

# Oatlands Supreme Court House and Collections

## Access and Interpretation Plan

### Volume 1

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*Court House c1828*



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Throughout the progress of this Plan, the working group met a number of times to provide suggestions and thoughts on their views for interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House. The working group acts as an advisory group to the Southern Midlands Council, for matters regarding the military precinct at Oatlands.

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## Executive Summary

This Interpretation Plan is based on thematic interpretation; that is, that all activities and new initiatives should be based around one central message, that visitors will remember long after they leave the site. In doing so, the Interpretation plan for the Oatlands Supreme Court House aligns with the direction and vision of Tourism Tasmania, and of leading experts within the cultural heritage tourism and interpretation fields.

The Plan conforms to the broader direction of the Oatlands Military Precinct, and other associated sites in the township.

This Interpretation Project for the Oatlands Supreme Court House is intended to identify appropriate and relevant ways to deliver messages related to the site's prepared Statement of Significance through on-site interpretation, and to develop a contextual museum of itself, portraying the layers of history within a building of significant heritage fabric which has an extensive collection of artifacts and chattels relating to several use-phases of that building.

In the recommendations for new interpretive initiatives at the Oatlands Supreme Court House, it is further intended that:

- On-site interpretation of the collections is undertaken, where appropriate;
- The profile of the site and its broader context will be increased;
- A diverse group of visitors will be attracted to the site;
- Public access to the collections and history of the site will be increased;
- Interpretation will cover a range of interests to account for a wide variety of different audiences and user groups to Oatlands; and
- Conservation of the site will be enhanced by protecting the site and its resources.

The recommendations in this Plan for new initiatives and activities have been based upon audience research, interpretation theories and principles, the significance of the site, and the input of the Oatlands Gaol and Court House Working Group.

The five year goal for the Oatlands Supreme Court House is to be a "must-see" attraction which offers a unique experience for its visitors. This goal is to be met through the following interpretive activities and initiatives:

- Business Plan
- Partnerships
- Exterior Signage
- Self-guided tour of the military precinct
- Architecture brochure
- Advertising
- Interior display – domestic life
- Orientation – layers of history
- Interior display – Court Room
- Interior display – Judge's Chamber
- Special Events
- Guided tours
- Interior display – holding room
- Interior display – Police Office
- Archaeology signage panels

- University Law Torts
- Website
- Permanent staffing
- Soundscape
- Gift shop
- Publication
- School programme
- Children's activities
- Performance

An ongoing programme of evaluation will be crucial in determining that the new activities and initiatives are addressing the key outcomes of the Plan (as stated above).

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE SITE

The Oatlands Supreme Court House is the most intact building in original condition remaining from the former Oatlands Military Precinct. It is a convict-built, Georgian sandstone building, and is part of the oldest Supreme Court House in Tasmania. It was acquired and partially restored by the National Trust in the 1980's. The building is now owned by the Southern Midlands Council (SMC). The use phases and the evolutionary pattern of the building demonstrate the development of the Southern Midlands as a major colonial administration centre. These phases include:

- Chapel and police office 1828-34
- Court House (1835-39)
- Supreme Court House (1840-1862)
- Council Chambers (1862-1888)
- Mechanic's Institute (1889-c1910)
- Domestic dwelling (c1911-1977)
- Various community uses (1978-)

These phases represent several key interpretive themes, pertinent to the development of the region (and wider Tasmania) as a whole:

- Religion
- Convictism and penal discipline
- The administrative systems of Colonial Van Diemen's Land
- Formation of Municipal Government
- Technology and Education
- Early-mid twentieth-century domestic life

Interpretation of these themes can take a number of forms, including:

- The physical nature of the building (evolution of form, fabric and detailing)
- The archaeology within, and surrounding the building
- The collections of chattels and artifacts relating to each theme

This Plan will explore both the physical and thematic aspects of the building, as well as its collections. Interpretive installations need to be based on fact and relevant to the history of the place, giving consideration to the financial viability of the site, and the need to consider the authenticity of the site.

## 1.2 INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVE OF THE OATLANDS SUPREME COURT HOUSE (IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL)

Heritage places are a fundamental part of Australia's tourism industry. Tasmania, and in particular the Midlands, is rich with historic cultural heritage. SMC is taking the initiative to

add value to this resource by investing in interpretation, education, training and information services, with the overall aim of promoting and preserving heritage in a sustainable way, creating benefit for community members and tourists alike. Access to heritage buildings and collections is an integral part of this initiative.

The SMC Strategic Plan 2006-11 has been developed to provide guidance for the organisation, to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver the range of services that the Southern Midlands community have identified. Section 2.2.1.7 of the SMC Strategic Plan identifies that SMC wish to 'Develop and implement a program of interpreting the Southern Midlands through signage and tourism product'. This Interpretation Plan for the Oatlands Supreme Court House contributes to achieving this strategy.

This project aims to plan the use of the Oatlands Supreme Court House and associated collection as the focal point for a unique interpretive experience, which will both contrast and compliment existing experiences.

Tasmania has seen an increase in tourist numbers since 1997 as a result of interpretation and engagement making the difference between a 'pleasant holiday' and an 'unforgettable experience' (Tourism Tasmania, 2004). It is stated (Williams, B. Pers. Comm., 2006) that:

*'Oatlands lacks this interpretation and engagement. For example, a walk around the exterior of the Oatlands Courthouse is very pleasant – a well proportioned Georgian sandstone building set on the edge of Lake Dulverton. There is nothing on site to tell the visitor about the building and its context in the development of the town. Adequate interpretation and visitor engagement, including the interior space of the building, can make a visit to that building an informative and unforgettable experience – captivating the beholder and sending them back to times past. This would encourage a longer stay in Oatlands, more spending, and making Oatlands an experience which will be recommended to others'.*

In 2004, at a conference titled 'Tourism in the Southern Midlands', facilitated by SMC, the Oatlands Gaol and Court House were identified amongst the top five sites in the municipality that should be better presented and promoted.

The aim of the Oatlands Supreme Court House Interpretation Plan is to utilise that building as a thematic interpretation centre to house the collection of items held by SMC which relate to that building and the early development of Oatlands.

There is currently no public access to the building or collection. The building is not open to the public, and the entire collection is in storage. This project will be a major step in opening the building and utilising this collection in the interpretation of the themes outlined above. Whilst this component of the project will not establish access to the collection, it will provide the direction for the physical implementation of the recommendations into publicly accessible installations in the near future.

Currently, onsite interpretation of the Oatlands Supreme Court House consists of an out-of-date signage panel with inaccurate information, and a recently added Rotary signage panel.

SMC are undertaking an extensive restoration program on the Court House, and is now looking at options for adaptive re-use which would maximise effective access and provide linkages to other similarly themed sites throughout the state.

In summary, this Access and Interpretation Plan aims to

- Gain a better understanding of the themes represented by the building
- Determine how the collection, in conjunction with the building, can demonstrate these themes
- Research the audience to which the collection can be presented
- Assess the best ways to allow this audience to access the collection
- Consider the appropriateness of the collection in demonstrating the key themes of the site.

Benefits of this Interpretation Plan will include:

- Increase access to the collection
- Increase visitor's understandings of the Oatlands Supreme Court House and its collection
- Improve conservation and care of the collection
- Further the promotion of heritage in the Southern Midlands municipality

It is intended that the implementation of interpretive initiatives will blend together the multi-faceted themes which the building represents into a 'must-do experience' for visitors to Oatlands. This interpretation will, in an original and dynamic way, transfer the history into a memorable and informative experience.

### **1.3 OATLANDS COURT HOUSE COLLECTIONS**

Central to this project, SMC have an extensive collection of artifacts and chattels relating to several use-phases of that building (several hundred items). An inventory of these collections is included as Appendix 2 of Volume 2. These items derive from several sources, including:

- The contents of that building from its use as a domestic dwelling (c1911-1977);
- Items related to the building or to Oatlands as donated by members of the community since 1977; and
- Collections of archaeological artefacts relating to all use phases, excavated in 1979, 1983 and 2005.

