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The Purpose Built Post Office Buildings of the Office of Public Works in Leinster from 1870 to 1947

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THE PURPOSE BUILT POST OFFICE BUILDINGS
OF
THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS
IN LEINSTER
FROM 1870 TO 1947

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to establish a record, within Leinster, of the extant and the extinct post office buildings, built between 1854 and 1947, both those presently in use as post offices and those now used for other purposes.

No research has been carried out on this group of buildings to date.

This group of buildings, consisting of an over sixty, mainly small, modest buildings will be threatened as a typology if they are sold off by An Post.

Many of these buildings are not listed in the various county Records of Protected Structures.

This body of work does not claim to represent all the purpose built Office of Public Works buildings. It does however cover and detail all the buildings within the archive of the Office of Public Work's Drawing Collection maintained in the National Archive of Ireland.

Mullingar P.O., c.1900. Demolished

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Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

In 1856 there were 1322 post offices in Ireland[1]. By 2006 there was a post office in almost every city, town and village in Ireland giving a total number of over 1,900 postal offices. These include company offices, contract offices and post points. Company offices are those post offices owned, run and staffed by An Post. At present there are eighty-four company offices but this number is dropping year by year[2]. Post offices owned and run by a contractor on a franchise basis are more common and are known as contract offices or sub-post offices. There are a total of 1271 of these of which 901 are fully automated meaning they can offer the entire range of An Post services[3]. Post Points are machines put into premises, mostly shops, and primarily used for phone 'top-ups' and there are 2991 of these throughout the country[4]. BillPay, which allows payments of utility bills, is available at 609 at of these outlets[5].

The company offices are not all accommodated in the original purpose built post office buildings. Of the many post office buildings built by the Board of Works (Office of Public Works) between 1854[6] and 1983[7] only some survive and of those only a small number are still owned and used as post offices by An Post, Figure 1/1. It is current the policy of An Post to move the postal business out of their purpose built buildings and to sell on these buildings[8].

The Map of Ireland, Figure 1/1, shows the locations of all the sixty-one post offices listed in the OPW Archives.

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[1] Irish Philately; *Post Office in Ireland;* Issue 4, 1995; article by CT Murphy citing *'British Postal Guide' 1856; published by Order of the Postmaster General 1st May 1856*
[2] An Post Annual Reports; 2002-2006
[3] An Post Annual Report 2006
[4] ibid
[5] ibid
[6] Date of formation of Office of Public Works in Ireland
[7] Date of division of Department of Post & Telegraphs into two separate state sponsored companies – An Post and Telecom Eireann , later to be called Eircom.
[8] In conversation with Stephen Ferguson, Assistant Secretary, An Post. August 2006.

Figure 1/1 – Map of Ireland the showing distribution of OPW Purpose Built Post Offices

The purpose of this thesis is to establish a record, within Leinster, of the extant and the extinct post office buildings, built between 1854 and 1947, both those presently in use as post offices and those now used for other purposes. Appendix 1 gives details of all the Office of Public Works (OPW) post office drawing files, in Leinster, maintained the National Archives of Ireland (NAI). Appendix 2 gives all the OPW post office drawing files, for the entire island of Ireland, also maintained the NAI.

This group of buildings, consisting of a over sixty, mainly small, modest buildings will be threatened as a typology if they are sold off by An Post Their survival is also threatened if they are not listed in the various county Records of Protected Structures as is the case in some counties.

Thesis Structure and Methodology

This thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis subject and describes the reason and methodology behind the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the postal system through the ages. It gives a background history to the postal system in Great Britain and Ireland.

Chapter 3 outlines a more detailed history of the post office in Ireland from its inception to the present day.

Chapter 4 describes the work of the Office of Public Works (OPW) and in particular its work with the Post Office.

Chapter 5 explains the post office buildings, their plan typologies and their layout and structure.

Chapter 6 discusses the legislation and the Charters and their impact and influence in establishing the significance of this building group.

Chapter 7 presents a building inventory for ten existing post offices. It includes both buildings still operating as post offices, buildings which are now no longer operating as post offices, but have different uses and are still owned by An Post and buildings no longer in use as postal offices. It also includes one post office, not in Leinster, but Westport, Co. Mayo. The reason being this building is an example of a post office which, when designed, included a postmaster's residence. It is still in the ownership and in use as a postal office by An Post and maintains much of its original footprint and some of the layout of the Postmaster's residence.

Chapter 8 discusses conclusions and recommendations.

Archives

The primary source material used in this thesis was the archives of the OPW retained in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) and the OPW own archives maintained in the OPW library in their head office in 52 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

The archives of the OPW which are retained in the NAI are arranged into seven separate sections each section arranged according to the function which that body performed since its inception in 1831.

The OPW files in the NAI archive are divided under seven headings, Buildings, Piers and Harbours, Railways, Roads, National Monuments, Inland Navigation and Drainage. Although the post office building programme was extensive these buildings were not included as a separate group within the buildings division. Another area of primary source material in the NAI is the records of the Department of Communications and any record I found in this archive referring to a post office building is listed in Appendix 3. The OPW own library and archive records deal mostly with files dating from 1940s onwards and were therefore not of great benefit to this body of work. However, there are a number of document files as well as drawing files in these records and these are also referenced.

Sample Group

The drawing archive of post office buildings of the OPW, held in the NAI, covers all 32 counties of Ireland[9]. Obviously, after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 the responsibility for the six counties of Ulster, Derry, Antrim, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone, which remained under British rule, remained with the British Government. Thus any files after 1922 in the NAI only refer to the 26 counties[10].

The sample size selected for this thesis concentrates on 12 counties of the province of Leinster – Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow. Leinster was selected for two reasons. Firstly it is my home province and

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[9] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4.
[10] ibid

secondly the recent publication 'Buildings of Ireland, North Leinster[11], by Christine Casey was also seen as a stepping stone. However, there are very few post office buildings listed in this publication, offering further proof that this group of buildings is a 'forgotten' group.

From my search through the records of the OPW in the NAI, it is evident that the buildings selected in Leinster are representative of the post office building stock throughout Ireland built between the mid to late 1860s and 1947.

It is also evident from the sourced records that there was no new building programme in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the Irish Free State until the building of the first purpose built post office by the Free State in 1934. This was the Post Office in Rathmines, Dublin, designed by Howard Cooke[12]. Athlone Post Office, Athlone, Co. Westmeath followed next and was designed by the Sidney Maskell[13]. This building was part of a group of three government buildings, consisting of a Government Building and a Post Office both built in 1939 and a Garda Station, built in 1947[14]. The Post Office in Andrew Street, Dublin built in 1947 was also designed by Sidney Maskell with John Fox[15].

I have used 1947 as a cut off date for my research into the buildings for two reasons. There was a change of Principal Architect in the OPW in 1948 when John M. Fairweather retired (1939-1948[16]) and Raymond McGrath was appointed. Mc Grath served as Principal Architect for OPW from 1948 to 1968[17] and as the new Principal Architect brought about a noticeable change in architectural styles particular to the design of this group of buildings. The first post office designed under Raymond

[11] Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan,; *The Buildings of Ireland, North Leinster;* Penguin Books, Dublin;1993
[12] Architectural Association of Ireland, *Public Works, The Architecture of the Office of Public Works, 1831-1987*; John O'Regan Design Inc; Dublin; 1987; p 49
[13] ibid, p45
[14] ibid, p45
[15] ibid; p50
[16] ibid; p35
[17] Donal O'Donavan; *god's Architect, A Life of Raymond McGrath;* Kilbride Books, Dublin; 1995; p199 &p301

McGrath is the Post Office in Drogheda, built in 1951, Figure 1/2. This was a modern style, predominately glazed fronted building.

Figure 1/2 – Drogheda P.O., 1951[18]

However the OPW records in the NAI are not exhaustive as there are no records for the Post Offices in Kildare, Figure 1/3, and Gorey, Figure 1/4. However there are some drawings in the OPW's own library files but it is not conclusive whether the OPW Architects Department were responsible for their design or not[19].

Figure 1/3 – Kildare P.O., c. 1900-1920; Photo, Author, 2006

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[18] Reproduced from Architectural Association of Ireland, *Public Works, The Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-1987,* Dublin, 1987, p51
[19] OPW Library; *Post Office Drawing Collection;* Kildare, Ref L 16 4; Gorey L 16 2

Figure 1/4 – Gorey P.O., c.1890-1910; Photo, Author 2007

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is run under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. It is charged with compiling an inventory of the building stock in Ireland. This thesis will concentrate in detail on those buildings not already covered by this inventory. It will, however, refer to those post office buildings in Leinster which have been covered by NIAH and these are listed in Appendix 4.

Omissions from sample group

The obvious omission from this sample group is the General Post Office, Dublin. The reason for this omission is partly because much has already been researched and written about this building and secondly it is a different type of building designed and built on a grander scale than all other buildings in the sample group. It was designed by Francis Johnston, architect to the OPW and was completed in 1820[20].

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[20] Christine Casey, *The Buildings of Ireland, Dublin*, Yale University Press, Dublin, 2005; p50

Bibliographical Review - Architectural

In Patrick and Mary Shaffrey's book *Buildings of Irish Towns, Treasures of Everyday Architecture*[21], two post office buildings are mentioned, namely Belturbet, Co. Cavan and Cahir, Co. Tipperary. Belturbet Post Office was built in 1904 and designed by Robert Cochrane & Edward Kavanagh, architects for the OPW. In the book they state that the smallest villages would have had a church, a school and most likely a market house[22]. However these town and villages would most likely also have had a receiving (post) house and from the late 1800s possibly a purpose built post office building and yet there is no mention of these. It was usual, here, that the landlord would be the person responsible for pushing forward administrative buildings – courthouses and market houses. However, the Post Office company expected the local post master to supply his own premises and this situation continued until the Post Office Building programme started in the mid 1800s. They also state that shops may have provided three or four different services from the one establishment[23] but do not refer to a postal service being included in their list of services.

In Jeremy Williams' *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland 1837-1921*[24]*,* the post office in Belturbet, Co. Cavan, designed by Robert Cochrane and dated 1904 is featured. It is described as having banded bulbous half-columns set beside a mullioned window beneath a Flemish gable, all in sandstone trim against bright red brick facade[25]. The Post Office in Oliver Plunkett Street, Cork is described as a large unassertive building with a glazed arcade set on a curving bend and incorporating an earlier theatre on the site. Design is attributed to J.H. Owen in 1879 and extended by T.J. Mellon (no date) both of the OPW[26]. The Post Office in Clonakilty is not housed in a purpose built building but in a Presbyterian Church built in 1861, which was acquired by the Department of Post and Telegraph in 1924 for use as a Post Office[27]. This building and postal

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[21]Patrick and Mary Shaffrey; *Buildings of Irish Towns, Treasures of everyday Architecture*; Dublin 1983;
[22]ibid p57
[23] ibid p 93
[24] Jeremy Williams, *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland 1837-1921;* Dublin 1994
[25] ibid p44
[26] ibid p 63
[27] ibid, p85

office is at present at the centre of a campaign by the townspeople of Clonakilty, to save the Post Office[28].

The Post Office in Carrick-on-Shannon is described in Williams' book as a minor but scholarly example of the Baroque revival dating from the first decade of the 20th century and possibly designed by J.H. Pentland[29]. Castlebar Post Office[30] also designed by J.H. Pentland is described as having a façade treated with forceful horizontal combination of brick and stone oblivious to the sloping site. However, it was designed

<div align="center">'with extraordinary wrought-iron scrolls that uphold the gutters'</div>

Williams attributes this extra precaution to the rainfall in the West of Ireland. Westport Post Office, designed also by J.H. Pentland, is described as a well-proportioned arcade revealing its architect's grasp of classicism[31]. It is however, very different style to Castlebar Post Office, although only 20 miles apart and designed by the same architect in the same era. The Post Office in Balrath[32], Co. Meath is described as a Tudor revival post office circa 1840 (no record of it elsewhere to date).

Clonmel Post Office, now no longer owned by An Post but in use as a bookshop, is described as an example of Flemish revival in red brick and terracotta with triple segmental arcade at ground-floor level and having five arched windows at first floor level with a curvilinear parapet[33]. It was designed by Edward Kavanagh in 1905. Waterford Customs House and Post Office situated on the corner of The Quay and Keiser Street is described as a handsome palazzo in restrained Venetian Gothic and designed by James Ryan of the Board of Works (sic)[34].

Sean Rothery in his book *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900-1940*[35] lists only one Post Office building, that being Rathmines, Dublin. This building was built in 1934 to replace the older more traditional building on Lower Rathmines Road and design was by Howard Cooke of the Board of

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[28] Report from Joint Committee on Communications, Marine and Natural Resources; 08-01-2004
[29] Jeremy Williams' *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland 1837-1921;* p 259
[30] ibid p 303
[31] ibid p 306
[32] ibid p 308
[33] ibid p 343
[34] ibid p 364
[35] Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900-1940;* Lillipit Press, Dublin;1991

Works. Rothery describes the building as having a Classical elevation to the street,

> 'symmetrical in design with a central block for the main office and two flanking smaller units containing shops....the main doorway is Art Deco… the façade is finished with thin granite and marble slab…'[36].

There are no other references to post office buildings in this book.

The Architectural Association of Ireland's *Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-1987*[37] discusses some of the architects responsible for some of the post office buildings. It also describes more post office buildings than any other reference book to date. It includes Ballsbridge, Blackrock, Bray, Clonmel and Roscommon Post Offices. The OPW had charge of the Dublin General Post Office since 1846 and in 1856 was entrusted with the maintenance of all the buildings of the Post Office. In 1870 it was asked by the Post Office to provide post office buildings throughout Ireland. This book lists E.T. Owen as designing the post office at Waterford in 1873. Other post offices buildings built in E.T. Owen's time, and listed in this publication, were Limerick 1873, Cork 1876, Dun Laoghaire (Kingston) 1877, Galway 1885 and Cobh 1877[38]. Within the OPW Surveyor General's Department, from about 1896, the country was divided into three divisions with Pentland in charge of Dublin, Cochrane the northern area and T.J. Mellon the southern area[39]. Cochrane was involved in the erection of over fifty post offices in provincial towns – characteristically of bright red brick with limestone or moulded brick dressings. T.J. Mellon with the southern area was responsible for post office in Enniscorthy in 1901, New Ross in 1903 and extensions to those at Cork and Limerick. C. W. Crowe signed off on plans for Bray in 1904 and Cahir in 1902. Pentland was responsible for James' Street Post Office in 1891, Ballsbridge in 1891, Phibsborough in 1892 (now demolished and replaced by 1960s building) Blackrock in 1909, Westport in 1899 and Athy in 1910. Pentland was also responsible for the

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[36] ibid pp 181-183

[37] Architectural Association of Ireland, *Public Works, The Architecture of the Office of Public Works, 1831-1987*; John O'Regan Design Inc; Dublin; 1987;

[38] The Architectural Association of Ireland's *Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-198;* p 21

[39] ibid p 25

reconstruction of the G.P.O. Dublin which was carried out in three phases between 1904 and 1915[40].

Other post offices featured in this publication are Rathmines[41] 1932, Drogheda[42] 1951, Letterkenny[43] 1952, Cootehill[44] (no date) and Longford[45] 1982. The post offices in Athlone, Rathmines, Andrew Street were finished in granite and marble, the post offices in Drogheda, Letterkenny and Cootehill were predominately glass with light structural elements, both types being in stark contrast to the buildings built before the formation of the Free State. Longford Post Office was built in 1980s in a traditional 'town' shop front design with two floors over.

In Matthew J. McDermott's *Dublin's Architectural Development 1800-1925*[46] there is only a passing reference to the General Post Office, Dublin[47].

The OPW's publication *Buildings for Government;*[48] although it has a section on post offices, only gives brief descriptions. It describes Birr Post Office[49]; 1903, as Queen Anne style; Sligo[50] 1902 as neo Georgian and Clonmel[51],1902 and Castlebar[52] 1902 as arts and crafts.

[40] ibid p 26
[41] ibid, p48
[42] ibid, pp 49,50
[43] ibid, p51
[44] ibid, p51
[45] ibid, pp 78-79
[46] Matthew J. McDermott; *Dublin's Architectural Development, 1800-1925*; Tulcamac, Dublin; 1988
[47] ibid, pp7,9 & 79
[48] Office of Public Works; *Buildings for Government, The Architecture of State Buildings, OPW: Ireland 1900-2000,* Town House & Country House, Dublin; 1999
[49] ibid p50
[50] ibid p50
[51] ibid p50
[52] ibid p50

Chapter 2

General History of the Postal System

General History of the Post

The postal system, consisting mainly of government documents carried from place to place commenced in ancient Egypt and Persia (Iran)[53]. In Egypt, references to such a postal system date back to around 2000 B.C. Persia had the first recorded regular postal system, where riders on horseback and horse drawn wagons were used to carry messages. The most common types of messages and users of the service was the government as they needed to relay information safely from one area to another. Greek historians recorded that the first postal service was established in Persia in the 6th century B.C[54]. Major roads and trade routes were used for the transportation. The system used a relay of messengers riding between resting stages which were the distance apart a horse could travel without needing rest. Typically they were 5 – 6 kilometres or 9 miles apart. Horses were kept ready for the relay messengers while the incoming horse was allowed to rest – hence the name post, derived from the Latin name for place of rest – 'posta'. China was the next major group recorded as using a messenger system during the Chou dynasty (1122-221 B.C.) and again it was used mostly to transport government official documents.

The "postal" system was not always the world wide name for the delivery of messages it is today but derived its name from the usage of the delivery e.g. posta as explained above. In the Islamic world the postal system is known as "barid" a word derived from the towers built to protect the roads used by the messengers[55].

The postal system in the Roman Empire was organised during the time of Augustus Caesar (62B.C. – AD 14) and this service was also reserved for government correspondence[56]. For the Roman Empire communication from Rome to outlying governors was a necessity. As the postal system developed so did the road system on which to carry the messengers. The 'Cursus Publicus' public course was a series of state built roads with relay station at various intervals. The efficiency and speed with which messages were carried could be up to 270 kilometres (170 miles) in a

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[53] Universal Postal Union, *http://www.upu.int/about_us/en/history.html*; May 2006
[54] Bath Postal Museum, *http://www.bathpostalmuseum.org; May 2006*
[55] Bath Postal Museum, *http://www.bathpostalmuseum.org; May 2006*
[56] *http://www.postalhistory.org; May 2006*

twenty-four hour period and after the fall of the Roman Empire this was not equalled again, until 19th century, in Europe. The growth of the Renaissance in Europe and the resulting commercial business and the development of the printing press in c.450 all contributed to the need for the re-emergence of a postal system in the 15th century.

The postal system or service is now the name given in the Western world for the delivery of hard copy written documents and small packages to destinations all over the world and anything sent through the system is known as post (Europe) or mail (USA).

The Post Office in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).

In 1635 the state postal service was established by Royal Proclamation under Charles 1[57]. This meant that the facilities of the Royal Post were now opened up to the public. Previous to this the only mail sent by 'post' was to and from the royal court. Members of the public who wanted to send messages used private messengers.

Over the next few decades very little was done by the Royal Post to advertise itself. Post-houses were set up where the public could take their mail for delivery and could collect mail sent to them. But –

> ……*what towns possessed post-houses of their own and how these towns stood in relation to other towns which did not enjoy the same advantages, might well be considered essential information; yet even of this no public announcement was given…. and no newspapers then existed to do for the Post Office what the Post Office omitted to do for itself* [58].

This could be said to be as true a representation of the postal system today as when it was written. See further reference to this in Chapter 6.

The city of London was no better off from a postal system point of view than the remainder of Great Britain and posts were irregular and at lengthy intervals. There was no structure to the postal system regarding times of delivery, houses did not have numbers and so delivery of post

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[57] British Post Office; The Post Office, An Historical Summary; HMSO by Order of the Post Master General; 1911; p2

[58] Joyce Herbert; *The History of the Post Office from its Establishment down to 1836,* London 1893; p

was for the most part irregular. William Dockwra[59], who, established the original London Penny Post, also, in 1680, introduced a structured postal system for London[60]. Between 400 and 500 receiving-houses (post-houses) were opened on a single morning and deliveries commenced to the Inns of Court and other places of business. Messengers called for letters every hour and deliveries were made up to ten to twelve times a day. Deliveries to other places according to distance were made from four to eight times a day. Up to this time there had been only one receiving house in London, the General Post Office in Lombard Street[61].

In the 1700s receiving-houses were set up throughout the country. They were usually housed at inns where the innkeeper took on the duties of the postmaster in accepting the mail, handing over letters, the exchange of mailbags and the provision of fresh horses for the postboys.
Post offices resulted from these receiving houses and were built up from the amount of trade they had however –

> there does not appear to be any record of the structure to the establishment of these premises at this time[62].

The accommodation at Post Office headquarters in London in the early part of the 18th century was believed to be inadequate, more post towns and receiving houses were required but until the headquarter building in London was extended to provide more space for the handling of mail the provision of additional post-houses was not an option. It was not until 1792 that the Post Office built additional space in London.[63]

Rowland Hill, in 1837, published a pamphlet entitled 'Post Office Reform' in which he advocated a low postage rate, the prepayment of postage on letters rather than the collection of postage on delivery, the adhesive stamp and the uniform penny post[64]. The Post Office did not agree with these measures and further asserted it would take forty to fifty years to

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[59] David Feldman & William Kane; *Handbook of Irish Postal History to 1840*; Feldman, Dublin; 1975; p41
[60] British Post Office; *The Post Office, An Historical Summary;* HMSO by Order of the Post Master General; 1911; p7
[61] ibid, p3
[62] Herbert, Joyce; *The History of the Post Office from its establishment down to 1836"*; London 1893; p 207
[63] ibid, p 296
[64] M.J. Daunton; *Royal Mail, The Post Office since 1840;* Athlone Press, London; 1985; p 5

recover costs if they were introduced. However, public pressure prevailed and the government introduced the Penny Postage Bill in 1839. The Penny Post was introduced in January 1840 with the first stamps coming out in May of that year[65].

This was the first step in the reform of the postal system. It made communication for the general population affordable, which up to now it had not been. It thus started a social change in the way the public communicated across distances and in the way they did business. It was now easier and simpler to communicate across the country. After this the postal office system started to expand. In 1838 the money order system started and it grew rapidly with the popularity of letter sending. The use of slits in doors had become generally adopted after a suggestion by Rowland Hill in 1850s. Numbers on doors was also introduced around this time making the work of the post office messenger (postman) much easier. The first road side letter boxes were introduced in 1852, the idea being claimed by both Rowland Hill and Anthony Trollope. Trollope was responsible for the first experiment of road-side pillar boxes in Jersey in 1852[66].

The Post Office in Ireland

The first Irish Postmaster was Evan Vaughan and he was appointed in 1638[67]. In a report by him in 1655 he gives the first list of provincial post offices:

> *Ulster: - Belturbet, Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry, Armagh, Londonderry, Antrim, Coleriane, Belfast, Carrickfergus.*

> *Connaught – Athlone, Castlerea, Loughrea, Galway*

> *Munster – Kilkenny, Clonmel, Mallow, Youghal, Cork, Cashel, Limerick, Gowran, Wexford, Waterford.*[68]

The earliest known Dublin letter office was located on Castle Street in 1659[69]. The letter office was located in various premises until its final

[65] ibid, pp 10-11, 14
[66] ibid, p 40
[67] F.E.Dixon; *'Irish Postal History'*; Dublin Historical Record; No 23, 1969-1970; p 128
[68] ibid p 128

move from a site on College Green, when a decision was made to purchase the site on Sackville Street (O'Connell Street). This was the first building, in Ireland, specifically built as a Post Office. It was opened to the public 1820.

From the time of the Act of Parliament in 1657 which set up the postal service monopoly in Great Britain (and Ireland) the Irish postal service was under London control. It separated from London in 1784

……for the convenience of trade[70]……

and became the Irish Post Office. Sir Edward Lees came to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant and became the Secretary for the Post Office for Ireland in 1774[71]. He continued in this position until his death in 1811 when his son Edward took over from him and continued in this position until 1831[72].

In the early part of the nineteenth century rumours had been circulating about practices of the Secretary of the Post Office in Ireland and a number of reports were ordered by the House of Commons to investigate[73]. These reports were damming to the working and accounting methods of the Lees', the Secretary of the Post Office in Ireland stating –

> *……the post office arrangements were defective, there appeared to be a want of system throughout, frequent delays and irregularities in the delivery of mails, there existed an accumulation of errors in the accounts, and that frauds were constantly occurring, that private property was frequently embezzled, no proper check existed, that accounts had never been audited from the establishment of the Post Office (in Ireland) in 1774 until 1819, that there seemed to be a want of official attention, the economy was disregarded or unattended to in every branch of incidental expenditure there appeared extravagance and waste of public money[74].*

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[69] Mairead Reynolds; *A History of the Irish Post Office;* Dublin; 1983 p 17
[70] cited from ibid, p.28
[71] ibid, p 34
[72] ibid, pp 34-37
[73] P.C. O'Neill; *Brief Review of the Irish Post Office from 1748-1831;* London 1831; p 6
[74] P.C. O'Neill; *Brief Review of the Irish Post Office from 1748-1831; Ninth Report of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into Fees and Gratuities in Public Office in Ireland, ordered by*

The Irish Post Office had been independent of the Post Office of Great Britain at this time for nearly fifty years but as a result of this report -

……*it was determined that this independence should cease……*[75]. Control of the Irish Post Office, therefore, reverted back under the control of London in 1831[76].

Independence and the Importance of a National Identity

In 1922, as part of the Treaty of Ireland, the Irish Post Office was separated again from the British Post Office and for Ireland the importance of highlighting its national identity and independence was paramount. The Post Office in Britain issued, at this time, a publication called the British Post Office Circular. One of the first things the Irish Post Office did was to issue its own circular and on 15th March 1922 it published the first issue of 'Iris an Phuist' (sic). This was based on the British version and was a circular sent to all postmasters for the purposes of enabling them to carry out their duties. It gave details of postage rates, telegraph rates, changes in working practices, advertisements for vacancies for postmasters and general items of interest. As Ireland was now independent and in a position to make her own regulations the Post Office was also in a position to publish its own publication, Iris an Phuist, as they saw fit. As a result it was published in Irish and English. In the first issue, Issue No 1, the Postmaster General, Seamus Breathnach, (J.J.Walsh), appealed to his Irish Postmasters by stating –

> ……*To the Staffs*
>
> *In taking over, on behalf of the Irish people, the control of the Irish Post Office, I desire to say that the aim of the new administration is to make the Staff the most contented of staffs, and to make the service as whole the most efficient service in Europe ……*
>
> *……in its dealings with the Staff the administration will be guided solely by the interest of the service, and the extraneous*

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the House of Commons Feb 1810;Fifth Report of the Commissioners for Auditing Public Accounts in Ireland ordered by the house of Commons 14th march 1817; Nineteenth Report of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry ordered by the House of Commons 22nd June 1827 London 1831; p 6

[75] Herbert, Joyce; *The History of the Post Office from its establishment down to 1836"*; London 1893; p 415

[76] Dixon, F.E.; *Irish Postal History*; Dublin Historical Record No. 23 1967-1970; pp 127-135;

considerations which have in the past been allowed to influence service decisions will no longer operate……

……for the first time, the Irish Staffs, are working for an Irish Government; for the first time they are responsible, for the providing of an efficient Service, to an Irish Government alone – to the Irish people alone. And, in the providing and maintaining of an efficient service, I feel confident that I can rely upon the whole-hearted co-operation of men and women of all grades[77]

The patriotism and feeling of national pride is obvious and continues through the early issues of the publication in various guises as follows -

……It is intended that Iris an Phuist should take the place of the British Post Office Circular. The latter publication will, however, continue to circulate in Ireland for some time longer, and in the meantime it is not proposed to publish Iris an Phuist more frequently than once a fortnight or, as a rule, to repeat in it any matter that may appear in the Post Office Circular. All items will be published in Irish and in English in Iris an Phuist[78]

……it is the Postmaster-General's desire that all officials of the Irish Post Office should…. possess a good knowledge of the Irish language….show a useful lead in the language movement…[79]

……the provisional government has issued a Minute pointing out that it is essential that each Department should become thoroughly Irish, and that the use of the Irish language should be introduced where possible[80]

……in the purchase of stores…preference should be given…to articles of Irish manufacture…[81]

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[77] Rialas Sealadach na hÉireann; *Iris an Phuist No. 1 15th March 1922;* Dublin 1922 p 1
[78] ibid, Issue No 1; 15th March 1922; p 2
[79] ibid
[80] ibid, Issue No 8, 7th June 1922 p 71
[81] ibid, Issue No. 2, 29th April 1922; p

The promotion of the Irish language was very important for the Post Office at this time, although the number of citizens who could read, write or speak Irish at this time was low. In 1926 in a population of 2,428,481 only 543,511 classed themselves as Irish speakers[82]. So although only 18% of the population regarded themselves as Irish speakers the new government was pushing forward the Irish language through its various departments. The Post Office was encouraging its staff to learn the language and states –

> ……*the Postmaster General directs that the special attention of all Post Office Officials be called to the notice in Iris an Phuist of 15th March 1922 relating to the Irish Language. He reminds them that Irish will be increasingly used in the Public Services and expects that as a matter of patriotic duty cooperation will be forthcoming…..classes will be held in all the principal towns*[83]

> ……*another cry for the use of the language and to take advantage of the Irish classes arranged throughout an Saorstát*[84]

It would seem that although the government and its department were pushing the use of the language the civil servants and postal workers were not giving it the support the government would have liked. This could be because of the low level of usage by the general public. If the public had been demanding it then the civil servants would have had to comply.

Imperial Insignia

Buildings

Patriotism and nationalism was manifesting itself in many ways and requests were made to the OPW from various postmasters for the removal of the royal insignia from the front facades of buildings[85]. At this time there was a great urgency to remove the British emblems and motifs. It was a matter of national pride for the New Irish Government to have its own Irish identity and the postal system was an obvious place to start.

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[82] Central Statistic Office, Ireland
[83] Saorstát na hÉireann; *Iris an Phuist No. 61 26th September 1923;* p 251
[84] Rialas Sealadach na hÉireann; *Iris an Phuist* Issue No. 112 3 September 1924 p 283
[85] National Archives; Dept. of Communications Record Files; Post Office Buildings – Removal of Royal Monograms and providing Irish Free State Symbols; State Symbols for Post Offices; Com/B12105/50, Volume 1.

The Post Office was one of the government departments that the general population came into contact with regularly through the visibility of the Post Office vehicles, buying stamps, posting letters etc.

Requests were made from postmasters to the OPW for permission to remove coats of arms, ornamental badges and Royal lettering from the walls of the buildings. The postmaster in Ennis Post Office, Co. Clare, was particularly vocal and when he could not get a response from the OPW, resorted to contacting the local Garda Síóchana who made a report to the Commissioner in Clare. Amongst his concern was:

> ……*although pillar boxes displayed the letters G.E. it was absurd to see this symbol on the front of the Head Post Office in the town. It was a reminder to the observant that though the Old Order changeth (sic), the feelings of some of the Officials transferred to the Free State are as English as ever*[86]

By 1924 a number of Post Offices had requested replacement of the Royal Coat of Arms with the Irish Free State emblem. From the records it is obvious that the OPW were quite willing to allow any metal cartouche to be removed, but where the emblems were carved into stone or brick it was -

> ……*not considered that the expense of removing the device would be warranted and in those cases no alterations would be made*[87]

Buildings with a metal cartouche had their emblems removed, namely Boyle, Enniscorthy, Killarney, Tipperary and Tullamore. The royal insignia on the postal office buildings at Birr, Bray, Castlerea, Clonmel, Dundalk, Limerick Junction, Navan, New Ross, Skibbereen and Tralee would have to be chiselled off and therefore no work was done to them at that time. The Royal Arms in stone on the post office building in Waterford was to be ……*defaced by plastering over carving*[88].

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[86] National Archives; Dept. of Communications Record Files; Post Office Buildings – Removal of Royal Monograms and providing Irish Free State Symbols; State Symbols for Post Offices; Com/B12105/50, Volume 1.
[87] ibid, letter dated Feb 1924
[88] ibid

It is not obvious from the records, however, at what stage the remaining royal insignia in stone were replaced with Irish Free State emblems, Figure 2/1.

ROYAL COAT OF ARMS ON POST OFFICE BUILDINGS.

QUESTION OF REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT BY IRISH FREE STATE EMBLEM

Name of Post office.	Type of Royal Device.	Method of removing.
Birr	Stone cypher of King Edwd.VII.	Chiselling.
Boyle	Brass Monogram,"E VII R".	Prising Off.
Bray	Crown carved in stone.	Chiselling.
Cahir	Metal cartouche.	Prising off.
Castlerea	Stone monogram "GV.R"	Chiselling.
Clonmel	Stone cypher "E.R."	Chiselling.
Dublin (ruins of GPO)	Complete Royal Arms in stone.	Chiselling.
Dundalk	Royal Arms in stone.	Chiselling.
Enniscorthy.	Terra-cotta "V.R." and date.	Panel to be cut out.
Killarney	Metal cartouche.	Prising off.
Limerick Junction Post Office	Stone Cypher, "V.R." 1895.	Chiselling.
Navan.	Stone Crown & E.R.	Chiselling.
New Ross.	Stone Shield with "V.R."	Chiselling.
Roscrea	Bronze cypher E.VII.R.	Prising off.
Skibbereen.	Royal Arms in stone.	Chiselling.
Tipperary.	Metal cartouch.	Prising off.
Tralee.	Royal arms and crown in stone.	Chiselling.
Tullamore.	Cypher of King Edward VII in Metal.	Piling off.
Waterford.	Royal Arms in Stone.	Deface by plastering over carving.

Figure 2/3 – Royal Coats of Arms on Post Office Buildings – [89]

The removal of the emblems seen as belonging to the Imperial past in Ireland was important at least to the local postmasters, even if it did not appear from these records to be high on the priorities list of the OPW section of the new Irish Government.

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[89] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection,* Ref. B 12105/50 Vol. 1

Livery and Uniform

The Post Office was eager to display its 'Irishness' as quickly as possible. It was a very visible presence on the streets from letter boxes to postmen to delivery vans. I have found no record of an instruction to change the colour of post boxes and vehicles to green. However, a reference to a change in the uniforms did appear in Iris an Phuist. It read –

> *Uniform Clothing*
>
> *……New uniforms designed for the Post Office of the Irish Free State issued to full-time officers ……. Overcoats – no change except green piping will be substituted for red.*[90].
>
> *Repainting of Mail Cars, etc*
>
> *…... the crest ….should take the place of the Crown and Royal monogram and should appear in gold with black relief*[91].

There are references to the re-painting of handcarts and trucks[92] but not to their colour. It must be assumed that that order would have come from at a later date and not through the Iris an Phuist publications.

When Saorstát Eireann (the Irish Free State) took over responsibility for the network of post boxes in 26 counties of Ireland the nationalistic pride was carried through to the painting green of pillar boxes although there was no specific reference or instruction for this at this time in the Post Office official publication. This instruction, like that for the handcarts and trucks, must have come at a later time and by other means.

When the first pillar boxes were erected in Britain in 1855 they were painted, ironically, dark green. In 1859, the design of the postal box was standardised and called the National Standard pillar box and from 1874 the pillar boxes were painted red so that they could be more easily seen[93].

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[90] Rialas Sealadach na hÉireann; *Iris an Phuist,* Issue No. 36, 4th April 1923; p 132
[91] ibid; Issue No. 4; April 12th 1922; p18
[92] ibid; Issue No. 9; 21st June 1922; p 92
[93] British Postal Museum Archive; *Archive Information Sheet – Pillar Boxes*; citing sources: Post 14-Inland mails organisation and circulation: Post 15-Inland mails organisation, letter books: Post 30-England and Wales: Post 33-general minutes: Post 92-post Office publications.

Stamps

Until the Treaty was signed and ratified it was not possible to issue any Irish stamps and the government was not in a position to withdraw the British stamps and replace them with Irish stamps overnight for logistical and legal reasons. Therefore there was a period when British stamps, over printed with '*Saorstát Éireann 1922',* were still accepted in Ireland. The first overprinted stamp was issued on 17th February 1922[94] although the actual control of the Irish Post Office was not in the hands of the Irish Government until midnight on 31st March 1922.

Between the signing of the Treaty on 6th December 1921 and its ratification on 14[th]January 1922 British stamps were accepted in Ireland. On 17[th]February 1922 the Irish Post Office issued stamps using British stamps overprinted with the words *'Railtas Sealadaċ na h-Éireann 1922'*[95] (Provisional Government of Ireland 1922). When the new constitution of the Irish Free State was adopted in the Irish Dail on 9th September 1922 the country name changed from 'Railtas Saladaċh na h-Éireann' to 'Saorstát Eireann' (Irish Free State). The control of the Post Office was taken over by the Irish Free State Government at midnight on 31st March 1922. The overprinting of postal stamps also changed at this time from 'Railtas Sealadaċh na h-Éireann 1922' to 'Saorstát Eireann'. The first definitive Irish stamp was issued on the first anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, 6th December 1922[96], Figure 2/3.

Fig. 19. First Day Cover of Ireland's First Definitive Dublin to Birmingham December 6, 1922

Figure 2/4 – The First definitive Irish stamp; Reproduced from Dr. C.I.Dulin, Ireland's

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[94] Dr. C.I.Dulin, *Ireland's Transition, The Postal History of the Transitional Period 1922--1925;* McDonnell Whyte, Dublin; 1992; p 44
[95] ibid, p 24
[96] ibid, p 37

Patriotism and Nationalism

This nationalism must been seen against the background of Irish history up to this time. British rule in Ireland could be said to have started when England introduced plans to settle Scottish and English families in Ireland, and in Ulster in particular, in the late 16th century and early 17th century. This was commonly known as The Plantation and was introduced in order to 'anglicise' the country. The confiscated land which had been owned, in general, by Catholics, was now owned by the 'Planters' who were mostly Presbyterian and Protestants. The Penal Laws, between 1695 and 1727, were introduced to suppress the Catholics and assist in this 'anglicising'. They meant that Catholics were not allowed to vote, nor sit in Parliament, nor were they allowed to inherit property from Protestants. Property inheritance was allowed between Catholics but to prevent a Catholic from owning too much land, on the death of a Catholic his land was split up rather than handed to one individual. Presbyterians were also affected by the Penal Laws. There were allowed to sit in parliament but not to vote.

Ireland, at this time, was ruled by the King's governor in Ireland and by the Irish Parliament. However, the Irish Parliament could not pass legislation not already passed in the English Parliament. This discrimination led to frustration and eventually to the formation of the rebel group known as the United Irishmen. This organization crossed the religious divide with members from Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodists and other protestant groups. The United Irishmen were responsible for the Rebellion of 1798, which was quashed by the British after three months of fighting. This rebellion, however, led to the abolition of the Irish Parliament and the implementation of the Act of Union in 1801. It also meant that Ireland was now ruled exclusively by England, from the English Parliament.

The Home Rule Movement, in the latter half of the 19th century campaigned for the right of Ireland to govern herself as a region within the United Kingdom. It was lead by, ironically, a Protestant landowner, Charles Stewart Parnell and became to be known as the Irish Parliamentary Party. The issue of self government divided Ireland. A

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[97] ibid, p 37

significant minority of Unionists largely based in Ulster, opposed home rule, fearing that a Dublin Parliament dominated by Catholics and nationalists would discriminate against them. Two Home Rule Acts (in 1886 and 1893) were introduced by the British Parliament, but neither became law.

The British government attempted to introduce a third Home Rule Act starting in 1912, but due to vetoes, delays and the First World War, it was never implemented. In the meantime a small group of radical forces in Irish Nationalism were resorting to physical force. This led to the Easter Rising in 1916, which was centered in the General Post Office (GPO) in O'Connell Street in Dublin. This Rising, which proclaimed an Irish Republic, culminated in the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921 and the Civil War 1922-1923. A fourth Home Rule Act, the Government of Ireland Act 1920, was enacted in 1921. It granted Home Rule to part of Ulster, The Six Counties.

In the remaining twenty six counties, Home Rule was increasingly irrelevant in the light of the imminent Irish Republic. Negotiations between Ireland and Britain resulted in the establishment of the Saorstát Éireann, the Irish Free State, with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921 by the Irish and British representatives. This in turn, led, to the Irish Civil War, between supporters and opponents of the Anglo Irish Treaty, which lasted from June 1922 to May 1923. The country having been ravaged by hostilities and war for so long took time to re-establish and in this light must be seen the wish for the removal of anything British including the insignia affixed to postal offices[98].

Formation of An Post

In 1979 the Post and Telegraphs Review Group reporting to the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs recommended the establishment of two new commercial state-sponsored bodies, An Post, to operate the postal services and Telecom Eireann (now Eircom) to control telecommunications services.

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[98] Summarised from chapters in R.F. Foster; *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*; Penguin, London; 1990

The Department of Posts and Telegraphs was responsible for all postal services in Ireland until the formation of An Post, the Irish Post Office, as a state sponsored body. An Post was registered under the Companies Act in December 1983 and vesting day was 1st January 1984. Apart from one share held by the Minister for Finance, all of its shares are held by the Minister for Communication, Marine and Natural Resources.

A state-sponsored body is the name given to a commercial company, which is owned by the Irish Government. All state-sponsored bodies have a sponsor Minister who acts as the shareholder, either independently, or in conjunction with the Minister for Finance. State-sponsored bodies are sometimes called semi-state companies, which is incorrect, as they are fully owned by the state.

Some state-sponsored bodies are organized as statutory companies and being officially non-profit organizations do not have shareholders. This type of state-sponsored body includes Coras Iompair Éireann, Electricity Supply Board, RTE and Board Gáis Éireann.

State-sponsored bodies with the government as the sole shareholder, include An Post, Bord na Mona and Dublin Airport Authority. Eircom was such a company but is now no longer, having been floated on the stock market in 1999.

Chapter 3

The Post Office in Ireland

The Buildings

In the nineteenth century an accumulation of wealth by the 'leisure classes' and the growing 'middle class' meant that more and more people were able to read and write and then by progression, to use the postal system for communication. The popularity of the Post Office meant more and more receiving houses were opening up, which inevitably meant the construction of purpose built post office buildings.

The bank buildings, market houses and courthouses built in towns were formidable buildings, often austere in appearance. Banks were built in this manner to communicate honesty and dependability within the community

> ......*the completion of a new bank building caused excitement in these places (towns) and may even have enhanced the pride experienced by the town's citizens*[99].

These bank buildings were often built in stone, with porticos and steps leading up to the main banking floor.

> ......*Irish Architects working between 1900 and 1930 generally choose a corner site with the main emphasis on the angle with the main entrance at the aligned front*[100].

The Post Office building which emerged from the receiving house was initially located in the town's inn or in a small shop. It was not set apart from its neighbours, like the town's bank, but located and sized to fit in with the streetscape. When a receiving house no longer sufficed and a larger building was required the post master would request separate premises from the Post Office. The post office surveyor could ask the postmaster if he was prepared to supply his own premises for remuneration. This system worked in smaller towns and villages where property was not expensive, but in the larger towns the cost of supplying the property might not be fully returned to the postmaster in the annual cost of running the office. The alternative was to provide an office owned by the Post Office. At first the Post Office employed a local architect or

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[99] Emmet O'Brien; *Bank Buildings of Ireland 1762-1910*; unpublished thesis, UCD 1991; pp201-208
[100] ibid

builder who designed and built the building. However in the main offices in London, Edinburgh and Dublin the Post Office used the Government's own building department, the Office of Public Works[101]. In some cases with smaller offices the building was rented from a private individual thus creating the distinction between Crown Office Class 1 – built and maintained by the Office of Public Works and Crown Office Class II, a building which was leased and therefore the responsibility of the Post Office. Figure 3/1 gives a breakdown of the various categories of postal office at this time.

Head Post Office	a)	the building might be owned by the Postmaster
	b)	the building was most likely a Crown Office Class I built and maintained by the Office of Public Works
	c)	the building might be a Crown Office Class II leased by the Post Office
Branch Office		essentially a 'detached counter' of a Head Office; usually a Crown Office Class II leased by the Post Office
Salaried sub-office		Usually a Crown Office Class II,
	a)	where the sub-postmaster was established no private business was carried on,
	b)	where the sub-postmaster was un-established there might be some other trade
Scale-payment sub-office		Premises and staff supplied by the sub-postmaster who was usually a shopkeeper.

Figure 3/5 - Types of Post Office c.1900[102]

In 1907 a 'Select Committee on Post Office Servants' recommended that the Department take over the responsibility for the buildings from the Office of Public Works. This was not implemented and the Office of Public remained responsible for freehold offices with the Department responsible for offices held on lease[103].

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[101] M.J. Daunton, *Royal Mail, The Post Office since 1840, London,* 1985; p 277
[102] ibid, p281
[103] ibid, p277

From the formation of the post office in 1635 Ireland was part of the Post Office system of Great Britain. In 1784 an independent Irish Post Office was set up and it remained thus until 1831, when Irish Post Office lost its independence from the British Post Office. This arrangement was to remain until after Irish Independence in 1922. Much of the documentation relating to the Irish Post Office was stored in the Customs House, the home of the Irish Civil Service. However these records were lost a the fire in the Customs House in 1921, during the War of Independence. It can be assumed that the system which was employed for the English, Scottish and Welsh building programmes was also employed in the Irish building programme.

The number of post offices in the United Kingdom (including Ireland) had expanded from 4,028 in 1840, to 24,354 in 1913[104]. In 1840, the system was simple; the postmaster provided the office and clerks in return for allowances from the Post Office. In addition, there were receiving houses where letters were handed in. These were usually shops or inns working on commission. In the 1850s, the postmaster was appointed through patronage but this was abandoned from 1887 in Ireland and 1895 in England Wales and Scotland.

The Post Office surveyor in contrast to the OPW surveyor, was responsible for inspecting the various buildings as well as checking services and that rules and regulations of the post office were adhered to. If a postmaster required work to be carried out in his post office, he reported to the Post Office Surveyor, who, in turn reported to the Post Office Secretary. In Ireland and Scotland another layer of authority was added with the Post Office Secretaries in Dublin and Edinburgh reporting to the Post Office Secretary in London.

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[104] M.J. Daunton; *Royal Mail, The Post Office since 1840, London,* 1985; p 276

Post Office 1922-1984

By 1922 post office were also classified by the type of business they performed. The main categories were:[105]

Money Order Offices   (which could include Savings Bank business)

Telegraph Offices (which not only involved sending and receiving telegrams but also telegraphic transmission of Money Orders if, additionally the office was a Money Order office)

Telephone Call Offices (which meant that there was a call box in the vicinity, if not in the actual office).

All these categories were listed in the annual Post Office Guides printed at the time.

By 1923 there were 2,173 post offices in the 26 counties which were categorised as follows:[106]

58   Head Offices
1,952   Principal Offices (Branch Offices)
159   Town Sub-Offices
10   Town Branch Offices

Dr. C. I. Dulin in his book, 'Ireland's Transition'[107], gives a breakdown of the numbers of post offices in each county at the time of the Transitional Period[108]. He qualifies this by stating the limitations and problems with the listing[109]. Comparing this list of Head Offices with the list of surviving drawing files in the NAI, there are some anomalies. Forty post offices are on both lists, sixteen are on the Dulin list but not on the NAI list suggesting that they were classed as Head Post Offices at this time but were not located in a Government owned building. Fourteen are on the OPW list but not on the Dulin list, which suggests that there were a

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[105] Dr. I.C. Dulin; *Ireland's Transition, The Postal History of the Transitional Period 1922-1925*, Dublin 1992; Ch 6; p73
[106] ibid Ch 20, pg 322
[107] ibid
[108] ibid, p323
[109] ibid; p321.322

number of post offices located in purpose built buildings which were Branch Offices (Principal Offices).

A comparison between 1923 distribution by County of 'Free State' Post Offices in Leinster and the current distribution is given in Figure 2 and it shows a reduction in the numbers of Post Offices in all counties, further supporting the policy of An Post of reducing its building stock and the number of outlets it owns.

County	1923[110]	2006[111]
Carlow	36	21
Dublin	169	164
Kildare	57	37
Kilkenny	49	38
Laois	38	22
Longford	33	21
Louth	60	36
Meath	57	47
Offaly	44	31
Westmeath	74	35
Wexford	91	72
Wicklow	57	37
Total	765	561

Figure 3/6 - Post Offices by County in Leinster

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[110] Ibid Ch. 20, pg 323
[111] An Post, *Listing of Post Offices;* 2007

Post Office Structure in 2007

The classification of post office buildings in 2007 has not changed dramatically since An Post was made a semi-state body. The Branch Offices, also called Company Offices, are owned and staffed by An Post employees and at present there are eighty-four such offices. Contract Offices, sometimes referred to as sub-post offices, are operated by contractors and there are 1272 of these of which 901 are fully automated and 371 are non-automated. There is also a service called Post Points of which there are 2991 outlets. These are machines installed by An Post into shops and are used mainly for 'topping-up' mobile phones although at 609 of these one can use 'BillPay' which allows customers to pay utility bills. At another level are licenses given to shopkeepers for stamp sales only[112].

Vacancies are filled for contract managers, colloquially known as Postmasters and Postmistresses, through open advertising and an interview process. An Post select the contractors by the services the contractor is able to offer[113]. Most contractors would offer the Post Office alongside a retail outlet in order to make the service viable. Security is also the responsibility of the contract managers, although, An Post assists in introducing and upgrading security systems for contract offices.

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[112] In conservation with Dan McCarthy, Retail Building Section, An Post; January 2007.
[113] In conservation with Dan McCarthy, Retail Building Section, An Post; January 2007

Chapter 4

The Office of Public Works

Formation of Office of Public Works

The Office of Public Works, or Board of Public Works as it was first named, was established by an Act of Parliament passed in 1831. The act was called *An Act for the Extension and Promotion of Public Works in Ireland (1 & 2 Will. IV c.33)*[114]. The OPW commenced with a board of three commissioners, one being the chairman. The first Chairman was Colonel John Fox Burgoyne, with Brooke Taylor Ottley and John Radcliff serving as the other two Commissioners. The early activities of the OPW included provision of inland navigation, building of harbours, construction of roads and maintenance and building of public buildings. Under its duties the OPW took over the duties of the Postmaster General in relation to roads in 1831 i.e. post roads and by 1857 the OPW had taken over the responsibility for all buildings in connection with the Post Office. By 1860 the administration at head office included three Commissioners, a Secretary, Accountant, Architect, Engineer, Valuator and Solicitor, four messengers and up to thirty clerks. The OPW was transferred to the Irish Free State under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, during the period 1st April 1921 to 31st March 1922[115].

The Architectural Association of Ireland's publication *Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-1987*[116] discusses some of the architects responsible for some of the post office buildings. It also describes more post office buildings than any other reference book sourced and has been described in detail in Chapter 1.

