

NAME: Fitzroy Post Office

ADDRESS: 296 Brunswick Street

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1882

ALTERATNS./ADDITNS: 1925 - glazing of original arcade, new northern entrance, new counter arrangement internally. Late 1950's - reglazing of original arcade; south porch, and laundry added.

ARCHITECT: Public Works Department; John Thomas Kelleher

BUILDER: Beardall and Glencross

FIRST OWNER: Public Works Department

FIRST OCC./USE: Post and Telegraph Office

PRESENT OWNER: Australia Post

PRESENT OCC./USE: Ditto/Post Office

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Rendered brick walls, bluestone footings, slate roof.

INTACTNESS CONDITION: Externally intact

AREA/STREETSCAPE: Part of recommended area A7.



IMPORTANCE:

This post office, of 1882 was designed by John Thomas Kelleher of the Public Works Department. The builders were Beardall and Glencross.

The post office was one of the last to be built in the Italianate Style, and is superbly executed and substantially intact. It resembles the Warrnambool post office of 1880 but the facade treatment is more sophisticated. It provides the best example of the standard recessed arcade plan post office, although the arcade is now glazed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this post office be brought to the attention of the Historic Buildings Preservation Council. It is also recommended for addition to the Register of the National Estate.

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE:

This post office was constructed in 1883¹ to a standard Public Works Department design. The architect was John Thomas Kelleher, then 38 years old with 20 years experience in the department.²

1. Original drawings held at Commonwealth Department of Construction: 3 sheets Signed J.T.K. (John Thomas Kelleher) 22.12.1882; 1 contract drawing signed J.T.K. 17.10.1883 for outbuildings and fencing etc.
2. Information from Gordon Loader, Commonwealth Department of Construction.

"The builders were Beardall and Glencross who put in the lowest tender of £4655 making the all up cost of the post office £5160.

The standard design was for rendered brick walls with bluestone footings, baltic pine timber floors, oregon structural timbers and a slate roof.

The post masters residence was mostly upstairs and postal business downstairs. Entry was through an arcade along Brunswick Street which is now glassed in...

The Fitzroy Post Office was one of the last to be built in the Italianate Style following Williamstown Customs House (1873). Clunes P.O. (1874), Warrnambool P.O. (1880), Benalla P.O. (1881) Port Fairy P.O. (1880) and Portland P.O. (1881).

The location of the Post Office is very typical. It is on the fringe of the original main commercial centre of Brunswick Street on a corner site..." ³

An early photograph dated C1917 shows the post office as it was originally constructed.⁴ An open loggia faced onto Brunswick Street, but this was infilled in 1925 and glazed with double hung windows.⁵ At this time the entrance was relocated to the north and replaced an original window and a new counter was installed to satisfy the new arrangements.

In the late 1950's the west arcade was reglazed, and the south porch and the laundry on the roof were added.⁶

This building is superbly executed and is substantially intact, retaining the original slate roof, chimneys and cast iron fencing. It resembles the Warrnambool Post Office of 1880 in composition and general planning but the facade treatment to Fitzroy is more sophisticated: the ground floor has ruled masonry bands with a raised impost mould, and the upper floor windows have elegant Renaissance window hoods with delicately modelled sill blocks. The Warrnambool post office has a plain unmodelled rendered facade apart from the string coursing dividing the floors.

The building, despite some alterations is an excellent post office building and possibly provides the best example of the recessed arcade plan (now glazed). It is an important corner streetscape element to this significant commercial precinct.

