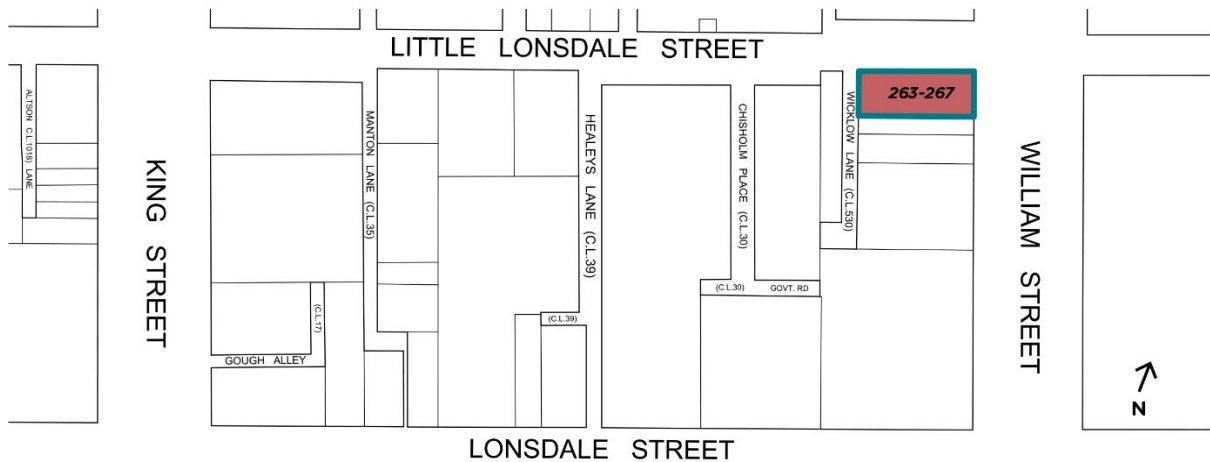


SITE NAME	Metropolitan Hotel
STREET ADDRESS	263-267 William Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110106



SURVEY DATE: February 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY H7822-1146

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE C

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: W M Shields

BUILDER: Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1925

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
13 Enjoying the City	13.6 Eating and drinking
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
9 Working in the City	9.2 Women's work
11 Caring for the Sick and Destitute	11.2 Providing welfare services

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 10	Inventory no: 146
Character of Occupation: Commercial	
1855 Kearney	Two-storey Metropolitan Hotel built 1854/5 shown 1855 map
1866 Cox	Metropolitan Hotel shown
1880 Panorama	As above
1905/6 Mahlstedt	As above
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotels and Lodgings
1920s	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 site has been continually operating as a corner hotel since 1854. The existing building was built in 1925 and is a modest hotel building with simple neo-classical styling, typical of many hotels of the period.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Enjoying the city

Eating and drinking

Established from the 1850s, the modest corner pub has played a significant role in the history of local communities, particularly in the social life of the working community as a meeting place through to the early twentieth century. As townships and suburbs developed in Victoria, many such hotels were built on prominent corner locations on main thoroughfares to attract passing foot traffic en route to nearby houses and commercial, manufacturing and industrial buildings.

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).

The role of the hotel as a provider of accommodation for travelers, and as an entertainment venue and meeting place for local community organisations diminished over time. Between 1890 and 1940, the typical pub became 'much less a community centre and more a male dominated drinking house' (Malone 1988:30). Nevertheless, hotels have served and continue to serve as local meeting places with a regular clientele, and favoured because of their location near city workplaces. 'People like to go to places and drink with other people... and the corner pub persist as a sort of "home away from home" in a way that wine bars and nightclubs will never be' (Wright in Lucas 2017).

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. Today, only approximately 12 hotels in central Melbourne retain their historic use and form (CoM 2018).

Working in the city

Women's work

Women were restricted in terms of the paid work that was available to them. Single women found employment as domestic servants and nursemaids in private homes, although these positions had a high turnover — this situation was disparaged by employers as 'the servant problem'. Women also worked as school teachers and nurses, and as 'shop girls', waitresses and publicans. (Context 2012: 55).

