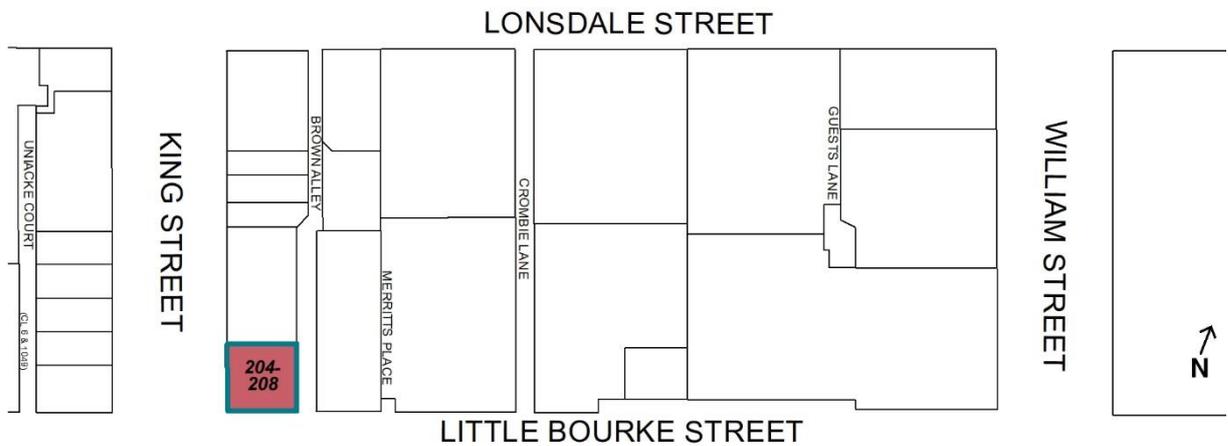


<b>SITE NAME</b>	Great Western Hotel
<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	204-208 King Street Melbourne
<b>PROPERTY ID</b>	105384



SURVEY DATE: March 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

<b>HERITAGE INVENTORY</b>	H7822-1223	<b>EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	No
<b>PLACE TYPE</b>	Individual Heritage Place	<b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>	Significant
<b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b>	Not known	<b>FORMER GRADE</b>	C
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:</b>	Victorian Period (1851-1901)	<b>BUILDER:</b>	Not known
		<b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1864

**THEMES**

<b>ABORIGINAL THEMES</b>	<b>SUB-THEMES</b>
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
<b>HISTORIC THEMES</b>	<b>DOMINANT SUB-THEMES</b>
13 Enjoying the city	13.6 Eating and drinking

**LAND USE**

<b>HISTORIC LAND USE</b>	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 18	<b>Inventory no:</b> 223
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Commercial, Residential	
Land sale details not provided.	
1866 Cox	Building on King street frontage
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	Two & one-storey buildings, J O'Brien "Star of the West" hotel
1905/6 Mahlstedt	Two & one-storey buildings, "Great Western Hotel"
<b>THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE</b>	
1890s	Hotel and lodging
1920s	Hotel and lodging, pubs
1960s	Pubs

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

**Extent of overlay:** Refer to map

**SUMMARY**

The former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street is a two-storey early Victorian hotel building. Built in 1864 on a prominent corner site, and extended in the 1920s, the former Great Western Hotel operated as a hotel for 153 years, from 1864 until 2017.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Enjoying the city

#### *Eating and drinking*

Alcohol was a mainstay of a frontier colonial town. During the early period of settlement, many people resorted to alcoholic beverages rather than drink the city's unpalatable and contaminated water. Hotels were abundant in Melbourne; in working-class areas, such as Carlton, there was virtually one on every corner. One of Melbourne city's first permanent buildings was Fawkner's hotel established in 1836 on the corner of William Street and Flinders Lane (Context 2012: 98).

A weakness for drink was considered by many in the Victorian era as a human failing; self-improvement and moral fortitude were the values to strive for. The consumption of hard liquor generally went hand-in-hand with gambling and with Melbourne's lively night life. Social problems associated with drunkenness in late nineteenth-century Melbourne made alcohol a chief cause for steps towards social reform, resulting in the establishment of the powerful temperance movement and local abstinence societies (Context 2012: 90, 98).

