

Politics Queensland Pubs

‘Remarkable hotel’: Plans for a rooftop bar, balcony at the Victory

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One of Brisbane’s most well-known inner-city haunts is set for a facelift, with The Victory Hotel planning a rooftop bar and a new balcony.

Precision Group, the owner of the hotel, submitted its plans to Brisbane City Council just before Christmas.



Plans have been lodged for a revamp of Brisbane’s Victory Hotel.

The plans include a new balcony – described as an “ornamental feature” – to restore the pre-1957 look of the hotel in the application, and a 284-square-metre rooftop bar.

Submitted plans also show a gaming area in the hotel’s basement.

Precision Group leasing executive Rory O'Brien said not much capital had been spent on The Victory this century.

"We really just want to make sure that we bring The Vic back to sort of that remarkable hotel that it should be known for," he said.

On the ground level, the beer garden would be expanded and opened up more to the rest of the pub, but O'Brien said the real action would be upstairs.

"I think the exciting stuff happens when you get up to level one and think, 'what will we do up there?'," he said.

"We're looking at making it a really open space, reinstating the veranda and honouring the heritage of that verandah – wrapping it around that level one space.

"So, it could be a steakhouse, it could be a nice restaurant. It's one of those areas that you could do something really remarkable with."

O'Brien said the balcony would be built to allow use by patrons, but the process of actually having activities such as outdoor dining on the new structure would require the leasing the airspace.

"You have to go through that process, which can take a little bit of time, so at the moment we're classifying it as an architectural awning, but definitely with the view, maybe 12 to 18 months after construction, of having it as operable," he said.

"I mean, why put in a veranda without it being operable? Having said that, even if it remains ornamental, I think it really brings back to life the heritage aspect."

If approved, the refurbishment would be done in two stages. The first would involve construction work across most of the existing hotel.

A second stage of development would result in the demolition of a late-era extension to the original pub, which would reduce the new rooftop bar to 238 square metres, but expand the existing beer garden downstairs.

It would also allow for a new entry to the beer garden from the Edward Street side of the pub, adjacent to the former Metro Arts building.

O'Brien said he expected the refurbishment to be an 18-to-24-month project, which would begin as soon as they received council approval.

And, as with the gentrification of much of the hotel, O'Brien said The Victory would remain true to its working-class roots, even while attracting different clientele.

"We'll end up with really four or five unique spaces that can cater to a very, very wide demography," he said.

"I think it will always cater for everyone across Brisbane."

The pub would remain open throughout the process, O'Brien said.

Built in 1855, the council recognised The Victory as the oldest remaining pub in Brisbane's CBD.

It was originally The Prince of Wales Hotel, but was renamed The Victory in 1921, in the aftermath of World War I.

"Of the 32 hotel sites identified within the central business district in 1951, only seven, including The Victory Hotel, remain," the council notes in its heritage notation of The Victory.

The Victory is known for its beer garden, one of the few remaining in Brisbane's CBD.

The famous old pub almost closed its doors for good last year, after the Woolworths-owned Australian Hospitality and Liquor Group did not renew its lease.

However, Precision Group found a new operator shortly afterwards, when Athena Group signed on as the new long-term lessee.

In 2008, a blaze at the pub resulted in the hospitalisation of seven patrons and the evacuation of hundreds more.