

BUILDING NO. 42
FORMER LIBRARY AND MECHANICS INSTITUTE
408 WARRENHEIP STREET



Recommendations

It is recommended that the former Library and Mechanics Institute be retained on the Historic Buildings Register, the Register of the National Estate and protected under the provisions of Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act. (Third Schedule).

* Statement of Significance

The Old Buninyong Library dates from circa 1859 when it was given as a gift to the citizens of the town by Robert Allen, a prominent local personality.

The single storey timber structure comprises a main room (formerly a reading room) and a residence, the two areas divided by an office. The facade comprises a centrally located entrance flanked by large windows.

The Library is one of the oldest buildings in Buninyong and survives from an early period in the town's development. The facade is most unusual with its detail simulating rusticated stonework. The tripled pilasters, deep cornice and decorative frieze are particularly notable.

* National Estate citation courtesy of the Australian Heritage Commission.

Building History and Description

The former Library was constructed in circa 1859 as a gift to the local townspeople, from Robert Allen. The intentions of this gift were viewed with scepticism by local residents and the library remained underutilized for several years.

The building comprises a former reading room and residence linked by a central office and is resolved by a half hipped roof. The rear residence is roofed by a skillian. The feature of the timber building is an elaborate facade, detailed to simulate the appearance of stonework. The facade is trabeated with banded pilasters.

A central doorway features a transom light above. The side and rear facades are finished with square edged weatherboards.

Internally the building is lined with timber ceilings, dado and flooring, with hessian lining above dado level. Evidence remains of early wallpapers.

This building is individually significant for its unusual facade, and is highly important as one of the oldest buildings in Buninyong, associated with its early goldmining activity.

Building Integrity and Future Enhancement

The former Library and Mechanics Institute is in a severely deteriorated condition, however the principal facade remains sound and substantially intact. The substructure to the rear facade has subsided below top plate level and this section requires immediate repair.