

# Town Hall Timeline

The Yalukit Willam people, members of the Bunurong clan of the Kulin nation, live here **Over 50,000 years**

Port Melbourne Lagoon and Yarra River are first-sighted by Charles Grimes **1803**

Victoria becomes a self-governing colony **1851**

Sandridge railway line opens **1854**  
Swallow and Ariell biscuit factory is established

First Council is elected and Cr Morley becomes the first chairman **1860**



First Mayor, William Morley c1867. Morley Family

Sandridge becomes Port Melbourne **1884**

First cable tram runs along Bay Street **1890**

Major renovations to the Town Hall convert the Library into the Council Chamber and the Library moves to premises in Liardet Street **1938**



**1854** Sandridge residents begin their campaign for a separate municipality

**1860** Sandridge is declared a municipality

**1861** First Council offices open in Graham Street behind the Court House

**1869** First community hall built in Bay Street, and referred to as the Town Hall

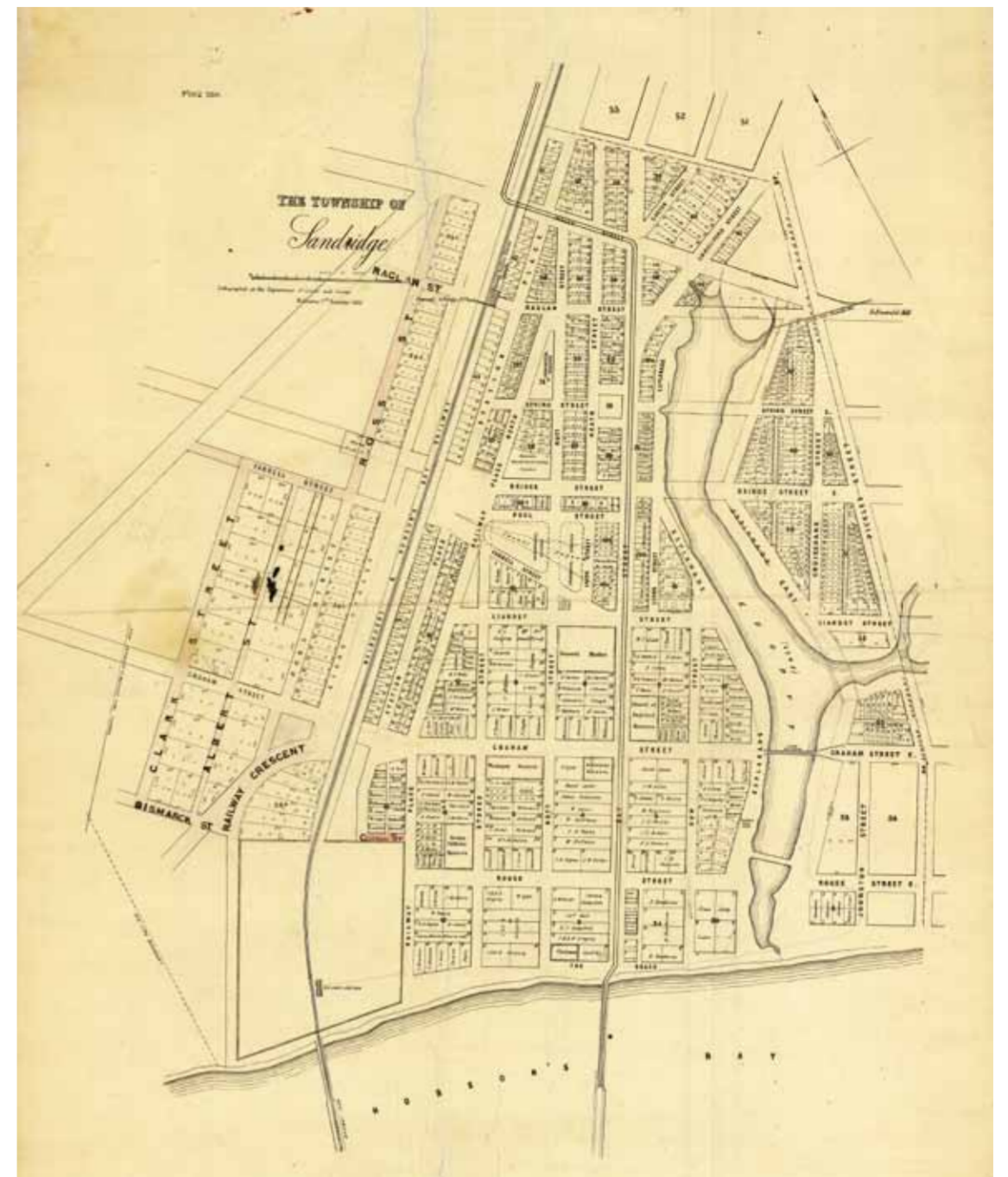
**1873** Local gas company produces first gas

