

FORMER MILITARY QUARTERS



Former Castlemaine military quarters_front view_KJ_7 Feb 2008



Castlemaine military quarters_slabs under weatherboards_KJ_7 Feb 08



Fmr Castlemaine military quarters_rear view_KJ_7 Feb 08



Fmr Castlemaine military quarters_slabs and plaster_Kj_7 Feb 08



Castlemaine military quarters_shingles_7 Feb 08



Castlemaine military quarters_stone base_7 Feb 08



Extent plan

Location

4-4A CAMP CRESCENT CASTLEMAINE, MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Municipality

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2162

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1001

VHR Registration

June 12, 2008

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The building at 4 Camp Crescent was constructed, probably by 1854, as military officers' quarters in the Government Camp, established here in 1852 to administer law and order on the Castlemaine goldfields. It was first occupied by Captain Frederick Blyth, the Commandant of the Troops. In 1858, following the 1854 Eureka uprising and the 1855 *Act for Better Management of the Goldfields*, the military forces were withdrawn from the Camp, and the house was taken over in 1859 by the Police Magistrate, Captain George Harrison. By 1862 Harrison had spent £120 on improvements, which probably included the addition of weatherboards over the slab and plaster of the original building. From 1865 the house was used as police quarters, occupied by Sergeant Henry Daly until 1871 and by Sergeant William Acton until 1883. The house originally had a detached kitchen (now gone), shown in 1862 sketch plans of the site, and the back verandah of the original house was later filled in to form a second kitchen and a lean-to with a flagged floor added to it, probably as a wash-house. A privy and a fowl house are shown at the rear of the block in a 1920 sketch plan. The Police Department sold the site in 1923, and it was let to Joseph Morrow, a labourer, who purchased it in 1958, and it is now owned by his son, who in c1960 subdivided the land and built a new house adjacent to the old one.

The building was originally a five-room house with an H-shaped plan, a gabled roof and verandahs in the recesses at the back and front. The walls, of hand-adzed horizontal slabs covered with a mud render and later with weatherboards, are on a base of large hand-cut stone blocks. It has twelve-paned double hung sash windows, with later metal canopies, a shingle roof, now covered with corrugated iron, two brick chimneys and rendered brick steps leading up to the front verandah. Internally the original room arrangement has been preserved except that one of the back rooms has been divided into two, and the back verandah has been enclosed by a brick wall with a central fireplace. There are fire places with timber surrounds in four of the rooms. The original rough plastered interior walls have been covered with plasterboard, probably in the 1920s. The lean-to wash-house has been removed, though the flagstones remain on the ground, and a timber-framed corrugated iron verandah has been added across the rear of the house.

How is it significant?

The former Castlemaine military quarters are of architectural and historical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The former Castlemaine military quarters are historically significant as a rare surviving example of the buildings constructed in the early 1850s in the Government Camps which were set up to maintain law and order on the Victorian goldfields. These camps were initially staffed by the military, whose presence was extremely unpopular and led to the 1854 Eureka uprising. The military were removed from the Victorian goldfields in the second half of the 1850s and there is now little physical evidence of their presence. The former Castlemaine military quarters are the only known surviving example of a building constructed for the accommodation of the military forces on the goldfields, and it is historically significant as a demonstration of this military presence, which played such an influential role in the early history of Victoria.

The former Castlemaine military quarters are architecturally significant as the only known surviving example of the slab buildings constructed by the Government in the goldfields Camps in Victoria in the early gold rush period. Building materials and labour were both extremely expensive at that time, and locally cut slabs were a readily available resource, which was widely used for these Camp buildings, but no other examples are known to survive. The building is architecturally significant as an unusually large and intact example of an early slab house, and has the potential to provide information about early construction techniques.

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

endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria 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 may 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 1854,
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,
Other Names MILITARY BARRACKS, FORMER MILITARY BARRACKS,
Hermes Number 13916
Property Number

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

With the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, there was a massive influx of miners to the goldfields. Following the precedent set in New South Wales, the new Victorian government established a Goldfields Commission and placed the administration of law and order on each goldfield in the hands of a Gold Commissioner. Each Commissioner established a camp, and administered their respective goldfields with the aid of a number of assistant commissioners, a detachment of troops, and the local police. They performed magisterial duties, had the authority to settle disputes over claims, and the responsibility for maintaining law and order in their district. However their primary obligation was to supervise the collection, storage and transportation of gold, and to manage the gold licence system, issuing licences and exacting fees and fines.

