

# OLD BOURKE STREET WEST POLICE STATION AND CELL BLOCK



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2008



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old bourke street west police  
station & cell blocks  
bourke street melbourne front  
elevation



old bourke street west police  
station & cell blocks  
bourke street melb front view



old bourke street west police  
station & cell blocks  
bourke street melb rear view  
police station

## Location

621-633 BOURKE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0655

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 24, 1999

What is significant?

The Bourke Street West Police Station complex is comprised of a cell block and watchhouse, police barracks and station, sergeant's quarters and marshalling yard. The main barracks were erected in 1888-9 to the design of the Public Works Department. The drawings were executed by SC Brittingham and countersigned by SE Bindley, the district architect. The two storey building is constructed of face red brick on bluestone footings with Waurn Ponds limestone dressings, parapet and fleurons. The fleurons, foliated cornice and bowtell mouldings are all derived from the drawings of French architect Viollet-le-Duc, whose work was very influential in Victoria. The main facade is symmetrical except for the carriageway leading to the rear courtyard. The style is a restrained form of Gothic incorporating pointed Florentine arches on the first storey and stilted segmental arches on the ground floor. The axed bluestone cell block at the rear of the barracks was built to designs by Brittingham and Bindley in 1887. It is a simple rectangle in form with a hipped slate roof and louvred lantern along the ridge. The only elaboration is the segmental arch opening with smooth stone reveals contrasting to the surrounding wall faces.

How is it significant?

The Bourke Street West Police Station is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Bourke Street West Police Station is historically significant as the only remaining intact nineteenth century police station in inner Melbourne. It is a significant remnant of continuous government administration in this area of the western end of Melbourne dating back to 1837.

The Bourke Street West Police Station is architecturally significant for its main facade which demonstrates the varied sources of High Victorian eclectic architecture, including face red brick, Florentine arches, and decorative dressings derived from the work of Viollet-le-Duc.

## 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	1888,
Architect/Designer	Brittingham, Samuel C,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	LOCK UP, LOCKUP, LOCK-UP,
Hermes Number	706
Property Number	

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## History

### History of Place:

The site is part of an area that has been occupied for government purposes since the arrival of Captain William Lonsdale in 1837. Government buildings are shown on the block occupied by the Bourke Street police complex in Robert Russell's map of June 1838. A small stone watch house was built in this area in 1852. Occupation of the block by government buildings reduced from the 1850s and sites were sold off. The Roman Catholic Reserve now occupied by St Augustine's Church was part of the divestment.

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Samuel Edward Bindley was born in England in 1842 and emigrated to Victoria in 1873. He was employed by the Education Department in 1876. When the department was amalgamated with the Public Works Department in 1884 Bindley was appointed Architect in charge of the North-Western District. He also designed the Crown Law offices in Lonsdale Street and the Record Office in Queen Street.

S C Brittingham was a draughtsman in the Education Department at the time of amalgamation, and became Assistant Architect under Bindley. In 1915 he was made Acting Chief Architect and then Chief Architect of the Public Works Department.

## Extent of Registration

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 655 - Former Bourke Street West Police Station and Cell Block, 621-629 Bourke Street, Melbourne (to the extent of the whole of the Old Bourke Street West Police Station, Barracks and Cell Block Buildings and the whole of the land in Volume 9619 Folio 592).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G7 18 February 1987 p. 398]

*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/>*