

JENS HOTEL

40 COMMERCIAL STREET EAST (cnr WATSON TERRACE)
INCLUDING REAR SECTION ALONG WATSON TERRACE



C.T: 5152/414, 415, 416, 417 (Lots 96, 97, 98, 99 Section 1103)

HERITAGE LISTINGS: This building is entered in the State Heritage Register.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE: Jens Hotel is an important part of the commercial and social development of Mount Gambier and is an excellent example of the typical design characteristics of hotels of the 1880s.

RECOMMENDATION: Retain in the State Heritage Register. This building should form part of the proposed Mount Gambier Central State Heritage Area.

ASSESSMENT:

This was the site of the first hotel in Mount Gambier and the present hotel was built in 1883 on the corner for Johannes Jens and was first named the Town Hall Hotel. An eastern wing was constructed in 1904 and the large colonnaded limestone addition in Watson Terrace was built in 1927. It is an integral part of the central area of Mount Gambier and forms an important element of the proposed Central State Heritage Area.

JENS HOTEL
40 COMMERCIAL STREET EAST, cnr WATSON TERRACE
INCLUDING REAR SECTION ALONG WATSON TERRACE (cont)

Site Record

Hotel - Jens Hotel, former Town Hall Hotel
 40 Commercial Street East
 Mount Gambier SA 5290

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Location | 40 Commercial Street East and Watson Terrace, Mount Gambier |
| Description | Two storey face dolomite hotel with extensive cast iron verandah |
| Boundary | Building is constructed to street boundary with verandah extending over pavement |
| Land Description | CT 5152/414, 415, 416, 417 (Lots 96, 97, 98, 99 Section 1103) |
| Local Government | City of Mount Gambier |
| Owner | The Pines (Tarpeena) Pty Ltd |
| Use | Hotel - Tourist Accommodation |
| Condition | Generally sound |
| Other Assessments | Mount Gambier Heritage Society, Mount Gambier Heritage Walks No. 1 - City Centre Les R Hill, <i>Mount Gambier - the City around a Cave</i> |
| Heritage Status | State Heritage Register |

10237 – Jens Hotel, 40 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier

Statement of Heritage Value

Architecturally, the 1884-1904 section of the hotel is significant for its high quality of construction, its attractive verandah, and its elegant first floor interior. The 1927 wing is significant for its rare and progressive styling, its attractive design and interesting construction, and for its virtually untouched interior.

Historically, the hotel is significant for its connection with the Jens family and its association with the early German settlers in South Australia. "Jens" is also significant for having been the only socially exclusive hotel outside of Adelaide, being comparable to the former South Australian Hotel. It forms part of the main focal grouping of civic and commercial buildings in Mount Gambier.

The integrity of the hotel is generally high, for while the ground floor of the 1884-1904 section has recently been totally redeveloped, including the restyling of the 1904 section's Commercial Road frontage, the upstairs of this section is basically still intact and the adjoining 1927 wing is in outstanding condition, remaining virtually as constructed.

(Derived from HSA objection report 4/81)

NAME: Jens Hotel

PLACE NO.: 10237

Address: 40 Commercial Street East (corner Watson Terrace), Mount Gambier

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Jens Hotel consists of two parts, the earlier 1883 section facing Commercial Street East and the later 1904 Commercial Street section and 1927 sections to the rear. The front section is constructed in rock face dolomite with dressed limestone window and door openings and quoining. The rear section is a colonnaded 1920s Art Deco/Free Classical design.

An interpretation sign at the hotel reads 'This is the original site of a small building that held the licence of the first hotel in Mount Gambier from 1847. After demolishing the primitive structure, the first section of the present hotel was built on the corner in 1884 for Johannes Jens and was then named the Town Hall Hotel. An eastern wing was constructed in 1904 and the limestone addition in Watson Terrace was built in 1927. The cast iron lace balcony and verandah are a focal point of the century old section in the centre of town, and with recent restoration the original rock face dolomite has been exposed.'

Internally the 1920s section retains an elegant timber staircase, timber wall panelling and other original elements, leadlight and stained glass windows. The interior of the 1880s section has been totally redeveloped.

