

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: POST OFFICE & RESIDENCE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: 31 Martin Street Bell and Martin Streets PENSHERST

STUDY NUMBER: 245

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Penshurst

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 2 **SECTION:** 18 **PARISH:** PARISH OF BORAMBORAM

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475J C11; VicRoads 233 O11; located on the north-west corner of Bell and Martin Streets beside the Court House in the centre of the township.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Post Office & Residence, 31 Martin St, Penshurst

Image Date: 15/05/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the building including the Post Office, the Post Master's Residence and the Court House, but excluding the interiors of the Post Office and the Post Master's Residence and including the interior of the court House, and including all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Complex includes a post office, post master's residence and court house. The whole is a single storey, rendered brick building made asymmetrical by the juxtaposition of its two main functions.

The complex is an asymmetrical, single storey, rendered brick building. The two main functions are expressed by different masses and roof forms. The Post Office is on the south side and the Court House is on the north side of the complex. It was built in 1877 to a standard design prepared by the Public Works Department. As well as the postal service, the building included a telegraph office and a residence for the postmaster. Along with all post and telecommunications services, the building passed to the Commonwealth after Federation in 1901. The Post Office facade, on Martin Street, is little altered unlike the matching Coleraine Post Office which was altered to a standard design during the Interwar period except for the entrance. The Court House has not been altered. Consequently the complex remains relatively intact externally to its original design. The Post Office, with its residence, is much altered internally and continues in its original functions. The Court House is little altered internally but is no longer functioning, the space now being occupied by the Penshurst Historical Society. The complex is in good condition.

HISTORY:

The land on which this complex stands has a particular significance for its earlier use as the centre of the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Protectorate. This was established in 1842 and abandoned in formally 1858. The Chief Protector was George Augustus Robinson, who had fulfilled similar duties in Van Diemen's Land, but with his responsibilities across the whole colony, he did not reside there. His second-in-command was Charles Wightman Sievwright who lived on the site and was immediately responsible for the running of the Protectorate. There was great animosity by the majority of the squatters to the Protectorate and how it came to be. Most considered the treatment of the original holder of the Mount Rouse run, John Cox, to have been shameful or at least unfair. Sievwright was unhappy, unpopular and unsuccessful in his role. He was replaced by Dr John Watton, as Medical Officer. Watton, a squatter himself, participated more broadly in the general community. His daughter Anna married Acheson French, one of the Hamilton Police Magistrates and his Edmund married Adelaide one of the daughters of the other Hamilton Police Magistrate, Cuthbert Featherstonhaugh, and his daughter Harriet married James Moore, squatter.

A feature plan prepared by the Surveyor, Hoddle indicates a small cluster of buildings towards the northern end of what, in 1858, became the Police Reserve of the new township of Penshurst. It may be that those structures continued to be used for public purposes in the short term. A new telegraph office was built at Penshurst in 1863, presumably on the Reserve, but this may have been subsumed into the later building. The Post Office, Post Master's Residence and Court House were built in 1877.

The Police Reserve was further subdivided and developed. Its present functions continue its role as the focus for the community.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.7 Establishing communications

3.7.1 Establishing postal services

3.7.2 Developing electrical means of communication

CONDITION:

The complex is in good condition.

INTEGRITY:

High degree of integrity externally throughout and internally in Court House. Low degree of integrity internally

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in Post Office and Post Master's Residence.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Penshurst Post Office, Post Master's Residence and Court House complex is located at the north-west corner of Bell and Martin Streets in the centre of Penshurst. The site has a particular significance for its earlier use as the centre of the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Protectorate. It may be that those structures continued to be used for public purposes when the town was first surveyed and developed. In any case, the land became the Police Reserve and its present functions continue its role as the focus for the community. A new telegraph office was built at Penshurst in 1863 but this may have been subsumed into the later building.

The complex is an asymmetrical, single storey, rendered brick building. The two main functions are expressed by different masses and roof forms. The Post Office is on the south side and the Court House is on the north side of the complex. It was built in 1877 to a standard design prepared by the Public Works Department. As well as the postal service, the building included a telegraph office and a residence for the postmaster. Along with all post and telecommunications services, the building passed to the Commonwealth after Federation in 1901. The Post Office facade, on Martin Street, is little altered unlike the matching Coleraine Post Office which was altered to a standard design during the Interwar period except for the entrance. The Court House has not been altered. Consequently the complex remains relatively intact externally to its original design. The Post Office, with its residence, is much altered internally and continues in its original functions. The Court House is little altered internally but is no longer functioning, the space now being occupied by the Penshurst Historical Society. The complex is in good condition.

How is it significant?

The Penshurst Post Office is of local historical and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire and the community of Penshurst.

Why is it significant?

The Penshurst Post Office is of historical significance as the focus for postal and telecommunications services to the community from the 1860s to the present day. It is of architectural significance for its association with the court house immediately adjacent and, by , with the post offices in the other communities of the Shire, particularly that of Coleraine which is of the same standard design.

COMPARISON:

067 Post Office & Residence, 80 Whyte Street, Coleraine (1874)

371 Post Office, Wills, St, Dunkeld

Post Office, Heathcote (1869)

Post Office, Maldon (1871)

Post Office, Avoca (1871)

Post Office, Buningyong (1872)

Post Office, Beaufort (1872)

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

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REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Bruce Trethowan	The Public Works Department, 1851-1900	1975	
Don Garden	Hamilton, A Western District History	1984	
Lindsey Arkley	The hated protector: the story of Charles Wightman Sievwright, protector of Aborigines 1839-42,	2000	
W M Rogers in Gordon Forth, ed.	A Biographical Dictionary of the Western district of Victoria	1998	pp. 46-7