



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.6.1 Establishing postal services

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 206 Mail Services

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Claremont Post Office is a fine example of a well designed and executed public building on a domestic scale in the Federation Arts and Crafts style. (Criterion 1.1)

Claremont Post Office with its distinctive stone façade and curved corner entrance provides a strong visual feature in its location on the Bay View Terrace and Gugerri Street corner. It makes a significant contribution to the streetscape and character of both streets, and is a landmark in the Town of Claremont. (Criterion 1.3)

Claremont Post Office, together with Poole's *Claremont Railway Station and associated buildings* (1886) situated opposite and the former Claremont Hotel (1902), form an important precinct of buildings which are a focal point at the northern end of Bay View Terrace and represent the centre of transport and communications in the town since the 1880s/1890s. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

Claremont Post Office is one of a number of government buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a result of the growing demand for public facilities that resulted from the Gold Boom in the 1890s. (Criterion 2.1)

Claremont Post Office has historic significance for its association with the evolution of postal services in the district and the State, as Claremont was the location of the mail exchange between Perth and Fremantle from the time of the establishment of the Swan River Colony. The relocation of post office services to the vicinity of the railway station in the 1880s and the construction

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard, Irving Robert and Reynolds, Peter, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

of *Claremont Post Office* on its present site in 1896 represents the link between postal and rail services which continued well into the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

Claremont Post Office has been the centre of postal communication for the Town of Claremont from 1896 to the present (2001). (Criterion 2.2)

Claremont Post Office was designed by the Public Works Department under the direction of George Temple Poole, Chief Architect from 1885 to 1897, with significant later alterations prepared under the direction of Chief Architect Hillson Beasley. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Claremont Post Office is highly valued by the community for its historic, aesthetic and landmark qualities, as evidenced by a public campaign to save the building from demolition in 1982. (Criterion 4.1)

Claremont Post Office demonstrates a sense of place to the local community, having operated as a post office since 1896. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Claremont Post Office is a rare example of post office building, designed by Poole, dating from the late nineteenth century and still in use for its original purpose. (Criterion 5.2)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Claremont Post Office is representative of Poole's use of the domestic scaled Federation Arts and Crafts style of architecture for public buildings, which have included a number of post offices. (Criterion 6.1)

Claremont Post Office is representative of a way of life when the Postmaster and family lived in a residence attached to the post office. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Generally *Claremont Post Office* is in good condition. Continuous use of Post Office functions and ongoing upgrading of facilities has ensured that the place has remained in a good condition. The 1984 addition to the south is also in a good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

As *Claremont Post Office* remains in use as a post office, the original intent remains intact. However within the building many changes and updates of facilities have occurred. The overall building has a high degree of integrity, whilst some individual spaces have not. The current use is compatible and there is a long-term viability to sustain the values of the place.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Overall, the *Claremont Post Office* retains a moderate degree of authenticity. The external fabric has a moderate to high degree of authenticity, although the residence to the east has been altered by the removal of the northern verandah. Internally the authenticity is low with internal walls and fireplaces removed and doors altered. All fittings and furnishings are recent.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Carmel Given, Heritage Researcher. The physical evidence has been compiled by Annabel Wheel, Consultant Architect. The document has been edited by Rosemary Rosario for Heritage and Conservation Professionals.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Claremont Post Office, a single storey limestone and tiled, single storey, Federation Arts and Crafts style post office and former residence, was built in 1896 to a design prepared by the Public Works Department under the direction of Chief Architect, George Temple Poole. Additions were carried out in 1906, and the façade was altered in 1914, both under the direction of PWD Chief Architect, Hillson Beasley. A major addition was built in 1984, and a major internal refurbishment occurred in 1998.

