ATTACHMENTS

Under Separate Cover
Council Meeting

6.00pm Tuesday 25 May 2021

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Church of Epiphany, Meredith

Address: 7 Wallace Street, Meredith
Construction Date/s: 1913-14
Level of Significance: State
Heritage Overlay No: HO58

| Church of Epiphany, Meredith, 2012. | Interior, Church of Epiphany, looking north to chancel. |

Statement of Significance[1]
What is Significant?

The Church of Epiphany, 7 Wallace Street, Meredith, has outstanding significance as a highly intact and rare example of a Federation Arts and Crafts Gothic styled, modestly scaled rural timber church in Victoria. Built in 1913-14 to a design by the acclaimed Arts and Crafts Anglican Church architect, Alexander North, the church is notable for its gabled form, elevated apsidal chancel and porch belfry tower with squat broach spire. Other significant external fabric includes the vertically-oriented timber framed window openings with stylised pointed-arched and stained glass windows, chancel windows between stuccoed panelling, bank of three windows at the south end with the central light having decorative stained glass iconography, gable infill at the south end, the entrance doors on the front elevation with bracketed hood above, and the rendered brick building base. The highly distinctive design is carried on in the atmospheric interior that features timber lined ceilings and walls, exposed timber roof trusses, traceried timber chancel screen and original and early timber furnishings. These fittings and furniture are of an Arts and Crafts design by the architect, North. At the south end is a decorative stained glass memorial window introduced in 1956. Other memorials include the pulpit and lectern, and the rood above the pulpit that is a memorial to those who fought in the First World War. Also on the site is the church hall, built in 1954 as St. John's Anglican Church at Lethbridge and relocated to its current location in 1983. It has limited significance for its previous historical associations with the development of the Anglican Church at Lethbridge.

How is it Significant?

The Church of Epiphany, Wallace Street, Meredith, is architecturally, historically and socially significant at a state level.

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[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.

Dr David Rowe: Golden Plains Shire Heritage Advisor   **1**

Golden Plains Shire Heritage Assessments for Amendment C53   **2012**

Why is it Significant?

The Church of Epiphany, Meredith, is historically significant (Practice Note Criteria A & H) for its associations with the development and witness of the Anglican Church in the town since its construction 1913. The site has longer associations with the evolution of the Church since 1860, when the two acre property was reserved for Church of England purposes and an earlier timber church and school building (now removed) was soon erected. The church has associations with numerous clergy and parishioners. The historic significance of the place is also is embodied in the interior fabric as a legacy of early 20th century liturgical practice and for commemorative reasons, including the pulpit (a thank offering in 1914 by John and Frances Molesworth for the recovering of their son, Dick), timber lectern and alms plates (given in memory of William Osborn Stafford in 1914 by his parents, sisters and brother), and the stained glass window at the south end (given by Norman McDonald in memory of his parents, Mary and Matthew McDonald). The Church of Epiphany also has significance for its associations with the talented and prolific Arts and Crafts Anglican Church architect, Alexander North.

The Church of Epiphany Hall, Meredith, has some historical significance (Practice Note Criterion A) for its associations with the life and development of St. John's Anglican Church at Lethbridge between 1955 and 1983. This historical significance is embodied in the physical fabric and it has been diminished by the relocation of the former Church to Meredith for use as a hall.

The Church of Epiphany, Meredith, is architecturally significant (Practice Note Criteria D & E) as an outstanding and highly intact example of a Federation Arts and Crafts styled, rural timber church in Victoria designed by Alexander North. It survives as one of North's best rural timber examples of his ecclesiastical work in Victoria. The atmospheric and highly intact Arts and Crafts interior, complete with timber fittings and furnishings, further contributes to the distinguished design. The most comparable church with the Meredith building is St. James' Anglican Church at Point Lonsdale designed by North in 1915. Its integrity has been diminished by the defacing of the exterior with dichromatic brickwork in the late 20th century.

The Church of Epiphany, Meredith, is socially significant (Practice Note Criterion G) as it is recognised and valued by sections of the local community for religious reasons, as a symbol of their faith and their history of local participation in faith education. The interior includes a number of memorials that also have commemorative value relating to past parishioners of the church.

Description

The Site

The Church of Epiphany is set on a contextually large, open grassed site. The church building is located towards the north of the site, with a hall immediately south of it. The front is characterised by some remaining mature cypress trees (that once formed part of a hedge), together with shrubs, palm and other trees possibly planted from the mid 20th century. There is also a timber cross and a church services sign in the front yard. The church yard is divided from the remaining Church of England reserve by a rural timber post and wire fence.

The Church

The highly distinctive, horizontal timber weatherboard, Federation Arts and Crafts Gothic styled church building is characterised by a gable roof form that traverses the site, together with a raised apsidal chancel at the north side and a sizeable square entrance porch and belfry

Dr David Rowe: Golden Plains Shire Heritage Advisor   **2**

tower surmounted by a squat broach spire at the front south end. To the east (rear) of the chancel and nave is a skillion vestry and porch that represents an early addition. The nave, chancel and vestry roofs are clad in corrugated metal sheeting and there are metal crosses at the ends of the nave. The main roofs have projecting eaves and exposed timber rafters. On the sides of the nave and tower porch are vertical timber framed rectangular window openings incised with solid timber tracery forming stylised pointed-arched windows having stained glass. Smaller and simplified versions of these windows are located within the panelled and roughcast upper walls of the chancel. At the southern end of the nave is a bank of three windows, the central light having decorative stained glass and iconography. Above the pointed windows are square highlights with stylised quatrefoil glazing formed by solid timber tracery. The south end also has stuccoed panelling and vertical strapping in the gable infill. The building rests on a rendered brick base. On the front (west) elevation of the nave at the north end is a foundation stone that reads: "To The Glory of God this stone was laid by Dean Stephen, D.D. 22 November 1913, H.F. Finnis, Vicar, A. North, Architect, Burn Bros. Builders."

A feature of the design is the porch belfry tower and broach spire. Of squat proportions, the spire is clad in sheathed iron and its base has projecting eaves and exposed timber rafters. Below the spire are banks of rectangular, louvred timber ventilators. The verticality of the tower is emphasised by timber strapping although this has been muted by the introduced paintwork (that is identical to the weatherboard cladding). On the front of the tower is the porch entrance, identified by a double door opening with timber doors and a bracketed hood above.

Internally, the Church of Epiphany is highly distinctive and intact. It features a coved timber-lined ceiling with exposed timber trusses having curved struts and principal brackets. The walls have vertically-boarded dados to window sill height above which are tongue and groove timber lining boards. There are also timber floor boards. All the timber building fabric in the nave appears to have been varnished, highlighting the qualities of the Tasmanian blue gum. The highly atmospheric qualities of the nave are further emphasised by the early timber furniture including the pulpit, lectern, and two types of pews (comprising banks of pews on the west wall and individual seats in the centre of the nave). Other important features are the bank of windows on the south wall with the central light being a memorial to Matthew and Mary McDonald, memorial marble plaque and the rood above the pulpit being a memorial to those who fought in the First World War.

A principal feature of the interior is the chancel and sanctuary. It is divided from the nave by a Tasmanian oak screen with trefoil pattern reflective of the outlines of the chancel windows. Within the sanctuary is the introduced timber altar, and early rails and chair.

The church is entered from the belfry porch and a rear porch into the vestry. These spaces (including the vestry) have timber-lined ceilings and walls, timber floors and early windows of identical design as the other windows in the church.

The Hall
The mid 20th century former Church has a shallow-gabled roof with a projecting gabled wing at the southern end on the east side. These roofs are clad in corrugated sheet metal and have broad eaves and exposed timber rafters. The building is constructed with strapped vertical timber cladding, creating a rustic character. There are pairs of square timber framed windows with glass louvred highlights and the entrance is on the west side at the front. The building is elevated from the ground with the timber stumps exposed to public view.

History
Relevant Historical Theme (to Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 Thematic History)
- Sub-theme 7.3: Worshipping

Early Development of Meredith
The township of Meredith was surveyed on a grid layout in 1851-52 by Assistant Surveyor Dawson. The streets were named after the largest district landowners, including Robert Sutherland of Native Creek No.1 run, Simon Staughton of the Brisbane Range run and George Russell, manager for the Clyde Company that owned much the surrounding land. The establishment of the fledgling township resulted from the discovery of gold at the Ballarat goldfields, with Meredith an important stopping point enroute from the port of Geelong. The first crown land sales occurred on 20 September 1853. Initial sales centred on Wallace Street, as according A.J. Skene, District Surveyor in 1856, this was the road used by dray trucks to Buninyong. A police barracks was soon reserved, with the district Court House being at the nearby Steiglitz goldfields township. A Court House was built at Meredith soon after. The growth of the township included a number of hotels, most notably the Golden Fleece, three Royal's, Stag and Hound, Crown and Huntsman's Inn, that were all erected in the 1850s. In 1862, the Geelong to Ballarat Railway line was constructed through Meredith, providing links with district farming areas as well as the goldfields. By 1865, Meredith was described as 'a postal and road board village situated on Coolebarghurk Creek, as well as being 'both agricultural and pastoral, mining claims have also been lately taken up in the vicinity of the town.' A State School opened in 1874 and four years later in 1878, the Meredith Shire Hall was erected on the police reserve. After the goldrush through the later 19th and early 20th centuries, Meredith continued to prosper as the centre of a farming district known for producing some of Victoria's finest Merino wool in addition to thriving dairying and agricultural industries. Soldier Settlement subdivisions of Moranghurk Homestead after the World Wars brought additional families to the area. By 1970, the population was 480.

Early Years of the Church of England at Meredith
In 1860, 2 acres of land fronting Wallace Street (bound by Russell and Lawler Streets) was temporarily reserved for the Church of England. A church was soon established, with the first Vicar being the Rev. G.I. Russell who resided at Steiglitz. He was also one of the first Trustees. The other original Trustees of what became known as Christ Church were Thomas Connor, Richard Gosling, Michael Ward and William Adams.

A modestly-scaled gabled timber church was built about this time, which also served as a school. The building had a smaller belfry surmounting the main gabled wing, together with a gabled entrance porch and there was also a gabled wing that projected at the side.

