

## FORMER JOHN THOMAS SMITH RESIDENCE



FORMER RESIDENCE  
SOHE 2008



1 former residence queen  
street melbourne front view  
jan1985



former residence queen  
street melbourne rear view  
jan1985



former residence queen  
street melbourne side view  
jan1985



October 12, 1988

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 17, 2022

#### What is significant?

The former residence at 300 Queen Street was designed in 1848 and built between 1849 and 1852 as a residence for J T Smith. Smith was a publican, theatrical entrepreneur and later Mayor of Melbourne. The architect was Charles Laing. 300 Queen Street is constructed of stuccoed brick on a bluestone base with quoined openings and a large fanlight over the main entrance. In 1858 a third storey and outbuildings were added to designs by architect David Ross. The building has a simple symmetrical form, hipped slate-clad roof, Georgian fenestration and austere detailing. 300 Queen Street was occupied by David Munro between 1879 and 1889. Munro was a successful railway contractor who later as a land speculator was bankrupted during the economic crash of the early 1890s.

#### How is it significant?

The former residence at 300 Queen Street is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

#### Why is it significant?

The former residence at 300 Queen Street is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving houses in the central city area. It is significant for its associations with J T Smith, one of the earliest settlers in Melbourne, and who subsequently was Mayor of Melbourne seven times during the 1850s and 1860s. 300 Queen Street is also significant for its associations with David Munro, one of the largest employers in the State as a successful railway contractor during the 1870s and 1880s.

The former residence at 300 Queen Street is architecturally significant as an excellent example of the survival of Georgian styling into the late 1840s and early 1850s. 300 Queen Street is a rare surviving example of the simple but elegant Georgian form. It is significant as a design by two of Melbourne's earliest architects, Charles Laing and David Ross.

## 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](#).

Construction dates	1848,
Architect/Designer	Laing, Charles,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	FORMER TREASURY, FORMER JOHN THOMAS SMITH HOUSE, FORMER RESIDENCE, 300 QUEEN STREET MELBOURNE,
Hermes Number	793
Property Number	

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## History

### History of Place:

A tender notice was advertised in the Port Phillip Herald dated 22 February 1848 for the erection of a dwelling house in Queen Street for John Thomas Smith. The architect was Charles Laing. The house was described for the first time in the MCC rate book of 1850 as a brick house of 8 rooms, four finished and four unfinished with kitchen and cellar. In 1852 Smith announced that he would finish the office buildings to his residence and that he was his own master builder. A notice in the Argus of 16 January 1858 called for tenders for additions. The architect of what was to be the third floor was David Ross, the builder was John Morton. The 1859 rate book describes the house as brick with 17 rooms, hall, 2 cellars, coachhouse and stables.

On 1 October 1859 the house was let to the Victorian Government. It was used until 1869 as several government offices, including Mines, Agriculture, the Treasury and Gold Office from 1859-1862. Subsequently the house became a boarding house and temperance hotel. It was bought by David Munro in 1881. After several owners it then passed into the State Government hands in 1950.

(The RHSV and the Smith House, RHSV October 1979)

John Thomas Smith was born in Sydney in 1816. He arrived in Melbourne in 1837 to be schoolmaster at the Church of England Mission Station, a 40 pounds per annum appointment. By 1847 he was sufficiently wealthy to purchase the land for his residence from the Crown on February 24 1847, paying 202 pounds. (The Age, August 24 1963)

He later was a storekeeper, hotel and theatre proprietor. Smith was elected to the Melbourne Council in 1842 and remained a councillor until his death in 1879. He was mayor of Melbourne seven times between 1851 and 1864. (ADB)

David Munro & Co was a large railway contractor in the 1870s and 1880s. He built Queens Bridge in 1888 and Prince's Bridge in 1890. Other contracts included the Frankston to Crib Point line and the Fitzroy to Whittlesea line. He also sold sawmilling, threshing and mining machinery. Munro later developed close links with Thomas Bent. In 1888 Bent suggested Munro convert his company to a publicly limited company and offer shares. Munro borrowed substantially, and became involved in land speculation. The land boom collapse signalled insolvency, compounded by fraudulent activities by his bankers. Munro moved from his Kooyong mansion in to a small house

in Parkville where he died in 1898.  
(Michael Cannon, Land Boom and Bust, Melbourne 1972)  
Associated People: John Thomas Smith  
David Munro

## **Extent of Registration**

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 806.

Former Residence, 300 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000.

(All of the buildings shown hatched and all land shown enclosed by a broken line in Attachment A, known as Crown Allotment 19A, Section 29, City of Melbourne).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G31 8 August 1990 p.2436]

*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/>*