The arrival of convicts, and with them the Pensioner Guards, in the Swan River Colony in 1850 marked the beginning of European occupation of the Claremont area. Originally known as 'Butler's Swamp' after early landholder John Butler, the district became established after the Pensioner Guards settled along the shore of Fresh Water Bay. Humble Street (Bay View Terrace) and Pensioner Row (Victoria Avenue) were two of the earliest streets surveyed in the area.¹

In 1853, a convict depot was established near the present-day Claremont Police Station for the purpose of building the Perth-Fremantle Road (Stirling Highway). Convict road gangs were based at the depot in the 1850s and 1860s, resulting in the establishment of basic commercial services.²

In the 1870s, land speculation around Fresh Water Bay increased, particularly with a decision to investigate routes for a proposed railway between Fremantle and Guildford in 1874. In September 1875, James Morrison, the son of Melbourne investor John Morrison, influenced by this speculation, increased the family holdings by another 72 acres (29 hectares).³ Preempting the construction of the northern railway route for which he had given the Government a piece of land, Morrison released his estate named 'Claremont' for public sale on 25 August 1880.⁴ The area subsequently became known by that name.

With the opening of the Fremantle-Perth railway line in 1881⁵ and the Claremont Railway Station in 1886, the commercial centre of Claremont developed between the station and Stirling Highway along Bay View Terrace.⁶

1 Bolton, G. & Gregory, J., *Claremont: A History*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1999, pp. 16-19.

2 *ibid.*, p. 24.

3 *ibid.*, p. 38.

4 *Inquirer*, 25 August 1880, cited in Bolton & Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

5 *West Australian*, 4 March 1881.

6 Bolton & Gregory, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-43.

From the earliest days of the Swan River Colony, the town of Claremont has featured in the history of the postal service. The site of the first mail exchange between Perth and Fremantle was a 30 metre high Tuart tree, located on the south side of Stirling Highway opposite Vaucluse Avenue. It marked a point approximately half way between the two settlements. The place was known to the Nyungar people as Katabberup, and Aboriginal people were the first mail runners in the colony.⁷

From 1838, riders on horseback traveled the Perth-Fremantle Road, meeting at the Halfway Tree to exchange the mail. In 1868, a post box was located there, and mail was transferred by a horse-drawn mail van.⁸

The landmark 'Halfway Tree' died in the 1920s, and was eventually removed in 1935. In 1936, a pillarbox (still extant) was put there to commemorate the earliest history of the mail service in Western Australia.⁹

When the Fremantle to Guildford line (Eastern Railway) began operating in 1881, mail was then carried by train. A siding, located approximately 400 yards (365 metres) from the present station, was constructed at Butler's Swamp. From 1883, Anne McMullen operated a mail service from McMullen's store in Gugerri Street, located between the present post office and the railway siding.¹⁰

The construction of the new railway station in 1886 altered the focus of services in Claremont. Bay View Terrace (named Humble Street until 1894) became the main street with many essential services being located between the station and the Perth-Fremantle Road. A mailbox was installed at the new station, with six posts daily to Perth. For convenience and business, the post office was relocated from Gugerri Street closer to the station, and located within the newly built store and inn on the north west corner of Bay View Terrace and Gugerri Street. This inn was the forerunner of the Claremont Hotel, built in 1902, currently (2001) known as the Red Rock Hotel. In 1888, the store was taken over by Edward Massey, who was the postmaster from 1893.¹¹

Claremont grew in population and importance in the 1890s. The location and amenities were considered to be attractive, and the area had an impressive social image.¹² The demand for improved communication and other services resulted in the decision to build a new post office, also incorporating a Telegraph Office and Postmaster's residence.

The design for the new post office was prepared by the Public Works Department [PWD] under the direction of Poole in 1895. Located on the north east corner of Bay View Terrace and Gugerri Street, its design complimented the Claremont Railway Station buildings opposite also designed by the PWD under Poole's direction. Tenders were called early in 1896, and the contract won by A. Davenport for £1,190/4/0.¹³

7 *ibid.*, p. 26.

8 *ibid.*, pp. 26–28.