This building sits within the recently proclaimed Mount Gambier Central State Heritage Area.

Statement of Heritage Value:

Jens Hotel is an important part of the commercial and social development of Mount Gambier and is an excellent example of the typical design characteristics of hotels of the 1880s and also reflects later architectural styles with the expansion of the town during the 1920s.

Architecturally the 1884-1904 section of the hotel is significant for its high quality of construction, its attractive verandah, and its elegant first floor interior. The 1927 wing is significant for its rare and progressive styling, its attractive design and interesting construction, and for its virtually untouched interior.

Historically, the hotel is significant for its connection with the Jens family and its association with the early German settlers in South Australia. 'Jens' is also significant for having been the only socially exclusive hotel outside of Adelaide, being comparable to the former South Australian Hotel. It forms part of the main focal grouping of civic and commercial buildings in Mount Gambier.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the Heritage Act 1993):

- (d) *It is an outstanding representative of a particular classes of places of cultural significance.* Jens Hotel is an excellent example of a place of accommodation and social activity which has functioned from the 1880s in an important country town, and it is also notable for the reputation it developed as an exclusive hotel outside Adelaide.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Jens Hotel at 40 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier remain as an entry in the State Heritage Register.

NAME: *Jens Hotel*

PLACE NO.: 10237

SITE RECORD:

FORMER NAME: *Town Hall Hotel*DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: *Two storey stone building*DATE OF COMPLETION: *1880s; 1904; 1927*REGISTER STATUS: Description: *Confirmed*
Date: *28 May 1981*CURRENT USE: Description: *Hotel*
Dates: *Construction to present*PREVIOUS USE(S): Description:
Dates:ARCHITECT: Name: *Thomas Hall*
Dates:BUILDER: Name: *T Haig*
Dates:SUBJECT INDEXING: Group: *Hotels, motels & accommodation*
Category: *Hotel*LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Description: *City of Mount Gambier*LOCATION: Street No.: *40*
Street Name: *Commercial Street East*
Town/Suburb: *Mount Gambier*
Post Code: *5290*
Region No.:
Region Name:LAND DESCRIPTION: Title Type: *Certificate*
Volume: *5152*
Folio: *414-417*
Lot No.: *96-99*
Section: *1103*
Hundred:AMG REFERENCE: Zone: *54*
Northing: *5813122*
Easting: *480793*
Map Sheet No.: *7022*
Map Scale: *1:100,000*OWNER *: Name:
Address:
Town/Suburb:
Post Code:PHOTOGRAPH: Film No.: *Digital*

