

Locality: HEYFIELD
Place address: 7 TEMPLE STREET
Citation date 2016
Place type (when built): Post office
Recommended heritage protection: Local government level
Local Planning Scheme: Yes
Vic Heritage Register: No
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

Place name: Post Office (former)



Architectural Style: Inter War Stripped Classical
Designer / Architect: Not known
Construction date: 1924

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H is the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with the level of Government legislation.

What is significant?

The post office at 7 Temple Street, Heyfield is significant. The original form, materials and detailing as constructed in 1924 are significant.

Outbuildings, alterations and additions to the building are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Heyfield Post Office is locally significant for its historic, social and aesthetic values to the Shire of Wellington.

Why is it significant?

The Heyfield Post Office is **aesthetically significant at a local level** as a representative example of a very intact Inter War Stripped Classical architectural style post office. Built in 1924, the trabeated treatment of the façade is significant. It is a domestic scaled building with openings in vertical classical proportions, divided into vertical bays which are delineated by red brick pilasters with a brick plinth, and brick capitals which support a plain rendered entablature. The notable architectural elements of the building include the flat roofed porch, the low-pitched hipped roof clad with orange coloured terracotta tiles, wide timber-lined eaves and two external red brick chimney stacks, red brick walls with a band of decorative smooth render that runs beneath the eaves of the whole building and porch. The entrance porch to the left of the facade is reached by wide bluestone steps and also has brick pilasters with brick capitals and plinth, flanked either side with symmetrically placed small windows supporting a plain entablature above. (Criterion E)

The Heyfield Post Office is **historically significant at a local level**. Built in 1924, it illustrates the importance of the town as an established commercial centre for the surrounding pastoral and agricultural district and coincides with the new butter factory and work starting on the Glenmaggie Weir in the 1920s. (Criterion A)

The Heyfield Post Office is **socially significant at a local level** for its importance as a meeting place for people in the town and the outlying districts for over 90 years. (Criterion G)

Statutory Recommendations

This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme to the extent of the title boundary as shown on the map.

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No

Aboriginal Heritage Place	Not assessed
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Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



KEY

- Recommended for Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

Post Office

7 Temple St, Heyfield

Project: Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study
Client: Wellington Shire Council
Author: Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd
Date: 12/2/16

History

Locality history

The first European contact in the area was made by both Angus McMillan and Paul Strzelecki in 1840 when they crossed the Thomson River near present Heyfield. Hayfield pastoral run was occupied in 1841, supposedly named for the tall waving grass covering the plain. A small settlement known as Heyfield Bridge was soon established on the north side of the Thomson River. Heyfield township was surveyed in 1864 and was part of Maffra Shire from 1875 (Context 2005:39; Fletcher & Kennett 2005:65). In 1883, a railway line from Traralgon extended to Heyfield and in 1898, James Tyson's Heyfield Run was subdivided and 114 lots were sold for dairying and cropping. Further subdivision occurred in the town after 1900. Heyfield became a service centre for the surrounding farming and pastoral district (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:65-6). The town became busy when work started on the Glenmaggie Weir in the 1920s, and a tramline was built from Heyfield to the weir site to transport materials needed for the huge project (Context 2005:22). In 1922 a new butter factory was built, with cattle sales held in the town fortnightly (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:65-6). In the 1940s the Victorian Rivers and Water Supply Commission began works in the area, employing several hundred men to raise the walls of the Glenmaggie Weir and carry out irrigation works. After this project was completed in 1960, about 60 families remained in the area (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:66).

Heyfield grew substantially from the 1950s as the centre of a saw milling industry (Context 2005:39). Between 1933 and 1954 the population of the town quadrupled from approximately 500, to peak at 2,184 people in 1954 (Victorian Places). The alpine timber industry was to not only transform the alpine ash forests and send roads threading into this isolated area, but also to transform Heyfield, below the mountains on the red gum plains (Context 2005:21). After the 1939 fires with their horrific loss of life and the destruction of Victoria's main mountain ash forests and hardwood timber supplies, the state's timber industry was restructured. The Forests Commission surveyed the untapped and inaccessible alpine reserves of timber. Saw mills would be relocated to towns away from the forests and milling operations would be centralised in the towns to be known as conversion centres; one town nominated was Heyfield (Context 2005:21). In 1950, during the heart of the post-war timber shortage, seven saw mills were established in Heyfield which was quickly transformed into a timber town (Context 2005:21). It is suggested that the one town had the most mills in the southern hemisphere, in the 1950s (HDHS). Streets of mill workers houses were hastily built on the perimeter of the town - 185 houses altogether - giving workers proper housing and access to educational, health and shopping facilities that they had been denied when they lived in the forests. Most of the 1950s mill houses are now in private hands, some have been renovated (Context 2005:21). In the 1950s, a soldiers' settlement was also established in the newly irrigated farms to the south of Heyfield (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:66).

