

Investigation of Significance Statements of Heritage Impact (SOHI)

Proposed demolition of the Former School of Arts Building, 98 Bank Street Molong

Client: Cabonne Council



Figure 1: image showing Molong School of Arts courtesy Central West Daily

'Cabonne residents were offered the benefit of funding for a modern library and community learning centre in the heart of Molong by the parliamentary Secretary for Western NSW, Rick Colless on 17th March 2019. \$5 million in state government funding was granted.

Date 25th May 2020

This investigation of significance and the following Statement of Heritage Impact is required because the proposed new Cabonne Community Centre was formerly designed to occupy two lots in Bank Street: the former Supper Room at Lot B DP155735 (96 Bank Street), and a residence on Lot 432, DP 1070957, 94 Bank Street.

The proposal for redevelopment as a larger Community Centre with Auditorium has now been extended to include Lot 2, DP1082943, 98 bank Street where the former School of Arts stands. That building will be demolished, and a new auditorium constructed there, with carparking.

A heritage Impact statement was formerly written to cover the demolition of two buildings on the first two lots, and this report should be referred to in its entirety: 'Heritage Impact for Proposed Library and Community facilities' by Complete Urban PL. It is sometimes referred to in this report and acknowledged.

None of the three buildings to be demolished are listed as individual items of heritage significance on the LEP although they are within the Molong Conservation Area and the former Supper Room and School of Arts buildings contribute to the historic streetscape of Bank Street which extends from 1-100 Bank Street. They are also in the vicinity of some heritage listed items, namely item I162 St John's Church, item I178 the Town Hall including Soldiers Memorial (they are both on the opposite side of Bank Street) and item I179 Hawthorne House at 100 Bank Street on the same side.

By 'Impact' this SoHI report covers any effect that may alter the historic significance of the listed place. With demolition it is an affect that is both visual and physical. However, having an 'impact' on a heritage place does not mean that such a proposal cannot proceed. The description of the impact will enable Cabonne Council Planning staff and their heritage adviser to determine whether to approve such a development, and if the impact is acceptable.

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Figure 2 Artists impression of the proposed new buildings courtesy Architects King + Campbell

Summary

Cabonne Council proposes to extend its plans for a new community facility in Bank Street. By demolishing the former School of Arts a new auditorium can be added to the functions previously proposed. The uses already included in the design are a library, meeting rooms, amenities and carparking.

The buildings to be demolished are the former School of Arts building, the former Supper Room and a residence at 94- 98 Bank Street. The buildings are not heritage listed items. They are however within the Molong Conservation Area of 1-100 Bank Street.

The building group makes a **visual contribution** to Bank Street, Molong. Their shape, bulk and scale have set the design parameters for the newly proposed structures with gables a strong feature facing Bank Street. In this way the streetscape contribution will be continued.

The former Arts building has been altered in many small ways and large; it has had several changes in use resulting in façade and fabric that is lacking the original detail and integrity of the past.

The overall **heritage impact** due to the demolition of the School of Arts, former Supper Room and residence from the streetscape will be minimal. The new building will provide a more cohesive infill in Bank Street and balance the similar bulk of heritage items opposite.

The important Social and Cultural Significance of the School of Arts can be carried through to the new structures through a thoughtful interpretation plan.

Molong Bank Street Conservation Area

The Molong heritage conservation area extends from 1-100 Bank Street. Its statement of significance reads:

The defined Urban Conservation Area contains a collection of architecturally important buildings that are grouped together in a compact form. Bank Street is unusual in that the groups of retail buildings, some with original verandah posts to the street alignment, are diagonally opposite on each block forming a significant townscape in a close physical setting.

Its physical description reads:

Molong is laid out in a traditional grid pattern with wide streets. It is situated on the Molong River and is bordered by hills to the east and west. The Urban Conservation Area includes that part of Bank Street between Edward Street and Watson St. The buildings in the street are a mixture of late 19th and twentieth century and are tied together by a compact form on each of the two street blocks and by several original shop verandahs with posts at street alignment. Bank buildings listed by the National Trust complemented by a number of significant and non-disruptive buildings.

The urban development rises to the west of Bank Street joining a natural boundary. The vista to the east is significant with a steep hill, with little development, joining a close physical backdrop to the town. The hill is important with regard to the visual quality of the Urban Conservation Area, development should be controlled.



Figure 3 View down Bank Street – Wikipedia



Figure 4 Historical view up bank Street, Bruce Lewington. Unknown date.

The group of buildings involved in this development 96-98 Bank Street form one of those 'compact forms' and are well elevated on the hill. They would be well known to the whole community as a socially significant part of the town's past. 96-98 are positioned within a residential setting to each side but opposite the large civic building of the Town Hall.



Figure 5 Streetscape 94-98 Bank Street Molong courtesy Google Earth

The strength of this visual group is assisted by a stronger presence on the opposite side of Bank Street including the Anglican church building and the Council Chambers – former Town Hall.

The proposed redevelopment of the site will be of similar bulk and scale to the existing as shown below by the elevational diagram. The hatched area being the existing, and the dotted line the proposed building. The scale of the new building is larger to the east side where it partly

replaces a residence, but it is in a good proportional relationship to the proposed new auditorium. (west side).

