

SORELL HERITAGE SURVEY

Address: 15 Somerville Street Sorell 7172		UPI: 2902834	PID: 5934697
Name: SORELL ANTIQUE CENTRE FORMER SCHOOL OF ARTS			
Feature Type: Hall Library	Structure Type	Dating:	1830 - 1890 1862/1910c
	Site Feature Type	Access Restrictions:	Restricted
		Inspection Date:	October 96 P Davies
		Style:	Edwardian
		Grid ref:	5426 545750 5262800
Indication of Significance: High probable significance		Theme:	Halls
Material:	Timber Corrugated iron	Listings:	National Trust SMC Schedule 3
Condition:	Good		
Integrity:	Intact		
National Estate Criteria:		Photograph Index:	1:30
Risk:	Excavation: ☐	Development: ☐	Maintenance: ☐ Vandalism: ☐

SITE DESCRIPTION:

A timber building in two major bays under gabled roofs with a transverse wing at the rear. The Somerville Street wing is open in form with a central entry that divides the space into two areas, probably for hall and library use. The western end has a stage. The parallel bay is divided into three areas, one of which connects to the smaller rear wing. The interiors are lined in timber boarding. The construction is basic, windows are timber, floors are timber, there is no applied decoration. The roof is topped with standard patent ventilators.

The building has been built in at least two stages with the Walker St end of the building probably built as a later section and the Somerville Street wing appearing to be the first section (as seen in early photographs).

HISTORY:

The Sorell Library was established as a public subscription library by local trustees in 1860 and in 1861 a building was erected on a parcel of land obtained from the Government on the corner of Somerville and Walker Sts. A report of the first annual general meeting of the library in 1861 remarked that,
... £87 15s was subscribed by 103 members, and . . . a grant for the same amount was received from the Government, since which a further sum of £3 19s was subscribed by thirteen members . . .

The number of books in the Library is 768, of which 8 are donations by Mr. Stanley and Mr Fitzsimons.

The books comprise works of the most approved authors, on subjects amusing and scientific, as well as works on Farming, &c. The current periodicals and magazines, are regularly received, and last but not lest the books suitable to the capacity and of an attractive nature to the rising generation, whose interest in the progress of the Library the Committee have endeavoured to promote as the most sure basis to its prosperity and permanency.

The average issue of books weekly has been about 60.

The Library would have contained a much larger number of books but for the expenses incidental to the formation of one, such as the purchase of cases for their reception, the cost of having the rules and catalogues of books in the Library printed for circulation. . . .

A plot of ground in the centre of the Township has been obtained by your Committee from the Government, so that a Mechanics' Institute or Reading Room may be erected, which it is almost needless to say will prove of incalculable benefit to the District.

Later additions included a hall erected during the 1880s. It was used as a town hall as well as for dances and, later, a picture theatre. Following the opening of the Sorell Memorial Hall in 1954 the older hall was acquired by the Buffaloes as a lodge meeting place. The building is currently operated as an antique shop.

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BOUNDARY:

The listing boundary is formed by the title boundary of the property within the wider, Walker Street, conservation precinct boundary.

COMMENTS:

