

NAME: Napier Hotel

ADDRESS: 210 Napier Street
(cnr. Moor Street)

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1916

ALTERATNS/ADDITNS: 1925 - Smith, Ogg &
Serpell
1954 - Walter Pollack

ARCHITECT: Smith and Ogg

BUILDER: W. Cooper

FIRST OWNER: Carlton Brewing Co.

FIRST OCC./USE: Ditto/Hotel

PRESENT OWNER: J. & J. Dempster,
210 Napier Street

PRESENT OCC./USE: Ditto/Hotel

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Brick, terracotta tile roof, tiling to dado height, intact lead light glazing

INTACTNESS/CONDITION: Externally intact

AREA/STREETScape: Part of recommended area B7.



IMPORTANCE:

This hotel was constructed in 1916 for the Carlton Brewing Company, and built by contractor W. Cooper. The architects are not known, but may be Smith and Ogg, who nine years later undertook some alterations to the building. The exterior of the hotel of unpaired red brickwork is intact. The composition is symmetrically placed around an unusual square corner tower adorned by a rose bush decoration. Two identical central dutch gables are featured in each facade, echoing the entrance doors below. The ground floor windows contain fine leadlighting, and wrought iron lamp brackets overhang each entrance door.

The intact nature of the hotel and the unusual, architectural motifs (square corner tower, decorative foliage, intact wrought iron work) combine to make this building one of great architectural significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this building be added to the Historic Buildings Register as an intact and unusual example of a hotel building of the period. It is also recommended for addition to the Register of the National Estate and for specification under Clause 8 of the Town & Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE:

This corner hotel was constructed in 1916 and replaced an earlier hotel, likely to be the original hotel on this side of 1866¹. This hotel like many others in the Melbourne suburbs, replaced a hotel that was considered of inadequate standard by the Licensing Reduction Board. The Licensing Reduction Act of 1906-07 established high standards, many of which were not met by the existing hotel.

1. Daws K and MacAllester, Jill "Hotels with corner towers in Fitzroy and Collingwood". B.Arch. University of Melbourne, 1968, p.12.

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE (cont'd)

A permit was issued on the 30th October, 1916, with W. Cooper listed as the builder. ²It is possible that Smith and Ogg who were the Brewery architects at that time, designed this hotel, but there is no such record. At this time the Brewery had one staff architect, Weaver, who also may have been responsible for this building. In 1925, Smith, Ogg and Serpell untook alterations to the hotel (nature of works uncertain) and so it appears likely that the firm designed the hotel 9 years earlier.³

The exterior of the hotel is intact, and the composition is dominated by a corner tower, a standard feature of hotels built at this time. However, the tower on the Napier is unusual, with a similar, but inferior, tower appearing on the Royal Oak Hotel in Bridge Road, Richmond. The square nature of the tower differs completely from other corner towers and results from continuing the flat plan of the door up into the tower. The timber brackets supporting the roof appear to be a Queen Anne derivative. An unusual rose-bush decoration decorates the corner tower panel. The origin of this corner tower and rose-bush decoration is unknown, but appears so distinctive that one person may have been responsible for its creation. It is possible that Robert Haddon who worked for Smith and Ogg in 1912 may have influenced this work⁴, but this has not been substantiated.

The composition is symmetrically placed around the corner entrance. The side entrances are echoed by a projecting dutch gable motif which extends beyond the parapet. A foliated crest with the initials 'NH' is contained within a recessed arch below the gable end. An unusual wide projecting cornice treatment supported on timber eaves brackets unify the composition at eaves height. This is repeated by horizontal bands at first floor level (with raised name), and at ground level with a solid bank of green tiles. Unlike many hotels, these tiles form a vital part of the hotel design and compliment the very fine predominantly green lead lighting to the ground floor windows. Fine wrought iron lamp brackets overhang each entrance door and window balconettes decorate the two side entrances.

The interior has been altered but pressed metal dados survive in the hall and billiard room, the corner internal entrance joinery is intact and the bar appears to be original. Otherwise on the ground floor there is nothing of note.

The unusual composition and features of this hotel, combined with the intact, well preserved and face brick facade, combine to make this hotel of unique architectural significance. The enigma surrounding the architect responsible or the source of inspiration does not lessen its importance.

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2. Fitzroy Council Building Permit Book 30.10.1916.
Hotel for Carlton Brewery Ltd. W. Cooper, Builder Napier & Moor
Street £2.5.-
 3. Daws & MacAllester op cit p.12. Information compiled from the
Licensing Court which supplied names of architects who carried out
alterations.
 4. A suggestion made by a Mr. Gainger of the firm, as quoted in
Daws and McAllester op cit p.46.