

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** NAREEN HALL COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Nareen Road NAREEN

**STUDY NUMBER:** 062

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** NAREEN SCHOOL, NAREEN MECHANICS INSTITUTE AND FREE LIBRARY

**PRECINCT:** outside

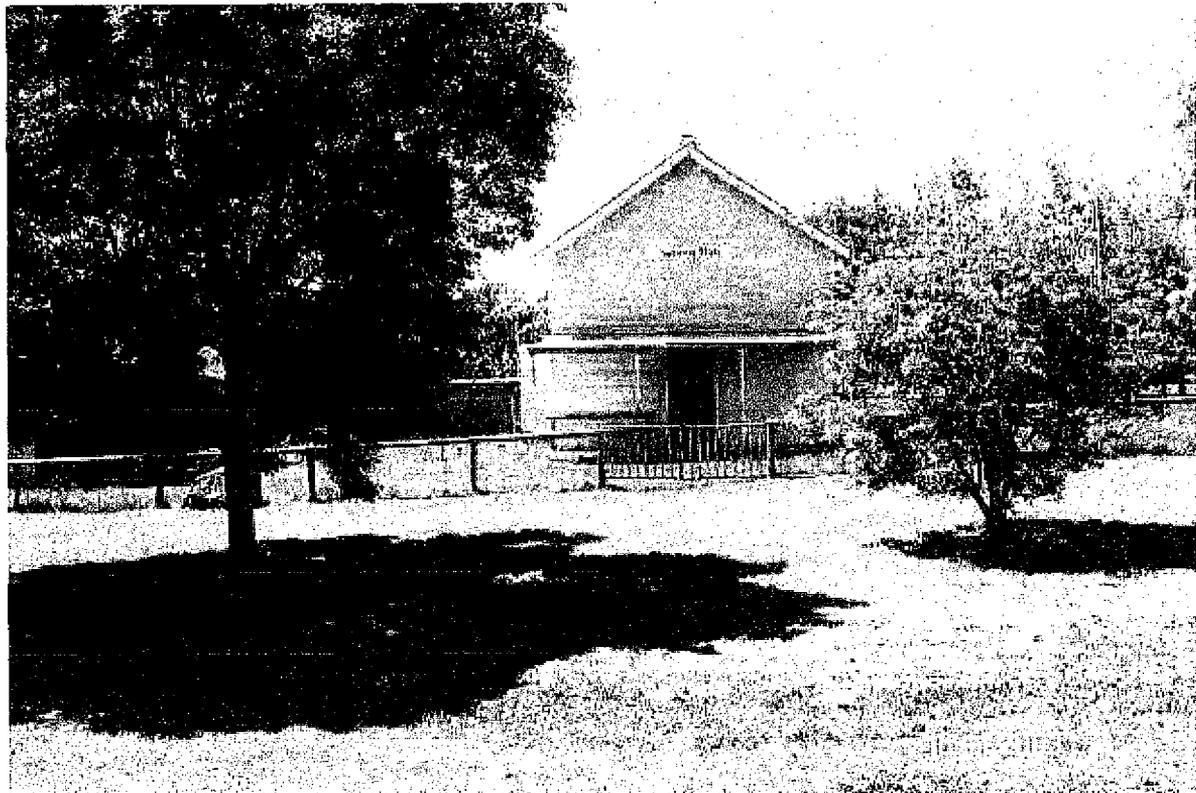
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF TARRAYOUKYAN

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 386 D21; VicRoads 54 B7; on the Nareen Road at Nareen.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Nareen Hall Complex, Nareen Road, rear view

**Image Date:** 16/11/03

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings, including the former stone hall, and current public hall, and all of the land associated with the complex.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The old Nareen hall was originally erected in 1870 as a simple rectangular stone building, with three windows on the north side, and a corrugated iron roof. The front facade is constructed of dressed bluestone, with a horizontal lintel over the timber door which faces the road. The remaining walls are of random coursed stone, with a plain chimney in the east wall. The north wall of the hall has been altered by the addition of a timber room which functioned for many years as a kitchen.

A photograph of Nareen township from about 1910 shows the later hall building was constructed as a simple rectangular timber building, with a corrugated iron roof, and a timber ashlar facade facing the road. A skillion porch has been added at a later date. The original weatherboards have been replaced by Hardiplanks, except in the area around the front door, under the verandah roof, where the ashlar remains. The later hall has undergone at least two unsympathetic additions at the rear, including a modern cement brick toilet block.

An early timber picket fence in front of both halls has been replaced with a modern post and wire fence, with steel gates.

A large volcanic stone placed near the front fence carries a bronze plaque dedicated to the Fraser family. "Malcolm and Tamie Fraser raised their four children and lived here at Nareen until January 1998. Rt Hon John Malcolm Fraser AC

CH PC was the Liberal Party member for the Wannon electorate from 1955 to 1983 and Prime Minister of Australia from 11th November 1975 to 11th March 1983. A notable quote of his was:- "Life wasn't meant to be easy..." "... my child; but take courage: it can be delightful..." George Bernard Shaw. Erected by the people of the Nareen district."

The Nareen War Memorial is located on the roadside verge outside the 20th century hall.

## **HISTORY:**

In 1865 Nareen settlement, originally called The Wando, was separated out from a large pastoral run, of some 90,000 acres, formerly held by Willis and Swanston under licence.

