
Berwick Mechanics' Institute & Free Library



620_2.jpg



620_3.jpg



620_4.jpg

Location

15 High Street, BERWICK, Casey City

Municipality

CASEY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO84

Heritage Listing

Casey City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 20, 2004

The Berwick Mechanics' Institute and Free Library is remarkable as a free local library still operating after more than a century. This building has high local significance both as an institution and as one of a small number of nineteenth century facades remaining in the Berwick High Street precinct, giving the area its distinctive character. First opened in 1862 it was the earliest Mechanics' Institute established in the Berwick district. The building has been an important element in the High Street streetscape since 1878, when it was moved from an earlier Peel Street site. Extended in 1982 to improve its library functions, the institution is notable as a provider of free library services within the Berwick district (one of its original functions), for more than a century.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Casey - Casey Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2004; Casey - Heritage of the City of Berwick, Context Pty Ltd, 1993;
Hermes Number	63148
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The original facade was carefully incorporated into the new building. The central weatherboard elevation of the library today is constructed mostly of original materials and represents the extent of the original facade. The original building had an external red brick chimney on the western gabled end and a hip-roofed rear addition with several double-hung windows. The new additions are distinguished from the old fabric, and consist of a new roof form, better brick end-walls abutting adjacent buildings and large plate glass windows either side of the older section. The interior of the entrance has been reconstructed and lined in beaded pine board. A watercolour portrait of Lady Casey by Cecil Beaton (dated 1968), is also hanging in the library. Silks by the artist Ellis Rowan, Lady Casey's aunt, are also owned by the library and have recently been restored. (1)

SOURCE

1. Helen Millicer, 'A brief cultural review of the City of Berwick', 1991.

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/>