



### Steam Coach Hotel, former (part) 49 Mercer Street

#### History

Located on the Melbourne Coach Road and close to the steam railway terminus, this site was ideal for the hotel complex which developed there. Sited on Joseph Tolson's Crown Grant of 1852, this building formerly adjoined a single-storey timber section of the hotel.

The architect, John Young, called for bricklayers and carpenters for Martin Bolger's hotel in 1853,<sup>1</sup> while Backhouse & Reynolds called tenders for a cellar in the Steam Coach, also for Bolger in 1856.<sup>2</sup> This parallels with rate descriptions which describe Jeremiah Holly's weather-board and brick Steam Coach Hotel, 15 rooms and a stable in 1854.<sup>3</sup> The following years were similar, although room numbers varied. The first cellar (stone) mentioned was in 1856-7 when James Sillett was the licensee.<sup>4</sup> Then the timber section was defined as the Bar and 1 room, whereas the brick wing was 9 rooms plus

cellar, indicating that it was the cellar only in the last tender called.

An illustration of c1860 shows the single-storey splay-corner bar, with the lamp over the door, and this building beside it with the name and licensee on the side wall. This was the brief period when Bolger was both licensee and owner.<sup>5</sup> Later licensees were Thomas Darcy, Frank Griffiths, Daniel and Cornelius Ryan (owners also), and Margaret Braken (?).<sup>6</sup> Early this century, Mary Phelan owned it but apparently not as an hotel. Her tenants were Mary Wellington and Hannah Kirly (?). An owner-occupier, Annie Cunningham, preceded George and Laura Healey and their tenants, Lill Sainton (confectioner), who followed in the 1930s, presumably when the first shopfront replaced the hitherto domestic two windows and a door of the original.<sup>7</sup> The architect, John Young, also designed the first stage of the Mechanics Institute and the adjoining Steeple Church (both extensively altered). He also designed St. Giles schoolroom, the Bay View Hotel, Aberdeen Street, Baptist Chapel, the Gold-

1 Huddle cites GA21/10/53

2 Huddle cites GA 30/4/56

3 RB1854, 751

4 RB1856-7, 304

5 RB1860-1, 380

6 VB1881, 360; VB1870, 327; RB1886, 350; RB1896, 205

7 RB1920, 126; RB1930, 171

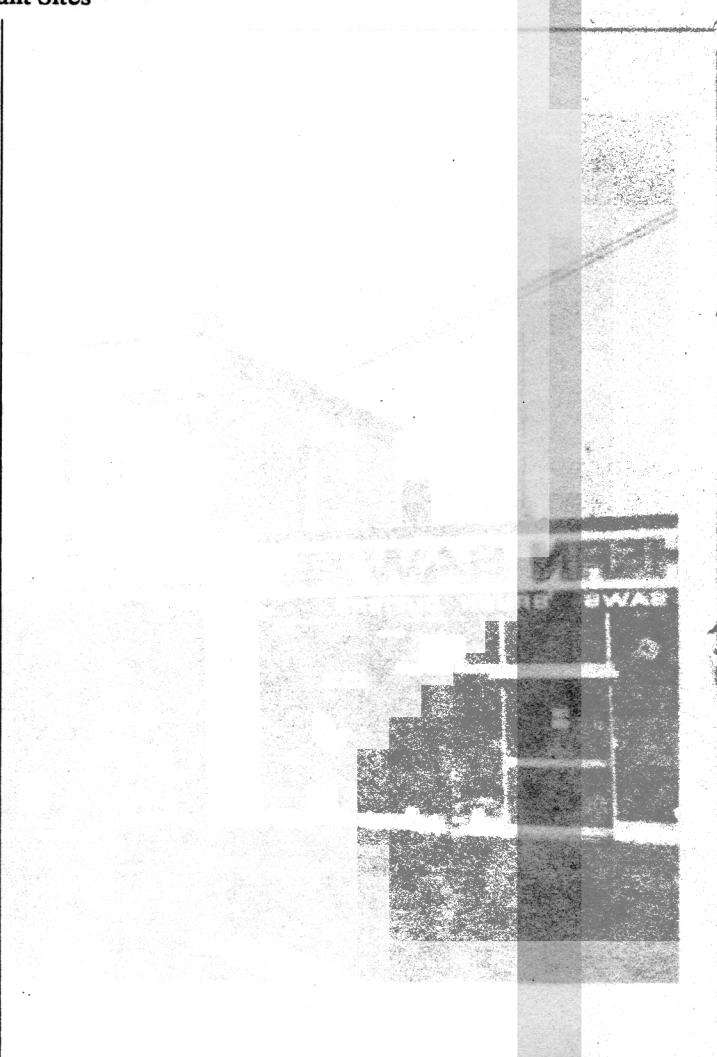
Possibly designed to be extended northwards, the elevation is curiously asymmetrical, with its upper-level openings offset from the symmetry implied by the parapet pediment. The facade is stuccoed brick, with quoining and simple cornice and string mouldings, and the sides are face brick (since painted). A simply pitched pyramid-shaped roof is typical of this period, but the design shows little of Young's architectural skill (see Bay View and Golden Age hotels).

The ground-level has been replaced, signs added, the bricks painted, and a cantilever canopy added. The former single-storey bar to the north has been long since demolished.

Isolated from the similarly old commercial streetscape to the north, (see 11-19 Mercer Street).

Historically, one of Geelong's gold-rush hotels of the 1850s and sited near the two major land routes into the city.

Architecturally, simply elevated with few architectural pretensions, but nevertheless one of the city's oldest group of hotels.



49 Mercer Street  
Steam Coach Hotel

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located on the Midland Railway Company's property. The site was then a large open space, and the railway terminus was not yet built. The site was then a large open space, and the railway terminus was not yet built. The site was then a large open space, and the railway terminus was not yet built.

1	Huddle ches 0.780
2	Huddle ches 0.780
3	RIMSD 751
4	RIMSD-7.50
5	RIMSD-1.50
6	VIRUS MO. NO. 10.75
7	RIMSD 1.50

1 MUAI; Huddle, p.19f  
2 GW & DST DP36