	REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION
HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA	

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
- 9.5.2   Looking after the infirm and the aged

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)
- 206   Mail Services
- 210   Telecommunications
- 404   Community services and utilities

11. 1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is a competently designed and built example of a simple, Federation period, civic building displaying some of the aesthetic characteristics of the earlier Victorian Georgian style. (Criterion 1.1)

Although almost domestic in its scale *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* is a landmark due mainly to its conspicuous corner location at the end of the vista formed from around Eric Street looking southward along Railway Street. (Criterion 1.3)

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) and its close proximity to the Cottesloe Railway Station, forms part of the significant townscape element of Cottesloe.   (Criterion 1.4)

11. 2. HISTORIC VALUE

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is one of a number of government buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a result of the development of Cottesloe and the growing demand for public facilities as a consequence of the Gold Boom in the 1890s. (Criterion 2.1)

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is associated with the evolution of postal services in the district and the state. The close proximity

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*   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 the railway station to the place represents the link between postal and rail services which continued well into the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is associated with the development of telecommunications in Western Australia as the first telephone exchange from 1897 to 1921 and was the third in the metropolitan area. Cottesloe Exchange was one of the first exchanges on the State's first telephone cable strung from Perth to Fremantle in 1897. (Criterion 2.2)

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) has significance to the community for its continuing role in the care of the aged in the Towns of Cottesloe, Claremont, Mosman Park and the Shire of Peppermint Grove since 1985. It has been the site of the Home and Community Care Programme which subsequently became the Aged Persons Support Service. (Criterion 2.2)

John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia from 1941 to 1945, lived in Cottesloe from 1918 until his death in 1945, maintaining a strong presence in the area and using his home as his office when he wasn't in Canberra as the Federal representative for Fremantle. Curtin would have frequently used the services of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr).* (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) contributes to the community's sense of place as it has been the site of community services since 1898. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is rare as a suburban post office built in the late 1890s by the Public Works Department with an almost domestic appearance. (Criterion 5.1)

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is representative of the era when a post office building was one of the main civic building in a local community. It is typical in communities on the Midland to Fremantle railway line to have the post offices located near to the railway station. (Criterion 6.2)

12. 3 CONDITION

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is of low to moderate integrity. The building no longer serves as a post office.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is of low authenticity. Very little of the original fabric of the building remains and that which does is mainly the external fabric of the front part of the building. However, this has been altered by painting and the introduction of additional wide openings on the east facade. The original internal fittings were removed in 1964, when the building ceased to be a post office.

13.   SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Prue Griffin, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Alan Kelsall, Kelsall Binet Architects.

13. 1   DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is a single storey stone building with a corrugated iron roof which was designed by the Public Works Department in 1897 and is located at 81 – 83 Forrest Street, Cottesloe.

In September 1896, a portion of crown land between Perth and Fremantle was subdivided and given the name 'Cottesloe' by the Governor Sir Frederick Napier Broome. The name originates with Baron Cottesloe of Swanbourne and Hardwick bestowed upon Thomas Fremantle, brother of Captain Charles Fremantle, in 1874.[1]

Although the route for the Perth-Fremantle road, which was constructed by convict gangs in the 1860s, went through Cottesloe very little settlement occurred until the 1890s. Even the construction of the Fremantle to Guildford railway line in 1881 provoked no great surge of settlement. By 1893, there were still only six permanent residents in Cottesloe.[2]

The area developed more rapidly after 1895 when the Western Australian Government granted £100 to the improvement of the Perth to Fremantle Road and £100 toward its ongoing maintenance. Cottesloe and the adjacent settlements at Buckland Hill and Mosman Park were thus more accessible for residents and holidaymakers.[3] In the same year Cottesloe was declared a road board and was able to levy funds from its residents.[4]

The gold discoveries in the east of Western Australia in the 1890s brought great wealth to the state. The beachside location of Cottesloe and the significant wealth now present in the colony saw Cottesloe develop as one of the prestigious suburbs of Perth. In the late 1890s, many elaborate residences and holiday cottages of the States prominent families were constructed in Cottesloe.[5]

As Cottesloe developed, residents needed better facilities, including a better postal service. The first service offered in Cottesloe was probably the appointment of a Mail bag receiver at the Cottesloe Railway Station. There is some evidence to suggest that another location was used as a Post Office in

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[1]   Marchant James, Ruth *Heritage of Pines: A History of Cottesloe,* Town of Cottesloe, Second Edition, 1992, pp. 3 &15.

