

# STAWELL COURT HOUSE



STAWELL COURT HOUSE  
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H01997 1 stawell courthouse  
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H01997 stawell courthouse  
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H01997 stawell courthouse  
courtroom sep01 ac2



H01997 stawell courthouse  
gallery sep01 ac2



H01997 stawell courthouse plan

## Location

11 PATRICK STREET STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## **Municipality**

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## **Level of significance**

Registered

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

H1997

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO29

## **VHR Registration**

September 12, 2002

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - September 16, 2002

### What is significant?

The town of Stawell grew out of two mining settlements established in the 1850s. Gold was discovered at Pleasant Creek (later Stawell West) in 1853 and at Quartz Reefs (later known as Stawell East) from 1854. A police camp was set up at Pleasant Creek and in 1858 it was named after Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria. However the settlement did not develop as the Government had expected. Instead, Quartz Reefs (Stawell East) flourished and was re-named Stawell in 1870.

By 1868 the population at Quartz Reefs was approximately 6500 compared to about 200 people at Pleasant Creek. Finally in the late 1870s the Government acknowledged that the growing settlement required a more official presence. The Patrick Street court house was built in 1878-79 and police quarters and lock-up in 1881. The police quarters and lock-up were demolished to make way for a Percy Everett designed police station of 1949. A new police complex was built in the early 1990s.

The Patrick Street court house was built in 1878-79 by contractor J Summerland to the design of George W Watson, who became the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department from 1910 until his death in 1915.

### How is it significant?

Stawell Court House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

Stawell Court House is of architectural significance as a fine and highly intact example of the larger courts in the Victorian Free Classical style with recessed entry, arcade, gallery and hipped roof. The building is significant in its use of the local Stawell sandstone from the nearby Heatherlie quarry; stone from this quarry was also used in some Melbourne buildings including Parliament House. The court house is also notable for the high integrity of its interior fittings and furniture.

Stawell Court House is of historical significance for its associations with the transformation that had taken place

by the 1860s and 1870s of a number of makeshift gold settlements into established towns with more permanent and architecturally sophisticated structures. The court house also has associations with the history of law and order in Victoria and the complex history of government administration reacting to the demands of the shifting goldfields population.

Stawell Court House is of historical and architectural significance for its associations with George Watson, a prolific Public Works Department architect. The Stawell Court House is an important example of Watson's work as it represents a transition from the simple designs evident in some of his works such as Mansfield Court House to the confident, exuberant designs he executed for Bendigo Post Office and Law Courts.

## 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 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. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. 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.

#### Exterior:

\* All repair and maintenance works specifically recommended in the Schedule of Works, pages 31-32 of the Conservation Management Plan (Robert Sands, 1996), provided that major works are carried out under the direction of an appropriately experienced conservation practitioner.

\* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

\* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and

making good.

\* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

\* Regular garden maintenance.

Interior:

\* All repair and maintenance works specifically recommended in the Schedule of Works, pages 31-32 of the Conservation Management Plan (Robert Sands, 1996), provided that major works are carried out under the direction of an appropriately experienced conservation practitioner.

\* Installation of a Duress alarm system provided that existing wiring conduits, where possible, will be utilised and that installation will be carried out in places with the minimum visual impact and will avoid any decorative elements.

\* Installation of single cylinder deadlocks to the exit door from the court room to the magistrate's chambers and to all doors opening to the magistrate's chambers.

\* Painting of previously painted walls and ceiling of the court room in colour schemes consistent with the original scheme provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative schemes.

\* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirtings.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

\* Refurbishment of toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in situ.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors and exit signs.

Construction dates 1878, 1881, 1849, 1990,

Architect/Designer Watson, George W.,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 5772

Property Number

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## History

The town of Stawell grew out of two mining settlements established in the 1850s. Gold was discovered at Pleasant Creek (later Stawell West) in 1853. Between 1854 to 1857 there were gold rushes at Quartz Reefs (later known as Stawell East). A police camp was set up at Pleasant Creek and in 1858 it was named after Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria. However the settlement never met expectations and it was Quartz Reefs (Stawell East) that flourished and was re-named Stawell in 1870.

The Pleasant Creek (Stawell West) police camp comprised a police residence for the Superintendent, court house, lock-up, police quarters and stables. The Wimmera District Police Headquarters was located at Stawell West from 1862 to 1928 until it was moved to Ararat.

By 1868 the population at Quartz Reef was about 6500 compared to a couple of hundred of people at Pleasant Creek. Finally in the late 1870s the government acknowledged that the growing settlement required a more official presence. The Patrick Street court house was built in 1878-79 and police quarters and lock-up in 1881.

The 1881 police quarters and lock-up were demolished to make way for a Percy Everett designed police station of 1949. This too has since been demolished and replaced with another complex built in the early 1990s.

The Patrick Street court house was designed by George W Watson, who became the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department from 1910 until his death in 1915. His other works include the Bendigo Law Courts and the

Bendigo Post Office. The court house was built in 1878-79 by contractor J Summerland; the contract price was £7612 with the iron gates an additional £421. It opened in June 1880.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the building known as Stawell Court House marked B1 and the iron palisade fence and gates marked B2 on Diagram 1997 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the objects located in the court room comprising: magistrate's bench, clerk of courts desk, witness stand and bench seats.
3. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1997 held by the Executive Director being the Public Offices Reserve, RS 4838.

*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/>*