In 1908, it was proposed to relocate the Vicarage from Steiglitz to Meredith. This was opposed by the Steiglitz Church Board and ultimately, permission was granted from the Bishop in Council. The vicarage was relocated in 1910 and located nearby the church. A bazaar was held to defray the relocation costs of £130. The Vicarage was sold for removal in 1963 and relocated in Wallace Street, Meredith.

In 1913, ownership of the church grounds was queried by the Registrar of the Anglican Diocese. Proof of the death of the original Trustees was required with the provision of a Statutory Declaration.

The Building of the Church of Epiphany Church

At the annual meeting in 1912, the Rev. H.P. Finnis declared that the greatest need was the construction of a new church building. A meeting was held in an effort to consider ways of fundraising and soon after a bazaar and then a tea meeting and social were held, the latter event attracting 300 people. Other fundraising activities included the Sale of Gifts at the Mechanics Institute and quarterly subscriptions.

The meeting of the Vestry on 17 February 1913 resolved to ask the architect, Alexander North of Melbourne, to prepare plans and specifications for a new church "built of wood with brick foundations." North had just moved to Melbourne from Launceston, Tasmania, where he had designed a number of distinctive Anglican churches in brick, timber, stone and reinforced concrete. By 22 April 1913, North had prepared the drawings for the new church and they were presented to the Vestry. The plan (as shown in the Public Health Department Plan of 1913), elevations and perspective drawing provided for a rectangular layout with an apsidal chancel at one end, and a projecting side porch at the other end. A temporary vestry was proposed in the corner adjacent the porch, with no provision given for a permanent vestry. The Vestry Committee requested that the permanent vestry be included in the final design although this did not eventuate, possibly due to costs. The location of the proposed porch was also altered, it being positioned on the opposite (west) side of the church. Tenders were called for the construction of the building in the *Geelong Advertiser* and *Ballarat Courier* newspapers on 23 and 30 August 1913. The contract was awarded to Burn Brothers of Geelong who, according to the Vestry Minutes of 14 October 1913, 'were willing to allow the payment of the last £100 to stand over for 3 months after completion of contract.' The accepted tender of Burn Brothers was for £649. The foundation stone was laid by the Dean, Rev. D.D. Stephen, on 22 November 1913. Nearing completion of the building in February 1914, the Vicar was asked to seek out a cost on the design and construction of the altar. The cost of the Tasmanian blue gum altar was met by the former Vicar, Rev. G. Gason, in memory of his wife, Valda (it appears to have subsequently been replaced). The altar rails – omitted from the original design – were also added.

On 14 March 1914, the new Church of Epiphany was dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne. The *Geelong Advertiser* on 18 March 1914 gave the following description:
"On Saturday afternoon last, 14th inst. The new Anglican Church of the Epiphany was dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne. For some months past the edifice – a step nearer completion each week – has attracted much attention ... The successful tenderers were Messrs 'Burn Bros' of Geelong, who entered into the spirit of the design, and from first to last employed skilled workmen and the best of material and have now completed a really noteworthy building. From all parts of Meredith and out into the country beyond can be seen the noble tower of the church with its graceful lines leading up to the top-most point of the finial, some 50 feet above the foundations ... The whole interior is lined with Tasmania blue gum, placed in upright panels to the windows and horizontally above. This vertical panelling thus reaches to the highest windows of the chancel and sanctuary and forms a contrast with the horizontal panelling in the body of the church. This contrast is still further marked by the two ways in which the wood has been treated: in the nave all the woodwork has been varnished, while in the chancel and sanctuary it has been oiled. The one part leads to the other up three steps and through a chancel screen. This screen is the really unique part of the building. It is of Tasmanian oak and corresponds with the trefoil design of the sanctuary windows. It was carved in Launceston. The altar rails are of Tasmanian oak and are in harmony with the windows. The roof-work gives a sense of grandeur and strength to the interior: the cross beams, tie beams and principals being stained a dark colour to stand out in contrast to the light grain of the blue gum ceiling. The church, which is 60 feet in length and

22 feet wide in the nave and 14 feet wide in the chancel, was taxed to its utmost limits on Saturday afternoon, some 200 people having gathered from all parts of the district to take their part in the dedication service. The Archbishop was received at the main door by the Vicar (Rev. H.P. Finnis, M.A.), churchwardens and vestrymen and after a petition to dedicate the church had been read by Mr F.W. Pilkington and the Archbishop had given his consent to the dedication, the processional hymn was announced and the procession moved within. Preceded by the cross-bearer marched the churchwardens and vestrymen, followed by the vicar: then came visiting clergy from the following parishes: Rev. F.E. Lewin, Ballan; Rev. E.J. Withycombe, Melbourne; Rev. R.H. Williams, Marshalltown; Rev. O. Ball, Geelong; Rev. A. Campbell, Inverleigh and immediately preceding the Archbishop and carrying his pastoral staff, walked Canon Snodgrass of St. Paul's, Geelong. The Rev. Alfred Wheeler officiated at the organ in musicianly manner and kept the large body of voices together. The Episcopal licence of the building for the purpose of the public worship was read by Canon Snodgrass and signed by the Archbishop. His address was based on the magnificence of the temple which Solomon, King of Israel, built in Jerusalem ... Two noteworthy characteristics of this building stand out as practical points that have been well tested by two successive large congregations. One is the perfect system of ventilation which provides for the free inlet of fresh, pure air, and the outlet of impure air. There was an utter absence of stuffiness even though Sunday evening was close and sultry. The other point is the acoustic properties of the building – the roof-work breaks the echo and the sound is even and sustained. There is little doubt that this attempt which the Church of England has made in Meredith to have a beautiful and attractive church for public worship will be followed in other parts of Victoria ..."

The finished building featured in the *Church of England Messenger*. It showed the apsidal chancel at the north end and the tower fronting Wallace Street. The original exterior character was further defined by the highlighting the vertical and horizontal timber strapping to the chancel and tower in a darker colour.

Important liturgical furniture was donated as thanksgiving gifts and memorials (although it is not known whether this fabric was in place for the opening of the church). The timber pulpit was the gift of John and Frances Molesworth as a thank offering for the recovery of their son, Dick. The timber lectern was given in memory of William Osborn Stafford (died 21 May 1914) by his parents, sisters and brother, as were two hand-crafted alms plates.

Although some liturgical furniture may have first adorned the church interior, the building was not entirely complete at the time of its opening. The *Church of England Messenger* of 13 March 1914 reported as follows:
"Though the church itself is finished, there will be little or no furniture in keeping with the design, and about £200 will remain to be paid before the building is clear of debt. Liberal offerings at the dedication service will hasten the time when the task of furnishing can be commenced in earnest."

Just four years later in 1918, the architects North and Williams were commissioned to design 60 new timber chairs for the church. They were built in a slightly different design to the existing chairs and were installed in June 1918. Two additional chairs were ordered at this time, together with a railing for the choir. Towards the end of 1918, North and Williams were commissioned to design the choir stall and the tender of James Moore and Sons at a cost of £10/15/6 was accepted. A rood was also installed at this time behind the pulpit as a memorial to those who had served in the First World War.

In 1919, sufficient funds had been raised for the construction of the vestry at the side of the church. Initially, the architects had proposed to locate it at the side of the chancel fronting Wallace Street, as shown the Health Department Plan of 12 April 1914. A porch was to provide direct access from the exterior. Both the vestry and porch were added to the rear elevation of the church.

Further changes occurred throughout the 20th century. It appears that in 1943 a marble plaque was installed in the church behind the pulpit in memory of William J. Stafford (died 1939) and Samuel H. Mayo (died 1943). Both had been faithful churchwardens of the parish. In 1956, electricity reached Meredith and it appears that electric lights were installed in the church, as were strip heaters. The chancel and sanctuary were carpeted. It was also at this time when the stained glass window was installed at the southern end of the nave, in memory of Mary and Matthew MacDonald. It had been donated by their son, Norman MacDonald, a long-serving Vicar's Warden of the church. Upon his death, donations from parishioners were added to a bequest from the late Norman MacDonald for the purchase of an electric organ. It was dedicated on 1 July 1973.

In 1962, the bell of St. Paul's Anglican Church, Steiglitz, was installed in the belfry, having been given by its parishioners when their church closed.

The Hall
In 1982, the original church building, Christ Church, that was situated to the south of the Church of Epiphany building and which had served as a Sunday School, was demolished. Some of the building material was used to repair the Craft Shop in Staughton Street (originally known as Bobby Bell's Boot Shop).

The old church building was replaced with the former St. John's Anglican Church from Lethbridge. It had been built in 1954 with timber from the Timber Top campus of the Geelong Grammar School. The building was constructed by male students of the Grammar School under the direction of a Mr White, foreman. Volunteer labour was also provided by parishioners of the church. It had been dedicated on 7 August 1955. In its relocation to Meredith as a Sunday School hall, the stained glass windows were removed and relocated to St. John's Church, Bannockburn and the altar was installed in the chapel at Deakin University, Waurn Ponds.

The Grounds
A pointed timber picket fence had been erected along the Wallace Street frontage by 1914, as it is shown in the image of the church in the *Church of England Messenger* of that year. This fence may have been constructed in earlier years as the boundary to the original timber church. At a working bee on 27 July 1918, 100 cypress trees were planted as a hedge along the front of the church and vicarage. It might have been at this time when a flat timber picket fence having masonry piers at the church entrance replaced the pointed picket fence. By 1968, the hedge had become overgrown as some of the cypress trees are shown with the front fence in a photograph by John Collins. Much of the hedge and the front fence were removed about the time of the demolition of the old church and the relocation of the Lethbridge church.

Comparative Analysis
Alexander North & His Other Contemporary Church Designs
Alexander North (1858-1945) was born in Huddersfield, England. He trained in art and architecture in London and later worked with James Cubitt, an architectural theorist and

Nonconformist church designer. North emigrated to Hobart in 1883 where he married Lucy Mariannie Hamilton Morgan in 1885. John Maidment in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* gives an overview of North's career in Australia:

"From November 1883 until June 1886 he was employed in the Lands and Works Department. Permitted a concurrent private practice, he was in partnership with L.G. Corrie at Launceston in 1884-93, although Corrie joined Henry Hunter in Brisbane in 1887.

