

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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<b>Name</b>	Former Royal Hotel, 67 Bendigo Street, Prahran	
<b>Address</b>	67 Bendigo Street PRAHRAN	<b>Significance Level</b> A2
<b>Place Type</b>	Hotel	
<b>Citation Date</b>	2010	



Former Royal Hotel

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**Recommended** VHR No HI No PS Yes  
**Heritage Protection**

### History and Historical Context

#### *Prahran's Pubs*

Inns or hotels were usually the first commercial buildings to appear in Prahran's early settlements and were typically built on the main tracks and at cross roads to provide accommodation and refreshment for travellers. Hotels also became important meeting places and centres of social life for local communities.

By the 1850s, Prahran had over twenty hotels (1). Many were small pubs offering refreshments to local workers at the end of a hard day's labour. Later hotel building in the 1860s and 1870s was mostly confined to the western parts of Prahran and typically occurred as infill development in spaces along main roads not taken by earlier hotel builders. A smaller number of hotels could be found tucked away in side streets serving local communities, especially in the low-lying areas that were isolated by swampy ground. The Argo Hotel, College Lawn, Red Lion and Emu Hotel (now known as the Flying Duck Hotel) were hotels of this type. Betty Malone describes how each of these local hotels developed its own distinct atmosphere to suit the surrounding community (2).

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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The number of hotels in Prahran grew to over 50 at the height of the 1880s land boom. The prosperity of the age enabled many publicans to enlarge and improve their hotels. Most of the surviving pre-boom inns and hotels were remodelled and enlarged with rear and upper storey extensions, billiard rooms, repainting and decorative embellishments.

The corner pub remained an important part of working class social life through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, the role of the hotel as a provider of accommodation for travellers and as an entertainment venue and meeting place for local community organisations had diminished. Betty Malone describes how, between 1890 and 1940, the typical pub had become 'much less a community centre and more a male dominated drinking house' (3).

Falling hotel standards and pressure from the temperance movement prompted the State government to reduce the number of liquor licenses. A Licenses Reduction Board was appointed in 1906 and began a process of hotel de-licensing throughout Victoria. In order to meet the standards of the Board and maintain their licenses, several of Prahran's hotels were upgraded.

The gradual relaxation of Victoria's restrictive liquor licensing laws from the late 1960s revived the local hospitality industry (4). Many new restaurants, bars and nightclubs opened in South Yarra and Prahran, some occupying early hotels, but with a change of name, image and style of service to appeal to a new generation of residents and visitors.

## *The Royal Hotel*

The Emu Hotel was built on the south-west corner of Bendigo and Princes Street, Prahran, in 1868 for William Edward Stone (5). Stone was the proprietor of the hotel until 1871 when it was taken over by William H Crocock. In 1875 the Emu Hotel was renamed the Princess Royal Hotel when J. C. Armstrong became the proprietor. Frederick Daniels then became proprietor of the Princess Royal from 1879 until 1882 when the licence was taken over by John O'Rourke, who remained licensee until 1888, when taken over by Mrs O'Rourke. From 1889 until 1899 William Forsyth ran the hotel (6).

The Princess Royal Hotel was offered for sale at auction on the 15 July 1891, the Argus describing it as an 'old brick and tile building for removal' (7). Given that there is a sign on the present hotel building which reads 'Erected 1891', it can be presumed that the original 1868 hotel on the site was demolished and replaced with a new building in 1891 or shortly thereafter. This change is reflected in the rate books of the period which list a 10 room brick and wood hotel on the site in 1891 with a net annual value of £160. The record for the following year has an 11 room brick hotel on the site with an increase in the net annual value of £40 (8).

An MMBW plan of the area, drawn up a few years later in 1896, shows a hotel on the site with a footprint corresponding to the current hotel building (see figure 2 below). The MMBW plan also gives the name of the hotel as the Royal although other records indicate that it continued to be known as the Princess Royal until 1899 (9).

The Royal Hotel was one of a many inner city hotels to be rebuilt or extensively renovated in the prosperous boom years of the 1880s. The decision to rebuild the hotel might also be explained by the introduction of the Liquor Licensing Act of 1885. The Act was intended to close down the smaller less reputable drinking establishments by requiring all hotels in the metropolitan area to provide, amongst other things, six rooms for public accommodation, a well appointed eating house to serve daily meals to guests and stabling for at least three horses (10).

In 1899, Miss Margaret O'Rourke became proprietor of the Princess Royal Hotel and shortened its name to the Royal Hotel (11). Miss O'Rourke managed the business for many years. Female proprietors continued to run the Hotel for some time after Miss O'Rourke, with Mrs McInerney noted as publican during the early 1920s and Mrs M. A. Hemmingway, licensee from 1925 to 1926.