Hotels responded to the changing times and circumstances. In the early 1900s, falling hotel standards and pressure from the temperance movement prompted the state government to reduce the number of liquor licenses. From 1907 the Licences' Reduction Board reduced the number of hotels in all districts to 1885 statutory levels. Many hotel buildings were subsequently demolished or adapted to different uses; other hotel owners upgraded and refurbished their buildings from this period through to the 1920s and 1930s in order to meet the new licensing conditions that were contingent on the provision of adequate accommodation and other facilities (Dunstan 2008).

The 'early closing' of hotels at 6.00pm, an effort to curb drunkenness by restrictive legislation, caused other anti-social behaviour, and was overturned in 1966 (Context 2012:98). Of the approximate 100 hotels in existence in central Melbourne in the 1920s, only approximately 45 hotels remained by the 1960s. In 2018, only approximately 12 hotels in central Melbourne retained their historic use and form (CoM 2018).

## SITE HISTORY

The land comprising 204-208 King Street, Melbourne forms part of Crown Allotment 19, Block 18, first purchased by Alexander Davidson of Sydney for £117.0s.16p in 1838 (CoMMaps; 'Plan of Melbourne' 1838; DCSLV 1839).

The subject building, a two-storey brick corner hotel with bluestone quoining, was built in 1864 for P J Martin, esquire (CoMMaps; *Argus* 21 October 1868:3; S&Mc 1864). Opening by December 1864, it operated continuously as a hotel for over 150 years, firstly as the Star of the West Hotel from 1864 until 1892, and then as the Great Western Hotel from 1892 until its closure in 2017 (S&Mc 1865, 1892; *Argus* 20 December 1864:8). Established in 1864, the subject building continuously served as a pub for over 150 years until its recent closure in 2017.

The Star of the West Hotel, addressed as 172 King Street in the 1860s, originally comprised two narrow rectangular built forms (on allotments 204-206 King Street), each with a single entrance and window and separated internally by a party wall, with an attached outbuilding on the southern elevation (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). In 1868 tenders were called for the hotel to be painted (*Argus* 21 October 1868:3).

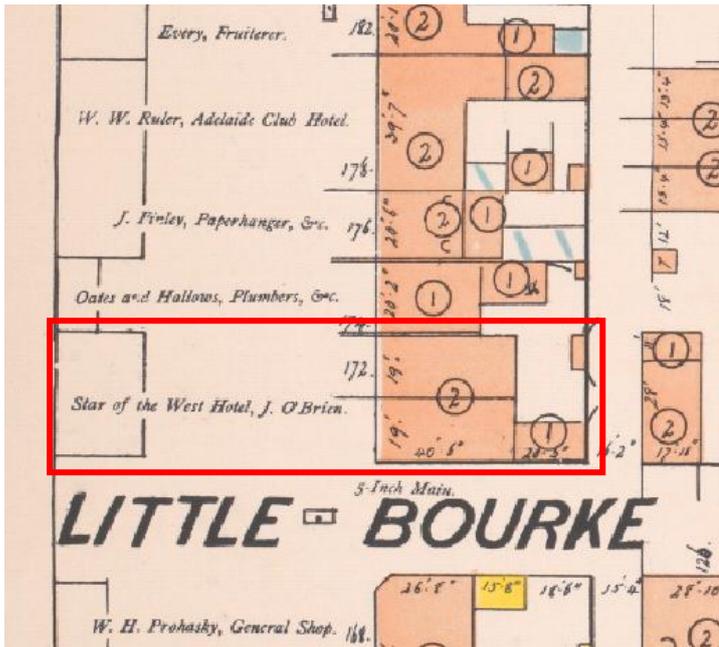


Figure 1. Extract from Mahlstedt fire survey plan showing the original Star of the West Hotel (later Great Western Hotel) building footprint. (Source: Mahlstedt Map no 18, 1888, SLV)



Figure 2. Extract from 1882 engraving of Melbourne, showing the subject building prior to the extension in 1920. (Source: Cooke 1882, SLV)

During the early years, the publican of the hotel changed frequently between 1864-1885, with no single victualler remaining longer than a few years (S&Mc 1870-1890). The first licensee was Thomas Lowrey, followed by John McDonald, who took over as licensee for the subsequent two years (S&Mc 1868). Several inquests were held at the premises in the 1870s, demonstrating that the Hotel had a civic function in early Melbourne (*Age* 18 June 1874:3).

