

THE LOST COURTHOUSES, POLICE STATIONS and LOCKUPS of HILL END

A Summary of the research undertaken so far by Karen Bates and others

There are three buildings that are of interest:

1. [The Court House](#),
2. [The Police Station](#), and
3. [The Watch House / Lockup](#).

Hopefully the notes below will shed some light on their existence and location.

Court House

- 1870 *Metropolitan Hotel - opened in December 1870 by Thomas Wythes. “During his occupancy the large ballroom was used as the courthouse and during this period stone cells, now represented by a heap of rubble”¹.*
- May 1872 *The courthouse was established in the ballroom of the Metropolitan Hotel under a rental arrangement² between the NSW Government and the owner Thomas Wythes.*
- May 1872 *“The Hill End Police Court is quite a new institution and is not yet a week old”³.*
- 16 Aug 1872 *Appropriation of 900 pounds for a new Court House⁴*
- 4 Oct 1872 *Tenders for the erection of a Court House and Watch House for Hill End⁵.*
- 3 Jan 1873 *Courthouse for Hill End – Petition⁶*
- 22 Jan 1873 *No Suitable Land for Courthouse⁷*
- 7 Nov 1873 *Supply Estimates for Courthouse and land purchase Hill End⁸*
- 15 Jan 1874 *Site for Courthouse Hill End forwarded to Department of Lands⁹*
- 23 Jan 1874 *Courthouse on Police Reserve Rejected¹⁰*

¹ The Hill End Story, Book 1, Pg.65, Hodge, Harry

² NO information pertaining to this rental arrangement has been found to date.

³ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13258075?searchTerm=Police%20Station%20hill%20end>

⁴ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/225844241/12699959>

⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230132861?searchTerm=watch%20house%20hill%20end>

⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28412528?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

⁷ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/107169246?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

⁸ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13326132/1450179>

⁹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28411223?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁰ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/60983610?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

- 23 Jan 1874 *Selection of Lot 1 Section 5 for Courthouse at Hill End*¹¹
- 31 Jan 1874 *First Courthouse Site rejected, second site rejected, offer of rental in a hotel*¹²
- 3 Feb 1874 *Building at Hill End was open for purchase for Courthouse*¹³
- 7 Feb 1874 *Lands Department selected a site for a Courthouse at Hill End*¹⁴
- 4 Mar 1874 *No definite decision made for a site for the Courthouse at Hill End*¹⁵
- 4 Mar 1874 *Several Sites had been offered, BUT the Government did not yet accept any offers*¹⁶
- 5 Mar 1874 *Smith addresses Parliament as to the delays by the Government*¹⁷
- 7 Mar 1874 *Government would not accept any tenders*¹⁸
- 1872 to 1878 *Persistent representations by members of parliament, community members and others saw the government move to find appropriate land to site the courthouse but rejection followed rejection by the Hill End community as to the sites recommended, eventually the government acquired the unfinished Protestant Hall on the corner of Havilah and Denison streets for the courthouse, not all parties were happy with this purchase and the courthouse was never to occupy the building.*
- 7 Sep 1878 *Protestant Hall secured for new Courthouse*¹⁹
- 9 Oct 1883 *A fire at the Courthouse saw the stables and kitchen destroyed. Damage was done to the Courthouse and barracks. The Presbyterian church at the rear of the Courthouse suffered some damage*²⁰.
- 20 May 1890 *“Courthouse is a very old building attached to which are the police quarters”*²¹
The Metropolitan building would now be approximately 20 years old and showing its age.
- 1883 to 1896 *The courthouse continued to function within the old Metropolitan hotel building after the fire. Hodges mentions that the Court House was still at the*

¹¹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13330335?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹² <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/70472067/4767198>

¹³ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/111332083?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁴ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/70472264?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13332580?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/107145238?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁷ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13332677?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁸ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/128806969?searchTerm=Court%20house%2C%20Hill>

¹⁹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/70594676?searchTerm=protestant%20hall%20court%20hill%20end>

²⁰ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/908079?searchTerm=metropolitan%20hotel%20court%20hill%20end>

²¹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/128769786?searchTerm=one%20cell%20court%20police%20hill%20end>

hotel when the Borough Council re-occupied the site in 1896²². The hotel appears to not have renewed its publican licence after 1873, mention has been made that the Lockup and Police quarters were located behind the hotel.

