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# ECHUCA COURT HOUSE



ECHUCA COURT HOUSE  
SOHE 2008



1 echuca court house front  
corner jul1984



echuca court house front  
elevation dec1983



echuca court house side  
elevation dec1983

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## Location

4 LAW COURT PLACE ECHUCA, CAMPASPE SHIRE

## Municipality

CAMPASPE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1469

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO12

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## **Amendment to Registration**

May 23, 1998

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 5, 2004

### **What is significant?**

The Echuca Court House was erected in Dickson Street in 1873 as a Shire Hall. The first timber court house was built in Echuca in 1859 as a Court of Petty Sessions and was located on the south bank of the Murray River. Echuca became a municipality in 1864 and in 1869 a combined town hall and court house was built in High Street and the timber court house was removed to Rochester in 1872. In the years after the construction of the railway line from Melbourne in 1864, the port town of Echuca grew significantly.

In January 1872 the Echuca Shire Council took possession of land in Dickson Street and Bendigo architects Vahland and Getzchmann drew up plans for a new Shire Hall. Construction of this building was completed by November 1873. In 1877 the administrative offices for the Shire of Echuca were moved to Rochester and instructions were given to sell the Shire Hall. At this time it was described as containing a large hall, four commodious offices, stables and a coach house. It was sold at auction to Mackintosh, Luth and Palmer and subsequently used as a corn exchange.

In 1882 the Shire Hall was purchased by the Government for conversion into a court house, to be used as the Supreme Court. Included in this conversion were alterations to the Dickson Street entrance porch and the reduction in size of the large central hall to include extra rooms at one end, over which a gallery was erected.

The Court of Petty Sessions continued in the High Street municipal building, although attempts were made in 1893 and 1913 to move all Echuca court activity to the Dickson Street building. The combination of court activities at the Supreme Court building finally occurred in 1924, after renovations and repairs had been carried out. Concerns about the state of the building, largely due to its proximity to the Murray River, were reported constantly, however court sessions were held there until the mid-1980s. The building was reopened in 1988 by the Aboriginal Community of Echuca.

The Echuca Court House is a single storey brick building articulated with stucco mouldings. It is symmetrically conceived with ancillary rooms contained in parapeted projecting bays at either end of a hipped roof central hall. The Hopwood gardens entrance facade has a small central Doric portico, flanked by single aedicule windows. The Dickson Street facade comprises a series of three projecting wings, with the Doric portico motif repeated in the central wing. The front and rear wings of the building display a parapet with distinctive circular motif and rusticated corner pilasters.

### **How is it significant?**

The Echuca Court House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Echuca Court House is of architectural significance as a fine intact example of a classically designed provincial hall and as an example of the work of prolific Bendigo architects Vahland and Getzchmann. The projecting bays and portico motif of the Dickson Street facade are unusual and combine with the overall use of distinctive decorative mouldings of Doric columns and porticos, rusticated piers, balustrading and window mouldings to create a fine example of nineteenth century conservative classicism.

The Echuca Court House is of historical significance for its association with the growth of this important port town which peaked in the 1880s. It is an essential element of the historic Echuca port area and together with the police station (1867), forms a legal precinct. The court house is sited importantly, as it terminates the view from the commercial centre along High Street, and it is a fine feature of this historic city.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]

## 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:

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. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant

may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates        1873,  
Architect/Designer        Vahland & Getzschmann,  
Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,  
Hermes Number            415  
Property Number

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## History

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### **The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2004. Sources were as follows:**

M.M. Saunder. 'The Courts of Echuca' in *Journal of the Clerks of Courts Chronicle*, vol 22, no. 2, June 1981, pp. 252-257

A. Ward and Associates. *City of Echuca Heritage Conservation Study*, 1992

M. Challinger. *Historic Courthouses of Victoria*. Melbourne 2001

Report by C. Kellaway. National Trust of Australia (Victoria),

## Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings

Echuca City

Court House, Dickson Street, Echuca.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p3088]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the Heritage Act 1995 pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

*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/>*