OPW and the Post Office Buildings

The OPW had charge of the General Post Office Dublin since 1846 and in the Annual Report of 1855 the first reference to post office building appears as -

> ……*'Building to accommodate Post Office, Custom House etc., Belfast'. The works of this building have made considerable and*

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[114] Guide to the Archives of the Office of Public Works, Ch 1 Pg 1.
[115] Summarised from Guide to the Archives of the Office of Public Works, Ch 1 .
[116] The Architectural Association of Ireland's *Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-1987*, Dublin; 1987

> *satisfactory progress, and it is expected that building will be fit for occupation in the course of next spring[117].*

In the 1857 Annual Report it refers to the Post Office in Belfast as being completely finished and occupied.

Maintenance of post offices is referred to as early as 1861 when the 30th Annual Report referred to

> *……repairs have been affected to such of the ……Post Offices……as required them[118].*

The first post office constructed after the Post Offices in Belfast, Cork and Limerick was reported in the 1878 Annual Report as

> *…… A new Post Office has been erected at Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire), and handed over to the Post Office Authorities[119].*

In the 1870s, the OPW was asked by the Post Office to provide large post office buildings in the Provinces[120]. It took charge of this building programme until the formation of the Free State in 1922 when the OPW came under the new Free State Government. The Architectural Association of Ireland's book lists E.T. Owen as designing the post office at Waterford in 1873. Other post offices built in E.T. Owen's time, and listed in this publication, were Limerick in 1873, Cork in 1876, Dun Laoghaire (Kingston) 1878, Galway 1885 and Cobh 1877.

From about 1896 the OPW Surveyor General's department, divided the country into three divisions with Pentland in charge of Dublin, Cochrane the northern area and T.J. Mellon the southern area. Cochrane was involved in the erection of over fifty post offices in provincial towns – characteristically of bright red brick with limestone or moulded brick dressings[121]. T.J. Mellon with the southern area was responsible for post office in Enniscorthy in 1901, New Ross in 1903 and extensions to those at Cork and Limerick. C. W. Crowe signed off on plans for Bray in 1904 and Cahir in 1902. Pentland was responsible for James' Street Post Office in 1891, Ballsbridge in 1891, Phibsborough in 1892 (now demolished and replaced by a 1960s building) Blackrock in 1909,

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[117] OPW Annual Reports; *24th Annual Report, 1855*; p26
[118] ibid *30th Annual Report, 1861*; p7
[119] ibid, 47th Annual Report, 1878; p 13
[120] The Architectural Association of Ireland's *Architecture of the Office of Public Works 1831-1987*; p21
[121] ibid, p25

Westport in 1899 and Athy in 1910. Pentland was also responsible for the reconstruction of the G.P.O. in Dublin which was carried out in three phases between 1904 and 1915[122]. Ironically, this reconstruction was totally destroyed during the Easter Rising in 1916. The Post Office building programme stalled after the formation of the new Free State due to lack of funding from the Government for the new department looking after telecommunications – the Department of Post and Telegraphs.

The next programme of purpose designed and built government buildings started in 1930s. Athlone's Post Office is one of three separate buildings built for government in early 1939. Andrew Street Post Office in Dublin was built in 1948 and designed by Sidney Maskell and John Fox[123].

Other post offices featured in A.A.I. and built after 1922 are Rathmines, 1932[124], Drogheda, 1951[125], Letterkenny, 1952[126] and Cootehill[127].

The post offices in Athlone, Rathmines, Andrew Street were finished in granite and marble, while the post offices in Drogheda, Letterkenny and Cootehill were predominately glass with light structural elements, both types being in stark contrast to the buildings built before 1922.

The only purpose built post office built by the OPW on behalf of the Department of Post and Telegraph as a result of an open competition was the new post office in Tipperary town. The competition was won by H.J. Lyons Architects in 1978.

The last post office built by the OPW was in Longford which was built in 1980 for a tender price of £342,759.34[128]. The OPW, in the meantime, had been preparing drawings and cost estimates for Navan Post Office since 1976 and a letter dated 14th February 1984 to The Director of An Post referred to a revised scheme with an estimated cost of £800,000.00, including fees[129]. It is not clear, however, who did build this post office, as An Post was by this stage responsible for its own building portfolio.

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[122] ibid p 26
[123] ibid p 45 and p 50
[124] ibid, p 48
[125] ibid, pp49 & 51
[126] ibid, p 51
[127] ibid, p 51
[128] National Archives of Ireland *OPW Archive* File No. A69/74/10/1 Vol.1.
[129] ibid, File No.A69/35/9

Chapter 5

The Buildings of the OPW

Introduction

The records of the Office of Public Works in the National Archives of Ireland were the main primary source material used in this body of work. There are almost 140 drawing files with approximately 1890 drawings referring to 61 different post office buildings throughout Ireland in these archives. However, I have been only able to source two correspondence files relating to the post office building projects in this archive, these being Fairview Post Office and Wexford Post Office. It appears that in the 1970s a large number of OPW files were destroyed in order to make room for an OPW refurbishment of one of its buildings on a site adjacent to the, now, National Concert Hall. OPW employees were informed that this was about to happen and were asked to remove any files they needed. Most of this correspondence was not retrieved[130]. The archive also includes Letter and Minute files of the OPW. However, there is no listing of records of post office buildings in these letter and minute files, although other building types are listed by group, such as police barracks, railways stations, national schools, lunatic asylums, etc. A search through this archive might produce more information, but due to the extensiveness of this section of the archive it is not part of this body of research.

Plan Typology Sample Group

When the postal service was taken over and run by the government the postal office evolved out of the receiving houses. This could be compared to a private shop becoming a public building. Therefore, as public areas, these buildings take on a very different identity.

McCullough & Mulvin in 'Lost Traditions' state that

> *……buildings, generated by pressing requirements of function, economy and beauty, were not invented anew for each project, but derived from long-lived architectural types inherited and acquired over time…* [131]

So too the post office building evolved out of necessity of function and use from the receiving houses it followed.

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[130] In conversation with Gregory O'Connor, Archivist, National Archives of Ireland; December 2006
[131] McCullough & Mulvin *'Lost Traditions'* 1987, Dublin; p11

Seventeen postal office plan types of buildings in Leinster are examined in this Plan Typology Section. These plans were selected from the drawing archives of the OPW Collection in the NAI, and the Drawing Collection of the OPW Library are listed below. Figures 5/1-5/17 inclusive show each plan type in diagrammatic form. They give a broad sample of the general layouts of postal offices in Ireland and a sample of the postal offices in Leinster. Although drawings do not survive for some of the postal offices in Leinster it can be reasonably assumed that those extinct buildings had similar plan typologies as those examined.

The buildings examined in detail on their plan typologies are
Athy, Co. Kildare; c.1911
Ballsbridge, Dublin; c.1914
Birr, Co. Offaly; c.1907
Blackrock, Dublin; c.1907
Bray, Co. Wicklow; c.1908
College Green, Dublin; c.1890
Dun Laoghaire, Dublin; c.1897
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford; c.1911
Fairview, Dublin; 1889 amended 1909
James's Street, Dublin; c.1892
Kells, Co. Meath; c.1903
Killucan, Co. Westmeath; c. 1911
Longford, Co. Longford, c.1910
Muine Bheag, Co. Carlow; c.1921
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath; c.1900
Navan, Co. Meath, c.1906
Phibsborough, Co. Dublin, c.1898
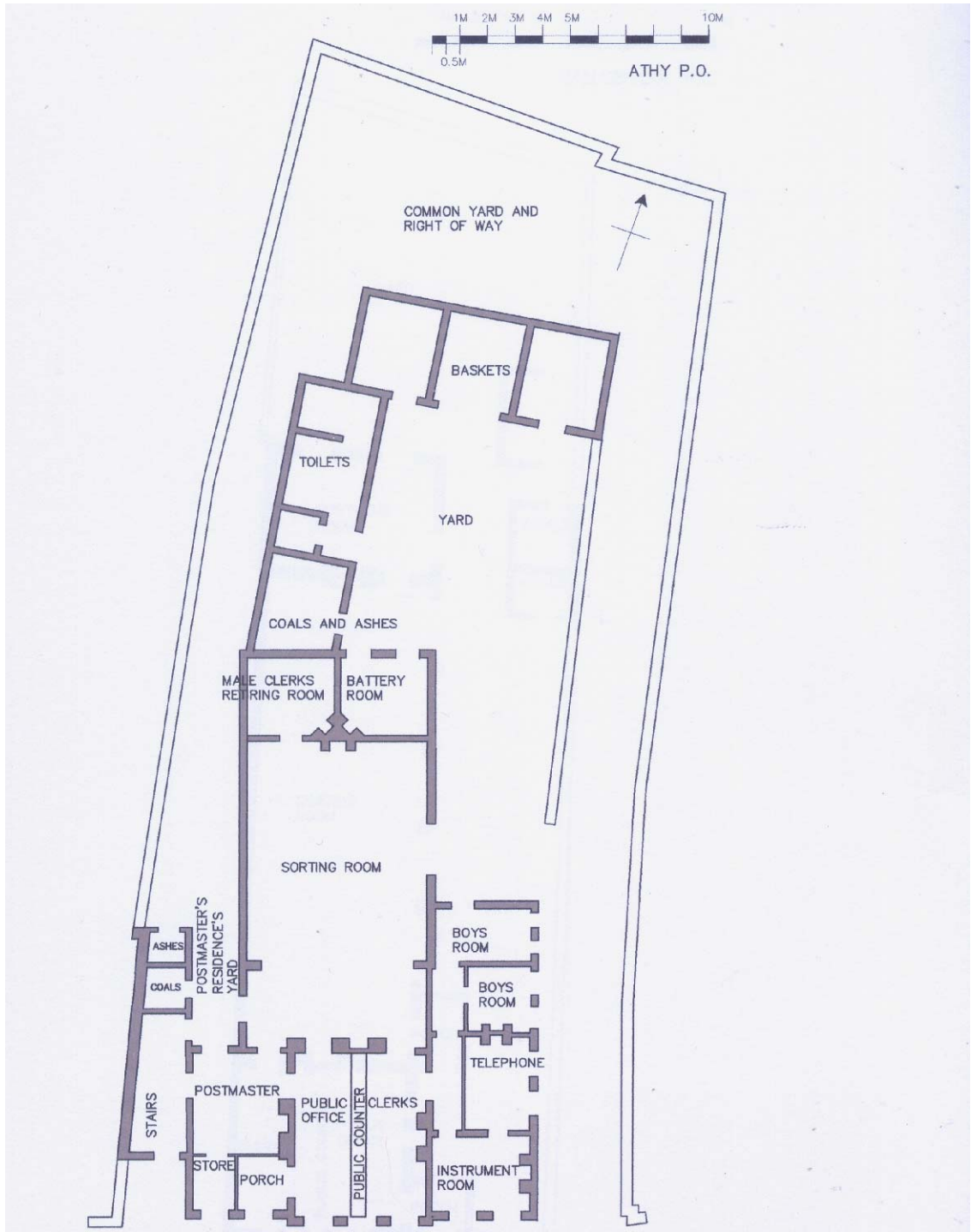
Figure 5/7 – Athy P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing[132]

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[132] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/594
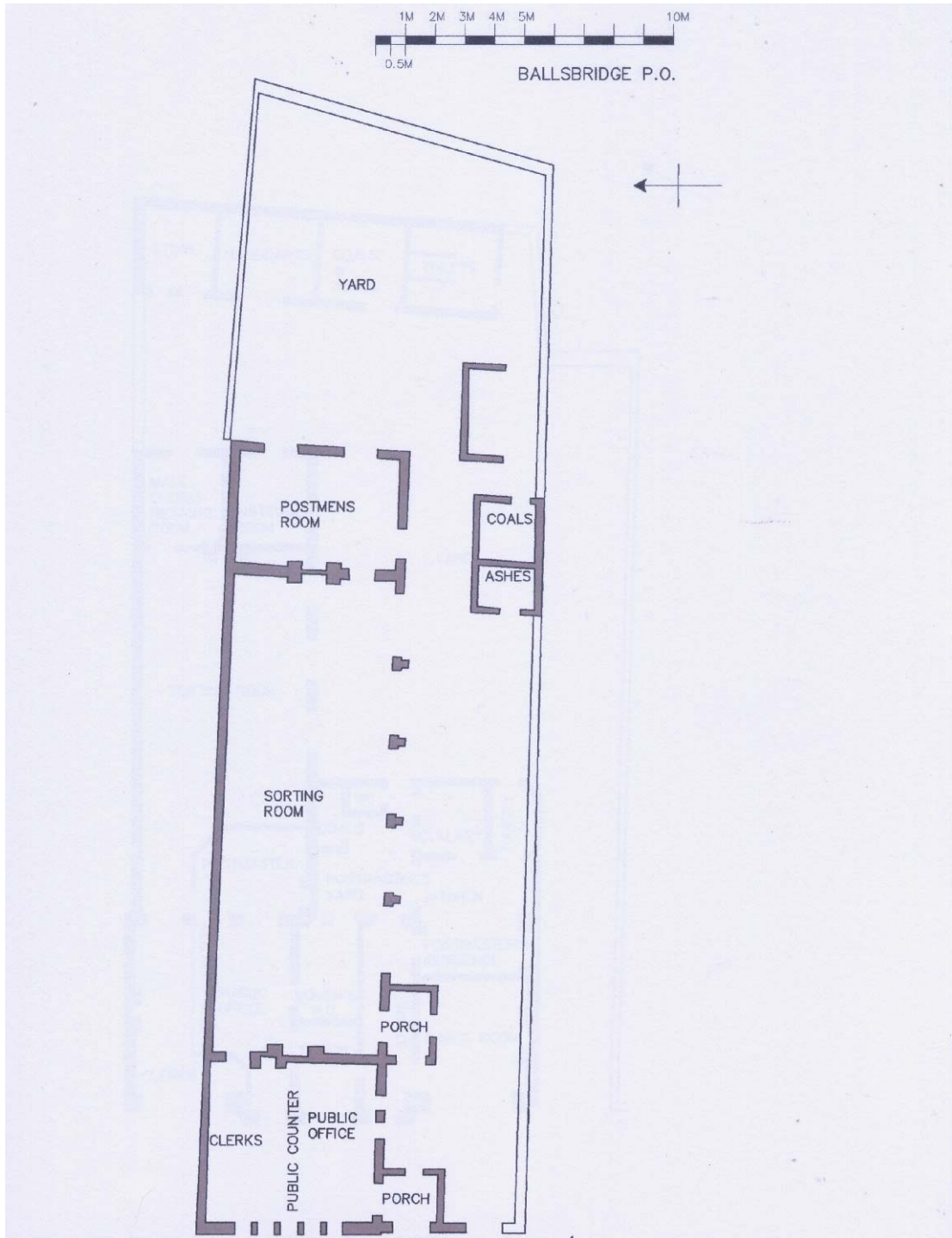
Figure 5/8 – Ballsbridge P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing[133]

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[133] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/615-617
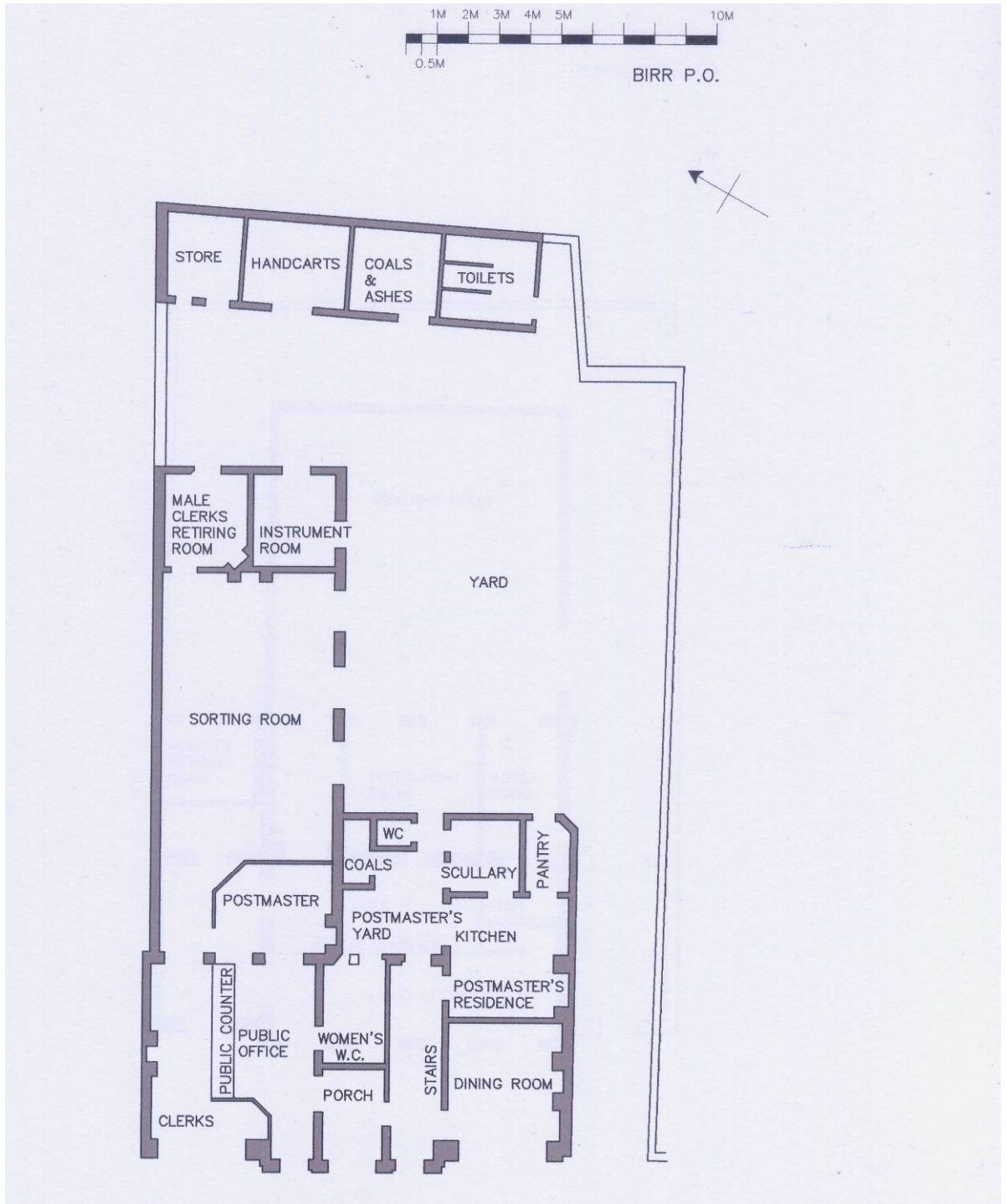
Figure 5/9 – Birr P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing[134]

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[134] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/598

1M 2M 3M 4M 5M 10M
0.5M

BLACKROCK P.O.

SORTING ROOM

WOMEN'S
RETIRING
ROOM

INSTRUMENT
ROOM

BOYS
ROOM

CLERKS

POST
MISTRESS

PUBLIC COUNTER

PORCH

PUBLIC OFFICE
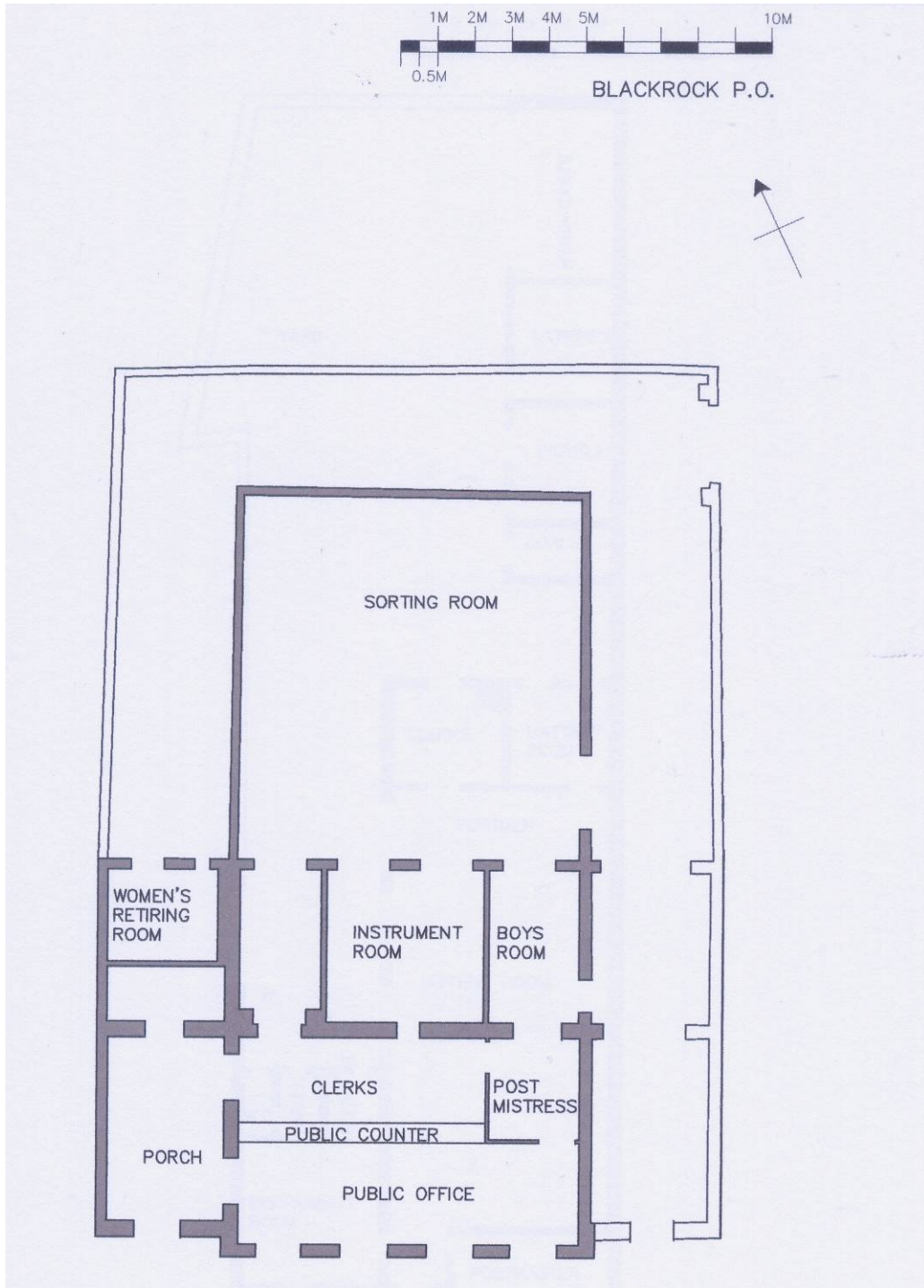
Figure 5/10 – Blackrock P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [135]
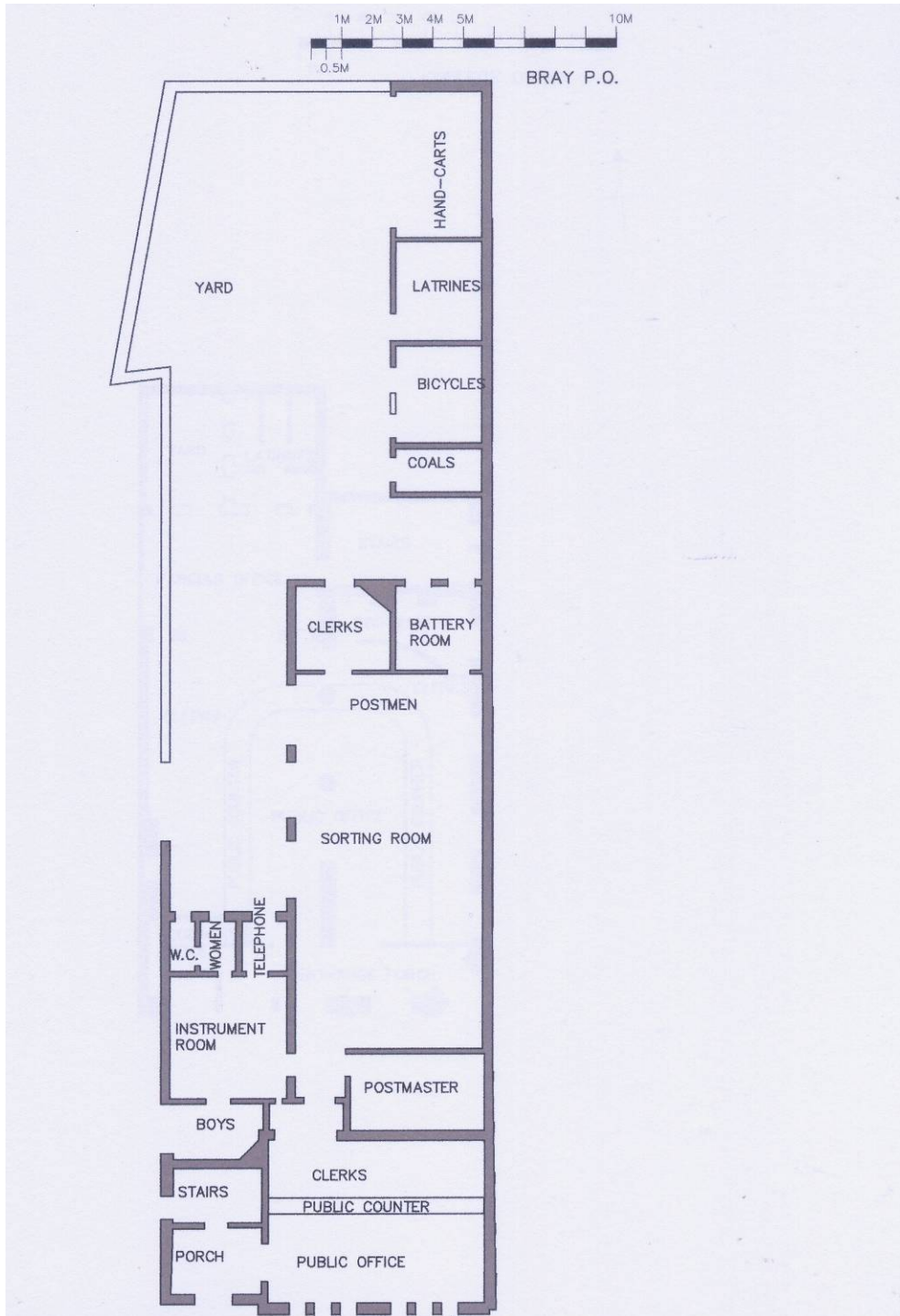
Figure 5/11 – Bray P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [136]

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[136] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/601
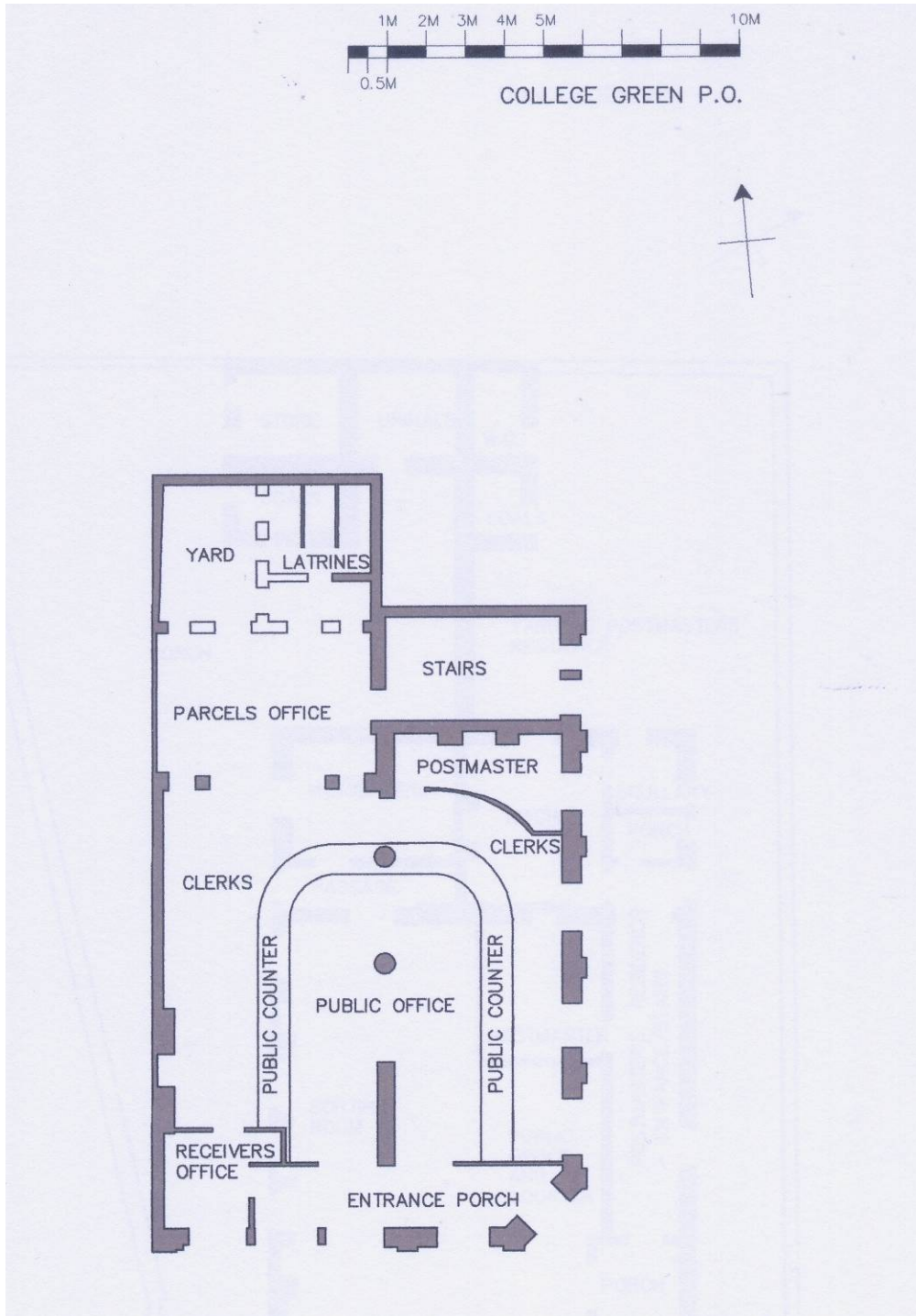
Figure 5/12 – College Green P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [137]

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[137] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/682 & 683
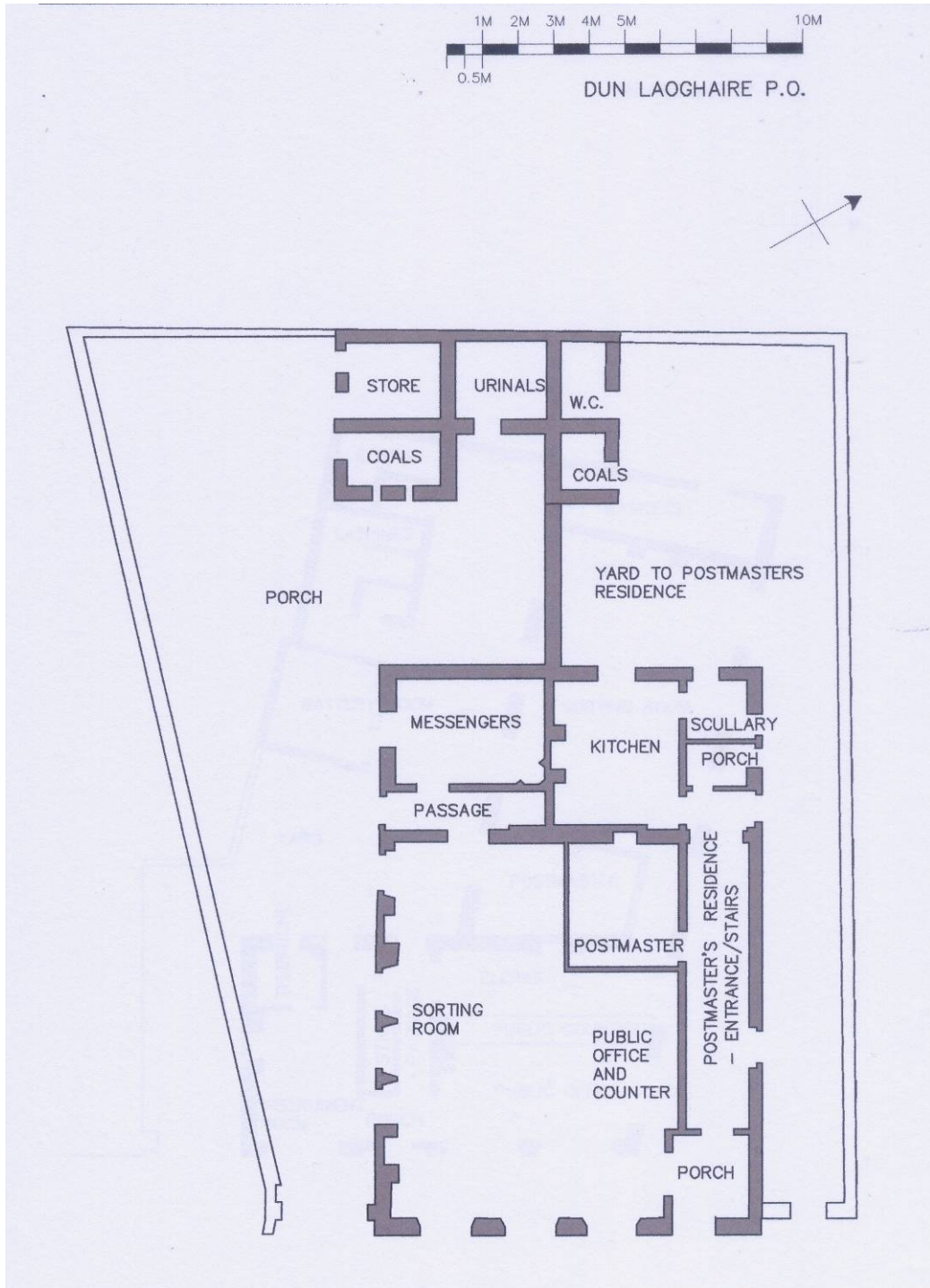
Figure 5/13 – Dun Laoghaire P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [138]

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[138] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/611 & 612
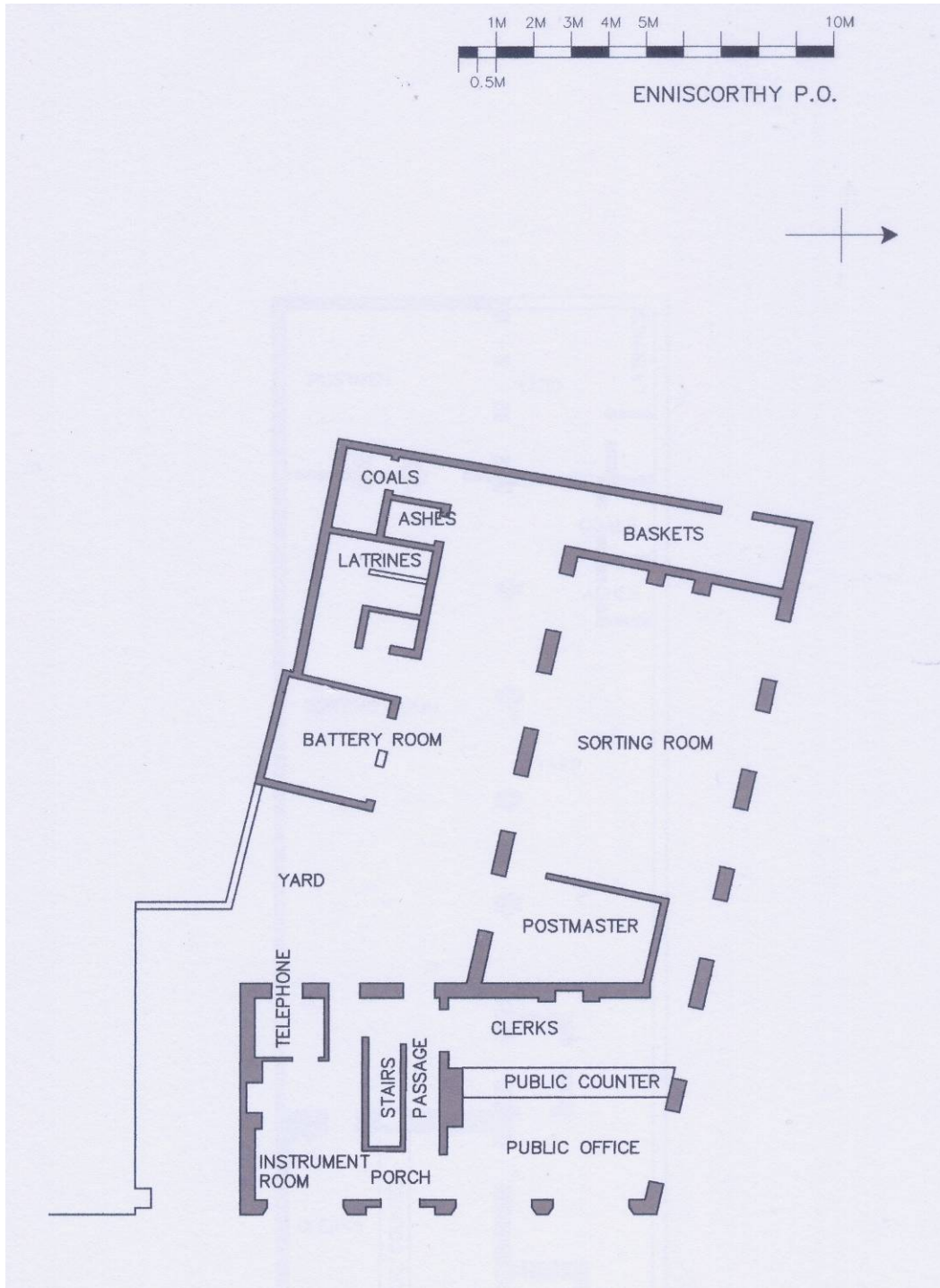
Figure 5/14 – Enniscorthy P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [139]

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[139] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/620
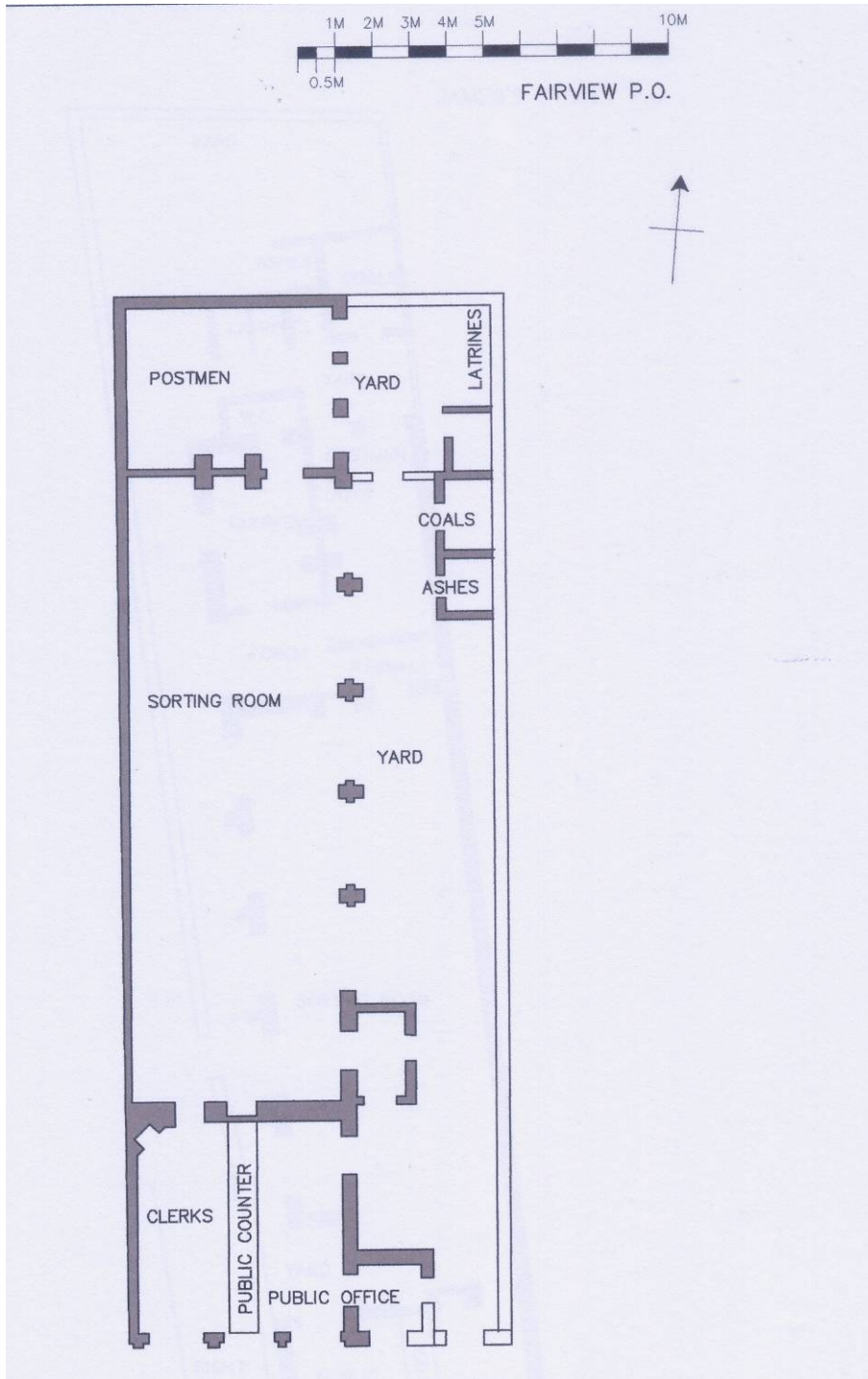
Figure 5/15 – Fairview P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [140]

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[140] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/654
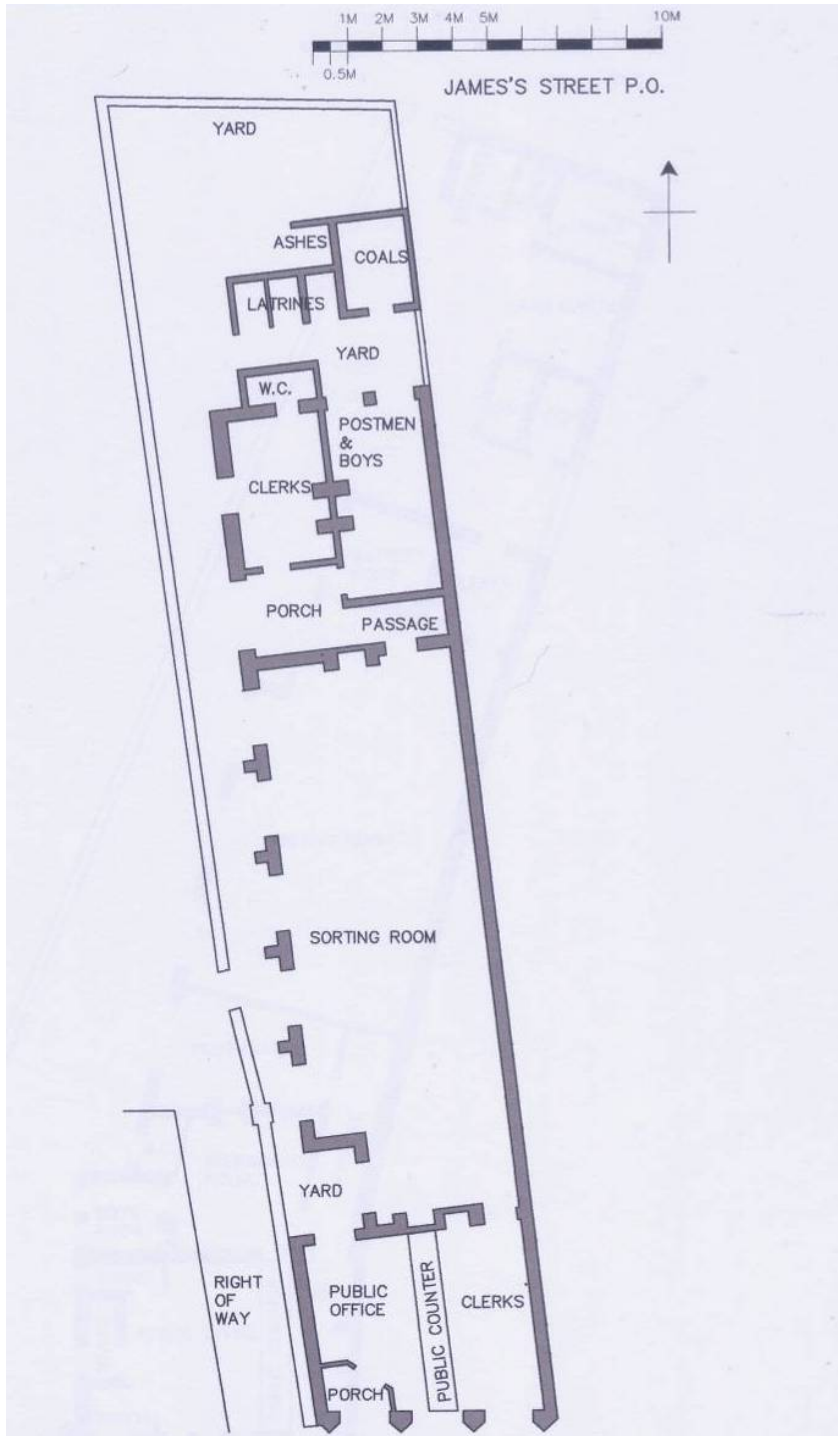
Figure 5/16 – James's Street P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [141]

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[141] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/895
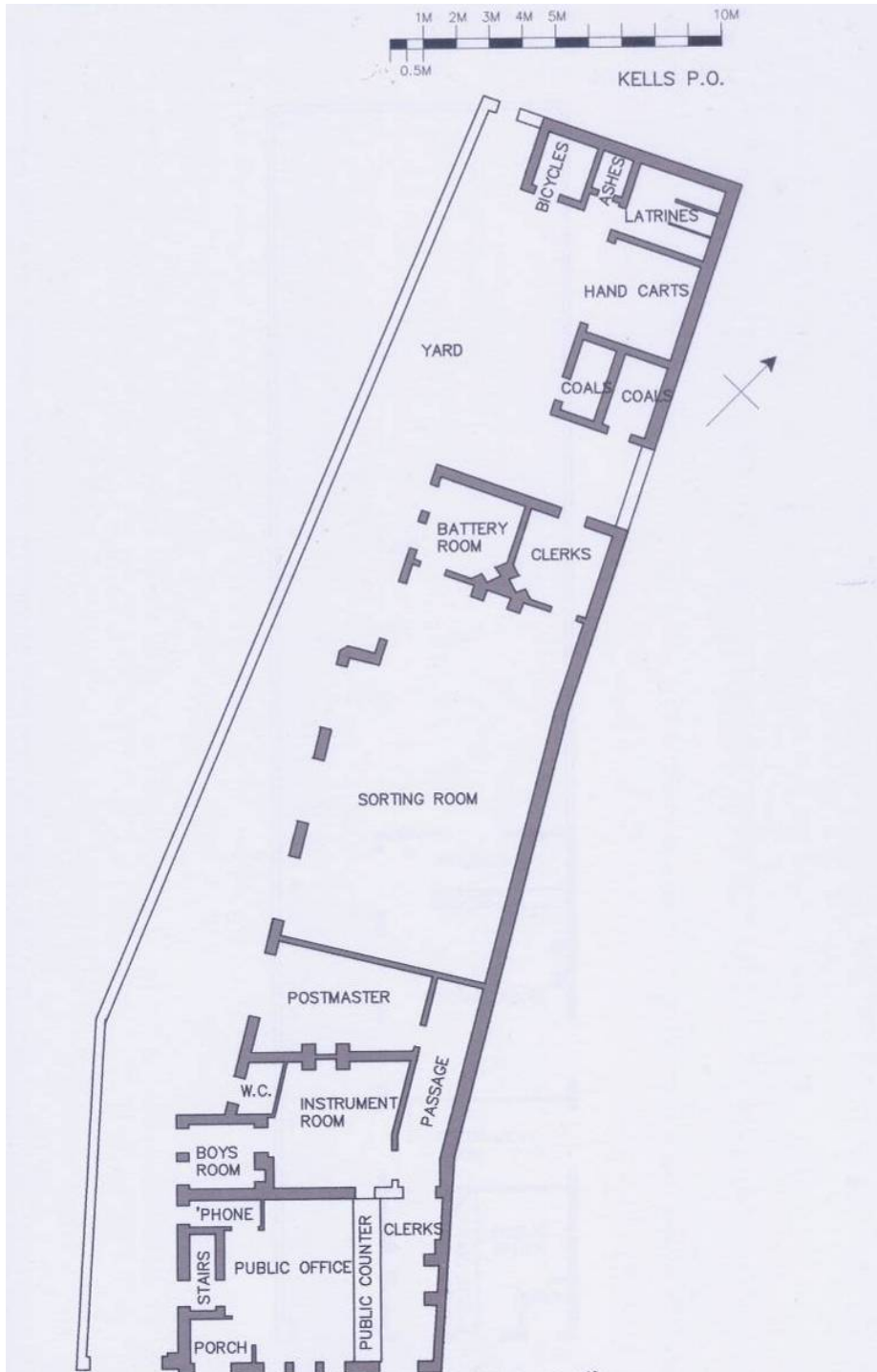
Figure 5/17 – Kells P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [142]

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142 National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/898

KILLUCAN P.O.

