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BUILDING TITLE FORMER NATIONAL MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA CITY OF BALLAARAT

DOCUMENT FILE No.

NATIONAL ESTATE PROJECT No.  
DOCUMENTATION OF LISTED HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN VICTORIA

DESIGNATION H.B.P.C. REGISTER No. NATIONAL TRUST ☒ ☒ FILE No.

BUILDING TYPE COMMERCIAL / OFFICE  
BUILDING NAME FORMER NATIONAL MUTUAL  
STATE VICTORIA INSURANCE CO.  
LOCAL GOVT AREA CITY OF BALLAARAT  
STREET STURT (WRLYDIARD) No.  
SUBURB/TOWN BALLARAT C.B.D.  
CITY BALLAARAT POSTCODE 3350  
RURAL  
NEAREST CENTRE Km.



TITLE REFERENCE Vol Fol  
DIRECTORY  
NEGATIVE FILE FILM 1 / FRAME 32

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION  
DATE OF SURVEY/INSPECTION JULY 1978

OWNERSHIP ORIGINAL NATIONAL MUTUAL INSURANCE CO / OFFICE  
PRESENT THOMAS JEWELLERS PTY LTD / SHOPS & OFFICE  
ADDRESS 15-21 STURT ST.

ARCHITECT/PRACTICE J.J. & E.J. CLARKE  
BUILDER P. ROGERS  
ARTISANS/TRADES

TENDERS REFERENCE  
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1905  
ESTIMATE/CONTRACT VALUE  
ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS VERANDAH REPLACED BY AWNING; CENTRAL DOME REMOVED; CORNER TURRET/MANSARDS REMOVED

#### BUILDING CITATION

This imposing corner building was built in 1905 to the design of Architects J.J. & E.J. Clarke, and constructed in face stonework by Contractor P. Rogers. It is one of the most substantial commercial buildings constructed in Ballarat at this time, and represents the beginning of the early 20th Century eclecticism common in commercial buildings in Melbourne of this date.

The building is a sizeable composition with mixed Renaissance and Venetian Gothic characteristics, including recessed logias on the three upper levels, with trefoil Gothic arches to two levels and very unusual cusped stilted segmental arches on the top storey. From the roof projects an openwork octagonal structure, formerly domed with pinnacles at the corners.

Internally there is little of note, apart from a range of pressed metal ceilings of varying patterns on the first and second floors.

The building has been altered: The original verandah with paired columns has been replaced by an unsympathetic cantilevered awning, and the shopfronts modernised. There were originally three corner mansarded turrets capped by finials. The building however still provides a unique streetscape element; there appears to be no building of similar design throughout the State of Victoria. It is substantially intact above ground floor level, and in good condition.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## DOCUMENTATION SOURCES

- 01 GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 02 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 03 ARCHIVES/CATALOGUES
- 04 ARCHITECTS INDEX
- 05 ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS/ILLUSTRATIONS
- 06 PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS
- 07 NATIONAL TRUST FILE/ HISTORIC BUILDINGS PRESERVATION COUNCIL FILE
- 08 PRIVATE RECORDS

02 B.C.C. BUILDING PERMITS BOOK : NATIONAL MUTUAL INSURANCE COY. J. CLARKE ARCH. PROGERS CONTRACTOR BRICK OFFICES, PLANS LODGED 14 /7/ 1904

06 SEE REFS 1,4,5 BELOW.

• BALLARAT ILLUSTRATED c1920 p7.

• LA TROBE LIBRARY, SL.V. STURT ST. EAST FROM TOWN HALL TOWER 1938. MC4 DRI ENV 2A H19104

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. BUILDING JUNE 17. 1917 p52 & 54 (EARLY PHOTO)
2. BUILDING AND ENGINEERING MINING JOURNAL 29.11.1902.F
3. P. NAVARETTI 'ARCHITECTS OF MELBOURNE AND THEIR WORK 1900-1940', HISTORY OF ARCH. 3, B. ARCH. UNIV MELB 1971. 'JOHN JAMES CLARKE'
4. LITTLE W. BALLARAT'S BIRTH 1837 PUB 1904 (SKETCH SHOWS VERANDAH DETAIL)
5. BALLARAT STAR ALMANAC & GUIDE BOOK FOR 1906 (PHOTO SHOWS BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

## ASSESSMENT OF LISTING

CONDITION/INTEGRITY OF BUILDING UPPER FLOORS SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDING

LANDSCAPE/STREETSCAPE/ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE PART OF RECOMMENDED AREA A1.1

DOCUMENTATION JACOBS LEWIS VINES DATE SEPTEMBER 1978

ARCHITECTS 198

FORMER NATIONAL MUTUAL INSURANCE CO. - CNR. STURT & LYDIARD STREETS

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

This imposing corner building was built in 1905 to the design of Architects J.J. & E.J. Clarke, and constructed by Contractor P. Rogers.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most substantial commercial buildings constructed in Ballarat at this time, and represents the beginning of the early 20th Century eclecticism common in commercial buildings in Melbourne of this date.

