# Bondi Beach
Post Office HMP

Heritage Management Plan

20 Hall Street, Bondi Beach NSW 2026

January 2017

Prepared by

Prepared for

LOVELL CHEN

AUSTRALIA
POST

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) has been commissioned by Australia Post and addresses the Bondi Beach Post Office at 20 Hall Street, Bondi Beach, New South Wales. This report has been prepared in anticipation of the disposal of the building by Australia Post.

Bondi Beach Post Office is included on the Commonwealth Heritage List as a Listed Place (Place ID 106174) under the provisions of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, (EPBC Act). The post office is also subject to local heritage controls through the Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 2012 under the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. Bondi Beach Post Office has an individual listing (Item 113) in Schedule 5 (Environmental Heritage).

This HMP is intended to provide guidance on the conservation and management of the Bondi Beach Post Office and its heritage values once it ceases to be owned by the Commonwealth.

Overview

Bondi Beach Post Office is located in the commercial strip of Hall Street, one block to the west of the beachside boulevard of Campbell Parade along Bondi Beach. The post office is one of several that serve the municipality of Waverley, and its establishment was prompted by the growth of residential and visitor numbers in the North Bondi area in the interwar period. The post office was constructed in 1922 to the design of Supervising Architect EH Henderson, under the aegis of George Oakeshott, of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways. The building is designed in the interwar Colonial/Georgian Revival style and is one of many domestically scaled, corner post office buildings constructed to the same design.

A substantial addition was made to the post office in 1934 to the design of architects H Sturtevant and C Todd, of the then Works and Services Branch, Commonwealth Department of the Interior. The addition was constructed in a sympathetic style and continued the architectural detailing of the original. Subsequent alterations and additions were made to the building later in the twentieth century.

Significant values

The cultural heritage values of the Bondi Beach Post Office relate to its development during a key growth period for Bondi Beach. The expansion of the post office reflects the increase in demand for post and telegraph services arising from the development and suburbanisation of the area in the interwar period. The post office is an example of a Second generation post office, albeit without residential quarters. Stylistically, the post office adopts a columned corner entry, a design that was distinct to New South Wales. Aesthetically, the building makes a contribution to the local/immediate streetscape heritage character.

The conservation policies in this HMP considers the identified heritage values of the Bondi Beach Post Office. The direction of the conservation policy is to ensure that the identified heritage values are maintained, in particular to the significant fabric. Also, that where works are proposed, that these are undertaken in a manner that is consistent with Burra Charter principles and in accordance with statutory frameworks. The conservation policies address the future management of the place on the understanding that it will no longer remain in Commonwealth ownership, and considers the potential for site development and adaption of the building in the future.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background and brief

This Heritage Management Plan (HMP) has been commissioned by Australia Post and addresses the Bondi Beach Post Office at 20 Hall Street, Bondi, New South Wales. The Bondi Beach Post Office is owned by Australia Post and is included in the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) as Place ID 106174.

The report has been prepared in accordance with Australia Post's 'Heritage Strategy for Australia Post Heritage Places' ('Heritage Strategy') updated in 2015, to enable Australia Post to meet its obligations under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*, (EPBC Act). The EPBC Act establishes the CHL, a list of places with heritage values which are managed or owned by the Australian Government and affords them statutory protection.

The strategic framework established by the Heritage Strategy requires HMPs to be prepared for all post offices assessed to have Commonwealth Heritage Values, to ensure their protection and management.

This HMP anticipates the impending divestment of the Bondi Beach Post Office. Following from this, Australia Post is committed to following the principles of the EPBC Act in order to protect the heritage values of the place following divestment. This approach is consistent with the Heritage Strategy's provision for Property Divestment which states that, 'where necessary, a management plan will be prepared for the property, to fully identify and describe the Commonwealth Heritage Values prior to the divestment and to guide future management and conservation of the values.'

This HMP has been prepared to guide the future use of Bondi Beach Post Office while protecting its heritage significance. The primary objectives of the HMP are to:

- Confirm the cultural heritage significance of the post office, its individual elements and areas, and
- Provide appropriate policies for the conservation of the building and site as a whole, taking into account both the care of significant physical fabric and ongoing use and management.

The HMP also addresses, and complies with, the requirements of Schedules 7A and 7B of the EPBC Regulations.

1.2   Methodology

This HMP broadly follows the principles and processes set out in the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and its Practice Notes. The *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* establishes a standard of practice for those involved in assessing, managing and undertaking works to places of cultural significance.

This HMP takes into account the heritage requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessments Act 1978* and the Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 2012. More specifically, the report has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 7A of the *Commonwealth Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation regulations, 2000*: 'Management Plans for Commonwealth Heritage Places' which sets out various requirements such as a comprehensive description and condition of the place; the methodology used to establish its heritage values; provision of a management framework including relevant statutory requirements; and the provision of policies for the management and conservation of the place.

1.3   Authorship

This report was prepared by Lovell Chen Architects and Heritage consultants. Unless otherwise noted, photographs in this report were taken by Lovell Chen.

1.4   Location

The Bondi Beach Post Office is located at 20 Hall Street, Bondi (Figure 1 and Figure 2), on the west corner of Hall Street and Jacques Avenue. For the purposes of this report, north is taken as the Hall Street frontage of the building.

Figure 1   Location plan for the Bondi Beach Post Office
Source: http://www.street-directory.com.au/

Figure 2   Recent aerial photograph of Bondi Beach Post Office, indicated; north is to the top of the image
Source: Nearmap, accessed May 2016

1.5   Extent of study area

The extent of study area reflects to the whole of the site as described as Lot 2, DP 329116 and shown in Figure 2.

1.6   Statutory heritage controls

1.6.1   Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The Bondi Beach Post Office is included on the Commonwealth Heritage list maintained by the Australian Heritage Council as Place ID 106174. A copy of the citation is included at Appendix A.

The statement of significance included for the place included in the *Australian Heritage Database* is as follows:

> Bondi Beach Post Office, constructed in 1922 to a design by E H Henderson of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways, and subsequently extended, is of local historical significance. The building is associated with a period of local growth and development, in the interwar period, when Bondi Beach became a popular beach resort and attraction for families and recreational swimmers. As Bondi grew in popularity, so did the development and suburbanisation of the area. The interwar heritage character of the building, reflecting an important period of development in the local context, and the prominent corner location, enhance this aspect of significance (criteria a).

> The post office and telegraph office (possibly originally with residential quarters) was designed by E H Henderson under George Oakshott's (sic) aegis as State head of the Commonwealth Public Works Office, in the Colonial/Georgian Revival Style. Typologically, the building's original planning has been impacted by works. These works, which include changes to the exterior such as the enclosure of the former corner porch and other additions, have also impacted to some extent on the building's presentation. Stylistically and architecturally, however, Bondi Beach is significant as one of a small group of compact, domestically scaled brick post offices in New South Wales designed by Henderson. It also reflects and develops several design signatures worked out by architects Murdoch and Mackennal in other states. The building is also one of four still operating as a post office designed between 1923 and 1926 that adopt a columned corner entry in a tight domestic cottage-form, and were a genre distinct to New South Wales. More formally, it is a companion design of the pyramidal or oblong hipped-roofed post offices designed for small suburban and regional settings between 1920 and 1930, which again had their main airing in New South Wales, but were tried out in other states as well (criterion d).

> Aesthetically, Bondi Beach Post Office, located on the corner of Hall Street and Jacques Avenue, displays some landmark qualities in this context. The building has an assured corner presentation, makes a contribution to the local/immediate streetscape heritage character, and accordingly demonstrates aesthetic value at a local level (criterion e).

> The curtilage includes the title block/allotment of the property.

> The significant components of Bondi Beach Post Office include the main postal building and its corner presentation, and the 1934 addition to Hall Street.[1]

1.6.2   New South Wales Heritage Act 1977

The Bondi Beach Post Office is not included on the *State Heritage Register*, maintained by the New South Wales Heritage Division.

1.6.3   Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The property has an individual listing (Item 113) in Schedule 5 (Environmental Heritage) of the Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 2012. The building is described as 'Inter-war Stripped Classical style public building' 20 Hall Street (Lot 2, DP 329116). A Development Application is required for all works with the exception of minor works identified as Exempt Development or Complying Development.

The statement of significance included for the place on the Office and Environment and Heritage inventory is as follows:

> Fine local example of an Inter-War Stripped Classical style public building. Associated with the development of Bondi as a popular surfing beach, and the suburbanisation of the area. Intact period buildings are now rare for this locality. Important streetscape contribution on its corner site. Local significance.[2]

The citation is included in Appendix A.

Figure 3   Detail, Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 2012 Heritage Map – Sheet HER_004, location of site indicated
Source: Waverley Council

1.7   Non-statutory heritage controls

1.7.1   National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

The building is not classified by the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales).

1.8   Limitations

The following limitations impacted upon the work undertaken in the preparation of this HMP:

- Limited available drawings dating to the initial c. 1922 construction of the building
- No architectural drawings located for the addition preceding the c. 1996 construction phase
- No access was made to concealed spaces including the subfloor, roof space and roof level.

2.0 HISTORY

This chapter focuses on the development of the 1922 Bondi Beach Post Office site and building, with a brief overview of the local context.

2.1 Waverley – the context

2.1.1 Early settlement

The Waverley Aboriginal Heritage Study notes that that area around Bondi Beach was a rich area of Aboriginal settlement and culture, with the proliferation of freshwater, creeks, lagoons, rock-pools and springs.[3] The Waverley area was traditionally occupied by the Gadigal people.[4] Aboriginal people continued to engage in traditional use of the land well into the mid nineteenth century when their encampment at Bondi Beach and Corrobboree ground were noted by Europeans.[5]

The first European landowner at Bondi was William Roberts, a former officer of the New South Wales Corps, who in 1809 received a grant of 200 acres around the beach which became known as Bondi Farm.[6] Land sales in the 1830s and 1850s encouraged development in the area and in 1858 the municipality of Waverley was established. Early European occupation was largely limited to the elevated lands with views of the coast.[7] Bondi Farm passed into the hands of William O'Brien in 1851, and from the 1880s onwards he progressively subdivided the estate for housing development. Bondi Beach, as it appeared before housing development in the later nineteenth century, can be seen in Figure 4 and was sparsely developed, while Figure 5 shows the progressive subdivisions that began to occur around Bondi Bay toward the end of the century.

Figure 4   Bondi Beach pictured in 1870
            Source: State Library of New South Wales ON 4 Box 58 No 297

Figure 5   Detail of Borough of Waverley showing subdivisions and the Bondi Estate in 1887
              Source: National Library of Australia Object No 229950697

2.1.2   Suburban development

Bondi Beach developed along suburban lines late in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Improving transport played an important role in this development, particularly public transport such as trams at the turn of the twentieth century, and buses in the mid twentieth century. The arrival of the first steam tram at Bondi Beach in 1894 was a particular boon. The Bondi Beach tram line was among those also extended from the city to Coogee Beach and Bronte Beach, with the tramway junction established at Bondi Junction.[8] By 1902 the line was electrified.[9]

The interwar period was one of considerable growth at Bondi, and in Waverley at large.[10] The tramline as well as the beaches loomed large in promotions for residential subdivisions such as the 1921 Cliff Hill estate (Figure 6). A 1920 auction notice for Bondi Beach real estate proclaimed:

> Real estate at Bondi with its splendid beach is always in demand – it is the home of
> thousands of people who desire the congenial climate that Bondi offers, daily
> visitors number millions every year, values are always going up.[11]

Combined with the booming residential development, increasing services catered for tourists and holiday-makers along the Bondi Beach foreshore, with council beautification works such as the Bondi park, and a number of hotels such as the Astra, Tareleton, and Bondi Hotels so that 'by the late 1930s a wall of hotels, guest houses and flats extended the length of Campbell Parade'.[12] This growth was connected to the popularity of the beach and the rise of a beach and surf culture in Australia in the twentieth century.

The interwar years continued to see significant growth in the Municipality of Waverley, including at Bondi Beach, with a number of subdivisions drawing new residents into the area, attracted to its beach, public transport and development opportunities.[13] The persistent popularity of Bondi Beach as a sometimes controversial bathing and surfing location heralded an era of 'almost continual development' in a building boom after World War I. The first Beach Inspector was appointed in 1917, and in 1928 the Esplanade was opened, with its beach pavilion and 31 acres of parks.[14]
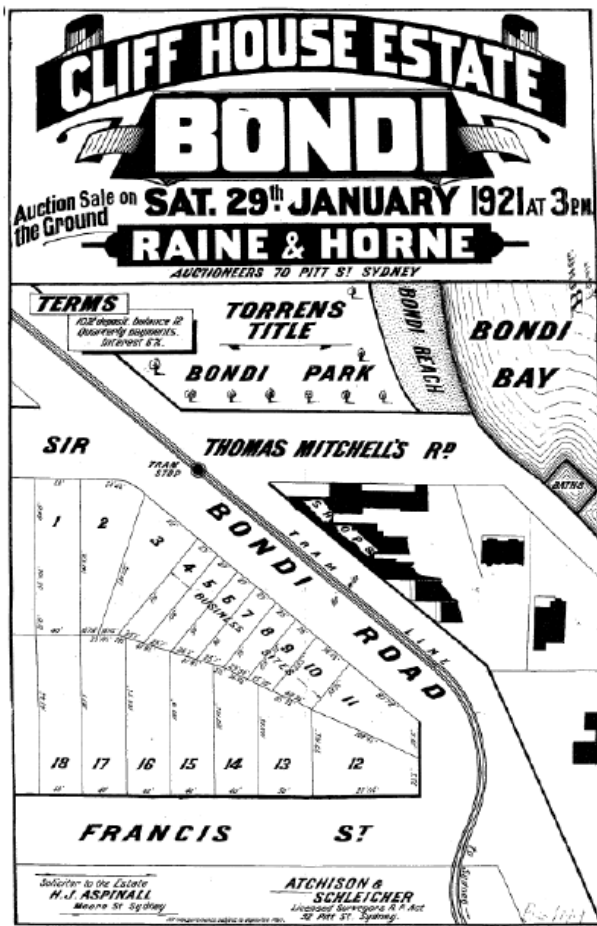
Figure 6   Cliff House Estate poster 1921
                Source: National Library of Australia, cited in Bondi Beach Interwar Study (2014), p.9.

2.2   The rise of surf culture in Australia

In the late nineteenth century, Bondi Beach began to attract visitors picnicking on the coast or swimming. This was despite public bathing remaining illegal on Sydney beaches by an 1838 act of Parliament. Increasing numbers of the public openly defied the bans imposed by local councils, including Waverley. Local councils had introduced dress codes for the beach-going public, including mandatory skirted bathing costumes for men and sometimes total bans on women bathing outside of approved bathing boxes. The public defiance of such laws, and their eventual liberalisation in the early 1900s, were inextricably connected to the rise of Bondi Beach as a holiday resort in the early twentieth century and ultimately as a famous icon of Sydney's beach life. In 1906 the success of daytime bathing was symbolised by the establishment of both the Bondi and North Bondi Surf Clubs.[15] The local council erected bathing sheds at Bondi Beach in 1911 and in the 1920s Castle Pavilion was added to the scene (Figure 7).

The display of male bodies in particular and the rise of the 'Bondi Lifesaver' (Figure 8) as a symbol of Australian masculinity and national identity soon overwhelmed the Victorian prudery of a previous age.[16] In the early twentieth century surf culture also gained favour as part of the shift in public attitudes celebrating outdoor life and recreation and favouring open displays of athleticism as part of the worldwide trend of eugenics – a concern for promoting the physical fitness of the 'race' that was tied to the growth in racialized nationalism at this time.[17] The growing influx of tourists as well as residents to Bondi Beach, alongside the boom in hotels and other services, directly led to the increased need for postal services in the area.
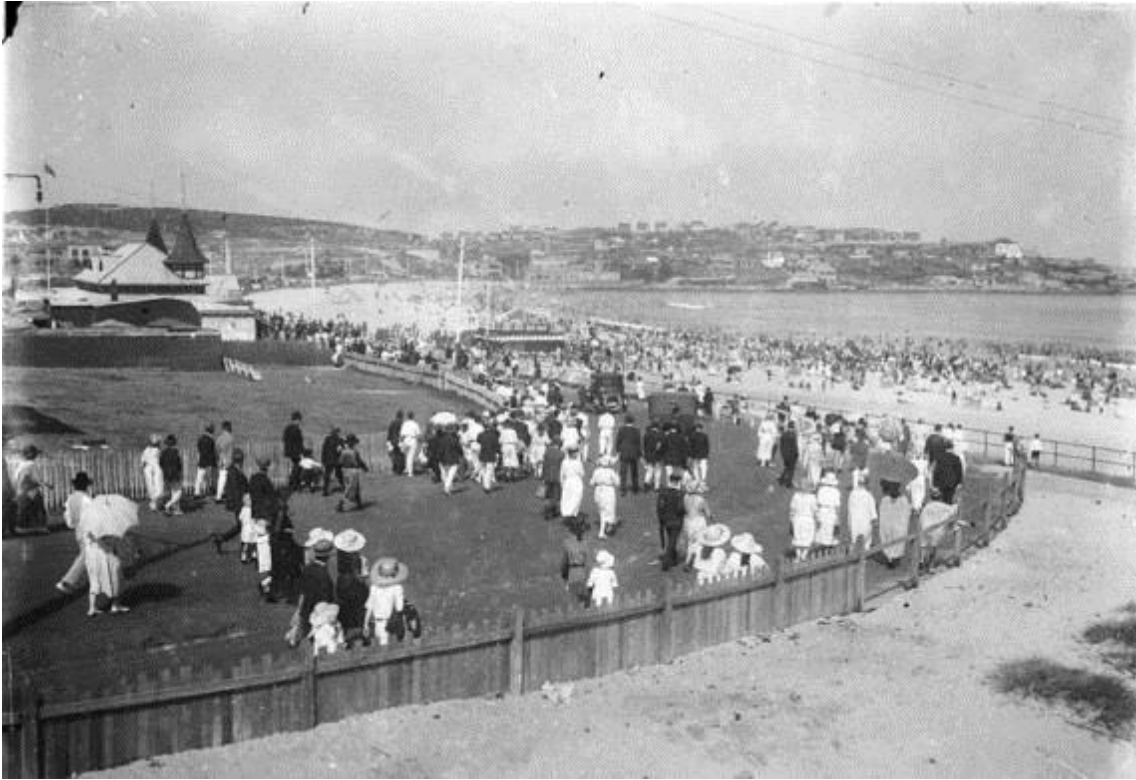
Figure 7   Bondi Beach and the new 'Castle Pavilion' pictured c. 1923
                Source: State Library of New South Wales Item No ON2/572

Figure 8   North Bondi Lifesaving Carnival c. 1925-30
                Source: State Library of New South Wales Item No DG ON4/1925

2.3   Postal, Telegraph and Public Telephone services

With the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901, the importance of uniform and coherent postal services to the new Commonwealth was signalled with the handover of the post and telegraph services to a new federal department, the Postmaster General (often referred to as PMG). This became one of the great public service institutions of the Australian Commonwealth in the twentieth century, until its abolition in 1975 and the subsequent corporatisation in 1989. The postal service in New South Wales is the oldest in Australia, established in 1809. Colonial postal services were run by the respective governments. Telegraph services from the 1860s initially had their own department but were merged into a Post and Electric Telegraph Department in 1893.[18]

Along with the transfer of postal services with Federation, the responsibility for design and construction of post offices around Australia passed to the Commonwealth, ending a period of relative individuality among post office designs.[19] The involvement of the Post Master General's office in the erection of post offices 'ensured a consistency of approach and quality of design' was brought to their construction, with a particular focus on 'superior design' and 'the recognition of the social importance of public buildings'.[20]

2.4   Bondi Beach postal services

Prior to the establishment of the Bondi Beach Post Office, residents and visitors to Bondi Beach were compelled to use the postal services run out of Bondi Post Office. The first post office at Bondi, the Bondi Post Office, had been opened in 1883 in a space leased from a commercial premises and in 1890 telegraph, money order and savings bank facilities were introduced.[21] When the new post office building at Bondi, on Bondi Road, was constructed in 1908, the design included public telephone booths in the entry porch area in addition to substantial residential quarters. [22] Bondi Post Office had been established and expanded as the result of community agitation regarding the location of postal services within the municipality of Waverley, and Bondi Beach would be no different.

The demand from residents for more services early in the twentieth century led, in March 1913, to a postal inspector visiting Bondi, Watsons Bay and Edgecliff to report on local conditions and the demand for postal services. While Inspector Williams did not agree that local conditions yet justified a post office at Bondi Beach, he did recommend that a site be chosen and purchased in anticipation of future demands:

> A number of houses have lately been erected in the vicinity of Hall and Roscoe Streets, but north thereof …, the country is mostly sand and rocks, and it will be some years before it will be materially settled upon. A few shops have been erected near the site of the proposed post office, but there is absolutely no present necessity for the facility asked for. There are two licensed stamp vendors, also posting boxes at Bondi Beach. The settlement near the beach cannot be compared with the sister district at Coogee, which is thickly studded with residences, and contains a large hotel and several up-to-date residential chambers. There is a post office at Coogee, but no delivery therefrom.[23]

A site for the future post office at Bondi Beach was acquired in May 1914 (Figure 9). The site for the post office was one of two potential sites (Figure 10) and a topic of some controversy. The Bondi Vigilante Association had been agitating for a location on the major intersection known as 'Five Ways'.[24] The Inspector preferred the current site, on Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, however as 'the most likely to meet future requirements'. This was due to its proximity to the anticipated northward expansion of Bondi Beach and the proximity of the site to the tram terminus in Hall Street, which would enable residents to 'transact business at the Post Office while on their way to and from the city.'[25] The decision to site the post office at its current location rather than at 'Five Ways' is a reminder of the importance of

the tram terminus, and the growing importance of the beach to the Bondi area and its strong relationship to the growing Sydney metropolis at the time.

In April 1921, the postal inspector accompanied the local member of parliament Walter Marks, to meet the Bondi Progress Association to discuss congestion at the Bondi Post Office, where, it was claimed, 'many thousands of letters and much postal business was not transacted at the office on account of unsuitability, and that expense was willingly incurred by residents making special arrangements rather than use the [Bondi] office.' The deputations asked for 'the immediate erection of a post office on the land already acquired at the corner of Hall and Jacques street.'[26] Owing to the rapid development of Bondi Beach and the North Bondi area, and the 'impracticability' of providing adequate services for the locality out of the established post offices, the Post Master General decided in 1921 to proceed with the erection of a post office building at Bondi Beach as soon as funds were made available in the 1921-22 Estimates.[27] The cost of renting an office had also been considered, but was determined to be too costly.[28] In March 1922, up to £3,000 was secured from the government to build the post office following lobbying from the local MP and the treasurer Sir Joseph Cook.[29]

The importance of the beach to local identity and boosterism was symbolised by the Bondi Vigilante Association's representations to the department in 1922 that the post office be known by the name of 'Bondi Beach' rather than 'North Bondi' as proposed by the department. The name was officially adopted on 12 October 1922.[30]
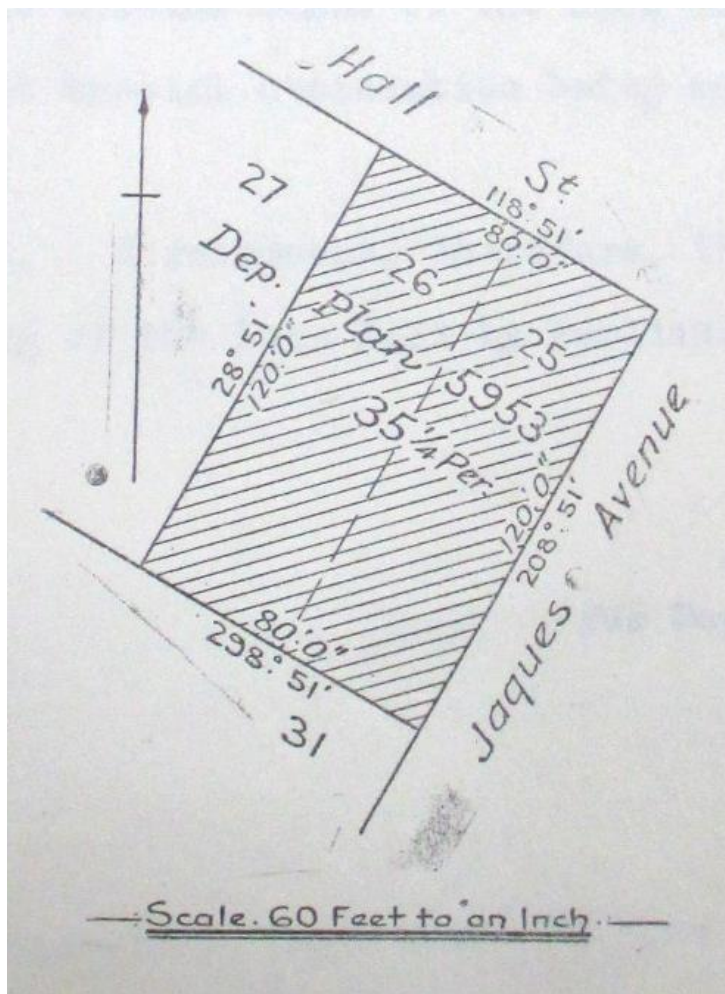
Figure 9   The 1914 Gazetted site for the Bondi Beach post office
                Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number MP33/1 6000751
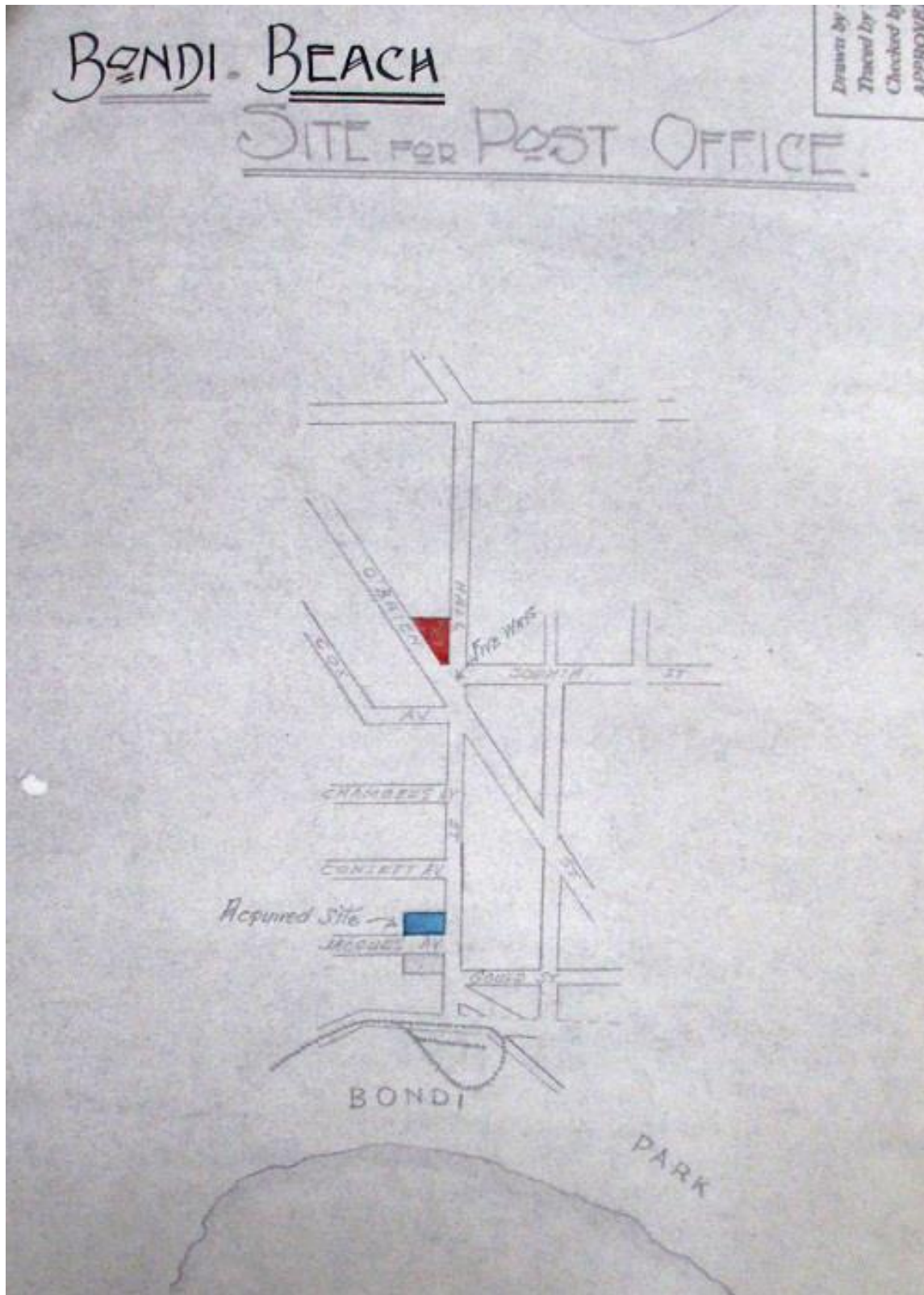
Figure 10   Inspector's plan showing alternative sites for the Bondi Beach post office. In red, the site at 'Five Ways' (also sometimes known as Six Ways) originally proposed by the Vigilante Association and in blue the (current) site nearer the tram terminus purchased by the Post Master General
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number MP33/1 6000751

2.4.1   The 1922 Post Office building

The post office designed by EH Henderson, under George Oakeshott, architects with the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways was for a single storey brick building opening onto the corner of Hall Street and Jaques Avenue. Although the original floor plans have not been located, the original ceiling plan from 1922 (Figure 11), signed by E Henderson and Geo. Oakeshott, shows the extent of the building. The written Specification of Work put out to tender in 1922 were also detailed, and combined with a sketch plan (Figure 12) of the building from 1934 a comprehensive picture of its original layout and operation can be constructed. A telephone operator's table show that telephony was available in 1922, and there were three public telephones within the building and four outside.

