



During the 1880's, some three decades after Victoria's Gold Rush, Melbourne experienced an enormous land boom. Buildings, including houses and hotels, exhibited a richness of detail never seen before in Victoria, with architects combining many styles such as Victorian, Gothic and Italianate, but turned to Greek and Roam motifs for inspiration. (1)

The interior of hotels built during that period exhibited an extraordinary opulence that often outshone the exterior of the building. Because of the fierce competition between hotels, it was necessary to strive to outdo each other. "...Craving for elaboration was almost an obsession". (2)

In 1887, William George Wolf architect ⁽³⁾ was commissioned by Samuel J. Davis, a cordial manufacturer in Portarlington, to design his "Grand Hotel".

It would be the largest of the three hotels in Portarlington at that time, comprising a lookout tower, and 54-rooms with shared bathroom facilities in 3-storeys of a partly rendered brick construction. Designed in the Boom Style, an exuberant and individualistic architectural expression of the 1880s and early 1890s, it depicted elements of both Renaissance and Classical styles.

Francis H. Sims of Richmond was the contracting builder and carted some 13,000 bricks to the Portarlington site for the construction which began on 6^{th} August 1887 $^{(3)}$ being completed in December of that year.

The Grand Hotel is located facing north, perched on the highest point in the main street of Portarlington with outstanding views of Port Phillip Bay across to the You-Yangs and Melbourne.

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER. WEDNESDAY. JUNE 22 1887.

A NEW HOTEL FOR PORT-ARLINGTON.

The increasing popularity of Portarlington as a place of resort for visitors to the seaside in the summer months has of late attracted considerable attention. Already a move-ment has been initiated by Mr Crichton. laudlord of the Bay View Hotel, at the town-hip named, the object being to erect a first class and imposing hotel in a commanding position. For these premises, Mr J. B Jackson, srchitect, of Geelong, has prepared excellent designs, but nothing definite has been done in the matter, owing to an apparent difficulty in the way of obtaining a license for the house when erected. Apart from that scheme, however, there is another ventilated by Mr S. J. Davie, of Portarlings ton, who proposes building a very bandsome structure, to be fitted up as a hotel and a house of general public accommodation. The intention is to proceed with the erection of the premises as room as the working plan, have been prepared, and to take the chance of a license being is used for the new house. The hotel is to be crected in Newcombe streetright opposite the Free Library, upon a site which will command a very extensive view of thesea, as well as of Geelong, Williamstown, and Melbourne, the shipping in Hebson's Bay, the Anakie hills, You Yangs, and Mount Macedon. The house, which is to be constructed of brick, resting on a stone foundation, will have a frontage of 120ft to Newcombe street. by depth of 66ft. It is to be a two storey bu lding, and when finished will contain in all forty-four rooms, the object being to provide 22 bedrooms, 2 large diving rooms, I lodge room, I billiard saloon, and several sitting rooms and private parlors. desire of the projector of the new house is to provide the public with every means of thoroughly enjoying the stay by the seaside, which at Portarlington offers great facilities to visitors from Mel-bourne and elsewhere. The intention is to place the public bar in the centre of the building, but to so arrange the surroundings that it will not interfere with the comfort or convenience of visitors. There is also to be an elegant hale ny in the front of the hotel, whilst a tower or lo-k-out, 22ft, square, and 44it from the level of the ground, is to be p aced in a conspicuous part of the building, which will affind a magnificent view of the su roundings of Portarlington. The interior of the hotel is to be firted up with electric be Is in all of the rooms, and every attention is to be paid with the view of making the h use complete for family resilence, whilst the rooms are also to be furnished upon an elegant scale. It is anticipated that the sum of £2800 will be expended in erecting the hatel, the plans for which have been prepared by Mr Wim. Wolf, architect, of Rich moud.

PORTARLINGTON HOTEL VISIONS

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Wed 22 Jun 1887 Page 4 (Trove) A NEW HOTEL FOR PORTARLINGTON.

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For these premises, Mr J. S. Jacobson, architect, of Geelong, has prepared excellent designs, but nothing definite has been done in the matter, owing to an apparent difficulty in the way of obtaining a license for the house when erected.

Apart from that scheme, however, there is another ventilated by Mr S. J. Davis, of Portarlington, who proposes building a very handsome structure, to be fitted up as a hotel and a house of general public accommodation. The intention is to proceed with the erection of the premises as soon as the working plan, have been prepared, and to take the chance of a license being issued for the new house. The hotel is to be erected in Newcombe street right opposite the Free Library, upon a site which will command a very extensive view of the sea, as well as of Geelong, Williamstown, and Melbourne, the shipping in Hobson's Bay, the Anakie hills, You Yangs, and Mount Macedon.

