

<b>Locality:</b>	<b>STRATFORD</b>
<b>Place address:</b>	<b>64-66 TYERS STREET</b>
<b>Citation date</b>	2016
<b>Place type (when built):</b>	Post office, court house, and council chambers/offices
<b>Recommended heritage protection:</b>	Local government level Local Planning Scheme: Yes Vic Heritage Register: No Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No
<b>Place name:</b>	<b>Stratford Post Office, Court house (former) and Council Chambers (former)</b>



<b>Architectural Style:</b>	Victorian Free Classical 1884-5, Federation Queen Anne c1900
<b>Designer / Architect:</b>	J. H. W. Pettit (1884-5 complex)
<b>Constructions date:</b>	1884-5 (additions to post office in 1887, c1900)

## 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 Stratford Post Office, former court house and former council chambers at 64-66 Tyers Street, Stratford, are significant. The original form, materials and detailing as constructed in 1884-1885, and extensions and alterations in 1887 and c1900 are significant. The early (possibly original) portion of timber picket fence below the porch on the south elevation of the post office is significant.

Outbuildings, other alterations and additions to the buildings are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Stratford post office, former court house and former council chambers are locally significant for their historical, social and aesthetic values to the Shire of Wellington.

### *Why is it significant?*

The 1884-85 Stratford post office (and its residence), former court house and former council chambers are **historically significant at a local level for their association** with prominent Sale architect John H. W. Pettit, who worked as an architect and surveyor in Sale between 1854 and 1896, predominantly designing ecclesiastical and civic buildings. (Criterion H) The complex represents the boom period of the town when it was an established commercial centre for the surrounding pastoral and agricultural district and as the seat of government for the Avon Shire. The original complex was designed by Pettit in 1884-85, with early additions made to the post office; the verandah was added in 1887 and was later reduced in length to allow for the construction of the two Queen Anne gabled-bays c1900, which extended the office and public room to the interior. (Criterion A)

The Stratford post office, former court house and former council chambers are **socially significant at a local level** for their importance as a meeting place for people in the town and the outlying districts for over 130 years. (Criterion G)

The Stratford post office, former court house and former council chambers are **aesthetically significant at a local level** as a fine and intact example of a Victorian era civic complex in the Shire. All three sections of the tuck-pointed red-brick building are single storey with galvanized corrugated iron roofs and seven tall red brick corbelled chimneys, and were designed and built as one in the Victorian Free Classical style (with additions to the post office built in 1887 in the same style and c1900 in the Federation Queen Anne style), but significantly, resulting in the different function of each section of the building being symbolically reflected in strong variations in the design. Built to a high quality, it has retained a high degree of integrity and overall, it is in very good condition. (Criterion E)

The red brick courthouse building in the centre, visually dominates as it is the height of a two storey building and it has an imposing Classical aedicule in light coloured render, with prismatic rustication surrounding the single round arched doorway. The windowless façade rises from a rendered plinth at the base, to an overhanging gable roof, with machicolation following the line of the gable, and a clock to symbolize the time of judgement, in the gable end. The top part of the side elevations have double-hung timber windows, which are visible from Tyers Street. (Criterion E)

The single-storey post office has a more homely Queen Anne design, symbolising the social function of the place and the residence of the post master. The post office and attached residence feature a complex composition of transverse gabled roofs, with two prominent gabled bays that front Tyers and Hobson streets (c1900) with a taller roof than the 1885 works. The Queen Anne jettied gabled-

ends have rough-cast render and timber strapping, creating a half-timbered effect. Corbelled stringcourses of brickwork run horizontally below the eaves and at the tops of the windows, extending over the voussoirs of each window; this is visible on the north, south and west elevations. The windows are double-hung sash windows with square or segmental-arched heads and radiating red-brick voussoirs, and rendered sills. The 1887 verandah with timber column and brackets, between the courthouse and the post office, has been altered at a later date. (Criterion E)

On the north side of the complex is the architecturally plainer section built as the council chambers. The design reflects the status of the administrative function but visually links with the courthouse and post office, such that below the roofline the design is similar to the post office and the north window of the courthouse, comprising three double-hung sash timber windows, projecting brick stringcourses and segmentally arched windows with label moulds. (Criterion E)

The complex is significant for its landmark and ornamental contribution to the streetscape, and the historic picturesque skyline of roofs and chimneys, as viewed mainly from the south and Anzac Park opposite. (Criterion E)

## Statutory Recommendations

The Stratford Court House (former) is included in the Wellington Planning Scheme Heritage Schedule as HO50. This place, HO50, lacked heritage documentation. As a result of the findings of this Study, it is recommended that former court house, former council chambers and post office are included as one place under the existing HO50, supported by this documentation.

It is recommended that the current boundary of HO50 is amended to include the entire 1884-1885 complex, as shown on the map.

It is recommended that the controls in the Wellington Heritage Schedule for HO50 are amended to the following.

<b>External Paint Controls</b>	Yes
<b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls</b>	No (amended from HO50 which states Yes)
<b>Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3</b>	Yes, the fence section under the porch on the south elevation
<b>Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan</b>	No
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>	Not assessed

## Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



### KEY

- Recommended addition to existing Heritage Overlay (HO50)
- Existing Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

**Court house (former), council chambers (former) and post office and residence  
64-66 Tyers St, Stratford**

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



## History

### Locality history

Stratford is located on the east bank of the Avon River. The earliest known Europeans in the area included Angus McMillan and his party, who crossed the Avon River in 1840 and named it after a Scottish River. Following McMillan was Polish explorer Paul Strzelecki and his party, who followed a similar route but headed for Western Port. Strzelecki wrote a very positive report of the Stratford region. Squatters soon settled in the area, the lands serving as pasture for sheep and cattle. In 1842, William O. Raymond established the Stratford Pastoral Run, as well as a run at Strathfieldsaye (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:75). While it is suggested that the run was named after Shakespeare's Stratford-on-Avon (Victorian Places), it is more probable that it was named after the 'Straight Ford' across the Avon River at that point (as opposed to the Long Ford across the river at Weirs Crossing, that was used for a time when the Straight Ford was impassable) (SDHS). By 1844 there were 15,000 cattle in the region, and by 1845 there were 78,399 sheep (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:75; Context 2005:11).

