

Elsternwick Hotel 1854 -
259 Brighton Road, Elwood
MEL: 67 E3

Established in 1854 as a wayside inn, the Elsternwick Hotel was a favourite watering hole of bushrangers and robbers because of its relative isolation on the track from Melbourne to the Mornington Peninsula. Both the hotel and its immediate surrounds were notorious for this criminal element. Thomas Bent was once held up and tied to the red gum opposite the hotel. Thomas McCombie and Robert Keys were granted the land on which the Elsternwick Hotel was built in July 1854, the year that remains on the parapet over the corner.

John Fleming was the first licensee of the Elsternwick Hotel. In 1858, McCombie bought Keys's share when the second licensee became Henry Figsby Young, who purchased the controversial painting of Chloe. His son Henry Figsby Young jnr was the 'Young' of Young and Jackson's Hotel on the corner of Swanston and Flinders Street, where the painting now resides. After Today McCombie's death in 1869, Figsby Young snr bought the hotel from McCombie's estate in 1872, three years before his son took on the licence for Young & Jackson's, and held it at least until the mid 1890s. From 1878, he installed a variety of licensees.

The first portion, built in 1854, is the oldest continuously trading hotel building in St Kilda. It is thought that the designer of the earliest section of the Elsternwick Hotel was Robert Russell (1808-1900). A copy of a design drawing by Russell completed in 1875, is held by the hotel. The additional features, designed by James Wood, date back to 1889. These include the additions of a parapet; a double level arcaded first floor at the front (the lower level has been subsequently enclosed); a two-storey Boom-Style Italianate corner section to the south; and a billiard room to the north. The architects for these late nineteenth century works are not known.

In 1926, architects Chris A Cowper and Murphy & Appleford designed the renovations. PJ O'Connor in 1930 and Robert H McIntyre in 1938 designed further alterations and additions. In 1972, the hotel was again extensively renovated and extended. The Victoria Bitter neon sign erected in 1951, and located on the corner section, is also a prominent local landmark and was registered with the hotel by the National Trust at local level in December 1996.



Elsternwick Hotel, 2004