The house, which is to be constructed of brick, resting on a stone foundation, will have a frontage of 120ft to Newcombe street, by depth of 66ft. It is to be a two-storey building, and when finished will contain in all forty-four rooms, the object being to provide 22 bedrooms, 2 large dining rooms, 1 lodge room, 1 billiard saloon, and several sitting rooms and private parlors. The desire of the projector of the new house is to provide the public with every means of thoroughly enjoying the stay by the seaside, which at Portarlington offers great facilities to visitors from Melbourne and elsewhere.

The intention is to place the public bar in the centre of the building, but to so arrange the surroundings that it will not interfere with the comfort or convenience of visitors. There is also to be an elegant balcony in the front of the hotel, whilst a tower or look-out, 22ft. square, and 44ft. from the level of the ground, is to be placed in a conspicuous part of the building, which will afford a magnificent view of the surroundings of Portarlington.

The interior of the hotel is to be fitted up with electric bells in all of its rooms, and every attention is to be paid with the view of making the house complete for family residence, whilst the rooms are also to be furnished upon an elegant scale. It is anticipated that the sum of £2800 will be expended in erecting the hotel, the plans for which have been prepared by Mr William Wolf, architect, of Richmond.

NOTE:

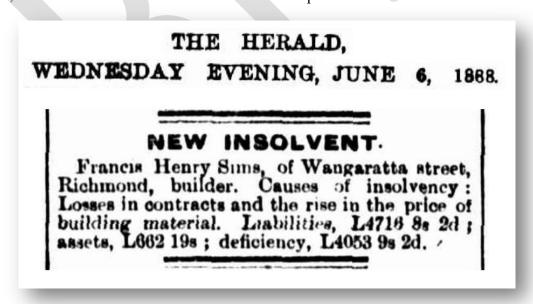
In the six months between the date of Wed 22 Jun 1887 when the article above appeared in the Geelong Advertiser and Thursday December 22nd 1887 (following) when an application was made for conditional licencing with the Drysdale Licencing Court, the building was enlarged:

From 2 stories to 3 stories

From 44 rooms to 54 rooms.

BUILDER INSOLVENT

Six months later, the builder Francis H. Sims of Richmond was pronounced insolvent.



The Herald (Melbourne, Vic.) Wed 6 Jun 1888 Page 3 (Trove)

Francis Henry Sims, of Wangaratta street, Richmond, builder. Causes of insolvency: Losses in contracts and the rise in the price of building material. Liabilities. £4716 8s 2d; assets, £662 19s; deficiency, £4053 9s 2d.

PORTARLINGTON GRAND HOTEL ARCHTECT WILLIAM GEORGE WOLF



WILLIAM GEORGE WOLF 21/11/1855 – 28/06/1925

He married Maria May JORDAN on 11 June 1883 in Melbourne, Victoria, and they had 10 children in 23 years. He died 1925 in Plympton, South Australia, at the age of 69, and is buried in Adelaide, South Australia. (7)

William was born in New York, USA and was educated at Fort Lee, USA; then later at Heidelberg, Germany where he obtained his diploma as an architect. He moved to England and worked in the office of Hewitt and Son of Euston Road, London. (6)

He arrived in Melbourne in 1877 at the age of 22, and worked as a draftsman for Lloyd Taylor for 3 years before beginning his independent practice during the boom years of the 1880's.

In 1886 after some new legislation, he designed the Burnley Hotel which brought a lot of publicity and many more design jobs as he became known as the "Hotel Architect"; with 14 known hotels to his credit in 4 years.

Wolf's design of the Portarlington Grand Hotel seems very rich and expensive, with its tower, arches and cast-iron work, especially for a small town. Wolf appreciated the play of light on buildings, and as a result his buildings responded with brilliant shaded and sunlit areas. (2)

He also designed, warehouses, terraces, villas and residential work before merging with Lewis in 1890, and together they followed the boom to Sydney in 1892. Wolf was engaged in over 50 jobs between 1888 and 1892, and never practiced in any one office for more than 12 months. (6)



MARY MAY JORDAN

OPPOSITION TO LICENSE

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22 1887.

TOWN TALK.

