

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Duke of Edinburgh Hotel
(former)

Citation No:
2446

Other names: -

INSERT MAP



Address: 374 St Kilda Road, St Kilda

Category: Commercial: Hotel

Style: Interwar

Constructed: 1850s, 1924, 1937

Designer: H V Gillespie (1924), unknown
(1937)

Amendment: TBC

Comment: New citation

Heritage Precinct: Not applicable

Heritage Overlay: TBC

Graded as: Significant

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Significance

What is significant?

The former Duke of Edinburgh Hotel at 374 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, is significant. It was constructed in the late 1850s as a single storey shop. In 1924 it was expanded to two storeys by architect H V Gillespie, and in 1937 the façade was redesigned in the Moderne style.

The hotel consists of a front two storey section and single-storey rear sections. The main roof has three parallel hipped sections of differing widths and lengths clad in corrugated sheet metal. The rear skillion/hipped roof section at least partly dates to the 1920s. There are four rendered chimneys with a projecting cap and raised 'T'-shaped detailing. The rendered façade features an indented band to the parapet and both raised and recessed speedlines, and the lower part is built out between the openings in a buttress-like manner. The chamfered corner has a curved profile, a light fixture, and the main entrance is defined by tiled engaged columns. The corner window to the upper floor, which probably relates from the 1924 phase, is arched and deeply recessed. Most of the upper floor windows are rectangular and have timber-framed double hung sashes with single panes. One window on the south side (which is probably a remnant of the 1924 phase) has taller proportions and contains decorative glass with leadlight in a floral and drop motif. The openings to the ground floor have black tiling (overpainted) to the reveals.

Post-1937 alterations and additions, including the rear single storey gable roofed section, are not significant. The current paint colour scheme is not significant.

How is it significant?

The former Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, 374 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The former Duke of Edinburgh Hotel is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving hotel buildings in St Kilda, primarily operating as the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel between 1868 and 1996 and for some years thereafter for related uses under a different name. Originally constructed as a single storey grocer's shop in the late 1850s, the building was expanded and remodeled in a contemporary style during the Interwar period indicative of the common approach to the modernisation of hotels whereby buildings were evolved over multiple stages of development and upgrading. Its St Kilda Road address is reflective of the traditional practice of prominently locating hotels along major thoroughfares. (Criteria A)

The former Duke of Edinburgh Hotel is of aesthetic significance as a good and intact example of an Interwar period hotel in the Moderne style, which was popularly adopted for hotels during the 1930s. It also incorporates some remnant aspects of the earlier 1920s remodeling which add interest and hint at the staged development of this building. While this style is not uncommon in the municipality among the group of remaining Interwar period hotels, the incorporation of curved elements at the corner and detailed articulation (to the parapet, extensive use of speedlines, and buttressing and reveals to the ground floor), distinguishes it from some of the more angular Functionalist examples. (Criterion E)

Thematic context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

5. Building Victoria's Industries and Workforces: 5.6 Entertaining and socialising

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

3. People: 3.5 Expressing identity and culture

History

Contextual history

Providing food, refreshments, entertainment and accommodation, hotels – or pubs – have been popular places to eat, socialise and stay in the City of Port Phillip since the arrival of European settlers. Wilbraham Liardet was the first to open a hotel in the area, the Brighton Pier Hotel, in October 1840. During the gold rush period from 1851 to 1876, 51 new hotels were opened in Port Melbourne alone.

Before the creation of civic buildings, hotels were often used as meeting places for early councils, social groups and committees, as well as general socialising. Some of the oldest buildings in the City of Port Phillip are hotels that have stood the test of time, such as the Golden Gate Hotel (1853), Prince of Wales Hotel (1863), the George (which began as the Terminus in 1857), the Esplanade (which began as the New Bath Hotel in 1856), the Golden Fleece Hotel (1872) and the Balaclava Hotel (formerly Carlisle Hotel 1869). Some, like the Hotel Victoria built in 1888 on Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park, remain but no longer used as hotels. Others, like the Greyhound Hotel (1853) have been demolished. Hotels have been particularly associated with working-class people as centres of Australian drinking culture, and continue to provide vital social venues for the community today.

Duke of Edinburgh Hotel

The subject site formed part of Crown portion 71B, parish of Prahran, of about 4 and a half acres which was purchased in 1850 by F McDonnell (*Argus* 16 May 1850 p2) (PP).

