

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: LIBRARY AND WAR MEMORIAL HALL

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: McLennan Street GLENTHOMPSON

STUDY NUMBER: 305 **HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: GLENTHOMPSON MECHANICS INSTITUTE

PRECINCT: Glenthompson

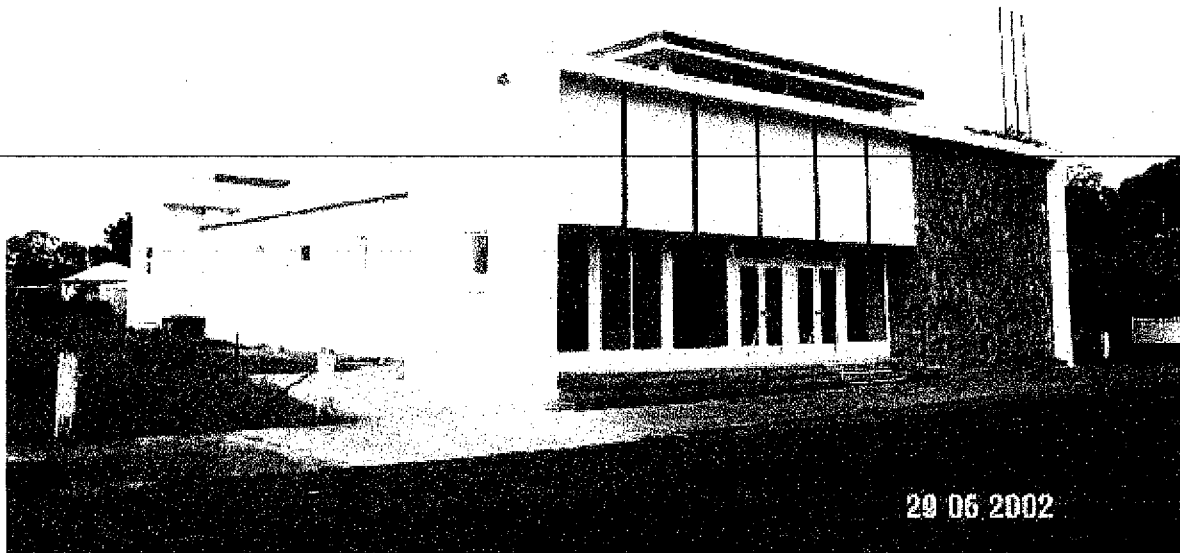
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: F1B & **SECTION:** 1 **PARISH:** PARISH OF YUPPECKIAR
2

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 434J8 ; VicRoads 229 M10; located on the east side of McLennan Street on the eastern side of the township of Glenthompson.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Library and Memorial Hall McLennan Street, Glenthompson

Image Date: 29/05/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings and the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Library and War Memorial Hall is located in McLennan Street, in the centre of Glenthompson, about 300 metres south of the Glenelg Highway. Its size, position, and distinctive façade make it the most dominant building in the street, and a prominent local landmark. A photograph in the possession of the Glenthompson History Centre shows that the building was originally a single hall, notionally of six bays, with three windows and three doors on the north elevation. It had a gabled roof covered with corrugated iron hidden by a parapet wall. A stage section was built across the rear, under a transverse gable roof, and later a porch was added to the façade.

Major alterations to the hall occurred in 1955 when a new Moderne facade was added. Designed by Warrnambool architect Taggeter Walter, the façade is a good example of the Moderne style, with a composition which includes the massing of rectangular forms, and the use of different materials to create textural and visual effects. The alterations included a glazed lobby, offices and stairs behind a panel of freestone and, above the lobby, facilities for film projection. Above the new facade there is an attic in the form of a floating clerestory. Behind the façade, the 1902 building and its later additions survive reasonably intact. New service areas have been added on the southern side.

HISTORY:

The Glenthompson Library and War Memorial Hall located in McLennan Street in the centre of the township began as the local Mechanics Institute. The hall was built on land donated by local pioneer John McLennan, who also laid the foundation stone. John McLennan came from Ballarat in 1862 to take over duties in connection with the coach horses of Cobb and Co. He built the hotel, still called Mac's Hotel, and a store, and he acted as Postmaster. The original residence of Thomas Scott, a prominent local merchant from 1876 onward, was the first hall in Glenthompson, also serving as a private hotel, trading under the name of the Temperance Hotel. This structure has since been demolished (GHC file).

Construction commenced in 1902, which is relatively late in the history of the Mechanics Institute movement, and the building was opened on Coronation Day that year (Shire of Mount Rouse, 1964). According to the foundation stone, the architect was W J Muntz and the contractor was G C Rowe. The architect was possibly the William Jamieson Muntz who was born at Malmsbury in 1869 in which case he was the younger brother of the highly regarded Heidelberg School artist, Josephine Margaret Muntz born at Barfold near Kyneton in 1862 (PI, Reg. No. 3358 & 8974). Their father was Thomas Bingham Muntz, a surveyor, engineer for the municipality of Malvern and later, in 1885-86, the mayor of Prahran. The original Mechanics Institute building was brick, typically Classical in style and rather austere in its architecture. Over the years several alterations and additions were made.

