

Former Lock Up, Bannockburn

Address: Crown Allotment 4, Section E, Victor Street, Bannockburn

Construction Date/s: 1860, 1869

Level of Significance: Local

Heritage Overlay No: HO18



Former Lock Up, Bannockburn

Statement of Significance¹

What is Significant?

The former lock up, Victor Street, Bannockburn, has significance as a rare surviving example of a 19th century bluestone lock up and a physical legacy of early law enforcement in the Golden Plains Shire. Initially built at Lethbridge in 1860 and dismantled and relocated to its present site in 1869, the austere building is a representative example of standard Public Works Department design as expressed in the gabled forms clad in slate, square coursed basalt wall construction (with each block being numbered), moulded timber bargeboards, broad eaves, small window openings with iron security grilles, narrow ventilation openings in the gable ends and the iron grille gate in the front porch. Internally, the original function of confinement and imprisonment is reflected in the rudimentary and intact fabric, including the cobbled stone porch floor, timber-lined ceilings, timber floors to the cells, solid vertically-boarded cell doors and white-washed stone walls. The relocation of the building to its current site has not diminished its significance. The lock up functioned on the existing site for almost one hundred years. It is in good condition and is predominantly intact.

How is it Significant?

The former lock up at Bannockburn is architecturally, historically and socially significant at the local level. It represents one of only two surviving 19th century lock ups in the Golden Plains Shire.

Why is it Significant?

The former lock up at Bannockburn is historically significant (Practice Note Criteria A & B) for its associations with the evolution and development of law and order (and particularly a police presence) in Bannockburn for almost a hundred year period between 1869 and c.1967. The

¹ The heritage assessment criteria and format of this statement of significance accord with the VPP Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay, revised September 2012, Department of Planning & Community Development.

building is a physical legacy of the 19th century court system, when the Magistrate's Court sat in the Bannockburn Shire Hall with a visiting police magistrate, and the lock up serviced prisoners awaiting trial.

The former lock up at Bannockburn is architecturally significant (Practice Note Criteria D & E) as a predominantly intact and rare surviving example of a standard Public Works Department austere lock up design of the late 1860s in the Golden Plains Shire. Although relocated from Lethbridge in 1869, it still reflects the original exterior and interior design and construction. The only other surviving lock up of similar design and construction in the Shire is at Smythesdale.

The former lock up at Bannockburn is socially significant (Practice Note Criterion G) as a symbol of 19th century law and order in the town. While no longer functioning for its original purpose, the lock up is recognised and valued as a tangible link to the town's public infrastructure heritage.

Description

The former lock up in Victor Street, Bannockburn, is set on a contextually large and open-grassed site. The lock up is centrally located on the site which is also characterised by peppercorn and pine trees near the stone structure, together with trees of similar species and eucalypts near the property boundaries.

The symmetrical, single storey, square coursed basalt lock up is characterised by a gable roof form that traverses the site, together with a minor porch gable that projects towards the street frontage. These roof forms are clad in slate and there are moulded timber bargeboards and broad eaves. Each of the basalt blocks are numbered, being a physical legacy of the relocation of the structure in 1869.

High up on the side and rear walls are small, horizontally-aligned, rectangular openings having projecting basalt sills and iron security grilles. Narrow vertical ventilators are located in the gable ends.

The lock up is accessed through a central door opening in the front porch. It has an early iron gate. Internally, the porch has an early cobbled stone floor, timber lining board ceiling and white-washed walls. From the porch are two door openings that lead into the two cells that are separated by a stone wall. There are solid vertically-boarded timber doors with access hatches and substantial iron bolts and hinges. The cells have timber-lined ceilings, timber floors and white-washed stone walls, the spartan appearance reflecting the original 19th century function of confinement and punishment.