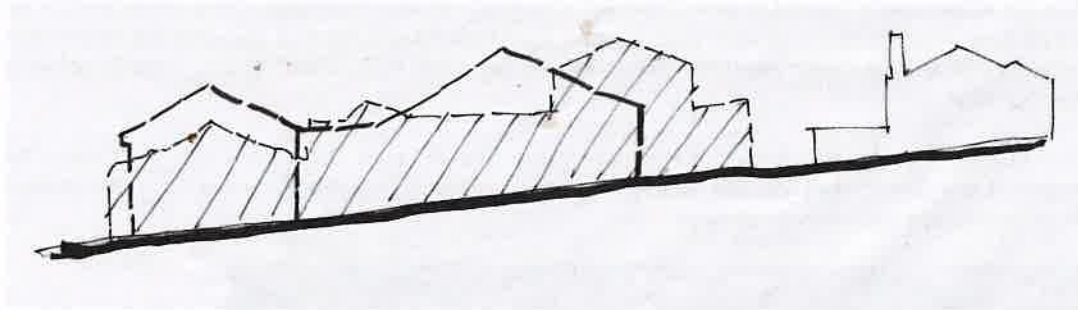


Figure 6 Rough diagram to illustrate the elevational shape facing Banks Street. Hatched area is the existing buildings. Barbara Hickson.

NOTE: The Architects, King + Campbell, have drawn a more accurate diagram of the before and after silhouettes and the site plan. Please refer to their final DA drawings.

Similarly, a dotted outline of proposed buildings is superimposed on the existing structures on plan. The proposed building present as good infill, mindful of the buildings of the past and in suitable scale and character with the former two gables echoing the former Arts Hall and Former Supper Room. The break to the east side, with its setback from Shields Lane, allows for the change back to residential development below this point to be softened. This is also



enhanced by the roof of the new building on this side being cantilever forward while the building bulk is set back-allowing it to look lighter in the streetscape and providing an opportunity for vegetation to screen this view.

Figure 7 Dotted outline of proposed buildings superimposed on existing building footprint.

Heritage listed buildings in the vicinity

The site of the redevelopment in Bank Street is in the vicinity of several heritage items. These are I162 St John's Church, and I178 – Connelly's Store (former) Town Hall including Soldiers Memorial and shop on the opposite side of Bank Street and I179 – Hawthorne House at 100 Bank Street, Molong. Refer to council's Heritage MAP 004-AA.

Two of these buildings are large scale heritage items: The St Johns Church and the Town Hall. The proposed new development opposite will offer a stronger scale and unity of building that can better balance in the streetscape with the heritage items.



Figure 8 Aerial view showing heritage item 'Hawthorne House' at 100 Bank Street to the right-hand side, courtesy Architects King + Campbell



Figure 9 View up Bank Street showing item 'Hawthorne House' at 100 Bank Street to the right-hand side, courtesy Architects King + Campbell.

In the proposal for the community Centre the buildings are set back further from the front boundary and from the western boundary than at present. The proposed buildings are not at a greater scale at the west end.

Although 100 bank Street is well screened by vegetation the continued scale and improved setback of the proposed Community Centre will alleviate any 'crowding' of the heritage items and afford it a better presence in the streetscape, particularly from the north east.



Figure 10 Close up image of Hawthorne cottage, SHI data heritage form. Barbara Hickson

History

The SHI data form for the history of Bank Street Conservation Area notes:

The township of Molong is one of the oldest in the Western Districts, a stockade being in existence in 1822. Attention was first focussed on the district by the discovery of copper where mining operations were in evidence in 1845. The settlement was fostered by the grazing opportunities. A government stockyard was established at Molong in 1845, and a military guard installed. Land was reserved for a village and the town was laid out in 1848. Development was slow and the town was incorporated as a municipal district in 1878. Between 1875 to 1879 land was 'rushed' in the district, when 500 selections were taken up. The rail reached Molong in 1891.

THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND THE FORMER SUPPER ROOM

Plans for a School of Arts at Molong really began in earnest when the member for Molong, Mr. Smith, promised in December 1876 to 'endeavour to have £300 placed upon the Estimates' for 1877 as a Government subsidy towards the erection of the Molong School of Arts.¹

The following year the School of Arts committee had already raised some money. Many of the leading citizens having given £10 each. The Committee then purchased suitable land in Bank Street, Lot 6 and part of Lot 5, from Mr. Robert Shield at the favourable price of £62. It is possible that Robert Shield had built his first house on this same land in c. 1852.

Beside the land was a rough private laneway, also owned by Shield that lead other property of his at the rear. This land was much later taken up by the Molong Council (Now Cabonne Council) when it was then widened, drained, and straightened by them.

Robert Shield was, at about the time of the land sale, a local Council Alderman and for a while, the mayor. He had married Rebecca, who was born at Grantham (England) in 1818 and together they had migrated to Australia, living first in Sydney for a year, but arriving in Molong c. 1851/2. Rebecca was a grandniece of Captain Cook, the famous navigator, and the discoverer of Eastern Australia. (Rebecca was buried at Forbes cemetery in 1902)

¹ The Armidale Express 29th Dec 1876

School of Arts Bank Street Molong

The 1877 the School of Arts committee had accumulated the nucleus of a library and soon after called tenders for preliminary site work and foundations.

In July 1878 Sir Henry Parkes came through Molong. It was said that he then 'Opened the School of Arts' but at that stage only the foundations could have been completed.

The foundation stone for the building was laid in the following year in April 1879 by Mr. Alderman Hughes. (The mayor was away at the time). A time capsule containing the Molong newspaper and other documents was duly placed at the south-west corner of the building. The next month the work was under construction by the local contractors Messrs. Gadd & Neville, and James from Orange. They had two other projects at that time in Molong being the Telegraph Offices for £1680, and the Public School at £3300.

They worked fast and by October the School of Arts was opened; the first major function was probably the grand concert held there on the 11 October 1879 to raise funds to alleviate the building debt. More than 300 people attended and £23 was raised.



Figure 11 Part of the Parish map of Molong showing Shields Lane and the site of the School of Arts and Former Supper Room highlighted.

