

# HERITAGE REPORT

## ORIENTAL HOTEL

55 Nelson Place Williamstown



**Lesley Alves & Associates**

**Historians**

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## **Contents**

<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 History .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.1 Historical Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.1.1 Williamstown .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.1.2 Hotels .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.2 History of Oriental Hotel (Former) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3 Physical Evidence .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1 Description of the building.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.2 Alterations to the fabric .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4 Cultural Significance.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.1 Comparative Analysis .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.2 Relevant themes demonstrated in the place.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.3 Statement of Significance.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **1 Introduction**

This report has been prepared for Hobsons Bay City Council, by historians Lesley Alves and Louise Blake. It is a history and heritage assessment of the (Former) Oriental Hotel at 55 Nelson Place, Williamstown, HO211 on the Heritage Overlay.

This research has been conducted using previously published material, historic maps, images, and some public records. The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by Brian Haynes of Williamstown Historical Society. A detailed list of references is included in the bibliography.

## **2 History**

### **2.1 Historical Background**

#### **2.1.1 Williamstown**

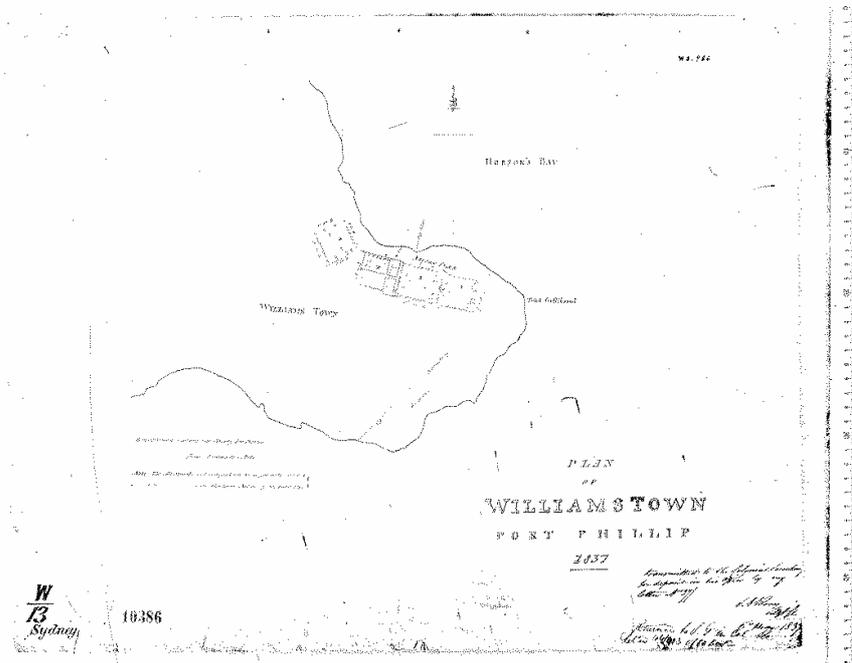
Between 1798 and 1802 several British expeditions explored the Victorian coastline and Port Phillip Bay and reported on the settlement potential of the region. Following short-lived British settlements at Sorrento and Corinella, explorers Hume and Hovell visited the region and surveyed the landscape with a view to its potential as grazing land. By the mid 1830s a shortage of pasture in Tasmania and the favourable reports of Hume and Hovell prompted a number of settlers to explore the grazing potential of the Port Phillip District. In June 1835 John Batman, one of the founders of the Port Phillip Association, visited Port Phillip and acquired a large amount of land through a 'treaty' with the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people. Despite the land claim of the Port Phillip Association being declared void, members of the Association and other squatters began flooding into the district, bringing with them sheep and cattle to graze on what seemed like an abundant supply of grazing land.

Following the proclamation of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales in 1836 and the appointment of Captain William Lonsdale to oversee the settlement, the townships of Melbourne and Williamstown were surveyed. The township of Williams Town, named after King William IV, was surveyed at Point Gellibrand where members of the Port Phillip Association had initially disembarked to take up pastoral runs in the district. Four blocks of land fronting Nelson Place comprised the new township of Williams Town and included Section 1 between Ann Street and the unnamed Parker (now Kanowna) Street [see Figure 1]. Crown land sales for land on Nelson Place between Cole and Thompson streets were held in June 1837. Further land sales were held over the next three years.<sup>1</sup> By 1840 the settlement featured a few weatherboard houses, tents, huts, a store, bakery and two hotels, the Woolpack Inn and the Ship Inn, which were constructed of thatched roofs and wattle and daub walls.<sup>2</sup>

Williamstown was initially the port of Port Phillip and as a result some of the early buildings constructed along Nelson Place were associated with shipping or catering for passengers and crew disembarking at Williamstown.<sup>3</sup> Hotels provided accommodation and/or refreshment to the new arrivals and those living and working in the busy settlement. Among the early hotels were the Woolpack Inn, the Ship Inn and the Albion Hotel.<sup>4</sup> Some of the early publicans of Williamstown's hotels came from shipping or naval backgrounds. Tait writes that Captain Bowden who established the Ship Inn (known then as Captain Bowden's Public House) was the master of the schooner Tamar that operated between Launceston and Port Phillip.<sup>5</sup> The first owner of the original Woolpack Inn, James Jordan, had served in the British Navy.<sup>6</sup>

