

**TOWN HALL, INSTITUTE LIBRARY AND RIDDOCH ART GALLERY**  
**10-30 COMMERCIAL STREET EAST**

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C.T: 4397/161, 162, 163 and 4030/976, 977 (Sections 860, 407-410)

**HERITAGE LISTINGS:** These buildings are entered in the State Heritage Register.

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**STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:** An exceptional group of civic buildings dating from 1868 constructed in face dolomite with limestone dressings which forms a coherent group with the adjacent significant Jens Hotel, Cave Gardens and Fountain.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Retain in the State Heritage Register. This building complex should form part of the proposed Mount Gambier Central State Heritage Area.

200 P. 122

## TOWN HALL, INSTITUTE LIBRARY AND RIDDOCH ART GALLERY 10-30 COMMERCIAL STREET EAST (cont)

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### ASSESSMENT:

This group of buildings consists of the Institute, Library and Hall, the Town Hall and Theatre. The Institute was commenced in 1868 with the ground floor, library and hall to the design of W T Gore. It was officially opened in 1869 with an evening performance in the presence of the State Governor. In 1887 a second storey was added to the Institute due to the generous donation of John Riddoch from Yallum Park. The hall became a picture theatre from 1911 until 1926 and is now the present city hall. The Institute Library ceased to function in 1967 and the Library is now located in the new Civic Centre on Watson Terrace.

The Town Hall was constructed in 1882 to the design of architect J J Barrow and the clock tower was added in 1883. This building was used as the City of Mount Gambier Council Chambers until the Council moved to the new Civic Centre in 1981.

The Theatre, which is now the Riddoch Art Gallery was built in 1906 for the Institute Trustees to cater for the growing need for public entertainment space. It was officially opened by the Hon George Riddoch in 1907. Thomas Hall was the architect and he carefully adapted parts of the original Institute design to link this new section of the complex to the earlier central area.

Various alterations internally allowed the Theatre to be used as a picture theatre with Star Pictures, the Ozone Theatre and the King's Theatre all using the building. The theatre has now been converted to the Riddoch Art Gallery.

**TOWN HALL, INSTITUTE LIBRARY AND RIDDOCH ART GALLERY**  
**10-30 COMMERCIAL STREET EAST (cont)**

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**Site Record**

Educational Building: Town Hall and Institute Complex  
 10-30 Commercial Street East  
 Mount Gambier SA 5290

<b>Location</b>	10-30 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier
<b>Description</b>	Run of two storey buildings including halls and theatre with central clock tower to former Town Hall
<b>Boundary</b>	Buildings constructed to property boundaries including frontage to Commercial Street East
<b>Land Description</b>	Town Hall - CT 4030/976, 977 Institute and Theatre - CT 4397/161, 162, 163
<b>Local Government</b>	City of Mount Gambier
<b>Owner</b>	City of Mount Gambier
<b>Use</b>	Art Gallery, City Hall and Offices
<b>Condition</b>	Generally sound
<b>Other Assessments</b>	C J Maslen, <i>A History of the Mount Gambier Institute, 1862-1980</i> Danvers Architects, <i>Conservation Plan for Mount Gambier Town Hall and Institute</i> Mount Gambier Heritage Society, Mount Gambier Heritage Walks No. 1 - City Centre
<b>Heritage Status</b>	State Heritage Register

HERITAGE SURVEY  
ITEM IDENTIFICATION SHEET

Sou Australian  
Heritage Act 1978-80:

REGION 6 :  
SOUTH EAST

Item No. : MTG:011  
ITEM NAME: Town Hall & Offices  
Former or other names:

LOCATION:

Address: Commercial St. East,  
Mount Gambier

Allotment:

Section : 410  
Hundred : Blanche  
County : Grey  
L.G.A. : Mount Gambier

S.H.P. Region: 6

A.M.G., Ref. Z: 54 N: 5812950  
E: 480600

TYPE OF ITEM:

Description: District Offices

Subject: 3.03

Period: 1880-1890

Date: 1882

Condition: Well Kept

Architect:

Builder:

STATUS State Heritage List: Registered

National Estate : Listed

National Trust : Classified

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

RECOMMENDATION: State

Description:

Italianate style building of rock-faced dolomite with applied string courses and hood mouldings to semi-circular arched windows. Applied mouldings to parapet and rusticated quoins to tower (tower added at a later date).