History

Relevant Historical Theme (to Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 Thematic History)

- Sub-theme 8.3: Crime & Law Enforcement

History

First known as Wabdallah and then Leigh Road, the early importance of Bannockburn was associated with its location on the road and railway between Geelong and Ballarat during the gold rush years of the 1850s. In 1862, the Bannockburn Road Board District was gazetted and in the following years, 1863-64, the streets of the town were laid out. They were named after district settlers, including Russell and Manifold, with later thoroughfares commemorating

British poets including Burns, Byron, Milton and Pope. The Shire was proclaimed and gazetted in 1864 and the original Shire Hall, initially constructed at this time, was rebuilt in 1876 having been destroyed by fire (it was extended at the front in 1915). It was not until 1892 when the town was named Bannockburn.

On 20 October 1857, a 50 acre police paddock and adjoining 2 acre site for a police station were laid out at Lethbridge. On 20 and 21 June 1860, both *The Argus* and *Ballarat Star* newspapers reported on the accepted contract of Thorne, Brooken and Co. for the construction of a goal at Lethbridge at a cost of £468 15s. Having a rectangular plan, it was constructed of square coursed basalt with a gabled entrance porch and iron grille gate.

On either 28 or 29 March 1866, a police station was established on a two acre site in Victor Street, Bannockburn, when a police presence was transferred from Batesford. In 1869, the Public Works Department contracted the Geelong builders, Trevena and Gubby, to remove and re-erect the stone lock up at Lethbridge to the Bannockburn police reserve. Derek Beaurepaire in *The Stepping Stone: A History of the Shire of Bannockburn*, claims that the relocation of the lock-up was due to the Court then sitting in the Shire Hall at Bannockburn. The principal function of the lock up was to house prisoners awaiting trial before the visiting Police Magistrate, although it may also have been used to provide overnight security for gold escorts.

In 1921-22, it appears that the original police station was replaced with a new residence and station relocated from Cape Clear. A Public Works Department drawing shows a modestly-scaled double-gabled dwelling with front verandah and rear hipped and gabled addition. The police residence was located towards Victor Street in the north-west corner of the site, with the lock up having a central location on the reserve.

It seems that the lock up and the police station served their original purpose until c.1967. A new police site in Milton Street was reserved as gazetted in 1967 and in 1968 the original police reserve with the surviving lock up was temporarily reserved as a site for Public Purposes (Historical purposes). It would appear that the former police station was removed from the site at this time.

Comparative Analysis

Contextual Historical Background

Helen Doyle in 'Dispensing Justice': An Historical Survey of The Theme of Justice in Victoria (May 2000), gives the following overview of lock ups in Victoria:

Police lock-ups and watchhouses provided small towns with a means of confinement, for the purpose of holding a prisoner prior to a court hearing, or used by the police for overnight punishment. They were usually located at a local police camp or police reserve.

... After 1853, with the growing presence of police in the various districts across the colony, especially on the goldfields, the lock-up or watchhouse was one of a collection of buildings which together made up the government or police camp ... As settlements developed and public buildings improved, there was more uniform construction of lock-ups through the use of standard designs. A large number of lock-ups were commissioned by the Public Works Department from the late 1850s to the early 1860s.

Lock-ups tended to be plain and undecorative, built to a simple box-like plan, with a door, ventilation, but no windows, a design befitting with the prevailing attitudes to those who were confined in them. The interior was usually encased with a tight timber lining to floor, walls and

ceiling, to prevent escape. Lock-ups were generally built of bluestone if it was locally available; stone was preferred for being more difficult for prisoners or detainees to escape from. The sombre shades of bluestone also suited the philosophy of criminal treatment of the period, appearing as oppressive and punishing.

... The lock-up was usually built close to the police station, and also to the court house ... Cell blocks varied in number, usually from between one to four, depending on the size of the town and the size of the court house. They were often designed to accommodate only one prisoner at a time, influenced by contemporary thinking on criminal reform: that solitary confinement would aid reform."

Other 19th Century Lock Ups in the Golden Plains Shire

From the 1850s, lock ups were erected on the police reserves at some of the settlements in the Golden Plains Shire. At Steiglitz, a wooden lock up was built in 1857 and it was also in the 1850s when lock ups were built at Shelford and Meredith. The former was built of bluestone.

