

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR

AUSTRALIAN ARMS HOTEL, PENRITH



Prepared for:

The Australian Arms Unit Trust

Prepared by

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Amendments since August 2018:

- Description of rooms at southern end of first floor of Hotel amended June 2020.
- Landscaping recommendation clarified June 2020.

Executive Summary

Background

The Australian Arms Hotel is situated in the main business precinct of Penrith, at 351-359 High Street. There has been a hotel on the site since the 1870s and possibly as early as the 1830s. The present hotel was built in 1940 in the Art Deco style. It has undergone some minor changes but is still relatively intact. Its curtilage includes a substantial area which is undeveloped.

The growth of Penrith is providing opportunities for development and the current owner has prepared a proposal for the site. Penrith Council has asked for a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to guide change on this site.

The aim of this CMP is to provide guidelines for the conservation and management of the Australian Arms Hotel, to ensure that the heritage values of the site are maintained.

Summary Statement of Significance

The Australian Arms Hotel is a two-storey brick building constructed in Art Deco style with local significance. It has historical significance, reflecting the importance of hotels in Penrith's commercial and social life. It has associative significance as an example of the work of Gordon McKinnon and Sons, Architects. It has aesthetic significance for its relatively intact exterior and partially intact interior fabric and is significant for its local rarity as a hotel in the Art Deco style.

Document Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Documentary Evidence
This section provides analysis of historical documentary evidence.
- 3.0 Physical Evidence
This section provides a survey of the property and annotated images.
- 4.0 Assessment of Cultural Significance
This section includes comparative analysis, definition of curtilage and statement of heritage significance using the criteria established by the NSW Heritage Council.
- 5.0 Constraints and Opportunities
This section considers constraints such as statutory listings, local authority controls and opportunities.
- 6.0 Development of Conservation Policy
This section discusses the influence of factors affecting the development of policies for conservation of the hotel.
- 7.0 Conservation Policies and Guidelines
This sets out policies informed by preceding parts of the CMP and strategies for their implementation.
- 8.0 Confidential Matters
This section considers confidentiality.

1.0 Introduction

The Australian Arms Hotel is located at 351-359 High Street, Penrith (Lot 9 DP 28199 and Lot 2 DP 513015). It occupies only part of the site and its current owner wishes to retain the original hotel building and build new hotel accommodation on the remainder of the site. As part of the approvals process, Penrith City Council has requested the owner to have a Conservation Management Plan prepared.

Mark Bullen Architects have been engaged by the owner to prepare this document. In so doing, they have drawn upon a number of sources, including the 'Penrith Heritage Study' by Paul Davies, the 'Nepean Times' newspaper, written material and photographs held by Penrith City Council Library and photographs by Max Dupain held by the State Library of New South Wales.

2.0 Documentary Evidence

2.1 History

2.1.1 Thematic History

A comprehensive thematic history of the Penrith area is contained in the Penrith Heritage Study 2007. State themes are explored and identified heritage items are associated with state and local themes.

The early development of inns in Penrith is placed within the state theme of *commerce*, with the "impetus for the investment in inns coming from the demand generated by the gold rush and the role of the Western Highway in transporting people and goods to the western goldfields."¹ Commercial interest in the area for tourist activities including accommodation around the Nepean River is noted from 1910 onward.

Hotels offering rooms for short or long-term stays would also fit within the theme of *accommodation*. Public hotels typically fit within the state theme of *leisure*, as places associated with recreation and relaxation. They can also be associated with *social institutions* where they have been used as venues for meetings or social events.

A survey of the history of the Australian Arms Hotel reveals a primary association with the theme of *commerce* with further association with *accommodation*, *leisure* and *social institutions*. Its aesthetic value as an exemplar of the Art Deco architectural style also places it within the theme of *creative endeavour*.

2.1.2 Early History of Penrith

The area now known as Penrith was home to the indigenous Dharug people. European expeditions to the area, which commenced in 1789, recorded their presence particularly around the Nepean River, which was a valuable resource for hunting and foraging.²

In the first half of the 19th century a small unplanned town grew up around the court house of Penrith, which had been built in 1817 on the Great Western Road. A series of grants of land were made in the surrounding areas and the rate of settlement slowly increased. The railway was extended from Parramatta to Penrith by 1863 which provided some further stimulus to population growth in the area. In 1871 Penrith was proclaimed a municipality.³

¹ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 2, 2007, p.34

² *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 2, 2007, p.17

³ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 1, 2007, p.11-13

2.1.3 Development of the Australian Arms Hotel, Penrith

The land on which the Hotel stands was originally part of a parcel of 100 acres granted to Sarah McHenry on 6th June 1834. Sarah McHenry was the wife of John McHenry, who had arrived in the colony in 1819 and acquired 1200 acres around Penrith through grant. It is believed that the 100 acre parcel was promised by Governor Macquarie in 1821; around 1827 McHenry built Lemon Grove within the northern part of this area. The Lemon Grove estate of 65 acres north of the railway line was eventually subdivided into 249 town blocks in 1885.⁴

In the meantime, development had been occurring in the southern part of the grant along High Street. There is some uncertainty about the early history of the buildings on the present site of the Australian Arms Hotel. It has been reported that about 1836 a hotel known as Hogan's Pub stood there.⁵ Other reports suggest that in about 1860 Thomas Andrews was running a butcher's shop on the site and by 1872 he had built additions to it and had become the licensee of the first Australian Arms Hotel on that site. In 1877 he died and the licence passed to his wife Harriet.⁶ Her obituary in 1901 stated that she had had a new hotel built on the site where the old house stood.⁷

A photograph believed to be from around 1906 shows a two-storey masonry building with a ground floor awning supported on posts. The same awning is evident in a postcard postmarked 1907. Later photos show a much more substantial two storey verandah. This was probably built around 1911 as it was reported in May of that year that alterations and additions were to be carried out at the hotel. "The old rooms and billiard room, which have done service for so long, are to be demolished and a new two-storey brick building erected in their stead to meet the requirements of the licensing inspector. The present two-storey brick building, standing on the corner of High and Castlereagh street will also be renovated and slight alterations made inside and the outside vastly improved by the erection of a wide balcony."⁸

Later issues of the local paper contain stories of the difficulty of obtaining tenders, but in July 1911 it was reported that good progress was being made with the alterations and additions.⁹ A photograph from 1919 shows a wide balcony with timber balustrade extending around the corner of the building. By 1936 however it was reported that a notice had been served requiring the verandah posts and balcony over the footpath to be removed within 90 days from 25 June.¹⁰ Whether this was due to their being in a state of disrepair or because balconies with support posts at the kerb side were no longer in favour in the age of the motor car is unknown.

⁴ *Penrith Heritage Study Vol. 3, 2007, p.212-218*

⁵ *Nepean Times, 28 June 1962*

⁶ Parr, L. *Hotels and Inns of the Penrith District, 2003, p.11*

⁷ *Nepean Times, 31 August 1901, p.4*

⁸ *Nepean Times, 6 May 2011*

⁹ *Nepean Times, 29 July 1911*

¹⁰ *Nepean Times, 13 August 1936*



Figure 1: High Street, Penrith c.1906. The Australian Arms Hotel is on the right hand side and Cram Place (also a local heritage item) can be seen on the left.
Image courtesy of Penrith City Library photographic collection, creator Charles Kerry



Figure 2: High Street, Penrith: Postcard postmarked 1907, with Australian Arms single storey awning just visible on right hand side.
Image courtesy of Penrith City Library, Joyce Cole photographic collection



Figure 3: High Street Penrith c. 1911 with Australian Arms on right hand side. Image courtesy of Penrith City Library, Arthur Street photographic collection.



Figure 4: Australian Arms Hotel intersection of High and Castlereagh (now Lawson) Streets in 1919 Image courtesy of Penrith City Library photographic collection.