The 1922 Specification of Works described the building as a 'brick post office with tile roof' and included a 'brick store, asphalt area, and gates and fences'. Its 'Special Conditions' are a reminder of the proximity and legacy of Australia's involvement in the First World War, including that in the work, 'preference shall be given – other things being equal – firstly to Returned Sailors and Soldiers with satisfactory records of service, and secondly to members of Trades Unions.'[31] Further preferences were outlined for 'Australian materials, and if Australian materials are not available, British materials … wherever possible; in the event of Australian or British materials not being available, then preference shall be given to materials of Allied countries.'[32]

It appears that the Bondi Beach post office did not include a residence for a postmaster, as typically was the case for twentieth century post offices. The Bondi Beach Post Office of 1922 appears to be among a number of corner post offices constructed to a similar design over the decades of the 1920-40s under the direction of Oakeshott, such as those at Maroubra (Figure 13), Charing Cross in Waverley, and at Mascot Airport. The design was also adapted for non-corner blocks in the case of Coogee.

2.4.2   George Oakeshott and EH Henderson

The designers of the Bondi Beach post office were George Oakeshott and EH Henderson. George John Oakeshott (1862-1924) became NSW Works Director for the Commonwealth and during his tenure designed several post offices including at Croydon in 1913. Other buildings included the Millers Point Drill Hall, the Small Arms factory at Lithgow and building for the North Head Quarantine Station.[33] Oakeshott was also a member of the board overseeing the design of Canberra during 1912.

Edwin Hubert Henderson (1885-1939) joined the Commonwealth Department of Works in 1912 and became Supervising Architect in 1920 and Principal Architect in 1929.[34] He was particularly notable for his bank designs, and for the Art Deco design of Manuka Swimming Pool (1930). He designed a range of post offices, banks, and telephone exchanges around Australia. Other post offices he oversaw included at Albury and Goulburn.[35]
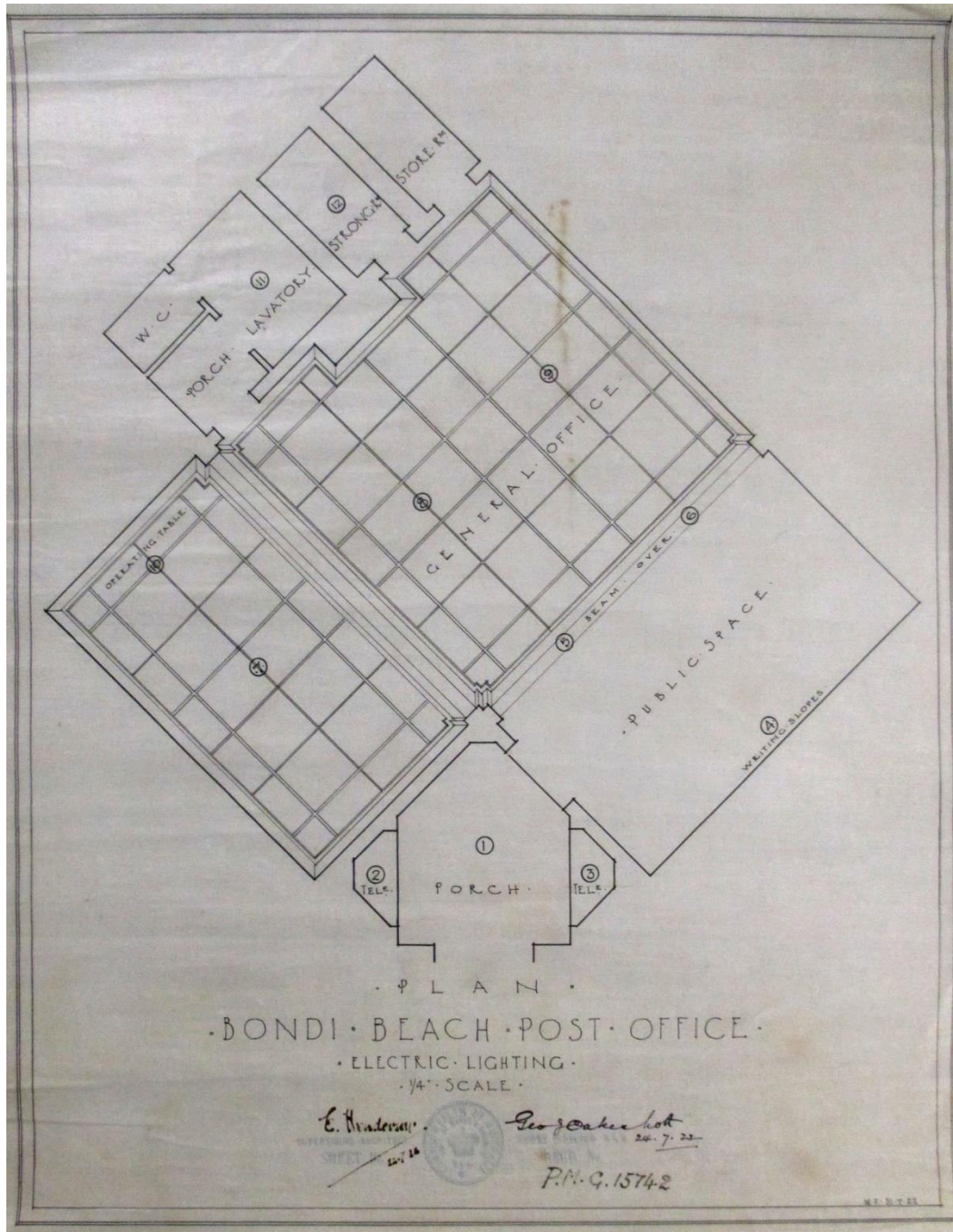
Figure 11   Reflected ceiling plan of the original 1922 design signed by Henderson and Oakeshott
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386
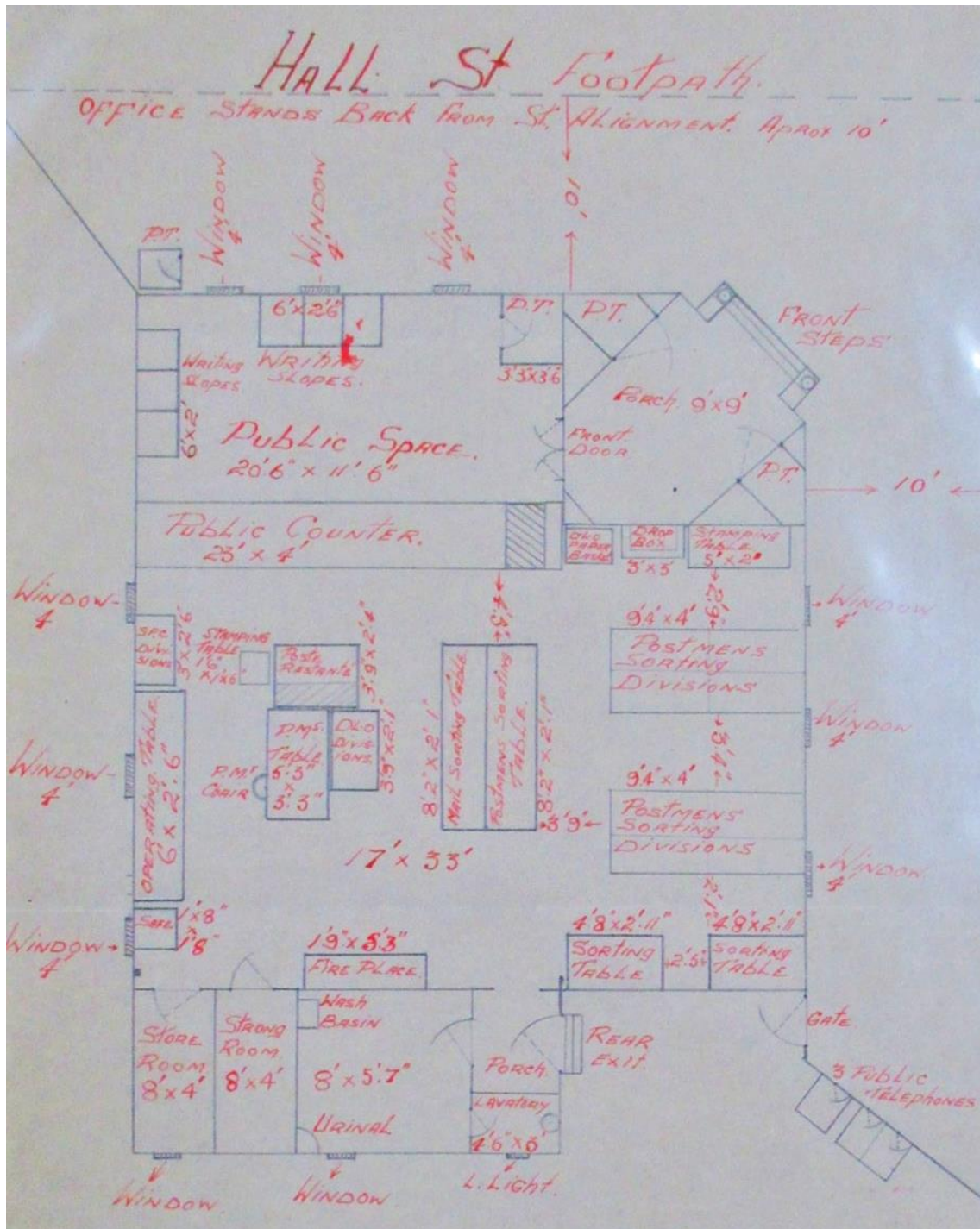
Figure 12   1934 Plan of the original section of the post office as it operated ahead of the extensions
              Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number MP33/1 5992963

Figure 13   Maroubra Post Office in 1947
                 Source: National Archives of Australia, image no C4078, N2982

2.4.3   Completion and opening

The completion and opening of the post office was greeted by locals as a sign of 'progressive Bondi' alongside the boom in real estate:

> Mr. E. Martin, estate agent, of Bondi Beach, has made most remarkable progress since his establishment six months ago, having completed contracts for the sale of property in the surrounding district to the value of £84,114, which, no doubt, is a record for any one suburban office. Those figures tend to show the confidence that homo-seekers and investors generally have in placing their savings in this area.
>
> The great progress of Bondi Is evidenced by the extensive growth of the population, also the recent erection of the new beach post-office, public school, bank, and picture palace, &c.[36]

Staff at the Bondi Beach post office during its early history numbered around 15 and included a postmaster, postmen, junior postal officers, postal clerks, postal officers and postal assistants. The post office also served as the local branch of the Savings Bank, until the transfer of business to the local branch of the bank that opened in 1931.[37] Parcels were received direct from the city and prior to 9am the parcels were booked up and sorted in the public space. After opening, this operation had to be handled in the office yard. In early 1934 an Inspector's report was prepared on the building in which it was noted that Bondi Beach was becoming 'the most important seaside resort on the southern side of the harbour', during summer months 'crowded with visitors and all accommodation … booked up for months ahead'.[38] As part of the report a plan of the interior was drawn up indicating the breadth of services being provided (Figure 12). The service reflected the needs of both locals and visitors and the booming tourist trade contributed considerably to the congestion, especially during the holiday periods, with holiday-makers keen to send postcards to friends and family and the returned mail resulting in thousands of 'dead letters'. This made storage a challenge. At the same time, the operation and public presentation of the post office was not enhanced by its large backyard, sometimes littered with vehicles. In September 1933 the Postmaster General and the government approved the sale of a portion of the rear yard of the post office (Figure 14) to Mrs Ryan, owner of the adjoining property on Jaques Avenue for £220.[39] For reasons that are not known, the sale, though approved, does not appear to have eventuated as reflected in the title history and demonstrated in the current extent of the site.
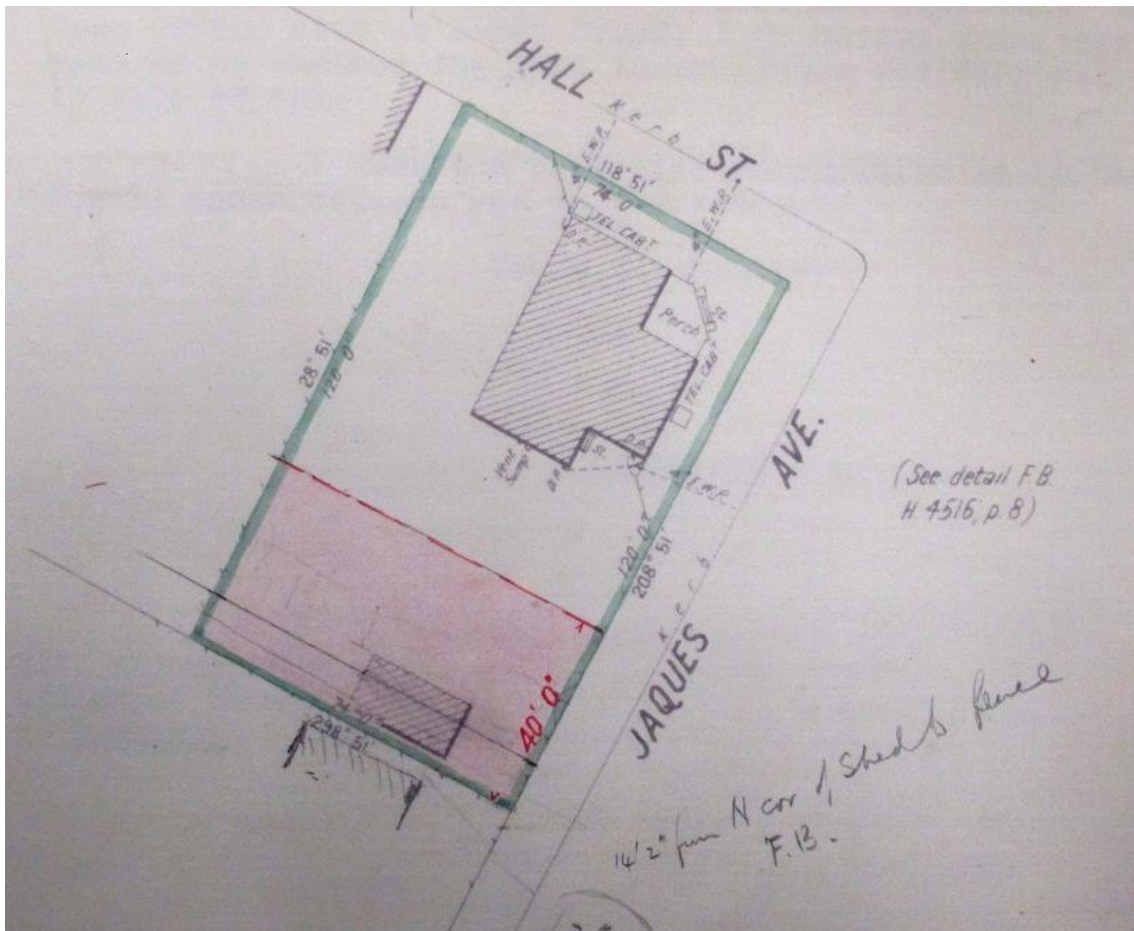
Figure 14   Plan showing excess land in the rear yard that was to be sold in 1933
             Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP394/1 1018411

2.4.4   The 1934 additions

The Bondi Beach Post Office took place within the context of the slow recovery from the Great Depression (c.1929-33). Prior to the Depression, the post office had struggled at busy times 'in finding sufficient accommodation for handling of the parcels … the postmen had scarcely any room to move about' and were thus 'materially delayed … in sorting and setting up their rounds.'[40] By 1932, Bondi Beach was once again described as a 'progressive seaside tourist resort and residential area' and 'one of Sydney's finest seaside resorts' whose 'development is beyond question'.[41] The postal inspector's report in 1934 noted that despite ongoing congestion at Bondi Beach Post Office, a slight decrease in postal trade had been noticeable, 'due principally to the unsettled business conditions in the State' where 'wages have been reduced and all sections of the community have been directly or indirectly affected'. By the end of 1934 however the inspector believed there was greater optimism and hope for 'an upward trend' and a return to the growth of the previous era [42]

The return to booming growth in Bondi, in terms of tourists as well as residents, placed severe strain on the space and capacity of the post office. In April 1934, the chief postal Inspector wrote to the secretary to the Department of the Interior, arguing that 'the present building is inadequate for the amount of business transacted. In appearance it compares unfavourably with other buildings in the locality. It is badly in need of renovation'. The inspector was especially keen that work to the building should be:

> … carried out prior to the visit of His Highness, Prince George, and in time to create
> a favourable impression on overseas visitors, a considerable number of whom are

almost certain to spend some time at a seaside resort of such outstanding popularity.'[43]

As well as employing a Postmaster, the office has two clerks, a postal assistant, nine postmen and two telegraph messengers, working from 6am to 6.15pm, with the office opening at 9am.

The additions were to extend the existing post office building and at the same time erect new public telephone cabinets to replace four wooden ones, as well as to provide a hat and cloak room and an additional W.C.[44] Approval was also given for a bicycle and fuel shed. In total, the cost was estimated at £1,150.[45] The building work on the additions to the Bondi Beach post office were officially completed on 18 February 1935 at an actual cost of £1,007.[46] A detail (Figure 15) from the 1934 plans (Figure 16) show the extent of the additions. The plans were signed by H Sturtevant and C Todd.

Mr HB Sturtevant was the Commonwealth Director of Works in the 1940s, overseeing a number of post offices, often of 'modern' design such as those at Wembley and Inglewood.[47] Mr Todd was also employed by the Commonwealth Works Department. Neither appear to have been noted as architects outside of the design of works for the Works Department.

Photographs of the Bondi Beach post office survive from the 1940s showing the extended building (Figure 17) while the entry porch (Figure 18), new telephone booths (Figure 19), interior postal counter (Figure 20), and rear buildings (Figure 21) are also captured in photographs from the same period.
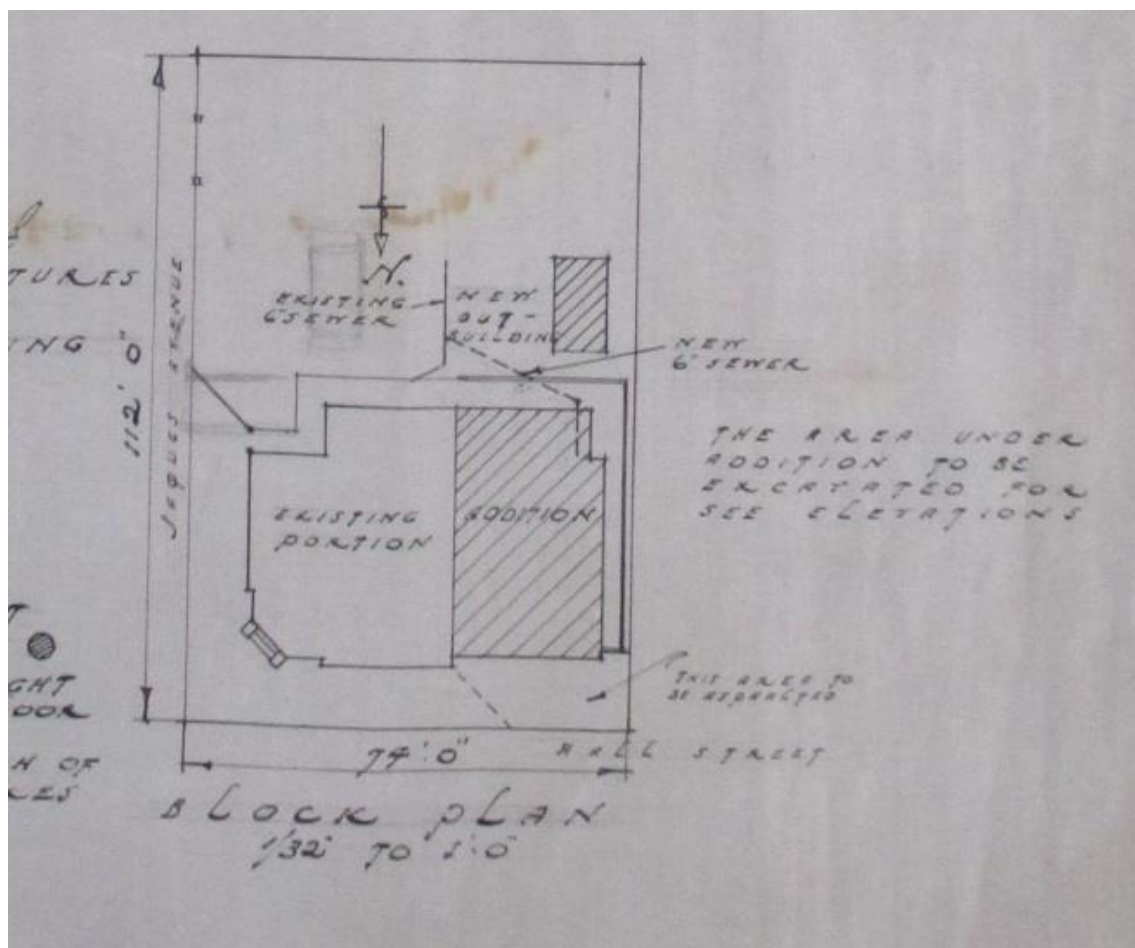
Figure 15   Detail from 1934 plans shows the extent of the additions at that time, north is to the bottom of the image
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386
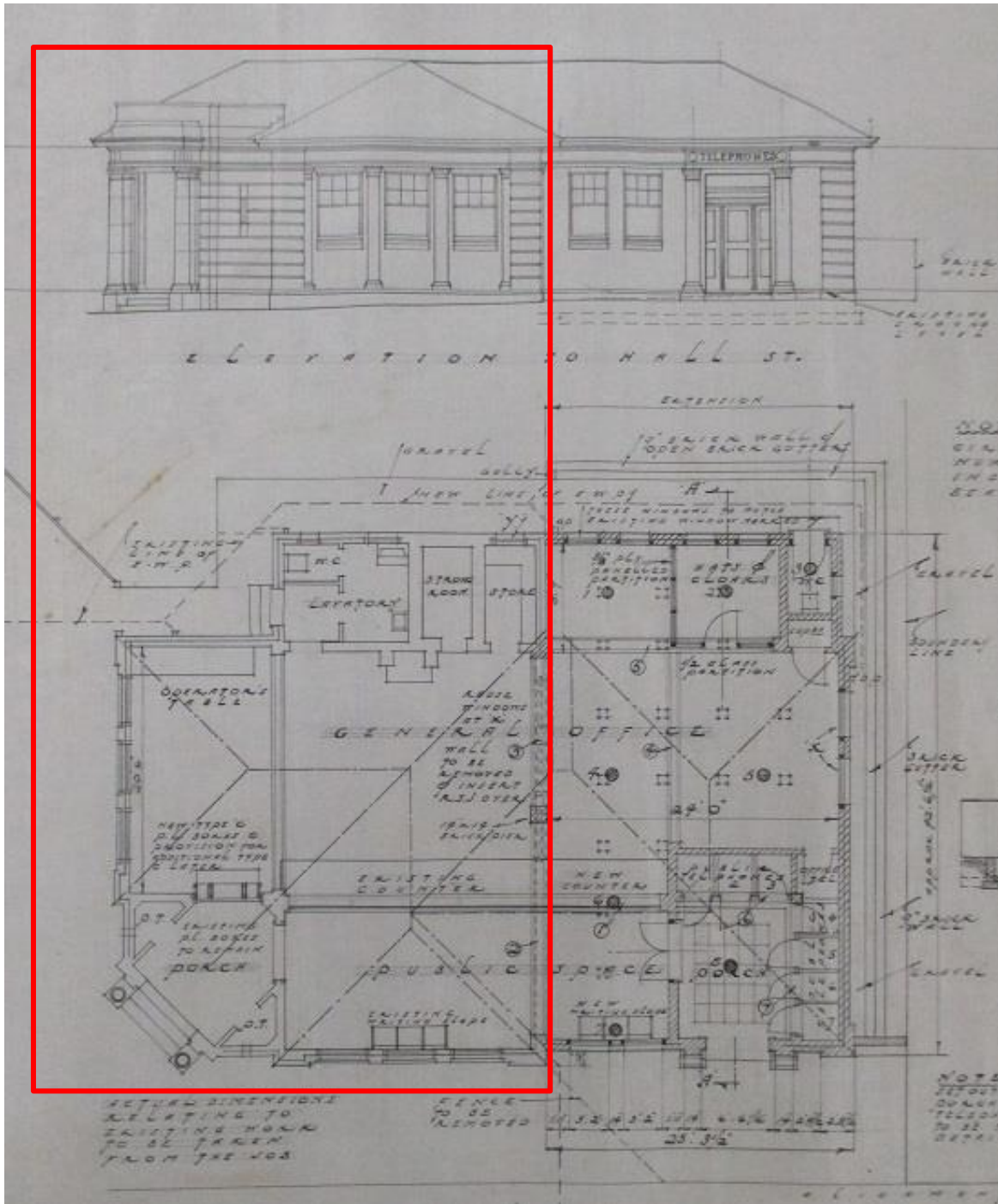
Figure 16   Plans of the 1934 addition show original extent of the building (highlighted in red)
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386

