

# THEATRE ROYAL AND MECHANICS INSTITUTE



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SOHE 2008



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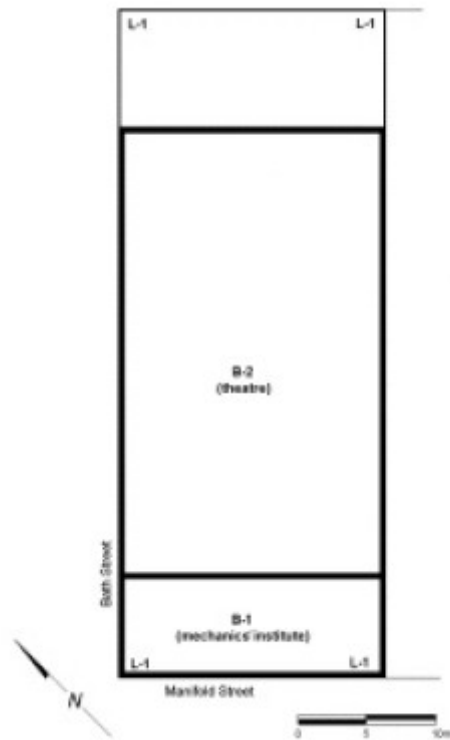
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1 theatre royal &  
mechanics institute  
camperdown front view of  
theatre



theatre royal & mechanics institute camperdown plan

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## Location

216-226 MANIFOLD STREET CAMPERDOWN, CORANGAMITE SHIRE

## Municipality

CORANGAMITE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1415

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO123

## VHR Registration

February 12, 1998

## Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 19, 1999

The combined Theatre Royal and Mechanics' Institute (former Free Library) Camperdown, make a significant contribution to the culture and architectural character of the town. The Mechanics' Institute was built in 1890 to a design by Alexander Hamilton, in Renaissance Revival style. It featured a first floor museum to house the collection of local ethnographer and amateur anthropologist, James Dawson, who was renowned for his humanitarian interest in, and study of, Western District Aborigines. The Institute is intact (though no evidence of Dawson's collection remains), and continues to serve an educational role in the community. It is also one of several 19th century mechanics' institutes in Victoria to include a purpose-built museum, the others being at Warrnambool (demolished) and Beechworth (1856/63). The Theatre Royal, which replaced an earlier timber hall, was built in 1927-28 (during the boom period of cinema construction) at the rear of the Institute. It is a picture theatre-cum-hall in Free Classical Revival style, to a design by local architect W Perry Knights. The main auditorium (hall) has a flat floor to accommodate other uses such as public meetings, balls and dances, and civic events. Other extant theatre-halls in country Victoria include Swan Hill, Nhill, Leongatha, Morwell and Colac, and of these the Royal at Camperdown is comparatively intact, a very good representative example, and one of the few still operating as a picture theatre. It retains many original elements including a ticket box and decorative features in the foyer, a bio-box (projection room), and timber railings on the stairs and landings and an imposing full-height proscenium. Garland motifs are featured throughout. The main entrance is also enhanced by decorative paving, a cantilevered canopy with Ionic columns, and the words 'Picture Theatre' in relief on the parapet.

The Theatre Royal and Mechanics' Institute Camperdown are historically, socially and architecturally important to the State of Victoria.

The Theatre Royal and Mechanics' Institute Camperdown are historically and socially important for their ongoing contribution to the cultural, recreational, social and educational needs of the Camperdown district. The Mechanics' Institute is an important civic amenity, with a significant early association with James Dawson, a pioneering ethnographer and anthropologist in Victoria. The Theatre Royal is an excellent and comparatively intact example of a once common entertainment and community facility in rural Victoria, which retains its original function.

The Theatre Royal and Mechanics' Institute Camperdown are architecturally important as intact and particularly fine examples of their type. They are also notable buildings by architects who have made outstanding contributions to the streetscapes and built heritage of Camperdown. The exuberant facade and elaborate internal features of the theatre reflect its construction during the boom period of cinema going. The Free Classical Revival style of the theatre is also unusual for this type of building, and strongly distinguishes it from other public and commercial buildings in Camperdown. The Mechanics' Institute is one of the most competent interpretations of the Renaissance Revival style in country Victoria.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

## **Specific Exemptions:**

### **EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:**

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

#### **General Conditions:**

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### **Exterior**

Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

#### **Interior**

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of paintings and other wall mounted pieces.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is

concealed from view.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates	1890,
Architect/Designer	Hamilton, Alexander,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	5298
Property Number	

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## History

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1415 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

Theatre Royal and Mechanics' Institute, corner of Manifold Street and Bath Street, Camperdown, Corangamite Shire Council.

### EXTENT

1. All of the buildings marked B-1 (Theatre) and B-2 (Mechanics' Institute) on Diagram Number 608121 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the land marked L-1 on Diagram Number 608121 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 5941 Folio 025.

Dated 5 February 1998  
RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G6 12 February 1998 p.351]

*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/>*