

## FORMER SUPREME COURT, BENDIGO



FORMER SUPREME COURT SOHE 2008



2024. Brick extension around the original sandstone building. Roof of the sandstone building visible behind tile roofs.



2024. Former Supreme Court, Bendigo viewed from Park Road.



2024. Central courtroom space, now a classroom.



1 former supreme court now bendigo secondary college bendigo side entrance jul1984



former supreme court now bendigo secondary college bendigo entrance jul1984



former supreme court now bendigo secondary college bendigo window detail sep1993



former supreme court now bendigo secondary college bendigo side view sep1993



2024. Aerial extent of registration.

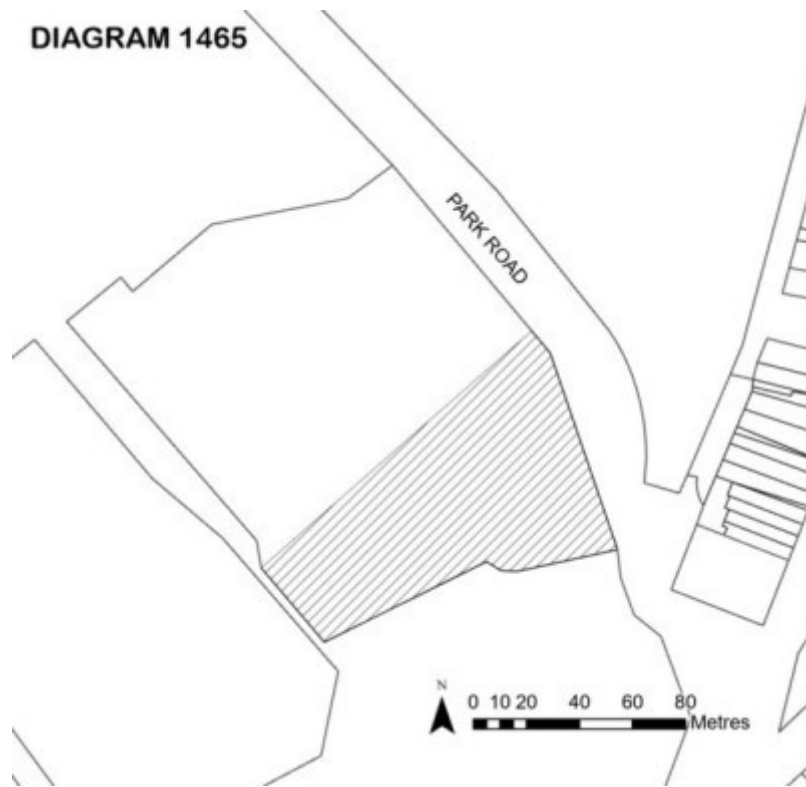


Diagram 1465

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### Location

10-20 GAOL ROAD BENDIGO, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

### Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1465

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO141

### VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

### Amendment to Registration

April 17, 2025

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 23, 2025

Abbotsford Convent is located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

## What is significant?

The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo constructed in 1857-58 by the Public Works Department for the Crown Law Department, including a single-storey sandstone Court building designed in a simple Italianate style with a double height courtroom at its centre.

## How is it significant?

The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

### Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

### Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

## Why is it significant?

The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo is historically significant as one of the oldest surviving government buildings on the Bendigo goldfields. As one of only a few buildings remaining from the Government Camp, which once served as the administrative centre of the Bendigo goldfields, its importance lies in its place in the development of one of the most significant goldmining areas in Victoria into an important regional centre. It is also of historical significance as an early surviving building which was purpose built to accommodate the Supreme Court in Victoria, when it was decided to extend the circuit court to Bendigo in 1857. The provision of this facility was indicative of Bendigo becoming an established regional centre

(Criterion A)

The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo is significant as a notable example of a simply conceived Italianate design applied to a government building. Decoration is limited to smooth quoining which emphasises corners and window openings, and contrasts with the textured surface of the main building. Together with the other buildings of the old Government Camp, the Former Supreme Court, Bendigo represents a fine example of a nineteenth century government building, used to administer law and order on the goldfields.

## 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](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Former Supreme Court, Bendigo subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

#### Guidelines

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or

their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.

