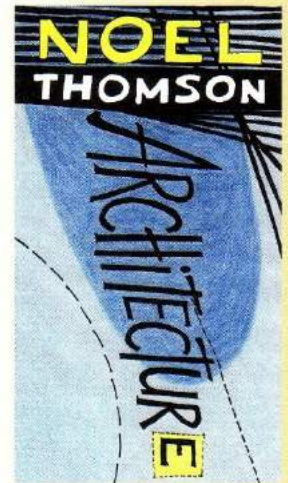


# CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE 'THEATRE ROYAL' – 90 MARKET ST, BALRANALD



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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Purpose

A Conservation Management Plan is a conservation planning document, which analyses the current context, condition, and management of the place [which has cultural significance], and provides conservation management policies and strategies for the ‘best practice’ management of the place taking into account client and ‘external’ requirements, and current and optimum management structures for the Theatre Royal, Balranald.

Balranald Shire Council agreed to the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan in September 2021 and they provided funding for this Plan.

Balranald Shire Council provided the following tasks to be undertaken in relation to the Masterplan for the Theatre Royal:

#### Tasks

- 1.1. Undertake a site visit to record and review the issues;
- 1.2. Consult fully with relevant Council Officers, in relation to the project;
- 1.3. Investigate the previous studies & related documents;
- 1.4. Complete the following tasks in relation to the CMP
  - 1.4.1 Obtain the physical analysis & condition.
  - 1.4.2 Review evidence of potential significance and undertake analysis of evidence
  - 1.4.3 Investigate the significance & prepare a current Statement of Significance.
  - 1.4.4 Provide conservation policies.
  - 1.4.5 Review the future uses after studying the constraints & opportunities.
  - 1.4.6 Provide Masterplan options for the Theatre Royal
  - 1.4.7. Provide Recommendations for future management, maintenance and conservation.

**Conservation Management Plan for:** The Theatre Royal building

**Item Type:** Built **Group:** Recreation & Entertainment **Category:** Theatres

**Local Govt Area:** Balranald

**Address:** 80 Market Street, Balranald NSW 2715

**Statutory Address:** Lot A Section 13 DP 156137

**Owner:** Balranald Shire Council



Fig. 1: SixMaps - aerial view of Theatre Royal building and shops/offices – Market St, Balranald

## 2.2 Heritage Significance

With reference to Heritage NSW “Assessing Heritage Significance” an item will be considered to be of State or Local heritage significance if, in the opinion of the Heritage Council of NSW, it meets one or more of the following criteria:

HISTORICAL:

**Criterion (a):** *An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

ASSOCIATIVE:

**Criterion (b):** *An item has strong or special association with the life works of a person or group of persons, of important in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

AESTHETIC:

**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).*

SOCIAL:

**Criterion (d):** *An item has strong or special association with a particular community or particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area), for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

RESEARCH POTENTIAL:

**Criterion (e):** *An item has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of local area).*

RARITY:

**Criterion (f):** *An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the areas cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of local area).*

REPRESENTATIVENESS:

**Criterion (g):** *An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.*

- *or a class of local area’s cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

This Statement of Significance is an extract from Balranald Shire Heritage Review/Study 2013.

This early 20<sup>th</sup> century Picture Theatre and Hotel has high landmark value, historic and aesthetic significance. Some of its original Arts & Crafts style features, such as ceramic tiled shopfronts and lead lights contribute to its aesthetic value. Originally built in the 1920’s as part of an entertainment complex, the Theatre Royal now comprises a range of uses, including small shops.



Fig. 2: Street view of Theatre Royal and shops/offices – Market St, Balranald

## 2.3 Background & Overview

The Balranald Shire Council acquired the majority of the Theatre Royal building in early 2000s, with Council having undertaken restoration works and upgrade projects to utilise the theatre space as a public hall. These works included footing stabilisation, roof replacement, lighting & electrical upgrade and extensions for new kitchen & green rooms. The building has historical value in the streetscape and is a much-loved public building.

Council seeks to maintain the building within available resourcing and look to future funding opportunities to conserve and restore the building to continue the use of the multi-purpose asset for the benefit of the community more appropriately.

Balranald Shire Council engaged Noel Thomson Architecture in 2021 to prepare Conservation Management Plan for the Theatre Royal, Balranald.

The Conservation Management Plan is to include the following sections;

1. Introduction
2. Analysis of Historical Significance
3. Analysis of Physical Evidence
4. Heritage Significance
5. Conservation Policies
6. Master Plan Documentation
7. Management Plan and Maintenance

#### **2.4 Acknowledgments and Bibliography**

This document has been prepared by Noel Thomson of Noel Thomson Architecture Pty Ltd with the assistance of;

- Balranald Shire Council Staff – Ray Mitchell
- Balranald Shire Library Staff – Janaya Gaston
- Balranald Local Historian – Angela Harben
- Balranald Shire Community Heritage Study 2006-2007 – Heritage Archaeology
- Balranald Shire Heritage Study 2013 – Noel Thomson and Peter Kabaila
- Movie Theatre Heritage Register for NSW, 1896-1996 by Ross Thorne, Les Tod and Kevin Cork
- Cinema and Theatre Historical Society of Australia Inc Online Database
- Cinema Record publication – Issue 27 Feb 2000 (Theatre Histories: 85. Country Movie Mogul - Frank O'Halloran) by Gerry Kennedy
- Trove and Articles from the “Riverina Recorder” on Royal Theatre Balranald

### 3. ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### 3.1 Brief History of Balranald

Balranald Shire is one of western New South Wales most important settlement areas and one of the few to have sites on the World Heritage List. Balranald, in the County of Cairn, is located on a vast plain approximately 910 km west of Sydney. It became a thriving inland port on the Murrumbidgee River c.1853, particularly with the advent of the river steamer trade. The township of Balranald was gazetted on 4th April 1851. Several explorers are associated with the district of Balranald. They include Lieutenant John Joseph William Oxley, Captain Charles Sturt, Major Sir Thomas Livingston Mitchell, Yurranigh, Turandurey and Ballandella and Burke and Wills. Balranald serves a region of sheep, cattle, wheat, and irrigated fruit farming; lumbering and mining are also local activities. Balranald Shire encompasses a diverse natural landscape which includes the world heritage listed Mungo National Park and the picturesque Yanga National Park. Surrounded by the wonders of the Murrumbidgee, Murray, Lachlan, Wakool and Edward Rivers.

With reference to the Balranald Shire Heritage Review prepared in 2013 by Peter Kabalia and Noel Thomson, a brief European History of Balranald is as follows;

“Balranald developed around a river ford. A river crossing was then an important – and sometimes lengthy- stop in the journey. Hawkers and innkeepers sought passing trade by putting up a few pine log and bark huts at the river crossing. In 1848 Leighton Robinson and Thomas Duggan established a general store at Balranald and during the same year a public house, the Balranald Inn, was erected by a Mr Robertson. In the same year the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the Lower Darling District, George James McDonald, visited the river crossing and named the settlement after his home village of Balranald in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland. He pointed out that the township’s position, on the lower reaches of the Murrumbidgee River, was expected to be of strategic importance with the impending introduction of steam navigation on the Murray. Balranald was an established settlement by the time of the Burke and Wills expedition (1860). The expedition crossed the Murrumbidgee River by the punt at the bottom of Mayall Street. They made camp on the river bank in front of the Balranald Inn.

Although Balranald was gazetted at the start of the Victorian gold rush period in 1851, with the first land sale of 35 lots a few years later, the settlement at Lang’s Crossing (later Hay) overtook it soon after. Lang’s crossing had already been in operation before Balranald was gazetted. The development of the stock-route across the One-tree Plain to Lang’s Crossing was attributed mainly to the cattle tycoon Sidney Kidman (1857-1935), taking his cattle drivers through Hay along what later became known as “Kidman Way”, through White Cliffs to Hay and then the Victorian gold fields, by-passing Balranald. By the latter half of the 1850s, when the fat-stock market was at its peak, Balranald was exhibiting signs of stagnation. The gold rush therefore held up development of Balranald because all meat-sheep traffic was going through Hay. Although Hay grew faster during the gold rushes, Balranald became established as a sheep grazing area, supplying meat to the gold rush settlements and wool for export through Melbourne.

In 1853 the river steamboat trade commenced with the advent of Cadell’s “Lady Augusta” and Randell’s “Mary-Ann” and within a few years Balranald became an inland port. After the initial lag in development, Balranald and Euston boomed, becoming busy river ports to about 1900. They became transport interchanges, with wool and red gum being transferred by bullock wagons from sheep stations by riverboat to Echuca from the 1850s.

Paddle steamers had reached nearby Darlington Point by 1858, bringing goods for Echuca and Adelaide. Erection of a Public Wharf was a part of the working river front at Balranald. The local station owners made their wealth by selling their wool produce to the cities by paddle steamer to Echuca. Balranald was also a “wooding station”, where cut lengths of gum were sold to the captains by the ton.

When the railway line to Balranald was under construction, steamers transported sleepers along the river. Mail coaches and teamsters still criss-crossed the country. The punts at Balranald permitted safe transport of people, produce and livestock across the Murrumbidgee. Wool from the big sheep station properties such as Yanga and Canally (which were virtually self-sufficient villages) was taken for loading onto barges on the Balranald wharves. From there, paddle steamers towed the barges to the river junction and then upstream along the Murray River to the river port and rail head at Echuca. From there, the wool was taken by road, and later by rail, to Melbourne. Goods went back the other way, from Melbourne to Balranald.