Figure 17   Bondi Beach post office photographed in 1949
             Source: National Archives of Australia C4078:N3550A

Figure 18   Entry to the porch, undated c. 1940
             Source: National Archives of Australia Image No HN17553

Figure 19   Telephone booths inside the porch photographed in 1940
              Source: National Archives of Australia Image No N1694C

Figure 20   Staff at the counter of the Bondi Beach post office c. 1945
              Source: Waverley Council Library No 007755

Figure 21   Postal staff and van outside Bondi Beach Post Office c. 1945 showing the outbuildings at
the rear of the site at the time
Source: Waverley Council Library No 007754

2.4.5   *Late twentieth century additions*

The Bondi Beach Post Office continued to operate through the post-war era, with additional works occurring later in the twentieth century. An historic aerial dated 1951 shows the post office still occupying the block to its 1934 extent with outbuildings in the rear yard.[48] It has not been determined when exactly between 1951 and 1996 the first westwards extension of the post office took place, encompassing the enclosure of the former strong room and rear washroom and WC, with the addition of new washroom facilities. However it appears likely from observation that they occurred in the 1980s. The Waverley Council Development Plan drawings (Figure 22) for the post office extension in 1995 show the southern end of the building that was added in 1996.
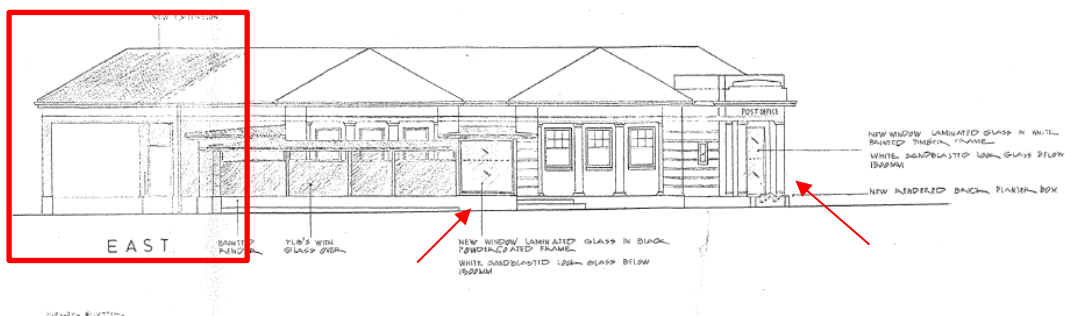
Figure 22   Detail of 1995 plans showing additions of that year with additions indicated
Source: Waverley Council

2.5   Conclusion

The Bondi Beach Post Office was built in 1922 at a time of booming development at Bondi. The site had been acquired in 1914 as part of planning by postal authorities for anticipated growth and demand in the area associated with the growing popularity of the beach and the proximity of the tramways. Both suburban development and the growth in beach related tourism and culture were significant influences on its early history. Continued growth and in particular recognition of the broader national and international awareness of Bondi led to the 1934 addition and renovation. The size and design of suburban post offices at the time was a testament to their importance as service hubs for a range of telecommunication and other services.

In terms of architectural design it is related most strongly to the careers of Oakeshott and Henderson, and is one of a number of post offices constructed to a similar or identical design around New South Wales by the pair working for the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways. The use of standard designs was an expression of the uniformity of the federalised postal service. The extension by Sturtevant and Todd was broadly sympathetic to this style.

3.0   PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

A physical survey and inspection (not a condition survey) of the Bondi Beach Post Office, 20 Hall Street Bondi Beach was conducted in May 2016. This chapter summarises the findings of the survey and considers the development evolution, degree of intactness and nature of alterations to the building.

The post office was inspected to its external fabric and internal areas, with the exception of the sub-floor and roof spaces as well as the roof.

Sources reviewed in the preparation of this chapter include archival photographs of the post office from the early twentieth century and architectural drawings (c. 1922, c. 1934 and c. 1995). From analysis of the available documentation, it is apparent that a substantial addition was made to the south of the building prior to the addition constructed in c. 1996, although no documentation has been located to confirm the date of these works.

The physical analysis is also informed by an earlier assessment if the property by Lovell Chen Architects and Heritage Consultants as part of the National Survey and Assessment of Australia Post (owned) Heritage Properties (May 2009).

3.1   Site and curtilage

Bondi Beach Post Office is located on a rectangular site to the south-west corner of Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, Bondi Beach. The heritage curtilage is taken as the whole of the site described as Lot 2, DP 329116 and shown in (Figure 23, Figure 24). It appears that the tile includes some of the land (public footpath) to the north of the building.

The site is oriented on a north-east alignment, with the original porch located on the eastern corner of the site. Access to the building is via the principal façade to Hall Street.

For the purposes of this assessment, north is taken as the Hall Street frontage of the building.

The site is almost wholly occupied by the building, with access available to the south and west sides of the building via narrow access ways, and the car-park/driveway to the delivery dock to the south of the site on Jaques Avenue. On Hall Street, the post office is built within the site boundary, the setback allowing for the location of external public infrastructure such as postal boxes and phone booths. To Jaques Avenue, the site is occupied by the projecting hipped wings of the building, the modern, low-level post office box enclosures and office space beneath the hipped roof. The loading dock is set into the site and is adjacent to the ramped path; both are enclosed by a steel framed and mesh gates. The west boundary is defined by a cyclone mesh fence and the south by a timber paling fence.

The post office is located within a small commercial strip on Hall Street, one block west of the beach front esplanade of Campbell Parade. Hall Street contains numerous commercial enterprises housed within buildings dating predominantly to the interwar period, though there are elements of recent development in the vicinity of the subject site. The interwar period buildings are typically one to three storeys high. Apart from the commercial enterprises on the corner of Hall Street, Jaques Avenue contains predominantly residential buildings dating to the interwar period and more recent apartment buildings.

Landscape treatments in front of the post office, on both Hall Street and Jaques Avenue include mature paperbark species in concrete planter boxes with concrete pavers to the footpath. Adjacent to the building are a pair of public phone/wi-fi booths and three postal boxes are located to the east of the corner entry.

Figure 23   Aerial view of the Bondi Beach Post Office site
                 Source: Nearmap, accessed May 2016

Figure 24   Bondi Beach Post Office viewed from the north-east along the Hall Street elevation

3.2 Evolution of the building and site

Analysis of the available documentary material indicates that the post office was developed over four broad phases illustrated in Figure 25.

HALL STREET

Key   Construction phases

Phase 1	Phase 2	
Phase 3	Phase 4	
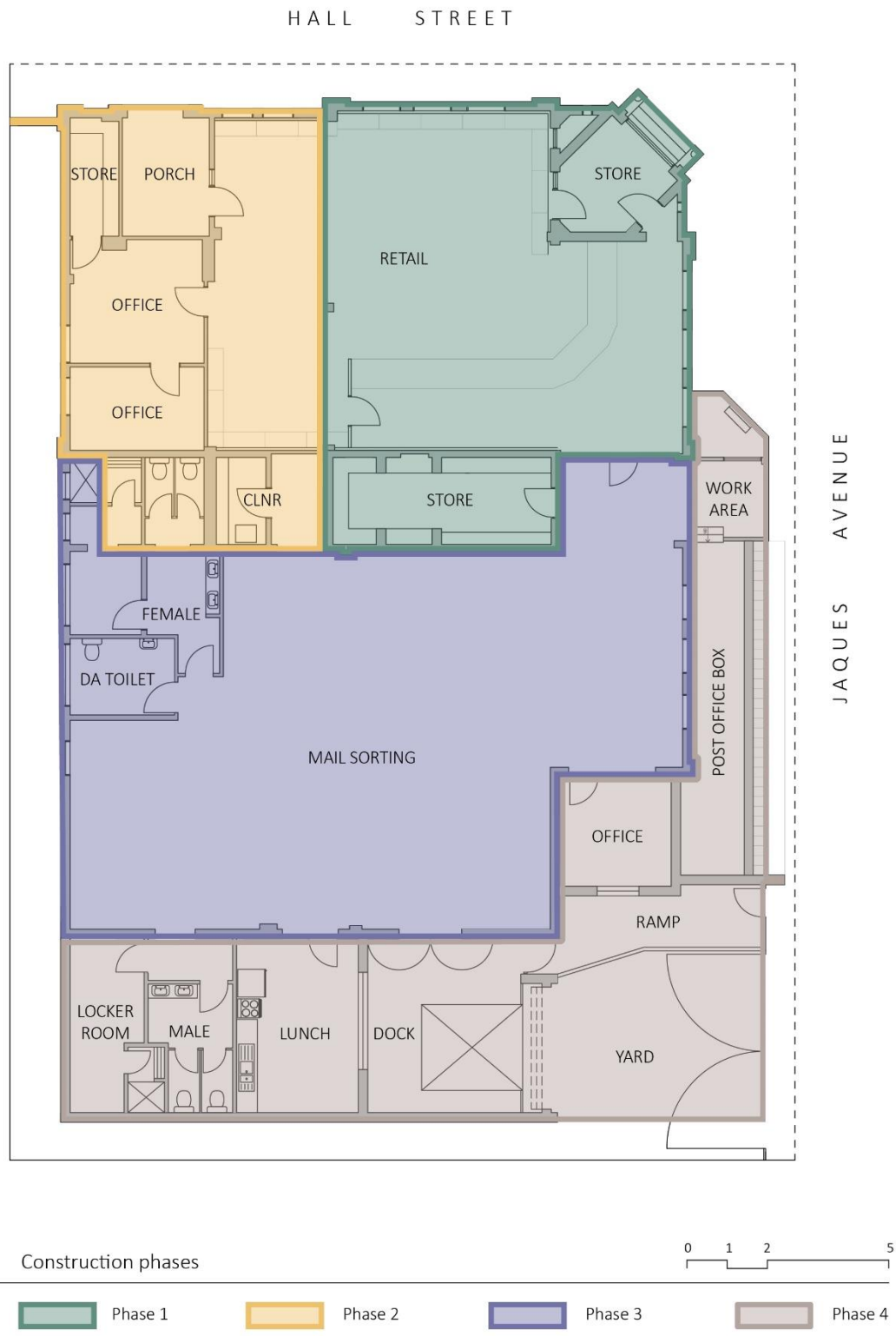
Figure 25   Plan illustrating the phases of development of the Bondi Beach Post Office

First phase

The post office building was constructed in c. 1922, with a single reflected ceiling plan located dating to this period (Figure 27). Analysis of the ceiling plan, title plan (Figure 26) and subsequent c. 1934 drawings relating to the western addition, indicates that the original building was a free-standing structure located to the eastern portion of the site. The building comprised the canted porch to the north-east corner, the external wall to Hall Street, projecting bay to Jaques Avenue, west wall and a rear amenities wing beneath a skillion extension of the hipped roof. While the title drawing indicates an outbuilding, it does not match the hipped roof outbuilding shown in Figure 31. Two external telephone cabinets are also shown in the title plan.

Internally, a pair of public telephones were housed within the entry porch in addition to substantial public and general office spaces. An 'operating table' is indicated on the reflected ceiling plan in the east projecting bay and this is presumed to be a space for the telephonist/telegraph services. A lavatory, with internal and external access, strong room and store were located to the south of the office spaces beneath the skillion roofed section of the building. Overall, the post office was a largely open space internally, with the separation of the discrete spaces expressed through deep ceiling beams and the joinery to the public counter.
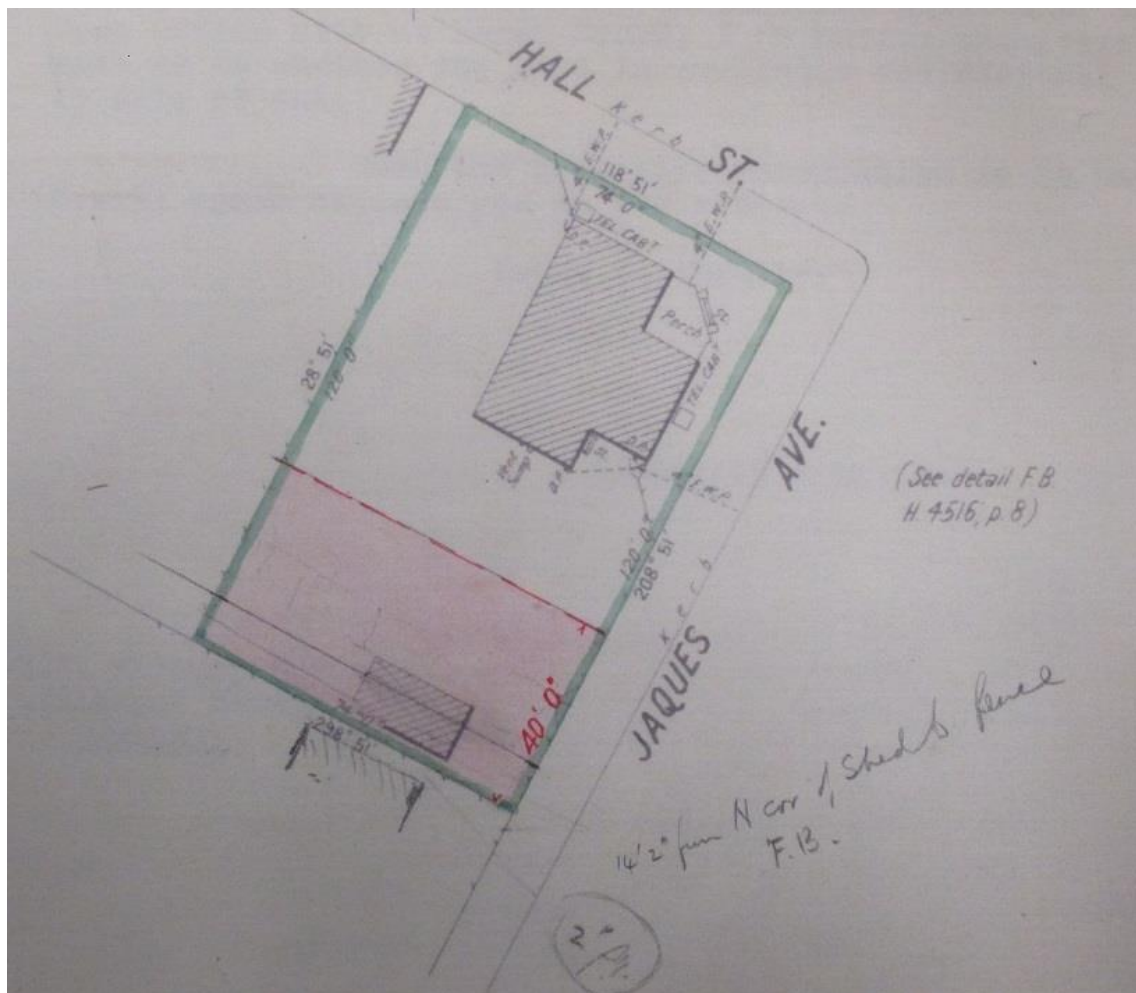
Figure 26   Annotated title of the Bondi Beach Post Office showing the freestanding building to the eastern side of the site c. 1932; the red area indicates a portion of land being considered for disposal at the time though retained
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP394/1 1018411
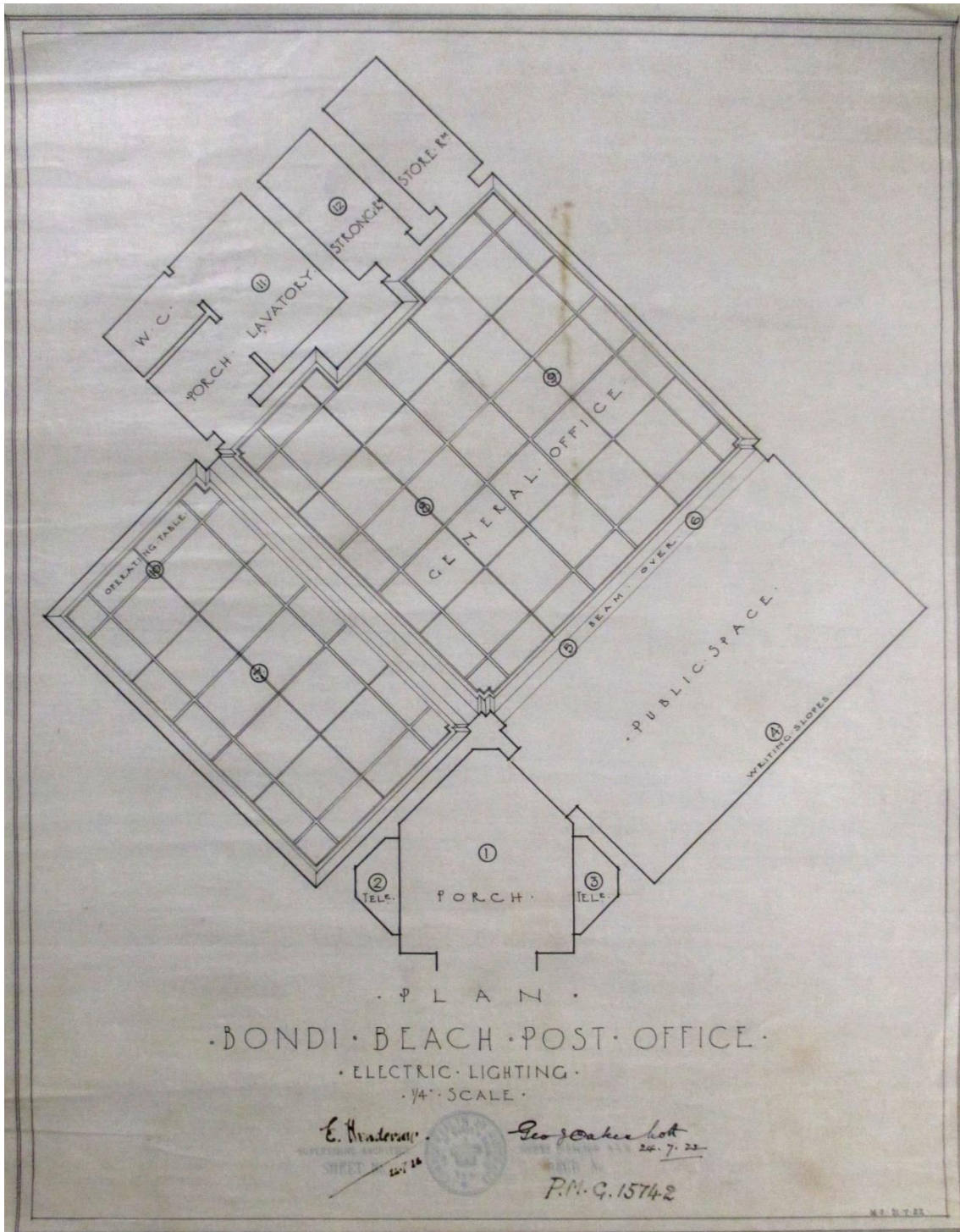
Figure 27   Reflected ceiling plan for the Bondi Beach Post Office, c. 1922; north is to the bottom of the image
Source: National Archives of Australia, Series Number SP1107/1 679386

Second phase: expansion

A major addition was completed in c. 1934 and this comprised of the extension of the building to the west as well as internal alterations (Figure 28 to Figure 30). The addition doubled the size of the original post office. Roof level changes at this time include the roof being restructured as an 'M' form, with a central valley behind the transverse ridge parallel to Hall Street. Additional amenities were housed in the skillion extension of the roof and detailed to match the original structure to the east. The drawings indicate that windows from the c. 1922 west wall were relocated to the 'new' west wall.

The addition provided a second entry into the building from Hall Street, with six additional phone booths housed within this porch. Internally, the expansion of the post office provided for increased public space, a lengthened counter to the public space; additional office space and staff spaces (hat and cloak room and W.C.).

A brick skillion-roofed outbuilding was constructed in this phase for storing bicycles and fuel (Figure 31).
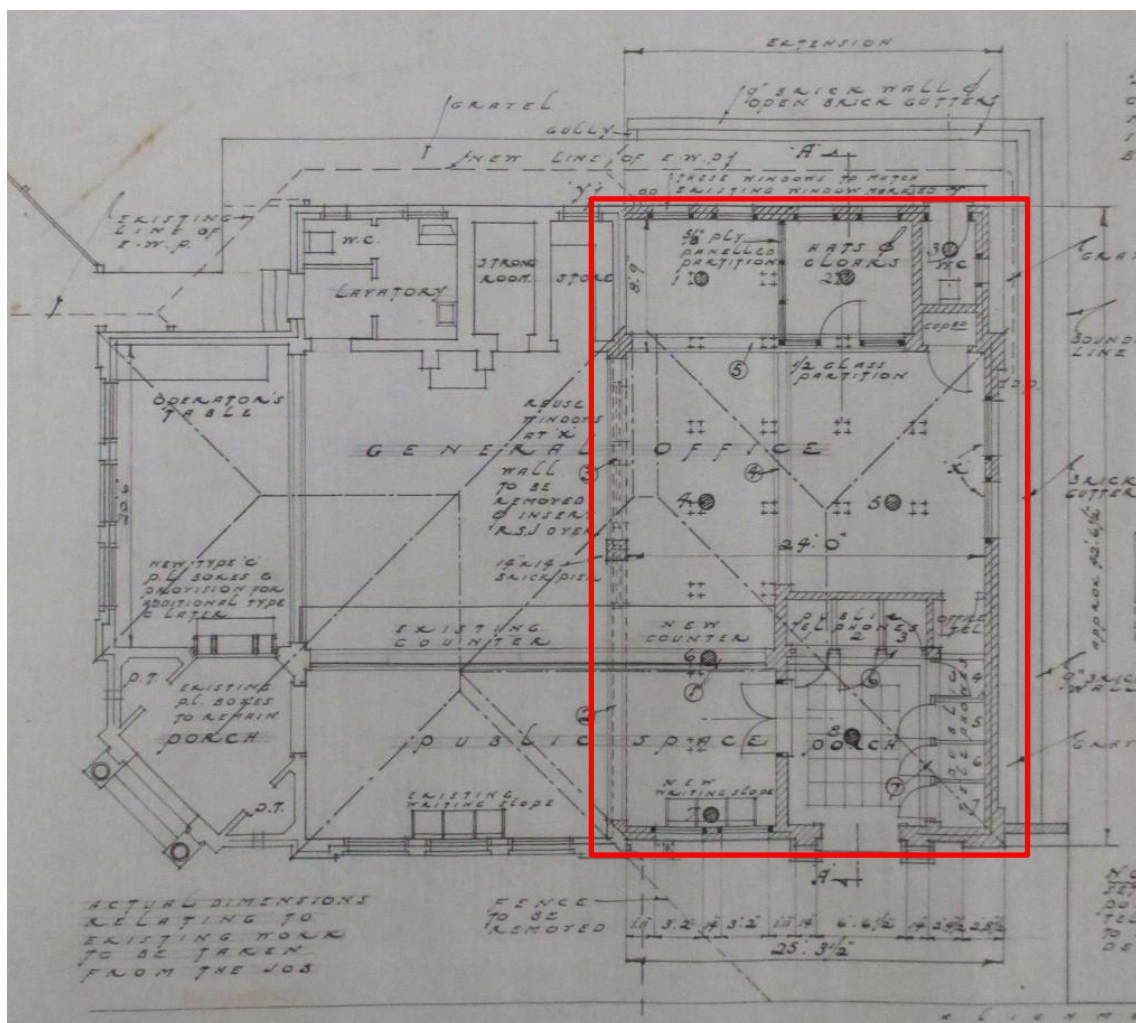
Figure 28   Plan of the c. 1934 addition to the west of the original structure (outlined); north is to the bottom of the image
              Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386
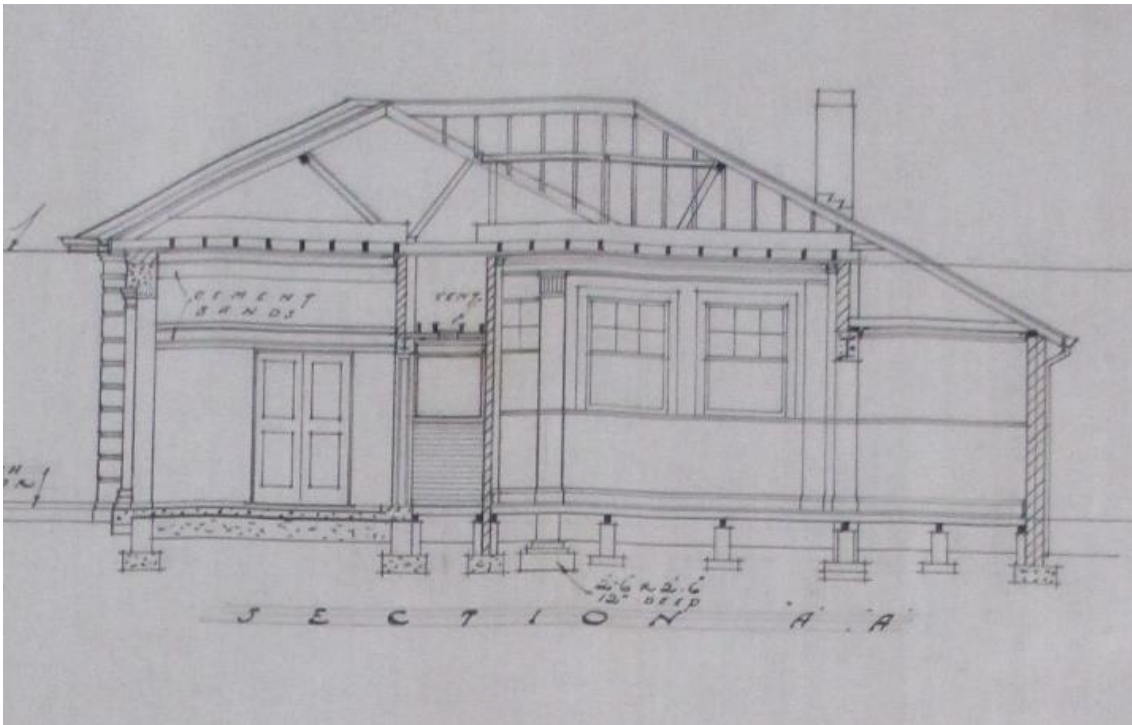
Figure 29   North-south section of c. 1934 addition through the porch, phone booth office and rear skillion
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386
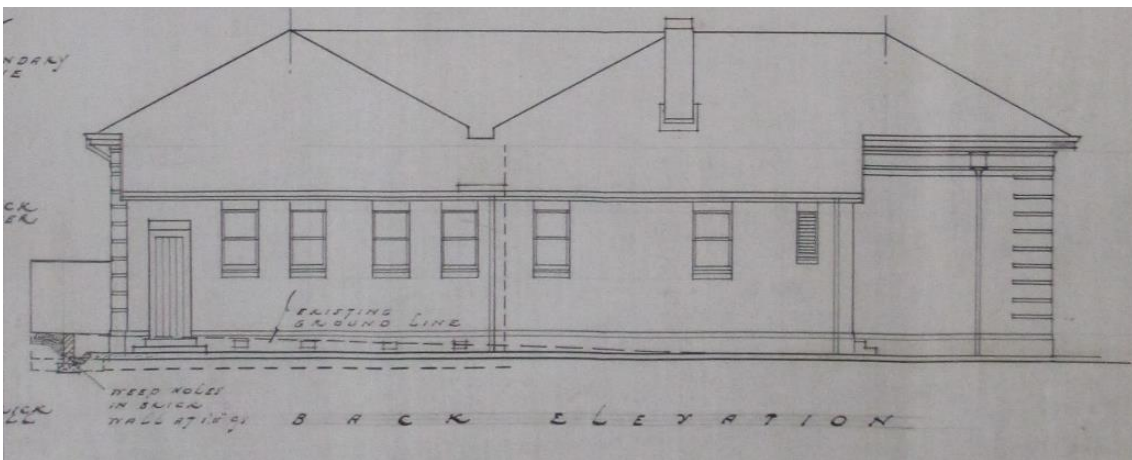
Figure 30   South elevation of the proposed c. 1934 addition to the left of dashed line
Source: National Archives of Australia Series Number SP1107/1 679386

Figure 31   Rear view of the Bondi Beach Post Office c. 1949; note the pair of outbuildings and yard behind a timber picket fence
Source: National Archives of Australia, image no N3440C

Third phase (1949-1996)

While there is no available documentary evidence confirming the timing of works during the second phase expansion and the final phase in c. 1996, it is clear from the site inspection and analysis of the c. 1934 and c. 1995 drawings and images that the building was substantially altered and added to between 1949 and 1995 (refer to Appendix C). The expansion to the south would have required the demolition of the outbuildings to the south of the post office.