YARD

POSTMEN

COUNTER

SORTING ROOM

INSTRUMENT ROOM

CLERKS | PUBLIC COUNTER | PUBLIC OFFICE

PORCH
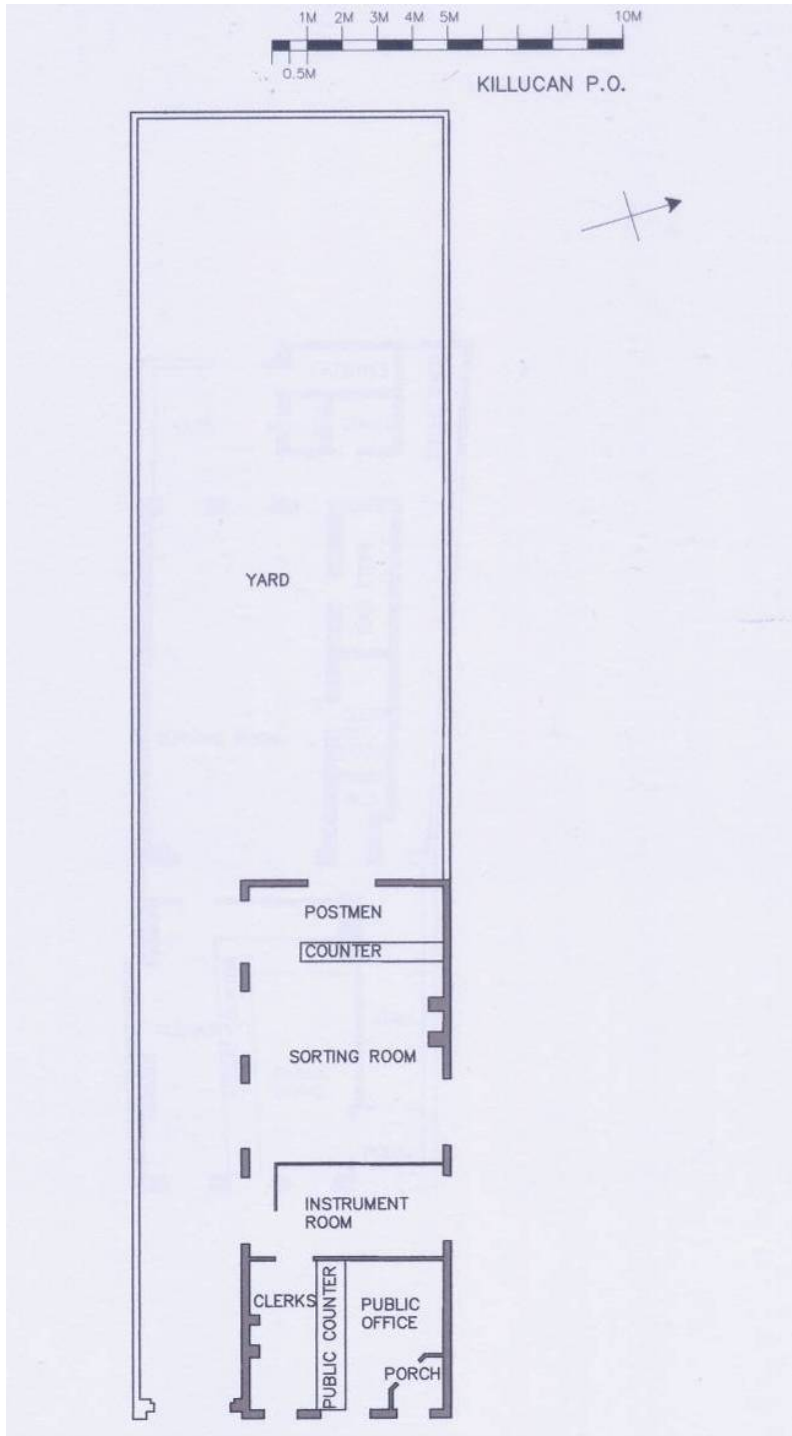
Figure 5/18 – Killucan P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [143]

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[143] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899
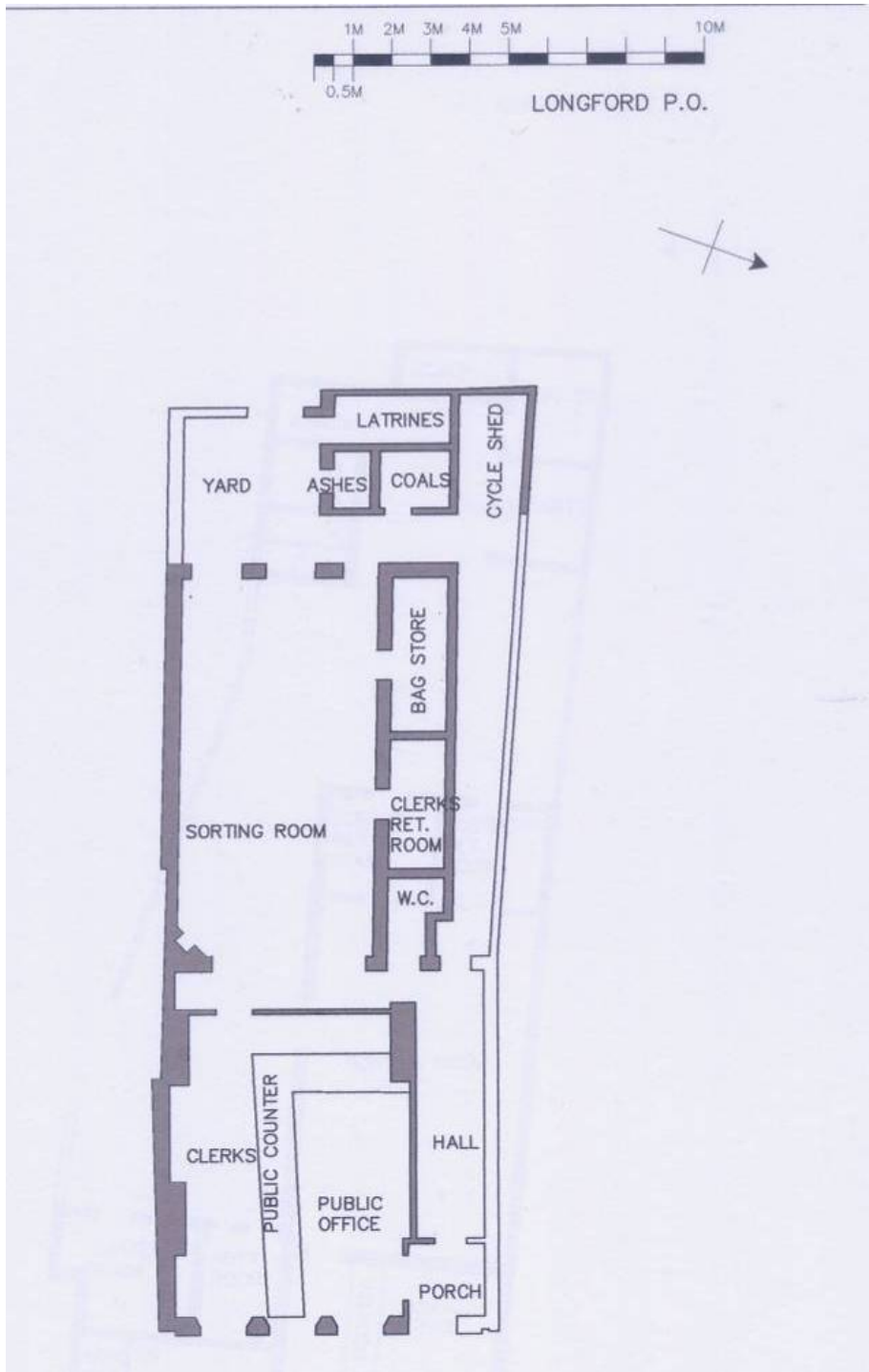
Figure 5/19 – Longford P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [144]

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[144] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/643

Figure 5/20 – Muine Bheag P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [145]

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[145] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/614
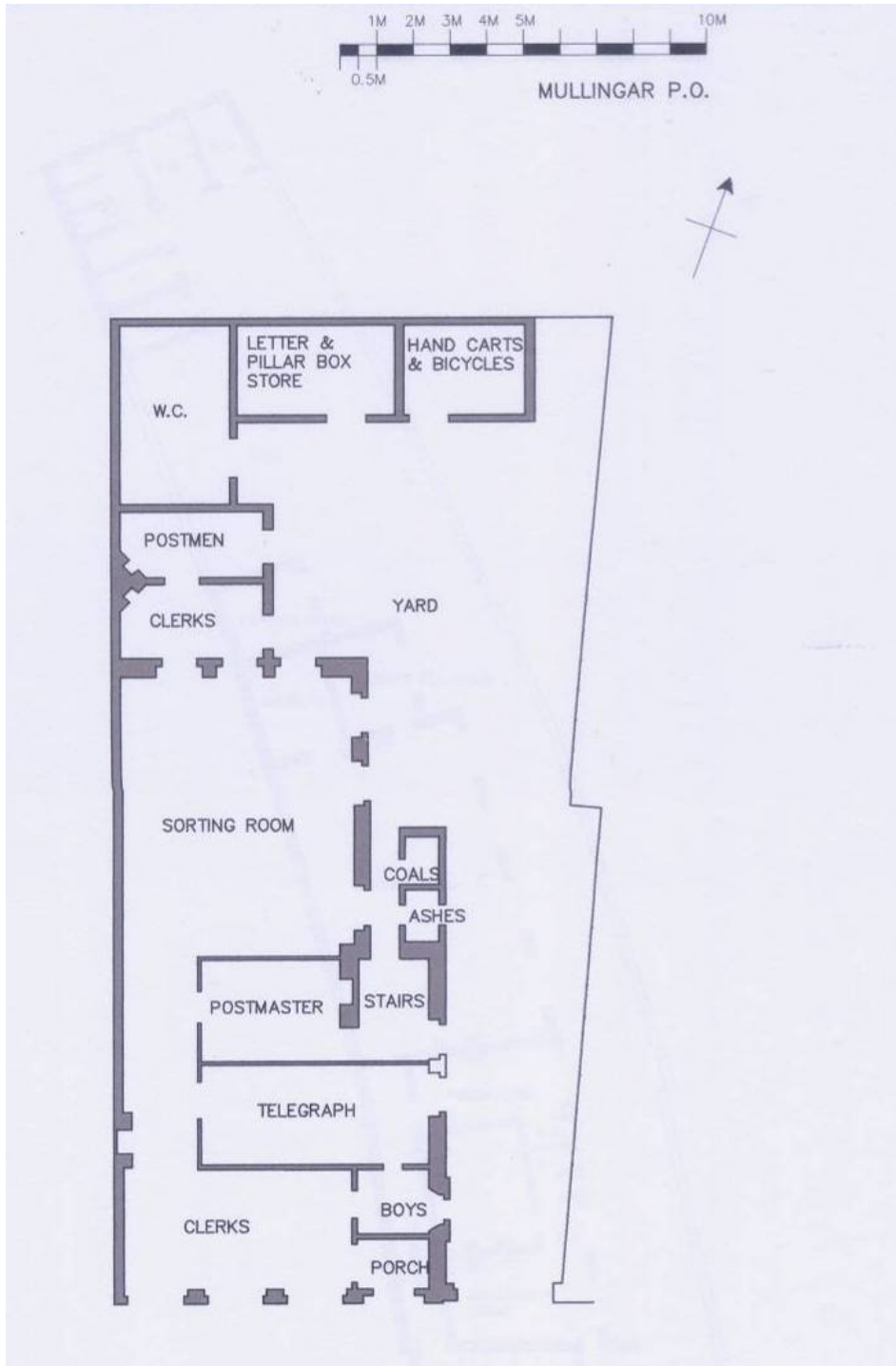
MULLINGAR P.O.

Figure 5/21 – Mullingar P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [146]

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[146] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/641
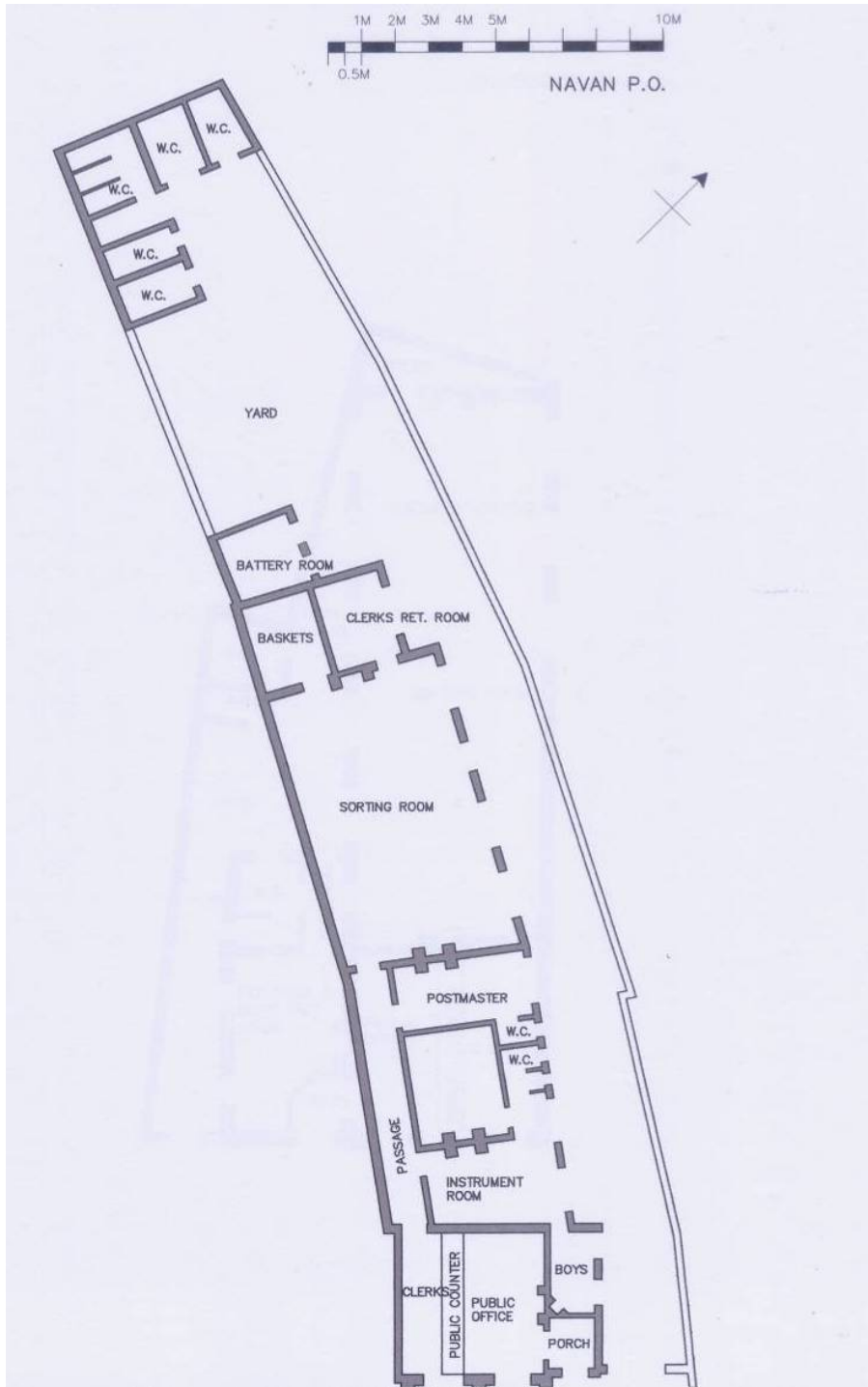
Figure 5/22 – Navan P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [147]

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[147] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/637-640
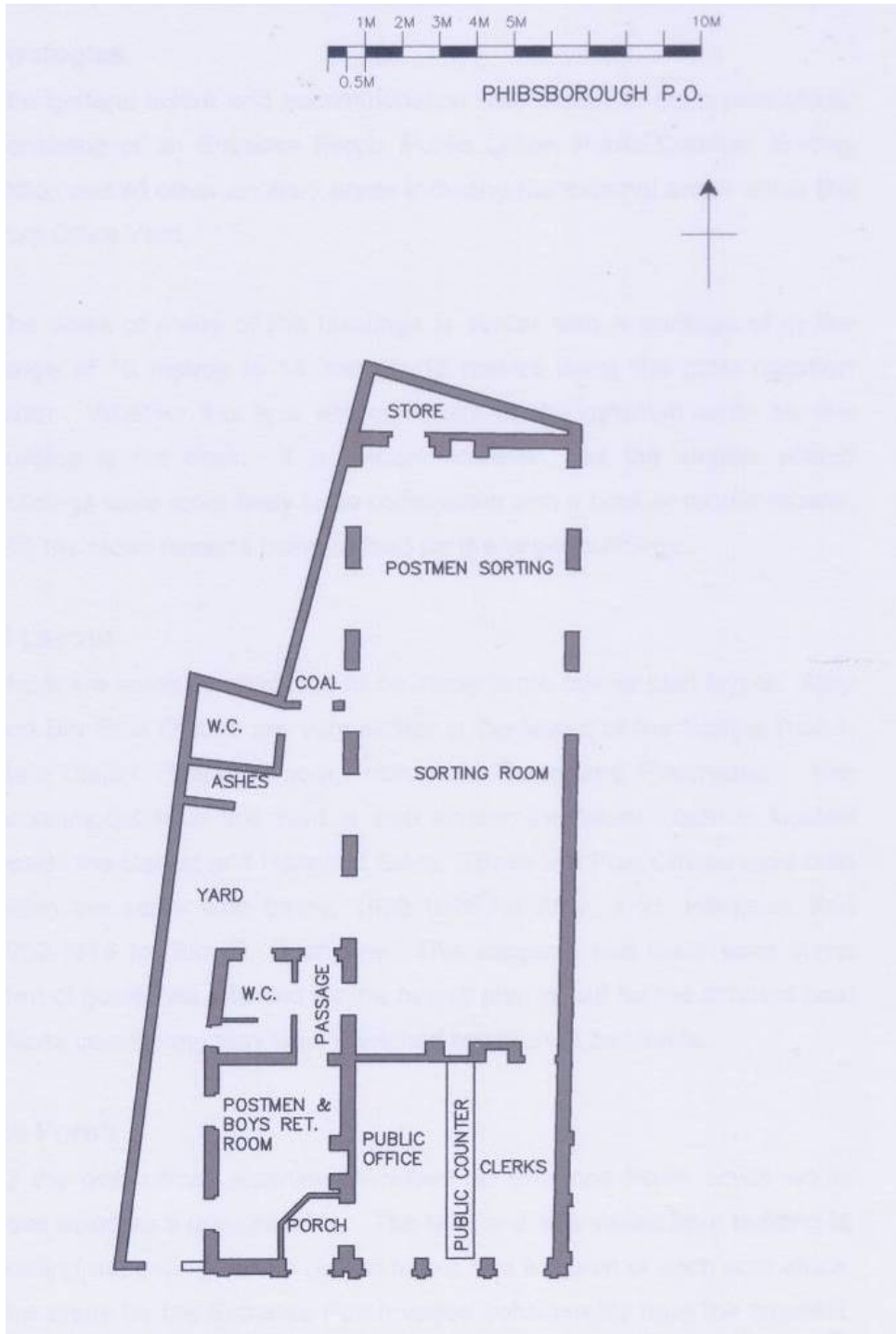
Figure 5/23 – Phibsborough P.O., redrawn from original OPW drawing [148]

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[148] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/651

Plan Typologies

The general layout and accommodation was similar in each post office, consisting of an Entrance Porch, Public Office, Public Counter, Sorting Office and all other ancillary areas including the external areas within the Post Office Yard.

The scale of many of the buildings is similar with a frontage of in the range of 10 metres to 14 metres, 12 metres being the most common width. Whether this is a site constraint or the optimum width for the building is not clear. It is evident however, that the smaller scaled buildings were more likely to be constructed with a brick or render façade, with the stone facades being utilised for the larger buildings.

General Layout

There are some comparisons to be made in the overall plan layout. Athy and Birr Post Offices are very similar in the layout of the Sorting Room, Male Clerk's Retiring Room, Instrument Room and Postmaster. The accommodation in the Yard is also similar; the Store Room is located beside the Basket and Handcart Store. These two Post Offices were built within the same time frame, 1909-1915 for Athy, J. H. Pentland, and 1902-1915 for Birr, R. Cochrane. This suggests that there were some form of guidelines followed for the overall plan layout for the different post offices considering they were designed by different architects.

Entrance Porch

All the post offices examined included an Entrance Porch which would have acted as a draught lobby. The type and size varied from building to building depending on the overall layout and footprint of each post office. The areas for the Entrance Porch varied considerably from the smallest, Killucan[149] at 6sq.m. to the largest, College Green[150] at 19sq.m. The smallest, Killucan, has a chamfered wall into the main Public Office with the inner entrance door located in this chamfered wall and directing the public into the Public Office space. Phibsborough[151] is similar also having

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[149] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection*; Ref. OPW5HC/4/899
[150] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/682
[151] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/651

a chamfered wall to the Entrance Porch, however in this instance the wall was likely to have been chamfered to allow for a more usable space in the adjoining Postmen and Boys Retiring Room, Figure 5/17 and 5/18. Muine Bheag[152], 6.8sq.m. and James's Street[153], 6.5sq.m. also had a similar chamfered wall arrangement.
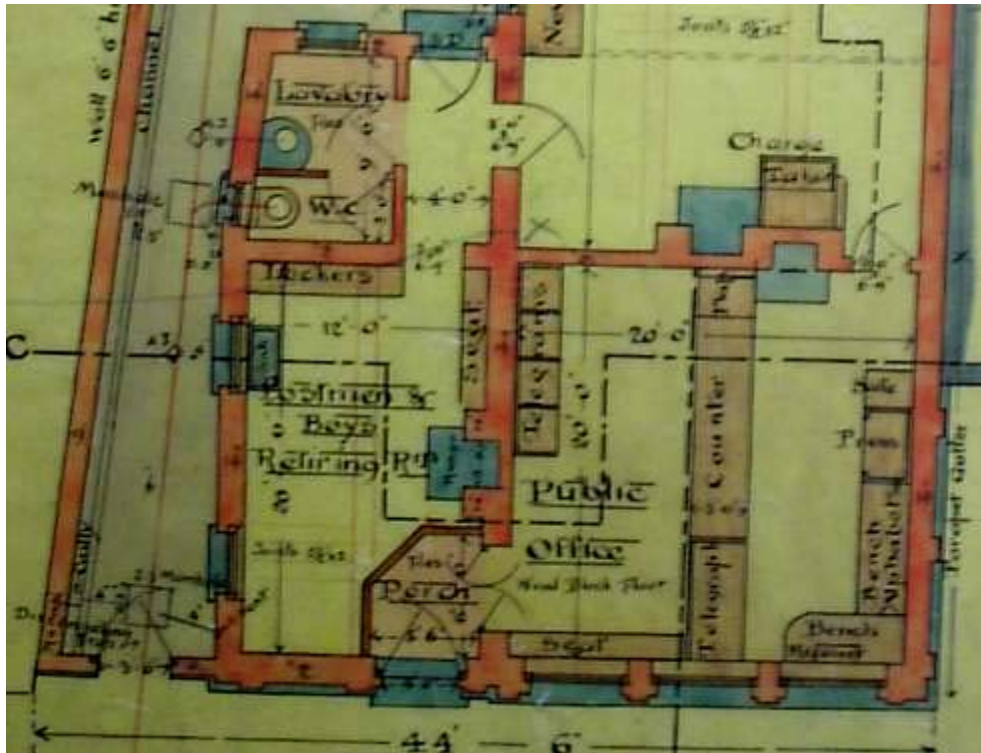
Figure 5/24 – Phibsborough P.O., c.1898; Entrance Porch Arrangement[154]

The two largest Entrance Porches were in Blackrock[155], 18sq.m. and College Green, 19sq.m. The footprint of the Post Office in Blackrock was divided into three main sections, two smaller wings either side of the main central wing. Blackrock's large Entrance Porch occupied the full width of the wing to the West side and includes a stairs to the upper level and storage for bicycles, Figures 5/4 and 5/19.

The Entrance Porch in College Green stretches across almost the entire width of the building and was possibly dictated by the overall plan. It also gave the entrance to the Post Office a greater significance and public character. The building is on a corner site and the Entrance Porch had two sets of entrance doors. One set of doors was on the corner of the site

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[152] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/614
[153] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/895
[154] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/651
[155] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/599

giving the entrance more importance. This was a large post office in the capital city situated across from the Bank of Ireland, College Green, contributing to this need for grandeur Figure 5/6 and 5/20.
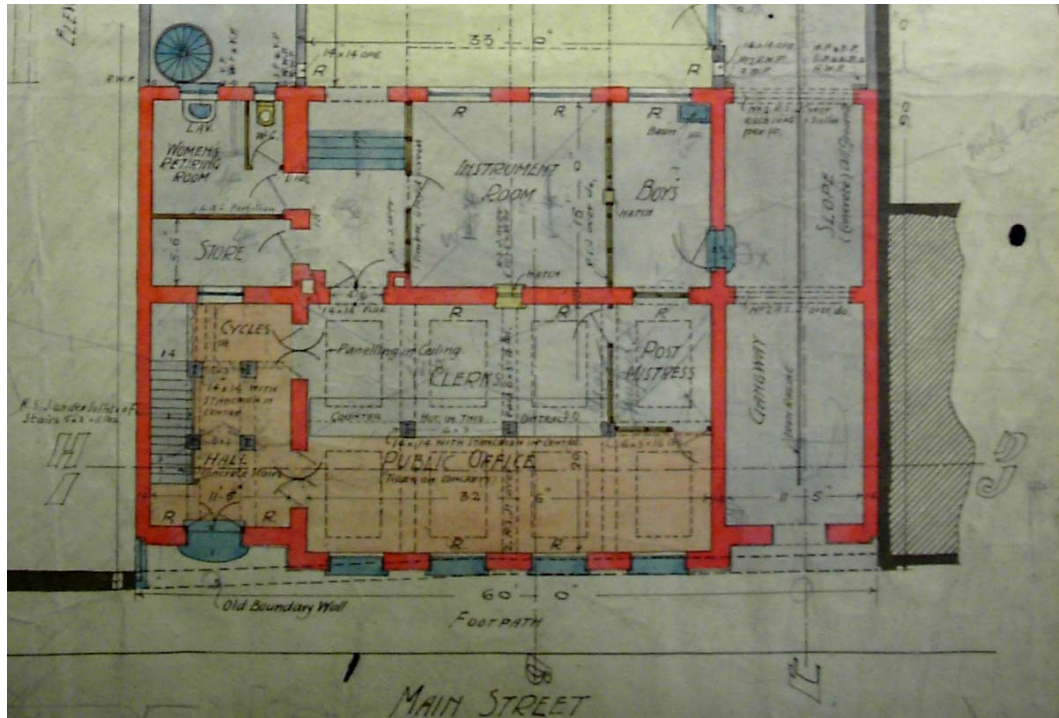
Figure 5/25 – Blackrock P.O., c.1907; Entrance Porch Arrangement[156].
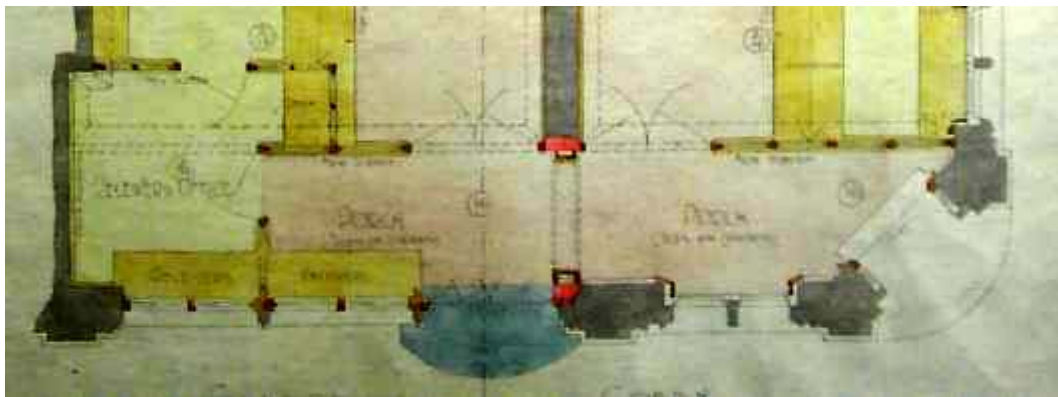
Figure 5/26 – College Green P.O., c.1890; Entrance Porch Arrangement[157]

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[156] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection*; Ref. OPW5HC/4/599
[157] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/682 & 683

Public Office and Public Counter

The Public Office which served as a waiting area for service at the counter also had counters at which the public could write out telegraph messages, fill forms, write envelopes etc. It displayed public notices both from the Post Office and other government departments. A notice in an issue of the Irish Post Office Circular - Iris an Phuist stated –

……display of Poster for Department of Agriculture: arrange to have displayed as prominently as possible, without interference with P.O. notices ……[158]

The intention of the Post Office to use the Public Office as a space for community notices both on their own behalf and on behalf of various Government Departments is examined in Chapter 6.
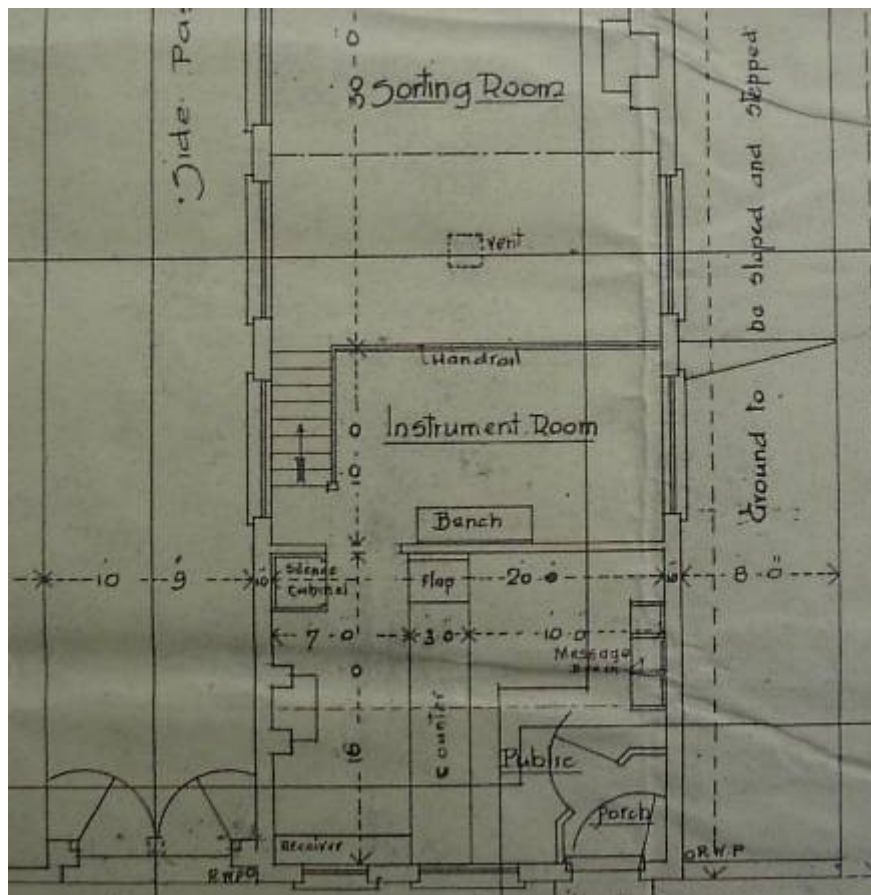
Figure 5/27 – Killucan Former P.O., c.1912, Public Office, Public Counter and Sorting Office Arrangement[159]

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[158] National Library of Ireland; *Iris an Phuist;* Issue No 47; 20 May 1923; p199
[159] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899

The Public Office area varied in size from the smallest, Killucan at 12sq.m., Figure 5/6 an 5/21 to the largest in College Green, Figures 5/6, at 43sq.m. In general, the Public Office area ran from the front to the rear of the building and the width of the public area between the front of the counter to the wall opposite it, varied between 2.5m and 3.5m as in Phibsborough, Figures 5/17 and 5/18. Exceptions to this are Blackrock, Figures 5/4 and 5/19, where the Public Office is governed by the plan and the Public Counter runs across the full extent of the main central wing of the building and Bray, Figures 5/5 and 5/22, where the Public Office and Public Counter also run across the front of the building. This is a change from the norm for this size of post office, where usually the counter ran from front to back, as in Muine Bheag, Figures 5/14 and 5/23. The other noticeable exception is College Green.

The College Green post office is one of the largest examined, Figures 5/6 and 5/24. The layout in this post office is very different from all the others. It has a 'U' shaped Public Counter and the Public Office is located in the centre of the 'U'. Entrance to the Public Office is through two sets of double doors from the Entrance Porch. As stated earlier, this is a large post office in the centre of the capital city possibly competing with the Bank of Ireland, College Green, across the street. The Public Counter always divided the Public Office from the Clerks Area behind and is dealt in detail with later in this Chapter.
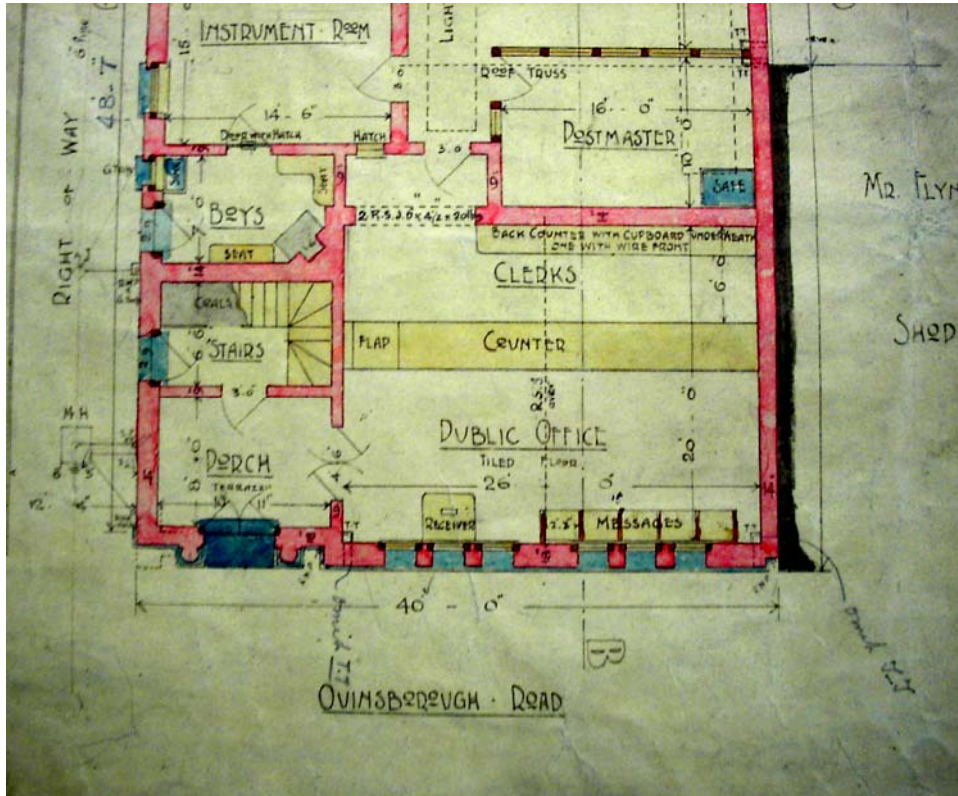
Figure 5/28 – Bray P.O., c.1908; Public Office and Public Counter Arrangement[160]
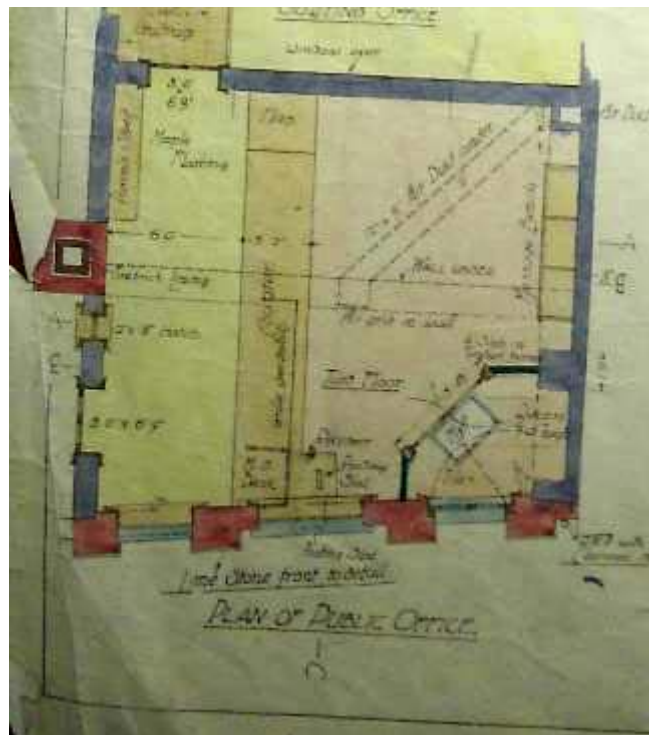
Figure 5/29 – Muine Bheag P.O., 1921; Public Office and Public Counter Arrangement [161]

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[160] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/601:
[161] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection*; Ref. OPW5HC/4/614
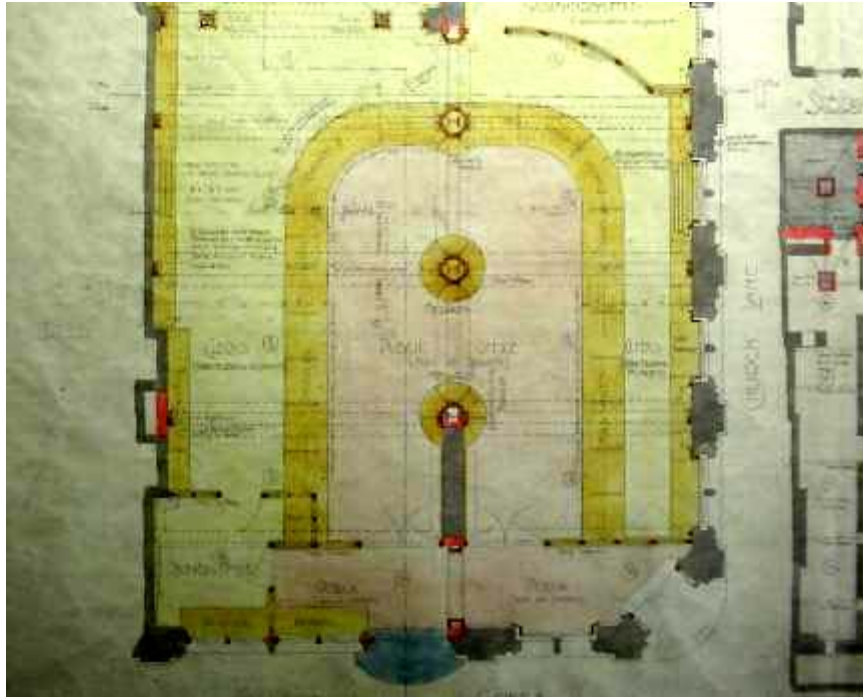
Figure 5/30 – College Green P.O., c. 1890; Public Office and Public Counter Arrangement[162]

Sorting Office

The Sorting Office was typically located directly off the Clerks Area with direct access from the Clerks Area as in Longford, Figures 5/13 and 5/25. The Sorting Offices in Blackrock Figure 5/4 and 5/19, Navan, Figure 5/16 and 5/26 and Kells, Figures 5/11 and 5/27, are the exceptions to this with the Sorting Office separate from the Clerks Area but still having direct access via an internal corridor.

Access to the Sorting Office was also through the open yard at the rear in all cases. In Longford, access is also through the Entrance Porch. In none of the post offices studied is there access through the Public Area into the Sorting Office.

There is no Sorting Office area in College Green, only a Parcels Office. This would suggest that the main sorting took place elsewhere.

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[162] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection*; Ref. OPW5HC/4/599
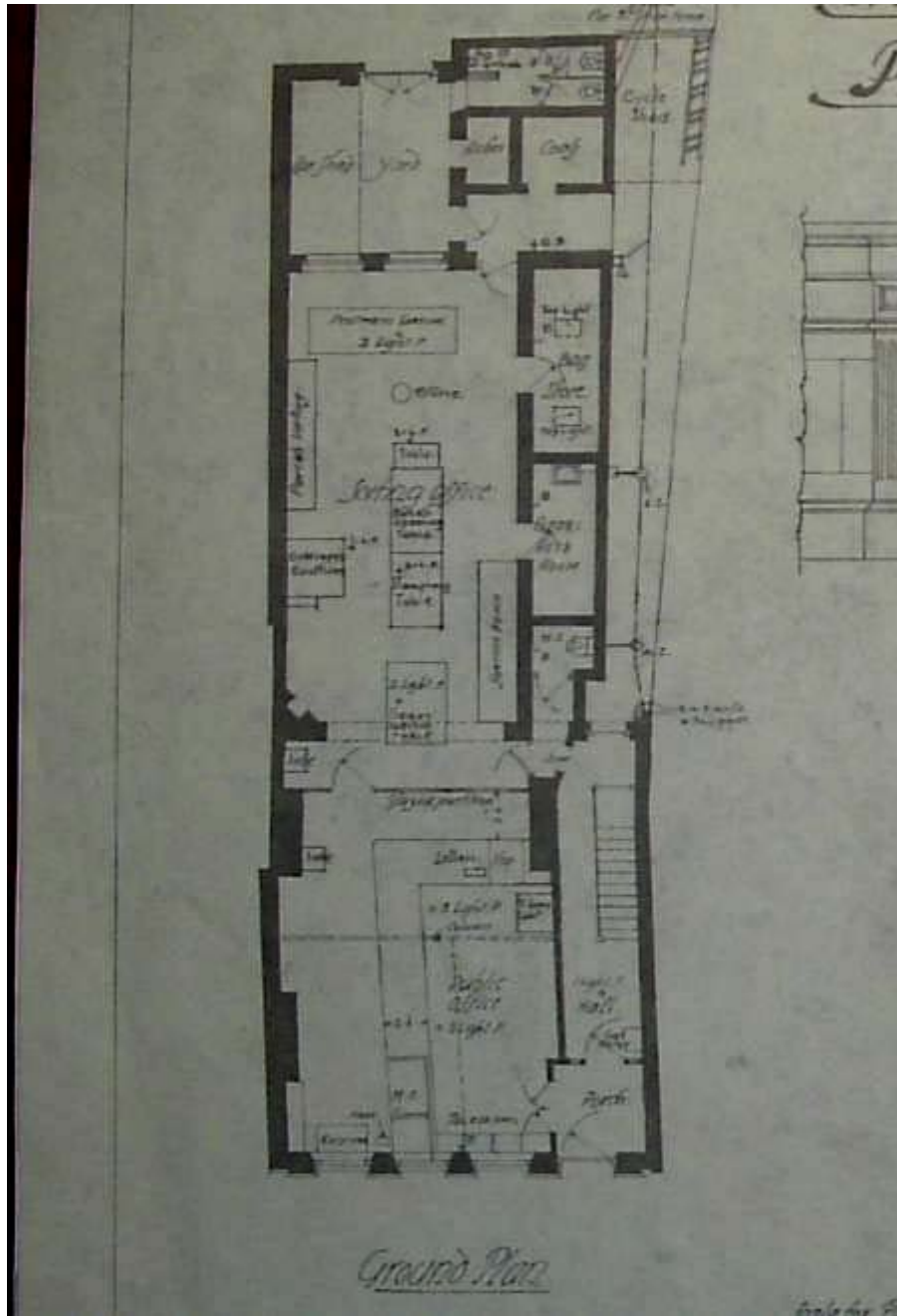
Figure 5/31 – Longford P.O., c.1910; Sorting Office Arrangement[163]

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[163]Office of Public Works Library;, Drawing Collection; Ref. L16 8

Figure 5/32 – Navan P.O., c.1906,; Sorting Office Arrangement[164]

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[164] ibid, Ref.OPW5HC/4/637-640
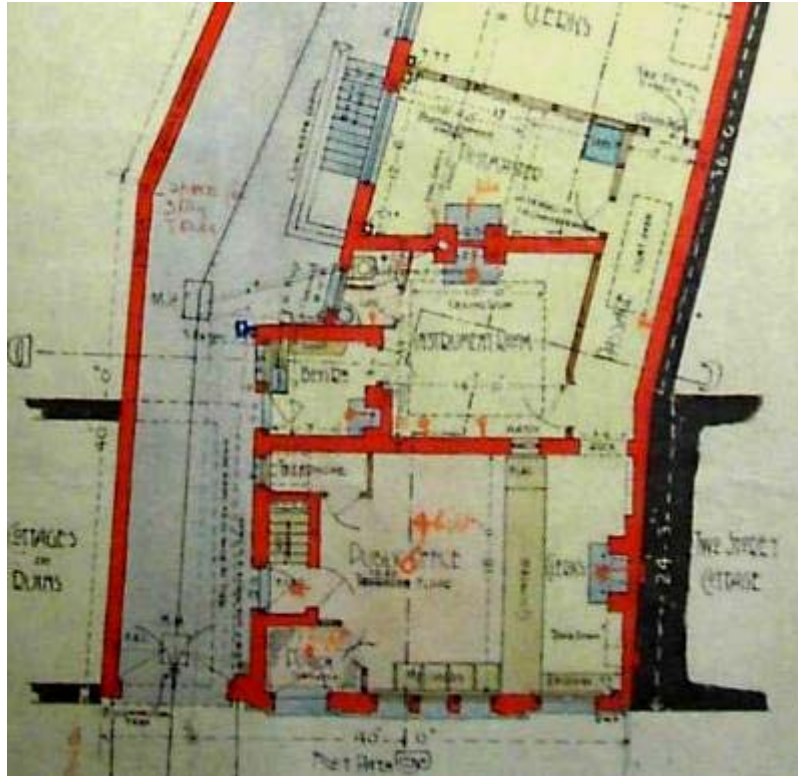
Figure 5/33 – Kells P.O., c. 1903; Sorting Office Arrangement[165]

Postmaster/Postmistress

In all the post offices examined, except Blackrock, the manager was male – Postmaster – and accommodation was allocated for him. Male toilets, Boys Retiring Room and Male Clerks' Retiring Room were all included in the overall planning. The only post office with a Postmistress Room was Blackrock. However, advertisements in Iris an Phuist were for both male and female employees.

In Iris an Phuist advertisements were published for vacancies in the postal service. In the fifth issue an advertisement for the position of

>......*Postmaster of Dun Laoghaire, salary £305.00 p.a....incoming postmaster will be required to occupy the official residence for which he will be charged 20% of his salary. The accommodation consists of Sitting Room, Dining Room, 5 Bedrooms, Kitchen, Pantry, Scullery, Bathroom and usual office.*[166].

A similar advertisement in Issue No. 1 of Iris an Phuist for postmaster in Bantry gave the annual salary at £195.00 with a charge of £30.00, 15%,

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[165] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection*; Ref. OPW5HC/4/898
[166] Rialas Sealadach na hÉireann; *Iris an Phuist No. 5 26th April 1922;* Dublin 1922 pg 23

for the official accommodation, suggesting different rates of pay and rates for accommodation between Dublin and Cork.

External Yard

The external yard was located to the rear or side of the postal office in all the cases examined. The yard was used for the parking of post office carts, bicycles and vehicles. On the 1897 drawing for Birr P.O. it indicates the yard as a Van Yard, Figure 5/28. This reference would be to early post office vehicles such as hand carts being referred to as vans. The word van is a slight misnomer as today a van refers to a motorised vehicle, the first motorised vehicle being attributed to the 1876 Mercedes Benz Patent[167]. There is no evidence to indicate that Birr Post Office had motorised vans at this time.

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Figure 5/34 – Birr P.O., c.1907; External Yard Arrangement [168]

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[167] www.mbusa.com/heritage/gottleib-daimler.do; Feb.2007
[168] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/598:

The post office accommodation in the external yards typically included Van Yard, covered Hand Carts Area, enclosed Basket Store, enclosed Battery Room, Coal Store, Ashes Store, Latrines. The external yard in the Mullingar Post office in addition to these areas included Letter and Pillar Box Store. Mullingar was the only post office with this store area, Figure 5/29. Access to the external Yard was from the street in most cases, either from the side or the rear. In some cases the entrance was through the front of the building from the street as in Blackrock and Dundalk.
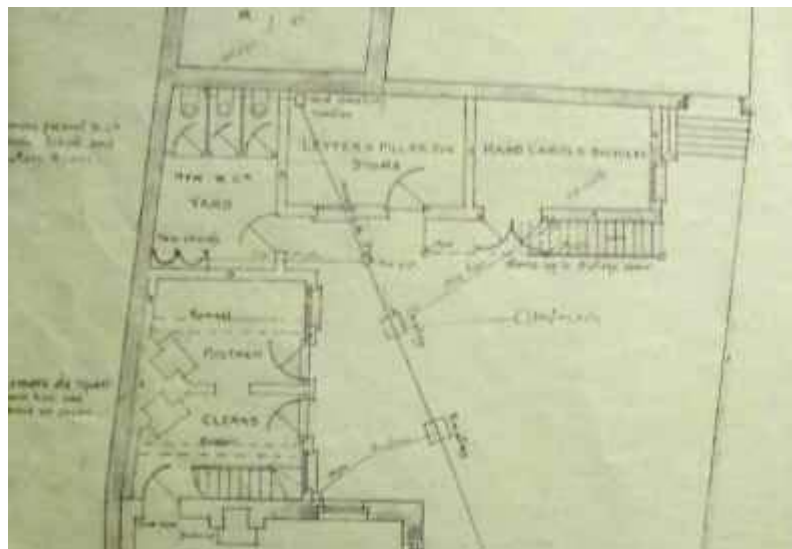
Figure 5/35 – Mullingar P.O., c.1900; Letter and Pillar Box Store Arrangement [169]

Floor Areas

Figure 5/28 gives a comparison, in square metres, of the areas examined of the eighteen drawn plans. In general the Entrance Porch areas are between 6.00sq.m. and 19.00sq.m., thirteen are between 6.00sq.m and 8.50sq.m, three are between 10.00sq.m. and 11.35sq.m., and two are between 18.00sq.m. and 19.00sq.m.

The Public Office has seventeen offices between 12.00sq.m. and 26sq.m. with one Public Office having an area of 43.00sq.m. namely College Green.
The Sorting Office sizes vary with College Green having an area of 23.00sq.m. (for Parcels only in this case) and with all the remaining Sorting Office areas between 46.00sq.m. and 117.00sq.m.

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[169] ibid, Ref. OPW5HC/4/641

The External Yard areas also vary considerably with College Green having a Yard of 10.00sq.m. the smallest yard area. Four postal offices had an area between 41.00sq.m. and 92.00sq.m. and the remaining postal offices had areas between 106.00sq.m. and 265.00sq.m.

The frontage of all the buildings examined varies between 18.50m Blackrock, and 6.50m Killucan. The most common width of frontage is between 12.00m and 11.90m where seven post offices fall within this range.

There does not appear to be any correlation between Public Office, Sorting Office and Yard areas. However in general the Entrance Porch area range is not as broad as the other areas examined.

	Building	Figure No	Entrance Porch	Public Office	Sorting Office	External Yard	Frontage
			sq.m.	sq.m.	sq.m.	sq.m.	m
1	Athy	5/1	8.20	17.70	88.00	129.00	14.00
2	Ballsbridge	5/2	7.60	17.25	109.50	252.00	12.00
3	Birr	5/3	10.10	17.35	71.00	265.00	15.20
4	Blackrock	5/4	18.00	26.00	110.00	176.00	18.50
5	Bray	5/5	11.35	22.00	95.00	211.00	12.00
6	College Green	5/6	19.00	43.00	25.00	10.00	11.80
7	Dun Laoghaire	5/7	10.00	22.00	63.00	188.00	11.90
8	Enniscorthy	5/8	7.50	18.00	61.00	106.00	12.00
9	Fairview	5/9	7.80	17.80	117.00	88.00	9.00
10	James's Street	5/10	6.50	15.00	106.00	92.00	7.50
11	Kells	5/11	7.10	20.00	88.00	173.00	8.50
12	Killucan	5/12	6.00	12.00	46.00	287.00	6.50
13	Longford	5/13	8.50	20.00	68.00	41.00	9.50
14	Muine Bheag	5/14	6.80	13.00	61.00	144.00	12.00
15	Mullingar	5/15	7.50	13.50	73.00	165.00	10.00
16	Navan	5/16	8.20	20.00	90.00	239.00	8.60
17	Phibsborough	5/17	6.50	16.00	109.00	45.00	10.70

Figure 5/36 – Plan Typology – Floor Areas[170]

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[170] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4

Building Typologies

General Description

This section examines the building's structure and external appearance, the furniture and fittings and the special decorative features and insignia. In order to better describe the various elements this section refers to postal office buildings throughout all of Ireland.