6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.
7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the *Act* must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

## Conditions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Aboriginal Heritage Council (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

## Exempt works and activities

1. All internal works to and demolition of post-World War II detached buildings within the extent of registration which date from the Bendigo High School era.

## Theme

### 7. Governing Victorians

Construction dates	1857,
Architect/Designer	White, Samuel,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	HIGH SCHOOL, Bendigo Senior Secondary College,
Hermes Number	137

## History

### Bendigo and the gold rush

In 1851, the discovery of gold in Bendigo spurred wealth and civic growth. The centre for the Supreme Court was Melbourne, but the provision of access to the Supreme Court was gradually extended to country centres. The towns to be visited by the Supreme Court required suitable premises including space for jurors, barristers, witnesses and members of the public along with secure accommodation for temporarily holding those people that were awaiting trial. Existing courts were to be extended, and new ones built. By 1863, the Supreme Court sat in eight country towns of Victoria, being Ararat, Ballarat, Beechworth, Castlemaine, Geelong, Maryborough, Port Fairy and Sandhurst (now Bendigo). By 1891, the number of towns in the Supreme Court Circuit was 16.

### Bendigo Supreme Court

The Bendigo Supreme Court was built between 1857 and 1858 with sandstone and a slate roof. It was built on Camp Hill where an area had been set aside for police purposes in 1852. This area provided the base for military and police presence during the goldrushes in the 1850s. The Supreme Court building is one of only a few buildings remaining from the Government Camp which once served as the administrative centre of the Bendigo goldfields. Its historical significance lies in its place in the development of one of the most significant goldmining areas in Victoria when it was decided in 1857 to extend the circuit court of the Supreme Court to Sandhurst (the original name of Bendigo).

Alterations to the original building were made over a long period, first in 1860 when three new rooms were added to the rear of the building and rooms were re-distributed as they had become inadequate and unsuitable. Within six years of its construction the building was reported to have deteriorated to a dangerous extent, necessitating the removal and rebuilding of half the courthouse building. At this time, the original pediment was removed, and the hipped roof was introduced. The inappropriateness of the site had been realised at this stage, and removal of the court function to a more accessible site was urged at the time of rebuilding, though it never came to fruition.

The building was used as the Supreme Court until 1895, when court activity was transferred to a new building in Pall Mall (VHR H1466).

### Educational uses

In 1907 the Former Supreme Court, Bendigo was acquired by the Education Department and used as a Continuation School. Internal changes were made at this time. In 1927, the building was adapted for use by the Bendigo Teachers' College. This involved the addition of a red brick extension, enveloping three of the elevations. In 1928 extensive alterations followed, including the remodelling of the front porch from a small square porch to a larger arcaded porch across the two-storey central section, and the removal of some of the single storey rooms from three sides at the rear of the court room. New classrooms replaced these rooms.

The depression forced the closure of this college in the early 1930s, and the building remained vacant until it was occupied by the Bendigo Girls High School of Domestic Art in 1937. It was used for this purpose until this school moved to new premises in 1959. The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo was then used by Bendigo High School. It currently remains part of the Bendigo Senior secondary campus.

The Former Supreme Court, Bendigo (1857-58) was used as the Supreme Court for 37 years (1858 to 1895), and for educational purposes for more than a century (1907 to the present day, 2024).

### Selected bibliography

Butcher, Mike, and Gill Flanders and Author 2. *Bendigo Historic Buildings*. Maryborough: National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1987.

McIntosh, Diahn, & Frances O'Neill. *Court Houses in Victoria: a survey* / prepared for the Historic Buildings Council. 1991.

Ratio Consultants, Caulfield and Krivanek. *View Street Rosalind Park Study*. 1992.  
Graeme Butler & Associates. *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study*. 1993.

## Extent of Registration

### Heritage Act 2017

#### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H1465

Category: Registered Place

Place: Former Supreme Court, Bendigo

Location: 10–20 Gaol Road, Bendigo

Municipality: City of Greater Bendigo

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1465 encompassing part of Crown Allotment 17 Section 89C at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst excluding the land to the north occupied by the Former Bendigo Gaol (H1550)

17 April 2025

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

*[Government Gazette G 16 17 April 2025]*

*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/>*