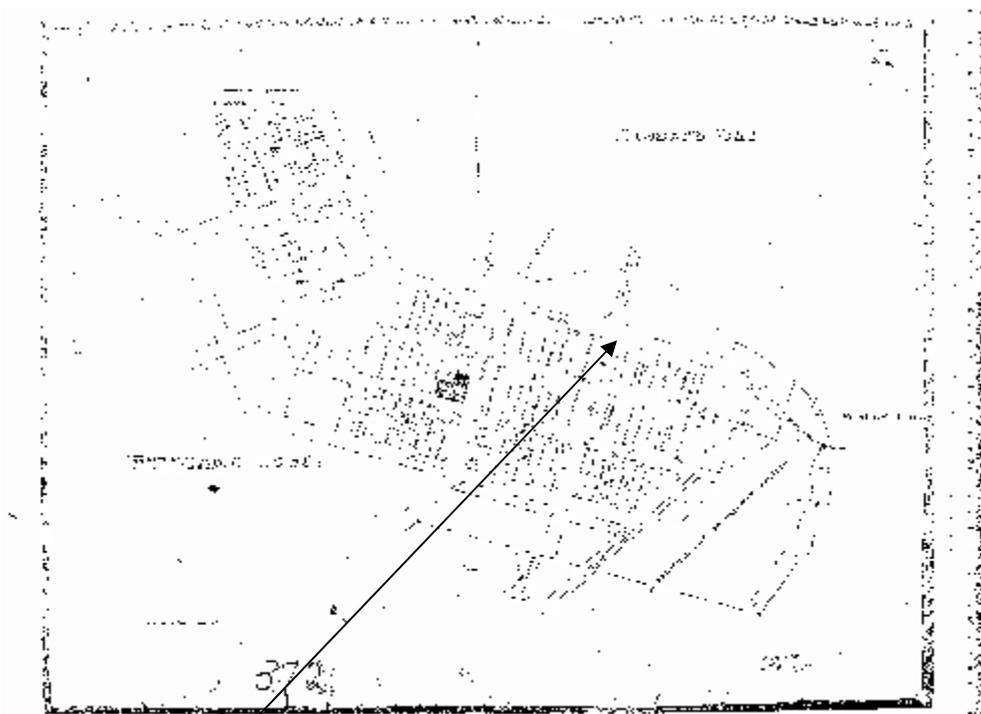
The 1850s gold rush may have shifted the centre of Port Phillip's shipping industry to Sandridge (Port Melbourne), but the prosperity of the 1850s did have an impact on the development of Williamstown. By the mid 1850s many of the allotments in the surveyed township were sold [see Figure 2]. A lithograph of Hobsons Bay and Williamstown published by Quarrill & Co in 1854 shows the development at that time [see Figure 3]. A number of hotels were constructed in Williamstown in the 1850s. The Pier Hotel was constructed on the corner of Thompson Street and Nelson Place. The owner of the hotel, James Conroy, is said to have made his wealth on the goldfields and the hotel was initially made of granite.<sup>7</sup> The Marine Hotel on the corner of Thompson and Little Nelson Street was also built of stone.<sup>8</sup> Some hotels, such as the Commercial,

were still constructed of timber.<sup>9</sup> The absence of rate books from this period – local government was not established in Williamstown until 1856 – makes it difficult to accurately determine the structure of the early buildings, and many descriptions have been based on the Borough of Williamstown rate book descriptions from 1858 onwards.<sup>10</sup>



**Fig 1: Plan of Williamstown Port Phillip 1837**

[Sydney W13; PROV, VPRS 15899, Historic Plans Collection [copy of VPRS 8168; reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, Australia



**Figure 2: Plan of Williams Town, 1853, showing the allotments in the township that had been sold and the future site of the Oriental Hotel [Feature 372; PROV, VPRS 15899, Historic Plans Collection (copy of VPRS 8168) reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria]**

