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# Hamilton Historical Society



26537 Hamilton Historical Society

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## Location

47 Gray St HAMILTON, Southern Grampians Shire

## 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 -

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Mechanics Institute in any town formed the social focus for middle classes. The building uses a formal, dignified style of architecture to create a sense of respectability, reinforced by each of the responsible architects. A key building in the streetscape.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

former Mechanics' Institute (now Hamilton Historical Society)  
47 Gray St

The Hamilton Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1859, was granted a block of land in Gray St in that same year ([i]) but did not start to construct the present building until 1865. A lecture hall was designed by the architect J S Jenkins in 1869, ([ii]) In 1872 the building was extended to include a Free Library from the designs of the architect William Smith ([iii]) and in 1879 another large room was added. This was the Learmonth Memorial hall, which was built with funds collected in 1874 for a memorial to Alexander Learmonth, an influential Hamilton businessman and original Institute trustee. ([iv]) Further additions, designed by Frank Hammond, architect, town clerk and engineer, ([v]) were made to the building in 1903. The Mechanics' Institute has played an important role in the history education in Hamilton, which is known throughout the region for its many fine educational establishments. The Mechanics Institute in any town formed the social focus for middle classes. The building uses a formal, dignified style of architecture to create a sense of respectability, reinforced by each of the responsible architects. A key building in the streetscape. It is significantly intact and is in excellent condition.

[i] *Portland Guardian*, 25 April, 1 June 1859.

[ii] **Hamilton Standard**, 24 June, 26 July 1865, *Building Times* 1/10/1869, p 4.

[iii] *Ibid.*, 16 March 1872.

[iv] Garden, D, **Hamilton**, p 84, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) File No 4419.

[v] *Ibid.*

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - City of Hamilton Conservation Study, Timothy Hubbard with Carlotta Kellaway & Michael Looker (plus Francis Punch), 1991;
Construction dates	1865, 1872, 1879, 1903,
Architect/Designer	Hammond, Frank, Smith, William, Jenkins, John S,
Other Names	former Mechanics' Institute,
Hermes Number	26537
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

### MATERIALS:

**Roof:** corrugated iron

**Walls:** rendered brick

**Dressings:** cement render

**Plinth:** cement render

**Windows:** timber dhs

**Paving:** asphalt

Other: single palisade iron fence  
bluestone plinth

**NOTABLE FEATURES:** Quality and correctness of the Tuscan Order

### Historical Australian Themes

## **ASSOCIATED HISTORIC THEMES**

Education: mechanics institute  
historical society & museum  
Government Institutions: municipal  
Sport & recreation: historical society & museum

## **Integrity**

Integrity: E

## **Physical Conditions**

Conditions: E

*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/>*