**1883** New Council Chambers, Municipal Offices and Library open in front of the Town Hall; the whole complex is now referred to as the Town Hall

**1915** New community hall replaces the original hall behind the Council Chambers and offices

**1982** Council offices and Town Hall are renovated to integrate the two buildings

**2003** Port Melbourne Library returns to the Town Hall



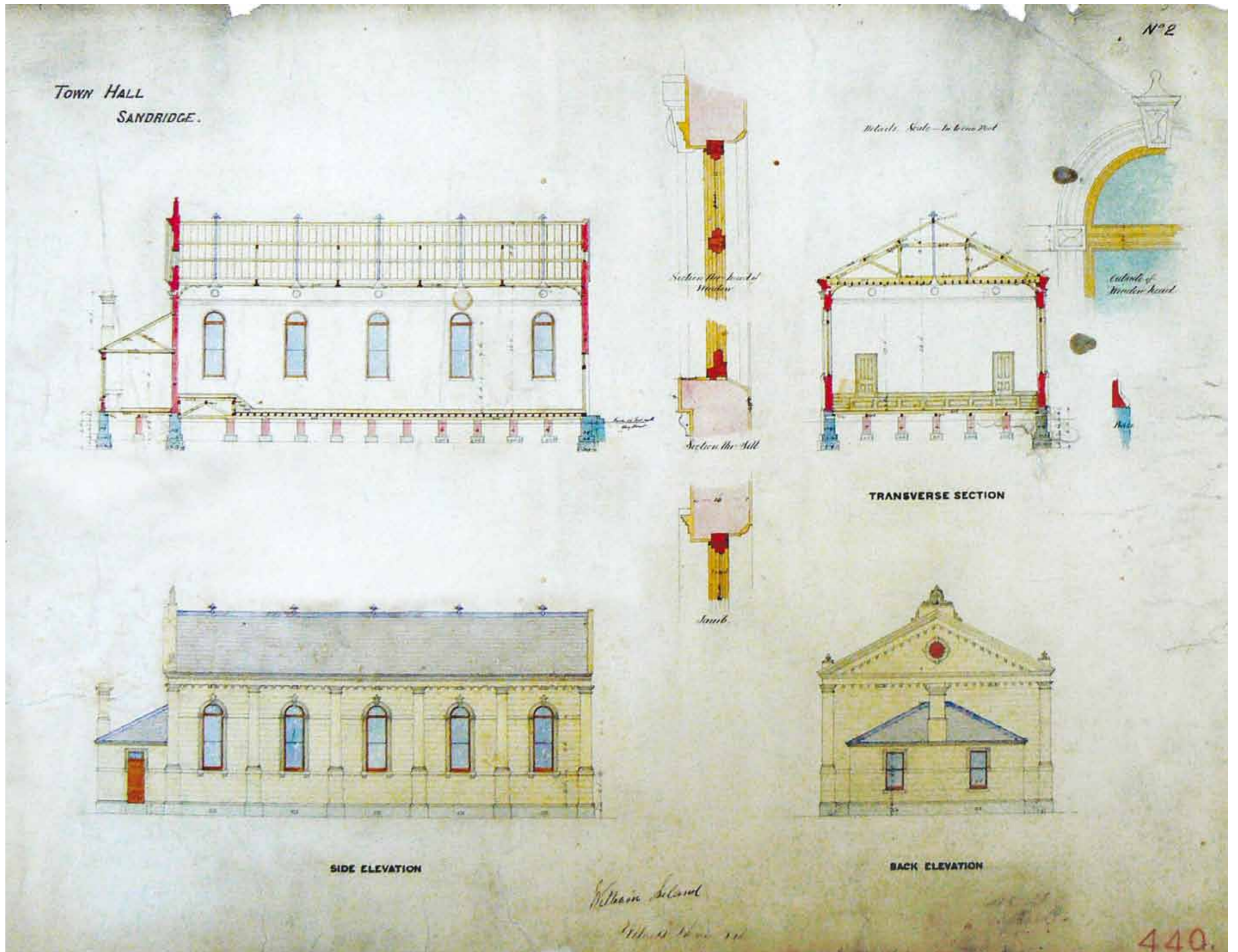
Map of the township of Sandridge 1860. PPCC pmo606



