PROJECT No.
DOCUMENTATION OF LISTED HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN VICTORIA

DESIGNATION H.B.P.C. REGISTER No. 113 NATIONAL TRUST (C) FILE No.

BUILDING TYPE HOTEL
BUILDING NAME GEORGE HOTEL
STATE VICTORIA
LOCAL GOVT AREA CITY OF BALLARAT
STREET LYDIARD ST. NTH. No. 25
SUBURB/TOWN BALLARAT CBD
CITY BALLARAT POSTCODE 3350
RURAL
NEAREST CENTRE Km.



TITLE REFERENCE Vol Fol
DIRECTORY
NEGATIVE FILE FILM 1 / FRAME 25

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION
DATE OF SURVEY/INSPECTION JULY 1978

OWNERSHIP ORIGINAL J. COGHLAN (1902)
PRESENT KARIM JABBOUR
ADDRESS 27 LYDIARD STREET NORTH 3350

ARCHITECT/PRACTICE E & B. SMITH
BUILDER J. MCGREGOR, BALLARAT EAST
ARTISANS/TRADES

TENDERS REFERENCE BEMJ 12.4.1902
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1902
ESTIMATE/CONTRACT VALUE £ 8,400 TOTAL INCLUDING FURNISHINGS £17,000
ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS 1926, CLEGG AND MORROW
1938 L.H. VERNON ARCHITECT, VALUE £ 3,000

BUILDING CITATION

The George Hotel has operated on this site since 1853, its location on Camp Hill and its substantial nature and design led to it having many important historical associations. The original building survived until the present structure was erected in 1902 by J. McGregor for a tender price of £8397, although the total cost including furnishings was £17,000. The architects were E. and B. Smith, the contractor J. McGregor of East Ballarat. The building is notable for its large double balcony street verandah constructed in six bays. The facade and painted face brickwork is of less interest; the ground floor has been altered; the two upper floors of bedroom windows are of little note; it has a balustraded parapet surmounted by a genuine circular decorative tympanium above the name plate. The building forms an extremely important streetscape element in an important section of Lydiard Street, particularly in the manner in which it relates to the two balcony street verandahs opposite. In spite of recent fire damage to the rear the front section is in good condition. The double balcony street verandah is unique to the State of Victoria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this building be retained on the Historic Buildings Register, the Register of the National Estate, and be specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

DOCUMENTATION SOURCES

- 01 GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 02 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 03 ARCHIVES/CATALOGUES
- 04 ARCHITECTS INDEX
- 05 ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS/ILLUSTRATIONS
- 06 PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS
- 07 NATIONAL TRUST FILE/ HISTORIC BUILDINGS PRESERVATION COUNCIL FILE
- 08 PRIVATE RECORDS
- 02 B.C.C. BUILDING PERMITS BOOK
 - 11/3/1902 - Late J.Coghlan, E. & B.Smith, Brick Hotel, Lydiard Street
 - 1930 - alterations #3000 L.H.Vernon Architect
- 05 VERNON COLLECTION, BALLARAT
 - 24.5.1926 - alterations by Clegg and Norrow
 - additions George Hotel (no name, no date) possibly
Vernon's own work
- 06 LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA
 - sketch entitled 'George Hotel 1856' SLV, H32712, MC9,
DR6, ENV1
 - illustration of E. and B.Smith's design for the George
Hotel, Lydiard Street, B.E.M.J. 4.8.1903
 - photo of George Hotel Cyclopedia of Victoria
- 08 LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION RECORDS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1. Hargraves J. 'Ballarat Hotels, Past and Present'.
Typescript January 1943, held at Ballarat Regional Library pp.2 and 10.
- 2. Cyclopedia of Victoria V.2, pp.280-282 lengthy description of new building.
- 3. Ballarat and Vicinity 1894.
- 4. Times 3.12.1854 Advertisement.
- 5. Building Engineering and Mining Journal 12.4.1902 E. and B. Smith
announce successful tender for brick hotel Lydiard Street, Ballarat.
4.8.1903 Illustration of E. and B.Smith's design.

ASSESSMENT OF LISTING

CONDITION/INTEGRITY OF BUILDING SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT EXTERNALLY
SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDING
LANDSCAPE/STREETSCAPE/ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE PART OF RECOMMENDED
AREA A1.1

DOCUMENTATION JACOBS LEWIS VINES DATE SEPTEMBER 1973
ARCHITECTS 145

GEORGE HOTEL - 25 LYDIARD STREET NORTH

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The first George Hotel was among the earliest in Ballarat. The George Inn, as it was then called, was opened by George Howe and Francis Herring in 1853¹, and is reputed to be the second hotel to operate in Ballarat West² (after Baths Ballarat Hotel which opened the same year). The first licence was in the name of Fern³. It was located in a key position on Camp Hill, opposite the Camp reserve and stockade, and was witness to the various agitations and activities associated with the Eureka Stockade of 1854. The original building (shown in a drawing dated 1856)⁴ was a substantial and imposing two storey building with an open balcony in comparison with other hotels of the period. (Bath did not complete the two storey section of his hotel until 1854.)

