

## Heritage Citation – Individual Place

**Heritage Place:** The Orrong Hotel

**Address:** 711 High Street, Toorak

**HO Reference:** HO753

**Citation status:** Final

**Date Updated:** 28 March 2022

**Designer:** Unknown (c.1875 design); James H. Wardrop (c.1938 design)

**Year of Construction:** c.1875 / c.1938

**Builder:** Unknown (c.1875 design); George Prentice Pty Ltd (c.1938 design)



Photograph of The Orrong Hotel (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of 711 High Street, Toorak.

**Heritage Group:** Recreation and Entertainment

**Heritage Type:** Hotel

**Key Theme:** Retailing and hospitality

**Key Sub-theme:** Providing hospitality and entertainment

**Significance Level:** Local

**Recommendation:** Recommended for the Heritage Overlay as an individual place.

<b>Controls:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> External paint colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls
	<input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited uses may be permitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Heritage Place	

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The property at 711 High Street, Armadale, (otherwise known as The Orrong Hotel), is significant. Specifically, the form, scale, setback, fenestration and sitting of the Streamline Moderne style hotel is of local significance, along with the neon 'Fosters Lager' sign. Later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Orrong Hotel is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

### *Why is it significant?*

The Orrong Hotel is historically significant in demonstrating the major interwar era trend of rebuilding or remodelling Victorian era hotels to the Art Deco style following the introduction of the Licenses Reduction Board. As a former Victorian era hotel that was later completely rebuilt, the Orrong Hotel illustrates how liquor legislation in Victoria stemming from the lead up to World War I impacted the design and appearance of local pubs within the City of Stonnington. Moreover, as a long-running local pub, the Orrong Hotel also provides a tangible link to the way locals wine, dine, and socialised in the past. (Criterion A)

The Orrong Hotel is aesthetically significant as a Streamline Moderne style pub on a prominent street corner. Key attributes contributing to its aesthetic value include its emphasis on horizontal built form, curved lines and corner awning, steeped cube corner tower, geometric parapet along the western elevation, imposing scale and height, corner sitting, original upper floor fenestration, and original face brick chimneys. These elements, combined with the original neon 'Fosters Lager' sign, render the site a distinctive and visually striking local landmark within the suburb of Armadale. (Criterion E)

## HERCON Criteria Assessment

<b>A</b>	<b><i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i></b>	<b>The Orrong Hotel is historically significant in demonstrating the major interwar era trend of rebuilding or remodelling Victorian era hotels to the Art Deco style following the introduction of the Licenses Reduction Board. As a former Victorian era hotel that was later completely rebuilt, the Orrong Hotel illustrates how liquor legislation in Victoria stemming from the lead up to World War I impacted the design and appearance of local pubs within the City of Stonnington. Moreover, as a long-running local pub, the Orrong Hotel also provides a tangible link to the way locals wine, dine, and socialised in the past.</b>
<b>B</b>	<b><i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i></b>	This place does not meet this criterion.

C	<i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
E	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	The Orrong Hotel is aesthetically significant as a Streamline Moderne style pub on a prominent street corner. Key attributes contributing to its aesthetic value include its emphasis on horizontal built form, curved lines and corner awning, steeped cube corner tower, geometric parapet along the western elevation, imposing scale and height, corner sitting, original upper floor fenestration, and original face brick chimneys. These elements, combined with the original neon 'Fosters Lager' sign, render the site a distinctive and visually striking local landmark within the suburb of Armadale.
F	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
G	<i>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.

## Description

### • Physical Analysis

The Orrong Hotel is a large two-storey commercial building built in the Streamline Moderne style, a derivative of the Art Deco movement that was popularised from the 1930s. The style is characteristic for its curved forms and long horizontal lines emulating the form of passenger ships. In addition to buildings, the style was explored widely in the designs of cars, planes, trains and household appliances.

The south elevation faces High Street and west elevation faces Orrong Road; they form the main visual components of the structure. Key elements along these elevations include the tall projecting steeped cube corner tower that rises above the two-storey main structure with the word 'Orrong' painted on, as well as the main entrance located at the rounded corner of the ground level. The steeped cube corner tower is a visually prominent feature and its highest point is visible from the wide vistas of the main streets. This is framed by distinct curved walls.