Collections relating to the domestic use phase of the building include both large items of furniture and small artefacts, including crockery.

Having recently been audited and catalogued, these items are currently in storage, and are in need of a meaningful space in which to be displayed. There is currently no public access to this collection of items. With the building ready for a use, it is logical that these items are displayed in this building as a means of interpreting them within their correct context, and to allow access to this collection for interpretation and research.

In order to appropriately contextualise these items, and to understand their significance to the building, an interpretation strategy which links the collection to the building (and wider geographic and thematic contexts) is required.



This Plan aims to explore and better understand the interpretive themes of the building, and by linking parts of the collection to their respective theme, will establish an interpretive centre for the presentation of that collection to the public.

A separate grant, from the National Library of Australia, has been obtained by SMC to conduct a preservation study of this collection. This will address issues such as environmental conditions of the building, as well as collection policies.

It must be noted that the majority of the collections do not relate to the primary significance of the building (i.e – the use of the building as a Supreme Court House). Rather, they relate to the domestic use phase of the building. For this reason, the display of the collections, and interpretation of the Court House relating to the domestic use phase of the building, will be limited to one room, to allow the remainder of the building to interpret its primary significance. However, in Section 5.3 of this Plan, recommendations are made as to how to maximize public access to the collections and interpretation of the domestic use period of the building.

## **1.4 METHODOLOGY AND OUTLINE OF FOLLOWING SECTIONS**

Regular liaison with the Southern Midlands Council Heritage Project Officer has been integral to the development of this plan. In addition, Council staff, and other key stakeholders including the Oatlands Tasmanian Visitor Information Network (TVIN) and the Oatlands District Historical Society have been included through a workshop held in September 2006. All Councilors, staff, and other interested persons were given further opportunity to comment or provide suggestions throughout the project, as described in Volume 2.

### **Section 2 – An Interpretive Model for Interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House**

This section outlines the model and theoretical framework for future interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House, based on the research and literature review documented in Section 2 of Volume 2.

### **Section 3 - Significance**

Section three provides the Statement of Significance for the Oatlands Supreme Court House. This has been developed by the Heritage Project officer for the Southern Midlands Council (Williams, 2005), and aspects of it were reinforced by members of the Oatlands Supreme Court House Working Group who attended the workshop held on Friday 22 September 2006.

### **Section 4 – Themes**

Section four states the themes that should be utilised to underpin all new interpretive activities. These are based on the site's Statement of Significance, and the input of the working group members. Themes will provide detail and structure in the messages that visitors receive.

## **Section 5 – Interpretive Strategy**

This plan is intended to guide interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House for a period of five years. It is intended to be a practical, usable document, to be implemented by the Southern Midlands Council. Section five sets out a paradigm in which this can be achieved, and also suggests a basis for ongoing evaluation and review of proposed new activities to ensure they address the aims and objectives of interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House.

The paradigm presented in Section five is audience-oriented, based soundly in the results of visitor research. In addition, Councilors, staff, and other interested persons in the fields of history and tourism have also been involved in a workshop to identify potential new interpretive activities.

## **Section 6 – SWOT analysis**

Section six presents a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis which provides a review of the interpretive activities and initiatives outlined in Section five, assessing the positive and negative aspects of the implementation of each.

## **Section 7 – Process for Implementation**

This final section considers the requirements for implementation of new interpretive initiatives and activities, including staffing and budgeting.

## **Volume 2**

### **Section 1 - History**

It is important that any interpretation strategy is firmly grounded in the history of the site. It is the significance of this history which interpretation of the site is to convey to its visitors.

Section one includes a summary history of the Oatlands Court House and its broader social, geographical and historical context. References for a detailed historical account of the Oatlands Court House, its uses, owners and occupiers are provided.

### **Section 2 – Interpretation: Theories and Principles**

A literature review of interpretation theory and practice has been used to shape and inform the intellectual framework of this Interpretation Plan. This plan relies heavily upon the approach and theoretical considerations of the Tasmanian Thematic Interpretation Planning Manual (Tourism Tasmania, 2005); the approach of Freeman Tilden, the first interpreter; the constructivist learning principles of George Hein; and the TORE interpretive approach of Prof. Sam Ham, as advocated by Tourism Tasmania.

Comparative analysis of Interpretation Plans for other historic sites within both Tasmania and interstate, including those of the Port Arthur Historic Site, Port Arthur; Highfield House, Stanley Tasmania; Rouse Hill Estate, New South Wales; Old Parliament House, Canberra; and York Police Station, Courthouse and Gaol Complex, York Western Australia, has been undertaken to ensure that this plan conforms to best practice.

### **Section 3 – Audience Research**

Small museums are successful when they understand their different audiences and have a careful strategy for providing what interests them. This Interpretation Plan has an additional component of audience research which will help to guide and shape new interpretive initiatives for the site. This research was conducted in June and July 2006, by tourism and historical organisations affiliated with the Southern Midlands Council and the Oatlands area, through the form of open-ended questionnaires. Analysis of these questionnaires has been undertaken by the consultant. The results of visitor research have been used to support the development of the Interpretation Plan. A discussion of the main findings of this research is presented in Section 3.

By clarifying the needs of its different audiences, the Oatlands Supreme Court House will be a successful small museum. Strategies for the requirements of particular groups will contribute to ensuring that their experiences of the site are worthwhile and memorable.

## 2 AN INTERPRETATION MODEL FOR THE OATLANDS SUPREME COURT HOUSE

The interpretive theory approaches outlined in this section are interlinked and are complimentary and supportive of each other. It is suggested that new interpretive activities at the Oatlands Supreme Court House are based on the concepts above, including primarily the notions that:

- thematic interpretation is seen as the key to a successful visitor experience;
- that interpretation should be relevant to a wide variety of audiences; and
- that it should encourage opportunities for participation.

In addition, interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House will be based on the six principles identified by Tilden; it will address the TORE approach of Sam Ham and Tourism Tasmania; will adhere to a constructivist approach; and will seek to challenge and provoke visitors.

This model is suggested as it is the best to deliver the interpretive aims and objectives of the Oatlands Supreme Court House, and is achievable, whilst also conforming to best practice interpretation, and current thinking within the field.

Most importantly, the new interpretation strategies will be visitor-focused, and informed by audience research. The significance of the site and its messages and themes will be reflected in interpretation.

The site's integrity and authenticity, and issues of site conservation will be of primary concern for new interpretation. The new strategies included within this policy will not compromise the site's natural ability to interpret itself as an authentic site with much integrity.

Any new interpretive initiatives will be based on sound research and informed knowledge.

The interpretation model seeks to provide variety in the interpretive experiences offered to visitors and will allow for diverse audiences by providing different layers or levels of information. It will also contribute to the long-term preservation of the court house and its collection, by spreading the load of visitor impact.

In a consistent approach with interpretive tourist experiences across Tasmania, this Interpretation Plan will strongly adhere to the principles of the Tasmanian Experience Strategy and the Tasmanian Thematic Interpretation planning Manual.

Interpretation of the site will be developed in accordance with the significance of the site, with a primary focus on this. Interpretation will also acknowledge the different levels of significance of different periods in the history of the Oatlands Supreme Court House. However, interpretation will not concentrate on any one period of time and occupancy at the expense of another. Rather, it is necessary to acknowledge, and is necessary that visitors understand, all the layers of history that contribute to the evolution of the site and its story over time. The building and its uses have never been static, and it would be inaccurate to present the building as though this was the case.

Despite this, it is also noted that the primary significance of the site rests in the period of use of the building as a Supreme Court House. Therefore, a key focus of interpretation needs to relate to this use phase of the building. The layering of the history of the site, and its area of primary significance, coupled with the existing collections which do not represent the primary significance of the site, present a challenge for interpretation, which are addressed throughout the recommendations of this Plan.