Gold was discovered in the creeks at Mount Alexander in June 1851, but was kept secret until September. In October the Chief Commissioner of Goldfields, Captain Wright, arrived at the goldfields, and in February 1852 moved his Camp from Chewton to a site at the junction of Barker's and Forest Creeks, on a low rise overlooking the creeks. The site of the Camp is now on the outskirts of the town of Castlemaine, bounded on the north by the Camp Reserve Oval and the east end of Caroline Street, on the west by Bowden Street, on the south by a continuation of Ray Street, and on the east by the creek. Initially all administration was carried out from tents, but in April 1852 the Superintendent of Works, Mr Wales, arrived to supervise the erection of several buildings, the majority of which were situated on the high land in what is now Goldsmith Crescent. The area became known as The Camp, a name that is still used.

Official buildings were soon constructed, including '[Military] Barracks and Police Quarters, Gold, Commissioners and Police Offices, Post Offices, Gaols, Watch Houses and out stations, etc' (Victoria Blue Book, No 2, 1852). The camp cost more than £25,000 to establish. In 1852 the administrative staff employed and accommodated in the Camp numbered around three hundred. The generous salaries paid to this large group of men were paid from revenue raised from licence fees, a fact which was a continuing aggravation to the miners, and the camp and the military were held in contempt by them.

The township of Castlemaine was surveyed and gazetted by 1853, when the government released town lots on the other side of Barkers Creek to the Government Camp and the first land sales took place.

The first Police Magistrate in the Camp, James Fletcher, was appointed in 1852, but was replaced after a few months by Robert Shadforth, who resigned in February 1854 and was replaced by Captain Harriott, then Captain Charles Prendergast, and in October 1855 by Captain George Harrison R.N., who was to remain in Castlemaine for many years.

After the Eureka uprising and the 1855 *Act for Better Management of the Goldfields*, the military presence on the goldfields was unwelcome and the fate of the Camp became a matter of dispute. But it was not until 1858 that the military were withdrawn. In October 1855 a public meeting was held in the Castlemaine Market Square to consider the formation of a municipal council, and the first council meeting was held in January 1856. One of its main aims seems to have been to have the Government Camp removed and ensure that the military left the area. There was no objection to the buildings being preserved 'as mementoes of the past state of things', but according to the *Mount Alexander Mail* (29.9.1855) as long as the buildings remained so too would the ill feeling because of the injustices imposed from there. The camp however continued to be used for public proceedings, such as post and police business, and it was some time before new public buildings began to be built in the town. A new Gold Office and Sub Treasury was built in 1856 in Barker Street, and a new post office in Lyttleton Street in 1859. In 1858 a site in Templeton Street was reserved for police buildings, and the Savings Bank (built in 1855) became the police station.

With the new public buildings built in the town, the Council and the *Mail* continued in their efforts to have the old Camp buildings removed. Several attempts were made by Council to have part of the Camp reserved as a site for the Botanical gardens, but another site to the north was granted for this purpose.

In 1860 Section 117 on the Camp was reserved for public use, but the government refused to remove the buildings, as they were still occupied by government officials. However in 1863 the Government decided to sell the land on the Camp site, and on 15 October 'a large number of wooden and other buildings on the Camp' were auctioned. The *Mail* (16.10.1863) reported the auction:

These buildings were erected in those 'early days' concerning which old chums tell such marvellous stories to new ones. In those days the Camp was the centre of officialdom. There the representatives of law and order - from the almighty Warden down to the ordinary constable - reigned supreme, a terror to evil-doers, and the plague of the unlicensed portion of the community. Even the simplest of these wooden buildings cost an immense amount of money, and fabulous stories are told of the price per foot paid for hard wood and soft wood, for shingles and fencing. The rate of wages paid to the carpenters, bricklayers, etc, then were remarkably high. But the glories of the Camp have departed; those who formerly delighted to dwell on that very select and horribly exclusive spot have one by one departed, till now the locality is almost deserted .

Although the buildings had cost the PWD £25,700 in 1852, they were sold for a total of £150. Only a few of the former buildings have survived *in situ*.

The location of the former Camp buildings was investigated in Gilchrist's research essay 'Government Camp Castlemaine', Monash University History Department 1984-5. The earliest maps of Castlemaine pinpoint the location of the court house and the post office, but not the other buildings, but it has been possible to obtain information about the site of some from the sale notice in the *Government Gazette*, and the report of the sale in the *Mount Alexander Mail*. The nomination notes that the only buildings on the Camp not sold were the former hospital and police quarters (later Burke's residence), the original court house, the Chinese interpreter's house and office, the Sheriff's house, the Gold Commissioner's Office and Quarters, the Town Crier's house, and the house at 4 Camp Street, which was the former Military Barracks and officers' quarters, also known as the old Police Quarters.

