

Heritage Council Determination

Determination date	4 December 2025
Place/Object name	Woodend Court House
Location	43 Forest Street, Woodend, Macedon Ranges Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung Country
VHR number	H1489
Category	Registered Place and Registered Object Integral to a Registered Place
Relevant legislative provision/s	Amendment to the Victorian Heritage Register, pursuant to section 62 of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i>

Determination of the Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **4 December 2025**, in accordance with Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act'), that the above Place is to be amended in the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR').

The Heritage Council determined to make the following amendments to the VHR:

- the objects are integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of a registered place and are to be included in the VHR in accordance with section 49(1)(ca) of the Act; and
 - to include additional land in the VHR in accordance with sections 49(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Act; and
 - the proposed categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place for which a permit under the Act is not required will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place under section 49(3)(a) of the Act.
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Executive Director's recommendation ('the Recommendation')

The cultural heritage significance of the Woodend Court House, located at 43 Forest Street, Woodend, Macedon Ranges Shire, Dja Dja Wurrung Country ('the Place'), was recognised when it was included in the Register of Government Buildings in 1988. Its State-level cultural heritage significance was confirmed in 1998 when it was transferred into the Victorian Heritage Register ('VHR').

On **19 August 2025** the Executive Director made and accepted an application to amend the registration of the Place.

On **15 September 2025** the Executive Director made a recommendation to the Heritage Council ('the Recommendation') that the existing registration for the Place should be amended in the VHR. The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on **19 September 2025**.

Section 44 submissions

During the 60-day public advertisement period no submissions were received pursuant to section 44 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').

The Place

Description

Extracted verbatim from page 3 of the Executive Director's Recommendation (in-text references have been removed):

The Woodend Court House is located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country 85km south of Bendigo. From the 1830s European settlers took up land in the region and dispossessed the Dja Dja Wurrung people of their land, destroyed food and water sources and cultural sites, and introduced foreign flora, fauna and diseases.

The Woodend Court House was erected in 1870 and was the second court building in Woodend. It was designed by Henry A. Williams who was a Clerk of Works and Draftsman in the Public Works Department under William Wardell. It was built by Grant and Johnson to a cost of £668. The earlier court building in Woodend was built in 1862 and was located south of Keating's Hotel. The new court house was a response to requests from the town for the replacement of the original court house. The 1870 court house originally comprised two rooms – the court room and clerk's office on the eastern elevation.

The design of the Woodend Court House is typical of the Public Works Department during the period that William Wardell was chief Architect. It is one of approximately twenty court houses built in a similar style. This standard Public Works Department design is exemplified by the central court room, with lower height wings to one or both sides which are set back from the central court room on the façade. The Woodend Court House is set apart by its asymmetrical massing of a single wing to the eastern elevation.

The original two-roomed court house is constructed of brick, which is currently overpainted, on bluestone footings with a gabled roof over the main courtroom volume. There is a protruding office on the eastern elevation with a hipped roof which was extended in 1885 with the addition of a second office to the rear of the clerk's office. The façade of the building is characterised by simple decorative brickwork around the gable and distinctive timber lattice friezes and timber brackets to the verandah. Other court houses in this style include Lilydale, Bright and Avenel.

The interior finish of the courtroom is plastered brickwork with lines etched into the plaster to simulate the appearance of stone. The ceiling is constructed of varnished pine boards on exposed trusses. The magistrate's bench, dock, clerk's desk, witness box, and bench seat remain in the court room and there is a cast iron fender in front of the fireplace.

The clerk's office is plastered brickwork with a ceiling of varnished lining boards. The slate fireplace surround has been painted black. In the Magistrate's office the walls are again plastered brickwork while the ceiling is fibrous plaster.

The last court of petty sessions was held there in 1964 and the last coroner's court hearing in the 1970s. The building has since been occupied by the Woodend and District Heritage Society. In 2006, an extension was added to the rear of the building.