After much controversy over expense and choice of site, the Town Council moved from a weatherboard hut to this impressive building. Thomas Chute Ellis of "Benara" donated a tower and clock in 1883.

Report Text:

REFERENCES: L. Hill, "Mount Gambier, the City around a Cave" pp. 151-153

Verbal: Les Hill

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Slide No :

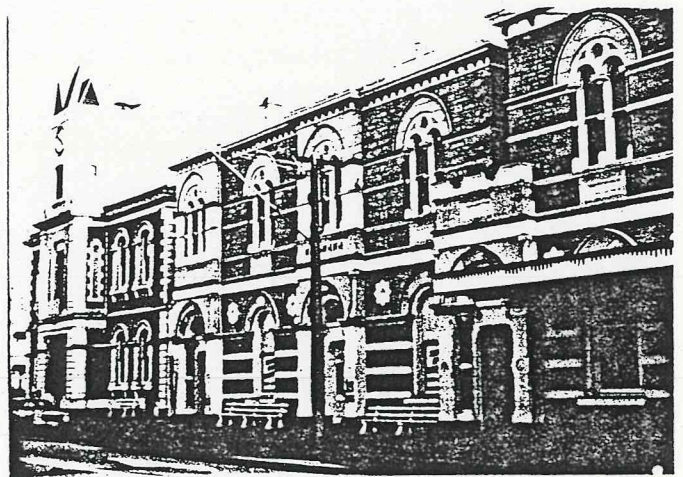
Film No : 11

Negative No: 15

Archival No: B12146 (1907)

B15855 (1882)

DANVERS ARCHITECTS Date: 1983



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**NAME:** Mount Gambier Town Hall

**PLACE NO.:** 10236

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**Address:** 30 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier

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**ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:**

There is an interpretation plaque outside the Town Hall which reads 'The Town Hall was constructed in 1882 to provide new offices and meeting rooms for the town of Mount Gambier Council the architect was J J Barrow and the contractor William Webber. Thomas Chute Ellis of Benara Station generously donated the clock and tower which was erected in 1883. There was a fire station at the rear of the old Town Hall which served the town until a new fire station was constructed in Sturt Street in 1955. The building was used for local government purposes until Council moved to the new civic centre behind in 1981. The Town Hall has been converted to offices and now houses various regional boards and associations.

This building sits within the recently proclaimed Mount Gambier Central State Heritage Area.

The Town Hall is a registered place on the Register of the National Estate (ID No: 8176).

**Statement of Heritage Value:**

Built specifically to accommodate the Mount Gambier Town Council and its associated functions, the Town Hall is directly associated with the development and progress of local government in the town. The scale and size of the structure reflects the civic pride of the townspeople and their faith in their municipal representatives. It provided a focal point for the administrative, social and cultural functions of the town.

The town hall is one of an exceptional group of civic buildings dating from 1868 constructed in face dolomite with limestone dressings, which forms a coherent group with the adjacent significant Jens Hotel, Cave Gardens and Fountain.

**Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the Heritage Act 1993):**

- (a) *It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history:* The Mount Gambier Town Hall demonstrates the ongoing development of local Government and the construction of facilities required for rural communities during the prosperous period of the 1880s in South Australia.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Mount Gambier Town Hall at 30 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier remain as an entry in the State Heritage Register.

**NAME:** *Mount Gambier Town Hall*

**PLACE NO.:** 10236

**SITE RECORD:**

**FORMER NAME:** *Mount Gambier Town Hall*

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:** *Two storey stone building with central clock tower*

**DATE OF COMPLETION:** *1882*

**REGISTER STATUS:** **Description:** *Confirmed*  
**Date:** *24 July 1980*

**CURRENT USE:** **Description:** *Offices*  
**Dates:** *1981 - present*

**PREVIOUS USE(S):** **Description:** *Town Hall*  
**Dates:** *1882-1981*

**ARCHITECT:** **Name:** *J J Barow*  
**Dates:**

**BUILDER:** **Name:** *William Webber*  
**Dates:**

**SUBJECT INDEXING:** **Group:** *Community facilities*  
**Category:** *Town Hall*

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** **Description:** *City of Mount Gambier*

