

Place No. 64 Victoria Hotel



Victoria Hotel Roebourne, viewed from Roe Street 2012

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Victoria Hotel
Other Name (1)	Victoria Arms
Other Name (2)	"The Vic"
Location/Address	
Street Number	17
Street Name	Roe Street/Padbury street
Suburb/Town	Roebourne
Other Locational descriptor (text)	515205 mE, 7702915 mN (MGA94 Zone 50) Longitude: 117.1461 Latitude: -20.7735

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Yindjibarndi Capital Pty Ltd	21 Hampton Street, Roebourne WA 6718			
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
	1,2 & 3	D 41696	1861/571	

Listing and Assessment	
HCWA Reference Number	4196
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Management Category	A

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1893
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Individual Building or Group Historic Site
Use(s) of Place	
<i>Original</i>	COMMERCIAL: Hotel, Tavern or Inn
<i>Present</i>	VACANT/UNUSED: Vacant/Unused
<i>Other</i>	
Construction Materials:	

<i>Walls</i>	2. BRICK 201 Common Brick 3. CONCRETE 399 Other Concrete 9. STONE 904 Local Stone
<i>Roof</i>	6. METAL 606 Corrugated Iron 11. TIMBER 1199 Other Timber
<i>Other</i>	
Condition	Fair
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Good
Physical Description	
<p>The Victoria Hotel is a fine example of Victorian Georgian Architecture, albeit obscured by a later verandah and balcony enclosures on the upper storey. There is a two-storey extension to rear of hotel/motel building on the Padbury Street elevation. There have been internal alterations to bar areas.</p>	
History	
<p>The Victoria Hotel, commanded the premier trade in the district surrounding Roebourne and Cossack from 1866. The Victoria Hotel had the first public license to be issued in the north west, granted to Simeon Müller on 1 January 1866.¹ It was to bear the sign 'Victoria Hotel'. J.S. Battye claims that the Hotel was early on known as the 'Victoria Arms'.² Battye wrote, 'It is widely patronised, not only by the pastoralists who occupied the large runs in the vicinity of these seaports, but also by those representatives of the commercial world whose business brought them to the region from time to time.'³</p> <p>Simeon Müller was a member of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and moved to Roebourne with his wife and four children. Suffering ill health, the family left in 1867. The second public license was granted in 1867 for 'Chinki', later the Roebourne Hotel.</p> <p>By 1878 the Hotel was licensed to Charles Zeddi. By 1891 John Spencer was proprietor of the Hotel. By this stage the hotel was newly renovated, advertising that 'every attention and comfort can be relied upon by Visitors and Diggers proceeding to the Nor'-West Goldfields.'⁴ This included a well-lighted billiard table and latest sporting intelligence posted.</p> <p>In 1893, a newspaper article described the opening of the new Victoria Hotel. It describes the 'convivial gathering' held to 'celebrate the opening of the handsome new building ... the first two-storey building in Roebourne' by proprietor Thomas Porter, replacing 'the small two-roomed thatched house of the olden days.'⁵</p> <p>Reports from the same year provided a detailed description of the layout of the hotel's 20 rooms and states it has 63 foot frontage on Roe Street, 50 foot frontage on Padbury Street.⁶</p> <p>Evidently the old Victoria Hotel building remained on site, as this building was converted into a meeting and dance hall sized 30 x 60 foot.⁷</p> <p>In 1894 an advertisement claimed the Victoria Hotel was the 'finest and most commodious Hotel in the North. Spacious balcony, Plunge and Shower Baths, Good Stabling and Attentive Ostlers. Loose boxes for racehorses.'⁸</p> <p>One of Charles Zeddi's daughters, Margaret Porter (nee Zeddi), ran the hotel for a while after the death of her husband Thomas Porter. In 1910 Margaret Porter was the licensee. In 1914 the license was transferred from Margaret Porter to Victor Suhard, whom Margaret married.</p> <p>In 1925 the Hotel was damaged by a cyclone.</p> <p>Renovations were carried out in 1947 and a building permit was issued on 11 May 1951 to erect</p>	

new timber-framed bedrooms for staff.

In 1953 Stan Ball was the proprietor. Max McKay purchased hotel from Stan and Jean Ball in 1965. In 1966, the McKays built the first block of motel units north of Carnarvon, in order to service the hoards of new workers in the region. The verandahs were not enclosed when the McKays bought the hotel.