From around 1865 to 1873, Balranald’s population had doubled to 350. Its first inhabitant (Robertson, who had built the first hotel) was still there. There was also a resident Police Magistrate (Major Thomas Mitchell’s son), courthouse, jail, public school, shops and two hotels. By 1887, Balranald was a boom town with St Barnabas Anglican Church, St Dympna’s Catholic Church, a gospel hall, the Australian Joint Stock Bank, private hospital, and Masonic Hall. It had seven hotels including the Bridge House Hotel. There were four barber shops, four general stores including Harben's General Store, two butchers, two bakeries, two boot makers, three banks, two blacksmiths, tinsmith, tailor, saddler and post office. New South Wales Colonial Architect, James Barnet designed the Post and Telegraph Office which was erected at Balranald in 1871.

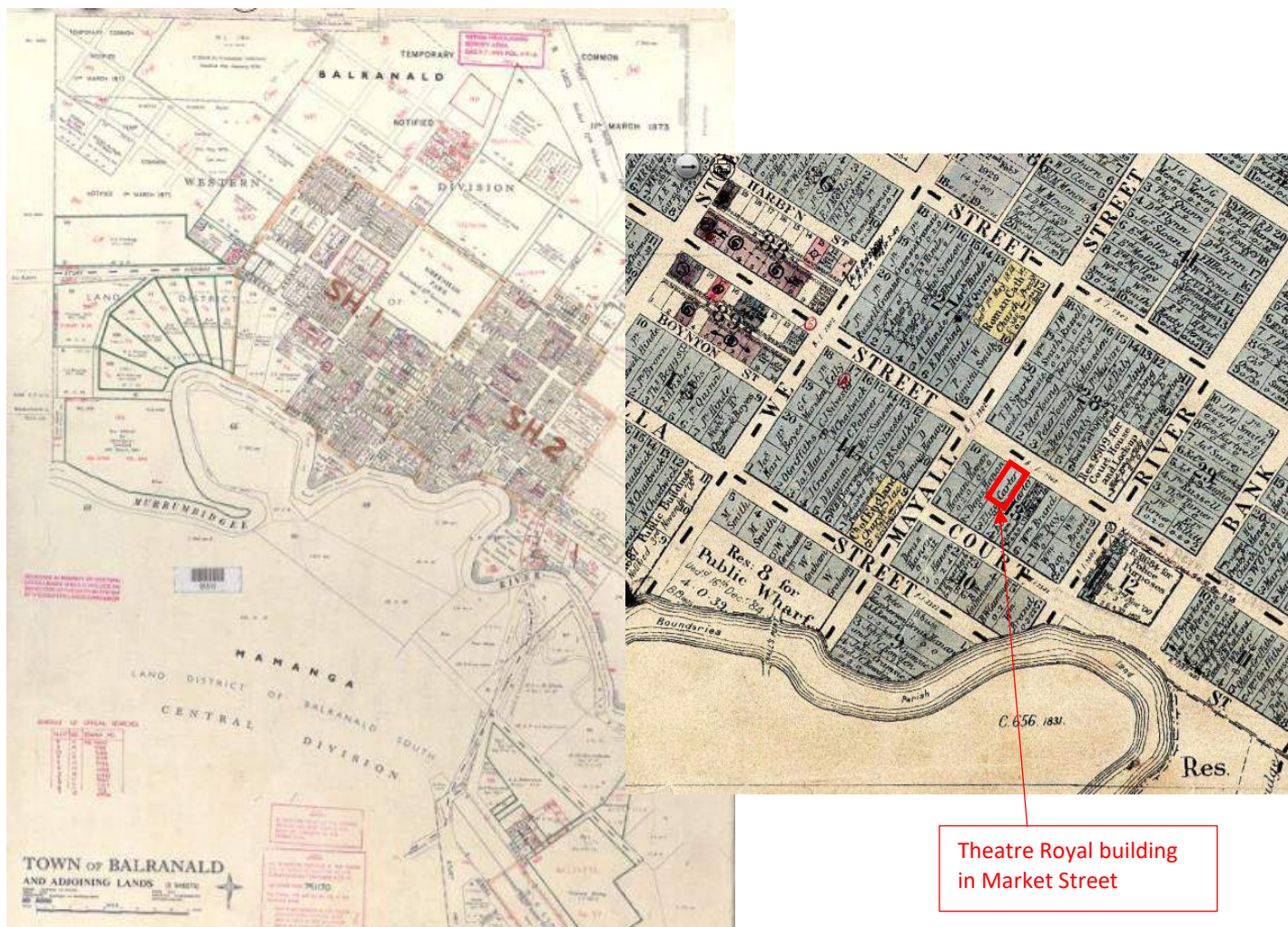


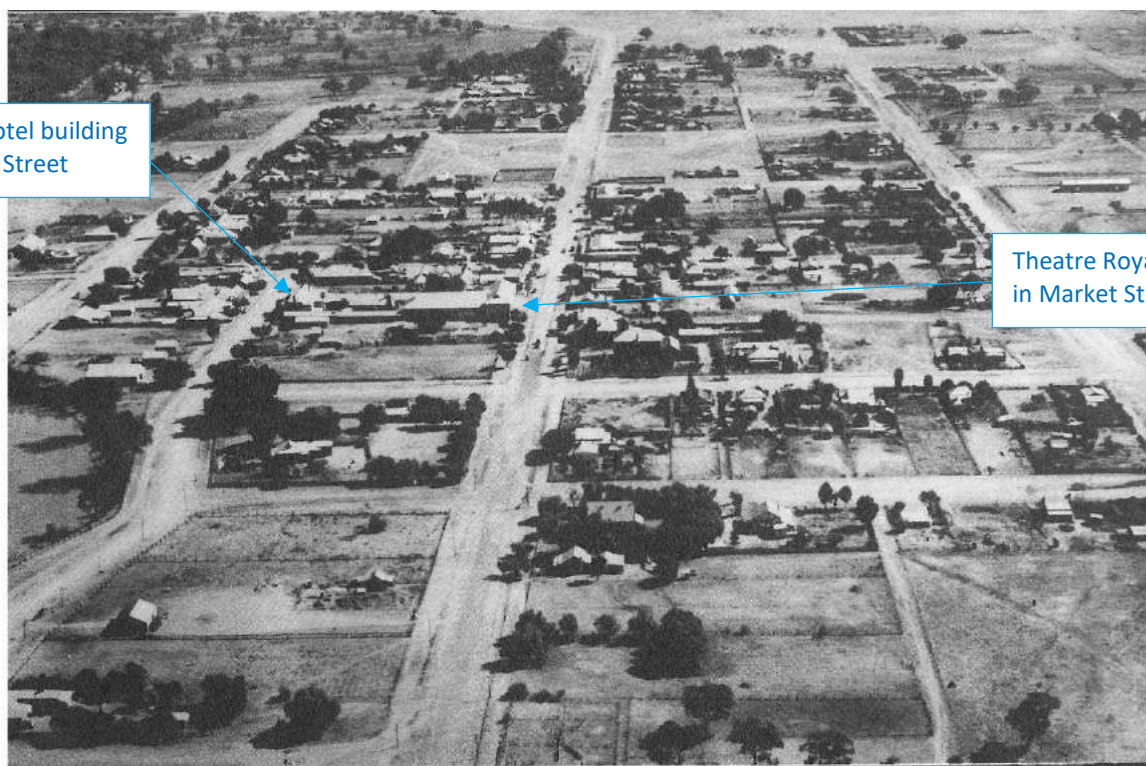
Fig. 3: Parish & Town Maps for Balranald, indicating the site of the Theatre Royal building in Market Street

With death of the river trade, came the automatic economic decline of Balranald and Euston. The result on the housing fabric of Balranald is that there is a significant well-preserved stock of late 19th century and Federation period (c1890-c1915) worker’s cottages and houses. Local people at Balranald do a lot of home-tuning, personalising their properties, modifying original houses with small additions, sunshades, and ornamental gardens.

In the 1920s land was subdivided from the largest stations to satisfy a land shortage in Victoria. To service the new blocks, the Victorian railway was extended from Echuca to Balranald. Commercial river transport continued for some years after the railway was completed to connect the region to Melbourne (1926). But within two generations, river and rail were replaced by road. The Cobb & Co factory, for example, was converted to a motor garage, the Hay Motor & Engineering Co. The Balranald Railway Station was demolished. At Balranald, the main street moved from Mayall Street (connecting to the old river port) to Market Street on the Sturt Highway. Just as the river transport was gradually phased out by the railway, the railway was gradually made obsolete by sealed road transport. However, even as late as the 1950s, loads of wool were still being carted from Yanga Station on roads that were only dirt tracks.



There was even a gate across the Sturt Highway between Balranald and Hay until the late 1960s. Gradually, however, the State Roads Authority and local Councils undertook asphalt surfacing of the road network and by the end of the 1970's the railway was disused and the station closed.



*Balranald, 1936 — a souvenir aerial photograph issued by "THE ARGUS"*

*Fig. 4: 1936 aerial view of Balranald indicating the Theatre Royal building in Market Street*

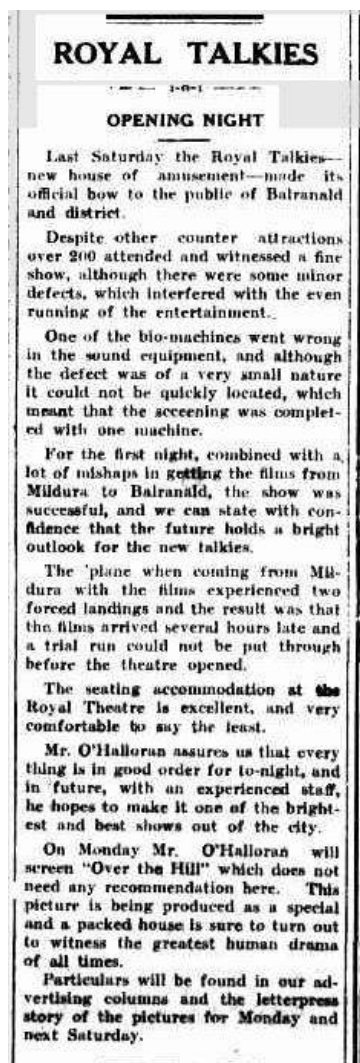
In the present day, Balranald Shire has a small ratepayer base that covers a large land area, around 20,000 square kilometres containing 2,500 people. Although much has been demolished or radically altered at the town of Balranald, its fragmented architectural streetscape contains many examples of 19th century and early 20th century houses. A visual survey was made of every street and land of the town to photograph every 100 year old dwelling in the town. Houses that make an important contribution to the streetscape have been identified for possible heritage listing. Particular cases of historic houses exist, however, in visually prominent street locations, where tourists can easily appreciate historic houses as they drive through the town. The Highway and town exit heading to Mungo National Park are two such places.