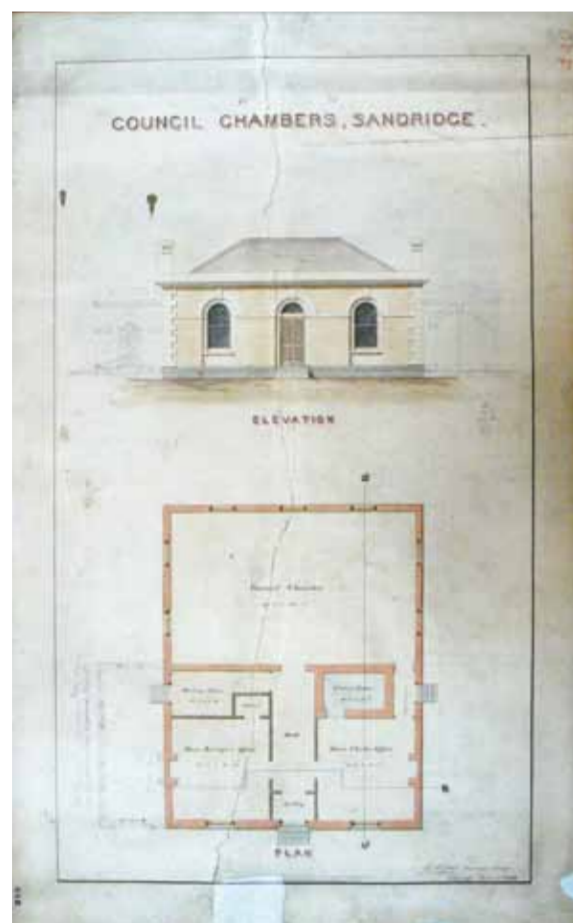
Port Melbourne Municipal Offices located on the RHS behind the Court House on the corner of Bay and Graham Streets 1873. PPCC pmo434



Cable tram passing Port Melbourne Town Hall c1930. Cable trams ran down Bay Street from 1892 until 1937. PPCC pm1252



Plans of first community hall, called the Town Hall, in 1869. PMHPS



Plan of the first Municipal Offices located on Graham Street. PMHPS

## Changing Places

*“In Australia, municipal town halls traditionally are the centre of local government (‘the town’) and the centre of the local community (‘the hall’). In Port Melbourne in the late 1880s these two functions were brought together into two adjacent buildings occupying the same site. Together they make the Port Melbourne Town Hall, which has served the people of ‘the Borough’ admirably. It has been the centre of good times and the focus in bad times.”*

*Port Melbourne Town Hall. Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society 2003*

The **community hall**, initially referred to as the Town Hall, has been a continuous presence on this site since it opened in 1869. It was rebuilt in 1915 and the façade of this building is still in place. It was later remodelled most significantly in the 1930s and in the 1980s (see panel 3).

The first councils met in the Court House on the corner of Bay and Graham Street from 1860 until 1883 when this Town Hall opened. Here they moved into the single-roomed **Council Chamber** on the first floor designed for this purpose. In 1938, Council moved the Chamber to the larger adjacent room, previously occupied by the Library (see panels 4 and 10). The previous Chamber was then divided and used by mayoresses and ward councillors. Now these rooms are the centre of activities of the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society.

The first **Municipal Offices** and staff were located on Graham Street behind the Court House before they too moved into the Town Hall in 1883 (see panel 9).

The **Library** opened in this building but in 1938 moved off-site before returning here in 2003 (see panel 10) where it is now the centre of activities.