With a changing succession of partners, W.H. Dunning, A.H. Masters, and then R.F. Ricards and F.J. Heyward, North became known as an outstanding church architect. His early Tasmania churches were in a simple French Gothic idiom, but around 1900 he designed Holy Trinity and St. John's Launceston, on an impressive scale, using brick with sandstone ornamentation, St. John's incorporated concrete vaulting and a crossing dome. Other Tasmanian church, domestic and commercial commissions were executed in stone, brick, timber and the reinforced concrete adopted for grain silos at Cataract Gorge, Launceston, in 1912. At the 1892 meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, North had spoken on 'The truthful treatment of brickwork' and in 1902 his paper, 'Rural churches', outlined design principles for wooden buildings.

... In 1913 North and his junior partner Louis Reginald Williams moved to Melbourne where they specialized in church work. North designed a large chapel for Trinity College, University of Melbourne; financed by John Horsfall, it was described as an 'architectural triumph.'

The many church contracts North secured, not only in Tasmania and Victoria, but in South Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, enabled him to develop an individual style akin to that of his English arts-and-crafts contemporaries and assemble a wide vocabulary of motifs, many derived from native flora and fauna. His churches are notable for their fine proportions and detailing."

Although North designed the Trinity College Chapel at the University of Melbourne in 1913 simultaneous to his design of the Church of Epiphany, Meredith, the brick Arts and Crafts Gothic Trinity College building is more substantial in scale, construction and elaboration. This is continued on the interior, where there are face brick walls, a brick-clad concrete-framed roof gallery and decorative timber detailing including the use of possums and platypuses on the choir stalls.

Most comparable with North's Meredith church design in Victoria is St. James' Anglican Church, Albert Street, Point Lonsdale. Originally of rough-cast stucco above timber dado wall panelling, this rural church was built in 1915 having a gabled roof form surmounted by an open bellcote with a flared broach spire. Allom Lovell and Associates in the Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study in 1985 described the interior as being timber lined, "the darkened, lacquered finish providing a distinctive and original atmosphere within." The exterior of St. James' Church was defaced with the dichromatic brick wall construction between 1985 and 1991.

Architectural historian, John Maidment, who has undertaken extensive research and analysis into the work of Alexander North, provides the following comments in relation to the Meredith church and North's other timber church designs:

"North built a timber church at St Augustine's Macquarie Plains, Tasmania (Glenora) which also has a timber apse like Meredith. The broach spire was not unusual in his work, although Meredith may be the only example on a timber church. North designed many timber churches

for Tasmania and Victoria and was very pleased to use this material – the Meredith interior, with its splendid boarding and wooden rood screen, is an outstanding example of what he could achieve on a circumscribed budget. He wrote a pamphlet called Rural Churches in which he outlined his principles in timber church building – a pointed arch in such instances was regarded as an aberration.

Sadly, most of North's timber churches in Victoria have been demolished, such as the Anglican churches at Greensborough and Ringwood. Many survive in Tasmania, however, although not well maintained in many cases. Meredith must be one of the best surviving examples."

Other Churches in the Golden Plains Shire

The Church of Epiphany at Meredith represents one of 28 surviving churches in the Golden Plains Shire (see Schedule to the Heritage Overlay). The Meredith church is one of nine timber churches in the municipality. Unlike the Church of Epiphany with its highly intact and distinctive and innovative Arts and Crafts exterior and interior, the other timber churches in the Shire are of more conventional Carpenter Gothic style. Most of these timber churches were constructed in the 19th century and a number have a history of relocation. Examples include:

- Uniting Church (former Free Presbyterian Church), 167 Ackland Road, Lethbridge.
- St. Paul's Church of England, Crown Allotment 14, Regent Street, Steiglitz.
- St. Thomas' Roman Catholic Church, Crown Allotment 2014, Steiglitz Road, Steiglitz.
- Church, 66 Brooke Street, Smythesdale.
- St. Agnes Anglican Church, Wallinduc.

Condition

In a report entitled 'Anglican Church Meredith, Victoria Conservation Recommendations (11 April 2011), Ivar Nelson highlighted the following specific issues in relation to the condition of the building:

"There is evidence of timber rot on the tower, just under the roof. It would appear the rot is in timber cladding rather than in the structure. The vertical framing appears clad in timber trim [sic.].

There is evidence of damp on the west side of the Church building, just north of the entrance. This is a low lying area and the downpipes just discharge onto the ground adjacent the building.

The foundation of the building is a continuous rendered brick wall and there is evidence of minor cracking in that wall and lose render as well. None of the cracking or loose render is fatal to the building. The loose render is superficial, but symptomatic of some damp. The cracking does not appear to have compromised the integrity of the building and again is symptomatic of some damp and minor settlement."

The neighbouring hall shows weathered vertical timber wall cladding, debris build up in the roof valley at the junction of the main roof with the east wing, and the downpipes are not connected to sealed drainage, giving potential for dampness.

Integrity

Both the exterior and interior of the Church of Epiphany is substantially intact.

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The hall (former Church) is moderately intact, its elevation from the ground being evidence of its relocation.

Recommendations
Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls:	Yes (church building only)
Internal Alteration Controls:	Yes (church building only)
Tree Controls:	No
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	Hall
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted:	Yes

Extent of Heritage Overlay
It is recommended that the heritage overlay apply to the whole site.

Other Recommendations
The exterior of the church would benefit from being painted in the original manner proposed by the architect, with the framing elements picked out, emphasising the verticality of the tower. A paint scape may reveal the original colour scheme.

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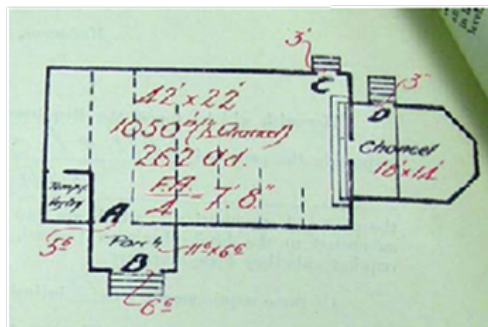
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Christ Church (original church building), 30 November 1968. Source: J.T. Collins, La Trobe picture collection, State Library of Victoria, image jc011977.
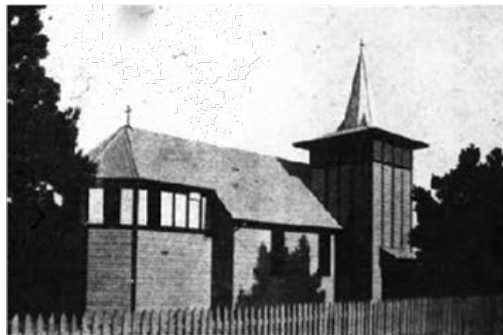

Public Health Department, Original proposed plan of the Church of Epiphany, 12 May 1913. Source: Public Building file, VPRS7882/P1, Unit 747, Public Record Office Victoria.
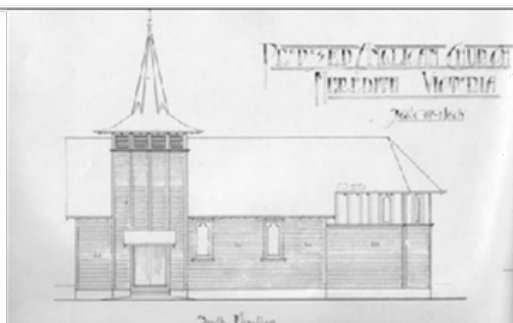

A. North, Proposed Anglican Church, Meredith Victoria, south elevation, 1913. Source: John Maidment.

A. North, Proposed Anglican Church Meredith Victoria, perspective image, 1913. Source: John Maidment.

Completed Church of Epiphany showing original
exterior colour scheme (tonal highlights), 1914.
Source: *Church of England Messenger*, 13 March 1914,
State Library of Victoria.
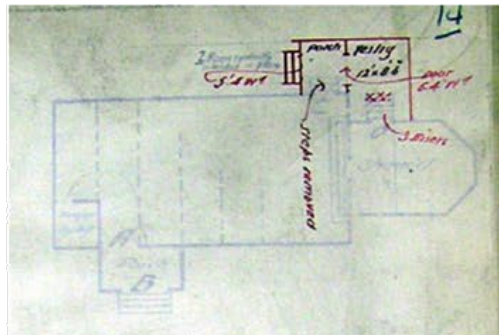
Public Health Department, Early plan of the Church of
Epiphany showing proposed vestry & porch additions,
17 April 1919. Source: Public Building file,
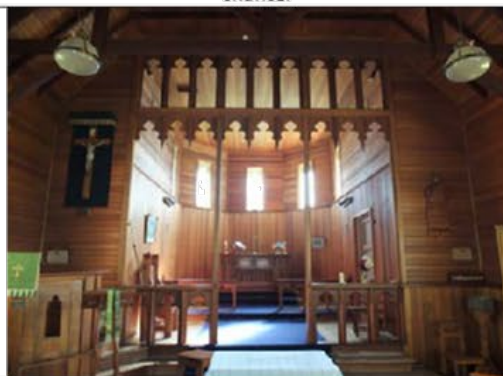VPRS7882/P1, Unit 747, Public Record Office Victoria.

Church of Epiphany, 30 November 1968. Source: J.T. Collins,
La Trobe picture collection, State Library of Victoria, image
jc011976.

Church of Epiphany, north elevation showing apsidal
chancel

Church of Epiphany, south and east elevations.

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Interior detail of chancel screen and sanctuary.

Detail of altar (which has replaced the original altar).

Detail of original pulpit, lectern and other furniture.

Detail of original timber seats.

To The Memory Of

WILLIAM J. STAFFORD.
DIED 9-6-1939 AGED 79 YEARS.
AND
SAMUEL H. MAYO.
DIED 18-2-1943 AGED 77 YEARS.
TWO FAITHFUL CHURCHWARDENS & FRIENDS
· WHO SERVED GOD IN THIS PARISH. ·

Detail of original timber pews and seats.

Detail of memorial plaque.

Detail of Rood being a First World War memorial.

Detail of memorial window at the south end.

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2012

Church Hall, north and west elevations.

Church Hall, north and east elevations.