Reasons for the amendment application

Additional land

The Executive Director recommended that the Heritage Council amend the registration of the Place to include additional land, having formed the view that:

- the State-level cultural heritage significance of the Place would be substantially less if the additional land or any part of the additional land which is or has been used in conjunction with the Place were developed [s.40(3A)(c)(i)]; and
- the additional land surrounds the Place and is important to the protection or conversation of the Place; or contributes to the understanding of the Place [s.40(3A)(c)(ii)].

The Executive Director noted that:

- the land proposed for inclusion both is currently and has been used in conjunction with the place for over 150 years; and
- the land is the historic land parcel, being the original land parcel reserved for the court house.

The Executive Director was of the view that:

- the current extent is limited to the footprint of the court house building, and is insufficient to protect, conserve and allow for a proper understanding of the place.
- if any additional land proposed for inclusion in the registration were developed, depending upon the nature of the proposal, there is potential for the development to impact upon the place and substantially reduce its State-level cultural heritage significance.
- including an area of land around the place will enable features that could potentially impact the conservation of the building, such as drainage and paving to be managed under an approvals process.
- inclusion of an area around the building provides a setting for the place.
- the area includes later additions that contribute to an understanding of how the place has developed over time.

Objects integral

The Executive Director recommended seven (7) objects as being integral to understanding the cultural significance of the Place. Objects considered by the Executive Director to be integral to the cultural heritage significance of the Place included:

1. Dock
2. Magistrate's bench
3. Clerk's desk
4. Witness box
5. Bench seat
6. Washstand
7. Cast iron fender

Summary of how the objects are integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of the Place

The objects integral at the Woodend Court House have been at the place for over 150 years and allow the court room to be interpreted as a late nineteenth-century court room. The arrangement of these items within the room allows the historical court room functions to be understood. A description of each object integral is provided at **Attachment 1**.

Heritage Council's findings

The Heritage Council's statutory remit is confined by the *Heritage Act 2017*. When a place or object is included in the VHR, the description, history, Statement of Significance and permit policy do not form statutory components of the VHR.

The Heritage Council notes that the Executive Director may make non-statutory amendments to the Statement of Significance as set out in the Recommendation. The Heritage Council's decision in relation to the Place is confined to the extent of registration and permit exemptions.

Objects integral to the registered place

The Heritage Council's findings accord with the Executive Director's Recommendation. The Heritage Council finds that the collection of seven (7) objects associated with the function of the Place as a court house are integral to the understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the Place.

The inventory of objects is provided at **Attachment 1**.

Additional land

The extent of registration is provided as **Attachment 2** and includes all of the Place hatched on Diagram 1489 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 7 Section 2A Township of Woodend Parish of Woodend and the objects integral to the Place.

Permit exemptions

The Heritage Council determined specific permits exemptions that would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the Place or the objects integral to the Place. The permit exemptions are provided as **Attachment 3** to this determination.

Conclusion

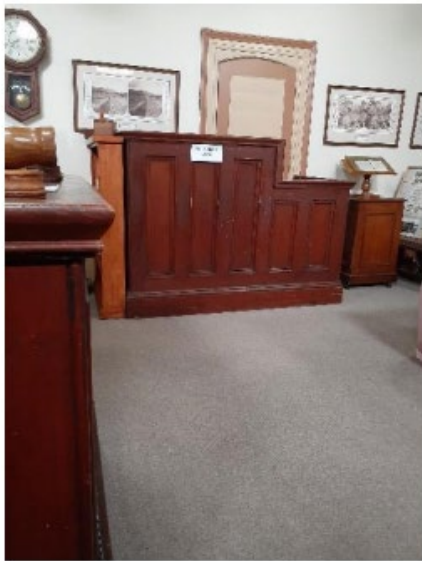
The Heritage Council determined, pursuant to Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the registration for Woodend Court House is to be amended in the Victorian Heritage Register.





Professor Philip Goad
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Attachment 1


Objects Integral Inventory

Object number & name:	01. Dock
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Prisoner's Dock. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Timber prisoner's dock designed by the Public Works Department.
Condition (if known):	Good condition.

Object number & name:	02. Magistrate's bench
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Magistrate's bench. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Timber magistrate's bench with leather/ vinyl inlay to the writing slope. Located at the front of the courtroom.
Condition (if known):	Good condition. Minimal signs of peeling leather inlay.