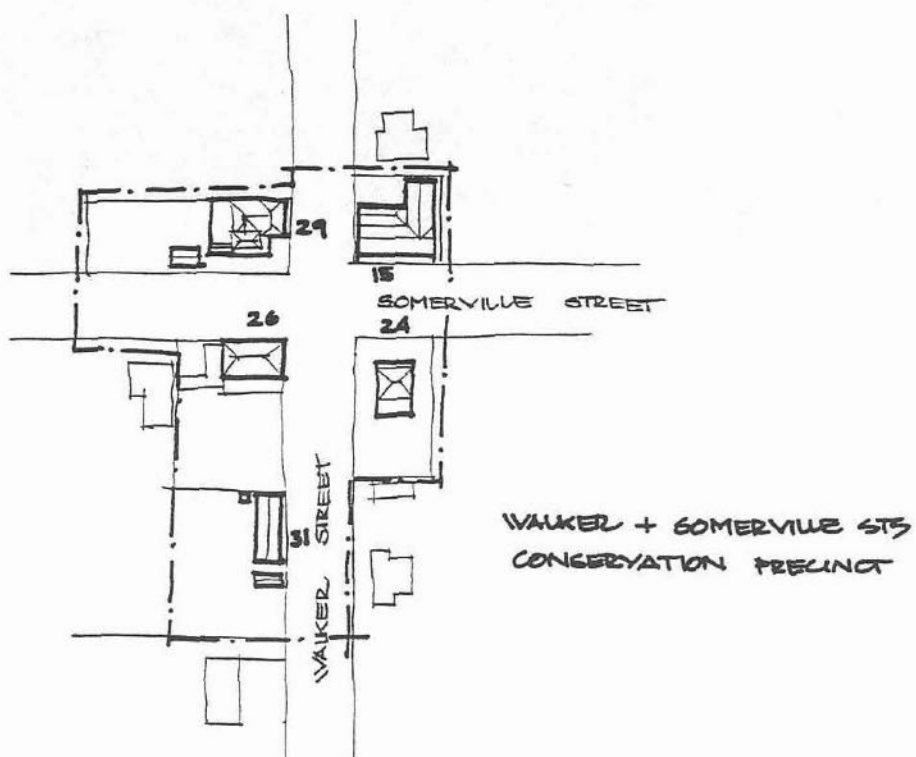
The former School of Arts building is significant for its important community role over a long period, its early construction date of 1861, the way the building demonstrates growth and the need to provide for a growing communities needs with library and hall facilities, the way the building has retained its significant form with the present use and the strong streetscape value of the building on the prominent corner location as part of an historic group. It also has social significance for its later lodge use.

It should continue to be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

The Mercury 10 April 1861, p2
Oral informant: Don Maisch, ph: 6243 0195

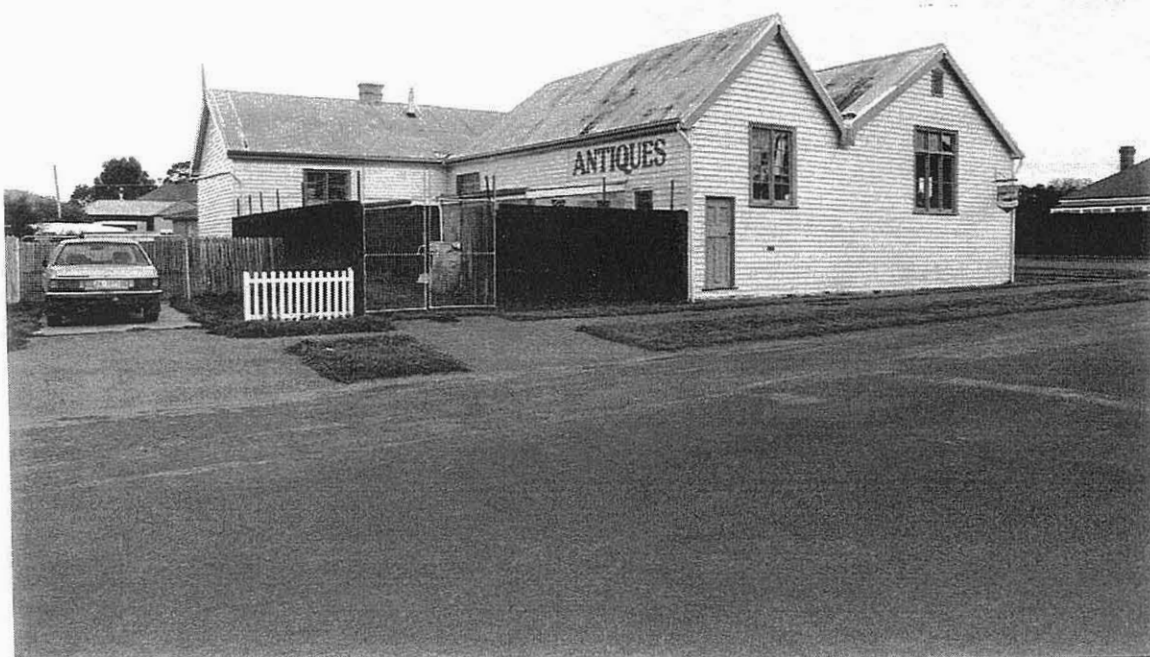
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