

# **'RICH and CHASTE'**

**Building ornamentation in Victorian**

**Launceston**

**Miranda Morris-Nunn**

**jointly funded by the  
Australian Heritage Commission  
and the  
Queen Victoria Museum  
Launceston City Council  
1989**

## **Acknowledgments**

My thanks to Jill Cassidy for the source material provided through her Architectural Index, Jane Dunsford and Mercia Bresnehan for the use of their photographic equipment, Brian Allison and Sandra Brown for developing and printing the photographs, Rhonda Hamilton and Ross Smith for finding me images, and Carolyn Hall for doing the cover.

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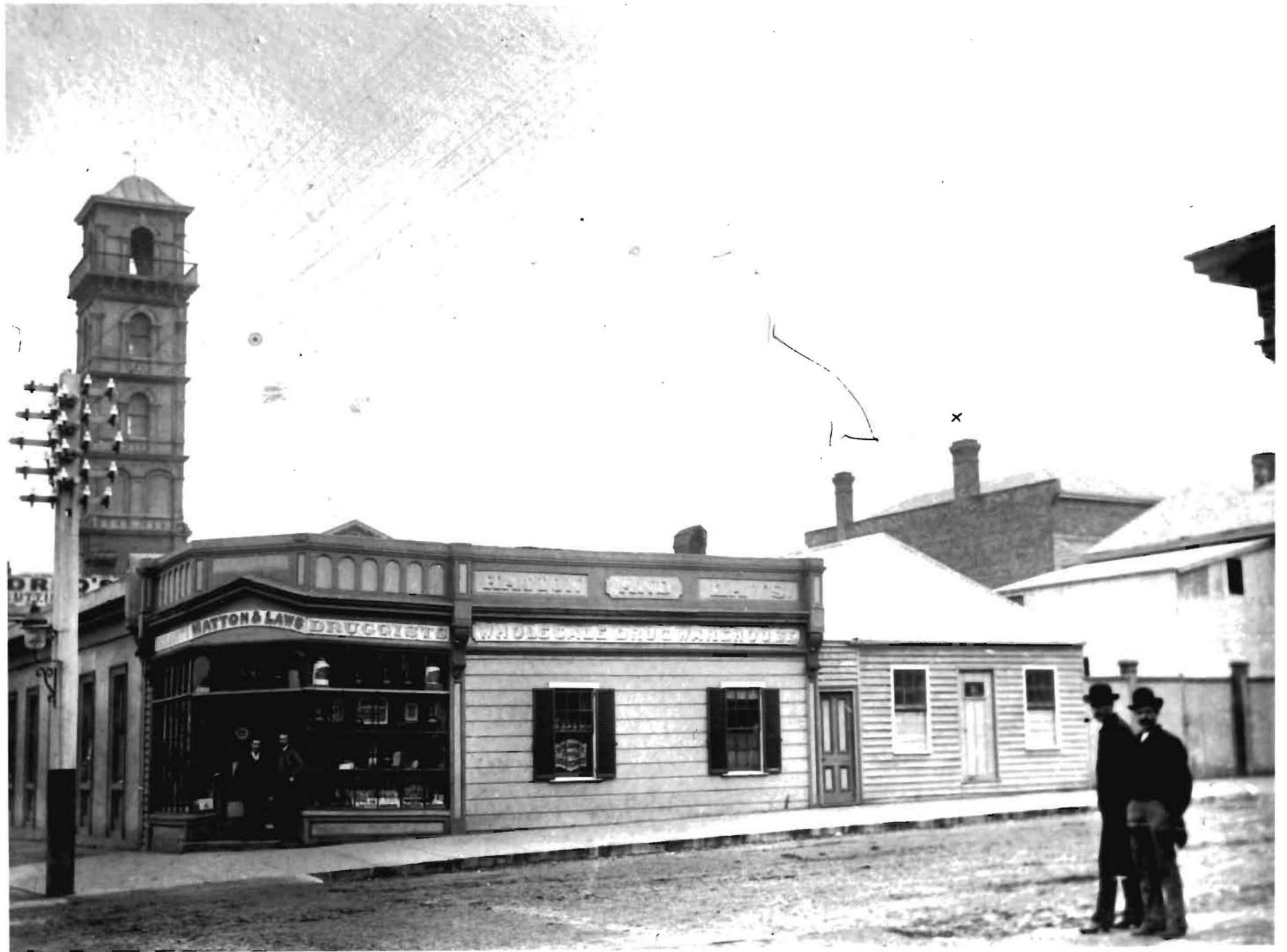
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## Introduction

This survey documents Launceston's architectural transition from a penal settlement and frontier town to a self-governing, confident and established city. The Victorian age was one of rapid change in Europe, but in Australia the evolution was more marked because of the primitive conditions that necessarily prevail in a new colony.

In a new settlement function is of paramount importance. There is neither the time or resources for adornment. In the case of Launceston the vacillation over the location of the northern settlement undermined the confidence needed to encourage investment in the erection of permanent buildings. The most substantial buildings fell into three categories. There were the homesteads of the landowners whose large grants substantiated their right to a permanent place on the island; there were the government buildings - the prisons designed to keep people in, and the commissariat stores designed

to keep people out; and there were the churches whose prominence reflected the prevalence of sinners the administration wished to see repentant. Gradually merchants erected warehouses and stores in the vicinity of the Tamar. These too were resistant to intruders and, for added safety as well as convenience, their owners usually lived in them. Still they were unadorned.

In the early 1850s three occurrences brought about considerable social change. Individually they would have had impact, together that impact was compounded. The cessation of transportation meant that Tasmania was no longer primarily seen as a dumping ground for convicts and that the proportions of convicts to free would gradually lessen. Accelerating this process was the discovery of gold in Victoria. It lured away many ex cons and some still serving, it also enticed an enormous number of working men. Denison, who was governor at the time but was prone to exaggeration, estimated that half the adult male population had left the island. The effects were severalfold.



The growth of Victoria provided Tasmania with an enormous potential market for goods both agricultural and manufactured, but it also removed her labour. Wages and prices soared, leading to appalling poverty for many of the women and children abandoned at this time. The third factor was the introduction of municipal government from which grew not only fervent civic pride but the idea that society could be moulded. Already it seemed well-tamed with the aboriginal population banished to the islands and the daily exodus of men perceived as undesirable. The building of the Mechanic's Institute heralded this new age. It was to be a 'temple of science and art ... in which the masses can receive that education which tends so greatly to enoble and refine the human intellect...' and it would be 'a monument, not only to architecture, but of the energy, perseverance, and philanthropic spirit of those who act not for themselves alone, but who wish to benefit their fellow man.<sup>1</sup> The laying of the foundation stone warranted a public holiday for all.

Butler Stoney described Launceston as 'a large and busy town, all . . . life and bustle, with crowded streets in all the turmoil of daily toil and traffic.' Busy the town may have been in 1854, but architecturally memorable it was not.

Nevertheless, Butler Stoney believed 'a very few years [would] no doubt improve this city wonderfully ... and as the go-ahead principle prevails, we prognosticate great things for the fair city of the North.'<sup>2</sup>

From the late 1850s the new buildings in Launceston's centre, the Mechanics' Institute, Public Buildings, Town Hall, insurance offices, shop terraces and banks, were no longer mere structures, they were 'temples', 'monuments', 'edifices', 'ornaments', and 'Lombardo establishments'. Commensurate with their new standing, architectural style became of paramount importance. The rules were strictly classical and any deviance was noted and repudiated as being of bad taste. **Architecture** was defined by R. Phene Spiers, a leading writer on the subject in his his time, as 'the art of building in such a way as to accord with principles determined,

Brisbane Street, from Gunn's Tower, Launceston, Tasmania



not merely by the ends the edifice is intended to serve, but by high considerations of beauty and harmony. . . No defect is more glaring or more unpleasant than want of proportion. . . By harmony is meant the general balancing of the several parts of the design. It is proportion applied to the mutual relation of the details.. Thus supported parts should have an adequate relation to their supports, and the same should be the case with solids and voids. Due attention to proportion and harmony gives the appearance of stability and repose which is indispensable to a really fine building. Symmetry is uniformity in plan, and, when not carried to excess, is undoubtedly effective. But a building too rigorously symmetrical is apt to appear cold and tasteless. Such symmetry of general plan, with diversity of detail, as is presented to us in leaves, animals and other natural objects, is probably the just medium between the excesses of two opposing schools.

Next to general beauty or grandeur of form in a building comes architectural ornament. Ornament, of course, may

be used to excess, and as a general rule it should be confined to the decoration of constructive parts of the fabric; but, on the other hand, a total absence or paucity of ornament betokens an unpleasing poverty. Ornaments may be divided into two classes - mouldings and the sculptured representation of natural or fanciful objects. . . Mouldings require to be carefully studied, for nothing offends the eye like a confusion of mouldings, such as Roman forms in Greek work. . .<sup>13</sup>

For many years single storey shop fronts interspersed ornamental stuccoed buildings four times their height. 'Quite enough of the old style of brick structures remain' wrote one commentator, 'to show the character of the prevalent bizarre taste of a bygone age.' The *Examiner* went to great pains to 'convince distant readers that Launceston [was] not a mere assemblage of wigwams or wattle-and-daub huts; but that several of its streets [were] lined with buildings that would not disgrace the more antiquated cities of the old country; and it [was] not unreasonable



to conclude that as a taste for architectural beauty [had] been awakened, it [would] continue to largely influence the design of edifices yet to be erected in the town.'

