

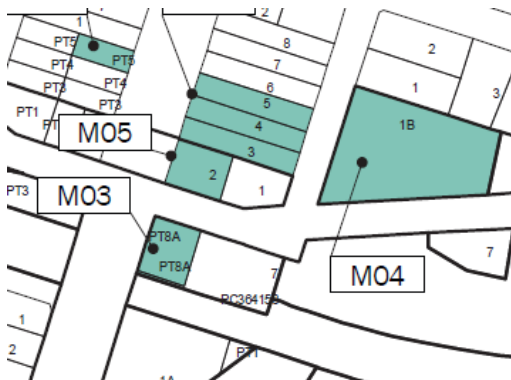
Name	Former Shire of Marong Hall	Reference in 1998 Marong Study	M3
Address	31 Adams Street (Calder Highway), at corner with High Street, Marong	Map reference	VicRoads 626 B/C 10
Building type	Multi-purpose hall (former municipal hall)	Survey date	July 2010 (external inspection only)
Date of construction	1908	Recommendation	Include in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay
Significance	The former Marong Shire Hall is of local historical, social and aesthetic/architectural significance.		



Left: Shire of Marong Hall c. 1908 (Source: Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia. p. 167). North elevation, 2010, note soldier's memorial.



Left: West elevation, note mature palms. Right: The modified rear (south) elevation.



Left: Aerial view, 2010 (Source: City of Greater Bendigo). Right: Proposed Heritage Overlay map, with the subject site shown as M03.

Intactness ✓ Good Fair Poor

History

The Marong area was squatted from the mid-1840s¹ and used as a gold washing site and commissioner's camp from 1852, when the water gave out at Bendigo.² The town is located at the intersection of Bullock Creek, and the Alternative Calder Highway ('High Street' at Marong), a main road through the district from the early years of settlement. The Marong District Roads Board was formed in September 1861 at a meeting held in Kilgour's Union Hotel at Lockwood. In 1861, 36 dwellings were recorded at Marong, of which 20 had more than two rooms, eight were of canvas and seven of slabs or mud. The majority of residents were farmers.³ In 1865, Marong was described as a 'small hamlet' with a population of 'about 50 persons'.⁴ Marong County was renamed the Parish of Marong in 1861 and from this time, land was temporarily reserved from sale for National School purposes (1861), for a cemetery (1861), for Presbyterian and Wesleyan churches (1865) and for public recreation (1869).⁵ The Marong District Roads Board became known as the Shire of Marong on 12 December 1864,⁶ and by 1865 the Shire of Marong had an estimated area of 148,000ha (365,000 acres), and an estimated population of 5,500, the number of dwellings being approximately 1,100.⁷ Some development at Marong occurred between the 1860s and 1880s, following the early gold rushes. From the 1860s, there was also lobbying for Marong to take over from Lockwood as the seat of local government. This finally occurred on 11 September 1908, with the official opening of the Marong Shire Hall (the subject building). The early meetings of the Shire of Marong were held at Lockwood where municipal offices were built at the crossroads opposite the old Queen's Head Hotel. That municipal building has long been demolished.

The design of the Shire Hall was given to the office of the noted Bendigo architect, William C Vahland, who was by then in his 80s. At that time Vahland was in partnership with John Beebe⁸. Given Vahland's age, it has been suggested that Beebe acted as the principal architect in the design of the Marong Shire Hall.⁹ The firm was descended from Bendigo's best known architectural practice, begun as the office of William Charles Vahland in 1857; Vahland with Robert Getzschmann, 1858-1875; William and Henry Vahland, 1892-1904; William and Henry Vahland with John Beebe, 1901-4; and then William Vahland and John Beebe to c. 1913.

Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

Victoria's themes and sub-themes:

- 7.1: Developing institutions of self-government and democracy
- 7.2: Struggling for political rights

Description & Integrity

Marong's former shire hall, at the south-east corner of Adams Street (Calder Highway) and High Street (Alternative Calder Highway), is a single-storey building with a taller hall/chamber at its centre and an entrance loggia. The building combines Classical and Baroque motifs. It is built of red tuck-pointed brickwork, with relief afforded by a stuccoed cornice, loggia spandrels and pediment vents, painted a light/neural colour.

