

Victorian Heritage Database Report

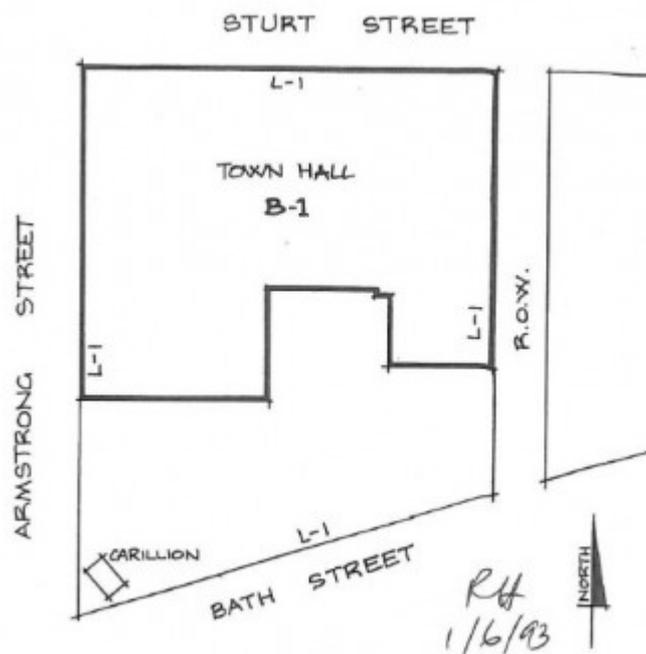
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BALLARAT TOWN HALL



BALLARAT TOWN HALL SOHE 2008 1 ballarat town hall exterior view 1993



H0978 H0978 plan

Location

225 STURT STREET BALLARAT CENTRAL, Ballarat City

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0978

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO104

VHR Registration

July 15, 1993

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 21, 1999

The distinctive two storey classical revival building, with central mansarded clock tower of two levels and unusual pedimented end pavilions featuring fan-shaped glazing, is one of the few grand-scale symmetrical town hall design in Victoria, and reflects the civic pride of the Ballarat citizens of the 1860s, and their vision for the future.

* The design, which resulted from an architectural competition in 1868, is interesting and unusual work of three architects - the exterior by JJ Lorenz, the interior by local architect HR Caselli, and the final overall composition by Ballarat borough architect Percy Oakden, who merged the incompatible design designs of Lorenz and Caselli into a whole. Oakden later moved to Melbourne, entered partnership with architect Leonard Terry, and became one of Victoria's influential 19th century architects. The building was erected by William Cowland.

The Town Hall is believed to be one of the only three such buildings in the world equipped with bells. The eight "Alfred Bells" in the clock tower, weighing four and a half tons were purchased to celebrate the arrival of Prince Alfred following an attempted assassination. (The Prince visited Ballarat in 1867).

The fact that part of the ground floor street frontage was rented for commercial purposes is particularly unusual in a town hall building. Indeed, the last major tenant, the Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd who vacated the building in 1965, occupied the Armstrong Street corner for 97 years.

The existence of the unfinished 1860 town hall (designed by CO Cuthbert and built by Evans and Barker), incorporated into the eastern extremity of the present building, the former police court, and the cells beneath the building demonstrate a changing sequence of usages and functions over time. The "trench room", which occupies part of the former court room has a strong historical associated with the First World War, because it was there that parcels were assembled for despatch to troops in the trenches.

Although much of the building has been extensively modernised, the elaborately decorated and skylight stair hall and the mayor's room and adjoining council chamber, complete with the original 1860s chamber furniture, are intact. The building is enhanced by having retained its natural cement render external finish as well as the stone dressings at ground floor level.

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|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction dates | 1870, |
| Architect/Designer | Oakden, Percy, |
| Heritage Act Categories | Heritage place, |
| Hermes Number | 1395 |
| Property Number | |

Plaque Citation

Ballarat Town Hall is registered by Heritage Council Victoria

Built 1870 to a design by Lorenz, Oakden and Caselli, this grand Classical Revival-style building features eight 'Alfred Bells' in the central mansarded clock tower. Civic buildings with bells were extremely rare.

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 978.

Ballarat Town Hall, Queen Victoria Square, Sturt Street, Ballarat

(All of the building known as the Ballarat Town Hall, marked B1 on Plan 600222G (A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council but excluding the additions made to the building after 1912.

All the land on Plan 600222G (A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council and described in Certificate of Title Volume 179 Folio 35775, Volume 2881 Folio 576061, Volume 4962 Folio 992223 and Volume 2926 Folio 585107.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G27 15 July 1993 pp.1902-1903]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place data owner.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>