

BUILDING TITLE: former Mechanics' Institute (now Hamilton Historical Society) **ADDRESS:** 47 Gray St
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: A | X | B | C | D | E | **BUILDING TYPE:** Mechanics Institute
DESIGNATION: HBR Reg No File # 60 0632 M **AHC File #** **NT File #** **Class** | **Rec** |
CONSERVATION AREA: Gray St Commercial **LEVEL OF STREETScape SIGNIFICANCE:** 1 | 2 | X | 3 |
STYLE: Roman Revival

CONSTRUCTION DATE & ALTERATIONS:

1. 1865
2. 1872 (free library)
3. 1879 (new large room)
4. 1903
- 5.

Sources:

- 1 D Garden, *Hamilton*, p 84; and *Building Times*, 1/10/69, p 4.
- 2 ibid
- 3 ibid & 4 ibid

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

SURVEY DATE: 7/3/91 **NEG FILE:** 2/5/6 **REPORTER:** TFH

INTEGRITY: E | X | G | F | P | **NOTABLE FEATURES:** Quality and correctness of the Tuscan Order
CONDITION: E | X | G | F | P |

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.

ALTERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Appropriate: Rec **Inappropriate:** Rec
 extensions
 none apparent

O=reinstate original design S=reinstate sympathetic alternative R=remove RAM=remove by approved method

SIGNIFICANT OWNERS/TENANTS:	ARCHITECTS/BUILDERS:	TITLE:
land to Trustees Mechanics Institute	J S Jenkins, architect (1869)	Sec C A
and Free Library	William Smith, architect (1872)	8 17
	City of Hamilton present owner	Frank Hammond, architect (1903)
		Hamilton Historical Society

COUNCIL COMPUTER # 10817.0051

MORE INFO OVER | X |

HAMDS046

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.

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC THEMES

Education: mechanics institute
historical society & museum

Government Institutions: municipal

Sport & recreation: historical society & museum

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Hamilton Club, 41 Gray Street
Lyndhurst, 4 McIntyre St, et al, all
designed by Frank Hammond

REFERENCES

Garden, D *Hamilton*, Melbourne, 1984.
Hamilton Standard 24 June, 26 July 1865, 16 March 1903.
National Trust of Australia (Victoria) File No. 4419.
Portland Guardian 25 April, 1 June 1859.

FOOTNOTES

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- 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.