Caring for the sick and destitute

Providing welfare services

The hardships of the 1890s depression highlighted the need for improved welfare provisions. There was soon a high rate of unemployment in Melbourne and as a result families suffered, especially children, who were often being left in the care of others or placed in institutional care.

In the twentieth century significant contributions to social welfare in Melbourne were also made by private benefactors. Notable among these were successful businessmen, such as the retailers Alfred Edmonds and Sidney Myer. Myer famously provided Christmas dinner for Melbourne's poor and homeless at the Exhibition Building each year (Context 2012: 64-5).

SITE HISTORY

The land at 263-267 William Street on the corner allotment at William and Little Lonsdale streets, is part of Crown Allotment 9, Section 31, purchased by Sylvester J Browne by 1839.

A two-storey bluestone hotel named the Metropolitan Hotel and an adjoining shop currently at 261 William Street (HO1088, VHI H7822-1145) opened on the subject site on 17 October 1854, on the same day of the opening of the Melbourne Exhibition in 1854, which was held in the 'Crystal Palace' on the opposite side of William Street (*Argus* 15 October 1854:8) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Former bluestone hotel building and the adjoining shop at 261 William Street (extant) at the end of the 1860s. (Source: Noone 1869, SLV)

The first proprietor of the Metropolitan Hotel was John M Chisholm, an early settler, followed by Robert Wilson in 1855; James Carrol in 1858; Charles Forrester in 1859-1861; Mrs Margaret Forrester in 1874; and Gilbert Duncan in 1880 (Butler 2011:660; *Argus* 15 October 1854:8).

In 1891, the Metropolitan Hotel was described as 'a substantial two-storey bluestone building...containing 11 rooms...kitchen, [and] servant's room' (*Argus* 22 July 1891:2).

The Metropolitan Hotel was one of many Victorian hotels in the 1920s and 1930s to undergo extensive alterations and additions. These changes were initiated by the demands of the Liquor Licenses Reduction Board, established in 1906, which required hotel owners to provide adequate accommodation and facilities for the public.

In January 1925, architect William McMichael Shields invited tenders for the re-erection of the Metropolitan Hotel in brick, for the then owner Mrs C Englehardt. Quantity surveyors were Anderson, Alexander and Hay (*Age* 16 January 1925:6).

Prior to 1925, the bluestone hotel building occupied only about one third of the allotment, which measures 40 by 100 feet, while the rear of the allotment featured a number of smaller structures (Figure 2). The brick reconstruction in 1925 extended the building footprint to the allotment boundaries (Figure 3) (MMBW Detail Plan no 736, 1895; Mahlstedt Section 2, Map no 2a, 1923, Mahlstedt Section 2, Map no 2a, 1962).

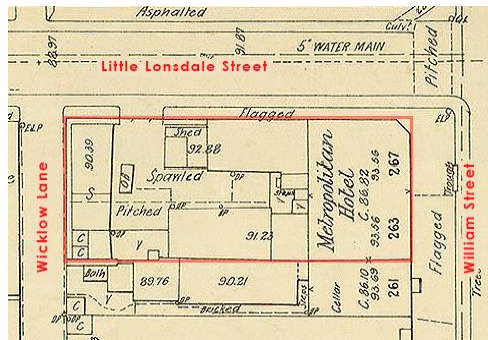


Figure 2. An 1895 MMBW plan showing the former Metropolitan Hotel and rear buildings. (Source: MMBW Detail Plan no 736, 1895, SLV)

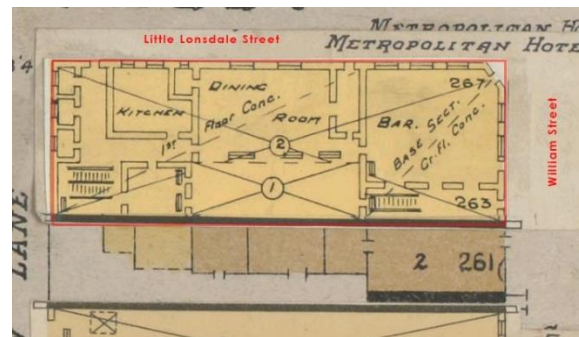


Figure 3. The Metropolitan Hotel surveyed in the late 1920s, soon after the re-erection in brick in 1925. (Source: Mahlstedt Section 2, Map no 2a, c1928, SLV)

According to the City of Melbourne fire survey plan published in the 1920s, the new Metropolitan Hotel premises contained a large front bar, a dining room, a kitchen, and toilets on the ground floor (Mahlstedt Section 2, Map no 2a, c1928).