9 Speech by Australia Post State Manager, Mel Beck, 18.9.1984 at the site, to commemorate 175 years of postal service in Australia, transcript in K1209/1 NAA.

10 Bolton & Gregory, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–42.

11 *ibid.*, pp. 40–42.

12 Refer to Bolton & Gregory, *op. cit.*

13 *Government Gazette*, 1897, p. 200 cited in Oldham, Ray and John, *George Temple-Poole: Architect of the Golden Years 1885-1897*, Western Heritage Part 2, UWA Press, 1980, p. 187.

The building comprised a 'mail room, public office and operators' room, and two-roomed quarters for the postmaster.¹⁴ The grounds were enclosed by a low picket fence, adding to its domestic appearance.¹⁵ Outbuildings included a lavatory block and laundry, both no longer extant.¹⁶ The post office was completed in April, and officially opened on 4 August 1896. The first full-time post mistress was Susan Commerford.¹⁷

The post office was one of a group of public buildings in Claremont designed by the PWD under by Poole. Others include the nearby *Claremont Railway Station and associated buildings* opposite (1886),¹⁸ the former Police Station on Stirling Highway (now adapted to a private residence), and the original primary school building, part of the *Claremont Primary School Precinct* site.¹⁹

Subsequent to Federation on 1 January 1901, the functions of the Western Australian Post and Telegraph Department were assumed by the federal government, and the *Claremont Post Office* became the property of the Commonwealth.²⁰

In 1906, the entrance, public area and residence were extended. The successful tenderer was Messrs Ward Bros, for £423/0/0.²¹ It is thought that the residence, which was originally two rooms, was probably enlarged at this time to comprise six rooms as shown in a later floor plan, dated c1928 (discussed below).²²

On 1 July 1911, the *Claremont Post Office* was granted official Australia Post status as a major suburban post office, indicating the general growth of the suburb and increased use of the post office.²³

In 1914, the building was upgraded to a design by the PWD under then Chief Architect, Hillson Beasley. It was not uncommon for the PWD to undertake works for the Commonwealth Government. The façade was altered, to feature a rendered parapet over the main arched window facing Bay View Terrace, and a Romanesque-style, curved portico at the north east corner entrance. Some internal walls were demolished to accommodate a larger mailroom and public area. At this time, the shingles on the roof were replaced with Marseilles tiles.²⁴

As shown on a circa 1928 sketch, the public entrance was on the north elevation and divided from the main office by a counter. The residence consisted of six rooms: a sitting room, bedroom and dining room on the north side of the passage, and a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and store on

14 Public Works Dept [PWD] Annual Report 1895-96 in *Votes & Proceedings of WA Parliament* [V & P] 1896, Paper No. 25, p. 51.

15 Photo c1896, *Subiaco Post* 15.4.2000, p. 20.

16 Outbuildings are shown on plan, 'Claremont Post Office [CPO] Repairs & Additions,' Dept Works & Housing, Dwg WA 10639, 23.3.1952 in K1201/1 NAA.

17 PWD Annual Report 1895-96 in *V & P* 1896, Paper No. 25, p. 51; Bolton & Gregory, op. cit., p. 70.

18 For more information refer *Claremont Railway Station Conservation Plan (Draft)*, prepared for Westrail, by Heritage and Conservation Professionals, Oct. 2000; and Heritage Council of WA [HCWA] assessment, Database no. 486.

19 The original classroom building has been so altered by additions that it is barely recognisable. See *Claremont Primary School Precinct* HCWA assessment, Database no. 7596.

20 Agency Registration Sheet, State Records Office.

21 *Guardian*, cited in previous research by Helene Charlesworth, provided by Town of Claremont [TOC].

22 No details of the extension were located, however six rooms are shown in Sketch c1928 in 'CPO Staffing' K1184/1 209/1 NAA.