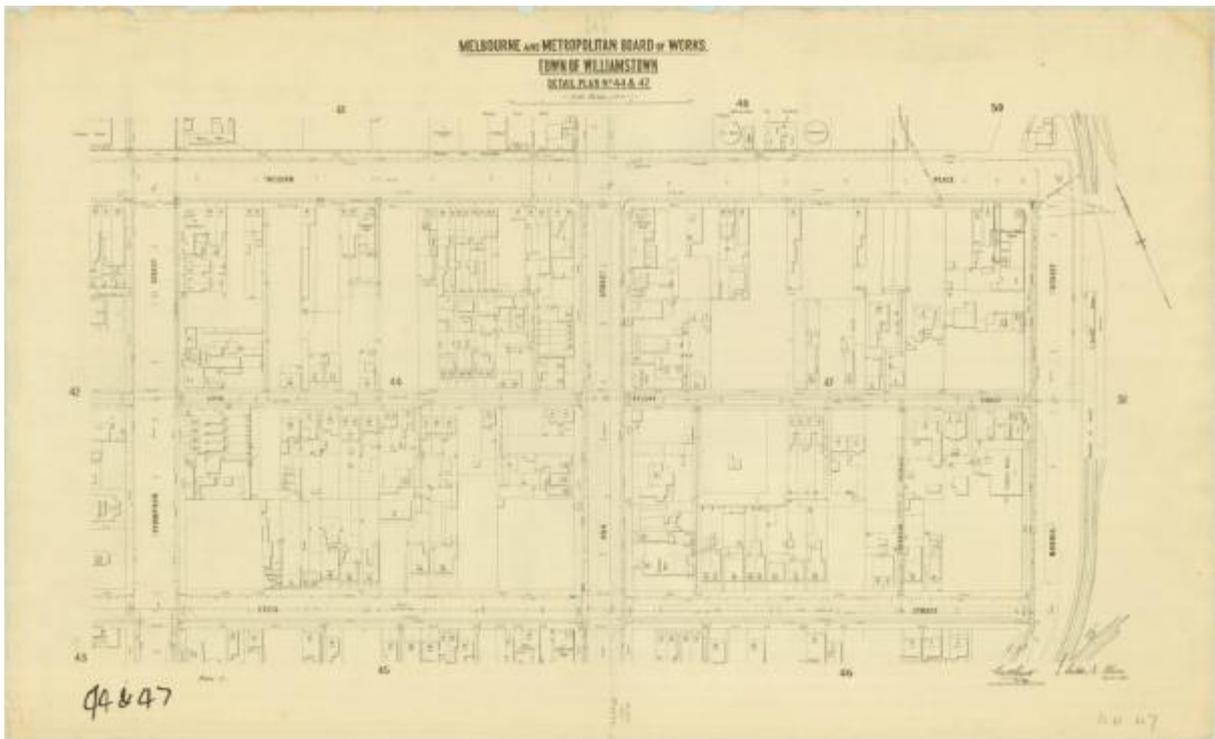


**Figure 3: Williamstown Hobsons Bay, 1854.**

The sketch shows the Williamstown Lighthouse on Gellibrand's Point. To the right of the lighthouse is the subject hotel, with the ground floor obscured. [Snell, Edward, 1820-1880; 'Williamstown Hobson's Bay, 1854 / possibly lithographed by Edward Snell', (Melbourne): R. Quarrill & Co., 1854, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales]

Although Williamstown lost its role as a major port, it became a centre for ship building and repair, with the Alfred Graving Dock and State shipbuilding yard completed in 1874. By the 1880s the commercial centre of Williamstown was moving away from Nelson Place to Ferguson Street and Douglas Parade, and other industries unrelated to shipping were beginning, in particular the vast Newport Workshops commenced in 1882. A Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan drawn in 1908 shows quite a lot of vacant land in the area bounded by Nelson Place, Ann Street, Cecil Street and Morris Street (now Kanowna Street) [see Figure 4]. However some industrial development had commenced, with a chemical factory opening in about 1906 in Morris Street. In the 1930s the James Seymour Woollen Mills were established in Morris Street and over the following three decades expanded to occupy much of the block bounded by Nelson Place, Ann Street, Aitken Street and Morris Street. The mill was busy with wartime production during the Second World War and by 1947 was employing 650 workers.<sup>11</sup>

In recent decades Williamstown has lost much of its industry, and has become gentrified as a desirable residential suburb, linked to Melbourne via the Westgate Bridge which opened in 1978.



**Figure 4: MMBW plan featuring Nelson Place, Thompson Street, Cecil Place and Morris Street, 1908**  
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan, 44 & 47, Town of Williamstown State Library of Victoria]

### 2.1.2 Hotels

Since the time of first European settlement, hotels have had a significant place in Australian communities. An inn, pub, public house, or hotel, however small and humble, was often the first public building in a community. Indeed it was often the case that a town formed around an inn built at a crossroads or landing place. John Pascoe Fawkner opened his grog shop on the bank of the Yarra River on the site of the Customs House in 1836. The first hotel licences for Melbourne were issued a year later and by the end of 1838 Melbourne had 18 hotels. Hotels were usually built in prominent positions on main streets to attract passing trade, corner sites being preferred. In port towns, hotels were built near the waterfront, ready to provide accommodation for passengers arriving and departing as well as meals, refreshments and entertainment for port workers.<sup>12</sup> The 1908 MMBW plan of four town blocks in Williamstown [Figure 4] shows ten hotels within the area.

In the early years of European settlement in Australia, hotels have filled the gap as venues for municipal council meetings, court proceedings and even church services, before local communities and authorities got on with the job of erecting the appropriate buildings. As part of their ongoing function, hotels have hosted private functions such as weddings and wakes, and public events including political meetings and entertainment of all kinds, from theatre and dances to horse racing and boxing. There is a strong tradition of retired sports people, such as footballers and boxers, taking on a new career as a publican, cementing traditional ties between drinking and sport, and bringing local celebrity status into the hotel.<sup>13</sup> Some hotels have also hosted illegal or shady activities such as SP bookmaking and prostitution.<sup>14</sup>

In order to limit the adverse social effects of drinking, licensing laws have imposed minimum standards of accommodation and amenities, and, prompted by the strong temperance movement, reduced the number of hotels. From 1907 the Licenses Reduction Board closed many hotels in Victoria, mainly suburban Melbourne, including a number in Williamstown.<sup>15</sup>

Every hotel established its own identity, reputation and particular kind of clientele — be it a family hotel, a watering hole for workers, a popular sports bar for the local residents, or even a place of ill

repute. Over its lifetime a hotel could have been all of these and more, changing to meet the needs of the surrounding community. As Freeland has pointed out: “A pub owes its very survival to its ability to offer the latest in comforts service and amenities consistent to the demands of its customers”.<sup>16</sup> Consequently hotels have constantly needed alterations and improvements to remain in business, and very few early hotels have survived in their original state.

