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# IMMIGRATION DEPOT



IMMIGRATION DEPOT  
SOHE 2008



1 former immigration depot  
south street port albert front  
view feb1980

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## Location

6 DENISON STREET PORT ALBERT, WELLINGTON SHIRE

## Municipality

WELLINGTON SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0498

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO30

## VHR Registration

June 26, 1981

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 18, 1999

From the early 1840s when Gippsland first opened up to pastoral settlement labour supply had always been a problem. With relatively rapid development following the Omeo gold rushes, this labour shortage changed in type - pastoralist station hands were not as much in demand as agricultural workers and single women. The people of the district were more than anxious to welcome the immigrants. A public meeting at the Tarraville court house on 6.1.1857 passed the following motion "that as the only accommodation now existing in the district for immigrants is a rough slab hut destitute of every convenience and comfort, erected some years ago at a cost of 40 pounds, and situated four miles from the port, it is, in the opinion of this meeting, highly desirable that a suitable depot be erected at Port Albert, the place of arrival". (Gippsland guardian 9.1.1857). The local MLA, James Davis, acted on this resolution and in February 1857 tenders were called for building materials for the immigration barracks - 93,000 bricks and 7,500 ft. of blue gum plank 6"x8". McKenzie & Co. of Port Albert won the tender at three pounds five shillings per 1000 bricks. (Gippsland guardian 13.1.1857).

While the depot was under construction the flood of immigrants continued and Port Albert received some direct from England. One such group of one hundred and eleven souls arrived at Port Phillip heads on 7.6.1857 per the "Black Eagle" from Liverpool, were transferred on the government steam sloop "Victoria" to the Port Albert heads, and from there they were transferred to the Port Albert steam navigation company's ship "Oberon" for the last leg of the trip to Port Albert township. Temporary quarters were provided in the iron store and two tents (government gazette 18.7.1857). This accommodation was subject to some criticism: "... The iron store at Port Albert ... A more miserable place scarcely exists at this stage of the year - without fire place, wood for fuel and with the sea within a few feet of the building, the immigrants after their transshipment, like so many bales of goods, will be able vividly to depict the comforts of Port Albert". (Government Gazette 24/7/1857).

Three more groups of immigrants arrived at Port Albert before the end of 1857. At this stage it was noted that Henry Charlesworth, an immigrant bricklayer on a wage of 8/- per day wet or dry weather, was employed by Mr. Lowe of Port Albert on building the new immigration depot, wanted a rise of 10/- per day. This would suggest that the immigration depot was not completed until 1858, the year in which no arrivals were recorded. The Gippsland guardian of 10 June 1859 advised that twelve married couples, twenty-eight single females and one single male ("Ex Herald" presumably meaning that he had previously worked on the newspaper) were now awaiting service at the immigration barracks, Palmerston. Between the years 1860 and 1865, twelve separate contingents, being mostly single females, arrived. This contributed to the Sale newspapers report of the "extensive immigration barracks ... which looks more like a convent than anything else - all that is merely required in a temporary building where a few girls and married couples may get a few nights lodging as they will be engaged soon after that." (Gippsland Times 6/11/1863). Only two contingents of immigrants are recorded in local newspapers from 1865 to 1870 so it seems that the immigration barracks at Palmerston became functionally redundant - an official "white elephant".

The building was used intermittently until the 1880s to house government officers from other departments which had sub-barracks in the district. In 1886 when the second building used to house the police officers was built on an adjacent site, it was noted that the former immigration barracks was used as a corn store.

The barracks reflect the importance of imported labour to the development of Gippsland in the mid-nineteenth century. The building illustrates the government role in local development - Palmerston was a government township established in 1857 to break the monopoly control held by the merchants Turnbull bros. Over the 180 acres around the port. The building as it stands today is a two roomed brick structure with gable ends. There is no floor or ceiling, the plaster is coming off the walls and the roof is supported by a simple timber truss system.

## 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](#).

Construction dates	1857,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	PORT ALBERT IMMIGRATION DEPOT, IMMIGRATION DEPOT PORT ALBERT,
Hermes Number	926
Property Number	

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## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No.498,Port Albert Immigration Depot, South Street, Port Albert.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No.88 26 August 1981 p.2821]

*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/>*