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# CITY OF PORT MELBOURNE



## OPENING OF REMODELLED AUDITORIUM RED CROSS BALL, May 24th. 1938

COUNCILLOR W. HOWE  
MAYOR

S. S. ANDERSON  
TOWN CLERK

F. G. COOK  
CITY ENGINEER

Stuart  
Studio

Opening of remodelled Auditorium. Red Cross Ball 1938. PMHPS



Port Melbourne Town Hall Auditorium series.  
PPCC pmo754 (d)



Port Melbourne Town Hall Auditorium series.  
PPCC pmo754 (l)

## The Hall

*A fancy dress ball celebrated the opening of the first community hall on this site in 1869. Ever since the community has gathered here for the dances, dinners, public meetings, church services and band practices associated with a thriving community. While these activities have continued the hall has incurred great changes from refurbishments and rebuilding.*

When the hall was rebuilt in 1915 the recent supply of electricity to the area enabled the new red-brick hall to incorporate an electrically operated sliding roof and projector for a cinema.

The most refined interior was created with the 1938 refurbishment which introduced art deco style and fittings. In 1983 the space was divided horizontally in two. The ground level was initially used as offices and later incorporated into the Library. The current hall was created at the level of the original balcony.

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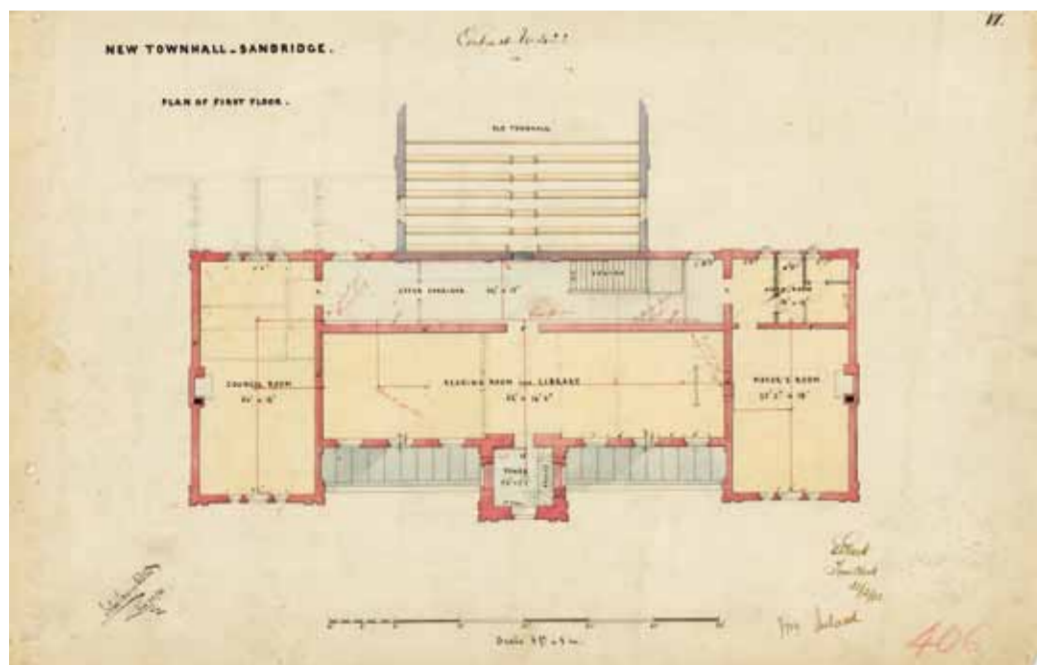




*J. L. Cousland (HEALTH INSP). S. S. Anderson (TOWN CLERK). Cr. James P. Hickey, J.P. (MAYOR). G. S. Williams (CITY ENGR). A. B. Rasmussen (DEPUTY TOWN CLERK).  
 Cr. J. P. Crichton. Cr. M. J. Woodruff (ABSENT).  
 Cr. A. C. Edwards. Cr. L. S. Turner.  
 Cr. E. J. Purchase. Cr. M. H. Fennell.  
 Cr. A. Todd. Cr. J. W. Woodruff.*

*Louise Stedie  
 PH 1952*

Detail from *The Port Melbourne City Council in session July 1952*. PMHPS



*New Town Hall – Sandridge, plan of first floor 1881 signed by architect John Wild, Town Clerk, Edward Clark and Surveyor William Ireland. PCC pm0622.6*

## 1938 Council Chamber

*This room was originally planned and used as the Library. It became the Council Chamber in 1938 when the previous Chamber became too small. The incongruity in styles between the architecture and furniture in this room reflect the periods of their respective creations, 55 years apart.*

The room, designed by the building architect, Mr J.J. Wild and constructed in 1882, incorporates the ornate architraves and high ceilings typical of this period. The furniture dates from 1938 when the room was refurbished to become the Council Chamber. It was designed by the City Engineer, Fred Cooke, and is characteristic of this art deco period.

