

Foyer back wall with interpretive panel (showing architrave surrounds)

- Preliminary Concept only. Not to scale.
- Digital print applied directly to wall below picture rail and above dado rail.
- Framed historic photographs applied to wall over background graphic. Final photograph inclusions TBC.
- Names of all original Hall Committee members appear over background image (Names TBC)

Bellinghen Memorial Hall: History of a Grand Design



Beginnings
The story of the hall started at a public meeting held on 4th December 1918 when it was resolved to erect a War Memorial, to cost no more than 500 pounds, as a sign to be chosen, in honour and memory of the 960 men and women of the district who went to the defence of Australia and the British Empire.
A further meeting was held on June 6th 1919 at which the decision of the previous meeting was cancelled and it was decided by a substantial majority to build a memorial hall. A committee of 17 members was appointed to raise the money and find the site. The committee established a fund to be known as the Bellinghen Shire Soldiers' Memorial Hall Fund.



Selected Site
W.J. Hammond offered his property, Claremont in Hyde Street. This was a double block with a residence on the western side opposite the bridge. Mr Hammond also offered to repay 50 pounds of the purchase price to the fund at the end of the purchase, by way of donation. The Committee accepted the offer of the full site with 150 feet frontage to Hyde Street in February 1920, paying 500 pounds as a deposit.



The Pictures
The next move proved to be not only a critical contribution to the ultimate building of the Memorial Hall, but had an important effect on the social life of the town over the next half century. The Committee conceived the idea of using Claremont as an open air cinema. This proposal was agreed at a meeting in September 1920.
The screen was faced with its back to Hyde Street, where the Memorial Hall is today, the projection box was set up half way down the block. The Committee had to generate its own electricity until the town system was installed in 1926.
The Bellinghen Cinema opened on Wednesday 19th January 1921.



Pressure to build the Hall
A new Committee was under pressure to get on with the building of the Hall. The war had ended six years earlier and the building of the Memorial Hall was paramount.
The financial success of the Cinema provided the Committee with the finances to begin the erection of a hall worthy of the town and the memory of the townspeople who had given their lives in the war. A building Committee was appointed, which decided to sell half the block with the original Claremont residence and build on the other half where the temporary picture palace stood. The Claremont building and half the original block sold for 1,500 pounds to the Government Savings Bank of NSW. It was estimated that a suitable hall to meet the wishes of the members could be built for 1,000 to 4,000 pounds.



The first intention was to build a new front to the temporary structure which housed the cinema and later build a new hall behind the facade.
The order was placed with a local builder, Ben Johnson.
The temporary structure which had served well since its inception was pulled down, the dance floor preserved in the new building which was erected in its place.
The Memorial Hall building at last commenced ten years after the end of the war. The final cost 4,178 pounds.



Opening Day
The Memorial Hall was opened on 25th April, Anzac Day 1929. The Memorial Hall had been in the community's vision for ten years.
The opening of the Hall at the East End of Bellinghen was preceded by a special service at the War Memorial at the West End and the official party then marched through the town for the opening ceremony.



The Original Memorial Hall Committee Members names are listed throughout this photo. Can you spot one of your family members?

With thanks to the Bellinghen Valley Historic Museum for loaning space dollar sit since! Ein exasperate sin porpore sheppitatur ipsum dolor sit amet. ipsum dolor sit amet.