By 1939 the hotel was owned by Mrs Frances G. Fulton of Rose Bay. The Penrith Licensing Inspector, Sergeant Sheridan, considered the premises to be so unsatisfactory that he applied to the Licensing Court for their demolition and replacement with a modern hotel consisting of dining room, kitchen, parlour, twelve bedrooms, etc. In evidence to the Court, he described the hotel as consisting of "one bar, a dining room, three parlours, seven bedrooms, bathrooms – gents at the end of the verandah and ladies at the end on top of the stairs. There was no hot water throughout the building and no shower cubicles. One wall was damp, the floor in the ironing room and the floors in two

parlours were decayed. There were wooden ceilings throughout the building, which permitted dust to seep through. Other features were stated by the sergeant to be unsatisfactory." ¹¹

The application was opposed by the owner, who together with the property manager for Toohey's Ltd, claimed that the premises only required minor alterations and that several hundred pounds had already been spent over a number of years on minor alterations.¹²

The Court listened to the evidence and inspected the premises. In their judgment, they concluded that "the premises are in a dilapidated condition and in no way in keeping with the modern requirements of a hotel. The Court particularly noticed that the allegation as to the dampness of the premises is well founded, as it is apparent that the outer walls of the premises ... are suffering from dampness. It is perfectly apparent to the Court that the owner of the premises is particularly sound and that she will have no difficulty whatever in financing the building of new premises. The Court is entirely satisfied that public convenience requires that these premises should be rebuilt, and it has no hesitation whatever in making an order substantially in accordance with the licensing inspector's requisition. It does, however, limit the total number of bedrooms to be provided, including those for the licensee and staff, to twelve ... Plans to be submitted within three months and work completed within twelve months." ¹³

A report in the local paper on 11 April 1940 of Penrith Council Meeting recorded that Gordon McKinnon and Sons, Architects, Sydney, had written to Council that they would shortly be submitting plans for the rebuilding of the Australian Arms Hotel, and had asked for some advice (sic) in sewerage matters. The new hotel was to comprise public and saloon bars, lounge, dining room, entrance hall, kitchen, servery, laundry, lavatory blocks, 12 bedrooms lounge, balconies etc. and two lavatory blocks on the first floor. The mayor said that he had been informed that it was intended to spend between 14,000 and 16,000 pounds on the hotel. Council replied that it was anticipated that sewerage would be ready for connection when the building was completed. ¹⁴

The hotel reappears in a further meeting report on 11 July 1940 when Council objected to the proposed construction of a "hood" over the main entrance in Castlereagh Street.¹⁵ (Note that Castlereagh Street is now Lawson Street.)

In the Nepean Times in 1941, a report on permits issued for the erection of new buildings in 1940 based on information provided by Mr Phelps, Penrith Council's Building Inspector, included a new hotel at a cost of 8,000 pounds. The article noted that the hotel was the Australian Arms, which was opened the previous week, "a fine architectural structure, with every up to date accessory."¹⁶ A later report described it as built by Elvy and Co. and being a "very modern and imposing building" that "considerably enhances the appearance of that section of the street".¹⁷

An aerial view of the site in 1943 shows the hotel roof and at the rear, on the northern boundary along the laneway, another roof of an outbuilding of unknown purpose (possibly a garage). A very small structure also appears to be situated on the eastern boundary between the hotel and the larger outbuilding. The properties to the east of the hotel appear to be completely separate from the hotel site.

¹¹ *Nepean Times*, 16 November 1939

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Nepean Times*, 11 April 1940

¹⁵ *Nepean Times*, 11 July 1940

¹⁶ *Nepean Times*, 2 January 1941, p.1

¹⁷ *Nepean Times*, 16 January 1941



Figure 5: Aerial view of the hotel site and surrounds in 1943, showing the hotel and outbuildings, with another building and an empty lot to the east of the hotel.

Image source: <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au>, accessed 6 July 2018

During the 1940s the new hotel appears in newspaper reports as a venue for meetings and functions.¹⁸ The Penrith branch of the Australian Labor Party met there regularly in 1941- 42 and the Penrith Chamber of Commerce held their inaugural annual dinner there in 1947 and a second dinner in 1948. In 1951 the local paper commented that many people “must have been impressed by the very fine example of civic pride set by Mr G.J. Aldridge, licensee for the Australian Arms Hotel, by the creation of a footpath garden and lawn adjoining the hotel premises.”¹⁹

In 1948 a promotional brochure on Penrith by Oswald Ziegler was published which included photographs by Max Dupain. The State Library of New South Wales now holds a large collection of photographs taken in and around Penrith by Dupain in that period. In that collection are at least four views of the Australian Arms Hotel. They all show the hotel as it appeared from diagonally across the High and Lawson Streets intersection.

The photographs provide invaluable evidence of the appearance of the hotel in the first decade of its existence. They reveal that the hotel at that time had another two entrances on Lawson Street where there are now windows, and that there were two timber framed windows where there are now metal louvres. The walls around the corner are light in colour. The finish is not discernible but is likely to have been tiles, as a slightly darker band of tiles at low level stepping up to a pyramid shape on the corner can be seen. Two of the photographs also show that on Lawson Street there appears to have been no additional structures immediately to the north end of the building but a little farther away is what may have been the outbuilding whose roof appears in the 1943 aerial view. A fence (possibly paling) runs along the Lawson Street boundary where there is now a low brick wall.

The photographs confirm that, with the exception of the treatment of openings on Lawson Street, the present building appears largely as it did in the 1940s.

¹⁸ *Nepean Times*, various e.g. 29 May 1947

¹⁹ *Nepean Times*, 12 July 1951, p.1



Figure 6: View of hotel taken by Max Dupain c. 1940s
Image courtesy of Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Max Dupain Exhibition
Negative Archive, File FL7649956

The present hotel has been in operation continuously since it first opened. In 2014 it was sold to the current owner, Australian Arms Unit Trust.



Figure 7: Panoramic photomontage in present hotel entrance hall showing views in 1919, 1983 and 1988 (Original source for 1919 view likely Penrith City Library Photographic Collection)

3.0 Physical Evidence

3.1 Context

The hotel is located at 351-359 High Street, Penrith. High Street is the main outdoor shopping street of Penrith, with a mix of single and two storey shops, cafes and small businesses. The hotel is about one kilometre from the train station. There is now a Westfield shopping mall close to the station, and the Civic Centre, Library and Performing Arts Centre are on the far side of that. The concentration of development back from and away from High Street means that the street has retained its character as a low scale, relaxed shopping strip. Nevertheless, there is higher development in the vicinity of the hotel and the current zoning permits buildings of 12m, 20m or 24 m height within a short radius of the site.



Figure 8: Aerial view identifying subject site
Source: Google Maps

There are a number of local heritage items in the vicinity of the hotel, including shops, churches and banking premises. These are identified at Figure 9, which shows their item numbers in the Penrith Local Environment Plan 2010. West of the hotel, on the other corner of Lawson and High Streets, is the shop at 361-365 High Street (No. 714) which comprises a mid-Victorian structure which has had a deco inspired façade added in the 1940s. Opposite the hotel on the south side of High Street is Cram Place, as well as a coach house, well, pump and cast iron fence (No. 201). This former branch of the Commercial Banking Company was built in 1879 and “demonstrates a high quality commercial premises... and an important phase in the development of the town.”²⁰ Directly to its east is St Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church (No. 688). The church is one of the earliest extant modern buildings in this part of Penrith and there are historic items, including memorials and early electric lamp stand, on the site, which comprises land donated in the 1830s.

²⁰ *Penrith Heritage Study Vol. 3, 2007, p.224*



Figure 9: Heritage items in vicinity of Australian Arms Hotel (No. 196).
 Source: Penrith Local Environment Plan 2010, Heritage Map HER 013.

Cram Place sits on High Street at the point where Lawson Street terminates. This means that from Lawson Street, there is a fine view of the building framed by the hotel and the shop at No. 361.



Figure 10: View corridor looking south along Lawson Street towards Cram Place.
 Source: Google maps, street view.

3.2 Identification of Existing Fabric

The fabric was investigated by non-intrusive observation and measurement. Access was not available to all hotel rooms due to the private nature of their occupation. Access was also not available to the roof cavity and roof.

3.2.1 Curtilage

The hotel building is located on the corner of High and Lawson Streets. It occupies the entire site frontage to High Street and the majority of the frontage along Lawson Street. The covered beer garden occupies the remainder of the Lawson Street frontage. There is a laneway at the northern end of the site off Lawson Street. Adjacent to the beer garden there is a substation, garden and brick outbuilding facing the lane. The site also includes an open car park behind the hotel which is accessed via the laneway.

An awning projects over the street for the entire south façade along High Street, and along the west façade as far as the entry to the accommodation. Along with the Art Deco tower, it provides architectural emphasis to the corner site and also marks the more public areas of the Hotel.

The principal views of the hotel are from High Street and Lawson Street. The ground floor is largely internalized with windows facing the street. The upper floor has more expansive views to the south and west from the verandah, views to the west from a small balcony and more limited views from bedroom windows on the west and south.

3.2.2 Exterior

The two-storey hotel is sited on a corner. It is built to the boundary at street level, while the first floor has a deep verandah colonnade wrapping around the corner to face both streets. On the corner itself is a three-tiered tower surmounted by a flag pole. The longest frontage is to Lawson Street and it is here that the main entrance is placed. Two doorways on High Street open directly into the front bar.