The external finish of the buildings comes under three main headings, stone facade, rendered facade and brick façade. In some instances the brick finished buildings also had stone relief as in Curragh Camp Post Office, Figure 5/31 with its stone entrance door surround, stone sill and keystones to Ground Floor windows. Sligo Post Office, Figure 5/32, is a mixture of stone and brick with central section in stone accommodating the entrance and side panels. There is brick relief to the remainder of the ground floor and throughout the first floor.

Figure 5/31 – Curragh Camp P.O., c.1900; Brick Post Office; Photo Author, 2006

Figure 5/32 – Sligo P.O., c.1899; Brick and Stone Post Office; Photo, Bernadette Solon, 2006

Figure 5/33 – Athy P.O., c.1911; Rendered Post Office; Photo, Author, 2006

Athy Post Office is an example of a rendered façade, Figure 5/33. The stone and render finished buildings are not a common as those in brick. Of the twenty eight buildings examined in Leinster, only four are finished in stone, Athlone, Dun Laoghaire, Rathmines and St. Andrew Street and three are rendered, Muine Bheag, Athy and Tullamore. The remaining twenty-one are brick finished, some with stone relief. It was unusual to have brick buildings in Ireland at this time for large and public buildings. With the exception of the brick buildings of the Georgian era most large or public buildings were stone and most private buildings had either a render or stone façade, so it is intriguing to see the public buildings of the OPW designed on behalf of the Post Office opting for brick finishes.

The early post office layouts appear to have no standard structured guidelines from which the Post Office, OPW or the postmasters worked in order to establish layouts. There is, however, evidence of standard details for internal joinery issued from the Post Office in London in the OPW records.

Site Selection, Tender and Commencement

As stated in a previous chapter site selection was carried out either by the postmasters or by the Post Office's surveyor.

Fairview Post Office

The site opposite the Roman Catholic Church and Philipsburgh Avenue was offered to the GPO by Mr. James Donnelly with a lease of 200 years. A Ground Rent of £7.00 per year was agreed between the owner and the Postmaster General. The original proposal included a Public Office, Clerks Area, Sorting Office, ancillary areas and External Yard. Approval was given for this layout by the Post Master General, he stated -

> ……*having been directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, to proceed with the spending of £920.00 on the buildings*

A letter from the Secretary of the GPO to OPW asks what savings would be affected if the buildings were to be confined to a Sorting Office only. The letter stated -

> *'…it is thought that it is premature to open a Public Office at Fairview at present and that the needs of the public may continue to be met by the present Receiving Office*[171].

This was agreed by the GPO and tenders were invited by OPW for the works. Patrick Sheridan, Contractor, Green Street, Parsonstown, won the contract with a tender price of £886-4-3. The furniture fittings were extra to the Contract Sum and were costing £213-16-6. The contract was signed on 25th March 1889 and was to be completed by 1st September 1889. The completion date was delayed until mid October due to delays caused by the supply of Ruabon (sic) bricks[172]. This contract completed the works of what eventually became a two staged project. It is clear from the ordnance survey maps that the first stage of the project did not bring the building out to the pavement building line, Figure 5/34. The later ordnance survey map, Figure 7/3, clearly shows these additional works.

Figure 5/34 – Fairview P.O., c.1889; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[173].

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[171] ibid, letter dated 20-10-1888
[172] ibid
[173] O.S. Map No. 18-8; Scale 1:2500; 1907 Revision

Figure 5/35 – Fairview P.O., c.1936; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[174].

A letter in the archive files, to the OPW from the Secretary of the GPO, asked for costings for building additional accommodation for a Public Office as shown on the 1888 drawings. The additional works were estimated by OPW as costing £500-0-0 in 1894. By 1898 the works had not commenced and were now estimated as costing £560-0-0. There was no resolution to this and in 1903 a letter from the Secretary of the GPO to the OPW asked for plans showing the proposed works to complete the building plus a Women's Retiring Room, such

> *as is usually provided at Branch Offices*.

An estimate for these works was submitted as costing £580-0-0. However this new layout did not satisfy the GPO and another new layout was requested. This was priced at costing £822-8-0. This was rejected and in October 1908 the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury informed the OPW to proceed with the extension of the Post Office at an estimated costs of £470.0.0. Obviously the earlier smaller extension was to be built but without the Women's Retiring Room. Figure 5/36 shows the extent of the extension.

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[174] O.S. Map No. 18-8; Scale 1:2500; 1936 Revision
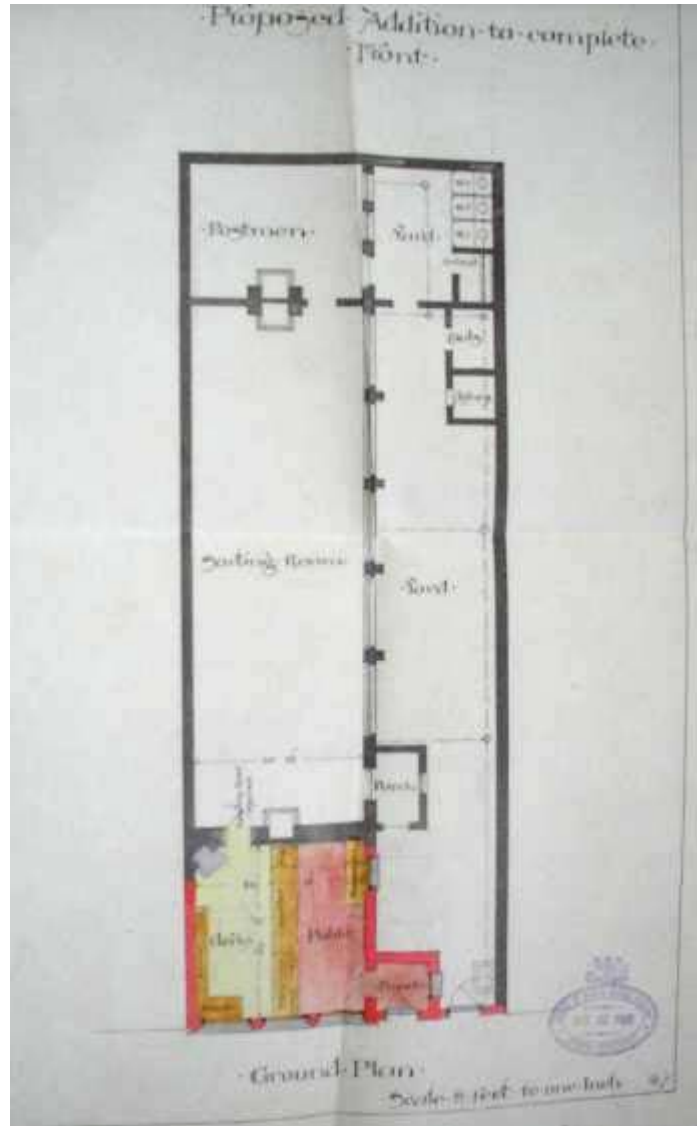
Figure 5/36 – Fairview P.O., c.1889; Proposed Extension to Complete Front Section[175]

Specification for the works was prepared by the OPW Principal Surveyor, Mr. Robert Cochrane and the Architect for the extension works was (M). H. Allberry of the OPW. P. Shortall won the contract for building the extension and work commenced in June 1909[176].

An article in the Irish Builder reported that the extension was now complete. It stated

> '……*the lofty gable on the street front faced with Portmarnock (Co. Dublin) Brick, contains large central window surmounted by carved*

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[175] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/654
[176] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Summarised from - Ref OPW/15216/10 Fairview

> *keystone and projecting pediment supported on consoles. Stone dressings all Ballyknockan (Co. Wicklow) granite[177].*

Wexford Post Office

A letter dated 2nd January 1892 from the GPO in Dublin to the OPW stated -

> *……the present Post Office at Wexford being considered unsuitable enquiry (now) being made for a Site for a new Post Office……*

.

A memo from Mr. M. Mellon OPW to Robert Cochrane OPW regarding the site opposite the, then, Customs House stated

> *…….Anne Street is fairly central in the town and is a quite respectable street running from the Main Street to the Quay…I suggest a sketch plan be prepared in accordance with the particulars given by M Creswill* (GPO)……

Following various letters to and from the General Post Office and OPW the layout was agreed, tenders were invited from six contractors and a contract was signed with the lowest contractor on 12th March 1894 for the amount of £2741-5-2, Figure 5/37.

The original estimate from OPW was for the amount of £2000-0-0, the additional amount being as a result of changes to layout requested by the GPO.

A Clerk of Works was appointed – Mellon (OPW) recommended F.R. Coffee and stated in a Memo dated 19th March 1894 -

> *……presently Clerks of Works at Tipperary Post Office…..should be on the ground before any of the concrete footings are laid……*

suggesting the job started on site shortly after this date. From the signed contract the job had to be finished on or before 31st January 1885 or a penalty of £10-0-0 per week for every week that its completion would be delayed beyond that date[178].

It would appear that the same contractor tendered and won both the Fairview contract and the Wexford contract. Patrick Sheridan also signed off as Contractor on the Ennis Post Office, Figure 5/53.

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[177] Irish Builder, 27-11-1909
[178] National Archives of Ireland, *OPW Collection;* Summarised from Ref OPW/7558/96

Figure 5/37 – Wexford P.O., 1894; Contract Form[179]
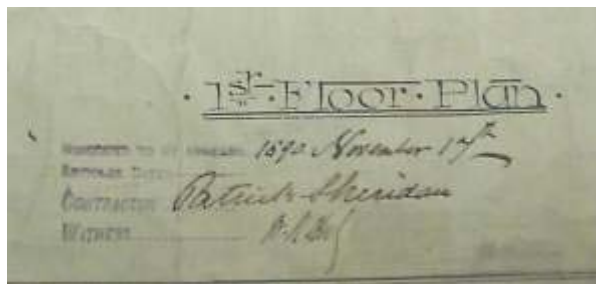
Figure 5/38 – Ennis P.O., c.1890; Contract Drawing Signed by Patrick Sheridan[180]

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[179] ibid, Contract Form, 12-03-1894

Structure

The external walls were solid with stone, render or brick outer face to the front façade and render or brick outer face to the rear façade. In Dun Laoghaire the side walls are of random rubble. However this was not specified on the original drawings[181].

The construction of the ground floor was either a solid concrete slab finished with ceramic tiles, linoleum or timber blocks, as in Cahir, Figure 5/39, or a timber raised floor finished in timber or timber with linoleum, as in James's Street, Figure 5/40. Upper floors were timber joists or steel beams with joists for longer spans.
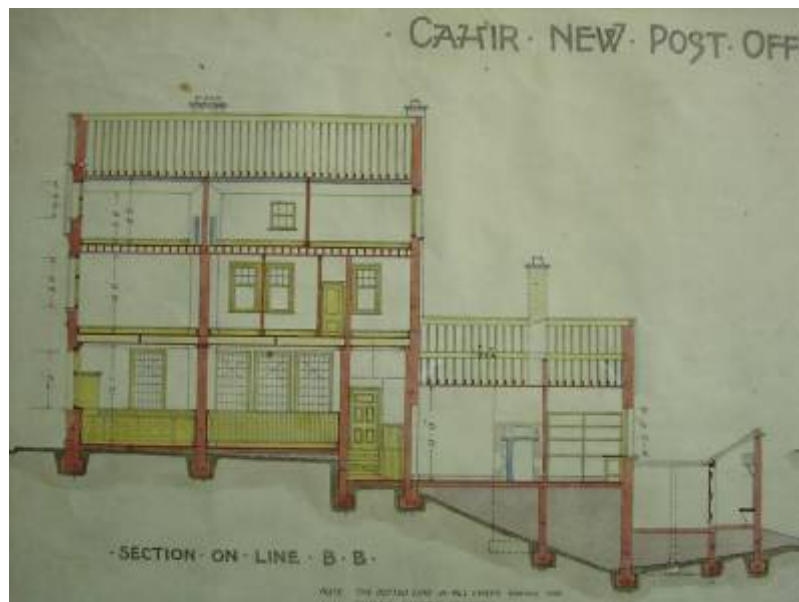
Figure 5/39 – Cahir P.O., c.1910; Section showing Ground Floor Construction[182]

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[180] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/619
[181] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/612
[182] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/602
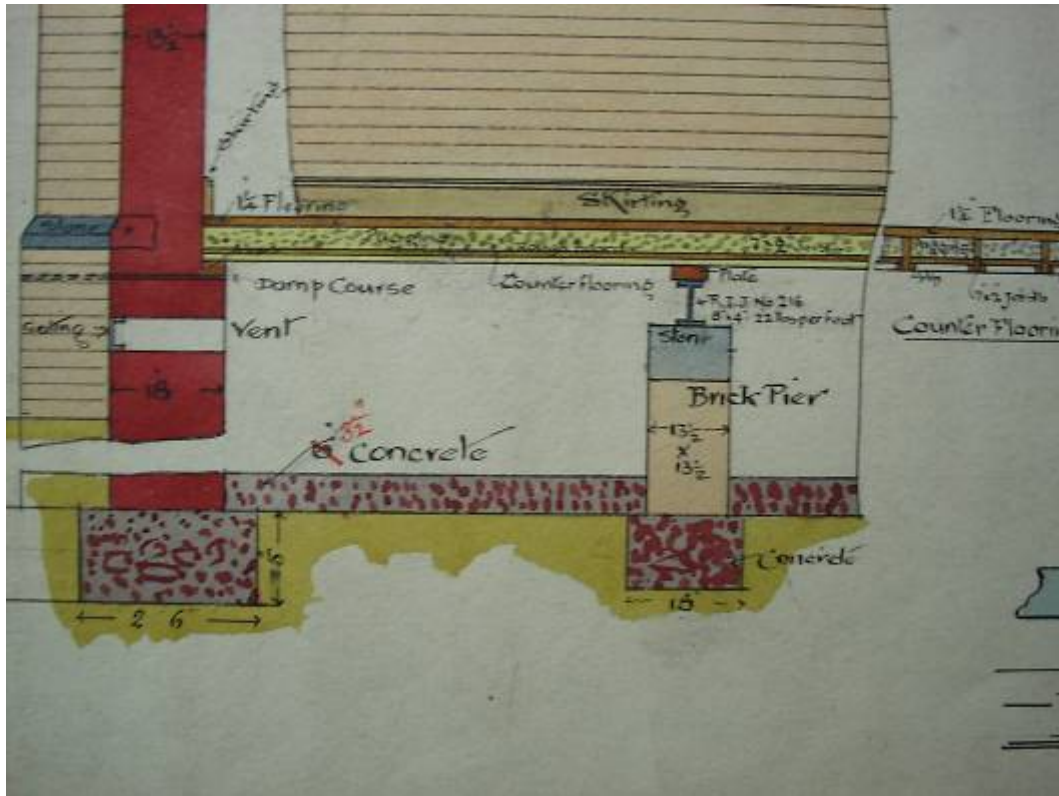
Figure 5/40 – James's Street P.O., c.1892; Section Showing Timber Ground Floor Construction[183]

Roofs were, generally, pitched roofs constructed in timber and finished with slates. Pitched roof construction was either timber trusses, or if the span was wide, with steel trusses. The Sorting Office was usually double height with steel trusses as in Ballsbridge, Figure 5/41 with a 7.6m span or steel and timber trusses as in Bandon, Figure 5/42 with its 6m span.

The structure chosen would have been a main factor in dictating the overall width of the Sorting Office. The width of each Sorting Office varies between 6.00m to 7.20m. Blackrock with its 10.9m span had a double A-pitch roof supported on centre columns, Figure 5/43.

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[183] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/895
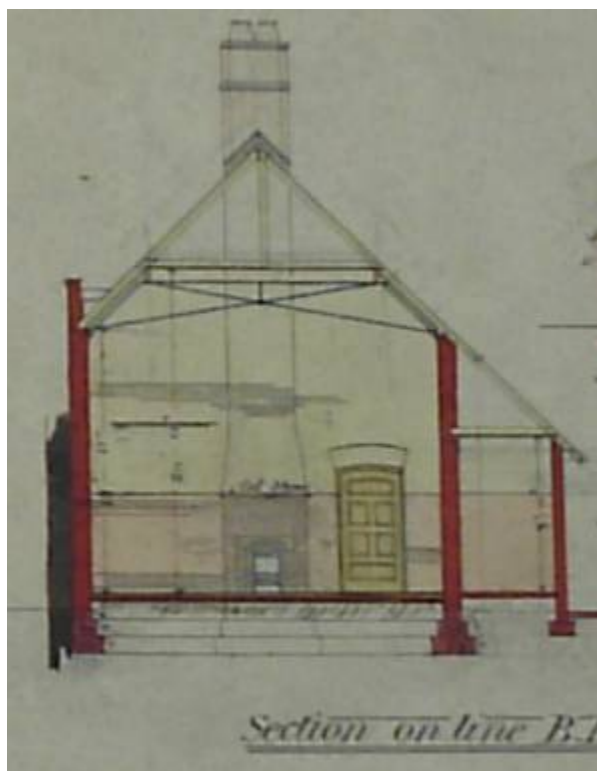
Figure 5/41 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Section through Sorting Office[184]
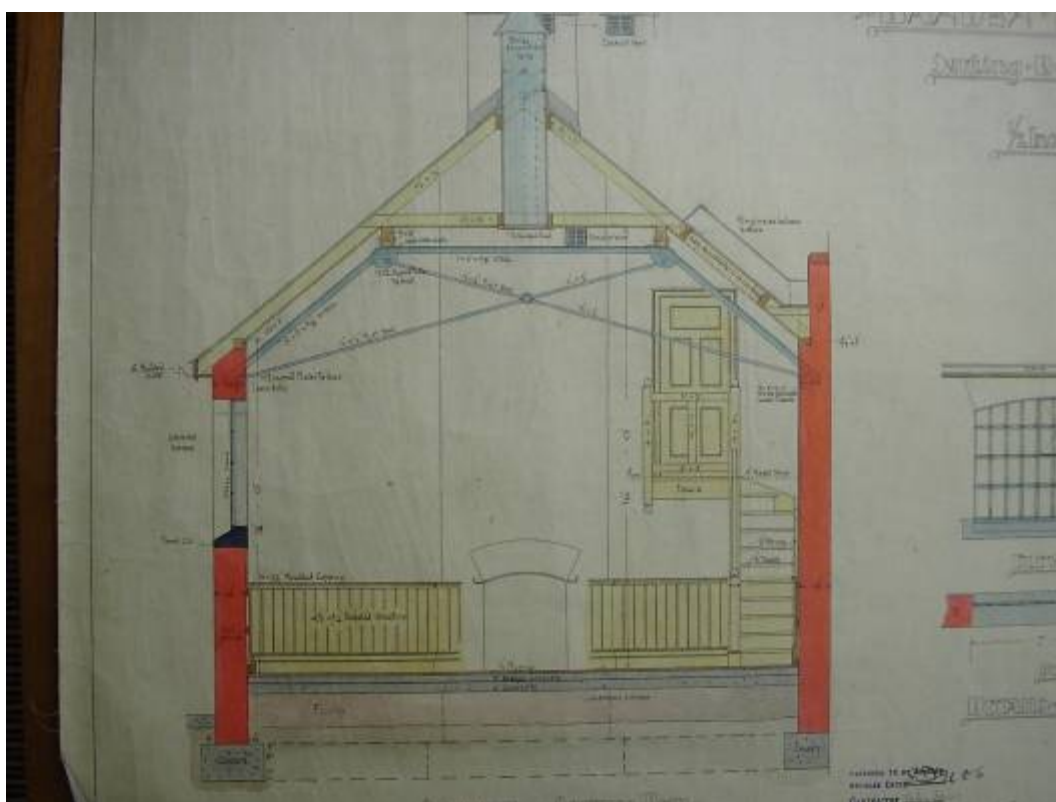
Figure 5/42 – Bandon P.O., c.1906; Section through Sorting Office[185]

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[184] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/616
[185] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/613
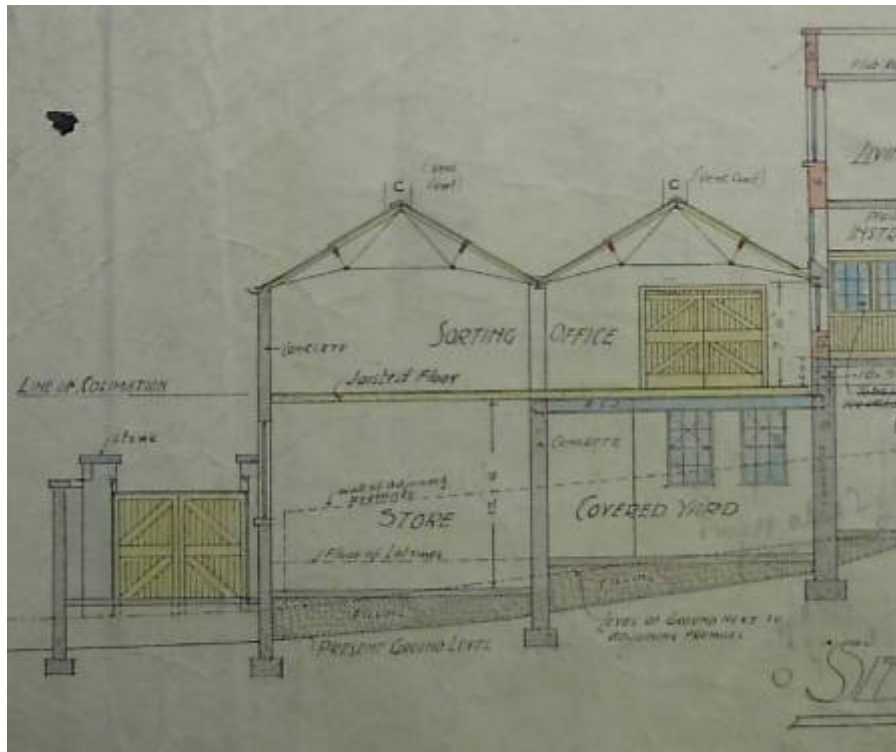
Figure 5/43 – Blackrock P.O., c. 1907; Section showing double A-pitch roof over Sorting Office[186]

Entrance Porch

The Entrance Porch or Lobby was a small area typically about 1.05m x 1.05m, as in Armagh Figure 5/44, and often with a splayed wall taken off that area, as in Killucan Figure 5/45.

The entrance doors were solid timber sheeted single or double doors with the inner porch door being either double or single doors but more generally being partially glazed as in Armagh, Figure 5/44 and Belturbet, Figure 5/46. The outer doors were nearly always single swing and opening inward with the inner doors either single or double swing. The floor finish in the porch was usually a ceramic or quarry tile, the floor finish in the public office being either tiles or wood block timber floor. In Kells a royal insignia still survives in the mosaic floor tiles, Figure 5/47.

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[186] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/599
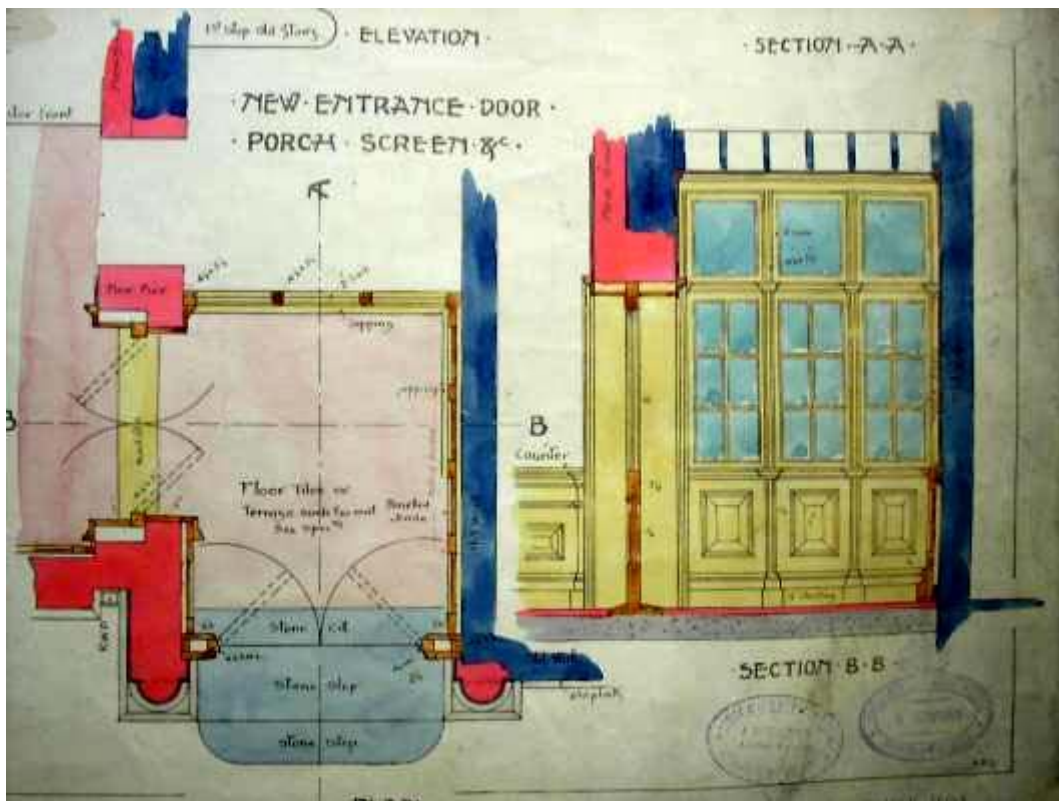
Figure 5/44 - Armagh P.O., c.1898; Entrance Screen and Porch Screen[187]
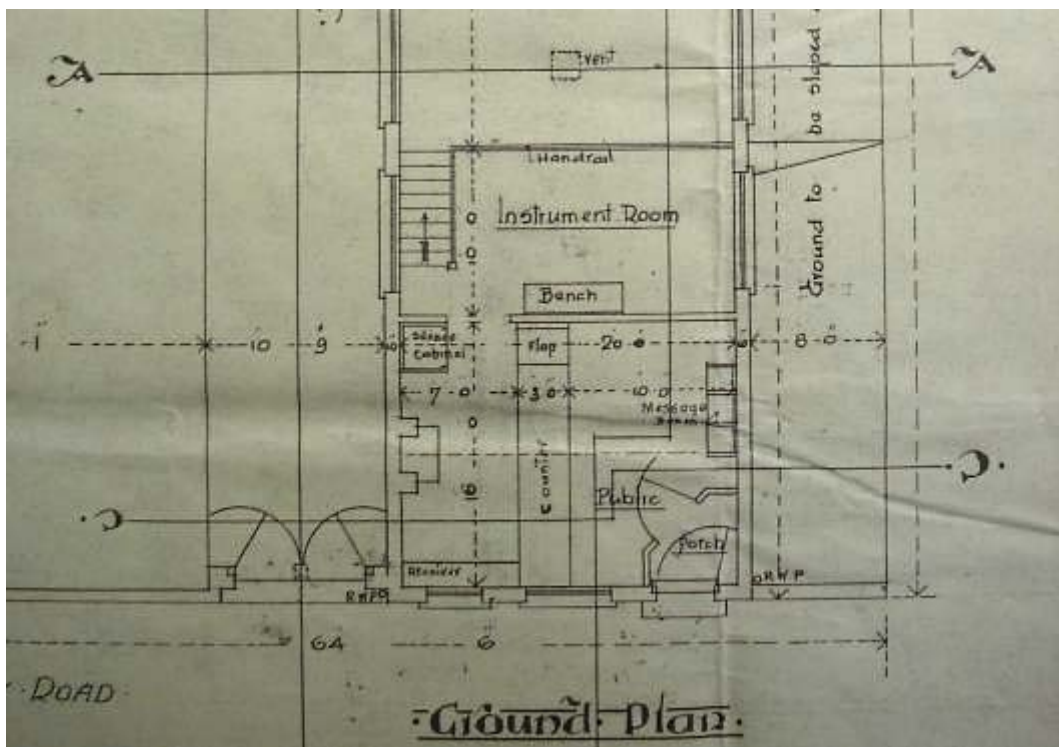
Figure 5/45 – Killucan P.O., c.1911; Entrance Porch [188]

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[187] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/692
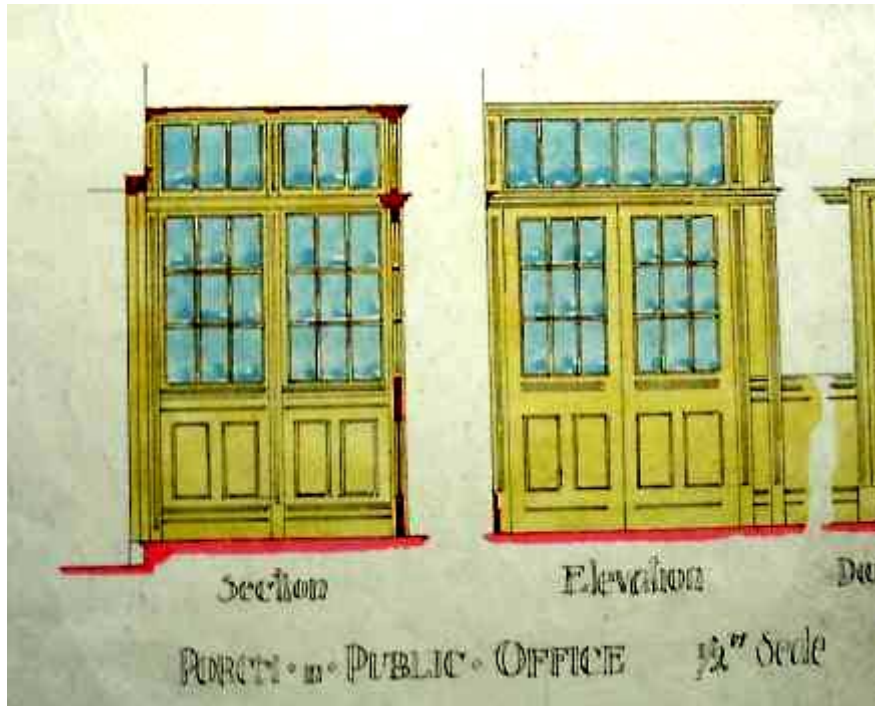
Figure 5/46 – Belturbet P.O., c.1910; Entrance Porch Screen[189]

Figure 5/47 – Kells P.O., Royal Insignia inlaid in Entrance Porch Floor; Photo, Author, 2007

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[188] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899
[189] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/596

Public Office

The Public Office, being the area frequented by the public, was typically 3m x 5m. A writing bench was fitted in all post Public Offices. It consisted of a bench top up to 0.4m wide supported on timber brackets and divided into sections. Each section was separated by a screen with obscure glass in a timber frame as in Enniscorthy, Figure 5/48. In some Public Office seats were also provided. These were timber seats fixed to the wall and supported by a timber frame as in Enniscorthy, Figure 5/49.
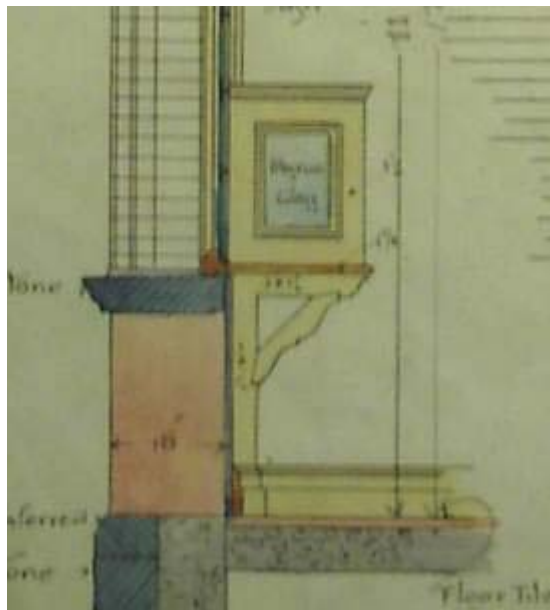
Figure 5/48 – Enniscorthy P.O., c.1910; Section through Writing Bench in Public Office[190]

Figure 5/49 – Enniscorthy P.O., c.1910; Section through Seat in Public Office[191]

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[190] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/620

An exception to this was the Public Office in the College Green Post Office. This public office was much larger than the typical being 4.5m x 6.6m. The general layout for College Green was also very different from all other post offices examined. The public office was a 'U' shaped area with counters on three sides and two sets of double entrance doors to the fourth side. Circular message writing desks were located in the centre of the public area positioned around structural steel columns which were encased in circular boxing, Figure 5/50.
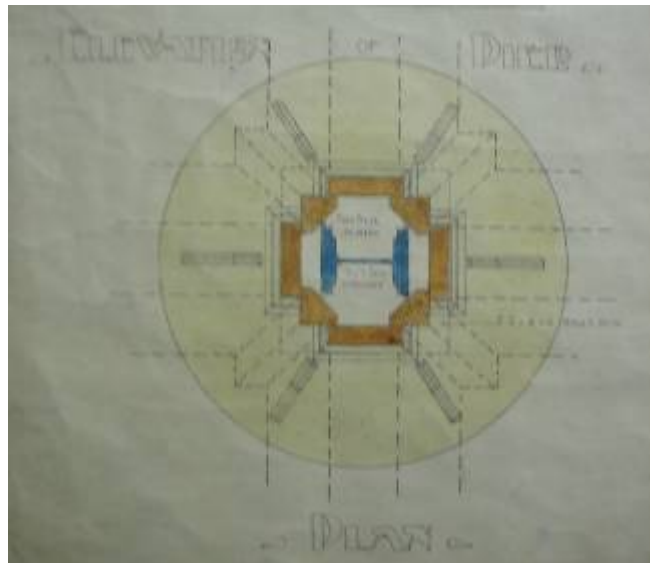
Figure 5/50 – College Green P.O.,c.1890, Plan Detail of Writing Bench[192]

Clerks Area and Public Counter

The Public Office and the Clerks Area were separated by the Public Counter. On most furniture drawings there is no indication of the timber type to be used in the Public Counter. The only specification was on the standard detail sheets, issued by the OPW in Dublin or London. In some cases the timber type was specified and some of the timbers used were pitch pine, Baltic deal or red deal.

The counter was divided into sections for selling stamps, sending and receiving telegraphs and posting letters and parcels. It was between 0.75m and 1m wide and generally 0.95m in height. It had an opening flap for access for the postal office clerks between the Public Office and the Clerks' Area. The public counter was constructed in hardwood with brass railing as a security screen on top. Early public counter drawings did not show a brass security screen. When they were introduced they were

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[191] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/620
[192] ibid, Ref OPW5HC/4/682 & 683

positioned on top of the counter at a typical height of 0.9m to 1m. In some cases the brass rail was at a higher level with an additional hardwood section on top of the normal counter height as in Mullingar, Figure 5/51.

The stamp section had up to thirteen shelves on the inside face of the counter, some were pull-out and all were of equal height. The remainder of the inside of the counter had three shelves of equal height. A row of drawers approximately 0.15m deep running from end to end were placed immediately underneath the countertop. The narrow counter top section on top of the main counter top was also divided into shelves, three of equal height. This section of the counter was lined up with the outer face of the counter and was 0.3mwide with an overall counter width of 0.7m to the clerks' side. A 0.15m shelf for use by the public was attached to the outer face of the counter at a height of 0.95m. The Standard Pattern Sheets indicate that the exposed timber was pitch pine. In a later counter detail the brass screen was placed immediately on top of the counter without the additional narrow counter piece. Figure 5/52.

The Public Counter in the Curragh Camp was removed in the early 1980s. All that survives of it is a photograph taken before its removal, Fig 5/53.
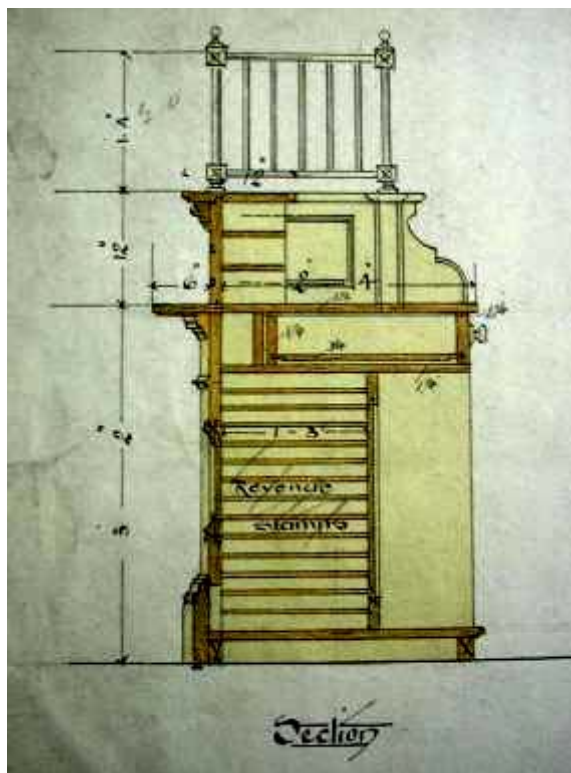
Figure 5/51 – Mullingar P.O., c.1900; Section through Public Counter[193]

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[193] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/641
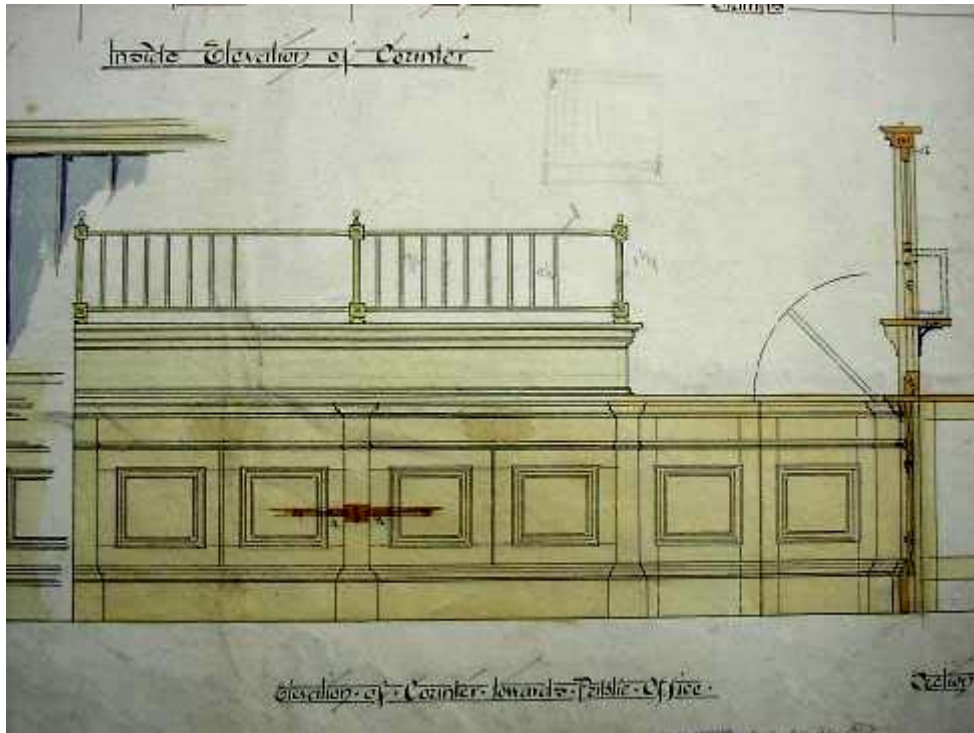
Figure 5/52 – Mullingar P.O. – Elevation of Public Counter from Public Office[194]

Figure 5/53 – Curragh Camp P.O., c. 1900;; Public Counter c. 1980; Photo courtesy of Reggie Darling, Curragh Historical Society

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[194] ibid

The Receiver Box

The receiver or letter box was either located within the Public Area or behind the counter in the Clerks Area of the Public Office, depending on the public counter layout. The public used it to deliver letters to the post office and access for the public was from outside or inside the building. It could be opened and emptied from both inside and outside the building, Figure 5/54. The receiver or letter slot was located, in some postal offices, within one of the window opes which would have a section of glass omitted and replaced with a brass plate with the letter slot Figure 5/55. Some postal offices had the letter slot located in the wall. In some cases there were two or more letter slots. In most cases these receivers have been modified or removed completely.

Figure 5/54 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; – Receiver Box; Photo, Author, 2006
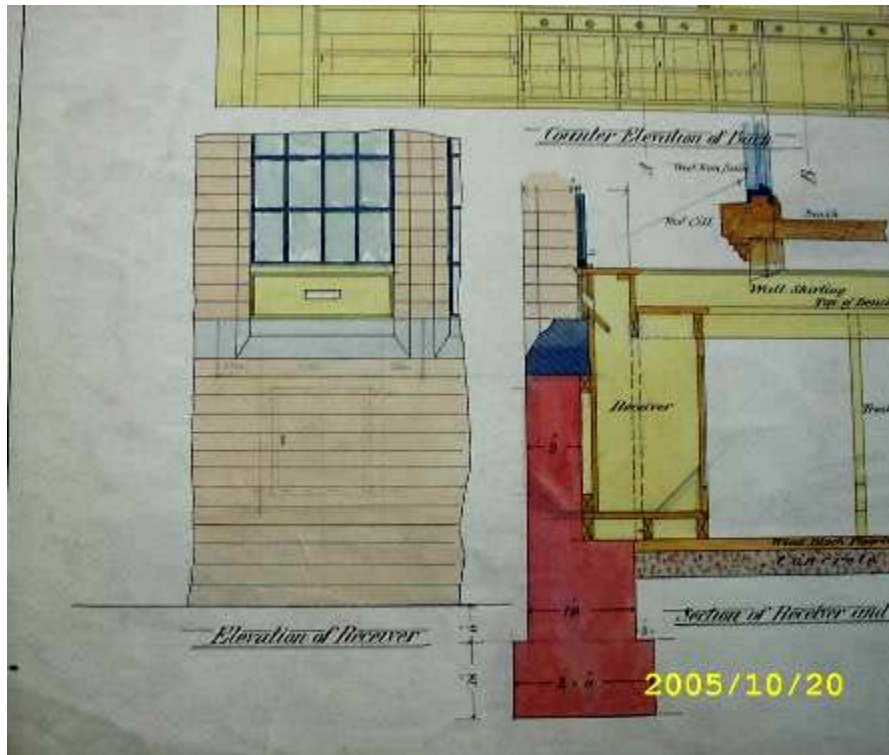
Figure 5/55 – Ballsbridge P.O.; Section through Receiver Box[195]

Sorting Office

The rear of the building accommodated the Sorting Office, Postmaster's Office, Instrument Room which housed the telegraph equipment, Boy's Room and Women's Retiring Room. In some postal offices a Postman's Room and a Clerks' Room would be provided off the Sorting Office.

The Sorting Office was one large open area often double height. It consisted of fitted and free-standing furniture used for the sorting of post and parcels. The furniture included benches, tables or shelving for Letter Sorting, Newspaper Sorting, Parcel Sorting, Opening and Stamping, Letter Carriers and Rural Messengers.

Letter Sorting

Letter Sorting tables were constructed in bays of 0.9m lengths from the Standard Pattern Sheets, Figure 5/56. The table top was 0.825m high and 0.75m deep with turned legs or shelves under counter. The Standard Pattern specification is for visible timber parts to be pitch pine and all others to be Baltic yellow or red deal. Legs and frame were bolted with

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[195] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/617

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billiard table bolts covered with turned hardwood bosses. A cast iron seat was sometimes supplied with the letter sorting table Figure 5/57.
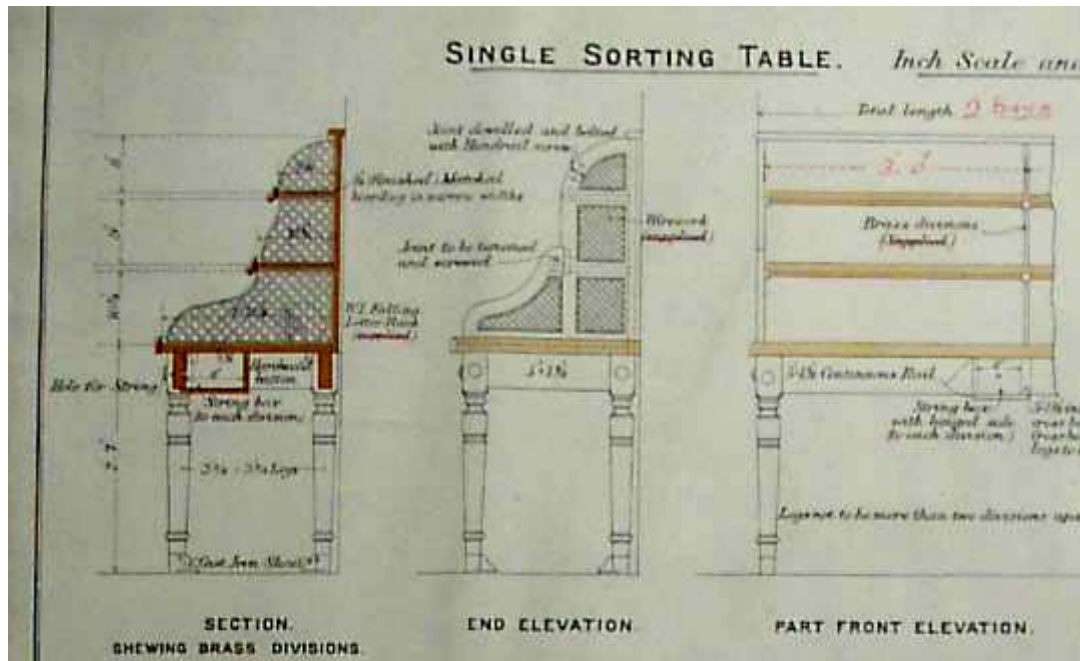
Figure 5/56– Killucan P.O., 1911; Pattern Sheet - Sorting Table[196]
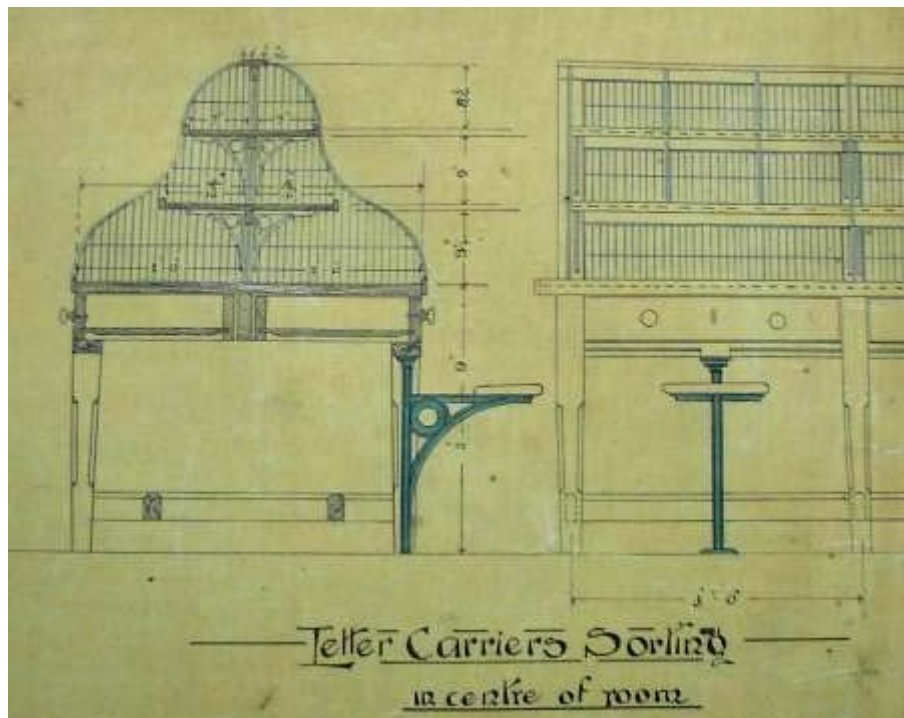
Figure 5/57 – Fairview P.O. – Free Standing Letter Sorting Table with Cast Iron Seat[197]

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[196] ibid; *;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899
[197] ibid, *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/654

Newspaper Sorting

The standard Newspaper Sorting Table drawing, Standard Pattern Sheet No. 9 issued by the H.M. Office of Works, Dublin, and included in the drawing file for Killucan, shows a single sided table unit with a 'trough' to keep newspapers from slipping to the ground while sorting. A shelving unit over with three shelves was divided into sections 0.022m wide x 0.020m high. This trough section was constructed in mahogany with the remaining frames and visible timbers in pitch pine, Figure 5/58.
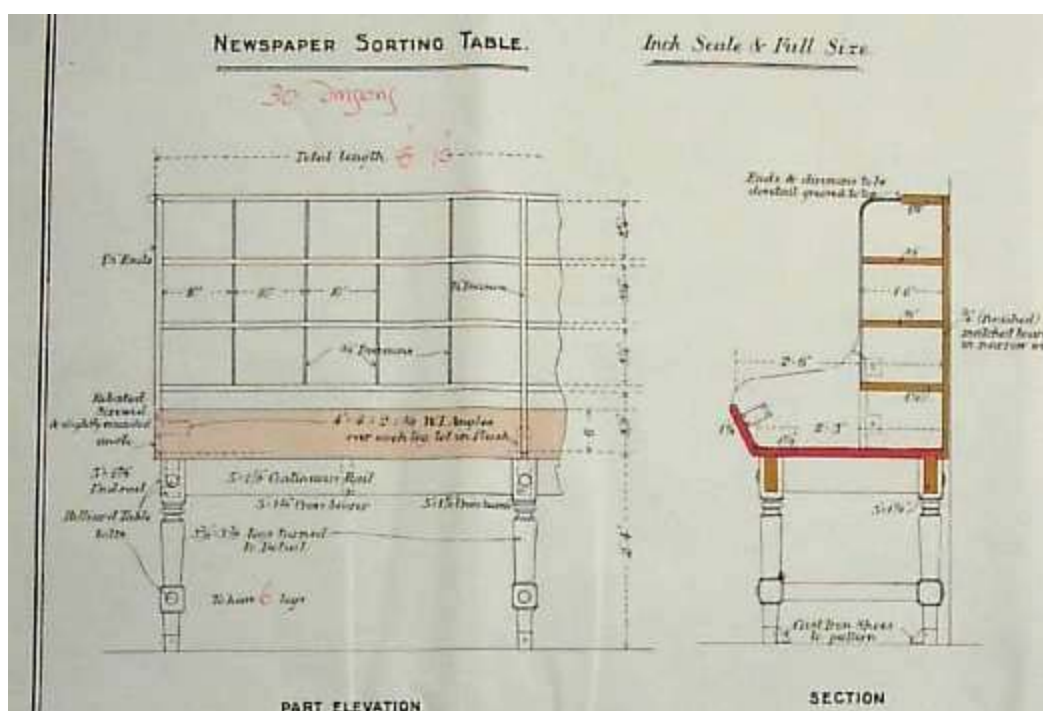
Figure 5/58 – Fairview P.O., c.1889; Newspaper Sorting Table[198]

Parcel Sorting

In Mullingar the Parcel Sorting unit is a floor mounted series of pigeon holes 0.6m x 0.6m x 0.3m deep and 5.8m long and three shelves high. The unit was constructed in 0.025m, 0.035m and 0.05m thick timbers of unknown material but most likely pitch pine. In Killarney the fitting was similar but shorter at 4.2m long, Figure 5/59.