### 3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oatlands Military Precinct, particularly the Gaol and Court House, represents high cultural significance to Tasmania because:

- It was the longest running military establishment in the interior of VDL;
- The planning and layout of the precinct reflect the contemporary thought that Oatlands was to become the capital of the VDL interior;
- It was the last regional military precinct to be disbanded;
- It was the most complete military precinct site in Tasmania;
- The Gaol (1834) was the largest regional Gaol in VDL, the only one where executions took place and is the second most complete site of its type in Tasmania. The layout of the complex represents the typical attitude of Governor Arthur to penal reform and the architectural styling is a fine example of the work of the Colonial Engineer John Lee-Archer; Hangings only occurred where there was an association with the Court House.
- The Court House (1828) is the oldest stone building in Oatlands, the only regional Supreme Court House in Tasmania. The architectural styling is unique – the wagon-headed ceiling being one of only three in the southern hemisphere;
- Both buildings are listed on local, State and National heritage registers.
- The Oatlands Supreme Court House is the oldest regional Supreme Court House in Australia.

**Criterion A (Evolutional Pattern):** The Oatlands Supreme Court House demonstrates a complex and unusual evolutional pattern reflecting the needs of the township of Oatlands through the nineteenth century. Built as a chapel/court house, extended for police offices, again extended for judges chambers, upgraded to a Supreme Court then superseded by a new building and revitalised for other uses (Council Chambers, Mechanic's Institute, Domestic dwelling) – the fabric of the building tells stories from each of these phases.

**Criterion B (Rarity):** Being the oldest Supreme Court building in Australia, the Oatlands Court House is a rare example of this type of building. The wagon-headed ceiling construction in the Courtroom is reputedly one of only three in the Southern Hemisphere.

**Criterion D (Representative of):** The Oatlands Court House is representative of the early administrative structure of Oatlands. The distinct use phases reflecting in variations on the Georgian architecture of the building represent the changing needs of the fledgling community.

**Criterion E (Creative/Technical/Aesthetic):** The rare attributes of the construction detailing of the Oatlands Court House are of creative/technical significance. The wagon-headed ceiling and ornate sandstone mantel demonstrate a high level of technical achievement unusual for such a discreet building.

**Criterion F (Community):** Being one of the oldest public buildings remaining in the town, the Oatlands Court House has strong meaning for the community. It represents many aspects of the social formation of the township (judicial, spiritual and industrial). Its position on the shore

of Lake Dulverton is a significant element in the historic townscape and adds to the community's sense of place (Williams, 2005).

## 4. THEMES

The following topics and themes have been developed based on the Oatlands Supreme Court House Statement of Significance, above, and the outcomes of a workshop held with members of the Oatlands Gaol and Supreme Court House working Group, on Friday 22 September, 2006. The themes presented below are the key messages which the site should convey to its visitors. One theme should be used as the core message in each new activity/initiative at the Oatlands Supreme Court House.

### **Government administration and military precinct**

A Supreme Court House in Oatlands may sound absolutely absurd and completely unnecessary by today's standards, but at the time it was essential to the colony's administrative and military systems, as the central capital of the interior.

The planning and layout of the military precinct reflect the intention that Oatlands become the capital of the Van Diemen's Land interior.

The Oatlands Supreme Court House was but one component to a much larger picture of government administration in Oatlands, and together, the Oatlands Supreme Court House along with other related sites in Oatlands, is the most complete military precinct from colonial times in Tasmania.

### **Architecture (and construction)**

The Oatlands Supreme Court House is constructed largely of local materials, sourced not more than 100 metres away, and is representative of the main building material and style used in the colony's early history.

Of the stone buildings for which Oatlands is renowned, this is where it all began.

The individual stonemasonry styles of the two convicts in chains who built the Court House are clearly discernable in the stonework of the building.

The interior of the Oatlands Supreme Court House presents remarkable workmanship in its architecture, with the layers of history also embedded in the walls of the place.

### **Evolution/Uses of the building**

The Oatlands Supreme Court House demonstrates a complex and unusual evolutionary pattern reflecting the changing needs of the fledgling community through the nineteenth century.

The construction and evolutionary history are apparent in the building's fabric, first as a chapel/court house, extension for police offices, later extensions for judges chambers, upgraded to a Supreme Court then superseded by a new building and revitalised for other uses (Council Chambers, Mechanic's Institute) – the fabric of the building tells stories from each of these phases.



### **Domestic Life**

In a bizarre twist of purpose, the Supreme Court House was to become a place of family routine and chore, as well as celebration of life.

### **Social history**

The various convict systems operating in Van Diemen's Land rendered many changes to the colony and its society, evident through the 60 year life span of the Court House.

The trials held in the Court House paint a colourful picture of the life and times in a small rural town in the nineteenth century, with nearly all its residents entwined in the system at some stage or other. Many of these characters were embroiled in scandal and corruption.

### **Trials**

The Oatlands Supreme Court House is a place of trials and tribulations, with the stories of those who passed through here, in their many different facets of life, embedded into the very fabric of the place.

For 60 something years, this was much more than just a minor country town, as the place where crime and punishment were dealt with, from petty offences to murder. The fate of many was decided here at the Supreme Court in Oatlands, with hundreds of people sentenced, some to death, within these walls.

### **The legal system**

Our justice and legal systems of today are remarkably reminiscent of those which were operating 150 years ago, with many parallels apparent, yet also many differences.

The operation of this facility was pivotal in the control of lawlessness within Tasmania.

Australian law is and has always been about protecting its citizens. The Oatlands Supreme Court House represents this thread from the colony's very earliest days.

### **Convictism**

Although convictism is a common theme within Tasmania's history, the Supreme Court House portrays a different side to the convict experience.

### **Conservation, archaeology and management**

Conservation and management of the Oatlands Supreme Court House is an ongoing process, reflecting the hard work and dedication of many.

## **5. INTERPRETATION STRATEGY**

Two key, and related, challenges present themselves in relation to interpretation at the Oatlands Court House. These challenges are those of access to the site, and the consequent implications of the need for staffing. These issues have been addressed in the following recommendations for interpretive activities through priorities for implementation.

There is also a limited amount of space which can be used to interpret the building, its stories and collections, and it is important not to overcrowd the spaces and overwhelm the visitor. The suggested initiatives below have taken these factors into account, though it is important to also remember at the time of preparing displays for each room that less is often more, and especially in small spaces.

Advertising will be an important early component of attracting visitors to the Oatlands Supreme Court House, and raising awareness of it. Simultaneously, interpretive initiatives need to be provided at an early stage to reflect this advertising and meet visitors' expectations.

The recommendations provided below recognise that interpretation and visitor access is starting from scratch, and that visitor numbers need to be gradually built up, in correspondence with the layering of interpretive initiatives to achieve the five-year vision for the site.

This Plan is intended to be a realistic and achievable document, working towards the five-year goal, recognising that the Oatlands Supreme Court House is not going to become a "must-see" attraction overnight. It will take time and effort to make it such, including a collaborative effort with other related sites in Oatlands.

In devising the initiatives below consideration has been given to what it is that will make the Oatlands Supreme Court House a unique and "must-see" attraction. Primarily, it is the stories and themes of the site that are remarkable, and that make this place distinct from any other. These stories need to be told in captivating, thought-provoking and meaningful ways. Secondary to the stories and themes are the interpretive media. The media in itself will not make the Court House into a "must-see" attraction, though coupled with the stories, together these things will build a name for the place. Both need to be of the highest quality and standard.

The following suggested interpretive initiatives are based on the significance of the site, the suggestions of the Oatlands Gaol and Court House Working Group and the results of audience research. In addition, the initiatives have been developed in consultation and negotiation with the Heritage Project Officer, Southern Midlands Council.

### **5.1 COMMUNITY USE**

It is acknowledged that an important function of the Oatlands Supreme Court House will be for community purposes and uses. This may include special functions. It is outside the scope of this project to consider in detail the community uses and functions of the building, with the

focus being, instead, on the interpretive presentation of the building and its collections for visitors. However, the dual-purpose of the building has been considered in the preparation of this Plan, and the interpretive initiatives suggested are intended to be compatible with future community uses of the building.