It seems that the Star of the West Hotel also had a reputation for accommodating roguish behaviour; in 1871 then proprietor William Ryan was fined for permitting drunken and disorderly persons to be in his hotel; in 1875 proprietor Bernard O'Hagan was fined for illegally selling liquor on a Sunday; and in 1877 proprietor and landlord Michael Tierney was found guilty of manslaughter of a patron (*Leader* 14 January 1871:23; *Age* March 1875:2; *Argus* 13 January 1877:13). Publicans of the Star of the West

Hotel continued to be fined throughout the 1880s for breaching liquor licensing laws (*Age* 13 July 1888:9; *Melbourne Punch* 10 December 1885:1; *Argus* 17 May 1882:10).

Sydney H Wilson, architect, invited tenders for alterations, general repairs and painting to be carried out to the Star of the West Hotel in 1889 (*Age* 16 October 1889:9). These works were minor repairs and surface treatments as no changes to the building footprint are recorded on the 1895 Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan (MMBW Detail Plan no 737, 1895). The Star of the West Hotel was renamed the Great Western Hotel by 1892 (S&Mc 1892). Located near Spencer Street Railway Station (now Southern Cross Station), the hotel targeted its advertising towards families and country visitors, offering accommodation, food and drink (*Age* 8 December 1890:3; *Age* 8 December 1890:3).

Thomas Tanner took over the establishment's licence in 1894, and remained the licensee until 1920 (*Age* 26 July 1894:7). A tender was invited for tuck-pointing services for the Great Western Hotel in 1904 (*Age* 11 October 1904:9). After Thomas' death in 1909 his wife Catherine Tanner continued to operate the Great Western Hotel until her death in 1920 (*Argus* 6 September 1920:1)

Thomas Uren was registered as the licensed victualler of the Great Western Hotel in late 1920 (*Argus* 16 October 1920:13). During the proprietorship of Uren, the premises were substantially extended, when 'additions to hotel' were carried out at a cost of £2250, presumably in order to meet new liquor licensing requirements for provision of adequate accommodation and other facilities (MBAI 3079). The two buildings were joined internally by a single opening (see Figure 3) (S&Mc 1905-1920; *Geelong Advertiser* 5 September 1925:5; MBAI). Architect Ernest J Keogh oversaw the 1920 alterations and additions to the Great Western Hotel (*Argus* 20 November 1920:25; MBAI). Uren lived at the hotel with his wife, Elizabeth Uren, until his death in 1922 when the licence was transferred to Elizabeth (*Herald* 25 July 1922:16). Elizabeth Uren transferred the licence of the hotel to John H Gunch in 1938 (*Argus* 5 July 1938:4). After World War Two the hotel management prioritised the employment of returned soldiers (*Age* 1 June 1949:12). W McClure and V H Coleman were registered as directors of the Great Western Hotel in 1947 and subsequently reconfigured the interior as three main sections: bar, dining and saloon (see Figure 4) (*Age* 24 April 1947:8).

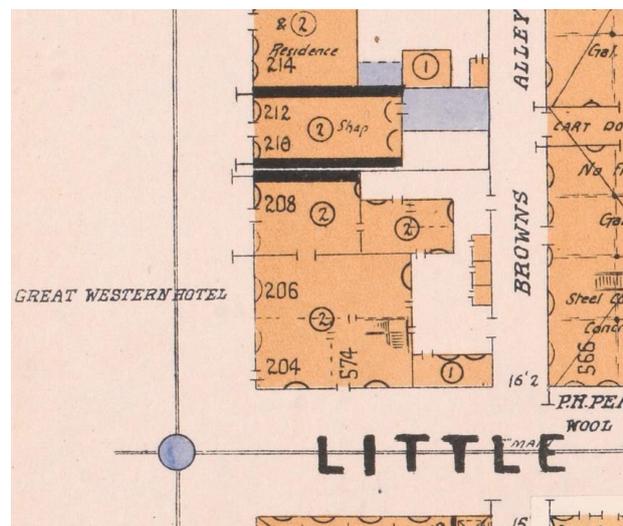


Figure 3. Extract from fire survey plan showing the later, northern addition. (Source: Mahlstedt Map section 1 no 19, 1925, SLV)

