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# City of Williamstown Municipal Offices and Town Hall (Former) and Drinking Fountain



City of Williamstown  
Municipal Offices and Town  
Hall (former) and Drinking  
Fountain, Hobsons Bay  
Heritage Study 2006



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## Location

104-112 Ferguson Street WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO124

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The former City of Williamstown Municipal Offices and Town Hall, comprising the municipal offices designed by Plottel & Bennett and constructed by RL Phillips in 1919, the Town Hall designed by Gibbs, Finlay & Morsby and constructed by Weavell & Keast in 1927, the John A Dennis Memorial, the 1967 offices and library and the Golden Elm Tree, at 104 Ferguson Street, Williamstown.

How is it Significant?

The former City of Williamstown Municipal Offices and Town Hall complex is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, it is significant as the first municipal offices constructed by the City of Williamstown and the buildings on the site demonstrate the growth and development of the city over a long period until its eventual amalgamation with the City of Altona in 1994. The drinking fountain has associations with long-serving councillor, John A Dennis and is one of a series of similar memorials erected throughout the city. (AHC criteria A4, D2 and H1)

Aesthetically, it is significant as an original example of an Interwar municipal complex that includes both offices and a town hall and is an important work by architects who had an extensive career in Melbourne. The town hall is notable as one of the largest Interwar examples in Victoria and one of the few in the Greek Revival style. Set back behind a grand forecourt, the complex is a major landmark element in Ferguson Street. (AHC criteria B2, E1 and F1)

Socially, it has important and strong associations for local residents as the municipal offices and town hall for the former City of Williamstown and is an important part of the identity of the locality. It continues to play an important role as a Library and community meeting place today. (AHC criterion G1)

Heritage Study/Consultant Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Architect/Designer Bennett, HE & Plottel J,

Hermes Number 15055

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The design of the former Williamstown Municipal Offices uses an austere form of Italian and French Renaissance typical of the 1920s in Melbourne. An E-shape plan supports a symmetrical front elevation of five bays; alternating between smooth rusticated stucco and face red bricks, with stucco dressings to openings. The stuccoed parapet and cornice which link these two materials is of simple geometric shapes with open entablatures, ornamented with trellis pattern iron, whilst the fenestration is set alternately in vertical strips, interrupted by bracketed balconies or individual window openings, arched at the centre, level and flat headed at the upper. The central bay repeats this but as unglazed openings; a porch at the lower and a balcony at the upper (now enclosed). Geometric wrought iron designs, in panels, provide balcony balustrading. The semi-concealed roof is clad with Marseilles pattern tiles.

Extended timber eaves and a minor ventilation tower on the west provide a provincial note to the design. The building is set back behind a formally landscaped forecourt; while none of the plantings are original, the symmetrically placed light poles are. Internally, the front wing is as original, with wrought and cast iron details and tiled floors. There are some notable lead-light windows, and the building retains many of the original fittings, fixtures and furniture associated with its use by the City of Williamstown.

The town hall is a temple shaped, gabled building in the Greek Revival style with a stuccoed pediment and red brick walls. The siting of the municipal offices and the restricted width of the land means that the hall is unusually sited off centre, with the east wall aligned with side wall of the offices.

Specific details can be found in the *Williamstown Town Hall Conservation Management Plan*.

There is a semi-mature Golden Elm Tree in front of the 1960s offices.

## **Integrity**

External Integrity

*Integrity - High. Condition - Good.*

## **Physical Description 2**

Context

A major individual civic building, isolated and set back, with forecourt.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Governing; Developing local government authorities

## **Physical Description 3**

*Associations*

Williamstown City Council, Gibbs, Finlay & Morsby

*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/>*