The crest and mayoral chair from this suite of furniture are now located in the St Kilda Town Hall. They were moved there as a symbolic reminder that the City of Port Melbourne was part of the amalgamation which resulted in the formation of the City of Port Phillip in 1994. The outrage of the last Port Melbourne Councillors at the amalgamation is recorded in the drawers of the Council table.



Rear of clock face of Port Melbourne Town Hall clock taken from inside tower 1991. PPCC pm1366



Port Melbourne Town Hall clock tower during renovation or painting work about 1950 showing several council staff on the top platform of the tower. PPCC pmo888



View of Port Melbourne Town Hall with no clock c1886. PPCC pm1601

## Clock Tower

*The 80 ft (24 m) high tower was designed to incorporate a clock, belfry and flagpole, but it was bereft of the clock for 10 years after it was finished. Cost overruns on the building of the new Town Hall meant no money was available to purchase this integral component.*

When Councillor Phillip Salmon became Mayor in 1890 he determined to see the clock installed and became patron of a fund for its purchase. The fund attracted strong community criticism because of the Council's dire financial situation. As a result contributions were less than required and Salmon had to partly fund the clock himself.

The clock was eventually added in March of 1891 and started at a special ceremony in May.

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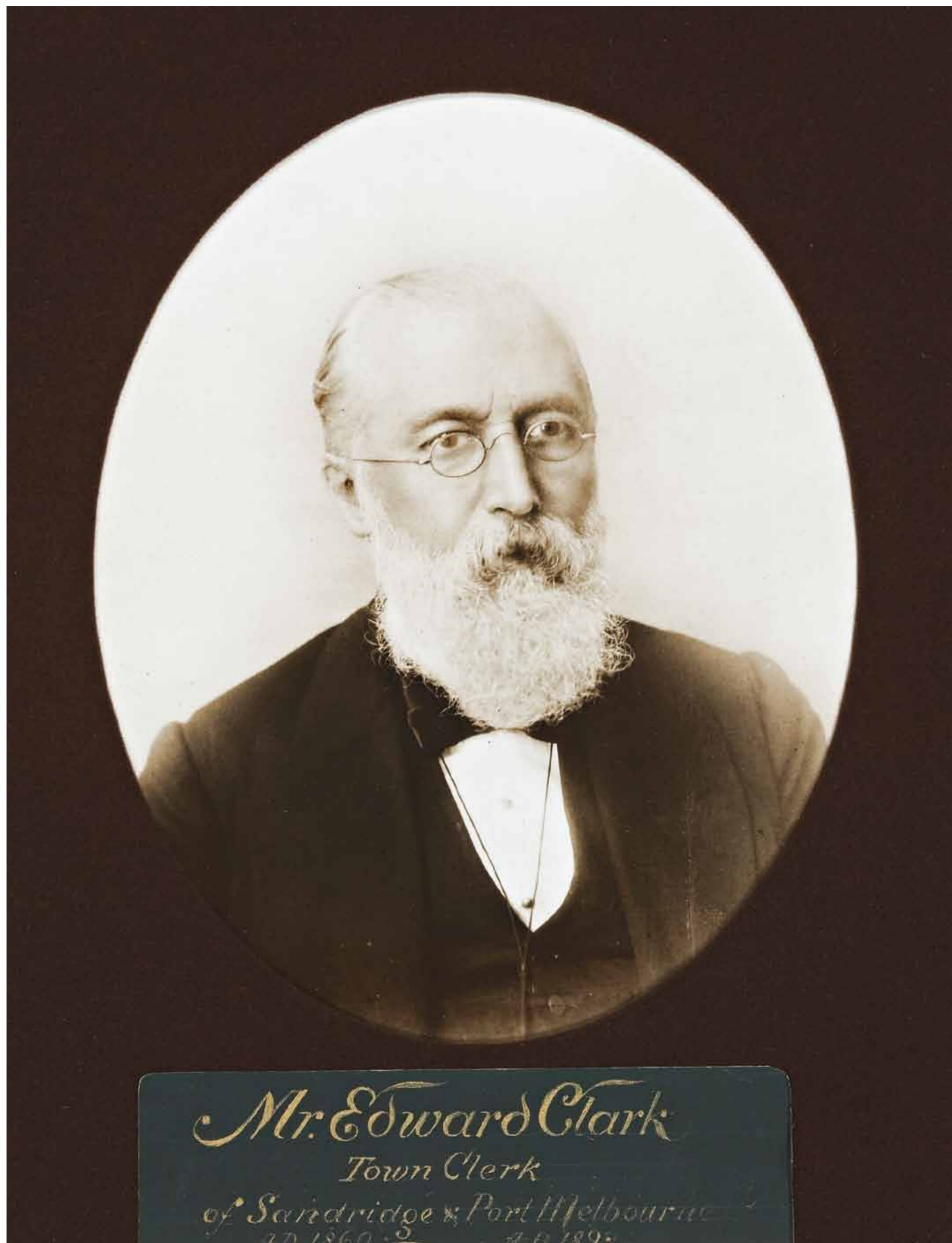
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Town Clerk, Mr Syd Anderson detail from 1923 photograph. PPCC pm1069.1-2