A good deal of opposition was raised at the annual sitting of the Drysdale Licensing Court yesterday to an application made by Mr S. J. Davis for a conditional license for a new hotel at Portarlington, now in course of erection, Mr Davis was represented by Mr Fink, barrister, instructed by Messre Gillott, Croker, Snowden and Co., Melbourne, and Superintendent Toohey opposed the application, assisted by Mr H. W. C. Simpson, who appeared on behalf of a number of ratepayers resident in Portarlington. Evidence was given by the applicant and the architect of the new hotel, Mr Wolff, after which Mr Toohey withdrew his opposition. Mr M'Lean gave evidence for the ratepayers, explaining the reasons why it was considered the opening of the hotel would be undesirable, and he was severely cross-examined by Mr Fink. The application was eventually granted, and Mr Fink applied for costs against the ratepayers. After an animated opposition by Mr Simpson, the sum of £3 3s was allowed against Mr M'Lean, on the ground that the objections of the ratepayers were vexations.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Thu 22 Dec 1887 Page 2 (Trove)

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Evidence was given by the applicant and the architect of the new hotel, Mr Wolff, after which Mr Toohey withdrew his opposition.

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LICENSE GRANTED

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THE GEELONG ADVERTISER, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10 1888

DRYSDALE LICENSING COURT.

The adjourned sitting of the above court was held yesterday forenoon, there being present—Messrs Heron, Carr, and Thompson, P.M.'s. At the sitting of the court in December a conditional liceuse was granted to Mr S. Davis for his new hotel at Portarlington, on the understanding that the building should be in a complete state at the adjourned court. Mr T. N. Whyte. who appeared in support of the application for the license, stated that the hotel was perfectly complete, and evidence to that effect was given by the architect and the applicant. The court readily granted the license, and Mr Heron stated that he had great pleasure in referring to the hotel as one of the best in the district of Geelong, and a great credit to Portarling-

TROVE: Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Fri 10 Feb 1888 Page 3

The adjourned sitting of the above court was held yesterday forenoon, there being present—Messrs Heron, Carr, and Thompson, P.M.'s.

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NOTE: Only 8 months later, Samuel Davis put his Grand Hotel up for auction.

AUCTION

The Age Supplement Methourne Centennial Exhibition.

MELBOURNE, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1888

WEDNESDAY, 31st OCTOBER,

On the Premises.

At 2 o'Clock.

PORTARLINGTON GRAND HOTEL, PORTARLINGTON.

OHN DALLEY (in conjunction with MUNRO and EAILLIEU) has received instructions from S. J. Davis, Esq., to sell by public auction, The GRAND HOTEL, PORTARLINGTON.

The hotel is built of brick, with cemented front, Is situated in

NEWCOMBE-STREET, Opposite the public park, free library, weighbridge, new post and telegraph offices, and is within FIVE MINUTES WALK of the BATHS.

The property has a frontage of 66 ft. to New-combe-street by a depth of 165 ft.

The house is a THREE-STORIED BUILDING, Containing tifty-four rooms, and is fitted up with

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS For the convenience of customers.

Two splendid balconies and a look out tower, commanding a VIEW of the WHOLE of the BAY.

The HOTEL

Is in first class order, nicely furnished, and doing a FIRST CLASS TRADE.

PORTARLINGTON
Is becoming one of the most fashionable watering places inside the Heads,
And being backed up by the beautiful fertile Bellarine Hills justifies the auctioneer in proclaiming the property one of the MOST VALUABLE OUTSIDE MELBOURNE.

The stabling and all necessary ontbuildings are in first class order, the accommodation both inside and out being everything a first class hotel requires. Six steamboats call daily, running to and fro between Geelong and Melbourne. Also two excursion boats on Sundays.

There are also two mail coaches running between Portarlington and Geelong, hence every facility is offered to the travelling public.

The furniture to be taken at a valuation.

Early possession given.

Terms, which are reasonable, will be given at time of sale.

Title perfect.

Further particulars may be obtained from the auctioneers, at Portarlington, and 40 and 42 Collins-street east, Melbourne.

AUCTION

The Age (Melbourne, Vic.) Tue 30 Oct 1888 Page 2 (Trove)

The Age Supplement

WEDNESDAY, 31st OCTOBER. On the Premises. At 2 O'Clock.

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The property has a frontage of 66 ft. to Newcombe Street by a depth of 165 ft.

The house is THREE-STORIED BUILDING, containing fifty-four rooms, and is fitted up with the most MODERN IMPROVEMENTS for the convenience of customers.

Two splendid balconies and a lookout tower, commanding a VIEW of the WHOLE of the BAY.