It is built of red face brick, predominantly smooth faced, with contrasting horizontal bands of textured face bricks running above and below the window openings. The red mortar joints are raked. There are hooded terra cotta ventilators set into the brick facework.

The brickwork at the main entrance curves inwards to form a recess for the entrance at the ground floor level and a small balcony at the first floor. There are circular brick columns to the first floor verandah. There is a concrete slab above the verandah supporting the brick parapet which curves inward where it meets the tower. The tower comprises two tiers of circular brickwork and a third tier of glass bricks. The latter is defined by concrete slab above and below.

The walls at the ground floor level have been rendered and painted along the High Street frontage and along Lawson Street as far as the extent of the first floor verandah over. Below the render is a band of modern tiling about 800mm high. Modern tiles have also been used on the steps to the main entrance and the other doors on High Street.

There is a section at the northern end of the ground floor on Lawson Street that is single storey. This now opens onto the covered beer garden. The hotel is partially set back from the eastern boundary to provide a covered service passage giving access to the toilets and the rear of the lobby from the front bars.

The roof is tiled in red Marseilles pattern glazed terra cotta tiles. Its hipped form is largely concealed from the street frontages by the brick parapets, with shaped rainwater heads on the upper façade serving the box gutters concealed behind the parapets. There is a chimney which serves the fireplace in the upstairs lounge.

There is a deep steel-framed awning which extends along the entire High Street frontage and along Lawson Street as far as the main entrance. It is supported by steel rods anchored to the façade at the upper level. The underside of the awning is clad in patterned pressed metal.

The main entrance doors to the lobby are timber framed and glazed with sidelights. Other entrance doors are also timber framed and glazed, as are the doors on the first floor opening onto the upper verandah, where frosted glass has been used. There is a modern set of folding glazed doors leading to the beer garden.

The windows to the front bar and to the first floor lounge are steel framed. There is curved glass in the windows at either end of the lounge and on the corner at street level. Other windows generally are timber framed. Two windows along the Lawson Street frontage have metal louvres within the original brick openings (one of which was originally a doorway as evidenced by the Dupain photographs). There is a set of louvred doors at low level providing direct access to the basement for keg deliveries.

The name of the hotel is displayed on the brick parapet on both street frontages in raised individual letters. It is also painted on the face of the awning where it rounds the corner. There are illuminated box signs suspended below the awning and a large one fixed to the upper façade on High Street.

There is some accretion of other modern fixtures on the façade and roof. Electrical items include cable conduits, faux coach lamps and the illuminated hotel signs. A television antenna, satellite dish and air conditioning plant on the roof are visible from the street. The eastern passageway has a vast accumulation of service pipes, conduits and the like.

The beer garden, which is off the dining room, is set back from the Lawson Street boundary and at the same level as the hotel so that it is above the street level. There is a set of steps and a ramp providing direct access from the street. Its entry is marked by brick piers and the gable end of a pitched metal roof. The modern structure is predominantly steel with dropdown acrylic blinds in lieu of walls. There is acrylic glazing to the pitched roof. There is a narrow section of flat roof separating that roof from the tiled roof of the dining room. Metal fencing partially encloses the beer garden area.

There is a low brick wall along Lawson Street in front of the beer garden interrupted by the steps and ramp giving access to that area. The bricks used in the wall are similar to but not the same as those of the main hotel building. The inference that they are a later addition is confirmed by the Dupain photograph of the 1940s. The wall returns at very low level around the corner to the laneway, enclosing a garden bed. Two car spaces behind the beer garden are accessed from the laneway. At the eastern end of the car spaces is a small brick building with tiled roof and timber door and immediately to its east is a substation with bollards.

The remainder of the site comprises a bitumen car park accessed via the laneway. It is bounded by guard rails on the laneway and other buildings to the south and east. The beer garden can be accessed from the western side of the car park.

There is little landscaping on the site. The garden bed at the laneway corner contains a young jacaranda and other shrubs and there is a narrow planter bed with shrubs and bougainvillea screening the substation and more shrubs between the beer garden and car park. There is some planting along Lawson Street behind the low brick wall including two jacaranda saplings and a hedge.



Figure 11: Ground Floor Plan



Figure 12: First Floor Plan

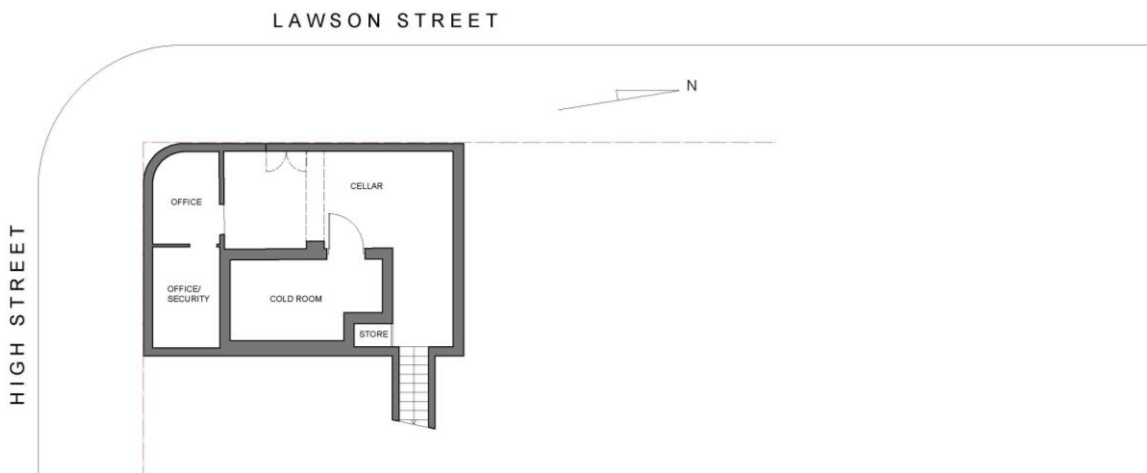


Figure 13: Basement Plan

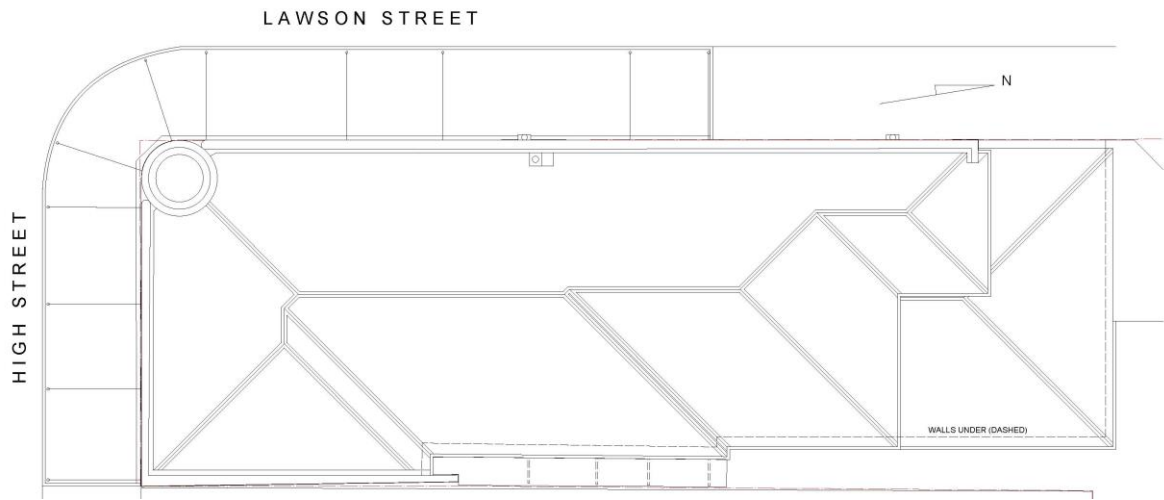


Figure14: Roof Plan



Figure15: West Elevation (Lawson Street)



Figure16: South Elevation (High Street)