The symmetrical front (north) elevation, facing Adams Street, is distinguished by a three-arched loggia with moulded imposts and flanking wings. A recessed pediment, over the loggia, features the shire coat of arms in a foliated surround to its tympanum. The pediment has four matching pier-pilasters, two being wider at each corner, and concludes with a string course, lower plain cornice and a broad pediment. The loggia windows are arched double-hung sashes with coffered apron-sills; the central door is windowed and two-leaved with a lunette fanlight. The paired windows on the flanking wings are double-hung sashes with cambered headers. The loggia spandrel is inscribed MARONG SHIRE HALL in sans-serif letters. The front cornice is of the characteristic plain-topped Bendigo type, with a moulding placed mid-way up its stuccoed surface. This forms a Doric-influenced capital for the pilastrated pier separating each wing from the central loggia.

The hall roof is hipped with slate tile cladding and ridge capping in galvanised steel and has small slatted dormer vents with half-oval pediment and keystones combined. The roof fascias are courses of header bricks supported on a lower row of stretchers, tuck-pointed like the walling. The chimney cornices behind this are matching in their mould detailing. As in the front parapet the surface is stuccoed, marking it out from the exposed face brick walling below.

The rear wall of the main hall/chamber appears to have been intended as the link to an additional structure, as evidenced by the segmental arch in its central bay. It is capped by a brick dentilled cornice and flanking piers and blind arches with stuccoed corner pilasters running up to their impost lines. The rear also has a set of more recent additions. The segmental arched bay has been infilled with a rendered surface with three rectangular windows and a connecting wing to newer buildings. While this annexe continues the red face brick of the original building, it has a flat roof, timber fascia and asymmetrically placed aluminium-framed windows, variously fixed or double-hung. This more recent fabric has an additional block to one side and a conspicuous air-conditioning duct running across its central area.

The former Marong Shire Hall is set back from Adams Street behind a landscaped garden, bisected by a concrete pathway. The entrance is via a granite Marong and District Soldiers Memorial gateway, installed after World War I. There are three mature palm trees to the west lawn.

The former Marong Shire Hall appears to be in sound condition.

Comparative Analysis

Marong's is one of several small brick shire halls in the Bendigo region, the others including John O'Dwyer's design for Huntly (1867), George Steane's design for Strathfieldsaye (1869),¹⁰ and H E Tolhurst's for Raywood (1878). O'Dwyer and Steane were shire engineers, while Tolhurst was prominent in Eaglehawk. Marong's shire hall was designed by W C Vahland and John Beebe, successor practice to the long-established Bendigo office of Vahland and Getzschmann. The red tuck-pointed brickwork, window to wall proportions and the elegant hipped roof link it to other, earlier public buildings in Central Victoria, especially to smaller post offices and court houses of the late 1850s and 1860s. These generally had arched windows, but the material usage and elegant proportions were similar. Court house examples include Creswick (1859), F E Kawerau's at Maldon (1861), J J Clark's at Newstead (1865), Talbot (1866), A T Snow's at Inglewood (1868), John Williams' at Eaglehawk (1869), Woodend (1871) and Huntly (1874).¹¹ At a larger scale, there are resemblances to William Wardell's second Bendigo Post Office in View Street (1867).¹² Broadly, these were Italianate designs with symmetrical street entrances, with subtly prominent eave lines. Most were in an exposed red brick similar to the shire or borough halls at Raywood, Marong and Strathfieldsaye. The court house plans obviously differed, with high windows for the court wings and a flanking lower wing or pavilions for the ancillary rooms. The three shire halls in the Bendigo region opted for tripartite facades: either three façade bays, as at Raywood, or three-arched entries as at Huntly, Strathfieldsaye and Marong.

The design and composition of Marong Shire Hall also reflects its comparatively late date. The main part was completed in 1908, by which time the broadly classical tradition among Australian architects was being infused with 'English Renaissance' or English Baroque revivalism, especially of the style of Christopher Wren, Thomas Archer, John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor – in retrospect the Baroque revival is also called Edwardian Baroque, appropriate enough at the Marong Shire Hall as the building was commenced during Edward VII's reign.¹³ The echoes of this revived form, recently re-launched by Herbert Gribble (Brompton Oratory) and then John Brydon (Chelsea Vestry) in the period 1878-87, are quite restrained in this example, being seen either in the little roof vents or the hall pediment, which has a typically English Baroque relief comprising a roundel flanked by foliage. In other related designs this roundel housed a clock, as did Fawcett and Ashworth's Flinders Street Station, Melbourne, commenced in 1901 and still under construction when this Shire hall was being built.

