

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: COMMON SCHOOL (FORMER), RESIDENCE AND SHOP

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: 83A & B Bell Street PENSURST

STUDY NUMBER: 243

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: PENSURST COMMON SCHOOL, CHESSWAS NEWAGENCY

PRECINCT: Penshurst

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 6 **SECTION:** 14 **PARISH:** PARISH OF YALIMBA

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475J C11; VicRoads 233 P11; located on the south side of Bell Street in the centre of the township.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Common School (Former) and Shop, 83a-b Bell St, Penshurst

Image Date: 22/04/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the building with its various additions and extensions but excluding the interiors and all the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The original stone section of the building is at the centre of the complex and is set well back from the street frontage. It is single storey with a gabled corrugated iron roof, perpendicular to the street frontage. Its ridge line is the highest. A timber addition was built in front of the stone wing. It is symmetrical about a substantial front door with fan and side lights. Tripartite windows are on either side. The roof line of this timber wing is unusual in that the main roof is hipped but there are two large gables projecting forward, centred on the windows, and a small gable centred over the front door. There is a simple timber verandah across the whole frontage. While now quite domestic in character this timber wing may be an early part of the Common or National School. There is a substantial garden area, now simply planted, in front of the timber wing.

A small timber shop has been added, probably in the early 20th century, in the south-east corner of the site on the street boundary. While its facade is plain, the entry is characterised by a finely crafted leadlight door. The shop operated as Chesswas' Newsagency for many years.

HISTORY:

The land on which these buildings stand was originally reserved as a National School and then as a Common School. It is shown as the former on a plan dated 1864 (Survey & Lands Office, 1864) and as the latter on a plan dated 1927 (Department of Lands and Survey, 1927). The National School opened in 1858 in two stone rooms, with an enrolment of 34 pupils. The first teacher was Mr. Patrick D. Baxter, a qualified ship's master. Mr. Baxter also served as the first secretary of the district roads board in 1863.

The school building was erected by the parents and the Centenary of Mount Rouse Shire History states that in 1860 they required 168 pounds to complete the building and they required a grant from the government of 75 pounds. Mr. Daniel Ritchie, a prominent local land owner, was the head of the advisory board. He undertook to supply "a few books, paper, etc. and necessary number of desks and forms for the number of pupils actually in attendance."

Modern state education was established by an Act of Parliament in 1872. National schools became state schools under the banner of 'free, compulsory and secular' education. The Penshurst National or Common School buildings did not become the new state school. The new bluestone school was established on a separate and much larger site on the corner of Watton and French Streets as State School No 486.

During the early 20th century, a small timber shop was erected in the southeast corner of the land. The Chesswas family opened a newsagency there for many years.

In 1962, the buildings were condemned and made available to the Penshurst Youth Club for conversion to clubrooms. It subsequently became a private residence

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 6 Educating
6.2 Establishing schools
6.5 Educating people in remote places

CONDITION:

The building is in good condition

INTEGRITY:

High degree of integrity as a sequence of development. [Interiors not inspected.]

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

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What is significant?

The former Penshurst Common School, associated residence and shop (formerly Chesswass' Newsagency) are located on the south side of Bell Street in the centre of the township of Penshurst. The former Common School retains the original stone section of the building at the centre of the complex and is set well back from the street frontage. The school appears as a single storey building with a gabled corrugated iron roof, perpendicular to the street frontage. Its ridge line is the highest. A symmetrical timber addition was built in front of the stone wing. A small timber shop has been added to the school and residence complex, probably in the early 20th century. The shop is located in the south-east corner of the site on the street boundary. While its facade is plain, the entry is characterised by a finely crafted leadlight door. The shop operated as Chesswas' newsagency for many years. The stone section of the school dates from 1858, when it opened as the National School, erected by the parents of the thirty four children who were the first pupils. When modern state education was established by an Act of Parliament in 1872. National schools became state schools under the banner of 'free, compulsory and secular' education. The Penshurst National or Common School buildings did not become the new state school. The new bluestone school was established on a separate and much larger site on the corner of Watton and French Streets as State School No 486. In 1962, the buildings were condemned and made available to the Penshurst Youth Club for conversion to clubrooms. It subsequently became a private residence. The complex is in good condition, with the exteriors demonstrate a high degree of integrity as an example of a sequence of development

How is it significant?

The former Common School and later residence are of historical and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians shire and to the township of Penshurst.

Why is it significant?

The former Common School is of historical significance as an expression of early education prior to the introduction of free, secular, and compulsory state education in the 1860s. The building is of architectural significance for demonstrating a sequence of development.

COMPARISON:

131 Balmoral Consolidated School, Coleraine Road and Simson Street, Balmoral
236 St Joseph's Catholic Church, Presbytery and School, Martin Street, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

20-May-02

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
L J Blake, ed.	Vision and Realisation , Vol 2	1973	22
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Penshurst, Parishes of Boram Boram and Yalimba, County of Villiers	1927	
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Penshurst		
Mount Rouse Shire Council	Mount Rouse Shire Centenary, Commemorative Meeting	1964	
Office of Lands and Survey	Township of Penshurst	1864	
Surveyor General's Office	Suburban & Country Lands & Township of Penshurst near Mount Rouse in the Parishes of Yalimba and BoramBoram, County of Villiers	1855	