

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**name:** Mitre Public Hall  
**Address:** 1429-1431 Natimuk - Frances Road MITRE  
**Place Type:** Hall Public  
**Citation Date:** 2022



*Mitre Public Hall, 1429 Natimuk - Francis Road Mitre*

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**Recommended Heritage Protection**      **VHR -**

**HI -**

**PS**  
Yes

## Integrity

generally high integrity externally and internally, though all window sashes have been replaced with aluminium units and the front and side doors are also modern glazed aluminium units.

## History and Historical Context

The inaugural meeting of the Mitre Public Hall Committee took place on 25 October 1913. Held in Mitre at the private dwelling of Mr C. Pumpa, the purpose of the meeting was to erect a Public Hall at Mitre South. The *Horsham Times* reported that the local community had felt a need for a public hall for many years, as both the Toonan Hall and Toonan State School were situated too far from what had become the centre of the district.[1] Those present at the meeting were Mr R.G. McClure (elected Chairman), Mr C. Pumpa (elected Secretary), Mr J. McClure, Mr H. Sudolz, Mr C. Burris, Mr W. McCredden, Mr T. McCredden Jnr, Mr R. Schmidt, Mr E. Burris, Mrs Aitken, Mr J. Lear Snr and Mr H. Hateley.[2]

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An impressive £85 was committed at the inaugural meeting and committee members were deputised to collect further donations from nearby residents in Grass Flat, Natimuk, Nurcoung and Mitre, as well as Horsham. By the next meeting, held in 1914, the committee had collected £161. Following a one week adjournment to consider a suitable size for the hall, the committee decided that it would be 50 ft. by 25 ft., with 12 ft. walls.[3]

Mr W.J. Sinclair was empowered to draw up the plans, with instructions from the committee that it must be brick and cost no more than £250. Former Mitre resident, Jack Lear, explains that the president at the time 'stated that it be a brick building, for the maintenance of brick was far cheaper than weatherboards'.[4] Despite the prior stipulation of a £250 construction budget, it was decided at a public meeting held in April 1915 that tenders would be called for to construct the building for no more than £300. Six tenders were received ranging from £410 to £319.[5] Mr C. Pumpa's tender for £320 was accepted at a general meeting in June 1915; however, the increased cost of construction required a National Bank loan.

The Mitre Lake Public Hall was constructed in 1915, opposite the Mitre Store. It sat on one third of an acre block of land, which was generously donated by Mr A.C. Hateley of Mitre.[6] The opening of the new hall, described in the local press as 'a fine spacious brick building neatly designed', was celebrated with a concert and ball held on the evening of Friday 19 November 1915. [7] According to the *West Wimmera Mail and Natimuk Advertiser*, the hall was 'packed to the doors with an enthusiastic assemblage, many having travelled long distances'.[8]

Since its opening, the Mitre Public Hall has hosted dances, balls, fundraisers (for local schools, churches and hall improvements), social gatherings, school concerts, comedies, patriotic evenings, public meetings, political meetings, farewells and even skating in 1916.

During the first and second world wars, it was used to hold fundraising events for various charities supporting the war effort, such as the British Red Cross. Welcome home events were held upon the soldiers' return, and honour boards presently adorn the walls, in recognition of the war service of the brave men of the Mitre region.

In 1924, a working bee was held to erect a store and supper room at the back of the hall.[9] Following the Jubilee Celebrations in 1965, another positive effort was made to raise funds to build a new supper room, which, with the assistance of a subsidy from the Arapiles Shire, was erected in 1967. Further upgrades were made, when a toilet block was built at the rear of the hall in 1977.

Many of the improvements to the hall and its assets can be attributed to the fundraising efforts of the Mitre Hall Ladies Auxiliary, established on 3 June 1963.[10] The Auxiliary worked tirelessly to raise funds by organising events such as social functions, and through catering for weddings and birthday parties. Money raised went back into the hall funds to buy items such as cutlery and crockery. They also made considerable contributions to upgrade the kitchen, and equipped the hall with furnishings and appliances including two electric stoves, a hot water service, piano, chairs and curtains.[11]

Despite a gradual decline in use of the hall over the past few decades due to the slow migration of residents into nearby towns, the Mitre Public Hall continues to be utilised by the local community for meetings and events, and remains a distinctive feature of the Mitre landscape.

[1] Horsham Times (1913) Mitre Lake South. *Horsham Times*. 4 November, p. 6.

