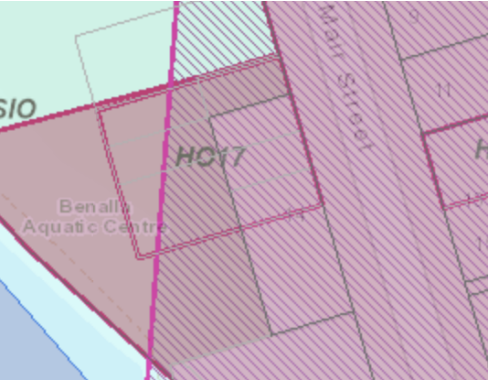


Place Citation HO17
16 Mair Street BENALLA

Address	16 Mair Street BENALLA		
Heritage Overlay	HO17		
Heritage Overlay Map			
Designer/s	Unknown	Dates	c1869-70
Significance	Local	Builder/s	Unknown
Heritage Overlay Map	The application of the heritage overlay map to the full title area is supported.	Survey Date	March 2024



Former Mechanics Institute

Statement of Significance 1992

Source: <https://hermesorion.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/44447>

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute is locally important for its role as an educational institution and community resource since 1869-70 and as a very early surviving public building in the city. Its architectural treatment is uncommon in Benalla.

The following Statement of Significance has been prepared according to the provisions of the Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay, (2018)

Assessment against criteria

The following analysis is based on Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

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

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

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street is significant. This includes the 1869-70 building and the 1882 addition.

The context as provided by the setting which includes side and rear setbacks.

Significant fabric includes, but is not confined to:

- the original form, fabric and scale of the former Mechanics Institute;
- architectural features, which include : single storey form; gable roof clad with corrugated galvanised iron; the render finish with ashlar ruling; quoining; former main entrance at the Bridge Street end; the gable with oculus vent; tri-partite round arched windows to the street and the hood moulds to the round arched windows.

The former Mechanics Institute is substantially intact and it has largely retained its integrity.

Alterations from the mid twentieth century and later are not significant.

How is it Significant?

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street Benalla is of historical, aesthetic and social cultural heritage significance to the Benalla Rural City.

Why is it Significant?

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street Benalla, built in 1869-70 and the 1882 addition is of historical significance as it provides evidence of the early civic development of the township. It was constructed to provide to provide educational facilities for the ordinary working man ('the mechanic'). (Criterion A)

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street Benalla, built in 1869-70 and the 1882 addition is of historical significance as it provides evidence of the role of government agencies as it provided offices for the Lands Department and the Country Roads Board between 1926 and 1966. Benalla was a regional centre for a number of government agencies and they were critical to the economy of Benalla during much of the twentieth century. (Criterion A)

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street Benalla, built in 1869-70 and the 1882 addition is of aesthetic significance. Features which contribute to its significance include its: single storey form, gable roof clad with corrugated galvanised metal; classical inspired features such as the: ruled ashlar stuccoed walls with contrasting quoins; oculus vent to each gable ends and the tri-partite round arched windows with hood moulds. (Criterion E)

The former Benalla Mechanics Institute at 16 Mair Street Benalla, built in 1869-70 and the 1882 addition is of social significance as it is a place that has been used by the community for much of its life. It has a strong association with community activities which include a place of education during its role as a Mechanics Institute and its later role as a museum as developed by the community. Today it still has a community function and is much valued by all who use it. (Criterion G)

Physical description

A single storeyed stuccoed neo-Classical public building with corrugated iron clad gable roof and former main entrance at the Bridge Street end. At the west end, gable ends are formed as architectural 'devices' with oculus vent and tri-partite round arched windows to the street elevation. The stuccoed work has ashlar markings, relieved with quoining, and hood moulds to the round arched windows.

History

In 1869-70 a Mechanics Institute and Free Library was built in Mair Street west side between Bridge and Church Streets to provide educational facilities for the ordinary working man ('the mechanic'). In 1882 two rooms and a passage were added to the brick building to the design of Mr Stafford. Mr Trough was the contractor.

In 1926 the building ceased to be used as a Mechanics Institute and ownership reverted to the Lands Department, which with the Country Roads Board, occupied it until 1963. The property was subsequently

Place Citation HO17
16 Mair Street BENALLA

purchased by the Benalla Borough Council. Since 1966 it has been used as a Pioneer Museum, housing collections of the Benalla and District Historical Society.

References:

Benalla Standard 14 March 1881, 23 May 1882.

National Trust Register

Lands Department - Seymour

Bassett, J. and Dennis, J. *Benalla Sketched* 2nd Ed. Neptune Press Pty Ltd, Newtown (Vic.) 1986 p.16-19.