

ATTACHMENT 3
EVIDENCE STATEMENTS PREVIOUSLY PREPARED RELATING TO THE
FORMER ORIENTAL HOTEL:

1. Assessment of significance of the former Oriental Hotel in relation to the proposal to remove it from HO22 and impose a site specific overlay (HO173) over the property, Report to the Panel – Amendment C34, October 2003.
2. Former Port Phillip Woollen Mills and Former Oriental Hotel, Statement of Evidence to the VCAT, June 2012 (corrected to June 2013 in evidence in chief before the Tribunal).

AT A PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ON OCTOBER 24, 2003

The Commission is pleased to have the former Oriental Hotel in relation to the
proposal to remove it from HO22 and impose a site specific heritage overlay (HO173)
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HO22 AND IMPOSE A SITE SPECIFIC
HERITAGE OVERLAY (HO173) OVER THE
PROPERTY**

REPORT TO THE PANEL –
AMENDMENT C34

October 2003

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Heritage Assessment

Proposed Works

The proposed works to the site are detailed in the attached plans. The works include the removal of the existing building and the construction of a new building. The proposed works are consistent with the requirements of the Heritage Act 1993 and the Heritage Act 2018. The proposed works are also consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) and the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) Schedule 2. The proposed works are also consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) Schedule 2. The proposed works are also consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) Schedule 2.

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Oriental Hotel Williamstown

Heritage Assessment

Purpose of this report

The report has been commissioned by Clayton Utz Lawyers on behalf of their client, Port Phillip Wool Processing Pty Ltd. The purpose of this report is to assess the significance of the former Oriental Hotel building at 55-57 Nelson Place, Williamstown. The subject site is currently located within a Heritage Overlay (HO22, Newport-Williamstown Precinct). Amendment C34 proposes to change the status of the building as HO22 is being replaced by new heritage overlay precincts. None of these will apply to this site. A site specific heritage overlay (HO173) is proposed for the building.

Sources of information

I have not been asked to undertake detailed original research into the history of the site or any associated historical significance, but rather to assess whether such a move is warranted. I have nonetheless reviewed a number of secondary sources in relation to the history of the building and of other hotels within Hobsons Bay, and have inspected the site.

The analysis below draws upon the relevant documents such as the Hobsons Bay City Council Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) and Heritage Policy (Clause 22.04); related heritage studies such as *the City of Williamstown Conservation Study* of 1993, the *City of Williamstown Conservation Study Review Part 1* (2002) and the *Inner Metropolitan Hotels Study* of 1992; and the relevant sections of the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. I have also undertaken a site visit and internal and external inspection.

A number of secondary sources have also been consulted; these are listed in detail at the end of the report.

Description

The subject site occupies a corner site bounded by Nelson Place and Ann Street. The extant building on the site, variously known as the former Oriental Hotel, the former Builders Arms or the Willy Tavern, was constructed in 1871 following a fire in which an earlier hotel – the Barkly Arms, constructed in 1856 – was destroyed. A three storey stuccoed brick Victorian building, the hotel was named the Oriental in 1881.¹

The building has undergone a number of alterations. According to the citation for the building, it seems that the earliest of these additions were carried out c.1888-9, when the 16 room hotel became a 24 room hotel.² These additions were reflected by an attendant increase in the Net Annual Value of the hotel. The citation suggests that these modifications may have been carried out in response to the introduction of new licensing laws in 1877, which required hotels to have a certain number of rooms of minimum dimension in order to obtain a license.

A photo from c.1870 shows the building without a verandah, the present verandah being a later addition.³ A 1904 photograph shows the building in better detail, still without a verandah, but with a substantial cornice to its upper level, a string course between ground and first floor and substantial pediments to both Anne Street and Nelson Parade featuring the name 'Oriental Hotel'.⁴ This photograph also shows a single storey hipped roof extension along Anne Street. The shadow of this extension is still visible on the south wall of the building, the extension itself having been demolished.

The *Williamstown Conservation Study* notes that the hotel was renovated in the interwar period (c 1925), and it seems likely that the building was modified with a view to giving it a more modern appearance. All of the Victorian stucco mouldings and ornamentation – including cornice, stringcourses, and the crowning

¹ This is noted but not referenced in Council's citation for the Former Oriental Hotel, HO173, p 2.

² Ibid.

³ *City of Williamstown Conservation Study* 1993, p 6.

⁴ *Williamstown Illustrated, 1904*. Facsimile of the original, reprinted by the Williamstown Historical Society Inc, 1996, no page numbers.

pediments – were removed, and the chimneys were altered. All the original multi-paned double-hung windows were replaced with more simply detailed versions, the exception being a solitary multi-paned window to the east elevation.

As the hotel stands today, ornament is confined to the rather ugly window ‘hoods’ that presumably were also added in the 1930s. Despite these changes, the building is not modern in character. It presents more as a Victorian building that is merely lacking much of its former detail.

More recently, single storey extensions have been added to the building along Nelson Place and south along Ann Street. These additions are not architecturally distinguished and are extremely plain in character.

Current status

The former Oriental Hotel is not presently listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate, nor is it classified by the National Trust.

The *City of Williamstown Conservation Study* 1993 provides a good indication of the significance of the various buildings in the locality. It is therefore worth noting that the *City of Williamstown Conservation Study* identified the former Oriental Hotel as being an E grade building. E grade buildings were defined:

...by their limited integrity, and relative isolation from buildings of higher integrity, represent neither individual form or style types well, nor contribute to a streetscape or precinct. They possess some period detail and thus can be recognised as belonging to a general era and may, by restoration or renovation, achieve a viable new use and potentially may contribute more to the area's period content.

