

NORWOOD TOWN HALL  
THE PARADE, NORWOOD

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HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Historically, the Norwood Town Hall is significant because it represents a prosperous phase in the State's municipal history generally, and is an example of the development process of the Adelaide suburbs during the 1870's and 1880's.

Architecturally, the Norwood Town Hall's significance is two part. The front (1884) portion is important internally and externally for its proportions and detailing. The later rear portion is only important for the Theatre/Hall and its foyer which are interesting examples of their type and era.

Environmentally, the Norwood Town Hall is significant as a visual landmark along The Parade.

The Integrity of the Norwood Town Hall differs between the front and rear portions. The front portion has a high degree of integrity both internally and externally. The rear portion has been modernised substantially at ground level, both internally and externally, but the Theatre/Hall and its foyer are very much intact.

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NOMINATION SOURCE/THREAT/OWNER

This report has been prepared as a result of the nomination of the Town Hall for inclusion on the Register of State Heritage Items, and recent enquiries from the City in reference to upgrading and altering the building(s). The City's investigations are only at a preliminary stage.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION BRANCH RECOMMENDATION:

..... *Brian C. Reaney* .....  
fa Manager

It is recommended that this item be included/~~not be included~~ on the Register of State Heritage Items, and that it be categorized A2, A3, H3, H2.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

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Chairman

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-82	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures	Ref. No. 6628-12721
	Item NORWOOD TOWN HALL THE PARADE, NORWOOD.	Status N.Tr.-RL.
Age 1884 1914 Extensions	Subject PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	Style Late Victorian/ Transitional

History

Architecture

Environment

Integrity

Context	Associated with the growth of the Norwood/Kensington municipality, the Town Hall reflects the overall development of the suburbs in the Adelaide Region during the 1870's and 1880's.			
Person/Group	Norwood Council Sir Hans Heysen Sir Edwin T. Smith			
Event	1914 Extensions by Mr. McMichael (Theatre) 1959 Renovations to Grand Hall 1974 Modernization and renovations carried out.			
Architect/Builder	Beyer and Withall - Architects, front portion Joseph Lang - Builder, front portion.			
Design	- Front Portion: well proportioned civic design, unusually tall slender tower, well detailed, many interesting features. - Rear Portion: large brick box, recessed blind arcade relieves walls, awkward at ground level, overshadows front building.			
Construction	- Front Portion: squared and coursed stone walls, rendered quoins and details, corrugated iron and copper roofs. - Rear Portion: brick walls, some portions rendered, corrugated iron roof.			
Interior	- Front Portion: series of arched corridors, joinery and plaster details intact, new timber screens and partitions, some false ceilings. - Rear Portion: mixed, intact and impressive hall and foyer.			
Representation	One of 8 Town Halls of this era in the metro area, basically because of the tower this one would be number three behind Adelaide and Glenelg.			
Continuity	Generally sympathetic but very much larger in scale than its neighbours.			
Local Character	A very strong character element along The Parade, size makes it important.			
Landmark	Tower in particular is a focal point along The Parade, rear portion is not as striking despite its size.			
Alterations	- Front Portion: largely superficial upgradings, now partitions and false ceilings. - Rear: ground floor entirely remodelled, changes to Ground Floor exterior, hall & foyer intact.			
Condition	No obvious defects, well maintained.			
Compatibility	Still used as Local Government chambers and Town Hall.			

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### Supplementary Information

**Adaptation:** Particular care should be taken with the interior and exterior of the front building, although sympathetic adaptation of that interior should not be ruled out. The Theatre/Hall and its foyer, in the rear building, should receive sensitive treatment, while the remainder of that building should be treated with fewer restrictions. Because of its size though, any external alterations to the rear building should be carefully considered for their visual impact.

**Interpretation:** The building itself is a visual reminder of its historical and civic importance. A small display or plaque in the main public entry hall, with photos and text, should suffice but it could be supplemented with a brochure.