The rate books record that by March 1860 there was a five-roomed brick and slate building on the subject site with a NAV of £160, owned by merchant Moses Frazer, and occupied by Dickson and Tomison, grocers, wine and spirit merchants (RB 1860 no. 1484). The building was apparently erected sometime

during the late 1850s, as it is not shown on the 1855 Kearney Plan but is listed in the Sands and Kenny's Directory for 1859 (occupied by Moses Frazer, grocer, wine and spirit merchant). The single storey building is captured in an early photograph (Figure 2), c.1861, which shows four bays to the façade and arched openings. The 1864 Cox plan (Figure 1) shows the building's footprint was L-shaped.



Figure 1 - Cox Plan 1864 (Source: State Library of Victoria).

Figure 2 - 'Frazer's Grocery, High Street', c.1861 (Source: Port Phillip City Collection, sk0603.1-4)

In 1868, a hotel was established at the site, presumably involving the adaptation of the pre-existing building. On 5 May 1868, a license was granted for the 'Duke of Edinburgh Hotel', named in honour of Prince Alfred's (eldest son of Queen Victoria) recent Melbourne visit (*The Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra Guardian* 9 May 1868 p3). The rate book for January 1869 records a six-roomed brick hotel with a NAV of £46, occupied by publican Patrick McGowan (RB 1869 no. 1481). By the following year, 1870, the building was described as having 8 rooms and the NAV had risen to £65 (RB 1870 no. 1211).

The 1873 Vardy plan (Figure 3) shows the brick hotel with an L-shaped footprint. On the rear boundary was a timber outbuilding, probably stables. Moses Frazer owned several adjoining properties as indicated on the plan (numbered 203-206), including a timber yard adjacent to the north (numbered 205).

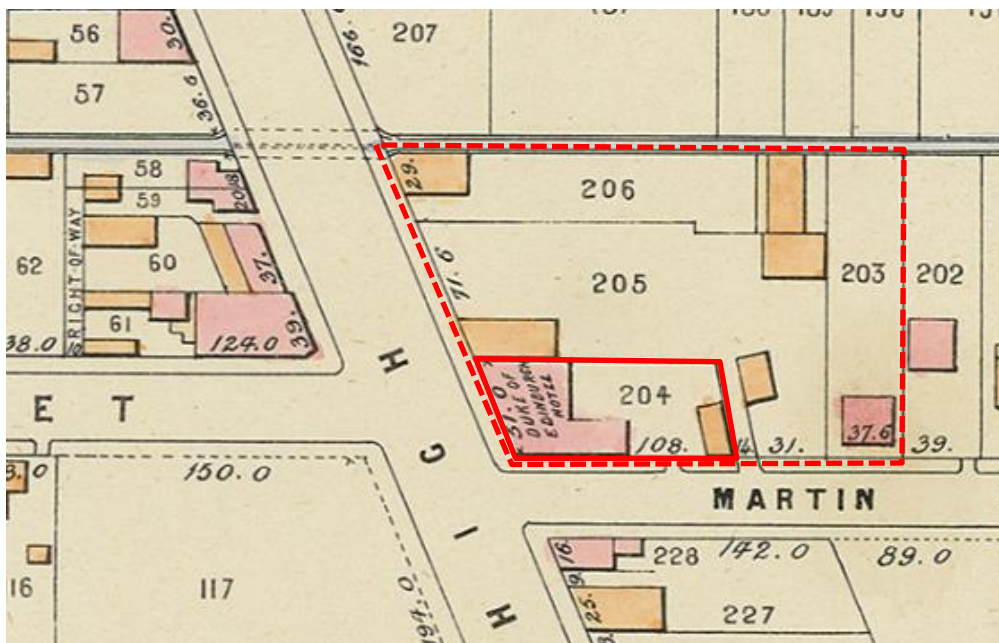


Figure 3: Plan of the Borough of St Kilda, South Ward No. 1 (J.E.S. Vardy, 1873). The subject site (solid line) and the adjoining properties also owned by Moses Frazer (dashed line) are indicated. (Source: St Kilda Historical Society)

In April 1875, tenders were called for a brick billiard room (Age 23 Apr 1875 p1). In May 1876, Frazer was made insolvent due to bad debts and losses in business (Argus 27 May 1876 p7). In July 1876, the subject site (along with the other adjoining properties owned by Frazer) was sold to John O'Farrell, a hay and corn dealer. John O'Farrell (or his son of the same name) was also the owner of other nearby High Street (now St Kilda Road) properties including the Queen's Arms Hotel on the corner of Pakington Street (CT v.884 f.639).