The HOTEL is in first class order, nicely furnished, and doing a FIRST CLASS TRADE.

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Further particulars may be obtained from the auctioneers, at Portarlington, and 10 and 12 Collins street east, Melbourne.

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1888
TOWN TALK.

Our Portarlington correspondent wired last night:—"The Grand Hotel was sold to day by Mr John Dalley to Mr Symons, of Melbourne (supposed to be for Mr Nation, of Melbourne), for £8300."

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Thu 1 Nov 1888 Page 2 TOWN TALK

Our Portarlington correspondent wired last night:—"The Grand Hotel was sold today by Mr John Dalley to Mr Symone, of Melbourne (supposed to be for Mr Nation, of Melbourne), for £8300."

ALTERATIONS IN THE RATE BOOK

NOTE: A publican or licensee may be the owner of the licensed establishment or may be hired to manage the licensed establishment on behalf of the owner(s) or leaseholder(s).

The Licence for the Grand Hotel Portarlington was passed from Davis to Earl in February 1889 and Rates register changed.

TROVE: Geelong Advertiser (Vic.: 1859 - 1929) Fri 15 Feb

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1889.

Mr Heron, P.M., and Messrs Willey and Harvey, Js. P., presided at the Drysdale Court of Petty Sessions yesterday, and dealt with a number of small ones. An application for a transfer of the license of the Grand Hotel, Portarlington, from Samuel J. Davis to Samuel Earle, was granted after some slight opposition by the police, represented by Mr Superintendent Toohey. Mr Simpson supported the application.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Fri 15 Feb 1889 Page 2 **TOWN TALK**

Mr Heron, P.M., and Messrs Willey and Harvey, Js.P., presided at the Drysdale Court of Petty Sessions yesterday, and dealt with a number of small cases. An application for a transfer of the license of the Grand Hotel, Portarlington, from Samuel J. Davis to Samuel Earle, was granted after some slight opposition by the police, represented by Mr Superintendent Toohey. Mr Simpson supported the application.

1889 Page 2

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER. FRIDAY, APRIL 5,

BELLARINE SHIRE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, April 3rd.
Present—Crs Dalley (president), Grigg, Sutterby,
Henderson, flooper, Cooper, and Williamson.
Absent Member.

An apology was received for the absence of Cr

ALTERATIONS IN THE RATE BOOK.

Samuel Earle applied to the council to have his name inserted in the rate book in respect to the Portarlington Grand Hotel (of which he is the licensee), in lieu of that of Samuel J. Davis. Another application was made to have the Victorian Brewing Malting and Distilling Company (Limited) entered on the rate book as owners of the same property. The desired alterations were made in the rolls.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Fri April 5 1889

Samuel Earle applied to the council to have his name inserted in the rate hook in respect to the Portarlington Grand Hotel (of which he is the license), in lieu of that of Samuel J. Davis. Another application was made to have the Victorian Brewing; Malting and Distilling Company (Limited) entered on the rate book as owners of the same property. The desired alterations were made in the rolls.



SUSPICIOUS DEATH

THE GEELONG ADVERTISER, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1900.

A single woman named Mary Josephine Anderson, aged 38 years, circumstances and Pacey refusing cate as to the cause of death. that the deceased, who is said to be a re of Albert Park, came to Portarlington the steamer from Melbourne on Thursday evening last, and put up at Warden's hotel. During the night she complained of unwell and Dr Barrett was called regarded the case as being of such character that he sent for Drysdale, and the two medical attended her up to the time of her de they refused to give a certificate for ce reasons, Mounted-constable Kiley forwardeda report yesterdey by steamer to Superinten-dent Maud, who laid the facts before the coroner, Mr G. W. F. Patterson, P.M. latter ordered a post mertem examina e made by Dr Kennedy, Portarlington in the afternoon. will be held this morning at 11.30 o'clo

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Mon 26 Nov 1900 Page 2

A single woman named Mary Josephine Anderson, aged 38 years, died at Portarlington early yesterday morning under circumstances that led to Drs Barrett and Pacey refusing to give a certificate as to the cause of death. It appears that the deceased, who is said to be a resident of Albert Park, came to Portarlington by the steamer from Melbourne on Thursday evening last, and put up at Warden's hotel (Grand Hotel Portarlington).

