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# Royal Mail Hotel



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## Location

288-90 Albert Street, SEBASTOPOL VIC 3356 - Property No 2000392

## Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO209

## Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 5, 2024

### What is significant?

The Royal Mail Hotel at 288-290 Albert Street, Sebastopol, originally built in 1865 and reconstructed in 1924. The remnants of the 1865 structure and the extent of the 1924 reconstruction are considered to be significant. The 1924 reconstruction comprises a long red brick clad building, L-shaped in plan, addressing Albert Street. The facade is dominated by a parapet featuring a roughcast rendered reverse arched panel with raised numerals ('1924') above a rendered panel displaying the hotel's name ('Royal Mail Hotel') in raised lettering. A rendered brick residence is attached to the rear of the hotel by a gabled link.

### **How is it significant?**

The Royal Mail Hotel is of historic and architectural significance to the City of Ballarat.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Royal Mail Hotel is of historic significance as one of the oldest continuously occupied hotels in Sebastopol. It is a rare surviving example of a hotel within the township, which had as many as seventy in operation prior to 1900. It was erected in 1864 as a modest weatherboard hotel to provide refreshments and entertainment to the burgeoning population of the local Sebastopol goldfields and continues to operate as a hotel today. It represents two important periods in Sebastopol - the deep lead mining period (the early fabric) and the prosperity and optimism of the early 1920s. (Criterion A)

The Royal Mail Hotel is of architectural significance as a handsome interwar hotel on a prominent corner site. It forms a landmark due to its style and placement on the corner site. It is distinguished by a striking parapet along the Albert Street facade which shows the influence of the Federation Free Classical style, updated with a 1920s geometricism. (Criterion E)

## **Theme**

### 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

Heritage Study/Consultant Ballarat - Sebastopol Heritage Study (Stage 2), Context Pty Ltd, 2015;

Construction dates 1865, 1924,

Hermes Number 183809

Property Number

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## **Physical Description 1**

The Royal Mail Hotel is a red brick building with complex hipped roofs hidden behind the front parapet, located on a corner site. At the north rear is a residence, now integrated into the hotel. On the south side are a modern drive-in bottle shop and smokers' area built up against the wall of the hotel.

The entire building is clad in hard red bricks, dating to the 1924 post-fire reconstruction. The extremely complex array of hipped roofs, however, suggests that some of the earlier structure (most likely the L-shaped section along the two street fronts) was incorporated into the present building, though no pre-1920s chimneys survive.

The facade, facing Albert Street, is quite long. Its dominant feature is the parapet, which shows both the influence of the Federation Free Classical style as well as geometric tendencies characteristic of the 1920s. At the centre of the parapet is a short reverse arched panel of roughcast render, with a raised date ('1924'). To either side are long panels, bracketed by short piers and geometric scrolls carried out in render. A rendered cornice divides the parapet from a rendered band displaying the hotel's name ('Royal Mail'), also in raised and slightly stylised lettering.

The brickwork of the facade is tuckpointed, and the windows and doors have cement-rendered lintels (overpainted). The window sills are of bullnose brick, as are the reveals of the two original (southern) doorways. The doorways have bluestone sills, one of which retains a triangular mason's mark. The large southernmost window was once divided into six fixed panes (indicated by scars). The three other windows to this elevation are one-over-one double-hung sashes.

The parapet slopes down and terminates on the south elevation, facing Queen Street, leaving the corrugated-iron clad hipped roof visible. The bricks of this, and the other minor elevations, are not tuckpointed. This elevation,

while largely concealed by modern accretions, retains the only original external door identified (a ledged door, cut down and windows inserted), as well as original hatch doors to the cellar (also cut down), and unpainted cement render lintels to the door and a window - indicating their original appearance.

The north elevation has an identical termination to the front parapet, revealing a number of hipped roofs and 1920s chimneys (red brick with a soldier course at the top). At the rear of this section is the former residence, which has a pyramidal hipped roof and appears to date from the 1920s. This building has since been linked to the hotel by a gabled link. The walls have been rendered, covering the face brick.

The interior has been extensively remodelled. The only early element identified is an arched brick fireplace of c1924 in the dining room.

*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/>*