John O'Farrell died in 1877, and probate of his will was granted to his wife Catherine. Later, ownership of the subject site was transferred to his three sons, John O'Farrell, Patrick O'Farrell and Michael O'Farrell, provision merchants of High Street St Kilda (CT v.236 f.101).

The 1897 MMBW plan (Figure 4) shows the hotel with an enlarged U-shaped footprint. The profile of the façade, showing the positioning of piers, appears consistent with the 1861 photograph. Note also, the passage along the north side of the building.

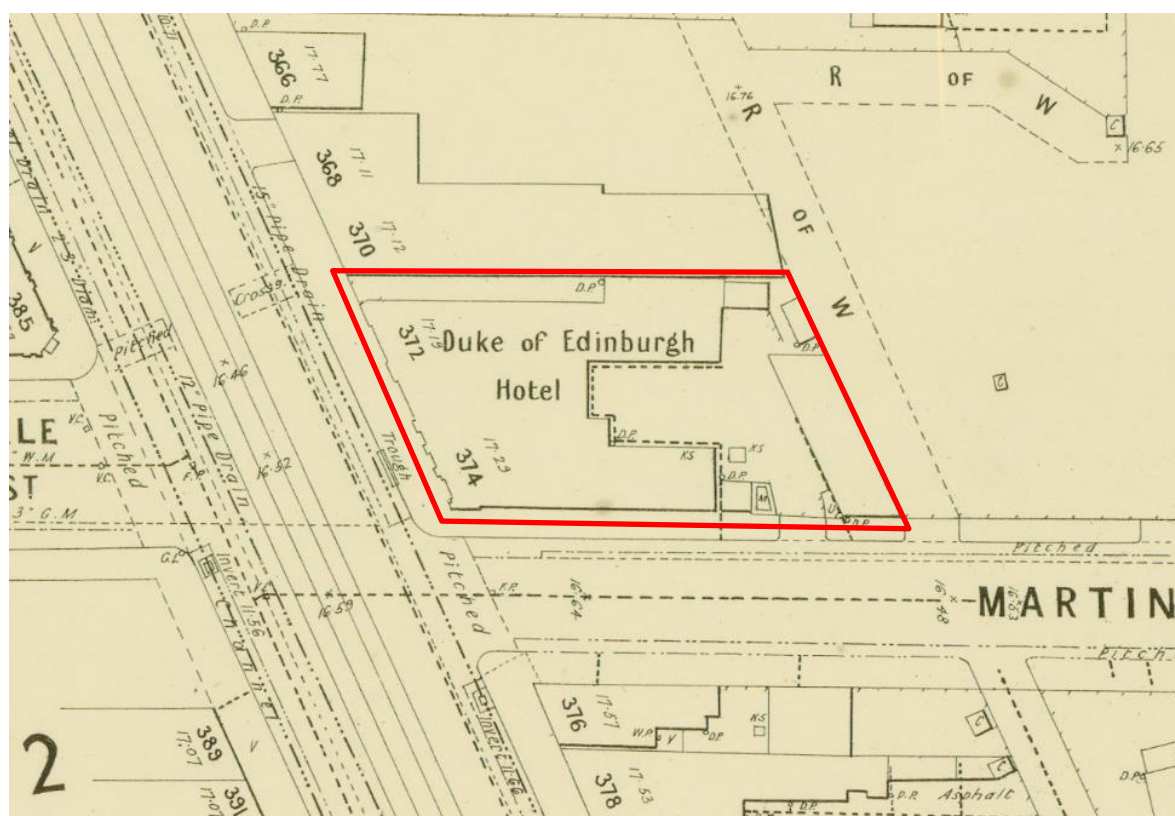


Figure 4: MMBW detail plan no. 1371, dated 1897. The approximate current boundaries of the subject site are indicated. (Source: State Library of Victoria)

John O'Farrell died in 1911, having been predeceased by his brothers. Probate was granted to the Perpetual Executors and Trustees Association Ltd of 89 Queen Street Melbourne, and William Kennedy, gardener, of Moorabbin. The broader holdings, which at that time extended between Pakington and Martin streets, were subdivided (CT v.3258 f.479). In November 1920, ownership of the subject site was transferred to Irene Miriam Annie Carrick, married woman of Rowell Street, Camberwell (CT v.4417 f.383).