The ground floor facade fenestration consists of interspaced, tall and fixed windows. An original curved awning shelters the main entrance at the corner of the site, with a number of awnings covering secondary entrances on the west and south elevations. The words 'Orrong Hotel' is painted in dark green on the curved awning, as well as the wall of the eastern elevation. An original red neon electric sign reading 'Fosters Lager' also sits above the upper edge of the curved awning.

The upper floor facade fenestration consists of paired recessed single sash windows. Ornamentation on the façade is limited to the yellow paint finish contrasted by the maroon-coloured trim paintwork. The maroon trim highlights the horizontal form of the façade, outlining the base and parapet of the building. The flat parapet of the building is broken at the corner tower, as well as a stepped parapet projection above the secondary entrance on the west façade. The structure has a gable ended 'U' shaped roof clad with terracotta tiles. Two open face brick corbelled chimneys extend from the northern side of the roof. While the roof form is obscured from street view by the parapet, it retains visibility from the rear laneway where the stepped corbelled gable end of the building is exposed. The original unpainted red brick laid with a stretcher bond is visible from the rear laneway. The original internal courtyard has been infilled with two-storey addition with a flat corrugated galvanised iron roof.

The Orrong Hotel is located on the main corner junction of Orrong Road and High Street within a commercial precinct. The rear lane on its north side connects Orrong Road to Aubrey Street. The bluestone paved lane is well preserved and used as garage, deliveries, and storage access for the pub. The building is considered to be in good condition overall, having undergone a renovation recently.

The Orrong Hotel's distinctive built form, parapet, steeped cube corner tower, upper floor fenestration, along with other significant elements such as the 'Forsters Lager' neon sign remains intact. However, other elements such as original face brick and render details, balcony and ground floor tiling have been modified. The ground floor level is of low integrity and the upper floor level is of moderate integrity.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

- Ground floor street facing elevations modified with:
  - New window and door openings.
  - Removal of original tiling.
  - Addition of an awning above the bistro entrance.
  - Addition of an awning on the southern elevation.
  - Conversion of a small upper floor balcony along the western elevation to an awning.
- Upper floor street facing elevations modified with:
  - Infilling of balcony doors along the western elevation.
  - Addition of advertising signs.
  - Removal of the original extruded font 'ORRONG HOTEL' and 'HOTEL'.
  - Rendering of the walls, covering sections of face brick and linework.
- Services added to the roof.
- Former courtyard infilled with building additions.

## History

### • Historical Context

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as Stonnington was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided Traditional Owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay. It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

The first land sales in what would become Armadale began in 1854 following the surveying of Glenferrie Road and High Street. The suburb of Armadale was formally included in the City of Prahran and, as is the case with many of the suburbs in Stonnington and surrounds, it received its name from a lone but notable property. Armadale House was built by one James Munro, son of the first keeper of the Prahran pound. On arriving in Australia from his home in Sutherland, Scotland, Munro worked for the stationer business Fergusson and Moore—Fergusson being James Fergusson of Kooyong. Armadale House, built in c.1887, was the first of many grand houses constructed in the suburb in the late 19th century. Munro went on to become Premier of Victoria and, later, Attorney General, before losing all in the economic crash of the 1890s. Following the turn of the century, many of the original 19th century properties faced demolition and subdivision, encouraging growth in early 20th century and the interwar period. While Armadale today enjoys an affluent reputation for its association with the surrounding suburbs of Toorak, Malvern and Kooyong, traces of remnant working class houses can be seen at the small timber workers cottages present in some parts off High Street and near the border with Malvern (Cooper 1924, 268).

### • Place History

The Orrong Hotel was initially constructed as a brick building with eight rooms for publican Richard Kenney in 1875 (Stonnington History Centre). Erected on a corner lot between Orrong Road and High Street, Armadale, its development was precipitated by the growing population in Armadale towards the late 19th century.