By 1971, the Victoria Hotel had increased its staff from 13 (in 1969) to 64, due to the rapid influx of construction and mining workers. It became one of the top five liquor outlets in WA. Buses were organized from the work camps and there would be 500 or 600 people crammed into the beer garden, where only jugs, not glasses, were served. The band played on the roof of the outdoor bar.⁹

The 1967 Referendum that granted automatic citizenship rights to Aboriginal people were commonly referred to as 'drinking rights' because Aboriginal people were permitted to drink in pubs. This had devastating consequences for the community, with alcoholism causing the breakdown of families and increasing abuse and violence. The influx of mining workers to Roebourne saw an increase in racial discrimination. In 1973, a study for the Department of Community Welfare found 'considerable racial discrimination' in Roebourne.¹⁰ Violet Samson remembered,

'I was here when the mining people came here working for money and just coming to the pub. They came into Roebourne and turned the town upside down, taking the young girls. It destroyed Aboriginal families.'¹¹

On 28 September 1983, John Pat was arrested with others following an altercation at the Victoria Hotel which involved a group of police officers fighting with a group of Aboriginal men, during which John Pat was punched by a policeman and fell, hitting his head on the road. Witness accounts of the event testify to police brutality. John Pat tragically died in custody in police cells in the Roebourne Police Station, Gaol and Court House Precinct, aged nearly 17, eventually triggering the national Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1989.

By 1993 Danny Vacca and Libby Bridge were the managers of the now infamous Victoria Hotel. As part of their efforts to renew the image of the pub, the motel section underwent a name change to Mt Welcome Motel. The new owners attempted to revive the Hotel and attract passing tourist trade. They engaged two local Aboriginal men, Anthony Hicks (Noonie) and Patrick Boonga to decorate the outside wall of the hotel/motel area with a mural of Aboriginal scenes and stories.¹² This mural remains today.

In 1994 the Victoria Hotel agreed, along with other liquor outlets, to cut morning trading hours as part of a campaign to cut alcohol consumption. The opening hours were changed from 6am to 10am.

In the late 1990s the Victoria Hotel closed.

In 2002 the community lobbied unsuccessfully for the Victoria Hotel to reopen.

In 2013 the hotel was purchased by Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation.

Archaeology

There would be potential for archaeology to reveal material evidence for the use of this site over a long period of time as a hotel. This may contribute to a more holistic and social history of the site.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historic theme (s)

3. OCCUPATIONS
311 Hospitality industry & tourism

Statement of Significance:

The Victoria Hotel is historically significant to Roebourne and the history of the State for a number of reasons. The hotel was the first licensed premises in Roebourne (and the north west), the last to close and the only remaining hotel structure in Roebourne. The hotel catered and adapted to the gold rush and the pearling boom and later the construction and mining boom.

The Victoria Hotel has historical significance for its association with the death of John Pat in 1983, which triggered the National Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1989.

The hotel has social significance because it has provided a focus of town activity, providing a venue for town meetings and socialization, as well as a dance hall and children's fetes over a long period of time.

Its central position on the main road of Roebourne and fine Victorian Georgian architecture has aesthetic significance because it provides an entry to a streetscape and town that contains many heritage buildings.

ASSOCIATIONS	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Other Associated Person(s)	Simeon Müller Charles Zeddi Thomas Porter Margaret Porter Victor Suhard Stan and Jean Ball Max McKay Danny Vacca and Libby Bridge John Pat Anthony 'Noonie' Hicks Patrick Boonga
2001 Shire of Roebourne Council Report	Site identified as "at risk" and of heritage significance to the community. (will provide ref)
MHI 2012	Site identified through community consultation as significant and at risk
MHI Review 2012	Site assessed and Place Name Record created



The rear of the Victoria Hotel, showing the staff quarters 2012



The Victoria Hotel, Roebourne, viewed from Padbury Street 2012



The rear of the Victoria Hotel, showing the outdoor bar area 2012

¹ Nancy Withnell Taylor, *Yeera-Muk-A-Doo: A saga of the North West*, Hesperian Press, Victoria Park, 2002, p 100.

² J.S. Battye, *The History of the North West of Australia*, Facsimile Edition, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1985, p 228.

³ J.S. Battye, *The History of the North West of Australia*, p 228.

⁴ Victoria Hotel Advertisement, *Norwest Times*, 22 August 1891.

⁵ *Nor' West Times*, 4 March 1893.

⁶ *Nor' West Times*, 25 February 1893.

⁷ *Nor' West Times*, 15 April 1893.

⁸ *Northern Public Opinion*, 1 December 1894.

⁹ *Reflections – 20 years of Robe*, *Robe News* 1992

¹⁰ Olive, p 190; refer to R. Howitt, 'Resource Development and Aborigines The Case for Roebourne 1960-68', *Australian Geographical Studies*, October 1989, p 155

¹¹ Olive, p 188

¹² 'Aboriginal art gives new look to Roebourne', *The Karratha Guardian*, 10 March 1993, p 8; 'Mural becomes talking point in Roebourne', *North West Telegraph*, 10 March 1993, 'Roebourne mural draws attention' *West Australian*, 30 March 1993.