NAME: Jens Hotel

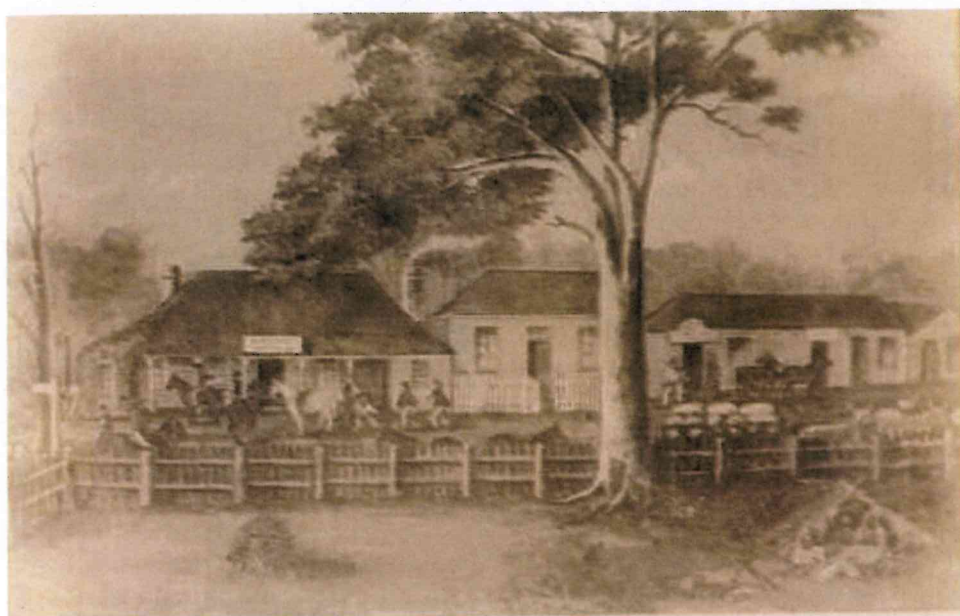
PLACE NO.: 10237



Interior and exterior views of Jens Hotel

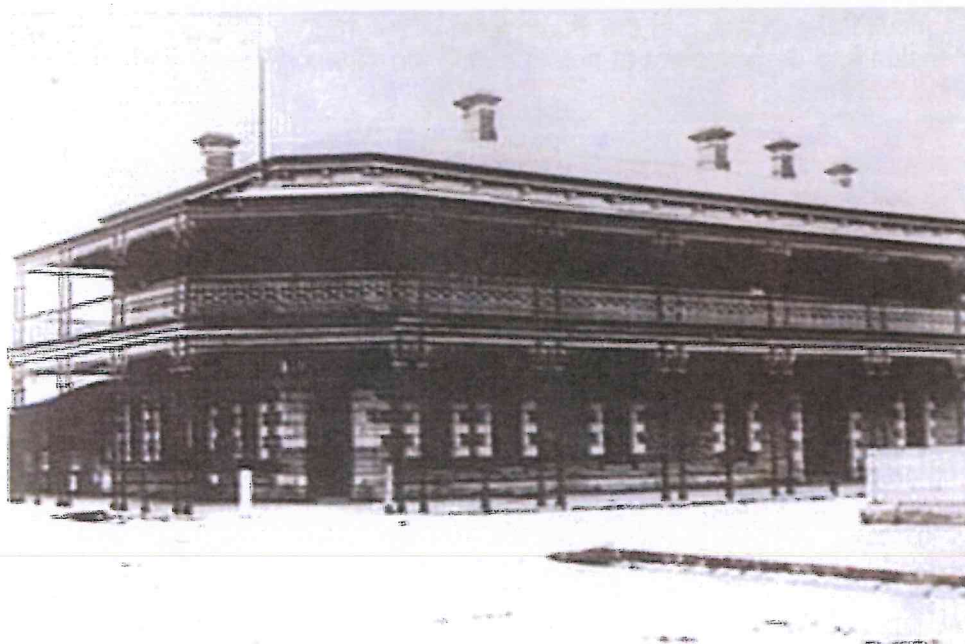
NAME: Jens Hotel

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Site of Jen's Hotel in 1856 at Mount Gambier, l-r: Alexander Mitchell's Hotel, Assembly Room, General Store and J. Heinemann's Saddlery Shop. First Mt. Gambier Hotel was built on same site by John 'Black' Byng an American Negro in 1840, later A. Mitchell, John Allen then J.M. Jen's purchased and built a two storeyed hotel

(Source: SLSA B3068)



View of Jen's Hotel in 1893

(Source: SLSA B21810)

State Heritage Areas of South Australia



Jens Hotel

**40 Commercial Street East (corner Watson Terrace), Mt Gambier
SHR 10237 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 28 May 1981**

Jens Hotel, originally named the Town Hall Hotel, was opened for business on 30 January 1884 with a band, gas lighting throughout and Chinese lanterns festooning the balcony. The building was designed by architect Thomas Hall, for German immigrant Johannes Matthies Jens, and was constructed on the site of Mount Gambier's first (1847) hotel.

Over the years a number of major alterations were made to the hotel, making it one of the leading country hotels in South Australia. Jens Hotel has hosted royalty, Supreme Court Judges and many distinguished visitors to the district.