It is recommended that a community consultation programme be undertaken to establish the local community's preferences for their use of the building, and the purposes and activities for which they would like to use it.

However, before this process is undertaken, it is recommended that the Working Group consider all possible and potential partners who may be interested in being part of the project. These partners may include the Supreme Court House of Tasmania, Tasmania Police, University of Tasmania, Education Department, Commonwealth DPP, and the Law Society of Tasmania.

The development of partnerships with targeted organisations, for the purposes of both interpretation and community use, should be investigated.

## **5.2 MARKETING OF THE SITE**

The name of the Oatlands Supreme Court House is going to be important in capturing people's imaginations and drawing them to the site. This name needs to reflect the ways in which the Court House will be presented, including its themes and media.

One suggestion for a name of the site is:

The Oatlands Supreme Court House - A place of trial and tribulation

This name – a play on words – captures the sense of the judicial system in Van Diemen's Land, as well as some of the social stories related to the site. The name also captures the layers of history of the building, through the 'trial' of the building in its many different forms and uses.

'Place' is considered a better word than centre or space, as it opens up a greater affinity with the site, and hints that the site offers an experience, and is open to the public. The name also has a sense of intrigue and curiosity for visitors, whilst remaining ambiguous enough to allow for community use and functions within the building.

The name, whilst not conveying a theme or message, does however depict the central aspects of the site's significance, as a Supreme Court House.

## **5.3 FIRST YEAR – INITIAL AWARENESS**

During the first year of this Plan, it will be important that the Working Group continue to foster partnerships and encourage the participation of other related organisations and sites, including the Supreme Court in Hobart, the University of Tasmania and Tasmania Police. Such partnerships are an important avenue for funding and marketing/advertising. These partnerships will also be important in furthering awareness and appreciation of the site.

Most of the suggestions for implementation in the first year of this Plan involve the exterior of the building and the military precinct, given that access will still be restricted at this time.

### **Business Plan**

Parallel to the implementation of this Interpretation Plan, it is essential that a Business Plan be developed, overseen by the working group, for recommendation by the Council, that covers all relevant aspects pertaining to the Court House Project development, including the strategies outlined below.

### **Partnerships**

During the first year of this Plan, the working group should investigate partnership opportunities with relevant organisations and groups. These partnerships should investigate funding opportunities, potential audiences and community uses for the building, collections held elsewhere that may be displayed at the Supreme Court House, and other issues.

### **Exterior signage panel**

A signage panel is needed at the entrance of the site, to provide visitors with an introduction to the Oatlands Supreme Court House and its significance, as well as orienting them to the site. This signage panel will act as an invitation for visitors to take a look around the building, increasing awareness of the place.

Only one signage panel should be placed outside the Court House, so as to minimize any visual intrusions.

The signage panel designed for the exterior should be done in such a way that similar signs can be placed at other related sites, such as the Oatlands Gaol, to ensure a consistency in approach.

This signage panel should relate to the main history and uses of the building, as well as briefly interpreting the architecture and construction of the exterior of the building – all notions of which are intertwined.

### **Self-guided tour – Oatlands Military Precinct**

A self-guided tour of the military precinct should be implemented through the means of a glossy and high-quality booklet. This booklet should be in-keeping with the design of the exterior signage-panel for consistency and recognition. Such a brochure would have a dual purpose – to act as a guide for visitors for the military precinct, before any of the buildings are capable of being staffed, and as a form of marketing and advertising. A high-quality, glossy and informative guidebook will make a quality souvenir for visitors, who can also show this to friends later.

The self-guided tour should focus on the military precinct of Oatlands, rather than solely the Court House. This is due to the fact that the Court House will largely remain closed to visitors and, by itself, a guide book to the exterior of the building will not hold enough attraction for visitors. However, if this booklet relates more broadly to the Oatlands military precinct – with special attention and information provided for each building and area of interest – it will encourage visitors to understand the Court House in its broader context, and a more general history of Oatlands.

Such a booklet is a good way to begin encouraging interest and awareness in the Court House and broader precinct.

This booklet should be made available alongside the exterior signage panel at the site, in a weatherproof box. The booklet should also advise people of a place (perhaps the TVIN or SMC Office) where they can place their name on a list for twice yearly updates on the progress of the Court House restoration and interpretation programme (See 'Advertising' below).

### **Architecture - brochure**

A brochure specifically designed to interpret the architecture of the building in detail, (with some reference to interior features) will help visitors to understand the significance of these aspects of the site, which are accessible prior to the building being open.

A brochure is a non-intrusive way for visitors to find out more about the architecture, and interior details of the building, and is something they may take away with them as a souvenir.

To prepare this brochure need not be too onerous – a simple A4 double-sided sheet can be prepared quite easily with simple graphic design, and printed in high-quality, glossy paper.

Similarly to the military precinct brochure, this architecture brochure should also be available to visitors at the exterior signage panel of the Court House.

### **Advertising**

Subtle but effective signage should be placed on the High Street in Oatlands, to inform visitors of the direction to the Oatlands Court House.

In addition, a brochure should be developed to be distributed at TVIN centres throughout the State to inform visitors of the Oatlands Supreme Court House and military precinct, with reference to it being a 'work in progress'. This information might be included on an update to an existing broader Oatlands brochure.

Regular (i.e six-monthly) updates should be emailed to those who express interest in being included on such a list. This update should also be posted on Council's website. People may express interest in being included on such a list after being invited from a brochure to do so, through Council's website, and any other available means.

Early advertising such as this will alert people to the fact that something is happening at the Oatlands Supreme Court House, as a 'watch-this-space' type of promotion.

It is suggested that a partnership be developed with a key stakeholder/s, to ensure that exterior signage is consistent and supportive of other tourism strategies developed in the region. For instance, links and partnerships with the existing tourism strategies and groups of the Heritage Highway and Convict Trail could be investigated.

### **Interior display – domestic life**

In the first year of this Plan, interior displays should be established, interpreting the domestic use of the building. The collections should be displayed in one of the front rooms, and should rotate on a six-monthly basis.

The display could be set-up to depict the domestic use of the room in which it is displayed, and to provide visitors with a 'lived-in' feeling, with only a small A4 colour printed signage panel informing visitors of the Thomas family and their life. This panel should also explain how the collections come to remain with the building.

A plan of the interior of the building at the time of the Thomas' residence should later be provided in the interactive interpretation of the layers of the building, in the main entrance hall (see Year 3).

This room should be cordoned off by Perspex walls. Perspex walls will allow for smaller items to be displayed, without any fear of theft or accident.

The entrance off the hallway should be closed, to influence the way and timing in which visitors experience this room. In this way, visitors will access the court room before the domestic space, in-keeping with the chronological order of these two use phases.

It is recognized that at this early stage, the building won't be open for public access. However, by interpreting an area of the interior of the Court House early on, it does provide visitors with a 'sneak preview' through windows. This will add interest to their visit, and people will be able to see the beginnings of the interpretation of the interior of the Court House.

Two main options exist for the interpretation of the domestic use of the building, as follows:

1. Interpret the front northern room as a room of a particular use by the Thomas family, such as bedroom or kitchen, utilizing objects from the collection; or
2. Interpret the room as a display of the existing collections, comprising a mix of elements from different areas and uses of the house.

Opportunity exists to incorporate both the above concepts, utilizing a rotational or temporary display, whereby the room will be interpreted at times as a bedroom/kitchen and at other times it will present a more disparate display of the collections. This will allow all the objects held in the collection to be on display at one time or another, providing the best public access to the collection.

The first option above will present visitors with an image of the room as it was when the Thomas family occupied the building. However, it is recognized that, due to the nature of the collections, some elements of the bedroom/kitchen are missing. New elements should not be introduced as these would compromise the authenticity and originality of the existing collection. Visitors should be informed, through signage, that the objects they see are those that were used by the Thomas family, and that other objects would also have been here at the time of the Thomas family's occupation of the building, though these have not been kept as part of the collection.

