

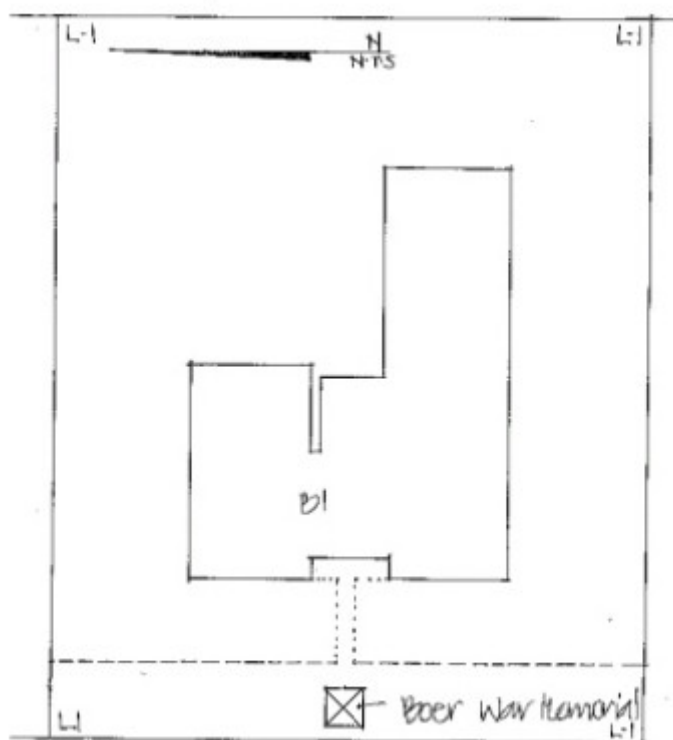
# FORMER HEATHCOTE COURT HOUSE AND SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS



FORMER HEATHCOTE  
COURT HOUSE AND SHIRE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SOHE 2008



1 former heathcote court  
house & shire council  
chambers front view



former heathcote court house & shire council chambers plan

## Location

125 HIGH STREET HEATHCOTE, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## **Municipality**

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1368

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO465

## **VHR Registration**

December 4, 1997

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 13, 1999

The Former Heathcote Court House and Shire Council Chambers was constructed in 1863 to the design of Melbourne architect, John Flannagan and was partially funded by both the local council and the colonial government. The building is quite unusual for incorporating the town hall with the court house, and only a small number of other Victorian local councils had such buildings and of these, very few survive particularly those dating from the 1860s. Flannagan designed a similar building for the Hotham Municipal Council in 1862 and this previous design was used as a model by the Heathcote Council when lobbying the government for funding. The building when constructed was a face brick symmetrically arranged building with courthouse and town hall in large wings on either side of a central entrance bay. The building is a good example of nineteenth century classicism employing the inventive and playful mood of mannerist buildings of the Baroque period. Since construction the building has been rendered with stucco and features an intact court house interior.

The Former Heathcote Court House and Shire Council Chambers is of historical and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

The Heathcote Town Hall and Court House is of architectural merit as a well composed building influenced by a style known nominated Victorian Mannerism, which sought to be inventive and playful within the tradition of strict classicism. Early nineteenth century British architects rediscovered Mannerism of the late Renaissance as a style which released them from cold imitation of Classicism and allowed freedom and 'character' within their design. The well designed and prominent building is an unusual and rare surviving integration of an 1860s court house and shire chambers.

The building has historical importance as it demonstrates the growth of the central goldfields area as a consequence of the gold fields and in particular the period of permanent settlement in the 1860s and 1870s when temporary buildings were replaced with permanent structures of considerable architectural merit.

## 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:

#### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under **Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995**)

#### General Conditions:

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. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

### Interior

- Interior painting and wall-papering, provided the preparation work does not remove evidence of the building's original paint or other decorative scheme.
- Removal of existing carpets / flexible floor coverings eg vinyl.
- Installation of carpets and flexible floor coverings
- Installation of curtain tracks, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- Installation of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of paintings, mirrors, and other wall-mounted works of art.

- Refurbishment of existing bathroom /toilet / ensuite including removal of existing sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, and wall and floor coverings, and installation of new fixtures, and wall and floor coverings.
- Removal of existing kitchen benches and fixtures (stoves, dishwashers etc.) and floor coverings and installation of new kitchen benches and fixtures, including associated plumbing and wiring.
- Installation of hydronic, or concealed radiant (Ceiling Foil Radiant Heating or under carpet heating) type heating, provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings, architraves and the location of the heating unit (boiler etc) is concealed from view.
- Installation of bulk insulation to the roof space.
- Re-wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, or GPO's are retained in-situ. Note : If wiring is original to the building, timber conduits should be left in situ rather than removed.
- Installation of smoke detectors.
- Installation of damp-proofing by either injection method, or "grouted pocket" **method**.