HISTORY OF PLACE

As the building at 4 Camp Street was owned by the Government until the 1920s it is well documented in government records, now held at the PROV, and it is possible to trace its history in these records from the 1850s to the present house on the site.

The location of the building at 4 Camp Street corresponds to that of a building shown on an 1856 map as the Commissioner's Residence, and on the 1863 sale notice.??? It could be what is described as the Military Barracks constructed for the officers' quarters in 1854 (Construction of Officers Quarters, PROV VPRS 957/PO Unit 2, p 761). The first occupant was Captain Frederick Blyth, a military captain.

In 1854 £569-11-8 was spent on 'Construction officers' Quarters', and £878-14-10 was spent on 'Additions and repairs' (PROV VPRS 957/PO Unit 2). This could be the present building. An 1858 photo shows a building which appears to be the one surviving at 4 Camp Street, with the same twin gabled form.

In 1856 Council rates of £120 were paid by Captain Frederick Blyth, captain of the military; in 1859 the same amount was paid by Captain Harrison.

The Police Magistrate Captain George Harrison (RN) was in residence in 1860, and then (27 September 1860) wrote a letter regarding the realignment of a road adjacent to his residence and the possible construction of miners' huts nearby (PROV VPRS 44 Unit 29 File 60/6132). Accompanying the letter is a sketch plan, on which he marked his house as a long rectangle, labelled 'Premises occupied by Police Magistrate'. This corresponds to the location of the existing house at 4 Camp Street. It is also shown on a sketch map in another letter from Harrison, dated 7 April 1862. In this he states that:

In 1855 I was named as Police Magistrate of this District with salary, forage and quarters. In 1858 the military being removed hence to other quarters I effected an exchange under sanction of the President of Land and Works from my then house to that of the **Commandant of the Troops** which I have since continued to occupy and have spent some £120 thereon in repairs and alterations. In 1860 certain lands were marked off for sale in the Camp reserve and a line (?) of land was "on paper" passed thro' my residence . I have improved the forementioned [sic] property by a large personal outlay. If you permit these small huts to be put up alongside it you actually render a most substantial house valueless .

This letter elucidates the early history of the house at 4 Camp Street. Harrison described it then as a most substantial house, which had been the home of the Commandant of Troops (Captain Frederick Blyth) in Castlemaine, before becoming the Police Magistrate's house in 1859. The year it was taken over by Harrison is noted in another letter (written 28.10.1862) from Harrison, in which he requested that he be allowed to purchase the house, following an 1861 demand that he pay rent for the property. He explained that

'you will be doing a great service for disposing of these holdings as great jealousy and unpleasantness exists on the subject of the Camp and Camp Officials [Harrison's underlining] - By selling we become at once bona fide citizens paying rates and taxes and not was we are at present looked upon as Municipal Pariahs'.

His request was refused on the grounds that the Railways wanted the land withheld.

Harrison states that by 1862 he had spent '£120 thereon in repairs and alterations'. An inspection of the house shows that it was a slab building with a mud render over the slabs. These are covered by weatherboards. The existence of the render would suggest that the weatherboards were a later addition. As the house was described in the 1869 police report to be of weatherboard, it appears likely that Harrison added the weatherboards, after he took over the house in 1859 and before 1862.

In 1865 Police Sergt Henry Daly moved into the house, where he stayed until 1871. In 1869 a Victorian Police report describes the place as 'Police Quarters', a 'weatherboard building with shingle roof of 5 rooms, 12 by 14, 12 by 14, 12 by 10, 12 by 16, and 10 by 10 feet, and a privy 8 by 4 feet', located on the Old Police Camp, then used as 'Constables and Sergeants Quarters', and built in 1854 or 1855. It was listed as requiring a 'new iron roof, spouting, brick chimney, papering, and repairs to foundation, plastering, door and windows' , rendered necessary 'through wear and tear of buildings generally'.

The house was occupied from 1871 to 1883 by Police Sergeant William Acton. A letter from (31.12.1872) to the Superintendent of Police notes that:

The kitchen of the house was originally a back verandah, but was, before Sergt Acton's occupation, converted into a kitchen and was used as such. It was therefore very narrow & low and could not continue to be used by Sergt Acton's family in the same way. A detached kitchen with flagged floor was allowed to go into disuse and therefore get out of repair. Sergt Acton, at the approach of the hot weather, purchased an oven and had it put in it. He also purchased materials and made a door to the ruin (?) repaired it and it is now in good repair.