In the 1860s, lock ups were erected at Lethbridge (1860 – being the subject building now at Bannockburn), Scarsdale (c.1864) and at Smythesdale (1866). The lock up at Smythesdale was erected in 1866 on the police camp reserve that had been established in 1859. It remains extant and largely intact today, being of similar bluestone construction and detailing as the lock up at Bannockburn, but larger in scale. These are the only two lock ups surviving in the Shire today.

Condition

The former lock up is in good condition. There is evidence of rusting in the ironwork to the porch gate and grilles, but the roof and wall construction show little signs of deterioration. It appears that the galvanised ogee forms gutters have recently been introduced (replacing earlier gutters) and they are connected to introduced downpipes and sealed drainage.

Integrity

Predominantly intact.

Recommendations

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls:	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls:	Yes
Tree Controls:	No
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted:	Yes

Extent of Heritage Overlay

It is recommended that the heritage overlay apply to the whole site contained within the temporary reserve for public (historical) purposes.

References

The Argus newspaper, 12 May 1857, 5 July 1858, 20 June 1860, 30 October 1866, 5 July 1871.

'Bannockburn Police Residence' & Bannockburn Lock Up', Police Buildings Inventory (Historic Places – DSE), Police Buildings and Sites Datasheets, kindly provided by Janette Hodgson, Department of Sustainability & Environment, Melbourne.

D. Beaurepaire, *The Stepping Stone: A History of the Shire of Bannockburn*, Golden Plains Shire Council, 1996, p.86.

H. Doyle, 'Dispensing Justice': An Historical Survey of The Theme of Justice in Victoria – A Cultural Sites Network Study, prepared for the Historic Places Section, Department of Natural Resources & Environment, May 2000, p.59.

Heritage Matters Pty Ltd, 'Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Stage 2' (including Thematic Environmental History), prepared for the Golden Plains Shire, October 2009.

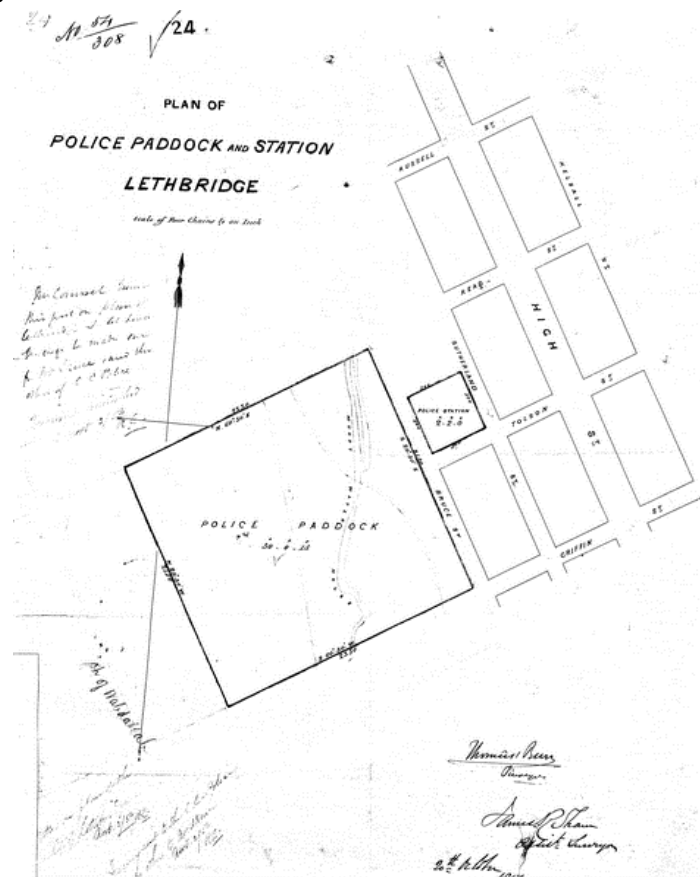
E. McGillivray, *The Heritage of Lethbridge*, Neptune Press Pty Ltd, Drysdale, 1996, p.205.