In July 1888 Robert Shield left Molong for Sydney in order to get treatment for facial cancer but indicating that he may stay away. He had been a well-respected alderman and townsman for Molong. Mr. Robert Shields died in 1890.

One of his sons Thomas Shield followed in his father footsteps also as a local Councillor of many years.

By July 1891 the committee for the Hall made a decision to supplement the facilities with a Supper Room, plus facilities for a Ladies Reading Room and community and council meeting rooms. This was 'referred to a sub-committee for investigation and report'. In July Mr. E. Finch provided specifications for a corrugated iron room to be built, of the same length as the hall, with an entrance to it. However, after discussions the construction material was changed to brick and the specifications revised. Functions were held and funds raised towards the proposed construction.

By May 1893, the Supper Room was up and functioning. A small improvement was then added to create a small space that could be heated for book readers. It was then that the facilities, School of Arts Hall plus Supper Room, really came to the forefront of the social and educational life in Molong

Possibly one of the earliest major social functions was the Molong Social Club Ball. As was the custom at all social gatherings in Molong since then, the Hall and Supper Room were decorated to look very handsome, 'as well as tempting' having been decked out by a 'bevy of ladies'.



Figure 12 The Arts Hall decked out for a function in 2018 Courtesy Audrey Kerr

By 1905 a report (Australian Town and Country) said there were 10 rooms and a hall in the building which included a billiard table and a reading room.²

Through the years many socials followed including Hospital Balls, Juvenile Balls and Engineers Balls. There was a myriad of occasions to celebrate in the School of Arts Hall and Supper Room.

The facilities also served for various sports such as skating, music, exhibitions and memorials and other celebration and as after about 1930, as a movie theatre. During these years, the School of Arts and Supper Room must have been at the very centre of social life in Molong.

Around 1909 the Molong Council took over Shields Lane from the Trustees of Robert Shield. The lane had been a problem for some time with drainage discharging onto Bank Street and causing damage. The Council added additional land owned by Mr Parslow from Lot 4 to the east so that it could be properly aligned and drained. Today it frames the Town Hall building opposite.



Figure 13 The improvement in Shields Lane framed the view of the Molong Town Hall.

In January 1960 drawings for the alterations and additions to the façade of the Supper Room were completed by architects Louis & Roberson & Son. These plans changed the buildings appearance significantly, obscuring the gable end that had tied it visually to the Hall. At the same time the façade of the Hall was rendered and simplified and the sign on the hall gable 'School of Arts' was removed or covered over. New steel columns were also proposed in the hall

² Complete Urban SoHI p.11

indicating a lack of structural stability. Refer Plan Drawings included in previous SoHI report by Complete Urban PL.

Some of the many Organisations that used the hall

Apart from the major function of community celebrations, recitals and the library, the facilities of the School of Arts Hall plus Supper Room, were used for by many organisations and commercial interests. These tenants probably provided an income for the upkeep of the hall. These uses included: Molong Argus Newspaper, Salvation Army; Molong CWA; Molong Pastures Protection Board; Molong RSL and the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos.

Molong Argus Newspaper: Although there was some early attempt to start an Argus Newspaper in 1876 it seems the Molong Argus did not commence until 1895. The National Advocate in Bathurst reported '*We have received from Mr. James Anderson, publisher, the first copy of the Molong Argus. The best and worst thing we can say of the paper is, that if the district in which it circulates is as good as the paper, it is very good indeed.*'

Salvation Army

The presence of the Salvation Army in Molong and their relationship to the School of Arts is recorded in many newspaper articles. The following examples illustrate this relationship:

November 1888: *³The Salvation Army is commencing work in this town. They contemplate renting the new store lately erected by Mr. Shields next the School of Arts, and it is most probable that before many weeks we shall witness the opening.*

November 1908 *a unique ceremony was performed viz., the celebration of a double wedding under the auspices of Salvation Army. For weeks past the members of the local corps—more especially the female portion —have been busy preparing for the great event, and numbers of townspeople waited impatiently to see how a "Hallelujah Wedding" was conducted. As it was anticipated that the local barracks would not hold the number who desired to be present, so the School of Arts Hall was engaged for the occasion.*⁴

In September 1916 *The Salvationists of Molong held their annual self-denial effort on Saturday and Monday last, in the shape of a Naval Fair in the School of Arts.*⁵

August 1917 the Salvation Army conducted a spring fair at the School of Arts.

³ Molong Express

⁴ Molong Argus 20 November 1908

⁵ Molong Express 23 September 1916

School of Arts Bank Street Molong

November 1953 The Salvation Army had a visit from their commissioner Mr. Joshua James and his wife. The Molong Express wrote: *The Salvation Army will conduct a barbecue at 5.30pm, tomorrow afternoon, to be followed by a band program, the Wellington Band at 8pm. On Sunday, a holiness meeting will be conducted at 11am, and at 3pm Commissioner James will deliver an- address 'Towards A Better World,' The Molong School of Arts. Commissioner and Mrs. James will also take part in the Salvation meeting at the Salvation Army Hall (Citadel) at 7.30 on Sunday evening.*

*'The Salvation Army celebrated 125 years in Molong (December 2013) with a special service held in the Community Hall. Several historical items were exhibited, including the old Molong Corps drum, which still gives a good sound. Even though the Molong Corps no longer exists the work of the army goes on in the town through the faithful work of Soldiers of the Orange Corps. Many of our corps members are descendants of the original pioneer Salvationists.'*⁶

Molong CWA

The Molong CWA held balls, socials and Bridge card events at the hall and held meetings there.