A small settlement developed at the place where the stock route forded the Avon River, which would become Stratford. Raymond opened the Shakespeare Hotel c1847 and other businesses opened, including a blacksmiths, before the town was surveyed in 1854. The first bridge over the Avon River was built, a general store opened, and a tannery and flourmill were established (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). During this period, Gippsland cattle were driven south through Stratford to Port Albert for transport to Melbourne and Tasmania (Victorian Places). A Presbyterian church was built in 1857 which also served as the government school. A Catholic school opened with the construction of the first Catholic Church in 1864, before an Anglican Church was built in 1868. In the 1860s the pastoral runs were opened for selection and Stratford became the centre of the farming district. The town further grew with the discovery of gold in the Great Dividing Range, particularly at Crooked River in Grant, when supplies for the goldfields were brought through the town (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). In 1864, the Avon District Road Board was formed, and proclaimed a Shire in 1865, with Stratford as the administrative centre (Context 2005:38-9).

By the 1870s, Maffra and district had prospered and councilors exerted pressure to move the seat of government to Maffra. This was achieved briefly from 1873 to 1874, but in 1875 Maffra formed its own shire. Stratford became the main town in the Avon Shire and remained the centre of local government (Context 2005:38-9, 41). In 1884-85 a post office, courthouse and shire offices complex was built. The 1880s also saw the construction of a mechanics' institute and library (1890), and the first timber churches were replaced with brick buildings. The railway line from Melbourne reached Stratford in 1888 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). By 1903, Stratford also had the Swan and Stratford Hotels and the Shakespeare Temperance Hotel, State School No. 596 and four churches (*Australian handbook* 1903). The town saw steady population growth until the beginning of World War I, maintaining a population in the 800s between 1911 and the 1960s (Victorian Places).

After World War I a soldiers' settlement was established on estates in the Avon Shire, however, many of the farms proved unviable and the settlement scheme was not a success. During World War II the district benefited from good wool prices, and a flax mill was opened west of Stratford. The district prospered in the 1950s with a reduced rabbit population and increased primary produce prices (Victorian Places). The Avon River was a narrow river with a wide flood plain and the river flooded rapidly and frequently, with severe floods in the 1930s, 1971 and 1990, which caused extensive damage. Measures to combat erosion were undertaken in the 1940s and the River Improvement Trust was formed in 1951 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). A bridge that could withstand the floods was opened in 1965 (Victorian Places).

Stratford experienced a building boom from the 1970s, following land subdivision which resulted in residential development and an increase in population (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). 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 (Context 2005:39). Stratford was no longer an administrative seat, but retained its importance as a central town for the surrounding farm district (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:76). The town has seen a steady population increase in the 2000s (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 lot on the corner of Tyers and Hobson streets was originally purchased from the Crown by D. Clarke in June 1855. The corner portion was later transferred to the Commonwealth for the purpose of a post office (Township Plan).

Avon District Road Board was formed in 1864 and proclaimed a Shire in 1865 with Stratford as the administrative centre (Context 2005). The first meeting of the Avon Shire Council was also held at the Shakespeare Hotel, on 23 October 1865 (Wilson 1991:76). Court cases in Stratford were originally held in the Shakespeare Hotel (1847) in the 1860s, and Tom Curran's Swan Hotel from 1871.

A letter to the Editor of the *Gippsland Times* (5 May 1882) in 1882 responded to the Government's grant for a telegraph and post office in Stratford. The author further noted the need for a courthouse and police quarters. In 1883 there were various articles published in the *Gippsland Times* that reported on the progress of discussions between the Avon Shire Council and State Departments, concerning the construction of public buildings in Stratford. By July 1883, an Engineer had drawn plans for a complex, comprising a post office, court house and Council chambers, and applications had been made for funding to both the Law and Post Departments (requesting 1,200 pounds from each). The land was leased back to the Crown for 999 years (Barraclough 2012:13).

In April 1884, Engineer George McKerrow received the contract for the construction of the public building, comprising the court house, post and telegraph office and shire offices, for the Shire of

Avon. An article reported in May 1884 that construction of the public buildings was underway. The plan for the building at this date was described as 'a porch standing out and a wing either side with three windows in each. The wing to the left of bank side of the Council Chamber, and the proper entrance is up a lane ten feet wide, then down a passage on the right to the door; not a very grand approach, and is possible this should be remedied before it's too late (*Gippsland Times* 16 May 1884:14; Barraclough 2012:4, 14).

The buildings were designed by architect J. H. W. Pettit of Sale. A Mr Gough, master builder, was the overseer of the works, for contractors George McKerrow and Mr Waters (bricklayer) (*Gippsland Times*, 4 Jun 1884:15; 10 Oct 1884; 4 Feb 1885).

By October 1884 the buildings were nearing completion. The *Gippsland Times* reported in October 1884 that 'the main structure is a large courthouse measuring 45 x 25 x 21 [feet], a spacious and well-ventilated apartment with the usual appurtenances of offices and rooms at the rear. The eastern wing is occupied by the postal department in which the offices and private quarters of handsome compartments are incorporated, and on the western wing stands the shire hall, with secretary's, contractor's and engineer's offices. The whole buildings cover a very large area of ground, an in total contains 21 rooms allotted as follows : post-office 10 rooms, court-house 5 rooms, shire offices 6 rooms. The external appearance of the offices are grand, and when completed will form an imposing feature to the town' (*Gippsland Times*, 10 Oct 1884).

A floorplan dating to 1885 showed that the original extent of the post office building excluded the two projecting bays to the main elevations (Figure H1). The drawings also showed the detail of interior cabinetry, desks and tables, as well as windows and doors to the porch and the sign board to the facade (no photographic evidence shows this in place) (plans provided by owner Alex Saleta, 2016). There was no verandah and the facade of the post office was originally set back an equal distance from Tyers Street as the council chambers at the north end of the complex (as evident in the current roof form of the original 1885 section of the Post Office).

The buildings were completed by February 1885, 'with the exception of a few trifling items' and were pending approval from the Public Works Department inspector (*Gippsland Times*, 4 Feb 1885). The Shire Council chambers were officially opened in April 1885 (*Gippsland Times* 15 Apr 1885). The court house was also to serve as a place for public purposes, but this appears to have been replaced by the Mechanics Institute which was built in 1889 (*Gippsland Times* 22 Apr 1885; Barraclough 2012:19). The post office was opened in June 1885 (Context 2005). Later additions have been added to the rear (east) of the post office building.

The court house served as a Court of Petty Sessions (Challinger 2001:178). In August 1885, John Bell (of the Bell Brothers of Richmond) received the contract for the court furniture. In 2015, the furniture is held in the collection of the Stratford & District Historical Society (Barraclough 2012:4; 28).