Williamstown's former Oriental Hotel, (under four different names), fulfilled the changing demands of its community, sometimes showing its seamy side, for over 130 years.

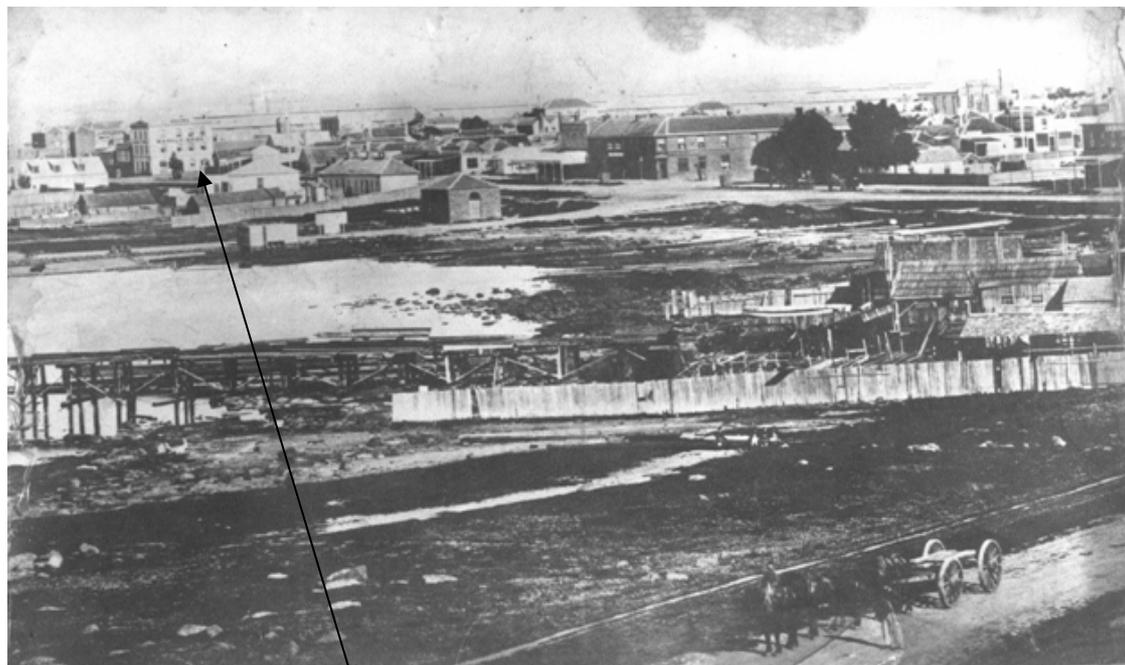
## **2.2 History of Oriental Hotel (Former), Williamstown**

The site of the hotel, Williamstown Town allotment 8 of Section 1 Parish of Cut Paw Paw, comprising almost a quarter of an acre (approximately 0.2 hectare), was sold at auction to Benjamin Skelton for 23 pounds 15 shillings at the third sale of Town land on 27 June 1849.<sup>17</sup> Skelton was a boatman, but nothing further is known about his connection to Williamstown. Skelton died on 7 March 1853 and probate of his estate, including Allotment 8 Section 1 was granted to his wife, Sarah Skelton.<sup>18</sup> On 25 April 1853 Sarah Skelton married mariner Henry Cox.<sup>19</sup> Property transactions relating to Allotment 8 Section 1 following the marriage of Sarah Skelton and Henry Cox suggest that the land was part of a marriage settlement between Henry and Sarah and that the couple subsequently mortgaged the land.<sup>20</sup> On 25 April 1854 a mortgage agreement was made between Henry and Sarah Cox with George Thomas “in respect of the erection of a certain Hotel or House upon the said land”.<sup>21</sup> Newspaper references to Cox’s Hotel or Cox’s Family Hotel appear as early as September 1854. On 1 September 1854 an advertisement appeared in the *Argus* for a “good female cook wanted for Cox’s Hotel” and in October an inquest was reported as being held at Cox’s Family Hotel in Williamstown.<sup>22</sup>

Previous heritage reports have stated that there had been a hotel on the site since 1856 when the original Barkly Arms Hotel was constructed.<sup>23</sup> However, the 1854 lithograph of Williamstown Hobsons Bay includes what may be a three-storey building in the vicinity of where the Barkly Arms Hotel was built [see Figure 3]. The building is depicted with a row of four windows on the upper and middle storey of the building, but the front and ground floor of the building is obscured. A map of Williamstown hotels dated 1987 places Cox’s Family Hotel on the same allotment behind the Barkly Arms Hotel.<sup>24</sup> Tait states that Cox’s Family Hotel became the Barkly Arms Hotel.<sup>25</sup> The building depicted in the 1854 lithograph closely resembles the 1860s photograph of the Barkly Arms Hotel with its row of four windows on the Ann Street facade [see Figure 5]. The absence of rate books for this period means that we do not have a description of Cox’s Family Hotel.