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[198] ibid, *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/654
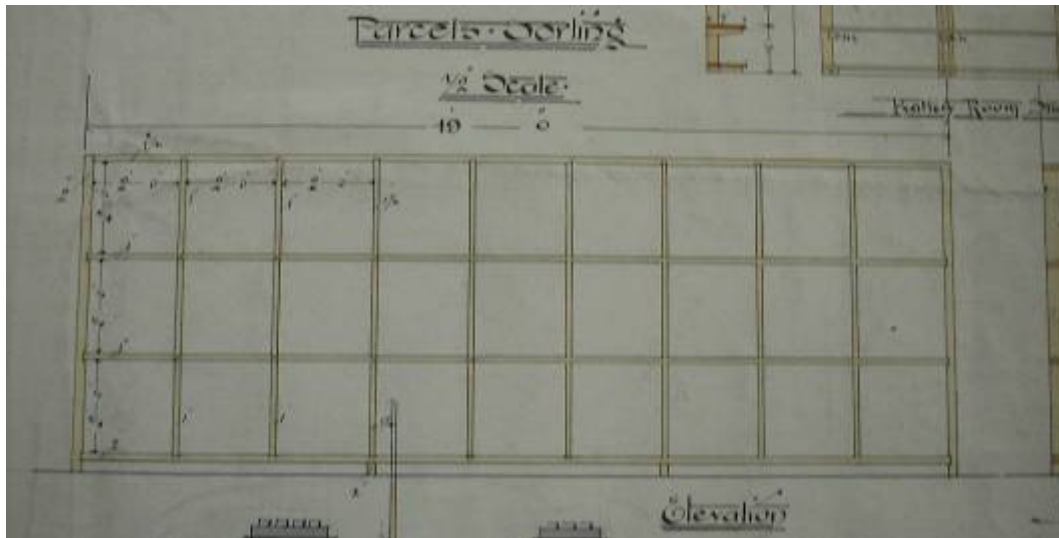
Figure 5/59 – Mullingar P.O., c. 1900; Elevation of Parcel Sorting Unit[199]

Opening and Stamping Tables

Opening and Stamping Tables were free standing units. The stamping table had one section for stamping and the remainder for opening letters. A stone inset was fitted into the stamping section, Figure 5/60. The table details on the Mullingar drawings give notes for framing as *out of 3½" x 3½" stuff*[200].
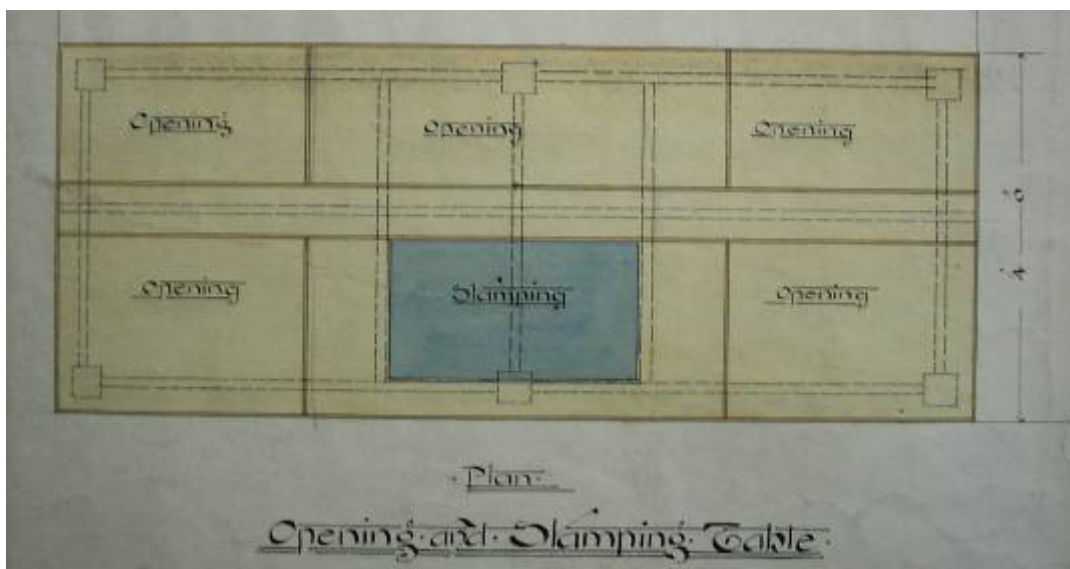
Figure 5/60 – Mullingar P.O., c. 1900; Plan of Opening and Stamping Table[201]

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[199] ibid, *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/641
[200] ibid
[201] ibid,

Postmaster's Office

The Postmaster's Office was located off the Sorting Office and always had a glazed screen partition or a glazed internal window opening separating it from the sorting area. This provided a visual contact between the Postmaster and the Sorting Office. The Postmaster's Office was accessed either directly from the Public Office and via a passageway from the Clerks Area as in Carrick-on-Shannon, Figure 5/61; through the Clerk's Area behind the Public Counter via a passageway, as in Clones, Figure 5/62; or directly off the Clerks Area as in College Green, Figure 5/63, where it was obviously designed to fit in with the curved 'U' shaped public counter.
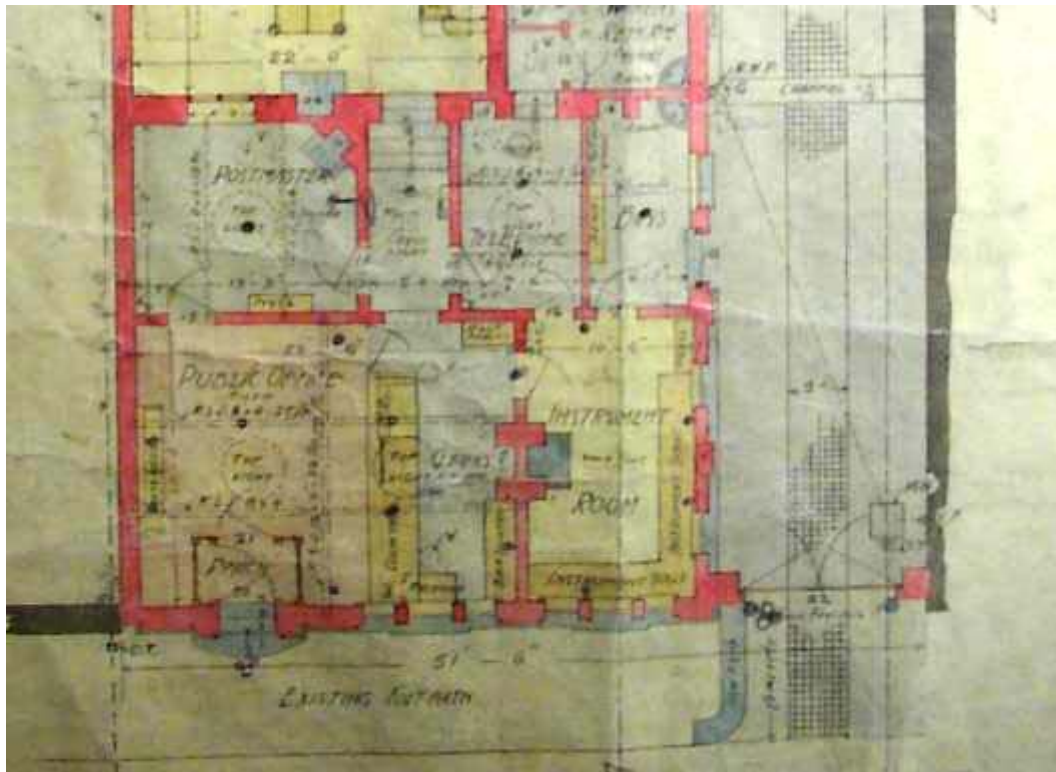
Figure 5/61 – Carrick-on-Shannon P.O., 1906 showing Postmasters Office accessed from Public Office[202]

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[202] ibid; Ref. OPE5HC/4/604
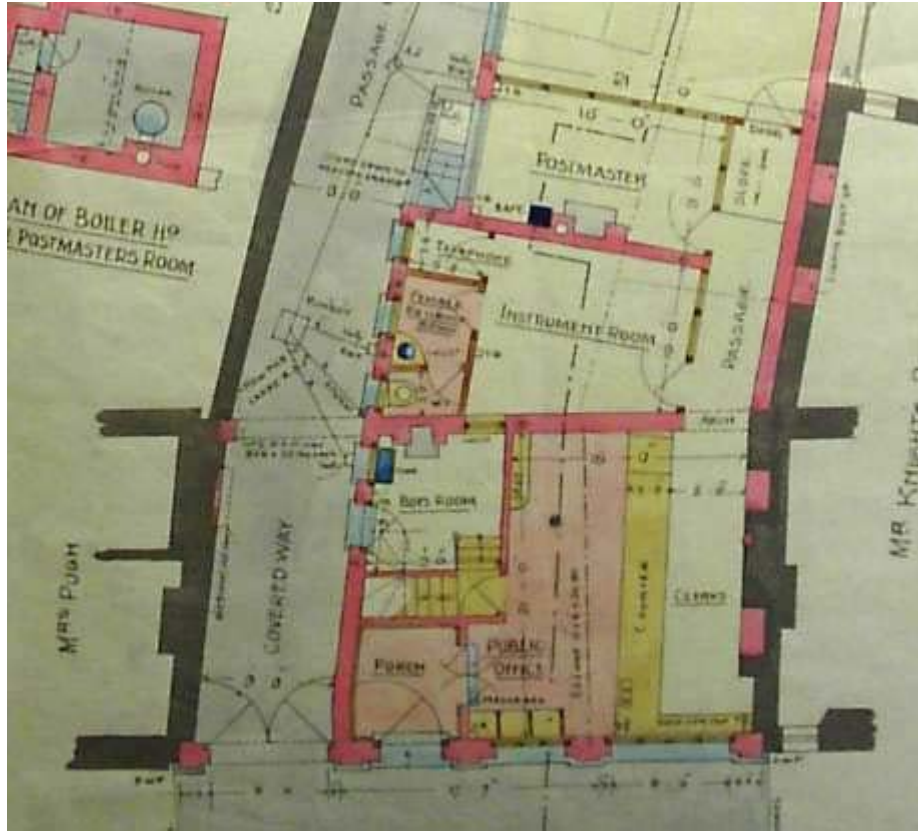
Figure 5/62 – Clones P.O., c.1910; Plan showing access to Postmaster's Room[203]
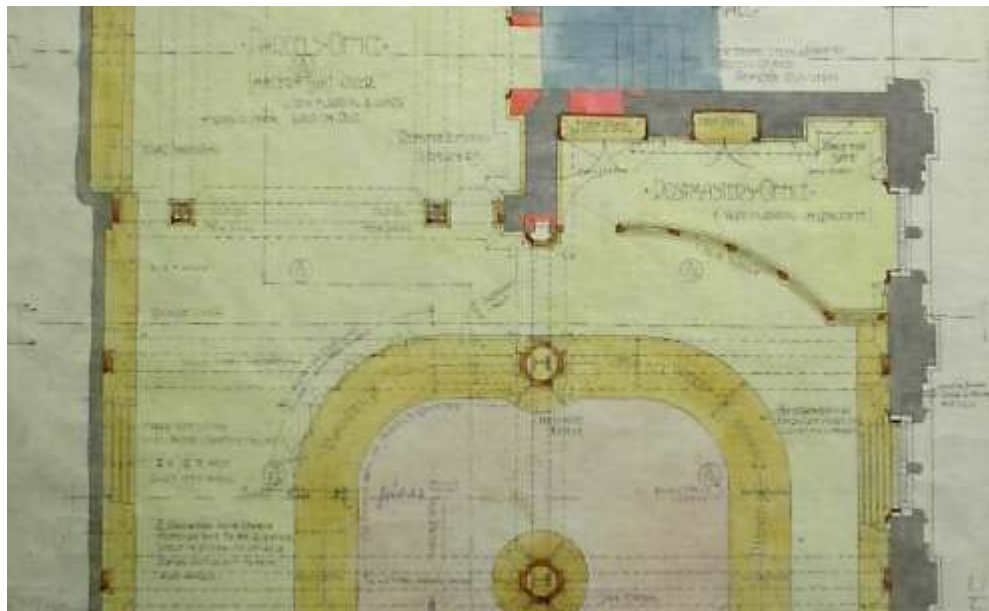
Figure 5/63 – College Green P.O., c.1890; Plan showing access to Postmaster's Room[204]

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[203] ibid, OPW5HC/4/607
[204] ibid, OPW5HC/4/682 & 683

External Yard

The external yard was accessed through timber or steel gates. These gates were double gates where possible. Access to the small Phibsborough yard was through a single gate. Access to Tuam's yard was through steel gates set in brick piers, Figure 5/64. Access to the Clonmel yard was via timber double gates, Figure 5/65. The Boy's W.C and Latrines and Urinals were located off the yard. The Coal Store was also off the yard. A covered area for handcarts, an enclosed room for bicycles and a general store room were also accommodated within the yard. There was direct access from the Sorting Office to the yard. The Battery Room and an Ashes Store was also within the Yard.

In Westport the yard was divided into two, one for the Post Office itself and the other for the Postmaster, Figure 5/66. The Post Office yard included accommodation for Van Yard, covered Hand Carts area, enclosed Basket store, enclosed Battery Room and Latrines. This area of the yard was separated from the Postmasters Yard by a door. The Postmaster's Yard included W.C., Coal Store. Access to the Ashes store was from both yards. Access to a Well was located within the Postmaster's Yard. The adjoining Bank also had access to the Well.

Figure 5/64 – Tuam P.O., c. 1912; Steel access Gates to External Yard[205]

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[205] ibid, OPW5HC/4/965
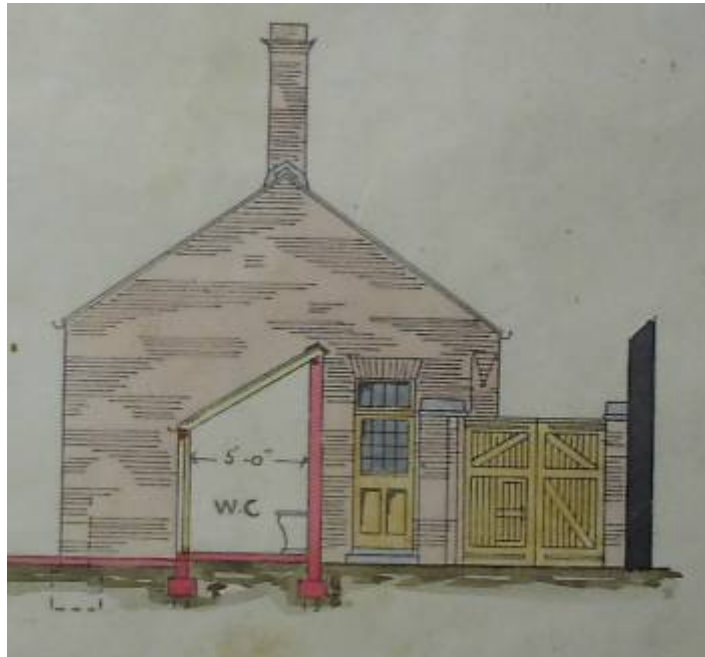
Figure 5/65 – Clonmel P.O., c.1900; Timber access Gates to rear Yard[206]

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[206] ibid; Ref OPW5HC/4/606
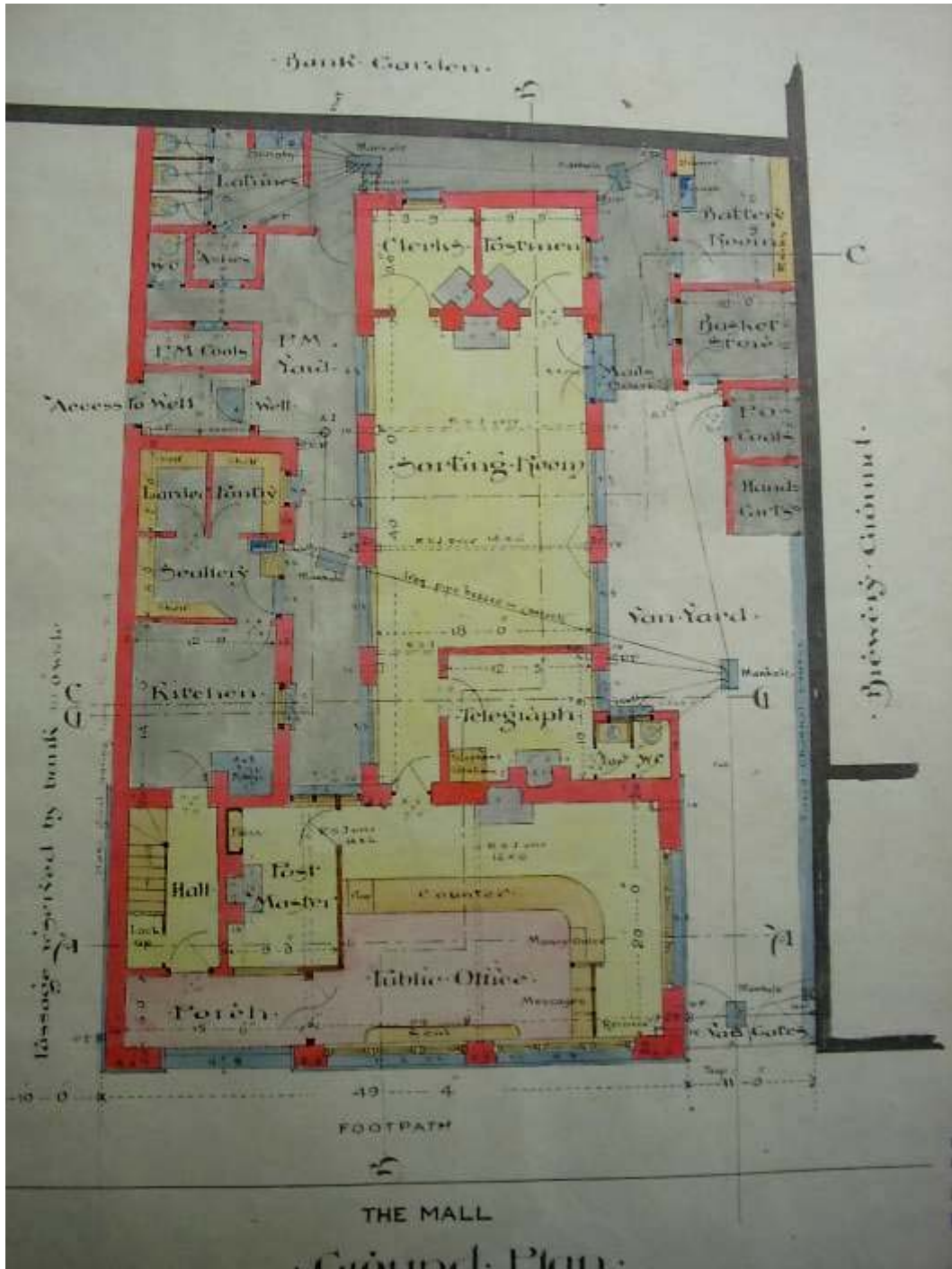
Figure 5/66 – Westport P.O., c.1900; Plan of External Yard[207]

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[207] ibid, OPW/5HC/4/921 & 960

Front Terrace

The only post office with an area to the front recorded in the OPW archive files was in Castlebar, Figure 5/67 and 5/68. The area notated on the drawings as a Terrace was enclosed by a stone plinth with iron railings over. The building line was approximately 2.4m behind the original building line. The Terrace was brought out to the boundary of the previously existing building line.

The building is on a steeply sloping site and the Terrace was built up so that its ground level was not sloping but kept level with that of the building. Current photographs of the post office show the entrance straight onto the street, Figure 5/69. Road widening could explain the removal of the terrace. The railings were Victorian style with an arched rail with a lantern over the entrance gates. Four smaller light fittings were positioned on the railings, one on each gate post and one on either side of the gates. These accentuated the decorative railing and piers. In all other records in the OPW archives the postal office building had direct access onto the street.   Some of these had level access while others had steps.
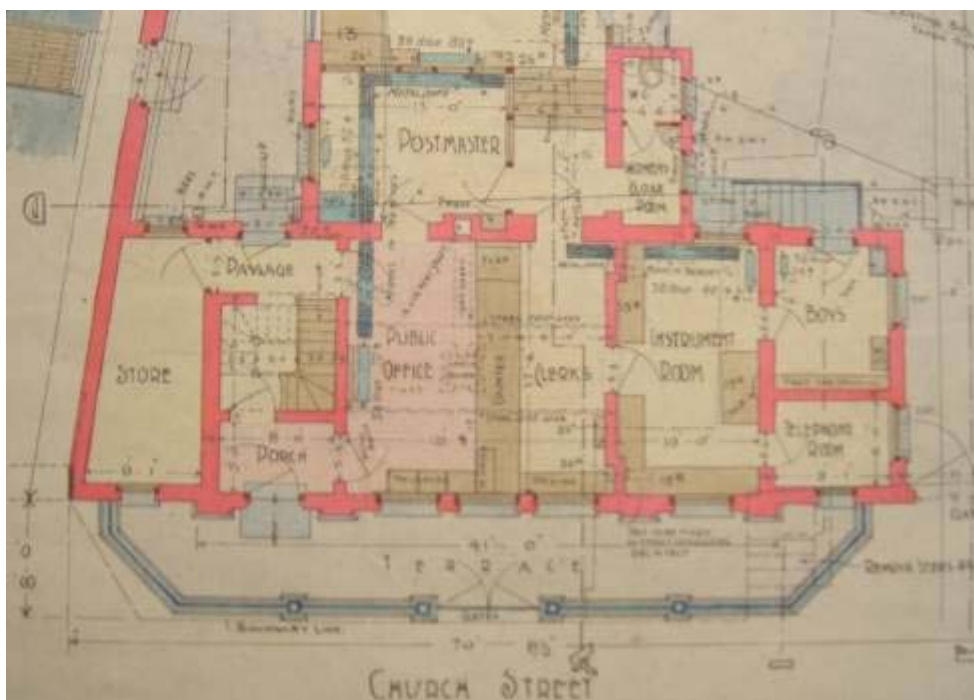
Figure 5/67 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Drawing showing Entrance Terrace[208]

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[208] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/605
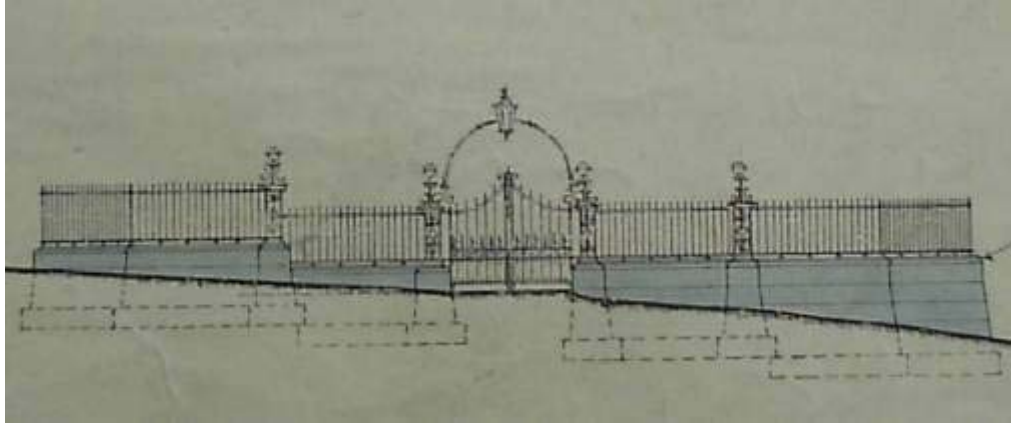
Figure 5/68 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Elevation of Terrace Railings[209]

Figure 5/69 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Photo Showing Front Entrance; Photo, Author, 2005

Postmaster's Residence

Of the sixty-one post offices studied in the OPW records, only twenty included living accommodation for the Postmaster. Typically two, three to four bedrooms were provided and in some cases five bedrooms, Appendix 5. In some cases it was not possible to provide living accommodation because of site restrictions and in other cases space was provided but this was not used as living accommodation.

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[209] ibid

The living accommodation was either accessed through the Entrance Porch, which also gave access to the Public Office or through a separate entrance doorway. In Ennis this doorway gave access to a stairs which lead down to the Kitchen and Scullery Figure 5/70. Access to the Postmaster's Yard was through the Scullery. The First Floor of the building accommodated the Parlour, Drawing Room, four Bedrooms, three with a fireplace, and the W.C. Figure 5/71. A single Bedroom with a fireplace was located at Mezzanine level, Figure 5/72. It is evident from the drawings that no bath was installed in the original layout.
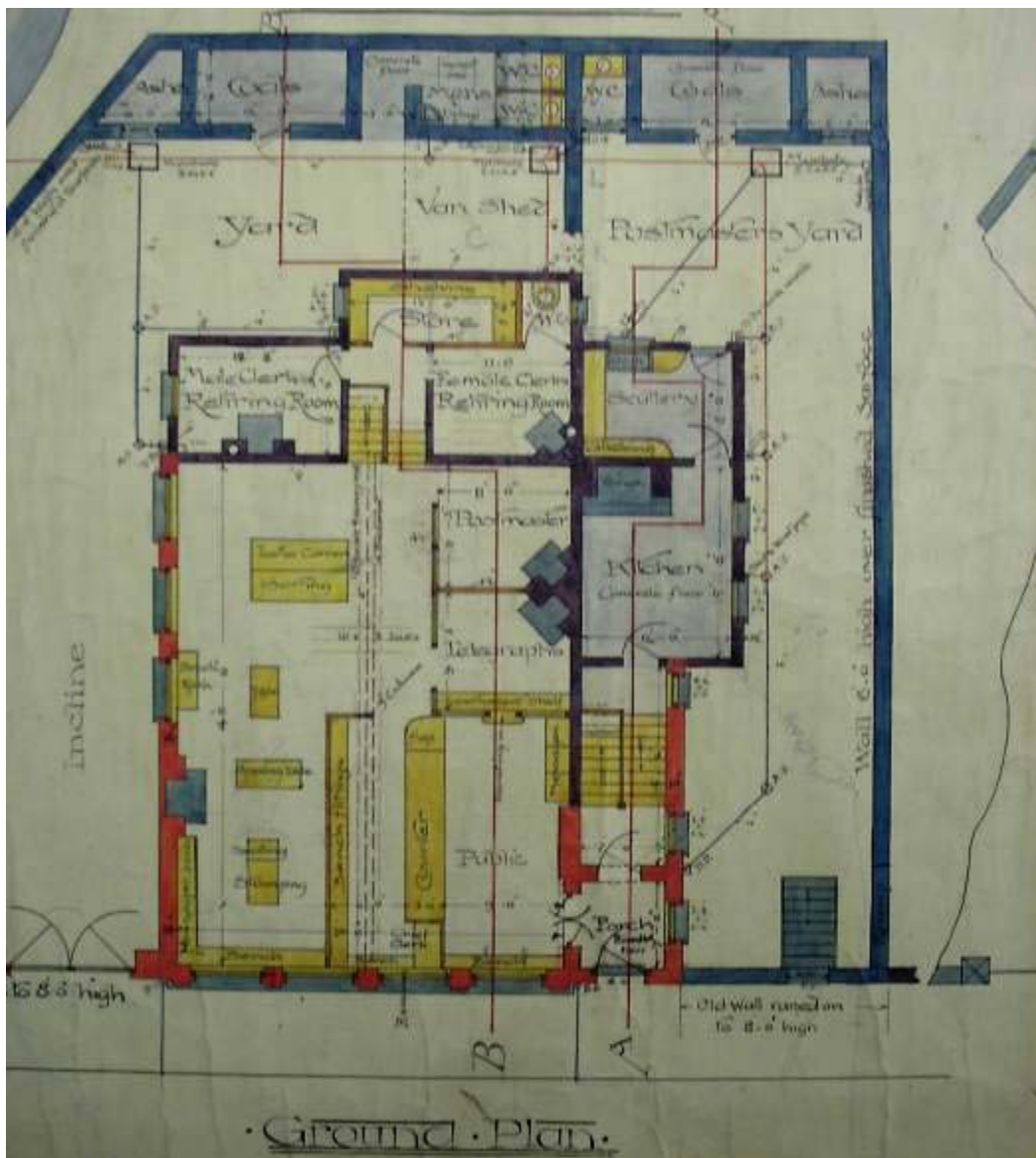
Figure 5/70 – Ennis P.O., 1890; Ground Floor Plan[210]

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[210] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/619
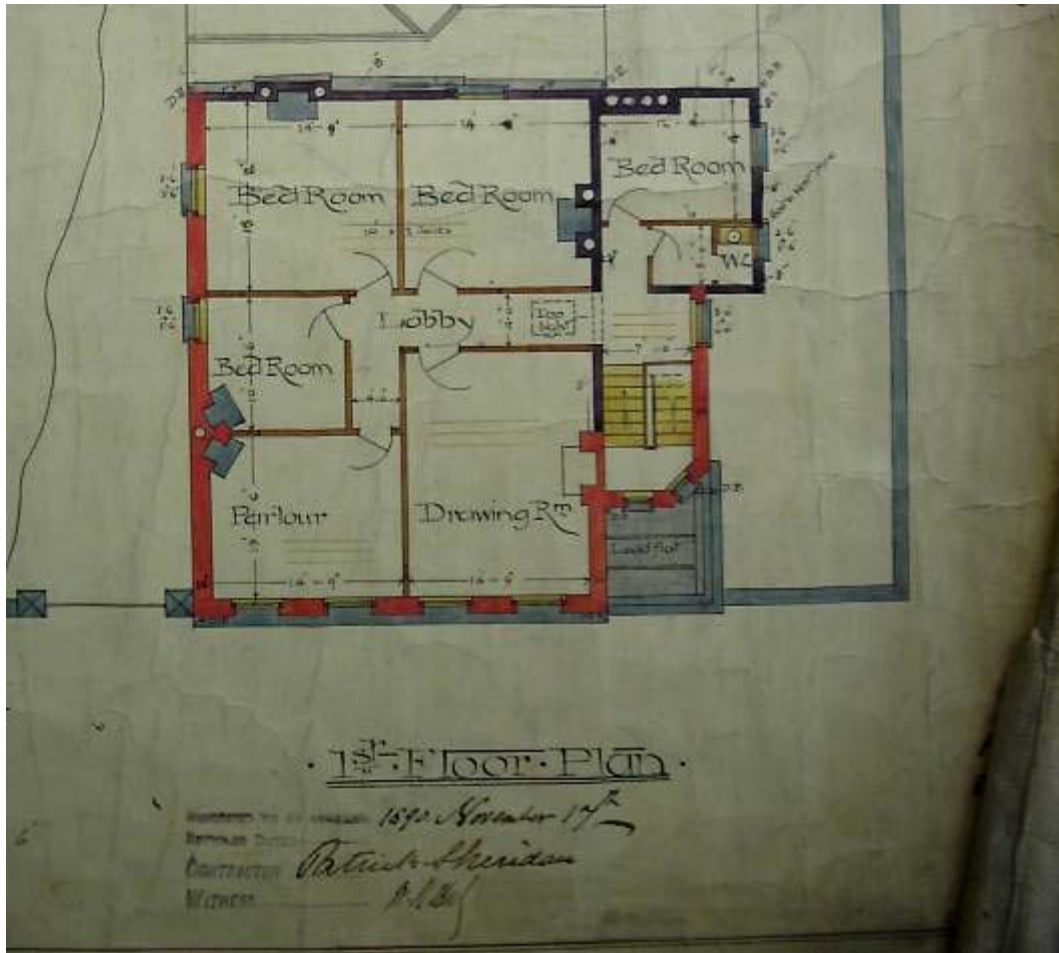
Figure 5/71 – Ennis P.O., 1890; First Floor Plan[211]
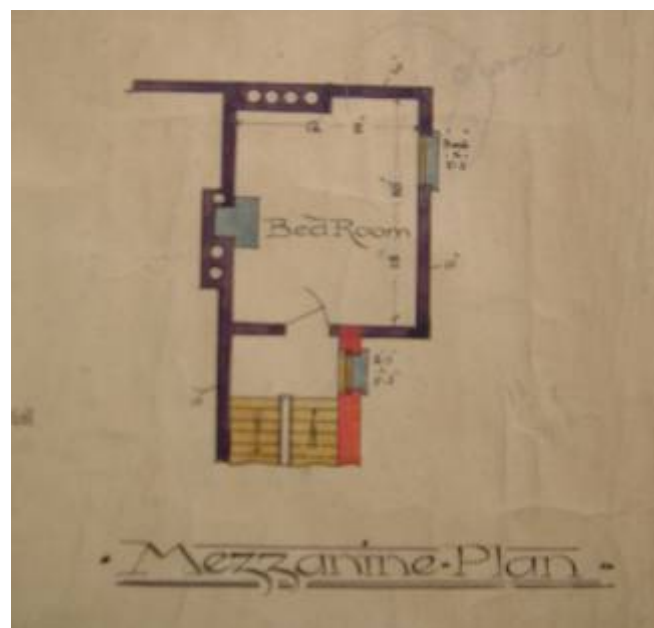
Figure 5/72 – Ennis P.O., 1890; Mezzanine Floor Plan[212]

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[211] ibid

In Westport the Postmaster's accommodation was located on the Ground and First Floor. On first Floor it consisted of a Drawing Room and a Dining Room with a store room for China off it. It had four bedrooms along a corridor. The Bathroom was located at the north east end of the corridor. A Servant's Room was located adjacent to this Bathroom, Figure 5/73. The only other instance of a Servants Room was in the Post Office in Portadown.
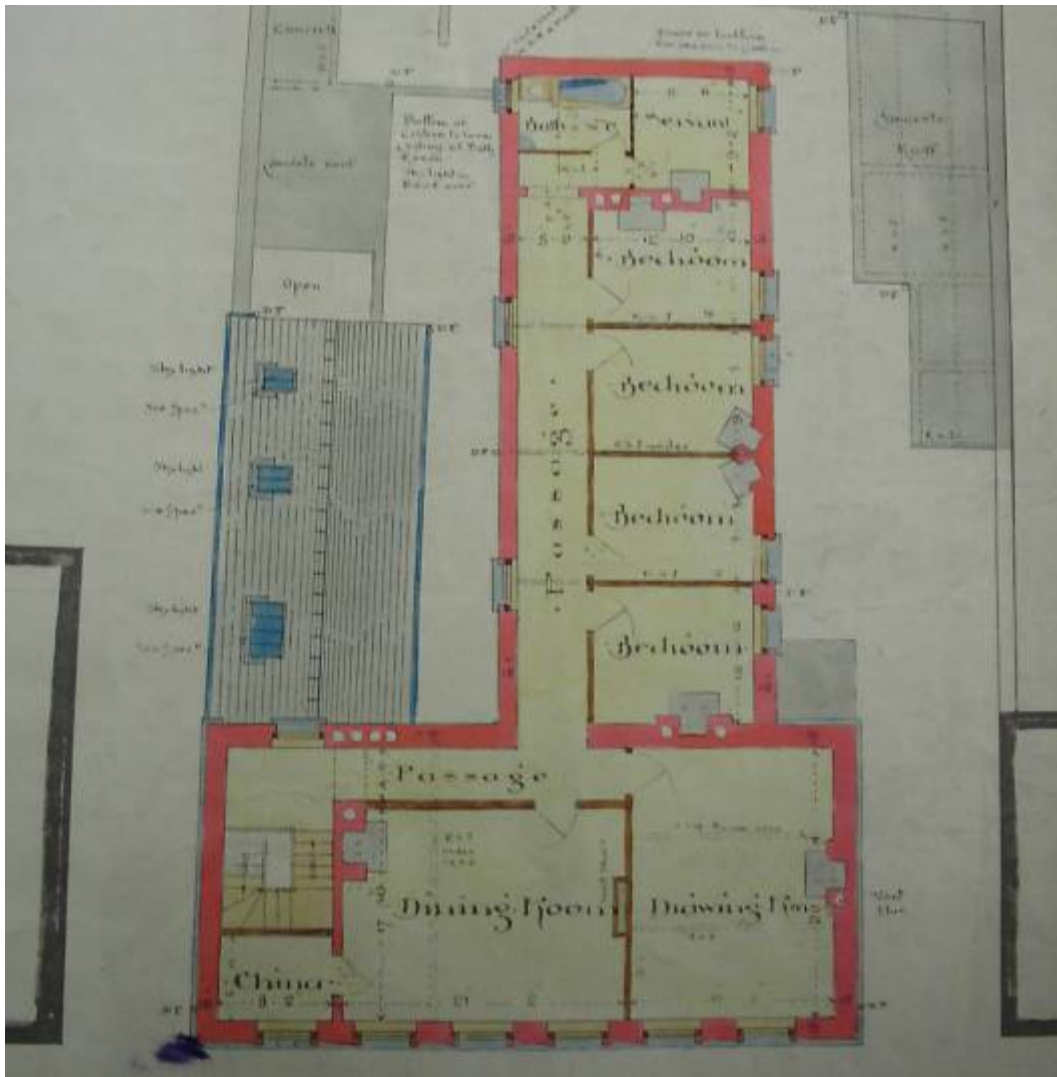
Figure 5/73 –Westport P.O., c.1900; First Floor Plan showing Bedrooms and Servant Room[213]

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[212] ibid
[213] ibid

Heating

Both the Sorting Room and Clerk's Area were heated by an open fireplace, Figure 5/74, as were the Postmaster's Office, the Postmen's (sic) Room and the Clerks Room. The Public Area was not normally heated, the only example of a fireplace in the Public Office being in Belturbet, Figure 5/75. In some postal offices there is evidence of a boiler fed heating system, as in Castlebar, Figure 5/76, although there is no reference to radiator details.

A hot water system was not a standard inclusion as there is reference to a later system added in Mallow Post Office. Figure 5/77. This later addition of hot water installation was added to Mallow Post Office as a drawing dated 1911 shows, construction on Mallow Post Office having been completed in 1891.
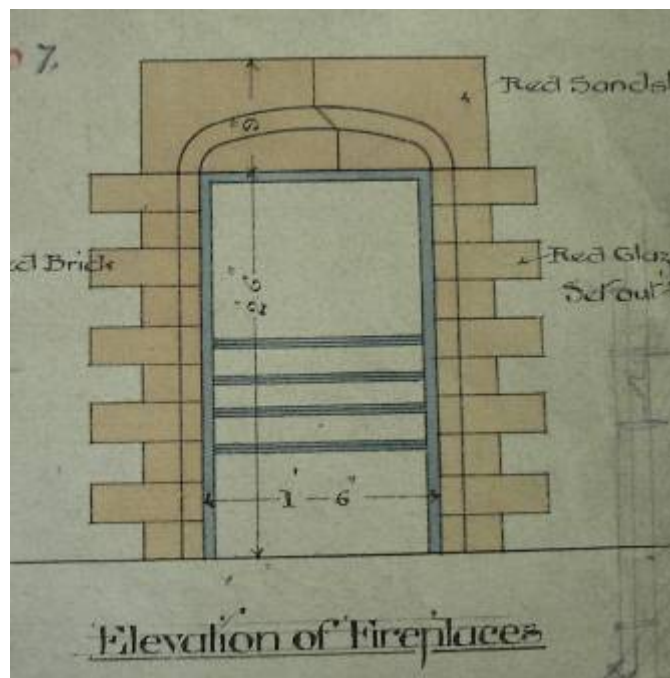
Figure 5/74 – Phibsborough P.O., c. 1900; Original Drawing of Elevation of Fireplace Detail[214]

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[214] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/651
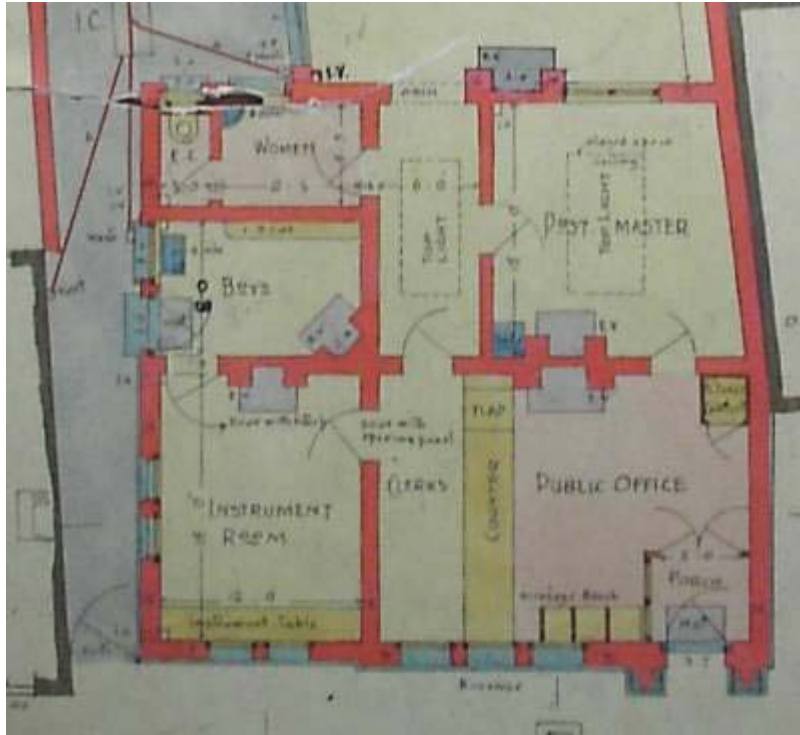
Figure 5/75 – Belturbet P.O., c.1910; Plan of Public Office Showing Fireplace[215]
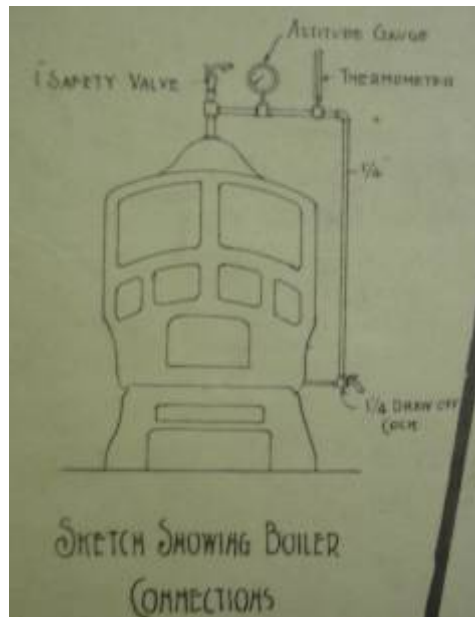
Figure 5/76 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Heating Boiler Detail[216]

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[215] ibid, Ref. OPW5HC/4/596
[216] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/605
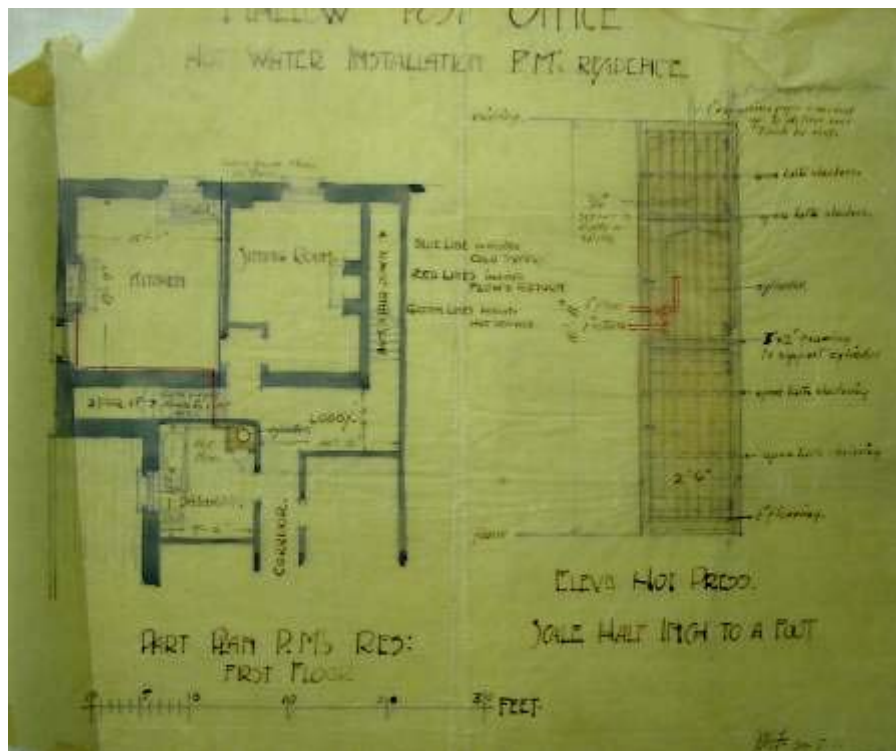
Figure 5/77 – Mallow P.O., c.1900 – Water Installation Drawing in Postmaster's Residence[217]

Clocks

In most postal offices clocks were fitted behind the glazing of the window frame in the front façade. The window frame was designed with a circular section to frame the clock, Figure 5/78.

Figure 5/78 – Belturbet P.O., c.1910; Front Elevation Drawing showing Location of Clock[218]

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[217] ibid, Ref.OPW5HC/4/636

The clock in Wexford's Post Office was fitted after much discussion as to the position and type. Wexford Town Clerk's Office in a letter to OPW requested

> *……the desirability of having an outside clock…as it will be of such a great public convenience……*

The OPW replied that because of the narrow street the clock would have to

> *……be supported on brackets and face up and down the street...'*

The cost of the bracketed clock would be in the region of £40-0-0. A letter from the GPO to OPW dated June 1894 stated that it was

> *……not the practice to erect clocks of the (this) kind on Crown Post Office buildings…'*

The normal window mounted double dialed clock had been allowed for in the tender. There was also an issue regarding the placing of a bracketed clock if one were to be required. A memo from Mellon of the OPW to the Architectural Department of the OPW dated July 1894 stated that a bracketed clock was not desirable as there was no room for the case and works in the Public Office and these would be

> *……most objectionable in the P.M's drawing room or dining room on the first floor on account of the constant ticking and the building has not been designed to suit a clock of this kind……*

Obviously the OPW Architects were not to be moved on this issue either. A letter dated 7th July 1894 from GPO to OPW requested a double faced clock for the window. The clock was eventually fitted in the window but no longer exists, Figure 5/79[219].

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[218] ibid, Ref. OPW5HC/4/596
[219] National Archives *OPW Collection;* Summarised from - Ref. OPW/7558/96

Figure 5/79 – Wexford P.O., 1894; Photo, Author, 2006

Furniture Schedules

Furniture in the Sorting Offices, Public Offices and Clerks' Offices has been dealt with earlier in this chapter. These drawings indicated the furniture details and requirements of the GPO. This furniture was supplied and fitted by the OPW as part of the building contract. A schedule of furniture requested by GPO for the Wexford Post Office and required to be supplied by OPW is listed in Appendix 6. It is reasonable to assume that similar furniture was supplied to all post offices. The Athy Post Office drawings were issued with furniture schedules included on them, Figure 5/80 and Figure 5/81.
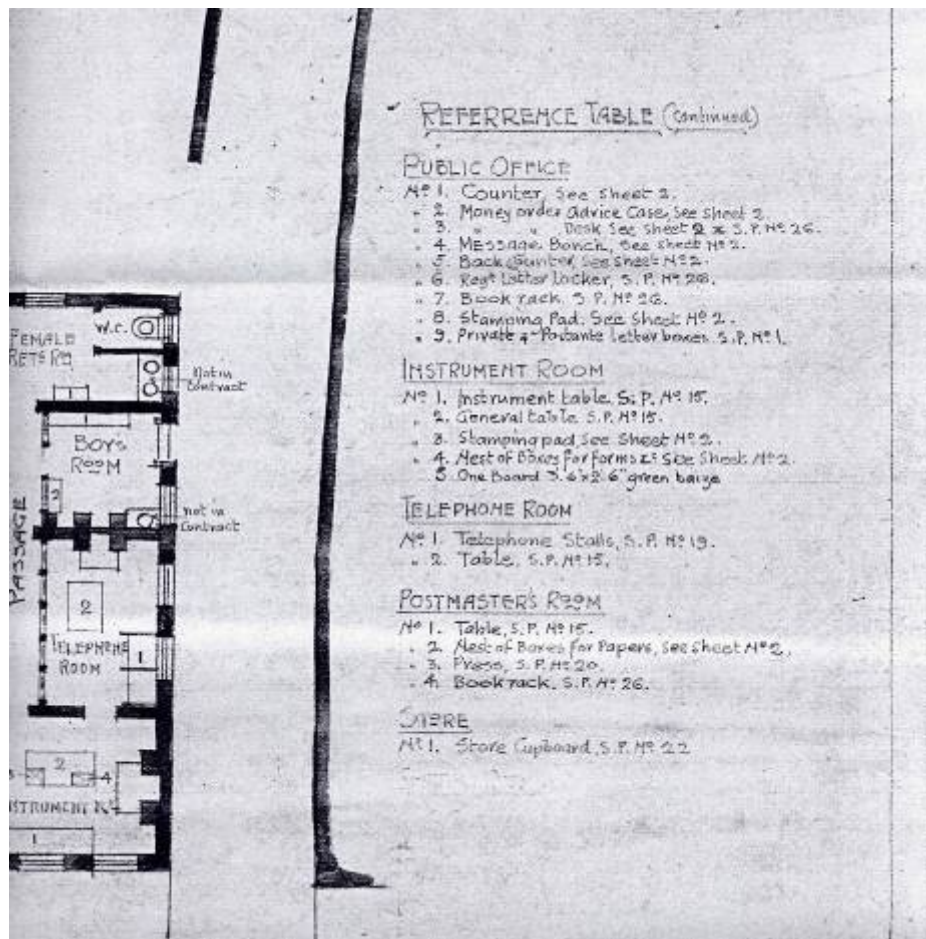
Figure 5/80 – Athy P.O., c.1911; Drawing showing Furniture Schedule[220]
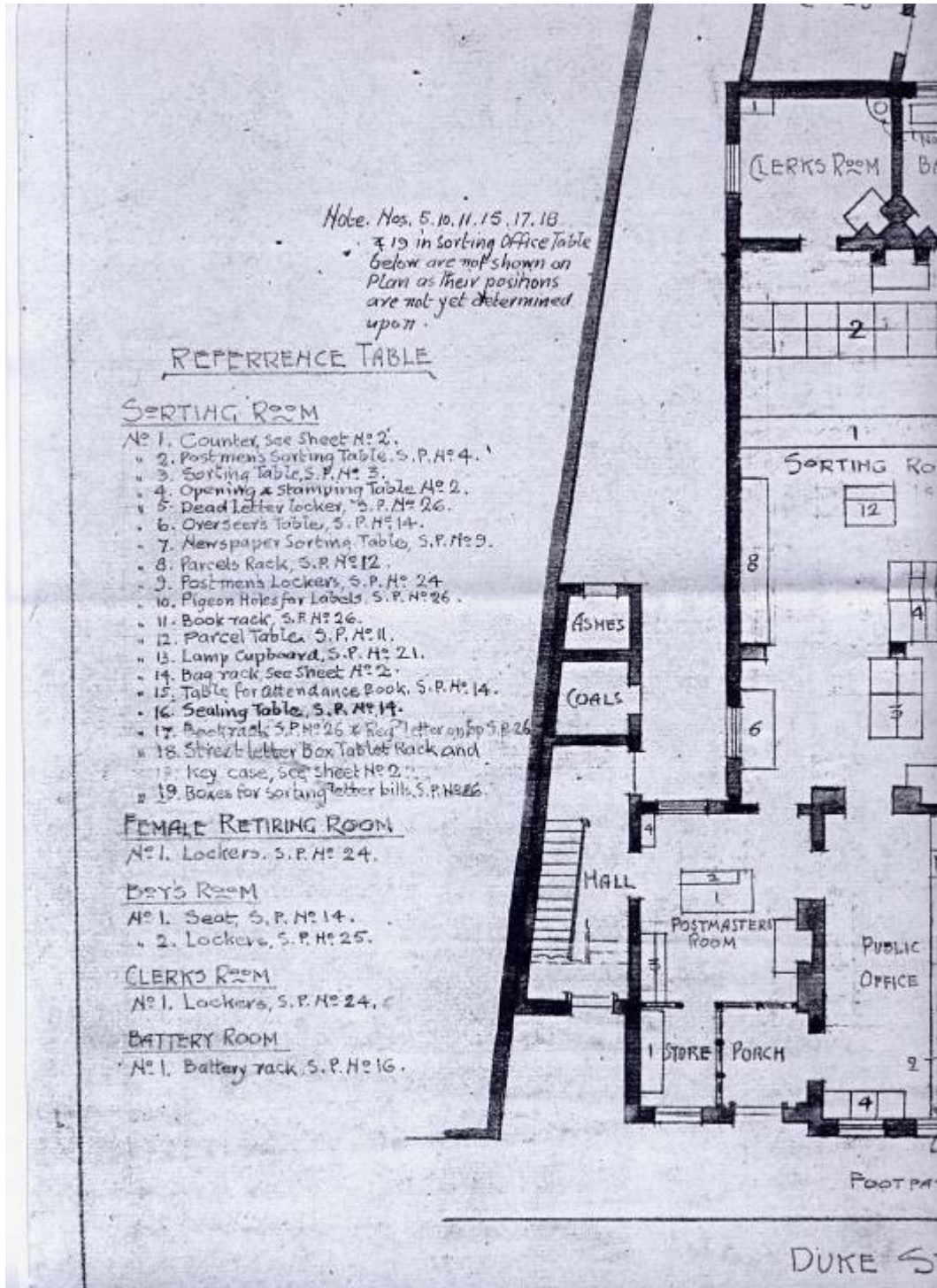
Figure 5/81 – Athy P.O., c.1911; Drawing showing Furniture Schedule[221]

[221] ibid

Window Blinds

A request for blinds in the Wexford file gives some insight into the Postmaster's Residence.