In 1902 the designs for this building were advertised.<sup>2</sup>

*"The National Mutual Life Association invites competitive designs for buildings to be erected at the corner of Sturt and Lydiard Streets, Ballarat. Full particulars of the proposed buildings and accommodation required may be obtained on application. Competitors must inspect the site and take their own levels and make themselves acquainted with all local building requirements. Premium as follows will be awarded : 1st £50, 2nd £25 ....."*

Architects J.J. & E.J. Clarke won 1st prize with Clegg, Kell & Miller 2nd prize.

The building is a very sizeable composition, constructed in face stonework, and represents the final phase of the illustrious career of Architect J.J. Clarke. It has mixed Renaissance and Venetian Gothic characteristics, including recessed loggias on the three upper levels with trefoil Gothic arches in two levels and very unusual cusped stilted segmental arches on the top storey. A band of deep brackets rises to a conventional cornice above which is a balustraded parapet of a plain slatted character passing between paired pillars with square domical caps and balls. From the roof projects an openwork octagonal structure which was formerly domed, with pinnacles at the corners reminiscent of

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1. B.C.C. Building Permits Book. 14/7/1904 Plans Lodged.

2. Building & Engineering Mining Journal 29.11.1902, p.6.

FORMER NATIONAL MUTUAL INSURANCE CO. - CNR. STURT & LYDIARD STREETS

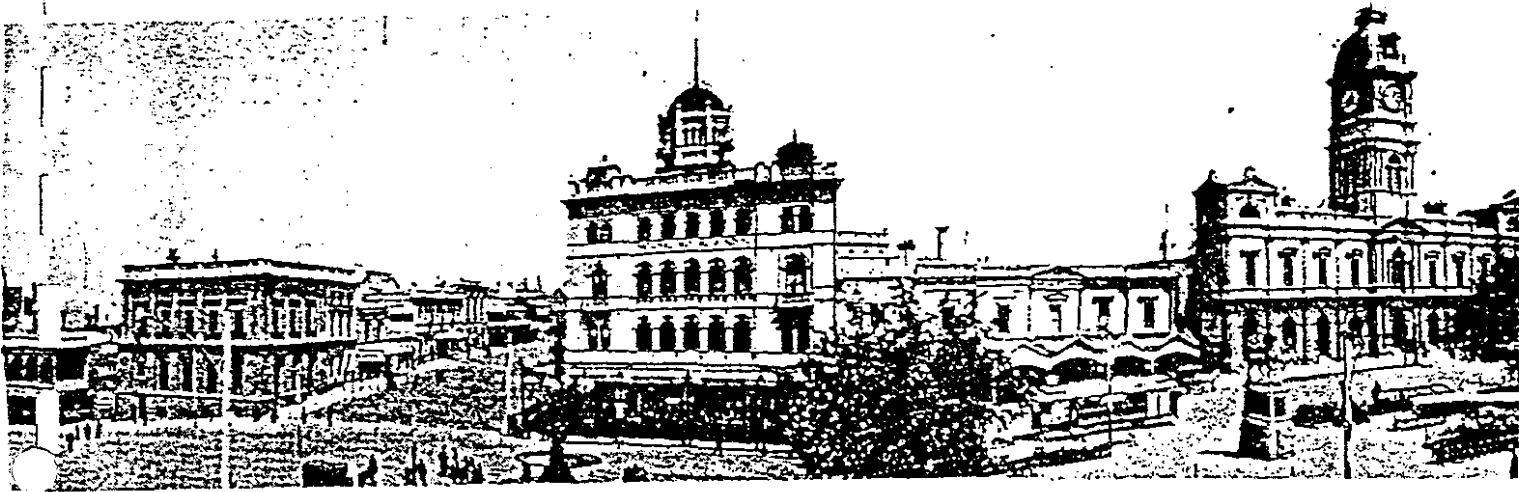
BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

Moslem architecture. Linked to it by arches are grotesque square chimney flues with segmental pediments on each face and domical caps and crockets.

Internally the building is planned about a central stairwell in a conventional fashion, except that the two corner rooms to the Sturt Street elevation project into the stairwell. The stair itself has been replaced. The door architraves are by and large intact - otherwise there is little of note, apart from a range of pressed metal ceilings of varying patterns on the first and second floors. The ground floor and basement have been totally modernised.

This building has undergone much alteration, but the total effect is still one of an imposing corner building. There was originally an ornate verandah with paired columns extending along the two elevations - this has been replaced by an unsympathetic cantilevered awning and aluminium screen. The shopfronts have been completely modernised. The roof tower was originally surmounted by a pressed metal dome topped with a flag pole and there were three rolled metal mansarded turrets capped by finials.

This building provides an imposing and unique streetscape element to the Sturt Street precinct. Despite alterations, the facade above ground floor level is remarkably intact and of great architectural importance. There appears to be no building of a similar design elsewhere in Victoria. It represents a transition to the early twentieth century use of a mixed vernacular in office buildings. This building provides one of the last important buildings designed by Architects J.J. Clarke. The building and the entire precinct would be enhanced by the replacement and restoration of the original verandah.



Panorama of Sturt Street, south side. The dome of the former National Mutual building, which has since been removed, is clearly seen in this photograph, dating from the 1920's.

(photograph from *Ballarat Illustrated*, page 7.)