The Pastures Protection Board was probably a very long running tenant with an early meeting at the School of Arts from December 1906, and was still there in 1939 when *'Mr. Stanger mentioned the necessity for a coat of oil paint to brighten up the Pastures Protection board room'*.⁷

Molong RSL Anzac services were held in the School of Arts 3 May 1928

The **Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos** was formed in November 1947 at Molong on by Sir Thomas Byrnes, ROH, G-P (N.S.W.).

Theatre Molong was established in the School of Arts for live theatre and movies from around 1934 showing movies such as THE LITTLE COLONEL, BROADWAY BILL, CAPTAIN JANUARY and ESPIONAGE.

Library. This was the original function of the hall. The proposers of the School of Arts had accumulated a reasonable library when in 1877 *'leading citizens having given £10 each and there are also about 100 volumes of standard works, the nucleus of a library, valued at £40.'*

⁶ Molong history News 29 December 2013

⁷ Molong Express 17th June 1939

The present library is located in a non-purpose-built accommodation. The relocation to a new purpose built space will strengthen library usage.

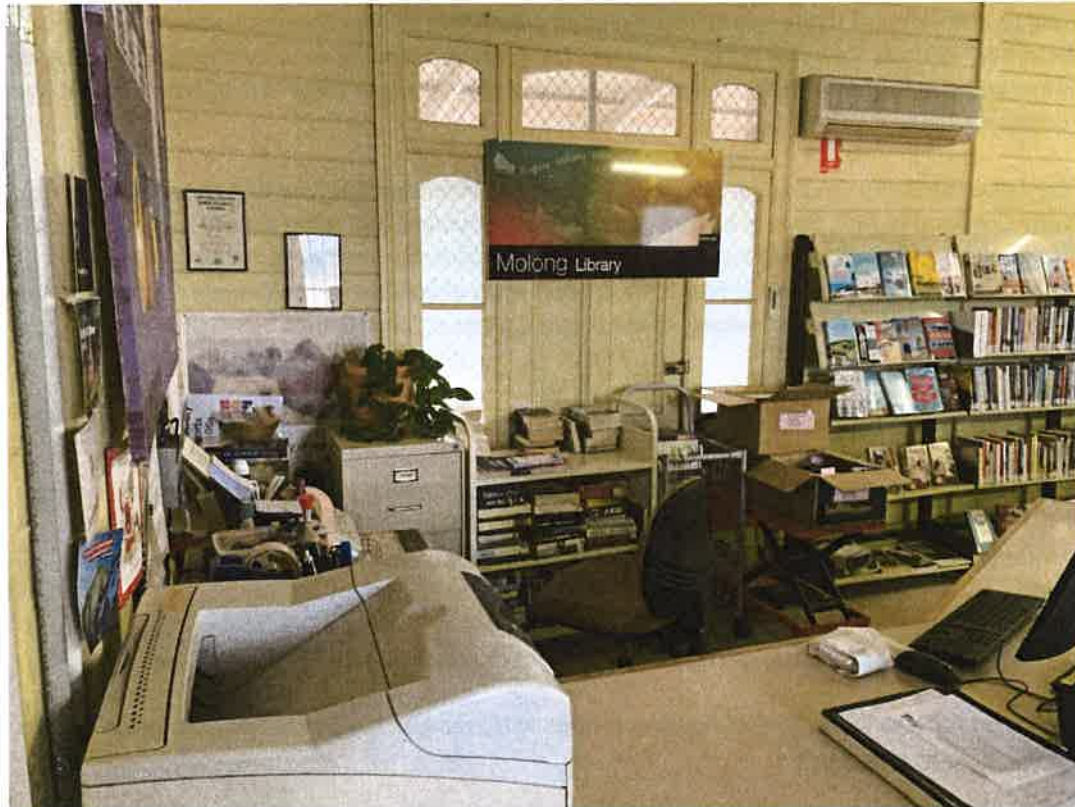


Figure 14 The present Library function located in the former Railway Station building. Image Courtesy Architects King + Campbell

Physical description

The School of Arts is a masonry building with a tall gable on the north end above a two storied facade addressing the streetscape. It was built in many stages.

The roof is corrugated iron clad and the degree of rust also indicates different dates of repair. The original brick walls are constructed in English Bond with rendered low arched window and door heads. The timber framed roof is finished beneath with a mansard shaped ceiling.

While the ceiling and the walls appear to have been re-lined, there are still original ceiling vent roses in the ceiling.

The ground floor is a timber framed floor and apparently has been retained. The upper floor, once the projection level, was probably an addition c. 1930s, as indicated by this roof being at a slightly different pitch to the main roof sheeting. There may also have been an addition to the rear as indicated by a change in wall cladding.

The main front gable has a pitch at approx. 27-30 degrees beneath which are three narrow low arched windows. The ground floor has a recessed porch. The whole façade is now rendered (c. 1960) and painted off white, with a short flight of steps to the recessed porch.

The original English bond brick fabric is visible at the western side, with original rendered flat arched windows. At least one flat arch now filled in below, indicates a bricked-up opening in the side wall. The rendered arches are in a poor condition. A buttress added to the side wall and nearby a steel tie rod, may have been after thoughts to stabilise the wall. Repairs to the brick work over the years can be seen.



Figure 15 English Bond Brickwork with rendered heads and a stepped attached buttress. Windows have horizontal panes so were possibly replaced in the late 1930s. Image courtesy Architects King + Campbell

The brick walls were built at a time when there was usually no damp-proof course (DPC) inserted in the walls, although occasionally there was one of stone. Over a long period of time walls without a DPC take up the salts from ground water and become 'damp'. If the walls can breathe (allow salty moisture to reach the air) then there is no great problem, except occasional need to repoint the spalled mortar joints.

However, when the walls are rendered, as in this case, (the whole facade was rendered in c. 1960) then the salts have nowhere to go. They will usually travel inwards as the easiest path, which may be to the internal surface. Some of the internal walls are reclad and this will hide the movement of salts.