In June 1924, architect H V Gillespie of 443 Chancery Lane Melbourne invited tenders for brick additions and alterations to the hotel (Age 28 Jun 1924 p1). A 1924 oblique aerial photograph (Figure 5) shows the hotel as a single storey building just prior to the additions. The configuration of the façade had apparently changed since the 1897 MMBW plan – the 1924 photograph appears to show three openings to the High Street (St Kilda Road) elevation and a chamfered corner. A second oblique aerial photograph (Figure 6) taken about one year later in 1925 shows that a second storey had been added. The 1925 image indicates that the overall form of the building, including the placement of openings (three to each level on the west elevation), the roof forms and the parapet are consistent with the building today.



Figure 5: Aerial photograph, c.1924 by Ernest Ebell. (Note: incorrectly dated 1926 in library catalogue.) (Source: State Library of Victoria, H91.365/3)

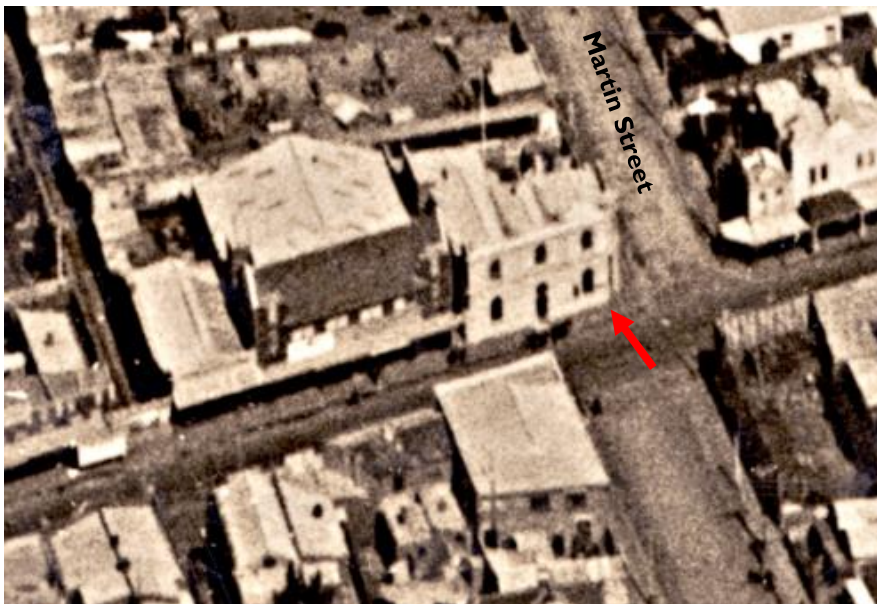


Figure 6: Aerial photograph, c.1925 by W R Garrett (Source: State Library of Victoria, H98.129/21)

In 1928, ownership was transferred to married couple James Gordon Bennett and Phillip Maude Bennett of 77 Mitford Street St Kilda. In 1936, following the deaths of the Bennetts, probate was granted to the Perpetual Executors and Trustees Association Ltd and Francis George Reid of 39 Grice Crescent Essendon (CT v.4417 f.383). In October 1936, Council issued a building permit for a brick outbuilding with an estimated cost of £120 (BP 9507). Then in August 1937, Council issued another building permit for alterations valued at £1,800 (BP 9778). The builder for the latter was recorded as S J Armstrong 26 Alma Road Malvern East. In August 1937, an advertisement sought a bricklayer's laborer and scaffold hand (Age 31 Aug 1937 p3). These works appear to have included a redesign of the façade presentation (i.e. the extant façade is indicative of the 1930s rather than the 1920s).



Figure 7: Aerial photograph dated 1945. The approximate boundaries of the subject site are indicated. (Source: Landata, Proj No 5, Run 17E, Frame 58012)

In August 1952, the hotel was sold to Phyllis Marie Hand, married woman of 95 High Street Kyneton. Two years later, in March 1954, it was offered for auction at which time it was described as follows:

Splendidly situated in one of the main entrances to the city, this sale affords a unique opportunity for the hotelkeeper or investor of acquiring an excellent hotel freehold. The hotel building is a Modern Brick Structure containing large bar, lounge bar, diningroom and kitchen on the ground floor, and 7 bedrooms, sittingroom and two bathrooms and toilets on the first floor. (Age 3 Mar 1954 p12)

The auction was apparently unsuccessful however, and the property was instead mortgaged (CT v.7797 f.050). From the 1960s, the hotel changed hands several times.