Rokewood Presbyterian Church Complex, Rokewood

Address: 60 Ferrars Road, Rokewood
Construction Date/s: 1865-66, 1874, 1905, 1951-52.
Level of Significance: State
Heritage Overlay No: HO61

| Rokewood Presbyterian Church, 2012. | Rokewood Presbyterian Church with hall at rear, n.d. [c.1952]. Source: Leigh Historical Society. |

Statement of Significance[1]
What is Significant?
The Rokewood Presbyterian Church, 60 Ferrars Road, Rokewood, has outstanding significance as a predominantly intact example of an unusual and distinguished Victorian Decorated Gothic-styled Presbyterian Church in a rural setting. Built in 1865-66, it represents the first major design by the prolific and notable architect, Alexander Davidson, who had been enticed to emigrate from Scotland to Rokewood by his uncle, Rev. John Cooper, the Presbyterian Minister at Rokewood between 1859 and 1866. A landmark in the small township of Rokewood, the contextually large scale and elaborate building is a legacy of the wealthy benefactors of the Presbyterian Church in the Rokewood district, notably the Russell family of 'Wurrock' and the Elder families of the Kuruc-a-ruc Estate and 'The Meadows'. The significance of the church is embodied in its design and construction, the coursed bluestone Victorian Decorative Gothic Revival styled building being characterised by a distinctive articulation of steeply-pitched and parapeted gable roof forms clad in slate (comprising a cruciform layout) and a landmark tower with broach spire added in 1905. In addition to the tower and spire, the decorative tracery windows and freestone dressings – and particularly the

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[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.

Dr David Rowe: Golden Plains Shire Heritage Advisor   1

stylised trefoil and half-trefoil motifs in the gable apexes, ends to the parapet corbels and the Italian-pointed ventilators – became common design details in Davidson's subsequent work. Internally, the church is especially notable for its elegant timber collar and tie roof trusses having curved ribs supported by plaster consoles, timber-lined ceiling and original timber pews and surviving timber liturgical furniture also designed by Davidson. Four memorial plaques adorn the walls in memory of members of the Russell and Elder families. The rear Victorian Carpenter Gothic-styled hall was built in c.1862 as the Church of England church at Smythesdale. It was relocated to the Rokewood Church site in 1951, having been funded by Miss Gladys Bell, a wealthy benefactor associated with the nearby Wurrook South Estate. Opened in 1952, it was named after Miss Bell's late brother, Alan Bell. The hall contributes to the significance of the Rokewood Presbyterian Church.

How is it Significant?
The Rokewood Presbyterian Church is architecturally, historically and socially significant at a state level.

Why is it Significant?
The Rokewood Presbyterian Church, Rokewood, is historically significant (Practice Note Criteria A & H) for its associations with the development and witness of the Presbyterian Church in the Rokewood district since its construction in 1865-66 (the vestry being added in 1874 and the tower and spire in 1905). The Church also has associations with the initial establishment of Presbyterianism as early as 1847 when the Rev John Gow was inducted to the pastoral Charge of Colac and Woady Yalloak (later named Rokewood). The prosperity of the Rokewood Presbyterian Church came from a number of wealthy benefactors from nearby pastoral properties, including the Russell family of Wurrook and the Elder family of Kuruc-a-ruc and The Meadows, together with the rapid growth of the township as a result of the gold boom in Rokewood and surrounding districts in the 1850s and 1860s. The Rokewood Presbyterian Church has associations with numerous clergy and members of the congregation who have played key roles in its life and witness. Of particular note was the Rev. John Cooper who enticed his architect-nephew, Alexander Davidson, to emigrate to Rokewood in 1864. Davidson was responsible for the design of the Rokewood Church (including the vestry in 1874 and the tower and spire in 1905) and it was a precursor to numerous church, homestead and other commissions (a sizeable number for Presbyterian squatters in the Western District) until his death in 1908. In partnership with his cousin, George Henderson, between 1867 and 1877, the architectural firm of Davidson and Henderson established a highly successful practice, creating unique designs partly based on the writings of the French architect, Viollet-le-Duc and his *Dictionnaire*. Another notable figure associated with the church is Miss Gladys Bell, an important benefactor who funded the relocation of the former Smythesdale Church of England to the Rokewood Church site in 1951. The former church building opened as the Alan Bell Memorial Hall (in memory of Gladys Bell's brother).

The Rokewood Presbyterian Church, Shelford, is architecturally significant (Practice Note Criteria D & E) as an outstanding and contextually elaborate example of Victorian Decorated Gothic Presbyterian Church architecture in the Shire and State of Victoria. This is especially identified in the cruciform plan comprising intersecting steeply pitched gables, landmark tower with broach spire (added in 1905) and in the well-considered and holistic detailing of stylised trefoil and half-trefoil motifs that were features of other works by the architect, Davidson. Internally, the holistic approach to the design is continued, with the unusual and elegant timber collar and tie roof trusses having curved ribs supported by plaster consoles, timber-lined ceiling and original timber pews and surviving timber liturgical furniture.

The architectural significance of the Church hall has been partly compromised by its location on elevated stumps (resulting from its relocation) and modest skillion kitchen addition. However, it contributes to the significance of the place as a physical embodiment of its former role as the Church of England at Smythesdale (c.1862-1951) and from 1951 as the Presbyterian Sunday School and Hall at Rokewood.

The Rokewood Presbyterian Church, Rokewood, is socially significant (Practice Note Criterion G) as it is recognised and valued by sections of the local community for religious reasons, as a symbol of their faith and their history of local participation in faith education. The church interior includes four memorials to members of the Russell and Elder families, pioneers of the district and active members of the Church. These memorials therefore have commemorative value.

Description
The Setting
The Rokewood Presbyterian Church at 60 Ferrars Road, Rokewood, is set on a contextually large rectangular site bordered by eucalypt trees and shrubs, with large open grassed areas. The church is accessed by a central gravel path that forms an apron around the building. The Alan Bell Hall is located at the rear.

The Church
The coursed bluestone Victorian Decorative Gothic Revival styled church building is characterised by the distinctive steeply-pitched and parapeted gable roof forms clad in slate and a landmark tower with broach spire added in 1905. The forms are defined by the centrally-projecting nave at the front, with side-projecting shallow transepts and rear-projecting chancel. At the rear (north-east corner) is a gabled vestry (added in 1874). The bluestone wall construction is accentuated by the freestone dressings as quoinwork, contextually-elaborate tracery windows in the main gable ends, corbelled parapet ends capped with stylised trefoil motifs, half-trefoil motifs in the gable apexes and the Italian-pointed ventilators high up in the gable ends. The front (south) gable is also crowned with an early cast iron finial.

A landmark feature of the church is the corner tower and spire. It has similar construction and detailing as the main church building, even though it was built almost 40 years later. The square tower base has projecting buttresses at the corner, together with stylised lancets over three levels, the uppermost paired lancet ventilators (comprising the belfry) being crowned by quatrefoil motifs. Surmounting the tower is the broach spire having an unusual recessive octagonal base augmented by small blind pointed-arched openings and an elongated spire with projecting gablets at its base. These gablets continue the stylised trefoil theme identified on other parts of the church, with the front, rear and side gablets comprising ventilators. At the base of the tower on the east side is a marble memorial foundation stone that reads: "Memorial stone placed by Mrs N.G. Elder, Tower and Spire presented by Thomas Russell, of Wurrook, 23 March 1905. A. Davidson Arch."

The church is entered at the base of the tower at the front which has a pointed-arched double door opening with vertically-boarded timber doors. The stained timber lined and shallow-coved ceiling and hard plaster walls are original, but the tessellated tile floor (on a concrete base) has replaced the original floor. On the west side of the porch is a pointed-arched door opening that leads into the church. The doors in the opening have been refaced.

The interior is especially distinguished by the elegant timber collar and tie roof trusses having curved ribs supported by plaster consoles. The ceiling is timber lined and the pendant electric lights have been introduced. The hard plaster walls appear to be original, as are the timber floor boards (with introduced carpet over). The church is lit by four sets large tracery windows having geometric stained glass. These windows are contextually elaborate for a rural Presbyterian church built in the 1860s. The chancel as a raised, stepped timber floor covered in introduced carpet.

The unusual nature of the church interior is further accentuated by the layout of the original timber pews. The southern portion of the nave has a central aisle with flanking pews, while the central portion of the nave at the junction with the transepts has side aisles and central pews. The transepts have pews flanking short central aisles. The pews have vertical timber-lined backs, the ends featuring pointed-arched caps (following the detailing of the stylised trefoils on the exterior). The pews are connected by centrally-located timbers. Although the original communion rails have been removed, much of liturgical furniture in the chancel seems to be original as the stylised trefoil and quatrefoil motifs characterising the chairs and pulpit are reflective of design detailing commonly employed by the architect, Davidson (the quatrefoil motif was the business logo of the architectural firm of Davidson and his partner, George Henderson).

On the walls are four memorials to well-known members of the congregation. There is a marble tablet in memory of Nairne Guthrie Elder (died 1911, senior member of Session) and his son, Nairne (died 1910), and plaques in memory of Thomas Russell of Wurrook (died 1920, elder of the Church in 1868,) Anna Louisa Russell, wife of Thomas Russell (died 1913), and John Nairne Elder of "The Meadows (died 1946 after lifelong service to the church having been elected an elder in 1889).

At the rear, accessed by a door opening on the east side of the chancel is the vestry. It has an early timber-lined and stained ceiling although the hard plaster walls appear to have been repaired and the kitchen furniture and fittings and floor covering have been introduced.

The Hall

At the rear of the site is the Victorian Carpenter Gothic styled hall. It has a gable roof form clad in corrugated sheet metal, timber weatherboard wall cladding, pointed arched timber-framed casement windows and a centrally-located pointed arched door opening on the south side, having panelled timber doors and blind highlights. The building sits on elevated stumps, being evidence of its relocation to the site. Towards the rear on the east side is a projecting skillion kitchen addition added in 1951. It is constructed of the same materials as the hall and has a brick chimney at the rear, with a door opening on the south side and a timber framed double hung window on the east side. Both the hall and the kitchen are accessed by a series of steps.

History

Early Development of Rokewood

The early history of the Rokewood district was associated with several pioneer squatting families, most of whom were Presbyterian. They settled on large runs in the late 1830s and early 1840s, including Commeralghip (pre-emptive right granted to Gordon MacMillian in 1852), Dereel (also taken up by MacMillan), Glenfine (owned by William Rowe in 1853), Wurrook (owned by Thomas Russell from 1857) and Kuruk-a-ruc (owned by William Elder in the 1860s).