3. Gordon Loader, article on Fitzroy Post Office *Melbourne Times* Jan.24 1979 p.4

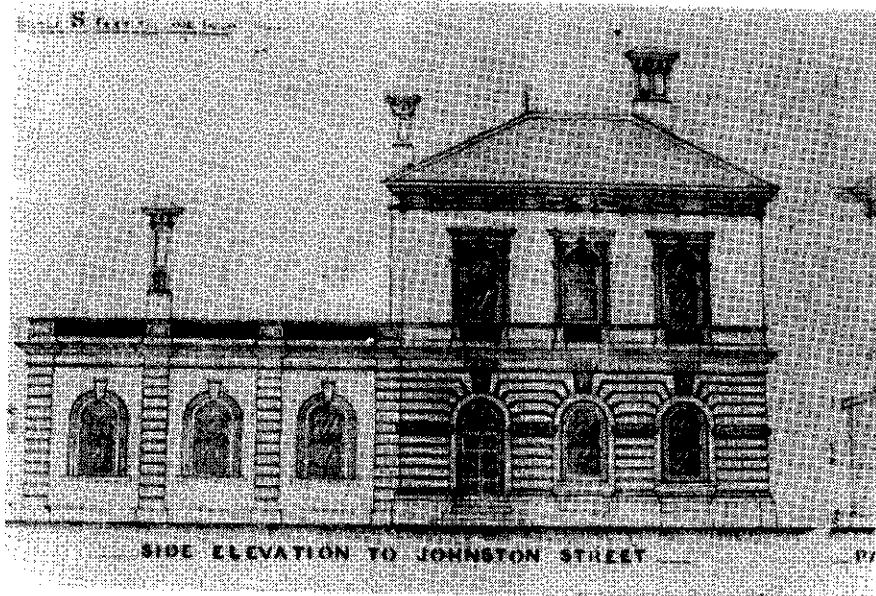
4. Held at Commonwealth Department of Construction.

5. Drawing held at Commonwealth Department of Construction 26.8.1925 signed by H. Anderson.

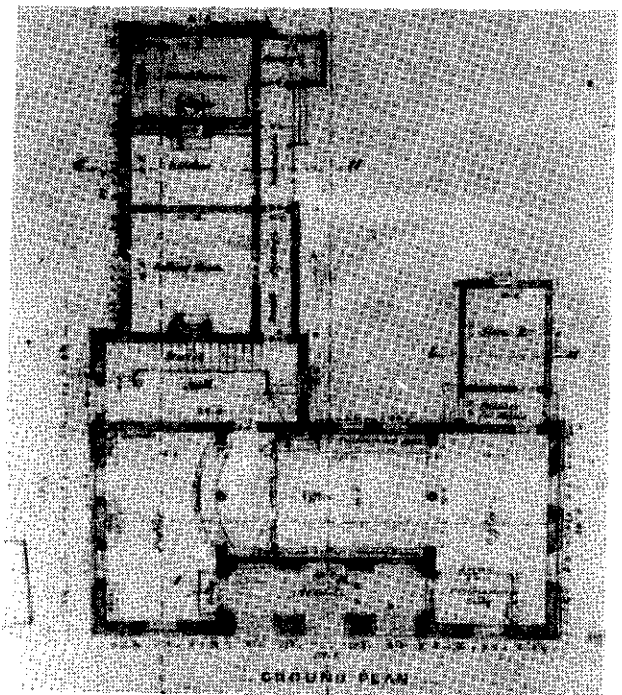
6. Information per Keith Ross.



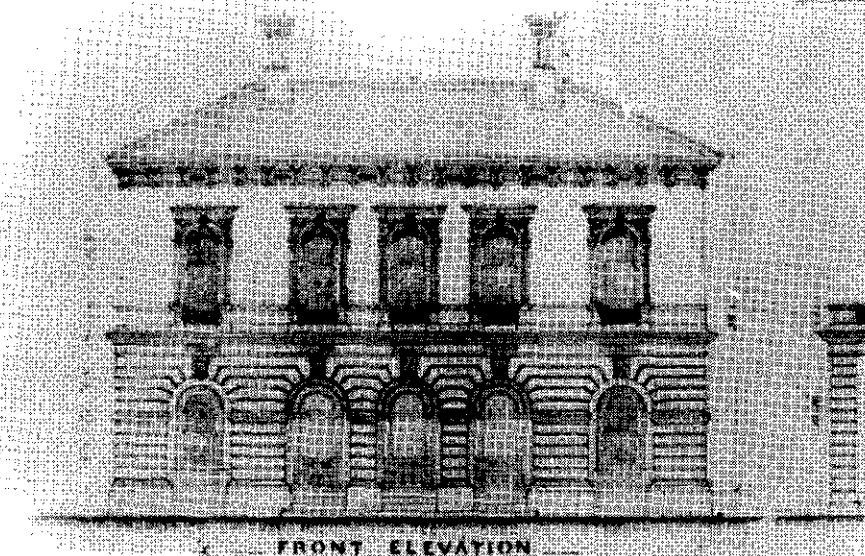
(18) Fitzroy Post Office, c1917.



(19)



(21)



Original Drawings: Signed J.T.K.
12.12.1882
Commonwealth Department of
Construction.