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OMEO JUSTICE PRECINCT

DAY AVENUE OMEO, East Gippsland Shire

VHR Number	H1536
File Number	600710 (1)
Other Names	OMEO COURT HOUSE OMEO LEGAL PRECINCT OMEO LOG LOCK UP AND HUT OMEO LOG LOCK-UP AND HUT OMEO LOG LOCKUP AND HUT
Year Construction Started	1858
Municipality	East Gippsland Shire
Extent of Registration	1. All the buildings marked as follows on Diagram 1536 held by the Executive Director:B1 Court House (1893)B2 Court House (1859-61)B3 Log Gaol and Cookhouse (1858, 1882-83)B4 Police quarters (1882-83)B5 Police Stables (1882-83)B6 Court House Outbuilding (1893)2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1536 held by the Executive Director being all the land included in Public Gardens Reserve and Public Purposes Reserve (Folk Museum) on Crown Allotment 1 Section D Township of Omeo Parish of Cobungra3. The following objects located within the court house:Magistrate's chair in the court room.Set of 8 matching balloon back chairs in the jury box.Horseshoe back smoker's chair in the magistrate's room.
Other Listings 1	East Gippsland Shire Planning Scheme
Architect/Designer	Macdonald, A J
Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) American Romanesque
Additional Information	Comparisons: Log Lockup/Gaol (1858)Comparison Seven log lockups are known to survive in Victoria, at Bright, Carisbrook, Eaglehawk, Harrow, Omeo, Seymour and Warracknabeal. Those at Bright and Harrow are on the Heritage Register. The lockup at Harrow is on its original site but the one at Bright has been relocated from the original police reserve to a site behind the old Court House. The Bright example is a square structure, about half the size of the ones at Omeo and Carisbrook. The one at Carisbrook is of similar size to Omeo and may be slightly earlier but an exact date is not known. It no longer retains its internal log walls and is not on its original site. It was relocated to its present site in 1886. It has been recommended to the Heritage Register. The one at Seymour. has been relocated twice and is no longer within a police precinct. The date of construction of the log gaol at Warracknabeal .is 1873. Unlike the other examples which have hipped roofs, Warracknabeal has a gable roof and gabled entrance porch. Most of the other examples are no longer within their original setting.

Police Stables (1882-83) Comparison

The only other timber police stables on the Register is at Mansfield(1888.89) where there is a much larger stables with decorative central gable and latticework. The timber stables at Bridgewater have been recommended to the Register as part of a police complex. This example at Omeo by itself would not be worthy of registration but it is part of a remarkably intact example of a country justice

precinct which is of State significance.

Police Cookhouse /Kitchen (1882-83) Comparison
The only other separate kitchen on a police reserve known to have survived from the nineteenth century is at Donald but this is not on its original site. The police cookhouse at **Omeo** is therefore of particular importance,

Court House (1893)Comparison
Macdonald designed buildings such as the Bairnsdale Court House, South Yarra Post Office, Flemington Police Station and Lock-up, **Omeo** Post Office, Mornington Police Station(demolished) , Euroa Post Office and Court House. Although a number of these are on the Heritage Register, Macdonald's output is so small and his contribution to Australian architecture so significant that it is important that **Omeo** Court House be included in the Register. **Omeo** Court House, on a smaller scale and more modestly conceived than Bairnsdale Court House, is a particularly pleasing and restrained example of Macdonald's work.
Heritage object/s;Heritage place

Heritage Act Categories

Click on the arrow below to view the Item Categories.

▼ Item Categories

Item Group

Law Enforcement

Item Category

Courthouse

Gaol/Lock-up

Objects (movable)

Police station

Click on the arrow below to view the Statement of Significance. Note: Some records may not yet have a Statement of Significance.

▼ Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The **Omeo Justice Precinct** consists of a log lockup (1858) and stockade fencing (1885 replacing that of 1882-83), court house (1859-61), a police residence (1882-83), police stables (1882-83) and police cook house (1882-83), as well as the 1893 court house designed by the outstanding government architect A. J. Macdonald and the 1893 outbuilding containing toilets.

The 1893 outbuilding is of contributory significance.

The buildings which are not original to the site as a **justice precinct**, but were introduced to the site for the purposes of the Folk Museum, ie the Penders Court Laundry, the Blacksmithy and the Machinery Shed , are not part of the significance of the site.

How is it significant?

The **Omeo Justice Precinct** is architecturally and historically significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The **Omeo Justice Precinct** is the most intact example of a nineteenth century police and court complex known to survive in Victoria. It is significant because of the presence of a number of elements which are architecturally and historically significant to the State. These are the Log Lockup/Gaol (1858), the Court House (1859-61), the Police Cookhouse (1882-83), the Police Residence (1882-83), the Police Stables (1882-83) and the Court House (1893).

The **Omeo** Lockup is architecturally and historically significant as a rare example of primitive log construction in Victoria. It is unusual in retaining its internal log walling

between cells and internal doors so that its original function can be clearly seen. Although not the earliest, it is the most intact lockup in the State and in itself is of State significance as a rare example of a particular type of vernacular building construction seldom used in Victoria. It gains added significance in its context in a remarkably intact example of a nineteenth century **justice precinct**.

The Court House (1859-61) is historically significant as a rare and intact example of a small country goldfields court of the 1850s. It was a symbol of the extension of the power of the State government to impose **justice** on a small and remote goldfields community and demonstrates in its fabric part of the story of Victoria. Its strong association with Arthur Currie Wills and Alfred Howitt, is clearly documented in Howitt's papers describing the way he worked in the two small back rooms, and this gives it added historical significance. .

The Police Cookhouse (1882-83) is historically significant as a rare example of a police building which demonstrates nineteenth century policing practices.

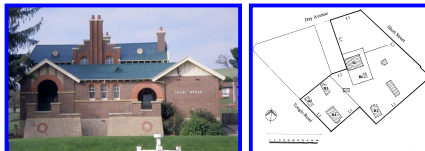
The Police Residence (1882-83) is historically significant as a representative and intact example of a nineteenth century police house and station which demonstrates the importance of the police presence in a remote mining town.

The Police Stables (1882-83) is historically important as a representative and intact example of a timber stables, which demonstrates the way of life of nineteenth century police officers and their reliance on horses for transport.

The 1893 Court House is architecturally significant as a fine and rare example of A. J. Macdonald's work, whose small but remarkable output for the Public Works Department during his brief architectural career was influenced by HH Richardson of Chicago and many other styles, such as the Arts and Craft Movement. The 1893 **Omeo** Court House is particularly significant as a rare example of a court house in the Federation Romanesque style in Victoria. The Court House is also historically significant as an element within the **justice precinct** which is a rare and intact example of a complex of nineteenth century court and police buildings.

Click on the arrow below to view the Images. Note: Some records may not yet have images.

▼ Images



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