While it is not yet known exactly when the Barkly Arms Hotel was established it is likely that it was named after the arrival of Sir Henry Barkly who was appointed Governor of Victoria in November 1856. Williamstown was not the only suburb to have a hotel named after Barkly – variations on the name appeared in hotels in Queenscliff, St Kilda, Heidelberg, Richmond, and Fitzroy. In January 1857 a notice in the *Williamstown Chronicle* by Henry Cox still referred to Cox’s Family Hotel, but by May 1857 Joseph Soden was granted the licence to the Barkly Arms.<sup>26</sup> By April 1858 Thomas Carroll was listed as the licensee.<sup>27</sup>

In June 1858 the Barkly Arms and the two adjoining cottages were advertised for sale. In the advertisement the Barkly Arms was described as a “substantially built and commodious hotel [that] occupies the best side in Williamstown for business purposes, being situate at the corner of Ann-street and Nelson-place, opposite the Government Pier and the new Patent Slip. Is doing a first-rate business, and is let for £800 per annum.”<sup>28</sup> The 1858/59 rate book for the Borough of Williamstown describes the Barkly Arms as a 15 room brick building. Henry Cox was listed as the owner of the hotel, as well as the two wooden dwellings on Ann Street, one of which Cox occupied with the other occupied by a Mary Cohen.<sup>29</sup> By July 1859 Henry and Sarah Cox, together with the trustees of the marriage settlement, were being sued by Alexander McNaughtan, who had been a partner in Tasmanian firm Kerr, Bogle & Co. McNaughtan was suing the couple over the mortgage they had taken out on the hotel property, with the case resulting in foreclosure.<sup>30</sup> In October 1860 the *Argus* reported that Cox was insolvent as a result of the legal expenses involved in attempting to recover the property.<sup>31</sup>



NELSON PLACE 1863

**Figure 5: Nelson Place, c.1863.**

The Barkly Arms is in the top left corner of the photograph, which was taken after the July 1862 fire that destroyed the Ship Inn Hotel and Albion Hotel.<sup>32</sup> [Courtesy: Williamstown Historical Society]

The new owner of the Barkly Arms was John Bogle, who had been in partnership with Alexander McNaughtan in Tasmania. Bogle had returned to Glasgow in 1839 and later moved to Torquay in Devon.<sup>33</sup> In 1860-61 John Bunter was publican of the Barkly Arms, followed by William and Alice Butiment.<sup>34</sup> In 1860 the hotel was said to have been accused of being a disorderly house.<sup>35</sup> By 1865 Reuben Thomas Adams was publican.<sup>36</sup> Adams, who is said to have spent time on the goldfields after arriving in Victoria in 1853 had also been associated with the Pier Hotel in Williamstown.<sup>37</sup> The 1860s photograph of Williamstown features the Barkly Arms Hotel. The name of the hotel is written on the Ann Street facade with the name of Adams on the roof parapet. The three-storey hotel featured in this photograph, with its row of four windows on the Ann Street facade closely resembles the 1854 lithograph.

Like many hotels in Williamstown, the Barkly Arms has suffered damage from fire. In 1862 fire destroyed the Ship Inn Hotel and the original Albion Hotel, as well as some neighbouring businesses.<sup>38</sup> Previous heritage reports have stated that the Barkly Arms Hotel was destroyed by fire c.1870 and the existing larger building was constructed afterwards.<sup>39</sup> Elsum writes that the Barkly Arms Hotel was destroyed by a fire that spread right along Nelson Place as far as 'Dint' Munday's shop.<sup>40</sup> An article on the Williamstown Volunteer Fire Brigade in the *Williamstown Chronicle* in 1929 reported that members remembered the big fire that went from the Barkly Arms to 'Dint' Munday's business, but does not mention that the hotel was destroyed.<sup>41</sup> A TROVE search of the *Williamstown Chronicle* and the *Argus* has not yet found a report of a fire destroying the Barkly Arms in the 1870s.<sup>42</sup> In the Sands & McDougall directories and, more reliably the rate books the Barkly Arms Hotel continues to be recorded.<sup>43</sup> In the Borough of Williamstown rate book in 1880-81 the hotel is still described as a 16 room brick hotel.<sup>44</sup>

A photograph of the Prince of Wales Hotel on the corner of Morris (now Kanowna) Street and Nelson Place dated 1870-75 also features the Barkly Arms Hotel [see Figure 6] When viewed in closer detail the Nelson Place facade of the Barkly Arms Hotel is unchanged from earlier photographs, and also features a six paned window on the top storey of the Morris Street facade, where a window is situated on the existing building [see Figure 6]. While it is possible the photograph pre-dates a fire in the 1870s the basic structure of the building with its window positions is not dissimilar to the existing building.



**Figure 6: Henry Foncesca's Prince of Wales hotel, c1870-1875.**

The Barkly Arms Hotel is located in the background on the left side of the street (see excerpt from photo below) [American and Australasian Photographic Company, 'Henry Foncesca's Prince of Wales Hotel, corner Morris Street & Nelson Place, and Morris Street with gasworks, Williamstown', 1870-1875 *Holtermann Collection : photographs of goldfield towns in N.S.W. and Victoria; Sydney and Melbourne streets and buildings, 1871-1876*, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales]



**Figure 7: Excerpt from Henry Foncesca's Prince of Wales hotel, c1870-1875, showing the three-storey Barkly Arms Hotel**

By 1881 the hotel was known as the Oriental Hotel with Richard Murphy its licensee, but it was Richard's wife, Bridget Murphy who was the hotel's most well-known publican. Bridget had been associated with the hotel since she and her first husband, Henry Jones took over the Barkly Arms around 1869-70. The couple had previously run the Queen's Head Hotel in Cecil Street.<sup>45</sup> After Henry died in 1870 the licence of the Barkly Arms was transferred to Bridget, who later married