Not only had a taste for architectural beauty been awakened, there were also architects to oblige that taste.

William Henry Clayton, locally born but trained in London and Brussels was said to have 'made the first attempt to initiate an improved style' in Launceston, and his designs displayed 'a demand for, or an appreciation of, a greater amount of beauty than has hitherto been observed here'.<sup>4</sup> In the fifteen years he practised in Launceston, between 1848 and 1863 when he moved to New Zealand, his most memorable buildings were the Mechanic's Institute, the Bank of Australasia, the Theatre Royal, and, still intact today, the Public Buildings.

His laying out of the Quadrant, a divergence from the strict grid pattern of Launceston and most other Australian towns, should not be forgotten.

Writing of Peter Mills, who came into prominence almost immediately after Clayton's departure, a commentator wrote that before his arrival the architecture of Launceston 'with few exceptions', was 'simply a disgrace to a civilised community'.<sup>5</sup> It seems likely that those 'few exceptions' were the work of Clayton.

Mills was London-born arriving in Launceston in 1857 when he became a foreman to the builder John Francis. He established a thriving business as a building supplier as well as becoming a prolific practising architect. His responsibility for the change in Launceston's streetscapes is often referred to by his contemporaries. 'Mills', according to one, 'led the way towards an improved style of architecture in Launceston at a time when but little taste was displayed in this direction, and each new building erected by him usually shows more departure from the beaten track.' Mills had 'revolutionised architecture in this island by supplying 'chaste and beautiful designs for new structures which forced the old world ideas of Tasmanian builders into new channels.'



These structures were monuments to his architectural genius and good taste.' <sup>6</sup>

The third major architect of the buildings in this period was Harry Conway, a man of 'well-known taste and architectural skill'. <sup>7</sup> He was designing buildings in Launceston between 1873 and 1888, although his main contributions to the centre of the town were all erected in the five years after 1879, when Mills was moving towards retirement.

Major institutions, particularly banks, employed the same architects to design all their branches. Reed, Henderson & Barnes, for instance, were responsible in the 1880s for the Banks of Australasia at Launceston, Burnie, Latrobe, Ulverstone and Campbell Town. Leonard Terry, who designed the Melbourne Club, was brought in to design the Union Bank here. Other intercolonial architects were employed to design one off buildings.

In the late 1880s Alexander North began practising in Launceston introducing a strong English Arts and Crafts style. Victorian classicism began to wane.

This survey is made up of contemporary photographs and news commentary. We are fortunate to have such good documentation of this period.

The authors of the commentaries were articulate, thorough and well acquainted with both the architectural vocabulary and the aesthetic ideal of the period. By looking at their words we can come to a deeper appreciation of the architectural objectives of the Victorian age and how successfully these were met by Launceston's architects.

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup>*Launceston Examiner* 11 October 1859; <sup>2</sup>H. B. Stoney *A year in Tasmania*, 1854; <sup>3</sup>R. Phene Spiers 'Architecture' *The Encyclopædia Britannica* Cambridge, 1910; <sup>4</sup>*Launceston Examiner* 18 October 1856; <sup>5</sup>*Cornwall Chronicle* 2 February 1877; <sup>6</sup>*Cornwall Chronicle* 7 November 1879; <sup>7</sup>*Cornwall Chronicle* 7 November 1879.



FIRST TRIAL OF TRAMS.  
28 July, 1911.



Bank of Australasia

Architect Clayton, William Henry

Cameron St

Builder

Bank

1854

**References**

Examiner 17/6/1854,  
9/9/1856 details, 25/5/1858,  
8/10/1856, 22/1/1970  
demolition.

Owner Original

Occupier Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

demolished X

altered

'This fine building which rivals in external appearance, and surpasses in internal arrangements and decorations many similar erections in adjoining colonies, . . . is now complete.'  
*Launceston Examiner 25th May 1858*



The Bank of Australasia, situated on the north side of Cameron Street, is a two storied free stone building of large dimensions. It might be styled Anglo-Italian and is after a model frequently used in England for such buildings. There is a porch at each end which is fronted by an iron railing. The lower tier of windows are arched and the upper square, the centre of one being ornamented with a pediment. The attic of the building is ornamented with Royal Arms (bronzed). The building is dignified, and a great acquisition, from an architectural point of view, to the town.

*Launceston Examiner 25th April 1867*

'At each end of the building is an entrance porch, one for the public and the other leading to the manager's residence. These porches are designed with rusticated pilasters supported on a moulded plinth and surmounted with an enriched frieze, and moulded free stone cornice. The front between the porches is spaced out for five circular headed recessed windows, with panelled relief under the sills, and the piers between and space above are rusticated in Grecian rustic.

The ground storey is terminated by a free stone moulded string course, on which stand the windows of the first storey, which are relieved by free stone moulded labels over, supported on carved scroll trusses.

The centre window finishes with a moulded free stone design. The quoins are of free stone, rusticated, and add much to vary the design.

The ends of the building are relieved by piers projecting from the general face, in which are carried the flues from the several fire places, the shafts above the parapets forming a pretty feature in the design, being relieved with a wreath.

The front and ends of the building are finished with a richly moulded free stone cornice and blocking course, with dentils chiseled in one of the members over the centre window. The blocking course is broken and slightly pedimented in which in which will be cut "Bank of Australasia [1857]".'

*Launceston Examiner 18th October 1856*



Theatre Royal  
St John St 095  
Theatre

1856

**References**

Examiner 20/8/1856,  
23/8/1856 description,  
18/10/1856

**Architect** Clayton, William Henry  
**Builder**

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

demolished

altered

Converted to Oddfellow's Hall  
by Mills. Façade completely  
altered.

'The building will be of brick; the front which is to be stuccoed, with free-stone dressings, is on St John-street, about 130 feet from its angle with Brisbane-street. It is divided into three compartments by eight coupled Roman Doric pilasters, supporting proportionate entablature, with appropriate enrichments in free-stone. Between the pilasters are three doors, with one row of windows under the entablature, and a second row of circular windows above the entablature, giving light to the boxes, refreshment rooms and ladies' cloak-rooms.'

*Launceston Examiner 23rd August 1856.*

Mechanic's Institute  
Cameron St Cnr St John St  
Public building 1856

**Architect** Clayton, William Henry  
**Builder** Russell, G R

**References**

Examiner 18/11/1856,  
5/5/1857 details, 8/3/1859  
stone shortage, 11/10/1859  
history, 10/4/1869 opening &  
details, 13/12/1860  
dangerous.

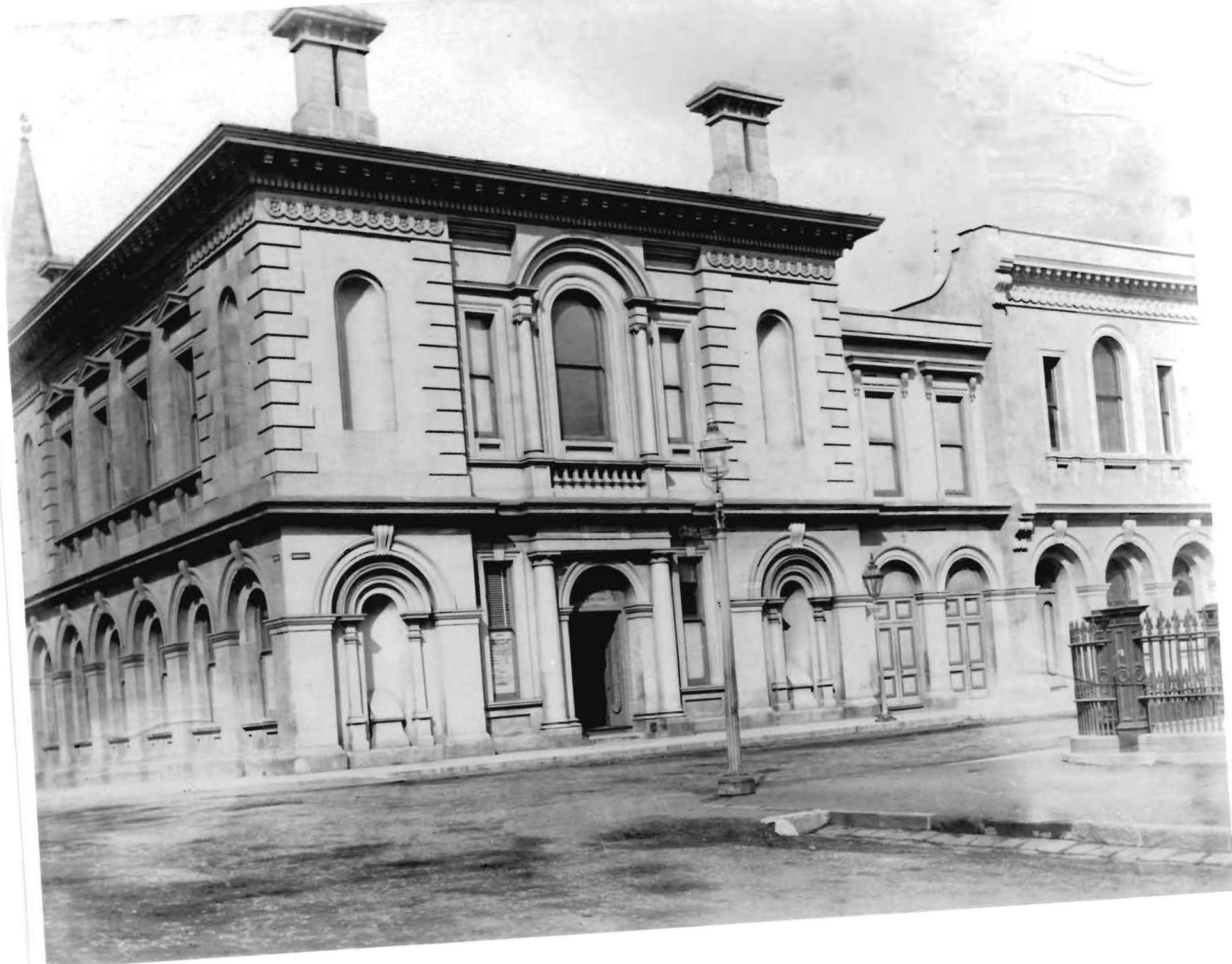
**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