**Timeline:**

- 1830: Explorer Charles Sturt expedition of the Murrumbidgee River passes the site of Balranald
- 1835: William Charles Wentworth (explorer) establishes Yanga Station
- 1836: Major Thomas Mitchell and his party stopped on the site of Balranald on his trek of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers
- 1847: George James McDonald, the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the Lower Darling District, arrived at the site of the present-day township of Balranald, noting it's the place for a new settlement
- 1849: Francis MaCabe surveys the site after decision to lay out Balranald township was made in November
- 1851: The township of Balranald was gazetted on 4th April
- 1853: The Australian Joint Stock Bank opened for business in Sydney on 24th January and in 1931 was absorbed by the Bank of New South Wales
- 1865: The first school in Balranald established, later to become the Balranald Central School
- 1866: Royal Hotel was constructed in Court Street
- 1871: Post & Telegraph Office erected in Market Street
- 1873: Anglican Church constructed and services began 6<sup>th</sup> April
- 1875: Catholic Church construction completed
- 1877: The newspaper Riverina Recorder commences
- 1880: Hospital constructed and dedicated on 16<sup>th</sup> January

1881: Balranald population around 400, reporting that five stores and six hotels  
 1882: Balranald was proclaimed a Municipality in 1882 and Herman Levy was elected its first mayor  
 1883: Lift-span bridge constructed over the Murrumbidgee River opened to traffic in April  
 1885: New Courthouse erected in Market Street and Balranald Racing Club established  
 1887: The Gaol, Police Station & residence were Masonic Hall construction completed  
 1888: Presbyterian Church construction completed  
 1899: Post & Telegraph Office extended and St Joseph's Catholic School established  
 1911: Public telephone system / service established in Balranald  
 1926: Balranald was connected to the Victorian Rail system and Railway Station constructed  
 1926-27: The new Royal Hotel buildings commenced construction in Market Street  
 1929: New Fire Station building constructed in Market Street  
 1933: New 'Rose Drapery' store and 'Theatre Royal' opened in the Royal Hotel buildings in Market Street  
 1944: Norma Male was appointed Town Clerk at the Balranald Municipal Council, the first female town clerk in New South Wales  
 1956: The local government administrative body became the Shire of Balranald  
 1964: New premises for the Balranald Shire Council were opened in August, erected at a cost of £40,000  
 1965: Women's Rest Centre (CWA) & Library building opened on 1<sup>st</sup> October  
 1966: The Royal Hotel had ceased operation and building later demolished  
 1977: The Police lock-up was last used, the holding both men and women had ceased.  
 1978: Theatre Royal Café ceased operation in the Market Street building.  
 2015: Council's new \$1.5million Balranald Discovery Centre opened at 83 Market Street  
 2020: NSW local government minister Shelley Hancock places Balranald Shire Council in under administration, as of 29th January until 2024.

### 3.2 History of Theatre Royal Balranald



Mr W. A. Merrett, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel in Court Steet, started constructing the Balranald's Theatre Royal building behind the hotel facing Market Street in c1926. The 'Theatre Royal' was licensed to Mr Merrett in November 1933, this 400+ seat cinema is accessed by a small, rather narrow foyer that leads from the street to the auditorium. The theatre building has four shops with upstairs accommodation and a supper room which had a direction connection to the entry foyer below. Theatre Royal opened with fanfare on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1933 to a packed house of over 200 people in attendance with Frank P O'Halloran the operator. Frank O'Halloran of Balranald started his rural 'Regent' chain of cinemas from this site in 1933. The Theatre Royal was leased to O'Halloran Theatres (a well-known Victorian cinema chain) and by 1937 there were two theatres operating in Balranald – "The Britannia" and the "Royal", O'Halloran Theatres operated the new 'Regent Theatre' from 1940-1957 with the Moore family purchasing the 'Regent Theatre' in 1958. With the introduction of television in the 1960s there was a decline in the use of the theatre and it ceased to operate as a picture theatre in 1962.

Having laid unutilised and vacant for many years the Balranald Shire Council acquired the title to the building in 2002. The Shire Council has received grants of \$250,00 from DOTARS and \$75,000 from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for the redevelopment of the 1930's theatre building into a multipurpose centre including commercial spaces, courthouse, council chambers, library and 300 seat theatre. Further upgrades and restoration works have included footing stabilisation, roof replacement, lighting & electrical upgrade and extensions for new kitchen & green rooms.

Fig. 5: Article from the 'Riverina Recorder' reviewing the Opening Night for Theatre Royal on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1933



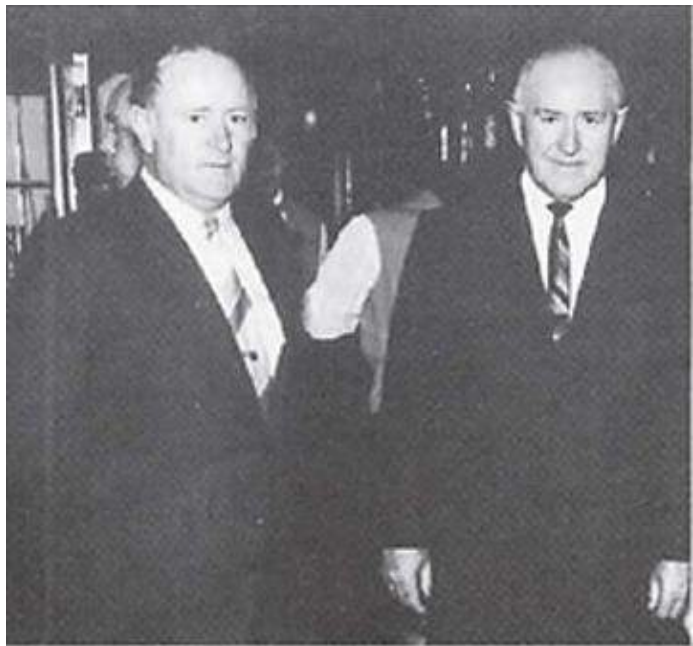
The Digger's Ball on July 22nd, 1938 at the Royal Hall.  
"The Good Old Days".

- Courtesy Val Stead.

*Fig. 6: photograph of the gathering for the 'Digger's Ball in 1938 at the Theatre Royal*

**Frank O'Halloran:**

P. F (Frank) O'Halloran was born on 14 December 1905 and lived his early life in Balranald. He was educated at Assumption College (Kilmore, Victoria) and on his return following the death of his father to run 'Rosalind Park', formed a dance band which was in popular demand in the Balranald area. Frank O'Halloran was keenly interested in the movies and around 1935 decided to take the risk and get into the 'movie business.' In 1932/33 he had opened an electric appliance shop which was known as the Balranald Radio Company. He ran this business for some years and during this time he hired the Theatre Royal which had 450 seats.



**Kevin (left) and Frank O'Halloran**

*Fig. 7: photograph of Kevin & Frank O'Halloran courtesy of Mary Livingston – form the Cinema Record publication – Issue 27 Feb 2000*

This project proved successful, and he next took a big gamble and crossed the border to the prosperous Murray River town of Swan Hill where he leased the Modern Town Hall. This large venue seated 1200 and became the centre of his operations in c.1938/39. From these beginnings O'Halloran Theatres expanded to locations in Deniliquin (NSW) and Nyah West, Warracknabeal, Dimboola and Nhill in Victoria for 'Regent Theatre' chain/network. At its peak, O'Halloran Theatres controlled 13 screens in 11 locations spread across hundreds of kilometres of Victoria and southern NSW. Frank O'Halloran was a canny businessman who was not afraid to take on the film distribution companies. He refused to pay percentages and only rented films at fixed prices. He also refused the distributors unreasonable demands to accept packages of films and he only booked the movies he favoured. From the late 1950's and especially during the 1960's, with the introduction of television for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic, the arrival of television in many country areas began to have an effect on cinema attendances and he had to diversify into other areas. Frank O'Halloran's long and productive life came to end with his death in November 1989.

