

Carlton Family Hotel / Carlton House and Hotel 1858 – 1862

53 Acland Street, corner Robe Street, St Kilda

MEL: 58 A10

Erected on a site known as Sudgen's Folly as it was part of the insolvent estate of William J Sudgen, this hotel, first licensed by Sudgen in 1858, had three storeys, a flat roof, bricks on bluestone foundations with thirty rooms, beyond which was a kitchen, coach house, harness room and hayloft. Sudgen had previously managed the Royal Mail in Bourke Street, Melbourne. His lofty plans to create a phenomenal seaside hotel, the likes of which Melbourne had not yet seen, were destroyed by the financial realities of the depression.

The Carlton was deemed before its time and was closed down, eventually being sold to TB Payne, a moneylender who leased it to William P Bonwick on 28 December 1860. Bonwick, a teacher, opened a school in the deprived hotel, yet given its gloomy expanse—the practically unfurnished thirty rooms created a depressing and eerie atmosphere. The school was closed by 1862.

Payne eventually had the building demolished, and used its bricks to rebuild a terrace of houses on the site. Payne's terrace remains. Alas, the double height cast iron verandahs and returns have been all been removed. This work was probably carried out in the 1960s. A private residence stands on the location today.