23 Australian Heritage Commission [AHC] Register of the National Estate [RNE] Database No. 10262.

24 AHC RNE Database No. 10262; Re façade: compare photo c1896 in *Subiaco Post* 15.4.2000, p. 20 with photo c1930s in 'All About Town' June 4-7, 1987, p. 13.

the south side of the passage. There was a verandah to the residence on the north elevation, and on the south side of the office.²⁵

The staff levels at *Claremont Post Office* in the 1920s and 1930s averaged about ten employees, including two or three messenger boys for telegram deliveries. The telegraph business was steady, and required employees on night duty and weekend shifts. Generally, business continued in this manner until the 1950s, and no changes were required to the building.²⁶

Between 1942 and 1949, the lettering 'Claremont Post Office' was installed above the curved portico on the northwest corner of the building and the words 'Post Office' on the parapet.²⁷

In 1952, major repairs and alterations were carried out internally. The existing washroom and store was gutted and rebuilt, including a new concrete floor and a new louvred window opening on the south elevation. An internal wall between the two rooms off the north verandah was removed, making one large room, with a new doorway leading into the office. The fireplace in the Telegraphs room was removed and a new opening led into a small storeroom, formed by enclosing the former hall with a stud wall. New louvres were installed above the dado on the north enclosed elevation. It is likely that the louvres replaced lattice that is seen in a photo dated a few years earlier.²⁸

External changes to the site in 1952 included the construction of a weatherboard and corrugated asbestos cement roofed cycle shed on the south side (not extant).²⁹ A nearby storeroom, and an old laundry further east were demolished, although the outside toilet block was retained. A new gravel and bitumen path was built on the south side of the building, and a similar driveway off Guger Street to the east, leading to the rear of the building. The Bay View Terrace porch area was paved and new glass entrance doors installed.³⁰

By 1952 the building was no longer used for a residence.³¹ Also at some time between 1928 and 1952 the public entrance had been changed from the northwest corner to the southwest corner, and the south verandah had been enclosed for use as the Postmaster's Office, which included a strong room.³²

In 1961-62, during regular repairs and maintenance, the external limestone walls and cement rendered surfaces were painted a 'Sand' colour, and the lettering of 'Post Office' was painted out.³³

Internal changes in 1961-62 included replacement of double doors from the mail sorting room onto the northern verandah with a window, and the bricking up of the easternmost door into the passage. A large window was also formed in the eastern elevation.³⁴

25 Sketch c1928, op. cit.

26 General correspondence 1924-1950 in 'CPO- Staffing' K1184/1 209/1 NAA.

27 Compare photos dated 14.10.1942 and 16.3.1949 in K1209/1 NAA.

28 'CPO Repairs & Additions,' op. cit.; Photographs in K1209/1 NAA dated 14.10.1942 and 16.3.1949 show lattice enclosing north verandah.

29 This was likely to be the workshed and cycle store demolished in 1984.

30 'CPO Repairs & Additions,' op. cit.

31 *ibid.*; No archival records were found as to when the building ceased to be used as a residence.

32 'CPO Repairs & Additions,' op. cit; Sketch c1928, op. cit. No floor plans or records exist between 1928 and 1952 to show when these changes occurred.

33 Correspondence 24.10.1961 including painting colour schedule in 'CPO-Repairs & Maintenance' PP280/1/0 P1961/62/134 NAA.

34 Letter to Dept Works 11.4.1961 in 'CPO-Repairs & Maintenance' op. cit.

In 1964, most domestic plantings were removed when the yard was paved by WA Gravel & Paving.³⁵

In the 1960s, the volume of mail at Claremont increased, due to the construction of many residential flats and commercial offices in the area, and also a new shopping centre in 1968.³⁶ This resulted in a steady increase in staff numbers, and a need for more private mailboxes during the 1960s. Additional letterboxes were installed in 1966, 1969 and 1970, with no structural alterations to the building. The boxes installed in 1970 came from the Bunbury Post Office, also a Poole designed building constructed in 1894, which closed in 1970 and was demolished in 1976.³⁷