In 1932, the Metropolitan Hotel was described in an auction notice as containing a bar, four parlours, a dining room, and 15 bedrooms (*Age* 5 Oct 1932:2). In 1938, the hotel was remodelled, and hot and cold-water showers installed (*Age* 17 December 1938:19).

During the first half of the twentieth century, the licensees of the Metropolitan Hotel were predominantly women, including: Miss Alice J Morton, 1900; Mrs Esther Kingdon, 1910; Mrs S J Hughes, 1920; Miss K Richardson, 1930; and Mrs L E Power, 1940 (S&Mc 1900-1940).

Under Mrs Power's management during the period between c1938 and 1949, the Metropolitan Hotel gained a reputation for charitable acts. In addition to weekly donations of her own, Mrs Power formed the youth group 'Boys of the Metropolitan Hotel' to raise money for the Children's Hospital appeal, which later became the Good Friday appeal. Mrs Power was also the organiser of the 'Fags for Fighters' campaign, funded and promoted by the *Sporting Globe*, for supplying cigarettes to Australian soldiers fighting in World War Two (*Sporting Globe* 9 April 1949:15). The Metropolitan Hotel continues to partner with leading charity groups to deliver events today (The Metropolitan Hotel 2018).

A photograph from the 1960s (Figure 4) shows the Metropolitan Hotel with its original 1925 design. The upper-storey maintains its face brick wall, and the ground floor has been rendered and painted. The thin metal art deco style signage may be a slightly later addition, as this style became popular in Melbourne around the mid-1930s-40s. The Metropolitan Hotel continues to operate from the same premises at 263-267 William Street today.



Figure 4. The Metropolitan Hotel with face brick walls in c1960s. (Source: Halla c1960s, SLV)

W M Shields, architect

William McMichael Shields was born in Sunbury in 1869, to Scottish parents, Dr Andrew and Agnes Shields. After completing his education at Hawthorn Grammar School and Scotch College, he was articled in the office of architect Guyon Purchas, where he went into partnership with Purchas at the age of 27 (Bauer, 2015:15-6).

At the turn of the twentieth century, Shields commenced his own practice and built up a reputation as architect of the Children's Hospital, the Women's Hospital and the Scots' Church, Melbourne. He designed more than 250 small and large projects and built more than 64 residential and 21 commercial buildings, mostly constructed in and around Melbourne. His last tender notice in 1935 appears in conjunction with Leighton Erwin, a well-known hospital architect (Bauer, 2015:16-7).

William Shields was a fellow of Royal Victorian Institute of Architecture from 1903 and a long-time affiliate of the Scots' Church, where he carried out a number of construction and restoration projects and where he had his wedding (Bauer, 2015:17). William Shields died in Hawthorn East in 1949.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Landmark hotel in Melbourne's legal precinct

The Metropolitan Hotel has provided a meeting place for individuals and groups from its establishment in 1854, with Melbourne Literary Institute meetings and election meetings (*Argus* 3 May 1867: 8; *Argus* 1 November 1864:6) held at the premises from the 1860s. The hotel also provided a home to a number of Melbourne residents through to the 1930s (*Argus* 24 April 1936:1).

The area bound by Collins, William, Lonsdale and Queen streets is known as Melbourne's legal precinct, with concentration of legal profession, courts and government offices associated with the legal system (Bamford 2008). The Metropolitan Hotel has served its legal precinct 'neighbourhood' for decades. Located close to the Melbourne Magistrates Court, County Court and nearby legal chambers, the Metropolitan Hotel has long been the 'watering hole' favoured by the legal fraternity, particularly criminal barristers and solicitors, as well as by law enforcement and those attending court. These connections date back decades, and continue today (*Age* 14 December 1997:12; *Age* 26 October 1998:13; *Age* 29 June 2006:11). It has also been a past favourite for journalists at the *Age*, the ABC (ABC Radio headquarters was at Broadcast House in Lonsdale Street from 1945 to 1995), *Nation Review* (1970-1981), and foreign affairs staff from Radio Australia (*Age* 5 October 1997:7).

