

BUILDING NO 30
BUNINYONG SHIRE HALL
307 LEARMONTH STREET



Recommendations

It is recommended that Buninyong Shire Hall be added to the Register of the National Estate, and protected under Clause 6 of the Town and Country Planning Act. (Third Schedule).

Statement of Significance

The Buninyong Shire Hall is a prominent building, commanding many vistas of the locality. The building was notably designed for the dual roles of a Shire Hall and a Court House, and is well executed using locally procured bricks. The Shire Hall is a fine example of a provincial municipal building constructed in the Italianate Style.

Building History and Description

Meetings of the Buninyong Borough Council (formed in 1863) were originally held at the early timber Crown Hotel building. In 1869, tenders were advertised for the erection of a hall and offices for the Buninyong Shire Council by the Ballarat Architect, J A Doane and this building was erected on a site at Mount Clear.

Finally the foundation stone for a combined Town Hall and Court House was laid by D M Davies on 30 August 1886. Architectural drawings of several proposals for the building survive in a private collection and it is believed the design may have been commissioned through a competition.

The Town Hall building was erected by the noted local builder Richard Rennie, to the design of Melbourne architects Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy.

The building is constructed to a rectangular plan with a central hall flanked by offices and a Court House. Access to the hall was provided by a recessed porch, and the Court House entry was a side porch.

The building was enlarged by the addition of a concrete structure in c. 1913 designed by Charles C P Wilson, Shire Engineer.

An Italianate style was adopted by the Melbourne architects, and was a style typical of many municipal buildings, employing such elements as arch-headed windows, projecting cornices, balustrading, pediments and parapet urns, in the design. The central slate roof tower with dormer ventilators, and ridge cresting is a significant feature.

Building Integrity and Future Enhancement

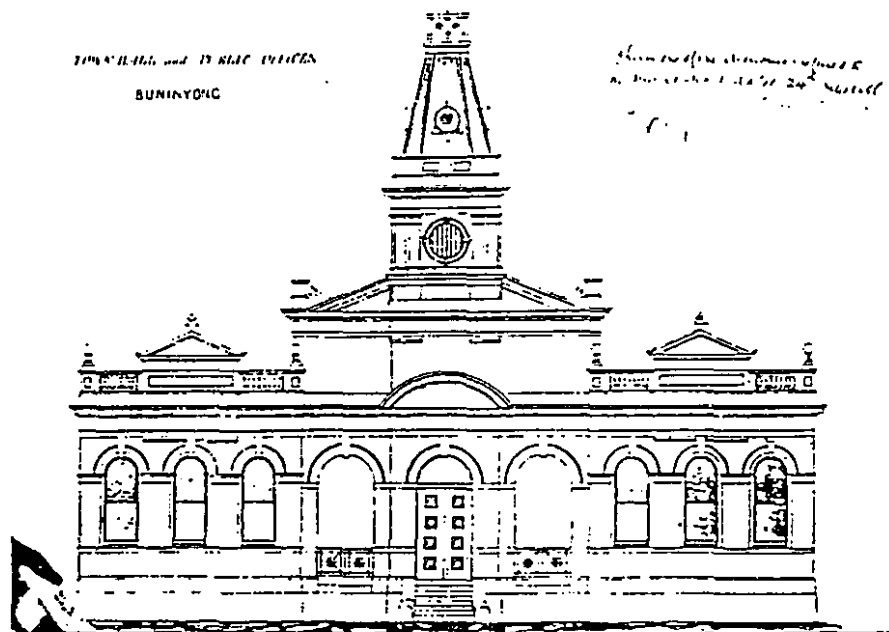
The Shire Hall building remains largely intact, however its former dual role as a Court House is no longer practised. A rear concrete addition detracts from the intended form of the building. Photographic evidence remains of the interior building decoration, particularly of the hall and proscenium arch. It is recommended that Council undertake work to restore the building interior based on a conservation analysis of the existing fabric and surviving evidence.

References

Ballarat Courier, 3 April, 1869.

Architectural Drawings held privately in the Collection of Ballarat Architect, L H Vernon.

Information from Peter Griffiths, Engineering Department, Shire of Buninyong.



TOWN HALL, BUNINYONG. CONTRACT DRAWING DATED 24 JULY 1886.
HELD L. H. VERNON COLLECTION.