[2]   Ibid, pp.10; *In Retrospect 1897 –1907,* Brochure by F.A. Mosely, St Columba's manse, cited in Marchant James, op. cit., p. 15.

[3]   Ibid, p. 12.

[4]   Cottesloe Roads Board Minutes, SROWA, Cons 6187, item 1, 1895 to 1905.

[5]   Ibid. pp.7 & 15.

1894, however, its location has not been discovered.[6] Stationmaster Mr W Richards was the officer who undertook the handling of mail until 1897 when a non-official Post Office was opened at the store of Barry and Dendy on the corner of the Perth-Fremantle Road and Napoleon Street.[7] Miss Rachel Harris was appointed in July 1897 as the first Post Mistress at Cottesloe, a position she held until June 1899 when R C Adams was appointed.[8]

As the suburb of Cottesloe developed as a residence and holiday location for the affluent and influential citizens of Perth, the relatively new technology of telephones was becoming more widespread. Telephone exchanges had been established in Perth in 1887, and Fremantle in 1888 to serve the subscribers in Perth and Fremantle. These two exchanges were linked in 1897 with the State's first telephone cable, which was an aerial cable consisting of 24 pairs of wires, paper insulated, wrapped in cotton and covered in a lead sheath covered with tarred hemp.[9] Cottesloe was the first exchange built along the new cable enabling it to access the cable to Perth or Fremantle and serve the local subscribers.

The site chosen for the new post office on the corner of Forrest Street and Railway Street was adjacent to the railway station and across the road from a number of shops. The proximity to the railway station was consistent with the importance of rail transport to the early settlement of Cottesloe.[10] Forrest Street was named in honour of Sir John Forrest, Premier of Western Australia from 1890 to 1901 and member of the first Commonwealth Government of Australia. John Forrest was leader of the government of Western Australia during its boom period and was instrumental in many major public works. Forrest purchased land in Cottesloe and contributed to the development of the suburb by building substantial homes in the area. He lived in Cottesloe and relied on *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* for his communications.[11]

Tenders were called for the construction of the *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* on 15 October 1897.[12] The successful tenderer was building contractor Leggo and Clague with a price of £1190.19.0.[13]

Nine months before, in January 1897, tenders were called for the construction of a Postmasters Quarters in Cottesloe.[14] No further evidence was found to establish the location of the Postmasters Quarters. Contract books for the public works department for the relevant period do not show any contracts for the Cottesloe Post Office or the Postmasters Quarters and no plans were found for either building. It is possible that the quarters and the post office

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[6] An item in *The West Australian* 20 March 1894 states that 'A new Post Office has been established at Cottesloe. The mails close in time to be made up for the train leaving Fremantle at 8.30am and leaving Perth at 3pm'. This notification suggests that another site away from the railway station that was used as a Post Office before 1894. In Marchant James' History of Cottesloe it is noted that the first mail facilities was the appointment of a mail bag receiver at Cottesloe station in September 1895.

[7] Marchant James op. cit. p. 37.

[8] Ibid. p.37. There is no reference given for the information about the Post Offices in Cottesloe.

[9] Moynihan, John, 'Telephony in Western Australia' in *Early Days* Volume 10, pt 3 p. 307.

[10] Marchant James op. cit. p. 37.

[11] *Post Newspapers Online,* www.postnewspapers.com.au item of the restoration of the house built by John Forrest *Timaru* located in Forrest Street Cottesloe.

[12] *Government Gazette,* 15 October 1897, p. 2160.

[13] *Government Gazette,* 7 January 1898, p. 14.