Andrew Walker.<sup>46</sup> Walker is recorded as the publican from approximately 1871.<sup>47</sup> After Andrew Walker died in 1877 Bridget married Richard Murphy who worked at the hotel and is later recorded as the hotel's publican.<sup>48</sup>

Tait writes that in the late 1870s “the local police tried to have the hotel closed because of unseemly conduct and for the number of brawls that were fought there. Many a ship had to delay leaving port because their seamen were either incapacitated by injury, in police custody, or late returning to the ship...”<sup>49</sup> Tait also writes that at this time the hotel was involved in a number of court cases for crimping, or procuring sailors by decoy or force.<sup>50</sup> In one court case an Edward Mitchell stated that he had been employed by Richard Murphy to bring men to the Barkly Arms to work and then take them back on board again.<sup>51</sup> Bridget Murphy later bought the hotel from John Bogle but by the mid 1880s the Murphys were no longer running the hotel.<sup>52</sup> Richard Murphy died in 1887 and Bridget Murphy died in 1894.<sup>53</sup>

In December 1886 the Oriental Hotel suffered damage after the adjoining Beckett's restaurant and Barnham's bakery were destroyed by fire. The *Williamstown Chronicle* reported that the Oriental Hotel was saved from total destruction but sustained much damage.<sup>54</sup> It is not clear from this report exactly what damage the hotel sustained, but rate books show that between 1886-87 and 1887-88 the hotel went from being a 16 room brick hotel to a 22 room brick hotel.<sup>55</sup> Previous heritage reports stated that the upgrading of the hotel in the 1880s followed new licensing laws that were introduced in 1877 that required hotels to have a certain number of rooms to be licensed.<sup>56</sup>

In the 1890s the hotel was again renovated. The *Williamstown Chronicle* reported that the new licensee Tom Curran had altered the accommodation and provided a boxing saloon where he intended to stage fights. Curran was said to have been a former boxing champion.<sup>57</sup> Tait writes that one of the boarders at the hotel at this time was heavyweight boxer Jim Rogers who boxed regularly at the Apollo Hall in Bourke Street, but also made appearances at boxing events staged at the Oriental. Rogers is said to have conducted a boxing school in one of the rooms at the hotel.<sup>58</sup> Tait writes that boxing continued after George Rogers took over the licence of the Oriental Hotel and that “boxing fans would arrive from all over Melbourne to witness some of the best fights being staged in Melbourne at that time.”<sup>59</sup>

In 1896 the Oriental Hotel was taken over by Captain William Boyer Thompson, who was married to one of Bridget Murphy's daughters. Thompson retained the licence on and off until June 1906.<sup>60</sup> The 1908 map prepared by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works records the location of the Oriental Hotel and a number of structures in Ann Street adjoining the hotel [see Figure 4]. The rate book describes the hotel at this time as a 20 room hotel.<sup>61</sup>

The hotel was said to have been renovated in the mid 1920s to give it a more modern appearance.<sup>62</sup> The rate book description of the hotel remained unchanged although the number of rooms had been reduced to 19.<sup>63</sup> Tait writes that in 1947 the rear of the premises was demolished and additional bedrooms, dining room, lounge, kitchen and servery areas were added.<sup>64</sup> The rate book description was again unchanged.<sup>65</sup> This renovation coincides with the peak time of the nearby Seymour Woollen Mills, just after the war, when the Oriental Hotel would have been a local pub for many of the mills workers.

In 1987 the Oriental Hotel was one of a small number of early Williamstown hotels still operating, including the Prince of Wales Hotel, the Steam Packet, and the Victoria Inn. Others had been de-licensed but the buildings still existed.<sup>66</sup> In 1993 the City of Williamstown Conservation Study identified 16 existing and former Williamstown hotels, almost half of which were built in the 1850s & 60s.<sup>67</sup> The Oriental Hotel was not included in this study, but was later included in the Hobsons Bay Heritage Study.<sup>68</sup> The Oriental Hotel temporarily closed down in 1988 and was subsequently purchased by Collingwood footballer Peter Daicos who revamped the premises and named it the Willy Tavern. Tait writes that extending hours - which saw the hotel closing at midnight or 1 am on most nights — led to complaints by local residents about the drunken patrons at the hotel. A letter to the Council from one resident stated that patrons “fight, yell abuse at each other, throw beer bottles, kick house doors, rip paling from fences, attempt to break into houses, damage cars and generally abuse the residents.”<sup>69</sup> The hotel closed less than a year later with debts of over \$100,000.<sup>70</sup>

### 3 Physical Evidence

#### 3.1 Description of the building

The former Oriental Hotel is a three storey stuccoed brick building, typical of the hotels built in the 1850s. It is situated on a corner site, but lacks the corner entrance commonly found on corner hotels. It has a single storey wing on the Anne Street frontage. The plain façade is relieved only by plain label courses above the windows. The verandah along the two frontages is a late addition to the building. Early photographs show parapets on both facades, which have been removed.