Edward Clark	1860 - 1893
Edward C. Crockford	1893 - 1909
Arthur V. Heath	1911 - 1920
Sydney S. Anderson	1920 - 1959
Andreas T. Aanensen	1959 - 1970
James Farrow	1970 - 1973
Frederick Jackson	1973 - 1988
David Graham	1988 - 1994



Mr Edward Clark, Town Clerk of Sandridge and Port Melbourne 1860 - 1893. PPCC pm0059.1-4

## Town Clerks

During 134 years of local governance in Port Melbourne, only nine men served as town clerks; they worked with more than 79 mayors. The first town clerk, Mr Edward Clark, set a remarkable standard by holding office for 33 years. However Mr Syd Anderson exceeded this term, serving in the role for 39 years.

The position of Town Clerk was highly respected and responsible for implementing the plans of the elected Council and managing the staff and operations of the district.

Like the mayors (see panel 7) the town clerks donned robes which identified the authority of wearer on formal occasions (see photo panel 4).

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View of Sandridge from the Sugar Works showing the corner of Bay and Rouse Streets, rear of the Sandridge Post and Telegraph Office and the backyard and house of Sugar Factory 1873. PPCC pm0340



View to the west of Town and Railway Piers from the Sugar Works, showing the site of Morley's Coal Depot, and the bluestone fence and gates of Victorian Sugar Works 1873. PPCC pm0350



View from the Sugar Works showing the Saltwater Lagoon in the middle distance with Rouse Street footbridge on the right and Graham Street Bridge on the left 1873. PPCC pm0348

