



New Zealand  
**Historic Places Trust** *Pouhere Taonga*

# Lyttelton Police Station

5-9 Sumner Road, **LYTTELTON**



Lyttelton Police Station. From: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/flissphil/35297503>. Photographed by Phillip Capper 18/08/2005. Copyright Phillip Capper

## Registration Type

Historic Place Category 2

## Register Number

7355

## Date Registered

13-Dec-1996

## Legal Description

Pt Sec 356 Town of Lyttelton, Canterbury Land District

## City/District Council

Christchurch City

## Region

Canterbury Region

## Historical Significance

This historic place was registered under the Historic Places Act 1993. The following text is from the original Historic Place Assessment Under Section 23 Criteria report considered by the NZHPT Board at the time of registration.

Historical:

The Lyttelton Police Station was completed in 1882 to replace an earlier structure. It was constructed with the help of

labour from the nearby gaol and was complemented by a senior officer' dwelling, which was demolished about a decade ago. The building provided accommodation for single men until the 1920s. It is claimed to be one of the oldest police stations in continuous use in the country.

## **Physical Significance**

This historic place was registered under the Historic Places Act 1993. The following text is from the original Historic Place Assessment Under Section 23 Criteria report considered by the NZHPT Board at the time of registration.

Architectural:

The Lyttelton police Station was designed in the Victorian Italianate style of the period 1837-1901. As a police station this particular example of the style is austere, and it therefore lacks the usual architectural details which otherwise distinguish Italianate as a picturesque style. One of the style's most prominent characteristics is present however, and indeed it is this characteristic which identifies the building as Italianate.

Style indicators are:

Chief Characteristic:

- Stilted segmental or round window arch

Secondary Characteristics:

- Exaggerated keystones above window arches
- Corner quoin blocks
- Low to medium pitched hipped roof
- Solid load bearing wall construction of stone
- Articulated or prominent Classical string course between ground and first floor.

## **Summary of Assessed Criteria**

This historic place was registered under the Historic Places Act 1993. The following text is from the original Historic Place Assessment Under Section 23 Criteria report considered by the NZHPT Board at the time of registration.

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history:

The Lyttelton Police Station has served the needs of this port town for more than 110 years and is claimed to be one of the country's oldest police stations in continuous use. It has been associated with the policing not only of the seaport town, but with that of neighbouring localities such as Akaroa. The Lyttelton police played an active role in all three of the nation's key industrial disputes, 1890, 1913 and 1950.

(g) The technical accomplishment or value, or design of the place:

DATE: 1880-82

ARCHITECT: Colonial Architect (office of P.F.M. Burrows)

STYLE CODE: 11 Victorian Italianate, 1837-1901.

#### DESIGN:

The Italianate style of the Lyttelton Police Station is very simple and severe, and this was no doubt deliberate given the function of the place.

Italianate is normally a picturesque style. However some of its chief elements, i.e., the faceted bay and the tower, are missing from this building. This relative austerity of design nevertheless has a direct reference to the plain stone villas located in the countryside of Tuscany. Such villas form part of the vocabulary of the Italianate style

of architecture.

As part of the design of the place, the adjoining lock-up (or cell block) at the rear of the station should be included in the registration proposal. A separate free standing building, the cell block is rectangular in plan, constructed of brick, has a hipped roof, and possibly has more cells than the one illustrated located in it. This building is functionally related to the police station and has the added interest of being brick, whereas the vast majority of lock-ups erected in New Zealand at this time were built of timber. As far as one can tell, it compares favourably with the brick cell block of the Mount Cook Police Station, Wellington, 1894, Category I. Standard features common to both structures are the pierced metal ventilation grille above the door and the wooden, double skinned, diagonal board cell door with round peep hole.

#### INTERIOR:

The interior of the Lyttelton Police Station has been extensively modernized with the removal of fireplaces, walls painted over, and finishings removed. However, the wooden staircase with its turned balusters, newel post and moulded hand rails, remains as a good example of how the interior was originally designed. This particular feature is enhanced by the retention of the hallway arch opposite, with its sidelights, brackets and Georgian style fanlight.

### **Associated Registrations**

Lyttelton Township Historic Area

### **Former Use**

Law Enforcement - Police station

### **Construction Professionals**

Burrows, Pierre Finch Martineau - Architect

### **Construction Dates**

Original Construction: 1880 (circa) - 1882 (circa)

### **Other Information**

A copy of the original report is available from the NZHPT Southern region office

Information on this page is correct to the best of the Trust's knowledge. If you have any additional information you would like to share with the Trust, please contact the Registrar. You may wish to contact the Trust to view our paper records.