It is believed that there are sufficient items in the collection to present this room as either a bedroom or a kitchen space. (However, signage should interpret to visitors that this room was never actually used as a kitchen, rather that the kitchen collections are displayed here to take advantage of the opportunity the room presents).

The latter option above will provide visitors with an indication of the way the Thomas family lived. In presenting a diverse array of collections (for instance, a kitchen dresser and wooden

sofa) visitors should be informed through simple signage that they are viewing the collections held as part of the Thomas family collection, which would have been spread throughout the building. Visitors should be encouraged to think about where each of these items may have been placed during the Thomas family's occupation.

Caution should be taken to ensure that this option of displaying the collections does not appear as an overcrowded jumble. Through this display, the items should be displayed neatly with similar use items placed together, such as the potty and tin bath. Plinths might be used to showcase some of these items and particularly the smaller objects. This will also enhance the notion that this is a display of the collections rather than a replica of the way the room was set up and used by the Thomas family.

It is recognized that the collections of the Thomas family include some grand and elegant pieces of furniture, and other more modest pieces. Both can be displayed together, in providing a contrast and intrigue as to the way these people lived. Through this notion, visitors will be provoked to thought, and wonder of who these people were and how they lived. They may even begin to think about their own homes, and wonder how other people would picture their lives if others were judging them based on their furniture and other objects of daily use.

The modest nature of many of the items held in the collection will enhance the notion of an ordinary family living here in the Court House in the not too distant past, and will provide visitors with a picture of the way these people lived and who they were. Through this notion, visitors should be inclined to draw parallels with their own lives.

Later in the life of this Plan, once other rooms are interpreted, the domestic use of the building will be in stark contrast and juxtaposition to the remainder of the building. This notion should be played upon and exploited, as a surprise factor for visitors.

Some of the other items from the collection relating to the domestic-use phase of the Court House, and not displayed in this building, should be displayed at the Historical Society. In this way, both places can act as advocates for the other, and the maximum number of items will be on display at any one time.

Images 1-6, below, provide an illustration of some of the collections available for display. (A full catalogue is also included as Appendix 2 to Volume 2).





#### **5.4 SECOND YEAR – THE BEGINNINGS OF LIMITED ACCESS**

Successful activities of the first year of this Plan should continue into the second. It is intended that, towards the end of this year, access will begin to be provided through guided tours at specified times. In the first part of this year, effort will be put into interpreting the building and making it ready to have something on offer for visitors during guided tours.

##### **Orientation to layers of history**

The different layers of use of the building should be interpreted to visitors in the main entrance hall, as an introduction to the layers of construction and use of the site. There are many ways in which this can be done, though it is believed that it will be most successful to present this as an interactive display. An interactive display, such as a touch-screen will also save congestion in a small space, which signage panels would result in. It is important to keep the main entrance hall as free as possible from other intrusions, so as not to clutter and confuse the visitor.

This interactive display should be presented as a touch-screen computer image which depicts the layers of history, and information about the period of each. (If this proves too costly, an alternative is to present this information as a Perspex book, depicting the layers of use and construction).

This modeling programme should depict to visitors the layout of the building at different times throughout its diverse past. For instance, it should show the layout of the building during the Thomas family's occupation, with the segregation of the main court room and the spaces



used as bedrooms, kitchen etc. This model will also depict the development of the building and the additions and extensions over time.

Although the building won't be fully staffed and open to visitors at this early stage of the life of this Plan, preparing interior interpretation of the layers of use at this stage will assist in preparing the building for later opening to visitors. It will also be useful for guided tours which come through the building in this second year.

### **Interior display – Court Room**

The main room of the Court House should be displayed in a minimalistic way, so as to retain its authenticity while providing visitors with hints as to the building's use as a Supreme Court House.

Due to the nature of the building and its architecture, subtle interpretation will be quite powerful in this space. As such, the Court House should be displayed to provide visitors with hints of the design and layout of the room at the time, with some furniture and other props to portray this image. For instance, the Judge's Box should be reconstructed from the original specifications, though information on this Box, or its form/material, should inform visitors that this is a reconstruction.

On the two side walls of the building should be the words of trials and sentences that have taken place in the Oatlands Supreme Court House – particularly those that are most striking. In addition, the words and quotes of famous law suits which have bearing on our lives today should be displayed on the back wall, so that visitors see these as they are leaving the room. This will provide them with thought-provoking notions of the links between the use of the Oatlands Supreme Court building and our lives today within the current legal system. Visitors will thus be surrounded by the history and events of the place, and forced to consider the broader links of the Court House with the legal system, both past and present.

It is envisaged that this text will be printed in large format, on material screens or banners which hang from the ceiling.

No other elements of interpretation, such as signage or photos should be used in this room. Rather the skeleton props should largely provide the sense of a Court House from the nineteenth century, as though visitors have stepped back in time, without many of today's intrusive elements.

Minimal furniture and props here will also assist in allowing community uses and functions to occur in this room.

It is suggested that a partnership be developed with a key stakeholder/s, to facilitate a mutually beneficial working relationship, with regards to interpretation of the Court Room. For instance, a partnership could be established with the Supreme Court of Hobart, the Law Society and/or UTAS. Opportunities for funding should be investigated, as well as the ways in which these groups can assist and benefit from interpretation and community use of the Court House.

### **Interior display - Judge's Chamber**

The interpretation of the Judge's Chamber should relate to the history of law in Tasmania and the influence it has on society, both past and present. The Supreme Court in Hobart should be consulted further over the interpretation of this space, and the material to convey, though it is suggested that this material be presented through interpretation signage panels and static displays.

It is recognized that this is a small space in which to interpret one of the site's main themes.

In this room, collections and displays should be most heavily relied upon as interpretive material to depict its former use. Photographic images and artefacts should be used in static interpretive displays where possible. If possible, material should be loaned from other sources, including the Supreme Court in Hobart, to be displayed here.

In addition, text-based media will be required to interpret the topic of law history and its influence on society. Large signage panels should be used for this purpose, and should be placed unobtrusively at the entrance to this room, in the Court Room, to avoid overcrowding the small space of the Judge's Chamber.

Interpretation in the Judge's Chamber should be complimentary to that in the main Court Room, in that they should both build from one another in telling the story of the Court House and its history, and how this relates more broadly to aspects of law and justice.

In addition, this room has an array of layers of wallpaper which depict the later domestic use of the space. This wallpaper should be retained, in juxtaposition to the story of the Judge's Chamber, and a small panel displayed to tell of the use of this space by the Thomas family.

The interpretation of the Judge's Chamber presents another opportunity to establish partnerships with appropriate organisations, including the Supreme Court of Hobart, the Law Society and/or UTAS.

### **Special events**

The Oatlands Supreme Court House should seek to be a part of special events that occur throughout the region and the State. Already, the Court House does this to an extent, through opening on days such as the Oatlands Spring Festival, its use for 10 Days on the Island 2003, and for specialist heritage workshops. However, this notion should be expanded, in order that the Court House actively becomes an essential part of such activities.

The Court House should continue to be a part of larger events such as 10 Days on the Island, by engaging with other aspects, such as housing related and relevant artworks, or similar. It is important that any such artworks enhance rather than detract from the site.

Artworks might include weather-proof sculptures in the exterior of the site, or may include installations in the Court House itself. If artwork is to be included in the Court House, the most appropriate space for this will be evident through the theme or topic to which it relates. It is recommended that any printed or painted artwork be hung from the ceiling, or on the walls of the building.

By this stage of the Plan, the Court House will have some interpretive initiatives to offer its visitors, and these should be advertised and marketed as such, particularly for special events. During these periods, the Court House should be permanently staffed.

Such activities will help to raise the profile of the site, and increase visitor awareness.

### **Guided tours**

In order to make use of the recently installed interior displays and signage, guided tours should be introduced to allow visitor access.

Both the working group and Business Plan should investigate the ways in which guided tours and access for the Court House can be granted, including issues of staffing, fees and regularity of tours.