In 1966, repairs and maintenance were carried out both internally and externally for a total cost of \$3,700. A minor change was the removal of stud wall partitions between the mailroom, telegraph room and main office space, and the provision of a counter screen.³⁸

Also in 1966, the timber fence on Bay View Terrace was replaced with asbestos, and a flagpole was erected on the western lawn. The Royal Cypher, raised cement lettering reading 'GR', (for George V's reign) was removed and replaced with 'EIIR', (for Elizabeth II's reign).³⁹

In 1967, the northern enclosed verandah, used for mail sorting, was in a state of deterioration. Claremont Postmaster H. Keegan requested the repair of the sloping floor, and the replacement of the louvres with fixed glass.⁴⁰

In 1969, repairs and maintenance included the waterproofing of the parapet wall.⁴¹

In July 1970, general repairs and maintenance included the installation of a female toilet off the southern porch entrance. To effect these changes, the porch was enclosed with a stud wall with obscure louvres over, and the floor was covered in vinyl tiles.⁴²

Also in 1970, the area's postcode, '6010,' was added above the lettering on the portico. Outside, the cycle shed was made more secure by the replacement of louvres with fixed glass, and the dividing fence to the rear of the toilet block was demolished. These general maintenance and works cost \$5,300.⁴³

In 1976, the Marseilles tiles were removed and replaced with similar profile tiles, however the decorative finials on the roof were not replaced.⁴⁴

In 1982, public debate arose over the future of *Claremont Post Office*, due to Australia Post's proposal to demolish and rebuild on the site. Public support for the place resulted in plans for demolition being cancelled.⁴⁵

Claremont Post Office was classified by the National Trust on 7 June 1983, and entered in the Register of the National Estate on 25 March 1986.⁴⁶

35 Memo 29.6.1964 in K433/1, XP1033, NAA.

36 Letter from Postmaster Keegan to Superintendent 11.3.68 in K433/1 XP1033 NAA.

37 Sketch, undated c1965; correspondence 13.6.68 and 20.3.70 in K433/1 XP1033 NAA; Oldham, Ray and John, op. cit., p. 54.

38 Sketch, undated c1965, and Letter to Dept Works Aug. 1966 in K433/1, XP1033, NAA.

39 Letter to Dept Works Aug. 1966 in K433/1, XP1033, NAA.

40 Correspondence 4.12.1967 in K433/1 XP1033 NAA.

41 Memo 4.7.1969 in K433/1, XP1033, NAA.

42 'CPO Floor Plan' 19.1.1955 amended July 1970, Dwg BBW 281; Letter to Dept Works, July 1970 and Memo 1.9.1970 in K433/1 XP1033 NAA.

43 *ibid.*

44 AHC RNE Database No. 10262.

45 *Claremont-Nedlands Post*, 21.12.1982.

46 AHC RNE Database No. 10262; National Trust Assessment Exposition 7.6.1983.

In 1984, a major extension and upgrade of the building began, during which the post office relocated to 44 Gugeri Street. An extension was built on the south elevation fronting Bay View Terrace, which necessitated the demolition of the 1952 Workshop and Cycle Store. The extension housed a new mailroom and letterbox area, with a loading bay and bikes storage area to the rear (east). Externally, the brick extension was cement rendered and painted a limestone colour, and windows and doors were timber-framed, with the intention of matching the original 1896 building. The extension featured a parapet similar to the original post office. A covered pedestrian access way was built linking Bay View Terrace with Leura Avenue along the south side of the post office.⁴⁷ In the original post office, the public space was upgraded. Use of office space was changed once again; however, only minor changes to the original walls were made, including the removal of fireplaces and some doors. Original details including door sidelights and fanlights, architraves and skirting were retained where possible.⁴⁸ During these renovations, the Royal Cypher on the building façade was removed, and has not since been replaced.⁴⁹ The total cost of works amounted to \$265,000, and was completed by January 1985.⁵⁰