An early historical image of the building reveals a late Victorian style pub featuring arched windows, a striking arched corner parapet, precast finials and a corner entrance (Unknown c.1910; refer to Further Images below). Kenney's ownership was short-lived however, and by 1877, Henry Cheel became the official license owner. Alterations and additions to the building appear to have been made during Kenney's initial ownership, with an auction advertisement describing the Hotel as a 'First-class licensed hotel containing 11 rooms, built of brick, with stabling and outbuildings' by 1877 (The Argus 1877). The Orrong Hotel would see several more changes in ownership over the next few decades, as well as some minor alterations including the addition of another bar and two rooms in 1892 (The Herald 1892, 1). As with other 19th century hotels, the Orrong Hotel not only provided accommodation and refreshments for travellers but was also a popular meeting place and centre of social and political life for the growing community (Context 2009, 114). Noted events that took place in the pub during its initial decades include a public meeting in support of electoral candidate A. Grant McIntyre in 1892 (Chronicle 1892, 10), as well as a speech by colonial politician Duncan Gillies, the member for the electoral district of Toorak, and later, the 14th Premier of Victoria, to local electors during Victorian Legislative Assembly elections in 1897 (The Argus 1897, 3).

While the licensees remained independent into the 20th century, this ended in 1937 when the license was sold to Carlton and United Breweries (The Age 1937, 8). Soon after this purchase, works to remodel the building commenced. James H. Waldrop and George Prentice Pty Ltd commissioned as the architect and builder (1940, 46). Best known for designing the Shrine of Remembrance along with Philip Hudson, Waldrop was a very well noted architect during the interwar period. He is remembered for his design of public monuments, however Wardrop also practiced in the Moderne idiom, as evident in his highly regarded Art Deco style United Kingdom Hotel in Clifton Hill (built 1937-38). It is important to note that the process of rebuilding of structure in a new style was not an uncommon occurrence during this time period due to the introduction of the Licenses Reduction Board, which frequently targeted hotels with sub-standard facilities for closure (Malone 1988). Rebuilding the Orrong Hotel was part of a major interwar era trend of re-modelling or rebuilding Victorian era hotels.

The Orrong Hotel was rebuilt in 1938. Early images of the hotel, just prior to completion, depict a Streamline Moderne building with curved horizontal lines, a prominent steeped cube corner tower, tiling along the ground level façade, linework to the upper facade, extruded lettering, a curved awning above the corner entrance, as well as a strip of open face brick and timber framed sash windows lining the upper level façade (Neon Electric Signs Ltd c. 1938). Notably, the photograph is also painted to show the design and placement of two neon signs reading 'Fosters Lager' on the curved awning and steeped cubed corner tower respectively (Neon Electric Signs Ltd c.1938). It is unknown whether the proposed sign on the steeped cubed corner tower was ever implemented, as it does not appear on a photograph taken in 1964 (Day 1964). Early interior photos also depict a sleek, Streamline Moderne style bar with a curved form and clear horizontal emphasis (Building 1940, 47).

The exterior of the Orrong Hotel was modified in the late 20th century to its current state, resulting in the rendering of original wall detailing and extruded lettering, changes to the ground floor fenestration, and the addition of painted lettering. A balcony with wrought iron detailing fronting Orrong Road that is depicted in the 1964 image has also since been modified into an awning (Day 1964). Today, the building remains in use as a local pub and meeting place for visitors and locals alike.

### Comparative Analysis

Originally constructed in a Victorian architectural style, the Orrong Hotel was re-modelled to a Streamline Moderne design in c.1938 following the introduction of the Licenses Reduction Board. It forms part of the major interwar trend of re-modelling or rebuilding nineteenth century hotels, resulting in the proliferation of popular interwar styles – particularly Art Deco and Streamline Moderne – in hotel design across both the municipality and inner Melbourne more generally.

Key comparative examples that were part of this interwar re-modelling trend include:

- **Hotel Max, 30 Commercial Road, Prahan (HO401).** Re-modelled in c.1940, Hotel Max is a good example of the interwar Streamline Moderne style. Compared to Orrong Hotel, it is significantly more intact, having retained its original face brickwork. While its use of steel frame windows (including a curved corner window) and continuous projecting sill and lintel to create a very clear streamlined character, the curved forms and strong horizontal lines emulating the form of a passenger ship is more evident at Orrong Hotel.
- **Prahan Hotel, 82 High Street, Windsor (HO286).** Visually dominated by two broad rendered bands, the re-modelled interwar era Prahan Hotel is distinct for its expression of the Art Deco cubist style.