J. Millward, OPW, suggested in a memo to Mellon that blinds be fitted to the Postmaster's Residence as it was directly over the Public Office. It would also prevent the

> *……amateur fitting of blinds...*

The cost of eight blinds was in the region of £3-10-0. A memo from Mellon to Cochrane OPW dated 17th April 1895 stated

> *……Tipperary being the only Postmaster Residence built in my time and that no blinds were supplied there…….*

He also stated that the postal offices built in the Dublin District with the exception of Kingstown have no residences attached and that blinds were not supplied in Kingstown. Cochrane's response was to the point –

> *…… we supply blinds for official premises only and then only where blinds are really necessary…….*

A final memo on the subject from Mellon to Millward dated 18th April 1895 reads

> *……under the circumstance referred to by W. Cochrane it will be better not to supply any blinds to this PM's residence'[222] ……*

External Insignia

A letter from GPO Dublin to the Secretary of OPW dated 24th August 1893 regarding the external signage on Wexford Post Office states the following:

> *……it is, however, observed that the letters V.R. or a representation of the Royal Arms are not shown on the Plan and in this connection I am directed to state that in the case of Crown Post Offices which have been erected in England and Scotland since the year 1879 it has been the practice to display on the outside, as an intimation that the office is one belonging to the Government, to have a representation of the Royal Arms or the letters V.R. and I am to request that the Board of Public Works will be so good as to adopt a similar course as regards Crown Post*

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[222] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Summarised from Ref. B 12105.50 Vol. 1

> *Offices in Ireland which are now in the course of erection or the*
> *building of which may hereafter be authorised.'*

Owen noted on this letter that:

> *……(use) terracotta letters and (the) date shown on (the) drawing*
> *attached'[223]……*

The terracotta date survives on the front façade of Wexford Post Office. However, the royal insignia does not. The Post Office, today, bears the twentieth century logo (insignia) of An Post., but unfortunately, with no evidence of the logo of the Department of Post and Telegraph, which I suggest replaced the royal insignia, Figure 5/82. The royal insignia were replaced over time, with the Department logo and evidence of the removal can been seen in most post offices, Figure 5/83.

The purpose of the royal insignia was to distinguish between the GPO owned and the privately owned post offices. It is also evident that OPW were happy to comply with the request from London, although they may have been hoping not to have to erect the royal arms.

Insignia was also a matter of contention after the formation of the Free State. Records show that postmasters were not happy with the time it was taking to have the royal insignia removed and replaced with the Free State emblem and this is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Figure 5/82 – Wexford P.O., 1894; Photo showing original date plaque and An Post logo; Photo, Author, 2006

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[223] ibid

Figure 5/83 – New Ross P.O., c.1903 showing original insignia, with Royal emblem removed, and the An Phuist emblem; Photo, Author, 2006

Decorative Features

Decorative features were an integral part of the design of all the post offices studies. They include items such as decorative brickwork and stonework, terracotta work, wrought iron work etc. and examples still exist in many cases. Decorative Brick detailing can be seen in almost all the brick post offices with decorative brick coursing at eaves, string course etc. as in Wexford on the string course at window sill level, at the window reveals and over the window heads, Figure 5/84.

Figure 5/84 – Enniscorthy P.O., 1910; Decorative brick features; Photo, Author 2006

Decorative Stonework can been seen here in both the stone finished and the brick and stone finished buildings. Castlebar Post Office is an example of this with its stonework detailing within a brick façade, Figure 5/85.

Figure 5/85 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Decorative Stonework on Front Façade; Photo, Author 2005

Terracotta work took the form of date or name panels, as in Ballsbridge name plaque, Figure 5/86.

Figure 5/86 – Ballsbridge P.O., 1915; Terracotta Name Panels; Photo, Author 2007

Stone name panels were also used as in Enniscorthy post Office, Figure 5/87.

Figure 5.87 – Enniscorthy P.O., 1910; Stone Name Panel; Photo, Author 2006

Wrought iron was also a feature and evidence of this was seen in the drawings for the railings for Castlebar Post Office. The decorative eaves brackets survive at the eaves of Castlebar Post Office, Figure 5/88 and 5/89.
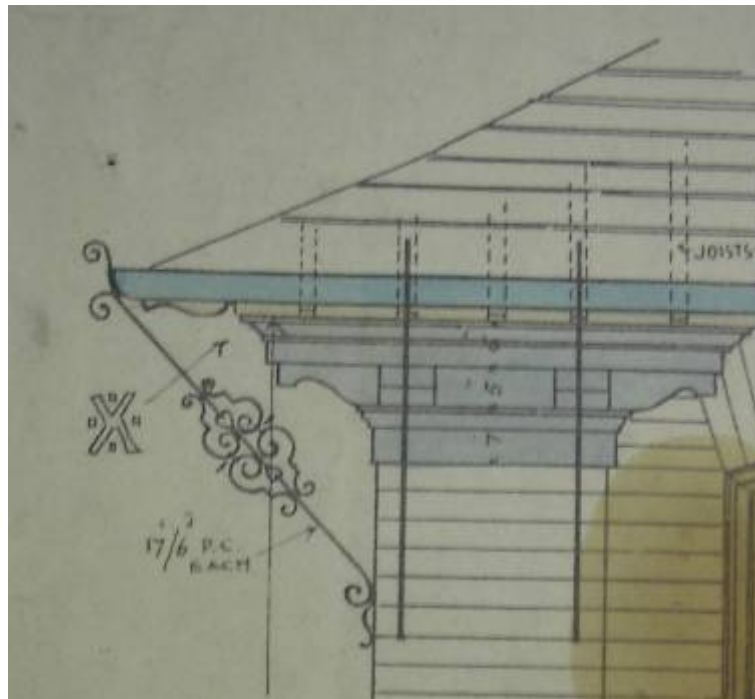
Figure 5/88 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Drawing showing detail of eaves bracket[224]

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[224] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/605

Figure 5/89 – Castlebar P.O., 1902; Decorative eaves brackets; Photo, Emer Crean, 2007

Even the simplest post office buildings had some decorative features and Kildare is an example of this with its brick eaves detail, Figure 5/90.

Figure 5/90 – Kildare P.O., c. 1910; Photo showing eaves brick detailing; Photo, Author, 2006

The decorative detailing was not confined to those areas readily visible from the street. The chimney pots and chimney ventilation grille in the New Ross Post illustrate this, Figure 5/91.

Figure 5/91 – New Ross P.O., c.1903 – Decorative Chimney Pots and Ventilation Grille; Photo, Author 2006.

Chapter 6

Conservation Issues

Introduction

The conservation issues relating to post office buildings apply to both the fabric and the significance of the buildings. Part of the problem lies in their ownership. When An Post was formed, the ownership of the buildings was transferred to An Post[225]. At present An Post does not have any policy guidelines for its historic building stock nor is there any intention to introduce any guidelines[226]. The transfer of ownership was fortunate for An Post as it gave them a large building portfolio, which they can use or dispose of as they see fit. Once this transfer occurred the Government was no longer involved in the protection of the buildings and An Post had no particular responsibility for the buildings other than that which fell within the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000. If the building is not a protected structure, and many still are not, that responsibility was further diluted, Appendix 4. Once An Post no longer have a use for a building it is sold into private ownership, further diluting this building type as a group. Once in private ownership the building's cultural significance is weakened, its historic and social significance is no longer appreciated. Killucan is an example of this as the building bears no reference to fact that it was once a post office building although a plaque on the façade does celebrate its refurbishment, it mentions nothing about its former and initial use, Figure 6/1. This building is now in private hands and is not on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Westmeath nor is the building included in the recently published National Inventory of Architectural Heritage listing for the county.
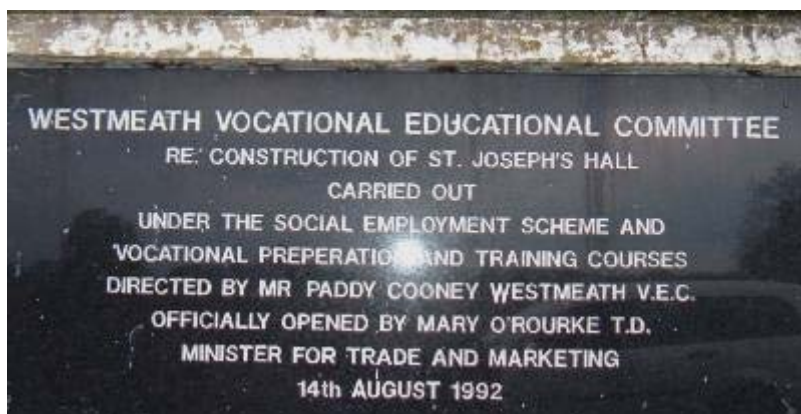
Figure 6/37 – Plaque on external wall of Killucan's former P.O.; Photo, Author, 2006.

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[225] Postal & Telecommunications Services Act, 1983; No.24/1983; Section 41
[226] In conservation with Stephen Ferguson, Assistant Secretary, An Post; August 2006

Legislation

Before any assessment of a building's significance can be formed it is necessary to look at the background to the legislation and the charters that apply. The Legislation in Ireland to protect our built heritage is principally the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, the National Monument Acts and the Architectural Heritage Act.

Planning Acts 1963-2000 (and amendments)

The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000 was introduced to consolidate previous legislation and introduce new legislation in various areas of planning. In particular reference to architectural heritage it added two main new responsibilities. Firstly it obliged Planning authorities to create a

> *……record of protected structures and to include in that record every structure which is, in the opinion of the planning authority, of such interest within its functional area… …*[227]

Secondly it obliged owners and occupiers to maintain their buildings

> *… … each owner and each occupier shall …… ensure that the structure …… is not endangered*[228]*..*

This section also specifies headings under which a building should be given protected status as

> *……architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest……*[229]

The National Monuments Act 1930-2004

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 gives further protection to the architectural heritage and gives protection by the State to monuments. Historic monuments in this legislation are classed as

> *'……prehistoric monument and any monument associated with the commercial, cultural, economic, industrial, military, religious or social history of the place……'*[230]

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[227] The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000; Part IV; Section 51
[228] ibid; Part IV; Section 58
[229] ibid; Part IV; Section 54

Architectural Heritage Act 1999 (including the Heritage Act 1995)

The significance and cultural value is defined in Irish Legislation in the Planning and Development Act and the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999 as structures or parts of structures with architectural, historical, archeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), under the terms of the Granada Convention and the Architectural Heritage Act 1999, provide for the establishment of a national inventory of architectural heritage. It is in the process of recording the built heritage of each county in Ireland. Fifteen inventories have been completed and published to date – Cork, Carlow, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Kildare, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath and Wicklow. Longford, Louth and Wexford are almost complete and ready for publication.

Their appraisal of structures is carried out under categories of special interest under the headings of architectural, artistic, historic, social, scientific and technical[231].

Structures are then rated according to their architectural heritage significance using this appraisal. The NIAH ratings are International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only[232].

Record of Protected Structures

The NIAH is mandated to assist Local Authorities in compiling their Record of Protected Structures. The Minister will recommend structures to the Local Authority for inclusion on their RPS list. Any other structure can also be included at the discretion of the Local Authority.

Guidelines

As part of the Local Government (Planning and development) Act 2000 the Minister was obliged to issue guidelines to the planning authorities for protecting structures and preserving the character of architectural conservation area. These guidelines were issued in 2004 as the publication "*Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning*

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[230] National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987; Section 1
[231] National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; *NIAH Handbook;* Dublin; March 2002; pp7-11
[232] ibid; pp12-14

Authorities, Guidance on Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000".

The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland issued the publication "*Guidelines for the Conservation of Buildings*" in 1994 and revised in 2001. These guidelines outline an approach and give information on the conservation of buildings for practitioners.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have issued sixteen "*Conservation Guideline*" booklets dealing with various issues relating to conservation.

The British Standards Institution issued its "*Guide to The Principles of Conservation of Historic Buildings, B.S. 7913:1998*". This standard is intended to be a guide to provide information on conservation of buildings for both practitioners and local authorities primarily in England, Scotland and Wales and in the absence of an equal Irish Standard is a useful document for Irish practitioners.

Grants

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government issue grants to Local Authorities for conservation of buildings by individuals. There is no automatic right to a grant under the scheme and structures must be on the RPS of the county to qualify for a grant. Each local authority is allocated a fixed amount of money, by the DEHLG for a calendar year to meet grant payments which is then allocated to the applicant. However a building must be listed in the Record of Protected Structures for the county for any grants to be issued. The maximum grant for works is €10,000 or in exceptional circumstance €20,000 and grants cannot be used for maintenance, alterations or improvements or if the works are not essential to secure the conservation of the structure.

The Heritage Council also allocated grants for Protected Structures.

The Charters

Various charters compiled and issued by ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, cover the conservation issues relating to the built environment. The Athens Charter stated the principles which would guide the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings[233]. The Venice Charter 1964 expanded on these conclusions under the headings of conservation, restoration, historic sites, excavations and publications[234].

The Burra Charter[235], using the Venice Charter as a base, was adopted in 1999 and provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. It states the *cultural significance* as meaning

> ……*the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for the past, present or future generations. The cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects*[236].

Methodology for Establishing Significance

Using these Acts and the Burra Charter as a framework to assess their significance the post office buildings will be assessed under the following headings:

> *aesthetic, architectural, artistic, cultural, historic, scientific, social and technical* [237]

and

> *fabric, setting, use, associations and meanings*[238]

Aesthetic, Architectural and Artistic

The architectural and artistic value of this group of buildings is evident in their design and the use of materials, and in their scale in relation to their setting and their surroundings. They are generally buildings of modest scale using different materials to emphasize their importance. Kells Post

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[233] ICOMOS; *The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments, 1931*
[234] ICOMOS; The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964)
[235] ICOMOS; *The Burra Charter;* The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance; 1999.
[236] Ibid; Section 1.2
[237] National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; *NIAH Handbook;* Dublin; March 2002; pp7-11
[238] ICOMOS; *The Burra Charter*, The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance;1999; Section 1.2

Office, Figure 6/2, is a modest brick building using architectural form and regular stone features in its design. Birr Post Office, Figure 6/3, also modest in size uses materials and design to express its ornamentation and to emphasize its importance in the streetscape. These buildings were designed to fit into the streetscape and over the passage of time have become an intrinsic part of their environment. This body of work of the OPW offers a significant contribution to our built heritage. Their artistic significance can be seen in the surviving insignia both Irish and British, the brick or stone detailing, fanlights, mosaic flooring, terracotta lettering and cartouche.

Although each building may be modest in its own right, with the exception of the General Post Office in Dublin, the collection of all these buildings, between sixty and seventy still surviving is of major significance. Only schools, police barracks and railways stations would have had a building programme as equal and as extensive within the OPW portfolio.

Figure 6/38 – Kells P. O., c. 1902; Photo, Author, 2005

Figure 6/39 – Birr P.O., c. 1908; Photo, NIAH, *Buildings of Ireland,* **Series**[239]

Historic

The historic significance comes from two distinct areas. Firstly the buildings themselves - all the buildings in this study have their original footprint intact and much evidence and records survive in archives giving information on structure, layout, services, fixtures and fittings.

The second historic significance comes from the part played by the post office buildings and the post office employees in the fight for Irish freedom. The obvious example is the G.P.O., Dublin and its occupation in 1916 by the leaders and men of the Provincial Government. The G.P.O. has come to symbolize the nation's freedom and was the centre of celebrations in 2006 to mark the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

At a more local level employees of the post office were also playing their part in the Civil War 1919-1921. In Longford Post Office, Figure 6/4, the postmistresses Misses Cooney and Madden helped the intelligence service of the IRA by intercepting all post addressed to the members of the British forces[240]. The British Government also had their own spies planted within the post office system and these along with some Post Office employees passed on information to the British[241]. It is very

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[239] www.buildingsofireland.ie; 22-02-2007
[240] Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish Revolution 1910-1923;* Irish Academic Press, Dublin; 2003; p139
[241] ibid; p140

possible that post office employees countrywide were doing their bit to support the War, whichever side.

Figure 6/40 – Longford P.O., c. 1910; Photo, Author, 2006

Social

This is the most important contribution to the cultural significance of this group of buildings. The post office buildings have a strong social significance as a result of their use by the community. They are public buildings with a focal point in the community and have a strong social sentiment with the public. This is explored in greater detail later in this Chapter.

Technical and Scientific

The technical and scientific significance of this group of buildings can be seen in the post offices in Athy, Figure 6/5, and in Tullamore, Figure 6/6, where there was a deviation from the more traditional post office type as designed by OPW at the time. The Burra Charter addresses the scientific value of a place and states its importance as depending upon the data involved, its rarity and its quality. Although these buildings were not at the forefront of the technology of the day they show diversity from the typically brick and brick and stone building.

Tullamore's original limestone doorcase and cast-iron lettering and the oversailing eaves at roof level being fine examples of technical detailing, Figures 6/7 and 6/8.

Figure 6/41 – Athy P.O., c. 1911; Photo, Author, 2006

Figure 6/42 – Tullamore P.O., c. 1907; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 6/43 - – Tullamore P.O., c.1908; Doorcase Detail; Photo, Author 2007

Figure 6/44 – Tullamore P.O., c.1908; Eaves Detail; Photo, Caroline Pegum, OPW

As the postal service grew, the internal layout of the post offices evolved, as much through experience as through any Post Office official guidelines. There was no evidence in the archives of any published guidelines for layouts from the post office at the time. The only evidence I could source for modern day guidelines for postal offices was an

American publication which gave some basic layout plans and standard sizes, Figure 6/9.
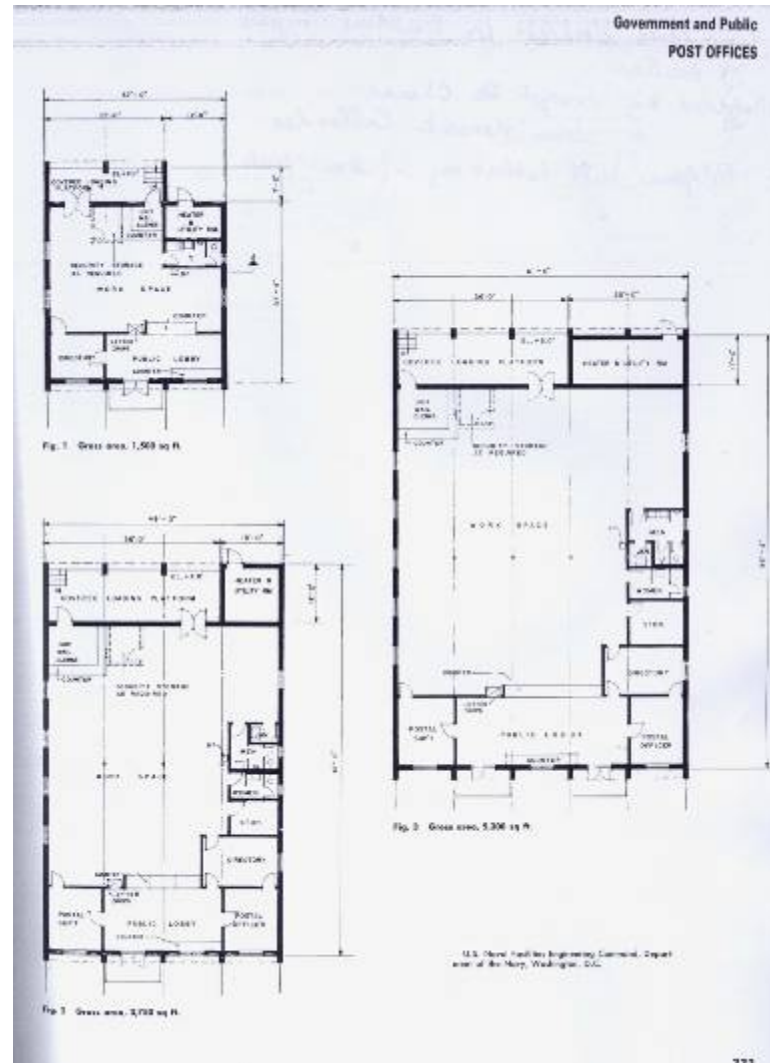
Figure 6/45 – Planning Guidelines for Post Office Buildings[242]

However, standard patterns for furniture were issued, either by the Post Office in London or re-issued from Dublin, as early as 1901 as seen in the Killucan[243] and Enniscorthy[244] files. OPW continued to use these standard patterns after the formation of the Free State, and evidence in the OPW archives shows 'traced' standard pattern sheets issued by them[245].

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[242] Joseph Chiara, John Hancock Canneldar, Ed; *Time Saves Standards for Building Types;* New York; p773
[243] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref. OPW5HC/4/899
[244] ibid; Ref. OPW5HC/4/601
[245] OPW Library; *Post Office Drawing Collection*; Ref. Standard Details

Fabric

The Burra Charter states the fabric of the place as meaning all the physical material of the place, including components, fixtures, contents and objects[246] and that disturbance of fabric should be kept to a minimum[247]. Although very little survives of the internal fittings the external fabric is much intact. Some internal fittings such as stairs and handrails, skirtings, doors, architraves, ironmongery, rooflights, ridge ventilators and roof structure do survive. Much of the window frames, Figures 7/38, and all the roof structure survive in James's Street P.O, 6/11 and 6/12. In Kells P.O. the original glazed screen to the Public Office survives intact, Figure 6/13. The stairs and handrails in Tullamore P.O., Figure 6/11, and Bray P.O survive intact.
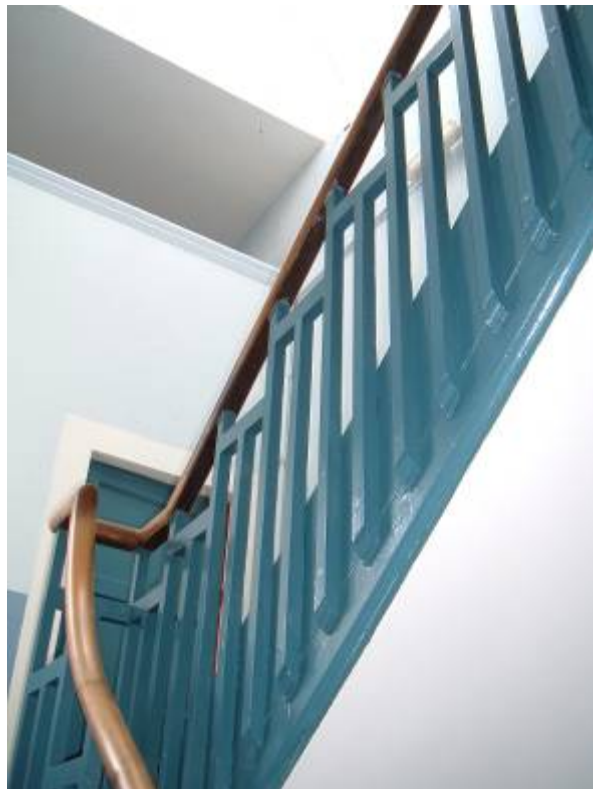
Figure 6/46 – Tullamore P. O. c. 1908; Original Stairs Balustrade and Handrail, Photo, Author, 2006

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[246] ICOMOS; *The Burra Charter*; The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999; Article 1.3
[247] ibid; Article 28
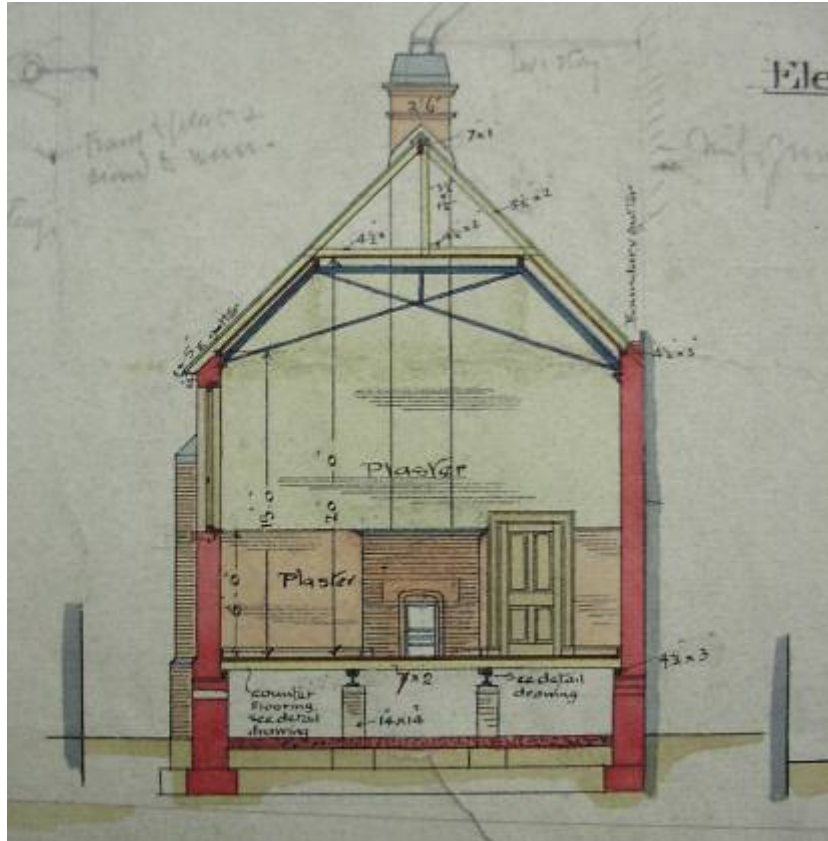
Figure 6/47 – James's Street P.O., c. 1892; Drawing of Section through Sorting Room showing original steel roof structure[248]

Figure 6/48 – James's Street Post Office; Sorting Room, Original Roof Structure, Photo; Author, 2006

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[248] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref. OPW5HC/4/895

Figure 6/49 – Kells P.O., 1902; Original Glazed Screen to Public Office; Photo, Author 2007

Setting and Location

Articles 8 and 9 of the Burra Charter refer to the setting and location of a place. In article 8 the setting is stated as meaning the area around the place and the relationship of its form, scale and character to the place. Article 9 states that the physical location of a place is part of its significance. The physical location, the importance of the building and the presence of the building within the streetscape all contribute to its significance. When the original use is changed, its setting and relationship to the streetscape are lost and inevitably there is a loss of significance for that building.

In most of the buildings examined not only the original footprint survives but also the original open yard area to the rear. Fairview Old P.O., now a

retail outlet, located as the end of a row of two storey terraced houses retains its street frontage. Although much of its significance has been lost since it was sold into private ownership by An Post, it was operating as a Post Office until late 1990s and is still an important building on this streetscape, Figures 6/14 and 6/15.

Figure 6/50 – Fairview Former P.O., c1889; Photo, Author 2005
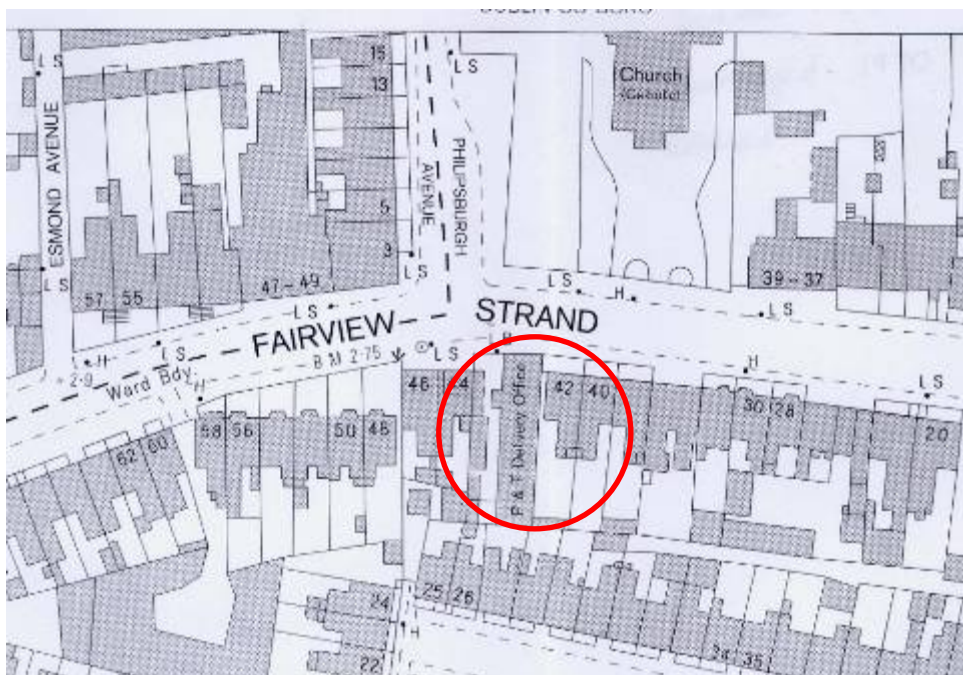
Figure 6/51 – Fairview Former P.O., c. 1889; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[249]

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[249] Ordnance Survey Ireland; Map No. 3198-17; Revised 1970

Use

Article 23 of the Burra Charter refers to the continuing, modifying or reinstating use of a building. Use is stated as meaning the functions of the place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place[250]. The continued use of government buildings for their original designed use is part of their significance[251] contributing to the significance of the street, village or town. In St. Andrew Street P.O. the former parcels office now houses An Post's Savings and Investment Services centre as part of the continuing and adaptive use of the post office.

One third of the extant post offices in the ownership of An Post, retain their original use and as a result their significance. Exceptions to this include James's Street P. O., Figure 6/15, and Tullamore P.O. which have both now extended the Sorting Room into the old Public Office,. An Post, by this action of reducing what was a public building to a private use, has seriously diminished their cultural significance.

Figure 6/52 – James's Street Former P.O., c1892; Sorting Room; Photo, Author, 2006.

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[250] ICOMOS; *The Burra Charter*; The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999; Article 1.10
[251] Peter Marquis-Kyle & Meredith Walker; *The Illustrated Burra Charter, Good Practice for Heritage Place*; ICOMOS, Australia; 2004; p69

Associations and Meanings

The Burra Charter states this association as being the special connections that exists between people and a place[252]. The meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses[253]. Post Office buildings are important symbols within the community. In some cases it takes the work of the communities themselves to foster these connections and the *'Use It or Lose It'* campaign by the Lombardstown Post Office discussed later in this Chapter is an example of what can be done. If An Post does not put as much importance into this it is then the responsibility of the Government, not only as shareholders in the company, but also as custodians of the country's heritage. It is a failure on the part of An Post and the Government to recognize the importance of these buildings and their potential as community information access points. An example of this is the Post Office Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia where a local community group was successful in reversing a decision by Australia Post to close and sell its historic post office. Australia Post are still the owners of the building and after refurbishment and changes to accommodate new equipment it has remained a functioning post office, Figure 6/17.

Figure 6/53 - Peter Marquis-Kyle & Meredith Walker; *The Illustrated Burra Charter,*
***Good Practice for Heritage Place*; ICOMOS, Australia; 2004; p69**

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[252] ICOMOS; *The Burra Charter*; The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999; Article 1.15
[253] ibid; Section 1.16

The Social Significance of the Post Office

The Post Office has significant ties with the community it serves and this is evident when a post office is threatened with closure. The social link to the community cannot be underestimated. Its role in rural communities is seen by the community as one of support and in some incidences helps to prevent isolation for citizens. When An Post proposed to introduce outdoor letter boxes for homes in 1998, opposition parties and interest groups criticised the proposal, saying an end to the traditional door-to-door service would be a blow to rural life in the State. This proposal was abandoned by An Post after much opposition.

An account by Marian Harrison in the Western People newspaper dated 25-08-2005 gives reports on closures and causes of closures of rural post offices and cites the most common reason for closure as profit viability for the postmaster or post mistress. The non-automated offices are the most likely ones to face closure for this reason. Without automation the post office cannot offer all the services the public expects and therefore the number of people using the post office drops. These vulnerable sub-offices are owned and run by on a sub-contractor basis. However a large number of postmasters are elderly and the remuneration offered by An Post does not appear to be high enough to entice younger people into the business.

In 1981 when it was first proposed to split the Department of Posts and Telegraph into two companies a white paper commissioned by the Government stated that

> ……*The state-sponsored body operating a public monopoly should be expected to carry some loss-making services as part of its normal activities*[254]……

The Inter-Departmental Post Office Working Group (IDG)[255] was established by the Irish Government in 2001 to determine a basis for the sustainable operation of the Post Office Network. In its report it states -

> ……*"the bulk of the losses forecast to be incurred by the post office service will occur in the larger sub post office and company owned office*[256]……

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[254] Government White Paper; *Reorganization of Postal Telecommunications Services;* May 1981; Section 4.8; p16
[255] Report of the Inter-Departmental Post Office Working Group, July 2001

......a proposal which seeks to protect the position of those rural communities whose post office would not otherwise continue is presented[257]......

......the sale and leaseback of suitable properties would release capital which could be used to fund network losses[258]......

......closure of the existing rural network could have severe social and cultural implications for the communities involved, given the focal point that the post office provides[259]......

......a framework is therefore needed to recognise and protect the social role played by many (especially rural) post offices[260]......

This report recognises the role of the post office in the community. It sees the post office as a vital way of maintaining the identity of the community and other services. The removal of the post office can lead to the decline of other services in the area and is seen as

......an abandonment of the community by the Government'[261]......

The report suggests that the community sees the post office service not just a mailing service but a government services outlet for the community. As government departments increasingly offer more services online – submitting tax returns, paying car tax, applying for benefits, etc., the postal office should put itself in the position of offering these services whither over the counter or by way of having internet connected computers in the postal office for this purpose. Postal offices could become an electronic centre for government departments, thus increasing their importance. The Post Office could be the link for bringing the Internet to the rural community.

An Post are endeavoring to run a profitable business while at the same time the payment to their contractors to run sub-post office is insufficient

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256 ibid; p6
257 ibid; p6
258 ibid; p11
259 ibid; p18
260 ibid; p18
261 ibid; p13

to it make a viable business for the sub-contractor in many cases. As the sub-post offices are closing due to retirement of the postmaster or post mistress the contract is put out to tender by An Post. In many cases the local supermarket is winning the contract and the post office opens within that premises. The IDG suggests that

> ......*An Post is building its retail presence in future around retail outlets rather that dedicated sub post offices*[262]......

However, when this happens the significance of these purpose built buildings is threatened and the association and meaning between the community and the post office is diminished when the post office in the small villages closes. The post office on The Bower, Co. Kilkenny, Figure 6/18, is one such example. The post office is a sub-office and is run under contract by the postmaster. It has been in the same family for generations and is now the only shop in the village. It supplies a limited amount of merchandise and, because it is not automated, a limited post office service. When the present postmaster retires it is very unlikely that this post office, unless automated, will be passed on to another generation of the same family or will be taken over by another contractor. It is equally unlikely that it will be automated. It is, however, retaining its association and meaning providing an important social role by providing a Government service in the community. If the significance of the sub-post office or company office in the community is reduced then in turn the significance of these purpose built postal office is also be reduced.

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[262] ibid; p5

Figure 6/18 – The Bower P. O., Co. Kilkenny; Photo, Author, 2006

In a recent RTE radio programme[263] Cathy Healy-Byrne, Postmistress, Lombardstown Post Office, Cork was interviewed. She is the Postmistress of a non-automated post office and her family had been involved with the post office for three generations. Her grandmother and aunt had both been postmistress in Lombardstown before her. The biggest impediment to the rural post office, she claimed, was the fact that An Post were not willing to put money into automating additional rural post offices. If these Post Offices are not automated they cannot move forward with An Post and offer their customers the additional services they expected. She claims the cost of installing a computer system into a non-automated Post Office is in the region of €3,000.00 to €4,000.00. There are 320 offices not fully automated[264]. Rural post offices must be made viable in order to survive. As a postmistress she receives a fixed sum of €16,000 p.a. and out of that she has to provide the premises, pay rates, lighting, heating and be open for five and a half days a week. The post office has a dual function in that it offers a social function as well as

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[263] RTE Radio 1; Mooney; Monday 18th December 2006.
[264] An Post

its commercial function. Many rural post offices would also offer a retail outlet no matter how small and these businesses complement each other. People come into the post office and stop for a chat. If the post office closes this social and community interaction is threatened.

In the same programme Mary Corcoran, Sociologist, N.U.I., Maynooth, who has carried out research into the dynamics of new suburban communities has found that there is a real need for a focus in new communities. She states that the local post office can help to form this social function enabling people to meet and engage at local level. If the post office is located in the town centre people will get into their cars and drive thus not allowing the social engagement and face to face interaction found within the community and on the street. She also stated that the historical significance of the Post Office gives it a sense of place. Both the Government and An Post should take responsibility for maintaining this. Her research showed that the County Development Plans are now calling for small shops to be provided at local level within the community with a focus on village and suburban life and local access. The postal office is a vital part of this but it also needs to diversify and to add the social function to its remit.

Also in the same interview Mark Milner, Industrial Correspondent for Guardian Newspaper, stated that the U.K. Government has pledged £1.7B for the restructure of the postal office network. He agreed it will mean postal office closures and already between 2002 and 2005, 2,500 postal offices out of a total of 14,5000, had closed. However over 200 rural postal office had closed because there was nobody prepared to take them over because of the low monetary payment. He states the U.K. Government is prepared to pay out £150M to help the rural network over the next few years. He suggests the Irish Government should mirror the U.K. proposals and subsidise the postal office system. The importance of the rural postal office cannot be underestimated, he said, and an adequate network is vital to the success of this. The Government must be prepared to give its commitment to this.

Anna McHugh, Corporate Communications, An Post, in the same interview, acknowledged that the post office system is central to An Post's

business and that 97% of their business was computerized. However, she states, it would not be economical to computerize some of the smaller post office with only 10 to 20 transactions per week. She stated that there was no closure plan on the part of An Post and as post office managers retire the business is advertised.

In conversation later with Cathy Healy-Byrne[265] I asked what she felt could be done to encourage people to continue to use and support the post office. She told me of a campaign she had undertaken in her community to advertise her Post Office. She started this campaign in the Autumn of 2005 and targeted 500 houses in a public awareness drive for the Post Office entitled *'Use It or Lose It'*. A public meeting followed the distribution of the flyers and a committee was formed to help support the push for changing her post office to an automated office. As a result of the campaign there was a 20% upturn in business. Cathy is still hoping that An Post will install the necessary computer system to allow her to offer her customers a full service.

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[265] Conversation with Cathy Healy-Byrne, Postmistress, Lombardstown P.O., Cork. January 2007.

The Cultural Significance of the Post Office Buildings

If the cultural significance of the post office network is reduced, as seen earlier in this Chapter, then inevitably, so will the cultural significance of the post office's buildings.

The IDG in its report proposes that the sale and leaseback of suitable properties would release capital which could be used to help fund network losses. If these buildings are sold off and even if they are leased back by An Post their survival as an important typology group will be diminished. The significance of these buildings as a group will also be diluted if their use or ownership changes.

It could be said that the old post office in Navan town, Figure 6/19 now a MacDonald's Restaurant has lost its significance as a building type. However whether that is it because it is a 'MacDonalds' and not a more 'up-market' restaurant is debatable. Maybe it still retains its links as a 'building of the people' with its present use. This building is listed on the Record of Protected Structures for Co. Meath and as such has retained much of its original fabric including the 'Post Office' signage on front façade. There is a need to maintain a more tangible link with the past by advertising the fact that these buildings were once post offices whether in their name or by way of signage.

Peter Pearson, Historian and Conservationist, in an article for the Dublin Business Post states

> ……*there are a significant number of architecturally important post office buildings…and An Post as the guardian of these heritage buildings should undertake a complete inventory of the heritage buildings in its ownership*[266] ……

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[266] Peter Pearson; *Sunday Business Post;* Sunday October 28 2001

Figure 6/19 – Navan Former P. O., c. 1910; Photo, Author, 2006

Blackrock Post Office, a significant building on the streetscape is located at the west end of the village of Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Figure 6/20, It has also closed as a company office and has been sold into private ownership. The Post Office, once a mainstay of the Blackrock's Main Street, is now housed in a small nondescript unit at the rear entrance to the Frascati Shopping Centre, Figures 6/21.

Figure 6/20 – Blackrock Former P.O., c.1907; Photo, Author, 2005

The new, replacement, located as it is at the furthest point from the centre of the village, and although only opened a couple of years ago, already looks run down and unloved Figure 6/22. Many such sub-post offices are located in poor premises, demonstrating signs of under investment in recent years. Further proof, that, An Post does not rate their company or contract buildings with much value.
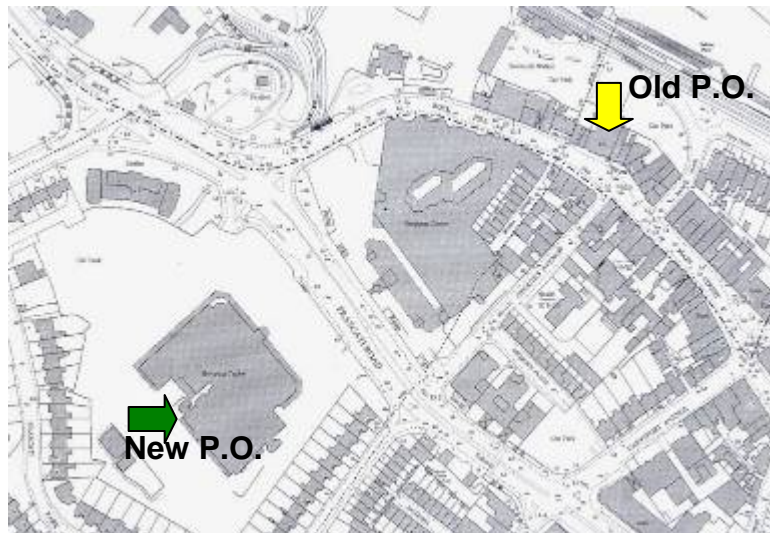
Figure 6/21 – Blackrock Village; Source-base map; Ordnance Survey Ireland[267]

Figure 6/22 – New Blackrock P. O., c. 2005; Frascati Shopping Centre, Blackrock; Photo, Author 2007

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[267] Ordnance Survey Ireland, Map No. 3330-17,3330-22, 3330-23; Revision 2006

The principal of conserving this group of buildings and giving them a significant use within the community can also be addressed through the Venice Charter 1964. Article 5 of this charter states –

> ……*the conservation of monuments is facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose……*

Blackrock Post Office is presently under refurbishment[268]. Its new role in the community will be as a restaurant and book shop. Much of its original internal fabric no longer exists but the original footprint and external fabric is to be retained[269]. The old post office, because of this change of use, has lost its identity as a public building. Its original use has been lost and its association and meaning with the community has not been respected or retained.

The conversion of Fairview Post Office to a retail unit has been carried out with changes to the window fenestration although the change from brickwork to stonework below the centre window could have been carried out at the time of its original construction Figures 6/23 and 6/24. The new signage is out of character and does nothing to enhance the significance of the building. There is no visible association retained between the community and the place. Its original use has been lost and there is no visible connection with its past.

Figure 6/23 – Fairview Former P. O., c. 1889; Original Elevation Drawing[270]

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268 Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Planning Reference 06/8206; November 2006
269 In conversation with Eoin St. John Downes, O'Mahoney Pike Architects October 2006
270 National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref. OPW5HC/4/654

Figure 6/24 –Fairview Former P. O. ,c 1889; Photo, Author, 2005 October 2005

A successful and appropriate conversion of Dun Laoghaire Post Office was completed as part of the new county council offices for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Co. Dublin, Figure 6/25. Its original use has been modified and changed to that of County Council Offices, but it still retains its status as a public building and so has retained its association and meaning for the community. New work is distinguishable from old, as seen when the external walls were cut down from sill level to ground level to facilitate the new entrance arches, Figure 6/26 and 6/27. Some original features have been retained, such as the original window frames and the support columns, Figures 6/28.

Figure 6/25 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O., c.1900; Photo showing Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council Offices; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 6/26 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O., c. 1900; Photo, Author, 2007,

Figure 6/27 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O., c.1900; Original Front Elevation Drawing[271]

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[271] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/612

Figure 6/28 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O., c.1900; Photo, Author, 2007

This refurbishment of the old post office is a good example of the re-use of these buildings. The community has retained ownership, it is still a public building and makes an appropriate entrance to the council offices Its significance and importance is not diminished by inappropriate use, improper signage or changes to window fenestrations. However, there is no reference or evidence to the building's original use.

Chapter 7

Building Inventory

Introduction

This Chapter looks at ten extant post offices in Leinster in detail and gives an appraisal of each. The buildings studied are those which have not yet been examined by the NIAH. Although Westmeath county has been surveyed and published by the NIAH the old purpose built postal office in Killucan has not been included in their records. I am also including Westport Post Office, Co. Mayo, in this section of the study because it is one of the few postal offices which included accommodation for the Postmaster which is still somewhat intact.

The study is carried out under the following headings-

Location – This section will locate the building in the street.

Original Building Description – This section will give a description of the building as it was originally built.

Existing Building Description – This section will give a description of the building as it is in 2007 under various headings including, composition, external walls, windows, doors, interiors and fittings.

Appraisal – This section will give an account of the building in an attempt to make the case for the building's significance.

Conclusion and Recommendations– This section will outline the conclusions and recommendations for each building.

The following building will be examined –

1.   Blackrock, Co. Dublin
2.   Ballsbridge, Dublin
3.   Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
4.   Fairview, Dublin
5.   James's Street, Dublin
6.   Rathmines (1883), Dublin
7.   Rathmines (1932), Dublin
8.   St. Andrew Street, Dublin
9.   Killucan, Co. Westmeath
10.   Westport, Co. Mayo

Ballsbridge Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location		Map Information	
Name: Ballsbridge Post Office			
Street Number:		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3264-18 & 23
Street Name:	Shelbourne Road,	OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
	Ballsbridge,	Revision	2004
Town:	Dublin 4	RPS No.	7680
County:	Dublin		

Classification		
Original Use	Post Office	
Current Use	Post Office	
Original Type (NIAH Ref)		
Date From: 1889	To: 2007	Condition Good

OPW Architect	Edward Kavanagh

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/615,616,617
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1889 – 1915
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 14 3
OPW Library Archive File Reference Date	1916 - 1983

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A						So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Existing	Condition	Original Location
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	Yes	Good	Yes
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	Yes	Good	Yes
Stamp Dispenser	Yes	Poor -	Yes
Clock	No	N/A	N/A
Post & Telegraph signage	Yes	Good	Yes
An Post Signage	Yes	Good	N/A
Fireplace behind public counter	No	N/A	N/A
External light fitting	No	N/A	N/A
Exhaust vents to Sorting Room	Yes	Fair	Yes

Location

Ballsbridge Post Office is located at the South end of Shelbourne Road, in Ballsbridge, Dublin. It is situated between a row of single storey cottages to the north and the 1930s Dublin Vocational College to the South. It is fronted to the street and backs onto the Dodder River to the east and rear of the site, Figures 7/1, and 7/2.

Figure 7/54 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[272]

Figure 7/55 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Photo Author, 2005

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[272] O.S. Map No. 3264-18 & 23; Scale 1:1000; 2003 Revision

Original Building Description

Single storey detached six bay west facing red brick post office built c.1889, comprising five-bay break front to the north end and single bay flat roof bay to the south end.

The internal layout, Figure 7/3, consisted of an Entrance Porch leading into the Public Office. The Public Office consisted of the main public counter running from east to west across the room with a writing bench for Telegrams (sic) on the Public Office side. The Clerk's Area, behind the Public Counter also had a writing Bench to the rear for the Clerks. A door from the Clerk's Office led into Sorting Office which was a long narrow rectangular shaped room measuring approximately 18.30m long and 6.0m wide with a height of 6.0m to the uppermost section of the ceiling, Figure 7/4. The Postmen's Room was located to the rear and off the Sorting Office.