The Star newspaper (Ballarat), 21 June 1860, 13 November 1863, p.2, 3 November 1864, p.2.

Victoria Government Gazette, 1968, p.2322.

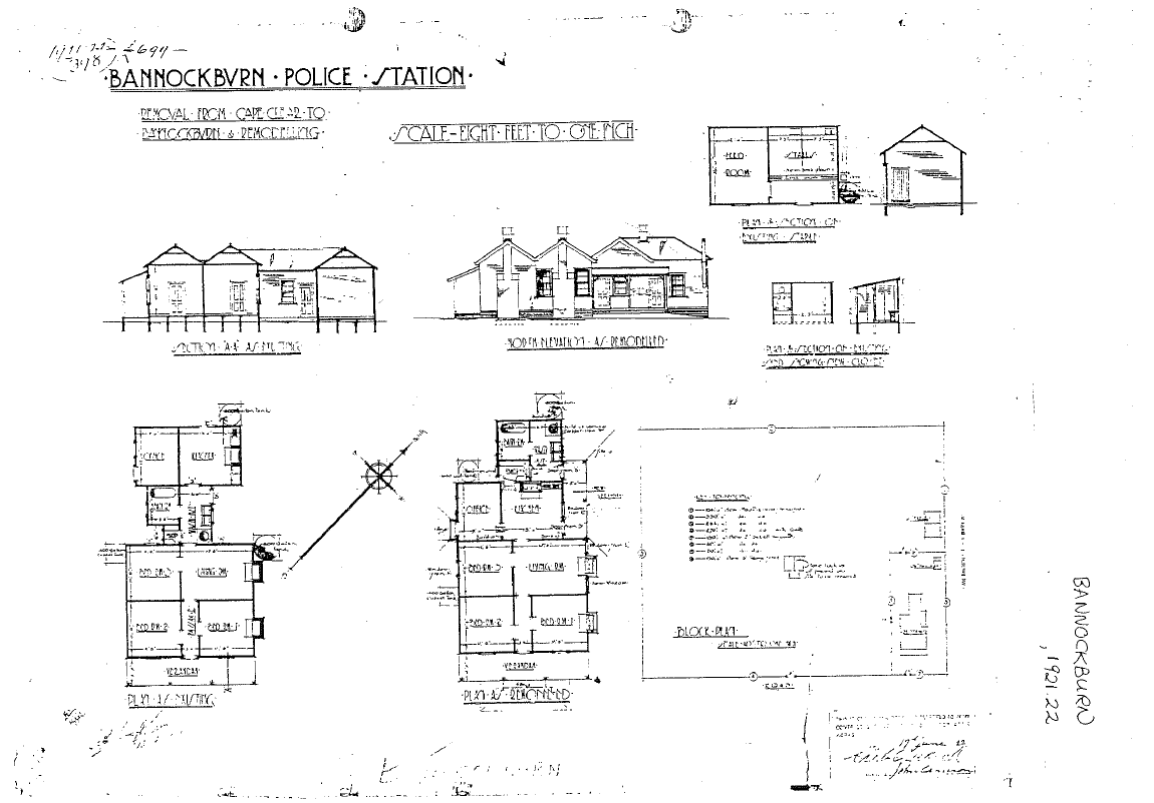
D. Wilson, 'Trevena & Gubby', biographical manuscript, family historian and member of the Geelong Family History Group, n.d.

Historical Images



Plan of Police Paddock & Station, Lethbridge, 20 October 1856.

Source: 'Bannockburn Police Residence' & Bannockburn Lock Up', Police Buildings Inventory (Historic Places – DSE), Police Buildings and Sites Datasheets, DSE.



Bannockburn Police Station, Plans and Elevations, 17 June 1922. Source: 'Bannockburn Police Residence' & Bannockburn Lock Up', Police Buildings Inventory (Historic Places – DSE), Police Buildings and Sites Datasheets, DSE.

Current Photographs



Former Police Reserve, Bannockburn, showing the location of the lock up.



Interior of lock up porch looking to the cells at the rear.