

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** POLICE STATION (FORMER) AND RESIDENCE

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 35 Martin PENSHURST

**STUDY NUMBER:** 248

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**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 west side of Martin Street between Bell and Cox Streets in the centre of the township.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Police Residence, Martin Street, Penshurst.

**Image Date:** 15/05/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the residence including its interiors, the stables and other outbuildings and all the land.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Police Residence (former Police Station and Residence) is a conventional, modest, but fine example of the Queen Anne style as it matured in the Federation period. It uses typical red bricks, grouped casement windows, half-timbered gables and a large sweeping roof with tall chimneys. The verandah is timber with typical simple detailing and a roof integral with the main roof. The form of the house emphasises the cross axial planning and the off-centre entrance. The principal rooms are at the front and the service wing is at the rear. The fence is not original and the front garden is of no historical or botanical interest. The interiors of the residence have not been inspected

## HISTORY:

The land on which the Police Residence 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 formally in 1858. The Chief Protector was George Augustus Robinson, who had fulfilled similar duties in Van Diemen's Land. With his responsibilities across the whole colony, he did not reside at the Protectorate. His second-in-command was Charles Wightman Sievwright who did live on the site and was responsible for the immediate 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 Fetherstonhaugh, and his daughter Harriet married James Moore, squatter.

A feature plan prepared by the Surveyor, Robert Hoddle indicates a small cluster of buildings towards the northern end of what, in 1858, became the Police Reserve of the new township of Peshurst. It may be that those structures survived and continued to be used for public purposes in the short term. When the community called for permanent police protection in 1860, the officer in charge of the Belfast police district considered the proposed accommodation to be "in a most dilapidated condition and certainly not fit for any human being to live in, in fact, the place is going rotten and tumbling down." The community again petitioned for a permanent policeman in 1861, claiming that patrons from the three licensed premises, one more than in the previous year, were causing trouble. The first constable was Samuel Watson, appointed in late 1861. He was given permission to rent a stone cottage and stables. This may have been allotments 18, 20 and part of allotment 1 of section 54 of the township of Peshurst, at the north-east corner of Chesswas and French Streets. In 1876, the police were operating from a timber and stone house with stables and a single cell on the eastern side of Scales Street, between Cobb and Watton Streets. This was allotments 9 and 10 of section 30, which was later purchased from the Crown by G T. Ewing in 1915.

In 1908 the Peshurst Progress Association agitated for the police to be moved from Scales Street to the more central Police Reserve. The police had known nothing about the infamous hold-up of the Bank of Victoria, located opposite the Reserve, in the 1870s when it happened. The police did move back to the Police Reserve in 1914, the date of construction of the present house. The timber stables and the single cell were relocated from Scales Street to the Martin Street site.

When the Police Station was situated at the east end of Watton Street on the Scales Street corner Mounted Constables James Lindsay and Henry Willett were the staff. The Justices of the Peace were John MacKiehan, J. Ernest Campbell, John Ritchie, M. M. Dickinson and A. S. Lane. The Police Magistrates were A. P. Akehurst and J. P. Hamilton. One policeman, Constable Thomas Hall stayed for ten years and was involved with the shearer's strike in 1889 and the train disaster of 1890.

The present building is now one of the few remaining police residences in the Shire which date from before the

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

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme: 7 Governing

7.6 Administering Australia

7.6.3 Policing Australia

7.6.4 Dispensing justice

7.6.5 Incarcerating people

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

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## **CONDITION:**

The building is in excellent condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

High degree of integrity externally.

[Interiors not yet inspected]

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Police Residence and former station is located on the west side of Martin Street between Bell and Cox Streets in the centre of the township of Peshurst. The residence is a conventional, modest, but fine example of the Queen Anne style as it matured in the Federation period. It uses typical red bricks, grouped casement windows, half-timbered gables and a large sweeping roof with tall chimneys. The complex also had a police stables located at the rear, and formerly served as the police station and residence. The land on which the Police Residence stands has a particular significance for its earlier use as the centre of the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Protectorate, dating back to 1842. The first constable to be permanently based in Peshurst was Samuel Watson, appointed in late 1861. He was given permission to rent a stone cottage and stables, which were located some distance from the current police residence, at the north-east corner of Chesswas and French Streets. In 1876, the police were operating from a timber and stone house with stables and a single cell on the eastern side of Scales Street, between Cobb and Watton Streets. In 1908 the Peshurst Progress Association agitated for the police to be moved from Scales Street to the more central Police Reserve, which they did in 1914, the date of construction of the present house. The timber stables and the single cell were relocated from Scales Street to the Martin Street site. There has been no architect or builder associated with the residence, but presumably, it was designed within the Public Works Department. The residence is in excellent condition, and retains a high degree of integrity externally.

How is it Significant?

The Police residence and former station is of historical and architectural significance to the township of Peshurst and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it Significant?

The police residence and former station complex is of historical significance for several phases of development within the township of Peshurst. The land on which the complex stands has historical significance for its very early associations with the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Protectorate dating from the early 1840s. The land has further historical significance for its long association with the role of the Police, being marked out as a police reserve from the earliest surveys of the new Township of Peshurst in the 1850s. The presence of the police

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reveals something of the nature of Peshurst in the 1860s, when, as a rapidly developing township on a major transportation route the need for a permanent police presence arose in response to 'trouble' from several of the seven publicans in the township. The police residence is of further historical significance when compared with the previous police residences, all temporary, usually rented premises and especially the hut which had survived from the Aboriginal Protectorate and was proposed as a residence. The construction of the current police residence was an affirmation of the importance and role of law within the township of Peshurst and a statement of the townships permanency.

## COMPARISON:

080 Policeman's House, Coleraine-Nareen Road, Nareen  
378 Police Residence (Former), 33 Glendinning Street, Balmoral

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

21-May-02

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## 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
	Shire of Mount Rouse, In the Centre of the Fertile Western District of Victoria: Centenary Celebrated	1966	
Brian O'Brien	'The history of policing in Peshurst'	1991	2
John Sutherland	History of Policing in Peshurst	1991	
Lindsey Arkley	The hated protector: the story of Charles Wightman Sievwright, protector of Aborigines 1839-42,	2000	

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