



**Heritage**  
VICTORIA

25 May, 1998

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<b>CITY OF YARRA</b>	
<b>RECEIVED</b>	
Home	
29 MAY 1998	
FILE NO.	30/10/03
ATTN TO	R. Krieger
KEY WORD	
DOC NO.	D98/1376
COMES TO	

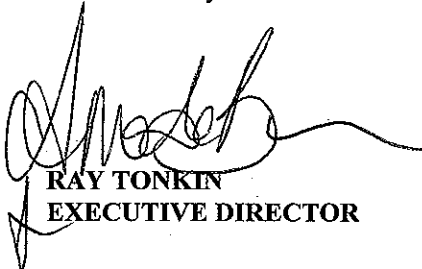
Dear Mr Krieger

**GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS REGISTER REMOVALS AND  
PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS**

Further to my correspondence dated 20 May 1998, I enclose documentation relating to the significance of places removed from the Government Buildings Register and included in your planning scheme. Please be aware that this material is based upon information available to Heritage Victoria at the time of assessment.

Should you have any queries regarding the removal of places from the Government Buildings Register or the inclusion of places in the planning scheme, please direct your inquiries to Amanda Bacon, Heritage Project Officer (03 9655 9724) or Nicola Stephens, Planner (03 9655 8862).

Yours sincerely

  
RAY TONKIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

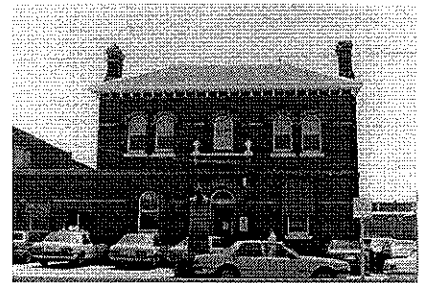
**NUMBER:** fmr GBR 304

**NAME:** Richmond Police Station & Court House

**LOCATION:** Bridge Rd Richmond

**LGA:** Yarra City **FILE NO:** 602047

Richmond Police Station was built in 1878 as part of a civic strip comprising of the Town Hall, Court House and Post Office. The Lock-Up located at the rear is thought to have been erected in the 1860s and was moved to this site in 1872-3. Richmond Police Station is important because of the role it played in the colourful history of the community of Richmond. Police authority and local government were highly involved in the struggles of union development, industry and the political battles between the ALP working class and the conservative middle class of Richmond. The prominence of the building is representative of the high profile of police authority, in conjunction with local government in Richmond during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of architectural importance is the intact government complex including the police lock-up. Architectural details include polychrome brick-work, arched windows and stone work in the lock-up. A better and more intact example of this building type and style exists at Carlton (1878) and has been transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register. The Richmond Police Station does not warrant inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register as it is not of State significance and a more intact example of its type has been transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register. It is however of local significance. The Richmond Police Station has been removed from the Government Buildings Register and included in the Heritage Overlay of the relevant Planning Scheme.



## ASSESSMENT REPORT

**NAME:** Richmond Police Station  
**LOCATION:** Bridge Road Richmond  
**CATEGORY:** Heritage Place  
**FILE NO:** 602047  
**OFFICER/S REPORTING:** Monash Public History Student Claire Turner

### DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

Richmond Police Station is located on Bridge Road next to the Town Hall. The Station is comprised of a number of buildings. Of historical significance is the main building that faces Bridge Road and the older lock - up at the rear. Connecting the two are a series of later, stylistically inconsistent smaller buildings. Built in 1878, the main, two - storey building is constructed in Italianate style contrasting red and cream Hawthorn brick on a bluestone base. It has a main entrance and seven windows that face the street, surrounded in round - headed brick arched openings. It has a slate roof. There are fourteen rooms in the original building. The original joinery is mostly intact and structurally the building is in good condition. There are obvious extensions to this main building. A single storey addition is attached to the front of the building in darker brick and in an unsympathetic style.<sup>1</sup>

The lock - up was constructed in the 1860's and was moved to this site in 1872 - 3. It is a single storey and contains four cells.<sup>2</sup> It is built of blue stone and also has a slate roof.

