

BUILDING TITLE OLD BALLARAT EAST LIBRARY;
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA CITY OF BALLARAT

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

DESIGNATION H.B.P.C. REGISTER No. NATIONAL TRUST (C) FILE No.

BUILDING TYPE LIBRARY.
BUILDING NAME BALLARAT EAST LIBRARY.
STATE VICTORIA
LOCAL GOVT AREA CITY OF BALLARAT.
STREET BARKLY. No.
SUBURB/TOWN BALLARAT EAST
CITY BALLARAT POSTCODE 3350
RURAL
NEAREST CENTRE Km.

TITLE REFERENCE Vol 442 Fol 88325
DIRECTORY
NEGATIVE FILE FILM 2 / FRAMES 30, 31, 32



PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION
DATE OF SURVEY/INSPECTION JULY 1978.

OWNERSHIP ORIGINAL
PRESENT CITIZENS OF BALLARAT UNDER CONTROL OF
ADDRESS BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, STURT ST.

ARCHITECT/~~PROJ~~ C. OHLFSEN - BAGGE
BUILDER BOULTON & FYFE
ARTISANS/TRADES

TENDERS REFERENCE
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1867
ESTIMATE/CONTRACT VALUE £ 3,500
ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS HALL ADDED PRIOR 1886, COST £ 1,200.

BUILDING CITATION

The foundation stone for the front section was laid by Sir Redmond Barry on 21.2.1867. The contractors were Messrs Boulton & Fyfe, and the work cost £1938. The supervision and interior design was by J.J. Lorenz, and the design was by Mr. C.H. Ohlfesen-Bagge who presumably designed the hall which cost £1,280. It employs particularly elaborate cream and red polychrome brickwork. It has banded segmental window heads and an intrusive triangular arcaded corbel table in contrasting materials below the eaves. The centre of the three principal elevations features a projecting panel with some unusual motifs. The building is enhanced by the elaborate cast iron roof plumbing and fence. The interior of the later hall at the rear is quite remarkable with elaborate trusses beneath a large clerestory. The building is substantially intact and is one of the most unusual polychrome structures in Victoria. The corbel tables and other decorative brick items, and the hall interior, are all quite remarkable.

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

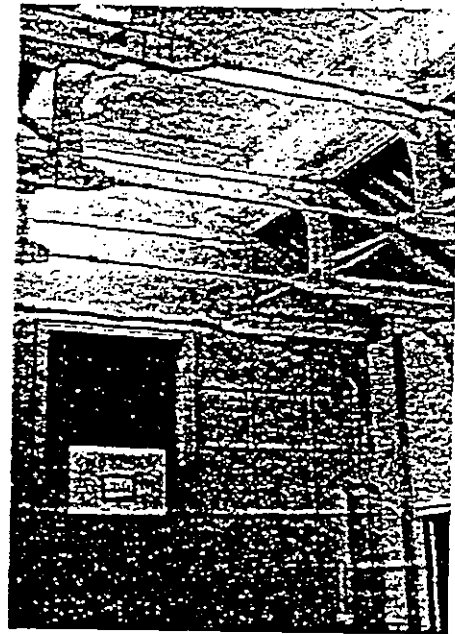
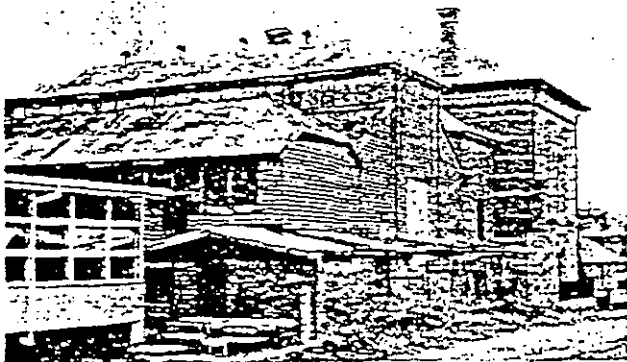
- 01 GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 02 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS
- 03 ARCHIVES/CATALOGUES
- 04 ARCHITECTS INDEX
- 05 ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS/ILLUSTRATIONS
- 06 PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS
- 07 NATIONAL TRUST FILE/ HISTORIC BUILDINGS PRESERVATION COUNCIL FILE
- 08 PRIVATE RECORDS

06 BALLARAT ILLUSTRATED p.13

A HISTORY OF BALLARAT LIBRARIES p. 23 photo c. 1920

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. WITHERS, HISTORY OF BALLARAT, 1887 ed. p286
2. BALLARAT STAR, 22/1/1867
3. BALLARAT AND DISTRICT 1901, p55.



ASSESSMENT OF LISTING

CONDITION/INTEGRITY OF BUILDING SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT

SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDING

LANDSCAPE/STREETScape/ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE PART OF RECOMMENDED AREA A4.1

DOCUMENTATION JACOBS LEWIS VINES DATE SEPTEMBER 1978.
ARCHITECTS

BALLARAT EAST LIBRARY, BARKLY STREET

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

The Ballarat East library was established in 1862 and at first operated from the engine house of the Ballarat Fire Brigade in Barkly Street.¹ The *Ballarat Star* of January 22, 1867, reported on the laying of the Foundation Stone by Honorable Sir Redmond Barry on the 21st January.