Object number & name:	03. Clerk's desk
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Clerk's Desk. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Timber panelled front with desk behind, leather/vinyl inlay to the writing slope. Designed by the Public Works Department, built c.1870.
Condition (if known):	Good condition. Some minor peeling of the leather/ vinyl inlay.

Object number & name:	04. Witness box
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Witness box. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Timber panelled box with small writing/reading slope behind. Used by witnesses. Designed by the Public Works Department, built c. 1870.
Condition (if known):	Good condition.
Object number & name:	05. Bench Seat

Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Timber bench. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Timber bench with arches and small cuts outs for the spandrel.
Condition (if known):	Good condition.

Object number & name:	06. Washstand
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	 <p><i>2025. Washstand. Source: Woodend & District Heritage Society</i></p>
Item Description:	Rectangular cabinet with lid. Internally there is a circular void for a basin.
Condition (if known):	Good condition.

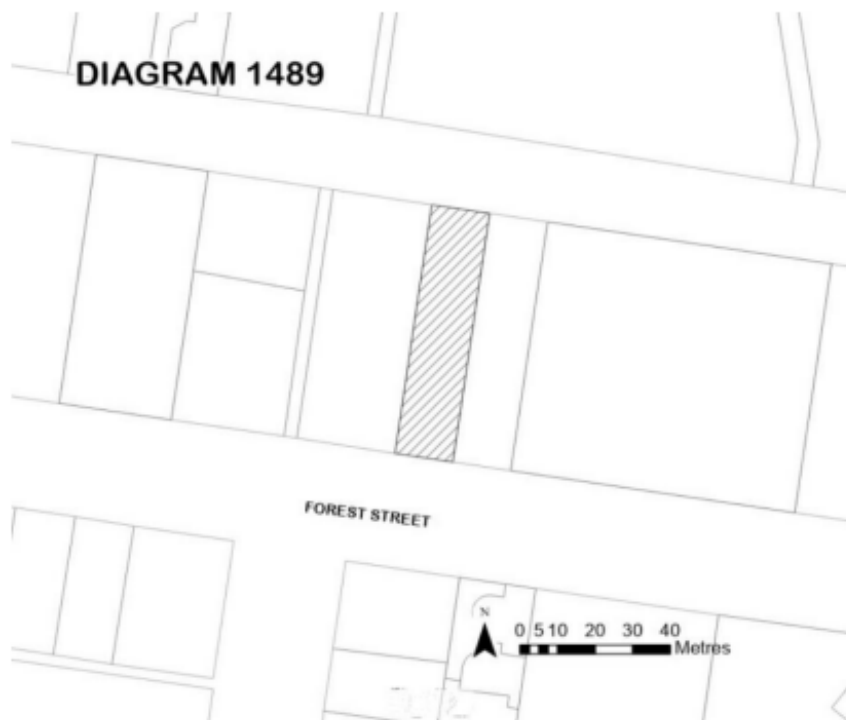
Object number & name:	07. Cast iron fender
Current location:	Visitor's research room/former court room
Image:	No photo available.
Item Description:	Cast iron fender which would have been located around the hearth of the fireplace, to stop firewood from rolling out.
Condition (if known):	Good condition.

Attachment 2

Extent of Registration

All of the Place hatched on Diagram 1489 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 7 Section 2A Township of Woodend Parish of Woodend, and the following objects integral:

1. Dock
2. Magistrate's bench
3. Clerk's desk
4. Witness box
5. Bench seat
6. Washstand
7. Cast iron fender



Attachment 3

Categories of Works or Activities which may be undertaken without a Permit (Permit exemptions)

Permit exemptions

General Permit Exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the VHR. General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which do not harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions. Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Permit Exemptions

The works and activities listed below under the heading 'Exempt works and activities' are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Woodend Court House. These are subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

Guidelines for specific permit exemptions

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage*

Act 2006 is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.

5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and

poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.

7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General conditions for specific permit exemptions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific

exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.

5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

Exempt works and activities

1. All internal works to the 2006 extension at the rear of the court house.