A plan and drawings of the Post Office, that date to 1887 showed a new verandah was proposed, along with a 'New Public Room' under the same roofline, along the Tyers Street facade (Figures H2 & H3). The 1887 drawings showed that a picket fence was present along the south boundary at this date and that a new woodshed and washhouse was also proposed. Another drawing, dated 1900 shows the complex at this date, incorporating the 1887 alterations (Figure H4) (Saleta 2016).

Plans dating to 1899 showed proposed additions to the office and public room of the post office, and the addition of the two projecting gabled-bays that front Tyers and Hobson streets (Figures H5 & H6). The plan showed that the Tyers Street verandah (1887) was to be reduced in length, and part of the Tyers Street facade was to be removed and rebuilt closer to the street, and the west end of the Hobson Street elevation extended outwards (to meet the 1885 section to the east; it appears that the eastern window of the south-facing bay was part of the original 1885 building and incorporated into the new bay). The elevation drawings show the proposed new bays with their timber work to the gabled-ends and brick detail to the openings in the same style as the 1885 building. A 1916 plan showed the

completed c1900 additions, and the resultant layout of the post office space and residence (Figure H7) (Saleta 2016).

A number of early photos exist for the buildings, after the c1900 addition of the gabled-bays to the post office. A photo dating to 1901 (NAA) showed the south and east (rear) elevations of the brick buildings (Figure H8). The roofs were clad with galvanised corrugated iron and note the taller roof of the gabled bays to the post office, in comparison to the lower roof of the original 1884 section of the building. The post office building appeared mostly as it does in 2015, with a gabled bay on the corner, a pair of windows flanking a central door (later altered and replaced with a window), a small hipped-roof porch in the corner, and the long gabled-roof portion (residence) along Hobson Street. The photo showed a second chimney towards the rear of the building (since removed). A picket fence ran along the southern boundary, with a taller fence at the east end. In the background, the roof of the court house was evident, with its three chimney stacks, and the smaller gabled-roof addition to the rear (all as remains in 2015). It appears that a further addition was attached to this section at this date.

A photo dating to 1906 (SDHS) showed the facade (west elevation) of the buildings (Figure H9). The post office section comprised an entrance on both elevations, with double doors and a highlight. The bay between the two sections comprised a verandah, with simple timber brackets against a single (central) supporting timber post (since altered), possibly for the benefit of the residence. To the north of this, the court house building appeared as it does in 2015. The arched windows were evident at the north wing (as evident on the rest of the building; window hood since added). A photo dating to c1914 showed that the building remained as it was in 1906, in clear detail (Figure H10). By 1917, the timber brackets had been removed from the verandah on the facade (west elevation) and the space partially enclosed with trellis (the top portion open) (Figure H11).

A photo dating to 1935 (SDHS) showed the facade of the court house and the northern wing, as they appear in 2015 (except for recent signage) (Figure H12). The court house had the clock to the gabled-end, above the grand entrance, while the northern wing had the three arched windows, with Avon Shire Council notices in two. In front of this, on the footpath, stood a flag pole (remained in the 1950s; since removed).

Figure H13 dating to 1920s-1930s illustrates the post office as a meeting place, and shows that the entrance door facing Hobson Street remained and the render was still unpainted (SDHS).

A photo dating to 1943 (Figure H14) showed that the render and window sills had been painted by this date. The post office entrance facing Tyers Street comprised a panelled timber door below a highlight (since replaced and the light covered) (Figure H7) (NAA).

From the c1950s, a timber fence enclosed a garden area in front of the northern wing (the Council Chambers) (Figure H15). The entrance of the court house comprised a pair of timber panelled doors (since replaced). A telephone box stood in front of the verandah space. Also in the 1950s, an enclosed timber bus shelter stood in front of the post office (since removed) (Figure H16) (SDHS). A plan of the post office in 1952 showed that the building retained the same plan since 1916 (Figure H17) (Saleta 2016).

In 1965, Avon Shire Council moved out of the building, into the new building constructed next door (to the north; serves as the Stratford Library in 2015) (Barraclough 2012:4). In 1975 the building ceased to serve as the Stratford Magistrates Court (Challinger 2001:178; Barraclough 2012:26). The court house building later served as the Stratford Library and was later occupied by the historical society (1978-1980). In the late 1990s, the court house and Council Chambers building (excluding the post office) was sold to private owners, who opened a theatre (c1997). In 2015 it is occupied by an art gallery, cafe and gift shop (from 2009) (Barraclough 2012:4).

A photo dating to 1984 (SLV) showed mature pines in front of the northern wing (the former Council Chambers), and the flagpole had been removed (Figure H18). By this date, the verandah space in between the two buildings had been enclosed (as appears in 2015). The entrance doors to the court

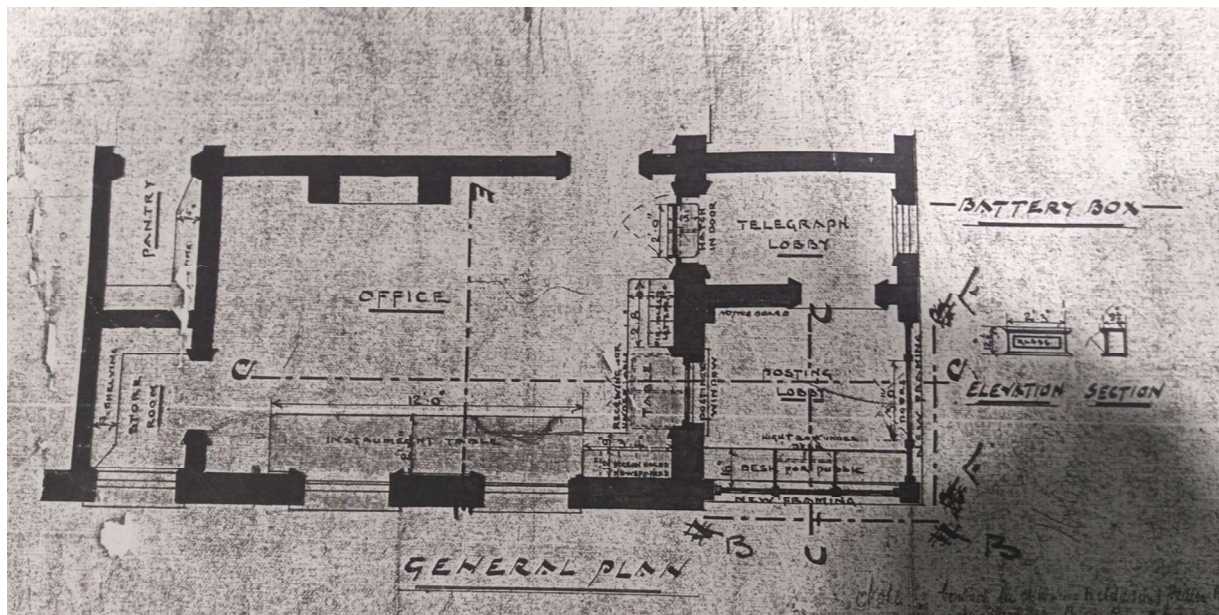


house at this date were those that remain in 2015. By 1998, the post office entrance facing Hobson Street (at the centre of the gabled-bay) had been altered to a window (Figure H19). It appears that the timber picket fence along the south boundary remained in 1998 (in 2015, it remains at the porch entrance only) (Victorian Places).