[14] *Government Gazette,* 29 January 1897, p. 174.

were combined into one building. Post Office Directories from 1898 list the post office with the post mistress or postmasters name included. It could be interpreted that the Post Office was therefore the quarters but the available information is not conclusive.[15]

The design of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* by the Public Works Department occurred when chief architect George Temple Poole was leaving or had just left the department. No plans were found to establish the architect of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. It has been suggested in the Town of Cottesloe Municipal Inventory that it may owe its design to architect John Grainger of the Public Works Department but this claim has not been substantiated.[16]

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) was opened in July 1898. Shortly after the opening of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* the local Roads board requested that two mail receivers (mail boxes) be located within the Cottesloe boundaries. Provision had only been made for receivers within the Peppermint Grove district and the residents between the railway line and the ocean were poorly served. By October 1899, the situation for the 1000 residents of Cottesloe was still unsatisfactory, according to the Cottesloe Roads Board, and the matter was to be brought before the local Member of Parliament.[17]

The telephone and telegraph facilities at the *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* served 88 subscribers upon the opening of the building. An undated photograph shows a pole outside *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* bristling with lines. The photograph has the description 'Forrest Street Cottesloe Outside Exchange east face of Pole.' [18] The first telephonist at Cottesloe was probably a woman as it was the practice to employ women for this position. The first telephonists at the Perth Exchange in 1887 were Connie Letch and Ada Woodbridge. At the opening of the Fremantle exchange in 1888 the first telephonists were Misses R. Chamberlain and E. Crake.[19] A photograph of the interior of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* in the early years of the 20th century shows two woman seated at the switchboard.[20]

In 1900, the Cottesloe Exchange provided a temporary end point for Western Australia's first submarine telephone cable to Rottnest Island. This connection existed for only a short period as the Fremantle Office was connected to the Cottesloe beach cable head by a specially constructed cable about a month after the cable was opened.[21]

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[15]   Public Works Department Contract Books 1897-1901, SROWA.

[16]   The original plans may have been transferred to the Commonwealth when in 1901 the Postal service became a commonwealth responsibility. The National Archives, the State Records Office and the Department of Housing and Works have no plans of the place.

[17]   22 July 1898 and 13 October 1899, Cottesloe Roads Board minutes, Cons 6187, item 1, SROWA.

[18]   'Council takes over historic post office' undated newspaper article probably 1985 Folder 1 – correspondence, cards and press cuttings, National Archives, Series number K1290, Control symbol COTTESLOE, Barcode 1658305.

[19]   Moynihan, John, 'Telephony in Western Australia' in *Early Days* Volume 10, pt 3 p. 306.

[20]   'Council takes over historic post office' undated newspaper article probably 1985 Folder 1 – correspondence, cards and press cuttings, National Archives, Series number K1290, Control symbol COTTESLOE, Barcode 1658305.

[21]   Moynihan, John *All the news in a flash : Rottnest communications 1829-1979* Perth, W.A : Telecom Australia and Institution of Engineers (Australia), Western Australian Division, 1987, p. 63.

In March 1901, the Postmaster General's Department (PMG) was formed following Australia's Federation on 1 January 1901. This department took over responsibility for the post and telephone service in Western Australia.

Minor additions were undertaken to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* in 1903, 1905, 1906 and 1909.[22] One of the most significant additions was the construction of a shed in 1906 to the rear of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* to be used as a linesman Depot with a horse stable attached.[23]

Telephone wires and cables were progressively put under underground from 1906. The Perth to Fremantle cable was laid underground in 1906 with most wires in Perth gradually taken down during World War One.[24]

The Post Office workplace in the early twentieth century was controlled and structured. Remaining files and daily work books contained at the National Archives demonstrate a workplace regulated by time and procedure. In 1913, a staff member was given the title of 'monitor' and one of his duties was to write 'please explain' letters to the staff when circumstances required it. For example, a letter to telephonist Webb, 'Please explain why you had not answered 'Cottesloe 520' after indicator had been down 40 seconds. J. Rosenburg Monitor'.[25] A 1918 day book records the duty officers hourly report of the telegraph traffic and the constant checking of the office clock to check its accuracy.[26]

A former postman at Cottesloe from 1914 to 1931, Samuel Bell recalls the post office as a friendly place where everyone got on well. He remembered no staff grievances or involvement with unions. Women workers were not common in the Post Offices he knew. Samuel Bell's career spanned 50 years with the PMG Department culminating in 30 years at the Perth Post Office.[27] Like many employees within the PMG he began his career as a telegram messenger boy. In 1928, a boy under 16 would be paid an annual salary of £87 as a telegram messenger compared to a postman's salary of £244.[28]

