
Post Office & Court House (Former)

Location

102-104 High Street, BERWICK, Casey City

Municipality

CASEY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO29

Heritage Listing

Casey City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 17, 2022

What is significant?

The former Berwick Post Office & Court House, designed by JT Kelleher of the Public Works Department and constructed between 1884-85, at 102-104 High Street, Berwick.

How is it significant?

The former Berwick Post Office & Court House is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Casey.

Why is it significant?

Historically, it has regional significance as a combined Public Office, one of a small number of such buildings in Victoria. The designing architect, John Thomas Kelleher, was responsible for the Fitzroy and Benalla Post Offices, as well as a combined Post Office and Court House at Traralgon. (AHC criteria A4 and D2)

Aesthetically, it is architecturally significant as a superior example of combined post office and court house building. The symmetrical facade skilfully unites the two functions whilst providing for secondary functions (the Postmaster's residence) in the rear timber section. The use of polychrome brickwork is especially highlighted in the Lombardic arched loggias and fenestration. The loggias are enhanced by cast iron columns with decorative capitals on tooled bluestone bases. The architectural quality and high level of intactness of the whole building is important to its significance.

The building is a landmark and forms part of an important nineteenth century institutional precinct with the adjacent former Rechabite Hall and former Christians Meeting House, and is an important element in the Berwick High Street precinct. (AHC criteria E1 and F1)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Casey - Casey Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2004; Casey - Heritage of the City of Berwick, Context Pty Ltd, 1993;
Construction dates	1884,
Architect/Designer	Kelleher, John Thomas,
Hermes Number	62892
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former Berwick Post Office and Court House is a single storey brick building with slate roof, located on an elevated block. The facade is oriented to overlook High Street rather than face the street. It is one of the few nineteenth century buildings in Berwick's main street and signifies the beginning of the 'institutional precinct' which extends eastwards and includes the adjacent Masonic Hall and Christians Meeting House.

This building is one of three almost identical Public Offices, the others being at Murtoa (1882), now demolished, and at Donald (1884), now altered. All three were designed with an arcaded loggia with Lombardic arched windows and polychrome brickwork. (1)

The style of the building is predominantly neo-Gothic, with Venetian influence in the pointed windows, loggia and polychrome brickwork. Red-brown brick with white tuck pointing is decorated with cream brick courses at impost level and red and cream bricks in the Lombardic arch heads at the windows.

A central gabled section on the west elevation is flanked by arched loggia entrances. The southern loggia elevation denotes the courthouse. Weatherboard additions to the rear once accommodated the magistrates offices. The gabled section and northern loggia accommodated the post office with former postmaster residence behind, now used as private offices.

Generally, the building is in good condition with minor changes to the exterior, maintaining distinction between the Post Office and Court House functions of the building and its ancillary functions as residence and offices. The interior of the Post Office has been extensively altered while a report (dated 1985) describes the building and requires preservation measures; careful alterations have converted the building for use as solicitors offices. (2) The Court House interior is very intact retaining its court furniture and woodwork.

Source

1. Old Post Office Berwick - History, Andrew Gray & Associates, Solicitors.
2. Nigel Lewis & Associates. (1985) 'Former Post Office, Berwick: Charge of Annuity Report.' Prepared for Department of Housing & Construction.

Intactness

High

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>