Royal Hotel/ Family Hotel 1847 – 1930s
22 The Esplanade, corner Robe Street, St Kilda
MEL: 58 K10

Early impression of the Royal Hotel

On 9th June 1846, the *Argus* reported, 'This delightful little village will not much longer be without a hotel and one too that will not disgrace the beauty and pleasantness of its situation'. Thus on 20 April of the following year, St Kilda's first hotel was established in the former home of Sir William A'Beckett, the first Chief Justice of Victoria. Its owner Joseph Howard was already well known within the community, as he was also the licensee of the Union Hotel in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, however it became more famous under James Mooney, who took over the license in 1853.
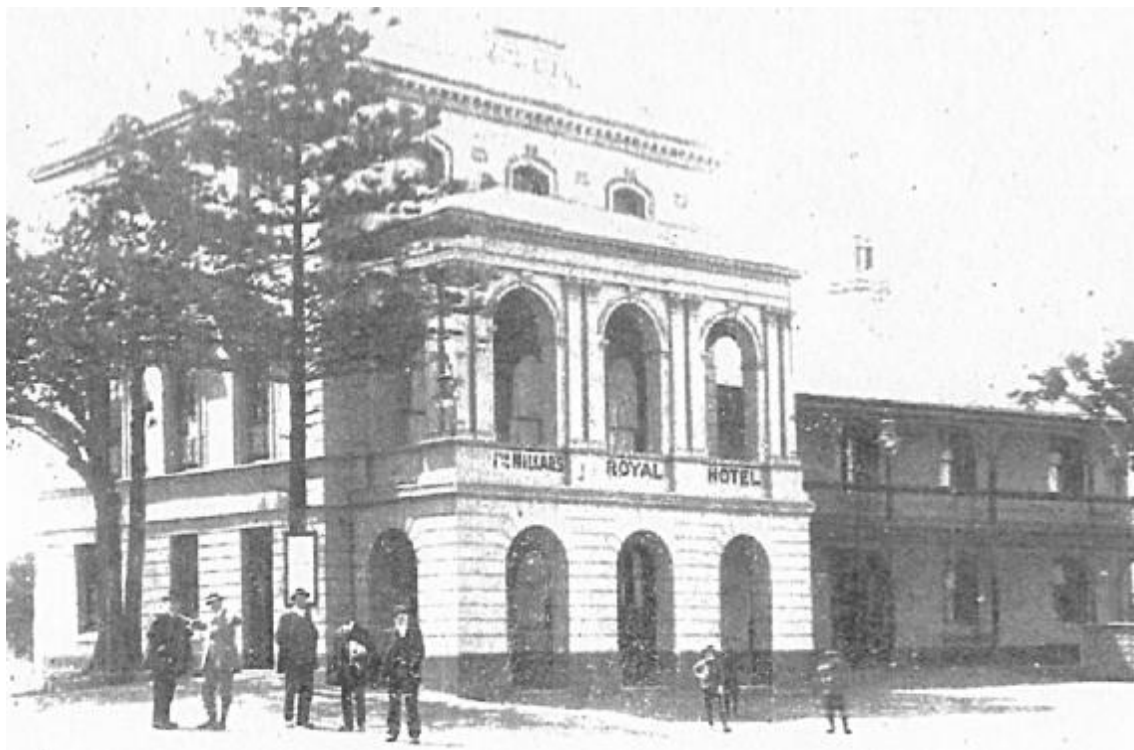
It is said that when Mooney took over the hotel a vast proportion of his profits was due to the gold diggers, flush with their earnings, who came to St Kilda in great colonial style with their 'temporary wives'. The Mooney family outlived James to run the hotel for thirty years after Mooney's funeral cortege left from there in 1869. Architect William J Ellis called for tenders for the erection of a verandah and balcony in 1876, and brick additions in 1881.

On 2 March 1915, owner John Callan was forced to demolish buildings he had erected on a vacant block adjoining the hotel and a verandah he added to the front of the hotel, because they contravened the Council's building regulations. His claim that he had received permission from the council was ultimately futile.

It is now the site of a residential block, the Belvedere Apartments, built in the 1930s.

Royal Hotel corner Robe Street and the Esplanade, 1864

Royal Hotel, 1900