By the time that the c. 1996 works were proposed it appears that the phone booths to both porches had been removed and the internal spaces rearranged. The western bank of phone booths in the Hall Street porch became a store and postal boxes were located to the south wall, while the corner entry was used for 'interviews'. Entries to the phone booths were closed over in this space.

The most significant change occurred sometime in the later twentieth century, possibly 1980s, with the estimated date based on the materiality and detail of the structure where visible. The works involved the construction of an addition to the south that, again, almost doubled the size of the building.

Externally, this addition resulted in the construction of a second projecting hipped roof bay to Jaques Avenue, the demolition of the skillion roofs to the amenities wing and extension of the paired hipped roofs to the south. The south façade to the c. 1924 building was altered below the roof line to link the retail area to the mail sorting room. The brickwork to the Jaques Avenue façade matched the original in detail (with a soldier course of brickwork below the frieze) in apricot coloured clay bricks, the incorporation of rusticated piers to the corners of the projecting bay and the extension of the cement rendered frieze. The flagpole centred on the corner porch was removed during this period.

Internal changes to the public space include the removal of counters and writing slopes dating to the early twentieth century and the consolidation of the public areas into one large space. The single fire place to the south of the general office area, shown in Figure 28, was also removed. The east wing was divided into two spaces, including a separate office space. Smaller spaces, likely to be office and amenities, were constructed to the west side of a large open work area constructed to the south. It is likely that the enclosure of the decorative plaster ceilings with plain plasterboard occurred at this time.

Fourth phase additions

A fourth and final phase of construction occurred in c. 1996. Drawings dated to 1995 (Appendix C) indicate that a further addition was made to the south of the post office and that this included the driveway and loading dock, separate office, postal boxes and associated work area, lunch room and toilets/locker rooms. While a comparatively small addition in terms of floor area and building envelope, the final expansion took the building to just shy of the south site boundary and occupied what was originally yard space. Landscape included the construction of several large planter boxes to both street frontages.

On Jaques Avenue, external changes included the introduction of a bank of post office boxes and an associated internal work space beneath a shallow skillion roof and directly in front of the southern projecting bay. A glazed enclosure and brick steps were also constructed to the north of the post office boxes. The loading bay, with large roller door, and a small office were constructed to the south of the projecting bay. The corner porch was reconfigured with the infilling of the entry with a fixed glass panel and conversion of the steps to a small planter box.

Internal alterations included the removal of amenities from the original location and relocation to the western side of the building; the demolition of partition walls to the 'retail area'; introduction of a glazed panel and planter box to the north-east porch; partitioning of spaces to the west side of the building for offices/storage; reuse of amenities for storage.

3.3   Building description

3.3.1   Construction

Simply, the post office is a single storied brick building, in brown coloured clay brick to the early phases, with a terracotta tiled hipped roof. As the building was extended and altered, new additions were constructed in cavity brick, variously pale apricot and red. All external walls feature a moulded cement frieze and soldier course detailing to brickwork. The roof is an 'M' form in plan, with paired projecting hipped bays to the east (Figure 32). Shallow eaves are lined in v-jointed boards and eaves linings to later additions simulate the original. Eaves gutters, downpipes and rainwater heads are in copper.

As indicated on the c. 1934 architectural drawings, the building is constructed in load bearing masonry to the external walls and internal walls, timber framed roof and floor structure and concrete strip footings to the external walls. Where retained, early internal masonry walls are finished in solid plaster. Later additions were also constructed of cavity brick to external walls, both masonry and lightweight walls and ceilings internally, steel structure and floors variously concrete and lightweight framing.
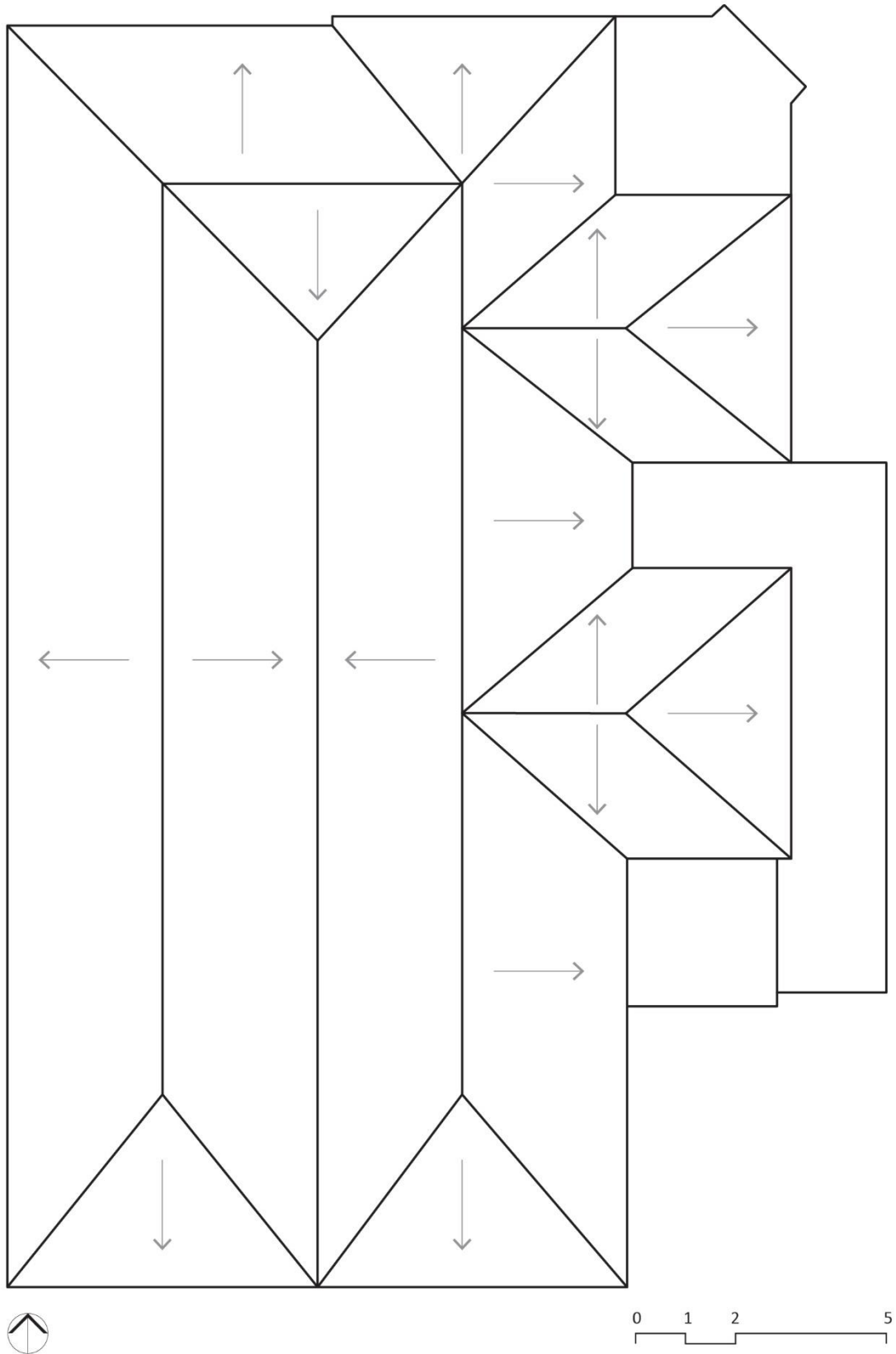
Figure 32   Roof plan of the Bondi Beach Post Office; north is to the top of the image

3.3.2   Exterior

Compositionally, the building is centred on the splayed corner entry porch defined by the paired Tuscan order columns and entablature at the north-east corner (Figure 33). The porch entablature provides the set off point for the cement rendered frieze extending to both facades. 'BONDI BEACH' is inscribed in raised decorative font to the frieze on the north and east facades and 'POST OFFICE' to the porch entablature. A cement rendered plinth also runs around the street elevations, turning into two pedestals either side of the porch to support the flanking columns. The terracotta tiled roof is a prominent feature to the Jaques Avenue elevation, though lesser so to the Hall Street elevation.

The entry porch is framed by paired columns, which sit forward of the flat rendered pilasters on the wall face (Figure 36). External walls to the porch are rusticated and retain a small vertical window to the north and east. The porch has a flat roof concealed by a low brick parapet. The original steps have been enclosed by a planter box and steel balustrade and the entrance is infilled with a fixed glass panel.

With the exception of the porch, external brick walls are in stretcher bond, with a capping of soldier course brickwork above the plinth and below the frieze (Figure 34). The original street facades are articulated by a bay of three double-hung timber framed sashes, divided by plain brick pilasters with cement rendered capitals and plinths, and flanked by rusticated piers. The later addition repeats this treatment, though with a pair of double hung sashes, and includes a second porch distinguished by paired pilasters in flat cement render and moulded capitals and bases (Figure 35). The c. 1934 addition facing Hall Street is set slightly back from the façade line of the original building. Rusticated piers define the corners of the building to the early phases. Windows are multi-paned to the upper sashes and single pane to the lower. The brick window sills are bull-nosed in a standard manner.

Figure 33   North-east corner entry to the Bondi Beach Post Office; note the infilling of the original entrance and steps

Figure 34   North façade of the c. 1922 post office to Hall Street; internal shop fittings are visible through the windows

Figure 35   Western addition and entry to the post office on Hall Street, constructed in c. 1934
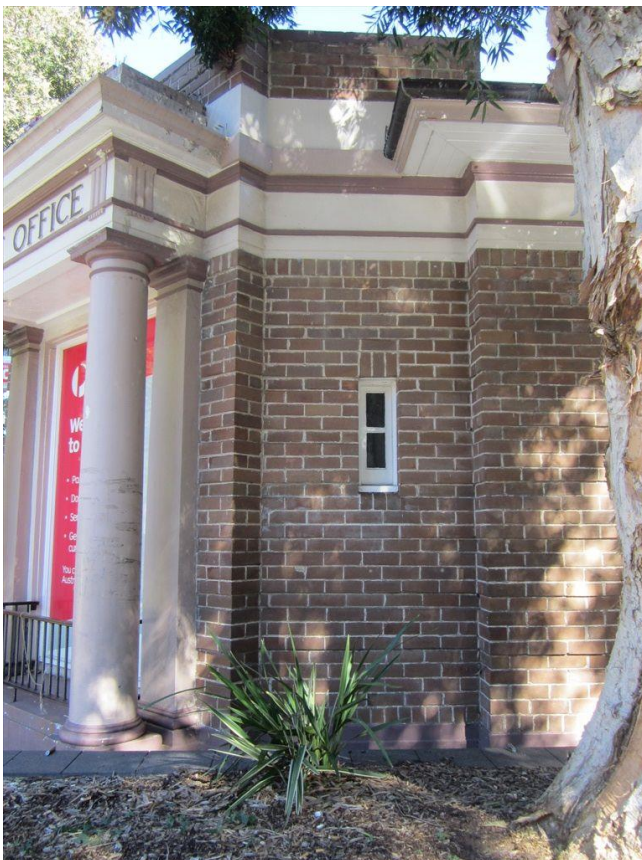
Figure 36   North façade of the corner porch and porch columns, pilasters and entablature

The Jaques Avenue elevation is comprised of the c. 1922 component described above, with the third and fourth phase additions to its south (Figure 37 to Figure 39). From Jaques Avenue, the building presents with paired hipped pavilions in brick set apart by a shallow recess that is infilled by a small glazed addition. The façade is dominated at ground level by the low-height bank of postal boxes in front of the second pavilion. A set of brick stairs accesses the north side of the glazed addition, though these are no longer in use. Further south is a small office, entry ramp and loading bay with roller door set into the site. Modern low-height structures (office, postal boxes and glazed addition) are beneath shallow skillion roofs of varying heights along this facade. Three small rectangular windows to the second pavilion are above the postal boxes and these are set between plain brick pilasters with rusticated piers terminating the corners of the structure. The driveway and ramp are enclosed by a steel framed chain mesh gate.

The c. 1934 addition to the west façade is in brown brick and re-used original west-facing windows, timber double-hung sashes with multi-paned upper sashes. As extended, the west elevation is constructed of face brick, with expansion joints defining each phase of addition (Figure 40). Windows to the later additions are modern, though constructed of timber. The south facade is a red clay face brick wall with moulded frieze beneath the eave, capped by the paired hipped ends to the roof.

Figure 37   Jaques Street façade to the c. 1922 post office

Figure 38   Hipped roof pavilion, post office boxes and works space additions to the south of the
                 c. 1922 post office

Figure 39   View of the later additions to the post office from the south-east

Figure 40   View along the west façade; the rusticated pier indicates the extent of the c. 1934 addition

3.3.3   Interior

Internally, the post office retains its large retail area, which is comprised of the early public and office spaces (Figure 41). All of the original and early fittings; counters, writing slopes and phone booths, have been removed and replaced by a modern counter and shop fittings. Lighting is of a modern commercial style (Figure 42 to Figure 44).

The corner porch remains in plan form, though is now only accessible from the interior of the building via a modern opening. Original opening in the walls for phone booths have been infilled. The west porch is used as the main public entry and is fitted out in a fairly utilitarian manner; glazed tiles to the floor and plain plasterboard linings to the walls and ceiling (Figure 45, Figure 46).

In the retail space interior faces of early walls are finished in solid plaster with a bead mould inscribed at sill height. Corners to pilasters and the central pier are chamfered. Original timber windows, where visible, are without architraves and set within an arrised reveal. Windows retain moulded timber sills. Moulded plaster vents with a floral motif remain above external windows throughout this space. Expressed ceilings beams are detailed with a recessed panel to their underside. A modern plasterboard ceiling has been installed between the ceiling beams and this is finished at the wall face and beam edge with a deep coved plaster cornice. Introduction of this ceiling are likely to have occurred as part of the c. 1996 works for the installation of air conditioning systems throughout the building.

The west side of the retail area contains two offices separated from the main spaces by lightweight plaster board walling. A narrow store is located in the area to the west of the porch that housed phone booths from c. 1934 (Figure 47). The upper section of the walls aligned with the rear of the phone booths remains. These rooms are largely non-original, though retain remnants of early detailing to the solid plaster external walls, wall vents, chamfered timber skirtings and a section of fibrous plaster cornice to the store (Figure 48). The ceiling to the offices is modern and matches the retail space.

The area comprising the original lavatory, store and strong room remains in plan form, though is largely altered. Where the original layout was of three discrete rooms, the rooms are now linked though the creation of openings in the dividing walls. Most original doorways have been infilled and access is now from the east side. Original external window openings are concealed beneath later plaster finishes. The flat ceilings are not original and were likely installed with the later alterations to the building. It is currently used as a store.

The architectural drawings indicate that the south-east area was divided into four spaces; an office and hats and cloaks spaces divided by a timber partition (Figure 28, Figure 49), a toilet, accessed from the outside and a small cupboard. None of these rooms remain, with this area altered internally and externally. The west wall now aligns with the original building and openings on the south wall are now infilled or altered. While there is evidence of early timber skirtings, these are more likely to have been relocated in refurbishment works.

The rear section of the post office comprises the mail sorting and parcels area (Figure 50), offices, lunch room, post office box area, amenities and loading dock. As noted these areas are all of late twentieth century construction. The central mail sorting area is a large space, designed with a flat panelled ceiling, plasterboard linings to walls and carpet floor finish over a presumed timber sheet flooring. To the west side of the mail sorting room are the female toilets and locker room as well as a disabled accessible toilet. These amenities are fitted out with modern finishes; tiles and plasterboard to walls, floors finished variously in tile and commercial carpet.

HALL STREET
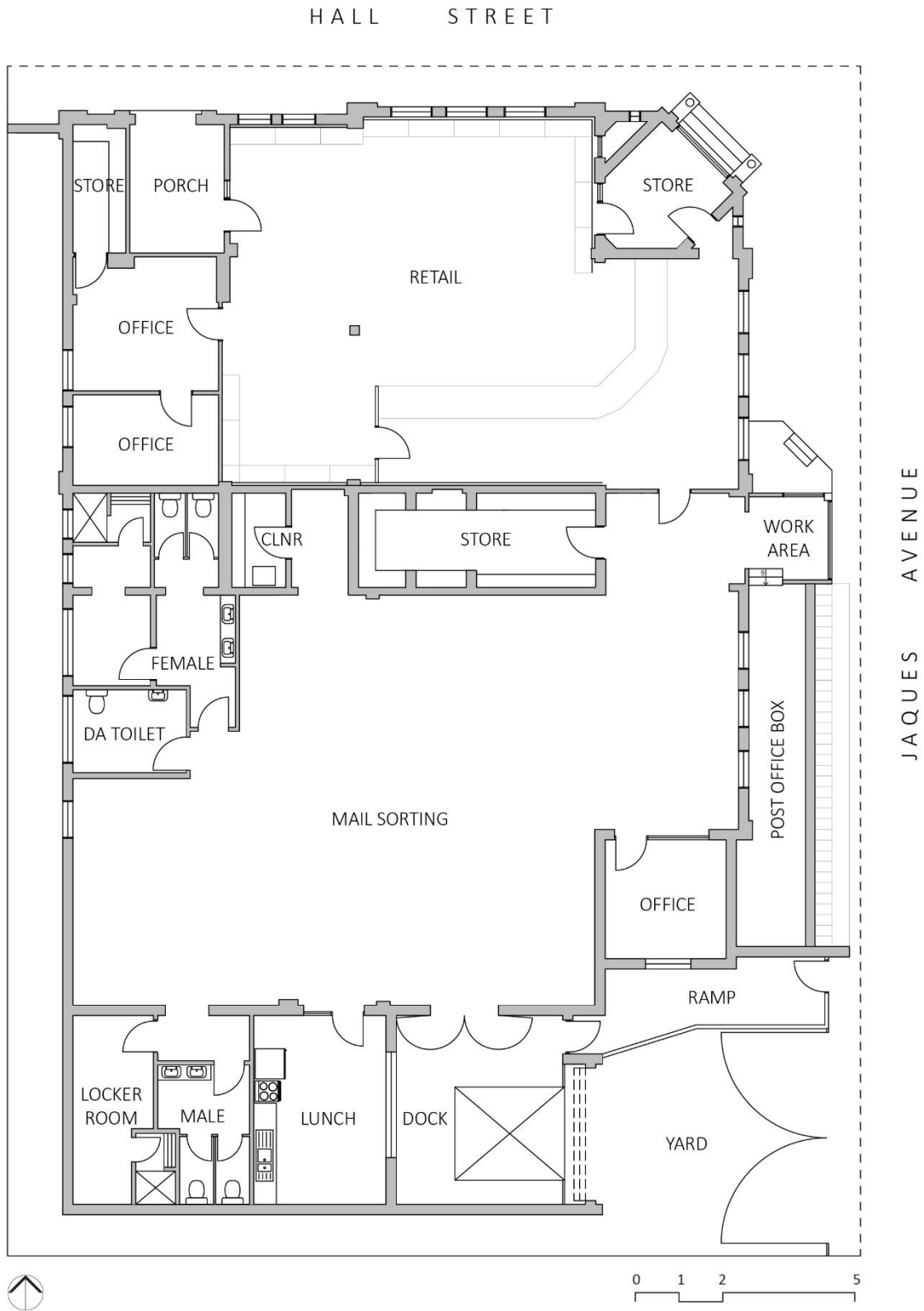
Figure 41   Plan of the Bondi Beach Post Office; north is to the top of the image

Figure 42   Retail area looking to the east (toward Jaques Avenue)

Figure 43   View along the east wall to the retail area, looking towards the modern doorway to the porch

Figure 44   View of the windows to the north mostly concealed behind shop fittings

Figure 45   Interior of the north-east porch, now store; the entry is infilled (right of image), the entry
                 to the phone booth is infilled (centre) and later door opening to the retail space (at left)

Figure 46   Interior of the west porch to Hall Street; note all finishes are modern

Figure 47   Store space to the west of the porch originally occupied by the phone booths; the ceiling
                 beam indicates the line of the original opening

Figure 48   West wall of office space to the south of the porch; note remnant sill, wall vent and
                 inscribed bead at sill height

Figure 49   The 'hats and cloaks' space, identified by the arrangement of the timber and glazed
                 partition and the arrangement of windows to the rear wall
                 Source: National Archives of Australia image no. N1694B

On the east side of the mail sorting room are a small office with a glazed entry, the post box area and works area in the space between the pavilions. The latter appears to have been used as a public service area with a hatch (no longer in use) to the north side. The external walls of the works area are glazed to the north and east, and the ceiling is a shallow skillion form. Access to the post box area is through the works area, stepping down to a floor level equivalent to ground level outside (Figure 51). Postal boxes line the east wall, with a narrow band of windows above. The ceiling is framed by exposed steel beams infilled by sheet plaster ceiling panels. The west wall is also lined with plasterboard. Carpet lines the floor.

Male toilets and locker room, the lunch room and loading dock are along the southern side of the mail sorting room. These spaces were developed in c. 1996. The toilets and locker room are finished to match the female spaces and these are set out with a shared air lock/entry accessing the separate toilet and locker room. The lunch room has flat plasterboard ceiling and walls, with a carpet finish to the floor. The space is relieved by a large highlight window to the east wall, looking over the loading dock. Kitchen joinery lines the walls to the perimeter. The loading dock is accessed from the mail sorting room. The south, west and north walls are all face brick, with the latter retaining the replica moulded frieze and external vents on what was an external wall. The ceiling is flat plaster. A concrete and brick platform is situated along the north, south and west walls, surrounding the central scissor lift loading platform. Vehicle access is from the east via the roller door.

Figure 50   View to the south-west in the mail sorting room and parcels area; access to the loading dock is via the blue paired doors

Figure 51   Post office box sorting area, looking to the south

3.4   Conclusion

Surviving original and early fabric at the Bondi Beach Post Office is in large part limited to external elevations and a section of the roof. This includes the external walls to the Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, the return south wall of the c. 1922 building to Jaques Avenue (above the roof line) and the west wall terminating at the rusticated pier. The roof to the c. 1922 and c. 1934 phases and construction is retained although this has been altered to the south when the roof was extended. All other remaining built form is modern and is not of interest in a heritage sense.

Internally, the planning of the corner porch remains legible, though the closure of the entrance and creation of new doorways does diminish the reading of this space. The remaining spaces dating to the early phases have largely been altered in plan, with the loss of the smaller ancillary spaces and the division of public and office space. Limited internal decorative features survive, and it is possible that the original ceiling above the public area may be concealed beneath later fabric. However, there is limited surviving fabric internally that illustrates the original design, layout and operation of the post office.

4.0   ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1   Introduction

The heritage values of the Bondi Beach Post Office have been assessed previously by Lovell Chen as part of the National Survey and Assessment of Australia Post (owned) Heritage Properties (May 2009). The Bondi Beach Post Office was assessed against the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) criteria and determined to have Commonwealth Heritage Values under the EPBC Act assessment criteria. The post office was inscribed on the CHL as a listed place on 22 August 2012. A statement of significance was prepared as part of the listing.

This chapter includes a comparative analysis and assessment of significance, which places the Bondi Beach Post Office in the context of design of the period, both in New South Wales and in a broader national context. This comparative analysis draws in part on typological research previously undertaken by Lovell Chen for Australia Post, and in particular a research essay prepared by Lovell Chen for the Methodology Report from the survey of properties owned by Australia Post.[49] Part of this essay is incorporated into this chapter; the full essay is included at Appendix B of this HMP. It examines historical typologies of post offices, and identifies phases which reflect the evolution of post office buildings deriving from changes in function, services and technology.

4.2   Comparative analysis – typological development of Australia post offices

4.2.1   Historical development of post offices

The *Research Essay/Typological Study of Australian Post Offices and Post Office Buildings* prepared for Australia Post by Lovell Chen (May 2009) identifies four primary phases of post office construction in Australia:

- First generation, 1803-1869 (Post Office and Quarters)

- Second generation, 1870-1929 (Post Office and Telegraph Office)

- Third generation, 1930-1974 (Drive-in retail shop and administrative office)

- Fourth generation, 1975- present (Separation of telecommunication and retail shop)

The following contains the relevant sections of this study. The complete document can be found at Appendix B.

