

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

name: Sailors Home Hall
Address: 2537 Blue Ribbon Road MURRA WARRA
Place Type: Hall Public
Citation Date: 2022



Sailors Home Public Hall, 2537 Blue Ribbon Road Murra Warra

Recommended Heritage Protection **VHR -**

HI -

PS
Yes

Integrity

High integrity internally and externally, apart from replacement of original timber window sashes with aluminium units on north elevation.

History and Historical Context

The Sailors' Home Hall was built on an acre block of land donated by James Bourke Kelly, one of the first selectors in the Parish of Kewell West. It was officially opened on Tuesday 16 October 1923 by the first secretary of the hall, Mr James Ryan. Sailors' Home Hall was completely funded by local farmers (known as shareholders) who bought a total of 70 bonds valued at £10 each. A register of original shareholders was unveiled by past committee president, John Reinheimer, at the hall's 90th anniversary celebrations in October 2013.

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Prior to the construction of the hall, social gatherings and events in the Murra Warra district were held in farmers' barns. In May 1922, a committee of shareholders met at the Murra Warra School for the purposes of taking definitive steps towards the erection of a hall. The *Horsham Times* reported that a financial statement showed that £610 had been paid into the bank and an extra £180 was available from generous sources.[1] By 8 August 1922, the site had been surveyed and tree planting had taken place. The *Horsham Times* reported that:

The timber [was] en-route to the Wail [railway] station. At the end of the week, four, six and eight light horse teams [would] be seen, as in a procession, bringing the required timber to the building site. When complete, the hall will have a length of 75 feet by 35 feet broad. It will consist of 55 feet by 35 feet floor space, stage, supper room and two cloak rooms, as well as a detached kitchen, the copper of which will be connected to the water supply. ... The hall will be paid for in cash (£735, no small sum), and what is more, great hopes are entertained of completely furnishing the building free of debt.[2]

The committee contracted Mr B. Cameron, 'late of the Technical Workshops' to build the hall, which he had expected to complete by the end of September.[3] Unfortunately, a severe windstorm destroyed the hall's main structure built by Mr Cameron's employee, Mr R. Dunton, soon after construction began, thus necessitating the postponement of its opening. The committee was also faced with another set-back when they were unable to raise adequate funds to furnish the hall debt free; however, fundraising concerts soon netted enough money to repay the overdraft.

Reporting on the opening of the hall, the *Horsham Times* described it as having an 'inviting exterior', and a wisely laid out interior that 'provide[d] for future needs'.[4] They stated that:

In the western end is a fine stage, with a roomy proscenium, flanked by dressing and retiring rooms for ladies and gentlemen. Cloak rooms and kitchen, roomy and well ventilated, provide "the last word" in modernity and usefulness. No detail seems to have been overlooked. The walls, high and well ventilated, are close-lined; four windows open on each side; there are two escape doors in the main hall, and escapes are provided also for the stage; the ventilation is carried out on modern lines; the hall is magnificently lighted by a fine air plant, and a tank of 2000 gallons capacity furnishes an ample water supply. The cost of the building, furnishings and piano, was about £1200. To participate in the opening of this palatial building people travelled over very long distances. The road to the northward was a crowded motor park, and the hall was packed with a good-humoured lot of people, many of whom had to be content with standing. It was, indeed, an event that will never be forgotten. The opening of the hall was going to mark an epoch in the history of Murra Warra.[5]

Since its opening, the origins of the name "Sailors' Home", has attracted significant public curiosity. The *Dimboola Courier* states that:

Although it's uncertain where the hall's name came from, it's believed that two sailors [who had deserted their ship][6] arrived in the area seeking employment around 1855, which they found nearby at Kewell Station as shepherds. They lived in close proximity to the hall; the area has been known as Sailors' Home since. At least one of the men is buried in an unmarked grave about 1.5 kilometres south-west of the hall.[7]

Regardless of the origins of its name, Sailors' Home Hall has been at the centre of community gatherings for over 90 years. It has hosted an endless number of balls, concerts, dances, welcomes and farewells and fundraising events. The hall has provided a meeting place for local clubs and shareholders of the hall, which are recognised in a framed 'register of original shareholders' unveiled at the 90th anniversary celebrations on 27 October 2013.

Honour rolls

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A large honour board hangs in the Sailors Home Hall paying tribute to the men of the Murra Warra and district who served in the Second World War (1939-45). Another honour roll is dedicated to members of the Sailors Home Methodist Church, which first opened on 16 September 1887 at Sailors Home and has since closed.