In 2016, the *Age* wrote that a sale was expected, for the 'Lawyers' pub' Metropolitan Hotel, 'a popular legal district meeting place', which 'bookmarks the western end of the city's legal precinct' (*Age* 9 March 2016:28).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The brick hotel at 263-267 William Street is located on the corner of William and Little Lonsdale streets. It is a two-storey brick building with a hipped roof concealed behind a parapet wall. Like many corner hotels, it is built directly to the street boundaries with a chamfered corner marking the entry point to the hotel.

Detailing to the façade is simple with a restrained neo-classical character typical of the interwar period. Varying elements of the façade reference classical motifs and styling. Simple pilasters occur around both street elevations of the second storey of the building, running to the full height of the parapet. A deep moulded cornice runs around the upper section of the parapet, and a second, narrower cornice runs around each elevation, just above window height.

The face brick (now overpainted) façade has rendered bays at the corner, at the northern end of the William Street elevation, and in the middle and eastern end of the Little Lonsdale elevation. The latter bays have arched windows with an arched cornice above. Rectangular window openings to the rest of the façade were originally spaced in a regular pattern. Windows are double hung sash windows with stone sills intact. Windows closest to the corner on each elevation have been replaced by oversized arched windows more recently. An early brick chimney exists on the northern edge of the building.

On the ground level, openings resemble the original but have been widened or lengthened in some locations. Windows and doors have been replaced. The tiled ground floor dado shown on the c1960s photo has been removed and the whole of the lower façade has been rendered. On the upper façade, face brick noted in the same photo has been overpainted.

The art deco style metal lettering reading 'Metropolitan' on the William Street elevation remains, but other signage noted in the c1960s photo has been removed.

INTEGRITY

The hotel building retains its form, including the chamfered corner and hipped roof concealed behind a parapet wall. Alterations have occurred to some windows and doors on both levels. Wall finishes have been altered with overpainting/rendering occurring on both levels and removal of the tiled dado at street level. Some early signage has been removed on both faces, with the word 'Metropolitan' remaining on the William Street face.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Hotels are a common building typology in the City of Melbourne, with examples dating from the early years of the establishment of Melbourne through until the present. Many hotels occupied corner sites, and a number of nineteenth century hotels were rebuilt or substantially altered during the 1920s and 1930s, incorporating improved amenities in response to the requirements of liquor licencing.

The subject building at 263-267 William Street dates from 1925. It can be compared with the following interwar examples, drawn chiefly from the Central City Heritage Review 2011 and other earlier studies, being of a similar use, scale, location and creation date.

The below images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Selected examples of corner hotels include:

Royal Mail Hotel, 519 Spencer Street, West Melbourne, 1938 (HO783)

The Royal Mail Hotel was built in 1938 and features a art-deco parapet over the splayed corner with a fairly intact first floor to both street elevations. It features a heavily altered ground floor.



Figure 5. Royal Mail Hotel, 519 Spencer Street West Melbourne constructed 1938. (Source: Google Maps)

Hotel Spencer, 475 Spencer Street, West Melbourne, mid-1920s (HO781)

The Hotel Spencer is built in the interwar classical revival style over three-storées. The ground floor has been altered through the insertion of new doors and windows; however the upper floors are intact.



Figure 6. Hotel Spencer 475 Spencer Street West Melbourne constructed c1920.

Waterside Hotel, 508-514 Flinders Street, 1925 (HO1038)

Built on the site of the old London and Carnarvon Hotel, this three-storey brick hotel (1925) with a corner tower was designed by Harry R Johnson. It still operates as a hotel and was refurbished in 2004.



Figure 7. 508-514 Flinders Street constructed 1925.

It is estimated that over 100 hotels were operating in the Hoddle Grid Study Area in the 1920s, with this declining to about 45 in the 1960s. Today it is estimated that there are 12 traditional hotels still operating in the city centre with a further approximately 15 hotel buildings remaining but not in use as hotels. These numbers indicate that hotels are a declining building type and use within the Study Area. The fringes of the city retain a number of hotels from the interwar period as indicated by the Hotel Spencer and Royal Mail Hotel.