In 1852, Rokewood was gazetted as a township, about the time of the nearby Corindhap gold rush. Initially a strategic stop route near the crossing of the Kuruc-a-ruc Creek, it was the nearby goldfields that brought the major transformation of Rokewood. According to Heritage Matters Pty Ltd in the 'Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Stage 2', "the mined areas in the Rokewood township extended from the swimming pool, in front of the school, behind the tennis courts and opposite the old manse." In 1865, Rokewood was described as "a postal town under the control of Shire of Leigh council, situated on the Kuruk-a-ruc Creek, and on the great Western Road, 86 miles W from Melbourne." At this time, Rokewood boasted a court of petty sessions, a post and money order office, two schools, and two hotels. The population was approximately 950 people. In the *Geelong and Western District Directory* 1882-83, Rokewood was described as:

... "a telegraph station on Kuruc-a-ruc creek, eighty six and a half miles from Melbourne, and forty-one and a half miles from Geelong, on the main road to Hamilton and Portland. Coach via Smythesdale to Ballarat daily, and to and from Geelong via Leigh road railway station on alternate days. There are three hotels. A good deal of land in the neighbourhood is under cultivation, chiefly cereals, but the country is most pastoral. The Commercial Bank of Australia has a branch here. There are three churches, an Oddfellows' lodge, a State school, mechanics' institute, public library, and a police station."

Several of the neighbouring pastoral properties were subdivided after World War Two as part of the Government's Soldier Settlement Scheme. The influx of new families boosted Rokewood's population and social development, with the memorial hall built in 1959. In the 1950s, the population was 300 (increasing from the post-gold rush declines) and remain the same in 1980.

The Early Years of the Presbyterian Church at Rokewood
On 3 November 1847, the Rev. John Gow, a licentiate of the established Church of Scotland, under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Glasgow, was ordained and inducted to the pastoral Charge of Colac and Woady Yalloak (later named Rokewood), by the Presbytery of Melbourne. With the Rev. Gow's removal to the pastorate of Smythesdale and Scarsdale, the Rev. Archibald Simpson of The Leigh (Shelford) conducted monthly services at Rokewood between 1854 and 1857. These services were initially held in private homes, then in McLarty's Hotel and later in the school that had been built in 1851 (and sponsored by L. Elder Senior and supported by other local Presbyterians).

On 13 December 1859, the Rev. John Cooper (who had arrived from Edinburgh, Scotland) was inducted to the Pastoral Charge of Rokewood and Cressy. At this time there were 7000 people at the nearby Pitfield diggings and the need for a Presbyterian presence led the Rev. Cooper to include Pitfield in his pastorate. At the height of the gold boom in 1866, and after a dispute with his congregation over the payment of his stipend, the Rev. Cooper received a call to Pentridge (Coburg). His successor was the Rev. John Steele who had recently arrived from the Church of Scotland.

The Building of the Church
The increasing Presbyterian population at Rokewood in the late 1850s brought about the need for a permanent church building. Although the construction of the manse took immediate priority in 1860, the project to build a church was launched in August 1864. A building committee was appointed consisting of Messrs. Nairn and William Elder, Thomas Russell, W. White and W. McAndrew, with Mr Elliott as secretary. Nairn Elder of "The Meadows" homestead was an active worker of the church and a member of the Board. Thomas Russell of

"Wurrook" was to become an ordained elder of the Church in 1868 and between 1868 and 1873 he served as a Member in the Victorian Parliament.

Just months before the launching of the church fund, the Rev. Cooper had returned to Edinburgh where he persuaded his architect nephew, Alexander Davidson, to emigrate to Rokewood to prepare designs for the local Presbyterian Church. Davidson arrived at the Presbyterian Manse at Rokewood on Christmas Eve, 1864. By this time, £1,200 had been raised. According to Allan Willingham in *The Biographical Dictionary of the Western District of Victoria*, Davidson had "completed both the documentation and a fine lithographed perspective for the new Presbyterian church at Rokewood within two months of his arrival." Tenders were advertised for its construction in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 20 February 1865 and in *The Argus* on 7 April 1865. The site for the church was purchased at a cost of £8 on 11 March 1865. On 26 May 1865, Davidson advertised tenders for the quarrying of the bluestone at William Elder's nearby Kuruc-a-ruc Estate. The foundation stone was subsequently laid by the daughter of Mrs. Elder of "The Meadows" (acting in the place of her mother who had taken ill). According to the Rokewood Presbyterian Charge Centenary Celebration booklet of 1949, Miss Elder "was presented with an engraved Silver Trowel and a silver-mounted Setting Maul [mallet] to mark the occasion. In the cavity beneath the stone various coins of the realm, papers and wheat were placed." On 16 August 1865, tenders were called for roofing the church. Several months later on 12 June and 3 July 1866, Davidson advertised tenders for the construction of the church furniture.

The Rokewood Presbyterian Church opened on 23 August 1866 at 12 o'clock by the Rev. J.O. Dykes, M.A., two years after the project to build it had been launched. However, the vestry and spire had not been built. The bluestone Gothic-styled church building created interest in the district, with its distinctive cruciform plan and specially-designed furniture. Of particular interest was the timber ceiling structure which the Presbyterian Church, Rokewood, Centenary Booklet in 1966 described as follows:

"The peculiar roof trussing was a special feature of the building and to this day the design of the trussing is almost unique in the Southern Hemisphere so much so that many architects, builders and engineers have made special inspections of that section of the building."

Towards the Completion of the Church Building
With the newly-opened church incomplete, attention turned to realising Davidson's original design. In May 1870, Messrs. I and W. Elder endowed the church £1000 and soon after this was matched by Thomas Russell and in return a pew was set aside for the use of the owners of Kuruc-a-ruc Estate. In September 1871, the church agreed to dispose of the school building and set aside the proceeds to the building of the vestry. On 31 January 1874, Davidson called tenders in the *Geelong Advertiser* for additions to the church building. These additions appear to have been the construction of the gabled bluestone vestry at the rear of the church.

Almost 40 years after the opening of the church, a memorial foundation stone was laid on 23 March 1905 by Mrs W.G. Elder for the construction of a tower and spire. A gift of Thomas Russell of Wurrook Homestead, the tower and spire was also designed by Alexander Davidson and it marked one of his later commissions. The memorial stone ceremony was reported in the *Ballarat Courier* newspaper on 27 March 1905, the steeple being described as follows: "The design of the architect (Mr Davidson) was a very beautiful one, and the work was being carried out in a first-glass manner by the contractors (Messrs. Rowsell)."

The tower and spire design had been completed by 8 December 1904 as it was at this time when the Board of Public Health had received the plans and specifications. Although Willingham claims that the tower and spire were "in exact accordance with Davidson's original design," a comparison of Davidson's lithograph of the original design (a copy is in Willingham's 'Two Scots in Victoria') shows there were subtle variations to the realised scheme, including the recessive octagonal spire base and the crowning finial.

The Board subsequently prepared a basic plan of the church which showed the stylised cruciform layout with the main corner entrance comprising the tower. The vestry was shown at the rear. Interestingly, the Board requested the discontinuance of glass fonts in the church and the installation of "proper bolts" on the two front doors.

A bell for the tower had been presented to the church many years earlier in 1868 by the local sheep farmer, James Grant. In 1966, the Centenary Booklet for the Rokewood Church declared that:

"Today the church spire stands as a land-mark in the district for many miles around distinguishing itself from modern church buildings and remaining as a visual link with the district pioneers and the Mother Country."

The church building had been completed well in advance of the Golden Jubilee that involved a week-long celebration that was proposed to commence on 27 August 1916. The celebration was to include a performance of the reopening of the church by Mrs Elder of "The Meadows", but owing to her inability to attend on that day, it was held over until the following Sunday. Two largely-attended church services conducted by the Rev. A. Stewart of Essendon especially marked the jubilee celebrations.

Other Changes to the Church
Through the early years of the 20th century, the Rokewood church was also the location of the Corindhap Church of England. The Anglican Church proposed to purchase a half share in the Presbyterian Church building, but this request was refused by the Presbyterian officials.

In the late 1920s or early 1930s, the communion rails that were attached to the front pew were removed and stored (they were later replaced and then completely removed in 1958). In 1934, the bell tower was 'weather-proofed' and in the following year it was found that the spire "was in a dangerous condition." The spire was subsequently repaired along with general repairs to the main church building at a cost of £167-10-0. Repairs to the west window and south wall were substandard and the contractors were required to fully complete the work. These costs were covered by a bequest to the church of £250 by the estate of H. MacIntosh of Pitfield.

Disaster struck the Rokewood community on 14 January 1944 when a grass fire swept through the Western District and "several homes, churches and public halls were reduced to ashes and Rokewood, on the South Eastern extremity of the burnt-out area, suffered heavily." The Presbyterian manse that had been built in 1860 was completely destroyed.

A photograph of the front of the church property in 1947 (at the time of the centenary of the Presbyterian Church in the district) shows that it was bound at the front by an early timber picket fence, having a pedestrian gate that was centred with the front of the church building. Cypress trees, possibly planted in the 1920s or 1930s, flanked the pedestrian gate and there were mature eucalypts forming the borders to the side and rear property boundaries.

Other changes occurred in the second half of the 20th century. In 1962, electricity was installed at the church and hall. In 1984, a new toilet block was proposed at the rear of the church hall.

The Alan Bell Hall

While the Rokewood Presbyterian Church boasted a substantial church building, it was without a hall for much of its history and from 1871 at least, without a satisfactory location for the Sunday School. Until 1944, Sunday School was held in the vestry and due to overcrowding, classes were moved to the nearby Mechanics' Institute Hall in 1945.

During the next two years, consideration was given to the erection or acquisition of a hall. Financial support was sought from Miss (Margaret) Gladys Bell, daughter of the pioneering family of Wurrock South Estate. She promised a yearly donation of £50 and asked that the hall commemorate her late brother, Alan C. Bell. A further donation was to be made by Miss Bell upon the completion of the hall. By May 1947, the Church had purchased an army hut from Ballarat for £304. The Church Secretary wrote to the Department of Public Health, detailing the building and the proposal as follows:

"We have an army building 54 ft by 24 ft, walls 8 ft high, the walls and roof are galvanized iron and it has a hardwood floor. I am enclosing a rough plan of our proposed building. We intend to have the exterior walls of weather boards and cement sheets and line it with Masonite and plaster sheets. It is to be used as a Sunday School hall and for Church work and is to be at the back of the Rokewood Presbyterian Church in the township of Rokewood, Shire of Leigh.