This results in an unhealthy building.



Figure 16 A fully rendered façade today.
Photo Courtesy architects King + Campbell



Figure 17 Signs of falling damp. Courtesy
architects King + Campbell.

There are timber weatherboards and fibrous plaster clad additions at the rear. The side windows with horizontal sashes which indicate replacement in c. late 1930s.

Overall, it is a modest building, unremarkable in its detail showing many alterations and additions in its elevation. Being a mid-Victorian era building it was probably never lavish but simple and functional.

The Former Supper Room as previously noted in Compete Urban PL SoHI is a building of poor architectural merit and has low heritage value. Renovated in the 1960s it does not provide a good example of that period either and does not meet current regulatory standards.

Condition: In summary the building fabric of School of Arts building looks well-presented internally, however it is generally in poor condition due to rendering and covering the face brickwork, the lack of a damp course, many alterations and additions and structural instability. It lacks integrity.



Figure 18 This rear view of the hall shows at least six stages of construction.



Figure 19 View of the façade of the School of Arts and original Supper Room whose façades were altered in the renovations of the 1960s. . Source: image supplied by Cabonne Council – the Mitchell Room c1960 (Borrowed from the report by Complete urban)



Figure 20 Two Internal views of the Hall. One prepared for a function in 2018 and one of the vacant hall. Courtesy Audrey Kerr, Cabonne Council.

Understanding significance

A statement of significance provides the principal basis for future management and/or planning. To make this assessment we examine the ways the place is of value to the community using the heritage criteria provided by the Heritage Branch of the Department of Planning.

HERITAGE CRITERIA

4.1.1) Criterion (a) – a place is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history.

The School of Arts Building (site and foundations only) was officially opened by Sir Henry Parkes on July 1878. The foundation stone and a time capsule were laid in the following year in April 1879 by Mr. Alderman Hughes. The building was opened in 1879.

4.1.2) Criterion (b) - an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history.

Many local community and business groups have made long and short term use of the hall and its former Supper Room including the Molong Argus Newspaper, Salvation Army; Molong CWA; Molong Pastures Protection Board; Molong RSL and the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos and as Theatre Molong. The land also has a strong connection with the Shield family and was originally owned by Mr. Robert Shield who was an early settler, alderman and townsman of note.

4.1.3) Criterion (c) - an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

The building is a modest functional space that has been developed and modified to serve the community for over 140 years. There are many small alterations and additions, but the core building brick and timber fabric remains largely intact.

4.1.4) Criterion (d) - an item has strong or special association with a community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Serving the community initially as an education facility as the School of Arts library, the building facilities were soon extended in 1893 to include a Supper Room. These combined facilities served the community widely providing a venue for balls, celebrations, exhibitions, recitals and movies; social, commercial and civic functions.

4.1.5) Criterion (e) - an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history.

As a multipurpose centre over 140 years of service the building's varied often accommodated the most important events in the history of Molong. In the process of demolition, the site has potential to illustrate construction methods of the mid-Victorian period and possibly earlier uses through archaeology, and a time capsule.

4.1.6) Criterion (f) - an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history.

Not used.

4.1.7) Criterion (g) - an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's.

The Arts Hall and Former Supper Room formed a community facility that was typical of many country towns where a central community space provided space for all manner of social and cultural events.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historically significant, the commencement of construction was 'officially opened' by Sir Henry Parkes on July 1878, followed with the laying of the foundation stone and time capsule in April 1879 by Molong Councillor Mr. Alderman Hughes. The site is also associated with the original owner of the land Mr. Robert Shield, an early settler, alderman and townsman of note.

The former School of Arts building is a modest functional space that has been altered and added to many times to serve the community as the hub of cultural and social events for over 140 years.

Socially significant the School of Arts and constructed as an education facility, the building has been adapted and extended to provide facilities that have served the community as an important venue for celebrations, exhibitions, balls, recitals, sports and movies.

The building group is culturally significant as it accommodated many local community and business groups including local council chambers, the Library, Molong Argus Newspaper, Salvation Army, Molong CWA, Molong Pastures Protection Board, ANZAC celebrations, and the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos.

School of Arts Bank Street Molong



Figure 21 Image of the Molong Community centre. Courtesy architects King + Campbell PL

Heritage Objectives

Heritage objectives for significant places can be summarised as follows

- To conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and places.
- To minimise the alteration of significant fabric of a building or place.
- Minimise the disturbance of a significant site.
- Manage the effect of new developments in the vicinity of a heritage item.

However, it should also be possible to

- Provide suitable maintenance of a heritage item.
- Keeping the place up to date and relevant for service and accessibility.

Comment on the proposed changes the site

The existing buildings (School of Arts and Supper Room) have a low to moderate rating of heritage significance and were not listed as heritage items in the LEP. However, there is a great community significance in the role that the buildings have played at the centre of Molong's cultural and social activities. The overall heritage impact of the new works, and the removal of the former School of Arts can be minimised because the replacement buildings are sympathetic and

- The proposed new building are generally complementary to the existing building
- The proposed infill buildings are of a similar scale and shape to the existing. It will be a 'good neighbour' to the Bank Street Streetscape and to 'heritage items' in the vicinity.
- The proposed new building can provide continuity in the social and cultural significance that the building group has provided in the past.

Statement of Heritage Impact

Date: 25 May 2020

Prepared by Barbara Hickson Architect and Heritage Adviser PO Box 610 Mudgee NSW.

Phone: 0263721186

Prepared for: Public Works Advisory (PWA) on behalf of Cabonne Council.

Address and property description of the proposed development: 98 Bank Street Molong

A brief description of proposal.