The current building was constructed in 1902 on the site of the original building. The architects were E. and B. Smith, the contractor J. McGregor, and the contract price £8,400. Following is an extract from the Building Engineering and Mining Journal of 12th April 1902.⁵

Tenders for the rebuilding of the George Hotel, which is to be replaced by a three-storied structure, were opened on Friday, April 4th, by the architects, Messrs. E. and B. Smith, and the lowest was found to be that of Mr. J. McGregor, of Ballarat East, at £8400. The total cost of the new hotel, however, is expected to be nearly £10,000. An endeavour will be made to have the place ready for the Christmas holiday season, and the demolition of the old building will be commenced as early as possible. The material will be disposed of by public auction on Tuesday, 15th inst., for removal. Seventeen tenders were received for the work of rebuilding, and the prices ranged from £8400 to £10,387. The old hotel is one of the landmarks of early Ballarat. Historic events happened in "The George" when it was one of the finest architectural exhibits in this centre. Time and modern improvements

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1. Hargraves, John 'Ballarat Hotels, Past and Present' unpublished thesis in possession of Ballarat Historical Society pp.2-10.
 2. Ballarat and Vicinity 1894 - Miss Fern's George Hotel.
 3. Liquor Control Commission records.
 4. Sketch entitled 'George Hotel 1856' SLV, H32712, MC9, DR6, ENV1.
 5. B.E.M.J. 12.4.1902, p.107.

GEORGE HOTEL - 25 LYDIARD STREET NORTH (contd.)

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

have ruled the old George out, but cannot destroy the recollections which cling to the days when the late Mr. Howe was the proprietor, and the hotel was the resort of the fashionable diners of the mining community. It is to be hoped that before "The George" is pulled down, photographs of it will be secured, to be preserved as representations of a famous Ballarat hostelry in the early fifties."

There is a particularly detailed description of the newly completed building in the *Cyclopedia of Victoria*. It describes the vestibule to the residential section with a fine walnut staircase, four bars, reading room, dining room, commercial room, sitting rooms, and billiard room.

The two balconies are described as "commodious enough to accommodate thirty sets in a quadrille", although whether this remarkable event occurred is not stated. There were stables at the rear - originally served by a carriageway to the right hand side of the building. This carriageway separated a suite of offices, the George Chambers, from the bars and lounge rooms.^{6 & 7} The facade below ground floor level was lined with St. Ann's Rougi and Sicilian marble. The total cost including furnishings was £17,000. The licensee of the new building was Mr. C.E. House who also operated the old hotel for some time.

Subsequent alterations were undertaken in 1926 and 1938; the first by Clegg and Morrow⁸, the latter, valued at £3000, by L.H. Vernon.⁹

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6. Illustration accompanying *Cyclopedia of Victoria* article, op. cit. p.281 shows original ground floor door and window openings as well as missing verandah brackets.
 7. The ground floor layout with carriageway is shown on the Ballarat Sewerage Authority Map 1926-32.
 8. Vernon collection.
 9. B.C.C. Building Permits Book.

GEORGE HOTEL - 25 LYDIARD STREET NORTH (contd.)

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This building is of importance principally on account of its large double balcony constructed over the pavement. It is constructed in six bays of a late patterned cast iron. The enclosed frieze iron is of a design common to Ballarat. It now appears rather stark in comparison with its original appearance, due to the removal of the original brackets. The facade proper is of less interest. The ground floor retains some of the original openings, but is now a fairly ordinary sequence of square head windows and doors with marble facing; the second floor is treated as an arcade with archivolts rising from impost mouldings over a uniform row of eleven windows. The top floor comprises the same number of windows with low segmental arched heads; this is surmounted, above verandah level, by a narrow dentillated cornice and balustraded parapet from which surmounting urns have been removed; above the name plate is a rather gross semicircular decorative tympanium surrounded by a curved bracketed cornice.

The interior has few surviving intact elements - the stairwell and staircase being the most significant. The dining room and rear wing were recently badly damaged by fire.

The exterior of the hotel is generally intact. However, the original face brickwork and rendered finishes have been painted, which has detracted significantly from the building's appearance. The plainness of the facade may have been relieved by some patterned brickwork. The verandah brackets and parapet urns are missing.

It is difficult to determine how much of the ground floor is original - the main changes have been relocation of several doorways and windows, and the closing up of the carriageway, as well as the removal of a projecting moulding just below window heads. The mantle facing may, in some instances, be the original described above.

GEORGE HOTEL - 25 LYDIARD STRFET NORTH (contd.)

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This building is of importance principally for its large two storied balcony verandah and the combined elements of the facade. Whilst there are numerous single balcony street verandahs, a double balcony example is unique in this State and represents a high point in late Victorian flamboyance, when numerous balcony verandahs were erected in Ballarat. In addition, the George Hotel is of importance because of the historic associations of its predecessor on the same site. In spite of fire damage to the rear, the front section is apparently sound. The building forms an extremely important streetscape element in an important location, being opposite the two single balcony verandahs of the Old Colonist's Hall and Alexandria Tea Rooms. The building's registration on the Historic Buildings Register is well justified.