The contractor will be R.G. Groves, 18 Princes St Nth, Ballarat, and the estimated cost is £658."

The Department sought a number of changes to door openings and that a completely dimension plan be provided. Approval was subsequently sought after K Murray Forster, architect of Melbourne, had prepared the necessary drawings for the hall's conversion in August 1948.

Although approval was granted and the former army hut relocated to the rear of the church building, it was not to be converted and made functional as a Sunday School hall. It was soon sold for £555 when plans were prepared for a completely new hall in 1949.

Instead, several existing halls were inspected throughout the district in an effort to procure an existing building for relocation. In 1951, the Church committee resolved to purchase the former Church of England church at Smythesdale for £500. This modest Victorian Carpenter Gothic styled building had been built in 1862 and it is shown in a photograph in its original location in c.1925. On its relocated site behind the Presbyterian Church, a sink and stove were immediately installed and it was furnished with 50 steel chairs and a piano. The following year in 1952, the building was opened and officially named the Alan Bell Hall. In 1953, a Masonite floor covering was added and the building painted. The hall is shown in a photograph of the church property about this time (the cypress trees at the front had also been removed). By 1966, the Sunday School attendees had increased to 70 from 19 names at the time of the opening of the hall.

Comparative Analysis
Other Churches by Alexander Davidson
Alexander Davidson was born in Edinburgh on 17 May 1839, the first son of Samuel and May Davidson. He was first articled to John Henderson, his uncle, and the father of George with

whom Alexander later formed the successful architectural partnership. According to Allan Willingham in *The Biographical Dictionary of the Western District of Victoria*, Davidson had already lived an eventful life as a young up and coming architect in Edinburgh before his arrival at Rokewood in 1864, including fathering a daughter out of wedlock by his first cousin, Euphemia Cooper. They were married at Rokewood in 1865 (their daughter, Euphemia, being brought up by Davidson's parents at Kingussie in the County of Inverness). Davidson was joined by George Henderson (1846-1905) in 1867. Initially the unpaid architectural assistant, Henderson became a partner and the firm was known as Davidson and Henderson. Much of the firm's work involved designing homesteads, additions to homesteads and substantial outbuildings for Scottish Presbyterian squatters, given Davidson's well-known connections to the Presbyterian Church. The practice relocated from Rokewood to Geelong in 1869. The firm built up its successful business mainly through the influence of Violet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire* that Henderson had brought with him. However, Davidson and Henderson created their own unique Victorian eclectic architecture. In 1877, Henderson returned to Scotland and Davidson practiced under the name, Alexander Davidson and Company.

Although Davidson had designed additions to the Elders' Kura-a-ruc homestead in 1865, his first major commission was the design of the Rokewood Presbyterian Church in the same year. A stone parsonage and temporary church for the Episcopalian Church at Rokewood soon followed. The prolific nature of the Davidson's work is especially identified in the numerous churches he designed (both in partnership with Henderson and under this own name) from the 1860s. They included a Wesleyan Church at Mortlake (1867), Episcopal Church at Colac (1869), Presbyterian Church, Ceres (1870), Presbyterian Church, Skipton (1871), Wesleyan Church, Newtown (1876), Wickliffe Presbyterian Church tower (1877), Roman Catholic Church, Batesford (1881) and St. Thomas' Presbyterian Church, Werribee (1884).

Variations in the Gothic style were adopted in the designing of these churches, with some familiar features of the Rokewood church identified in his later church designs. Of particular interest was the adoption of the Gothic French mode in his churches, including the octagonal tower and broach spire (added in 1905), and trefoil and quatrefoil motifs first employed at Rokewood but also found the Presbyterian Church Wickliffe, and St. Thomas's Presbyterian Church, Werribee. Some other churches also reflect the more unique decorative detailing influenced by the French architect, Viollet-le-Duc that are not present at Rokewood, including the detailing of chamfer stops and gargoyles at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Skipton, the roof trusses decorated with carved eagles at St. Thomas's, Werribee, and the roof trusses at the former Methodist Church at Mortlake which had originally featured carved gargoyles. The roof at Mortlake has been described by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as having "rather oddly bracketed hammer beam trusses" but it is not known whether these trusses are comparable with those at Rokewood.

Other Churches in the Golden Plains Shire
The Rokewood Presbyterian Church represents one of 28 surviving churches in the Golden Plains Shire (see Schedule to the Heritage Overlay). The most comparable with the Rokewood Church are the Presbyterian churches built of bluestone in the late 1850s and early 1860s. They are:

- Presbyterian Church, 42 Pyke Street, Teesdale, built in 1858 with the front timber porch added in 1934. This modestly-scaled astylar church building is the earliest Presbyterian church in the Golden Plains Shire and its rudimentary design is reflective of Presbyterian philosophy. The Rokewood Church is more substantial and externally intact.

- Leigh Presbyterian Church, 1716 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Shelford, built in 1859 to a design by the Geelong architect, Joseph Shaw. The building is a predominantly intact example of a Victorian Early English Gothic style, the tower and steeple being a landmark in the town. Some of the external details, including the octagonal belfry and spire, and the use of trefoil openings in the rear gable, are similar to Davidson's Rokewood Church but in a more rudimentary way. This is continued in the interior, with slender timber ceiling trusses but the overall character of the Shelford interior is more conservative and conventional compared to the Rokewood building.
- Presbyterian Church, 48 High Street, Inverleigh, built in 1861 and also to a design by J.L. Shaw. This building is a smaller example than the Leigh Presbyterian Church, lacking the landmark tower and steeple of the Shelford building. It is similarly designed in a Victorian Early English Gothic style, with steeply-pitched and parapeted slate roof, being three bayed with projecting buttresses and similar pointed-arched windows. The main gable end at the front has tripartite lancets. There is a side entrance porch that was added in 1885. The Inverleigh Church has been substantially altered internally.
- Former Free Presbyterian Church, Midland Highway, Meredith, built in 1868, the church comprises a steeply-pitched gabled roof clad in slate, and front gabled porch. The building is smaller than the Leigh Church, having a three-bayed composition. The church only functioned until 1882. In 1910, it was leased to the Meredith Masonic Lodge No. 161 and the Lodge acquired the site in 1961. There is a cream brick masonic temple at one side of the church (built in 1961) and a hall at the rear.

Overall, the Rokewood Presbyterian Church represents one of the more distinctive and outstanding examples of Victorian Gothic Revival Presbyterian Church architecture constructed of bluestone in the Golden Plains Shire and in the State of Victoria.

Condition
Overall, the Rokewood Presbyterian Church is in fair-good condition. There is staining on the stonework due to debris build up in the gutters and deterioration in the parapet copings and window sills and some spalling freestone. In the porch there is evidence of dampness in the introduced tile floor.

The Church hall is in good condition although showing signs of weathering.

Integrity
Substantially intact, externally and internally.

Recommendations
Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls
External Paint Controls:	Yes (church building only)
Internal Alteration Controls:	Yes (church building only)
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.

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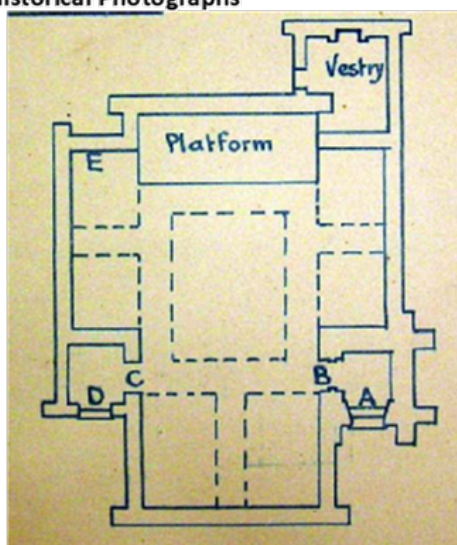
Board of Public Health, Floor plan of the Rokewood Presbyterian Church, 1904. Source: VRPS7882/P1, Unit 747, Public Record Office Victoria.

Rokewood Presbyterian Church, c.1947. Source: Leigh Historical Society.

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Mrs Beatrice Harridge with her dog, 'Laddie', Smythesdale,
c.1925. The Church of England church is in the background
behind the tree. Source: Museum Victoria, reg. no. MM000294.

Current Photographs

Rokewood Presbyterian Church, rear (north) elevation
showing projecting vestry.

Rokewood Presbyterian Church, side (east) elevation
showing detailing of tower (the light stone below the
ground floor windows is the memorial stone).

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Detail of gable end showing Italian-pointed ventilator and stylised half-trefoil motif near the apex.
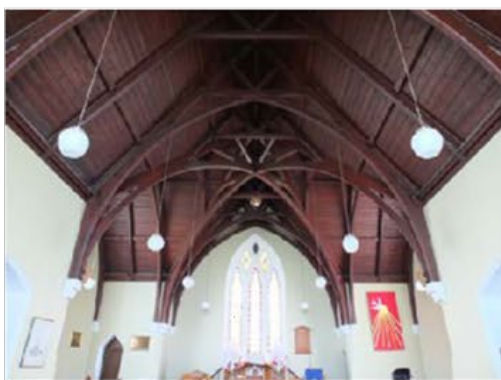

Detail of incised stylised trefoil motif in the end of a corbelling parapet cap.

Alan Bell Memorial Hall at the rear of the church.

Church interior, looking north towards chancel.

Church interior, roof detail.

Church interior, looking south.

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Marble memorial table to Nairne Guthrie Elder.

Memorial Plaque to Thomas Russell.

Memorial plaque to Anna Louisa Russell.

Memorial Plaque to John Nairne Elder.

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Former Police Stables & Lock Up, Smythesdale

Address: 62 Brooke Street, Smythesdale
Construction Date/s: 1859, 1866
Level of Significance: State
Heritage Overlay No: HO68

| Former Police Stables, Smythesdale | Former Lock Up, Smythesdale |

Statement of Significance[1]
What is Significant?