By 1958, the Heyfield Sawmillers Logging Company was formed to co-ordinate operations over concerns of diminishing reserves of millable timber (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:66). As logging allocations have been reduced over the second half of the twentieth century, companies in Heyfield have amalgamated until the situation in 2001 where one company, Neville Smith Pty Ltd, owns the two remaining saw mills. Because of the shrinking allocations, in the 2000s, timber is trucked to Heyfield from all parts of Victoria (Context 2005:22). Since the town's population peak in 1954 (totalling 2,184 people), the population reduced to 1,830 by 1971 and steadily reduced to a total of 1,459 in 2011 (Victorian Places). The town is suggested to retain the largest mill in the southern hemisphere (HDHS).

In 1994, Wellington Shire was created by the amalgamation of the former Shires of Alberton, Avon and Maffra, the former City of Sale, most of the former Shire of Rosedale, as well as an area near Dargo which was formerly part of Bairnsdale Shire. In 2011, timber logging and milling accounted for 11.4% of employment in the Heyfield area, with farming totalling 6.6% (Victorian Places).

Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes from the *Wellington Shire Thematic History* (2005):

5. Transport and communications

- 5.6 Communications

The following is based on information taken from the *Wellington Shire Thematic Environmental History* (Context 2005:30-1):

From the earliest days of settlement, the first residents of the shire maintained contact with the outside world via mail that was carried on horseback by settlers or travellers. The first post office in the shire was established at Alberton in 1843 and the mail was brought by coastal steamers. From 1848 a regular service was established with the mail coming overland from Melbourne through Sale. A post office was opened at Sale in 1848. With increasing population, regular mail services were established to post offices in stores, hotels and homesteads, such as Rosedale where the first post office was conducted in Henry Luke's store or at Won Wron where the school housed the post office. Loose bags of mail were left for settlers to collect and distribute. Postal services eventually reached the most isolated communities. One of the oldest post office buildings still existing in the shire is the former Port Albert post office. Built in 1865, it closed in 1972 and is now a private home.

The telegraph line from Melbourne reached Sale and Port Albert in 1864. Rosedale was connected in 1867 and this link to civilisation gradually reached many scattered communities. From the 1890s, the telephone network spread throughout the region. The Yarram district was connected in the early 1900s. Glenmaggie was linked in 1906, the line coming six miles from Heyfield, strung on trees and fences. In recent times, consolidation and improvement of services has seen the introduction of automatic telephone exchanges and the closure of small post offices, while modern telecommunications have improved links with the world.

Place history

The first post office in Heyfield opened on 24 September 1870 with A. Crooks as the postmistress (*Back to Heyfield* 1971). This very small timber building was located at 75 Temple Street, to the south of the existing post office (FitzGerald 1991:27).

An article in February 1924 informed the public that a site for the new post office building had been chosen. It would be located on Temple Street, next to the police reserve (*Gippsland Times*, 11 Feb 1924:3). The existing post office was built and opened on the site in 1924 (FitzGerald 1991:27).

A photo dating to c1927 (HDHS), soon after it was completed, showed a group of cyclists parked in front of the building (Figure H1). The facade of the post office appeared as it does in 2015, with a tiled hipped roof, simple brick chimney and face-brick walls. The words 'Heyfield Post [Office]' appeared under the eaves of the projecting bay. A small sign on the facade reads 'Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia' which suggests the building also served as a branch.

A photo dating to 1944 (NAA) showed the facade and part of the north elevation, also as they appear in 2015 (Figure H2). A second photo that also dated to 1944 (NAA) showed the rear of the post office, with a small timber outbuilding in the backyard (Figure H3). A photo (dating to post-1948, as dated by the 1948 car; Figure H4) showed two brick chimneys (remain in 2015) and the facade and south elevation of the post office, as they appear in 2015 (HDHS).