Figure 17: North Elevation



Figure18: East Elevation

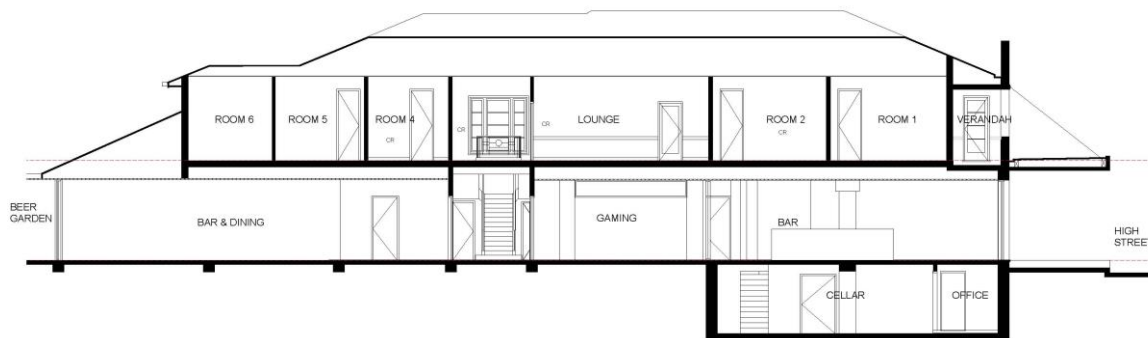


Figure 19: Longitudinal Section

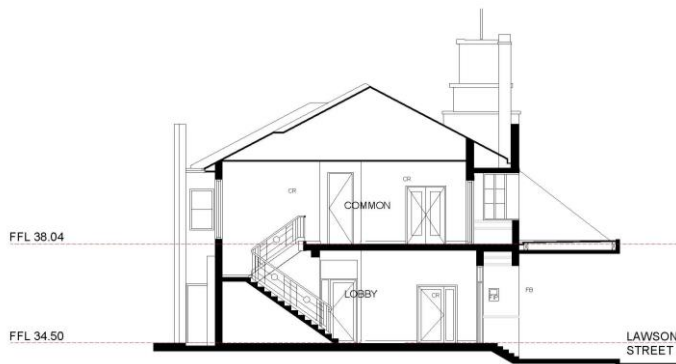


Figure 20: Cross Section



Figure 21: View at intersection of High and Lawson Streets



Figure 22: High Street view



Figure 23: Lawson Street view



Figure 24: Lawson Street view

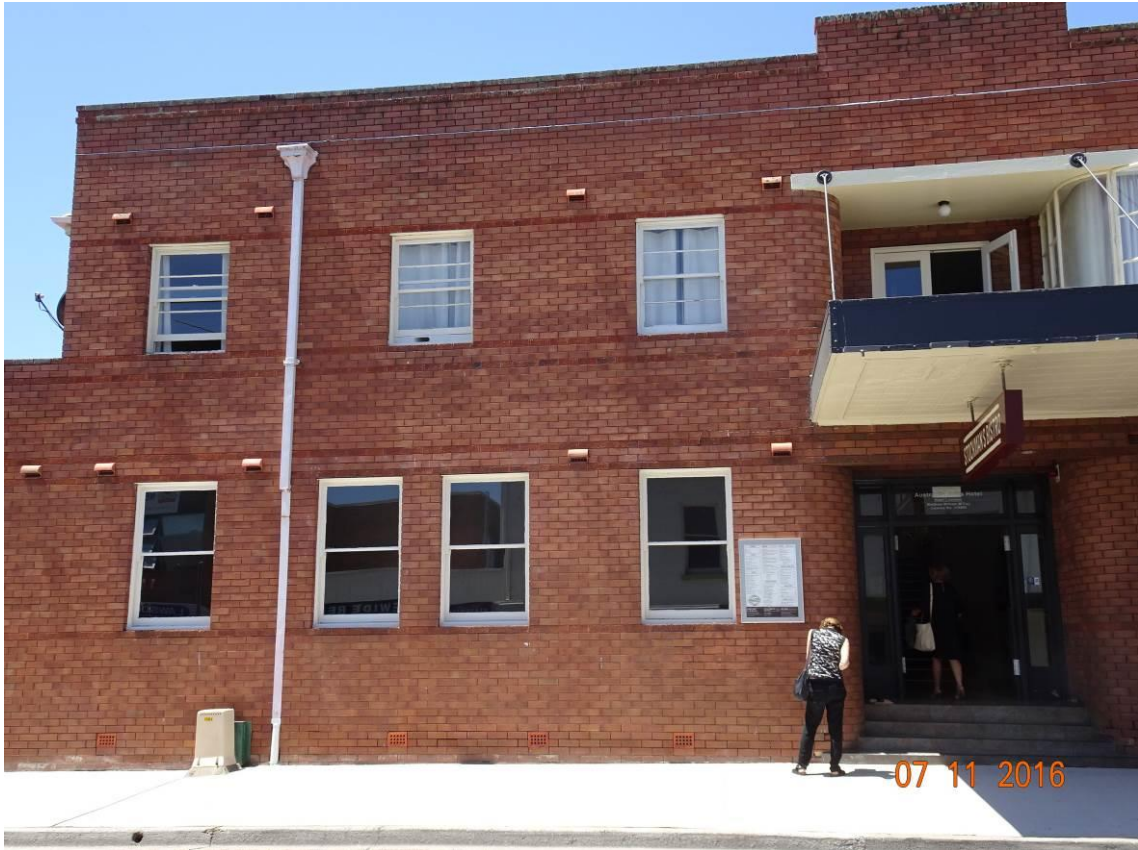


Figure 25: Lawson Street view



Figure 26: Lawson Street view



Figure 27: Lawson Street view showing roofscape and beer garden gable

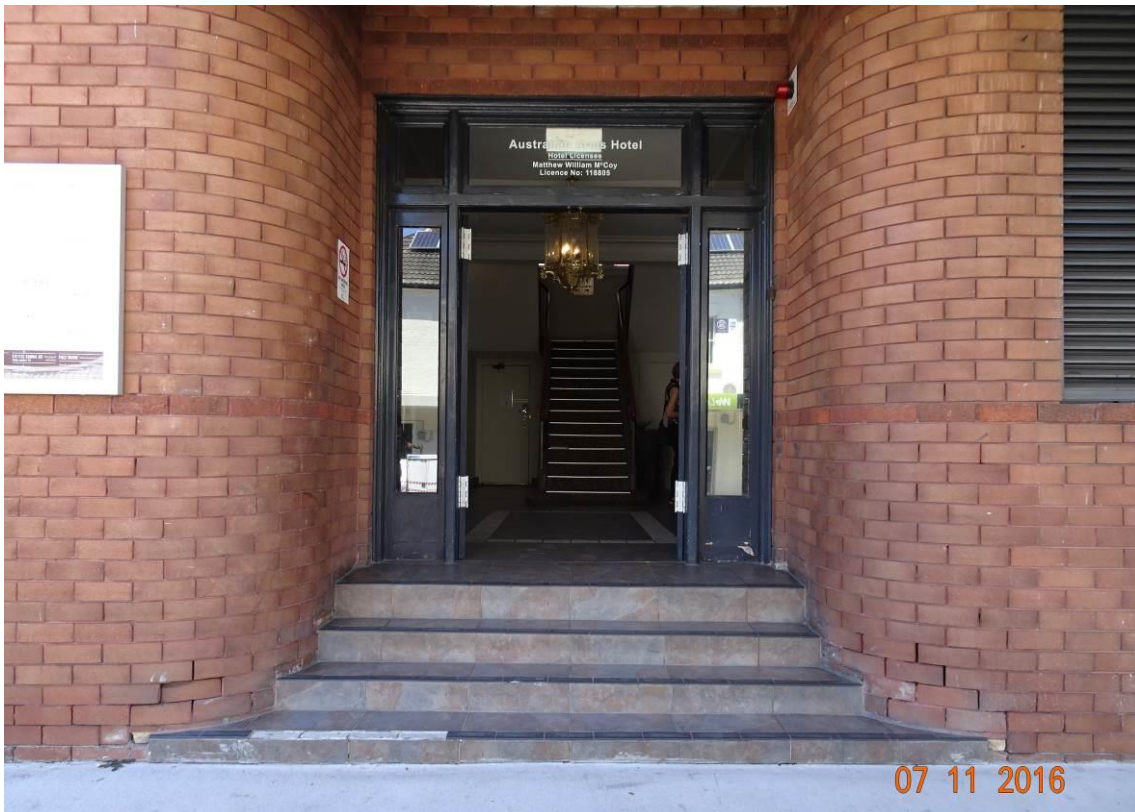


Figure 28: The main entrance on Lawson Street



Figure 29: View of the northern end of the ground floor from the covered beer garden



Figure 30: Ground Floor Eastern side showing windows to toilets and services pipework