### John H. W. Pettit

John Henry W. Pettit was a prominent architect based in Sale during the late nineteenth century (*Gippsland Times*, 23 April 1870:2). Pettit arrived in Gippsland in 1854, after a stay in the goldfields and in Melbourne and Dandenong. Moving to Sale, he worked as an architect and surveyor, appointed as the superintendent of works for government roads and bridges (AAI, record no. 3683; Kerr 1992:622). One of Pettit's earliest commissions was the Carpenter Gothic Christ Church at Tarraville (1856), designed with surveyor George Hastings.

He designed a small number of houses and hotels in the 1880s and 90s in Sale (AAI) and planned the design of the Sale cemetery. He was also involved with the Swing Bridge at Longford (AAI, record no. 42575). Pettit is known to have designed (sometimes in collaboration with other local architects) the former Borough of Sale Municipal Offices at Sale (1863-6) in the Classical style, St Mary's Catholic Church in Maffra (1870), St Brigid's Catholic Church in Cowwarr (1870), the Catholics Bishop's Residence and Presbytery in Sale (1879) and the civic complex at Stratford comprising the court house, council chambers and post office (1884-5). Pettit died in Sale in 1896 (AAI, record no. 3685).



**Figure H1.** Floorplan dating to 1885 that showed that the original extent of the post office building, which excluded the verandah and the two projecting bays to the main elevations (built 1900) (Saleta 2016).

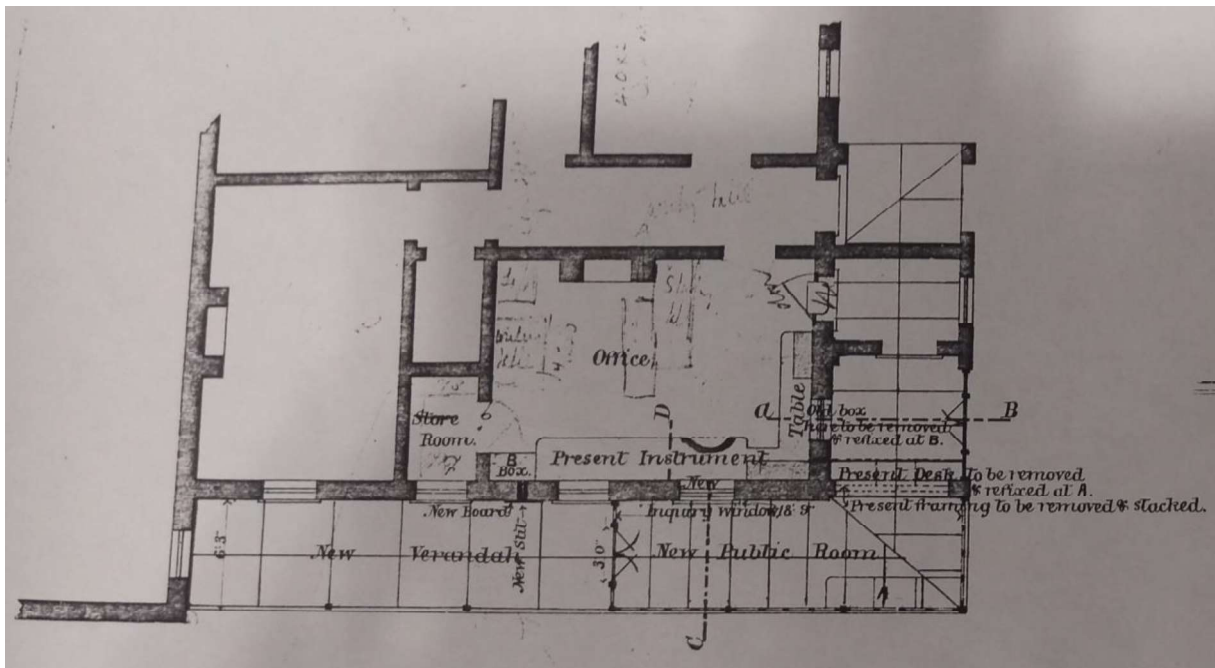


Figure H2. Plan dating to 1887 that showed a new verandah was proposed, along with a 'New Public Room' under the same roofline, along the Tyers Street facade (Saleta 2016).

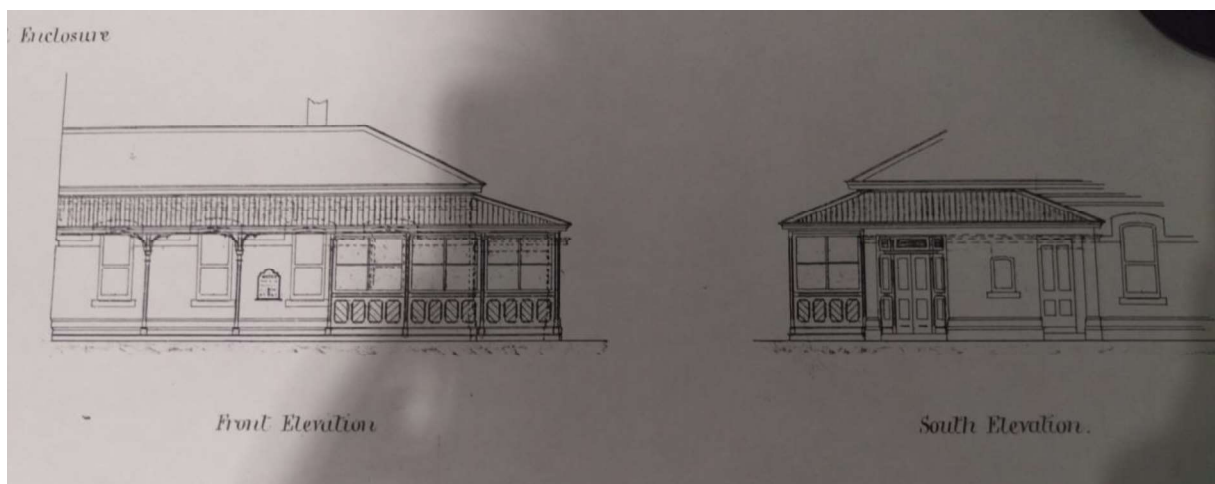


Figure H3. 1887 drawings of the facade (left) and south elevation fronting Hobson Street (right), showing the proposed new verandah construction and new 'public room' to the corner, to be built under the same roofline (Saleta 2016).

