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## TEMPERANCE & MASONIC HALL (FORMER)



23355 Temperance Hall  
Penshurst 0874



23355 Temperance Hall  
Penshurst 0873



23355 Temperance Hall  
Penshurst 0872

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### Location

77 Watton Street, PENSHURST VIC 3289 - Property No 0070

### Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

### Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

### Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 18, 2003

What is significant?

The former Temperance and Masonic Hall at 77 Watton Street, Penshurst is a substantial single storey building in the Classical style, which takes the form of a simple basilica. The well executed structure incorporates fine bluestone masonry with sandstone from the Grampians, and decorative timbers. The hall was built in 1872, at a time when the Temperance movement in Victoria was gaining momentum. The trustees included important local figures such as Thomas Aitken and his son Robert, both tanners, and George Chesswas, storekeeper, representing the Protestant Establishment in the district. The power of the Temperance lobby is reflected in the attempt to close some of the seven hotels in Penshurst, a move that was overwhelmingly defeated at a local referendum in 1888. The hall was taken over by the Penshurst Masonic Lodge in 1914, apparently with little change in its local connections, which use continued until 1987. No architect or builder has yet been associated with the building. The choice of style and form for the building draws on important associations and demonstrates particular values, not only for the Temperance Movement but also for its easy conversion to a Masonic Hall. The

building was extended in the mid twentieth century to provide better facilities. It retains a very high degree of integrity and is in good condition.

How is it significant?

The former Temperance and Masonic Hall, 77 Watton Street Penshurst is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The former Temperance and Masonic Hall, 77 Watton Street Penshurst is of historical significance as an early and rare surviving demonstration of the Temperance Movement and subsequently for its long-term use as a Masonic Hall. It has further historical significance for its association with several of the town's civic leaders, including the Aitken, Black and Chesswas families. Historically, the hall served as an important venue for community events, and as an expression of shared community interests for over 100 years.

The former Temperance and Masonic Hall is of architectural significance as one of the earliest and most substantial public buildings surviving in Penshurst. Its architectural significance is enhanced by its finely executed stonework, incorporating the use of contrasting materials, and by its simple, elegant decorative timbers. The use of the Classical style is typical for this kind of hall, reflecting the conservative values of the Temperance Movement. The Masonic values, while different and much older, were not incompatible, and the conversion of the building was therefore easily achieved.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1872,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	23355
Property Number	

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## Physical Conditions

The building is in good condition. It has not been inspected internally.

## Physical Description 1

The hall is a single storey symmetrical stone building. It takes the form of an elementary basilica, although with a side entrance, which is reinforced by the high side windows. Its form, scale and Classical style are typical for such public buildings, and can be compared with the contemporary Penshurst Courthouse. The gabled roof is perpendicular to the street, incorporates three ventilators and is clad with corrugated iron. The fascia boards are decorated with a simple ogee scalloped edge. The walls are constructed in local rock-face bluestone with contrasting quoins in pink rock-face sandstone or quartzite from the Grampians, a rare and distinctive combination. The facade includes a pair of large semicircular arched windows, apparently fixed, the combined sills of which are at half the height of the walls. The side elevations each include two small arched windows also at a high level. Some of these have been bricked-in. The hall has been extended towards the rear with a timber framed and corrugated iron clad wing of similar scale and form to the original wing. This includes a red brick chimney on the east side. Another more recent extension on the west side appears to cover the original entrance.

## Historical Australian Themes

Theme 4: Building settlements, towns and cities

Theme 8: Developing Australia's Cultural Life  
8.5 Forming associations  
8.5.1 Preserving traditions and group memories  
8.5.2 Helping other people  
8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid

## **Usage/Former Usage**

vacant

## **Integrity**

High degree of integrity externally. [Not inspected internally.]

## **Physical Description 2**

Thomas Aitken, first trustee  
Robert Aitken and James George Chesswas, second trustees  
Alexander Black, estate of, long term owner of the land.

*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/>*