Figure 31: First Floor Eastern side showing services pipework

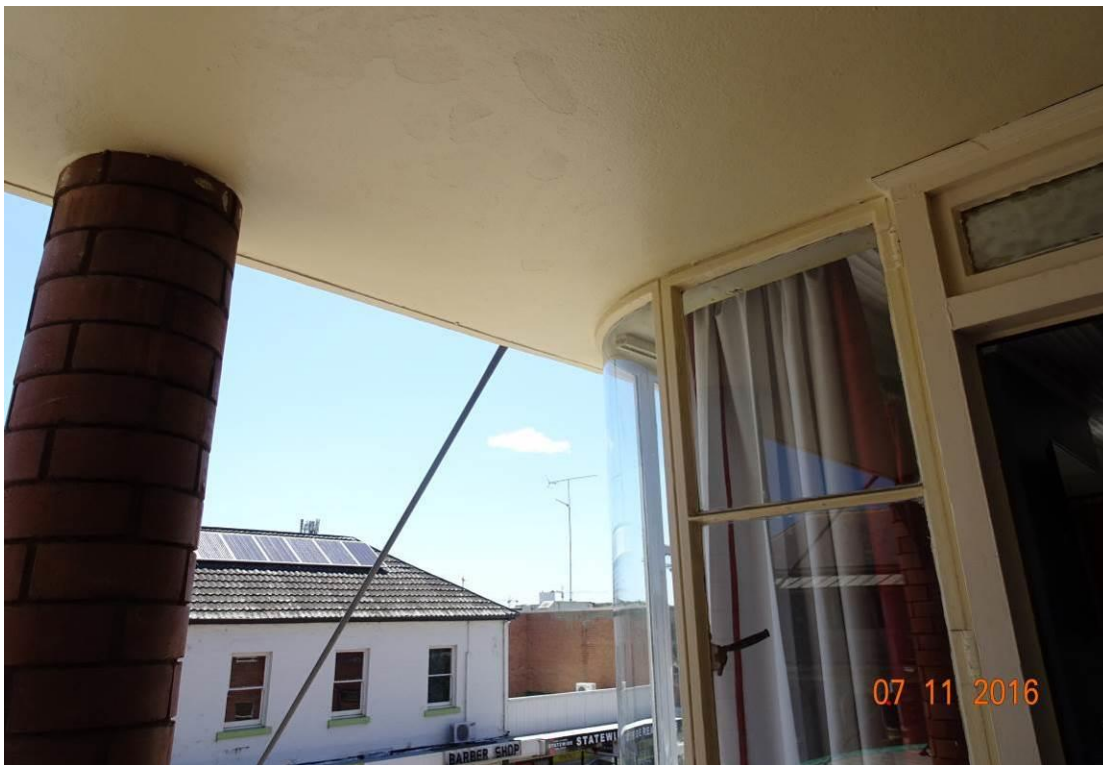


Figure 32: First Floor Verandah: Brick column, curved window and slab soffit

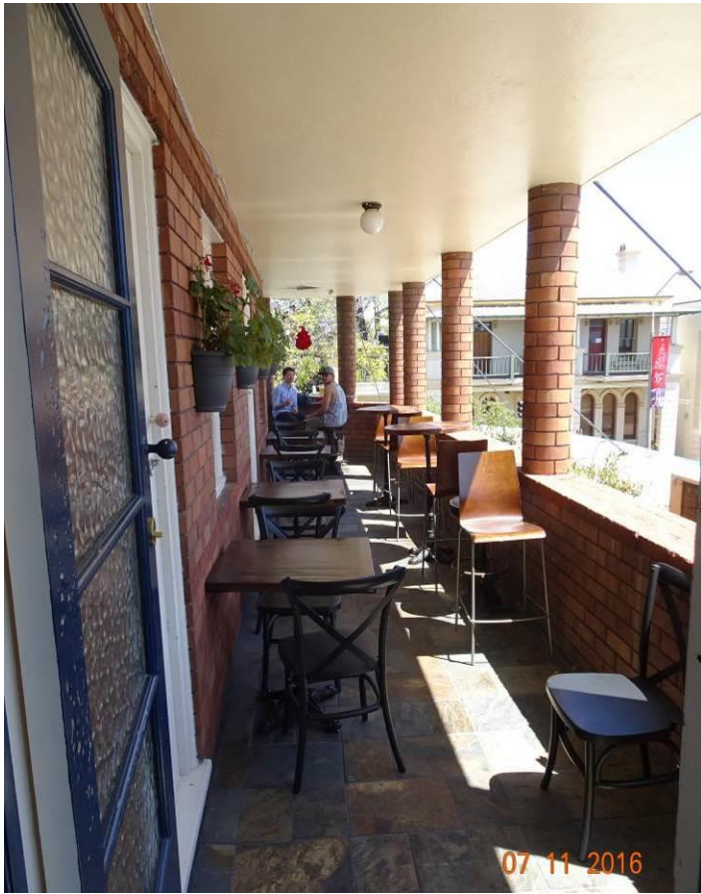


Figure 33: First Floor Verandah looking towards High Street. Cram Place can be seen on the opposite side of High Street.



Figure 34: View of substation outbuilding and car park at rear of hotel

3.2.3 Interior

Basement

There is a basement level accessed by a flight of concrete steps behind the main bar on the ground floor. It houses kegs, wine and general storage and services.

Ground floor

On the ground floor of the main hotel building there is a public bar opening off High Street and beyond that a room which is devoted to gaming. On the other side of the main entrance lobby is the dining room with kitchen and store rooms. There is one set of gents' and ladies' toilets near the main bar and another at the rear, accessed either through the dining room and beer garden or along the covered outdoor service corridor on the eastern side of the building.

There are curved corners in the bar and dining room (echoing the exterior form of the hotel). The public bar itself is curved and finished in timber veneer and ceramic tiles.

The lobby off Lawson Street contains a staircase which is bifurcated in plan and has a simple but elegant wrought metal balustrade with turned timber hand rail.

The bar and dining areas are carpeted and the lobby and beer garden are tiled. Walls are plastered. There are plasterboard ceilings in the bar and dining areas with bulkheads and lowered areas, including air conditioning ceiling registers and recessed downlights.

The toilets are ceramic tiled on floor and walls with ceramic fixtures.

First floor

At the top of the stairs is an open landing area with French doors opening onto a small balcony which provides cover over the main entrance. To the north is a hallway with 4 bedrooms and gents' bathrooms opening off it. To the south is another hallway giving access to a further 2 bedrooms, a Manager's Suite, the ladies' bathroom and the lounge. The lounge can also be accessed from the landing at the top of the stairs. The lounge has a single glazed door opening onto the verandah overlooking Lawson Street.

On the first floor several rooms have curved corners. Bedrooms off the western side of the southern hall open via glazed doors onto the verandah. These rooms have fanlights over the doors, unlike the rooms off the northern hallway.

Habitable rooms on the upper floor are carpeted. Walls are set plastered. The ceilings appear to be fibrous plaster, not patterned, but with cornices stepped and detailed. The cornice in the lounge is more elaborate.

The timber joinery is simple with bevelled skirtings and no architraves to the doors. The internal doors are all flush. There is a timber mantel piece of simple reeded style to the brick fireplace in the lounge.

The bathrooms walls are lined with cream square glazed ceramic tiles with a black skirting and top finishing tile. There is a band of patterned feature tiles in black and cream. The floor tiles are small square buff coloured ceramic.

3.2.4 Contents/movable heritage

No items were observed with heritage value relevant to the history or aesthetics of the hotel. There have been a number of owners over the years since the hotel was built and changing tastes have presumably led to the loss of original contents.