In its original inception, the Bondi Beach Post Office falls within the broad category of Second generation postal buildings. Coming towards the later end of the phase, the building reflects the shift in the provision of postal services from the often monumental Victorian era buildings to the modest-scaled and sometimes domestically inspired premises. The Second Generation phase also recognises the design of post offices from a Federal approach; designed by the Commonwealth Public Works Branch, Department of Home Affairs (1904-1916) and subsequently the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways (1917-1932), not the preceding state-based, colonial, development of designs.

The designers with the new Federal department were under the aegis of Commonwealth Architect John Smith Murdoch. All were in the front rank of Australian architects and were a highly talented group including JJ Clark, JT Kelleher, E Wilson Dobbs, AJ McDonald, Thomas Pye, FDG Stanley, AE Michaels, George Oakeshott and the various Williams: Kemp and Hardwick.

The construction of Second generation post offices was pushed further by increasing urbanisation, particularly after 1900-18, and by suburban development in larger cities and towns, requiring new post offices to service expanding residential areas.

Domestic and institutional expression also came in smaller designs. Smaller post offices reflected this new tendency toward recasting post office functions in conspicuously permanent and gestural masonry buildings.

Telephones, horizontality and post office size

Another major change with an impact on post office buildings typology was the spread of telephone services from 1880. These were quickly subsumed by the colonial post offices, in part because of the expense in building landline services and their equipment. Telephones needed manual exchange rooms, which were large in area and required additional staff rooms. After 1890 it seemed logical to attach these to existing post and telegraph buildings. Since relatively few people had domestic telephones, the post offices also became the local place to cluster groups of public telephones. Each of these in turn required a cubicle or booth, and collectively altering the ground area and frontal appearance of post offices significantly. Telephone exchanges effectively doubled the ground area occupied by a post office, and they brought even more personnel under the post office roof: operators, technicians, and billing and additional bookkeepers. This is reflected in the increasingly horizontal bearing of 1900s post offices, which relied more specifically on long street frontages and the address of crucial intersections than on the 'beacon' effect of the earlier clock towers and other vertical components. Clock towers disappeared from new post offices in NSW in the 1890s, being replaced, largely, with conspicuous vestibule spaces and entry halls.

This coincided with the Federalising of post office building designs. The Federal Department of Works and Railways took over their design, progressively, from around 1905-11, although state government architects continued some involvement till around 1917. In NSW, the state government office, under the aegis of George Oakeshott, Walter Vernon and George McRae, designed 125 new post offices between 1891 and 1916. Murdoch's department then oversaw another 34 post offices in NSW between then and the Depression.

Interestingly, almost all post offices built in the period 1900-1930 favoured some intimacy of scale and touches of domesticity, apart from Perth's GPO (1914-23). The suburban and rural post offices, by contrast, were linked increasingly to contemporary domestic form and detail or had an implicit grand manner softened by an intimacy in scale. Many still retained a residential role, and this was not to recede until later in the twentieth century.

Loss of residential role

The other significant change in this 'Second Generation' period was the gradual disappearance of any residential component. Residences had been part of almost all post offices, other than GPOs, since the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the postal halls in front of or below them often suggest typological origins in 'front rooms' or public inn spaces. For the older post offices with these integrated residences, the latter were gradually converted into offices and storerooms, their bathrooms and kitchens becoming amenities for the day workers. There were major implications for regional post offices, which no longer housed or were identified with specific families in a given town or suburb. To some extent the longevity of many employees would have lessened this impact, but the freeing of post offices from their residential role clearly severed some community roots, making the postal employees and their families less visible in terms of place, and reducing their place-profile to that of say, railway or bus personnel.

Comment

Bondi Beach Post Office reflects the small-scale, suburban post offices of the Second generation. The post office provided postal and telegraph services at a time of significant residential growth in Bondi, aligning with the rising popularity of beach culture. Typologically, the Bondi Beach Post Office

demonstrates the styling established by George Oakeshott and his contemporaries at the Federal Department of Works and Railways in New South Wales and applied readily to many suburban post offices in the interwar period. It did not, however, include the residential component typical to the early Second generation post offices.

4.3   Interwar post office design

The following comparative analysis is drawn from the Bondi Beach Post Office Survey and Heritage Assessment, Lovell Chen 2008.

The Oakeshott-Henderson designed post offices for the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways appeared in regional and suburban locations in New South Wales in the early 1920s. These represented the Commonwealth takeover of a previously New South Wales Government architects' preserve, but in a manner varyingly distinct from the Murdoch-Mackennal flavoured incursions in other states. Bondi Beach, in particular, concentrated its entry in a smaller and tighter corner placement, angled and hemmed in by two flanking columns. The most direct counterparts for Bondi Beach were at Beecroft (1925, Figure 52), Coffs Harbour Jetty (1926, Figure 53), Maroubra (1927, Figure 54) and Mascot Airport (date unknown, Figure 55). These all incorporated the Commonwealth institutional signature of brick rustication in their piers, but differed in the general pattern of smaller Australian post offices in other respects. All are designed in the interwar Colonial/Georgian Revival style. Other post office were designed with classically inspired entries, as at Waverley (1923, Figure 56), Botany (1917, Figure 57), Coogee (Figure 58) and Rose Bay (1928, Figure 59).

In this Bondi Beach reflected the generally small, tight proportioning becoming widespread in New South Wales housing and small institutional buildings, partly due to distinctively small property divisions and all being in brick.

This period also saw a gradual shift toward square footprint designs with symmetrical pyramid or hipped roof designs such as Yenda (1920), Killara (1923), Roseville (1924), the very similar Lawson (1925), the in antis columned Merewether (1925), Millthorpe (1927), and the round-arched pair at Rose Bay (Figure 59) and Concord (1930). There were smaller post offices with asymmetrical elevations but still square-roof plans and footprints. These included Belmore (1925), Branxton and Bulli (both 1926), Kandos and Yanco (both 1927).

These symmetrical roofed post offices found close counterparts interstate as at Glen Iris in Victoria or Nundah in Queensland (1928-30). These were in addition to the more general breakfront post offices that marked the Commonwealth dominance of post office design after c. 1920. These in effect also marked the high tide of Neo-Georgian pavilion post offices in Australia, though Old Colonial and Georgian revivalism had been evident in Government architectural thinking long before that (Armidale, NSW, 1880-1916).

Comment

Bondi Beach Post Office exhibits the designs characteristics and styling applied to many small scale interwar period post offices in New South Wales. The analysis demonstrates that it is one of many post office constructed to an identical design, and illustrates the approach to the provision of postal buildings where they were not site or context specific.

Figure 52   Beecroft Post Office, c. 1924
                Source: National Archives of Australia, Series C4076 HN870

Figure 53   Coffs Harbour Jetty Post Office, c. 1920 (sic)
                Source: National Archives of Australia, Series C4076 HN1454

Figure 54   Maroubra Post Office, c. 1947
                  Source: National Archives of Australia, image no C4078, N2982

Figure 55   Mascot Airport Post Office, c. 1938
                  Source: National Archives of Australia, image no C4076, HN1445

Figure 56   Charing Cross Post Office, built 1923, corner of Bronte Road and Carrington Road, Waverley, 1975 [also referred to as Waverley Post Office]
Source: Waverley Council Image Library

Figure 57   Botany Post Office, 1901 [sic]
Source: National Archives of Australia, Series B5919, 265

Figure 58   Coogee Post Office, 1946
             Source: National Archives of Australia, image No C4076, HN 17066
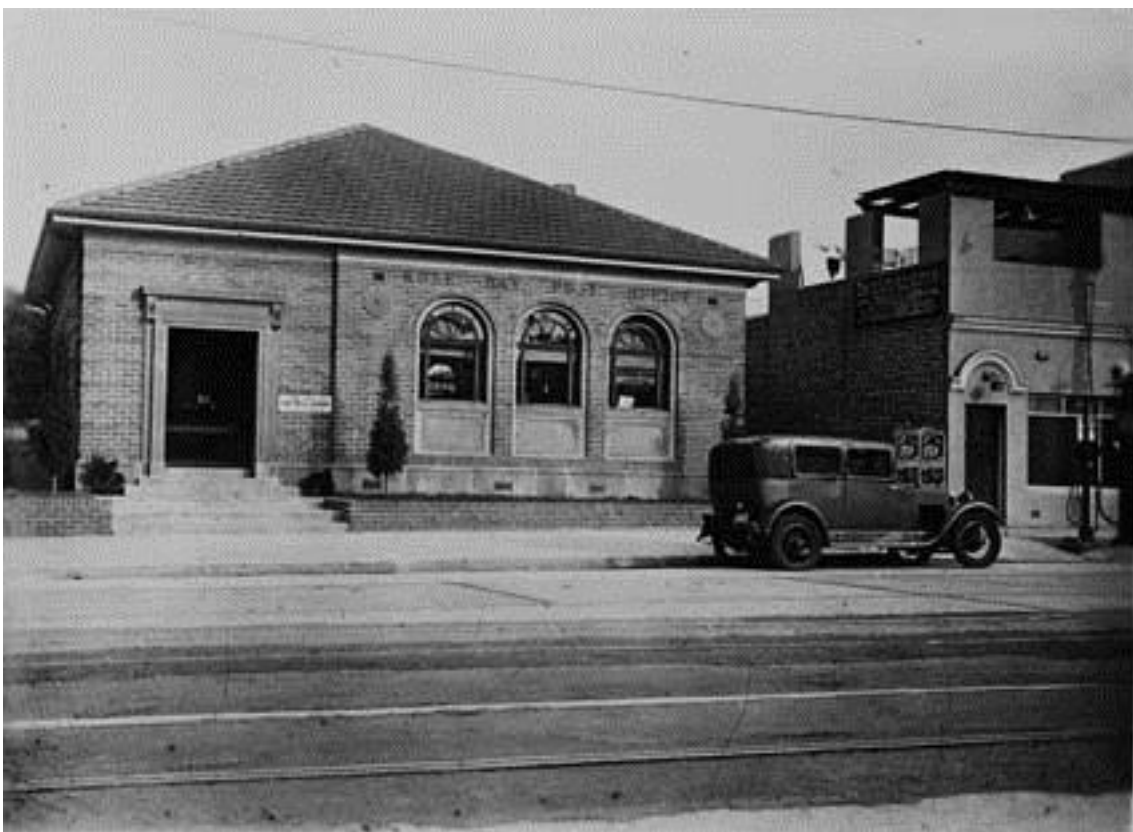
Figure 59   Rose Bay Post Office, 1930
             Source: National Archives of Australia, image no C4076, HN460

4.4   Assessment against criteria

The following assesses the Bondi Beach Post Office against the nine Commonwealth Heritage Criteria defined by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). It has been adapted from the earlier work by Lovell Chen and the CHL entry.

Criterion A: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history

Bondi Beach Post Office, constructed in 1922 to a design by Supervising Architect EH Henderson of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways, and subsequently extended, is of local historical value. The building is associated with a period of local growth and development, in the interwar period, when Bondi Beach became a popular beach resort and attraction for families and recreational swimmers. By the 1930s Bondi was drawing local and international visitors. Additions were made to the post office to meet these growing demand for postal and telegraphs services. As Bondi grew in popularity, so did development and suburbanisation of the area. The interwar heritage character of the building, reflecting this important period of local development, and the building's prominent corner location, enhance this aspect of its significance. The Bondi Beach Post Office achieves this threshold at a CHL level.

Criterion B: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Criterion C: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Criterion D: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:

Bondi Beach is an example of a:

1. Post and telegraph office without quarters (second generation typology 1870-1929)
2. Interwar period building in the Colonial/Georgian Revival Style.
3. Building by EH Henderson, Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways, under direction of George Oakeshott.

It appears that residential quarters were not part of the original building program, nor the subsequent additions dating to c. 1934. Typologically, the building's original planning has been impacted by the enclosure of the former corner porch, an additional entry to the postal hall was located on the Hall Street elevation, now part of the later addition designed in 1934 by H Sturtevant.

Stylistically and architecturally, Bondi Beach is typical of a small group of compact, domestically scaled brick post offices in New South Wales designed by EH Henderson under George Oakeshott's aegis as State Director of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways. It also reflects and develops several design signatures worked out by Murdoch and Mackennal in other states. The building is one of several designed between 1923 and 1926 that adopt a columned corner entry in a tight domestic cottage form, and were a genre distinct to New South Wales. Bondi Beach Post Office achieves this criterion at a CHL and a local level.

Criterion E: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group

Bondi Beach Post Office, located on the corner of Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, displays some landmark qualities in this context. The building has an assured corner presentation, makes a contribution to the local/immediate streetscape heritage character, and accordingly demonstrates aesthetic value at a local level.

Criterion F: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Criterion G: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Criterion H: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Criterion I: the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition.

The Bondi Beach Post Office does not meet the CHL threshold for this value. It is not considered to demonstrate this values at a local level.

Comment

The above assessment indicates that the Bondi Beach Post Office has Commonwealth Heritage Values under the EPBC Act under the criteria 'a', 'd' and 'e'. The place is therefore of historical, architectural, representative and aesthetic significance at a level which meets the CHL threshold of local significance.

4.5   Statement of significance

A statement of significance has been prepared for the Bondi Beach Post Office as part of its inclusion in the CHL. Based on the additional research and analysis undertaken as part of the preparation of this HMP, some minor additions or amendments have been made to the statement. The original citation is included at Appendix A.

> Bondi Beach Post Office, constructed in 1922 to a design by EH Henderson of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways, and subsequently extended, is of local historical significance. The building is associated with a period of local growth and development, in the interwar period, when Bondi Beach became a popular beach resort and attraction for families and recreational swimmers. As Bondi grew in popularity, so did the development of suburbanisation of the area. The interwar heritage character of the building, reflecting an important period of development in the local context, and the prominent corner location, enhance this aspect of significance (Criterion a).

> The post office and telegraph office ~~(possibly originally with residential quarters)~~ was designed by ~~EH Henderson under George Oakeshott's aegis as State Head of the commonwealth Public Works~~

~~Office,~~ in the Colonial/Georgian Revival Style. Typologically, the building's original planning has been impacted by works. These works, which include changes to the exterior such as the enclosure of the former corner porch and other additions, have also impacted to some extent on the building's presentation. Stylistically and architecturally, however, Bondi Beach *Post Office* is significant as one of a small group of compact, domestically scaled brick post offices in New South Wales designed by *EH* Henderson. It also reflects and develops several design signatures worked out by architects Murdoch and Mackennal in other states. The building is also one of ~~four still operating~~ *several* post office*s* designed between 1923 and 1926 that adopt a columned *splayed* corner entry in a tight domestic cottage-form, and were a genre distinct to New South Wales. ~~More formally, it is a companion design of the pyramidal or oblong hipped-roof post offices designed for small suburban and regional settings between 1920 and 1930, which again had their main airing in New South Wales, but were tried out in other states as well~~. *The post office demonstrates this criteria at a local level* (Criterion d).

Aesthetically, Bondi Beach Post Office, located on the corner of Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, displays some landmark qualities in this context. The building has an assured corner presentation, makes a contribution to the local/immediate streetscape character, and accordingly demonstrates aesthetic values at a local level (Criterion e).

4.6   Significant attributes

The preceding assessment has determined that the Bondi Beach Post Office is of historic, architectural and aesthetic significance at a local level, and that its inclusion in the CHL is warranted. Bondi Beach Post Office is also considered to be of local significance within the context of the Local Environmental Plan. Further, this analysis considers the relative significance and the attributes of the building on which the conservation objectives and policies in Chapter 6 are established.

Two levels of significance are proposed: *significant* and *little or no* and these are defined below and shown in Figure 60.

Significant

Significant fabric and elements include original elements identified in Chapter 3; and more generally the elements and attributes which express the identified historical, architectural and aesthetic values of the post office. These elements contribute to the public presentation and appreciation of the building as a domestic styled and scaled interwar post office.

- The extent of the external fabric dating to the c. 1922 and c. 1934 phases of development including the facades to Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, the south facade (above the addition), west façade, the corner porch and hipped roof form
- The north-east porch in plan form

Little or no

Fabric and elements defined as *little or no* significance make little or no contribution to the significance of the place. They include elements that have been altered or modified, where any heritage value has been significantly compromised; and/or are minor in nature; and/or of recent origin.

- The external alterations and additions post-dating the c. 1934 works
- The interior of the post office with the exception of the north-east porch

HALL STREET

Key   Levels of Significance

Significant

Little or no significance
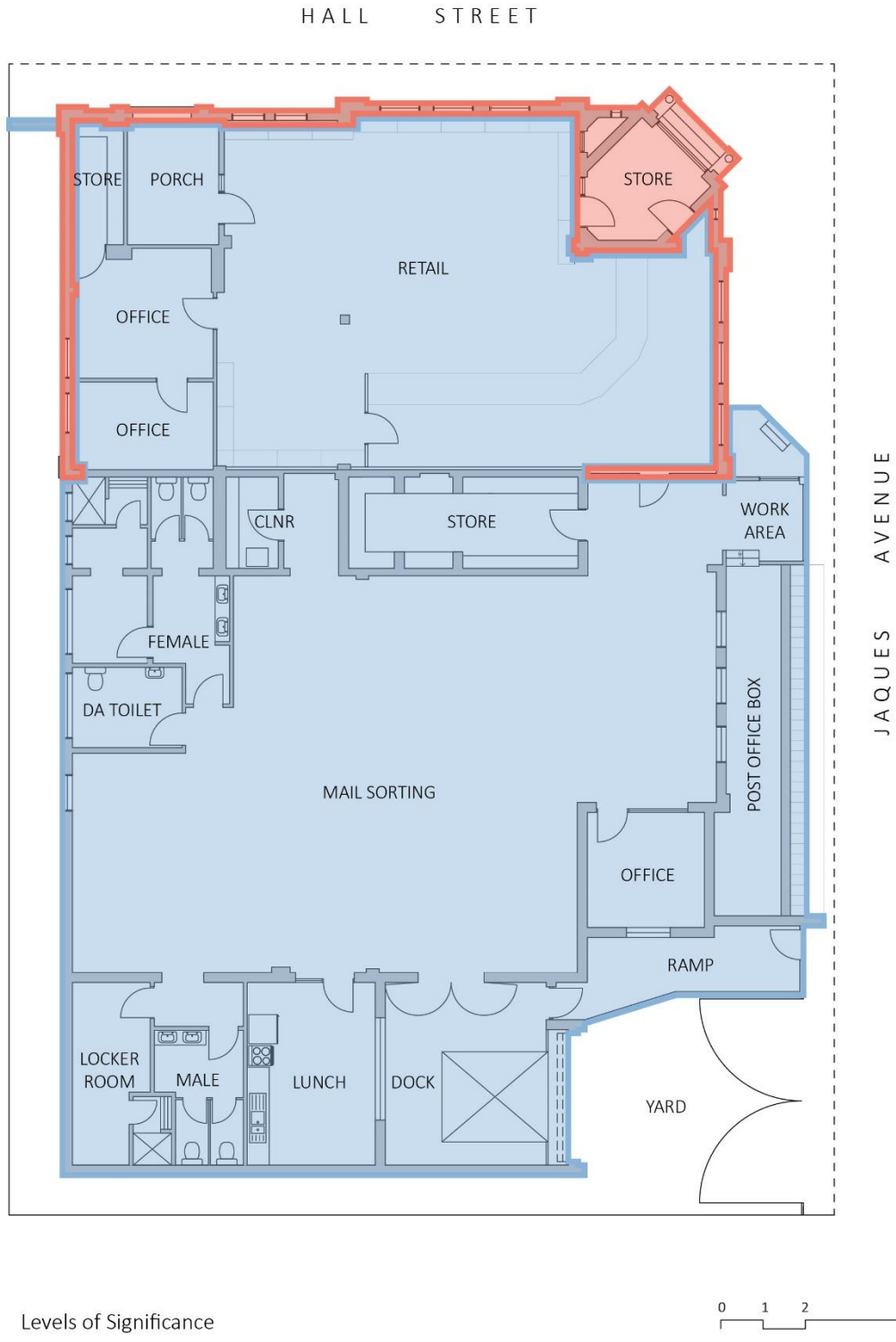
Figure 60   Significance plan for the Bondi Beach Post Office

5.0   OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following establishes a framework for the conservation policy at Chapter 6. Issues addressed include:

- Implications arising from significance
- Legislative requirements and management of heritage values
- Condition and integrity of the post office
- Current and future management

5.1   Implications of significance

The statement of significance at Chapter 4 demonstrates that the Bondi Beach Post Office satisfies the Commonwealth Heritage criteria for historic significance (criterion 'a'), for its ability to demonstrate the principal characteristics of a type, or class, of cultural heritage place (criterion 'd') and aesthetic attributes (criterion 'e').

The Bondi Beach Post Office is also of local significance to the City of Waverley.

The key implication arising from this assessment is that the Bondi Beach Post Office should be conserved. Key features and elements that require conservation include:

- The extent of the external fabric dating to the c. 1922 and c. 1934 phases of development including the facades to Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, the south facade (above the addition), west façade, the corner porch and hipped roof form
- The north-east porch in plan form.

5.2   Legislative requirements

5.2.1   Statutory heritage framework

The relevant heritage listings and controls, outlined below, are also identified in Chapter 1.

Future works to the property will be subject to the relevant statutory heritage controls, including the relevant local planning provisions as outlined below; and the EPBC Act depending on the future Australia Post ownership and/or leasing arrangements (see Section 5.4 below).

Table 1   Legislative framework

Act or Code	Brief description
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)	The EPBC Act imposes obligations on Commonwealth agencies to protect and maintain the environment, including the cultural heritage values of assets that they own or lease.

While the post office remains in Australia Post ownership, or under Australia Post control via a leasing arrangement, its management will be in accordance with sections 26 and 28 of the EPBC Act. |
| Commonwealth Heritage List | Bondi Beach Post Office is included in the Commonwealth Heritage List as a Listed Place (ID 106174). While the post office remains in Australia Post ownership, or under Australia Post control via a leasing arrangement, its management will be in accordance with sections 26 and 28 of the EPBC Act.

Any actions which will have a significant impact on the environment of a listed place, including identified Commonwealth Heritage values, require approval of the Minister for Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. If an agency is |

Act or Code	Brief description
	unsure that a proposed action will result in a significant impact they can refer the proposal to the Minister for a determination. The decision on whether to refer a proposal is a matter for the agency concerned, being a matter of judgement as to whether the action could have a significant impact on heritage values. A qualified heritage practitioner can also provide advice on this.
	Where Australia Post divests a property and it is no longer Commonwealth owned or controlled (i.e. Australia Post ceases to operate or function within the property), then the above statutory framework would cease to apply.
Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979	The Bondi Beach Post Office is listed as Item 113 in Schedule 5 (Environmental Heritage) of the City of Waverley Local Environmental Plan.
	A Development Application is required for all works with the exception of minor works identified as Exempt Development or Complying Development.
National Construction Code	The National Construction Code (NCC) provides the minimum necessary requirements for safety, health, amenity and sustainability in the design and construction of new buildings, and new work in existing buildings, throughout Australia. The NCC was developed to incorporate all on-site construction requirements into a single code. It covers the Building Code of Australia and Plumbing Code of Australia and is managed by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB).
	The NCC provides a nationally accepted and uniform approach to technical requirements for the building industry. It contains provisions for the design and construction of buildings and other structures, covering such matters as structure, fire resistance, access and egress, environmental sustainability, services and equipment and aspects of health and amenity.
	In cases of existing buildings undergoing alterations and/or additions, some discretion may be available with regard to upgrading the existing part of the building to meet the NCC.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	The Disability Discrimination Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the basis of their disability. It is not specifically about buildings, however it has an effect on buildings in which the design and construction prevents access by people with a disability, as the owners of those buildings are deemed to be discriminating against people on the basis of a disability.
	The DDA is philosophical in approach and:
	• is complaints based;
	• has no construction standards;
	• applies to actions of discrimination wherever they occur; and
	• can apply retrospectively to both new and existing buildings, wherever the discrimination occurs.
	On 1 May 2011, the Disability (access to Premises – Buildings) Standards (Premises Standards) took effect under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992.* These standards align with changes to the 2011 edition of the BCA.

The following table identifies EPBC Act requirements for management plans, and where these have been complied with in this HMP for the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Table 2   Summary of HMP compliance with the EPBC Act report requirements.

EPBC Act Regulations, 2000, Schedule 7a	Relevant section(s) of this HMP
a) establish objectives for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place;	Chapters 1, 5 and 6
b) provide a management framework that includes reference to any statutory requirements and agency mechanisms for the protection of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place;	Chapter 5
c) provide a comprehensive description of the place, including information about its location, physical features, condition, historical context and current uses;	Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4
d) provide a description of the Commonwealth Heritage values and any other heritage values of the place;	Chapter 4
e) describe the condition of the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place;	Chapter 3
f) describe the method used to assess the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place;	Chapters 1 and 4
g) describe the current management requirements and goals, including proposals for change and any potential pressures on the Commonwealth Heritage values of the place;	Chapter 5
h) have policies to manage the Commonwealth Heritage values of a place, and include, in those policies, guidance in relation to the following:	Chapter 6
(i) the management and conservation processes to be used;	Chapters 5 and 6
(ii) the access and security arrangements, including access to the area for indigenous people to maintain cultural traditions;	Chapter 6
(iii) the stakeholder and community consultation and liaison arrangements;	Chapter 6
(iv) the policies and protocols to ensure that indigenous people participate in the management process;	Not applicable
(v) the protocols for the management of sensitive information;	Not applicable
(vi) the planning and management of works, development, adaptive reuse and property divestment proposals;	Chapter 6
(vii) how unforseen discoveries or disturbance of heritage are to be managed;	Chapter 6
(viii) how, and under what circumstances, heritage advice is to be obtained;	Chapter 6

EPBC Act Regulations, 2000, Schedule 7a	Relevant section(s) of this HMP
(ix) how the condition of Commonwealth Heritage values is to be monitored and reported;	Chapter 6
(x) how records of intervention and maintenance of a heritage places register are kept	Chapter 6
(xi) the research, training and resources needed to improve management;	Chapter 6
(xii) how heritage values are to be interpreted and promoted;	Chapter 6
i) include an implementation plan;	Chapter 6
j) show how the implementation of policies will be monitored;	Chapter 6
k) show how the management plan will be reviewed	Chapter 6

5.3   Integrity

Externally, Bondi Beach Post Office is of high integrity to the external presentation of the early twentieth century phases of construction. Incursions, such as the infilling of the north-east porch entry and alteration of the steps have not greatly impacted on the presentation of the building. With the exception of the intrusive postal box and low-level glazed additions to the east, the modern additions generally have been completed in a sympathetic manner. These are of a scale that is compatible with the early fabric and do not dominate the key views of the building. The post office maintains a strong visual presence within the intersection, though this is somewhat diminished by the scale of the mature plantings to both Hall Street and Jaques Avenue.

Internally, the Bondi Beach Post office provides little evidence of early occupation and function through its planning layout and fabric. The interior largely has been altered and modified to the extent that the distinction between public and office functions is no longer legible. The building now reflects the evolved and expanded function of the post office in the late twentieth century.