The flooring of the house is hardwood and in one room in particular has so shrunk & warped that in some places there was an open space of fully one inch between the boards . [so that] it was dangerous to walk on them. After repeated efforts at nailing them down Sergt Acton was obliged to take a few of the boards up and purchase flooring to replace them.

This refers to the existence of a detached kitchen, which was presumably the small hatched rectangle shown behind the house in Harrison's 1862 drawing (7 April 1862). This is located in the approximate location of the newest wing of the modern house, and could be what was referred to in an 1871 letter as a 'back kitchen'. In the 1920 drawings this has gone, and an extension to the rear of the house is shown. Flagstones are still in place in this location, under a later verandah.

A c1910 PROV record (VPRS 967 Unit 34 File GV201/1355) includes a plan of the house, labelled 'Old Police Quarters, Goldsmith Crescent'. In the *Mount Alexander Mail* (2.9.1910) a reminiscence by an early resident, Rev E A Crawford notes the 'glory of the Camp'.

"the Camp" in the early fifties and sixties was the aristocratic quarter - the abode of the Government officers. There dwelt in Camp House - then far the best house in the town, the Warden of the Goldfields, Captain Bull. Then, in a small wooden house, still standing I think, lived the Police magistrate, Captain Harrison, R.N. . These Government officers, who lived on "the Camp", were the aristocracy of the place, and did not mix freely with the town people, holding themselves aloof in much the same way that the civil and military authorities in India so.

As the Police Department prepared to sell the property c1920, it is well documented in PROV records, described as the 'Police Quarters'. Sketches show that this is clearly the same house as the existing one at 4 Camp Street. A report from the Police Department to the PWD dated 12.12.1919 describes the house was 'slab and dab with W.B. outside and rough plaster inside'. A 1920 plan and site plan indicates that the back verandah has been filled in and an 'old shack lean to' added to the rear. It notes that

Generally the place is not too good. It is commodious enough but there is a lot of slab & dab covered (?) over. The floors are only (for the most part) 6x1 hardwood .(?). Fireplaces are small practically (?) grates and if anyone purchased the residence they would need to spend about £50 to £100 to make it at all decently habitable. There may be some demand from people for a house of this description as Castlemaine has not many empty houses.

The surveyor's report of 21 July 1921 notes that 'the building is very old and in a bad state of repair, the floors and walls being in a dilapidated state'.

In 1923 the Crown Grant was sold to Mary Anne Warren, a spinster, for £59 plus £70 for improvements. It was tenanted from the 1920s by Joseph Morrow, a labourer, and it is likely that improvements had by then been made, such as the lining of the interior with plaster board. On Warren's death in 1936 the house was inherited by her niece Winifred Martin, sold to Morrow in 1958, inherited by his wife in 1959, and by their son, Charles (known as Les), in 1972. When Les Morrow was married c1960, he had the land subdivided and built a new house on the south side of the block immediately adjacent to the old building.

REFERENCES:

Irene Gilchrist, 'Government Camp Castlemaine', Monash University History Department 1984-5.

Photocopies of PROV records accompanying nomination, now in file PL-HE/03/0402.

Plaque Citation

Built c1854 as officer accommodation in the Government Camp, this unusually large timber slab building, later clad with weatherboards, is the only known military building surviving on the Victorian goldfields.

Assessment Against Criteria

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object

The house at 4 Camp Street was constructed as part of the Government Camp established in 1852 to maintain law and order on the Castlemaine goldfield. All of the goldfields camps were initially staffed by the military (together with the police), whose presence was extremely unpopular and led directly to the 1854 Eureka uprising. The military were removed from the Victorian goldfields in the second half of the 1850s and there is now little physical evidence of their presence. This building is a demonstration of this military presence, which played such an important role in the history of Victoria.

b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

The former military quarters at 4 Camp Street is the only known surviving example of a building constructed for the accommodation of the military forces on the goldfields in the early gold rush period. It is also the only known surviving example of the many slab buildings constructed by the Government in the goldfields Camps in Victoria in the early gold rush period. Building materials and labour were both extremely expensive at that time, and locally cut slabs were a readily available resource, which were widely used for these Camp buildings, but no other examples are known to survive. Slab buildings surviving from the nineteenth century are generally much smaller than this example and are in generally poor condition; this is an unusually large and intact example of an early slab structure.

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

The former military quarters has the potential to provide information about the construction of early slab buildings.

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural association

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2162 held by the Executive Director, being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 8939 Folio 261.

2. All of the building marked B1 on Diagram 2162 held by the Executive Director.

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/>