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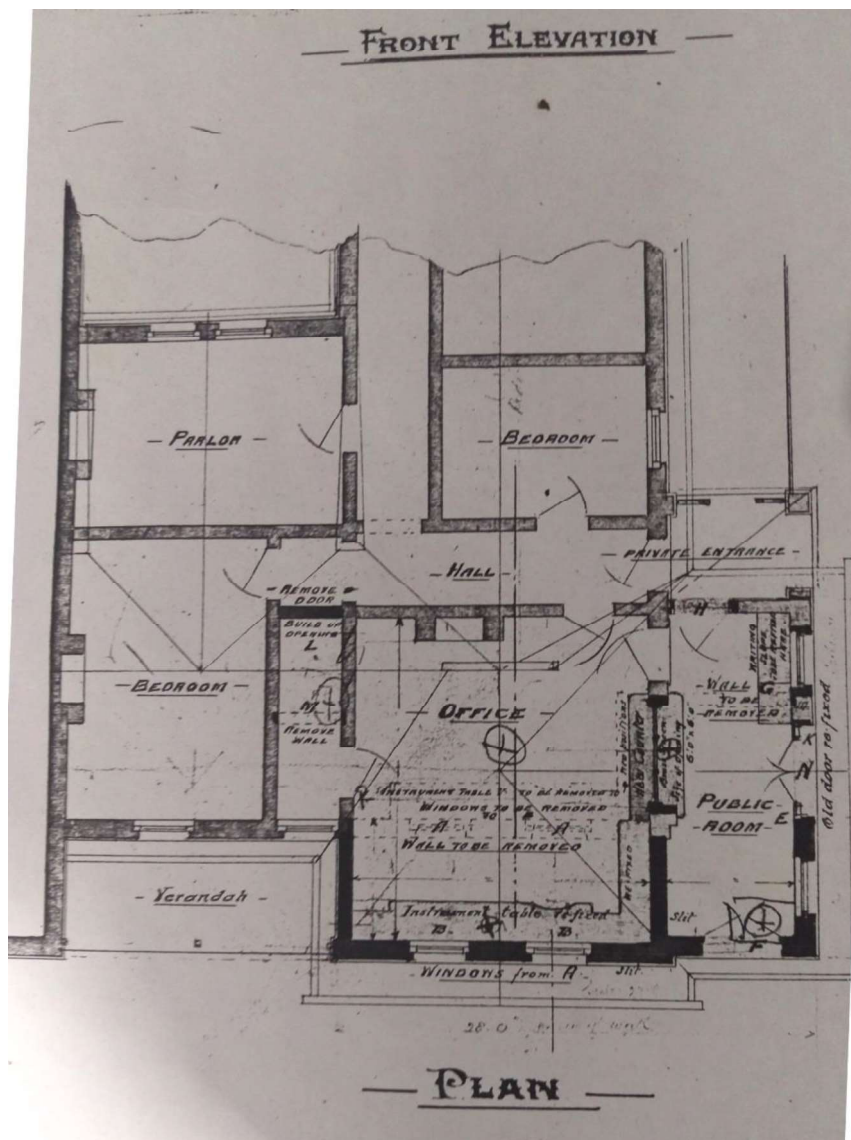


Figure H5. Plan dating to 1899, showing the proposed extension to the office space and public room, to form the two gabled-bays (Saleta 2016).



Figure H6. 1899 drawings of the proposed new gabled-bays to Tyers and Hobson streets, with their taller roof forms (Saleta 2016).