**Timeline:**

- 1926-27: Mr W Merrett, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel commences construction of the new Royal Hotel buildings in Market Street
- 1933: New 'Rose Drapery' store and 'Theatre Royal' opened in the Royal Hotel buildings in Market Street
- 1933: Theatre Royal opened with fanfare on 30<sup>th</sup> September to a packed house of over 200 people in attendance with Frank P O'Halloran the operator
- 1940: O'Halloran Theatres operated the new 'Regent Theatre' from 1940-1957.
- 1958: The Moore family purchase the 'Regent Theatre' and operate it until its closure in 1962
- 1978: Theatre Royal Café ceased operation in the Market Street building
- 1978-2002: The 'Theatre Royal' building & shops used for a range of retailing; apparel, toys, giftware, furniture and offices
- 2002: Council purchase the 'Theatre Royal' building on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2002
- 2006: Footing stabilisation (Uretek & key reblocking and underpinning) undertaken at the Theatre
- 2006: Works undertaken to the Theatre building including; roof and floor replacement and replastering
- 2008: New lighting occurs in the theatre and hall furniture purchased
- 2009: Major electrical upgrade/replacement undertaken renovation
- 2010: Lead light restoration to the shopfronts at the 'Theatre Royal' building
- 2011: New addition to the 'Theatre Royal' building occurs with Change rooms & Kitchen constructed
- 2020: The vacant allotment to the east is upgraded for new parking area and open space treatment
- 2021: New reverse cycle airconditioning added to the 'Theatre Royal' hall (yet to be commissioned due Essential Energy metering matter)
- 2021: Current first floor of the 'Theatre Royal' building unoccupied, with ground floor retail space being utilised by local 'Craft Group', with shops used by CanAssist and the Council for offices

## 4. ANALYSIS OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

### 4.1 Definitions/Glossary of Heritage Terms

This section identifies and defines heritage terms used in the Burra Charter, the *Heritage Act 1977*

**adaptation** means modifying a *place* to suit compatible uses

**alter** in relation to a heritage item means to: make structural changes to the inside or outside of the heritage item or make non-structural changes to the detail, fabric, finish or appearance of the outside of the heritage item, including changes resulting from painting previously unpainted surfaces, providing that the same colour scheme and paint type is used

**compatible use** means a use that involves no change to the culturally significant *fabric*, changes which are substantially reversible or changes which require a minimal impact.

**conservation** means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its *cultural significance*. It includes maintenance, and may according to circumstance, include **preservation**, **restoration**, **reconstruction** and **adaptation** and will commonly be a combination of more than one of these.

**conservation management plan** means a document prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office guidelines which establish the heritage significance of an item, place or heritage conservation area, and identify conservation policies and management mechanisms that are appropriate to enable that significance to be retained.

**cultural significance** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, or social value for past, present or future generations.

**curtilage** means the area of land (including land covered by water) surrounding an item or area of heritage significance which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance.

**demolish** a heritage item or a building work, relic, tree or place within a heritage conservation area means wholly or partly destroy or dismantle the heritage item or building, work, tree or place.

**environmental heritage** means those places, buildings, works, relics, movable objects, and precincts, of State or local heritage significance.

**fabric** means all the physical material of the *place*.

**heritage item** means : a, building, work, archaeological site or place specified in an inventory of heritage items that is available at the office of the council and the site of which is described in Schedule X (insert reference to the schedule of the plan containing a written description of heritage item sites) and shown (insert how it is shown, for example, by diagonal hatching) on the map marked "....."

**heritage significance** means historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value.

**in the vicinity** means surroundings, context, environment or vicinity of a heritage item

**item** means a place, building, work, relic, movable object or precinct.

**local heritage significance** means significance to an area in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.

**maintenance** means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves **restoration** or **reconstruction** and should be treated accordingly.

**material affectation** means changes made to an item or place that will affect the heritage significance of that item or place and inclusive of more than just change to the fabric of that item or place.

**movable object** means a movable object that is not a relic.

**place** means an area of land, with or without improvements.

**precinct** means an area, a part of an area, or any other part of the State.

**preservation** means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

**reconstruction** means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric.

**renovation** in relation to a building or work means: the making of any structural changes to the outside of the building or work or the making of non -structural changes to the fabric or appearance of the

outside of the building or work, including changes that involve the repair, plastering or other decoration of the outside of the building or work.

**restoration** means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by assembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

**setting** means the area of influence or setting of a heritage item which may vary from the surrounding garden and fields of a country house to the pavement of an urban building.

**State heritage significance** means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.

#### 4.2 The Theatre Royal – Building Condition

The 'Theatre Royal' building was in a dilapidated state when Council acquired the building in 2002 and have undertaken many upgrade works to restore that building and make the hall operational. The building is a masonry constructed building of two storeys facing Market Street that consists of 4 shops and entry foyer/passage to the large single storey Hall/Auditorium to the rear.

The building upgrades since 2002 have included the installation of new Male & Female toilets, Kiosk/Kitchenette, upgrade to the Auditorium with new lighting, carpet and operable wall and most recently the extension to the west side for new commercial Kitchen and Green/ Change rooms located off the Stage. There is an understage area that is currently not utilised due to 'water' issues that will need to be addressed, otherwise the Auditorium / old 'Theatre Royal' building is in good condition.

The first floor of the Market Street building where original Supper Room and Apartment above the Café is in poor condition having not been occupied for many years and closed off. The former vacant apartment consisted of a Kitchen, Bathroom, (both de-fitted) Living and Bedroom with the stair access from the shop below restricted/closed off. The original Supper Room is only accessible from the former vacant apartment as the stair access from the foyer has been removed when the electrical upgrade occurred to form the new electrical switchroom.

For the layout of the 'Theatre Royal' building, see drawings below and refer Appendix 2 and for Existing Condition photographs refer Appendix 1.

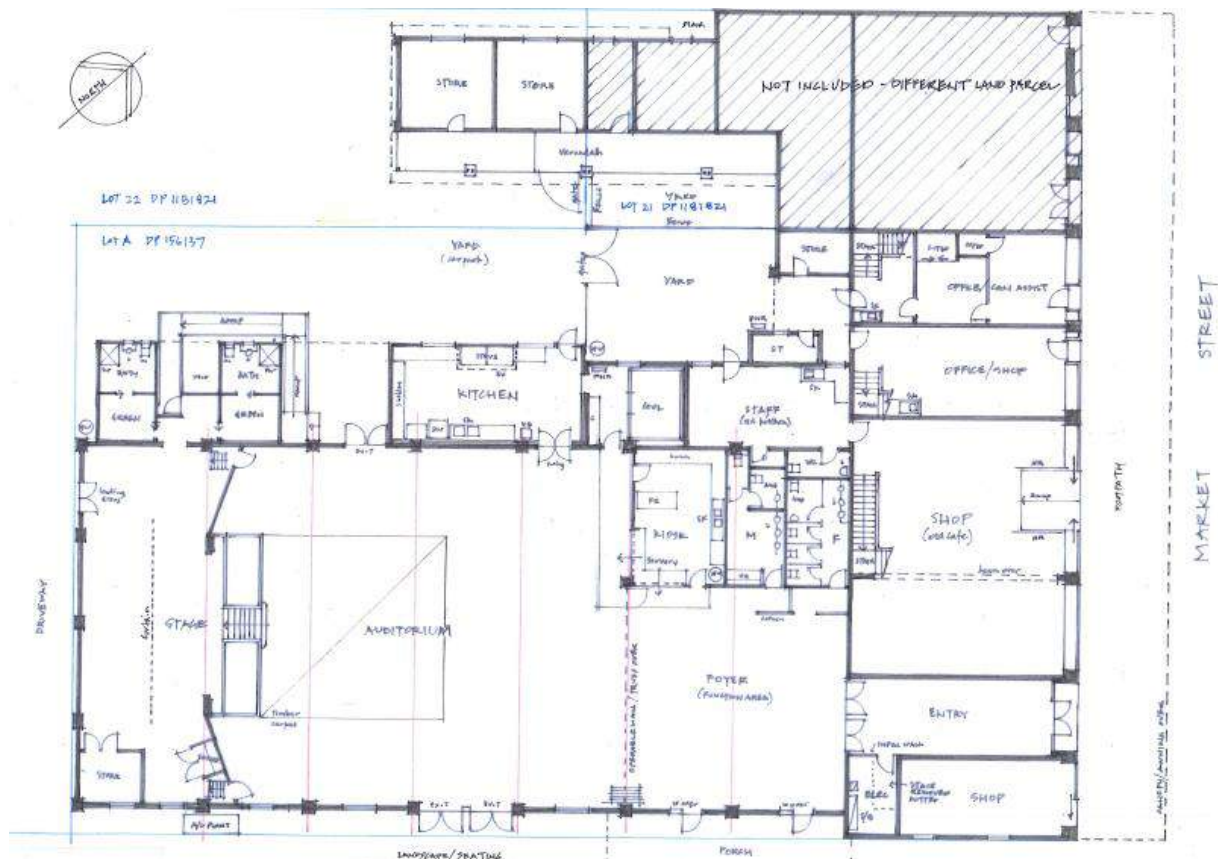


Fig. 8: Ground Floor Plan for the Theatre Royal building – Noel Thomson Architecture