Although an extension has been added to the eastern façade along Upton Road, the exterior of the hotel remains substantially intact, including tiles and art deco lettering. It compares favourably to Orrong Hotel in terms of integrity, however is a less articulated example of the Moderne idiom. Its angular form is more demonstrative of Art Deco sources as opposed to the Streamline.

- **Windsor Castle Hotel, 89 Albert Street, Windsor (HO402).** This expressive double storey corner hotel was substantially re-modelled in the 1930s with an interwar Moderne style façade mostly derived from the Art Deco idiom. Distinguishing features include its angular form, zig-zag pattern string course above ground floor entry doors, porthole windows, and wrought iron art deco lettering. With a few minor exceptions, its external features are substantially intact. While it has higher integrity overall, the curved forms and strong horizontal lines emulating the form of a passenger ship is more evident at Orrong Hotel. The form is more demonstrative of Art Deco sources as opposed to the Streamline.

As the above comparative analysis has demonstrated, although there are more intact examples of interwar era Moderne hotels in the City of Stonnington, the Orrong Hotel is a visually prominent, expressive and well-articulated example of the Streamline Moderne style. This is evident in its clear emphasis on horizontal lines and curved forms, the steeped cube corner tower, and original neon sign. Moreover, while Prahan Hotel and Windsor Hotel are good examples of the Moderne style, their angular forms are more emblematic of Art Deco influences as opposed to the Streamline. The only other example of a Streamline Moderne hotel is Hotel Max, which is less pronounced and prominent in form.

## References

Context Pty Ltd. 2009. 'Stonnington Thematic Environmental History.' Unpublished report prepared for City of Stonnington. PDF file.

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TOORAK ELECTORATE. (1892, April 2). *Chronicle, South Yarra Gazette, Toorak Times and Malvern Standard*, 10.

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Unknown. c. 1910. High Street, Armadale. Postcard. Prahran Collections, ref no. PH13531. Stonnington History Centre.

### Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.



## Further Images



View of Victorian era Orrong Hotel from High Street prior to rebuilding in c.1910 (source: Stonnington History Centre, c.1910).



View of the re-built Streamline Moderne style Orrong Hotel just prior to completion in c.1938 (source: State Library of Victoria, c.1938).



View of the re-built Streamline Moderne style Orrong Hotel in c.1964 (source: Fred Day, State Library of Victoria, c. 1964).



View of public bar in c.1940 (source: Building: The Magazine for the Architect, Builder, Property Owner and Merchant, 1940).



View of the altered public bar in 1964 (source: Fred Day, State Library of Victoria, c. 1964).



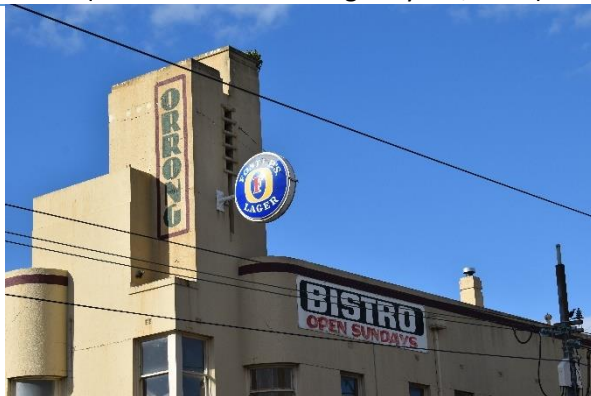
North-east view of Orrong Hotel from High Street (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North facing view of Orrong Hotel from High Street (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of main corner entrance, awning and neon 'Fosters Lager' sign (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of steeped cube corner tower (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).





Detail view of eastern elevation from Orrong Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of south elevation from High Street (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of signage above the main corner entrance (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of a former balcony fronting Orrong Road, now an awning (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of neon Fosters Lager sign and corner freestration (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



View of original face brick wall and chimneys along northern elevation from Orrong Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

## Authors

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