The former police stables and lock up, 62 Brooke Street, Smythesdale, has significance as rare and predominantly intact surviving examples of a 19th century police infrastructure buildings in the Golden Plains Shire. These buildings, along with the neighbouring court house, represent the only surviving structures of a considerable police complex on the former police reserve from 1859. The stables building was erected at this time and the lock up was built in 1866 at the height of the gold rush in Smythesdale. Both buildings are of standard Public Works Department design, in their gabled roof forms clad in slate, rendered brick wall construction (stables) and bluestone construction (lock up) and associated details. The interiors of the buildings are also predominantly intact. Of particular interest in the stables is the brick floor having the bricks set with their lengths into the ground, as well as the timber screen and cement rendered wall finishes. The interior of the lock up symbolises contemporary 19th century attitudes towards confinement and punishment, in the austere flagstone and timber floors, white washed walls, timber-lined ceilings, and especially in the solid timber doors (with substantial iron bolts and hinges) and openings with iron security grilles.

How is it Significant?

The former police stables and lock up at Smythesdale are architecturally, historically and socially significant at the state level. The stables represent the only example of its type in the Golden Plains Shire, and the only known surviving rendered brick police stables by the Public Works Department in Victoria. The lock is only one of two surviving 19th century bluestone gaols in the municipality today.

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[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.

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Why is it Significant?

The former police stables and lock up at Smythesdale are historically significant (Practice Note Criteria A & B) for their associations with the evolution and development of law and order (and particularly a police presence) in Smythesdale from the height of the gold boom in the town from the 1850s and 1860s. Alongside the neighbouring court house, they served their original purpose until 1959. The buildings symbolise the 19th century police presence in the town, with the lock up servicing prisoners awaiting trial at the neighbouring court house.

The former police stables and lock up at Smythesdale are architecturally significant (Practice Note Criteria D & E) as predominantly intact and rare surviving examples of standard Public Works Department austere designs of the 1850s and 1860s in the Golden Plains Shire. While the buildings have experienced repairs, they reflect their original designs and construction. The former stables building is the only example of its type in the Shire, and the only known surviving rendered brick example in Victoria. The lock up is only one of two lock ups surviving in the Shire (the other example being at Bannockburn).

The former police stables and lock up at Smythesdale are socially significant (Practice Note Criterion G) as symbols of 19th century law and order in the town. While no longer functioning for their original purpose, they are recognised and valued as tangible links to the town's public infrastructure heritage of the booming gold rush years.

Description
Setting

The former police stables and police lock up buildings are set on a contextually large site that is characterised by a substantial open grassed area at the front (the location of earlier police buildings now removed), with an asphalt footpath and perimeter garden bed on the south side, and exotic and native trees towards the rear. An introduced, gabled amenities block is located towards the south-west corner of the site.

Police Stables

The elevated single storey, rendered brick, former police stables building is characterised by a simple gable roof form clad in slate. The walls are constructed of three bricks in depth for the ground floor and two bricks thick for the upper loft walls, and externally they have ruled lines simulating ashlar blockwork. The north and south ends have simple timber bargeboards while the gable ends have loft door openings with vertically boarded timber doors. There are also single stable door openings with vertically boarded timber doors at ground floor level.

A feature of the design is the four-bayed front (east) elevation which has segmentally-arched openings. Three of these openings have timber louvres with one of the central openings featuring a pair of timber framed four paned timber framed windows. Above the segmentally arched openings are three bays of louvred rectangular openings at loft level. A further four bays of identical louvred openings are located on the rear (east) elevation.

Internally, the stables is identified by brick walls (previously white washed) having hard cement rendered finishes to the undersides of the windows, exposed timber ceiling beams and boards (comprising the attic floor above) supported by stop-chamfered timber posts and a dividing timber screen into two loose boxes. There is evidence that there may have been four stalls originally. Of particular interest is the brick paved floor with the bricks set with their lengths into the ground. The paving is sloped into channels which drain from the building.

The loft has a timber floor and there is a hatch near the north wall for access from the interior. Another hatch is located near the south-east corner with a timber ladder for access (the ladder is missing the lower rungs).

Lock Up

The symmetrical, single storey, square coursed basalt lock up is characterised by a principal gable roof form, together with a minor porch gable that projects towards the front. These roof forms are clad in slate and there are simple timber bargeboards and broad eaves.

High up on the front 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 original flagstone floor, timber lining board ceiling and white-washed stone walls. From the porch are three door openings that lead into the three cells separated by stone walls. 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 Themes (to Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 Thematic History)
- Sub-theme 3.1: Principal Discoveries & Gold Rushes
- Sub-theme 8.3: Crime & Law Enforcement

Establishment of Smythesdale

In 1838, Captain John James Barlow Smythe took up a lease of 10,440 acres on Smythe's Creek in Woady Yaloak, eight miles south of Ballarat. By 1854, gold had been discovered on the west side of Smythe's Creek which had attracted 800 diggers. By 1859, the developing goldfields settlement was known as 'Smythesdale', named after Captain Smythe. The Borough of Smythesdale was created in 1861, the same year when the first sale of surveyed blocks of land were sold in the township. Over the ensuring years, the town became a major centre for the Woady Yaloak district. Its population in 1865 was around 1500, including a large number of Chinese. These were the boom years of the township as by 1924 the number of people living at Smythesdale had declined to 250.

Law & Order at Smythesdale

By 1 November 1854, a police presence was established at Smythe's Creek. Three years later on 29 August 1857 the *Ballarat Star* newspaper reported that the 'new Court House at Black Hill, Smythes Creek is nearly finished.' On 9 May 1859, a police camp reserve of approximately 2 acres was created in Brooke Street. Overall, the police reserve was bound by Heales, Brooke, Loader and Ireland Streets and it was to accommodate several new buildings in addition to the court house. By 1859, contract no. 125 for £801/10/- for police buildings was accepted from Pleydell and Clark. It is assumed that other police buildings were built at this time, in addition to the police residence and the stables. On 14 October 1861, Superintending Inspector, J.N. Hansell reported that 'the Court House and one or two other buildings within the camp reserve being the only places [in Smythesdale] built of brick.' The stables serviced the police horses and it adjoined the horse paddock at the rear of the site. A traced drawing dated 15 September 1904 shows the design of the stables. Other early buildings constructed on the site

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included a Mining Warden's Office, Clerk of Court's Office, police barracks and residences for the police Magistrate, Inspector and Watchkeeper.

On 30 October 1866, *The Argus* newspaper reported that a contract had been accepted from James Overend for the construction of a stone lock up at Smythesdale at a cost of £809. It was erected to the south of the police stables and behind the police residence. The principal function of the lock up was to house prisoners awaiting trial before the visiting Police Magistrate.

A site plan of the site by the Public Buildings Department in c.1872 shows the complex of buildings on the reserve. It was at this time when new timber picket fencing and gates were proposed. Another site plan entitled "Police Station Smythesdale Block Plan" (undated) shows the location of the stables and lock up in relation to the police residence, office, horse paddock and court house.

In 1897, repairs and additions were made to the police residence. This building, along with the Mining Warden's office and other structures on the reserve, were demolished in 1962. The surviving buildings – the stables and lock up – were decommissioned in 1959. In July 1980, the site was permanently reserved as a conservation area of historic interest (having been temporarily reserved for public [historical] purposes in 1977). Since that time, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) was appointed the Committee of Management for the site, although active management has and continues to be vested with the Woady Yaloak Historical Society.

In 2000, a Public Heritage Program grant of $20,000 was awarded for repairs to the slate roof and stormwater drainage for the stables, while a further $10,000 was granted from Parks Victoria in 2007 for restoration works. These works were carried out by Nigel Green and included lime washing, new lintels and brick placement. These conservation works were overseen by Chris Smith of Parks Victoria.

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 & Police Stables 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 at this time when a bluestone lock up was erected at Lethbridge (it was later dismantled and rebuilt at Bannockburn in 1869). Other lock ups were built in the 1850s at Shelford and Meredith and a lock up was built at Scarsdale in c.1864.

The only other surviving lock up in the Shire is the bluestone building at Bannockburn. This structure is of similar construction and detailing as the lock up at Smythesdale, but smaller in scale.

No other police stables of the 19th century survive in the Golden Plains Shire. The Police Buildings Inventory by the Department of Sustainability and Environment lists 19 other brick stables buildings in Victoria. The Smythesdale stables building is one of the oldest, being built in 1859. The other early stables are those at Dandenong (1859) Ballan (1861), Gisborne (1861), Learmonth (1861), St. Arnaud (1862 – since demolished), Carisbrook (1863), Dunkeld (c.1863) and Strathfieldsaye (c.1863). The stables at Smythesdale are the oldest example constructed of rendered brick.

Condition

The former police stables building appears to be in good condition. The cement rendered interior walls are drummy and cracked, and some bricks have spalled. Some of the timber posts appear to have recently been introduced, replacing deteriorated posts of the same design, construction and profile.

The former lock up appears to be in fair-good condition. There is rusting in the gutters and weathering in the roof slates and timber bargeboards and fascias.

Integrity

Predominantly intact.

Recommendations
Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls:	Yes (stables & lock up buildings only)
Internal Alteration Controls:	Yes (stables & lock up buildings only)
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 gazetted permanently reserved conservation area of historic interest.

References
The Argus newspaper, 30 October 1866,

J.T. Collins, Photographs of the former Stables and Lock Up, 5 March 1966 – 4 November 1981, La Trobe Picture collection, State Library of Victoria.

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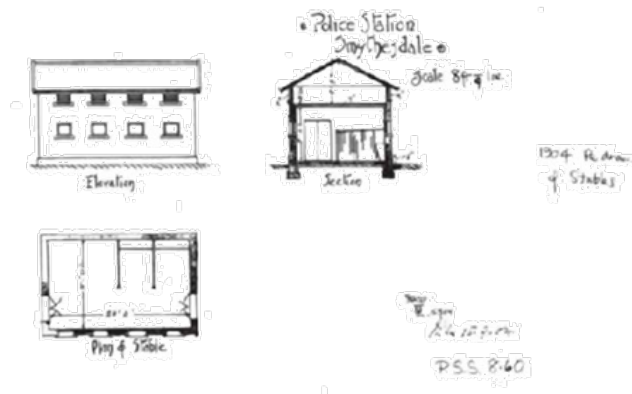J.G. Roberts, *Smythes Creek and Smythesdale*, Ballarat, 1930, p.4.