Although the design of Marong Shire Hall was cautious overall, any incursion into contemporary Baroque revivalism was still rare in Victoria outside Melbourne and Bendigo. Besides many houses, Vahland, Getzschmann and their partners had designed the bulk of Bendigo's Town Hall, the Mechanics' Institute and School of Mines, a series of large hotels, public halls, and the Edinburgh Tannery.

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria

Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

The former Marong Shire Hall, located at the south-east corner of Adams Street (Calder Highway) and High Street (Alternative Calder Highway), is of historical significance. It was completed in 1908 after approximately 40 years of agitation on the part of the town elders for a municipal hall at Marong. It demonstrates the pre-eminence of Marong as a centre for local government in the Shire from 1908 until the 1990s, supplanting Lockwood in this role. The involvement of noted Bendigo architects Vahland and Beebe in the design of the building is also significant.

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City the of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

N/A

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural history.

N/A

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

N/A

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics in the context of the municipality.

The former Marong Shire Hall is of aesthetic/architectural significance. The building is largely externally intact to its main presentation and is a well resolved and prominently located shire hall which combines Classical and Baroque motifs. Designed by the noted Bendigo architects Vahland and Beebe, the former Shire Hall is relatively unusual as a building in this period which demonstrates Baroque Revival influence, outside the major centres of Melbourne and Bendigo. Elements of note include the finely executed red tuck-pointed brickwork, the pedimented central entrance loggia, and the contrasting use of stucco to cornices, loggia spandrels and pediment vents. The significance of the building is enhanced by its prominent corner location and generous landscaped setting, which includes vestiges of an early garden layout, the granite soldier's memorial to Adams Street and mature palm trees to High Street. The building is also of interest as a comparatively late example of a small brick shire hall in the Bendigo region, with others mainly built in the 1860s and 1870s.

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

N/A

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of the place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

The former Marong Shire Hall is of some social significance as the building which was at the centre of local government in the former Shire from 1908 until the 1990s, and the seat of civic activity and local government for many decades.

Criterion H: Special association with life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Greater Bendigo's history.

The building is significant for its association with noted Bendigo architects William Vahland and John Beebe. Vahland was locally prolific for many years, before teaming up with Beebe, having begun his

architectural practice as the office of William Charles Vahland in 1857, and forming partnerships with other architects through to Beebe in the very early twentieth century.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The former Marong Shire Hall, located at the south-east corner of Adams Street (Calder Highway) and High Street (Alternative Calder Highway) was constructed in 1908. It is a single-storey building with a taller hall/chamber at its centre and an entrance loggia, and is built of red tuck-pointed brickwork, with relief afforded by a stuccoed cornice, loggia spandrels and pediment vents, painted a light/neural colour. The building combines Classical and Baroque motifs. The symmetrical front (north) elevation is distinguished by a three-arched loggia with moulded impostes and flanking wings. A recessed pediment, over the loggia, features the shire coat of arms in a foliated surround to its tympanum. The loggia windows are arched double-hung sashes with coffered apron-sills; the central door is windowed and two-leaved with a lunette fanlight. The paired windows on the flanking wings are double-hung sashes with cambered headers. The loggia spandrel is inscribed MARONG SHIRE HALL. The hall roof is hipped with slate tile cladding and has small slatted dormer vents. The rear wall of the main hall/chamber appears to have been intended as the link to an additional structure, as evidenced by the segmental arch in its central bay. The rear also has a set of more recent additions, with a connecting wing to the newer buildings. The former Marong Shire Hall is set back from Adams Street behind a landscaped garden, bisected by a concrete pathway. The entrance is via a granite Marong and District Soldiers Memorial gateway, installed after World War I. There are three mature palm trees to the west lawn.

How is it significant?

The former Marong Shire Hall is of local historical, social and aesthetic/architectural significance.

Why is it significant?

