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# CARLTON COURT HOUSE



CARLTON COURT HOUSE  
SOHE 2008



1 carlton court house  
drummond street carlton front  
elevation feb1985



carlton court house  
drummond street carlton front  
corner elevation feb1985

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## Location

345-349 DRUMMOND STREET CARLTON, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1467

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO43

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Amendment to Registration

May 23, 1998

## Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 25, 2000

What is significant?

The Carlton Courthouse was constructed by John Short in 1887 to the design of Public Works Department architect GBH Austin. The building is a single-storeyed Gothic style structure composed in a symmetrical but picturesque form. Red face brick walls sit on a basalt plinth. Dressings are cream face brick, stone or stucco. The bulk of the building comprising the court room sits beneath a parapeted gable slate roof running parallel to the street. Large tracery pointed-arch windows light these gable ends. Two louvred gablets puncture the roof. The cornice incorporates a trefoil motif. A transverse parapeted gable with tracery window and flanking chimneys dominates the centre of the composition. A lower block sits in front of the main body of the building, comprising two chequerboard polychromatic gabled end porches linked by a three bay arcade with balustraded parapet.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

The Carlton Court House is architecturally significant as a highly unusual Gothic style design by the Public Works Department. The Gothic style was not generally favoured by the Department during the 1880s and 1890s. The composition of intersecting transverse gables presents a strikingly bold facade to the street.

The Carlton Court House is historically significant as part of the civic core of Drummond Street. It is directly opposite the 1878 Carlton Police Station. The Court House was illustrative of the rise in the commercial and social status of the area in the 1880s. The Police Station and Court House are also reminders that the 19th century city was far from being an idyllic, trouble-free place, and that the expansion of settlement everywhere was accompanied by the expansion of the institutions of law and order.

## 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](#).

Construction dates	1887,
Architect/Designer	Austin, GBH,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	La Mama Courthouse Theatre,
Hermes Number	216
Property Number	

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## History

### History of Place:

The Crown acquired the site in October 1885 for 1500 pounds. After many delays the Carlton Court House was finally opened on 19 March 1888 in the presence of John Gardiner, the member for Carlton. Since 1875 the Carlton Court House had operated from Carlton Hall, Princes Street (now demolished).

The PWD architect G B H Austin practiced several styles. From 1885 to 1890 he designed several Elizabethan style post offices, at Geelong West (1885), Queenscliff (1885), Portarlington (1888) and Elsternwick (1890). The Gothic style for Carlton Court house probably derived from the Prahran Court House designed by Gilchrist in 1886. Austin changed style again to the Romanesque in 1910 for the design of the Melbourne Magistrates Court. The constant changing of architectural styles was part of the architect's skill in the nineteenth century. The so-called battle of the styles waged in Britain found a resonance in public architecture in Victoria. Institutions such as schools and courts favoured the Gothic style in Britain, and with the dismissal of chief architect William Wardell in 1878 the PWD in Victoria was freed from designing in a restrained classical manner and was able to experiment with other styles.

## Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings

Melbourne City

Drummond Street, Carlton

(i) Court House;

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p.3090]

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/>*