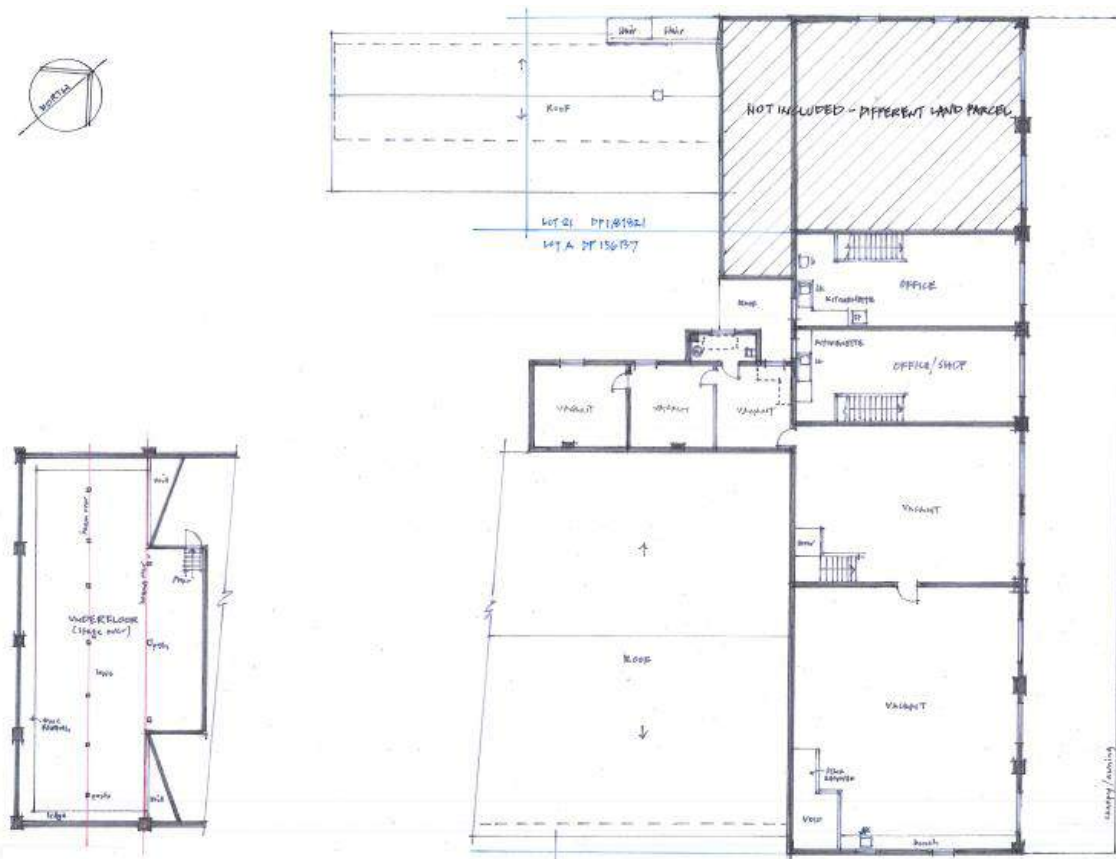


Fig. 9: Understage & First Floor Plan for the Theatre Royal building – Noel Thomson Architecture

### 4.3 The Theatre Royal – Recent Works

Council acquired the title to the building in 2002 and have undertaken upgrades and restoration works have included footing stabilisation (2002), roof replacement (2006), lighting & electrical upgrade (2008/09), leadlight restoration to the shopfronts (2010) and extensions for new kitchen & green rooms (2011). The most recent works have been the upgrading of the vacant allotment to the east upgraded for new parking area and open space treatment (2020) and the new reverse cycle airconditioning added (2021) to the ‘Theatre Royal’ hall (yet to be commissioned due Essential Energy metering matter).

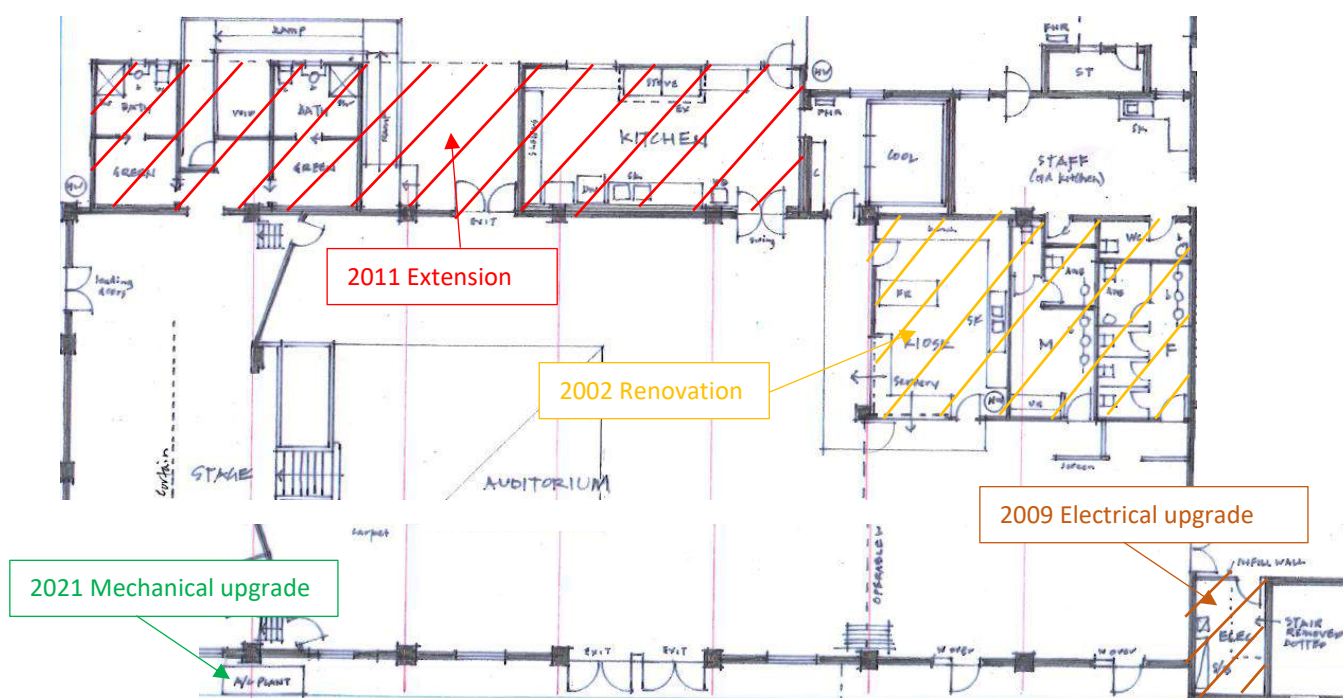


Fig. 10: Theatre Royal building - Ground First Floor Plan extract - Noel Thomson Architecture

## 5. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### 5.1 Current Status / Listings

Currently the Theatre Royal, Balranald is not a Locally or State listed heritage item, however it does hold significance for the township, and there is the possibility that it will be listed locally in the future as recommended by the Balranald Shire Heritage Study 2013 (by Noel Thomson & Peter Kabaila)

### 5.2 Statutory Heritage Lists

Only lists based on legislation have statutory standing in NSW. Heritage items with statutory protection include:

- items of local heritage significance listed on Schedules to Local Environmental Plans
- items of special significance to the people of NSW listed on the State Heritage Register
- NSW items on the Register of the National Estate (the Commonwealth has limited powers to restrict the actions of its agencies which affect these items).

Statutory lists of heritage items advise owners and the community of special places and objects which should be kept for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Owners of items on these lists need to make an application to a consent authority, such as a local council or the Heritage Council, before they can make major changes. The consent authority has the responsibility of approving only those changes that respect the heritage significance of the item

Most of the items on local heritage schedules are of local heritage significance. But some items listed by local councils are also of State significance.

#### The State Heritage Register:

The State Heritage Register was created in April 1999 as a result of amendments to the Heritage Act, 1977. The Heritage Council seeks public comment before recommending the listing of items to the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. Listings are published in the Government Gazette. The Register will even

### 5.3 Other Heritage Lists

The State Heritage Inventory already includes some cross-references to heritage items in New South Wales that are identified by organisations such as the National Trust, the Art Deco Society, the Institution of Engineers and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

In most cases these non-statutory lists cannot be used to control future changes to the items. Their value is to alert the community, local councils and the Heritage Council to significant items that may need to be listed on the State Heritage Register or local environmental plans lists. The Theatre building is **not listed** on the following heritage registers;

- Register National Trust of Australia (NSW)
- Register of the National Estate
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects - Register of Significant Buildings
- NSW Heritage State Heritage Register

### 5.4 The Burra Charter

*The Burra Charter* (2013) The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance is used as a guideline in assessing heritage significance. The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions, about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians.

Article 26.1 of the Burra Charter states that:

*“Work on a place should be preceded by studies to understand of the place which should include analysis of physical, documentary and other evidence, drawing on appropriate, knowledge, skills and disciplines.”*

Once the place has been studied, the cultural significance can be assessed. Article 1.2 of the Burra Charter defines **cultural significance** as the *“aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.”*



## 5.5 NSW Heritage Office Guidelines

The evaluation criteria for the assessment of cultural significance were developed by the NSW Heritage Council in association with amendments to the NSW Heritage Act 1977. They were developed with the goal of national consistency and community understanding and replaced the previously used **State Heritage Inventory (SHI)** assessment criteria. The **State Heritage Register (SHR)** criteria were gazetted following to the Heritage Act and have been in force since April 1999.

Assessment in this report has been made using these criteria for listing on the State Heritage Register. Criteria are outlined in the publication *Assessing Heritage Significance – Heritage Office 2001*. Under each section a place is assessed to be of **STATE** or **LOCAL** or **NO** heritage significance.

**STATE:** Of significance to the State of New South Wales

**LOCAL:** Of significance to the Local Government area

## 5.6 Grading of Significance









Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to the overall significance of the item. In accordance with the NSW Heritage Office Guidelines for Assessing Heritage Significance, the following five grades of significance have been defined.








Different components of a place may make a different relative contribution to its heritage value. Loss of integrity or condition may diminish significance. In some cases it may be useful to specify the relative contribution of an item or its components. While it is useful to refer to the following table when assessing this aspect of significance it may need to be modified to suit its application to each specific item.