By 1921, the number of subscribers had risen to 846.[29] It was the massive increase in subscribers that prompted discussion on the establishment of an automatic telephone exchange in Cottesloe. However it was not until 1930 that an automatic exchange was installed at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. It was the second automatic exchange in Western Australia.[30]

A sewerage plan of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* surveyed in June 1935 shows two galvanised iron sheds and two earth closets at the

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[22]   *Government Gazette* 1906 pp. 1796, 2163; 1905 pp283, 708; and 1909 pp250, 723.
[23]   National Trust Built Environment Assessment Exposition, September 1988.
[24]   Moynihan, John, 'Telephony in Western Australia' in *Early Days* Volume 10, pt 3 p. 308-9.
[25]   Cottesloe Post Office Monitors Book, National Archives, Series K1209, Control symbol, COTTESLOE, barcode 1658322.
[26]   Cottesloe Post Office Exchange Day book 1918, National Archives, Series K1209, Control symbol, COTTESLOE, barcode 1658324.
[27]   OH800, Samuel John Leithdale Bell interviewed by Judith Johnson in 1983, Battye Library.
[28]   Staffing file Cottesloe Post Office, National Archives, Series K1184, Control Symbol 236/4, Barcode 1381542.
[29]   Marchant James op. cit. p. 37.
[30]   Moynihan, John, 'Telephony in Western Australia' in *Early Days* Volume 10, pt 3 p. 310. Moynihan does not state were the first exchange was located however it was presumably Perth as he notes that Fremantle was modified in May 1930 to enable some direct dialling.

rear of the property. A small weatherboard structure is located on the eastern edge of the northern façade.[31]

Prior to World War Two, Western Australia's telephone system was linked by only one wire to the Eastern states.[32] The outbreak of war created demands for additional services to the eastern states. A second wire was established in 1942.[33] It was particularly crucial during war time that good communications was established between Perth, and particularly Cottesloe during the times that Prime Minister John Curtin was in residence at his home in Cottesloe.

In 1918, John Curtin moved to Cottesloe. Curtin and his family lived a simple life in Cottesloe, first in rented accommodation in Napier Street then in the house built for the family at 23 Jarrad Street.[34] Curtin represented the Federal seat of Fremantle from 1928 to 1931 and from 1934 until his death in 1945.

For the majority of his parliamentary career Curtin lived in Canberra and his wife Elsie lived in Cottesloe. She travelled to Canberra twice a year for two to three months a year and John Curtin returned to Western Australia for brief holidays and to visit his constituents. John Curtin maintained a strong presence in Cottesloe with his family living there and often using his home as an extension of his office from which Elsie handled electorate work.[35]

From 1941, when Curtin was the Prime Minister, he returned to Cottesloe only once or twice a year. During these visits he maintained contact with Canberra by letter, phone and telegram. This deluge of messages to the Cottesloe home via *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr).*was a massive change to the quiet suburban home. Curtin commented to journalists in Canberra prior to Christmas 1943 that 'Mrs Curtin wants him to come home, but he had told her it would mean leaving Forde [Deputy Prime Minister] in charge in the east and, as had happened before, this had not saved him from a daily avalanche of telegrams and telephone messages.[36]

During World War Two, significant restrictions were applied to postal and telecommunications as part of the war effort. New telephone connections were extremely limited, and the program of installing new telephone exchanges was also slowed. Special postal services were established for members of the military, including reduced postage rates. Postal services were stretched, and many women were employed to cover labour shortages.[37]

In early January 1944, whilst in residence at Cottesloe, John Curtin's secretary went to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* for postage stamps

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[31] Metropolitan Sewerage Department and Drainage Department Plan 1172, June 1935, SROWA.

[32] Moynihan, John '50 Years of East –West Telephony' Unpublished monograph in Battye library, p. 5.

[33] Moynihan, John '50 Years of East –West Telephony' Unpublished monograph in Battye library, p. 6.

[34] Website on the John Curtin house in Cottesloe, http://john.curtin.edu.au/curtinhouse

[35] Black, David *Friendship is a Sheltering Tree': John Curtain's Letters 1907 to 1945* John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library/Library & Information Service, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, c2001, 210.

[36] Lloyd, Clem and Hall, Richard *Backroom Briefings John Curtin's War* National Library of Australia, 1997, p. 185.

