

# CASTLEMAINE COURT HOUSE



COURT HOUSE SOHE 2008



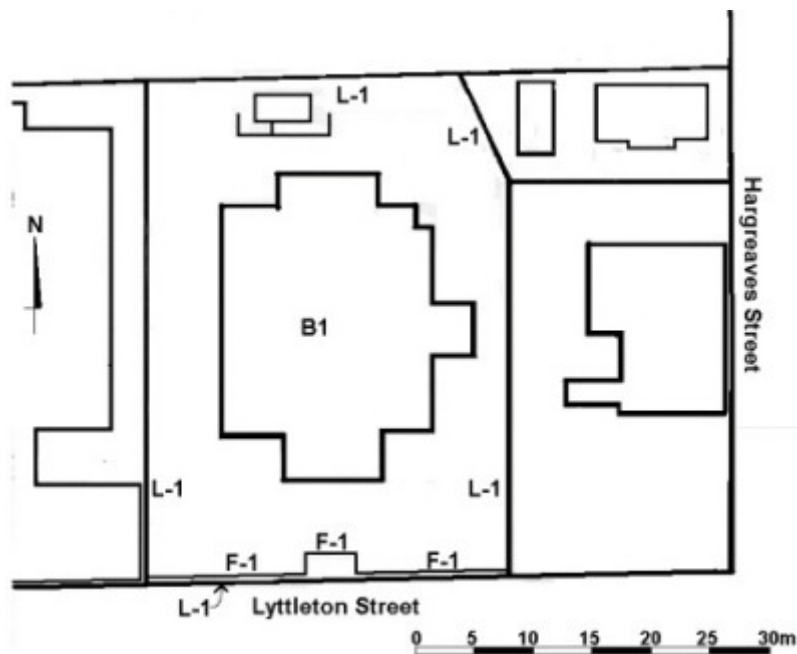
1 castlemaine court house  
lyttleton street castlemaine  
front view aug1984



castlemaine court house  
lyttleton street castlemaine  
entrance detail aug1984



castlemaine court house  
lyttleton street castlemaine  
rear view aug1984



castlemaine court house plan

**Location**

29 LYTTLETON STREET CASTLEMAINE, MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

**Municipality**

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

**Level of significance**

Registered

**Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1405

**Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO637

**VHR Registration**

August 20, 1982

**Amendment to Registration**

February 12, 1998

**Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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**Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - January 25, 2000

What is significant?

The first court building on this site was built in 1858. Previously courts had operated from the old Courthouse in the Commissioners Camp. This courthouse was similar to the courthouse at Beechworth, with a small front porch, a single side wing (and cell) on the east side, and stucco quoining and mouldings. A smaller police court stood to the west at the same time - this later became incorporated into the School of Mines in 1889. The new courthouse was designed by John Hudson Marsden, Public Works Department architect from 1872 till after 1900. It was completed in 1878-9, to provide services for the Supreme Court and County Court, including sufficient offices and facilities for juries, which were now required in the larger regional centres such as Castlemaine. The front porch and the palisade fence and granite gates were added in 1879. Other alterations including addition of a gallery over the south end of the courtroom, and a jury room and box on the west side, were made 1883-4. The courthouse is still in active use.

The Courthouse is situated in a precinct of government buildings dating from as early as the mid 1850s. William Wardell, who headed the Public Works Department during this era, was called upon to cut costs, and pursued a design policy of "the simpler the better -so long as proper architectural effect is preserved". In keeping with this policy, the design of the Castlemaine Courthouse is executed in a restrained Free Classical Style. Other projects of the period such as Maryborough Post Office and Courthouse, and St. Kilda Post Office, reflected a similar

aesthetic. The painted stuccoed brick building rests on a base of massive blocks of finely tooled basalt. Plain horizontal mouldings encircle the building at imposte level of ground floor openings, and at sill and imposte levels of the clerestory windows which light the court room. Plain cornice mouldings adorn the front porch and the flanking wings, with circular penetrations in the parapet. The front gable of the court room features an austere triangular Roman pediment with dentil ornamentation.

The courthouse is entered via a triple arched porch, then through wrought iron gates in three similar arched openings to a lobby. Curved stairs lead from the lobby to a mezzanine and office above and from there to a timber seating gallery supported by timber columns in the back of the courtroom. The courtroom is similarly austere, with plain walls and ceiling, and furnished in light coloured timber with simple mouldings. The offices which flank the length of the court room have hip roofs hidden by parapets. A holding cell block in similar style extends out from the right wing. A half hip extension for the judges chambers projects from the rear.

How is it significant?

The Castlemaine Courthouse is of architectural and historical importance to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

The Castlemaine Courthouse is of architectural importance as a fine and intact example of the restrained Free Classical style civic architecture of the Victorian Public Works Department under William Wardell's leadership during the 1870s. The building is exemplary in its careful and classical composition combined with the use of a restricted palette of simple classical elements.

The Castlemaine Courthouse is of historical importance for its association with the maturing of a number of important goldfields towns in Victoria as regional centres. In Castlemaine this maturity was heralded by the establishment of a substantial civic precinct, of which these Supreme Court and County Court facilities were an important component. The facilities for juries and for Supreme Court hearings were indicative of Castlemaine becoming an established regional centre.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

## Specific Exemptions:

### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

#### General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering systems.

#### Interior

- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms and toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates 1857,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Other Names LAW COURT,  
Hermes Number 266  
Property Number

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

The first court building on this site was built in 1858.. Previously courts had operated from the Courthouse in the Commissioners Camp. This courthouse was similar to the courthouse at Beechworth. . The front porch was a small affair, there was a side wing (and cell) on the east side, and stucco quoining and mouldings. A smaller police court stood to the west at the same time - this later became incorporated into the School of Mines in 1889. The new courthouse was designed by John Hudson Marsden, Public Works Department architect from 1872 till after 1900. It was completed in 1878-9, to provide services for the Supreme Court and County Court, including sufficient offices and facilities for juries, which were now required in the larger regional centres such as Castlemaine. The front porch, and the palisade fence and granite gates were added in 1879. Other alterations including addition of a gallery over the south end of the courtroom, and a jury room and box on the west side, were made 1883-4. The courthouse is still in active use.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number that the Heritage Register Number 1405 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

Castlemaine Courthouse, Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, Mt Alexander Shire Council.

### EXTENT

1. To the extent of all the building marked B-1 and all the fence and gate marked F-1 on Diagram 602123A held by the Executive Director.
2. To the extent of all the land marked L-1 on Diagram 602123A held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described as Public Purposes Reserve, Crown Allotment 1, Section 14, Town and Parish of Castlemaine.

Dated 5 February 1998

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G6 12 February 1998 pp.347-348]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*