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Former Wimmera Shire Offices
Firebrace Street, Horsham

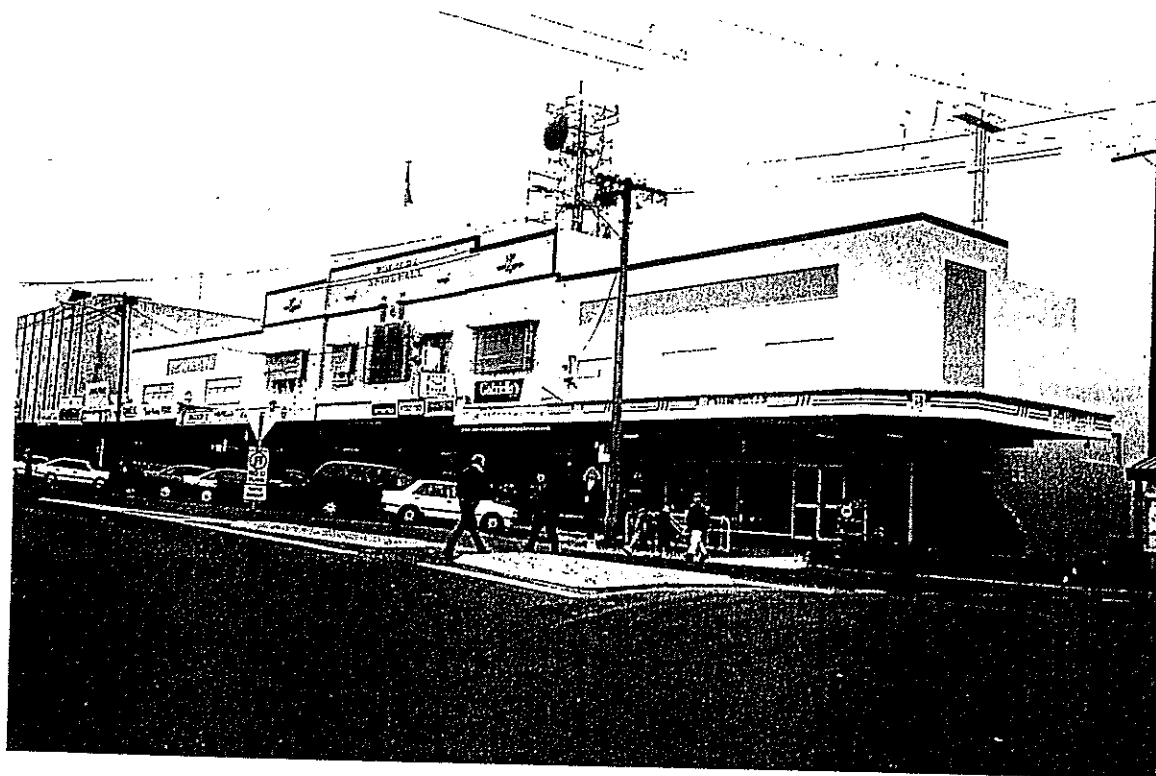


Photo: 1997

Existing Registrations:

Victorian Heritage Register: nil
National Estate Register: nil
National Trust Register: nil

History: From the date of the first Meeting of the Road District in 1862 until 1875 the Court House had been used for all Board and Council meetings. However it soon became apparent that the Council must acquire a permanent home. This current site was purchased for one hundred pounds became the home of the first Wimmera Shire Office building, erected in 1875. It was one of the most imposing buildings in Horsham at the time. The land at the rear was used originally for a depot to store materials and stable the Council's horses. It was later used in many ways, including an open air theatre and a sporting stadium. A leadlight and stained glass window with ornate timber surround, a memorial to Horsham and district First World War soldiers was installed in 1921. In 1937 the Shire Office was demolished, and the site redeveloped. Shops and new Shire Offices were built, with the stained glass window preserved and placed on the council chamber's eastern wall. *THIS HAS BEEN RE-LOCATED TO THE R.S.L. BUILDING M'CALLUM ST. 1999-2000*

Description: A large two storeyed commercial development with understated stuccoed upper level façade characterized by axial symmetry and retaining the former offices and Council chamber of the former Wimmera Shire upstairs. At street level there are shops

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and also the former offices of the Shire. It is understood that the glazed lead lit honour role for the Shire is in situ within the former council chamber.

Integrity: Medium **Condition:** Sound

Comparative examples: This building compares with the former Horsham Borough offices and hall of 1938 in Wilson Street but is rare at the State level on account of its origins as a speculative development by the Shire. It does however, compare in this respect with the much earlier development by the former Hotham Town Council of 1876 in North Melbourne.

Significance: The offices of the former Wimmera Shire with their associated street level shops are important for their associations with the evolution of local government in the region (criterion A). The survival of the honour role is especially representative of the building's former role whilst the nature of the development as a speculative venture by the Shire council of the day is rare at the State level (Criterion B).

References:

Data sheet prepared by Andrew Ward 2/98