Initially the project in 2016-7 involved the demolition of the former supper room and a residence on the corner of Bank Street and Shields Lane. This project has been extended now to include the demolition of the Former School of Arts (Community Hall) located at 98 Bank Street on Lot 2 DP 1082943 to construct a more complete Community Centre. The architects King & Campbell Pty Ltd have prepared the documents that will accompany this application.

This document, the SoHI, and the Investigation of Significance assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development will affect the heritage significance of the existing streetscape, items in the vicinity, and the significance of this site.

The following questions are adapted from the Heritage Office guidance document.



Figure 22 View of the former Arts Hall and Supper Room from Bank Street. Courtesy Architects King + Campbell PL.

1. why the item is of heritage significance	<p>The items to be demolished are of low to moderate significance and are not listed items. Due to considerable alteration and addition to the fabric the original items have changed significantly in their presentation to the streetscape. The statement of significance reads:</p> <p><i>Historically significant, the commencement of construction was 'officially opened' by Sir Henry Parkes on July 1878, followed with the laying of the foundation stone and time capsule in April 1879 by Molong Councillor Mr. Alderman Hughes. The site is also associated with the original owner of the land Mr. Robert Shield, an early settler, alderman and townsman of note.</i></p> <p><i>The former School of Arts building is a modest functional space that has been altered and added to many times to serve the community as the hub of cultural and social events for over 140 years.</i></p> <p><i>Socially significant the School of Arts, constructed as an education facility, has then been adapted and extended to provide facilities that have served the community socially as a venue for balls, celebrations, exhibitions, recitals, sports events, and movies.</i></p> <p><i>The building group is culturally significant as it accommodated many local community and business groups including the Library, Molong Argus Newspaper, Salvation Army, Molong CWA, Molong Pastures Protection Board, ANZAC celebrations, and the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos.</i></p>
2. what positive impact will the proposed works have on its significance.	<p>The proposed new works will result in the demolition of these buildings. The positive aspect is that the replacement facilities enable the cultural and social significance of the existing and past buildings to have continuity into the future.</p> <p>They provide facilities that are accessible, safe, and suitable in scale and bulk.</p> <p>They present as well-designed infill buildings that can provide a more cohesive façade than the present buildings that have been greatly affected in appearance and integrity by alterations in the 1960s. The proposal will strengthen the streetscape and present as an historical reminder of the past. The proposed building will not detract from heritage items in the vicinity</p>

3. what negative impact will the proposed works have on its significance.	<p>There will be a loss of historical fabric which is over 140 years old. These buildings will be removed completely, not simply altered, as in the past. A record of the existing buildings and their demolition is required.</p>
4. what measures are proposed to mitigate the negative impacts	<p>The significance of the building can be read as the significance of the site as the centre of cultural and social life in Molong for many decades. Although the building will be replaced that cultural and social significance should continue.</p> <p>The overall building form, materials and shape have been designed to remember the past. Their bulk and scale also better reflect the heritage items opposite in Bank Street making this a more cohesive group on the hill in Bank Street.</p> <p>The more consistent setback, access and better pathways will make this community hub more accessible and inviting for public use.</p>
5. why were more sympathetic solutions not viable.	<p>The old School of Arts building has been modified so much that simply altering it again will not easily serve today's needs for accessibility, fire and structural safety, or for functionality in the 21st century.</p> <p>Although the building fabric of the School of Arts building looks well-presented internally, it is generally in poor condition due to the external façade being rendered covering the face brickwork, the lack of a damp course, and structural instability.</p>
6. Have all options for retention and adaptive reuse been explored? Can significant elements be retained?	<p>The design process has been a long one with many adjustments in the design. It would seem adaptive reuse again would only postpone an inevitable demolition in a few years or decades to come.</p> <p>Some significant elements of the heritage item can be kept although due to the many changes not a great deal is salvageable. For example, some original bricks from the school of arts could be reused on site in construction or pavement. If other original materials are found to be sound such as timber flooring or framing, then consideration should be given to reuse on the site,</p>

School of Arts Bank Street Molong

	or in Molong. They should be disposed of thoughtfully.
7. Is demolition essential at this time or can it be postponed in case future circumstances make its retention more feasible?	<p>As noted above postponing demolition would not afford a long-term solution.</p> <p>Demolition should be recorded to illustrate the way this building was constructed and be especially mindful that there may be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Time capsule under the foundations in the original Arts Hall to the south west corner of the original building footprint laid down in 1879, that may be recovered and valued. • A footprint of an early residence, the first home of Robert Shield and his wife Rebecca who built a house in the vicinity in 1852. • The Halls framed timber floor may have protected relics below it for over 140 years.
8. Has the advice of a heritage consultant been sought?	This document has been prepared by a heritage Consultant.
9. If demolition is a result of the poor condition of the fabric, can it be repaired?	Yes. Both its poor condition and its inflexibility to meet current standards in flexibility, access, and fire safety.
10. Is the partial demolition minimised? (e.g. creating large square openings in internal walls rather than removing the wall altogether)?	No. The demolition proposed is wholesale. Further alterations and additions will no longer suffice to meet needs.
11. Does the proposed use, contribute to the significance of the heritage item?	Yes. The proposed use of the site and the new buildings will continue as a socially and culturally significant place for the community.
12. Why is the new development required to be adjacent to a heritage item?	The new development is within the Bank Street Conservation Area which is adjacent to a heritage item, and across the street from others. This is the best place for the new cultural centre to continue the significance of the site.

