
MECHANICS INSTITUTE (FORMER)

Location

12-14 Stirling Street DUNKELD, 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 - February 19, 2004

What is significant?

The former Mechanic's Institute is located in the north-east corner of Sterling Street and Martin Streets, two blocks south of the Glenelg Highway in the township of Dunkeld. The building was constructed in two phases. The earlier 1892 section comprises a main hall and rear wing with elevated stage and side dressing rooms. The newer 1963 section is a cream brick facade with a side entrance and side windows. Most of the windows in the older section were replaced or bricked up in the 1963 renovation. No architect or builder has been associated with the design, however, it is possible that the 1963 renovations were designed by Taggeter Walter, who was responsible for the renovation and remodelling of the Glenthompson Hall and Library in the 1950s. The former Mechanic's Insatiate is in fair condition, and retains a high degree of integrity to the mid 1960s.

How is it significant?

The former Mechanics Institute is of historical and social significance to the township of Dunkeld and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Mechanic's Institute is of historical significance as a prominent and well-used public building in a street that previously was an important commercial thoroughfare and thus is a reminder of an earlier, more prosperous era of the town's history. The hall has additional historical significance for its association with Harold Armytage, a patron of the Mechanics Institute and prominent early pastoralist.

The former Mechanic's Institute is of social significance to Dunkeld because, in the early 20th century it reflected the town's status and was associated with the self-improvement of its citizens through reading, lectures and concerts. Socially, the hall provided a focus for community activities such as dances, book borrowing and film nights. These roles continue and the hall is still used for a range of activities.

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| Heritage Study/Consultant | Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002; |
| Construction dates | 1892, |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place, |
| Hermes Number | 23602 |
| Property Number | |

Physical Conditions

The building is in good condition internally and externally

Physical Description 1

The former Dunkeld Mechanic's Institute has been constructed in two sections. The earlier 1892 section is a T-shaped red brick hall with bluestone footings. It comprises a large hall with the rear wing accommodating an elevated stage and adjacent rooms to either side. Many of the original windows were replaced in the 1963 renovation or bricked up. The new section was built in 1963 and includes a cream facade with side windows and a new entrance. This is in a loosely International style. The new section may have been designed by Taggeter Walter, who was responsible for the new facade on the Glenthompson Library and Hall

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

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

Usage/Former Usage

Public Library & RSL Hall

Integrity

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

Physical Description 2

G.G Crouch, first owner of the land

Harold Armytage, patron

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/>