In 1971, following an inspection by the Liquor Control Commission, the then owners Charles and Gladys Lillecrapp were issued with a notice requiring a series of repair works to be undertaken to the interior and exterior; the external works included the replacement of damaged wall tiles and the redecoration of the frontages to High and Martin streets (LF). In November 1971, the commission approved plans for a 'substantial remodeling' and Council issued a permit for works with an estimated cost of \$15,000 (BP 4027). The architect was G J Johnston of Croydon and the builder was W J Hornby of Hawthorn. Plans lodged with Council indicate various proposed changes, including the reconfiguration of all external ground floor openings and the introduction of aluminum windows and doors (however it appears that this only occurred at the east end of the Martin Street façade) (BP). A further inspection by the commission in October 1972 confirmed that the required works had only been partly completed and it is unclear to what extent external works had been undertaken.

The hotel operated as the Duke of Edinburgh until 1996, then closed for a year until it reopened as a bar, 'The Duke', in 1998. In 2003, it was converted into a function centre called SKD (Aizen).

References

Aizen, Becky, *Pots, Punks and Punters: a history of the hotels of St. Kilda and South Melbourne*, 2004

Building Files held by Port Phillip City Council (BF)

Certificates of Title (CT)

License File (LF) – Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 7712 P2 Box 84 ‘Duke of Edinburgh St Kilda’

Newspapers, various

Parish Plan - at Elwood, Parish of Prahran, P81-13 (PP)

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH), February 2021

Rate Books for St Kilda 1859-1900, accessed via ancestry.com (RB)

Sands and McDougall’s Street Directories (SM)

St Kilda Council building permit files (BP)

Description

The former Duke of Edinburgh Hotel is located on the east side of St Kilda Road at the north corner of Martin Street and has an area of 527m². The hotel is built to the street boundaries and takes up most of the site. On the north side there is a narrow partial setback from the boundary.



Figure 8: Aerial photograph (Source: Nearmap October 2021)

The hotel consists of the front two storey section and single-storey rear sections. It has evolved in three main stages: the ground floor dates to the late 1850s (including the placement of openings to the west elevation), while the upper floor, roof forms, chimneys, placement of openings to the upper floor and the parapet form date to 1924. The Moderne style façade detailing dates to the 1937, although it currently presents poorly as a result of unsympathetic overpainting and boarded-up openings.

The roof of the two-storey section is comprised of three parallel hipped sections of differing widths and lengths clad in corrugated sheet metal, with exposed rafter ends visible to the rear. There is also an area of traversable roof deck on the south side. Attached to the rear is a skillion/hipped roof section that at least partly dates to the 1920s. There are four rendered chimneys with a projecting cap and raised ‘T’-shaped detailing in red brick. Some sections of red brick in stretcher bond are visible to the rear. Another single storey gable roof section at the rear is a later addition.

The façade is rendered and the parapet is capped by an indented band (the recessed portions have a curved profile). The upper part of the façade is articulated with raised speedlines with further short, intermediate banding above the windows. The lower part of the façade is built out between the openings in a buttress-like manner and articulated with recessed banding/speedlines.

The corner is chamfered and has a curved profile. The main corner entrance is defined by tiled engaged columns to either side. The light fixture above may date to the Interwar period. The corner window to the upper floor, which probably dates from the 1924 phase, is arched and is deeply recessed.

The majority of windows to the upper floor are rectangular, but relatively wide, and have timber-framed double hung sashes with single panes. One of the windows on the south side has taller proportions and contains decorative glass with leadlight and a floral and drop motif (it probably relates to the 1924 phase). The openings to the ground floor have black tiling (overpainted) to the reveals. On the south side, the ground floor appears to have been partly altered, at least at the east end.

Comparative analysis

There are many hotels included in the Heritage Overlay, either as individual places or included in a precinct. The hotels predominantly date to the Victorian period, mostly from the 1880s or 1890s; relatively few pre-1880 hotel buildings survive. Many of the Victorian era hotels were remodeled during the Interwar period in a contemporary style, as was a common approach to the modernisation of hotels during the Interwar period. Only a few were built as new buildings during the 20th century, though often replacing an earlier hotel on the site. Most hotels are located on corners and/or main thoroughfares.

The Duke of Edinburgh Hotel is in the Moderne style, which was popularly adopted for hotels during the 1930s. It also incorporates some remnant aspects of the earlier 1920s remodeling which may have been designed in a classicising mode.