The hall also contains an honour board of former pupils of Sailors' Home State School No. 1632 (also known as Blackheath, Kewell West and Hoffmans), which was officially opened on 8 November 1875.[8] The first school building was situated c.2 miles east of Sailor's Home; however, in 1880, a new school building was built at Sailor's Home on 10 acres of land provided by Solomon Maddern, c.2 miles west of the first site. [9] The school operated intermittently until it closed in 1921 and moved to Cannum. Afterwards, parents built another school on the same site, which opened in 1936. The Sailors Home State School finally closed on 5 August 1947.

The hall also commemorates the Murra Warra State School, which was situated 20 miles north of Horsham on the Blue Ribbon Road. The weatherboard school officially opened on 23 January 1881, and lasted 82 years until it was demolished in 1963.[10] A new weatherboard building was erected on the same site in December 1963, and was officially opened by the Assistant Minister for Education, the Hon. J.F. Rossiter on 29 October 1964.[11] The Murra Warra State School officially closed in mid-1980 due to a low number of enrolments. The school building was subsequently moved to the Pimpinio State School to provide an extra classroom. The honour board/first aid cupboard, which contains the names of former pupils and teachers who fought in the Second World War, was relocated to the Sailors Home Hall. Similarly, the original plaque that was unveiled at the school in 1964 was relocated to an exterior wall of the hall.

[1] Horsham Times (1922) Sailors' Home Hall. *Horsham Times*. 4 April, p. 8.

[2] Horsham Times (1922) Sailors' Home Hall. *Horsham Times*. 8 August, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Horsham Times (1923) Sailors' Home Hall. *Horsham Times*. 19 October, p. 2.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Holland, E. and C. Thomas (1984) *Murra Warra: From Sheep Run to Settlement and Beyond*. Horsham: New Style Publications.

[7] Hastings, B. (2013) 'Sailor's Home 90 years on'. *Dimboola Courier [online]*. 29 October. Retrieved from <http://www.dimboolacourier.com.au/news.php?newsid=1800>. [Accessed 18 February 2014].

[8] Blake, L. (ed.) (1973) *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria. Vol. 2*. Melbourne: The Government Printer, p. 271.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Murra Warra*, pp. 7-8.

[11] *Vision and Realisation*, p. 280.

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Description

Physical Description

Single storey, unusual 'mini flute' (ripple iron) CGI clad hipped roofed hall, with no entry porch or windows to front elevation. Lean-to supper room/ toilets/ kitchen to rear and side. Double hung sash windows to side elevations (some with aluminium sashes). Interior of hall simple in decoration – ceiling replaced and possibly lowered, timber floorboards. Several honour boards located within hall.

Physical Condition

Good condition. Original cladding still extant.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria

Criterion A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of our cultural or natural history. (erected to service the growing farming community of the Murra Warra district – which was developing rapidly as a community in the interwar period)

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. (community hall – used for recreation, schooling, and civic events – a key part of the past/ present community in northern Horsham district)

Comparative Analysis

Memorial Hall, Jung, Hermes no. 186130: Jung Hall – erected 1926, reinforced concrete in construction – includes marble memorial boards on I – similar in era to Sailors Home. Larger hall – has stage, balcony and backstage area – comparable

Public Hall, Mitre, Hermes no. 186146: Mitre Hall – erected 1915 – brick construction. Includes a stage and contemporary supper room – comparable

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The elements of heritage value of the 1923 Sailors Home Hall, 2537 Blue Ribbon Road, Murra Warra include:

. 1923 hall structure, 'mini flute'/ripple-iron galvanised cladding, hipped roof form with dutch gable, remaining timber double hung sash windows.

How is it significant?

The 1923 Sailors Home Hall, Murra Warra, is of local historic and social significance to Horsham Rural City.

Why is it significant?

The 1923 Sailors Home Hall is:

. of local historical significance, illustrating the results of regional growth in the early 20th century and in

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particular inter-war period – a boom period for agricultural development in the district. (Criterion A)

. of local social significance, for servicing local 'civic, educational, and recreational and community needs in the then outer northern Horsham district for the past 100 years. (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: Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria. Vol. 2

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author: Blake, L. (ed.)

Literature publisher: Melbourne: The Government Printer

Literature year: 1973

Literature title: Sailor's Home 90 years on'. Dimboola Courier [online]. 29 October 2013 in Dimboola Courier Newspaper'

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author: Hastings, B.

Literature publisher:

Literature year:

Literature title: Murra Warra: From Sheep Run to Settlement and Beyond

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author: Holland, E.and C. Thomas

Literature publisher: Horsham: New Style Publications

Literature year: 1984

Literature title: Horsham Times Newspaper

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author:

Literature publisher:

Literature year:

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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.