[37] Edmonds, Leigh, 'A Lesson in Efficiency: Transport, Communications and the Community', in Jenny Gregory (ed.) *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands WA, 1996, p.170.

and was informed that she was entitled to only five stamps because of the war time restrictions. On stating who the stamps were for she was told 'it would not matter "if he was the King of England – five is the allowance"'.[38] Despite these restrictions *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* would have provided a vital link between Curtin and Canberra and subsequently to allied countries.

At the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945 Western Australia's telecommunications had increased enormously since 1939. More than 1.5 million more ordinary telegrams were sent in Western Australia in 1944 than in 1939 and the number of urgent telegrams increased fivefold in the same time.[39]

In Cottesloe, as early as 1944, it was apparent to the staff and management within the PMG Department that the shopping focus of the town of Cottesloe had shifted to Napoleon Street and the facilities at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* were becoming inadequate. The PMG Department considered various sites in Cottesloe for a new location for the Post Office.[40] The location chosen on the corner of Napoleon Street and Stirling Highway is the site of the current Post Office. The new site was purchased in 1946 for £4386.[41]

Maintenance continued at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* while plans were made for the development of the Napoleon Street site. In 1948 and 1949, general repairs and maintenance to the value of £1340 were undertaken at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* although the detail of what work was undertaken is not recorded in the 'Record of Building Proposal and Building History' maintained by the staff at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*.[42] In 1950, the building was re-roofed and the back yard was graded, drained and sealed. In 1954, fencing was erected around the site and the verandah was repaired. An amenities room for the engineering lines staff was built on the rear of the site in 1960.[43]

As plans progressed for the new Post Office at Napoleon Street, postal services continues to operate from *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. By the early 1960's the local chamber of Commerce, the Town of Cottesloe and the management of the new 'Grove' shopping centre all contacted the PMG to enquire when the new Post Office was to be built.[44]

In 1961, the reasons outlined by officers within the PMG for the move of the post office included the development of the shopping area some distance

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[38]   Day, John *John Curtin: A Life* Harper Collins 1999, p. 527.

[39]   Edmonds, Leigh 'A Lesson in Efficiency: Transport Communications and the Community' in *On the Homefront* (ed) Jenny Gregory, UWA Press, 1996, p. 170.

[40]   Cottesloe Post Office site, National Archives, Series K273, Control symbol, 1946/36 part 2, Barcode 857792.

[41]   Building sites- Cottesloe –Proposed new post office, National Archives, Series PP224/2, Control symbol, 427/45/4, Barcode 1542905.

[42]   Record of Building Proposal and Building History in Cottesloe Post Office – Folder 1 – correspondence, cards and press cuttings, National Archives, Series number K1290, Control symbol COTTESLOE, Barcode 1658305.

[43]   Ibid.

[44]   Building sites- Cottesloe –Proposed new post office, National Archives, Series Number PP224/2, Control symbol, 427/45/4, Barcode 1542905.

form the current Post Office as highlighted in the local press.[45]   It was also stated that the existing facilities at *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* were congested and outmoded and the estimated cost of £10 000 to modernize and enlarge the structure was uneconomic when compared to the estimated cost of £16 000 for a new building in a better location.[46]

The new Cottesloe Post Office was built on the current site on the corner of Napoleon and Stirling Highway in 1963 and opened by MP Mr K.E. Beazley on 18th May 1964.[47]   At the time it was stated in a press release that 'the pre-federation post office building near the railway will become a PMG line depot in which clerical staff, stores and material connected with engineering activities will be housed.[48]

Funds were allocated for the repairs and maintenance of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr).* In 1963, general maintenance and painting was undertaken by contractors Boers and Lynch for the price of £720. Their quote was the lowest of those submitted and considerably cheaper than the £1500 estimated by the Public Works Department.[49]

From 1963 to 1985, *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* was occupied by the PMG and its descendent Telecom as a line depot. The place was used by maintenance staff as an office facility, equipment store, and workshop.

After 1964, spare lengths of phone cable were shifted to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* (which was now used as the PMG line depot). They were buried beneath the ground in order to keep the cables supple for installation. The cables remained there after Telecom disposed of the property in 1984/5 and are still beneath the extant carpark of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr).*[50]

In 1985, *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* was transferred to the Town of Cottesloe and after internal modifications undertaken by architects Scanlon and Associates became a community centre.[51]   The functions of the community centre included the major Home and Community Care programme (HACC) for the Towns of Claremont, Mosman Park, Cottesloe and the Shire of Peppermint Grove.