[2] Mitre Centenary Committee (1982) *Mitre: Past and Present*. Unpublished, p. 28.

[3] *Ibid.*

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[4] Lear, J. (1989) *History of the Mitre District*. Unpublished, p. 9.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Horsham Times (1915) *Horsham Times*. 15 June, p. 6.

[7] West Wimmera Mail and Natimuk Advertiser (1915) Opening of new Hall at Mitre Lake South. *West Wimmera Mail and Natimuk Advertiser*. 26 November, p. 6.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Horsham Times (1924) A successful working bee. *The Horsham Times*. 29 April, p. 4.

[10] *Mitre: Past and Present*, p. 28.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

## Description

### Physical Description

A rectangular plan, handmade red brick (stretcher bond) hall building with masonry parapet to front elevation, painted above the top string course and with 'A 1915 D Mitre Public Hall' in white painted lettering. Corbelled eaves to front elevation and flat arched lintels, and header brick arch to front door. Brick side walls have four buttresses and two double hung sash windows each side. The corrugated sheet metal roof has a gable form behind the parapet with quadrant-profile eaves gutters. Three roof ventilators are located along the ridge.

A cement sheet 'weatherboard' clad extension to the rear has a skillion roof and brick chimney at the rear. A second extension to the north side is clad in texture coated board with a skillion roof.

Internally the hall has timber tongue and groove floorboards, painted hard plaster walls, and timber board ceiling partially raked to follow the roof line. Metal tie rods span across the hall and decorative ceiling roses connect with the external ventilators. A small stage is located at the southern end of the hall. The hall contains three honour boards relating to World Wars One and Two. There is a small bronze plaque on the front façade that reads 'Red Cross Centenary 1859-1959.'

There are two pencil pines in front of the hall, though their tops have been lopped off.

### Physical Condition

The Mitre Public Hall is in good condition, with no severe structural cracking of the masonry evident.

### Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria

Criterion A) Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history (erected to service the growing farming community of Mitre – which was developing rapidly as a community early 20thC)

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Criterion D) Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. (community hall in district – one of many halls in the region – but still extant and representative of settlement and past population of Mitre)

Criterion G) Strong association with a particular community for social and cultural reasons (community hall – used for recreation and civic events – a key part of the past/ present Mitre community in western Horsham)

## Comparative Analysis

*Hall, Murra Warra, Hermes no. 186149:* Sailors Home Hall – 1923 – framed construction – similar size but different construction

*Memorial Hall, Jung, Hermes no. 186130:* Jung Hall – erected 1926, reinforced concrete in construction – includes marble memorial boards on I – later era than Mitre

*Hall, Brimpaen, Hermes no. 186055:* Brimpaen Hall – erected 1922, framed construction

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The elements of heritage value of the 1915 Mitre Hall, 1429 Natimuk-Frances Road, Mitre, include:

- . 1915 brick hall structure, including front parapet, white painted lettering, brick detailing to front elevation and lintels;
- . double hung sash windows, corrugated sheet metal roof, roof ventilators;
- . three honour boards (inside)

Exclusions: Later additions to rear, toilet block

### How is it significant?

The 1915 Mitre Hall is of local historic and social significance to Horsham Rural City.

### Why is it significant?

The 1915 Mitre Hall, Natimuk-Francis Rd, Mitre, is:

- . historically significant for its role in the evolution and development of community, recreational and civic life in the Mitre district. The building is of historical significance as an early civic building demonstrating the presence of a more populated settlement in the Mitre district in the early to mid-twentieth century. (Criterion A, D)
- . of social significance for its role in the focus on community activities for the Mitre community and wider district. The hall has been used for a variety of community activities including meetings, school concerts, performances, charity fundraisers, farewells and skating. The hall was also used to host “welcome home” events to celebrate

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the return of local soldiers during the first and second world wars, and is still used for meetings and community events. (Criterion G)

## Recommendations 2022

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

## References

**Literature title:** Horsham Times Newspaper

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:**

**Literature publisher:**

**Literature year:**

**Literature title:** History of the Mitre District

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Lear, J

**Literature publisher:** Unpublished

**Literature year:** 1989

**Literature title:** Mitre: Past and Present

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Mitre Centenary Committee

**Literature publisher:** Unpublished

**Literature year:** 1982

**Literature title:** West Wimmera Mail and Natimuk Advertiser

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:**

**Literature publisher:**

**Literature year:**

**This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.**