The Clerks Area and Postmen's Room each had a fireplace while the Sorting Office had two fireplaces one at each end of the room. A second entrance Porch, off the external Yard, lead directly into the Sorting Office. The external Yard was accessed from Shelbourne Road through a single timber sheeted door. The external Yard ran from west to east by the side of the Sorting Office and widened out to the full width of the site at the rear. The Yard consisted of housing for three Urinals and four Closets, a Coal store and an Ashes store. There is evidence in later drawings that the single entrance gate to the Yard was replaced with a set of double gates in 1916[273].

Evidence shows an extension to the building in 1920s[274] when a pitched roofed second story over the original Sorting Office and a flat roofed two storey extension to the rear was added to accommodate a Telephone Exchange, see Figure 7/5. The areas shaded on this drawing indicate the new extension. This additional accommodation consisted primarily of an Apparatus Room on the Ground Floor and a Switch Room, Exchange Inspector's Room, Inspector's Room, Linemen's Room and Store at First

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[273] OPW Library; *Post Office Drawing Collection;* Ballsbridge; Ref. L14 3, Drawing No. 639, Proposed widening of Yard Gate, Date 8-12-1916.
[274] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/615, 616 & 617

Floor, all accommodation for the Telephone Exchange. Other accommodation included additional rooms for the postal workers consisting of Clerks Room and Retiring Room at First Floor. The Coals and Ashes storage in the external Yard was removed and a Boiler Room with coal store added at Basement Level. The original chimneys were demolished and the fireplaces built up[275].
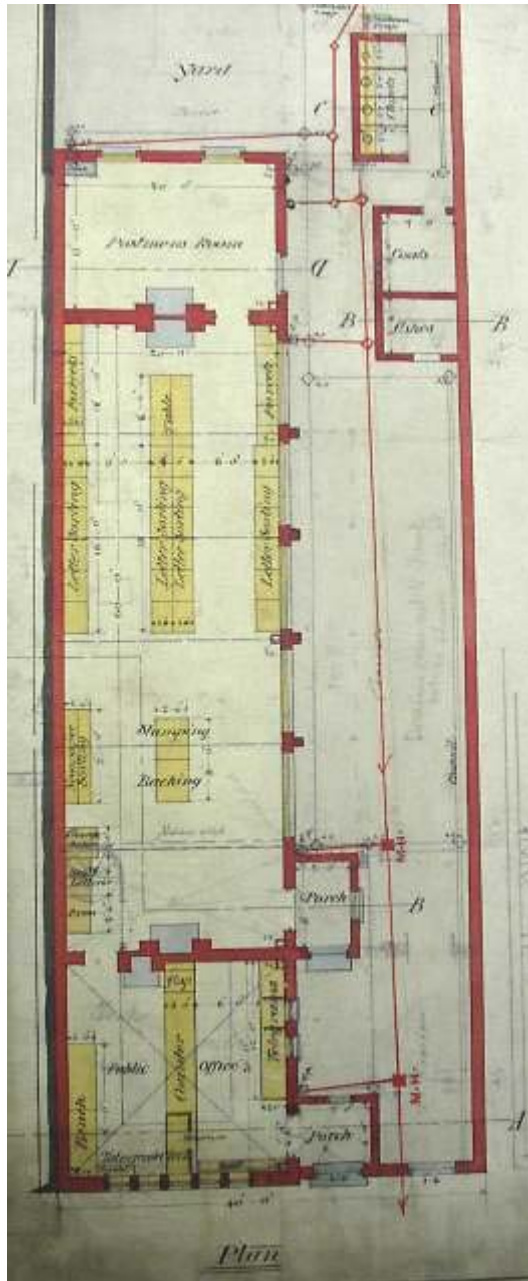
Figure 7/56 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Original Ground Floor Plan[276]

[275] ibid
[276] ibid
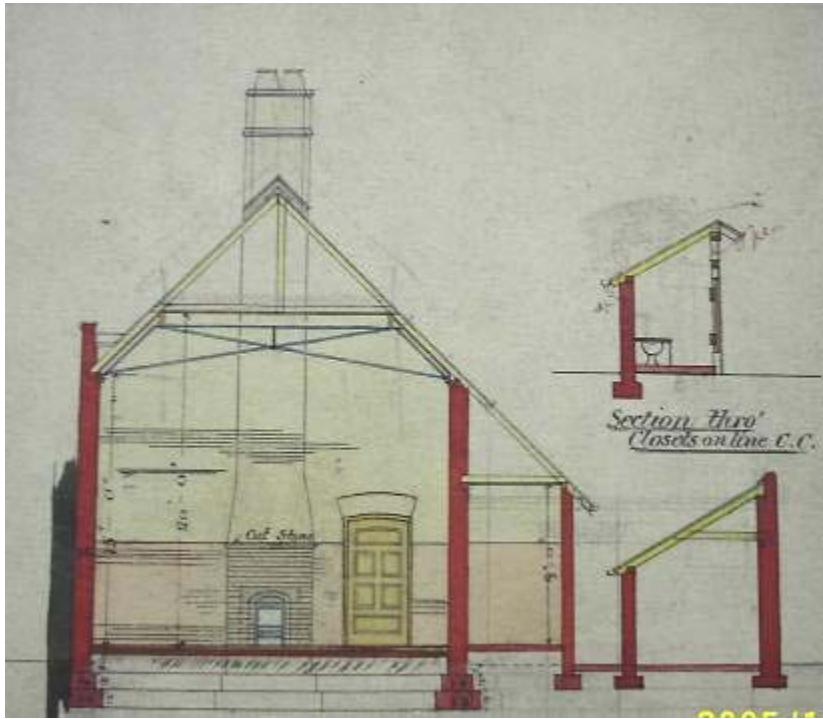
Figure 7/57 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Section through Sorting Office[277]
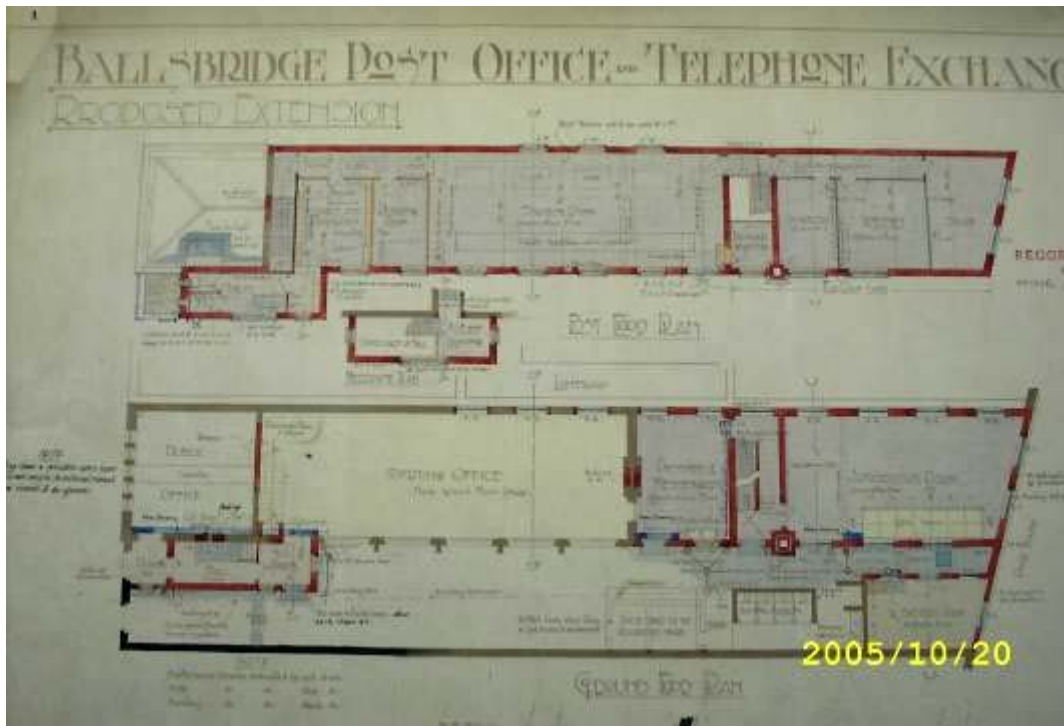
Figure 7/58 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Floor Plans with Proposed extension[278]

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[277] ibid
[278] ibid

Existing Building Description.

Composition

Although access was not obtainable to areas other than to the Public Office I discovered, in conversation with the Branch Manageress, that only the Public Office and an area behind it with toilets and staff room were now used by An Post. The remainder of the building is vacant, Figure 7/6. One section of the rear of the building is presently used, intermittingly, by An Post musical band for practice sessions.

The original footprint of the extended Post Office survives almost intact. The exception to this is the area behind the Entrance Porch which is now incorporated into the main Public Office. The Public Counter now runs on the north south axis, as opposed to the original counter which ran east west. There is no evidence of any the original public counter surviving.

Figure 7/59 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Rear View; Photo, Author, 2007

External Walls

Original brick façade survives intact. A cut limestone projecting string course continues into the coping to the flat roof bay. A limestone coping stone to the main parapet has curved raised sections at the end corners. Five terracotta cartouche panels are set into the parapet bearing the words Balls Bridge (sic) Branch Post Office. The overall front elevation bears much resemblance to its original drawing, Figures 7/2 & 7/10.

The walls to the rear buildings are brick faced with concrete sills and exposed stone lintels to window and door opes.

Roof

The roof to the Public Office is a pyramid A-pitch roof with terracotta hip tiles behind a parapet wall. The roof to the Entrance bay is hidden from view and is a flat roof behind the lower parapet wall. The roof to the main rear section, running on the east west axis, is a single span double pitch roof finished with natural slate with terracotta ridge tiles. Five original rooflights are visible on the north pitch as indicated on the original drawings. The double height flat roof to the rear is finished with green painted asphalt. The mono-pitch to the rear which originally housed the Battery Room is slated with a natural slate with a glazed light section abutting the raised wall, Figure 7/6. Much of the original rainwater goods also survive intact.

Roof Ventilators

One original roof ventilator survives on the A-pitched roof to the Switch Room. This appears to be in its original location as shown on the original drawings although three other vents were also on the drawings shown but were not fitted or do not survive, Figure 7/7.

Figure 7/60 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Roof Ventilator, Photo, Author 2007

Doors

The original main entrance door to the Public Office survives with the addition from the original drawings of a viewing grille, Figures 7/8.

Figure 7/61 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Door Grille Detail, Original Entrance Door, Photo, Author, 2006

Windows

Windows to the front façade are timber top hung casement windows. From the original drawings, the original windows sections were timber with wrought iron sashes, Figure 7/9, and were divided into twenty-eight lights in Tudor style, Figure 7/10. They may not have been fitted, at the time, the plainer existing single glazed lights being fitted instead, Figure 7/2.
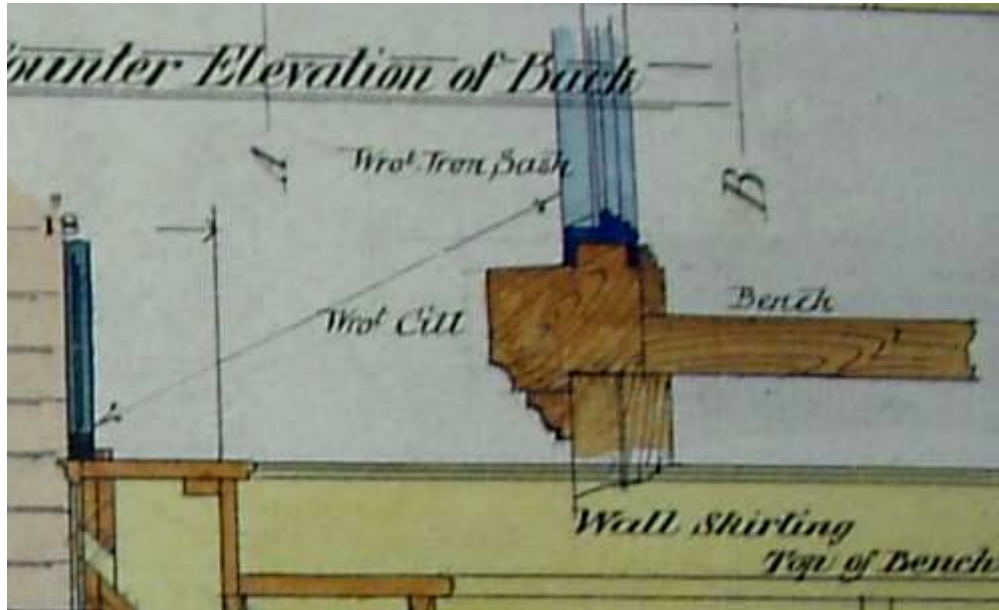
Figure 7/62 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Window Frame Detail[279]

Figure 7/63 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Original Front Elevation Drawing[280]

Interiors

Although no evidence of the original public counter survives some of the interiors are intact. The Public Office retains its ceiling coving almost intact, Figure 7/11. The doorway between the original Public Office and the Sorting Office survives although the door and frame are later replacements.

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[279] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/615, 616 & 617
[280] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/615, 616 & 617

Figure 7/64 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Existing Coving Detail; Photo, Author, 2007

Letter/Receiver Box

The Letter/Receiver box is located in its original position, Figures 7/10 and 7/12. Curiously a faint outline of a wall mounted receiver box can be seen on the original drawing and a period wall mounted receiver box was fitted, although there is no date to confirm when, Figure 7/13. The original letter box slot has been replaced with one with a larger slot, Figure 7/14.

Figure 7/65 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Original Receiver Box Drawing

Figure 7/66 – Ballsbridge P.O., c.1915; Receiver Box; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 7/67 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915; Letter Slot,; Photo, Author, 2007

Stamp Dispenser

The period stamp dispenser frame survives although a contemporary dispenser has been fitted by An Post, Figure 7/15. These were fitted into opes in the external walls in brass frames. An example of a period stamp dispenser survives at the Curragh Camp Post Office. It still retains its original signage lettering and lifting flap for stamps, Figure 7/16.

Figure 7/68 – Ballsbridge P.O., c. 1915
Stamp Dispenser;
Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 69 – Curragh Camp P.O., c. 1900
Stamp Dispenser;
Photo, Author, 2006

Appraisal

The Ballsbridge Post Office is a fine example of late nineteenth century postal office building in Ireland. It is a modest scale post office making a strong visual presence on the street where many other earlier buildings have been lost. It juxtaposition with the granite faced Estate Cottages to the north and its street frontage gives it a strong statement on the street.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Public Office and some ancillary accommodation are the only sections of this building now in constant use. Window frames to the front façade although not as shown on the original drawings are period frames. Some window frames to the rear section of the building are in poor condition but are original. This building is included on the Record of Protected Structures for Dublin City Council. The building should be renovated and either used or leased out by An Post.

Blackrock Former Post Office
Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:	Blackrock Former Post Office			
Former Name	Blackrock Post Office			
Street Number:			OSI Map Sheet No.:	3330-22
Street Name:	Rock Road,		OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
			Revision Date	1999
Town:	Blackrock		RPS	
Townland:				
County:	Co. Dublin			

Classification				
Original Use	Post Office			
Current Use	Vacant			
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial			
Date From:	1905	To:	2004	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	John Howard Pentland

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1905-1909
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 14 4
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1934-1948

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	Yes	Original letter slot, letter box increased in size
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	N/A	
Stamp Dispenser	Yes	Not included on original design drawings
Clock	Yes	Original location within carved stone carved
Post & Telegraph signage	Yes No	Post Office lettering Harp insignia
An Post Signage	No	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	Not included in original drawings
External light fittings	Yes	Period light fitting over south entrance doorway of unknown date
Windows	No	
External Doors	Yes	Original north entrance door & frame Additional door frame fitted to south entrance during 1934 refurbishment

Location

Blackrock former Post Office is located on Rock Hill on the approach to Main Street, Blackrock village. It faces south west and fronts directly onto the street. It is built on a sloping site ascending from east to west with a steep downward slope to the north and rear of the building, Figures 7/17 and 7/18.
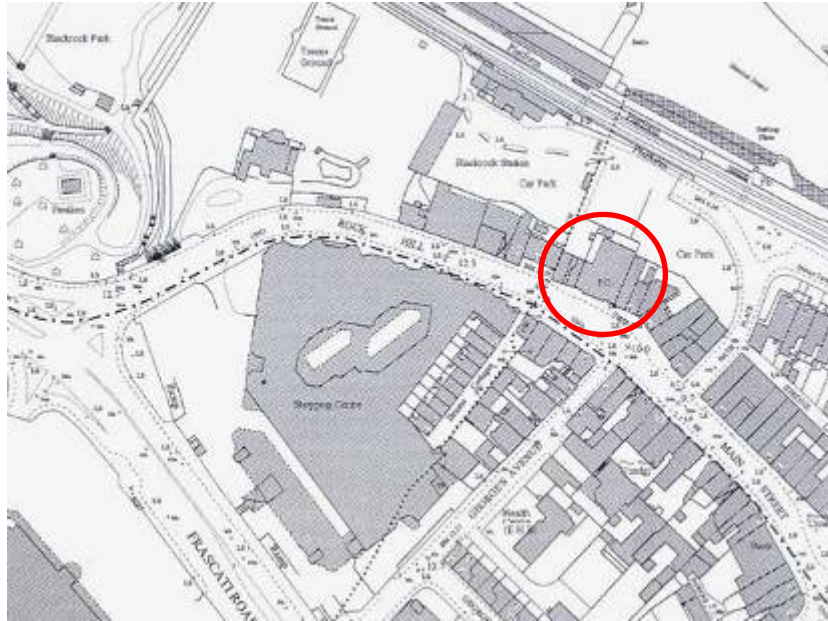
Figure 7/707 – Blackrock P.O.; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[281]

Figure 7/18 – Blackrock Former P.O.; Photo, Author 2005

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[281] O.S. Map No3330-17, 22 & 23; Scale 1:1000; 2003 Edition

Original Building Description

A two storey terraced south-west facing six bay post office building designed and built by the OPW between 1905 and 1909. The front façade consisted of granite and brick banding with granite plinth base and alternating rows of recessed brick and projecting stone bands at ground floor level. The brick finish at first floor level had projecting bands of brick. A deep granite string course was located above the first floor windows with central moulding running from east to west across the building. A wide projecting cornice with dentil mouldings ran across the central breakfront section with a granite coping stone on top of the parapet wall. Royal insignia plaques were fixed above both entrances. The lettering POST OFFICE was fixed to the middle string course and a granite carved frame for a clock is fixed in the central brick and granite pier, Figure 7/19.
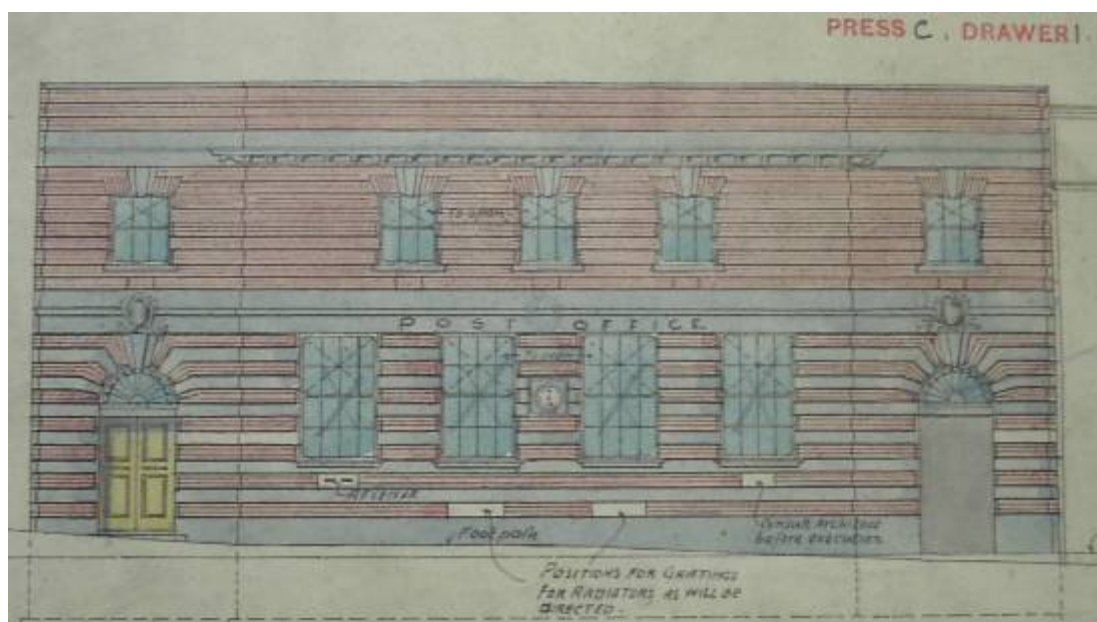
Figure 7/19 – Blackrock P.O., c. 1907; Original Elevation Drawing[282]

The Ground Floor internal layout, Figure 7/20 consisted of an Entrance Porch leading into the Public Office. The Public Office counter ran from east to west across the room. The Postmistress's Room was accessed from the Public Office and the Clerks Area. A door from the Clerks Area led onto a passageway with five downward steps leading to the Sorting Office. The Sorting Office was a square shaped room measuring 10.05m x 10.97m. The Instrument Room and Boys Room were located between the Clerks Area and the Sorting Office to the east side of the building. A Women's Retiring Room and Store was located to the west side of the

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[282] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/599

building adjacent to the steps leading to the Sorting Office. A stairway led upwards from the Entrance Porch to the First Floor. An area for bicycles was also located in the Entrance Porch. A sloping Gangway from the street at the east end of the building led to the rear External Yard. Access to the Boys Room was off this Gangway only. Because of the steeply sloping site from front to the rear external steps led from the sorting office down to the external yard level. Access to the external Yard was via the sloped Gangway from the south and front of the building. A double width access gateway at the rear of the Yard also gave access to the yard area.

The First Floor consisted of Test Room, Switch Room and Store Room to the south and the living accommodation to the north with the views over Dublin Bay. The living accommodation consisted of self enclosed living area including Living Room, Kitchen, W.C. and two Bedrooms. An external iron (sic) spiral staircase, to the external Yard area, was located off the living accommodation. A Lavatory and Cloak Room for postal workers was also located at First Floor, Figure 7/21.

The Basement Level consisted of Bicycles Store, Heating Chamber, Caretaker's (Postmistress's) Coal Store and P.O. (Post Office) Coal Store, all located beneath the front and south section of the building. A Covered Yard, Linemen's Store, Battery Room, Store and Latrines were located beneath the Sorting Office, Figure 7/22.

The roof to the south and front section of the building was a concrete flat roof, stepped down over the rear and north section, Figure 7/23. The roof to the Sorting Office was a double pitch roof steel truss roof with Top (roof) Lights.
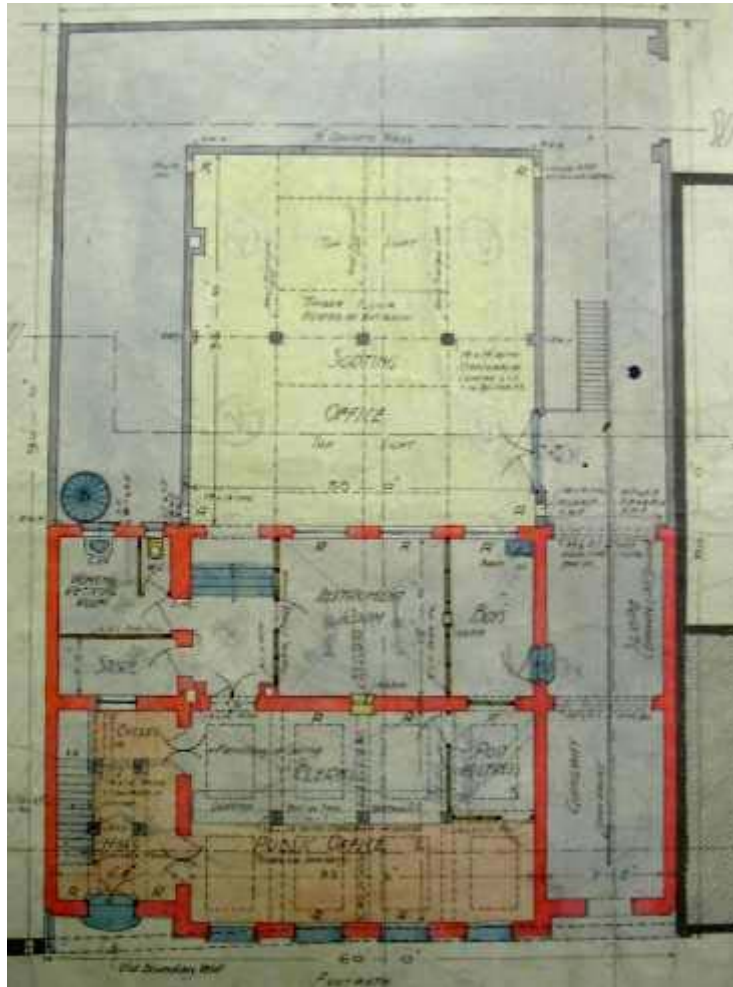
Figure7/20 – Blackrock P.O., c.1907; Original Ground Floor Plan[283]
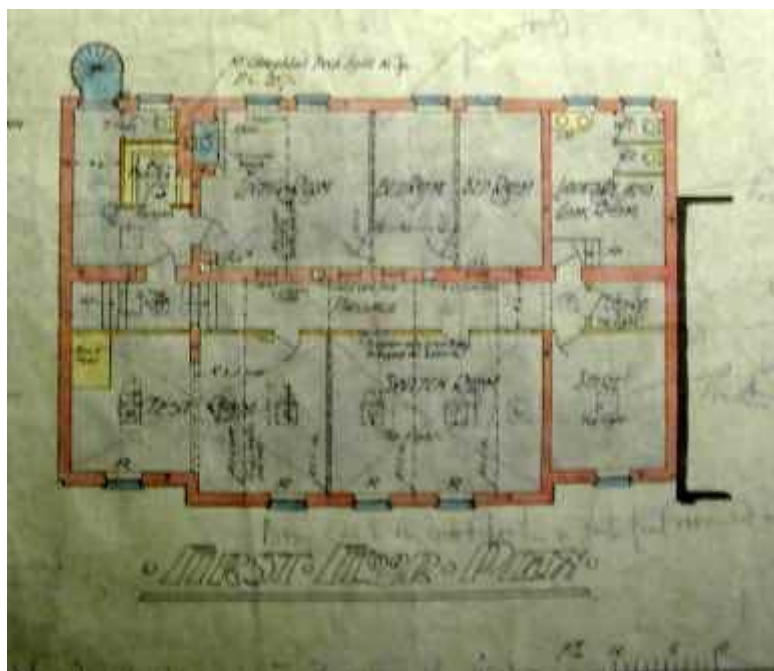
Figure 7/21 – Blackrock P.O., c. 1907; Original First Floor Plan[284]

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[283] ibid
[284] ibid
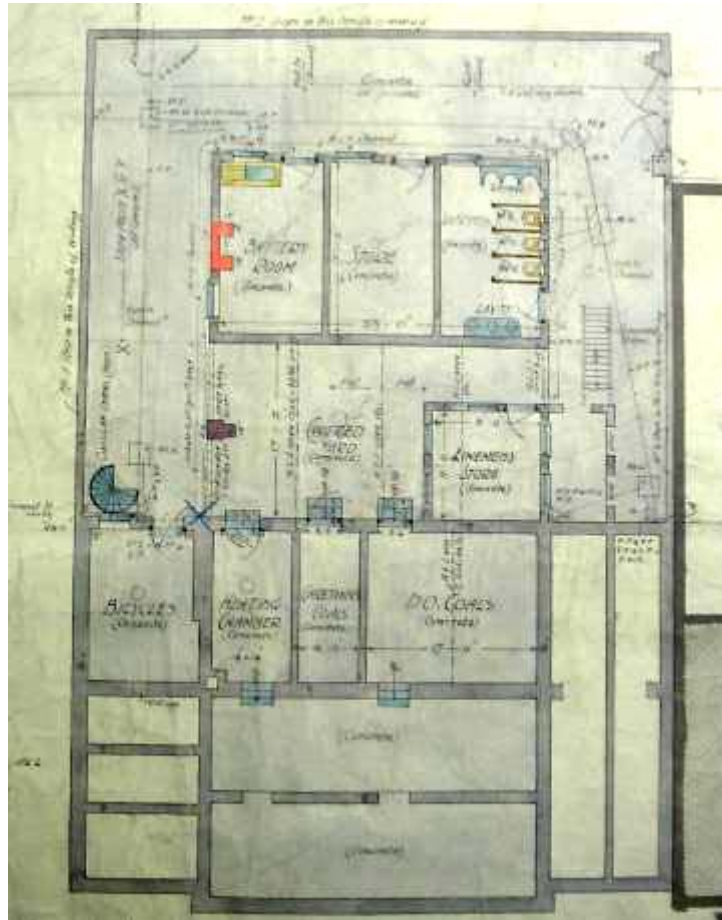
Figure 7/22 – Blackrock P.O., c.1907; Original Basement Floor Plan[285]
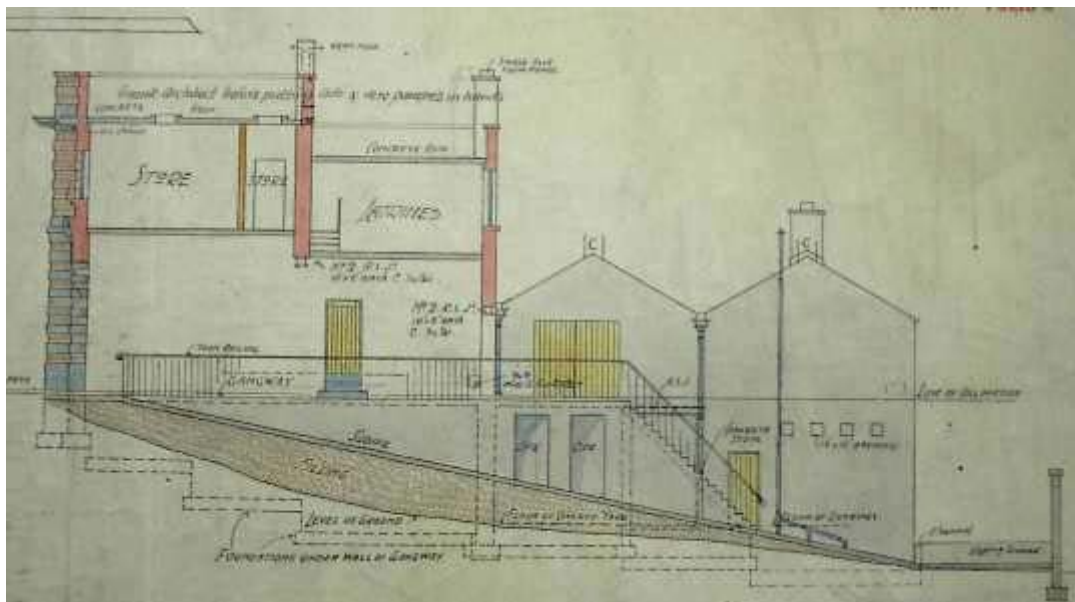
Figure 7/23 – Blackrock P.O., c.1907; Original Section[286]

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[285] ibid
[286] ibid

Evidence shows changes to the internal layouts were made in 1930s when the living accommodation was removed and replaced with additional accommodation for the postal office, Figures 7/24 and 7/25. This refurbishment together with changes to the internal layout also included replacing the original (timber) window frames with hardwood windows and a new hardwood door to the east entrance to match the existing[287]. Further changes were made to the Public Office layout in the 1980s when security screen were added and the location of the Public Counter was changed[288].
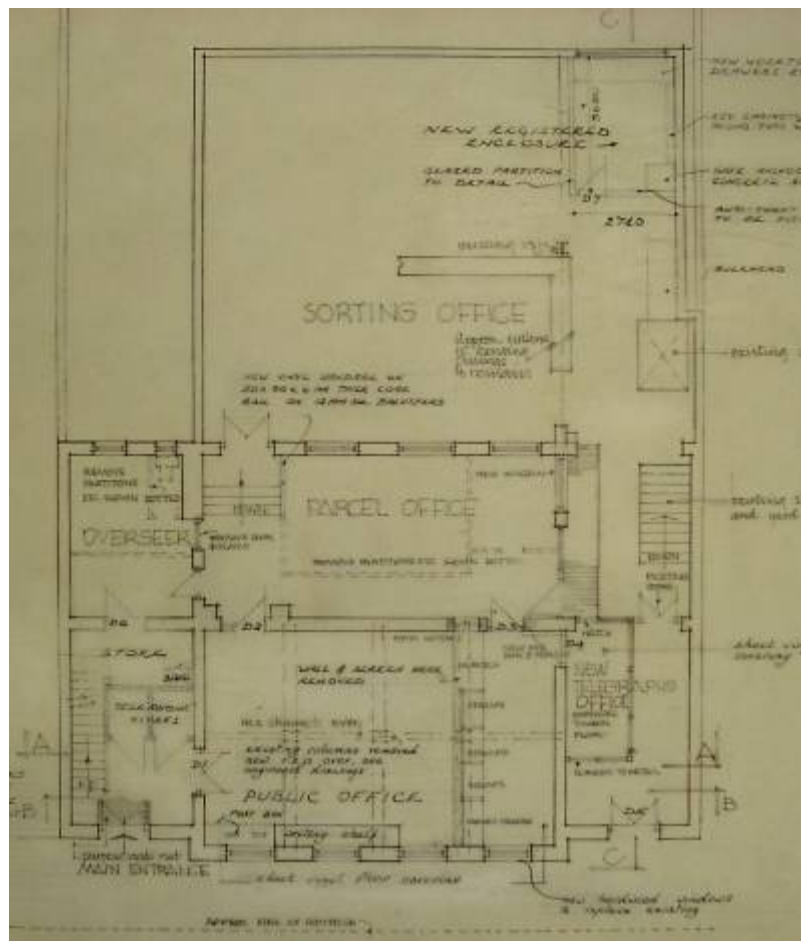
Figure 7/24 – Blackrock Former P.O., c. 1907; 1930s Changes to Floor Plan[289]

[287] ibid
[288] OPW Library Archives, *Projects,* Ref. Blackrock A/69/44/12-14 inc.
[289] OPW Library Archives, *Post Office Drawing Collection*, Blackrock, Ref. Blackrock L 14 4
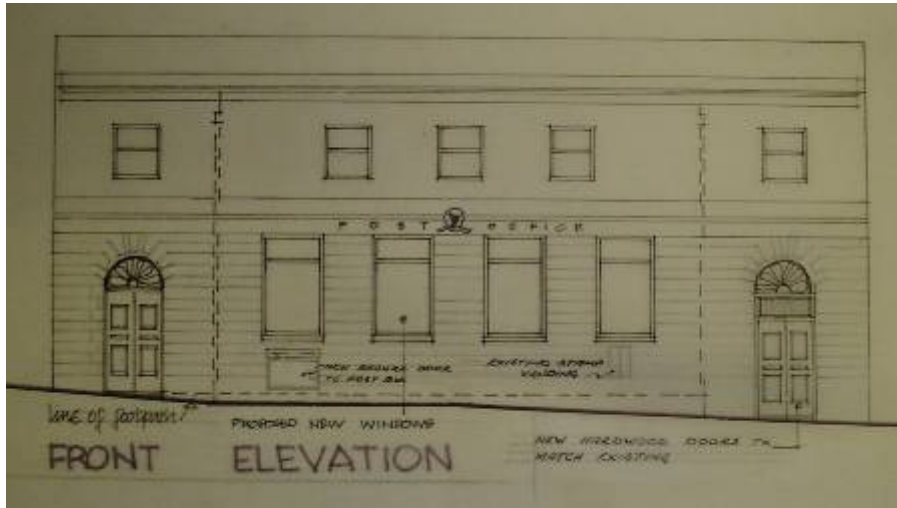
Figure 7/25 – Blackrock Former P.O., c.1907; 1930s changes to Front Elevation[290]

Existing Building Description

Composition

Although access was not possible to the interior of the building, it is obvious from visual inspection and comparison with the original drawings that the front façade is much intact. The existing stone and concrete projecting bands to the ground floor of the front façade differ from the original stone and brick bands. The changes carried out in the 1930s are also, in the main, intact. A report carried out on the building on behalf of O'Mahony Pike, Architects[291], indicates that some original features including the moulded timber skirtings, door architraves, doors and fanlights and the spiral stairs at the rear of the building are intact and recommends that any such features be retained.

Appraisal

This building retains much of its original external fabric. Located at the Dublin City approach to Blackrock village it offers much to the architectural heritage of the village. It is a fine sample of a middle sized postal office designed and built by the OPW in the early twentieth century.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This building is undergoing refurbishment at present and it is proposed to retain its external fabric to the street. Its new use should take into account its historic public use.

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[290] ibid
[291] Dublin Civic Trust, *Architectural inventory and Historical Appraisal,* November 2004

Dun Laoghaire Former Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location		Map Information	
Name:	**Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Offices**		
Former Name	Dun Laoghaire Post Office		
Street Number:		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3394-01
Street Name:	Marine Road,	OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
		Revision Date	2006
Town:	Dun Laoghaire	RPS	
County:	Co. Dublin		

Classification				
Original Use	Post Office			
Current Use	County Council Offices – Public Entrance Lobby			
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial			
Date From:	1887	To:	1997	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	**Enoch Trevor Owen**

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/611 & 612
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1877-1915
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 15 11
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1933 – 1963

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	N/A	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	
External light fittings	No	
Windows	Yes	Original windows to Ground Floor south-west façade are retained First Floor Front façade window are retained
External Doors	No	

Location

Dun Laoghaire former post office is located on the north end of Marine
Road between the original Town Hall to the north-east and a row of
terraced three storey rendered houses to the south-west Figure 7/26
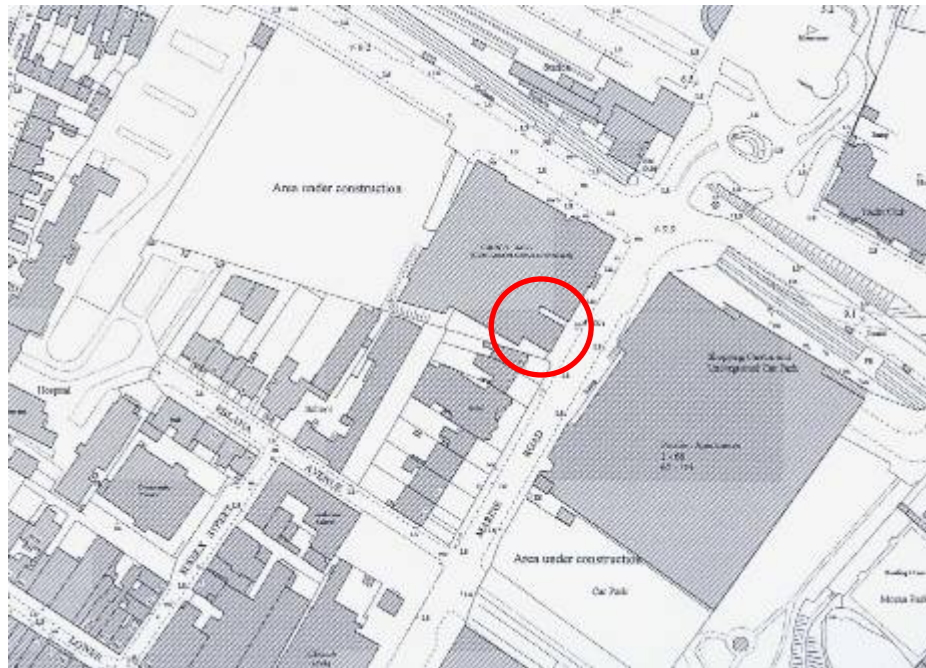
**Figure 7/26 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O., 1900; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey
Ireland[292]**

Figure 7/27 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O. 1900; Photo, Author, 2007

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[292] O.S. Map No.3394-01; Scale 1:1000; 2006 Edition

Original Building Description

A two storey detached four bay granite post office built c. 1887, now used as the entrance and reception lobby to Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council offices, Figure 7/27.

The internal layout, Figure 7/28 consisted of an Entrance Porch which led into the Public Office. It is not clear from the drawings in what location was the Public Counter. A door from the Entrance Porch led to a passage-way which gave access to the Postmasters Office. There was a doorway from the Postmaster's Office which led into the Sorting Office. The Sorting Office occupied almost half the ground floor area and measured 5.48m in width and 12.19m in depth. An access passage-way divided the Sorting Office from the Messengers Room and gave access to the Post Office Yard. The Post Office Yard was accessed from the street via a 2.40m wide timber gated Gateway. A Coal store, Store and Urinal area were located at the rear of the open yard.

The Postmaster's Residence was accessed through the Public Entrance Porch. The passageway, which also gave access to the Postmaster's Office, led to the Kitchen and Scullery at the rear of the building. A stairway led to the first floor accommodation, Figure 7/29.

The first floor accommodation was entirely the Postmaster's residence consisting of a Sitting Room and Parlour to the front of the building and three bedrooms, one to the south-west side and two to the rear. There was no evidence of a toilet or bathroom although they could have been accommodated in the room off the passage-way which led to the Kitchen, which is not titled on the original drawing. The Postmaster's Yard was accessed through the Scullery and from the street through a timber gated doorway. The Yard consisted of W.C., a Coal store and possibly an ashes store.

The Kitchen and Scullery to the Postmaster's Residence and the Messengers Room to the Post Office was a single storey annex with a hipped roof.
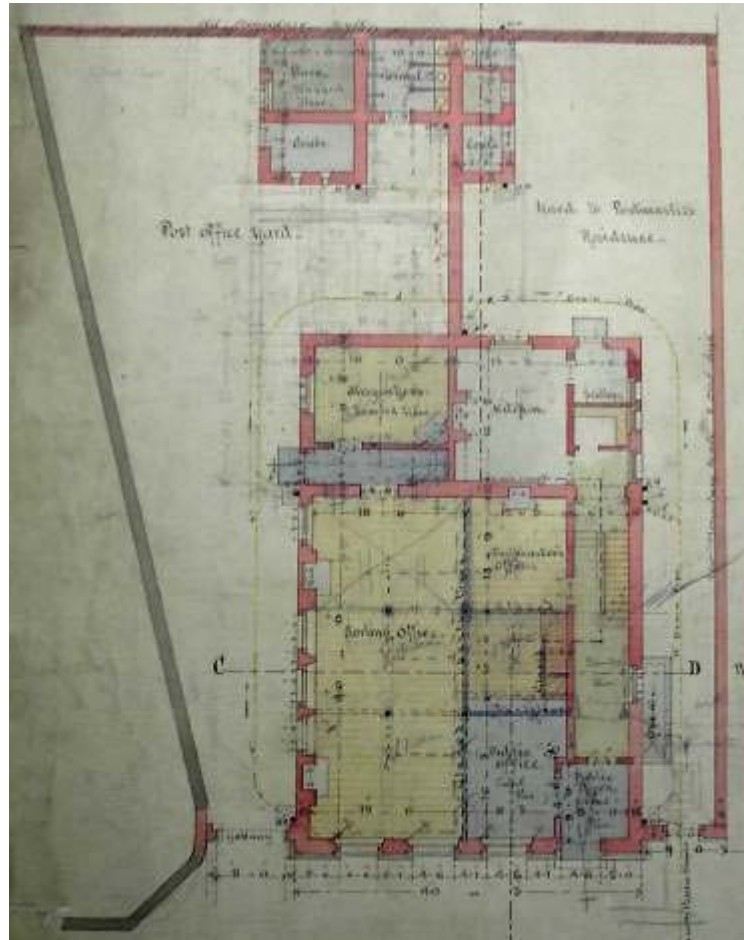
Figure 7/28 – Dun Laoghaire Former P.O. 1900; Original Ground Floor Plan[293]
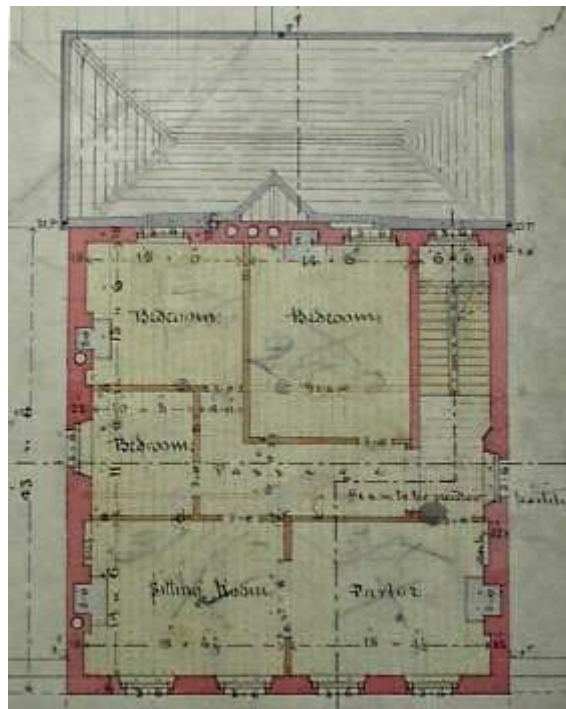
Figure 7/29 – Dun Laoghaire Former P. O. 1900; Original First Floor Plan[294]

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[293] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/611 & 612
[294] ibid

Existing Building Description
Plan

The original footprint survives although additions have been made and the entire back wall of the original building has been demolished in order to incorporate the building into the new County Council Office building at the rear.

External Walls, Windows and Doors

The original granite façade survives. The Ground Floor window openings have been cut down to ground level for use as openings into the building. The door opening retains its original steps although it is no longer used as an entrance. The original windows to the front façade at First Floor Level and the windows at Ground Floor Level to the south-west have been retained.

Interiors

None of the original interior features or fixtures at ground floor level survive. The original steel structural columns on the Ground Floor have been retained and are intact and in public view. The original roof trusses at first floor level have been retained and are now exposed although it was unlikely that they were exposed originally.

Appraisal

This is a fine example of one of the few OPW postal offices with a stone façade built at the end of the nineteenth century. It retains some original external fabric. It also retains its classical proportions even with the changes to the ground floor window openings. It is unfortunate that no reference to its use as a postal office exists.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The importance of the building in the streetscape has been retained through careful detailing. Its social and cultural significance as a public building have also been retained through its new function as the Entrance Lobby and reception area to the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council offices. The building should continue in public use and some reference to its use as a postal office should be made.

Fairview Former Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:			OSI Map Sheet No.:	3198-12&17
Former Name	Fairview Post Office		OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
Street Number:			Revision Date	2005
Street Name:	Fairview Strand			
Town:	Dublin 3		RPS	Not recorded
County:	Dublin			

Classification				
Original Use	Post Office			
Current Use	Retail and Offices			
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial			
Date From:	1889	To:	1990s	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	Robert Cochrane

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/654
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1889
OPW Library Archive File Reference	
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	

Categories of Special Interest									
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating	
		C				So		Regional	

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	No	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	
External light fittings	No	
Windows	No	
External Doors	No	
Sorting Room Ventilators	Yes	Poor

Location

This former post office building is located on the south side of Fairview Strand opposite the junction of Philipsborough Avenue, Figure 7/30 and 7/31. It is a detached building located between a row of terraced two storey brick houses to the east side and two semi-detached two-storey shop units, of a later period, to the west side.

Figure 7/30 – Fairview Former P.O., 1889; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[295]

Figure 7/31 – Fairview Former P.O., c.1889; Photo, Author, 2005

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[295] O.S. Map No. 3198-12 & 17; Scale 1:1000; 2005 Edition

Original Building Description

Single storey four bay gable fronted brick and stone post office building built 1901. This building was built in two phases and is described in detail in Chapter 5. The first phase consisted of a Sorting Office with Entrance Porch and a Postmen's Room at the rear of the building. The external Yard consisted of a Coals store, an Ashes store, a Urinal area and three W.C.s, all shown uncoloured in Figure 7/32. The second phase consisted of the addition of a Public Office, with Entrance Porch and a Clerks area. This construction brought the building line of the postal office out to the street and the works shown coloured in Figure 7/32 indicate this.
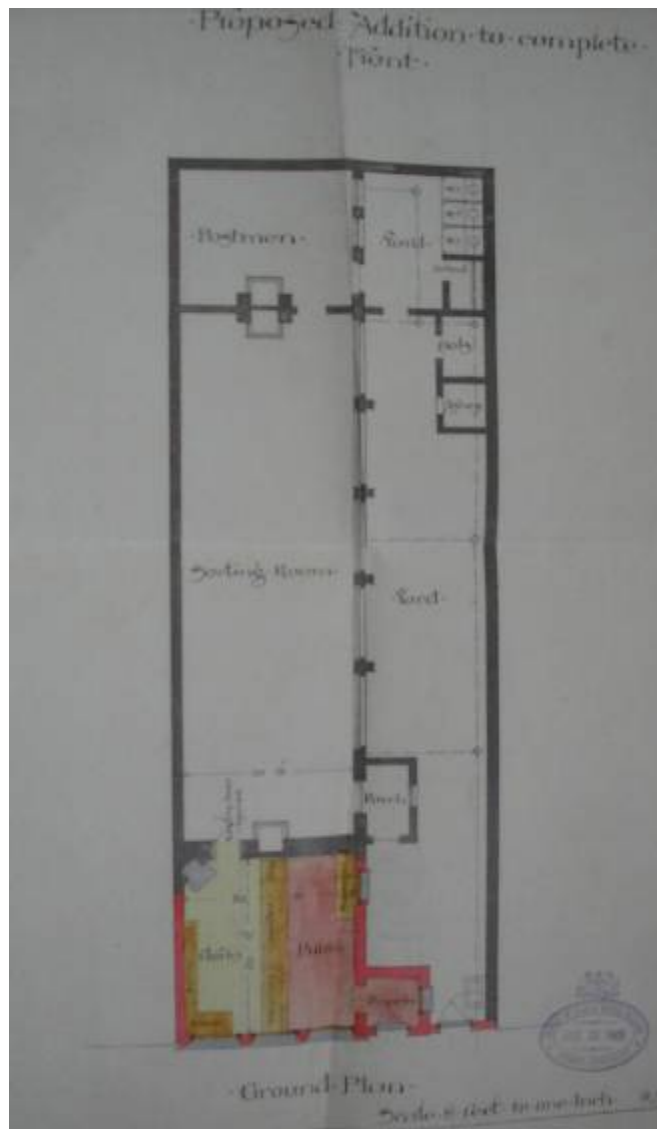
Figure 7/32 – Fairview Former P.O., c. 1889; Ground Floor Plan with additions[296]

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[296] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/654

Existing Building Description

Plan

The original footprint survives but the internal layout to the former public office is much changed. Access was not permitted to the remaining areas.

External Wall

The front façade differs from the original elevation drawing as the brickwork below the front windows is now stone, Figure 7/33.

Figure 7/33 – Fairview P.O., c. 1889; Original Front Elevation Drawing[297]

Windows, Doors and other features

No original windows, doors or features of the area examined have been retained.

Appraisal

This is an example of early OPW purpose built Post Offices. Its location at the road junction gives it a significance on the streetscape.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although this building has had some changes to its fabric, they are all reversible. This building should be included on the Record of Protected Structure for the council.