## Exterior

- Existing signage may be altered/replaced provided that the new sign is no larger than the existing, is located in the same position and that no internally illuminated signage is used.
- Fencing and gates may be altered, extended or replaced provided the materials **remain the same**.
- Erection of small outbuildings including sheds, aviaries, kennels, poultry sheds and the like, with the exception of "period " style gazebos, at the rear of the registered building provided that the outbuilding is no larger than 10 m2 in floor area and no higher than 2400mm high.
- Installation of garden watering systems.
- Removal of air-conditioners / pipework / wiring / antennae / aerals / and **making good**.

Construction dates        1863,  
 Architect/Designer        Flannagan, John,  
 Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,  
 Hermes Number            5124  
 Property Number

## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

The former Heathcote Court House and Shire Chambers was constructed in 1863 to the design of Melbourne architect, John Flannagan to house the Borough of Heathcote's Town Hall and Court House.

Closer settlement in the Heathcote area followed the discovery of the McIvor goldfield in 1853. A public meeting was held on 29 September, 1859 at the Heathcote Hotel to discuss the election of a municipal council for the town, a council was formed and their first meeting was held on 6 October 1959, again in the hotel. Meetings soon moved to a stone cottage opposite the Union Hotel. During the formative years, the principal concern of the council was the provision of road infrastructure.

The first courthouse in the town was established within the Government Camp in a stone building erected in 1853-4. By 1857 the local newspaper reported the derelict condition of all of the Government Camp buildings and in 1862 a decision was made to replace the courthouse in a building combining the Town Hall, Court House and Mechanics Institute, which was operating from rented premises.

Councillors from Heathcote approached the government in Melbourne seeking financial assistance for their building plans and were promised £1500 on condition that plans be obtained by the local council and that they be made available to the Government for approval.

John Flannagan, a Melbourne architect, was commissioned to prepare the plans. Flannagan was responsible for the design of several Melbourne residences of the 1860s as well as the Young and Jackson's Princes Bridge Hotel at the corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets, Melbourne (1853) and the Royal Hotel at Queenscliff (1882). Flannagan seems to have enjoyed a successful practice and was elected to the first council of the second Victorian Institute of Architects in 1871. He designed many hotels and other commercial buildings; civic buildings, and importantly the first Hotham Town Hall and Court House in 1862, used as the prototype for the Heathcote model also designed that year. Flannagan was born in Manchester and studied architecture in Dublin, coming to Australia in 1854 where he practiced until his death in 1883 when he was in his forties.

The concept of a combined Shire Hall, Court House and Mechanics Institute was an unusual one, as court houses were the responsibility of the Government and Shire Halls were the responsibility of the shire. The Heathcote building is the only known example of the amalgamation of these services in one building. It is thought that another such building was constructed for the Hotham Municipality in Melbourne by the date that Heathcote made their presentations to the Government for funding. A municipal council chambers and court house was erected in Hotham to the design of John Flannagan but this was replaced in 1867 by the present building.

Tenders were called for the construction of the Heathcote Town Hall and Court House in 1862 and that of James Crowle, a local builder, was accepted. James Orr was appointed Clerk of Works for the project which was to cost £2342. The construction phase of the building's life was fraught with many difficulties causing division in the town. The foundation stone was laid on 19 January 1863 and debate raged among the Councillors, contractors and architect over the quality of workmanship and expense incurred on the site, however by January 1864 it was reported that the new building was completed and occupied, providing the newly created Borough of Heathcote with Council Chambers.

The Town Hall and Court House seems to have remained in a partially completed state until the late 1870s when some work was done. In 1885 W&H Chaffer were contracted to repair the building and cement render the exterior for £383.

On 23 May 1892 an Amalgamation Order was signed uniting the Borough of Heathcote with the Shire of Melvor with the consequence that the former Shire Hall was sold and that this money was spent on an extension of the own Hall section of the Heathcote Town Hall and Court House.

A fire in 1851 gutted the interior of the council chambers and these were rebuilt in an altered form and opened in 1953. The shire chamber continues in use as the regional office of the City of Greater Bendigo. The court house is now used as an historical museum and craft shop.

Buninyong Town Hall

This building was designed by Melbourne architects, Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy and built by local builder, Richard Rennie in 1886. This was designed in the Italianate style and is principally a town hall flanked by a court house, magistrate's court and clerk of petty sessions.

Associated People:

## **Extent of Registration**

### **NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1368 in the category described as a Heritage Place only:

Former Heathcote Court House and Shire Council Chambers, 125 High Street Heathcote, Greater Bendigo City Council.

### **EXTENT:**

1. All of the building known as the former Heathcote Court House and Shire Council Chambers and marked B1 on Diagram 605030 held by the Executive Director. All of the structure known as the Boer War Memorial and marked as such on Diagram 605030.

2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 605030 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described as the Court House and Town Hall Reserve in Heathcote, Crown Allotment 5, Section 3B.

Dated 6 November 1997

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G48 4 December 1997 p.3317]

*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/>*