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

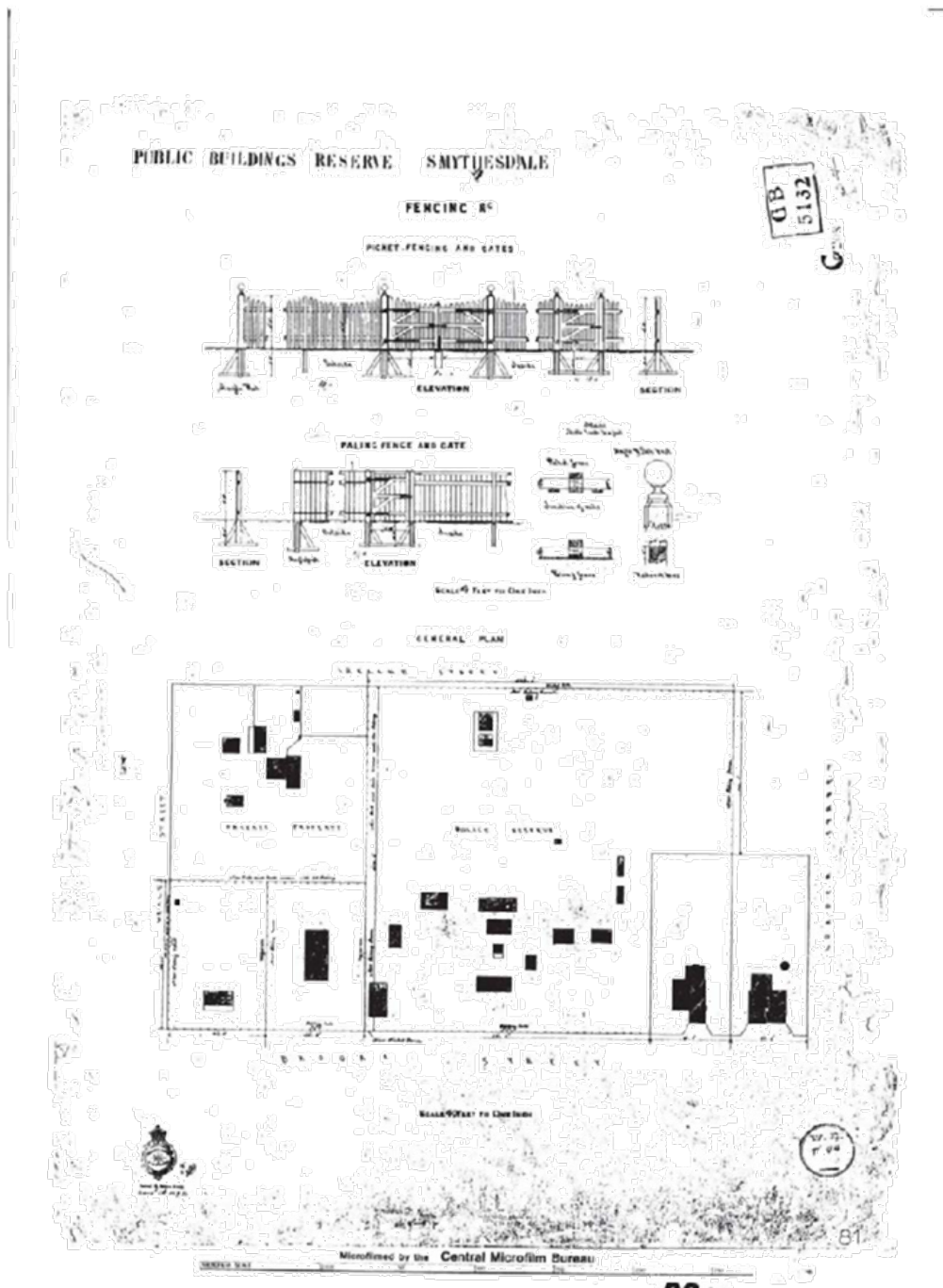*The Star* newspaper, 13 November 1863, p.2, 3 November 1864, p.2.

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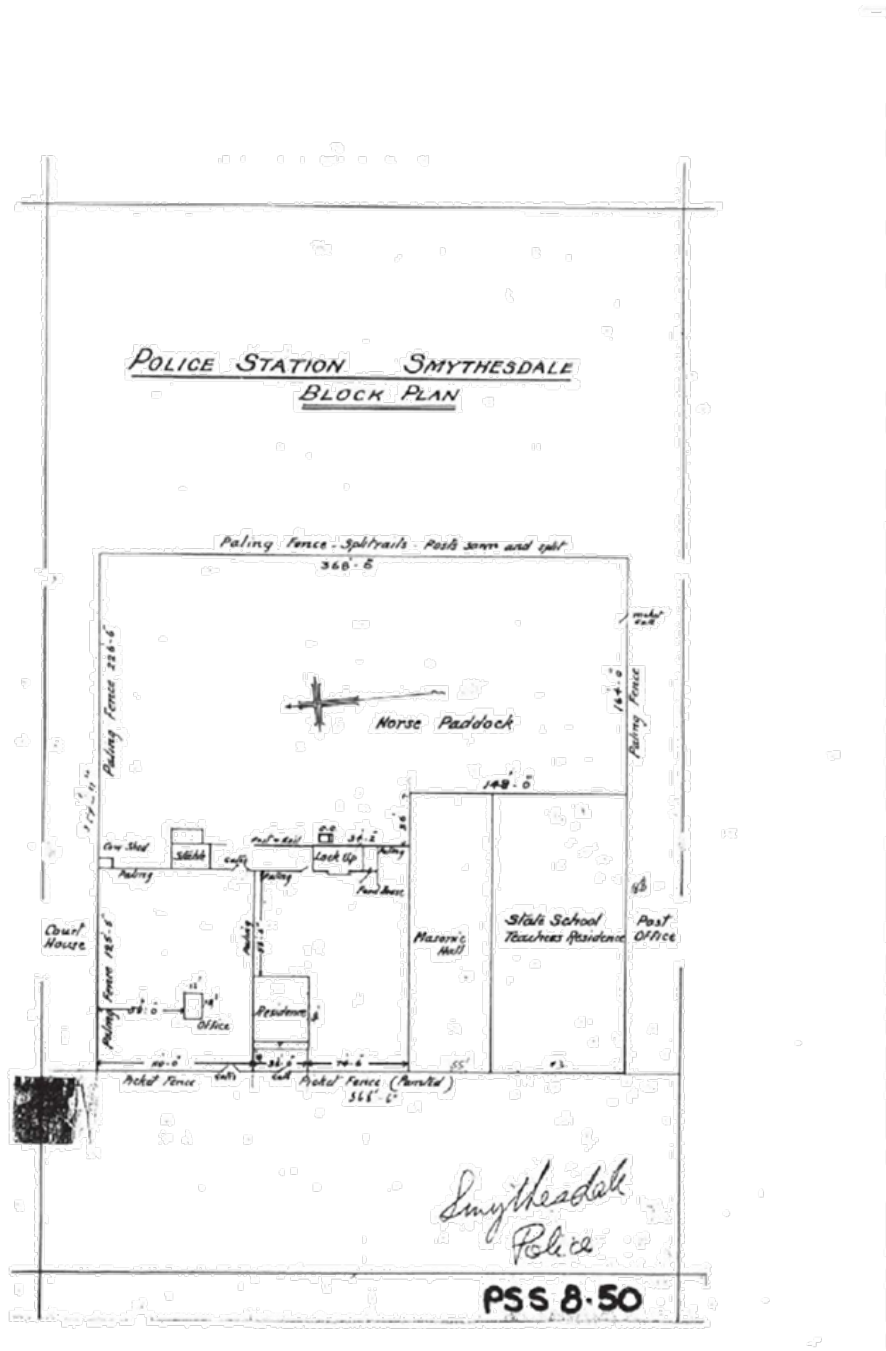Golden Plains Shire Heritage Assessments for Amendment C53   **2012**

Historical Images

Public Works Department, Drawing of Police Stables, Smythesdale, retraced 15 September 1904. Source: W. Jacobs,
'Smythesdale Police Stables' Condition Survey & Schedule of Repairs, 1997.

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Public Works Department, Public Buildings Reserve, Smythesdale, c.1872. Source: 'Smythesdale Police Residence, Smythesdale Lock Up, Smythesdale Police Stables, Smythesdale Police Camp', Police Buildings Inventory (Historic Places – DSE), Police Buildings and Sites Datasheets.

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Public Works Department, 'Police Station Smythesdale Block Plan', n.d. Source: W. Jacobs, 'Smythesdale Police
Stables' Condition Survey & Schedule of Repairs, 1997.

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Floor Plan & Elevations of former Lock Up, Smythesdale. Source: G. O'Beirne, 'Lock-up, Smythesdale', technical drawings, Matthew Flinders Drawing competition, 1992, State Library of Victoria.

Section of former Lock Up, Smythesdale. Source: G. O'Beirne, 'Lock-up, Smythesdale', technical drawings, Matthew Flinders Drawing competition, 1992, State Library of Victoria.
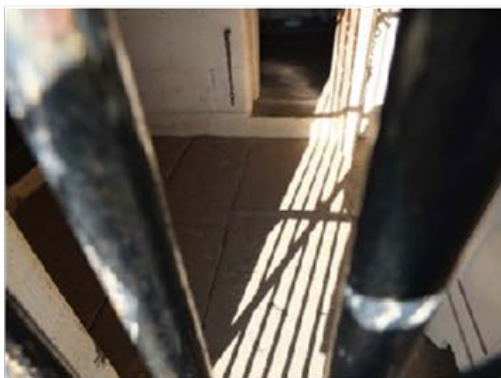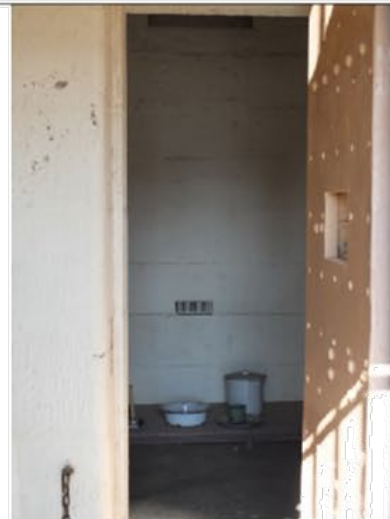
Current Photographs

Former Police Reserve showing the stables and lock up in the background, Smythesdale.

Interior, police stables.

Interior detail of flag stone floor of lock up porch.

Interior of cell from lock up porch.

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