## **5.5 THIRD YEAR – CONTINUING INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS AND GUIDED TOURS**

During the third year of this Plan, guided tours, and other initiatives already implemented, should continue. In addition, interpretive displays in the interior of the building should continue.

### **Interior display - Holding Room**

The Holding Room should be used as a reference room, and as a possible space for researchers to house themselves.

The room should be established to allow entry by appointment only to access research material, and access provided through the side door to this building. The door which opens to the Court Room should be encased in Perspex, allowing views for Court House visitors into this area.

In this room, an electronic database should be established, which visitors may search for information relating to trials which took place, and to easily look for further information pertaining to the trials and social history of the township. Visitors should also be provided the chance through this room, as a resource and reference area, to provide any information they may have on ancestors or other information as it relates to the Court House.

The electronic database should be established on two different levels – one purely as an easily readable interpretation for those wanting to know more about some of the trials and characters; and secondly as a more academic approach for those with a specialized interest, or school students.

Copies of records of trials should be made available in this room for visitors to peruse.

Interpretation in both the Holding Room and the Police Office needs to be complimentary to that already established in the main Court Room and Judge's Chamber. There need to be evident links between the interpretation of each room.

### **Interior display - Police Office**

The second front room should be interpreted as the Police Office, with interpretation panels to depict this history, as well as the social history of Oatlands in the nineteenth century and the trials which took place. In addition, the room should be modestly displayed, with collections, artefacts and photographs and images to depict this use.

The leather table and chairs held in the collections should be housed in this room.

A 3D interpretive model, depicting the Oatlands military precinct should be housed here. This model should be large enough to allow easy viewing, though small enough to allow its positioning on the leather table.

The social history and stories of characters who are associated with the building should be interpreted through this room. The continuity of character will be important, to interpret not just a single moment in a person's life, but to explain what happened after. The Court House also has the ability to provide a snapshot of society at the time, and this should be interpreted here. It is important to interpret the stories of the day-to-day life of the time of the Court House's operation, in order to paint a picture of the nineteenth century society which lived in the town, as well as its more striking tales. It is also important to interpret the stories of women and children who were associated with the Court House and its trials.

This interpretation should be told through large signage panels, and photographs and images, where available.

A partnership with Tasmania Police may be beneficial in developing this interpretive strategy.

### **Archaeology – Signage panels and collections**

Interpreting the archaeology of the Court House presents an opportunity to interpret the construction of the building, and its changes over time. A signage panel should be placed near the archaeological trench in the room interpreted as the Police Office, to portray the construction of the building. A note on this display should encourage visitors to view a second archaeological panel, near the site of the stables.

The archaeological collections of the Oatlands Court House should be interpreted through display. Such a display should be incorporated in the Police Office, near to the trench in this room. This should be presented in a glass case, with information pertaining to each item. (The signage panel explaining the archaeological trench should alleviate the need to have an additional panel for the display case itself).

A panel should be placed near to the site of the stables, where archaeology was undertaken in 2005. This panel should explain the discipline of archaeology, including the research and excavation process, as well as the outcomes of this particular excavation.

### **University Law Torts**

Through partnership programmes set up through the University of Tasmania, the Oatlands Supreme Court House should be used by students and lecturers as a place for law torts. This will be particularly useful in portraying the history of law to students, and to increase the awareness and appreciation for the site, for a different audience with a specialized interest.

In order to conduct law torts here, existing interpretation in the Court Room may need to be moved to one side.

### **Website**

Despite the lack of interest expressed in audience research for a website on the Oatlands Supreme Court House, it is considered that at this stage of the Plan, a website will help to increase the profile of the site, and will also be a useful tool to provide information for those with specialized interests, including architecture and conservation and management.

This website should have links to and from the online virtual tour devised by the Tasmanian Magistrate's Court. In addition, this online tour, with permission from the Tasmanian Magistrate's Court, should be accessible on the computer which houses the database (see Interior display – Holding Room).

## **5.6 FOURTH YEAR – ADDITIONAL MEDIA**

It is the aim of this Plan that by the fourth year, additional interpretive medias will begin to be introduced, including a soundscape, and publication.

### **Permanent staffing**

During the fourth year of the life of this Plan, the working group and/or the Business Plan should seek to identify ways to permanently staff the Supreme Court House, if the interpretation implementation of the previous three years deem this to be financially viable.

### **Soundscape**

A soundscape should be implemented in the main court room, of trials taking place. This should be of a volume so as to not overwhelm the visitor's natural experience of the space, but loud enough to be heard comfortably as a background. Many trials should be broadcast through this soundscape so as visitors are captured for as long as possible. However, none of the trials broadcast should be too long individually, or visitors will easily get distracted and lose interest.

### **Gift Shop**

A small display, presenting items which relate to the military precinct and its themes, should be established in a glass case on the wall of the hallway. These items should be made available for sale in the Oatlands Visitor Information Centre, with information directing people to this place for purchase.

This display should be placed in an appropriate position so as visitors are aware of it on leaving the Court House. It should not be too obvious or evident as they enter the building. A likely space would be on the wall beside the door.

### **Publication**

A publication should tell the history of the Court House, in all its various guises, including all use phases and the stories related thereto. This publication needs to be of a high-quality.

## **5.7 FIFTH YEAR – SPECIALISED AUDIENCES AND PERFORMANCES**

The fourth year of this Plan will see a series of special events and performances which add another experience to the building, and help to further increase its profile, particularly amongst the local community.

### **School programme**

Local schools should become involved with the Oatlands Supreme Court House through an ongoing programme which actively engages them with the site. This programme should involve visits to the site, to learn about aspects of its history and significance. This programme would need to be tailored to student's ages and interests, through negotiation with teachers. Class projects should be incorporated into the programme to increase student's understanding of the Court House.

An interactive way for students to be involved with the site is through a role-playing exercise. Costumes can help to enhance the experience for children, and need only be basic, to help put across the idea. Children could, with the assistance of teachers and a guide, act out a trial which took place. To further their understanding, use should be made of the Oatlands Gaol, which can further enhance the story and its portrayal for children.

### **Children's activities**

In conjunction with a school programme, something should be provided at the Court House for children who visit with their families. This could take the form of a booklet with different activities related to the Court House and its themes for children to complete. This should include questions and challenges which require participants to visit various rooms to discover the answers to the questions posed. For instance, it could ask children to sketch the Judge's box, to find the site of the stables, to find something from the 1950s... Activities could also include colouring-in and word-finds. Through this booklet, children should also be encouraged to experience the outdoor cell. A booklet such as this, if done well, acts as a souvenir and show-and-tell piece for children.

Other activities which have already been implemented which should engage children include the touch-screen computer and domestic-life display.

In addition, if costumes are implemented in the school programme, these should be available for other children to use. Putting on clothing can instantly change a person's appearance and transport them to another time. This acts as an interactive element to the site as well.

### **Performance**

The Oatlands Supreme Court House is an ideal venue for performance, which will also encourage the local community to engage with the site, both as actors/performers and as audience.

Ways of encouraging repeat visitation are important, and performance is an ideal way to achieve this.

Local performers should be approached for ideas and contributions, related to the significance of the site, initially for special events. Once this proves successful, a more regular performance schedule should be created, especially through busy periods, such as over the summer months.

Evening performances may provide visitors with a chance to see a different side of the Court House, and obtain a different experience from their daytime experience. However, the authenticity of the site needs to be considered in this approach, and nothing which trivializes it should occur.

Performances could take the form of re-enactments, or other, more creative and artistic ideas.

## **5.8 INTO THE FUTURE**

By the end of this five year Plan, the Oatlands Supreme Court House should be attracting reasonable numbers of visitors, with a variety of interpretation options on offer, with something to interest many different audiences.