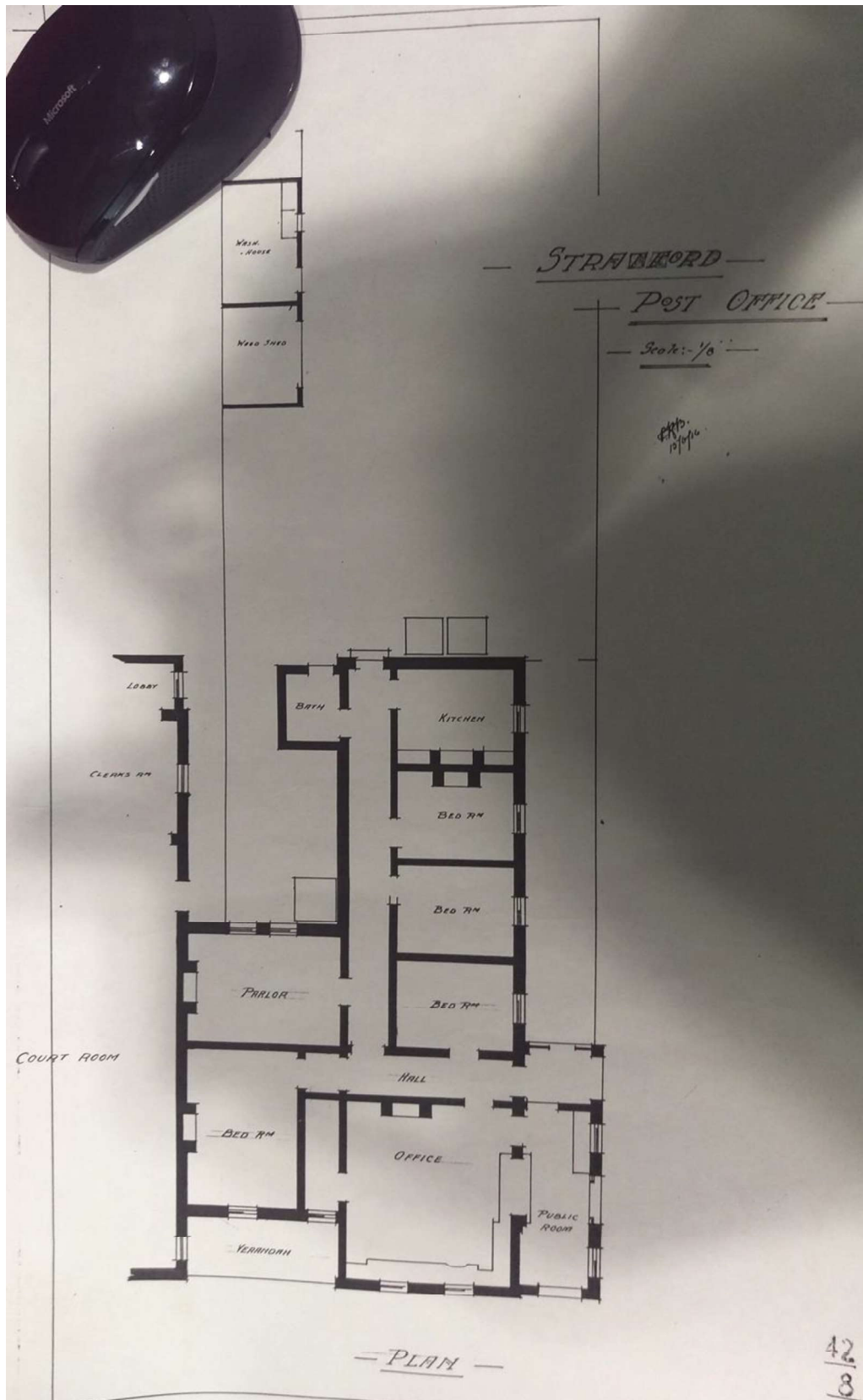


Figure H7. Plans dating to 1916 that showed the plan of the post office after the c1900 additions to the office and public room (Saleta 2016).





Figure H8. The south elevation of the post office section in 1901, and the rear (east) elevations of the complex) (NAA).



Figure H9. Photo dating to 1906, showing the facade of the post office, court house and Council chambers and picturesque skyline. Note all the roofs are unpainted galvanised corrugated iron, and the verandah and projecting gabled bays of the post office (SDHS).



Figure H10. Photo of the complex dating to c1914 (between World War I and the early 1920s) (SDHS).



**Figure H11.** Photo dating to 1917. The timber brackets had been removed from the verandah between the post office and court house, and the space partially enclosed by a trellis (SLV).



**Figure H12.** The facade of the court house and the northern wing in 1935. A flag pole stood on the foot path (SDHS).



Figure H13. Photo dating to 1920s-1930s. The post office as a meeting place, and entrance door facing Hobson Street remained and the render was still unpainted (SDHS).



Figure H14. Photo dating to 1943 showing render and window sills have been painted. (NAA).





**Figure H15. The complex c1950s, with a telephone box to the right in front of the post office, flag pole and fenced garden in front of the Council chambers (SDHS).**



**Figure H16. The complex in c1950s, with the bus shelter in front of the post office (SDHS).**

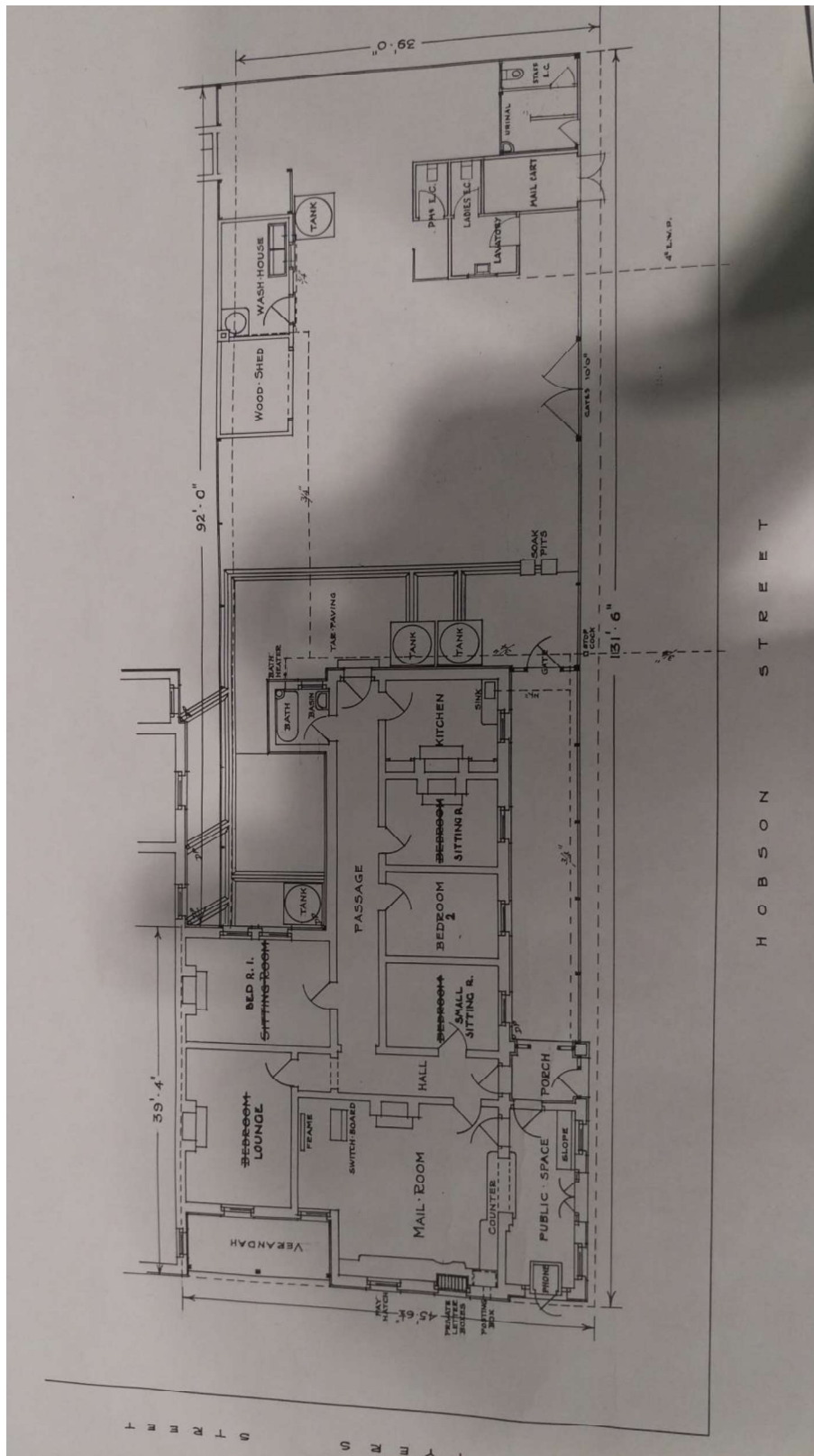
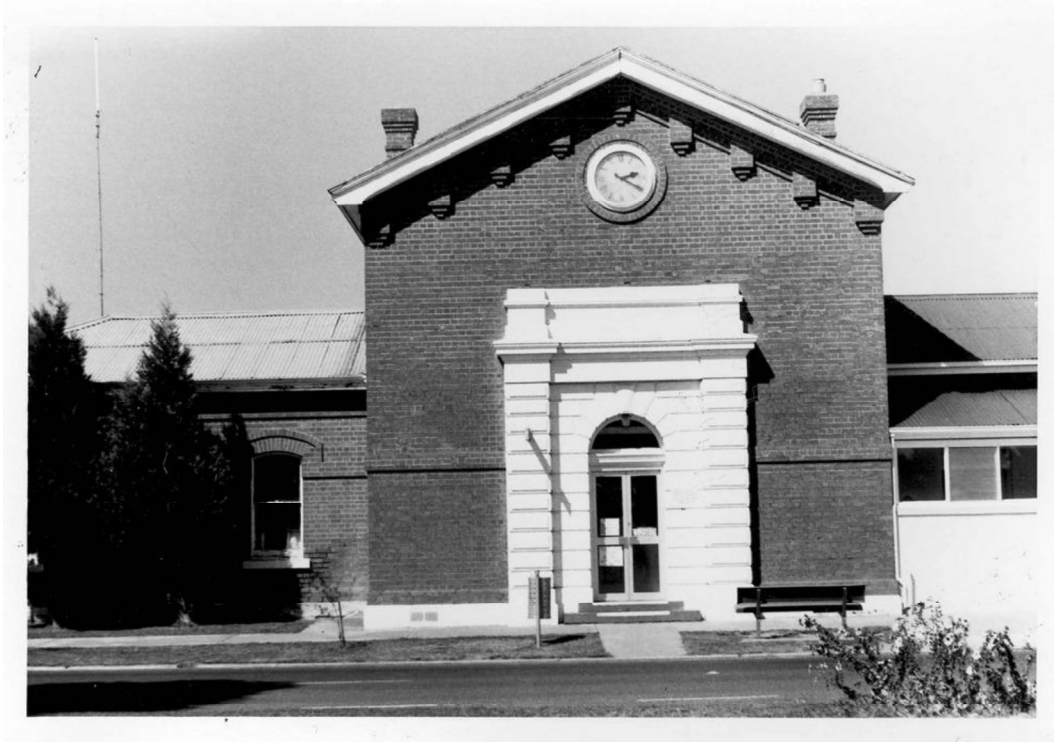