The former Marong Shire Hall is historically significant (Criterion A) for its capacity to demonstrate Marong's central role in the administration of the former Shire of Marong from 1908 to the 1990s, after supplanting Lockwood in this role. When completed in 1908 it followed approximately 40 years of agitation on the part of the town elders for a municipal hall at Marong. The involvement of noted Bendigo architects William Vahland and John Beebe in the design of the building is significant (Criterion H). Vahland was locally prolific for many years, before teaming up with Beebe, having begun his architectural practice as the office of William Charles Vahland in 1857, and forming partnerships with other architects through to Beebe in the very early twentieth century. The former Marong Shire Hall is also of some social significance as the building which was at the centre of local government in the former Shire from 1908 until the 1990s, and the seat of civic activity and local government for many decades (Criterion H).

The former Marong Shire Hall is of local aesthetic/architectural significance (Criterion E). The building is largely externally intact to its main presentation and is a well resolved and prominently located shire hall which combines Classical and Baroque motifs. It is also relatively unusual as a building in this period which demonstrates Baroque Revival influence, outside the major centres of Melbourne and Bendigo. Elements of note include the finely executed red tuck-pointed brickwork, the pedimented central entrance loggia, and the contrasting use of stucco to cornices, loggia spandrels and pediment vents. The significance of the building is enhanced by its prominent corner location and generous landscaped setting, which includes vestiges of an early garden layout, the granite soldier's memorial to Adams Street and mature palm trees to High Street. The building is additionally of interest as a comparatively late example of a small brick shire hall in the Bendigo region, with others mainly built in the 1860s and 1870s.

Recommendations

The property is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Greater Bendigo Heritage Overlay. The recommended extent of the Overlay is illustrated in the above map, with the focus of significance on the historic building and the landscaped areas to the north and west. The brickwork should not be

overpainted and the light coloured paint treatment to the stucco maintained. The setting of the building at a prominent corner site, including mature plantings (palm trees) and the soldier's memorial, is also significant. The rear additions are not significant; the modified rear of the building also offers some potential for new works.

External Paint Colours	No
Internal Alterations Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes
Outbuildings and fences exemptions	No
Victorian Heritage Register	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated plan	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No

Identified By

Andrew Ward, 1998.

References

Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 1987.

David Horsfall (ed), *Shire of Marong 1864-1964*, Shire of Marong.

Andrew Ward *et al*, City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Study (Marong) Study Area, Stage 2, 1998.

Specific:

- ¹ Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Volume 1, Crown Castleton Publishers, 2003, p. 123.
- ² Andrew Ward, *City of Greater Bendigo (Marong District) Heritage Study (Stage One Report)*, unpaginated.
- ³ Ruth Hopkins, *Moving Forward, Looking Back, The History of the Marong Shire*, Shire of Marong, 1985, p. 13.
- ⁴ F F Bailliere, in the *Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, 1865, p. 238.
- ⁵ Victorian Government Gazette: 29 – 25/02/1861, 98 – 29/06/1861, 178 – 06/12/1861, 98 – 04/08/1865, and 06/08/1869).
- ⁶ Ken Arnold, *Bendigo its Environs, The Way it Was*, Volume 1, Crown Castleton Publishers, 2003, p. 126.
- ⁷ F F Bailliere, in the *Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, 1865, p. 238.
- ⁸ Brother of William Beebe junior, more widely known, and son of William Beebe senior (died 1891). For the Vahland- Beebe partnership see Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust, Bendigo, 1987, pp. 35, 157-8, 167 (Marong Shire Hall).
- ⁹ Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 1987, p. 167.
- ¹⁰ Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 1987, p. 160-161 (Huntly), 163(Strathfieldsaye).
- ¹¹ Michael Challenger, *Historic Court Houses of Victoria*, Pallisade, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 71 (Creswick), 74 (Huntly), 79 (Eaglehawk), 102 (Inglewood), 121 (Maldon), 143 (Newstead), 182 (Talbot), 198 (Woodend).
- ¹² Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, *Bendigo Historic Buildings*, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) 1987, pp. 22-3. The third Post office was George Watson's Pall Mall design, of 1883-7 (p. 37).
- ¹³ For the contemporary revival of English Baroque architecture, see Alastair Service ed., contrib.), *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*, Architectural Press, London, 1974, and his *Edwardian Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1977.