13. Is the new development visually sympathetic to the heritage item?	Yes. The building form, materials and shape have been designed to remember the past. Their bulk and scale reflects the heritage items opposite in and creates a cohesive group on the hill in the Bank Street Conservation Area. The continuity of scale and form in the new infill, and the more generous but consistent setback also acts as a good neighbour to the heritage listed residence at 100 Bank Street.
14. Is the space around the heritage item large enough to allow for the retention of its significance?	The original building are not retained. But the new building will sit in the space in an acceptable way allowing good aspect and prospect for it and heritage items in the vicinity, allowing them to fully retain their significance.
15. Does the new development affect views to, and from, the heritage items in the vicinity?	Improving the streetscape through the construction of a new building sympathetic to the past will improve the views to and from the heritage items in its vicinity.
16. Does the new development affect archaeological deposits	As in item 5 above the construction needs to be mindful of potential archaeology. See Recommendations to follow.
17. Existing landscape elements	NA
18. Signage	NA. Refer to separate application.

School of Arts Bank Street Molong

Recommendations

The existing community facilities including the former School of Arts Hall are of moderate to low significance overall and their replacement with the proposed new facilities, including an auditorium, will form a thoughtful and acceptable infill development to Bank Street Conservation Area and not detract from heritage items in the vicinity.

However, the cultural and social significance in these early buildings that have served the community in a myriad of functions for over 140 years needs to be considered in the future interpretation of the place so that that significance and memory of the past can flow through to the future and allow this development to *'reinforce the presence of a community hub'*⁸.

The proposed carparking and access from the rear will make good use of this underutilised land and not impact on the heritage area of Bank Street.

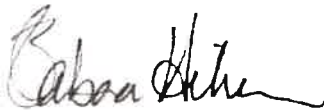
Further the community will have a facility that is accessible, functional and safe to current standards.

The following recommendations should be considered:

- Archaeology: Include in the construction certificate requirements the standard archaeological clause re the need to notify the Council and their heritage adviser should any relic be exposed in the process of the work. Be particularly mindful that there may be
 - A Time capsule under the foundations in the original Arts Hall to the south west corner of the original building footprint laid down in 1879.
 - There may be the footprint of an early residence, the first home of Robert Shield and his wife Rebecca who built a house in the vicinity in 1852.
 - Beneath old timber floors, especially those of the Victorian era there may be fragments of the past that should be recorded. It is not unusual for builders in that era to place items below the floor for 'good luck' such as odd shoes, a dead cat or children's toy. Record any finds.
- An Interpretations Plan: Consider a broad ranging interpretation plan that will enable the cultural and social significance of the existing and past buildings to have continuity with the future.
- An archival photographic record should be made of the building in its present state but also include images and details during demolition process of the original hall and former Supper Room that explains their construction. A copy of this record should be left in the library.

⁸ Complete Urban Consultants

- Archival records of the hall. There should be written records, plaques or memorials from the hall especially prior to its modernisation in 1960. if these can be sourced a record of them should be made left with the photographic record.
- Call for historic images from the public, externally and internally, for use in a record of the past uses of the hall.
- Be careful in disposing of the original bricks if they are sound and can be used in a suitable project. For example: Can some be used in the landscaping of the new proposed for the new community building.



Barbara Hickson

ARCHITECT AND HERITAGE ADVISER 25TH MAY 2020

Relevant Extracts from Trove Chronologically

30 March 1877 Land was procured: SMH

Efforts are being put forth by the School of Arts committee. A very suitable half-acre of land has been purchased in the main street, upon which the future hall will be erected. The price paid for the land was £62, and got as a favour at that price. There is a very nice sum already in hand, many of our leading citizens having given £10 each and there are also about 100 volumes of standard works, the nucleus of a library, valued at £40. Tenders will shortly be called for the preliminary work, foundations,

27 July 1878 Sir Henry Parkes at Molong, Australian Town and Country Journal.

AFTER opening the new School of Arts at Molong on Friday, on Friday last Sir Henry Parkes delivered the following Interesting speech in reply to the address presented on the occasion by the inhabitants .

26th April 1879 The Sydney Mail

The foundation-stone of the School of Arts Hall was laid on Wednesday by Mr. Alderman Hughes

(However, it was reported that the School of Arts Building, was officially opened prior to that date by Sir Henry Parkes on July 1876. **(The building was not constructed at this stage).**

10th May 1879 School of Arts under construction:⁹

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.-The tender of Messrs. Gadd, Neville, and James has been accepted for the new post and telegraph offices for £1680, the building to be Completed in eight months. This firm is also the contractors for the now public school, at £3300. This, with the large hall of the School of Arts now in course, of erection, will make Molong look a little livelier.

26 April 1879 The Maitland Mercury

In the unavoidable absence of the Mayor, the foundation-stone of the School of Arts Hall was laid to-day by Alderman Hughes. The contractor, Mr. James, of Orange, is pushing on the work vigorously, and a fine public hall will grace the town of Molong within three months. The principal residents attended the ceremony, and a 'bottle containing the Molong newspaper and other documents was duly placed at the south-west corner of the building.'

⁹ Australian Town & Country Journal 10th May 1879

May 1879 The School of Arts was open and functioning by May 1879 when a meeting was held there to promote the extension of the railway to Molong.¹⁰

11 October 1879 Australian Town and Country

A grand concert was hold here in the new hall of the School of Arts, on Friday night last, in aid of the funds of liquidating the debt on the building. The attendance was very good, and the handsome sum of £23 the proceeds of the entertainment-was netted on the occasion. Everyone seemed to bo pleased with the entertainment, which was creditably got up and very successful in every sense of the word. There could not have been much less than about 300 persons present. It was one of the best concerts ever got up here, barring the one that was held at the opening of the Roman Catholic Chapel, which was the best and grandest yet of all, and the most numerously attended.