Figure H17. Plan dating to 1952 showing the extent of the post office building and use at this date (Saleta 2016).





**Figure H18. The facade in 1984. The verandah between the court house and post office had been enclosed, with windows to the top portion (SLV).**



**Figure H19. View from a distance in 1998. The southern entrance to the post office had been altered to a window by this date (Victorian Places).**

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Stratford Township Plan

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## 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 civic complex on the corner of Tyers and Hobson streets was built in 1884-1885 comprising (north to south) council chambers, a court house and post office with an attached residence. The complex was built in a Victorian Free Classical style, designed by architect J. H. W. Pettit. The post office underwent two stages of additions. A verandah was added in 1887 (remains in part) along the Tyers St facade) and the two gabled-bays were added c1900, in the Queen Anne style.

**Figure D1.** The complex comprises both hip and gabled roofs of varying pitches, all clad with (non-original) galvanised corrugated iron. The buildings are constructed of handmade red-brick, with tuck pointing to the Tyers and Hobson street elevations, including the chimneys. Stylistically, the sections either side of the courthouse are visually linked together by corbelled courses of brickwork that run horizontally below the eaves and at the tops of the windows, extending over the voussoirs of each window. The Tyers Street facade has a rendered (overpainted) plinth, while the side elevations have a brick plinth. The windows are single double-hung sash timber windows with square or segmental-arched heads and radiating red-brick voussoirs, and rendered (overpainted) sills.

**Figure D2.** The taller, single storey **court house** is located at the centre of the complex. It has a gabled roof with bold machicolation (corbelled-brick brackets originally used to pour boiling water, arrows etc onto enemies below) to the eaves of the gabled end and a large clock. Two tall corbelled-red brick chimneys stand on the northern roof plane, with another two on the southern plane, and a squat version at the east end of the building. An imposing Classical aedicule in light coloured render (overpainted), with prismatic rustication surrounding the single round arched doorway dominates the symmetrical façade, as the entrance to the courthouse (the entrance doors, which are clearly visible in Fig H5, have been replaced). There are large segmental-arched windows to the side elevations at ground level, with smaller square-headed windows to the side elevations at the higher level. The 1884-1885 court house is in very good condition and has a very high degree of integrity.

The single-storey **council chambers** are located at the north end, with an entrance off the north elevation. The section fronting Tyers Street has a hipped roof and three one-over-one double-hung timber sash windows to the facade (the window to the right is covered by a sign, and a modern hood has been attached to the window on the left). A number of modern signs have been attached to this section of the complex. The 1884-1885 council chambers have a high degree of integrity and are in good to fair condition.

**Figure D3.** The north elevation comprises an entrance to the front section of the council chambers. The rear section of the council chambers has a gabled roof with eaves flush with the wall.

**Figure D4.** The rear section of the north elevation has a number of openings, including six-over-six timber windows and a timber paneled door with a highlight. There is a corbelled-red brick chimney to this section.

**Figure D5.** The single-storey **post office** is located on the corner to the south, with a complex composition of transverse gable roofs. Two prominent gabled bays front Tyers and Hobson streets; these were built c1900 and have a taller roof than the original 1885 building. Their jettied gabled ends have rough-cast render and timber strapping, creating a half-timbering effect. The Tyers Street bay has two timber one-over-one double-hung sash windows. To the right of this is an entrance to the public post office rooms (with modern doors). The post office has a high - medium degree of integrity and is in good condition.

The section joining the post office and court house now holds the post boxes. It is covered by the 1887 skillioned-roof verandah and is enclosed by a rendered wall with louvered windows to the top portion (this wall was built by 1984). This verandah space was originally open, supported by a single timber post with timber brackets (see Figures H3-H7 & H9).