Eventually the hall became too small for its many uses. As early as 1948 approval was sought to have it declared a War Memorial Hall. As the cost of constructing a new building was too great, plans were made to enlarge and renovate the existing. A building fund was established, and additional land was purchased. Contracts were signed in 1954 for the complete remodelling of the hall as a War Memorial Hall and Library, incorporating much of the original building fabric with a new Moderne facade. Mr. Taggeter Walter, from the Warrnambool architectural firm of Walter and Auty, designed the new façade. The building works were undertaken by Messrs. Bos, Binggen and Bakker, of Warrnambool, a group of Dutch tradesmen who were highly regarded during their stay in the township (GHC file).

The construction of the hall in 1902 reflects the prosperous condition of Glenthompson after the Mafeking gold rush, the opening of the Brickworks and the consolidation of the railway traffic. Mechanics Institutes were an important reflection of the prosperity, culture and aspirations of a town. They were also important as social centres. The hall was used for bazaars, dances, meetings, concerts, flower shows, weddings and picture shows.

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The building is still used for a broad range of community activities, and has continued to operate as a library since its inception.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

3. Developing local, regional and national economies

3.21 Entertaining for profit

6. Educating

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

8. Developing Australia's cultural life

8.5 Forming associations

8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid

8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

8.8 Remembering the fallen

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

CONDITION:

The building is in excellent condition.

INTEGRITY:

A fair degree of integrity to its early twentieth century condition, and a high degree of integrity to its early 1960s condition.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Glenthompson Library and War Memorial Hall located in McLennan Street in the centre of the township is a prominent local landmark. The architect was W J Muntz and the builder was G C Rowe. The surviving parts of the original building are brick, designed in an austere Classical style. Over the years several alterations and additions have been made. In 1955 it was completely remodelled as a War Memorial Hall and Library, incorporating much of the original building's carcass with a new Moderne facade designed by Taggeter Walter, an architect from the Warrnambool firm of Walter and Auty, with local connections.

How is it significant?

The Glenthompson Library and War Memorial Hall is of historical, architectural and social significance to the Southern Grampians Shire and to the township of Glenthompson.

Why is it significant?

The Library and Memorial Hall is of historical significance as a prominent and well-used public building in a street that previously was an important commercial thoroughfare on the road from Warrnambool to Ararat, and thus is a reminder of an earlier, more prosperous era of the town's history. The hall has additional historical significance for its association with John McLennan, civic father of Glenthompson, prominent merchant, and one of the earliest settlers in the area.

The Library and War Memorial Hall is of architectural significance as a distinctive landmark, and an important element in the streetscape of McLennan Street. The substantial 1902 Classical brick building survives reasonably intact, while the 1955 Moderne facade is well designed, well executed and demonstrates interesting uses of form and texture.

The Library and War Memorial Hall is of social significance to Glenthompson because, in the early 20th century it reflected the town's status and was associated with the self-improvement of its citizens through

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reading, lectures and concerts. Socially, the hall provided a focus for community activities such as dances and film nights. These roles continue and the hall is still used for a range of activities.

COMPARISON:

- 283 Penshurst Memorial Hall, Martin Street, Penshurst
- 134 Coleraine Mechanics Institute, Cnr Winter & Pilleau Streets, Coleraine
- 213 Mechanics Institute and Free Library, Hamilton-Port Fairy Road, Byaduk
- 244 Memorial Hall/ Mechanics Institute, Glendinning Street, Balmoral
- 378 RSL Hall (former Mechanics Institute?), NE cnr Stirling & Wills Street, Dunkeld

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE: 02-Jun-02

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 |
|----------------------------|--|------|------------------------|
| | Mechanics' Institutes The Way Forward, Conference organised by the Kilmore Mechanics' Institute | 1998 | 66 |
| | Rediscovering Mechanics' Institutes, Australian Mechanics' Institute Conference 2000 | 2000 | 128 |
| Frances Clancy | The Libraries of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria | 2000 | |
| Geoff Walter | Personal communication | 2002 | |
| George Nadel | Australia's Colonial Culture, Ideas, Men and Institutions in Mid-Nineteenth Century Eastern Australia. | 1957 | 74 - 88, 111-152 |
| Hope Henry | Glenthompson History | 1954 | 1-3 |
| Mount Rouse Shire Council | Shire of Mount Rouse, In the Centre of the Fertile Western District of Victoria: Centenary Celebrated | 1966 | |
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