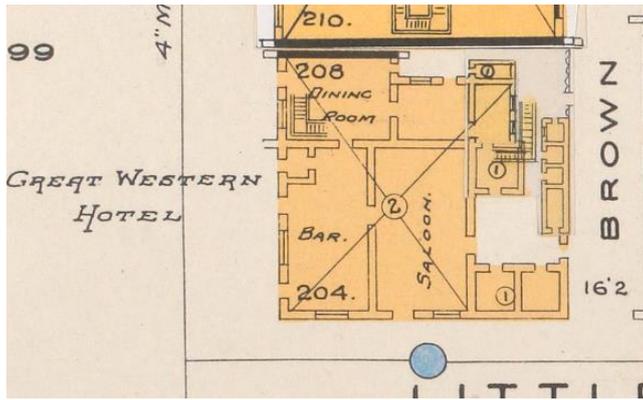


Figure 4. Extract from fire survey plan showing internal layout and reconfiguration. (Source: Mahlstedt Map section 1 no 19, 1948)

The façade of the two-storey addition at 208 King Street replicated in style, materials and window proportions the original 1864 building design at 204-206 King Street, as shown in the cover image and Figure 5. A bathroom was added to the original building in 1928 (MBAI) and in 1938 Robert H McIntyre, architect, invited tenders for alterations and additions to the hotel (*Age* 1 October 1938:5; MBAI).

In the latter decades of the twentieth century the hotel was known as a venue offering affordable food, including 'legendary dim sim bolognaise' and \$2 a head pub meals in the 1970s (*Age* 31 May 1991:2; *Age* 22 July 1975:17). The building was numbered 204-210 in 1974 (S&Mc 1974). The Great Western Hotel does not appear to have had any major alterations or additions made since 1972 (see Figure 5). An article published in the *Age* in 1975 describes the décor of the hotel as 'Victorian Railways Waiting Room 1940s', suggesting that the interior in the 1970s had not been significantly altered from McIntyre's works of 1938 (*Age* 22 July 1975:17).

The Great Western Hotel was closed in March 2017. A newspaper article in the same year stated that the 'pub has been a long-term haunt for barristers and solicitors from the nearby court district, and journalists covering courts and crime' (*Age* 25 January 2017). Approval for partial demolition of the building and construction of a 26-storey tower was granted in 2017 (*Age* 25 January 2017).



Figure 5. The Great Western Hotel in 1972. Note the ground floor level pattern of fenestration remains unchanged today. (Source: Halla 1972, SLV copyright)

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### *A traditional pub*

The Star of the West, later the Great Western Hotel, has served as a traditional hotel through its 153-year history, providing accommodation, meals and alcohol to a changing clientele. Changes in clientele most likely reflected the changing nature of this part of the city, and the uses and activities nearby. Even city pubs served a local – often workplace-based – clientele. Located close to the railway and port section of the city, the hotel advertised accommodation for country visitors in the 1890s, presumably taking advantage of its location near Spencer Street Station (now Southern Cross Station), the main terminus for country trains through to today.

During the twentieth century, the Great Western Hotel followed many of the trends used by hotels to survive lean times. In the 1976 for example, it became one of two city hotels – both in King Street – to propose cut-price drinks as part of a weekly “happy hour”, but a bomb threat to both venues, perhaps by a competitor quickly ended this initiative (*Age* 1 April 1976; 2 April 1976). Cheap food was another strategy used by the licensee of the Great Western Hotel to attract clientele. Peter Smark, a highly regarded journalist, started writing independent reviews of Melbourne restaurants for *The Age* in the 1970s, and his work is regarded as setting the standard for Australian newspaper food criticism (*Sydney Morning Herald* 23 June 2000). For example, Smark produced the first edition of *Eating out in Melbourne* in 1977, a forerunner to the Good Food Guide. Smark’s 1975 review of several inner Melbourne pubs comments positively on the food, described as ‘competent and ordinary but at that price (\$2) it’s remarkable’. Cheap meals continued to be a feature of the Great Western right through to its closure in 2017. The 1970s and 80s saw the development of a vibrant pub music scene in Melbourne and the Great Western Hotel followed that trend, advertising live bands and DJs in the weekly EG (Entertainment Guide) in *The Age* in the 1980s and 90s. Other activities held in the hotel included gatherings after the annual ANZAC Day march, and reunions including one for the VICRAIL

Claims Office reunion in 2012, one of many reunions and retirement send-offs held here for railwaymen (Wurr 2017).

