

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: SHIRE OF MOUNT ROUSE COUNCIL CHAMBERS (FORMER)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Martin Street PENS Hurst

STUDY NUMBER: 235

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Penshurst

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 1a **SECTION:** 13 **PARISH:** PARISH OF BORAMBORAM

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475 J6; Vic Roads 233 O11; located on the west side of Martin in the centre of the township.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Shire of Mount Rouse Council Chambers (Former), Martin St, Penshurst

Image Date: 10/05/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings including the interiors and all of the land but excluding the modern rear extension and the separate toilet block.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The building was constructed in 1864 and extended in either 1877, the date given by the Shire's Centenary History or 1887, the date given by the National Estate Register citation. The original design was by John S Jenkins, architect and engineer. The extension, which provided the major hall at the rear of the smaller office building, was designed by another architect, William Smith.

The Council Chambers are a small symmetrical stone building in a reduced Italianate style. The entrance is a slightly projecting section with an arched opening housing a fanlight and a double leaved front door of ten panels. The arched windows are single paned double hung sashes. The arches of the door and windows spring from a dressed cornice otherwise the rock face bluestone is laid in 12" courses. The gable over the projecting entrance is supported by extended purlins. The main roof has a low pitch, contributing to its Italianate style, and is transverse. There are chimneys at either end of the gabled roof. The interiors of the front wing are conventional but the inner glazed vestibule doors are notable as is the strong room off the Shire Secretary's office. The main chamber of the second wing is a particularly fine interior with an open ceiling and exposed queen post trusses.

The stone work of the building is particularly fine and, importantly, it is of the same standard and detailing throughout both wings. Old photographs show a simple picket fence in front of the building.

HISTORY:

The first form of municipal government in the area around Mount Rouse was the local Roads Board, created in October 1860 and constituted some 548 square miles. This was strictly limited in its capacities and functions. The first Chairman was Daniel Ritchie.

The Shire of Mount Rouse was proclaimed in 1864 and Ritchie was its first President. At first there were seven Councillors but this number increased to nine with its subdivision into three ridings: Chatsworth, Dunkeld, Penshurst. The building, with stables at the rear, was constructed in 1864, to the design of John S. Jenkins (c1835-1913), architect and engineer. Jenkins was appointed engineer of the Roads Board in December 1860, and served in that capacity until 1863, when the transition was made to the Shire of Mount Rouse. He served both as Shire Secretary and Engineer from 1870 to 1876. Permission to purchase furniture, including "12 chairs, one large table 10ft. x 5 ft., two fenders and sets of fire irons, and three benches" costing 51 pounds was given in late July 1864 (Shire of Mount Rouse, 14).

The boundaries and subdivision of the Shire of Mount Rouse remained constant until 1962 when the Chatsworth Riding was further subdivided into Chatsworth and Glenthompson. The number of Councillors increased to twelve. As a result of the changing structure of the Shire, in 1886, Council instructed William Smith C.E. (c1838-1909) to prepare the necessary working plans for additions and alterations to the Shire Hall (ibid.). They accepted G. Rowe's tender of 780 pounds and 13 shillings to build the extension. Council also resolved to buy venetian blinds, linoleum, office tables, etc. (ibid.). The extension provided the major hall at the rear of the smaller office building. Both Smith and Jenkins were architects from Hamilton and both were also the town clerks of Hamilton from 1861-1866 and 1874-1880 respectively (Garden, 73). Another architect, Frank Hammond who lived at Penshurst was also a town clerk of Hamilton.

A nineteenth century photograph of the Council Chambers taken in 1894 shows the building as it appears today and with a simple picket fence on the street boundary.

Cr. Mackiehan, the Shire President in 1879 has been credited with the original concept of the Municipal Association (HS 30/03/1912). John Mackiehan lived at nearby property, Yulungah, and was one first Councillors. A pamphlet published in 1956 entitled 'A digest of municipal endeavour and achievement' states that the Association was inspired by "an article published in 'The Argus' in 1879 referring to the value of a

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similar organisation in England. Mr. John Mackiehan of Yulangah, Penshurst. read the article and sent a circular on the matter to all municipal councils in Victoria". The first meeting of the Municipal Association of Victoria was held at the Hamilton Town Hall in June 1879, chaired by Cr. Mackiehan, who was elected unopposed as Chairman and President of the Municipal Association, which he retained until his retirement in 1885.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 7 Governing

7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy

7.6 Administering Australia

7.6.1 Developing local government authorities

7.6.6 Providing services and welfare

7.6.12 Conserving Australia's heritage

CONDITION:

The building is in excellent condition.

INTEGRITY:

high degree of integrity externally and internally

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The former Mount Rouse Shire Council Chambers are located adjacent to the central intersection of the township of Penshurst. The Chambers are a small symmetrical stone building in a reduced Italianate style, constructed in 1864 and extended in 1887. The original design was by John S Jenkins, architect and engineer. The extension, which provided the major hall at the rear of the smaller office building, was designed by another architect, William Smith. The stone work of the building is particularly fine and, importantly, it is of the same standard and detailing throughout both wings. Cr. Mackiehan, Shire President in 1879 was the originator of the concept of a Victorian Municipal Association. The Shire of Mount Rouse was amalgamated with other local shires in the late twentieth century to become part of the Southern Grampians Shire. The buildings are in excellent condition and retain an excellent degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The former Shire of Mount Rouse Council Chambers is of historical, social and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Shire of Mount Rouse Council Chambers is of historical significance because its construction and development mark the commencement and continuation of local government in the area for over one hundred years. It is of social significance as a centre for a wide range of formal and informal community activities. It is of architectural significance for its use of conservative style and form and as a work of the local architects, John S Jenkins and William Smith.

COMPARISON:

072 Wannon Shire Offices (former), 54 Whyte Street, Coleraine

012 Eucalyptus Centre (former Shire Offices), 69-71 Whyte Street, Coleraine

ASSESSED BY: TFH

ASSESSMENT DATE:

23-Jul-03

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

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Include in VHR **Include in RNE** **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
	Penshurst Free Press, Friday 5th April, 1912.	1912	2
	Mt Rouse Shire Centenary	1964	1
Garden, Don	Hamilton, A Western District History	1984	73, 89,
Municipal Association of Victoria	A digest of municipal endeavour and achievement.	1956	
Shire of Mount Rouse	Shire of Mount Rouse 1864-1964: Centenary Council Meeting Wednesday 9th September, 1964	1964	
