

1.2 History of the Police Station

Mounted Constable Shirley established the first police camp in Alice Springs in 1879 at the Telegraph Station.

On 21 April 1886, Mounted Constables Willshire and Wurmbrand with Native Constables Peter, Willie, Wilkie, Collins and Fred loaded all Police property on a wagon and moved to Heavitree Gap. Bough wurleys and a tent for stores were erected thereby constituting what is now regarded as the first permanent police presence to be established in central Australia.

A thatched log hut had been added by 1887 and by the following year an old hut from the Telegraph Station was erected for use as living quarters. These structures were sited east of present Reserve in the adjacent rail and road corridor. No substantive evidence of their existence remains due to flooding of the Todd River, railway and road construction and major use of the area for telecommunication cabling.

In 1889 an amount of 125 Pounds was allocated in the Government Estimates for provision of staff quarters which by then consisted of two Mounted Constables and six Native Constables.

In 1888/89 John Fleming and Thomas Pope built a store and a two roomed thatched dwelling with a verandah all round. These two rooms form the nucleus of the present day reconstructed building. Fencing for a horse paddock was also completed.

The buildings were roofed with corrugated iron by 1893. At this time Mounted Constable South claimed that an office, kitchen, two store rooms, a log hut used as a cell, a horse yard, camel yard and a garden had been added at an estimated cost of 100 Pounds but at no cost to Government.

On 14 December 1904, the buildings and premises at the Police Station were proclaimed to be a public gaol, prison and house of correction under the *Prison Act* of 1869.

Early in 1905, Mounted Constable South reported the buildings were all in a dilapidated condition with no adequate provision for the accommodation of prisoners evidenced the following year when seven prisoners escaped from custody.

The Executive Council on 2 September 1909 ordered the closure of the Police Station and gaol and the prisoners confined therein removed to Stuart (Alice Springs) where a new Police Station and gaol had been constructed in 1909.

Although intended to be demolished with the other buildings when the police moved to Stuart, the two-roomed stone building, small kitchen and store room were retained as quarters for the Junior Constable who, amongst his other duties, attended the station's plant of horses and camels.

It is unclear how long this situation remained but evidence indicates that it was used for quite a few years during the period 1920 to the mid 1930s by the District Stock Inspector as well as being a distribution point for rations to the local Aboriginal population.