demolished X

altered



'In the present article we have to show how the wealth accumulated by successful agricultural and commercial pursuits has been applied in the erection of a building erected as a temple of science and art and in which the masses can receive that education which tends so greatly to enoble and refine the human intellect...

A structure has been raised which is an ornament to the quarter of the town in which it stands, and which when completed will be a monument, not only of architecture, but of the energy, perseverance, and philanthropic spirit of those who act not for themselves alone, but who wish to benefit their fellow man...

The design is in the decorated Italian style. The lower storey consists of six recessed compartments, fronting on St John-street, and which are formed by seven pilasters, with moulded bases and caps, supporting semicircular arches, with moulded architraves and consoled keystones.

Each recess is devoted to a window, having a moulded sill, and three panels under. The front to Cameron-street, extending fifty feet from its angle with St John-street, is in keeping with the façade on that street. There are, also, two recessed compartments, forming, as it were, wings, the centre being the entrance to the ground floor of the building. These two compartments, instead of being devoted to windows, are relieved with niches and pedestals enriched with pilasters having moulded caps, bases and pedestals, supporting semicircular pedimented entablatures. The entrance doorway is marked by two engaged three-quarter Doric columns. The impost consists of pilasters with moulded caps and bases, from which spring the moulded archivolt, the whole being surmounted by a well-proportioned entablature, the cornice of which is continued, and forms a moulded string course to the three fronts of the building. The recesses between the Doric columns and the wings in Cameron-street are devoted to long narrow windows, relieved by moulded architraves and projecting key-stones.

The upper storey of the building in Cameron-street is divided as below into the three compartments, each wing having rusticated quoins, and is devoted to niches. The centre consists of three-quarter attached Ionic columns, with moulded bases and pedestals and carved caps, the space between the pedestals being filled in with a balustrade. These columns support a moulded entablature and semicircular pediment, the whole enclosing a large window with a semi-circular head and moulded architraves.

The space between the columns and the wings (as below) are devoted to lancet windows. The front to St John-street in the upper storey is also formed into three divisions, each end being carried up over the last arches flush with the face below, and relieved with rusticated coins and niches, corresponding with those in Cameron-street. The centre division is recessed, and devoted to four windows, with a continuous moulded sill, supported by consoles. Each window is relieved with moulded architraves and pediments.

The crowning entablature is five feet in height, the frieze being carved throughout with continuous scrolls, enriched occasionally with pateras; the cornice being also enriched with lentils and carved medallions. The four wings are terminated by chimney stacks corresponding with the general character of the building, and form commanding features in the design.'

*Launceston Examiner 11th October 1859*

'This erection, so beautiful to the eye, will be a ruin in a few years. What a contrast the public offices opposite present. Their chaste, substantial yet decorative character condemn in expressive terms the heavy gingerbread construction "over the way".'

*Launceston Examiner 13th December 1860*

'It is a relief and pleasure to turn to notice an edifice exhibiting many meritorious features but it is only fair to say that many persons condemn the building we are about to allude to.'

The whole building is composed of freestone obtained from Dr Maddox's quarry on the West Tamar; and it is to be feared from its appearance in many places that it will not endure as long as could be wished or was expected. The portion fronting Cameron-street has been armed with several coats of paints, and in addition to its appearance being improved it will, we are inclined to think, be found much more durable than the exposed side. The lower tier of windows are Saxon arches, the arched mouldings resting on short massive pilasters. The keystones assume the scroll form. The upper tier of windows - square - are surmounted with pediments of modest proportions, a row of dentels running along under each architrave. The frieze is a serpentine tracery, and it imparts much elegance to the well-moulded cornice above which is supported by a fine set of modillions.

The windows, like those of all our other public edifices, are of large plate glass. At each corner of the building in the upper storey are niches instead of windows. The façade in Cameron-street is handsome and pleasing. In short the whole edifice presents most gratifying features viewed from any point. The roof is a sloping slate one and is not hidden from view by a parapet, or coping. This is perhaps the only fault about the building, but it is a very slight one, as the roof is pyramidal and well made. .  
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*Launceston Examiner 23rd February  
1867*



City Hotel  
St John St  
Hotel

1859

**References**  
Examiner 6/9/1859

**Architect** Clayton, William Henry  
**Builder**

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

**Intact**

√

**demolished**

**altered**

Bottom floor has been altered  
sympathetically.







Public Buildings  
St John Street

Architect Clayton, William Henry  
Builder Porter, James

1859

**References**

Examiner 9/10/1858,  
6/1/1859, 31/5/1861,  
26/9/1861, 23/2/1867

Owner Original  
Occupier Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

√

demolished

altered





'The government has accepted a tender for common, not pressed brick in preference to ashlar. We regret this decision and we think the people of Launceston will too. The difference in price should not have weighed between the beauty and desirability of stone and the dingy appearance of brick. Buildings such as these should be erected with the best of material.'

*Launceston Examiner January 1859*

'We think [the Public Buildings] stand alone and unrivalled for beauty of design and good taste. They are of the best Italian and worthy of Palladio. The whole are fronted by a neat well-moulded iron railing, within which is a well-kept garden. The main portion of the structure comprises three storeys and the wings two. The body is of well-burned bricks and the cornerings, weatherings, and keystones of Hobart Town freestone - a very durable rock. The lower tier of windows are arched and ornamented with well-proportioned keystones; the higher tiers are square, the upper portion being ornamented with a cornice, supported at each end by a modillion.

The sides and sills of all the windows are of course provided with moulded freestone facings. The upper portion of the building is set off by a handsome ballustrade or coping. This is not only carried along the front but runs along the side walls of the upper storey of the main building; consequently the effect from a distance is very imposing. Tier rises above tier. The windows are all of plate glass, and are provided with green Venetian blinds. Fronting the Post Office windows [Paterson street] is a highly ornamental verandah formed by a triplet of arches, the roof of which is glass so as to give light as well as shelter to those who maybe engaged at the Post Office windows. The ichnographic projection of these buildings is as well considered and convenient as the orthographic is tasteful and imposing.'

*Launceston Examiner 23rd February 1867*









Union Bank  
Paterson St 036 Cnr St John St  
Bank 1858 +

**Architect** Terry, Leonard  
**Builder** Conway Harry Supervising  
architect

**References**  
Examiner 9/10/1858,  
10/1/1865, 23/3/1865

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

√

demolished

altered







'The first of the Lombardo establishments in this town is that of the Union Bank of Australia. It is situated at the south-west corner of Patterson and St John-streets. The façade presents an engaged Doric colonnade resting on a rusticated stylobate. The building is of brick in the body, but plaster fronted. The lower wall, to which the columns are engaged, is a plain blocking course. Large plate-glass windows intersect the fluted columns, and are provided with green Venetian blinds. The entablature is very modest, the epistylum being divided from the plain frieze by a row of small dentels. On the frieze at one end is carved the name of the bank in Sanserif letters. The cornice is neatly moulded. The upper portion of the building is admirably suited to the lower. The upper plate-glass windows, like the lower, are ornamented with Venetian blinds and are fronted by square railings of neat design. which project out to the parapet of the cornice.