1896 to 1901 It is unsure where the courthouse was between this time, a newspaper article in 1921 notes that the old courthouse on the corner of Tambaroora and Denison streets was sold and removed to Kandos²³. This would indicate if true that the courthouse was moved from the Metropolitan Courthouse site to Thomas Ackland's Lot 11 Section 8 for a brief period prior to its final move to its current location on Lot 4 Section 16.

14 Jul 1899 Resumption of land for Courthouse and Police buildings, Lot 4 Section 16²⁴

1 Dec 1899 Tenders for the Erection of a Courthouse and Lockup at Hill End²⁵

1 Dec 1899 Details of the planned Courthouse and Lockup²⁶

8 Jan 1900 Tender accepted for erection of Courthouse and Lockup, Hill End, W. Frost of Bowral, 2143 pounds²⁷

13 Jan 1900 Tenders for carting materials from Kelso to Hill End Lockup and Courthouse contract²⁸

26 Nov 1900 Construction on the courthouse proceeding slowly²⁹

1901 Courthouse, Police Station and Lockup finished

A.E. Howard wrote in his book³⁰ "*The courthouse in the early days of Hill End was at the junction of Denison and Bowen Streets and was a wooden building. The police station was also at this spot until the new police station and courthouse was built of stone in Tambaroora St in 1902*".

²² *Hill End Story, Book 1, Pg.95, Hodges, Harry*

²³ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/158670833?searchTerm=ackland%20hill%20end>

²⁴ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/221003303?searchTerm=resumption%20hill%20end>

²⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/221000798?searchTerm=hill%20end>

²⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/237190654?searchTerm=hill%20end>

²⁷ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/117036721?searchTerm=hill%20end>

²⁸ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63875191?searchTerm=hill%20end>

²⁹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/156276770?searchTerm=hill%20end>

³⁰ *Born on the Hill End Gold Fields, A.E. Howard, 1987*

Police Station

- Oct 1871 *Mention made of the Hill End Police*³¹
- Dec 1871 *Necessity for a courthouse and lock up at Hill End*³²
- May 1872 *The Police Station was noted as being “designed to accommodate a large force... but, nevertheless, is fit only to be used as a stable.”*³³
- 2 Sep 1872 *Missionary Assaulted near the Police Station on Tambaroora Street*³⁴
- 14 Sep 1872 *The Police quarters and Lockup are only temporary structures*³⁵
- Circa. 1872 *Hodges description*³⁶ *of Lots on the east side of Denison Street noted that Lot 2 Section 7 had the Police Station “From its junction with Belmore and Tambaroora Streets, Denison Street runs due south to the brow of Hawkins Hill. On the east side at the Belmore Street Corner, Ryan Bros carried on a produce store next to the original police cottage and in front of the police stables. On its south stood the Methodist Parsonage”.*
- One of Merlins earlier panorama images*³⁷ *does not show any building on the Lot, however a later image from Holtermanns Collection*³⁸ *shows what appears to be a new building on the Lot.*
- Circa.1872 *An image in the Holtermann Collection*³⁹ *shows three police officers standing on the verandah of a building on the corner of Short and Tambaroora Streets.*
- The State Library caption for this image reads “Policemen outside the Police Cottage, Hill End”. This information cannot be confirmed as of 2025.*
- Hodge notes that the Police were housed originally in Denison Street, and later behind the Metropolitan hotel*⁴⁰.
- 14 Jul 1899 *Resumption of land for Courthouse and Police buildings, Lot 4 Section 16*⁴¹
- 1 Dec 1899 *Tenders for the Erection of a Courthouse and Lockup at Hill End*⁴²

³¹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/252050653?searchTerm=polic%20%22hill%20end%22>

³² <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13249373?searchTerm=polic%20%22hill%20end%22>

³³ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13258075?searchTerm=Police%20Station%20hill%20end>

³⁴ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/114739727?searchTerm=missionary%20hill%20end>

³⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162663565?searchTerm=polic%20hill%20end>

³⁶ *The Hill End Story, Book 1, Pg.83, Hodge, Harry*

³⁷ *a2822822, Digital Order No., Holtermann Collection, State Library of NSW*

³⁸ *a2822482, Digital Order No., Holtermann Collection, State Library of NSW*

³⁹ *a2822580, Digital Order No., Holtermann Collection, State Library of NSW*

⁴⁰ *The Hill End Story, Book 1, Pg.96, Hodge, Harry*

⁴¹ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/221003303?searchTerm=resumption%20hill%20end>

⁴² <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/221000798?searchTerm=hill%20end>

- 1 Dec 1899 *Details of the planned Courthouse and Lockup*⁴³
- 8 Jan 1900 *Tender accepted for erection of Courthouse and Lockup, Hill End, W. Frost of Bowral, 2143 pounds*⁴⁴
- 13 Jan 1900 *Tenders for carting materials from Kelso to Hill End Lockup and Courthouse contract*⁴⁵
- 26 Nov 1900 *Construction of the Courthouse proceeding slowly*⁴⁶
- 1901 *Courthouse, Police Station and Lockup finished*

⁴³ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/237190654?searchTerm=hill%20end>

⁴⁴ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/117036721?searchTerm=hill%20end>

⁴⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63875191?searchTerm=hill%20end>

⁴⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/156276770?searchTerm=hill%20end>

Watch House / Lock Up

- Dec 1871 *Necessity for a courthouse and lockup at Hill End*⁴⁷
- Feb 1872 *Watchhouse Required*⁴⁸
- May 1872 *The Lockup was described as being “the vilest of all these structures*⁴⁹. *It is made of Wattle and Dab with a bark hut; and as it would not by itself restrain its “casuals” that are chained to a post”*⁵⁰
- May 1872 *Police Station only fit for a stable, Hill End Police court and not yet 1 week old, rented from one of the Hotels*
- Jun 1872 *New Lockup being built by Hudson & Bros. of Redfern*⁵¹
- 31 Aug 1872 *The crown survey*⁵² *of Lot 5 Section 6 shows a “Lock Up” on the Lot, this Lot was a Police Reserve. A later adjustment to the size of the Lot saw it reduced to allow for the Church Street alignment. This Lot is the current site of the Post Office.*
- Merlin Panorama image*⁵³ *- Reef Street looking north*
 Does NOT show the Lockup on the Lot
 *Holtermann Collection*⁵⁴ *- Reef Street looking north*
 DOES *show the Lockup on the Lot*
- 14 Sep 1872 *The Police Quarters and Lockup are only temporary structures*⁵⁵
- 4 Oct 1872 *Tenders for the erection of a Court House and Watch House for Hill End*⁵⁶.
- 26 Apr 1879 *Purcell / Monaghan Assault at the Lock Up behind the Courthouse next to Hodgsons Store*⁵⁷
- 14 Jul 1899 *Resumption of land for Courthouse and Police buildings, Lot 4 Section 16*⁵⁸
- 1 Dec 1899 *Tenders for the Erection of a Courthouse and Lockup at Hill End*⁵⁹

⁴⁷ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13249373?searchTerm=polic%20%22hill%20end%22>

⁴⁸ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/60447079/5733789>

⁴⁹ *The structures referred too were the Post Office and the Electric Telegraph Office*

⁵⁰ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/258898269?searchTerm=lock%20up%20hill%20end>

⁵¹

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/114733838?searchTerm=polic%20court%20house%20lock%20up%20gaol%20hill-end>

⁵² *Crown Plan 96-1742, survey undertaken on 31 Aug 1872*

⁵³ *a2822763, Digital Order No. Holtermann Collection*

⁵⁴ *a2822465, Digital Order No., Holtermann Collection*

⁵⁵ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162663565?searchTerm=polic%20hill%20end>

⁵⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230132861?searchTerm=watch%20house%20hill%20end>

⁵⁷ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/70937469?searchTerm=purcell%20hill%20end>

⁵⁸ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/221003303?searchTerm=resumption%20hill%20end>

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