### History and Sources

The Norwood Town Hall, the city's second town hall, was completed in 1883. It bears all the distinctive signs of civic pride and progress, and shares with many buildings erected in the early 1880's the characteristics of manifested Victorian prosperity. Kensington and Norwood were first settled in 1838 and the town of Norwood laid out in 1847. This early settlement was proclaimed a municipality in 1853, and built the first town hall in Adelaide on the S.E. corner of The Parade and George Street. As time went by, the town hall became inadequate for civic needs and a larger, grander town hall was considered necessary. In response to a competition called by the council, 12 designs for a new town hall were submitted. The winning entry of Mr. J.H. Hollingsworth was later substituted by Messrs. Beyer and Withall's design, on the grounds of cost. One of the requirements called for in the design was the incorporation of a Grand Hall, located at the rear of the Council Chambers. Messrs. Beyer and Withall's design featured the lavish use of arches throughout the two storey section of the building, a form favoured in their design of the Largs Pier Hotel. On the 29th June, 1882, Joseph Lang signed the contract to build the new town hall for a price of £6,709.5.0. He later received a further £300 to complete the tower, which in the 1890's was extended a further 11 feet. This was done in order to accommodate a grand clock donated by Sir Edwin T. Smith. Selected by Sir Edwin in London, it arrived in pieces and was assembled by a local watchmaker. The clock, actuated by weights which fell 65' in the tower, required manual winching every 5 days. Necessary extensions to the tower cost £510, of which Sir Edwin donated £400. When finally set in motion by Lady Smith on the 31st November, 1890, the gift proved a mixed blessing to the population. During 1891, a deputation asked that the clock be silenced during the night. One less patient resident resorted to violence, shooting the western face of the clock in protest.

In the rented office space, James Ashton ran a private Art School for years, notable in that one of its students was Sir Hans Heysen.

A number of alterations to the building have taken place over the years. In 1912, plans were drawn up for a major concert hall and theatre located above the existing grand hall. The architect, Mr. McMichael, designed a spacious theatre, which when opened in 1914-15, was the largest of its kind in suburban Adelaide.

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### History and Sources

Complete with orchestra pit, the stage is flanked by rooms on 3 levels and has a large basement leading up into the orchestra pit. Pressed metal ceilings adorn both the Theatre and foyer, the latter also featuring three stained glass skylights lit artificially. A projection room, known as a bio box, was added for picture shows. Since removed, its platform can still be seen between the front and rear roof lines of the building.

Renovations to the Grand Hall were carried out in 1959, followed in 1974 by further extensive renovations. The latter converted the front banquet hall on the 1st floor into Council Chambers and mayoral parlour. Alterations on the ground floor removed the original timber staircase on the western near side of the chambers and extended office space in the original Mayor's Parlour and Council Chambers on the eastern side of the building. The alterations have been achieved with the retention of distinctive arches throughout the entrance hall of the building.

Located on the north-west corner of The Parade and George Street, the Norwood Town Hall dominates The Parade. It is historically significant because of its representation of the development of the municipality, and the prosperity of the early 1880's, a period when many grand-scale buildings occurred.

### Sources:

Dan Manning, Honorary Historian, Kensington/Norwood Council.

Francesco Bonato: The old, new Town Hall. Paper, Department of Arch., Univ. of Adelaide, 1978.