July 1888 Molong Express

Mr. R. Shield. — On Wednesday of last week, Mr. R. Shield, one of the oldest residents of our district, took his departure for Sydney, whither he intends remaining indefinitely, if not altogether, his immediate object in going to the metropolis being to obtain special medical treatment of a dangerous cancerous growth which has formed on one of his cheeks. The permanent : absence of Mr. Shield from Molong, would be regretted by many in both our town and district, the interests of which he ever endeavoured to advance as an alderman and a townsman whose common, sense and honesty of purpose and general respect. In his advanced years of age much sympathy is also due to him in his affliction by so stubborn, and dis agreeable, if not dangerous,

July 1891 A School of Arts report in the Molong Express in June and July 1891 provides a glimpse into the workings of the Library and of additional plans to expand the facilities with a Former Supper Room and Ladies Reading Room, community, and council meetings.

It was decided to order Amateur Work an illustrated monthly magazine), to apply to the Government Printer for a copy of 'Wilkinson's 'Australian Magistrate,' and to invite tenders from several Sydney houses for the supply of the other works asked for. A committee was also appointed to prepare a list of works published by the Government Printer, which the committee intend to make application for.

A sub-committee,' to be called the Library Committee, was appointed, to have the oversight of the Library and reading-room, subject to the general committee. It was further decided to call for tenders from time to time for the purchase of the old magazines, the committee not pledging

¹⁰ Sydney Mail May 10, 1879

themselves to accept the highest or any tender. Due notice inviting the tenders to be posted in the reading room.

The questions of enlarging the former Supper Room at the rear of the hall, and providing a ladies' reading room, were introduced, and referred to a sub-committee for investigation and report. '

At the next meeting in July 1891 the plans were changed:

Mr. E. Finch laid upon the table specifications of an additional room proposed to be 'erected on the eastern side of the main building, and the full length of the hall, the additional room to be of corrugated iron with one or two entrances from the hall, to be available as a former Supper Room for balls etc. The feeling of the meeting was in favour of a brick erection and it was decided to adjourn the further consideration of this matter till next Friday night, when a special meeting will be held, and fresh specifications etc, to be obtained in the meantime.

12 May 1893 Molong Express

A portion of the former Supper Room is to be partitioned off, and a stove purchased with which to warm the room. A donation of books to the School of Arts was made by Mrs. A. G. Beveridge, whose kind gift was gratefully acknowledged.

8 September 1894 Molong Express

A jovial Union

On Thursday night some 40 gentlemen, in response to invitations issued by the (President of the late Molong branch of the Free Trade and Liberal Electoral Association; met in the long supper-room of the School, of Arts to spend a special evening. The room had been very tastefully decorated with pines and the sweet smelling wattle flower, and the large table being adorned with a profusion of dainty comestibles and a collection of nice flowers made the scene a very pretty one.

16 September 1893 Molong Express

the Molong Social Club Ball :

Then there was the supper-room, which, as is the custom at all social gatherings in Molong, looked handsome, as well as tempting. A bevy of ladies performed the difficult task of laying it, and they certainly are also to be commended on the result of their efforts. There was a profusion of beautiful assortments of flowers on the table, not to say anything of the extraordinary quantity of varied description of comestibles, the greater part of which were gratuitously supplied.

12 May 1894 Molong Express.

Further improvements began again with a partitioned space in the Former Supper Room to accommodate a heater and a warmer space in which to read.¹¹

October 1897 An excellent example of a social ball was held In October 1897. This special ball was held at the School Arts for the Mounted Rifles under Captain Claude Smith. *'There was upwards of sixty couples present. Mrs. R Clarke of the Telegraph Hotel did the catering and provided an extensive menu for the guests. The decorations for the former Supper Room were in the hands of Mesdames Bridekirk and Donaldson, and the Misses Clarke (2), and Foley, who, with splendid taste in arranging ferns, giant lilies, roses, green foliage, and the colours of the regiment (green and red): converted the banqueting apartment into a veritable flower garden, which gained the admiration of all.'*¹²

Hospital balls, Juvenile Balls, Engineers balls followed. There were many occasions to celebrate in the School of Arts and Former Supper Room.

The facilities also served for various sports such as skating, for music, exhibitions and memorials and other celebration and as a movie theatre. In these years the School of Arts and former Supper Room must have been at the very centre of social life in Molong.

26 Sept 1902 Molong Argus

Death of Mrs. R. Shield.

One of Molong's Oldest Residents. On Saturday night an old, well-known and much respected resident of Molong district, in the person of Mrs. Rebecca Shield, relict of the late Robert Shield, passed away at the residence of her daughter— Mrs. William Hasemer

The deceased lady, who had attained the advanced age of 84 years, was a native of Grantham, England. After her marriage with the late Mr. Shield the pair emigrated to N.S.W. in 1841. and resided for about 12 months in Sydney.

They then removed to Flyers' Creek, near Cargo and subsequently took up their residence in Molong building the first house on the spot over which stands the office where this obituary notice (the Argus was at the School of Arts for some time) was set up and printed. This was over 50 years ago. (house built on this site in 1852)

¹¹ Molong Express 12 May 1894

¹² Molong Express 30 October 1897

1905 report (Australian Town and Country) say there are 10 rooms and a hall in the building and included a billiard table and a reading room.¹³

15 October 1909 Argus

Shields Lane

The Mayor reported that he had interviewed Mr. .1. T. Parslow, re the sale of portion of his land, in order to improve Shield's Lane. Mr. Parslow said he would not listen to such a proposal, as be bad hardly room to turn a cat there now. He said if the Council chose he would sell the lot to them.

In **1960** additions to the façade of the Former Supper Room and School of arts by architects Louis & Roberson & Son.

¹³ Complete Urban SoHI p.11