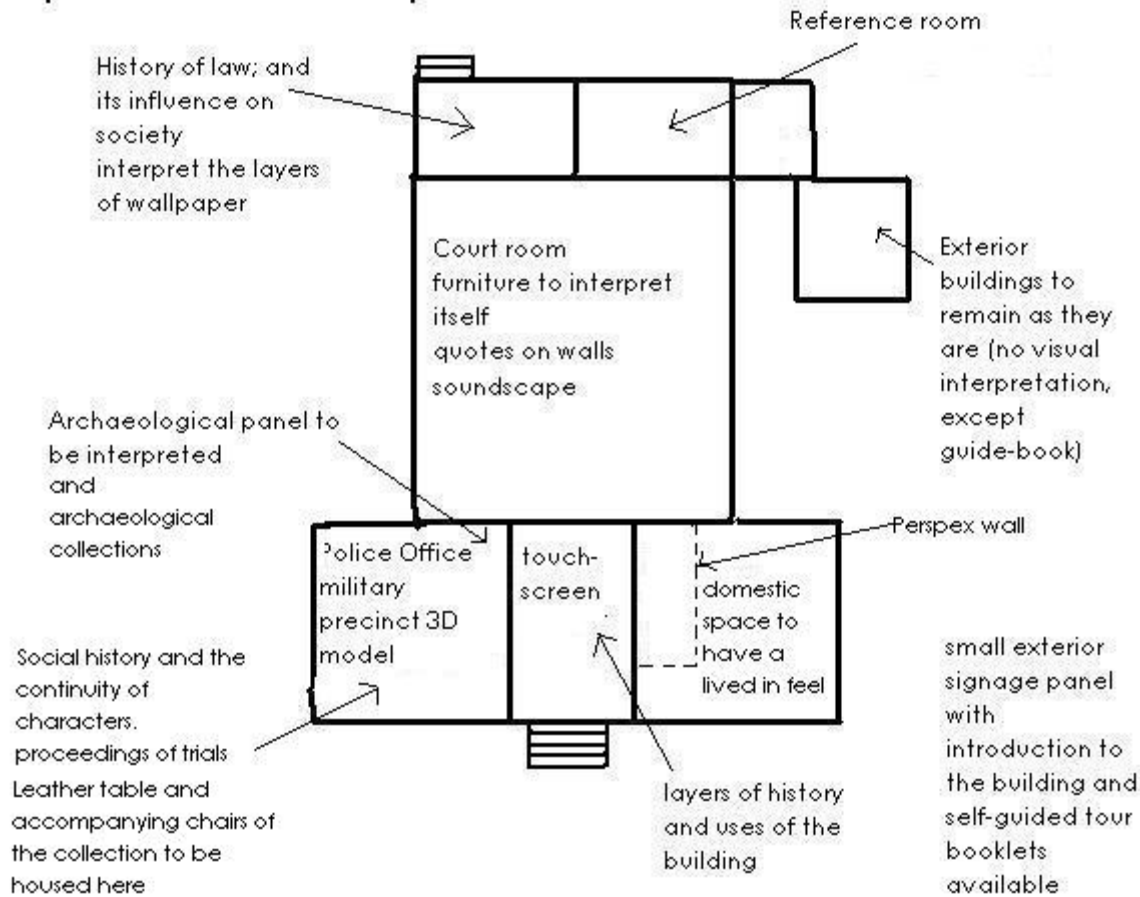
Beyond the life of this Plan there remains much scope to enhance and further the initial interpretive initiatives suggested above.

The many entrance and exit points in the building provide the potential for experiencing the building from different perspectives – as a judge, as a prisoner awaiting trial, as a member of the Thomas family... These possibilities should be explored, to provide visitors with more options for the way in which they wish to experience and view the site.

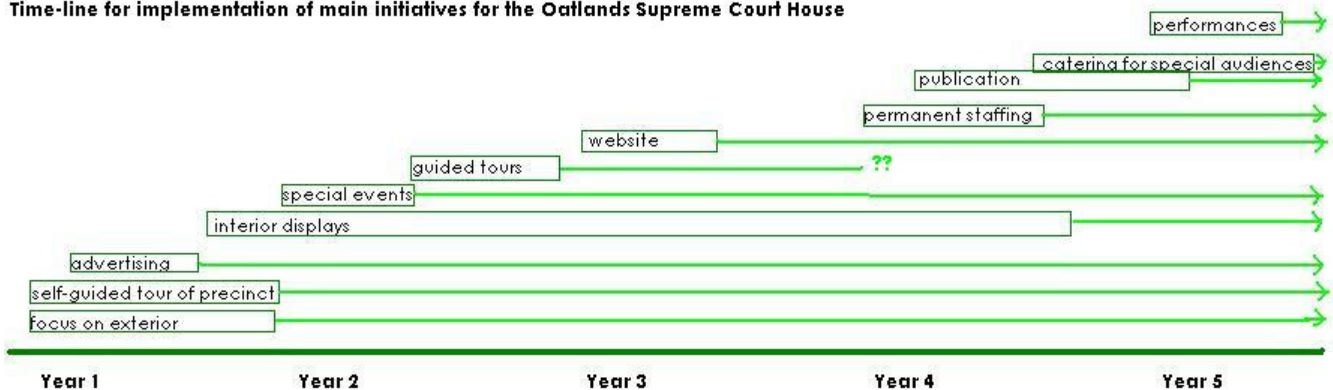
## **5.9 SUMMARY**

The following diagram and timeline provide a quick snapshot of the suggested initiatives.

## Interpretation of the Oatlands Supreme Court House



## Time-line for implementation of main initiatives for the Oatlands Supreme Court House



Key:

indicates implementation time for each activity

indicates ongoing nature of activity



## 6. SWOT ANALYSIS

The following Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis presents a review of the above interpretive activities, assessing the positive and negative aspects of the implementation of each.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threat</b>
<b>Business Plan</b>	Ensures a thorough and well-thought out approach to implementing interpretation.	Costly.	To further investigate issues including access, staffing and fees, throughout the life of the Plan.	May be time consuming to obtain funding to undertake a Business Plan, which will hinder the implementation process.
<b>Partnerships</b>	Mutually beneficial working relationship with appropriate groups/organisations. Ensures consistency in approach with other tourism strategies within the region.	Has the potential to skew interpretation of the site to meet other agendas of groups or organisations.	Better promotion, marketing for the site through additional avenues. Partnerships may bring with them a captive audience. It may be possible to loan collections from other sources for display at the Oatlands Supreme Court House.	Risk of partners becoming too involved and changing direction of interpretation/access to meet their own agendas.
<b>Exterior Signage</b>	Acts as an introduction to the site, especially when access to the interior is extremely limited.	Has potential to be visually intrusive.	To house brochures on the Military Precinct, and on other aspects of the Court House, prior to the site being staffed.	Costly.
<b>Self-guided tour</b>	Word-of-mouth advertising for the site, as a take-home 'show and tell' piece. Marketing and	Expensive to produce. Predominantly text-based. Visitors may prefer not to refer to it during their	Provides orientation to the site, relinquishing the need for much on-site signage within the precinct.	Expensive if done well. Difficult to update if required. May require

