

Victorian Heritage Database place details - 14/12/2019

AUSTIN HALL AND TERRACE COMPLEX



Location:

217A YARRA STREET GEELONG, GREATER GEELONG CITY

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H0841

Listing Authority: VHR

Extent of Registration:

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 841-

Austin Hall and Terrace Complex, 215-219 Yarra Street, 8-12A Mundy Street and 13-23 Carr Street, South Geelong.

(All the buildings (excluding the c.1980 brick units) and all the land entered in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 2107, Folio 421331, as shown hatched on the plan endorsed by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G5 6 February 1991 p.248]

Statement of Significance:

The Austin hall and terraces complex comprises two rows of six cottages facing the railway station and Mundy street (1887), Austin hall and its tower and the Austin terrace of four buildings (1888) and a handsome clock in the Jubilee hall tower in 1889. The foundation stone of the complex was laid on 14 August 1886, the anniversary of the birthday of Mrs Elizabeth Austin of Barwon Park, who endowed the institution. The twelve Elizabeth Austin cottages were opened in august 1887. Designed by the notable architect, Joseph Watts, the complex was constructed to provide accommodation for 'women of the educated classes in reduced circumstances' and was managed by the Geelong Ladies Benevolent Association. The body now known as the Geelong and Western District Ladies Benevolent Association has functioned as a vital charitable institution

from 1886 until the present day. The complex, the association and the homes are used still as benevolent homes. The buildings are in Victorian dichromatic brickwork (except for Austin hall which is monochromatic) with gabled roofs of slate. Austin hall (formerly jubilee hall) is a Victorian eclectic symmetrical building of two storeys with a three storey central clock tower the rusticated quoins and rusticated arched entry at the base of the clock tower are of cement. The slate gabled roof of Austin hall is banded and has unusual eaves detail with the eaves and underside of projecting gables being supported on decorative curved timber brackets. The clock tower has a bell cast roof of slate. The exterior of Austin hall is intact and the interior has had only minor alterations. The terrace rows are also intact externally with only minor interior alterations. Mrs Elizabeth Austin, the benefactress, was the widow of Thomas Austin (1815-1871), early settler and pastoralist, who made a fortune in the wool trade. The Austins owned Barwon park, a well-stocked estate of 29,000 acres with a magnificent mansion. After her husband's death, Elizabeth founded the Austin hospital in Heidelberg and the Austin homes in Geelong, and was involved in a number of other charitable works.

The Austin hall and terrace complex has both architectural and historical significance;

1. It is one of the most notable works of the distinguished Geelong architect, Joseph Watts.
2. The buildings, which comprise two rows of six cottages facing the railway station and Mundy street (1887), Jubilee hall and its Tower and Jubilee terrace of four buildings (1888) and a handsome clock in the Jubilee hall tower (1889)

is of importance as an intact Victorian complex of residential buildings constructed for benevolent purposes. (Jubilee hall and terrace is now known as Austin hall and terrace)

3. The complex is remarkable in its consistency of style and detailing and forms a visually cohesive and exceptional group.
4. The complex has historical importance for its associations with the notable benefactress, Mrs Elizabeth Austin of Barwon park, widow of Thomas Austin (1815-1871), early settler and pastoralist who made a fortune in the colonial wool trade. Mrs Austin also endowed the Austin hospital in Heidelberg.
5. The buildings have importance for their associations with the early history of Geelong, particularly during the Victorian era. The original names of Jubilee hall and Jubilee terrace commemorated the Jubilee year of the reign of Queen Victoria.
6. The complex is notable for its associations with the Geelong Ladies Benevolent Association (now known as the Geelong and Western District Benevolent Association) which has functioned as a vital charitable institution from 1886 until the present day. The complex of buildings remains management of the association and is used still for its original purpose as a benevolent home.
7. The complex has interest for its associations with the history of Victorian women, being founded and endowed by a woman, owned and managed by a charitable institution run by women and designed to provide accommodation for "women of educated classes in reduced circumstances".

Heritage Study	
Year Construction Started	1888
Architect / Designer	Watts, Joseph
Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place
Municipality	["GREATER GEELONG CITY"]
Other names	ELIZABETH AUSTIN HOMES
History	