The subject site is currently located within a Heritage Overlay (HO22, Newport-Williamstown Precinct) and is subject to the provisions of clause 43-01, the Heritage Overlay. Amendment C34 proposes to change the status of the building as HO22 is being replaced by new heritage overlay precincts. None of these will

apply to this site. A site specific heritage overlay (HO173) is proposed for the building.

The City of Hobsons Bay recently completed a review of heritage issues within the area, the *City of Williamstown Conservation Study Review Part 1* (2002). This review includes revised and updated versions of the existing citations contained in the study, as well as new citations for individual heritage places and heritage precincts.

Significance

The citation that has been prepared for the former Oriental Hotel as part of Amendment C34 identifies the building as being of local significance. The Statement of Significance states that it is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay:

Historically, the hotel is significant as one of a number along Nelson Place and in proximity to the waterfront that demonstrate their important role in the early development of the town, and the importance of Nelson Place as the commercial heart of Williamstown during the mid to late nineteenth century. It also illustrates how hotels were upgraded following changes to licensing laws during the late nineteenth century. (AHC criteria A4 and D2).

Aesthetically, although altered, it is significant as a rare example of a three storey corner hotel that relates to other similarly sited nineteenth century hotels in Nelson Place and the Government Survey Heritage Precincts. (AHC criteria B2 and E1)

The citation also offers the following comparative analysis for the former Oriental Hotel:

The former Oriental Hotel is one of a number of substantial brick hotels that were constructed in Williamstown during the late nineteenth century, and is one of only three, three-storey examples along with the Royal and the Newport. It directly compares with the more intact examples cited in this study including the Newport at 1 Mason Street (1888), Morning Star at 3 Electra Street (1890), Bristol at 190 Ferguson street (1890), Royal at 85 Nelson Place (1890), and the Yacht Club at 207 Nelson Place (1892). Other corner hotels within the Government Survey area include the

Telegraph (1862) at 17 Ann Street, and the Stag's head (1887) at 39 Cecil Street.

Although this analysis concedes that the former Oriental Hotel 'directly compares with the more intact examples' in the area, it fails to mention that the hotel compares rather unfavourably on several levels. Even within Nelson Place itself, for example, there stand a number of much more significant and intact hotels such as the former Royal Hotel at 85 Nelson Place (1890), graded A in the *Williamstown Conservation Study*; the former Clarendon Hotel at 231 Nelson Place (1859), graded A; the Prince of Wales Hotel at 1 Nelson Place (c.1858), graded B; the Yacht Club Hotel at 207 Nelson Place (c.1892), graded B; the Customs House Hotel at 161-163 Nelson Place (c.1880), graded C; and the Bay View Hotel at 175 Nelson Place (c.1910), also graded C.

The relatively low significance of the former Oriental Hotel is further supported by the fact that the building was not among the nineteen Williamstown hotel buildings surveyed in the *Inner Metropolitan Hotels Study* prepared by Bryce Raworth in conjunction with Allom Lovell & Associates (1992). This study focused on the more significant public hotel buildings that were established prior to WWII in Melbourne's inner metropolitan area. Five hotel buildings in Nelson Place were identified in this study, however the former Oriental Hotel was not one of them.

Also of note is that fact that between the Prince of Wales Hotel at 1 Nelson Place, and the former Royal Hotel at 85 Nelson Place, the former Oriental Hotel is the only building to be graded in the *Williamstown Conservation Study* at all. This reflects the fact that the hotel no longer sits within an intact streetscape, but within a heterogeneous and degraded environment.

In light of the above, much of the building's significance would seem to rely on the fact it is only one of three, three-storey hotels in the area, the other two being the Royal and the Newport. However, these two hotels are both of higher significance than the former Oriental Hotel. As noted above the former Royal Hotel was graded A in the *Williamstown Conservation Study*, while the Newport Hotel was graded C-B.

Further to this, the former Oriental Hotel is clearly in very poor condition. Severe cracking, of an extent to suggest structural failure, is apparent between the first floor and the roof along the east elevation. Major cracking is also evident along the west elevation. I understand that the engineering report of Wallbridge & Gilbert provides evidence in relation to this and other structural issues.

The combination of these structural defects indicate that the building is in very poor condition indeed. The citation for the building, however, identifies the integrity as 'moderate' and the condition 'good'. In light of the building's numerous alterations and additions, coupled with the obvious signs of structural failure, it would appear that this assessment is fundamentally flawed. Both the integrity and the condition of the building are poor. I note also that the citation fails to note the single storey additions to the building.

These points, when coupled with the fact that the building compares less than favourably with other examples in the locality, and is located within a degraded environment, all combine to suggest that this building is not worthy of individual listing within the Heritage Overlay.

In summary, the former Oriental Hotel is in poor condition, has been substantially altered in appearance, is of little architectural distinction and makes only a limited contribution to its context which is, in any case, no longer intact. Its structural and superficial deterioration has further reduced its integrity and significance. While it is accepted that the building has some contributory status, primarily on the basis of its historical associations as a larger, three storey hotel within the Nelson Place precinct, it is clear that the overall integrity, condition and significance of the place is of a low order relative to that exhibited by other nearby hotels.



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References

Graeme Butler. *City of Williamstown Conservation Study*, 1993.

Challenge handy Pocket Guide. Williamstown, Newport, Spotswood, Yarraville, Seddon, & Footscray. Undated.

The City of Williamstown Conservation Study Review Part 1 (2002).

Bryce Raworth in conjunction with Allom Lovell & Associates. *Inner Metropolitan Hotels Study*. 1992.

Williamstown Illustrated, 1904. Facsimile of the original, reprinted by the Williamstown Historical Society Inc, 1996.

Williamstown History Kit – Williamstown City Library. 1987. Sheets on 'Hotels' and 'Hotels and Breweries'.