Location:
34-38 FRANKLIN STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H0051
Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO663

Statement of Significance:
What is significant?

Mac's Hotel is a two-storey bluestone coaching hotel built for John McMillan in 1853 to a design by architects James & Charles Webb. The name of the hotel derives from the original owner and has continued unchanged
since the first day of opening. The style of the hotel is typical of hotels of the 1850s, symmetrical with simple openings and a plain parapet. Articulation of the facades is restricted to dropped keystones above the ground floor openings and quoins to the corners of the building. The stonework to the main facade was elaborated with vermiculated rustication, but this is now barely discernible due to sandblasting in the 1970s. The present hotel with its associated bluestone and brick rear wing is now all that survives of a once larger complex incorporating stabling for about one hundred horses, accommodation for the gold escort, and a lock-up and yards. The surviving rear wing may possibly have been a laundry and kitchen area. The verandah at the front of the hotel was a late addition in c1914.

Mac's Hotel has been substantially altered over the years. Alterations have been required to accommodate both the changing requirements of the licensing laws as well as the needs of different owners. Some ground floor windows have been altered to become openings. Internally the bar area is now completely open and dividing walls have been removed. Fireplaces and wall nibs survive to indicate the location of the four original rooms and the central passageway. The first floor layout is divided by a central passageway running on an east-west axis, dividing the floor into rooms with north or south aspects. Pressed metal ceilings, possibly dating from around 1914, have been added to some areas.

How is it significant?

Mac's Hotel is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Mac's Hotel is historically significant as the oldest surviving purpose-built hotel in continuous use within the city. The Mitre Tavern in Bank Place was not established until 1867 and neither the Duke of Wellington Hotel on Flinders Street nor Young and Jackson's on the corner of Flinders Street and Swanston Street were purpose built as hotels. Tavistock House has changed uses since 1850. At the end of nineteenth century there were hundreds of pubs in Melbourne and Mac's Hotel now survives as a rare example of a once prolific type.

Mac's Hotel is significant for its clear continuity with its origins because it retains both its original name and function. It is historically significant as a link to the gold rush period, when its first patrons were not only diggers returning form the gold fields but also the gold escort companies bringing the gold back to Melbourne.

Mac's Hotel is architecturally significant as one of the earliest known works of architect Charles Webb, who became one of Melbourne's most prominent architects. Notable later works by Webb include the South Melbourne Town Hall, the Windsor Hotel and Tasma Terrace.

The design of the hotel is in a Georgian style, evoking some of the tradition of British public houses. The simple styling of the hotel, including a symmetrical composition, simple openings and a parapet with the name of the hotel inscribed, is highly representative of hotel design in the 1850s. Subsequent alterations to the hotel's internal fabric demonstrate the changing requirements of licensing laws since the early 1850s.

| Heritage Study / Consultant |  |
| Construction Date Range | 1853 - 1854 |
| Architect / Designer | Webb, James |
| Municipality | MELBOURNE CITY |
| Other names |  |
| Hermes number | 759 |
| Property number |  |
This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online.