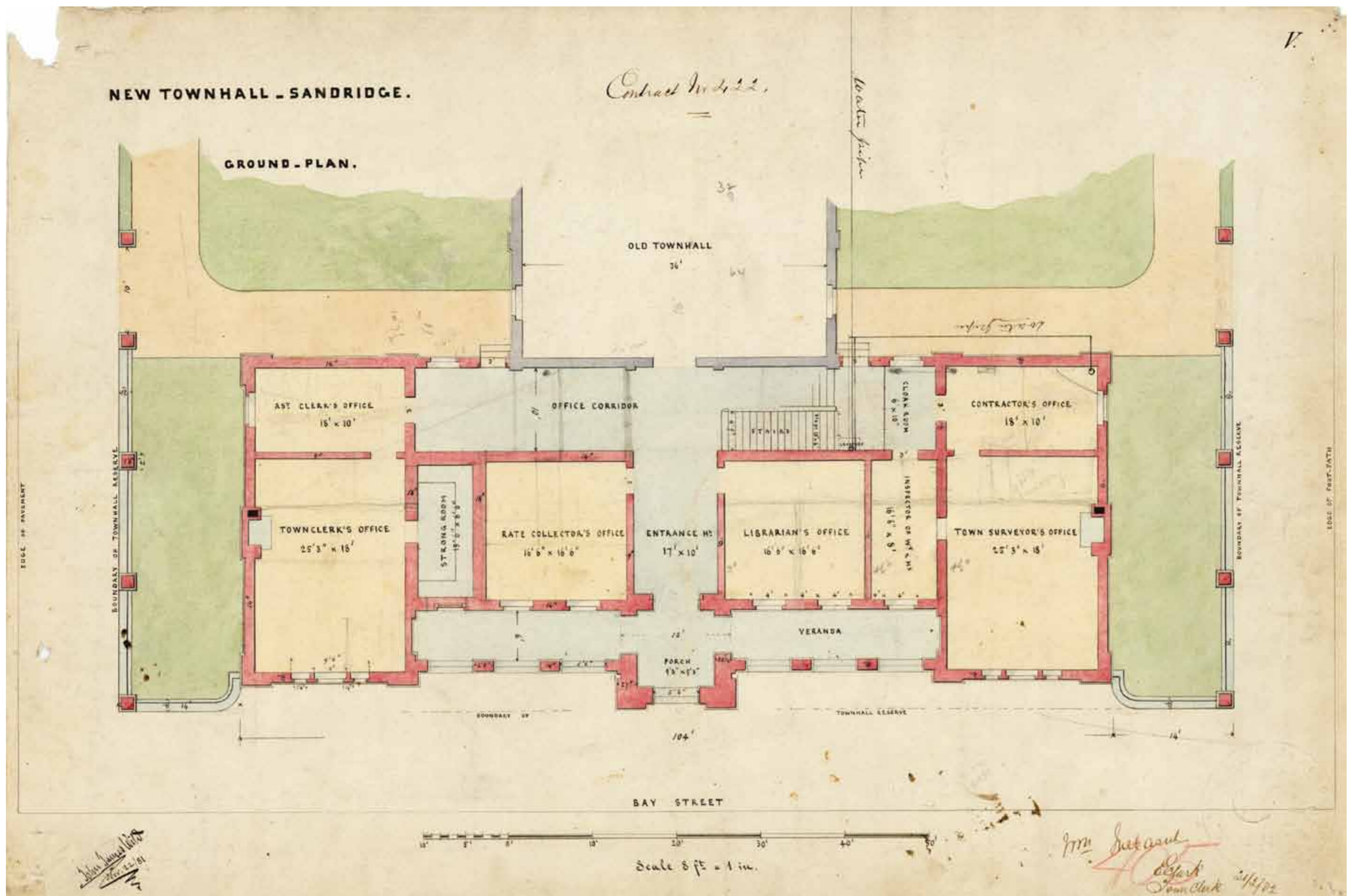
## Expositions

*In the late 1800s Council was keen to promote the growing municipality at the intercolonial and international exhibitions popular at this time. Two framed works of photographs depicting the new industries, businesses, houses and land opportunities of Sandridge were produced in 1873 and 1891 for this purpose. It is thought that the 1873 panel showed at Melbourne and the 1891 panel went by ship to Paris.*

In 1872 Town Clerk, Edward Clark, issued an invitation to all those in the community interested in entering goods for show at the Victorian Exhibition in Melbourne later in the year. From here the works and produce displayed were intended for the International Exhibition in London from April to October 1873. The smaller panel was prepared at this time.

The large frame of mounted photographs is dated 1891 but it incorporates photographs taken some years before; in this year the international exhibition was held in Paris.

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New Town Hall – Sandridge, plan of ground floor 1881 signed by architect John Wild, Town Clerk, Edward Clark and Surveyor William Ireland. PCC pm0622.5