Grading	Justification	Status
<b>Exceptional</b>	Rare or outstanding elements directly contributing to an item's local or state significance. High degree of intactness. Item can be interpreted relatively easily	Fulfil the criteria for local or state listing = 5
<b>High</b>	High degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key element of the items significance. Alterations do not detract from significance.	Fulfil the criteria for local or state listing = 4
<b>Moderate</b>	Altered or modified elements. Elements with little heritage value, but which contribute to the overall significance of the item.	Fulfil the criteria for local or state listing = 3
<b>Little</b>	Alterations detract from significance. Difficult to interpret.	Does not fulfill the criteria for local or state listing = 2
<b>Intrusive</b>	Damaging to the item's heritage significance.	Does not fulfill the criteria for local or state listing = 1




Area	Photograph	Status / Rating
Market St / front facade		5

<p><b>East side facade</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>East &amp; rear facade</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>West side &amp; rear facade</b></p>		<p><b>4 &amp; 3</b></p>
<p><b>Stores building</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Shopfronts (east)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Shopfronts</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Theatre Entry Foyer</b></p>		<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>Auditorium</b></p>		<p><b>5</b></p>

<p><b>Auditorium &amp; Stage</b></p>		<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>&amp; Stage</b></p>		<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>Theatre Toilets</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Theatre Kitchenette</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Theatre Kitchen (2011)</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Change / Green rooms (2011)</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Stage</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Understage area</b></p>		<p><b>4 &amp; 3</b></p>

<p><b>Former Shop (storage)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Former Stair to first floor – now electrical room</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Supper Room (vacant)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Grd Floor - former shop - now new Office</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former shop / apartment – now new Office</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>Grd Floor - former Shop - now CanAssist</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former shop / apartment - now CanAssist staff</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>

<p><b>Grd Floor - former Café - now Craft Group Shop</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Shop upper (vacant)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Shop Apartment kitchen (vacant)</b></p>		<p><b>4 &amp; 3</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Shop Apartment Living room (vacant)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Shop Bedroom (vacant)</b></p>		<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>First Floor - former Shop Apartment Bath Room (vacant - derelict)</b></p>		<p><b>3 &amp; 4</b></p>
<p><b>Grd Floor - former Café kitchen - now Craft Group staff area</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>
<p><b>Grd Floor - former Café kitchen - now Craft Group staff area &amp; toilet</b></p>		<p><b>3</b></p>

<p><b>Stores Building - 2 Store rooms</b></p>				<p><b>3</b></p>
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## 5.7 Assessment of Significance

With reference to Heritage NSW “Assessing Heritage Significance” the assessment of significance against NSW Heritage Criteria is as follows:

An item will considered to be of **STATE** or **LOCAL** heritage significance if, in the opinion of the Heritage Council of NSW, it meets one or more of the following criteria:

### HISTORICAL:

**Criterion (a):** *An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

Having opened in 1933, the Theatre Royal is historically significant due to its construction taking many years to complete during the depression forming an shops and theatre building in Balranald’s mainstreet.

### ASSOCIATIVE:

**Criterion (b):** *An item has strong or special association with the life works of a person or group of persons, of important in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The Theatre Royal is important due to its association with Mr W, A. Merrett who owned the Royal Hotel and constructed the building behind to achieve a major ‘entertainment’ complex for Balranald. Mr Frank O’Halloran is an important figure in Balranald, southern NSW and Victoria with started with operating the Theatre Royal in 1933. Some years later O’Halloran Theatres had 13 cinema’s operating under the ‘Regent Theatre’ banner by the 1950’s.

### AESTHETIC:

**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 Theatre Royal has aesthetic significance due to its design being a two storey shop building (with theatre behind) fronting Market Street having an imposing facade with Arts & Crafts style features and leadlighting detailing at shopfronts.

### SOCIAL:

**Criterion (d):** *An item has strong or special association with a particular community or particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area), for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

Having operated as a picture theatre / cinema from its 1933 opening until its closure in 1962 and for the many important events (Diggers Ball 1938), the theatre is socially significant to the people of Balranald.

### RESEARCH POTENTIAL:

**Criterion (e):** *An item has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of local area).*

The Theatre Royal has minimal potential to yield additional information on Balranald and NSW’s history other than what has been identified in this CMP.

### RARITY:

**Criterion (f):** *An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the areas cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of local area).*

The Theatre Royal building with shops, accommodation and auditorium is unique to Balranald and is a rarity in the Riverina and southern NSW.

#### REPRESENTATIVENESS:

**Criterion (g):** *An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.*

- *or a class of local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.*

Along with the arrival of the railway, the Theatre Royal demonstrates the development in the 1920's of the prosperous township of Balranald and is representative of other theatres being built around that period.

#### **5.8 "Theatre Royal" Statement of Significance**

The "Theatre Royal" building is significant to Balranald having been constructed by Mr W. A Merrett the owner of the adjoining Royal Hotel and operational from 1933 until its closure in 1962. It is important due to its association with local, Mr Frank O'Halloran who operated the theatre from 1933 until the 1950's having expanded this 'movie' empire into southern NSW and Victoria operating 13 cinemas in total.

This early 20<sup>th</sup> century Picture Theatre and Shop has high landmark value, historic, aesthetic and social significance due to its operation as a picture theatre/cinema for 40 years. Some of its original Arts & Crafts style features, such as ceramic tiled shopfronts and lead lights contribute to its aesthetic value. Originally built in the 1920's as part of an entertainment complex, the "Theatre Royal" building now comprises a range of uses, including small shops / offices and auditorium for use and hire to the people of Balranald.

## 6. CONSERVATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION:

The **guiding conservation policy** is that the Theatre Royal shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its cultural & state heritage significance. That the features intrinsic to that heritage significance are conserved, and that change be consistent and sympathetic with the viable use or uses.

### 6.1 BURRA CHARTER – BASIS OF APPROACH

#### POLICY 1.1

All conservation work and development will be carried out in accordance with the principles of The Australia ICOMOS charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance (the Burra Charter) in its current form.

#### POLICY 1.2

The statement of significance in this plan, together with any additional detailed research and assessments and scope of works, will guide future decisions and work on the place.

#### POLICY 1.3

Prior to undertaking work to any fabric on any building as having Significance, a statement of heritage impact consistent with NSW Heritage Manual procedures, shall be prepared which;

- Verifies the assessment of Significance through detailed investigation, recording and evaluation by conservation professional.
- Confirms the relevant policies applicable to the Significance and level of intervention proposed.
- Establishes a comprehensive specification applicable to the proposal, based on conservation policies from this Plan.

#### POLICY 1.4

All available documentary and physical evidence is to be reviewed as a guide, prior to any work being undertaken.

All work to be undertaken on the basis of known evidence. Conjecture, guesswork or prejudicial estimation is not acceptable.

#### POLICY 1.5

Retention, enhancement and retrieval of significant characteristics should be adopted as opportunities arise, after consideration of the changing needs and circumstances of the site and its users.

### 6.2 Control Change

#### POLICY 2.1

Ensure that sufficient consultation related to changes occurs between the stakeholders and Balranald Shire Council and Heritage NSW (as required).

#### POLICY 2.2

Ensure that changes provide for retention and enhancement of all significant fabric and items as identified in this Conservation Management Plan.

#### POLICY 2.3

Ensure that the Masterplan as referenced in this Conservation Management Plan is updated for any future works, then adopted and carried out in the recommended priority/staged order proposed.

#### POLICY 2.4

Ensure that all proposals are fully funded prior to works commencing on site.

#### POLICY 2.5

Ensure that all changes to the building have been vetted / approved by an experienced and professional conservation 'consultant' prior to any conservation works being undertaken.

#### POLICY 2.6

Prior to undertaking any changes or conservation works to the building ensure that approval for Works has been obtained from the NSW Heritage Council.



## **6.3 Management and Curtilage**

### **POLICY 3.1**

The curtilage for the site shall cover both the Theatre Royal and the adjacent allotments, that form part of the original overall building and the now vacant allotments to the east. The whole site is covered by the five allotments and due to its heritage links, a Management Structure should be established that is capable of the following:

- Provide and manage levels of authority and responsibility for the stakeholders.
- Devise, implement and supervise conservation works / maintenance activities.
- Enhancing and develop the Cultural Significance of the site.
- Establishing visitor related activities which support appropriate interpretation and promotion.

### **POLICY 3.2**

Implementation and establishment of a Management Structure for the Theatre Royal in accordance with the above guidelines shall be undertaken as a priority.

### **POLICY 3.3**

Decisions must be made in the context of the use of the Theatre Royal and the whole site and its significance. Efficient and appropriate use should be made of the Theatre Royal and site/buildings, while also having regard to the amenity and value to the community.

## **6.4 Services**

### **POLICY 4.1**

Prior to the installation of new services, heritage architect/consultants opinion to be sort. New services should not generally be chased into brickwork or superimposed on fabric in visible locations while brackets; mountings and fixings should not damage significant fabric.

### **POLICY 4.2**

All redundant services should be removed and the surrounding fabric made good, in particular where these services are exposed and visually intrusive,

### **POLICY 4.3**

External lights should be in keeping with traditional fittings, of appropriate design and unobtrusive. Lighting levels should provide safety at night and an appropriate degree of spilled lighting to the buildings without apparent "floodlighting" or glare.

### **POLICY 4.4**

Solar photovoltaic collectors - the objective is to place these intrusive modern services onto roofs where they will have lesser impact on the heritage significance. The proposal would be to place solar panels on the north/west roof of the Theatre so that it is not visible from the street.

### **POLICY 4.5**

The installation of a new mechanical air conditioning system for the Theatre has occurred, however can not be operated due to inadequate power supply to the building - upgrade to electrical supply to the street and required by Essential Energy.

## **6.5 Safety Measures**

### **POLICY 5.1**

Conflicts between Fire Safety requirements and conservation recommendations should at first be referred to heritage architect/consultant and the 'Fire Advisory Panel' of the NSW Heritage as appropriate.

### **POLICY 5.2**

All works shall meet the performance requirements and provisions of the National Construction Code / Building Code of Australia for Fire, Egress, Disabled & Access and Essential Services, as administered by Balranald Shire Council.

### **POLICY 5.3**

With the adaptive reuse and occupation of the first floor, this part of the building to be brought up to 'Standard' as per Polices 5.1 & 5.2 and the 'Premises Standard' where disabled access vis lift required to the first floor.

## **6.6 Maintenance and Repairs**

### **POLICY 6.1**

Undertake all tasks as set out in the Scope of Works for implementation in accordance with this Conservation Management Plan and with the minimum intervention in the significant fabric. Ensure that NSW Heritage approval is obtained prior to undertaking any works.

### **POLICY 6.2**

Use of the Management and Maintenance Plan as advised by this Conservation Management Plan.

### **POLICY 6.3**

As part of the 'Total Asset Management Planning', the owners/stakeholders (adopted Management Structure) shall include forecast expenditures sufficient for a five year Maintenance Plan.