L.T.O. Searches

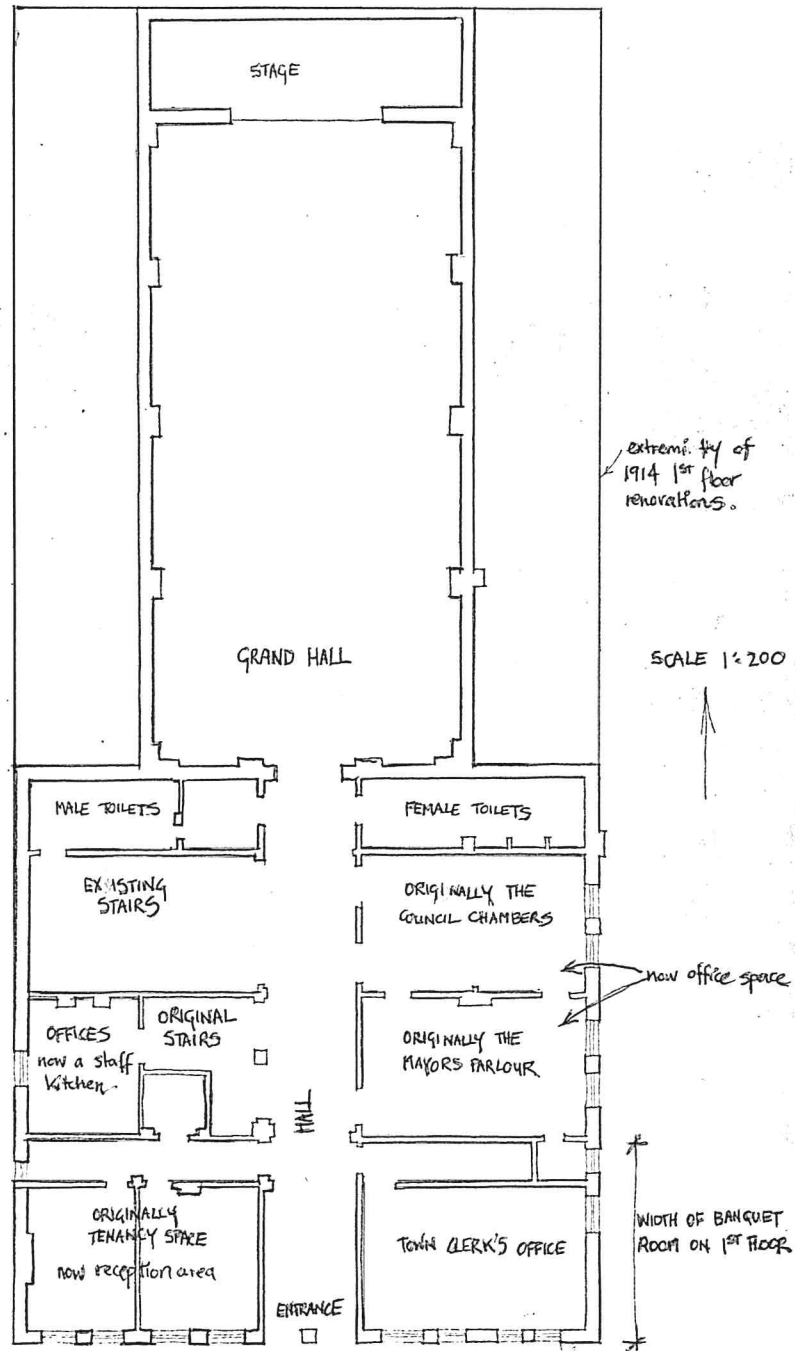
A.J. Peake & D. Manning: Kensington & Norwood Sketchbook, Rigby 1976.

G. Gooden: Fifty Years History of the Town of Kensington & Norwood. July 1853 to July 1903. FAC. Autaprint 1978.

## Chronology

- 1838 Kensington Norwood settled.
- 1847 Town of Norwood laid out.
- 1859 Land bought on S.E. corner of The Parade and George Street - £130.  
Plans drawn up by Messrs. Alderman and Perry. Messrs. Boot and Terrels offer for building at a cost of £775 accepted.  
Foundation Stone laid by Mayor on July 30th, 1859, making it the first Town Hall in Adelaide.
- Oct. 25,  
1881 Council recommended to ratepayers to empower them to borrow £10,000 for new town hall - block 160' x 173' purchased - Henry Gasquoine paid £115 solatium to quit. Sum met equally by council and owner of the land, George Scarfe.
- 12 designs received - prizes offered £75 (1st) and £25 second. Design by J.H. Hollingsworth was chosen as best, but construction costs considered too high ∴ Messrs. Beyer and Withall chosen instead (Largs Pier Hotel). Part of design requirement was for a Grand Hall at £6,000.
- 29/6/1882 Joseph Lang signed contract to put up structure for £6,709.5.0 - a further £300 given to Mr. Lang to complete tower.
- 28/9/1882 Foundation stone laid by mayor, Mr. Thomas Caterer (load bearing freestone masonry/stone work clad with pilasters with doric capitals on both tower and building).
- 30/7/1883 Opened by Sir W.C.F. Robinson, Governor.
- 1893 Sir Hans Heysen attended private art school run by James Ashton.
- 1912 Plans drawn for a major concert hall and theatre to be situated above existing Grand Hall. Marble foundation stone laid by Mrs. H.J. Holden 7/11/1914.
- 1959 Grand Hall on ground floor renovated and modernised.
- 1974 Further renovations - Banquet Hall on 1st floor converted into council chambers - remainder became a mayoral parlour.  
Ground floor renovated - original staircase destroyed.

# GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF NORWOOD TOWN HALL



(From paper by F. Bonato, Arch. Dept., Adelaide University, 1978)