In 1940 an application was made to the Licensing Court for alterations and additions to the hotel to value of £2,500 (12).

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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The architect was Robert H McIntyre, a specialist hotel designer who was responsible for the Prince of Wales in St Kilda among many other hotels of the 1930s. The application describes how the public bar was to be demolished and enlarged and given a new tiled counter and dado and a new ceiling of fibrous plaster. Parlour walls were to be finished with French polished timber dado and various refurbishment works were to be undertaken including repainting and repapering of walls on the first floor lounge, bedrooms and passages. Existing toilets in the rear yard were to be demolished and replaced with new sanitary block. It is not clear if all the works were undertaken as planned although a 1940 MMBW plan of drainage shows that several changes were made to plumbing fixtures in the building (13).

As part of the slum clearance initiatives of the 1950s and 1960s, whole neighbourhoods of workers cottages immediately west and south of the Royal Hotel were demolished to make way for new Housing Commission flats. The first of these flats was completed in 1960 in nearby Essex Street (14). Liquor License records from the early 1970s indicate that the future of the hotel itself was also in doubt (15). The Royal Hotel nonetheless escaped the wrecker's ball, and by 1988 had been renamed as the Flying Duck Hotel.

- (1) Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, p.114.
- (2) Betty Malone, *Prahran's Pubs 1852-1998*, p.11.
- (3) Betty Malone, *Prahran's Pubs 1852-1998*, p.30.
- (4) Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, p.114.
- (5) Stonnington Local History Catalogue reg 23154.
- (6) Stonnington Local History Catalogue reg 23154.
- (7) Argus, 15/07/1891, p.2.
- (8) City of Prahran rate books, 1890/91 and 1891/1892.
- (9) Stonnington Local History Catalogue reg 23154.
- (10) Bryce Raworth & Allom Lovell and Associates, *Inner Metropolitan Hotels*, p17.
- (11) Stonnington Local History Catalogue reg 23154.
- (12) License Case File no. 191248 'Hotel Royal'. Prahran. Public Records Office of Victoria Series 11570, Unit 201.
- (13) MMBW Plan of Drainage No 10835. Held by South East Water.
- (14) Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, p.142.
- (15) License Case File no. 191248 'Hotel Royal'. Prahran. Public Records Office of Victoria Series 11570, Unit 201.

## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

The former Royal Hotel illustrates the following themes as identified in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

- 7.1 Serving Local Communities
  - 7.4.1 Early Hotels
  - 7.4.2 Developing a Modern Hospitality Industry

## Description

### Physical Description

The former Royal Hotel occupies a site on the south west corner of Bendigo and Princess streets, Prahran. The hotel is a double-storey Victorian Italianate style building constructed of rendered masonry with a parapet concealing a hipped corrugated iron roof. Both street facades are built directly on the property boundary with a chamfer at the corner entry. A moulded string course separates the ground and first floor levels. The ground floor has square-headed door and window openings of varying widths with hood mouldings springing from impost mouldings. First floor windows are round arched timber-framed double-hung sashes spaced at regular intervals and embellished with hood and impost mouldings. The

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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whole of the facade is surmounted by a cornice and a balustrated parapet with a round arched pediment at the corner. The pediment has a coquillage insert and a sign in raised render lettering which reads 'Erected 1891'.

The hotel facade remains substantially intact to its c1891 state but with some relatively minor alterations at ground floor level including the recessed entry on the Princess Street frontage. It is also possible that one of the two door openings on the Bendigo Street frontage was originally a window. The external toilet block on the west boundary presumably dates from the c1940 upgrade of the hotel described in the history above. There is also a relatively recent glazed conservatory style addition on the south side of the hotel but this is set back from the principal facade and partly concealed by a high fence. The hotel interior was not inspected in detail as part of this assessment but nonetheless appears to retain little fabric of heritage value.

## Comparative Analysis

### *Late nineteenth century hotels in Stonnington*

Hotels of this period mostly conform to a fairly standard formula, being two or three storeys in height with chamfered or rounded corners and no setbacks from the street boundary. Facades were generally of rendered masonry construction with Italianate decoration of varying complexity. Roofs were concealed by a parapet, often with a corner pediment bearing the date of construction and/or name of the hotel. Surviving examples of this hotel type in Stonnington are described below.

#### Arcadia Hotel, 2-4 Toorak Road, South Yarra

A double-storey corner hotel with an elaborate Victorian Italianate style facade. It was erected c1892, replacing an early 1850s hotel building known as the South Yarra Inn. The hotel is an A2 graded building in the Toorak Road heritage overlay precinct (HO150).

#### Alexandra Hotel, 22 Powell Street, South Yarra

A double-storey 1875 corner hotel, converted into apartments.