By the 2000s, the Great Western Hotel was mainly known for its old-fashioned pub style, regarded as unchanged perhaps since the 1970s or 60s, with its 'bare simplicity', minimal beer-on-tap options and 'a long, beer-mat-covered wooden bar that services two spotless rooms and nondescript patterned carpet dotted with simple two-level tables and bar stools' (Age 9 June 2013). The meals remained cheap and the clientele were 'city workers, footy-heads and folks taken to nostalgia' (Age 9 June 2013). Frank and Shirley Welsford, licensees from the 1990s drew on their experience in running country pubs; they reinforced traditional service, welcoming regulars by their first name, retaining the beer on tap tradition, and not succumbing to trends such as bottled beer over the counter (Wurr 2017). Regulars during this period ranged from public servants to railwaymen; the lunch trade was strong (Vaughn Moore, pers. comm.).

The Great Western was also regarded as a 'long-term haunt (for barristers and solicitors from the nearby court district, as well as journalists covering courts and the crime beat'. Neville Bowler, Walkley Award winning Age photographer frequented the Great Western; his colleague Peter Cox recorded in Bowler's obituary that 'Neville's charm, good humour and ability to tell a good story made him a most popular drinking partner when the usual cleansing ale was consumed at The Great Western Hotel. So popular that a direct phone line was installed from the Age picture desk to the pub' (Age 16 June 2015).

Modernisation of many city hotels, with new facades and interiors, meant that hotels like the Great Western Hotel were sought out by those who liked its traditional, 'old-fashioned' style, décor and the simplicity of its offering. City and Country Hotels Architectural Appreciation Society (CCHAAPS), an informal group of people who enjoy traditional pubs, visited the Great Western Hotel on a number of occasions, regarding its traditional 'country pub' style – one of the last examples in the CBD – as an attraction (Paul Nicholson and Chris Wurr, pers. comm.). Its regular clientele marked the closure of the Great Western Hotel with numerous gatherings for 'last drinks', and a souvenir stubby holder featuring a sketch of the hotel (drawn by a CCHAAPS member) was produced (Chris Wurr, pers. comm.).

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Located on the north-eastern corner of King Street and Little Bourke Street, and abutted by Brown Alley at the rear, the former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street, Melbourne is a two-storey early Victorian hotel building. The original 1864 built form comprised two sections, with a third module, dating from the early 1920s, added to the north of the building. The addition has been executed in a manner to appear visually coherent and uniform with the original design, using the same materials and detailing, and it is likely that the 1864 face brick walls were rendered and painted to blend with the 1920s addition at this time.

The principal façade to King Street is of dark painted render over loadbearing brickwork with bluestone quoining framing the first level windows and corners of the building. It comprises three main bays, with the original two bays adjacent to the Little Bourke Street corner being of a consistent width, while the northern addition is similar but slightly wider. At the street level, simple rectangular pilasters with Doric capitals terminate in a moulded cornice at the first-floor level. At the first floor level there are ten window openings; comprising six vertically proportioned window openings on the King Street frontage and four on the Little Bourke Street frontage. The windows are arranged in pairs, located

centrally within each section. The window openings within the original bays feature painted smooth face bluestone quoins, as does the corner of the building at Little Bourke Street. The quoins to the northern 1920s addition are scribed and painted, imitating the original bluestone. The quoins that originally formed the northern corner of the original building are still visible in the painted render finish. At the roof level there is a moulded cornice, a narrow, partially intact stringcourse sitting underneath the cornice and a simple low parapet, which conceals three linear hipped roof forms. On the corner, there is a raised section above the parapet that appears to be of steel profile sheeting. The windows appear to be early or original double hung timber framed windows.

On the minor frontage to Little Bourke Street, the façade comprises simple flush painted render with no cornice, but is otherwise similar to the principal façade with four equally spaced vertically proportioned window openings and bluestone quoins on the first floor level, although in this case the stone is rough face. At the rear elevation to Brown Alley, the southernmost module has a single-storey wing, and there is a two-storey wing to the northern addition, both of simple painted loadbearing brick.

The architectural features of the façade are generally representative of the Victorian Regency/Italianate styles, albeit quite a restrained and rustic version with minimal decoration or design sophistication.

At the street level, the rendered brick walls sit on a bluestone plinth. Along the King and Little Bourke street frontages, the façades are punctuated by an irregular pattern of timber frame windows and doors. It is likely that these replaced the original openings, and probably date from the 1920s alterations and were certainly in place by 1972 (see Figure 5), although the main doorway entrance on King Street retains its bluestone threshold.