**LOCATION:** **Street No.:** *30*  
**Street Name:** *Commercial Street East*  
**Town/Suburb:** *Mount Gambier*  
**Post Code:** *5290*  
**Region No.:**  
**Region Name:**

**LAND DESCRIPTION:** **Title Type:** *Certificate*  
**Volume:** *4397, 4030*  
**Folio:** *161-163, 976-977*  
**Lot No.:**  
**Section:** *860, 407-410*  
**Hundred:** *Blanche*

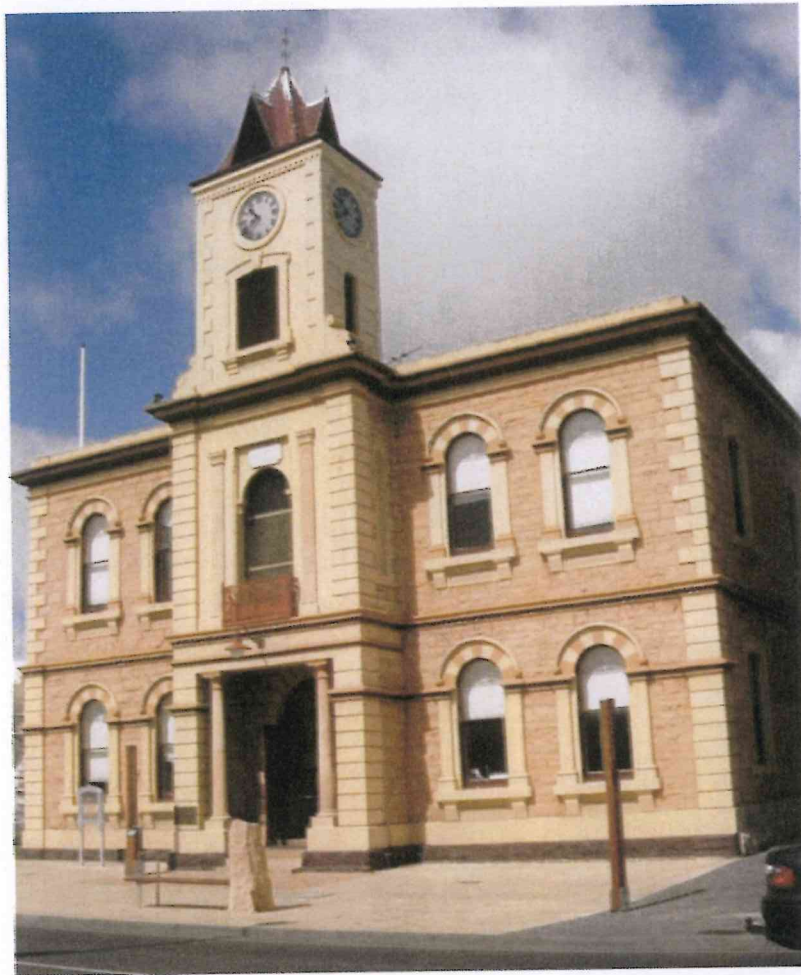
**AMG REFERENCE:** **Zone:** *54*  
**Northing:** *5813150*  
**Easting:** *480766*  
**Map Sheet No.:** *7021:100,0002*  
**Map Scale:**

**OWNER \*:** **Name:**  
**Address:**  
**Town/Suburb:**  
**Post Code:**

**PHOTOGRAPH:** **Film No.:** *Digital*

**NAME:** Mount Gambier Town Hall

**PLACE NO.:** 10236



Views of the Town Hall

**NAME:** Mount Gambier Town Hall

**PLACE NO.:** 10236



View of Town Hall in 1882 (Source: SLSA B15855)



View of Town Hall in 1907 (Source: SLSA B12146)



View of Ball at the Town Hall in 1905 (Source: SLSA B39801)



# State Heritage Areas of South Australia



## Mount Gambier Town Hall 30 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier SHR 10236 – confirmed as a State Heritage Place 24 July 1980

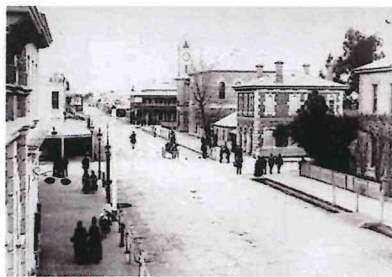
The old Town Hall, built in 1882, was the first purpose-built construction of Mount Gambier's local government. It was used as the City of Mount Gambier Council Chambers until the Council moved to the new Civic Centre in 1981.