5.4   Current & future management

This section addresses the current and future management of Bondi Beach Post Office.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the post office is owned and managed by Australia Post, but is being divested by the agency. Australia Post currently proposes to lease back the whole of the building following sale to the new owner.

In terms of Australia Post requirements in relation to the property, once the lease takes effect (upon settlement of the sale), Australia Post will remain responsible for protecting and maintaining the Commonwealth Heritage values of the property, in a manner consistent with this HMP and the EPBC Act. Australia Post, as tenant, will also have the usual repair and maintenance obligations. Otherwise, the new owner, as landlord, will generally be responsible for structural and capital repairs and unforeseen damage (e.g. caused by flood or fire etc).

It is also noted that the operating model under which Australia Post conducts its business is undergoing change, and future requirements may necessitate a physical change to the historic building. In that event, an EPBC Act referral would be made, if the works were considered a controlled action. Approval would also be sought from the local government authority, as per the property's individual listing in Schedule 5 of the Waverley Local Environmental Plan, 2012.

It is noted that no covenant is proposed to be placed on the title.

It is also understood that a separate Development Application (DA) has been lodged with Waverley Council for future development of the property by the new owners. The development which is proposed under the DA involves partial demolition of the post office to provide for a four-storey mixed-use building, with ground level retail, residential apartments above, and basement carparking over two levels.

6.0   CONSERVATION POLICY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

This conservation policy is based on the assessment of cultural significance at Chapter 4, and informed by the opportunities and constraints identified at Chapter 5.

The objective of the conservation policy is to provide guidance on the conservation and management of the subject property's heritage values and attributes.

As relevant, the individual policies are followed by explanatory text.

6.1   Definitions

The terminology used in this chapter is of a specific nature. The following definitions are from the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* (Article 1), as endorsed by all statutory and national heritage bodies.

> *Place* means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.
>
> *Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.
>
> - Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings,* records, *related places* and *related objects.*
>
> - Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.
>
> *Fabric* means all the physical material of the *place* including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.
>
> *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance.*
>
> *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of a *place*, and its *setting.*
>
> Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction.*
>
> *Preservation* means maintaining a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
>
> *Restoration* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.
>
> *Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material.
>
> *Adaptation* means modifying a *place* to suit the existing *use* or a proposed use.
>
> *Use* means the functions of a *place*, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.
>
> *Compatible use* means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place.* Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.
>
> *Setting* means the immediate and extended environment of a *place* that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.
>
> *Related* place means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.

Related object means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the place.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

Meanings denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

6.2   General policies

Policy 1   Significance as the basis for future conservation and management

The statement of significance included in this HMP should be the principal basis for future management and conservation of the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Specific conservation objectives should include:

- The retention and conservation of significant elements and areas in accordance with the policies and recommendations in this HMP.

- A sensitive and respectful approach to adaptation, new works and future development where significant elements and areas may be affected.

- Alterations and adaptation works in support of a new use which are undertaken in a manner which has minimal impact on significant fabric and on the original form and presentation of the element/area and the heritage values more generally identified at Section 4.

Policy 2   Adoption of the Burra Charter

The conservation and management of the Bondi Beach Post Office should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter.

When assessing the suitability of proposed works to significant areas and elements at the Bondi Beach Post Office, the principles of the *Burra Charter* (2013) and its practice notes should provide the basis for all future works. These principles provide guidance on the conservation and adaptation of places and elements identified as being of cultural heritage significance.

Policy 3   Adoption of policies

The policies included in this HMP should be endorsed and adopted by the present and future owners and managers of the Bondi Beach Post Office, and should form the primary guide for its management.

The present and future owners of the Bondi Beach Post Office should adopt and implement the policies in this HMP.

Policy 4   Compliance with legislation

The owners and managers of the Bondi Beach Post Office should comply with all applicable legislation.

It is important that those responsible for the management and maintenance of the Bondi Beach Post Office are aware of the statutory heritage controls which apply and their obligations under these controls. Processes should be developed and followed when proposing maintenance or repair work, landscape work, or other activities which potentially involve changes to and modification of significant fabric and elements, and accordingly may impact on the heritage values.

Information about the applicable legislation is at Chapter 5 'Legislative requirements'.

Policy 5   *Specialist advice and skills*

Advice from qualified heritage practitioners should be sought before any action is proposed or undertaken that could have an impact on the heritage values and significant building components and fabric of the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Where works to significant building components or fabric are proposed, or where technical advice is needed, it is important to select consultants and contractors with proven experience in the relevant field. This applies to the development of strategic approaches to undertaking works, as well as to the delivery of conservation works.

Policy 6   *Review of the HMP*

Consistent with best practice, this HMP should be reviewed and updated every five years (by 2021).

Major physical change to the Bondi Beach Post Office would be a trigger for a review of this HMP. Other triggers include instances where:

- Approaches to conservation practice change, with potential implications for the management of the Bondi Beach Post Office

- Major change occurs as a result of an accident or misadventure (i.e. vandalism or fire)

- The HMP is found to be out of date with regard to significance

6.3   Conservation policies

Policy 7   *Heritage curtilage*

The heritage curtilage for the Bondi Beach Post Office should be defined as the title boundary.

The 'heritage curtilage' for a building, complex or site has been defined as, 'the area of land (including land covered by water) surrounding an item or area of heritage significance which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance'.[50] A heritage curtilage should include all significant elements and establish an area which is managed to ensure the maintenance of heritage significance. Identification of land to be included within a heritage curtilage does not preclude change within this area including subdivision. Land within a heritage curtilage does, however, need to be managed so as not to adversely impact on setting, presentation or significance of a heritage place.

Policy 8   *Conservation of Bondi Beach Post Office and its significant elements*

The elements and areas of significance at the Bondi Beach Post Office should be retained and conserved.

Significant elements and areas are those identified as follows:

- The extent of the external fabric dating to the c. 1922 and c. 1934 phases of development including the facades to Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, the south facade (above the addition), west façade, the corner porch and hipped roof form
- The north-east porch in plan form.

Future management of the post office should ensure that these elements are retained and conserved. In planning for new works or development, an awareness of the need to retain these elements and their preferred treatment, should be uppermost. See also Policies 11 and 12 below.

Policy 9   Views

Views of the Post Office from Hall Street and Jaques Avenue should be retained.

The Bondi Beach Post Office was designed to address the corner of Hall Street and Jaques Avenue, with views centred on the prominent Classical Revival porch. As viewed from the north and north-east the Bondi Beach Post Office presents in a robust manner, owning the architectural qualities of the built form. In preference, these views should be maintained. Views from the south-east, along Jaques Avenue, are less sensitive and are dominated by the later, non-significant additions.

Policy 10   Remedial works and cyclical maintenance and repairs of fabric

Programs of priority maintenance, remedial works and cyclical maintenance should form the basis for on-going care of the significant fabric at the Bondi Beach Post Office.

The fabric of historic buildings will deteriorate over time due to the effects of age, weather and use. Poor maintenance can hasten the decline and decay of fabric, which can be expensive to rectify if not promptly addressed. It may also result in the loss of significant heritage fabric which can in turn impact on the heritage values of the place.

The establishment of a cyclical maintenance programme will help to retard deterioration and, following any refurbishment works, to prevent future deterioration of restored original or introduced new material. Broadly, the approach to maintenance should firstly be to maintain and ensure that the significant original and early fabric does not deteriorate further and secondly to maintain all existing fabric. *Ad hoc* repairs or patch ups should be avoided.

Where existing fabric needs to renewed, the replacement generally should match the original in design, materials and construction unless there are strong overriding functional reasons for altering the original design or materials. New material should be marked on the back with the date (year/month) of installation.

Regular inspections of the building's fabric should occur, with an emphasis on susceptible areas such as guttering and downpipes, door and window openings. Generally, day-to-day maintenance work can be carried out in accordance with the conservation policies and without reference to a conservation specialist. However, major maintenance works should be undertaken under the direction of an appropriately qualified conservation practitioner.

The primary aim of repair work should be to retain as much of the historic material as possible. In most cases involving repairs to significant fabric, the advice of a heritage practitioner will be required prior to undertaking the works, to ensure the significant fabric is treated appropriately.

Maintenance

Maintenance addresses all existing components of the place, including fabric and setting. Introducing new elements (such as new structures) or changing and adapting the existing building are not matters of maintenance, and are addressed in policies and recommendations included elsewhere in this HMP.

Typical maintenance works include:

- Cleaning out gutters, drainage systems and other water storage and drainage areas; replacing damaged or deteriorated elements with like materials.

- Securing and replacing roof and external wall fabric, glazing, timberwork and decorative features, in an appropriate and sympathetic manner (may require specialist input).

- Maintaining existing equipment and services.

- Maintaining existing power or pipelines or other services where this involves no alteration to the fabric of the place.

- Replacing or upgrading services (may require specialist input for substantial works).

Regular monitoring of the condition of significant fabric is also an important aspect of maintenance.

With regard to the recommended cyclical inspection and maintenance programme, the following sets out a desirable minimum program for cyclical maintenance.

Annual:	Roof cladding, gutters, downpipes, drains and surface drainage, bird-proofing, roof space, security and fire precautions, plumbing, electrical and data cables and appliances, windows and doors and general safety. Ceilings, floors, stairs, joinery, fixtures and fittings, tiling and building services.
4–5 years:	External walls, external joinery other than for windows and doors and lighting.

Repairs

Externally, Bondi Beach Post Office is relatively intact to the c. 1922 and c. 1934 parts of the building, though the internal arrangement and architectural detail has been modified. Accordingly, the approach to repair works for the earlier phases of the building should be one which maintains the significant presentation of the building externally and where affecting the interiors, repairs early features and materials.

From a heritage perspective it is generally recommended that repairs of significant buildings and structures should involve replacing 'like with like,' i.e. the replacement of material (missing, deteriorated or broken) with fabric to match the existing. Accepting this principle, it is also important to determine if the material proposed for replacement is appropriate (it may not be original). The advice of a qualified heritage practitioner should be sought on this. Wherever possible, only actual decayed fabric of a heritage structure should be replaced, instead of the whole host element.

Repairs to significant structures should also, in preference, be carried out by appropriately skilled staff or contractors, and may require in some cases prior analysis of the composition of the fabric to be repaired/replaced (i.e. mortars, renders and surface treatments).

Specialist input may also be required for the identification and eradication of any damage caused by pest infestations. Rectification may involve repair to, or replacement of, damaged fabric.

Policy 11   Changes to significant elements and areas

Exterior

The principal elevations of the Bondi Beach Post Office should remain unaltered.

The principal original and early elevations of the post office (addressing Hall Street and Jaques Avenue) should remain unaltered. Original exterior elements, including face brickwork, canted porch, cement rendered detailing, the roof and the arrangement of openings, should be retained intact and should not be obscured or altered by new work. Intrusive alterations, such as those to the north-east corner porch, should preferably be removed.

Interior

The arrangement of the original (c. 1922) porch should be retained.

While the plan form of the interior of the Bondi Beach Post Office has been largely altered, the north-east porch retains its planning layout. In preference, the arrangement of the porch, illustrating the original location of phone booths, should be retained.

However, future change to the interiors can be contemplated without detrimental impact to the place's heritage values. Where dating to the early development phases, the interiors have been largely altered and further change will not diminish the significance of the post office. Later alterations and additions are of no heritage value.

Policy 12   Managing change: new works and development

Development of the Bondi Beach Post Office site should have regard to the identified heritage values.

The siting, form and height of new development to the post office site should maintain the visual primacy of the building as viewed from both Hall Street and Jacques Avenue.

In preference, development of the Bondi Beach Post Office should be restricted to the areas defined as being of little or no significance.

Development proposals should, in preference, respond to the local context with regard to height, scale and materiality.

Where the future use of the subject property requires the introduction of new structures or buildings to the site, such works should be sensitive to the heritage values of the place, most importantly the domestic scale of the building, its interwar Georgian/Colonial Revival character and the presentation of the property within the streetscape.

This can be achieved through careful consideration of the placement, height, scale, form, materials and setbacks of new structures. New buildings on this site, if required, can also reasonably adopt a contemporary design and form. The post office is primarily seen to its Hall Street and Jaques Avenue facades in the public domain and these views should be maintained unimpeded.

Planning for additions or a new building(s) on this property should have regard for:

- the sensitive placement of new works, including avoiding visual and physical impacts on the heritage building and its principal facades to Hall Street and Jaques Avenue;

- the inclusion of restoration and preferably also reconstruction works as part of a development project to reinstate missing or altered architectural details and reinforce the presentation of the building within the streetscape context and in its architecturally appropriate form;

- avoiding visual dominance when seen in relation to the heritage building (i.e. not being of an inappropriate scale);

- maintaining important sight lines and views of the heritage building;

- avoiding external materials and finishes which will have an unacceptable level of visual impact and prominence;

- avoiding a 'faux' heritage design approach, or one which seeks to reproduce the character and appearance of the historic building; and

- removal of fabric of little or no significance which undermines the historic presentation of the building within the streetscape context (such as the modern additions to Jaques Avenue).

Policy 13   Recording

A photographic and documentary record should be made before any demolition, substantial change or new construction occurs at the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Where an element of significance is proposed for partial demolition or change, a recording program should be undertaken prior to any works. This may include, but is not necessarily restricted to, measured drawings and a black and white archival quality photographic record; a digital or video record may also be undertaken. Such records are typically required to be lodged with a statutory heritage authority, or a local historical society. A separate copy should also be lodged with an approved archival repository. The record may also be used for future site interpretation (see Policy 17).

Policy 14   Signage

Signage should be kept to the minimum required for business identification, and should avoid impacts on original fabric and the presentation of the building.

In preference, retain the raised cement rendered 'POST OFFICE' and 'BONDI BEACH' signage to the frieze.

Where additional signage is required, these should be non-illuminated and limited in size and number. It could be located along the street elevations in a manner that does not damage significance fabric or obscure key architectural features such as windows, rendered string course or rusticated piers and pilasters.

The raised cement rendered signage to the frieze should be retained and not obscured.

6.4   Management policies

Policy 15   Statutory controls

The Bondi Beach Post Office should remain subject to statutory heritage protection, to ensure that its values are maintained and conserved.

The Bondi Beach Post Office is included in the Local Environmental Plan (Schedule 5 – Environmental Heritage) and the Commonwealth Heritage List. These mechanisms provide an appropriate level of statutory heritage protection for the property. In the event that the post office is divested, and Australia Post no longer occupy or manage the building (including through a leasehold arrangement) the level of statutory protection afforded by the Local Environmental Plan is considered sufficient to manage the heritage values of the place.

Policy 16   Uses of the place

Future use of the Bondi Beach Post Office should seek to minimise impacts on the values and historic fabric of the place, and should preferably retain a level of public access to the post office.

In the event of divestment of the property by Australia Post, preferred new uses for the building include those which can be accommodated without an inappropriate level of impact on the heritage values and significant fabric of the place, and also retain a level of public access to the building. Even where this may be restricted, it should maintain a public link to the place. A use which maintains the overall domestic scale and character of the original building would also be appropriate.

Policy 17   Interpretation and promotion of heritage values

The cultural heritage values of the property should be readily discernible on site.

The cultural heritage values of the Bondi Beach Post Office are analysed at Chapter 4 of this HMP. These values are at a Commonwealth and local level, and relate to a range of architectural, historical, and

aesthetic attributes. It would be appropriate for the development and implementation of a values-based interpretation strategy for the heritage place, to supplement the historic built fabric.

An increased understanding of the cultural significance of the post office by the users and visitors would serve to raise awareness of the site, and support the long term conservation of its cultural significance.

As part of this process, consideration should be given to the introduction of interpretive signage (or similar) within the public areas of the property, to summarise the cultural heritage values of the place

Policy 18   Unforeseen discoveries

The discovery of unforeseen or unexpected material, including historical archaeological artefacts or physical evidence, which can contribute to an understanding of the history and operation of the post office site, should be reported to the Department of the Environment.

While the subject site is almost fully developed, with a consequent level of disturbance, there is some potential for evidence of the earlier site layout including the rear yard and former outbuildings, to remain. This may include potential subsurface artefacts relating to earlier postal occupation and use. In the event of archaeological remains being uncovered at the site, the Department of the Environment should be informed of the discovery before proceeding with further work.

Policy 19   Risk preparedness & risk management

Risk management should be integrated into the management of the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Risk preparedness and management is an important means of protecting and conserving the heritage values of all heritage places. As such risk management should be integrated into the management of the post office, based on the risk preparedness table included below.

While a detailed assessment of risk is outside the scope of this report, the following risk preparedness analysis outlines potential threats and hazards posed to the physical fabric at the property by environmental and social factors.

Table 3   Risk preparedness

Threat	Probability	Preparation/Response
Fire	Always present	Maintain a fire suppression and warning system at the site. Ensure there is an evacuation plan in place, and conduct regular training and rehearsals. Ensure that combustible materials do not come into contact with hot lights. Ensure that extinguishers, fire blankets etc, are located within reach of potential sources of fire. Maintain electrical systems in good order. Maintain liaison with fire brigade to regularly test and monitor systems.
Flood	Possible	Localised internal flooding, from toilets, sinks and pipe work, is always possible. Maintenance of wet areas and pipe work is a means of minimising this possibility.
Water ingress	Moderate	Rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes and sumps) should be repaired (where required), maintained, installed and kept clear. Inspect and maintain roofs, windows and doors regularly.

Storm damage	Always present	Maintain roof in good order, inspect fixings; inspect and maintain windows and doors in good order; regularly inspect and clean eaves gutters and downpipes.
Vandalism and theft	Moderate	Vandalism and theft are always possible and a normal level of awareness and security should be maintained, particularly while the building is not occupied. Installation of security cameras could be considered in discrete locations. These should be fixed to cause the minimum possible impact on significant fabric.

Policy 20   Consultation

Australia Post should consult with relevant stakeholders and other parties/individuals in the community as relevant, on matters affecting the heritage values of the Bondi Beach Post Office.

Key stakeholders with an interest in the post office as a significant local heritage place include the Waverley Historical Society, formed in 1962, and based in Gray Street, Bondi Junction; and the City of Waverley, being the local statutory authority.

It is recognised that the management of Commonwealth Heritage places should use the best available knowledge, skills and standards for those places, and where appropriate include ongoing community input into decisions and actions that may have a significant impact on the Commonwealth Heritage values.

In line with this, the Heritage Management Plan has been published on the Australia Post website, with comments and feedback sought on the report, and where appropriate incorporated into the report.

Policy 21   Education and awareness

Australia Post should continue to encourage awareness of the heritage values of post offices generally among staff; and more specifically among the staff involved in the running and operation of the Bondi Beach Post Office, awareness of its heritage significance and its statutory heritage management requirements.

The heritage significance of the post office, including the statutory heritage controls under which it is managed, should be clearly understood by Australia Post staff with an involvement in the property. This will enhance the management of the property, and help ensure that the heritage values are retained and protected. In order to help achieve this, copies of this report should be made available to staff.

Australia Post also raises general awareness about heritage properties through a quarterly feature on a selected heritage property in the *Post Journal* (a publication issued to all employees).

Policy 22   Implementation and monitoring

Implementation and monitoring of policies in this HMP is critical to the retention and conservation of the heritage values and significance of the Bondi Beach Post Office.

The following table sets out and summarises a timeframe for implementation of the policies. Many of the policies, as identified, are ongoing and/or as required.

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policies rests with Australia Post while Australia Post continues to own, lease or occupy the post office.

Policy	Implementation
Policy 1: Significance as the basis for future conservation and management	Ongoing
Policy 2: Adoption of the Burra Charter	Ongoing
Policy 3: Adoption of policies	Ongoing
Policy 4: Compliance with legislation	Ongoing
Policy 5: Specialist advice and skills	As required
Policy 6: Review of the HMP	In five years
Policy 7: Heritage curtilage	Ongoing
Policy 8: Conservation of Bondi Beach Post Office and its significant elements	Ongoing
Policy 9: Protection of views	Ongoing
Policy 10: Remedial works and cyclical maintenance of fabric	Cyclical. See policy for works to be undertaken annually, and those on a four-five year cycle
Policy 11: Changes to significant elements and areas	As required
Policy 12: Managing change: new works and development	As required
Policy 13: Recording	As required
Policy 14: Signage	As required
Policy 15: Statutory controls	Ongoing
Policy 16: Uses of the place	As required
Policy 17: Interpretation and promotion of heritage values	Prepare and implement interpretation within one year of finalisation of this report
Policy 18: Unforeseen discoveries	As required
Policy 19: Risk preparedness & risk management	Ongoing
Policy 20: Consultation	Ongoing
Policy 21: education & awareness	Provide copies of this report to staff involved in running and operating the post office.

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APPENDIX A   **HERITAGE CITATIONS**

National Heritage Citation

Bondi Beach Post Office - Commonwealth Heritage List

State Heritage Citation

Post Office – NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage

APPENDIX B **TYPOLOGICAL STUDY/RESEARCH ESSAY**

TYPOLOGICAL STUDY/RESEARCH ESSAY

[Note: The date ranges provided for each identified post office 'generation' are indicative only and are not intended to imply that the postal typologies cited, or the historical phases outlined, occurred exclusively within the date ranges. It is also noted that not all the post offices referred to in the following essay remain in Australia Post ownership.]

Australian Post Offices and Post Office Buildings: Changing Function and Typology

First generation post offices: 1803 to 1869

Through peoples' parlours

Public mail services were a First Fleet importation, being an unofficial extension of the British Royal Mail services originally made public in 1635.[1] Deliveries were initially by police and other officials, often collecting private fees, with some private mail outside Australia being contracted individually with specific ships. The receiver traditionally paid. A regular 2d mail service was established between Sydney and Parramatta in 1803, mail being shipped along the Parramatta River. A Postmaster for New South Wales, the emancipist boat builder Isaac Nichols, was established on the eve of Governor Macquarie's arrival in 1809.   Mail content was mostly official, personal mail being largely restricted by limited literacy. Nichols collected incoming and outgoing overseas mail, supervised its transport to and from ships, and distributed it from his own house for an expensive surcharge (i.e. 1 shilling per letter, 5 shillings per parcel). After Nichols' death in 1819 his successor, George Panton, established the European settlers' first Post Office building outside a private house, although he retained the same personal control over overseas mail exercised by Nichols. The new Legislative Council passed their Postal Act in 1825, transferring postal services to a specific government agency, although retaining private contractors for transport and delivery. Regular government sea mail services to Hobart and Newcastle began around 1828, along with weekly coach transport to Goulburn and Bathurst.

Tasmanian postal services were authorised from Sydney and organised under Nichols' aegis on very similar lines, the first Hobart Postmaster, James Mitchell, previously a farmer, running Van Diemen's Land services from a private house in Hobart, from 1813 to 1822. The earliest known were at Macquarie and Argyle Streets, opened from around 1816, Collins Street, 1818, and in conjunction with John Collicott's general store after 1822. Launceston and George Town gained postmasters that year, and a system of convict mail messengers between major settlements, mounted and armed, was in place by 1825. There were 55 of these by c. 1846.

Purpose-built post offices

Mortimer Lewis, the colonial government architect in NSW, designed a General Post Office for Sydney in 1825. His design reflected its perceived importance as a civic building, being temple-fronted with half-columns, as with a contemporary bank. Its 1848 successor was similar, but with the columns free-standing in a full front portico. This became the centre of a 2d letter service.

Melbourne and Adelaide had each gained a provisional postmaster and post office in 1837 (Melbourne's in a bark hut, Adelaide's in a general store) and then small GPOs in 1841, both on their present sites. Compulsory sender-paid stamped services were introduced in 1850-1 in NSW and Victoria respectively. By then Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Melbourne all had morning, midday and afternoon deliveries in their city areas, and the major colonial settlements were all linked by regular packet boats and overland transport. The regional post offices gained their first stimulus in the early 1850s, aided by the spread of stage coaching.

The range of outlying post office buildings which now appeared in the Australian colonies retained the form of houses, as they often were, or sometimes stage coach depots or inns. The Victoria region had

14 of these by 1845, 30 by 1849, and 54 by 1853.[2] There were 146 in South Australia by 1860.[3] Van Diemen's Land had thirty by c. 1846.

The generally standard divisions of this first generation typology of post offices usually included a residential component of several rooms and storage areas, 'offices' and kitchen for the store owner or postmaster and family, a front room for business transactions, or, in the case of stage coach inns as at Ararat and Hamilton, multiple front rooms, guest rooms, public kitchen, privies and stables.[4] As overland telegraph lines were developed the Morse code apparatus were accommodated in specific rooms.

These early post office buildings were invariably accompanied by a yard space, usually enclosed with a light fence, for coaches, drays, and horses. Their street front address was usually a porch, paved apron or verandah, with flanking windows sometimes flush with the street boundary. Externally, they resembled private houses or shops rather than specific institutional or public buildings. Symbolic or structurally expressive ornamentation was usually minimal or non-existent, and the material vocabulary was that of contemporary houses: timber, unrendered brick or stone, and basic timber or flagstone flooring.

Significantly, the regional post offices in particular were the typological nuclei for their more monumental successors, when post offices were progressively rebuilt from the 1860s onward and as their design was concentrated in the hands of colonial government architects. By that time the postal system had expanded to become a major component of most colonial governments, with sizeable public service establishments and, generally, specific ministers in each colonial cabinet.

Some later post offices retained this early typology external form and materials usage through the later nineteenth century and even into the 1900s, as with Braidwood in NSW, 1866-74, and later 'villa' and shop forms that marked a series of post offices under James Barnet's aegis, including West Kempsey, c. 1876, Gulgong, 1879, Coonamble, 1880, Warialda, 1880, Boggabri, Rylstone and Menindee, 1881.[5] South Australia had a series, including shop-form buildings for Moonta, 1866-7, Two Wells, 1875-6, Laura, 1877, Port Lincoln, 1877, Lobethal, 1883-4, Hawker, 1882-3 and Crystal Brook, 1884. House and row house forms marked Two Wells, 1875-7, Meningie, 1877, and Crystal Brook, 1884, and in quite sophisticated government designs by Owen Smyth and others, the suburban post offices at Alberton, 1899, and Burnside, 1903-4. Most of these were rebuilt versions of earlier post offices, as with Burnside's original in 1874, Crystal Brook's, 1873, and Lobethal's, 1864-74.

The South Australian tendency in later purpose-built postal buildings was often for telegraph offices to open first, with the post office moving its activities in later and the final result being an improvisation of sorts. This happened in Moonta, 1865, Kingston, Meningie, 1873, Laura, 1872-4, and Hawker, 1881.[6] South Australia, as with NSW, lacked Victoria's level of colonial wealth and the retention of a first generation form for numbers of regional post offices was, as for NSW, a sensible path financially. For marginally different reasons first generation types persisted even longer in regional Western Australia, partly through the climate, partly through the rapid population and infrastructural expansion from a fairly limited base, and through consequent difficulties in government funding. Examples are Gingin, 1886, Pingelly, Mount Barker and Broome Hill, c.1892-3, Brunswick 1895-6, Capel and Perth (Brisbane Street), 1896-7, and Norseman, 1897.[7] This was during Poole and Grainger's terms as government architects, and both were determined 'monumentalists' by nature.