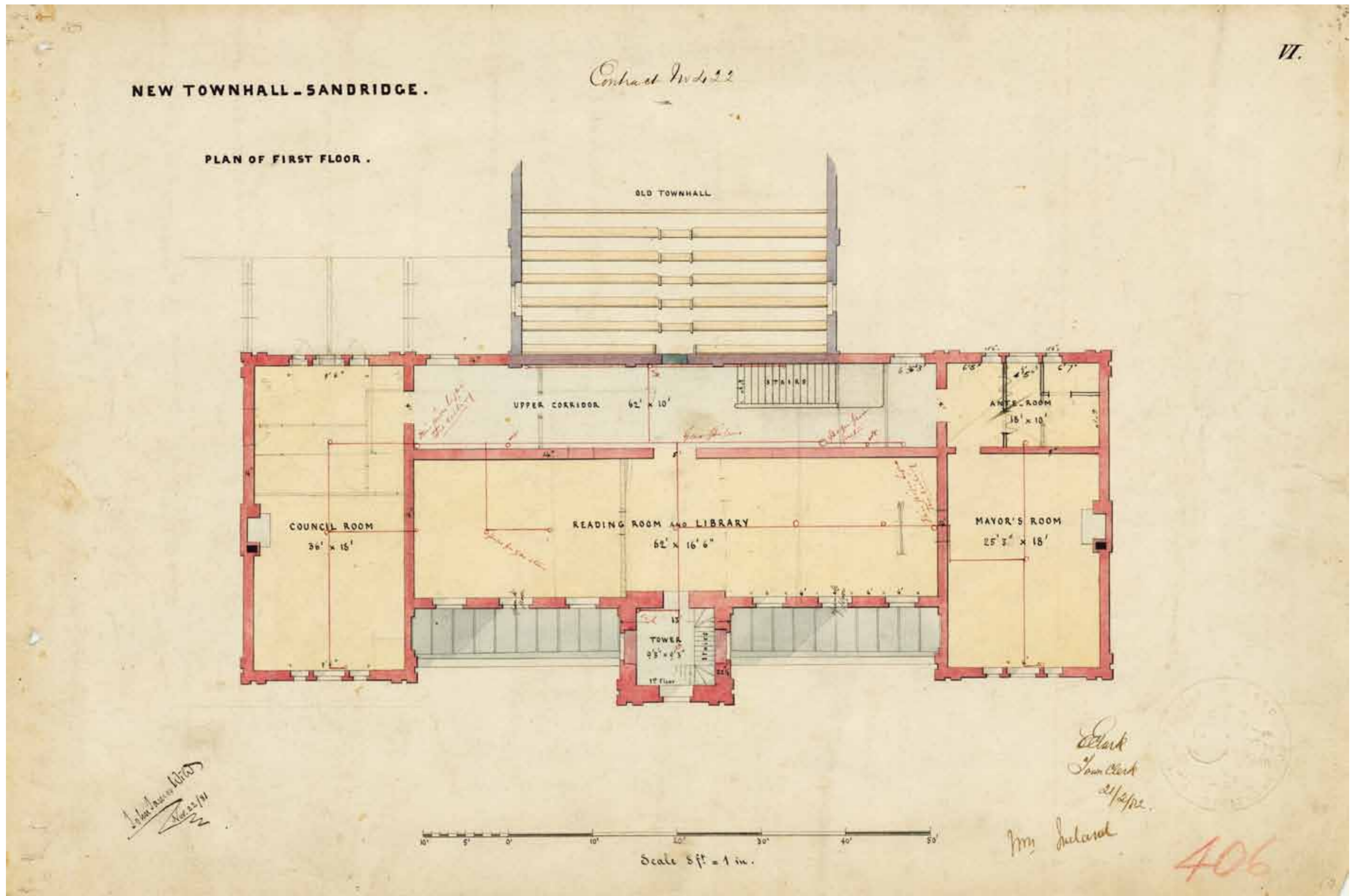


Spiral staircase in Port Melbourne Town Hall  
2010 D Thompson

## Council Offices

This plan provides insights into the Council services available when the Town Hall was being planned. The positions of Town Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Town Surveyor, Librarian, Rate Collector and Inspector of Works are identified.

The large office of the Town Clerk (see panel 6) held prime position. It was located immediately below the 1883 Council Chamber and a staircase gave direct access to the chamber. This spiral staircase, added prior to 1937, is still in place.



New Town Hall – Sandridge, plan of first floor 1881 signed by architect John Wild, Town Clerk, Edward Clark and Surveyor William Ireland. PPCC pm0622.6



Cream-brick library and red-brick fire station, Liardet Street 1979. PPCC pm1805

# Library

Successful lobbying by the community ensured the Library a place in this Town Hall when it opened in 1883. The plans locate the Library on the first floor and the Librarians office on the ground floor. Initially operating as a reference library, it became a lending library in 1911.

In 1938 the Library moved offsite to make way for a larger Council Chamber (see panel 4). It moved to new premises in Liardet Street, now the site of the Coles car park, next to the Fire Brigade building. By 1988 conditions there became too cramped and a new Library was built behind the façade of the Fire Brigade building.

After three moves and 65 years, the Library returned to the Town Hall in 2003 to once again occupy a prominent place in the building.

The bench seats nearby were crafted for the new Library from the timber of the Port Jackson fig tree, which was felled in 1999 after a century of growth in the grounds of the Holy Trinity Church in Bay Street.