

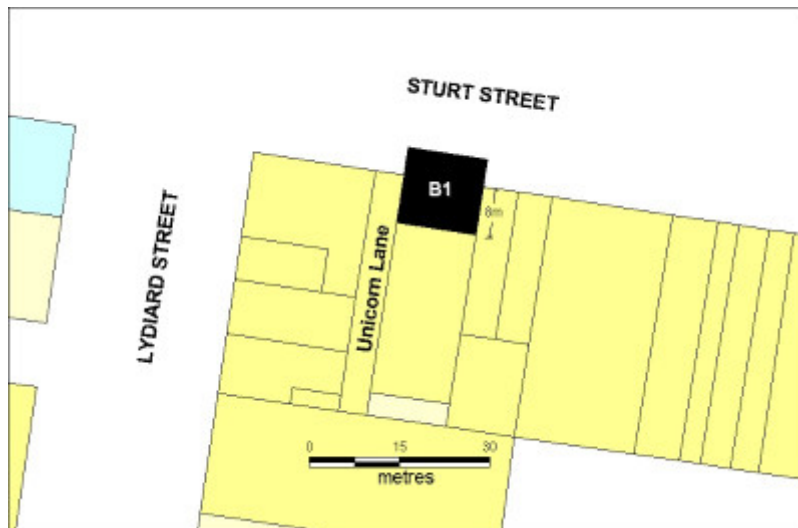
FORMER UNICORN HOTEL FACADE AND VERANDAH



FORMER UNICORN HOTEL
FAÇADE AND VERANDAH
SOHE 2008



1 unicorn hotel ballarat
front&lane elevation



Unicorn hotel plan

Location

127 STURT STREET BALLARAT CENTRAL, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1911

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO115

VHR Registration

December 21, 2000

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The facade and verandah of the former Unicorn Hotel at 127 Sturt Street, Ballarat, was built in or around 1863 or 1866 as a substantial brick facade to an earlier timber structure which had opened in 1856 as the Unicorn Hotel (Thomas Vaughan, publican), only the third hotel in the western part of Ballarat. The timber structure was soon replaced by the main building part of which has survived (The surviving elements of the main building have not been included in the Register save for the front 12 metres). The former Unicorn Hotel occupies a prominent location in Sturt Street with the western side of the building providing access to what became called Unicorn Lane or Passage. The design has been attributed to architects Caselli and Figgis. The verandah was elaborated in the 1880s to include cast iron work and a parapet adorned with a unicorn statue - long since removed. Upstairs the layout of rooms suggests the original use of the building as a hotel. The front room opens by way of French doors to the balcony. The external facade is composed on the upper floor of French doors surmounted by austere detailed Renaissance hoods and consoles with a pediment over the central door. The building has a particularly elegant and early verandah and balcony which tend to overshadow the facade. It is a two storey version of the early single storey flat roofed and balustraded post verandah. The building ceased to operate as a licensed hotel from 1952, and the ground floor facade was compromised when replaced with glazed shop fronts.

How is it significant?

The facade and verandah of the former Unicorn Hotel in Sturt Street, Ballarat, is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria for architectural, historical and social reasons and for the substantial contribution it makes to a notable nineteenth-century streetscape.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, the facade and verandah of the former Unicorn Hotel is significant because of its status as part of one of Ballarat's oldest extant hotel buildings. The fine and elegant verandah and balcony are highly unusual in this form. This is the only remaining two storied parapeted verandah in Victoria. Slender cast iron columns with Corinthian capitals support ground floor brackets, swag bellied balcony panels, double timber bressumer with frieze iron inserts, cornice and brackets. Much of this detail is in place and is of high aesthetic value. The now flat surfaced parapet originally had an elaborate set of balusters with a unicorn statue mounted centrally. The aesthetic contribution of the facade and verandah to its notable Sturt Street environment is substantial.

Historically and socially the former Unicorn Hotel is significant because of its role in the life of Ballarat and of Victoria since the gold rushes of the 1850s. Known as 'The Corner', the Unicorn adjoined the Mining Exchange and the building accommodated offices for stock brokers and share traders from the 1860s until the late 1880s and was a popular gathering point at times of intense share speculation as was the street outside the Hotel. Although the ground floor has been substantially altered, the continuing existence of the Sturt Street frontage illustrates the general association of the hotel with mining speculation in the nineteenth century, and endow the

structure with important historical associations. (See Anthony Trollope's description of trading in mining shares "under the verandah" in Trollope's *Australia*. ed. Hume Dow, 1966)

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Exterior

- * Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- * Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- * Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

Interior

- * Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- * Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

- * Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- * Refurbishment of bathrooms and toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- * Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors and exit signs.

Construction dates 1865,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 1394

Property Number

History

Contextual History:

History of Place:

The original Unicorn Hotel was built c.1856, the third hotel to be built in Ballarat after Baths (now Craigs Royal Hotel) and the George. The early building was timber and a substantial brick facade was added c.1866. Possibly later that year the existing brick building replaced the timber building behind the facade. Photographic evidence suggests that the verandah was altered in the 1880s to include the cast iron work and the parapet with unicorn statue. The architectural firm Caselli and Figgis advertised in 1885-86 that Popjoy's Unicorn Hotel was one of their designs. Popjoy owned the building from about 1870 until the 1890s. The Unicorn operated as a hotel until 1957 when it became a private hotel. It closed in 1973.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The former Unicorn Hotel has historical associations with Ballarat's prosperity during the quartz mining boom when stockbrokers gathered under its verandah and trading took place in front of the hotel. This area became known as "The Corner" and was immortalised by Anthony Trollope in the book "Australia" in 1873 when he noted his impressions of Ballarat.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The former Unicorn Hotel exhibits fine design features in its Classical Revival style detailing on the facade and

the two-storey cast iron verandah with its slender columns and intricate frieze work.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

1. The Fapade and Verandah of the building known as the former Unicorn Hotel together with the front 8 metres of the building marked B1 on diagram 1911 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land being the footprint of the B1.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>