These windows are also ornamented at the side with neat mouldings, and above with cornices to match, supported by large handsome modillions. The general appearance of this building is gratifying in the extreme, the style being admirably adapted to the nature of the establishment. It is large and fills the eye, giving an impression of wealth, importance and dignity, yet there is nothing heavy or oppressive about it. The elongated bright windows and Venetian blinds almost impart a feeling of lightness, while a diagonal view discloses a long, dignified Doric colonnade, with graceful and well-proportioned entases. The stylobate is simple and solid, the columns short (about 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> diameters) and massive, The entablature modest and graceful. The upper portion of the edifice being in good keeping with the lower, gives the whole a finished, lofty aspect.'

*Launceston Examiner 25th April 1867*



Town Hall  
St John St cnr Cameron St  
Public Building 1864

**Architect** Mills, Peter  
**Builder** Francis & Galvin

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle 23/1/1864,  
21/4/1864, 22/10/1864,  
Examiner 9/6/1886

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

**Intact**

**demolished**

**altered**

In the 1930s it was extended,  
changing the squat form to  
more classical proportions.





'The design of the [Town Hall] is highly ornamental. The elevation is an adaption of the Corinthian order of architecture, and has a frontage to Saint-John-street of 76 feet and to Cameron-street of 52 feet.

The principal front is towards Saint-John-street, the centre forming a grand piazza, approached from the front by a flight of steps the whole length of the colonnade, and forming the entrance to the Municipal offices. Connected by this piazza are two wings, in one of which are placed the public Hall and staircase, with an entrance from Cameron-street and the other the private Hall and staircase...; and each of these wings is surmounted by a cupola, one being niched for emblematic statues, the other forming a clock tower, having dials facing in four directions. The roof and cornice of the Piazza or Colonnade is supported on four Corinthian columns and pedestals, each the entire height of the building, and the remainder of the front is flanked with numerous pilasters and capitals to correspond...' *Launceston Examiner 23rd April 1864*

The Town Hall is a bastard, or more properly speaking, a plasterer's Corinthian. The designer appears to have studied how far he could outrage good taste and set delicacy and refinement at defiance by obtruding as many points and angles upon the eye as it was possible to crowd in the two wings. The windows, surmounted with large and ungainly pediments, look like young houses growing out of the building, and the way in which they are crowded together is an irresistible reminder of the house that Jack built.

The pile is fronted by an iron railing. The colonnade of the portico is composed of four unfluted columns resting on pedestals, which in their turn rest on a stylobate of four steps.

The plinths of the pedestals descend from the uppermost step to the second, giving the whole a "miscalculated" appearance. The spaces between the pedestals are only about the width of the pedestals themselves. This gives an impression of want of room, and we feel assured that a lady dressed in one of the full-sized departed crinolines would practically feel the limited space. The dice of the pedestals are plain and the surbases tastefully moulded. The entases of the columns are well-proportioned, and the capitals and abaci are well executed.

The epistylum is neatly moulded and the frieze is plain. The cornice is most elaborate and handsome, and is supported by a row of modillions, underneath which is a row of dentels. Above the cornice is a moulded balustrade which is surmounted by urns. The lower part of the walls is simply and ordinary blocking course. The lower windows are arched and ornamented with disproportioned keystones. The door opening out into the portico has a window on each side, and immediately above are arched niches to correspond. Perhaps one day they will be ornamented with the busts or statues of our great aldermen and mayors. The wings of the front and the façade of the building in Cameron-street are supported by Corinthian pilasters. The only redeeming feature about this building is the colonnade portico, and that, as we have said, is far from perfection. Of course, we do not assert that the structure is without grace, but we have no hesitation in saying that, with the same means, a skilful artist would have wrought an orthographic projection of far more imposing effect.

The combination is bad, the endless angular projections graceless, and the general appearance of the wings squat and awkward, especially the heavy pediments surmounting the doors and windows. The building is large and lofty and fills the eye, but the richness and beauty of the order to which it belongs are nullified by ill-judged and tasteless importations. After such an unfavorable expression of opinion it is only right to add that it is the joint product of two architects, the gentleman under whose direction it was completed having been called in when the work was too far advanced to permit him to make the alterations which he desired.'

*Launceston Examiner 23rd February 1867*



Cornwall Insurance Office

Architect Mills, Peter

St John St

Builder

Business premises 1865

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle 2/2/1877,  
9/9/1872

Owner Original

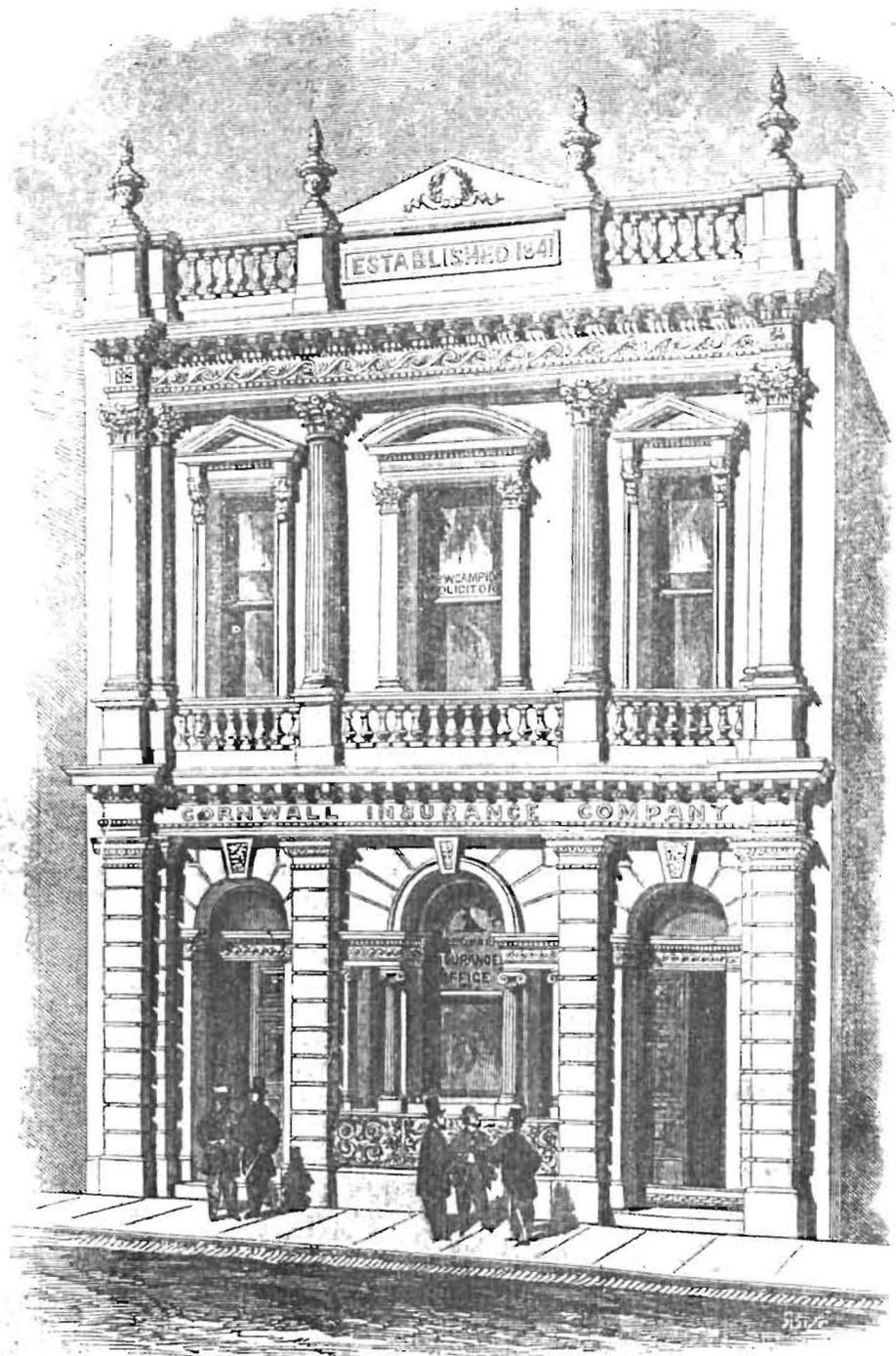
Occupier Original Campion, B W

**CONDITION:**

intact

demolished X

altered



[Peter Mills, Architect.]

'The Cornwall Insurance Office is the most highly decorated building in town.

It is situated in St John-street. The façade, which is confined to the street portion of the building, is one mass of ornamentation from top to bottom.

The gaudy tracery and flowering, the rich moulding, the handsome ballustrades, the arched windows supported by Ionic and Corinthian columns (fluted and unfluted), all combine to strike the eye and elicit admiration, but to our thinking the style is too florid. Although every portion of the embellishments are [*sic*] well-proportioned and fitted to each other, they appear too crowded and rich. Simplicity has been sacrificed for splendor, and splendor on a small scale and in a small space is a waste of means. A Chinese dandy would look very awkward and out of place in an assembly of black dress coats, but he moved with his peacock strut in an assembly of his own countrymen dressed in clothing of butterfly colors like his own, he would not look so much of a *rare avis*. He would form an integral part of the gay throng, and would assist in giving that grand and striking effect produced by the whole.