In 1880 Council voted to build a new Town Hall to replace the airy two-roomed weatherboard in which they had been meeting since 1868. A prize of £40 was offered for the best plan and design for the new Chambers, based on room requirements specified by Council. After much debate and some controversy, the design of Mr J Barrow was selected.



April 2005

Unexpected objections, mostly concerning costs and the site on Cave Gardens Reserve, had come from many sources and divided both Council and the town. Finally, during 1881 the old weatherboard building was removed, and on 14 September the new Mayoress, Mrs T.H. Williams, laid the foundation stone. Mayor Robert Anderson, who had been a prime mover for the new Town Hall, had unfortunately collapsed and died earlier that year. The impressive dolomite building was opened 24 May 1882, with a crowd of 800 attending the ceremony. Inclement weather forced the proceedings into the adjacent Institute Hall.



Commercial Street, Mount Gambier 1890  
Photo B 13435: State Library of SA

Within 12 months a tower and clock were generously donated by Mr T.C. Ellis. The clock was officially started on 7 August 1883, which coincidentally was Mr Ellis's wedding day, and so he was unavailable to start the mechanism!

A fire station at the rear of the Town Hall was built in 1923 and served the town until 1955. The rooms were then altered, and served the Council as engineer's offices.

A number of plans to build a new, larger Town Hall in Mount Gambier were put forward over the years, but all met strong opposition and failed. In 1981 the Council Offices were relocated from the Town Hall, and part of the adjacent Institute Building, to the newly completed Civic Centre across the Gardens.



Mount Gambier Town Hall and Fountain 1905  
Photo B 38845: State Library of SA



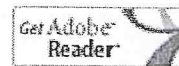
Mount Gambier Town Hall, 2005



## Showcasing SA Heritage Places

- [Overview](#)

Documents for download from this site are in PDF format and you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view them. The reader is free and can be downloaded from the Adobe website.



### Overview

South Australia's significant built and maritime heritage places are found in all regions of the State and are a varied mix of buildings, structures and sites. The [South Australian Heritage Register](#) contains entries for more than 2000 places of State heritage significance, while the SA Shipwrecks Database records approximately 800 shipwrecks in South Australian coastal and inland waters.

Increased public awareness and appreciation of the diversity and significance of these valuable State assets is integral to their long-term protection and conservation.

While all heritage places and shipwrecks are obviously significant, some have individual stories, character, features or past and present associations that give them a more noteworthy or general appeal.

The *Highlights of the SA Heritage Register* and *Highlights of the SA Shipwrecks Database* sections below showcase many of these outstanding heritage icons, while the *Interpreting SA's Built and Maritime Heritage* section leads to examples of the Department's many interpretive projects, some of which have been achieved through community and agency partnerships.



Jetty and Lime Kiln, Wool Bay  
(Photo: R Ashworth 2005)

#### [Highlights of the SA Heritage Register](#)

- [Latest Register entries](#)
- [Significant 2007 Anniversaries](#)

#### [Highlights of the SA Shipwrecks Database](#)

- [Significant 2007 Anniversaries](#)

#### [Interpreting SA's Built and Maritime Heritage](#)

- [On-site Interpretation Panels](#)
- [On-line Interpretation - Websites](#)
- [Brochures and Booklets](#)



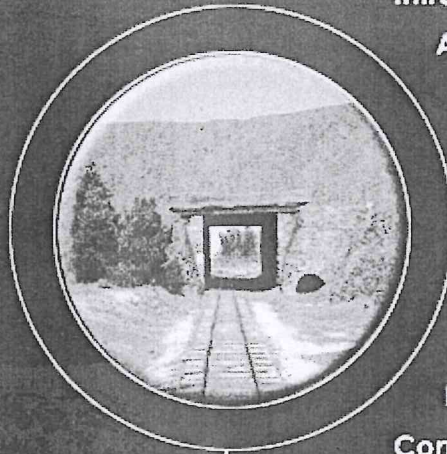
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# State Heritage Areas of South Australia



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Government of South Australia  
Department for Environment  
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