#### Former Black Prince Hotel, 455 Chapel Street, South Yarra.

A double-storey Victorian corner hotel. No longer operates as a hotel. It is an A2 graded building in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

#### Former Bowling Green Hotel, 85 Chapel Street, Windsor

A double-storey c1870 corner hotel. It has been converted into shops and is not readily identifiable as a purpose built hotel. The fairly plain appearance of its facade also suggests that original decorative ornament has been removed. It is a B graded building in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

#### Bush Inn Hotel, 505 Malvern Road, Toorak

A hotel was first built on this site c1854. It was rebuilt in the late-nineteenth century in the Italianate style. The hotel is included in a heritage precinct (HO142).

#### College Lawn, 36 Greville Street, Prahran

A double-storey c1876 corner hotel with a generally austere pre-boom facade. It is a B graded building in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

#### Court Jester, 270 Chapel Street, Prahran

A heavily altered double-storey Victorian corner hotel. It is a C graded building in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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Duke of Windsor, cnr of High and Chapel Streets

A heavily altered double-storey Victorian corner hotel. It is a B graded building in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

Former Fawkner Park Hotel, 20 Powell Street, South Yarra

A simple double-storey Victorian corner hotel with a fairly austere facade. It has been converted into a residence.

Her Majesty's, corner of Toorak Road and Davies Street, South Yarra.

A large double-storey Victorian hotel with an elaborate Italianate style facade and corner tower. The hotel is an A1 graded building in the Toorak Road heritage overlay precinct (HO150). A current planning permit allows for the development of a multi-storey apartment building behind the facade and reconstruction of the tower.

Imperial, 522 Chapel Street, South Yarra

A Victorian Italianate style corner hotel which has been heavily altered by the removal of most of the Chapel Street facade and enlargement of window openings on the side elevation.

Market Hotel, 143 Commercial Road, Prahran

A double-storey Victorian Italianate building with a substantially intact facade. Unlike most hotels of the period, it is not built on a corner site. The hotel is an A2 graded building in the Chapel Street Precinct (HO126).

Mount Erica Hotel, 420 High Street, Prahran

A double-storey Victorian corner hotel with a single-storey addition to High Street. The hotel is an A2 graded building in the Williams Road heritage overlay precinct (HO155).

Swan Hotel, 152 Chapel Street, Windsor.

A double-storey Victorian corner hotel with elaborate Italianate style facade to the first floor. The ground floor facade has been substantially altered by removal of render and original detailing and the enlargement of some openings. The building is included in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

Temperance Hotel, 426 Chapel Street, South Yarra

A double-storey Victorian corner hotel. The building appears to be substantially intact although the parapet may have been rebuilt, possibly in the 1920s. The building is included in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

Union Hotel, 90 Chapel Street, South Yarra

A double-storey Victorian corner hotel with a largely unadorned facade. The ground floor has two very wide non-original door openings. The hotel is included in the Chapel Street heritage overlay precinct (HO126).

The Xchange, 119 Commercial Road, South Yarra.

A Victorian corner hotel with a fairly plain facade. Various alterations have been made to the ground floor openings. The site has no heritage overlay control.

## *Conclusion*

The former Royal Hotel is by no means exceptional or unusual in terms of its facade design but it does remain remarkably intact in comparison to other hotels of the period in Stonnington. Many similar hotels on the Chapel Street shopping strip have been defaced through enlargement of openings, removal of original detailing and the addition of modern elements such as awnings and internally illuminated signage.

The location of the former Royal Hotel in a residential backstreet also sets it apart from many of the hotels listed above. Most were built on prominent corner locations on main thoroughfares to attract a passing trade. The Windsor Castle, Red Lion Hotel and former Alexandra Tavern are among the few other examples of hotels in Prahran to have been built to

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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serve a local neighbourhood, away from busy shopping strips and major roads.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The former Royal Hotel, 67 Bendigo Street, Prahran, is a double-storey Victorian Italianate style corner hotel constructed c1891. It replaced an earlier hotel building on the site dating back to 1868.

### *How is it Significant?*

The former Royal Hotel is of local architectural and historical significance to the City of Stonnington.

### *Why is it Significant?*

The former Royal Hotel is of historical significance for the enduring use of the site as licensed premises for almost one and a half centuries. It is of additional significance as an example of a hotel which was built away from main roads to serve a residential neighbourhood.

The former Royal Hotel is architecturally significant as a good example of a Victorian Italianate style corner hotel with a highly intact facade.

## Assessment Against Criteria

Assessment of the precinct was undertaken in accordance with the processes and criteria outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

## Recommendations 2010

### External Paint Controls

No

### Internal Alteration Controls

No

### Tree Controls

No

### Fences & Outbuildings

No

### Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted

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### Incorporated Plan

-

### Aboriginal Heritage Place

No

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.