So with a building, to be imposing it must not be small or isolated, or surrounded by cheap-John shops and corn stores. This is the grand mistake that has been made in regard to the Cornwall Insurance Office. It has been built as though a whole line of sister buildings were to be erected in the same street. If this was the assumption and if it was correct, not a shadow of fault could be found with the Cornwall Office. A row of such buildings would look grand and beautiful. But it is not likely that another such building will be erected beside it for a good many years. The Cornwall Office is too good.

*Launceston Examiner 23rd February 1867*



Commercial Bank

Paterson St 021

Bank

1873

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle

29/8/1873, 30/3/1874,

13/4/1874, 8/5/1874 (more  
details), 26/4/1875.

**Architect** Mills, Peter

**Builder**

**Owner** Original

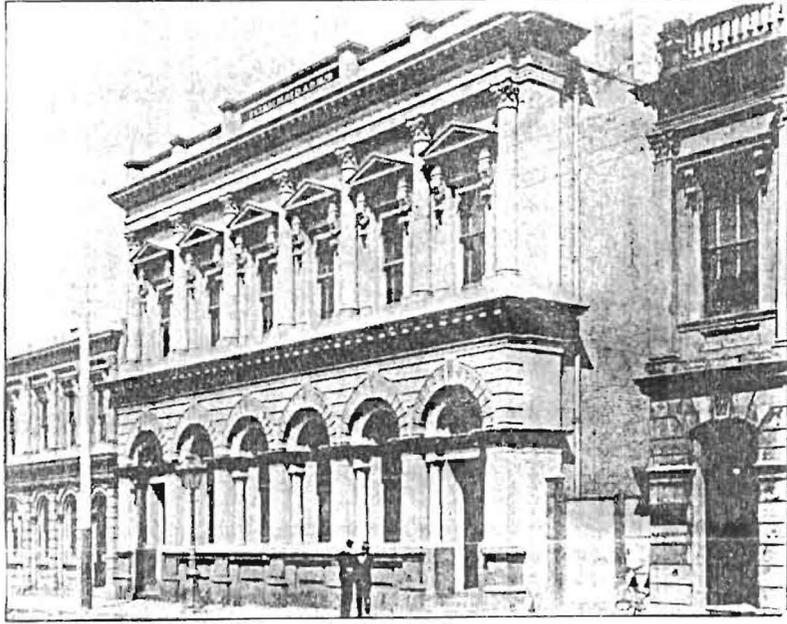
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact      ✓

altered

demolished



'[The Commercial Bank] will be two storeys high, the first of which is already completed, the total height of the front being 40 feet with a width of 56 feet. The second storey will be completed in about a month or so and ready for the roof. The building is of the most substantial character and when completed will be an ornament to the town. The basement is of blue-stone and the front will be handsomely finished after the Italian order of architecture. On the ground floor there are four circular headed windows, with two doors similarly finished, one at each end, having freestone columns on each side. In the second storey there will be six windows (pediment headed) likewise having freestone Corinthian columns between each and supporting a very ornamental cornice of the Corinthian order. The general appearance of the front, part cement and freestone, will certainly be very imposing and will no doubt render the building one of the permanent attractions of the town.'

*Cornwall Chronicle 13th April 1874*

'The perfectness of the ornamental brickwork in front is well worth close inspection now in its unfinished state. The bricks forming the Corinthian columns, the cornices, the window pilasters, and the pediments over the window have been set out very perfectly. The bricks have been so accurately moulded that they fit quite close, and if neatly pointed would look well even without being cemented over.

The whole of these bricks were moulded and made at Galvin's brickfield near Glen Dhu and the manner in which they have turned out and fitted proves that we have at hand excellent materials, and mechanics in Launceston capable of performing the most intricate ornamental builders' work.'

*Cornwall Chronicle 8th May 1874*







Fawns Block  
George St cnr Brisbane St  
Shop (3) 1873

**References**  
Cornwall Chronicle  
10/11/1873, 28/11/1873,  
30/3/1874, 13/4/1874,  
1/12/1879

**Architect** Mills, Peter  
**Builder** Archibald & Jackson (steel girder  
manufacturers)

**Owner Original** Fawns, J; Douglas & Collins  
**Occupier Original** Fawns, John; Sadler, R J

**CONDITION:**  
**intact** √ **demolished**  
**altered** In 1879 Fawns original  
building was extended in the  
same style.



With love. From Lucy

STURTELL  
PHOTO

'This building will comprise three shops of three storeys high, the foundations being of bluestone with an ornamental brick and cement front. The ground floor ceiling will be 12 feet high. There will be two front windows over each shop on both storeys, and the front will be suitably ornamented. Altogether the building will have a most imposing appearance and will certainly be a credit to the town, and also a credit to the spirited proprietor, Mr Fawns. That gentleman has shown the way to other owners of property in the town, and it will be well if several of them followed his plucky example and erected buildings worthy of the growing importance of the town, and equal to the necessities of the trade . .

*Cornwall Chronicle 13th April 1874*

' . . . very rich and chaste '

*Cornwall Chronicle 10th November 1873*

'Messrs Archibald and Jackson have just completed an iron girder 38 feet in length as a support over the shop fronts of Mr Fawns' new houses at the junction of Brisbane and George-streets. The tube of this is 16"x17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" and the outside plates are 15 inches broad. The same firm have completed two other 14 ft girders for the same buildings, and are at work on a circular girder to carry the ornamental brickwork at the corner of George and Brisbane-streets.'

*Cornwall Chronicle 30th March 1874*







Brisbane St 059  
Business premises 1874

Architect Mills, Peter  
Builder

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle 27/4/1874,  
20/9/1875, 20/11/1874,  
25/3/1879 (illustration)

Owner Original Mills, Peter  
Occupier Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact ✓ demolished  
altered Bottom storey altered

Brisbane Street from George St., Launceston



'The style of the building will also be new. . .'

*Cornwall Chronicle 27th April 1874*

' . . . a similar plan to Mills' earlier residence but on a larger scale and more ornamental. . .'

*Cornwall Chronicle 20th September 1875*





Boston Ironmongery Warehouse	Architect	Mills, Peter
Brisbane St Cnr St John St	Builder	Gunn, J & T
Shop & warehouse		Gow (plasterer)
1876		

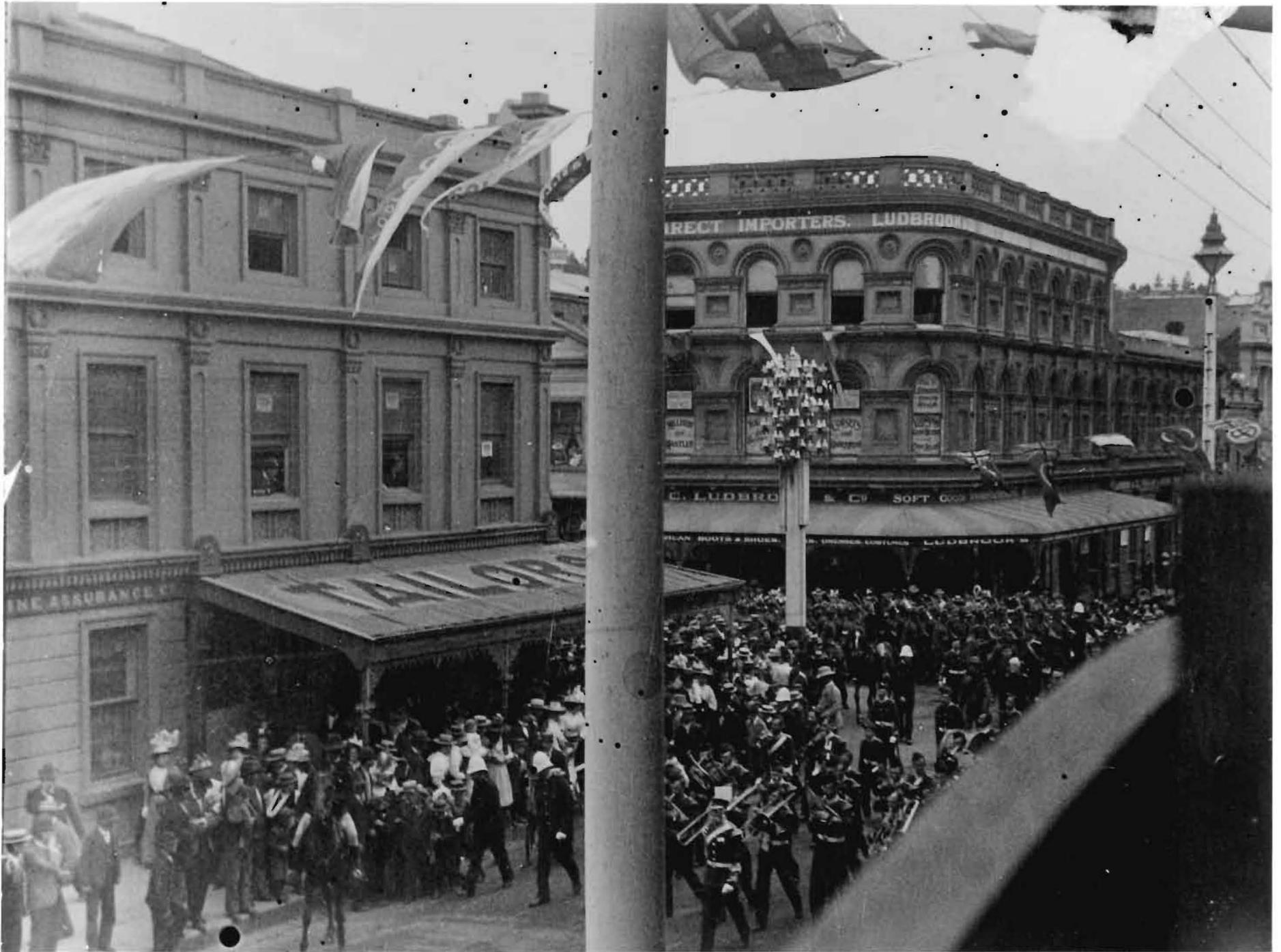
**References**

Cornwall Chronicle  
 25/12/1876, 2/2/1877 (more  
 details), 16/7/1877,  
 5/10/1877 (Details of building  
 & Opening), 14/12/1877,  
 7/11/1879