Figure 35: Front Bar opening onto High Street



Figure 36: Front Bar with Lawson St windows on left



Figure 37: View of Dining Room looking north towards Beer Garden

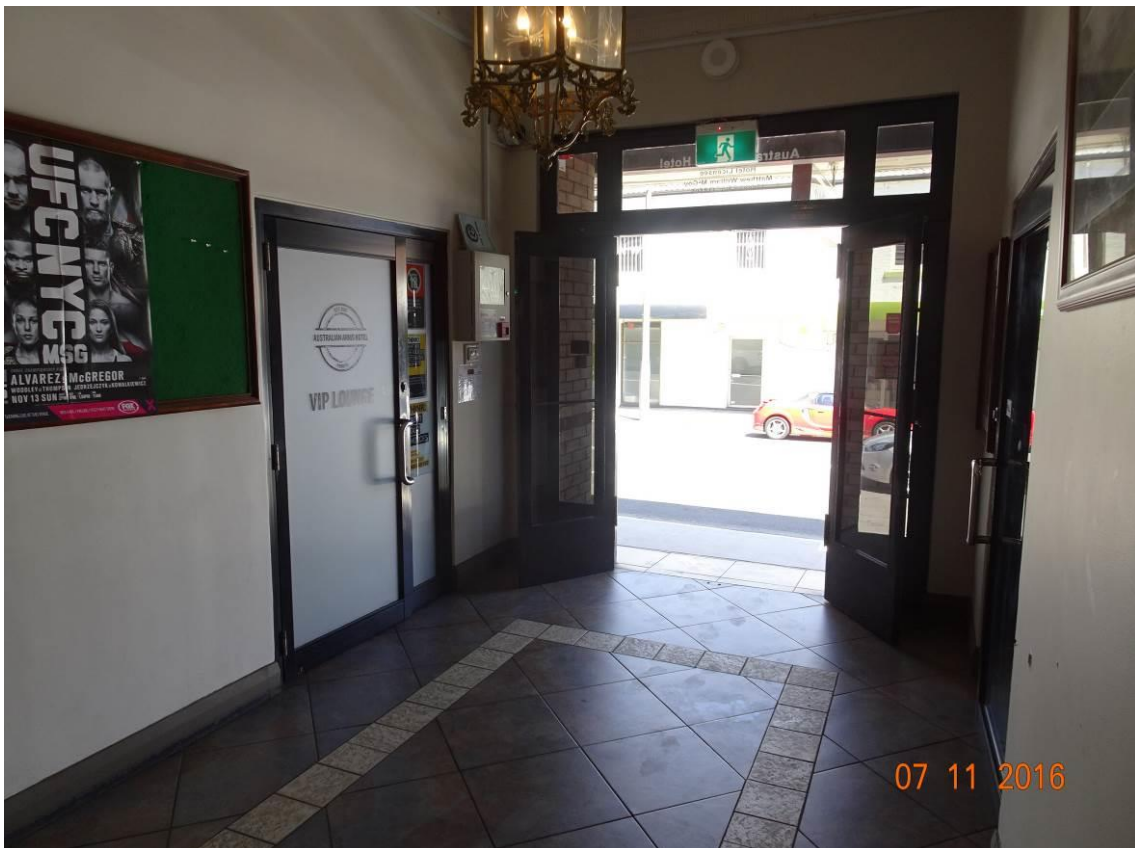


Figure 38: Entrance lobby opening onto Lawson Street



Figure 39: Entrance lobby and stairs



Figure 40: View of stair handrail, mid landing and window from First Floor



Figure 41: Stair balustrade and curved handrails



Figure 42: First Floor area at top of stairs and doors to balcony over main entrance

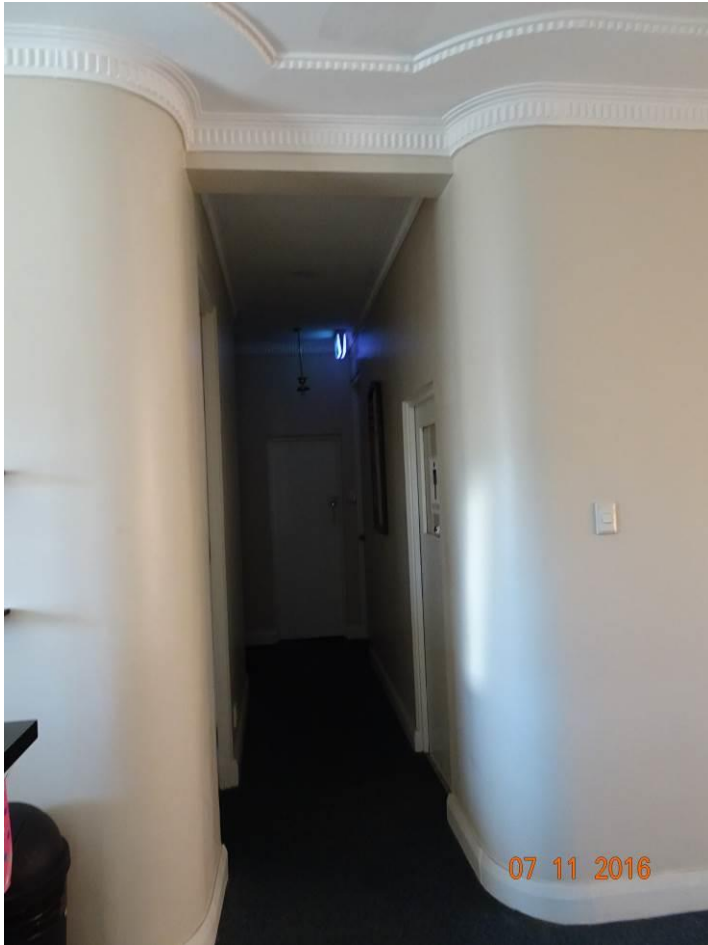


Figure 43: First Floor Hallway at top of stairs

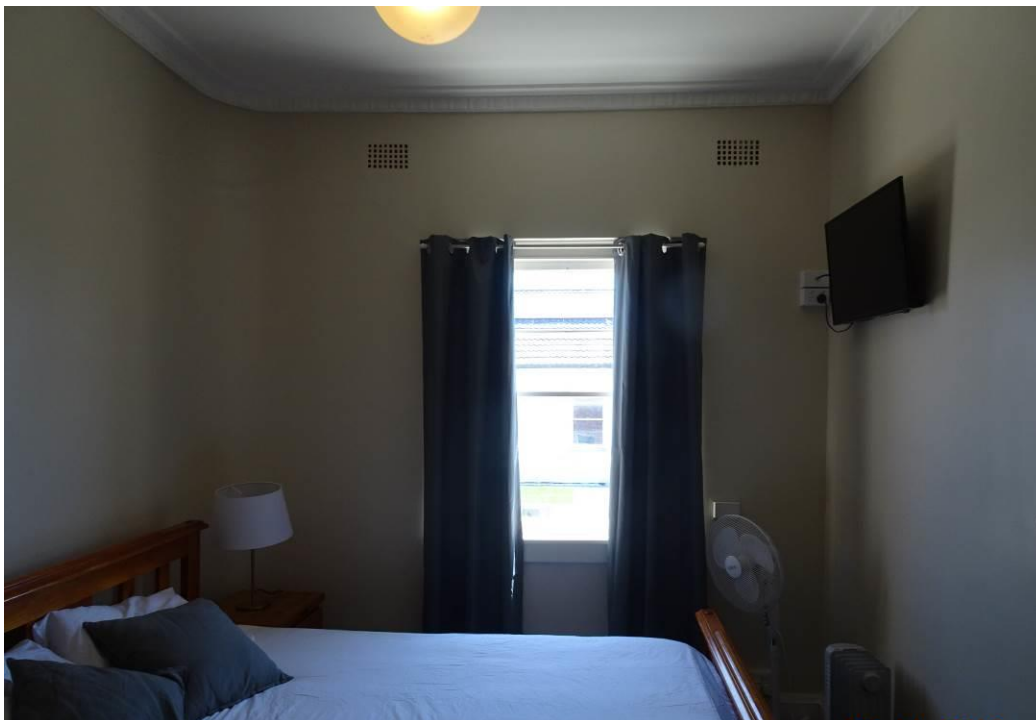


Figure 44: First Floor Bedroom facing Lawson Street with curved corner



Figure 45: First Floor Lounge



Figure 46: First Floor Lounge



Figure 47: First Floor Lounge: Cornice detail



Figure 48: First Floor Ladies' Bathroom with original tiles

3.3 Analysis of Existing Fabric

The style of the main hotel building is Art Deco, demonstrating typical streamlined horizontal emphasis and wrap around response to the corner site. The signage letters of the hotel name are also typical of Art Deco. The building form and fabric are largely original and consistent with the construction date of c.1940.

The tiled and rendered treatment of the external walls of the bar at street level is of a later date, as are the unsympathetic metal louvres to two windows.

The low brick wall along Lawson Street is not original but is of similar brick type and has been visibly toothed into the main hotel façade brickwork.

The beer garden structure is a much later addition with an inappropriate style more typical of the last quarter of the 20th century. The covering over the eastern passageway, the substation and carpark are also later additions.

Various accretions in the way of services and fixtures have accumulated on the exterior since the hotel was first built. Most could be removed without major damage.

The disposition of the main interior spaces of the hotel remains fairly consistent with the description given at the time of its construction. The gaming room may have been the saloon bar in the past.

Most of the ground floor interiors, particularly in the bar and gaming room, have been altered since the hotel was first built. Ceilings have been replaced to accommodate services and false partitions installed. The framed and glazed doors at the northern end of the dining room have likely replaced the original brick façade. Only the curved walls and the lobby staircase remain representative of the building's Art Deco origins.