The Moderne/Functionalist style hotels of the 1930s typically include a parapet, are rendered, and have a horizontal emphasis by way of banding or speed lines. Some feature Art Deco detailing to the bands, etc. Examples include:

- Prince of Wales, 29 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda (Citation 1473). 1936 by architect R H McIntyre (he was also responsible for the remodeled Greyhound Hotel, demolished). Fine, substantial four storey version with projecting balconies with curved corners and metal railing, and a pronounced horizontal emphasis. Similarities with the subject site include the use of black tiling (to dado and dividing walls to balconies) and banded panels with a curved profile.
- Royal Mail Hotel, 22 Bay Street Port Melbourne (Citation 2359). Victorian period hotel, remodeled in 1937.
- Pier Hotel, 1 Bay Street (Citation 608). Remodeled mid-1930s. Curved entry, glass bricks, black tiles.
- St Kilda Inn, 109 Barkly Street, St Kilda (Contributory). Remodeled Victorian period hotel. The rectilinear building has a rendered façade with speedlines being the primary articulation. An unremarkable example and has upper-level additions.
- Bleak House Hotel, 95 Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park (Contributory). Victorian hotel remodeled in 1935 to a design by Richard Le Poer Terry, architect. Includes a recessed balcony.
- Albert Park Hotel, 83 Dundas Place, Albert Park (Contributory). A good three storey example with porthole windows. Functionalist style with extensive use of speedlines.
- Town Hall Hotel, 137 Bank Street, South Melbourne (Contributory). Victorian hotel remodeled in 1936 to a design by Frederick Moresby, architect. A good example with a symmetrical façade with a stepped parapet, central curved balcony and fin, a recessed band to the upper part, and steel-framed windows to upper level.

- Swallow Hotel, 192 Station Street, Port Melbourne (Contributory). Remodeled in the 1930s in a Moderne/Art deco mode a band of panels featuring chevrons and the like and a faceted corner to the parapet. The tiled dado is intact.
- Rose and Crown, 309 Bay Street (Contributory). Victorian hotel remodeled in 1939 to a design by D. F. Cowell-Ham, architect. Symmetrical façade with central fin and flagpole, and some horizontal emphasis with Art deco influenced detailing to the parapet and the glazing bars to the windows.

During the 1920s, most hotels were designed in a classicising mode, whether new buildings or pre-existing hotels that were remodeled. These buildings are usually rendered, have a parapet often with a pediment and a cornice, and individual windows (a remnant of the Victorian period building). Examples include:

- Post Office Club Hotel, 306 St Kilda Road, St Kilda (Contributory). Remodeled Victorian period hotel. Retains original tiles to ground floor exterior. Diamond glazing bars to upper sashes (first floor).
- Ritz Hotel (former), 169 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda (Citation 1485). Freestyle design with a curved corner, oriel windows and arched openings.
- Bayview Hotel, 279 Cecil Street, South Melbourne (Citation 1139). Victorian hotel remodeled in 1927 to a design by P.J. O'Connor. Has a recessed balcony with columns to first floor, intact tiled dado to ground floor, stained glass to some windows.
- Queens Arms Hotel (former), 336 St Kilda Road (Sydney Smith & Ogg, 1924) (Significant within HO6, Citation 927). Parapet with triangular pediments and featuring a corner tower.
- Several other hotels in similar vein include the Cricket Club, Emerald, Golden Fleece, Limerick Arms, Montague, O'Connell's Centenary, and Rising Sun. Some of these were designed by Sydney, Smith & Ogg.

H V Gillespie, the architect for the 1924 remodeling of the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel undertook several commissions in the St Kilda area, including shops, flats and houses. Of particular relevance are Gillespie's 1925 five-storey addition to the George Hotel in Fitzroy Street St Kilda (VHR H0706), and the 1920s conversion of the Victorian period Star & Garter Hotel to apartments at 24-26 Robe Street St Kilda (Citation 793).

Assessment

This place has been assessed in accordance with the processes and guidelines outlined in the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (The Burra Charter) 2013, using the Hercon criteria.

Recommendations

Add to the Heritage Overlay as an individual place.

Apply external paint controls in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (to ensure complementary colour schemes are employed and/or encourage restoration of the rendered finish and tiled surfaces).

Primary source

RBA Architects & Conservation Consultants, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct Heritage Review Stage 2*, 2021

Other studies

Andrew Ward & Associates, *Port Phillip Heritage Review*, 1998

Other images



West side



South side and rear



South side, window with decorative leadlight glazing



Corner entrance

Area to be included in HO