Jens Hotel, April 2005

"...the Town Hall Hotel ... is an elegantly designed two storey structure, of red dolomite with white limestone dressings. The lower floor is divided into three parts by a corridor ... leading from an ornamental door on the Watson Terrace front, and another running at right angles with it from an entrance in Commercial Street. The bar ... occupies the junction corner. It is well finished, and furnished with cedar fittings. The commercial room ... is furnished with several small marble tables on ornamental stands, the other furniture being of cedar. The dining room is on the right-hand side of the Watson Terrace corridor. ... it is fitted to accommodate about 50. The other rooms on this floor are the bar parlour, two private parlours, a travellers' room, a pantry and kitchen. ... The entrance to the upper floor is at the head of an elegant staircase rising from the end of the Watson Terrace corridor. In front of the staircase is a nicely moulded archway, which has a pleasing effect. The rooms on the upper floor are 12ft 6in high, and there are 19 of them. The principal one is the drawing room ... which occupies the corner, immediately above the bar. It is beautifully finished. The woodwork is painted maple and the mantle-piece is of white marble. A splendid walnut suite has been placed in it, ... There are 12 bedrooms on this floor, ... There are two bathrooms, ... as well as a linen room, a pantry, and a closet. It should be added that all the mantle-pieces in the hotel excepting that in the dining room are of marble – white or variegated. ... An ornamental covered balcony ten feet wide runs around the two fronts. It is supported on handsome cast-iron pillars, placed in couples, and its appearance is improved by an ornamental iron frieze-work. ... the cellar ... is divided into six compartments. One of these, ... has been well finished and fitted as a beer saloon, ... Water is laid on to both storeys and the cellar. The gas (for lighting) is made on the premises from gasoline, ..."



Jens Hotel, Mount Gambier 1904
Photo B 21811: State Library of SA

Border Watch, 2 February 1884

In 1904 the original building was enlarged, with the Commercial Street frontage gaining 45 feet. Two new offices were erected at street level, with nine bedrooms and lounges added upstairs.

"ADDITIONS TO TOWN HALL HOTEL

Mr. J.M. Jens has resolved on an extensive addition to the Town Hall Hotel, and has accepted tenders for it. ... It will be two-storeyed, and the front will be similar in height and style to that of the present building. On the lower floor there will be three large rooms, ... one ... which will be let as offices. ... On the upper floor there will be a large parlour for boarders and gentlemen, ... "

Border Watch, 27 January 1904

In 1927 old buildings in Watson Terrace were demolished and another two-storeyed edifice erected, consisting of a magnificent dining room, foyer and kitchen, and 22 bedrooms.

"TOWN HALL ADDITIONS – EXTENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Among the building additions in progress in the town at present time are important and extensive additions to Jens' Town Hall Hotel. When completed they will be a very fine acquisition to the architectural beauty of Mount Gambier.

For 44 years the Town Hall Hotel has been in the hands of the Jens family, ... The house has the unique record of having had only one name over its door during the long period since 1883, and this probably constitutes a record for Australia.

On the site previously occupied by a wood and iron structure used as servants' quarters and sample rooms, a large two-storeyed building, designed by Melbourne architects, Messrs. Joy & McIntyre, is being erected ... On the lower floor there will be a lounge entrance, dining room to seat 120 persons, lounge and writing room. The top storey will consist of 22 additional bedrooms, including a suite of rooms and bathrooms fitted with showers and plunge baths, which will be supplied with hot and cold water, 11 bedrooms, as well as a lavatory and bathrooms. A corridor connecting with the present hotel will extend the whole length of the new building. Water and gas will be laid on, and hot and cold water will be available in the bathrooms."



Jens Hotel, Mount Gambier 1935
Photo B 20147: State Library of SA

Border Watch, 21 June 1927



Jens Town Hall Hotel
Mount Gambier 1924
Photo B 43533: State Library of SA



Jens Town Hotel interior, 1981

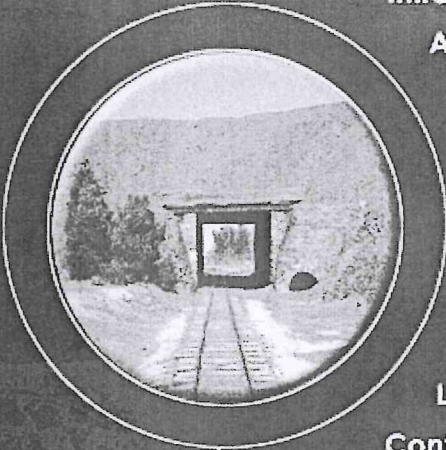


Jens Hotel, 1981



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Heritage

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