The first efforts at education in Nareen were initiated by Alexander Grant, of the Post Office Store (Neeson, 32). He appealed for a school in 1869, and a bluestone building was constructed in 1870 on a block of land donated by him. John Benson was the stone mason using stone quarried locally. The carpenter was W Boyle of Hamilton. The money for the building was raised by private subscription, funded in part by a donation of 20 pounds from Mrs Willis, of Koolomurt, enabling the building to be completed. "The total cost was 110 pounds, and it is thought to have been opened as a school fairly early in 1870 with William McBean as school teacher, he had previously been teaching at Bruk Bruk for three or four years." (Neeson, 32) The parents of the scholars paid for the teacher initially but, by mid 1870, the Education Department took over and it became State School No 1377. The government rented the building and McBean continued as the teacher.

William McBean of Muntham was engaged to teach 30 children at 1/6 per head per week. This arrangement continued until government education arrived in June 1870, when the Education Department took over the building as SS No. 1377. It rented the bluestone school until 1885, by which time this building had become too small to cope with the attendance. A purpose-built school was erected, and opened as Nareen SS No. 2303 in 1885.

Schools were also built at Tarrayoukyan, in 1875, Koolomurt, in 1877, and elsewhere requiring a local Board of Advice which was established in April 1875 with William Moodie of Wando Dale as secretary. Moodie retired in 1890 and was replaced by Alexander Grant who, in turn retired in 1892. The Nareen and Tarrayoukyan schools were operated jointly on a part-time basis until 1876 when McBean continued as the teacher at

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Tarrayoukyan and E Newlyn became the teacher at Nareen. The Koolomurt School was moved to Nareen in 1898 and by 1899 the school had over 30 children enrolled. Boards of Advice became School Committees in 1911. The 1885 building was subsequently removed to Balochile in 1912 (Neeson, 34). The former Koolomurt school was sold and replaced with a newer building brought from Wando Bridge in 1949. This was removed in 1960 when a new building was constructed and opened in June of that year by Mrs Kathleen Neeson, secretary of the School Committee for many years.

Apart from its function as a school, the stone building was used by local residents as a meeting place for church services, dances and concerts. For many years it housed the Nareen Mechanics Institute and Free Library, and was the home of the local debating club. William Moodie of Wando Dale wrote in his diary that "I was highly honoured by being its President for about twenty-one years" and "Not far from it stands the new wooden hall, a much more pretentious looking building" (Palmer, 101).

In 1900, the residents of Nareen advocated for a larger meeting space, and proposed to enlarge the stone hall with brick extensions. This plan was abandoned as too expensive, although some 15,000 bricks had been made at the Wando Dale homestead. A 40' by 20' wooden hall was erected adjacent to the old stone building by R McMurtric of Melbourne in 1904, at a cost of 215 pounds. In 1938 the hall was lengthened and dressing rooms were added on the side. Further alterations were made in 2002.

The old stone hall appears to have been converted to a mechanics institute after the new school was built in 1885. The new hall assumed the role and the stone building continues to be used as an annex. A kitchen was added on the north east side, with further extensions in 1958.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 6 Educating

6.1 Forming associations, libraries, and institutes for self-education

6.2 Establishing schools

6.5 Educating people in remote places

## **CONDITION:**

Both the stone hall and timber hall are in good condition. Both have suffered unsympathetic additions at later stages.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Highly intact

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Nareen Hall Complex is located at the centre of the hamlet of Nareen, on the eastern side of the Nareen Road. The complex consists of the original stone hall, a weatherboard public hall, cream brick toilet block and a memorial to the Fraser family. The original hall is a simple stone building erected facing Nareen Road in 1870, and was used as a hall, school and church. It is constructed of random coursed stone, and the front facade is of dressed bluestone. The modern Public Hall was built about 1910, it is a rectangular timber building, with a corrugated iron roof, and a timber ashlar facade facing the road. A skillion porch has been added at a later date. The original weatherboards have been replaced by Hardiplanks, except in the area around the front door, under the verandah roof, where the ashlar remains. The later hall has undergone at least two unsympathetic additions at the rear, including a modern cement brick toilet block. In front of the Public Hall is a large volcanic stone bearing a bronze plaque dedicated to the Fraser family.

How is it significant?

The Nareen Hall Complex is of historical significance to the district of Nareen and the Southern Grampians

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Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Nareen Public Hall Complex is of historical significance as the principal public meeting place of the small community for 100 years and now as one of its few remnants. Culturally, the hall is significant to Nareen because, in the early 20th centuries it reflected the town's aspirations and was associated with the self-improvement of its citizens through debates, lectures and concerts. Socially, the hall provided a focus for community activities such as dances, shows and film nights. These traditional roles continued until relatively recently. Of further significance is the role which the original hall played in the community, of school, hall and stand in church. The site is of further historical interest as the building of a new, much larger Public Hall around the turn of the century reflected the growing population of Nareen, and the success of the smaller farms which had come into being after the 1860s Land Acts.

## COMPARISON:

089 Anglican Sunday School, Cnr. Church & Henty Street, Coleraine

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

08-Nov-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
G McAffin	History of the Shire of Wamnon, 1872-1972,	1972	
L J Blake, ed.	Vision and Realisation , Vol 2	1973	var.
Ewan Neeson	"A Place of Oaks", a History of Nareen and Tarrayoukyan	1970	32
Joan Palmer, ed	William Moodie, a Pioneer of Western Victoria	1973	101
W J Waters	Early History of Nareen and District	1946	