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# SMYTHESDALE COURT HOUSE



SMYTHESDALE COURT HOUSE SOHE 2008 1 smythesdale court house front view jun1984

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## Location

64 BROOKE STREET SMYTHESDALE, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

## Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1653

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO69

## 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 - March 20, 2007

### What is significant?

The Court House at Smythesdale was built in 1860 as a Court of Petty Sessions, the year before it was proclaimed a municipality and the first land sales took place. It originally contained a main court room, adjacent holding cell providing direct access to the dock, and two rooms at the rear. A drawing, showing the addition of another room to the north at the rear and a front verandah, was undertaken in 1866, signed by Peter Kerr of the Public Works Department. These additions appear to have been completed in 1872. By 1874 the front verandah had been enclosed with glass and corrugated panels.

Smythesdale owed its existence to the gold rushes of the 1850s and the district still employed a large number of miners in the 1880s. Beside Petty Sessions, the court house also held sittings of the Court of Mines and the County Court. The population of the town declined in the 1890s.

Smythesdale Court House is one of a large number of brick, slate-roofed court houses, constructed in Victoria from the 1860s to the 1880s. Designed in a Free Classical style, these buildings are characterised by a dominant single storey, gabled structure containing the court room, ancillary rooms to either one side or both sides, and a timber framed verandah at the front. At Smythesdale, openings are of simple arch form and the front gable contains a circular motif.

### How is it significant?

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

### Why is it significant?

Smythesdale Court House is of historical significance for its association with the gold rush period and the subsequent development of the colony, illustrating the importance of this period in the development of a number of Victorian towns.

Smythesdale Court House is of architectural significance as an early and intact example of a popular type of regional court house, designed by the Public Works Department in 1860. It is an example of the restrained and economical work produced by the department under the leadership of William Wardell from 1859 to 1878.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2007]

## 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. 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](https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/permits-and-approvals/heritage-permit-exemptions).

**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.
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.
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 1860, 1866,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 1029  
Property Number

## History

The Court House at Smythesdale was built in 1860 as a Court of Petty Sessions, the year before it was proclaimed a municipality and the first land sales took place. It originally contained a main court room, adjacent holding cell providing direct access to the dock, and two rooms at the rear. A drawing, showing the addition of another room to the north at the rear and a front verandah, was undertaken in 1866, signed by Peter Kerr of the Public Works Department. These additions appear to have been completed in 1872. By 1874 the front verandah had been enclosed with glass and corrugated panels.

Smythesdale owed its existence to the gold rushes of the 1850s and the district still employed a large number of miners in the 1880s. Beside Petty Sessions, the court house also held sittings of the Court of Mines and the County Court. The population of the town declined in the 1890s.

The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2007. Sources were as follows:

M. Challinger. *Court Houses of Victoria*. Melbourne 2001

D. McIntosh and F. O'Neill. *Court Houses in Victoria. A Survey*. Melbourne 1991

B. Trethowan. *The Public Works Department of Victoria 1851-1900*. Melbourne 1975

## Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings  
Grenville Shire  
Court House, Smythesdale.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p3089]

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/>*