First generation GPOs

The same General Post office (GPO) and subordinate post office arrangement, predicated on a prepaid stamp system, was adopted in all Australian colonies. The colonial capitals' GPO buildings included a distinct postal hall for the preparation and stamping of pre-paid mail, and sorting facilities and dedicated areas for the deliverers to pick up mail for specific areas. This broadly followed the system in London's General Post Office, built in 1840.

Second generation post offices: 1870 to 1929

Monumental post offices

The second generation in Australian post office design spanned stylistic phases including middle and later Victorian Italianate and round-arched, free treatments of Gothic and Romanesque, Federation, Free Style, Neo-Baroque and Neo-Georgian. The colonial, then state architects' offices designed most of these post offices up until c.1907-11. They were at the height of their powers in this period, headed variously by Wardell, Clark, Kerr, Barnet, Hanson, Temple-Poole, Bindley, Vernon, Owen Smyth, Brady, Beasley, Walker, Rickards and McRae.

The Federal designers who succeeded them were under the aegis of JS Murdoch. All these were in the front rank of Australian architects and were assisted by a highly talented group including JJ Clark, JT Kelleher, E Wilson Dobbs, AJ McDonald, Thomas Pye, FDG Stanley, AE Michaels, and George Oakeshott, the Williams: Kemp and Hardwick. This genre included designs for major trans-shipment offices, such as Albany, which handled all incoming mail to Western Australia until that region's linkage to the Trans-Australian railway in 1917. Their construction was pushed further by increasing urbanisation, particularly after 1900-18, and by suburban development in larger cities and towns, requiring new post offices to service expanding residential areas. In each case, too, the post offices began to rival the railway stations as social gathering places, and became almost nineteenth-century replacements for marketplaces or town squares.

This social dimension registered in the second generation of colonial post offices from the 1860s, when most acquired porticos, porches, stepped aprons, imposing postal halls, colonnaded perimeters and enclosed post box areas. Though they retained the residential component that had marked the earliest post offices, these were more distinctive in identity than their temple-fronted or single-storey predecessors had been. In part this distinctiveness was fuelled by the growing perception that post offices worked as civic centres and town meeting points. Post offices also came to be seen as the embodiment of civic progress and local vitality, as important to many regional centres as the railway. The new pattern to their design additionally reflected the government architects' growing ease and skill with nuanced and monumental form and gesture.

Monumental post offices were also constructed in regional Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth century. The phase of Public Works Office rebuilding and expansion came under the direction of William Wardell and was assisted by JJ Clark, Peter Kerr, CHE Blackman and others. This produced the most cohesive rebuilding program in the Australian colonies, beginning with Beechworth and Daylesford post offices in 1858-63, continuing through the purge of Wardell and his principal assistants in 1878, and culminating in George Watson, SE Bindley and JT Kelleher's Bendigo, Fitzroy and other post offices around 1881-7. Most of these replaced earlier timber or house and shop-form post office buildings, as at Creswick, 1854-7, then 1863; Ballarat, 1851, then 1863-4; Daylesford 1858,then 1866-7; Beechworth (Peter Kerr), 1853, then 1858-9/1869-70; Kyneton, (Peter Kerr), 1870; Castlemaine (JJ Clark), 1848, then 1872-4; Stawell, 1857, then 1873-5; Warrnambool (CHE Blackman), 1848, then 1875-6; Hamilton (Blackman), 1844, then 1875-7; Maryborough (JH Marsden), 1854, then 1877-8; Echuca (John Brown),

1848, then 1877-8; then, under Watson, Port Fairy, 1843, rebuilt 1880-1; Fitzroy, new, 1883-4; Bendigo, 1852 (tents) 1853 (timber), then 1883-7; and finally Carlton, 1867, then 1883-4.

Smaller post offices

Domestic and institutional expression also came in smaller designs. Smaller post offices reflected this new tendency toward recasting post office functions in conspicuously permanent and gestural masonry buildings. Victoria developed a system quite early, whereby even substantially house-form post offices gained a clear institutional identity with mail rooms projecting as breakfronts and wings, and a round-arched, horizontally accentuated Italianate styling. This distinctive style set post offices and other small government buildings apart from more usual housing and is seen in the series initiated by Henry Williams and appearing in Central and Western Victoria: at Heathcote, 1869, Maldon, 1870, Avoca, 1871, Beaufort 1871-2, Coleraine, 1874-5. Penshurst, by Alfred Snow, 1878, fused a courthouse with an otherwise domestically scaled post office, a linkage seen later in the larger and monumental post office at Traralgon, 1894-5.

Barnet matched this in NSW, designing, alongside his 'domestic' or 'villa' post offices, a set with imposing, episodic fronts to state their institutional identity. Wentworth, 1867-93, Gundagai, 1880, Grafton, 1874-8, 1887, Richmond, 1875, Molong and Parkes, 1880, all used one or two-storey residences enveloped in a layer of arcaded masonry to form public entries. In the last four these were deepened into loggias. Narrabri and Tumut, 1879, and Dungog, 1880, were hybrids of these two arcade functions. Casino, 1879/1891, Bourke, 1880, and Cooma, 1879, expanded verandah and porch components in their otherwise residential forms, again to indicate their institutional role. Tiny Jerilderie, c. 1879, marked its identity with a wing housing expanded windows, rather like a contemporary school; Urana, of the same date and region, used an outsized wing and extruded verandah - again expansions from an otherwise domestic vocabulary - to accentuate a direct linkage with the street. This was repeated at Boggabri, at the other end of the state, 1881, and extended in the encircling street face of Gunning, 1881.

Second generation GPOs and civic post offices

The GPOs abandoned their residential role in this period and instead, all six 'final' GPOs, from Melbourne of 1859-1903, to Brisbane and Sydney, 1867, to Hobart, c. 1903 and to Perth, 1914-23, sought to draw the public in through the empathetic device of long, enclosed, arcaded loggias, components that were also increasing in the regional post offices. Sydney and Melbourne, in particular, were renowned for their social commentary and experimentation, Sydney through Barnet's bold articulation of the arcade and his provision of Loureiro's sculptures of modern life; Melbourne through the Griffins' collaboration with Murdoch in converting the GPO Postal Hall into a region where the public was symbolically served from either side, inverting the nineteenth-century pattern of crowds milling around an island counter of postal officials. Both were logical strategies.

From imposing street fronts, the mid- to late-nineteenth century GPOs became inner city thoroughfares, permeable at most edges and assuming, internally, the character of roofed-in streets, like giant arcades but with their array of visual signals under much closer control. Apart from James Barnet's towered or porticoed NSW designs and the arcaded post offices of William Hanson in South Australia and Charles Tiffin in Queensland, suburban and rural post offices were naturally more basic in their accommodation, their public gesture usually just extending to shorter loggias, arcaded bays and balconies. But if the funds were available Australian public works architects were generally happy to add clock towers or loggias. This reflects the highly civic and iconic role of the post offices, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and may well explain their continual proximity to town halls and shire offices. After 1914-19, town and suburban war memorials, another symbol of Australian social bonding, were often placed either directly outside or even inside the porches or halls of post offices.

Riding the rails

Railways made their major inland incursions in the later 1850s and 1860s. Cobb and Co, who by that time held the Australian coaching monopoly, shrewdly co-ordinated their deliveries around the new rail heads. Colonial governments' railway takeovers hastened this composite system, which began introducing British and European sophistications such as specific mail vans (1869) and mail sorting carriages (1877) on regular mail trains ('Travelling Post Offices' or TPOs) beginning with Queensland and Tasmania in 1877. Many of these services were eventually shut down after c. 1932, about the time when motor post services were extending.

In NSW the TPOs lasted until 1984,[8] being generally attached to overnight passenger trains known as 'Mails'. Their disappearance accompanied a general demise of night passenger trains to regional Australia, other than in Queensland. The one-time power of this railway linkage was memorialised by the appearance of imposing mail exchanges near major city railway terminals in the period 1910-1920, by architects such as JS Murdoch in 1915-17 (Melbourne) and George McRae in 1913 (Sydney).[9] These were also similar to JS Murdoch's landmark railway station designs, in particular Port Augusta (c.1917). By then rail transport had cut most inter-colonial and interstate mail delivery times from several days to around one or two, although the Queensland, Tasmanian and South Australian railway systems were still isolated in some segments and relied on ships or coaches to carry the mail partway. These gaps were filled in during the early twentieth century, when apart from Tasmania and northern Australia, the railways carried virtually all long distance mail inside Australian borders. The capital city mail exchanges all appeared after Federation, and at the end of this period of rail consolidation. Their celebratory role was expressed in a massive cuboid architecture, partly reflecting ferroconcrete frame construction and embodying the simplification and stripping down of Renaissance and Baroque referencing that was by then occurring in other larger city buildings.

Urbanisation and increases in mail volume

Apart from the mail exchanges, the principal effect of this consolidation and improvement in mail transport was an increase in internal and overseas Australian mail, a need to expand postal working space in almost all centres, and the expansion of assistant mail staff, all of whom had to be accommodated in post office buildings. Post office savings banks spread from the 1860s, as at Carlton in Victoria in 1867,[10] and the post offices, often placed close to government offices and courthouses as at Kyneton and Maryborough, began to take on government agency roles, becoming an initial point of contact for routine legal and bureaucratic procedures.

The other new factor in post office building was the electric telegraph, which came under post office aegis in all Australian colonies after 1854 and required new spaces for its dynamo and key equipment, for the induction of its cables and areas for transcribing. The telegraph network usually preceded the railways, connecting all the eastern colonies by 1859, South Australia by 1865, Perth in 1877 and linking overseas with a line to Port Darwin and a submarine cable to Java by 1872.[11] The volume of mail and telegraph traffic also increased with developing literacy and was a direct index of Australia's growing social sophistication.

The immediate effect of these personnel increases and telegraph proliferation was to double the volume needed in most post office buildings, and this in turn, compounded by the population growth in both colonial capitals and regional centres, meant that large numbers of post offices were reconstructed to new designs between the late 1860s and about 1920. 41 post offices had been rebuilt and enlarged in NSW by 1878 and over the next eleven years (to about 1890) another 169 NSW post offices were built to the designs of James Barnet's office alone.

Telephones, horizontality and post office size

Another major change with an impact on post office buildings typology was the spread of telephone services from 1880. These were quickly subsumed by the colonial post offices, in part because of the expense in building landline services and their equipment. Telephones needed manual exchange rooms, which were large in area and required additional staff rooms. After 1890 it seemed logical to attach these to existing post and telegraph buildings. Since relatively few people had domestic telephones, the post offices also became the local place to cluster groups of public telephones. Each of these in turn required a cubicle or booth, and collectively altering the ground area and frontal appearance of post offices significantly. Telephone exchanges effectively doubled the ground area occupied by a post office, and they brought even more personnel under the post office roof: operators, technicians, and billing and additional bookkeepers. This is reflected in the increasingly horizontal bearing of 1900s post offices, which relied more specifically on long street frontages and the address of crucial intersections than on the 'beacon' effect of the earlier clock towers and other vertical components. Clock towers disappeared from new post offices in NSW in the 1890s, being replaced, largely, with conspicuous vestibule spaces and entry halls.

This coincided with the Federalising of post office building designs. The Federal Department of Works and Railways took over their design, progressively, from around 1905-11, although state government architects continued some involvement till around 1917. In NSW the state government office, under the aegis of George Oakeshott, Walter Vernon and George McRae, designed 125 new post offices between 1891 and 1916. Murdoch's department then oversaw another 34 in NSW between then and the Depression. These architects all continued Barnet's earlier strategy in placing solidly finished 'rhetorical' breakfronts and wings on residential post offices, to emphasise their institutional role.

Yards and annexations

To this horizontal spread in newer post offices was added the telephones further use of generated electric power, and the subsequent provision for transformers, substations and generator space. The service yard component of post offices, which had been grafted onto many of the post-1860s designs, was also affected, as telephone networks needed mobile technicians to service them: their vehicles and trailers increased steadily with the physical expansion of the telephone system and its loading, and these vehicles all had to be stored. By the 1960s a series of purpose-built PMG telephone technical depots had appeared, as at Tally Ho in Melbourne's eastern suburbs (1965). So did purpose built telephone exchanges, which were all under the Post Master General's aegis up until the Australia Post/Telecom split in the mid-1970s. The telephone system additionally required a physical manufacturing base, given that the PMG's department now produced everything from circuitry equipment to concrete manhole covers.

Accordingly, a series of factory and storage buildings, all effectively part of the post office function, proliferated in this period. With motor vehicles, particularly, came the need for garages and for maintenance and servicing areas, particularly in the 1900s when motor service stations were few and the expectation was that vehicles be privately serviced. But the tendency to retain specific service centres remained over several decades following.   The other conspicuous result, and perhaps the post office's most pervasive symbol at the turn of the century, was in telephone poles carrying dozens of lines, some of which lingered on into the 1980s. Following British practice the colonial railways all constructed parallel telegraph and then telephone systems that remain in place outside areas of automatic signalling. Telephony's typological impact on individual post offices was less obvious internally, as the mail halls and telegraph offices largely remained in place as the frontal 'public' component, and the telephone exchange, bulky externally, was generally added on to one side or to the

rear and performed its detailed duties away from the postal halls, sometimes screened from public sight by ripple glass windows.

The expanding volume of mail prompted a second development - the takeover of buildings near major post offices for overflow activities. The Melbourne parcels dispatch office, for example, occupied a building behind the GPO in Little Bourke Street from the 1900s on. The mail exchanges also soon exceeded capacity and this prompted takeovers of existing buildings nearby or next door. The Bourke Street sorting houses in Melbourne, e.g. Harrison's Ramsay complex originally built in 1879, are a case in point. It also follows that many of these 'take-over' or annexed buildings were inexpressive of their postal function externally.[12]

Expanded duties

Besides these roles the post offices gradually accumulated other duties as well. The Commonwealth Bank used Australian Post offices as retail outlets from the Federation period on, a role only relinquished when the bank moved to automatic teller machines en masse in the 1980s. In addition, post offices gathered a range of other public service functions, including drivers' licence issue (South Australia), radio and television licence handling, quasi-banking roles such as the provision of money orders, electoral and census recording, and a conduit for paying government authorities' bills. Interestingly, almost all post offices built in the period 1900-1930 favoured some intimacy of scale and touches of domesticity, apart from Perth's GPO (1914-23). That followed the large, simplified Baroque and Classical referencing of the mail exchanges. The suburban and rural post offices, by contrast, were linked increasingly to contemporary domestic form and detail (Leongatha, Orbost, Cobram, Surrey Hills and Box Hill in Victoria), or had an implicit grand manner softened by an intimacy in scale (South Melbourne, Rochester, Brunswick, Carlton North in Victoria). Many still retained a residential role, and this was not to recede until later in the twentieth century.

Off the rails

Other modes of transport were quickly co-opted into mail service, although they did not in themselves have a major effect on post office size or typology. These included tram-hauled mail services, motor trucks, vans and buses after c. 1905. A radical change occurred with the spread of air transport from the later 1920s, when regular air services were established and the increasing power of aircraft allowed the carriage of large mail sacks. Regular air mail services provided by airlines such as ANA, from the late 1920s, cut the transport time for mail to 12 hours between each capital GPO in the Adelaide-Brisbane chain. By the later 1930s, more powerful planes cut this time again to four or five hours. From this period, air transports also made rapid and scheduled overseas mail services realisable, delivering letters and parcels to the UK in five or six days, and being linked to an Empire-wide, standard tariff system radiating from Cairo and terminating (for Australia) in a dock at Sydney's Rose Bay.[13]

All this prompted an upsurge in air mail traffic, assisted in quantity by the appearance of tissue-paper aerogrammes. Even within Australia these became an option for fast mail delivery. For a long time airmail had weight and surcharge restrictions, but these were eased in 1960, primarily through the dramatically increased speed, size and lifting capacity of prop-jet aircraft and then jet engine aircraft. These had taken over most Australian air travel by 1965, reducing total mail transport times to around three hours between most Australian capital GPOs. Architecturally the first impact of this was seen in the expansion of mail transit facilities at airports, freed from any function as postal halls and from the usual railway-era links with telegraph and telephone. These depots were usually attached to the terminal buildings but were sometimes isolated or free-standing buildings. The air transport of mail also had physical impacts in the development of specific airmail processing at city and regional mail sorting depots and post office counters.

A great deal of the spreading regional air services that marked the later 1950s and early 1960s was due to the general provision and subsidy of air mail. In turn air transport also posed a new challenge to the rail-based mail exchanges, since no major airports were near rail transport and airmail was no longer bound by the early twentieth-century mail exchange and terminal station linkage. The rail-based mail exchanges were largely closed by the later 1980s, along with the extensive tunnels and railway station linkages and yards that served them, as in the former Spencer Street station postal tunnel and Sydney Central Station's mail yard terminal behind the Railway Square Mail Exchange. This in turn affected the usage of ancillary buildings' around them, as with the Bourke Street sorting buildings in central Melbourne, which eventually closed along with the mail exchange.[14]

The suburban train networks were disconnected from mail transport in the 1930s and '40s and this gradually allowed new post offices to be built away from railway or tram lines. They had invariably been kept close well into the twentieth century, as with Hawthorn West, Hawthorn Central, Canterbury, Surrey Hills, Mont Albert and Box Hill in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, or Ashfield, Burwood, Strathfield, and Homebush in Sydney's inner west, all or which were within 400m of a railway station.

Loss of residential role

The other significant change in this 'Second Generation' period was the gradual disappearance of any residential component. Residences had been part of almost all post offices, other than GPOs, since the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the postal halls in front of or below them often suggest typological origins in 'front rooms' or public inn spaces. For the older post offices with these integrated residences, the latter were gradually converted into offices and storerooms, their bathrooms and kitchens becoming amenities for the day workers. There were major implications for regional post offices, which no longer housed or were identified with specific families in a given town or suburb. To some extent the longevity of many employees would have lessened this impact, but the freeing of post offices from their residential role clearly severed some community roots, making the postal employees and their families less visible in terms of place, and reducing their place-profile to that of say, railway or bus personnel.

Third generation post offices: 1930 to 1974

Retail connections in the 1950s and 1960s

The new 'freedom' in terms of the siting and location of postal buildings also reflects the 'motorising' of Australian communities and suburbs, and in turn, newer post offices were reshaped by car and truck access. Motor vehicle ownership increased enormously across Australia during the twentieth century, and the motorisation of commercial and mail transport accompanied this. The traditional role of post office as community gathering place was immediately challenged by this development, which recast post offices increasingly as short term transit stops and aligned them to drive-in/drive-out usage, not unlike service stations. Ballarat and Benalla Mail Centres are the direct result of this, and more 'publicly' presented post offices such as Warragul (1967), South Blackburn (1956, demolished), Eildon (c.1957), Manuka ACT (c.1970) and Queanbeyan NSW (c.1971) were similarly geared, sited on street corners near off-street parking, or in the heart of angle-parking retail areas.

The first generation form, of a lightly scaled verandah, returned, while the outer walls, close to the cars and patterned with ranks of post office boxes, became appropriately abstract in surface. The logical extension of this was to put post offices into conventional shop spaces. This is seen in the regional shopping malls that appeared after Toombul, Top Ryde and Chadstone were built in 1959-61. All these could be accessed by car or bus only, and the traditional local pedestrian access, on which most second generation post offices were predicated, was lost in these instances. At the malls, post offices were either slotted into pre-built retail tenancies or set out as gazebo 'events' in the early malls' outdoor

garden areas. Post offices in these settings were often separated from their mail exchanges and sorting rooms, and this had significant implications in that it articulated post offices' retail areas as physically separate from their other functions.

Rise of the industrialised postal centre-functions, materials and imagery

This new division accompanied the emergence of automated and semi-automated regional mail centres, intended to supplant the old rail-based mail exchanges. These included Sydney's Redfern Mail Exchange, of c.1962, which was initially plagued by faulty processing and machinery, and later depots such as Blackburn and Dandenong in Victoria, where problems were ironed out. These new centres often rendered mail sorting far less 'public-hall' and more factory 'production-line' than it had been: their buildings had workstation processing built into their internal planning, in contrast to the earlier sorting rooms, which had more social and conversational environments and allowed freer physical movement.

However, the shift to automated or key-punch mail sorting rooms in larger post offices moved slowly. At the same time, van-based parcels delivery and, in the 1990s, motorcycle-based letter services were probably an equal influence on mail centre form. The need was, in particular, for undercover servicing of multiple delivery vans and vehicle couriers' expanded sorting areas, either in extended or new premises. This meant that a large shed or warehouse form began replacing the old sorting rooms at the rear of earlier post offices. Since this shift gathered momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, materials usage in these extensions, or in rented or acquired premises such as warehouses (South Melbourne, 1967-87) or converted bowling alleys (Ballarat, 1965-86) was often very different from that of the earlier second generation nineteenth-early twentieth century post offices. Examples are the spread of asphalt and concrete paving to back yard postal areas.

Construction and design form changes, mostly to strict budgetary limits, shifted to utilising industrial and warehouse modes. These included, either bought or freshly built, exposed ducting and conduit; builders' foil linings or open-soffit ceilings, often with the frames exposed; large-span wall treatments using ribbon windows and expanses of brick, sometimes in conjunction with steel or reinforced concrete grid-framing; clear span internal trussing to leave the most flexible space below; glazed or thin-skinned partitions, freed from structural roles; and sudden shifts in floor claddings to mark specific territory over a standard set of concrete floor slabs. Between the 1950s and 1973, too, there was a growing use of asbestos compounds for lagging, sound deadening and wall lining components, and as an ingredient of vinyl tiling. Arguably, asbestos had an immediate effect in freeing up materials and spatial usage, since it was an appliqué fireproofing and sound-deadener with minimal structural impact. But it also drastically altered the economic and environmental implications in the subsequent usage of buildings with the material, and has impacted on the degree to which 1960s postal buildings can be economically used now.[15]

Post office designs of this period had their basis in architectural changes occurring in the 1920s and 1930s, although relatively few Australian post offices were built in the 1930s and 1940s due to a cessation of capital works for Commonwealth agencies in those years. South Yarra's new post office (1946) showed architecture's possibilities in this era, and forms a group with others such as Morwell (1954). These designs are linked, broadly, by a shared debt to the juxtaposition of brick massing by Willem Dudok, a major influence on European architectural modernism in Australia during the 1930s. This approach was widely applied in early post-WWII government designs, being seen in schools, pumping houses, libraries and related projects. Morwell Post Office is closely related to pre-WWII projects on these general lines, and is dominated externally by juxtaposed brick massing in thick planes, a balanced asymmetry with the main entry to one side, and the maintenance of some monumentalist

ceremony in the entrance. In typology its themes and arrangements were similar to those of the second generation post offices, but with modernist architecture as an intervening medium.

The later 1950s saw a move to light, airy and open forms, with extensive glass and bright, y everyday materials, in particular house bricks, steel tubing for balustrades and other elements, planter box step balustrading, tiling and linoleum. This was all fairly domestic, and monumentalism was generally out of favour at this time, in part because corporate and public service-based modern architecture was expressing itself increasingly as an industrially produced product, infinitely adaptable through volumetric adaptation and abstraction.

Around the middle 1960s the light post-WWII forms favoured in public buildings began falling into disfavour. In contrast later designs favoured thick and enveloping brick or concrete, heavier massing, and presentation of the ground floor spaces as hooded undercrofts. This approach marks the design of Fawkner Post Office in Victoria (1970) and Mentone (1972), and is seen also in a range of NSW suburban and regional post offices.

Changes in postal processing

Mechanical and vehicular components in mail sorting, as well as changes in staff roles and functions, prompted a greater articulation of areas in postal buildings which had previously been more shared or open. This is seen in the proliferation of administrative offices and equipment storage areas, particularly, most of which either filled the old residential rooms of post offices or were added to new postal centres, usually as a first-floor usage. The 1960s and 1970s also saw the provision of more conspicuous relief or escape areas from the increasingly mechanised work: lounge areas and kitchens. This in turn brought mail centres and post offices into new health law territories, and prompted still further changes, as in the expansion of simple toilets into systematically allocated washrooms and rest facilities. On postal sites generally, the motorization of delivery and commuting among postal workers brought equally marked changes. Even where a post office maintained a generally second generation (1870s-1920s) form, its service yard invariably changed significantly, to allow lock-up sheds - first for the postal bicycles, then for postal motorcycles - car spaces for couriers, technicians' vehicles and commuting postal staff, fuel storage and bowsers (as at Ballarat), and storage and service areas for maintenance equipment. These in turn forced security works on this yardage, primarily in the form of high, heavy duty fences and gates, external lighting, and camera surveillance. Interestingly, the mail centres were now increasingly connected to a new set of congenial institutions. These included major public service centres requiring large postal contact, as with the Australian Tax Office at Dandenong, the close linkage of new or refurbished post offices to regional administrative centres, as at Parramatta or Chatswood in NSW, or to perceived centres of office activity, as at St Kilda Road, South Melbourne (c. 1970).

Style and theme changes in architecture

Street front post offices themselves changed in the 1950s and 1960s, in part under the influence of modernist architecture, where open or at least direct entry planning was stressed, cutting out the vestibules and antechambers that often marked earlier designs, and with interiors that were now often much brighter and more simply divided. The public contact areas inside post offices were shaped by conspicuously modern movement materials and usages, in particular plate glass, tiling and plastics. The plans for public areas became, generally, simple two part divisions of space on either side of a counter. This made post office interiors resemble those of contemporary banks or shops, and that was arguably the intention: that post offices be aligned with everyday retail in transactions and visual experience.

The resemblance was not inappropriate given the post office's continuing role as Commonwealth Bank outlets and their slowly increasing role selling value added items for retail, alongside the more

traditional post office merchandise of stamps. The architectural implication of this shift was huge, since in program it rendered the sense of specifically postal place and occasion, so crucial in second generation post office design, completely redundant. A range of these post offices were built in Melbourne during the 1960s, notably Richmond, Hawthorn Central and Camberwell (1965-7). The subsequent pattern has been to divide the 1960s post offices into two or more retail units with office space then being let in the upstairs portions.

All are marked by external grids in steel-framed plate glass, accentuating the shopfront parallel in modernist terms; the other common program was the use of administrative offices above on a first floor.

Fourth generation post offices: 1975 and later

The disappearing post office

The telephone had expanded the program in postal buildings enormously, so its separation from the post office in the Australia Post-Telecom restructure of July 1975, had a dramatic effect on the whole post office system. This separation meant the demolition of the comprehensive PMG system, and ushered in strategies for drastically reducing and rearranging post office size and function. Post offices developed from this period, effectively the fourth generation in Australian post office design, were marked primarily by an increasing invisibility.