Owner	Original	Hart, Frank
Occupier	Original	

**CONDITION:**

Intact	√	demolished
altered		





'This fine block of buildings is to be of three storeys, 47 feet in height. The style is Italian composite, very massive, but elaborately ornamented in the latest and richest style. The main entrance will be in Brisbane- street - no door but a rich plate glass window at the corner - and another large plate glass window on each side of the main doorway. The front shop will be 31 feet square, and alongside it a showroom 31 feet by 25 feet . . . Instead of wooden shutters the front will be enclosed with patent steel self-acting shutters similar to Mr Mills' own business establishment. '  
*Cornwall Chronicle 2nd February 1877*

'This building being the most elevated in the main street of Launceston, it has been suggested that it is the proper locality for a town clock.'  
*Cornwall Chronicle 16th July 1877*







Savings Bank  
Paterson St  
Bank

1877

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle 2/2/1877

**Architect** Mills, Peter  
**Builder**

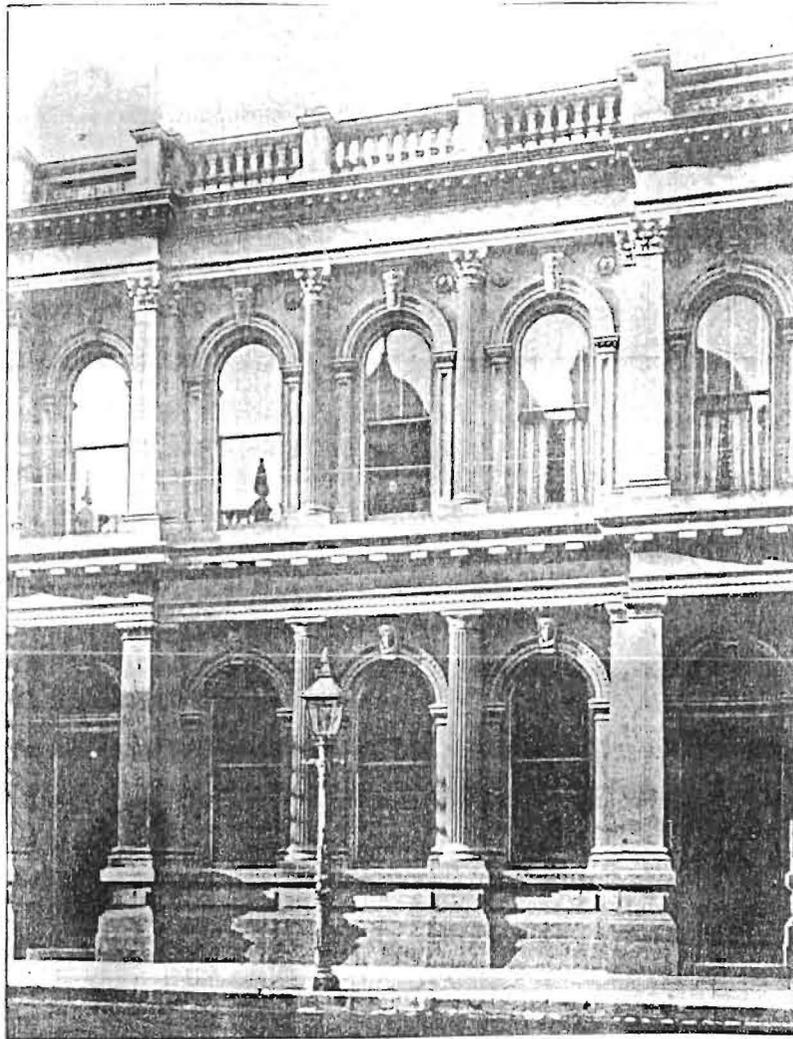
**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

altered

demolished X



Oddfellows' Hall  
St John St 095  
Hall

1877

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle  
19/3/1877, 5/2/1879 Details

**Architect** Mills, Peter  
**Bullder**

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** ✓

**altered**

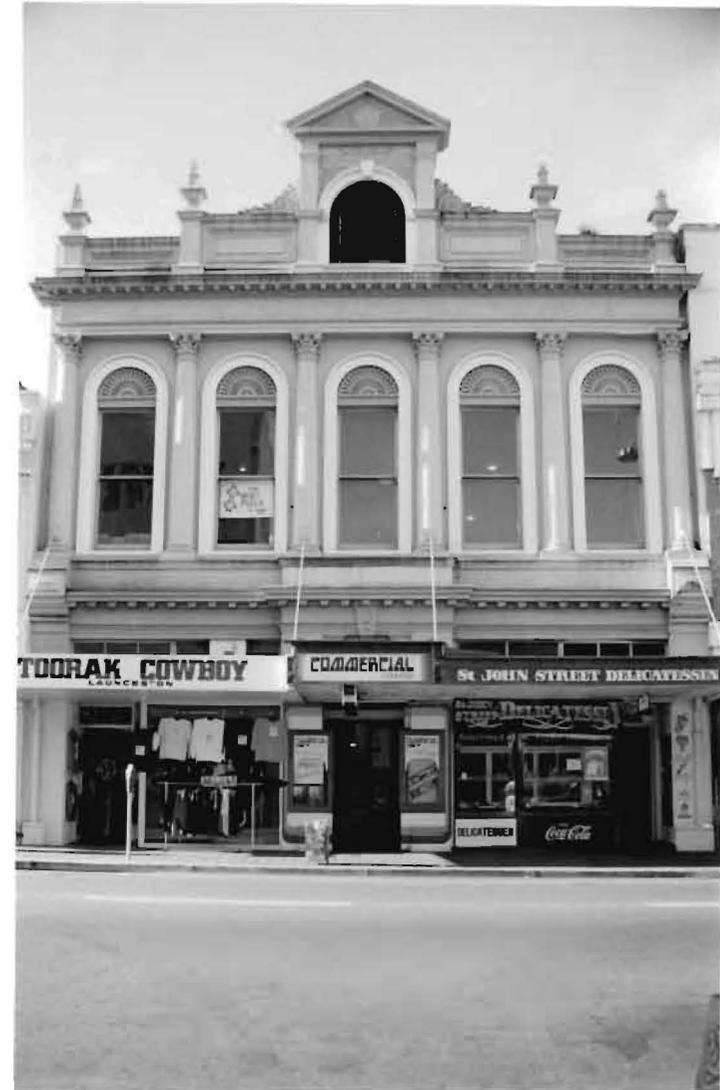
demolished



'The beautiful building commands the admiration of all, and great credit is due to that skilled master of architecture, Mr Peter Mills, for his unique design. . .

The external portion of the hall is Corinthian in style, and the emblem of the order forming the centrepiece has been ornamented with great care and taste by Mr D McEwan, plasterer. The whole of the building was erected by Mr D Scott. '

*Cornwall Chronicle 6th February 1879*





Charles St cnr Elizabeth  
Shop & dwelling (4) 1876

**References**

Cornwall Chronicle  
20/11/1876, 11/4/1877,  
18/5/1877

**Architect** Mills, Peter

**Builder**

**Owner Original** Turner, W; Dugan; Roberts

**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**Intact**

**demolished**

**altered**

Dugan and Roberts erected  
buildings adjacent to Turner in  
the same style.



Bank of Van Diemens Land  
St John St 079  
Bank 1879

Architect Mills, Peter  
Builder Scott, D

**References**  
Cornwall Chronicle  
3/11/1879, 7/11/1879 (more  
details)

Owner Original  
Occupier Original

**CONDITION:**  
Intact  
altered

demolished X

'The new bank will be a spacious, substantial and highly ornamental structure. . '

*Cornwall Chronicle 3rd November 1879*

'The style of architecture is composite, the lower story of the Doric order, the upper story of the Corinthian order, the whole suitably ornamented.

In the front there will be eight high plate glass windows besides the bank and private entrance doors.'