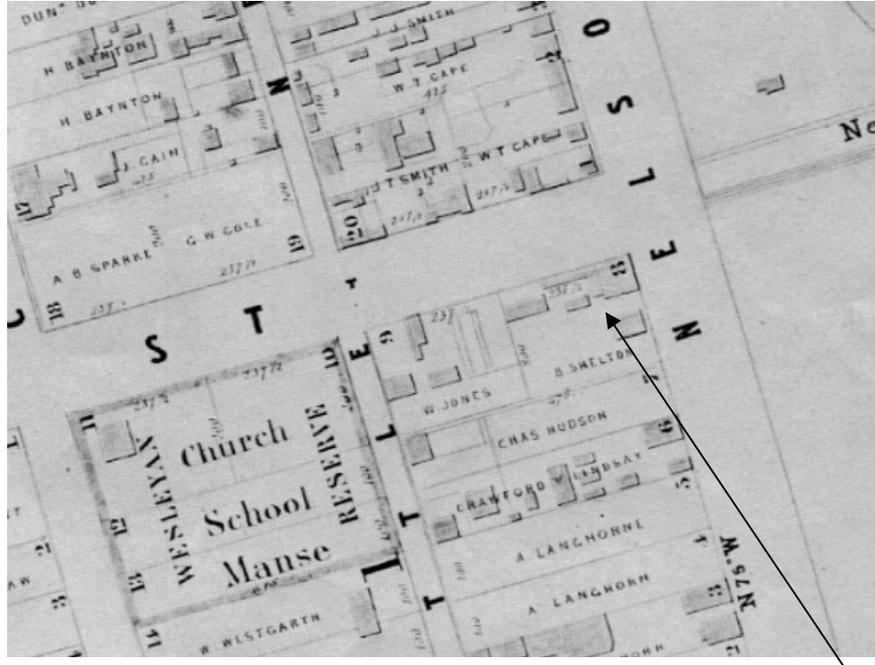
**Figure 8: View of the Oriental Hotel in 1925,** (centre of picture) the parapet can just be seen.  
[Williamstown Historical Society]



**Figure 9: View of the Oriental Hotel in 1958,** the parapet has gone.  
The Seymour Woollen Mill is in the background  
[Williamstown Historical Society]

### 3.2 Alterations to the fabric

The hotel has seen many changes over the years, as it has been extended and renovated, but no accurate details of any works are available. The 1858 Windsor Map of the area shows the hotel's footprint just a few years after its construction. It shows a small extension on the back of the main building with a narrow wing extending along Ann Street. There are three other smaller buildings on the site; one of them may possibly have been stables.



**Figure 10: Part of Windsor Plan of Williamstown 1858**, showing footprint of the hotel. [Williamstown Historical Society]

The next available plan is the 1908 MMBW plan, which shows a changed footprint [Figure 11]. There are two cottages, probably the ones advertised when the hotel was offered for sale in 1858. They replace one of the buildings in the Windsor Map. The wing extending along Ann Street is much wider and is linked with a verandah to a building to the east, possibly that shown on the Windsor Map. The dimensions of the main hotel building appear unchanged and the cellar is marked in Ann Street

According to Raworth hotel was renovated in the mid 1920s to give it a more modern appearance. Perhaps this was when the parapet was removed, although it can be seen in the photograph taken in 1925 [Figure 8]. We know from Tait that further renovations and additions were made in 1947. A 1958 photograph [Figure 9] shows the hotel without the parapets. At that stage there was still no verandah, perhaps it was added when Peter Daicos made the most recent renovations and renamed the hotel the Willy Tavern.



**Figure 11: Part of MMBW Detail Plan 44 & 47, 2008** showing footprint of Oriental Hotel

## 4 Cultural Significance

### 4.1 Comparative Analysis

In the Hobsons Bay Heritage Study (Revised 2010) the former Oriental Hotel was compared with a number of hotels built during the late nineteenth century. However the evidence cited in the history above has established quite convincingly that the hotel was built in 1854 under the name of Cox's Family Hotel, not in 1871 as previously believed. The appropriate comparisons would therefore be those hotels built within a decade of 1854. Architecturally, the hotels in this group are influenced by the Georgian style of early colonial Australia. Although they are all two storey buildings, they can be compared with the 'standard' hotel of the 1850s described by Freeland — three storeys, walls relieved only by plain string courses at upper floor sill level, crowned by a simple cornice to the parapet, corner entrance to the public tap-room.<sup>71</sup>

The oldest of the hotels in the comparative group is the Prince of Wales at 1 Nelson Place, built in 1857-8, with the verandah being a later addition. The Napier (1858) and the Alfred (1859-60) both in Stevedore Street, and the Telegraph in Anne Street (1862) are of similar design. The Steam Packet in Cole Street, rebuilt in 1863 to replace an 1850s building has a slightly more elaborate façade, and is the only one of the group still functioning as a hotel.<sup>72</sup> None of Williamstown's original hotel buildings constructed before 1854 is still standing. Therefore the former Oriental is probably the oldest extant hotel building in Williamstown, and in the City of Hobsons Bay.



Napier Hotel (1858)  
[HO278 Hobsons Bay Heritage Study]



Alfred Hotel (1859-60)  
[HO281 Hobsons Bay Heritage Study]



Telegraph Hotel (1862)  
[HO43 Hobsons Bay Heritage Study]



Steam Packet Hotel (1863)  
[HO73 Hobsons Bay Heritage Study]

## **4.2 Relevant themes demonstrated in the place**

Heritage Victoria has developed *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* “to increase people's understanding and appreciation of Victoria's rich heritage”. It enables places to be assessed and presented in the context of nine broad themes, each with several sub-themes that are “designed to be applied and interlinked”. The use of the themes focuses on the multi-layered stories represented in the site, to suggest “a lively and dynamic history, giving a sense of ongoing activities over time rather than a static and vanished past”.<sup>73</sup> At least two themes in the framework are expressed by the former Oriental Hotel:

5.6 *Entertaining and socialising*

6.3 *Shaping the suburbs*

## **4.3 Statement of Significance**

What is significant?