## INTEGRITY

The former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street, Melbourne is largely intact. The original building remains legible, to its 1864 alongside the northern bay addition in the 1920s. The 1920s modifications appear to have included the rendering and painting of the original face brickwork to facilitate the blending of the addition with the original building.

Notwithstanding the alterations carried out in the 1920s, the 1864 hotel remains legible, and retains much of its original detail, namely its bluestone quoining, street level pilasters, cornices, pattern of openings and early or original window timber frames. Although the pattern of fenestration at the street level has been altered, and the window and door joinery has been replaced, it retains a substantial amount of solid masonry rather than having been replaced with contemporary aluminium shopfronts.

Alterations to the original 1864 building include rendering and overpainting to both the King and Little Bourke street façades, the addition of the raised section of steel profile sheeting above the parapet, and the changes to the façade at street level. The legibility of the original 1864 building has not been diminished by the construction of the 1920s addition. The 1920s addition was associated with the continued operation of the hotel and, constructed as a 'seamless' extension of the original it is not considered to have adversely affected the integrity of the place as a whole. Overall, the building is of moderate to high integrity.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street, Melbourne, originally constructed in 1864 and extended during the 1920s, is a substantial two-storey hotel building on a prominent corner site.

Hotels are a building typology in decline in the City of Melbourne. Examples date from the early years of the establishment of Melbourne as a city through until the present. Some hotels occupied corner sites, while others were located mid-block. It is estimated that over one hundred hotels were operating in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review study area in the 1920s, with this number dropping to about forty-five in the 1960s. Today it is estimated that there are twelve traditional hotels still operating in the city centre with approximately a further fifteen hotel buildings remaining but not in use as hotels. These numbers indicate that hotels are a declining building type and use within central Melbourne (Context 2018:1103).

A number of nineteenth century hotels were re-built or substantially altered during the 1920s and 1930s in response to requirements of the Liquor Licencing Board. This often included the incorporation of residential accommodation, often to the upper level, and improved amenities.

The subject building at 204-208 King Street is an example of a purpose built early Victorian hotel building, an increasingly rare typology in the City of Melbourne, that operated continuously from 1864 until its closure in 2017. It can be compared with the following examples, drawn chiefly from the *Central City Heritage Review 2011* and other earlier studies, being of a similar original use, scale, style and construction date. The images are provided by CoMMaps unless stated otherwise.

*Metropolitan Hotel, 263-267 William Street, 1925 (Interim HO1231 Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

The site has been continually operating as a corner hotel site since 1854. The existing building was built in 1925 to replace an earlier hotel dating from 1854. It is a modest hotel building with simple neo-classical styling, typical of many hotels of the period. Windows to both ground and first floor levels and ground floor entry have been altered.



Figure 6. 263-267 William Street, built in 1925.

*Duke of Wellington Hotel, 142-148 Flinders Street, 1850 (VHR H1175; HO652,)*

The corner section of the Duke of Wellington Hotel was originally built as a stone house for Timothy Lane, in 1850. It was licensed as a hotel in 1853. It is the oldest hotel still operating in Melbourne.



Figure 7. 142-148 Flinders Street, built in 1850.

*Imperial Hotel, 2-8 Bourke Street, 1857 & 1863 (HO524, Significant in HO500 Bourke Hill Precinct)*

Two storey brick and bluestone hotel. Designed in the Renaissance Revival style the first level was built in 1857 and the second storey was added in 1863.



Figure 8. 2-8 Bourke Street, originally built in 1857.

The former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street is a substantial purpose-built early Victorian two-storey hotel building on a prominent corner site, which operated as a hotel for 153 years, from 1864 until 2017. Extended and modified in the 1920s, the original 1864 hotel building remains legible and much of its original detail, namely its bluestone quoining, street level pilasters, cornices has been retained.

Unlike the Metropolitan Hotel at 263-267 William Street, where the windows at ground and first levels have been altered, the former Great Western Hotel retains its original pattern of openings and early or original window timber frames, and other original detail such as its bluestone quoining, street level pilasters, and cornices.