### **POLICY 6.4**

Consultants, staff and tradespeople must have appropriate qualifications for the tasks including sound conservation experience working on heritage buildings.

### **POLICY 6.5**

In accordance with the "Burra Charter" Significant fabric must not be damaged by maintenance and repair activity. Trades will need to adhere to the conservation requirements for making good the surrounding materials and finishes if damaged.

### **POLICY 6.6**

Roofs, awnings, gutters, box gutters downpipes and drains, brickwork & dampness are to be subject to regular inspection, repair and maintenance.

## **6.7 Building and appearance form**

### **POLICY 7.1**

Adaptation, which does not adversely affect the character and significance of the Theatre Royal may be permitted within areas of building, however the following alterations may not be acceptable;

- The removal of primary internal walls
- Any works at the proscenium arch, side screens and dress circle balustrade
- New openings for doors and windows in significant rooms and external original walls
- Externally mounted plant and equipment
- Attached and exposed services and conduits
- Where there appears to be no feasible alternative for mechanical plant & equipment and exposed services, they should be accommodated and screened with a discrete envelope, painted in a similar colour to the surrounding material

### **POLICY 7.2**

The Theatre Royal building should retain its principal form including the floor layouts, roofs, mass, decoration, fenestration and access points. Work to areas of significance should be limited to preservation, restoration and reinstatement. All work, which could have a detrimental impact on the external form, is not acceptable.

### **POLICY 7.3**

External materials, finishes and colour schemes for the Theatre Royal building should be based on site investigation and scope of works. Prior to undertaking any changes to the external appearance Seek Council Approval

## **6.8 Intrusive Elements**

### **POLICY 8.1**

Intrusive elements, such as later added mechanical plant to the east side the "Theatre Royal" building should be screened so as to eliminate or reduce their detrimental impact on the significance of the Theatre building.

### **POLICY 8.2**

The making good of fabric associated with the removal of intrusive elements must be completed without further damage, and in a manner consistent with the Burra Charter principles of *restoration or reconstruction*.

## **6.9 Conservation Advice and CMP Adoptions**

### **POLICY 9.1**

The Conservation Management Plan is a guide for the future care and maintenance of the Theatre Royal. Experienced and professional conservation advice should be utilised for all conservation works.

### **POLICY 9.2**

A comprehensive copy of all relevant archival materials should be assembled for reference use on site and stored in a secure manner at the Theatre Royal. A similar copy should be lodged with the Balranald Shire Council for reference and safe keeping. The following should be included;

- Copies of all drawings and plans
- Copies of all available photographs
- A copy of the Conservation Management Plan
- A copy of the Management and Maintenance Plan
- A copy of the Maintenance Plan / Checklist
- A copy of relevant records relating to building maintenance contractors and works.

### **POLICY 9.3**

Masterplanning for the Theatre Royal building and site elements has been prepared and form part of this Plan. Priority should be given to the documented works that are highlighted in the Theatre Royal – Masterplan by Noel Thomson Architecture Pty Ltd - Refer Appendix 3

### **POLICY 9.4**

A commitment is to be made to consult stakeholders and Balranald Shire Council on a new Management Structure with regard to the adequate care and maintenance of the Theatre Royal building and site.

### **POLICY 9.5**

The ICOMOS Burra Charter recommends that a Conservation Management Plan should contain provision for adoption and review.

Balranald Shire Council to adopt this Conservation Management Plan. Review this plan within 10 years, or in the event of radical change to the Theatre Royal building, or in ownership and major changes in use or circumstances. When the detailed design for the alterations to the componemnts of the building are completed, seek Council approval

### **POLICY 9.6**

On adoption / endorsement of this Conservation Management Plan, Balranald Shire Council shall make this Plan available to the general public and place a copy in the Balranald Library.

## **6.10 Interiors**

### **POLICY 10.1**

Ensure that all uses are sympathetic with the conservation of significant building fabric and finishes within the Theatre and other building spaces.

### **POLICY 10.2**

Where appropriate, reinstatement of significant items such as light fittings and fixtures should be based on archival research and be consistent with the Burra Charter principles, in particular;

- Doors and windows
- Pendant light fittings
- Ceilings (auditorium)
- Proscenium Arch (auditorium)
- Timber joinery - including skirtings, architraves, etc.

## **6.11 Archaeology**

### **POLICY 11.1**

Where works are proposed which involve excavation, an archaeological assessment should be made to determine the possibility that relics may be revealed. This is particularly the case at adjacent to the Theatre building

#### POLICY 11.2

Where there is a possibility that relics may be exposed, specialist advice should be obtained from NSW Heritage, prior to the commencement of work. An Archaeological investigation should then be undertaken to assess, identify and record evidence of previous development.

#### POLICY 11.3

Where archaeological evidence is revealed at a works site, excavation should cease until advice has been obtained from a suitably qualified professional/archaeologist.

### **6.12 Adaptive Reuse and Opportunities**

#### POLICY 12.1

Encourage and support research directed at increasing the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the Theatre Royal at a local level (Balranald Community) and promote through the Balranald Tourist Information Centre and Balranald Shire Council. The following areas of research are worthy of detailed investigation;

- Detailed history of the establishment of the Theatre Royal
- The operation of the Theatre and its relationship with Balranald residents

#### POLICY 12.2

Support the development of temporary exhibitions, in conjunction with Policy 13.1 with the objective of attracting the support of the community.

#### POLICY 12.3

Support the Masterplan and proposed adaptive reuse of first floor areas

#### POLICY 12.4

Maintain contact with 'Theatres' within the region to exchange information and skills related to the projection of movies and performance venues.

#### POLICY 12.5

Continue to promote the use of the Theatre Royal as a 'Entertainment Venue', 'Function Centre' and 'Multipurpose Hall' capable of holding conferences, performances, weddings, etc through the Balranald Tourist Information Centre and Balranald Shire Council.

### **6.13 Significance and Conservation Funding**

#### POLICY 13.1

Balranald Shire Council should pursue funding of the conservation and masterplan works for the Theatre Royal, Balranald and other issues raised in this CMP.

### **16.14 LEP Requirements / Considerations**

#### POLICY 14.1

If/when the Theatre Royal is heritage listed then the Balranald Local Environmental Plan - 2010, with reference to Clause 5.10 Heritage Conservation, the following sub-clauses would apply;

#### **(1) Objectives**

The objectives of this clause are as follows:

*"(a) to conserve the environmental heritage of Balranald, and  
(b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas including associated fabric, settings and views,"*

#### **(2) Requirement for consent**

Development consent is required for any of the following:

*"(a) demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance):*

*(iii) a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area."*

#### **(3) When consent not required**

*"However, development consent under this clause is not required if—*

*(a) the applicant has notified the consent authority of the proposed development and the consent authority has advised the applicant in writing before any work is carried out that it is satisfied that the proposed development—*

- (i) is of a minor nature or is for the maintenance of the heritage item, Aboriginal object, Aboriginal place of heritage significance or archaeological site or a building, work, relic, tree or place within the heritage conservation area, and*
- (ii) would not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item, Aboriginal object, Aboriginal place, archaeological site or heritage conservation area,”*

**(4) Effect on heritage significance**

*“The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).”*

**(5) Heritage impact assessment**

*“The consent authority may, before granting consent to any development:*

- (a) on land on which a heritage item is situated, or*
- (b) on land that is within a heritage conservation area, or*
- (c) on land that is within the vicinity of land referred to in paragraph (a) or (b),*

*require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.”*

## 7 MASTERPLAN

### INTRODUCTION:

This section of the report identifies the constraints and opportunities, which arise as a result of the heritage significance of the Theatre Royal and input from stakeholders and building owner for the 'masterplanning' of the theatre/buildings and the adjoining allotments. The Theatre Royal is to be retained and upgraded in accordance with Conservation guidelines and 'masterplan' drawings.

### 7.1 Preparation of Masterplan

It is important that an in principle agreement with the full range of stakeholders for the Theatre Royal is reached for the preparation of a masterplan. Based on the appreciation of constraints and opportunities for the theatre/building and the adjoining allotments and the operational aspects, this detailed masterplan is developed.

Refine all options for potential uses for the Theatre Royal in the preparation of the masterplan and if necessary set stages for the works to be undertaken. Complete all necessary consultations and prepare a 'Business Plan' to prove the viability of the proposal.

