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# Bonegilla Theatre Latchford Barracks



Assembly Hall, former Bonegilla Theatre, from the north-west



Bonegilla Theatre, rear

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## Location

Mornington Street BONEGILLA, Wodonga City

## Municipality

WODONGA CITY

## Level of significance

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## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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Heritage Study/Consultant Wodonga - Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 1, Freeman Randell, 2004;

Construction dates 1941,

Hermes Number 125614

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

This is a tall building, two-storey height outside, but a large open space internally. The external walls have horizontal corrugated iron cladding with many small protruding ventilators just above head height. Series of five pairs of double-doors along the long south side, plus series of high non-viewing windows, bottom hinged, opening inwards at the top.

Entrance foyer protruding from western end of the hall has wooden floor boards, some exposed timber framing, partly lined with vertical boards with vee-joints and central v-groove (foyer interior visible through a window). Narrow timber staircase from foyer to upper floor level, but too narrow for use by crowds. Main hall not able to be inspected. A sign on the building exterior says it contains bonded asbestos materials.

The long north wall has five double doors and six high windows and numerous vents similar to the south wall, except that due to a slope in the ground the doorways open onto concrete landings about 0.5 metre above ground, with handrails and ramps down to ground. At the eastern end there is a large protruding section for the stage, with smaller protruding rooms each side, probably for dressing rooms/toilets. These have their own small windows and an external escape stairway.

The main roof over the hall is gable-style running approximately east-to-west, with large louvred vents at the apex of the two ends. At each end lower hipped-skillion roofs cover the protruding entrance foyer, stage etc. The roofs were probably clad with corrugated asbestos cement originally, but now have fairly new corrugated galvanised iron.

The hall is sitting above ground, mainly on timber stumps but with a small number of larger concrete stumps along the perimeter walls. Looks to be in good condition generally, but with some minor damage. On the south side, a protruding toilet (?) cubicle on tall stumps has rotted floor joists and needs some repair. Some gutters and downpipes need repair. A small more modern brick annex on the east face contains a boiler or space heater, and has a tall metal flue.

The main hall measures about 50 metres (paces) east-west plus about 2 or 3 metres entrance foyer at the west end. It is about 23 metres wide N-S. The entrance foyer is about 6 metres narrower - say 17 metres wide by 2-3 metres deep.

The hall is in an open park-like area with gently sloping ground, sparse grass and a few scattered trees, mostly natives. (Many have small plaques at the base, probably memorials to military units that have been associated with the base.)

An Army site plan dated September 2000 identifies this as building No.0462/111 (ie. No.111 within area 0462 = Latchford), and describes it as the ASSEMBLY HALL (CLOSED).

## Physical Conditions

Fair to good

## Veterans Description for Public

The former Bonegilla Theatre, on Mornington Street, was erected in late 1941 as part of the Bonegilla Military Camp (established 22nd September 1940). It was officially opened on Anzac Day 1942 by Brigadier Christenson from Albury Command. The building was possibly moved to Bonegilla from Tocumwal.

With the use of the Bonegilla Army Camp as a Migrant Reception Centre from 1947, the theatre was used as an assembly area to welcome newcomers on arrival. It continued to be used as a cinema and for concerts and plays which were staged by members of the migrant community. Migrants painted murals in the hall for decoration (some of which are extant). The building is currently used as an indoor cricket arena for the residents of Latchford Barracks.

*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 source.*

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