On 1 August 1952, it became an official post office (*Back to Heyfield* 1971). Later alterations have been made to the doorways within the recessed porch. It is not known at what date the building ceased to serve as a post office. In 2015, the interior retains some of the original timber work benches.



Figure H1. Photo of the post office taken c1927, soon after the post office was built, illustrating the original colour scheme of unpainted render and dark-tone timber joinery. (HDHS).



Figure H2. The facade and part of the north elevation of the post office in 1944 (NAA).



Figure H3. The rear elevation in 1944, with a round arched doorway and a small timber outbuilding to the rear of the post office (NAA).



Figure H4. The facade and south elevation, photo dates to post-1948 (HDHS).

Sources

Back to Heyfield (1971).

Context Pty Ltd (2005), *Wellington Shire Heritage Study Thematic Environmental History*, prepared for Wellington Shire Council.

FitzGerald, Leanne (1991), *Heyfield 1841-1991, a pictorial history*, Upper Ferntree Gully.

Fletcher, Meredith & Linda Kennett (2005), Wellington Landscapes, *History and Heritage in a Gippsland Shire*, Maffra.

Heyfield & Districts Historical Society (HDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Louise Hill-Coleman and Merryn Stevenson, provided Nov 2015.

National Archives of Australia (NAA), 'Heyfield Post Office', item nos. B5919: 095 & 13/252, <<http://www.naa.gov.au/>> accessed 10 Dec 2015.

Victorian Places, 'Heyfield', <<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/>>, accessed 24 February 2016.

Description

This section describes the place in 2016. Refer to the Place History for additional important details describing historical changes in the physical fabric.

The Heyfield post office was built in 1924, during the interwar period in the Stripped Classical style. The building is located near the front title boundary, on the east side of Temple Street. The 1924 post office is in very good condition and retained a high level of integrity.

Figure D1. The single-storey face-red brick building is domestic in scale and has a low-pitched hipped roof clad with orange-coloured terracotta tiles. The roof form comprises a projecting bay at the right side of the facade and at the left side of the rear (east) elevation (as evident in the aerial of the map). Two red brick chimneys remain at the north and south ends of the building. Engaged brick pilasters with capitals and bases break up the facade into vertical bays, appearing between the windows of the projecting bay to the right of the facade, and repeated either side of the entrance, forming piers with entablature above, representing a classical trabeated facade.

Figure D2. The wide eaves of the roof are timber lined, under which is a band of smooth render that runs around the entire building. Upon the decorative render is the name 'Heyfield Post Office', under the eaves of the projecting bay to the facade.

Figure D3. To the left of the facade is a partly enclosed porch with a separate roofline, under which is the entrance to the interior of the post office, (one entrance is bricked up, with another entrance open to the right of the porch).. The porch is entered by two bluestone steps to a flat floor clad in original pavers. The porch opening is enclosed by a modern retracting security gate. A modern telephone box is located in front of the entrance porch.

Figure D4. The red brick chimney stack stands externally on the north elevation. The wide eaves and band of smooth decorative render continue under the eaves on both the outside and inside porch and main portion of the building. Two small windows, with one narrow decorative lintel, are located on the north wall of the entrance porch and one on the left side of the porch which may indicate early telephone booths.

Figure D5. The south elevation comprises the external chimney breast of the second chimney. This is flanked by one-over-one timber sash windows. The smooth band of render continues beneath the wide eaves.



Figure D1. The façade of the post office. The two chimneys are out of view in this photo.



Figure D2. The wide eaves which are timber lined, and the name of the post office on the smooth band of decorative render.



Figure D3. The entrance porch to the left of the facade, which is under a separate roofline.



Figure D4. The chimney stack stands on the exterior of the elevation. Three small windows are

located on the entrance porch.



Figure D5. The southern elevation with the external chimney stack flanked by one-over-one sash windows.

Sources

All photos taken in 2015 by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd as part of Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study.

Comparative analysis

The size, grandeur and architectural style of post offices tend to reflect the size and status of the town and the era, in which they are built. All of the extant ones in Wellington Shire have very high to excellent integrity and are in very good condition and are all built in red brickwork.