In 1991, the Town of Claremont adopted the Municipal Heritage Inventory [MI], in which *Claremont Post Office* is listed as a Category Four. The MI was reviewed in 1995, at which point Council resolved to include the list in Town Planning Scheme No. 3 (1985) as the 'Schedule of Historic and Other Buildings and Places.'⁵¹

In 1998, Australia Post's program of centralisation of mail sorting resulted in less rear office space requirements for the post office. To maximise space more effectively and economically, the 1984 extension was leased to Boston Assets, holding company for Dome Equity Pty Ltd, on 15 March 1999 for a five-year period, with an option to extend the lease for a further five years.⁵² A major refurbishment to redevelop the 133m² 1984 extension into Dome Café began in October 1998, by Greg Rowe and Associates and Consul Construction, involving the remodeling of the front (west) façade and a commercial café fit out internally. The covered walkway to the south became an al fresco eating area.⁵³

At the end of 1998, the original section of the post office was redeveloped. The northern enclosed verandah was demolished and public access to letterboxes was provided through the rear entrance. Internally, works included the removal of sections of floorboards and replacement with concrete slab, some new openings and brick infill walls, and the erection of internal timber stud walls. The female toilet was made into a unisex toilet with access for the disabled.⁵⁴

47 Site and Floor Plan 'CPO Additions and Alterations,' Dwgs WA83 10.11.1983, Dept Housing & Construction, File 82/956, & Specification document, Mar. 1984, in TOC Building Application [BA] File AN 556; *Claremont-Nedlands Post*, 1.5.1984; 4.12.1984.

48 Site and Floor Plans 'CPO Additions and Alterations,' Dwgs WA83 10.11.1983 & WA84/76 Feb. 1984, Dept Housing & Construction, File 82/956, op. cit.

49 *Claremont-Nedlands Post*, 17.6.2000.

50 AHC RNE Database No. 10262.

51 Conversation with Carol Catherwood, Town of Claremont, 21.11.2001.

52 Conversation with Glen Harbord, Property Assets Australia Post, 14.9.2001.

53 Various correspondence; Proposed Site Plan, Dome Equity Pty Ltd, 17.12.1998, Brandon L Cross & Assoc., Dwg 1998-01 in TOC BA File AN 556.

54 Plans, CPO Redevelopment, Sasha Ivanovich & Assoc. Architects, Dwg 98/12, Aug. 1998, in TOC BA File AN 556. Site plans show removal of external paint and 'tuckpoint and clear seal finish original limestone,' although the walls are now (2001) painted. Also notes of the plan to the effect that original existing door and windows [rear] were to be preserved for future use. Australia Post staff advised that this process would have been followed, and elements stored safely. (Conversation with Glen Harbord, Property Assets, 14.9.2001.)

The surrounding area was paved and landscaped, and the rear of the building (east side) was improved for use as a public car park.⁵⁵

At 2001, the building is owned by Australia Post. The original section of *Claremont Post Office* operates as a post office, with the 1984 extension leased to Boston Assets, holding company for the Dome Café franchise, until 15 March 2004.⁵⁶

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Claremont Post Office (1896) is a single storey building located on the corner of Bay View Terrace and Guger Street in Claremont. Attached to the south of the Post Office building is a single storey café building (1984).

Claremont Post Office, located on the south east corner of Bay View Terrace and Guger Street, is situated opposite the Claremont Railway Station. Bay View Terrace is typical of a local shopping street situated at right angles to the railway station that developed as a result of the establishment of the railway line.

Claremont Post Office is an important element in the Bay View Terrace streetscape, being both part of the overall street and an important corner element with visual connections to the hotel on the opposite corner and the railway station across Guger Street.

The Post Office is a single storeyed building constructed of limestone with a tiled roof. It is a modestly styled building with an asymmetrical facade to both Bay View Terrace and Guger Streets. The main entrance to the Post Office and the café is from Bay View Terrace. There are entrances to the post office boxes and the rear of the café from the bituminised carpark to the rear (east) of the building.

