
MECHANICS INSTITUTE AND MEMORIAL HALL



23242 copy of 0901 Mechanics Institute Balmoral

Location

Glendinning Street BALMORAL, Southern Grampians Shire

Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 25, 2002

What is significant?

The Balmoral Mechanics Institute is a single storey, symmetrical red brick hall, built in 1888, with various 20th century brick extensions and additions. It is located in Glendinning Street, in the centre of Balmoral. Although land in the centre of Balmoral was reserved for the Mechanic's Institute as early as 1860, the hall was not built until 1888, when the contractor, Mr. Barton from Coleraine built the existing hall to the specifications laid out in plans laid out by Mr. A. G. Hill, an engineer also from Coleraine. The construction was not without difficulties and setbacks. The original building was simple and in the 'stripped' Classical style standard for such buildings. It has served continuously as the town's public hall, the meeting place for clubs and societies, a library and recreation centre and, in the twentieth century, as a cinema. The Mechanics Institute underwent a number of modifications including the addition of corrugated iron supper rooms and changing rooms, and the extension and re-flooring of the hall in 1940. In 1956, the corrugated iron memorial supper room was replaced with a brick structure. These alterations follow a common and pragmatic post-World War One and Two tradition of constructing memorial halls or additions to civic buildings which ensured their continuing community use. Further modifications have facilitated the building's use by the local bowling club which has operated on the adjacent site since 1964, a

practical arrangement which has consolidated both institutions. While the building has lost much of its original integrity, the subsequent alterations should be seen as significant in their own right. The building is in good condition.

How is it significant?

The Balmoral Mechanics Institute is of architectural, historical and social significance to the township of Coleraine.

Why is it significant?

The Balmoral Mechanics Institute is of architectural significance as a prominent landmark in the townscape of Balmoral and for its sequence of development. It is historically significant for its association with important local figures who struggled to get the building built. It is of social significance to the community of Balmoral as the main setting for public and social events in the town since the late nineteenth century, for its continuing role as the town's library and for its consolidation with the local bowling club.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1888,
Hermes Number	23242
Property Number	

Physical Conditions

The building is in very good condition.

Physical Description 1

The Balmoral Mechanics Institute and Hall is a single storey, symmetrical red brick hall, built in 1888, with various 20th century brick extensions and additions. The hall is located on the south west side of Glendinning Street in the centre of the township. The roofs are corrugated iron. The main building adopts the usual form for mechanics institutes with a central front door, rooms to either side with single arched windows, and a main hall beyond. It also echoes the conventional classical style of architecture frequently used for mechanics institutes, although much abstracted compared with nineteenth century examples. The various alterations and extensions have been relatively sympathetic.

The most important extension is the 1957 memorial supper room which is built perpendicular to the main hall, on the left hand side. This structure, designed in a post World War Two austere style, has its own square arched entrance from Glendinning Street. The original windows have been replaced in recent years with aluminium framed windows. In 1977 a new structure was built on the right hand side of the main hall to house the bowling club facilities, representing a major shift in the use of the place.

Historical Australian Themes

3. Developing local, regional and national economies

3.21 Entertaining for profit

6. Educating

6.1 Forming associations, libraries, and institutes for self-education

8. Developing Australia's cultural life

8.5 Forming associations

8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid

8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

8.8 Remembering the fallen

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

Usage/Former Usage

Meeting Place

Recreation

Adult Education

Integrity

Low degree of intactness for its nineteenth century fabric but a high degree of intactness for its twentieth century development.

Physical Description 2

C Wood, first president

James Henderson, vice president

James Cuzens, secretary and treasurer

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