Balranald Shire Council provided the following tasks to be undertaken in relation to the Masterplan for the Theatre Royal;

1. Consult fully with relevant Council Officers, Project Manager and user groups of the Theatre
2. Following consultations, determine the best solutions for the future development of the Theatre Royal and Buildings to meet anticipated future needs, particularly:
  - 2.1 Review the technical issues and options for a kitchen, catering functionality, storage for temporary use items & equipment, air-conditioning, ventilation and stage sound/lighting
  - 2.2 Review options for practical landscaping of the site – planting, pavements and ground and structured planting treatments

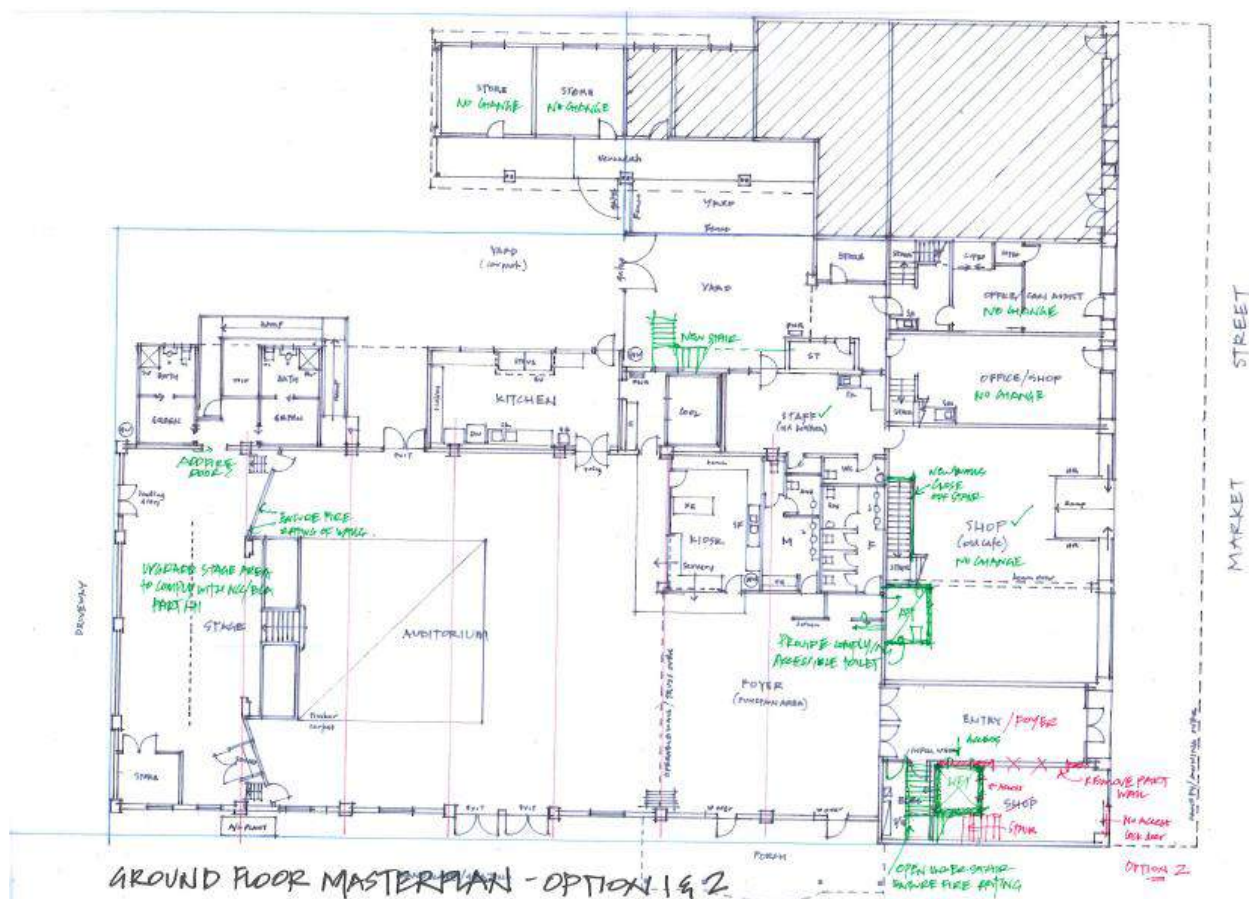
Noel Thomson prepared briefing notes from the site visit and instructions from Council where review of current theatre operations undertaken and input into master planning was obtained. From this meeting an outline of opportunities and restraints were highlighted as follows;

1. First priority is to finalise air-conditioning - power supply issue to the theatre so as to better utilise the building all year round.
2. Conservation, proscenium arch + side walls and stage is required on ongoing basis so that deterioration is avoided.
3. Maintenance issues raised; need to address building movement / cracking, moisture / rising damp and seepage at the understage area.
4. Intention is that movies be brought back to the theatre which requires resolution of fire issues and upgrade of projection and sound systems, so that the theatre can be fully utilised now that refurbishment complete.
5. Blackout blinds for the windows to prevent light penetration during daytime movies. The inside edge of the windows could be painted black to assist.
6. Stage upgrade required, in particular lighting and sound along with need for refurbishment of the floor and underfloor / access storage
7. Paint the outside surfaces of the building

The preliminary masterplan concept sketch options were prepared and form part of this CMP. Currently the building can be operated for many functions, from picture theatre/movies, live performance venue (stage, band, musical, presentation nights, etc), function centre venue (weddings, parties, conferences, seminars, etc) and for other occasions. This should be outlined and form part of Council's Theatre Royal 'Function Package' for the hire of the venue.

Noel Thomson Architecture has prepared Masterplan Concept Designs, with the basis of the design as outlined below;

1. The auditorium to remain a multipurpose space for events such as performances, movies and functions (conferences, weddings, school events, etc).
  2. The adjacent Building where store areas exist is to be upgraded that will cater for the storage of lightweight function equipment, seating benches, tables, seats, decorations, etc.
  3. The upstairs area where vacant and former supper room is to be upgraded to become a small function / meeting / gathering space - where the internal access by stair is to be reinstated and lift installed.
  4. The proposal for the understage area / once water issues have been resolved is for the placement of additional / easier access that will have the potential to cater for additional storage.
- Note: fire upgrade will be required if area to be used for storage
5. Upgrade auditorium infrastructure to ensure new substantial lighting and sound systems.



Note: Refer to Appendix 3 for the Masterplan Concept Drawings

## 7.2 Implementation of a Masterplan

Arrangements should be put in place to engage a full team of consultants with relevant experience, including heritage, services, structure and landscape consultants to assist in the preparation of tender / construction documentation for the implementation of the masterplan designs.

The cost of conserving the significant parts of the building, further adaptation of the building to enable multi-function use and upgrading services to an acceptable standard is likely to be in excess of the available local resources in the short term. As is often the case with projects such as these, staged implementation of the works is likely to be the adopted strategy.

In determining priorities, both cost and need have been considered. One of the major expenses will be the cost of a heating and cooling system that would be suitable for the whole auditorium space

High priority works are for the conservation / maintenance repairs which will assist in the long-term structural capability of the building, medium priority works are for the upgrade / expansion of the building will assist in the long-term viability of the building and low priority work achieves a particularly high quality

facility across all areas of potential use. The works have been set out below in stages as the likelihood is that the works will be implemented progressively. Depending on the availability of funding, construction works could be staged as follows;

- Stage 1: Get operational the mechanical services installed to the auditorium and stage areas by upgrading the electrical supply to the building.  
Install compliant accessible toilet at the rear of the auditorium.
- Stage 2: Building repairs and maintenance including areas of damaged masonry work due to movement / cracking, review and install appropriate damp-proofing at understate area, window repairs and painting, etc
- Stage 3: Upgrade the stage area / proscenium arch structurally for the new projection, lighting and sound system for cinema/movies and live performances.
- Stage 4: Construct new works for adaptive reuse of first floor areas, including installation of new lift and stairs.
- Stage 5: Rework existing stores at ground level, potential to construct link to auditorium
- Stage 6: Further conservation works, building repairs and maintenance that that will enhance the internal and external areas of the building.
- Stage 7: Install solar panel system to roof and upgrade electrics as required.



## **8. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This section of the report identifies the management and maintenance tasks, which arise as a result of the heritage significance of the Theatre Royal. Guidelines are required to ensure the appropriate management, statutory approvals and maintenance tasks are followed.

#### **8.1 Recommendation for works**

The Theatre Royal is to be retained and upgraded in accordance with Conservation guidelines.

Complete essential conservation works that are required to prevent further decay to the building fabric and establish clear management and operational guidelines for all contractors, staff and visitors, so that they are aware of the heritage value of the building/site.

#### **8.2 Statutory Controls and Opportunities**

If/when the Theatre Royal is Heritage Listed, as with all development, Council will require a Development Application and an application for a Construction Certificate for the proposed building works. In regards to a Development Application the works are to be fully described in a Heritage Impact Statement completed by a heritage architect/consultant. This is to ensure that the general character of the works are sympathetic with the significance of the building, and that the details for 'change' does not detract from the heritage architecture.

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) may then be proposed to Balranald Shire Council as a document for consent, allowing for minor works, which are covered within the agreed CMP to be exempt from a continual approval process.

#### **8.3 Management**

Following the implementation of the proposed new Management Structure for the Theatre Royal building, the adoption of this Conservation Management Plan is critical for the buildings ongoing management.

The policies in this CMP should direct and support all future decisions concerning the site including those involving restoration, reinstatement and new construction.

It is highly recommended that an experienced heritage architect/consultant be retained to consistently advise on conservation and development issues. This will ensure that documentation and proposed works are always based on sound advice, relative to the heritage significance of the Theatre Royal and the statutory requirements and approvals.

#### **8.4 Maintenance**

The Conservation Management Plan lists the works, which may be defined as corrective maintenance. These items are designed to bring the building to an acceptable standard. This will apply to the building fabric and also to the appropriate character of the materials, finishes and workmanship. The Management & Maintenance Plan must then cover the following requirements;

- Planned maintenance: For example cleaning of roofs and gutters, deterring roosting pigeons, external painting, etc.
- Emergency corrective maintenance: For example health, safety and security issues.
- Maintenance tasks may be carried out by staff in some instances, but mostly by specialist contractors and tradespeople. It is essential that all personnel are familiar with the tasks and any specific requirements dictated by the heritage status of the materials and finishes.
- It is important that contractors involved with tasks such as air-conditioning and communications are aware of the heritage significance of the building to ensure that inappropriate works (materials and workmanship) are not undertaken.
- There are many examples, particularly on external elevations, where services have been fixed to walls. The first alternative should be to attempt a concealed route either on the inside or the outside. Where this is not possible, screen the item / service with an appropriate material and colour. The screen is not to disguise or imitate but to reduce the visual impact of the object.

Recommendation is for the preparation of Management & Maintenance Plan and Maintenance Checklist documentation separate to this Conservation Management Plan.

Note: For Proforma documentation refer Appendix 4

**APPENDIX 1 – CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS 2021**

**APPENDIX 2 – EXISTING BUILDING LAYOUTS (GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR)**

**APPENDIX 3 – MASTERPLAN LAYOUT (GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR)**

**APPENDIX 4 – PROFORMA MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN AND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**