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[45]   *The West Australian,* 15 May 1959, cutting included in Building Sites – Cottesloe – Proposed new Post Office, national Archives, Series Number PP224/2, control symbol, 427/45/4, Barcode 1542905.

[46]   Building sites- Cottesloe –Proposed new post office, National Archives, Series Number PP224/2, Control symbol, 427/45/4, Barcode 1542905.

[47]   *Cottesloe Post Office 1964* by Arthur R. Pearce, unpublished paper held in Cottesloe Post Office –Folder 9- correspondence, National Archives, Series number K1209, Control symbol COTTESLOE, Barcode 1658333.

[48]   News copy dated 11th February 1964 in Cottesloe Post Office –Folder 9- correspondence, National Archives, Series number K1209, Control symbol COTTESLOE, Barcode 1658333.

[49]   PMG Cottesloe Post Office line depot – repairs and maintenance, National Archives, Series number PP280/1, control symbol P1961/62/132, Barcode 1554843.

[50]   Moynihan, John *All the news in a flash : Rottnest communications 1829-1979* Perth, W.A : Telecom Australia and Institution of Engineers (Australia), Western Australian Division, 1987, p. 63.

[51]   Certificate of Title, Volume 1217, Folio 375, DOLA and article on the new ownership of the post office undated found in the – Folder 1 – correspondence, cards and press cuttings, National Archives, Series number K1290, Control symbol COTTELSOLE, Barcode 1658305. Information from the Town of Cottesloe.

In 1988, *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* was classified by the national Turst of Australia (WA) as having heritage value.[52]

In 1997, funds were allocated for extensions to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* to increase the level of usage of the place. Architects, Considine and Griffiths were commissioned to design an extension to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* sympathetic to the original structure. The extension included one new room and the alteration of the interior layouts. In January 2000, plans for the additions were submitted to the Development Committee of the Heritage Council and the proposed works were found to be acceptable. Construction of the extension occurred in mid 2000. Minor additional changes to the garage entrance were undertaken at this time.[53]

Between 1997 and 1999 the HACC programme changed to the Aged Persons Support Service (TAPSS) which is the name under which the programme currently operates under. In 2003, *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* is occupied by TAPSS and covers the municipalities of Cottesloe, Claremont, Mosman Park and Peppermint Grove.[54]

13. 2   PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) a single-storey, Victorian Georgian style, limestone and iron building with a perimeter verandah occupying a conspicuous corner near Cottesloe railway station.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) stands on the south side of Forrest Street at the intersection with Railway Street. Railway Street runs along the east side of the Perth to Fremantle railway line. The railway line describes a gently curving change of direction from east /west to north/ south between Swanbourne Station and Cottesloe Station. Railway Street follows roughly the same line and frequently changes direction. One such change of direction is near the intersection with Forrest Street, which results in the site of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* being conspicuous, particularly when viewed from the north.

The section of Forrest Street between Railway Street and Stirling Highway is divided by a median strip that contains a drainage sump surrounded by a tea tree hedge at its eastern end. This section is about half the length of Forrest Street. The remainder of Forrest Street is planted with grass and mature Norfolk Island Pines. The median strip starts slightly to the east of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* and this adds to its prominence.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is located near to the island crossing for pedestrians to get to and from Cottesloe Station. The area opposite the west face of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* between the east side of Railway Street and the fence that runs beside the railway line, contains a bitumenised carpark and an access roadway. The road rises quite steeply so that the car park is about 2.5 metres above the level of Railway Street. The level change is retained by a combination of a limestone retaining wall and a limestone faced embankment.

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[52]   National Trust of Australia (WA) Built Environment Committee Assessment Exposition, 5 September 1988.

[53]   Place file P599, *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*, Heritage Council of Western Australia.

[54]   Signage at the front entrance of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* in January 2003.

A red brick footpath runs along the west and north sides of the site. The area between the kerb and the boundary line comprises paved parking bays set in the pavement. In areas where the verandah edges the site boundary, the paving used on the footpath extends under the verandah to the face of the building.