It is relatively common for corner sites to be set aside as hotels in the 1850s and for redevelopment to occur at a later time when the buildings were no longer able to meet licensing requirements. Stylistically the Metropolitan Hotel is conservative compared with this cohort, and somewhat similar to the Royal Mail Hotel, although lacking the art deco styling. The Hotel Spencer is an elegant example of the classical revival style and the Waterside Hotel is distinguished through its flamboyant corner tower, although otherwise quite typical in form and detail. Against this group the Metropolitan Hotel can be seen as representative of hotels of the interwar period.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspect of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION G 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>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

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

REFERENCES

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Argus, as cited.

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Sporting Globe, as cited.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Study 1993**

C

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

Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

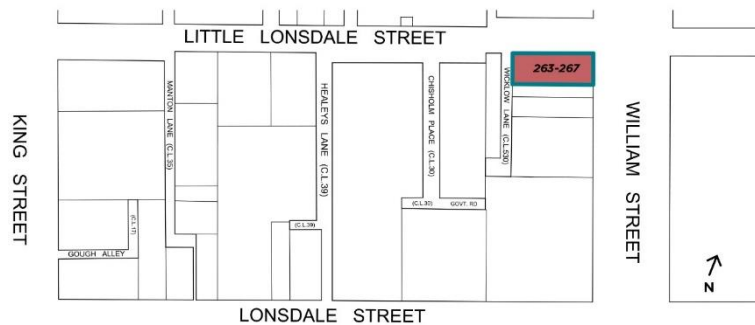
Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Metropolitan Hotel



PS ref no: Interim HO1231



What is significant?

Metropolitan Hotel at 263-267 William Street, Melbourne, built in 1925.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing;
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design;
- Hipped roof and flat parapet;
- Chamfered corner entry, and the pattern and size of original fenestration with double hung sash windows and stone sills;
- Classical motifs and styling to the façade including pilasters and major and minor cornice;
- Early brick chimney; and
- Art deco style metal lettering reading 'Metropolitan' on the William Street façade.

Later alterations made to the facades including the large round arched windows and corner window at the upper level and altered window and door openings at the ground level are not significant.

How it is significant?

Metropolitan Hotel at 263-267 William Street, Melbourne, is of local historic, rarity, representative and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Metropolitan Hotel building at 263-267 William Street is historically significant due to its association with the long term and continued operation of the Metropolitan Hotel on the same corner site from 1854 to present day. The Metropolitan Hotel is of historical significance for its association with the establishment of city hotels as meeting places; the increased occupation of women as publicans, particularly from the early 1900s; and the hotel's role from the late 1930s in raising money for charity. As one of a number of Melbourne hotels that underwent significant change in the 1920s and 1930s due to the demands of the Liquor Licenses Reduction Board from 1907, requiring hotel owners to provide adequate accommodation and facilities for the public, the Metropolitan Hotel is illustrative of the substantial hotel development that took place at this time. (Criterion A)

The Metropolitan Hotel is a rare surviving example of a traditional corner hotel. Once a ubiquitous land use and activity, the number of traditional hotels are in severe decline in the Hoddle Grid Study Area, reducing from over 100 in the 1920s, to approximately 45 in the 1960s, and with around 12 currently retaining their location, building form and use. (Criterion B)

The Metropolitan Hotel at 263-267 William Street is a representative example of a hotel from the interwar period. This typology is characterised by the corner location and splayed entrance, two-storey building form with residential accommodation on the first floor and public areas on the ground floor. A key characteristic of the Metropolitan Hotel is the restrained neo-classical character typical of the interwar period. Its integrity is consistent with other examples where the pattern and type of doors and windows have been altered, particularly to the ground floor. (Criterion D)

The Metropolitan Hotel is of social significance for its long connections with the city, as a place of social congregation for more than 160 years, providing a meeting place for particular organisations and groups, as well as for informal meetings, social activities and celebrations. The social significance of the Metropolitan Hotel is evidenced by the regular, long-term, and continuous use as a hotel – a ‘public house’ – serving the legal fraternity and court visitors in particular and continuing to serve that function today. (Criterion G)

Primary source

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