The Post Office contains a front shop, office area, toilets, lunchroom, and post office box sorting area. The post boxes are set in from the external walls creating an enclosed walkway to the rear of the Post Office. The adjacent café, located in a 1984 addition to the Post Office, has an outdoor area to the front in a verandah with an indoor café area beyond. This café area has a servery. Located behind the servery are toilets and the kitchen and office areas.

Claremont Post Office is a single-storey building constructed of random rubble limestone and roofed with tiles. Stylistically the building is classified as an example of the Federation Arts and Crafts style containing a number of typical elements such as a symmetrical facade, terracotta roof tiles, tall chimneys with terracotta pots, domestic scale and an ensemble of varied roof forms.

Externally *Claremont Post Office* has walls of painted smooth finish limestone with rough cut limestone quoining. The roof is hipped with small timber vented gables and covered with terracotta roof tiles. There is a limestone parapet to the Bay View Terrace elevation and a limestone and rendered curved porch addresses the corner.

The windows to the west (front) elevation are timber-framed with the centre one being a semi circular arched timber framed window with three sections. There are large single panes to the bottom of each section and smaller panes to the top. This window is located centrally within this elevation with two timber framed double hung sash windows flanking either side.

55 'Site and Floor Plan and Set Out,' CPO Redevelopment, op. cit.

56 Conversation with Glen Harbord, Property Assets Australia Post, 14.9.2001.

There are two windows to the front part of the north elevation. Both are timber framed with three sections. Each section has a single pane to the bottom and six panes to the top. There is a large door with a semi circular arched fanlight above, four panes to the top and a grille to the bottom, a four section window with each section having a single pane to the bottom and six panes to the top, and a solid core flush panel door.

The rear elevation has a large door with a semi circular arched fanlight above, four panes to the top and a grille to the bottom, a four-section window as per the side elevation windows and a single pane timber framed window.

Externally the café has rendered masonry walls with a metal deck roof concealed behind a parapet wall. A deep timber framed, terracotta roof tiled verandah is located on the Bay View Terrace elevation.

While the Post Office is located right at the edge of the boundary line, the café is set back several metres from the street. This allows for public access to the main entrance to the Post Office as well as the covered verandah dining area. There is a semi enclosed dining area to the south of the café with the southern boundary being the wall of the adjacent shop.

Internally *Claremont Post Office* consists of a large Post Shop to the front corner of the building with a door to the east leading to the office. An original entrance to the north of the office now contains shelving. An opening to the south leads to the central corridor. This corridor contains original openings with semi circular fanlights above. To south of the corridor is the toilet and kitchen. The eastern end of the corridor opens to the post office box sorting area with the post office boxes being arranged in an 'E' shape. The boxes have been placed within a larger room with the outer side of the boxes being in an enclosed walkway area, again in an 'E' shape.

The front shop has carpet over the timber floors, with some sections having ceramic tiles over the timber. There are sales counters and display shelving generally with a laminate finish, typical of the 1990s Australia Post Shop fitouts. The walls are generally clad with an aluminium and laminate shelving system. There is a suspended grid system paneled ceiling in this area. All openings to the north and east elevations have been covered over with the internal wall cladding.

A single door leads from the shop area to the one-roomed office, kitchen, toilet, and post office box sorting area behind. Generally these rooms all have suspended grid system paneled ceilings, carpet on timber floorboards to the office, hall and store, tiles on timber floorboards to the toilet, vinyl on concrete to the kitchen and carpet on concrete to the post office box sorting area. The internal walkway to the outside of the post office boxes has large limestone type pavers to the floor, plastered and painted walls and a plasterboard ceiling.

The walls all have a plaster and paint finish with painted plasterboard to openings later infilled. Lights are generally recessed fluorescent strips that fit within the suspended ceiling system.