The maintenance of Australia's huge and increasingly complex telecommunications network was taken out of the post offices' aegis formally, and Telecom and its Telstra successor progressively separated their technical facilities, personnel, telephone exchanges, research and manufacturing sectors from the physical territory and form of the post offices. This often meant that half of all post office facilities and their yardage and open site areas became gradually redundant. Added to this were the marginal reductions in mail and parcels custom though increasing use of private couriers, and the expansion of couriers' direct aircraft access from IPEC onward (c. 1963).

Mail alternatives

Even more significant, from the 1970s, were the development of alternatives to mail. The telegraph function of post offices was drastically compressed in area through telephone replacements of the telegraph machinery and the decreasing cost of trunk calls. Then the telegraph function disappeared from post offices altogether, replaced by telex machines (from 1954 on)[16] and then fax machines in the 1980s. The great majority of these were privately operated away from post offices, as changes in electronics and radio manufacture had made equipment privately available in areas where previously, as with the telephone exchanges and the telegraph, the post office's collective resources had been necessary to purchase the essential equipment and build physical transmission networks. Digital telephoning, variable-frequency transmission and broadband web systems have further rendered the post office and its traditional spatial and physical apparatus even more isolated from this realm of communication, although some post offices sell computer peripherals such as recordable disks and printers. Telex, faxing, email and web usage merely completed a privatising and personal encryption of electronic communication that can be seen as early as the news bureaux' wire photo transmissions of the 1940s and '50s, or commercial firms' tickertape and teletype machinery of the 1910s-1930s.[17]

Mail delivery

More recently changes in the delivery of letters have acted to reduce the usable volumes of post offices even further, including contraction of personnel at mail centres and the use of independent contractors for delivery and distribution of mail. Express mail is also sent through a separate distribution system, generally eliminating the need for direct sorting within post offices themselves. In line with this

decentralised delivery system and the reduction of needed space, many administrative office roles also disappeared, meaning that much office space in surviving post offices and mail centres was made redundant or used for storage. This in part stemmed from the post offices' declining role as a public service contact point, and also from the Commonwealth Bank's reduced presence.

New fusions with retail and adaptive re-use

For these general reasons the typology and public identity of post offices changed yet again. Postal counters were more limited, and were coupled to a largely commercial post box function often requiring only a few square metres of sorting and allocation space. In some cases post office functions were (re) united with another retail function, returning to the old post office-general store operation. Newsagents have also joined this role. Where separate post offices have been retained, these have been increasingly moved to the same buildings as mail centres, and have been reconfigured as retail or 'shop' pattern segments of the larger mail centre building. In malls and large shopping precincts the post office is routinely settled in a shop and has often been moved from the locality's original or earlier post office building. By implication, the post office's traditional visual presence has been greatly reduced.

The strongly residential post offices have always had a potential for renewed residential use, particularly as their old domestic spaces can be seen as attractive upgraded contemporary accommodation. The rich decorative character and conspicuous street placement of numbers of former post offices (in Victoria the 1909-15 Hawthorn, Canterbury and Box Hill buildings, for example) also lent themselves to single and multiple retail adaptations or restaurant functions. The semi-arcaded, roofed-street interiors of the GPOs have favoured retail conversions in all state capitals; while the larger regional post offices - Rockhampton, Townsville, Geelong, Ballarat - allow for adaptations to arts centres and office suites.

As a décor-logo, the Australia Post retail outlets have generally absorbed some of the private warehouse imagery of the later, industrialised mail centres, being dominated by large tubular air-conditioning and electrical servicing ducts and simple white- painted interiors. Their array of retail items mostly approximates newsagents' stationery sections, along with some specifically postal items such as mailing bags and prepaid envelopes. Apart from their postal service retail and some post office box distribution, they also perform virtually no other duties inherently connected to the nineteenth or early twentieth century post office.

In both function and imagery, therefore, the independent post office building with a dedicated postal function has begun to recede from Australian communities. Postal services and operations remain, albeit in a constantly evolving form, but within retail centres or in shared retail premises. Society will also continue to invent new ways to communicate, inevitably leading to further changes to post office infrastructure.

SUMMARY TABLE: CHRONOLOGY OF CHANGING POST OFFICE FUNCTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES AND IMPACTS ON PLANNING AND FORM

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
1803	Regular 2d mail service established between Sydney and Parramatta; Private delivery by police or other official	
1809	NSW Postmaster to supervise mail (Isaac Nichols)	Distribution from own residence
1819	Second NSW Postmaster (George Panton) established first post office building independently of his own house	Distribution from another small building, probably a house
1825	*Postal Act* transfers postal service to government agency; delivery/ transport still by private contractors	
1828	Regular government mail by sea to Hobart and Newcastle; weekly coach transport to Goulburn	Residential component with the postal hall in front or below, suggestive of a 'front room'
1830	Standard 2d letter service established and Sydney GPO designed under aegis of colonial govt architect –Ambrose Hallen; possible author Mortimer Lewis	
1840	GPOs in major capital colonies; Sydney GPO completed with full portico in 1848-Mortimer Lewis.	Internal: Large postal hall for preparation and stamping of prepaid mail; sorting areas for deliverers to pick up mail External: Expressive civic elements including porticos, porches, stepped aprons, colonnaded perimeter; often temple-fronted single-storey with long enclosed loggias; service yards at rear; Suburban/rural post offices included an arcaded bay or verandah
1849	Uniform colonial postal rates agreed on	
1850	Sender-prepaid stamped services established in NSW and Victoria in 1851 and regular delivery to city areas; Extension of penny post and halfpenny postal cards	
1854	Telegraphy becomes the responsibility of the post office	New areas required to accommodate equipment, cabling and areas for transcribing

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
1857	Expansion of regular mail delivery by rail/stage coach	Outlying post offices adapted from houses, stage coach depots, inns
1860	Eastern colonies connected through telegraph network by 1859. Government architects take over design of all new post offices	Mail hall and telegraph office converted as a frontal component
1870s	Introduction of railway mail vans, TPOs and the expansion of rail linkages; substantial intercolonial rail transport by 1887; transcontinental by 1917	Landmark post offices built fairly close to railway terminals, often incorporating prominent civic elements such as clock towers and loggias; general style Renaissance-Classical to 1890; then Free Styles, Federation, Edwardian Baroque, Neoclassical, Neo-Georgian
1865-77	Perth, South Australia (1865) and Port Darwin (1872) linked by telegraph services. Overseas telegraph connected 1877. Development of postal note system extending post offices' money transfer role	Increased requirements for postal and telegraphic services (plus increased volume of mail) reflected in increased size of post offices
1880-90	Spread of telephone services incorporated into existing mail/telegraphic exchange buildings	Incorporation of large manual exchange rooms (often added at the side or rear of the existing building), additional staff rooms. Development of industrial and workshop buildings under post office aegis, primarily for telephone equipment
1883-7	Completion of intercolonial rail connections from Brisbane to Adelaide	Increase in rail-based mail handling facilities
1890	Introduction of public telephones cubicles/booths	Increased floor area required to accommodate public telephone booths; service areas for transformer, substation and generator for electric power; service yards used for maintenance and equipment
1901	Creation of the Commonwealth PMG Department to unify postal, telegraphic and telephone services. Post offices as payment agency for pensions, outlets for new Commonwealth bank. Expansion of civil service role in becoming cashier for licences and some taxes. Gradual takeover of architectural design by Federal government architects, 1901-17	City mail exchanges designed as massive cuboid architecture, often with major street frontages and sited near railway terminals, reflecting the increasing social importance of these buildings as well as new use of ferro-concrete frame construction; increased requirements for sorting areas and service areas assisted by expanding existing buildings functions into the surrounding properties

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
	PMG employs 16,000 or 90% of all federal public service employees Private telephone ownership 1 in 100 per capita	
1905 ff.	First conspicuous slow-down in post office construction for modern financial and building recessions: 1905-7, also 1915-20, 1926-34, 1945-53, 1955-7, 1961-3, 1970-6, 1981-3: interruptions in post office completions and development	
1907	PMG commences trunk phone installations: Melbourne-Sydney; then Adelaide 1914; Brisbane 1923; Perth 1930; Hobart 1935	Expansions in central telephone exchange construction; appearance of large telephone exchange annexes at many regional and suburban post offices
1911 ff.	PMG establishes coastal short wave radio network	Construction of radio transmission infrastructure under PMG aegis
1918	Increasing suburbanisation and rapid population growth in cities. Appearance of independent commercial telecommunications	Location of post offices in new residential areas often close to town halls and shire offices; external incorporation of covered social areas in porticos and porches
1914-19	First interstate and overseas air transport of mail	
1920 ff.	Motorisation of the metropolitan area; 76,000 cars registered by 1920; car ownership ratio lowers to c. 1 in 12 by 1929. Increased retail function of mail centres Some automation of services Consolidation of Australian internal air mail, 1920-30	
1924	Telegraphic transmissions spread; much in private hands; first modern telecommunications development outside of post office control	
1928-35	Depression cuts most government capital works	Virtual absence of new post office buildings or incremental type development
1930	PMG assumes control of ABC broadcasting operations (later including Radio Australia)	PMG building infrastructure for ABC and Radio Australia, 1935 ff.

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
1930	Decline in residential use of post office buildings during depression era	Residential areas of post offices begin to fall idle; re-use as storage space and for upstairs offices
1934	Overseas air mail regularly scheduled; Imperial air system from 1936	Appearance of mail facilities at early permanent air terminals
1935-9	First co-axial cabling laid between mainland and Tasmania	Expansion of co-axial cabling infrastructure, esp. Sydney Melbourne in c. 1962
1943	Cessation of all non-military building; exacerbation of capital works lag left over from Depression	
1945	Limited resumption of capital works	Renewal of central telephone exchanges, 1945 ff.
1946-53	General resumption of non-military building; reduction in austerity conditions by 1953; increased siting of new post offices away from railway networks	Conscious application of international Modern Movement planning and construction to post office architecture; several genres of architectural modernism applied through to 1974
1950	769,000 cars registered in Australia	External: post offices often sited in the main street of new civic centres (and later regional shopping malls, pre-built retail tenancies with access to car parking); direct street façade; retail articulated as separate component from the mail exchange centre or sorting rooms Planning: simply divided internal spaces; open or direct entry planning with rationalised work spaces simply divided from the public area by a counter; incorporation of staff areas and luncheon rooms Service yard development including paving, lock up sheds, fuel storage and maintenance equipment
1954-5	Private telex machines introduced in Australia; first radio fax and radiopicture transmissions in US; Second major area of telecommunication develops outside postal network	
1955-6	ABC division expands into television	Provision of television infrastructure under PMG aegis

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
1960	Airlines take over long-distance regional and interstate transport; removal of air mail surcharge on letters; first shopping mall post offices	Extension of rail-free mail transport network and buildings; extension of purpose-built transhipment buildings at airports; appearance of shop-front/retail space post offices at shopping malls
1962	Modem developed in US; Third major area of telecommunication outside postal network	
1963	IPEC and other couriers start competition with post office for parcel and express transport	Expansion of non-postal parcel traffic
1963-70	Proliferation of fibre optic cabling	Significant reductions in line servicing needs
1967-74	Cuts in general mail delivery to 1 per day; decline of telegram services	First major reductions in staffing needs
1974-5	Restructure of PMG Department into Australia Post and Telecom, administrative separation of the ABC and Radio Australia, and gradual decentralisation and privatisation of mail service delivery; increase in courier services; fall in the volume of mail due to courier services and progressive changes in communications technology (extension of telex, arrival of personal fax, emergence of digital)	Removal of telephone function and associated areas; removal of broadcasting infrastructure from Post office aegis; post office function revised as a retail counter or shop; relocation of mail to new, acquired or leased large span sheds (often industrial parks) for delivery, sorting and distribution
1990-1	Resurgence of private mail contracting; Internet systems established	First main wave of Australia Post property sales
1994-6	Australian commercial and public computer ownership at 29%; Internet usage rises to 4%. Fourth major telecommunications area to expand outside postal network; fax machine ownership expands from 54% of small business concerns to 81%	
1996 ff.	2.5m computers in Australia	Closure of GPOs and major regional post offices
1998	Australian general computer ownership at 47%; Internet usage 19%	
1998-9	Private telecommunications companies active and expanding in Australia.	

Date	Development of service	Impact on form
	Development of decentralised two-tiered contractor mail delivery	
2000	Car ownership to 1 in 1.4-10.4m cars registered in 2003.	Installation of end-point delivery collection boxes away from mail centres
2003	12.5m PCs in Australian use; Internet usage rate 50% domestic, 60% commercial; 10.82m landline connections; 14.35m mobile phones	
2005-7		Second main wave of Australia Post property sales

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1   Information in the initial paragraphs of this discussion is sourced largely from G Stuart Warmington, Andrew Ward, Clive Lucas et al., *Australia Post Survey of Historic Properties in New South Wales* (NSW), Sydney: 1992, pp. 19-25.

2   See *Victorian Year Book*, 87, Melbourne: Government Printer, 1973, p. 259.

3   See G Stuart Warmington, Andrew Ward, *South Australia*, pp. 18-23.

4   Examples include Goolwa in South Australia, 1857; NSW and Victoria had rebuilt almost all of their early post offices by 1900, with some exceptions.

5   Details sourced from Warmington and Ward, *NSW*, v. 1, pp. 44-179.

6   Details sourced from G Stuart Warmington and Andrew Word, *Australia Post Survey of Historic Properties in South Australia*, Adelaide: 1992, pp. 29-107.

7   Details sourced from Warmington and Ward, *Australia Post Survey of Historic Properties in Western Australia*, v. 1, Perth: 1993, pp. 20-71.

8   Outlined in Warmington and Ward, *NSW*, v. 1.

9   There are entries on both in Philip Goad, et al, *Melbourne Architecture*, p. 103; Richard Apperly, Bob Irving, Peter Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1994, p. 106.

10   Warmington and Ward, *Victoria*, v. 1.

11   Information in this section is drawn from Warmington, Ward and Lucas' *NSW*, pp. 19ff. and their lists of completed post office designs, pp. 22-9.

12   See Warmington and Ward, *Victoria*, v. 1.

13   The Imperial air mail system is outlined in Warmington, Ward and Lucas' *NSW* study, p. 19 ff. The mail capacity and performance ratings of 1930s aircraft varied widely according to engines, which ranged from the 300 hp Gypsies used in the De Havillands through to the 800 hp Bristol Pegasus in the Short Empire and the 750-1200 Wright Cyclones and Pratt and Whitney Twin Wasps used in the DC 2 and DC 3. These contrasted with 1920s types, where the standard engines in heavy-freight Australian usage were the 220 hp Wright Whirlwind and the 450 hp Bristol Jupiter.

14   Cited usually as the former Harrison's Ramsay Building. See n.12, above.

15   This is reflected in valuer's reports such as the 2006 series, which consistently mandate asbestos checks for 1960s buildings.

16   See the *Victorian Year Book,* 87, for dates of these changes.

17   Military encryption through the German *Enigma* apparatus was simply a development of private commercial encryption machines available on the open market in the 1920s. Tickertape had been in wide use in the US from the 1900s on. Pneumatic mail delivery had been another early and mostly private means of short-range mail transport.

APPENDIX C   **Architectural Drawings**
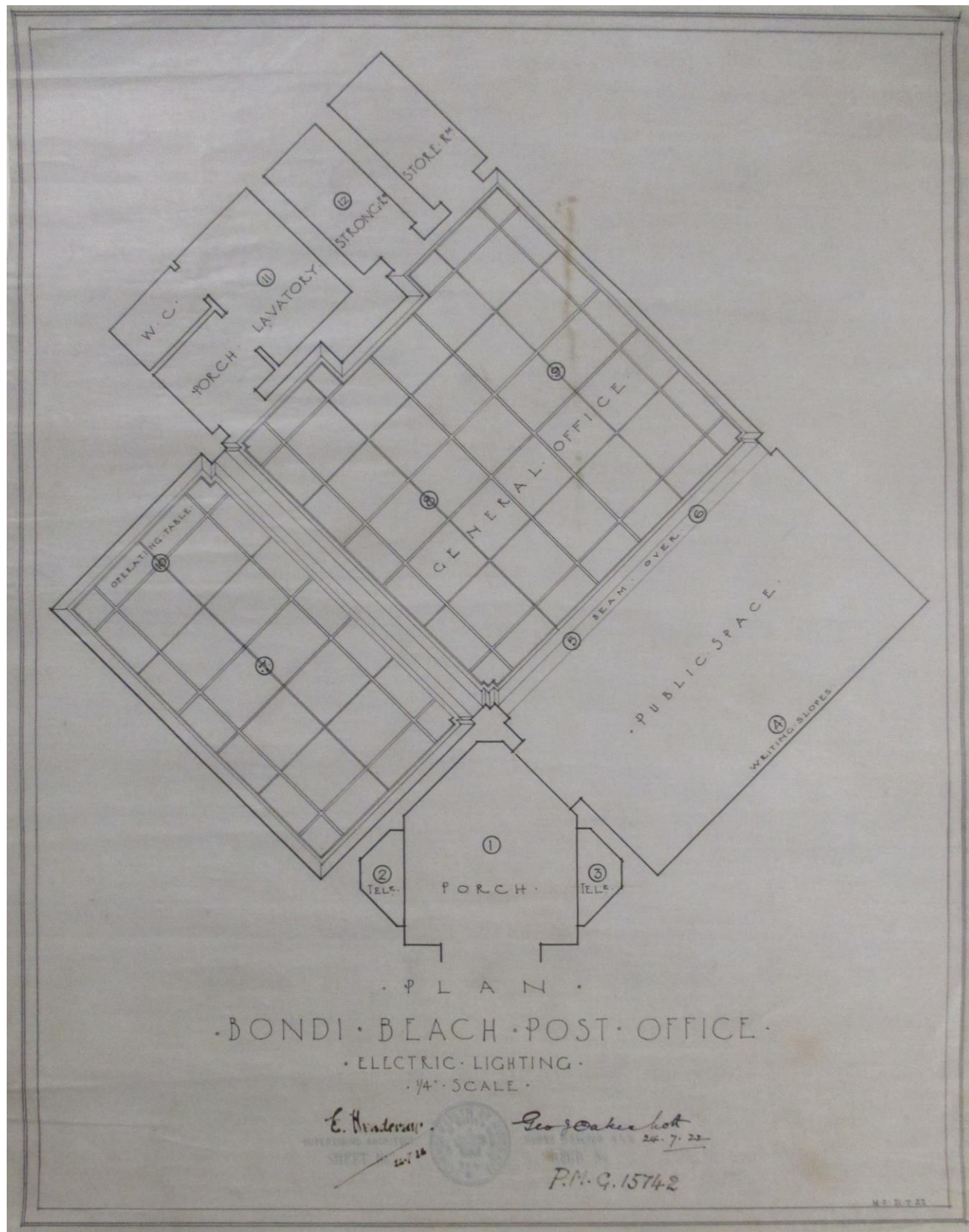
Figure 1   Reflected ceiling plan for the Bondi Beach Post Office signed by George Oakeshott and EH Henderson c. 1922
            Source: National Archives of Australia, Series Number SP1107/1 679386
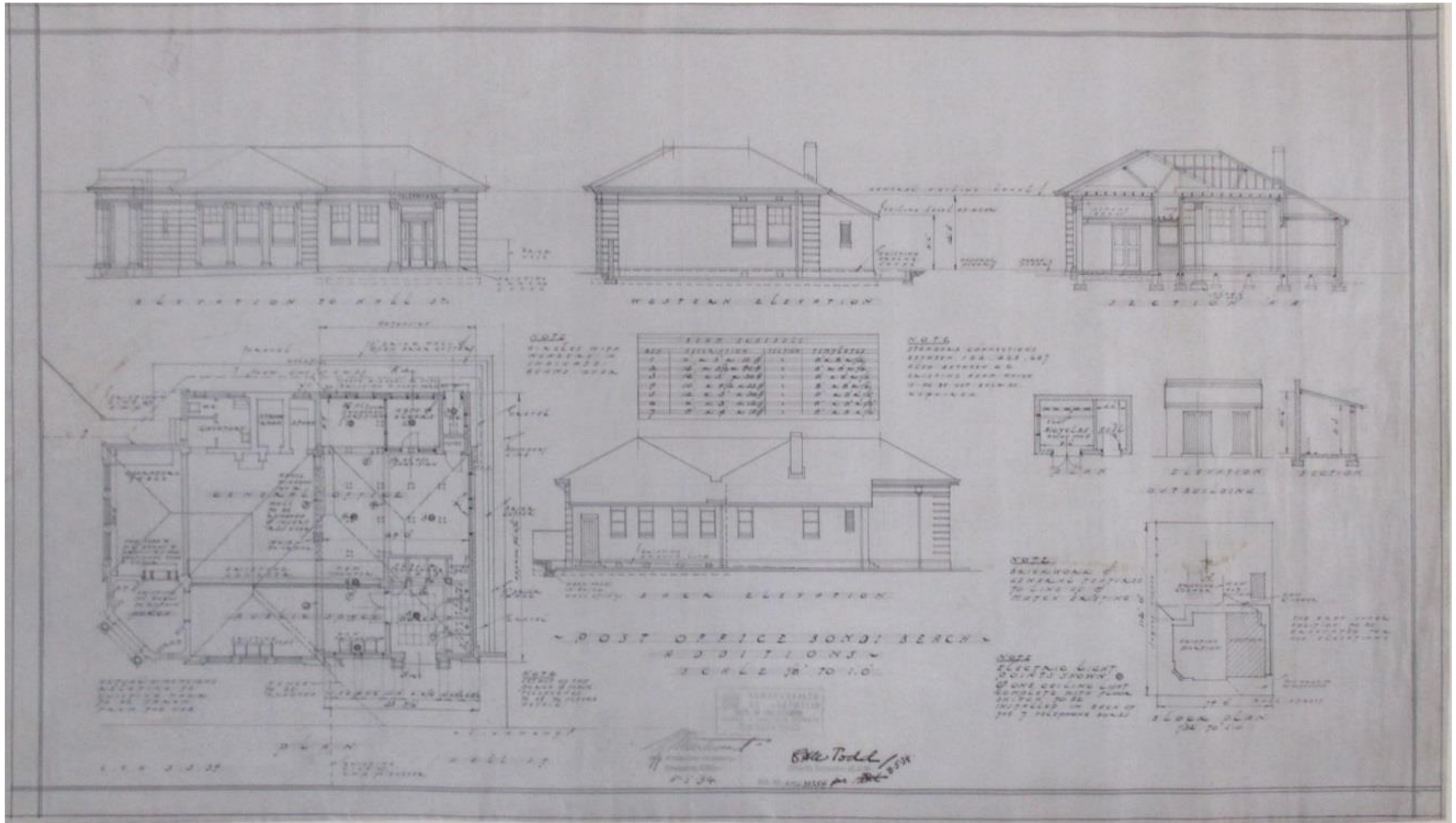
Figure 2   Plan, elevations and section of the c. 1934 additions and alterations to Bondi Beach Post Office
   Source: National Archives of Australia, Series Number SP1107/1 679386
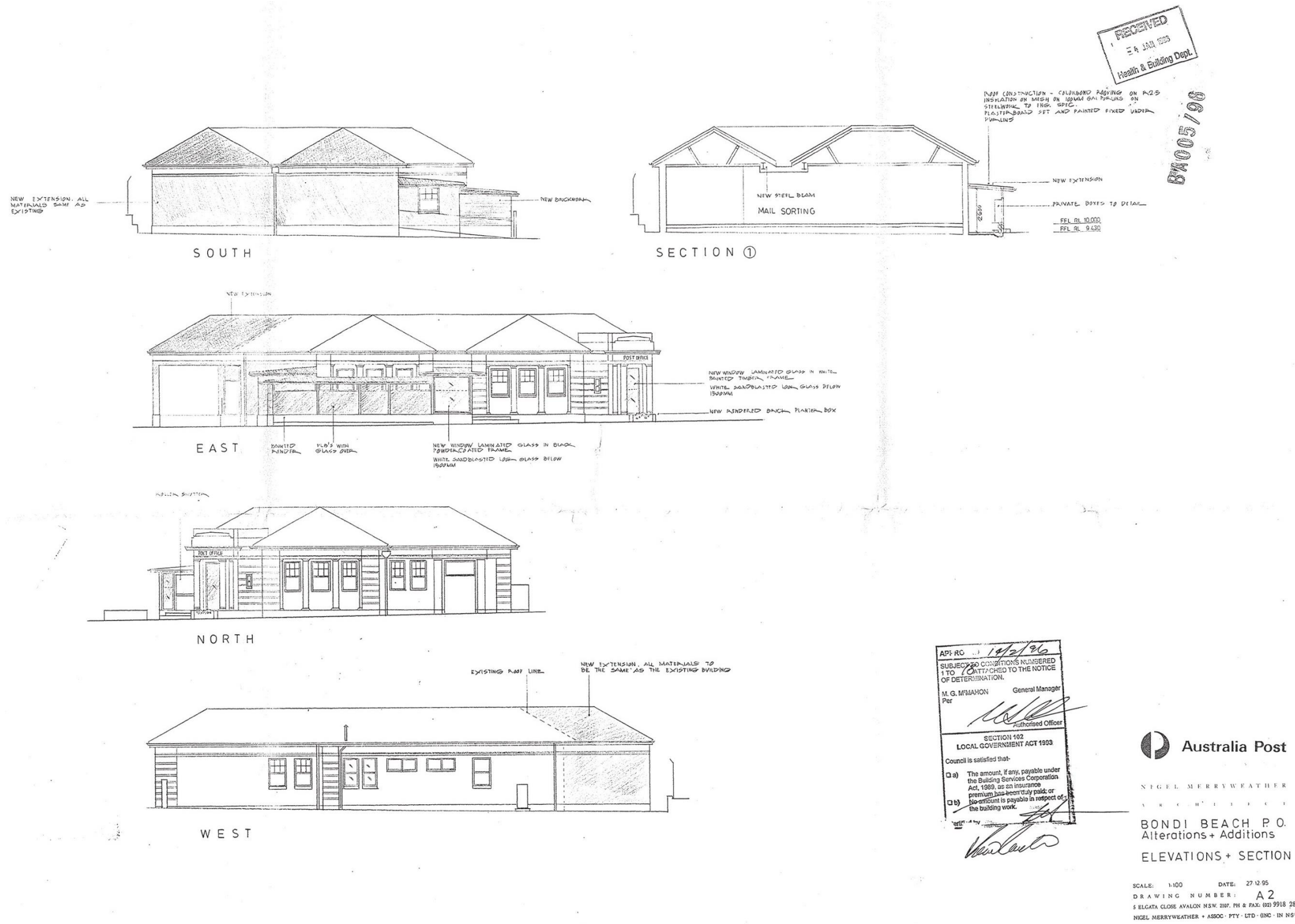
Figure 3   Elevations and section showing the alterations and addition proposed in c. 1995
   Source: City of Waverly

Figure 4   Plan showing the alterations and addition proposed in c. 1995
   Source: City of Waverley

Figure 5   Details of the works proposed in c. 1995
            Source: City of Waverley

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