During the night she complained of being unwell and Dr Barrett was called in." He regarded the case as being of such a serious character that he sent for Dr Pacey, of Drysdale, and the two medical gentlemen attended her up to the time of her death. As they refused to give a certificate for certain reasons, Mounted-constable Kiley forwarded a report yesterday by steamer to Superintendent Maud, who laid the facts before the coroner, Mr G. W. F. Patterson, PSM. The latter ordered a postmortem examination to be made by Dr Kennedy, who left for Portarlington in the afternoon. An inquest will be held this morning at 11.30 o'clock.

<u>Portarlington - Grand Hotel</u>

INQUEST



THE WEEKLY TIMES. DECEMBER 22, 1900.

DEATH FROM NATURAL CAUSES

PORTARLINGTON, Saturday.

The adjourned inquest regarding the death of a single woman, named Mary Josephine Anderson, which occurred here on November 24th, under what were considered suspicious circumstances, was resumed to-day, before Mr Patterson, Police Magistrate, and a jury of seven.

The medical evidence showed that the cause of death was purulent peritonitis.

Other evidence showed that deceased believed herself to be in a certain condition, and went to a doctor for an illegal purpose, but the doctor would have nothing to do with her. She then went to a private hospital, where an instrument was used on her on three occasions, but for a legitimate purpose. The deceased stated to one witness that she took this step at the instigation of the man she was keeping company with.

In summing up, the Coroner stated that the deceased was suffering from delusions in regard to her condition.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

PORTARLINGTON HOTELS in 1900

TARRIFF COMPARISON

THE AGE, SATURDAY,

DECEMBER 22, 1900.

PORTARLINGTON.—Grand Hotel, near pier, baths.—Unequalled Accommodation for Visitors; tariff 30s., upwards. T. H. Warden.

DORTARLINGTON.-Stay at Grand Hotel.

PORTARLINGTON.—Bay View Hotel, homely Accommodation; tariff 5s. per day, or special terms. M. Wissing.



Grand Hotel Tarriff

1900: 8 shillings per day Or £2/10/- Balcony room (30 shillings)

2023: \$250-\$360 per night

Bay View Hotel Tarriff

1900:5 shillings per day



Portarlington - Grand Hotel CHANGING TIMES



1890's

1950's



<u>Portarlington - Grand Hotel</u>

CHANGING TIMES



1980's



2000's

<u>Portarlington - Grand Hotel</u> pg. 17

PROJECT GALLERIES

Heart of the Ocean – Portarlington Grand Hotel by Technē Architecture + Interior Design Photography by Tom Blachford

Originally built in 1888, the hotel was still operational, though in more recent years it had lost all of its grandeur.

The biggest challenge was the edifice. The majestic original balconies and their gorgeous detailing had been removed. Thus, a second balcony was added to recapture the impressive views over Port Phillip Bay. New casts were made of the original balustrading (found tucked away in the shed), and the whole façade was reappointed in elegant lacework.

Internally, old blends marvellously with new, and key original details are retained. Design elements such as hand-trowelled plaster and botanical carpet evoke a classical sentimentality, resting softly against refined contemporary selections.

Portarlington - Grand Hotel CHANGING TIMES 2023





Portarlington - Grand Hotel CHANGING TIMES 2023



<u>Portarlington - Grand Hotel</u>



CHANGING TIMES 2023



Acknowledgement:

A report, the result of a conservation project by students at the School of Architecture Deakin University in February 1990, has been used as a primary resource for direct quotes, information, and leads into further internet research in the preparation of this document for the Bellarine Historical Society, September 2023.

The primary document work which included primary research, measured drawings and restoration drawings, was performed by Tim Angus, Brian Benson, David Fletcher, Pete Woolard with thanks to the Hanlon Family, owners of the building at that time for their willing co-operation with the students.

"The report has been made readily available to the community as there is considerable valuable information in it."

Lorraine Huddle, Lecturer, Deakin University.

Portarlington Grand Hotel - The Jewel Of The Bellarine

https://www.portarlingtongrandhotel.com.au

Portarlington Grand Hotel Issue No 12 Trio - The Local Project

Footnotes:

- 1 L. Honman, The House Block A, Deakin University, p103
- 2 J.M. Freeland, <u>The Australian Pub</u>, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1966, p121.
- 3 Trove: Geelong Advertiser (Vic.) Wed 22 Jun 1887, Page 4
- 4 Alexander Sutherland, Victoria and its Metropolis Vol 2, Melbourne, McCarron, Bird, 1888, pp.537-8
- 5 Bill Morrow, Bill Morrow Index (for the Geelong Advertiser), Geelong Historical Society.
- 6 Bruce Trethowan "Investigation. Project 6", Melbourne University 1974.
- 7 Ancestry.com Name search