

# *CAMPBELLTOWN COURT HOUSE*

Lot 1 DP 772068 No. 95 Queen Street, Campbelltown

Built 1886



## **HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION:**

The core of this building was erected in 1886, designed by James Barnet in his classical revival manner. It has a good interior of its period, with cedar fittings. Additions were made in 1966 by the NSW Government Architect with mark the lower floor of the older building. Further additions were made to the rear in 1991.

Note: land was set aside in the plan of 1826 by Robert Hoddle west of Lindesay Street between Lithgow and Dumaresq Street for a Court House and goal, and a temporary goal built there in 1826. Daniel Copper built a house also in 1826 on the western side of the main road near Railway Street which was rented by Thomas Hammond as the Hammond Inn which was bought by the administration in 1827 and altered to make a court house. This was on the site of the 1886 Court House. James Backhouse wrote in 1843 that the goal was below the level of the ground in front of the Court House and sometimes held up to sixty prisoners. Amongst his plans, Mortimer Lewis has one for a goal at Campbelltown built of stout logs.

The following article was featured in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1889.

'The new courthouse was opened on Saturday last when a luncheon was given in the courtroom in celebration of the event.'

After arriving from Sydney in the tourists' train, guests proceeded in buggies to Mount Gilead, where they were entertained by Mr & Mrs E.B. Woodhouse prior to the opening celebrations.

The building, which was commenced about two years ago [1887] is composed of brick, on a freestone base, resting on a solid concrete foundation.

It comprises the main hall or courtroom, 5 ft. long, 32ft wide, and 30 ft. high, having on both sides a wing running the full length of the building, and containing four rooms in each. In front of the courtroom is the vestibule, extending the full width of the main hall, and communicating with a gallery by means of a spacious staircase. The internal fittings are of cedar and are all well finished and polished. They include the Judge's bench, clerk and reporters' desks, witness box, and a well barred dock, the last having communication with the prison quarters below by means of an underground passage. Ample accommodation is also provided for jurors, witnesses, and the general public. The building is ventilated on what is known as the Tobin system, and is delightfully cool inside. The acoustic properties are also very good.

At the rear, quarters are provided for the court sergeant. The edifice has a bold facade worked out in cement, and stands at the corner of Queen and Railway streets. It is surrounded on three sides by a high brick wall, which

detracts somewhat from the appearance of the building. The structure was erected from plans prepared in the Colonial Architect's Office.

The Architect for the Courthouse was Mr. James Barnet with Peter Graham contracting the building.

The site itself has been used for a courthouse since 1827. The earlier court was situated above the Gaol, which was in an unpleasant state. The stench from the gaol was so offensive that in warm weather the Supreme Court was forced to move out!

The building was extended in 1966 to provide additional offices. Over the years this extension has attracted many complaints due to its out-of-character look which is so unlike the original architecture. The Courthouse has recently undergone major works which have included restoring the magnificent facade facing Queen Street.

#### **CONDITION AND USE:**

Extended in 1966 to provide additional offices for the Courts. The extensions are out of scale with the original building and the corrugated iron façade is ugly. Necessary additions at the rear are more sympathetic to the original building.

#### **HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:**

- The building has Historical, Social and Architectural significance
- It is an important building in the Campbelltown townscape, with the court house use having continuity of site since 1827.
- The site is part of the Town layout designed by Governor Macquarie
- The building was designed by James Barnet

#### **HERITAGE LISTING:**

**LOCAL:** LEP 2002

**STATE:** *Proudfoot:* Index No. 38, Category 2

*Macarthur Regional Heritage Study:* Map 5 No. 48

*National Trust (NSW):* Classified

**FEDERAL:** *Heritage Commission (National Estate):* Registered