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# BENA PUBLIC HALL



Bena Public Hall



image8

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## Location

41 MAIN ROAD, BENA, SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Municipality

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

## Heritage Listing

South Gippsland Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 20, 2022

### What is significant?

The Bena Public Hall, at 40 Main Road, Bena, designed by Godfrey & Spowers and opened on 29 August 1939 (to replace the original hall), is significant. It is a brick interwar hall, rectangular in plan with a hipped iron roof with an original roof ventilator. Other contributory features include:

- The austere cubic brick facade with a low square parapet and a slightly projecting central section containing the entrance.
- The original rendered surround framing the entry doors.

- The high set horizontal windows with narrow hoods placed symmetrically on either side of the entry and other original details such as original metal signage 'BENA HALL' above the entrance, the original rainheads and downpipes and diamond shaped vent covers above the windows that further emphasise the symmetry of the facade.
- The side walls divided into bays containing high set timber windows or doors by brick pilasters.
- Historical plaque

Non-original alterations and additions including the projecting gabled porch at the front are not significant.

**How is it significant?**

The Bena Public Hall is of local historic, aesthetic and social significance to the South Gippsland Shire.

**Why is it significant?**

Historically, this is Bena's second public hall and is one of two surviving community buildings that demonstrate the development of the district in the early to mid-twentieth century. The rebuilding of the hall so soon after the original was destroyed by fire (in February 1938) demonstrates the importance of public halls to isolated rural communities. (Criterion A)

Aesthetically, it is a local hall that demonstrates characteristics of the Moderne style including the austere cubic form of the facade with minimal detailing, the horizontal slot windows and the original rendered canopy around the entry. It is a distinctive building, which is an historic landmark within Bena. (Criterion E)

It has social significance for strong and enduring associations with the Bena community through its continuous use as a public hall for over 80 years. Importantly the current hall was built entirely by funds raised by the Bena community and paid off within 13 years despite the trials of World War II. (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant	South Gippsland - South Gippsland Heritage Study, David Helms with Trevor Westmore, 2004;
Construction dates	1939, 1939, 1939,
Architect/Designer	Spowers, Godfrey, Godfrey & Spowers,
Other Names	Bena Hall, Extra,
Hermes Number	73216
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The Bena Public Hall is a brick interwar building with a gable iron roof. The projecting front section has an austere almost Bauhaus facade with a centrally located entrance framed in a rendered porch flanked by steel framed horizontal windows set high in the wall. The name "Bena Hall" is set in metal letters above the front entrance.

A porch with a gable roof has been added at the front, partially obscuring the original porch.

*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/>*