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threat</b>
	advertising tool. High quality guide book can enhance the reputation of the Court House.	visit. Not useful outside in the rain.	A separate Guide Book can cater for children and students (and, eventually overseas visitors if required).	additional cost by visitors.
<b>Architecture brochure</b>	Is something that can be implemented easily early in the process, without requiring access to the building.	Has the potential to look cheap and tacky.	To interpret the Georgian architecture of the building and explain its significance.	Needs to be weather-durable.
<b>Advertising</b>	Creates early interest in the site.	Expensive.	To showcase the positive steps forward and progressive changes at the Oatlands Court House.	Constantly needs updating.
<b>Interior display – domestic life</b>	Changing displays may attract repeat visitors. This display will be useful in initial access to the site. A large collection exists, enabling rotation of display.	Without any text-based material, this room may confuse visitors, in its contrast to the rest of the building. The collection does not relate to the primary significance of the site.	Interpret themes through visual aids. Changing displays (eg. Every six months). Opportunity to showcase different aspects of the domestic use of the Court House. Develop partnerships with other places who hold relevant collections.	There may not be enough resources to enable the change of displays.
<b>Orientation – layers of history</b>	Interactive media. Hands-on activity for visitors. Saves on space.	Some audiences may not like this type of media. Only one person can see the interpretation at a time.	To interpret additional information if required later.	Expensive.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threat</b>
<b>Interior display – Court Room</b>	To interpret to visitors the visual layout of the court room, and its wider relevance to today.	Very little information contained in the room itself.	Role-playing and other interactive activities. Also allows easy adjustment to utilise this room for other purposes.	It may prove difficult to acquire the necessary props. Care must be taken to not over-create and threaten authenticity of the site.
<b>Interior display – Judge’s Chamber</b>	To provide signage that is up to date and aesthetically attractive. To provide signage that is ‘reader-friendly’. Appeals to special interest.	Has the potential to become crowded and overwhelming to the visitor. May be too reliant on text-based media.	To develop partnerships with the Supreme Court in Hobart.	Requires research, and much time to prepare.
<b>Special Events</b>	For people to experience the Court House differently to what they would normally.	If not done in a relevant manner, these events may detract from the site itself.	To increase the profile of the site in conjunction with other activities, and increase visitor awareness.	Much time required in organising and preparation.
<b>Guided tours</b>	Allows visitor access prior to the site being fully staffed. Allows visitors to find out more information.	Not all visitors are interested in guided tours, though they may wish to have access.	To increase visitor awareness and appreciation of the Court House.	Staffing issues may be difficult. Visitors may not know that this option is available to them.
<b>Interior display – holding room</b>	To interpret the social history relating to the Court House, and the trials which took place.	Has the potential to become crowded and overwhelming to the visitor. May be too reliant on text-based media	For visitors to provide information which can contribute to the ongoing research of the site. A place for volunteer researchers to work. The above may help	Electronic database will be expensive to purchase, and time will be required to enter information in.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threat</b>
			with staffing issues.	
<b>Interior display – Police Office</b>	Interpreting another aspect of the Court House.	Has the potential to become crowded and overwhelming to the visitor.	To develop partnerships with Tasmania Police.	Expensive, particularly 3D model.
<b>Archaeology signage panels</b>	To interpret the construction of the building and the discipline of archaeology.	Reliant on text-based media.	To link with any other archaeological works which may occur in the Military Precinct in the future.	Signage is expensive.
<b>University Law Torts</b>	Attracts a different audience to the Court House. Very relevant to the primary themes of the site.	May detract from other users of the Court House, or limit the availability of the site to other visitors.	To develop partnerships with the University.	Planning and organising of facilities required.
<b>Website</b>	Important source of advertising for the site. Can also be a useful place for specialized information – architecture, conservation and management.	Technical expertise required to develop the website. Website may have to conform to standards set by the SMC.	Will attract more visitors to the Court House, and especially younger people.	Elderly visitors will be less likely to use the website than other forms of advertising.
<b>Permanent staffing</b>	Provides full access for visitors to the site.	If not many visitors, there may be little for the staff to do.	Increases visitor's options for self-guided or guided tours	Staffing issues may prove difficult. Visitor numbers may not warrant permanent staffing.
<b>Soundscape</b>	Provides an opportunity to interpret some of the trials that took place.	May be distracting.	Provides a different interpretive media for those who do not like text-based material.	Very expensive.
<b>Gift shop</b>	A source of revenue for the site.	Space is limited to display material.	A way to present associated resources	Space may not be available, and it may

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Threat</b>
			available for visitors, and to showcase other related places.	detract from interpretation.
<b>Publication</b>	Source of revenue for the site.	Will only be of interest to a small percentage of visitors, with a specialized interest.	To highlight in detail the history of the site and its significance.	Much time required for research.
<b>School programme</b>	On-going links with schools and/or childcare groups within the local area. Provides something thought-provoking for children.	Numbers of interested children may only be small.	To engage children in a number of activities associated with the site.	Much planning and organisation will be required.
<b>Children's activities</b>	Provides something interactive to engage children with the site. Relatively cheap to implement.	Children may not be interested.	Can provide introduction to the history of the site for children.	Due to the nature of the court house and its topics, it may prove difficult to find aspects of interest to children.
<b>Performance</b>	Increase visitation to the Court House, particularly locals and repeat visitors. Can increase the profile of the site, and the variety of activities/ features it has to offer.	Has the potential to trivialize the site if structured around the desire just to attract extra visitors.	A different perspective on the site.	Visitor numbers may still be small, and the benefits of special events thus not realized. Much planning and organisation involved.

## 7. PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following table provides a summary of the implications of each new initiative, in terms of the requirements for staffing and budgeting, as well as timing issues. This framework sets up a strategy which will assist in the implementation of each activity.

Section 3.1.1.2 of the SMC Strategic Plan 2006-11 states that the Heritage Project Officer (HPO) of SMC should 'Work in Partnership with the State Government to ensure the strategic long-term management of publicly owned heritage sites'. The strategies for interpretation at the Oatlands Supreme Court House will help to achieve this goal.

In addition, the working group, comprising community representatives, elected members of Council, and Council staff should also be involved in implementing this Plan.

The working group will require administrative support and funding for the implementation of this Plan, as indicated below.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Budgeting</b>
	<b>YEAR 1</b>		
Business Plan		Working group	Funding required
Partnerships		Working group	In-house
Exterior Signage		Working group & technical assistance	In-house
Self-guided tour		Working group & technical assistance	In-house
Architecture brochure		SMC Heritage Project Officer (HPO)	In-house
Advertising		HPO and SMC	In-house
Interior display – domestic life		Working group	In-house
	<b>YEAR 2</b>		
Orientation – layers of history		Working group & technical assistance	Funding required
Interior display – Court Room		Working group	Funding req.d
Interior display – Judge's Chamber		Working group & Supreme Court	Funding req.d
Special Events		HPO & SMC	In-house
Guided tours		Working group	In-house
	<b>YEAR 3</b>		
Interior display – holding room		Working group	Funding req.d
Interior display – Police Office		Working group	Funding req.d
Archaeology signage panels		HPO	In-house

University Law Torts		Working group	In-house
Website		SMC & technical assistance	In-house
	<b>YEAR 4</b>		
Permanent staffing		SMC	In-house
Soundscape		Working group & technical assistance	Funding required
Gift shop		Working group	In-house
Publication		Working group	Publisher
	<b>YEAR 5</b>		
School programme		Working group, local school	In-house
Children's activities		Working group	In-house
Performance		Working group	In-house

## 8. EVALUATION

An ongoing evaluation programme needs to be established for each new interpretive activity introduced at the Oatlands Supreme Court House, in order to ensure that visitor's needs are catered for, and their expectations are being met.

On-going evaluation will be essential to the success of the strategies outlined above. Evaluation needs to check that goal outcomes are being met. That is:

- That there is increased access to the collection which meets visitors expectations;
- That there is an increase in visitor's understandings of the Oatlands Supreme Court House and its collection;
- That there is improved conservation and care of the collection; and
- That the promotion of heritage in the Southern Midlands municipality is being improved, including through a consistent approach of branding and recognition as uniquely SMC.

In addition, it is necessary to establish, through evaluation, that:

- Visitors experience is enhanced by new interpretive activities;
- Something is offered for different audiences;
- Visitors are receiving the messages of activities they participate in; and
- Visitor numbers are increasing with an overall diversity of audience groups.

Evaluation can be undertaken through a number of ways, including informal evaluation undertaken by staff and guides, noting visitor comments, observations and feedback. A visitor book is also a useful evaluation tool. In addition, formal evaluation techniques can involve recruiting guides and/or a consultant to undertake surveys, through quantitative questionnaires or qualitative interviews with visitors.

It is recommended that informal evaluation techniques be an ongoing method of assessing new interpretive activities, and reviewing these as appropriate. It is also recommended that formal evaluation techniques be utilised as required to further inform assessment and review of new interpretive activities, at relevant milestones throughout the life of the Plan.