*Cornwall Chronicle 7th November 1879*

St John St 081  
business premises 1880

**References**  
Examiner 16/7/1880

**Architect** Mills, Peter  
**Bullder**

**Owner Original** Ritchie & Parker  
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**  
intact ✓ demolished  
altered

'The upper storey will have several highly ornamental Corinthian pillars... The building itself is of the composite order of architecture, and presents a very handsome appearance, and now that it is completed will form a decided ornament to the central portion of the town.'

*Launceston Examiner 16th July 1880*



George St 054 cnr Cameron St  
Business premises 1882

**References**

Examiner 11/5/1882,  
31/5/1882 details. For sale  
16/11/1886, 20/12/1886

Architect Mills, Peter  
Builder

Owner Original Mills, Peter  
Occupier Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

√

demolished

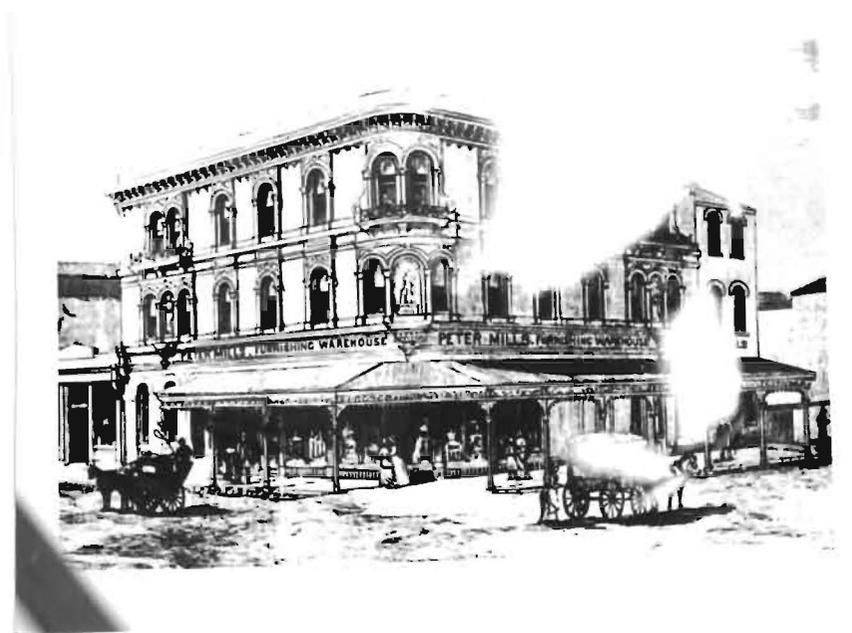
altered

' Mills, having sold his premises to the Launceston Club intends to erect an elegant and extensive three-storey building 60 feet x 40 feet comprising store, showrooms and dwelling. His workshop will be elsewhere.'

*Launceston Examiner 11th May 1882*

'The building will be constructed in the Italian style and the ornamental portion promises to be exceedingly attractive. Three niches are to be placed at intervals between the windows, each of which will contain a design in statuary. . . '

*Launceston Examiner 31st May 1882*







Bank of Tasmania  
Cameron St  
Bank

1879

**References**  
CC 23/7/1879

**Architect** Conway, Harry  
**Bullder**

**Owner** Original  
**Occupler** Original

**CONDITION:**  
intact  
altered

demolished



Paterson St 024  
business premises 1880

**References**

Examiner 4/9/1880 more  
details. 25/6/1881 details of  
completed building. 23/9/1882

**Architect** Conway, Harry  
**Builder** Gunn Bros

**Owner Original** Tulloch, Capt. S  
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** ✓ **demolished**  
**altered** Warehouse added 1882  
Lower storey  
unsympathetically altered

'The block will not only be an ornament to the town, but will harmonise well with the handsome buildings which have been erected during the last few years on the opposite side of the street. Commencing from the boundary adjoining the Public Buildings, the new premises will run eastwards with a frontage of 122 feet 6 inches along Paterson-street the front being 36 feet in height...The appearance is both neat and striking, there being a bluestone base two feet high and the lower storey being in the Corinthian style while the upper storey is Ionic with pillars between the windows.'

*Launceston Examiner 4th September 1880*

'...the appearance presented by the buildings is light and pleasing in the extreme. Their architect is Mr Harry Conway, and great credit is due to that gentleman for the handsome block that has resulted from his designs...The design of the buildings is Italian, and the material used in their construction is brick, upon a dressed freestone base with a cement front.

*Launceston Examiner 25th June 1881*

Mutual Assurance Co  
Brisbane St 099  
Business premises 1884

**References**  
Examiner 19/1/1884 descr.,  
13/11/1884 - detailed descr.

**Architect** Conway, Harry  
**Builder**

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** ✓ demolished  
**altered** Alterations on both storeys  
Ornamentation still intact  
apart from roof sculpture.



'The building appears to be a very handsome one. . . The architecture of the external part of the building will be both unique and handsome. The ground floor is to be in the Tuscan style, and the upper storey in the Corinthian, with a pediment fronting on Brisbane-street, supporting the emblem of the Society, with the words *Fideum teneo* underneath.

The lower columns at the vestibule are to be of red granite polished, while the remainder of the columns will be in cement. The building is to be well finished off, a fine rich cornice with balustrading running around, the panels etc., also being very tasty.'

*Launceston Examiner 19th January 1884*

'In the centre two granite columns standing clear of the building carry two three-quarter Corinthian fluted columns, the whole being surmounted by figures emblematic of the Society's motto *Fidem teneo* .

Great credit is due to Mr Harry Conway for the very handsome design he has prepared, which will add yet another noble building to the principal street of Launceston.'

*Launceston Examiner 13th November 1884*







Music Academy

George St

Theatre 1884

**References**

Examiner 10/10/1884 ,  
14/10/1884, 21/10/1884 ,  
22/10/1884 8/2/1886

**Architect** Conway, Harry

**Builder** J & T Gunn

**Owner Original** Hall & Hamilton

**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

Intact

demolished X

altered



'Mr Conway has brought his well-known taste and architectural skill to bear in designing a new theatre, the front of which will be an elegant and elaborate one and an ornament to Launceston...'

*Launceston Examiner 10th October 1884*

'The Academy will occupy a frontage on York-street of 96 feet, the height being 36 feet (two storeys), the whole presenting a very neat appearance in Doric architecture. The lower storey will consist of pilasters supporting on the upper storey quarter Doric columns; these again support architraves, frieze, cornice, balustrade, vases etc., to match.'

*Launceston Examiner 13th November 1884*



Brisbane St 143

Shop (4)

1884

**References**

Examiner 19/11/1884 ; Daily  
Telegraph 16/10/1884

**Architect** Conway, Harry

**Builder** Babington & Irwin

**Owner Original** McMichael & Taylor

**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** √ **demolished**

**altered** Bottom storey altered.

Central Charles Street, Launceston, Tasmania





' . . . two storeys, occupying a frontage of 52 ft to Brisbane-street, and 55ft to Charles-street, the total height from the basement being 37 ft. An ornamental parapet, with vases surmounts the top, as well as cornices and other enrichments. Large plate glass windows and double doors with plate glass fanlights adorn each establishment. . . . The premises constitute an ornamental addition to Brisbane and Charles- streets, and reflect great credit upon the architect Mr Harry Conway, and the contractors...'  
*Launceston Examiner 19th November 1884*



Brisbane Hotel  
Brisbane St  
Hotel

1882

**References**

Examiner 18/2/1888,  
21/4/1888

**Architect** Taylor, LLOYD  
**Builder** Thompson, G C  
Luttrell, A E Supervising  
architect

**Owner Original** Deleuse, A  
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** ✓ **demolished**  
**altered** Façade intact, interior  
remodelled.















Paterson St 016  
Warehouse

1884

**References**  
Examiner 19/1/1884

**Architect** Wardell (of Sydney)  
**Builder** J & T Gunn  
Conway, H (supervising  
architect)

**Owner Original** Lark, Herbert & Co  
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**Intact** ✓ demolished  
**altered** Further stories have been  
added, destroying the  
idiosyncratic roofline



Bank of Australasia

Brisbane St 111

Bank

1884

**Architect** Reed, Henderson & Barnes

**Builder** J & T Gunn

**References**

Examiner 30/1/1884 (details),  
26/9/1884 (detailed  
description) 25/6/1885 (  
details of history and rooms in  
building.

**Owner Original** Bank of Australasia

**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

intact           √

altered

demolished



'The style is composite, the lower storey being rusticated, relieved with pillars and plain capitals and the upper storey less ornate, and relieved with Corinthian pillars. The design would, if executed in freestone, be the handsomest building in Launceston, and even in brick and cement, which has been decided upon, with a bluestone base, will be a decided ornament to that part of town.'

*Launceston Examiner* 30th January 1884

'[The Bank of Australasia] when completed will prove a striking and most ornamental feature in the street .