**Figure D6.** The south elevation of the post offices comprises the second gabled bay and the long elevation of the residence to the rear. The roof of the residence has one tall corbelled-brick chimney. The second gabled bay of the post office that fronts Hobson Street has two one-over-one double-hung sash windows. At the centre is a window, in an opening that originally held a door to the public room of the post office (altered between 1943 and 1998, see Figure H10). To the right (east) of this is a porch, supported by an original brick pier, that covers two entrance doors; to the post office and residence. The door to the left is a paneled timber door, while the entrance to the residence has a highlight (the door is not visible behind a modern security door). The early (possibly original) timber picket fence remains beneath the porch (since replaced along the rest of the boundary with a modern metal fence). The residential section (east end) comprises four single one-over-one double hung sash windows to the south elevation.

**Figure D7.** The view from the east shows the rear sections of each building in the complex. It appears that additions (which may date to a later period) have been constructed to the rear of each building, most of which have gabled roofs. To the rear of the post office is an addition with corrugated fibro-cement roof cladding. To the rear of the court house is a weatherboard addition with a gabled roof. An aerial also indicates that additions have been built at the rear of the council chambers (the date of these additions has not been confirmed).



**Figure D1.** The main elevations of the (left to right) council chambers, two-storey court house and post office with the attached residence to the rear. Stylistically, the buildings are tied together by corbelled courses of brickwork that run horizontally below the eaves and at the tops of the windows, extending over the voussoirs of each window.



**Figure D2.** The council chambers (left) and the two-storey court house with the dominant Classical portico, clock and bold corbelled brackets to the eaves.





Figure D3. The north elevation of the council chambers.



Figure D4. The north elevation of the council chambers, towards the rear, with its six-over-six timber windows.





**Figure D5.** The main elevations of the post office, and the verandah to the left (with later in-fill). The two jettied gabled-ends have roughcast render and timber strapping, creating a half-timbering effect. Note the historic picturesque skyline of roofs and chimneys.



**Figure D6.** The south elevation of the post office and residence to the rear. The entrance at the centre of the gabled-bay has been altered to become a window. A section of the early (possibly original) fence remains beneath the porch. Note the historic picturesque skyline of roofs and chimneys.



**Figure D7. The rear (east) elevations and the complex of historic roofs, which are a significant feature when viewed from Hobson Street.**

### *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.

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. 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. 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 Tyers Street and Hobson Street elevations.
- 1.2. New structures should be restricted to the rear of the property and concealed behind the heritage fabric when viewed from Tyers Street.
- 1.3. New extensions/structures which can be seen from Hobson Street should have similar gable roofs of similar pitch to the historic places and clad in galvanized corrugated iron (not Zinalume or Colorbond), so that the structures are not contrasting with the complex of historic roofs, which are a significant feature when viewed from Hobson Street.

### 2. Accessibility

- 2.1. If ramp is required, use a removable ramp similar to the one installed in at the former church in Hobson St, which is ideal as it does not damage the historic steps, is removable and allows good air flow underneath. 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 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 therefore they are a suitable design for an accessible addition.

### 3. Reconstruction and Restoration.

- 3.1. The window sills, rendered plinth, and aedicule entry have been painted, however, these architectural features were not designed to be painted, see Figures H8-12. They were a light coloured unpainted render. It is strongly recommended that the paint be removed 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 elegance of 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 (do not paint the base a different colour) and closely resemble the colour of new render.
- 3.2. If an opportunity arises, consider restoring and reconstructing:
  - 3.2.1. The external timber doors as shown in the 1885, 1887 and c1900 drawings.

- 3.2.2. The original 1887 verandah on the Tyers Street elevation of the post office; that is, remove the infill wall and reconstruct the timber column and brackets of the area shown in the c1900 drawings between the Queen Anne gable end and the 1885 building.
- 3.2.3. If the post office ceases to operate as a post office, remove the post boxes and restore the walls.
- 3.2.4. New spouting should be ogee profile and downpipes should be round profile.
- 3.2.5. Replace the metal palisade fence with a timber picket fence to match the one shown in Figures H8 and H10, and the timber gate on the south side of the post office.
- 3.2.6. Remove the recent window hood on the Tyers Street window of the council chambers and use a thermally efficient internal roller blind that is semitransparent to allow light in and to see out, or similar internal method of controlling the heat and light.
- 3.2.7. To avoid more damage to the brick walls signs should be attached in such a way that they do not damage the brickwork. Preferably fix them into the mortar rather than the bricks.

#### 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 roofs were originally unpainted galvanized corrugated iron (not Zincalume or Colorbond) and this cladding should be used for replacement cladding, when required.
- 4.3. The timber windows and fascia boards were originally in a dark colour, which may be determined with paint scrapes. The colour was most likely similar to Solver Deep Indian Red, or Leaf Brown.
- 4.4. The gable ends of the post office had light coloured timber bargeboards and strapwork, and the roughcast render behind them, was a darker colour.
- 4.5. Damp:
  - 4.5.1. There are many signs of damp in the walls, particularly the those of the former council chambers (now a café) and they include: lime mortar falling out of the joints, patches with grey cement mortar, 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.
  - 4.5.2. The north wall of the council chambers has the most evidence of severe damp. This would be exacerbated by watering plants near the wall, and if a concrete floor has been inserted inside the building or a concrete path on the outside. Refer to the manual, by David Young, listed below for a full explanation of the problem and how to fix it. Water falling or seeping from damaged spouting and down pipes is also causing severe and expensive damage to the brick walls.
  - 4.5.3. 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 very cost effective. Do not rely on fans being inserted under the floor as these

are difficult to monitor, they will breakdown as they get clogged with dust, etc, and there are ongoing costs for servicing and electricity.

- 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. This building recently had a chemical dampproof course injected into the walls as the drill holes are visible along the Tyers Street walls of the courthouse and council chambers, just above the rendered plinth.
- 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 the 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.
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 or enclose them behind a screen the same colour as the building fabric, that provides adequate ventilation around the device. Therefore if a conduit goes up a red brick wall, as is the case on the south façade of the post office, it should be painted red, and when it passes over say, a cream coloured detail, it should be cream.



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



#### KEY

- Recommended addition to existing Heritage Overlay (HO50)
- Existing Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

**Court house (former), council chambers (former) and post office and residence  
64-66 Tyers St, Stratford**

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

#### Sources

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