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY AND HISTORY OF PLACE:

Since its settlement and until recent times, Richmond had always been represented as a straggletown and a rough neighbourhood. As an industrial suburb with a large working class population, Richmond was the site of enormous political activity.<sup>3</sup> Tensions between the workers and the comparatively few wealthy business owners were high and their battles through both the depressions and the wars were acted out in the streets and in the dominating Town Hall. Naturally Richmond Police Station played an important role throughout the regular social turmoil.

The presence of the Police in Richmond was certainly an essential one. Since 1843 they served the community from various locations. Before the consolidation of public buildings on Bridge Road, there were four known police stations and there are suggestions of even more.<sup>4</sup> There was one in the drill hall in Swan street, one in Stanley street, Harvey street South Richmond and one Burnley. In other words the area required plenty of Police support. The public response to the Police strike in 1923 exemplifies the dependence on Police support in an

<sup>1</sup> See appendix no. 1

<sup>2</sup> See appendix no. 2

<sup>3</sup> Joanna Wills, *An Evolutionary City: An Environmental History of the City of Richmond*. MA Thesis, Monash University, 1994. P. 90

<sup>4</sup> Most information about the history of the police station itself, unless otherwise indicated, is taken from Claire Levis' research for the Richmond Burnley Historical Society, 1996.

area like Richmond. The very real threat of larrikin riots in the absence of Police created enormous fear in locals.<sup>5</sup> Police presence was a consistent back - drop to every day life for the residence of the slum areas. The Police controlled unemployment riots during the depression, they fought against the frequent union protests, occasionally intervened in domestic violence and were there to pick up the alcoholics, vagrants and homeless children that were certainly not an uncommon site in Richmond. Given the social environment of Richmond, it is no surprise that the final choice of building for the new station was one that loomed ominously with its two - storey stature, in league with the equally imposing political symbol of the Town Hall.

The lock - up building was obviously considered an important asset, having served the community throughout the 1860's. The architect's plans from 1873 show that the lock - up was intended to be incorporated in the new Bridge Road building, which demonstrates the importance placed upon it.<sup>6</sup> The main building stands today as the only substantial remains of what was once an impressive civic strip.<sup>7</sup> Of course the Town Hall still exists, but it underwent renovations in 1935, much to the horror of the locals. Its Italianate features were buried under the Egyptian Monumental style, upgrading it extravagantly so that locals were alienated from using it for dances and so on.<sup>8</sup> Part of the little Court House stands next to the Police Station as a suggestion of the line of buildings that once existed. Essentially the Police Station is the only reminder of Richmond's struggle to change its reputation from a rough area to a dignified one. Its public buildings were symbols of solid government and respectability, regardless of what the reality may have been. Pride was important to many of the locals who struggled to rise above the mostly slum conditions and Richmond Police Station is all that remains of that attitude.

### COMPARISON:

Richmond Police Station is one of a number of two - storey, contrasting brick Italianate style police stations in Victoria. Examples of this are the Police Station in Carlton, which also has an older lock - up, the Police station in Sale, Ballarat and Port Melbourne. However, Richmond Police Station is significantly distinguished by its place in what was once a grand civic strip of buildings, originally constructed in a uniform style that was intended to reflect the solid, progressive unity of Richmond's Government. It is also most unusual for a police station to be erected on the same strip as the post office.<sup>9</sup> It is this aspect and the fact that the Police Station is the only in - tact remaining building from a once symbolically and functionally important group of government buildings, that make it a fine contribution to Victoria's heritage.

### ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA:

**CRITERION A:** The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

<sup>5</sup> Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900 - 1965*. Victoria, 1984. P. 108

<sup>6</sup> National Trust File no. 6761

<sup>7</sup> The historical society of Richmond and Burnley hold a photo of the civic strip before the removal of buildings and the change to the facade of the Town Hall.

<sup>8</sup> Janet McCalman. Op. Cit. P. 173

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Trethowan, *The History of the Public Works Department*, BA Architecture Thesis, Melbourne University, 1975