A right of way connecting Railway Street with Stirling Highway runs against the rear of the *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* site. The lot to the east of Cottesloe Post Office (fmr) contains a two-storey office building.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is the only building on the site. The site is fully developed and is occupied by the building, a paved courtyard in the north east corner of the site and a grassed terrace in the south west corner. The terrace is edged by a modern limestone wall of piers and infill panels of decorative tubular steel.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) shares some of the characteristics of the Victorian Georgian style, a style more commonly associated with domestic buildings.

The external form of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* derives from its plan. The building appears to be almost equally divided between the original part of the building and the later work. The northern half of the building original and this faces towards Forrest Street and Railway Street. Apart from the small courtyard in the north east corner, the original section occupies the front of the site giving this part of the building an 'L' shaped plan. This consists of the dominant front (north) wing, which used to house the public areas of the post office, and the rear part of the original section (ie. centre of the building), which runs for almost the full width of the site.

The west façade is in part formed by the 2000 addition, which is at the south end, while the original section of the building is to the north. The two elements of the facade read as distinct parts. The 1990s addition does not have a verandah, but instead the building is set against the rear edge of the footpath, whereas the original part of the building has a verandah, the outer edge of which runs along the site boundary/rear edge of the public footpath. This means the block containing the 2000 additions is set forward of the original building; allowing the verandah to terminate against it while providing shelter to the multi-paned doors that lead to the activity room in the rear part of the building.

Both parts of the facade share a common wall plate level and the two roofs are at the same medium pitch. The 2000 addition has a pyramidal roof capped by a square lantern light.

The west facade of the 2000 addition is symmetrically composed consisting of two pairs of timber framed double hung sash windows set equi-distant from the centreline. Each pair of windows is set below timber framed and corrugated iron sunshades. The walls are of limestone blockwork.

The west facade of the original part of the building has six window openings grouped in pairs and of these two pairs are in the wall of the public part of the original part of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. In addition to the set of windows, the rear section also contains a single door opening. The walls are of generally smooth textured limestone rubble with ashlar lines. The walls have been painted using cream coloured vinyl paint.

The openings have rock–faced quoining. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The door opening includes a glazed fanlight. The timber door is four panelled with flush beading.

The north west corner of the building is truncated. The truncated section of walling contains the public entrance to the *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. The double door opening is quoined and contains a glazed fanlight. Each leaf of the double door has three panels with bollection mouldings.

The north façade is similar to that of the west. The façade contains three window openings, one pair and one single window. The single window, which is towards the east end of the façade, has a higher sill height than is typical; instead of being 750 mm above ground level it is set at a height of 900 mm.

The east façade faces onto a courtyard. The east face of the building contains two large openings and a single window opening. The two large openings contain a central door flanked by fixed glazing. The large openings are not original. It would appear that the openings were formed by combining a pair of single window openings by the removal of the separating pier. The quoining to the sides of these openings appears to be original but the quoining to the head is obviously not. The south end of the courtyard in this part of the site is edged by the north side of the rear part of the original section of the building. It seems that this part of the facade may originally have been a side verandah that perhaps led to the rear part of the building. The area is now enclosed by a glazed screen containing a set of double doors flanked by panels of full height fixed glazing. All glazing overlooking the courtyard is multi-paned formed by thin glazing bars and is of recent construction.

The verandah that edges the original part of the building is articulated. It is set just below the wall plate level of the external wall. The verandah follows the line of the external wall of the original part of the building and includes a truncation at the north west corner. There is a gable at the outer edge of this truncation. The verandah has a skillion roof of timber and corrugated iron construction. The outer edge of the verandah is supported on square timber posts with steel shoes at the bases. The floor of the verandah is brick paved.

The rear (south) face of the building is recent and is constructed of limestone blockwork. The main body of the rear façade contains the Activity Room, which is in the southwest corner of the building. A large double garage occupies the southeast corner. An ancillary wing connects the two parts.

The south side of the Activity Room is symmetrically arranged. The room is faced by a lean–to verandah. The verandah is articulated in the same manner as the one at the front of the building. The outer edge of the verandah is supported on square timber posts. The wall contains two doors opening with each containing a set of multi paned glazed double doors.