"The Architect of the library is Mr. C. H. Ohlfsen-Bagge, the engineer for the Borough of Ballarat East and the contractors are Messrs. Boulton and Fyfe, tender being £1938. The design includes a hall forty by eighty feet, the height of the walls being 28 feet. The part now to be executed is the front portion facing Barkly Street, immediately opposite the Fire Brigade. The dimensions of the building are Sixty by Thirty three feet, the front and ends will be carried up in red brick relieved by white brick dressings round windows and the string cornice will be of coloured bricks and surmounted by elegant cast iron spouting, supporting a cresting of very light and handsome design."

Apparently C. H. Ohlfsen-Bagge acted as an honorary architect with J. J. Lorenz as the superintending architect "whose excellent taste was displayed in designing and carrying out the interior". The interiors were completed by Fly Bros., at a cost of £995. With extras, the overall cost came to £3,148.²

Withers reported³ that the cost of the building and fittings was about £3,500, and that a hall had been added at a cost of £1,200. (It is not known when the hall was built but it is assumed the hall is Ohlfsen-Bagge's design.) In 1887 the library consisted of 12,000 volumes.

In July 1870 a School of Design was formed and classes held at the library. The Education Department began to subsidise the school and the committee was able to extend the premises in order to accommodate additional classes. By the early 1900's the school had sufficient standing to become the Ballarat East Branch of the School of Mines.⁴

1. Withers *History of Ballarat* 1887 ed. p.286.
2. A. McCallum, *A History of Ballarat Libraries*, p.15.
3. Withers op. cit. p.286.
4. McCallum op. cit. p.16.

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

The library continued to operate, in 1949 becoming a branch library of the Ballarat Central Library, until 26th October 1973. It is now used as a Museum.

The Barkly Street section is a red and cream brick building of a most unusual character. It has windows with segmental heads banded in the two brick colours at both levels. It has a triangular arcaded corbel table below the eaves in cream brick on red brick brackets.

The entrance is emphasised by a central panelled composition rising to first floor level. This comprises a row of machicolation above the entrance, surmounted by angled bricks and some recessed panels of dark brick below the upper floor windows in just this central panel.

Above the other four windows are some rather strange motifs of squares set on the angle. The arrises of the window openings, and of the building itself, are in chamfer stopped brickwork. The end elevations have set in them panels rather like that on the entrance front and rising two storeys.

The building is really much enhanced by some of the ancilliary elements; firstly the spouting is intact. This is a rather elaborate cast iron spouting with a sort of triple moulding and ornamental brackets at the joints. Also the cast iron downpipes and octagonal rainwater heads, and at least two of the cut sheet iron acroteria are of interest.

A fence runs from the front around the east side with bluestone plinth and piers. It has slightly exotic cast iron caps to the palisade bars, and at the gate a rather fine pipe and wrought iron scrolled arch which is designed to carry the gas lamp, but unfortunately is now gone. This fence and a section further down Barkly Street, are the remains of the fence which originally enclosed the East Ballarat Town Hall, Library and Town Hall gardens. The latter buildings have subsequently been demolished; a great misfortune.

BALLARAT EAST LIBRARY, BARKLY STREET (contd.)

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

At the Barkly Street front one window has been glazed in leadlight glass for the Jubilee of 1912.

The building has been extended at the back with the hall, which on one end is in fact done in partially matching brickwork with simple cream bands, but at the other end is all in timber. Entering the building the interior appears at first rather coarse, but the glazed screen dividing off the lobby from the stairwell is of some interest with a very wide arched fan-like top divided by slim shafts running radially into four panes like voussoirs around a central semicircular lunette. The stairwell itself is of some pretension with a very broad segmental stilted arch carried on double foliated consoles, and passing under as the staircase breaks off to the left through one pair of arches, which have two orders of bowtell mouldings which simply sink away into the side reveal of the stilted plaster arch.

The main hall itself is a truly remarkable space in six bays with trusses of perhaps a nineteenth century structural expressionistic type in the Viollet-le-Duc manner. The bulk of the essentially queen post trusses are in timber with chamfered and notched decoration and the central panel has a tie bar with what appears to be a cast ring ornament on it. A non-structural section arises above this queen post truss to carry the clerestory in a sort of timber arch, again with other bizarre flanking decoration. The ceiling is in diagonal boarding, and the top clerestory section has a series of ceiling ventilating rosettes, no doubt to be placed above hanging gas lamps. The trusses are supported from the walls by timber brackets coming out from pilasters. There is a most interesting fireplace, now blocked off and painted over, but in timber with a semicircular opening, sort of geometricised with chamfered edges in a rather crystalline pattern.

The original ventilating system consisted of nine cylindrical Tobin tubes distributed along what were the external walls, and eight of these are still in place, while the other is lying loose. The tubes rise to nearly 2 metres off the floor and have little removable lids.

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

At the back of the building there is an upper room, completely lined in a very simple and pleasing way in beaded edged pine boarding. Externally the weatherboard rear of the building is of interest for the clerestory above the hall and the smaller rear half roof.

The building is substantially intact internally and externally, although not in particularly good repair. The painting of the rear hall is unfortunate.

This building is one of the most unusual polychrome streetscapes in Victoria on account of the corbel tables below the eaves, the projecting panels on each elevation and various pattern work in cream bricks against the red background. The fence, roof plumbing and rear hall are all quite remarkable. The building serves as a sad remnant of the former grandeur of the Ballarat East Town Hall, Police Station and Botanical Gardens, as shown. However it is in an important area, specifically because of its relationship with the unusual brick East Ballarat Fire Station.



Barkly Street, Ballarat East, c. 1920
The library is on the left.