In terms of original and ongoing use, scale, style and construction date, the building is comparable with the Metropolitan Hotel (Interim HO1231), the Duke of Wellington Hotel (HO652) and the Imperial hotel (HO524). The site of the Metropolitan Hotel was in use as a hotel from 1854 although the

original building was replaced in the 1920s. Licensed as a hotel in 1853, the Duke of Wellington Hotel remains the oldest hotel still operating in Melbourne. Unlike the former Great Western Hotel which closed in 2017, the Metropolitan, the Duke of Wellington and the Imperial continue to operate as hotels. The former Great Western Hotel is however notable for its relatively early construction date within the central city.

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**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**


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|---|--|
| ✓ | <p><b>CRITERION A</b><br/>Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>  |
|   | <p><b>CRITERION B</b><br/>Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>   |
|   | <p><b>CRITERION C</b><br/>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>   |
| ✓ | <p><b>CRITERION D</b><br/>Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>   |
|   | <p><b>CRITERION E</b><br/>Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>  |
|   | <p><b>CRITERION F</b><br/>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>   |
| ✓ | <p><b>CRITERION G</b><br/>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p> |
|   | <p><b>CRITERION H</b><br/>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>  |
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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME**

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

**OTHER**

N/A

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**PREVIOUS STUDIES**

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**Central Activities District  
Conservation Study 1985**

D

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**Central City Heritage  
Study 1993**

C

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**Review of Heritage  
overlay listings in the  
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

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**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011**

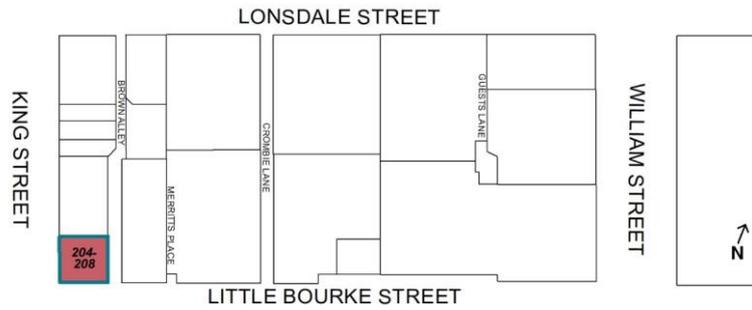
Ungraded

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Heritage Place:** Great Western Hotel

**PS ref no:** HOXXXX



**What is significant?**

The two-storey hotel building at 204-208 King Street, Melbourne, built in 1864 and extended in c1920.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original building form and scale
- The c1920s addition
- The original loadbearing brick walls (later rendered and painted) and pattern of fenestration including pilasters, corner quoins, cornices and parapet, window openings with quoins and projecting sills and rear wings to Brown Alley; and
- The original or early double hung timber frame windows.

Later alterations made to the street level facades and the steel profile sheeting above the parapet are not significant.

**How it is significant?**

204-208 King Street is of local historic, representative and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

**Why it is significant?**

The former Great Western Hotel is historically significant as a substantial early-Victorian purpose-built hotel in Melbourne. It operated continuously as a hotel for 153 years, from 1864 to 2017, initially under the name the Star of the West Hotel, and from 1892 to 2017 as the Great Western Hotel. Additions in the c1920s were associated with and provide evidence of the continued operation of the hotel under new liquor licensing requirements that required provision of adequate accommodation and other facilities. (Criterion A)

The former Great Western Hotel at 204-208 King Street is significant as a largely intact example of a substantial early Victorian hotel building on a prominent corner site. The building façades retain characteristic architectural features of the Victorian Italianate style, albeit in a restrained and rustic manner with minimal decoration or design sophistication. Extended and modified in the 1920s, the addition replicated the building’s original form and detail to create a ‘seamless’ extension to the north along King Street, while the original building remains legible. The former Great Western Hotel is

comparable with other examples of HO listed hotels in central Melbourne with similarly early construction dates and long history of use as a hotel. (Criterion D)

The former Great Western Hotel is of social significance for its long connections with the city, serving as a social meeting place for a diverse clientele for more than 150 years. For city workers, and the legal and media fraternity, the Great Western Hotel served as a place to meet, socialise and share stories. Regarded as 'old-fashioned', it attracted a clientele seeking the simple traditional pub-style – a bar, good beer, and simple, modestly-priced food. Closure of the hotel in October 2017 was marked by many regulars with farewell visits and online posts expressing a strong sense of connection to the hotel and an appreciation of its ambience, offering a traditional pub style then rare amongst city hotels. (Criterion G)

**Primary source**

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Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

