

ST. COLUMBAS SCHOOL HALL

Cnr. Armstrong and Gregory Streets



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this building be added to the Register of the National Estate and be specified under the provisions of Clause 8 of the *Town and Country Planning Act* (Third Schedule).

BUILDING HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

This building was probably first built in 1892.¹ It was designed to be a wooden church attached to the first portion, front east wing of the St. Mary's monastery, Gillies Street, Wendouree erected in 1891. This monastery (which is outside the study area in the Shire of Ballarat) was designed by architects Reid, Smart and Tappin of 11 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne and it appears that these architects were also responsible for this wooden school hall.

The relocation of this wooden church to its present site at St. Columbas North Ballarat must have taken place in 1915 or soon thereafter. The church which replaced it at the monastery was built in 1915 and the wooden building was no longer needed.

This building is unusual in its detailing. The classical architectural vocabulary often seen on masonry buildings is here translated into timber detailing. The elegant timber pediments over the entrance doors, the refined window surrounds, the gable end translated into a large pediment and the timber stringcoursing are skilfully executed in timber. The date of construction is surprisingly late for this design solution. The building is reminiscent of the very early chapels erected in Melbourne such as the Independent Chapel in Collins Street of 1839 and the Wesleyan Chapel in Queen Street of 1840. All buildings display a naive treatment of a classical design. Other religious timber buildings of the same date as St. Columbas were displaying gothic elements such as pointed gothic windows, steep gable roofs with porches echoing the main roof line.

An interesting comparison can be made with St. John's Presbyterian Church (now demolished) another timber church in Ballarat.² This was a larger building, in Peel Street erected in 1871 to the design of Mr. Percy Oakden. It was said to be the largest timber church in Victoria built in this material because the site was assessed by the architect as being unsuitable for heavier materials.

This building was also in the classical manner and from early photos the design and execution appear to be more skilfully interpreted in timber.

St. Columbas Hall is undoubtedly important as a rare and elegant interpretation in timber of a classical building. However the late date of construction makes it not innovative and its architectural importance is accordingly reduced.

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1. Historical Information obtained from the Rev. James R. Doherty St. Mary's Monastery, Gillies Street, Wendouree.
 2. See Withers W.B. *History of Ballarat* p. 268 for a description of this church.
 3. *Ballarat Illustrated* c.1919 facsimile copy re-published 1972.

RESIDENCE

212 Ascot Street



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this residence be specified under the provisions of Clause 8 of the *Town and Country Planning Act* (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS

The house is one of three intact bluestone houses in this small area of Ballarat. This is a beautifully detailed building of coursed rusticated bluestone with bluestone chimneys. The verandah which runs the width of the house is supported on openwork timber columns and has decorative timber fretwork overlaying the bressummer. The open timber flat columns are distinctive and unusual.