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# FORMER ECHUCA TOWN HALL



FORMER ECHUCA TOWN HALL SOHE 2008



1 former echuca town hall front view may1979



former echuca town hall rear view may1979



former echuca town hall south side jul1994

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## Location

524-530 HIGH STREET ECHUCA, CAMPASPE SHIRE

## Municipality

CAMPASPE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0378

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO19

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## **Amendment to Registration**

August 18, 1976

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on -

### **What is significant?**

The former Echuca Town Hall and Courthouse was built in 1869 to a Classical design by the Bendigo architects William C. Vahland and Robert Getzschmann, who were both German born. James Macintosh was the building contractor. The former Echuca Town Hall and Courthouse is a single-storey brick structure, comprising a simple hipped-roof central section flanked by lower wings with parapet walls and brick entablatures. One of these wings, fronting High Street, contains the main entrance and is articulated by a pediment.

The first court house at Echuca had been built in 1858 as a Court of Petty Sessions. The new building was designed to serve the dual purposes of council chambers. It accommodated the offices of the municipality of Echuca, which had been established in 1864, the same year that the Melbourne railway link was established. The port town grew significantly in the decades following this important development. Council sat here for the first time on 19 March 1869 and the local Court of Petty Sessions was heard in this building from 1869 to 1924. The combining of different public functions in this way was popular in the 1870s and 1880s because municipalities took advantage of the 99-year leases offered by the government on court houses reserves. A second court house [H1469] was built in Echuca in 1876 to serve as a circuit court of the Supreme Court.

The Former Echuca Town Hall and Courthouse was also briefly used from 1912 to accommodate the Echuca High School (a new high school building was built in c.1914). In 1954, it stopped being used as a town hall and was used as a municipal library; for some time until the mid-1970s the building was also used as a pre-school centre.

### **How is it significant?**

The former Echuca Town Hall and Courthouse is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

The former Echuca Town Hall and Courthouse is of architectural significance as an example of a Victorian civic building. It is significant as a distinctive early work of the prolific architects Vahland and Getzschmann and a notable example of the Classical style. The unusual form of the building, with exposed hall and flanking wings, and the low portico and brick entablatures are notable.

The building is historically and architecturally significant as an early example of a combined town hall and courthouse building, which was a popular dual function for municipal buildings in Victoria in the 1870s and 1880s.

The former Echuca Town Hall is historically significant as a critical element of Echuca's historic precinct. It demonstrates an important relationship with the other elements within this precinct, including the Echuca Wharf (1867) and adjacent Shackell's Bond Store (1859) [H558], which are amongst Echuca's oldest riverfront buildings. It is an essential element of high streetscape and a fine feature of the historic city of Echuca.

The former Echuca Town Hall is of historical significance for representing a significant period of growth of this river port town after 1864, fuelled by the rail link to Melbourne and the goldfields, where there was a ready market for Echuca's river trade. The building also represents a period of extensive civic-building in Victorian country towns during the second half of the 1800s.

## 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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1868,
Architect/Designer	Vahland & Getzschmann,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ECHUCA COURT HOUSE,
Hermes Number	417
Property Number	

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## History

Erected in 1869-70 and also once served as the court of petty sessions. The architects were Vahland and Getzschmann, the contractor was J Macintosh. The single storey brick structure comprises a simple hipped roof central section flanked by lower wings with parapet walls and brick entablatures. One of these wings, facing high street, contains main entrance and is articulated by a pediment. Building is now a library. Register of the National Estate citation. (Online data Upgrade Project October 2003)

### **The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Date Upgrade Project 2004. Sources were as follows:**

Court House data sheets held HV– 'Echuca'.

Australian Heritage Commission. *Register of the National Estate*. Citation.

Samuel Calvert engraving, *Illustrated Australian News*, 8 November 1869. [SLV Pictoria]

Doyle, Helen, 'Dispensing Justice: A historical report on the theme of justice in Victoria', prepared for Historic Places Branch, DNRE, 2000.

O'Neill, Frances, 'The Visible State', MA in Public History thesis, Monash University, 1993.

Andrew C. Ward & Associates, 'City of Echuca Heritage Conservation Study' (1992).

## Extent of Registration

*City of Echuca*. No. 145B. Former Town Hall, 524-528 High Street, Echuca. [Victoria Government Gazette No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3648]

Register Number 145B now becomes Register Number 378. [Victoria Government Gazette No. 77 - August 18, 1976 p.2573]

*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/>*