The Heyfield Post Office, built in 1924, in the Stripped Classical style, is a domestic scaled building with openings in vertical classical proportions, divided into vertical bays which are delineated by red brick pilasters with brick capitals, supporting a plain rendered entablature. Stratford, once the seat of government for the Avon Shire, is a fine complex comprising an 1885 council chambers, courthouse, and post office with residence, of the Victorian Free Classical style. The post office has Queen Anne half-timbered projecting gables (added c1900) which gives the post office and its residence a more domestic scale and homely appearance compared with the more forbidding taller and windowless façade of the court house adjacent. The fine Federation Freestyle 1913 post office in Yarram, was built when Yarram was the seat of government for the Shire of Alberton, and it is the only one of its type in Wellington Shire. One of the oldest post office buildings still existing in the shire is the former Port Albert post office. Built in 1865, it closed in 1972 and is now a private home. A larger and very impressive post office was built in Sale, which was the largest city in the area at the time, but it has been demolished, although the clock tower was rebuilt in a different location as a street feature.

Management Guidelines

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. They also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant. The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive and a pragmatic approach will be taken when considering development proposals. Alternative approaches to those specified in the guidelines will be considered where it can be demonstrated that a desirable development outcome can be achieved that does not impact on a place's heritage integrity.

1. Additions and new buildings

- 1.1. Retain clear views of the front elevation.
- 1.2. New structures should be restricted to the rear of the property and concealed behind the heritage fabric when viewed from Temple Street. The aerial image below shows the area recommended for new structures shaded in blue. It is preferable that they are not identical in design, so that the original building fabric is discernable, but sympathetic in scale, roof form, colours and materials.

2. Accessibility

- 2.1. A removable ramp can be installed at the front of the building, or one could be constructed at the rear, forming a new entry. The ramp should not be solid concrete, rather, a metal framed ramp which allows air to flow under it, to ensure the subfloor vents of the building are not obstructing good airflow under the floor which will allow the wall structure to evaporate moisture and reduce termite and rot attack to the subfloor structure and damp in the brick walls. Ensure water drains are away from the subfloor vents, and walls and the gap between the wall and the ramp remains clear of debris. Insert additional sub floor vents if the ramp has blocked any of them. The hand rails on the ramp should not be a feature, which would detract from the architecture. Plain thin railings painted in the same colour as the walls, so that they blend in, would be appropriate.
- 2.2. Metal bannisters can be installed at the front steps. They are functional and minimalist and they have a minor visual impact on the architecture and therefor they are a suitable design for an accessible addition.

3. Reconstruction and Restoration

- 3.1. The building is over 90 years old and the exterior of the building is in remarkably good condition (the interior was not inspected).
- 3.2. The poor condition of the concrete paving in front of the building is an opportunity to remove it carefully, without damaging the brickwork.
 - 3.2.1. Preferably, retain pressed granitic sand in place of the concrete, but if paving is required, use concrete finished with exposed aggregate of similar size and colour to granitic sand and separate the concrete from the brick building and bluestone steps, with Ablefex.
 - 3.2.2. The ground/concrete surface must not be any higher than it is now, or the subfloor vents will not function properly. Sub floor ventilation is cheap to install and free to run. Replacing and repairing damp damaged brickwork and timber floors, caused by blocking sub floor vents is expensive.
- 3.3. The rendered band under the eaves, around the building, and entry porch has been painted, however, these architectural features were not designed to be painted, see Fig H1 for original

colour scheme. They were a light coloured unpainted rendered. It is strongly recommended that the next time the cost of a repaint is considered, remove the paint chemically (never sand, water or soda-blast the building as this will permanently damage the bricks, mortar and render and never seal the bricks or render as that will create perpetual damp problems). Removal of the paint will not only restore the architecture, but it will remove the ongoing costs of repainting it every 10 or so years. However, if it is decided to repaint the render, it should be one colour only, similar to white Portland cement.

- 3.4. It is recommended that a heritage specialist industrial cleaner be engaged to remove the paint, but Haymes Peelaway may be used. The former bank at Rosedale was recently cleaned of paint using an approved chemical method. If an opportunity arises, consider relocating the telephone booth to the side or rear, and away from the front of the building.
- 3.5. Remove items such as the oil tank when no longer required.
- 3.6. Remove the Victorian era spears from the top of the metal gates, as they are out of character with the inter war design of this building. This is recommended but not a requirement.