The former Oriental Hotel is a three story brick building on the corner of Nelson Place and Ann Street Williamstown, constructed in 1854 as Cox's Family Hotel. It was renamed the Barkly Arms in 1857, presumably in honour of Victoria's third governor. Since around 1881 it has been known as the Oriental Hotel, apart from a brief period in the late 1980s when it was known as the Willy Tavern.

How is it significant?

The former Oriental Hotel is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it significant?

The former Oriental Hotel is historically significant as the earliest remaining example of the hotels that proliferated in and around Nelson Place Williamstown in the mid to late nineteenth century. With its proximity to waterfront, Nelson Place was the commercial heart of Williamstown during its heyday as a major port. The former hotel has provided various kinds of hospitality, including family accommodation for travellers through the port during the gold rush years, and later as a boxing venue for sports fans. It also illustrates the development and upgrading of hotels to comply with licensing laws.

The former hotel is aesthetically or architecturally significant as an example of the corner hotels that proliferated in nineteenth century Williamstown, although as a three storey building it is rare for the district.

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<http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic> [accessed May 2012]
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### **Office of the Registrar-General and Office of Titles, Memorial Library**

Memorial books

Search notes, Applications for Certificates of Title under the Transfer of Land Act

### **Public Record Office Victoria**

VPRS 28, Probate & Administration Papers, Master in Equity, Supreme Court

VPRS 460, Applications for Certificates of Title, Office of the Registrar-General and Office of the Titles

VPRS 2132, Rate Books, Williamstown (Municipal District 1856-1863; Borough 1863-1886; Town 1886-1919; City 1919-1994)

VPRS 2341, Rate and Special Books (Microfilm Copy of VPRS 2132 and VPRS 2135), Williamstown (Municipal District 1856-1863; Borough 1863-1886; Town 1886-1919; City 1919-1994)

VPRS 15899, Historic Plans Collection [copy of VPRS 8168]

### **State Library of New South Wales**

Mitchell Library

### **State Library of Victoria**

Maps collection

### **Williamstown Historical Society**

Maps and pictures

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## **Notes**

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21

<sup>3</sup> *City of Williamstown Conservation Study*, p.5

<sup>4</sup> Tait, B. *Pubs of Williamstown: Historical Guide.*, p.4, p.160, p.201

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.159

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.201

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.118

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.89

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45

<sup>10</sup> PROV, VPRS 2341/P0, Rate and Special Books (Microfilm Copy of VPRS 2132 and VPRS 2135), Williamstown (Municipal District 1856-1863; Borough 1863-1886; Town 1886-1919; City 1919-1994)

<sup>11</sup> Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 'Nelson Place Village Site, Williamstown: Assessment of Heritage Issues, Statement of Evidence', pp 5-8.

<sup>12</sup> Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins and Chris McConville, *The Australian Pub*, University of New South Wales Press, 2010, pp 28-9, 41.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 225-8

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, see chapter 5.

<sup>15</sup> Hobson's Bay Heritage Study, <http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Planning-and-Building/Heritage-Study-Revised-2010>, pp 64-5, accessed 5 June 2012.

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- <sup>18</sup> PROV, VPRS 28/P0, Unit 8, File 1/108
- <sup>19</sup> PROV, VPRS 460/P0, Unit 98, File 1616
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Register Book 10, Memorial 936; Office of the Registrar-General and Office of Titles, Memorial Library
- <sup>22</sup> *Argus* 1 September 1854, *Argus* 6 October 1854, p.4
- <sup>23</sup> HO211, Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic#detail:places:15144>; accessed 15 May 2012
- <sup>24</sup> Ackerley, Ada., 'Licensed Hotels of Williamstown', 1987, map reproduced in *Williamstown History Kit & Tait*
- <sup>25</sup> Tait, *ibid.*, p.20
- <sup>26</sup> *Williamstown Chronicle*, 3 January 1857, p.1; 2 May 1857, p.3
- <sup>27</sup> *Argus* 24 April 1858, p.5
- <sup>28</sup> *Argus*, 11 June 1858, p.3
- <sup>29</sup> PROV, VPRS 2341/P0, Unit 1, 1858-59, p.2
- <sup>30</sup> *Argus*, 16 July 1859, p.6
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- <sup>32</sup> Brian Haynes, pers.comm. May 2012
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- <sup>37</sup> Tait, *ibid.*, p. 9-10
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- <sup>46</sup> *Argus* 25 April 1870, p.6
- <sup>47</sup> *Williamstown Chronicle* 23 September 1871, p.5; *Sands & MacDougall Melbourne and suburban directories*, 1873; PROV, VPRS 2341, Unit 5, 1874-77
- <sup>48</sup> PROV, VPRS 2341/P01, Unit 6, 1878-79, p.2; 1880-81, p.1; *Williamstown Chronicle* 8 March 1879, p.3

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- <sup>72</sup> Hobson's Bay Heritage Study, HO43, HO73, HO210, HO278, HO281
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