The main hall occupies the north west wing of *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)*. The walls of the room are plastered. The ceiling is of battens over plaster sheeting edged by a moulded cornice. The timber floor is carpeted and the timber skirting is 200 mm high and has a moulded top. There is a small store room set centrally against the south wall of the room The main hall contains two fireplaces set on either side of the small store room. The fireplaces have rendered surrounds with drawn ashlar lines and painted barked mantles.

There are no original Post Office fittings in this room.

There are two door openings in the south wall of the Main Hall both leading through to the dining room. The one near the southwest corner is an original panel timber door. The other door, which is in the south east corner, contains a modern double multi-paned glazed door.

The dining room is located in the rear section of the original part of the building. The kitchen is situated against the east side of the dining room. A small lobby in the north east corner of the room provides an opening which leads to the enclosed verandah that now serves as the vestibule to the office located at the east end of the rear part of the original building. An opening in the south wall of the room leads to the activity room. The opening contains timber framed, multi-paned glazed double doors and fixed sidelights.

The dining room is a rectangular room with windows and a door in the west wall. The room has plastered walls and a flat plaster ceiling. The floor is vinyl covered.

The east wall of the dining room contains a large opening which acts as the servery between the dining room and the kitchen. The kitchen is a modern fit out. The floor has a vinyl covering and the plastered wall includes a tiled splash back.

The office vestibule is enclosed on the north side by a modern multi-paned glazed screen that includes a set of double doors. The walls of the room match the external walls of the original part of the building. The ceiling is lined on the rake and the floor is carpeted. A small window opening in the east wall has been blocked–in and now is a small niche.

The office is a small rectangular room. The ceiling is facetted with raked sides and a flat central area. There is a fireplace located centrally within the east wall of the room. There is a window set beside the south edge of the fireplace. A door in the north wall leads to a small room that now serves as a store. A former window in the centre of the south wall now serves as a recess containing a bookshelf.

The activity room is a large, almost square, space. The ceiling is lined on the rake and rises to a central lantern light. The room has plastered walls, a plasterboard ceiling and a carpeted floor. There are two openings in the south wall of the room overlooking a verandah. Each opening contains timber framed, multi-paned glazed double doors and fixed sidelights.

The glazed door in the east wall of the activity room opens onto the corridor that connects with the south side of the dining room. This corridor extends to the rear door in the south wall of the building. The corridor has the same finishes as the dining room. From about the mid-point of this corridor another short corridor leads to the east. This short corridor forms a dogleg and serves the toilets that are set against the east face of the building. A sick bay and a disabled toilet also open off this corridor.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) has undergone at least three programmes of major alterations. In 1964 the Post Office facilities were removed from the building and it served as a PMG line depot. In 1985 the building was adapted for use as a community centre. The external walls were painted at that time and the alterations were carried out to the north east corner of the building. In 2000 the large Activity Room and associated landscaping works was added to the south west corner of the building

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is in good condition and well maintained.

13. 3   COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

There are over 600 places in the Heritage Council of Western Australia data base which are post offices or former post offices. Of particular interest are those post offices built in the late 1890s by the Department of Works and buildings (subsequently the Public Works Department).   The discovery of gold led to the construction of many public buildings built to service the growing population.

Within the metropolitan area several post offices that were designed and built at approximately the same time as *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* are included on the State Register of Heritage Places. The *Claremont Post Office* (483) in 1896, *Guildford Post Office* (2480) in 1898, *Leederville Post Office* (2203) in 1897 and the *North Fremantle Post Office* (1037) in 1898. Although not on the Register the *Aberdeen Street Post Office* (1944) built in 1897 was a single storey post office designed by the Public Works Department.

Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr) is notable as being less substantial that the other post offices in the above list. The other buildings in the list appear to be more suited to an urban setting whereas *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* has an almost domestic appearance. An example of similar scale to *Cottesloe Post Office and Telephone Exchange (fmr)* is *Norseman Post Office* (0767), a single-storey limestone building with a corrugated iron hipped roof, designed by George Temple Poole and constructed in 1897 in Federation Bungalow style.

13. 4   REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition, 5 September 1988.

Town of Cottesloe Municipal Inventory place record form number 30, January 1995.

13. 5   FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research may locate original drawings for the place, which were not found in the Town of Cottesloe Archives, National Archives, State Records Office or the Department of Housing and Works. Rates books for the Town of Cottesloe may be able to clarify whether the Post Office was used as the quarters for the post master/mistress.

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