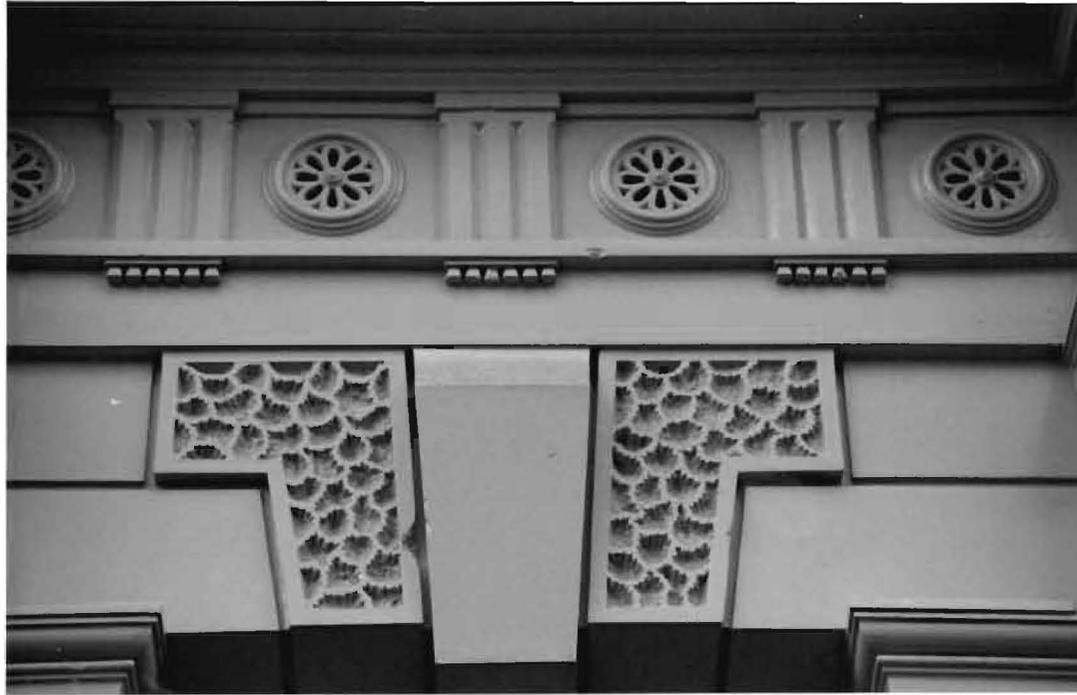
..

The structure will be two storeys, of brick standing on a Malmsbury bluestone base, averaging 2 feet in height from the ground. The building will occupy a frontage of 66feet and 6 inches in St John-street where the height from the basement to the roof

will be nearly 42 feet. Handsome columns and pilasters are to adorn the front, while a panelled pediment and parapet will surmount the whole . . . The whole front of the building will be cemented.'

*Launceston Examiner* 26th September 1884







Australian Widows' Fund Life  
Assurance Society  
Business premises 1884

**References**

Examiner 17/9/1884,  
8/1/1885, 27/3/1886 ,  
4/6/1886 (sculpture)

**Architect** Corrie, Leslie  
70 St John Street

**Owner** Original  
**Occupier** Original

**CONDITION:**

Intact

altered

demolished

'The front of the building will be of brick and cement in the Corinthian style with heavy columns.'

*Launceston Examiner 17th September 1884*

'The edifice, which is three storeys of brick, with cement front, in the Italian style of architecture rises off a bluestone plinth. The basement is rusticated, and the whole façade upon each storey broken with projecting pilasters, coupled at the top storey, and with three-quarter columns to the centre openings. The pilasters on the ground floor have enriched Doric capitals, with foliated capitals to the central entrance, all the other pilasters and columns having enriched foliated caps. All the windows and openings are circular headed with moulded impostes and archivolts. Cornices of various projections denote the different storeys, and the building is appropriately dominated at the top with a boldly designed cornice with projecting brackets under, the centre being occupied by a pediment badge of the Society, a boy breaking sticks, with the motto 'Union is Strength' which is being modelled in Melbourne.

From the depths of the recesses to the openings, etc., along with the projections of various parts, an unusual amount of light and shade is obtained which adds greatly to the appearance of the building. All the windows opening on the two fronts are protected by ornamental iron railings and balconets of various designs, very gray ones on the ground floor and lighter in appearance on the upper storeys. These have been specially selected for the building, and imported direct from Glasgow and are from the foundry of Walter M'Farlane and Co. . .'

*Launceston Examiner 27th March 1886*

'A cement statue illustrating the difficulty of breaking sticks was erected on the offices of the Australian Widows' Fund Life Assurance Society. It was a copy of a statue by McKenna.'

*Launceston Examiner 4th June 1886*





Barclay's Buildings

Brisbane St 108 cnr St John St

Business premises 1887

**References**

Examiner 15/4/1887,  
25/4/1887, 6/5/1887,  
14,7,1959

**Architect** Laidlow

**Builder** Farmilo, J T (brick & stonework)  
Bushby, F (woodwork)  
M'Ewan & Davis (plasterers)

**Owner Original** Barclay

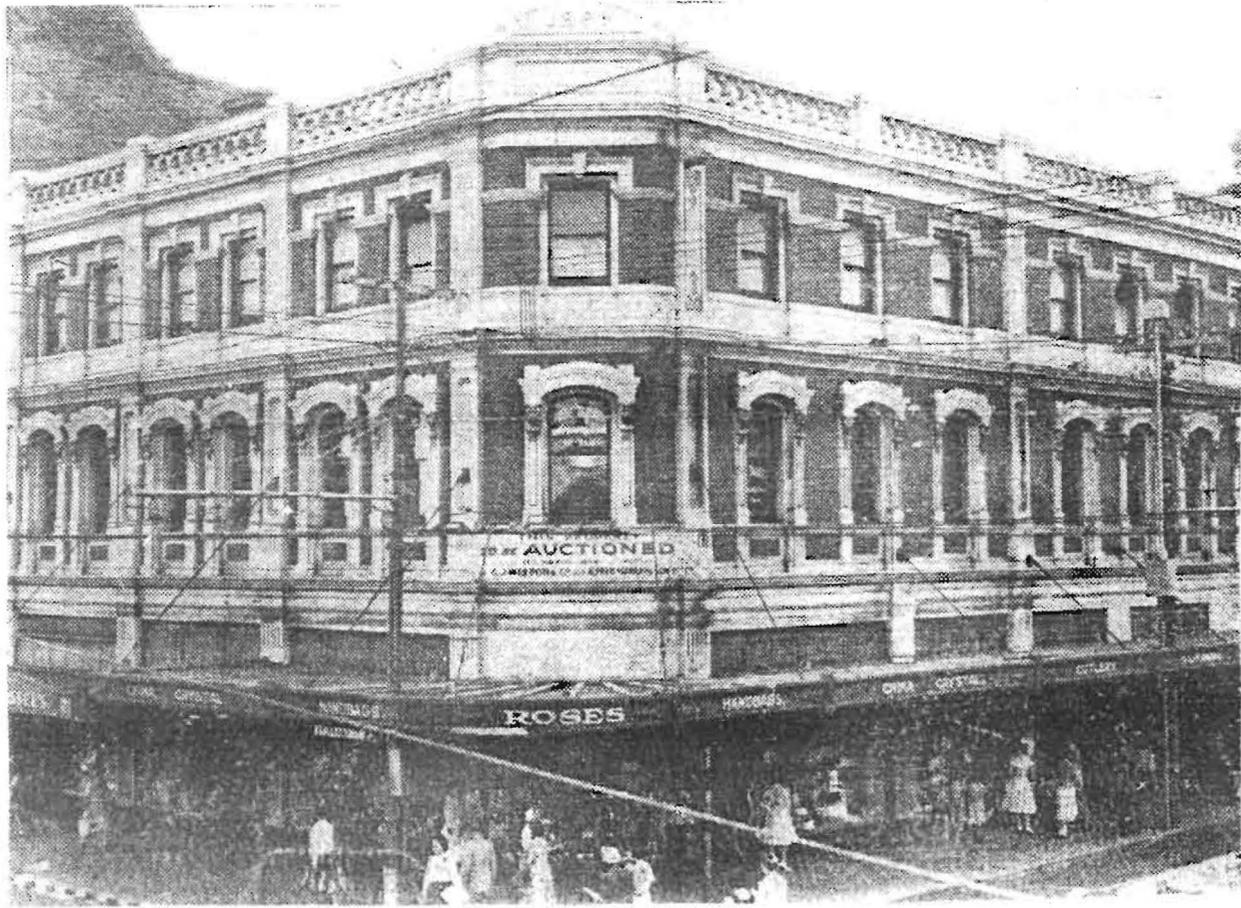
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

Intact

demolished X

altered



Victoria Buildings  
Cameron St  
Business Premises 1887

**References**

More details Examiner  
3/2/1888  
21/4/1888

**Architect** Luttrell, Alfred E  
**Builder** Ferrall, H J (Contr)  
Farmilo, J T (Brick and  
Stonework)

**Owner Original** Genders, J C  
**Occupier Original**

**CONDITION:**

**intact** **demolished** X  
**altered**





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