4. Care and Maintenance

- 4.1. Obtain a copy of "Salt Attack and Rising Damp" by David Young (2008), which is a free booklet available for download from Heritage Victoria website. It is in plain English, well illustrated and has very important instructions and should be used by tradesmen and Council maintenance staff. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.
- 4.2. The orange terracotta roof should be maintained to avoid future expensive repairs. The roof has not been inspected but it is evident from Temple Street that lichen is growing on parts of it (this is not doing any harm and is better left untouched as lichen attaches with roots which remove parts of the tile surface if removed, and they grow again in the crevices left by the roots).
- 4.3. The timber windows require regular repainting, preferably using the original colour scheme. Paint scrapes may reveal the original colours. These windows can be retrofitted with double glazing and draught proofed, from inside, without altering the original window joinery.
- 4.4. If there is damp in the walls, or the timber floor is failing, it is imperative that the drainage is fixed first. This may involve the lowering of the ground outside so that it is lower than the ground inside under the floor, installation of agricultural drains, running the downpipes into drainage inspection pits instead of straight into the ground. The reason for the pits is that a blocked drain will not be noticed until so much water has seeped in and around the base of the building and damage commenced (which may take weeks or months to be visible), whereas, the pit will immediately fill with water and the problem can be fixed before the floor rots or the mortar falls out, the bricks start to crumble, and the building smells musty.
- 4.5. Ensure good subfloor ventilation is maintained at all times to reduce the habitat for termites and rot of the subfloor structure. Subfloor ventilation is critical with solid masonry buildings. Check that sub floor vents are not blocked and introduce additional ones if necessary. Ensure the exterior ground level is 250mm or more, lower than the ground level inside the building. Good subfloor ventilation works for free, and is therefore cost effective.
- 4.6. Never install a concrete floor inside a solid masonry building as it will, after a year or so, cause long term chronic damp problems in the walls. Do not install a new damp proof course (DPC) until the drainage has been fixed, even an expensive DPC may not work unless the ground has been lowered appropriately.
- 4.7. Never seal solid masonry buildings, they **must be able to evaporate water** which enters from leaking roofs, pipes, pooling of water, storms, etc. Use appropriate cleaning materials, agents and methods, as recommended by the Shire's heritage advisor. The biggest risk to solid masonry buildings is permanent damage by the use of cleaning materials, agents and

methods. Sand and water blasting removes the skilled decorative works of craftsmen as well as the fired surface on bricks and the lime mortar from between the bricks. It is irreversible and reduces the life of the building due to the severe damp that the damage encourages.

- 4.8. Never use cement mortar, always match the original lime mortar. Traditional mortar mixes were commonly 1:3, lime:sand. Cement is stronger than the bricks and therefore the bricks will eventually crumble, leaving the cement mortar intact! Lime mortar lasts hundreds of years. When it starts to powder it is the 'canary in the mine', alerting you to a damp problem – fix the source of the damp problem and then repoint with lime mortar.

- 4.8.1. Remove any dark grey patches to the mortar joints. This is cement mortar which will damage the bricks and longevity of the walls. Repoint those joints with lime mortar. The mortar is not the problem it is the messenger.

5. Signage

- 5.1. Ensure all signage is designed to fit around the significant architectural design features, not over them.
- 5.2. Retain the Heyfield Post Office signage. If the place is not used as a post office in the future, do not remove the sign, if necessary, remove the paint so that the sign is not a feature, and if necessary, place a removable sign over the writing in such a way that the original writing will not be damaged.

6. Services

- 6.1. Ensure new services and conduits, down pipes etc, are not conspicuous. To do this, locate them at the rear of the building whenever possible, and when that is not practical, paint them the same colour as the building or fabric behind them. Therefore if a conduit goes up a red brick wall, as is the case on the front façade (north side) it should be painted red, and when it passes over say, a cream coloured detail, it should be cream.

Resources

Young, David (2008), "Salt Attack and Rising Damp, a guide to salt damp in historic and older buildings" Technical Guide, prepared for Heritage Victoria.

NOTE. The blue shaded area is the preferred location for additions and new development.