Fixtures and fittings to the post office include the shop fitout as described above, office furniture, toilet and kitchen facilities and the post office boxes.

The café internally has timber floor boards to the dining area, large paving slabs to the courtyard and vinyl on concrete to both the kitchen and rear office. The walls are generally painted and plastered with tiling to toilets and kitchen. The ceilings are flush plasterboard with a decorative feature to the main dining area.

Fixtures and fittings to the café include servery counter, kitchen facilities, toilet facilities, ceiling fans, blackboards, shelving to office and wrought iron gates to courtyard.

Subsequent alterations include: the extension of the residence and entrance to the original post office and quarters; the conversion of the residence to accommodate further post office operations; alterations to include toilet and kitchen facilities and post office boxes and the construction of an addition to the south, now occupied by the café. The main entrance has been relocated from the north west corner to the south west corner and several doors and windows have been blocked.

In summary the front post shop area remains as a large open space as originally intended although the internal layout of the space has altered considerably. The office, toilet and kitchen still retain much of the original form, although their use has changed and some alterations have occurred. The post office box sorting area has changed considerably with internal walls being removed, new walls introduced, floor being replaced, new openings being introduced and previous openings being removed. The western section of the original corridor remains in place.

Generally *Claremont Post Office* is in a good condition. Continuous use for Post Office functions and an ongoing upgrading of facilities has ensured that the place has remained in a good condition. The 1984 addition to the south occupied by the café is also in a good condition.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Poole (1856-1934) was Chief Architect of the Department of Works and Buildings (subsequently the Public Works Department) between 1885 and 1897. In the first years of office, Poole travelled around the state to inspect the colony's works, labour resources and building materials. The overland telegraph had been built in 1875, and the first railway line in Perth by 1881, later connecting to major country towns by 1885. Therefore, some of the first works Poole oversaw were post offices, railway stations and associated residences. The discovery of gold in 1885 led to gold rushes in the 1890s in WA, and Poole supervised the construction of many public buildings built to accommodate the growing population.⁵⁷

In this context *Claremont Post Office* was built in 1896. Each of the Post Offices designed by the PWD under the direction of Poole was different and each had its own character.⁵⁸ Most of the combined residence and post office designs were two storey constructions such as *Pinjarra Post Office* (1895), *South Fremantle Post Office* (1896) and *Toodyay Post Office and Residence* (1897). When *Claremont Post Office* was built, it was noted that 'the design is of such a character that the quarters may be added to by building another storey as may be found requisite.'⁵⁹ However, this did not eventuate.

For comparison, extant single storey post offices on the Register of Heritage Places prepared to a design under the direction of Poole for the metropolitan area include *Brisbane Street Post Office (fmr)* (1863) and *Leederville Post Office* (1897). Built to a similar design, although not on the Register, is the *Aberdeen Street Post Office* (1897) in Northbridge. None of these continue in use as post

57 Information paraphrased from Oldham, op. cit.; and Dr. Van Bremen, Ingrid, H., *The New Architecture of the Gold Boom in Western Australia Government Buildings Under the Direction of G. T. Poole, 1885-1897*, Ph. D. Theses, UWA, 1990.

58 Van Bremen, op. cit., p. 347.

59 PWD Annual Report 1895-96 in *V & P 1896*, Paper No. 25, p. 51.

offices. Outside the metropolitan area, Poole's single storey post offices on the Register include *Moora Post Office and Quarters* (1896) and *Dongara Post Office and Quarters (fmr)* (1894). Moora continues in use as a post office.⁶⁰

13. 4 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 7 June 1983.

Australian Heritage Commission Database No. 10262.

Town of Claremont Municipal Heritage Inventory.

13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may locate original drawings for the place, which were not found in the Town of Claremont Archives, National Archives or State Records Office.

⁶⁰ Information from Oldham, op. cit. and HCWA database at www.hc.wa.gov.au.