By comparison, the upstairs rooms, including the bathrooms, are on the whole very original. Doors have been replaced and there has been some deterioration in finishes but the fabric could be restored relatively easily.

The external fabric of the main hotel building is clearly the most significant aspect of this item. This is followed by the upper floor rooms and bathrooms. The fabric of the beer garden, substation and car park are of little to no significance.

4.0 Assessment of Cultural Significance

4.1 Comparative Analysis

Hotels are typically associated with the themes of commerce, accommodation and leisure. There are relatively few hotels in the Penrith local government area of recognized significance. Other locally listed hotels include the following.

The former Australian Arms Inn (c. 1841) and the former Arms Of Australia Inn (c. 1850) on the Great Western Highway at Emu Plains are local heritage items and are listed as examples of the once thriving inn trade associated with the crossing of the Blue Mountains by the Western Road.²¹ The current Australian Arms Hotel is not associated with these in any way and is of a completely different period, although it is on the site of an earlier hotel.

Red Cow Hotel (c. 1862) at 1-7 Station Street, Penrith is the oldest extant licensed hotel premises in the CBD and has historic associations with local identities and the coming of the railway.²² It is of a different period and style from the present Australian Arms Hotel.

Wagon Wheel Hotel (c.1955) on the Great Western Highway at St Mary's is on the site of an earlier hotel and wheelwright business of the 1860s. It is listed for its historical associations rather than townscape or architectural significance.²³

Wallacia Hotel (c.1930s) is a large interwar country resort style hotel in mock Tudor style. It is representative of the theme of leisure.²⁴

The Australian Arms Hotel is a fine exemplar of the Art Deco style. There are no comparable buildings within the Penrith area. Some individual buildings exhibit Art Deco influence or features but none is as complete or as good an example.

There are several Art Deco hotels elsewhere in the Sydney region, such as the Clare Hotel in Chippendale. Many of these exhibit characteristics similar to those of the Australian Arms but are not necessarily as intact. The Australian Arms Hotel is comparable with these, and notable for its tiered "wedding cake" massing.

The comparative rarity of the hotel as a surviving hotel which exemplifies the Art Deco style justifies its current status as a heritage item of local significance.

4.2 Definition of Curtilage

The curtilage of an item provides a physical context for it and can be a buffer to surrounding development. In this case the present curtilage includes the beer garden, substation and car park. An aerial view from 1943 (see Figure 40) indicates that the hotel occupied the lot on the corner and that the adjacent lot fronting High Street was occupied by a separate building with its own back yard. East of that was an empty lot; evidence of a worn path diagonally across it suggests it was used as a shortcut to and from the main street from the rear lane. Historically it would seem that the primary curtilage of the hotel did not include the substation or car park areas.

There is no evidence that the beer garden retains any original features and the covered structure does not have any heritage or aesthetic value. Like the substation and brick outbuilding it is not sympathetic with the hotel design. The car park area is an open bitumen lot from which the main hotel is not readily visible. None of the present improvements within the curtilage makes any particular contribution to the appreciation of the hotel building. This part of the present curtilage is deemed to be of secondary importance.

²¹ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 3, 2007, p.84

²² *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 3, 2007, p.247

²³ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 3, 2007, p.288

²⁴ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 3, 2007, p.307

The hotel's situation on the corner of the main street is of primary significance and the building is best appreciated from the opposite side of the street. The absence of any development on the car park does mean that the hotel presently can be read in part against the sky. However, it is inevitable that development will occur in the vicinity of the property and if it is well-designed it could provide a visual backdrop to the hotel which does not detract from its presentation to the street.



Figure 49: Aerial view of the hotel site and surrounds in 1943, showing the hotel and outbuildings, with the present day site boundaries marked in red on the image at right. Image source: LHS <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au>, accessed 6 July 2018, RHS annotated.

4.3 Statement of Significance

4.3.1 Summary

The Australian Arms Hotel is a two-storey brick building constructed in Art Deco style with local significance. It has historical significance, reflecting the importance of hotels in Penrith's commercial and social life. It has associative significance as an example of the work of Gordon McKinnon and Sons, Architects. It has aesthetic significance for its relatively intact exterior and partially intact interior fabric and is significant for its local rarity as a hotel in Art Deco style.

4.3.2 Historical Significance

There has been a hotel on this site since at least the 1870s and possibly as early as the 1830s. The present hotel was built in 1940 (while Australia was at war) and is of local significance as a remnant of the hotels which were an important part of Penrith's commercial life.

4.3.3 Associative Significance

The building was designed by Gordon McKinnon and Sons, Architects.

4.3.4 Aesthetic Significance

The building is a fine example of Art Deco period hotels. It exhibits key features of the style such as streamlined horizontal massing, curved brickwork and "wedding cake" tower on the corner. The spaces inside are well-proportioned and original detailing survives in the entrance hall, staircase and rooms on the upper floor. The long wrap-around first floor verandah overlooking the street is a particularly appealing space.

When it was recommended for listing as a heritage item in the 2007 Penrith Heritage Study it was described as “*arguably one of the best examples of the Deco style in Penrith*”.²⁵ It has local significance under this criterion.

4.3.5 Social

The hotel provided a venue for community and social events after it was built.

4.3.6 Research

Not applicable.

4.3.7 Rarity

It is locally rare as a relatively intact Art Deco style building in the Penrith area and the best example of a twentieth century hotel in Penrith town centre.

4.3.8 Representativeness

The building is locally significant as an example of Art Deco style hotels of its time.

²⁵ *Penrith Heritage Study* Vol. 3, 2007, p.250.

5.0 Constraints and Opportunities

5.1 Implications of Statement of Significance

The historical and social significance of the hotel dictates that it would be ideal if its function as licensed premises and hotel accommodation could be continued.

Its aesthetic significance as a good example of its period which is relatively intact suggests that it should be retained and if possible restored. Its corner position and appearance from the street are important considerations in any future plans for the site. Although the site as a whole is identified as a heritage item, the car park and beer garden area have no heritage significance and provide opportunities for further development without necessarily detracting from the hotel's significance.

5.2 Statutory and Other Listings

The hotel is listed as Item of Local Significance No. 196 in Penrith Local Environment Plan. This means that retention of the building is preferred and Council approval is required for development.

The hotel is not listed on the National Trust Register, or the Australian Institute of Architects list of Nationally Significant 20th Century Architecture.

5.3 Heritage Context

There are several local heritage items in High Street in the vicinity of the hotel. Potential impact on the heritage significance of any of these should be considered if new development is proposed on the hotel site. However, in our assessment the Art Deco style of the hotel is a unique example in a streetscape where the other heritage items are of a different architectural period. Accordingly, provided development occurs at the side and rear of the hotel, impact is likely to be minimal.

5.4 Development Controls

The site is zoned B3 Commercial Core with a height limit of 12m and a floor space ratio of 3.0. Height limits in the immediate vicinity are set at 20m and 24m. Council officers have advised that the lower height limit on the hotel site likely recognizes the lower height of the hotel itself and seeks to limit the impact of any development on the remainder of the site on the hotel.

There may be some opportunity to relax the height limit provided the effect on the heritage significance of the hotel is not detrimental.

5.5 Owner's Requirements

The current owner is keen to retain the original hotel building while developing the remainder of the site with a new hotel. They wish to make some internal alterations to the hotel which will not affect the street presentation.

The hotel requires expenditure to maintain and enhance the heritage fabric. Allowing development on the remainder of the site would support this expenditure.

5.6 Public Safety

There are a number of building elements which do not comply with current building regulations. These include:

- Balustrade height on first floor balcony and verandah
- Handrail height and balustrade design of stairs
- Steps at street entrances

- Stairs to basement
- Lighting levels to corridors and stairs

Compliance with some of these, e.g. lighting, is relatively easy but where compliance would require alterations to elements essential to the heritage character of the building, e.g. first floor verandah balustrade, exemptions may be sought or more creative solutions developed.

Further investigation is required for issues such as escape routes and disability access.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

There are some gaps in our knowledge of the original fabric of the hotel. In particular the original finish to the corner walls of the hotel at street level is unknown, although it may be conjectured by reference to other contemporary hotels. Penrith City Council has advised that they have no drawings or other information in their records.

6.0 Development of Conservation Policy

Consideration of the hotel's significance and the constraints and opportunities has led to the formulation of a set of policies to guide the future of the property. The policies are to be viewed in the light of a commercial entity that must adapt to changing uses to ensure its continuing viability.

