
Ballarat East Free Library



Ballarat East Library and Gardens - Ballarat Heritage Review, 1998



Old Ballarat east Library – Film 2 / Frame 30,31,32- Ballarat Conservation Study, 1978



Old Ballarat east Library – Film 2 / Frame 30,31,32- Ballarat Conservation Study, 1978



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Barkly street, Ballarat East, c.1920, The library is on the left

Location

25-29 BARKLY STREET, BALLARAT EAST - PROPERTY NUMBER 2002085, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1493

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO9

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 5, 2024

What is significant?

How is it significant?

Why is it significant?

Part of Recommended Area A4.1

No SoS provided in this citation. Please refer to the Attachments section in this place record for further information.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Ballarat - Ballarat Heritage Precincts Study, Dr David Rowe and Wendy Jacobs, 2006; Ballarat - Ballarat Heritage Review, Andrew Ward, 1998; Ballarat - Ballarat Conservation Study, Jacobs Lewis Vines Architects, 1978;
Construction dates	1867,
Architect/Designer	Ohlfsen-Bagge, CH,
Hermes Number	178150
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The foundation stone for the front section was laid by Sir Redmond Barry on 21.2.1867. The contractors were Messrs Boulton & Fyfe and the work cost £1938. The supervision and interior design was by J;J.Lorenz, and the design was by Mr.C.H.Ohlfsen-Bagge who presumably designed the hall which cost £ 1,280. It employs particularly elaborate 'cream and: red -polychrome brickwork. It has banded segmental window heads and an intrusive triangular arcaded corbel table in contrasting materials below the eaves .. The centre of the three principal elevations featl1res a projecting panel with some unusual motifs. The building is enhanced by the elaborate cast iron-.roof .plumbing and fence. The interior of the later hall a~ the rear is quite remarkable with elaborate trusses beneath a large clerestory. The building is substantially intact and is One of the most unusual polychrome structures in Victoria. The corbel tables and other decorative brick items, and the hall interior, are all quite remarkable.

Intactness

INTACTNESS: substantially intact

Physical Description 2

The Ballarat East library was established in 1862 and from the engine house of the Ballarat Fire Brigade in at first operated Barkly Street. 1

The Ballarat Star of January 22, 1867, reported On the laying of the Foundation Stone by Honorable Sir Redmond Barry on the 21st January.

"The Architect of the library is Mr.C.B. Ohlfsen-Bagge, the engineer for the Borough of Ballarat East and the contractors are Messrs.Boulton and Fyfe, tender being 1938. The design includes a hall forty by eighty feet, the height of the walls being 28 feet. The part now to be executed is the front portion facing Barkly Street, immediately opposite the Fire Brigade;; The dimensions of the .building are Sixty by Thirty three feet', the front and ends will be carried up in red brick relieved by white brick dressings. round ,windows and the string cornice will be of coloured bricks and surmounted by elegant cast iron spouting;' supporting a cresting of very light and handsome design."

Apparently C.H. Ohlfsen-Bagge acted as an honorary architect with J.J Lorenz the superintending architect "whose excellent taste was displayed in designing and carrying out the interior". The interiors were completed by Fly Bros, at a cost of £995. With extras, the overall cost came to £3,148.

Withers reported that the cost of the building and fittings was about £3,500, and that the hall had been added at a cost of 1,200. (It is not known when the hall was built but it is assumed the hall is Ohlfsen-Bagge's design). In 1887 the library consisted of 12,000 volumes.

In July 1870 a school of Design was formed and classes held as the library. The Education Department began to subsidise the school and the committee the premises in order to accommodate additional classes. By the early 1900' s the school had sufficient standing to become the Ballarat East Branch of the School of Mines.

The library continued to operate, in 1949 becoming a branch library of the Ballarat Central Library, until 26th October 1973. It is now used as a museum.

The Barkly Street section is a red and cream brick building of a most unusual character. It has windows with segmental heads banded in the two brick colours at both levels. It has a triangular arcaded corbel table below the eaves in cream brick on red brick brackets.

The entrance is emphasised by a central panelled composition rising to first floor level. This comprises a row of machicolation above the entrance, surmounted by angle bricks and some recessed panels of brick below the upper floor windows in just this central panel.

Above the other four windows are some rather strange motifs of squares set on the angle. The arrises of the window openings, and of the building itself, and in chamfer stopped brickwork. The end elevations have set in them panels rather than that on the entrance front and rising two storeys.

The building is really much enhanced by some of the ancillary elements; firstly the spouting is intact. This is a rather elaborate cast iron spouting with a sort of triple moulding and ornamental brackets to the joints. Also the cast iron downpipes and octagonal rainwater heads, and at least two of the cut sheet iron acroteria are of interest.

A fence runs from the front around the east side with bluestone plinth and piers. It has slightly exotic cast. iron. caps to the palisade bars, and at the gate a rather fine pipe and wrought. iron scrolled arch which is designed to carry the gas lamp, but unfortunately is now gone. This fence and a section further down Barkly Street, are the remains of the fence which originally enclosed the East Ballarat Town Hall, Library and Town Hall gardens. The latter buildings have subsequently been demolished; a great misfortune.

At the Barkly Street front one window has been glazed in lead lighted glass for the Jubilee of 1912.

The building has been extended at the back with the hall, which on one end is in fact done in partially matching brickwork with simple cream bands, but at the other end is all in timber. Entering the building the interior appears at first rather coarse, but the glazed screen dividing off the lobby from the stairwell is of some interest with a very wide arched fan like top divided by slim shafts running radially into four panes like voussoirs around a central semicircle lunette. The stairwell itself is of some pretension with a very broad segmental stilted arch carried on double foliated consoles, an opening under as the staircase breaks off to the left through one pair of

aches, which have two ordered of bow tell mouldings which simple sink away into the side reveal of the stilted plaster arch.

The main hall itself is a truly remarkable space in six bays with trusses of perhaps a ninetieth century structural expressionistic type in the Viollet-le-duc-manner. The bulk of the essentially queen post trusses ere in timber with chamfered and notched decoration and the central panel had a tie bar with what appears to be a cast ring ornament on it. A non-structural section arises about this queen post truss to carry the clerestory in a sort of timber arch, again eith ither bizarre flanking decoration. The ceiling is in diagonal boarding, and the top clerestory section has a series of ceiling ventilating rosettes, no doubt to be places above hanging gas lamps. The trusses are supported from the walls by timber brackets coming out of the pilasters. There is a most interesting fireplace, now blocked off and painted over but in timber with a semicircular opening, sort of geometrics with chamfered edges in a rather crystalline pattern.

The original ventilating system consisted of nine cylindrical Tobin tubes distributed along what were the external walls, and eight of these are still in place, while the other is lying loose. The tubes rise to nearly 2 metres off the floor and have little removable lids.

At the back of the building there is an upper room, completely lined in a very simple and pleasing way in beaded edged pine boarding. Externally the weatherboard rear of the building is of interest for the clerestory above the hall and the smaller rear hall roof.

The building is substantially intact internally and externally, although not in particularly good repair. The painting of the rear hall is unfortunate.

This building is one of the most unusual polychrome streetscapes in Victoria on account of the corbel tables below the eaves, the projecting panels on each elevation and various pattern work in cream bricks against the red background. The fence, roof plumbing and rear hall are all quite remarkable. The building serves as a sad remnant of the former grandeur of the Ballarat East Town Hall, Police Station and Botanical gardens, as shown. However it is an important area, specifically because of its relationship with the unusual brick East Ballarat Fire Station.

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/>