

Wollongong Town Hall.

It seems the more we are told about our Town Hall the more we should be concerned and working towards the preservation and retention of this public entity.

Just to fill you in on what is known or has been reported over the past couple of years.

In the July/August 2005 society Bulletin we published a request from Wollongong City Council. The request was for anyone who still possessed a colour photograph of the town hall so that Council could determine the colours the building was painted in the 1950s. All impressions received were that the Town Hall was going to receive a face lift.

The next report came from the media stating that lead had been detected in the roof.

In June this year the media reported that Wollongong was going to have a new Concert Hall and that units would be built above the Concert Hall.

We just recently heard that Wollongong City Council will not issue itself a PoPE (Place of Public Entertainment) licence as they now consider the building no longer fits the standard for fire safety.

From the settlement of the town of Wollongong the area of land covering the Town Hall and Art Gallery has always been set aside as an area utilised by the public.

As shown on the 1834 plans of Wollongong the area was first surveyed as a protestant burial ground. We know that only one person's remains were exhumed from that cemetery (Mrs Catherine Grover).

The denominational school was opened and operated on the site from 1839 until the new school was opened in the 1880s in Smith Street.

Then our Town Hall was built after the removal of the school building. The central site in Wollongong of the Town Hall and right next door to the State Heritage listed Wollongong East Post Office and Croft's Tailor shop.

The acoustics in the present Town Hall auditorium is appreciated by many who attend concerts in the venue.

Then what is to become of our magnificent pipe organ if after the end of this year the venue is not permitted to be used for public entertainment anymore?

Will it be dismantled and stored and perhaps never see the light of day again?

Our readers are asked to keep a keen interest into what Wollongong City Council proposes for our Town Hall site. Will they decide to make the area a Public, Private partnership such as has been proposed for a lot of our public facilities of recent times?

We urge Wollongong City Council to improve the fire safety standards for the Town Hall and retain this historic building for use by the public.