The building's original fabric should be retained and enhanced by diligent maintenance. A hierarchy of significance has been considered in identifying elements that should be conserved and other later elements which are not sympathetic to the original and which may be removed and/or altered.

If possible, the building should continue as a hotel, with public areas on the ground floor and accommodation above. Other sympathetic uses such as a restaurant, cafe or bar may be appropriate provided that the rooms on the upper floor are kept intact.

The beer garden and vacant areas of the site may be considered for new development provided new work does not encroach on the hotel itself, is visually separate and does not detract from appreciation of the hotel from the street.

7.0 Policies and Guidelines

7.1 Conservation of Key Aspects of Significance

Policy

- Ensure that a commitment to conserving the identified heritage values and characteristics of the Australian Arms Hotel underpins future management decisions.

Policy

- Retain the Hotel on the Penrith City Council register of items of local significance.

Strategies/Guidelines

The Art Deco features of the original building are integral to the heritage significance of the hotel. These include:

- the corner siting of the building with frontages to two streets
- the massing of the building
- the external original details
- the remaining original internal details

The loss of any of these would constitute a negative impact on the heritage significance of the building.

7.2 Curtilage and Setting

Policy

- Ensure that areas of the site which are not occupied by the original 2 storey hotel building are retained as part of the curtilage and that any development on them is subject to this CMP.

Strategies/Guidelines

As previously stated, the corner siting of the hotel and its reading from both streets are integral to its heritage values. Any proposed development in the curtilage should be assessed relative to this CMP.

7.3 Conservation, Repairs and Maintenance

Policy

- Significant building fabric, both internally and externally, should be retained, conserved and maintained.

Strategies/Guidelines

Elements to be conserved are identified in the schedule below. These are all items of high/medium significance. Changes to this fabric should be minimal, giving preference to changes that are reversible. Some adaptation may be acceptable if it is undertaken in a way that is consistent with the overall style of the building.

Maintenance, including repointing of deteriorated mortar to match original, and painting of timber, is recommended. Removal of surface-mounted services visible from the street would be desirable. Existing garden plantings have no heritage value but, if retained, their maintenance and rejuvenation with advice from a conservation landscape architect is suggested.

Schedule:

Items/fabric that must be conserved:

Exterior

Street facades of main hotel building

- The face brickwork walls, parapets, balcony and upper verandah to be kept intact with no changes to openings
- Face brick and glass brick tower and flagpole
- Brick chimney facing Lawson Street
- Concrete slabs painted in contrast colour (preferably light/white)
- Art deco style lettered signage of hotel name on parapets
- Awning including pressed metal soffit
- Terrazzo thresholds on High Street
- Window and door materials as existing whether steel, timber or glass except as noted under items that may be altered/removed
- Rainwater heads and downpipes
- Terra cotta ventilator hoods

Roof of main hotel building

- Roof form and tile finishes viewed from the public domain.

Interior

Ground Floor

- Curved corners to rooms
- Lobby walls and ceiling
- Staircase balustrade and handrails
- Mid landing window

First floor

- Curved walls and layout generally, particularly lounge
- Original internal walls and ceilings
- Original cornices
- Original skirtings
- Curved glass in corner windows on Lawson Street likely had steel frames originally – reinstatement may be considered
- Chimney breast, mantle-piece and fireplace

7.4 Managing Change

7.4.1 Changing Use and/or Ownership

Policy

- The building should retain a use which is compatible with its significance including commercial and public use.
- If other uses are proposed for the site, assess any potential heritage impacts prior to approval of that use.

Strategies/Guidelines

Most uses compatible with the local zoning (B3 Commercial Core) are appropriate. A hotel would be ideal as it continues and builds on the historical association of the item.

7.4.2 Demolition

Policy

- Demolition which affects the heritage significance of the item is to be avoided.

Strategies/Guidelines

Elements identified as *intrusive* may be demolished and removed.

Elements identified as *little/neutral* significance may be altered/removed provided damage to adjacent fabric is minimized.

Max Dupain's photographs provide a valuable reference for reinstatement of the external appearance of the hotel in the 1940s.

Schedule: Intrusive elements which would preferably be removed

Exterior

- Render and modern tile finish at ground floor level to High Street and return along Lawson Street - may be replaced with finishes more akin to period hotel finishes based on research, such as glazed ceramic tiles.
- Modern louvres to gaming room windows on Lawson Street (no change to brick opening size).
- Modern floor tiles at Lawson Street entrance
- Modern illuminated box signs
- Modern flue above chimney
- All surface mounted services including light fittings
- Folding glazed doors leading to beer garden on northern façade
- Roof sheeting and supports over eastern covered outdoor service corridor

Interior

Ground Floor

- Gaming room enclosing partitions
- Wall finishes and ceilings
- Surface mounted services providing original building fabric not further damaged

First floor

- Internal doors and hardware which are not original
- Surface mounted services providing original building fabric not further damaged

Schedule: Elements of little/neutral significance which may be altered/removed.

Exterior

- Windows on Lawson Street to either side of keg delivery door have replaced original doorways - reinstatement of doorways to match originals recommended if practicable
- Low wall along Lawson Street, stairs and ramp to beer garden
- Beer garden roof, structure, finishes
- Metal fences
- Substation and associated outbuilding
- Car park pavement, kerbs, bollards etc
- Garden beds and modern planting

Interior

Ground Floor

- Public bar and dining area bar modern partitions, finishes and bar counters
- Gaming room enclosing partitions
- Kitchen fitout
- Bathrooms and toilets
- Wall finishes and ceilings

First floor

- Internal doors and hardware which are not original
- Joinery fittings and fitments
- Wallpapers
- Soft furnishings

7.4.3 Adaptive Reuse

Policy

- The adaptation of the hotel is acceptable provided:
 - that the new work has been assessed by a heritage specialist and negative heritage impacts have been minimized
 - adaptive reuse options respect the original form, layout and fabric.

Strategies/Guidelines

Adaptation should ensure that the original fabric or significant architectural features are retained as far as possible.

Period detailing can be used to reconstruct elements that have changed over time but in general this should be restricted to where there is sufficient documentary or physical evidence of their original character. Where this is not the case for this particular building, evidence from hotels of the same period and style may be used. An example where this may be appropriate would be the reinstatement of a more appropriate ground floor façade treatment to replace the modern tiling.

7.4.4 New Development

Policy

- New structures need to:
 - Be contemporary in nature, and of a scale and height which does not overwhelm the existing hotel building when viewed from the public domain.
 - Allow observers in the public domain to appreciate the character and detail of the Art Deco building, with a priority to the views from High Street and the corner with Lawson Street, while recognizing the value of the view corridor along Lawson Street towards Cram Place.
 - Provide visual separation from the Hotel along the streetscapes of High and Lawson Street, ensuring independence of the original fabric as far as possible
 - Be assessed by a heritage specialist and any negative heritage impacts are minimized.

- Landscaping should be:
 - Be contemporary in nature, and appropriate to any new development.
 - Not obscure the view of the original hotel, particularly the Lawson Street façade, from the street.

Strategies/Guidelines

New development may be considered for the beer garden and car park.

Height: Penrith City Council LEP permits development on the site up to 12m high. Consideration may be given to development in excess of this provided that the massing is managed so as not to impose on the hotel. Setbacks, articulation, façade treatments and/or stepping of the building form may assist with this.

The use of high quality contemporary design is acceptable for new development separate from the hotel building and is preferable to inappropriate period design. New work should be clearly articulated from the original building.

Landscaping was not a feature of the original hotel and any future landscaping should be appropriate to new development as well as the hotel. While street trees are desirable for shade and amenity, there were none present at the time that the hotel was built, nor are there any there now. No trees should be planted along Lawson Street in front of the original hotel building as they would detract from the clear view which the public now enjoys of the hotel façade.

7.5 Archaeological material

Policy

- Develop a response plan in consultation with the local Heritage Advisor prior to any excavation on site which may uncover material of archaeological interest.

Strategies/Guidelines

While additions at the rear of the hotel may have previously disturbed the site, excavation for new development may go deeper and have more potential to reveal items of interest, such as footings of earlier outbuildings or artefacts. A response plan would assist in ensuring that any such finds were reported, assessed and, if necessary, documented.

7.6 Review

Policy

- Review this CMP every 10 years, in consultation with the local Heritage Adviser.

7.7 Public accessibility of document

Policy

- Copies of this document should be provided to the owner, Penrith City Council and the Penrith City Council library.

7.8 Interpretation

Policy

- Fix a permanent plaque at street level with the name of the building, the architects and date of construction.

8.0 Confidential matters

There are none of which the author is aware.

9.0 References

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