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[297] ibid

James's Street Former Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:	James's Street Sorting Office			
Former Name	James's Street Post Office			
Street Number:	109		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3263-08
Street Name:	James's Street		OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
			Revision Date	1997
Town:	Dublin 2		RPS	4128
County:	Dublin			

Classification	
Original Use	Post Office
Current Use	An Post Sorting Office
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial

Date From:	1891	To:	2005	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	Robert Cochrane & John Howard Pentland

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/895
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1891-1893
OPW Library Archive File Reference	
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	No	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	
External light fittings	No	
Windows	Yes	Good
External Doors	Yes	Good

Location

James's Street Former Post Office located on the north side of James's Street, is one of group of three red brick buildings, Nos 107, 108 and 109 James's Street. It is located to west of Guinness Brewery Factory and fronts directly onto the street, Figures 7/34 and 7/35.
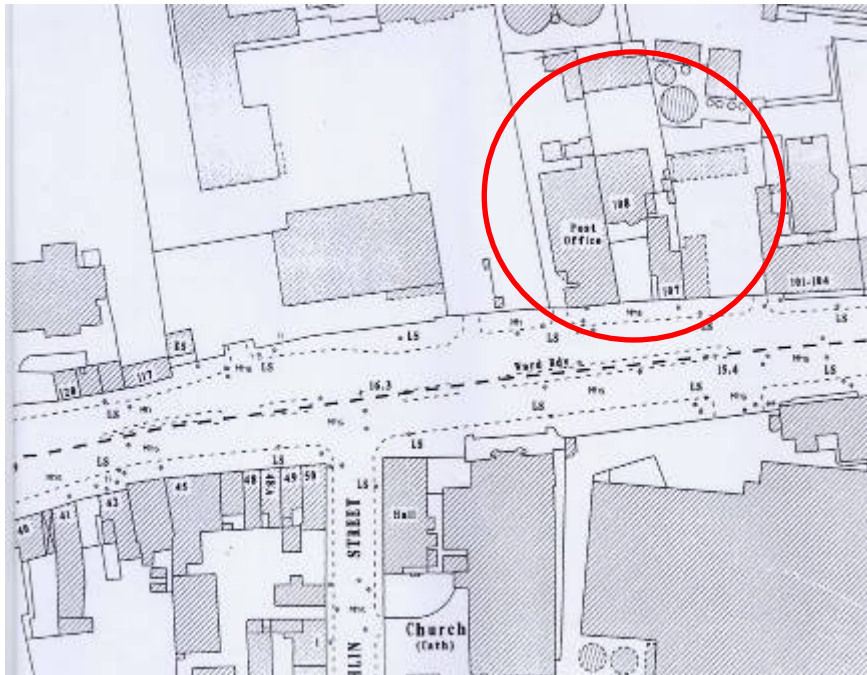
Figure 7/34 – James's Street Former P.O., c. 1892;
Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[298]

Figure 7/35 – James's Street Former P.O., c. 1892; Photo, Author, 2006

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[298] O.S. Map No. 3263-08; Scale 1:1000; 1997 Revision

Original Building Description

This is a single storey detached gable fronted south facing red brick post office building designed and built by the OPW c. 1892.

The internal layout, Figure 7/36 consisted of an entrance Porch, at the west side, with a splayed wall which led into the Public Office. The Public Counter ran from east to west from the front wall to the wall of the Sorting Office. A bench for Tele Messages (sic) was located on the wall opposite the Counter. A door from the Clerks Area, behind the Counter, led directly into the Sorting Office. The Sorting Office was a long narrow rectangular room measuring 18.30m in length and 6.09m in width. A second entrance to the Sorting Office was through a Porch at the east end and rear of the building. Steps led upwards from this Porch into the Sorting Office. This Porch gave access to the Postmen and Boys Room which had a fireplace, a seat and lockers. It also gave access to the Clerks Rooms which had a fireplace and a W.C. directly off it. The east and rear section of the External Yard had a Coal Store, an Ashes Store a Urinal and two W.C.s.

The Sorting Office was double height having a height of 6.09m to the underside of the steel roof structure. The Public Office had s similar ridge height but a plaster ceiling was fitted at a height of 4.50m.
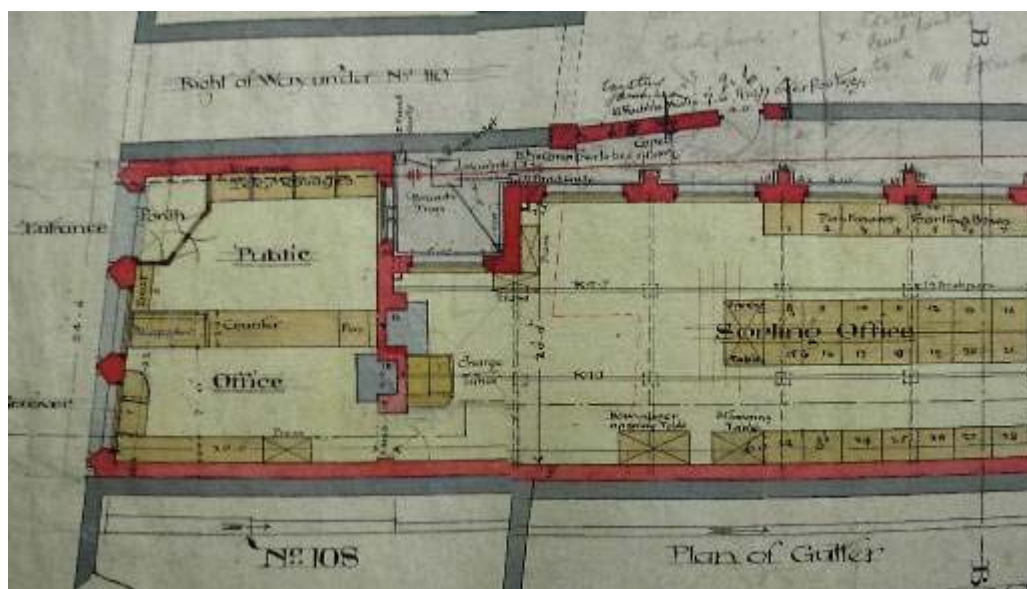
Figure 7/36 – James's Street Former P.O.; Part Original Ground Floor Plan[299]

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[299] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/895

Existing Building Description

Plan

The original footprint survives with some additions to the north end of the building. The original External Yard has been extended into the adjoining premises to the west side. However, the location of the Entrance porch differs from the original plans being positioned on the east side of the Public Area, Figures 7/36, 7/37 and 7/38.

External Walls

An inspection and comparison of the drawings illustrates a different finish to the front façade from that shown on the original drawings. The original drawings indicate a stone façade with Gothic style, Figure 7/36. The existing façade is red brick with a limestone tripartite window and door surround. Limestone coping stones finish the gable parapet and limestone ball finials finish the ends of the gables. A oeil-de-bouef in the gable has a limestone surround and a limestone keystone, Figure 7/36.
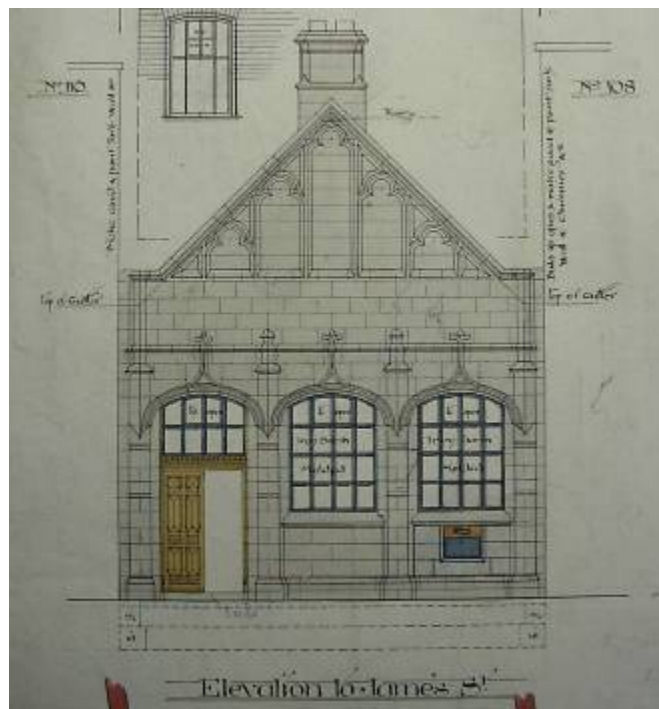
Figure 7/37 – James's Former P.O., Original Elevation Drawing[300]

Figure 7/37 – James's Street Former P.O., South and Front elevation; Photo, Author, 2005

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[300] ibid

Windows and Doors

The period timber windows of 12 divisions, with opening sashes in the top row, in the front façade survive intact including their opening mechanisms. Some of the original windows to the Sorting Office survive including their fittings, Figure 7/38. There is a closed segmental limestone pediment canopy over the entrance door and the original Entrance door survives also, with its original ironmongery.

Figure 7/38 – James's Street Former P.O.; Original Window Frame and Opening mechanism; Photo, Author, 2006

Roof and Rainwater Goods

The roof has been re-roofed with man-made slates, and the original skylights have been replaced with 'Velux' type rooflights. The original roof trusses to the Sorting Office survive intact, Figure 7/39.

Some cast iron ogee rainwater gutters, rectangular hopper heads and circular down-pipes survive.

Figure 7/39 – James's Street Former P.O.; Sorting Office Roof Structure; Photo, Author, 2006

Interiors

None of the original public counter fittings survive. The original ironmongery to the entrance door and the ironmongery to the window opening mechanisms survive.

Appraisal

This is a fine example of a Victorian design post office. It is one of a group of three red brick buildings comprising of this single storey post office to the west abutting the pavement, a deeply recessed three bay three storey over basement red brick centre block and a two storey bay three red brick block to the east end. This block also fronts straight onto the street.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The significance of this building as a public building is now threatened by its closure as a postal office.

The building features including the external signage, which distinguish it as a post office must be retained. Any future development of the building must endeavour to retain any other original features.

Killucan Former Post Office
Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:			OSI Map Sheet No.:	2842-A & C
Former Name	Killucan Post Office		OSI Map Scale:	1:2500
Street Number:			Revision Date	2005
Street Name:				
Town:	Killucan		RPS	Not recorded
Townland:				
County:	Co. Westmeath			

Classification	
Original Use	Post Office
Current Use	
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial

Date From:	1911	To:	1980s	Condition	Fair

OPW Architect	

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/899
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1911-1914
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 16 5
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1922

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A						So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	No	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	
External light fittings	No	
Windows	No	
External Doors	No	
Roof Exhausts Vents to Sorting Room	Yes	

Location

The building is located on the north-east end of the village on the Raharney Road. It faces east overlooking a public green, Figures 7/78 and 7/79.

Figure 7/40 – Killucan Former P.O., 1911; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[301]

Figure 7/41 – Killucan Former P.O., 1911; Photo, Author, 2006

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[301] O.S. Map No. 2842-A & C; Scale 1:2500; 2005 Revision

General History

The current postal office in Killucan is located in a two storey house at the end of a 1860s terrace of housing at the south end of the village[302]. Previous to this the postal office was located in this OPW purpose built building on the north east side of the village on the Raharney Road overlooking the 'Fair Green', Figure 7/80. This building is still in existence and was used as a community hall until recently when it was sold. The Vocational Educational Committee carried out refurbishment to the building in 1992. It is now owned privately and is no longer in use. The postal office operated out of this building from its opening in 1912 until it moved to its current location in 1980s. The OPW having secured a site within the village proceeded to build a Post Office building…

> ……*constructed of timber and uralite, the whole carried on concrete foundations, was put in hands towards the end of January, 1912, and handed over not quite complete, but fit for use by the Post Office on 30th March (1912)"[303]……*

The building was reported as being fully completed in the OPW 81st Annual Report of the following year. The preceding postal office had been located in a house on the north west end of the village on the Cloghan Road,   Figure 7/80. The 1876 OS Map shows another postal office located further away from the village on the same road, Figure 7/81. Killucan is listed as having a post office in the British Postal Guide 1856 and in the Post Towns in Ireland 1828-1840, Killucan Post Office is listed as a Sub Office[304].   It is listed in the Post Office Guide for 1871 list as being a Head Office, with a Money Order Office and a Savings Bank[305]. An early 19th century map shows another earlier postal office located on the south end of the village on the Tyrellespass road, Figure 7/82.

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[302] National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; *Buildings of Ireland*; Ref. 15312007.

[303] OPW Library Archive;   *80th Annual Report 1911-1912, Board of Works, Ireland*;

[304] David Feldman, William Kane *Handbook of Irish Postal History to 1840*: David Feldman, Dublin; 1975

[305] Derry Almanac and Directory 1871, reprinted in All Ireland Sources Newsletter 2004
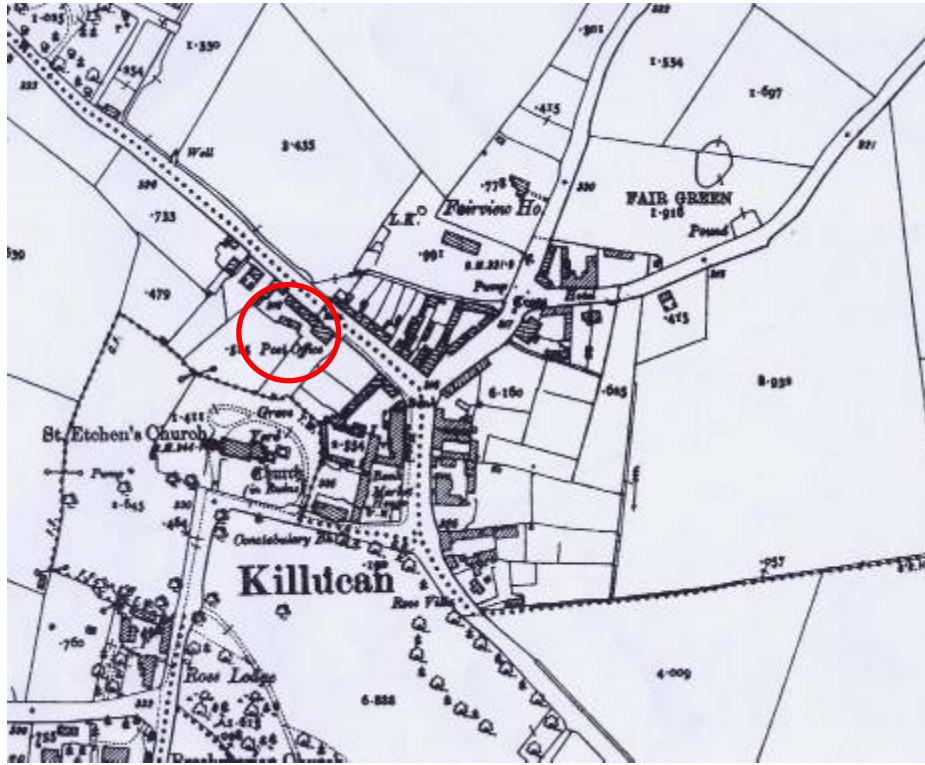
Figure 7/42 – Killucan P.O.; Map showing pre 1911 Post Office; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[306]

Figure 7/43 – Killucan P.O., 1911; Map showing pre 1876 Post Office; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[307]

[306] O.S. Map No. Map 20-15; Scale 1:2500; 1911 Revision
[307] O.S. Map No. 20; Scale 1:10560; 1878 Revision

Figure 7/44 – Killucan P.O.; Pre 1876 Map; Base Map Source: OSI Historical Mapping

Original Building Description

Three bay rendered single storey east facing detached former postal office built in 1911-1912 by the OPW occupying a prominent site overlooking the 'Fair Green' public space, on the north east end of the village. The building stepped upwards towards the rear section. The front section of the building accommodated a lobby, public office, public counter and instrument room. The rear section had the sorting room and the Postman Area at the rear was accessed by 9 steps. An open yard to the rear accommodated storage for post office vehicles and hand-carts and housed a coal store and toilets.[308]

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[308] OPW drawing file – OPW5HC/4/889

Existing Building Description

External Walls

There is no evidence of the Uralite specified as the finish in the OPW Annual Report of 1912. The current finish to the external walls is cement render. The front façade does retain the triangular section beneath the apex of the roof in the gable of 'eternite tiles' as specified in the original drawings Figure 7/82.

Figure 7/45 – Killucan Former P.O., 1911; Photo, Author, 2006

Windows

Window openings to the front façade are covered with boarding and were not accessible. The original plaster reveals has been removed and the original proportions to the windows and entrance door and fanlight have been altered, Figure 7/83. Twentieth century precast concrete sills have replaced the original sills. The fanlight over the entrance door has been removed and replaced with a separate window opening above the door way.

The window opes on the side elevations as shown on the original drawings are no longer evident.
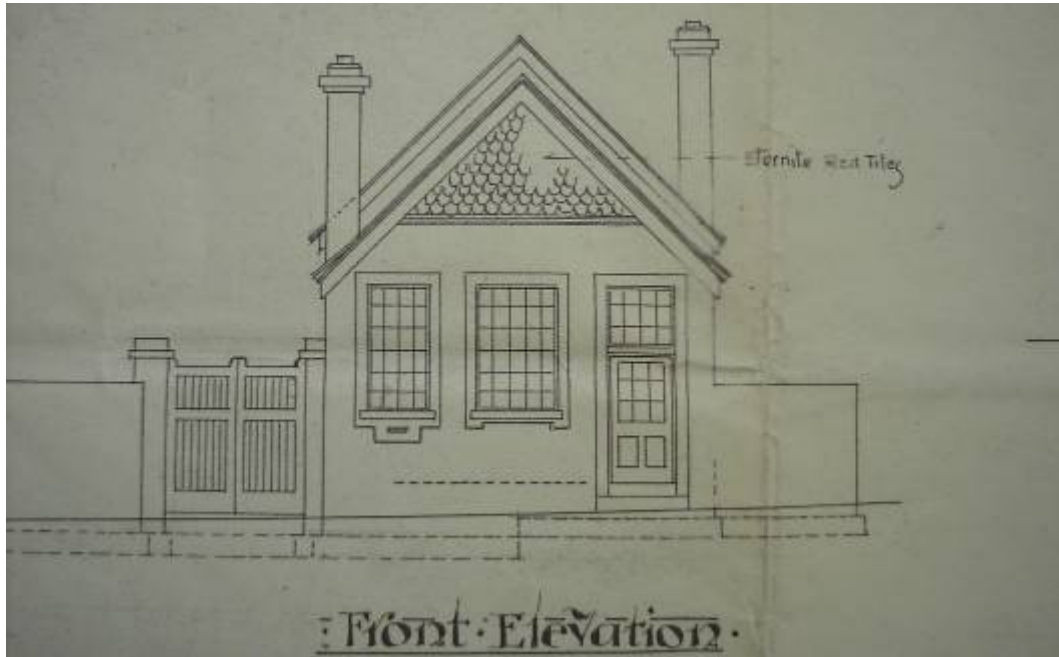
Figure 7/46 – Killucan Former P.O., c. 1911; Original Front Elevation Drawing[309]
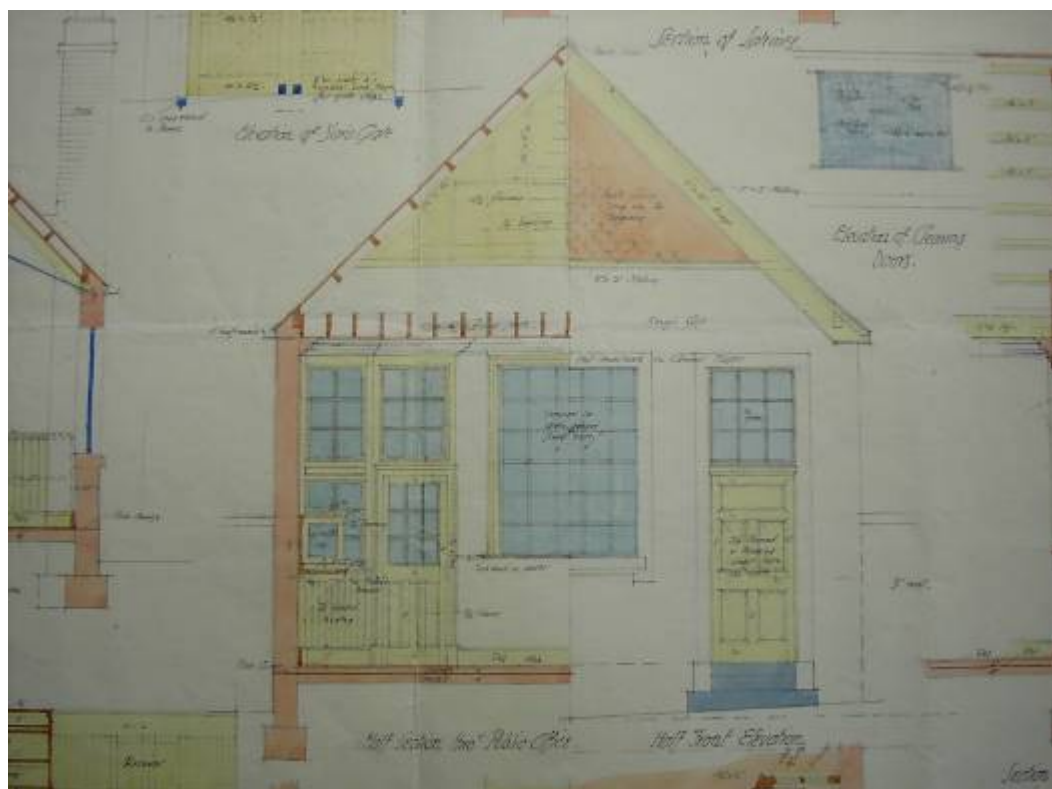
Figure 7/47 – Killucan Former P.O., c. 1911; Original Front Elevation and Section Drawing[310]

[309] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899
[310] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/899

Roof

The roof is in two sections, the front section has a lower ridge line and eaves than the rear. The roof is a single span A pitch roof, with the original red slates in a diamond pattern and terracotta ridge tiles. Three roof ventilators are located along the ridgeline, two of these appear to be original the third the centre ventilator could be a later addition as it does not appear on the original drawings. Four period rooflights are spaced along each pitch over the rear section of the roof. A 1922 drawing shows amendments to the original plan including the addition of rooflights. However the existing rooflights are not in the position or size as shown on the 1922 drawing see Figure 7/85.
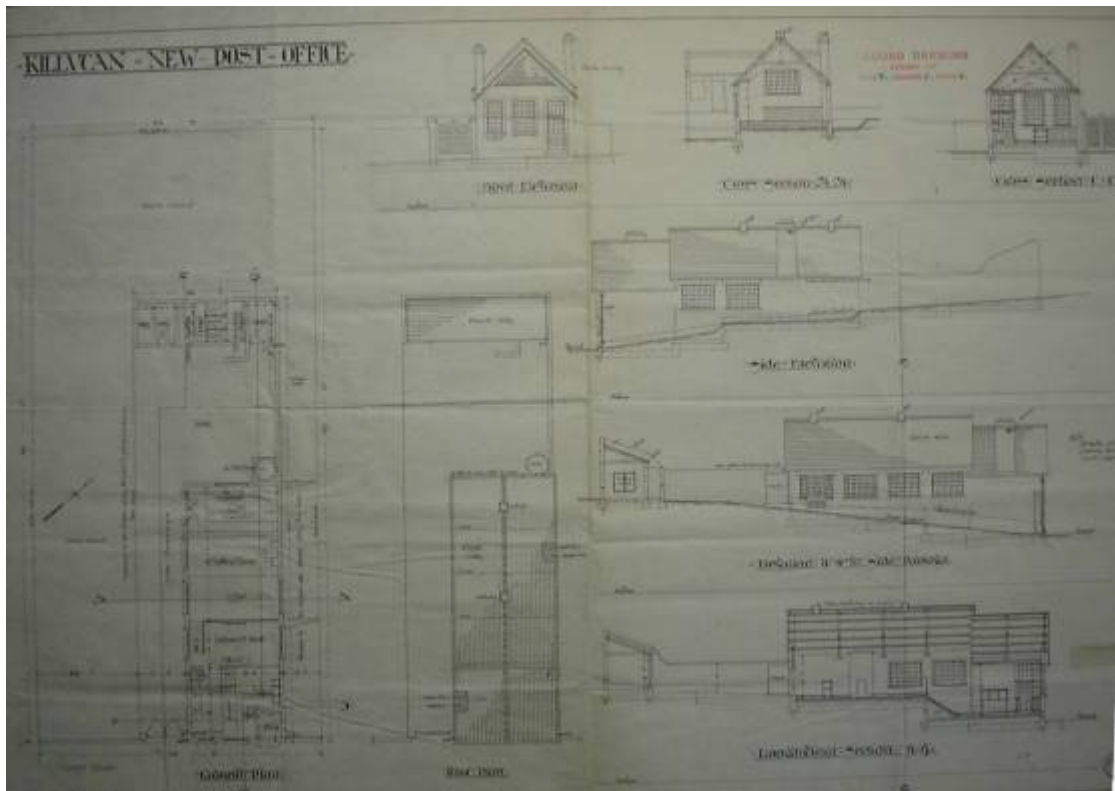
Figure 7/48 – Killucan Former P.O., c. 1911; Original 1922 Drawing[311]

Interiors

Access was not possible to the interior of this building and it is unlikely that any of the post office furniture fittings survive. However the OPW records include drawings of 'standard' furniture fittings for post offices for Killucan fit-out Figures 7/86 and 7/867.

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[311] ibid
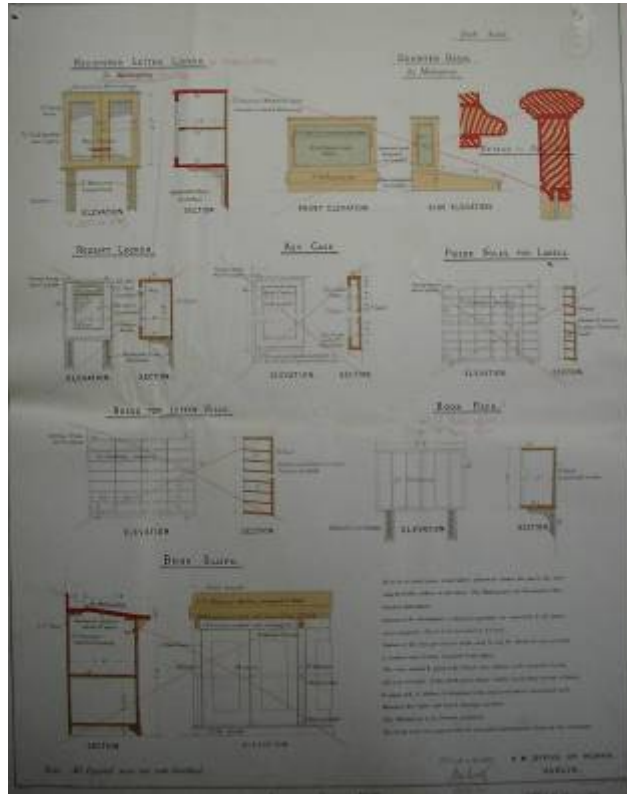
Figure 7/49 – Killucan Former P.O., c. 1911; Original Standard Pattern Drawing[312]
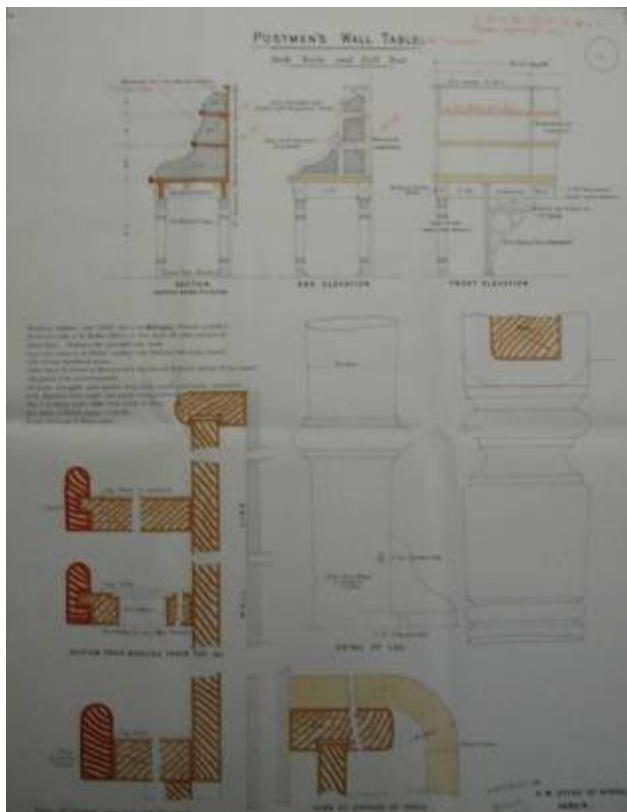
Figure 7/50 – Killucan Former P.O., c. 1911; Original Standard Pattern Drawing[313]

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[312] ibid
[313] ibid

Appraisal

This building is a rare example of OPW Arts and Crafts style building. It is located in a prominent position overlooking one of the public open spaces in the village. It retains its original footprint and some of its original external fabric. It was the only purpose built Post Office building in the village although the village has had a postal office recorded on various maps since the early nineteenth century.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This building is no longer in use. The windows and door to the front façade have been boarded up. There is evidence of organic growth in the gutters and on there is overgrown ivy on the south elevation. The building is not listed in the Westmeath list of protected structures. The interior has not examined. It does not show up any Ordnance Survey Maps as is appears there was no ordnance survey maps issued of the village between 1911 and 1999. This Post Office was built in 1912 and closed prior to 1992.

It is a unique building within the village of Killucan and should be retained as an example of an OPW Arts and Crafts designed building for a public use.

Rathmines Lower Former Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:	I.E.S Ltd		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3263-25
Former Name	Rathmines Post Office		OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
Street Number:	27-29		Revision Date	1997
Street Name:	Lower Rathmines Road		OSI Map Sheet No.:	18-15
			OSI Map Scale:	1:2500
			Revision Date	1907-08
Town:	Rathmines			
County:	Dublin 6		RPS	7327

Classification				
Original Use	Post Office			
Current Use	Offices			
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial			
Date From:	1883	To:	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	William Howard

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/635
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1883
OPW Library Archive File Reference	None
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	None

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A								Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	No	
Fireplace behind public counter	Yes	Plaster removed exposing structure
External light fittings	No	
Windows	No	
External Doors	No	

Location

The former Rathmines post office was located at the north end of Rathmines Road Lower, Figures 7/51 and 7/52.
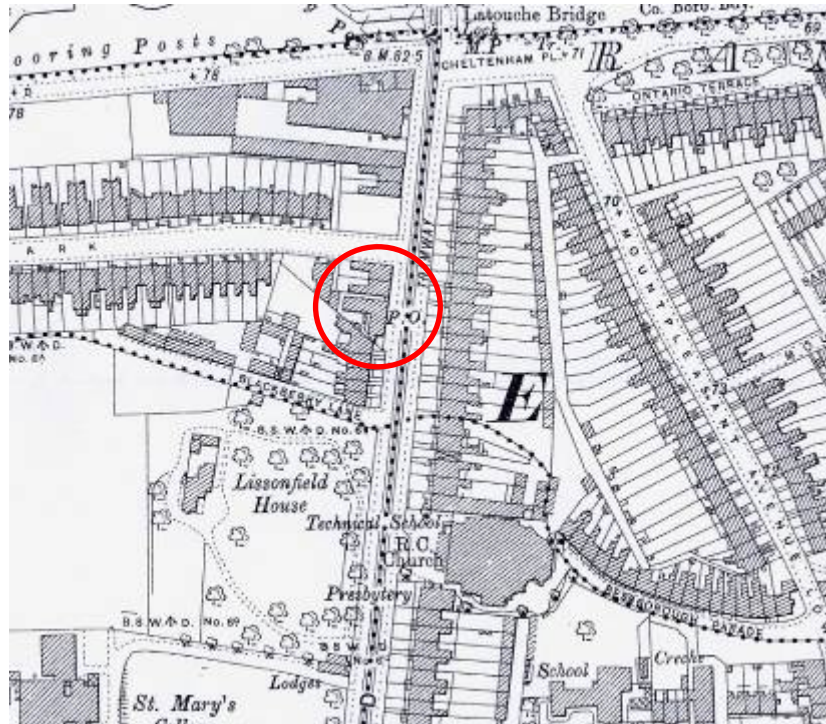
Figure 7/51 – Rathmines Former P.O., 1883; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[314]

Figure 7/52 – Rathmines Former P.O., 1883; Photo, Author, Feb 2007

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[314] O.S. Map No.: 18-15; Scale 1:2500; Edition 1911

Original Building Description

A detached single storey red brick two bay break-front Victorian building fronting directly onto the street, designed and built c. 1883 by the OPW.

The internal layout Figure 7/53 consisted of Entrance Porch which led into the Public office and also gave access to the Parcels Office, behind the Public Counter, the Sorting Office to the north side of the building, and a stairs to the Basement. The Public Counter ran across the Public Office from north to south and included a Public Bench located underneath the windows to the front. The Public Area measured 6.09m in width and 2.13m in depth. The Public Counter was 0.60m wide and the Clerks Area, in this postal office called the Parcels Office, was 6.09m wide and 3.65m deep. The Sorting Office a long narrow rectangular room measuring 19.50m long and 6.09m wide had timber trusses supporting the roof structure. The Basement area consisted of a Kitchen, Stores and a Coal Store. The single pitched Privies Area in the external yard to the rear had four W.C.s and three Urinals.
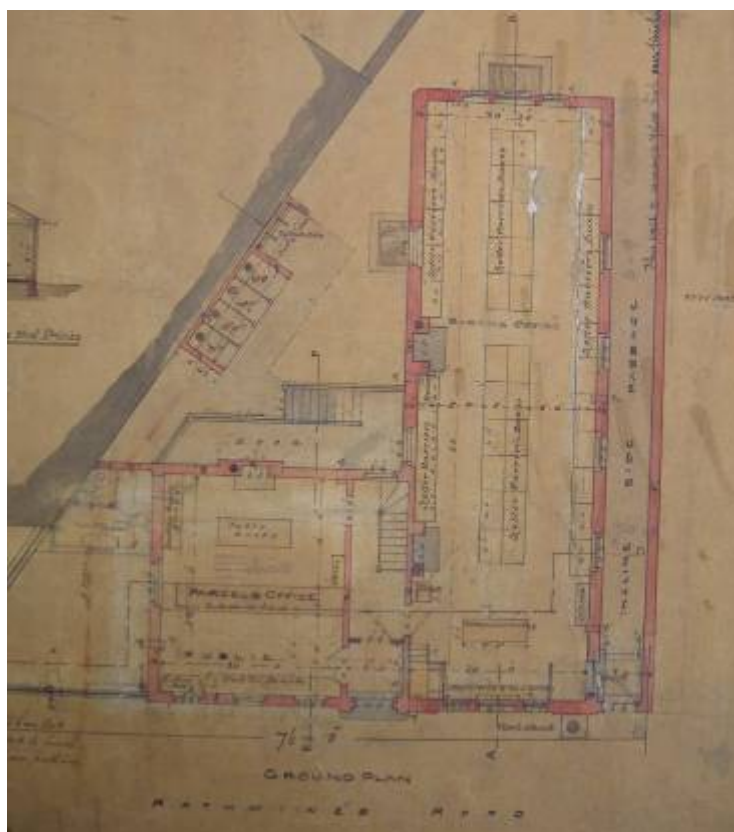
Figure 7/53 – Rathmines Former P.O., c. 1883; Original Ground Floor Plan[315]

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[315] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/895

The façade to the north had a gable front with a Venetian window with stone columns at Ground Floor and an oeil-de-booed window under the gable. The south bay façade had an A-pitch roof over the single storey with three segmental flat arched window openings. The centrally located entrance door opening had a semi-circular arched head with a keystone and a gable detail over the parapet to match the main gable, Figure 7/54.

Figure 7/54 – Rathmines Former P.O., c. 1883; Original Front Elevation Drawing[316]

Existing Building Description

Plan

The original footprint of the building survives intact. The end bay to the south which is set back from the street and is constructed in fairface blockwork with granite surround to the window opening is a 20th century addition. The interior layout is much changed, but retains some of the original features of the fabric of the building.

External walls

The original brickwork façade survives. The concrete string course at sill survives, but the circular columns to the Venetian window do not and the brickwork piers and arches to this window are a later addition. The keystone to both the Venetian window and the entrance door do not survive.

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[316] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/635

Roof

The original roof structure survives throughout the building. Original terracotta ridge tiles have survived in part as has a roof ventilator to the sorting office.

Windows and Doors

None of the original windows survive having all been replaced with uPVC window frames. The original front entrance door has been replaced with one matching the original design.

Interiors

None of the original fittings, doors, architraves skirtings, window boards etc. survive. However although the internal plaster has been removed on most of the internal faces of the external walls, it has revealed the construction methods employed at window and fireplace lintels, Figure 7/55 and 7/56.

Figure 7/55 – Rathmines Former P.O., c.1883; Original window with timber lintel and brick relieving arch; Photo, Author, Feb 2007

Figure 7/56 – Rathmines P.O., c.1883; Original arch to fireplace; Photo, Author, Feb 2007

Post Office External Fittings and Insignia

None of the original fittings or features of the postal office survive although the replacement of brickwork at the original receiver box is obvious to the eye, Figure 7/52.

Appraisal

This building is an example of OPW Victorian design of postal office at the end of the nineteenth century. It retains much of its original fabric. The interiors expose the original structure in the Basement and on Ground Floor, and the original roof truss structure is retained.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This building has been refurbished and restored within the last fifteen years. It is also included in the RPS for Dublin. Unfortunately, the only suggestion that it was once a postal office is the period post box on the street in front of it, which still retains its royal insignia, Figure 7/57. This post box has survived the refurbishment of the building and should not be removed.

Figure 7/57 – Rathmines Lower Former P.O., c.1883; Post Box bearing Royal Insignia;
Photo, Author, 2007

Rathmines Upper Post Office
Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:	Rathmines Post Office		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3328-05
Former Name			OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
Street Number:	4		Revision Date	1998
Street Name:	Upper Rathmines Road,			
Town:	Rathmines		RPS	7412
County:	Dublin 6			

Classification				
Original Use	Post Office			
Current Use				
Original Type (NIAH Ref)	Commercial			
Date From:	1934	To:	2007	Condition	Good

OPW Architect	Howard Cooke

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	N/A
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	N/A
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 17 7
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1929-1984

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So		Regional

Standard Fittings	Original	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	Yes	No longer in use
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	Yes	Some original signage survives
An Post Signage	Yes	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	
External light fittings	No	
Windows	Yes	
External Doors	Yes	
Internal Doors	Yes	
Internal Features	Yes	Ventilation Grilles and Internal Screens

Location

Rathmines Post Office is located at the north end of Rathmines Road Upper, Figures 7/58 and 7/59.
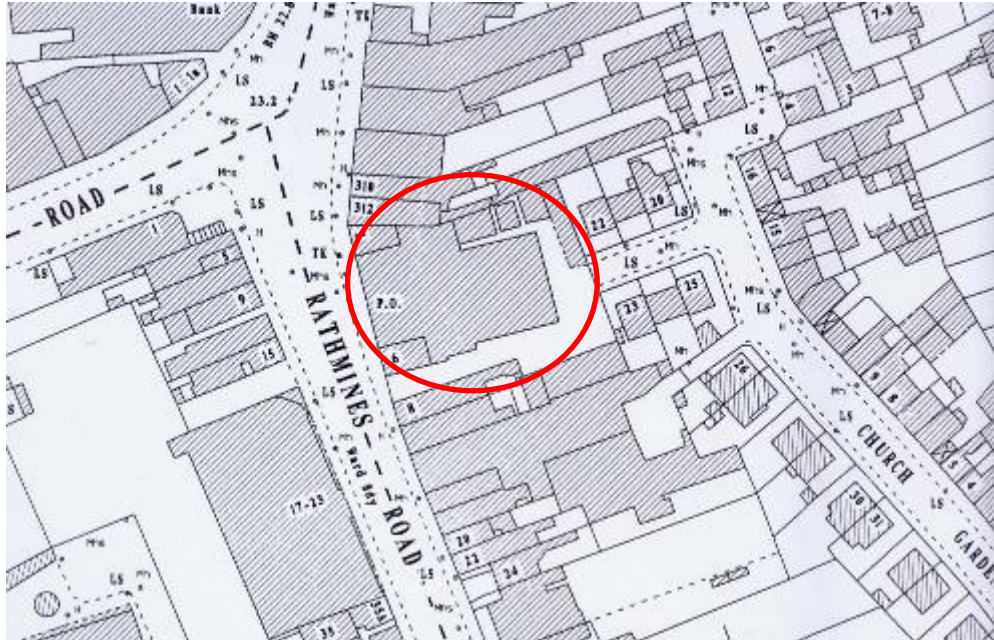
Figure 7/58 – Rathmines P.O., 1934; Base map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[317]

Figure 7/59 – Rathmines P.O., 1934; Photo, Author, 2007

[317] O.S. Map 3328-05, Scale 1:1000; 1998 Edition

Original Building Description

Semi-detached two storey post office built 1934. It has a centre five bay breakfront, with a centrally located entrance door, which is flanked by a three bay two storey bock to the south, Figure 7/59.

The original footprint of the building is intact apart from some minor additions within the External Yard. It was originally designed with two shops flanking the main centre building. The shop at the north is now is private ownership. The shop to the south has been refurbished and gives level access into the Public Office.

The centrally located main entrance is through a lobby measuring 1.80m wide and 1.06m deep gave access to the Public Area. A second entrance door at the north end gave access via a Vestibule (sic) to the Public Office and to a Linemens' (sic) Room and Inspector's Room. It also gave access to stairs to the first floor Switch Room which was used by the Telephone and Telegraph Department.

The Inspectors' and Clerks' Office and the S.P.M.'s (Sub Post Master) Office were access from the Public Area of the Public Office. The Sorting Office to the rear of the building was accessed from the Clerks Area behind the Public Counter. A Postmen's Retiring Room and Store Room were located at the rear of the Sorting Office and accessed from the Sorting Room. Postmen's W.C., Cycle Store, Garages, Engine Room and Battery Store were all accessed through the External Yard. This yard was entered from Rathmines Road Upper at the front and from Church Gardens at the rear, Figure 7/60.

The First Floor consisted of an Instrument room and Power Room. The Show Room at the Upper Floor level to the Shops was accessed only through the shops, Figure 7/61.
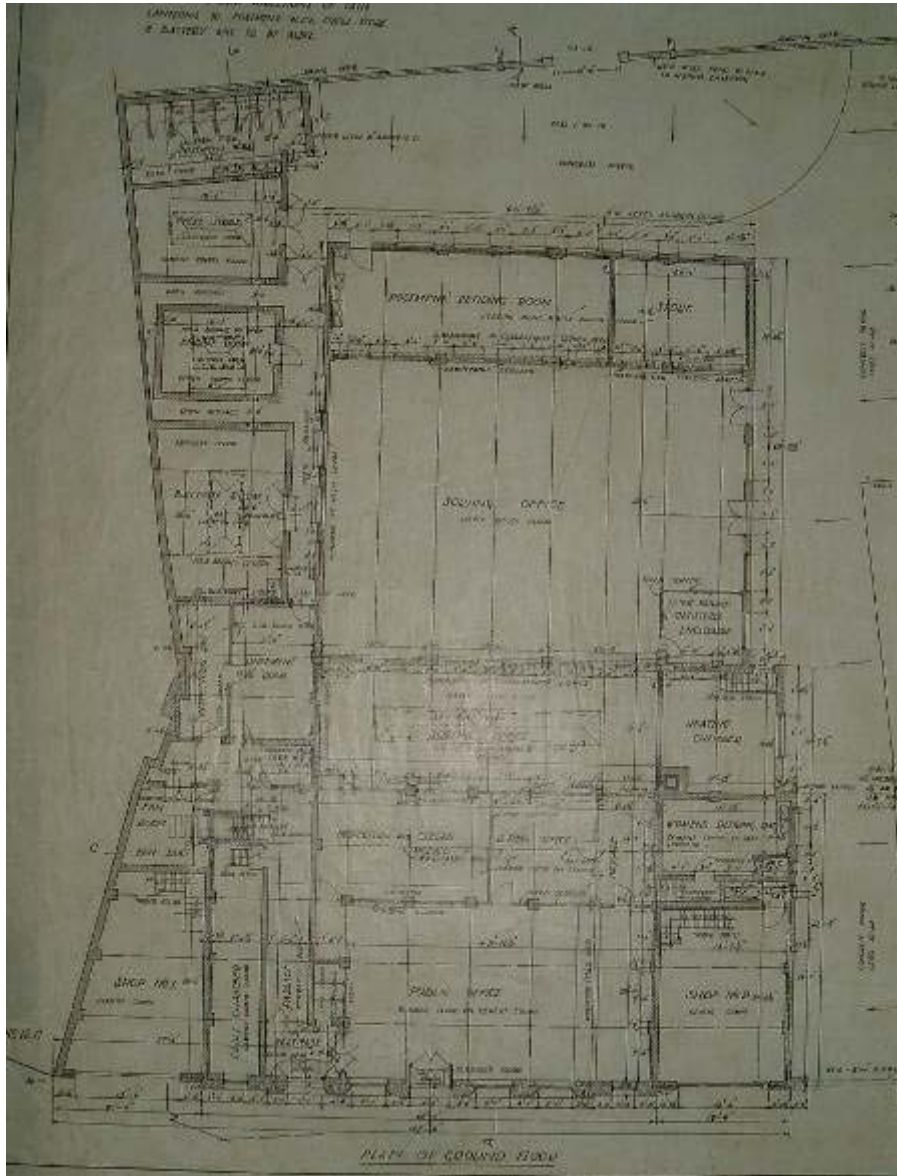
Figure 7/60 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Original Ground Floor Plan[318]

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[318] OPW Library, *Post Office Drawing Collection;* Rathmines, Ref. L 17 7, Dated 1932
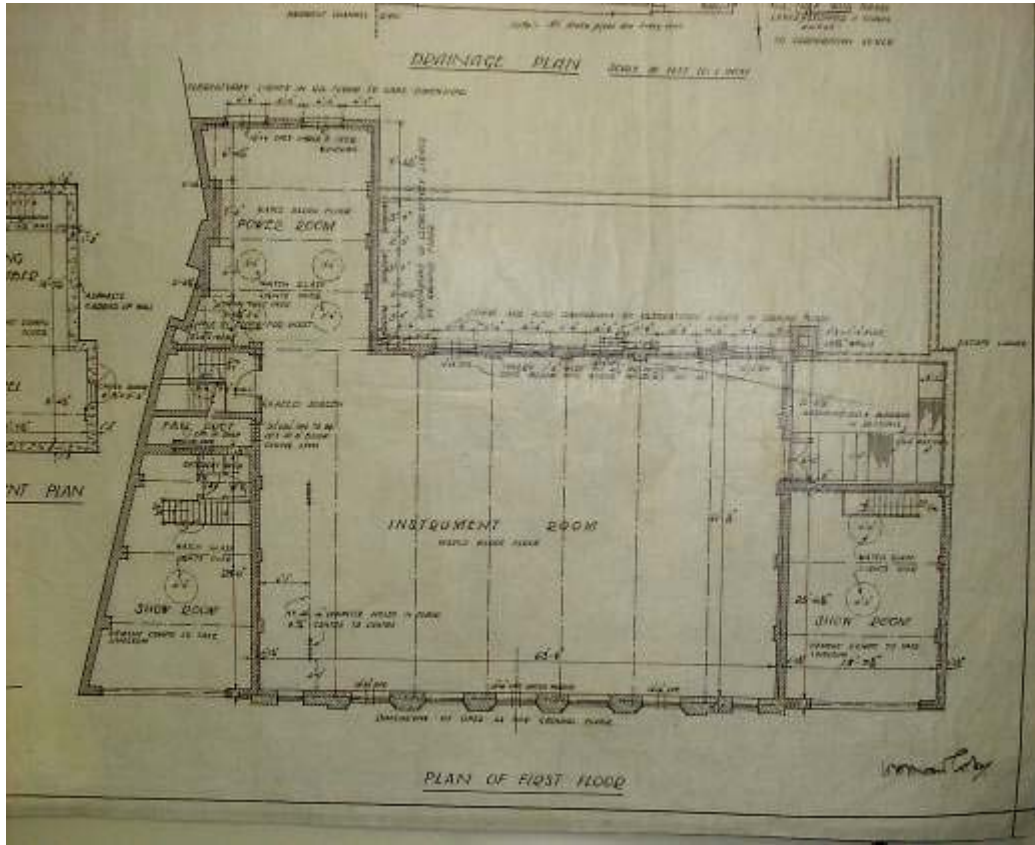
Figure 7/61 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Original First Floor Plan[319]

The Public Counter in the Public Office ran east-west across the room at the south end of the room. It was 7.60m long and 0.99m wide. It was finished in teak veneer with ebonised detailing, Figure 7/62.
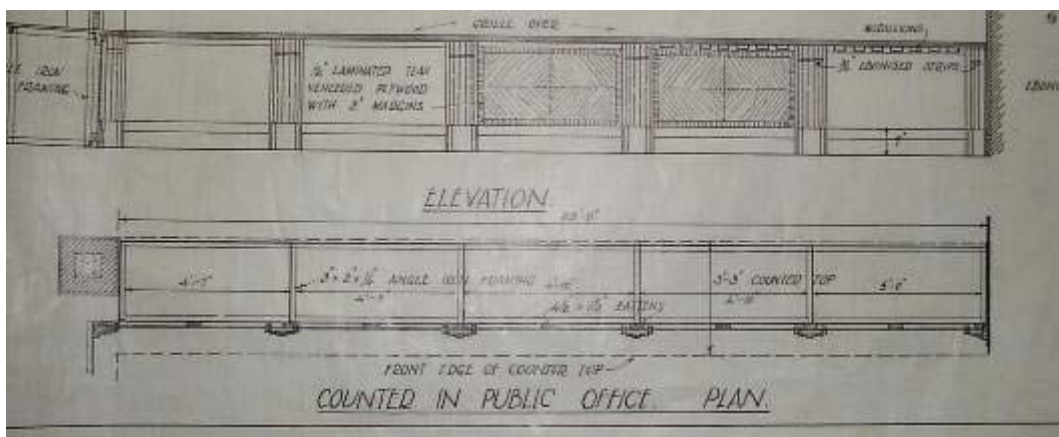
Figure 7/62 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Original Public Counter Drawing[320]

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[319] ibid
[320] ibid

Existing Building Description

Plan

The original footprint of the building survives intact. The end bay at the south side was re-built in 1989 and this is indicated by a plaque over the entrance door. An additional floor has been added to the rear and is distinguishable from the original by its painted external brickwork. The original accommodation in the External Yard survives intact.

External Walls

The original granite faced facade with a limestone plinth and limestone door surround to main entrance doorway survives intact. A granite stone over the doorway has the year 1934 in bronze lettering affixed, Figure 7/63. A one brick high soldier course of red brick runs beneath the projecting cornice below parapet level. A corresponding five brick high soldier course of red brickwork finishes the top of the six granite breakfront stonework piers between the window bays. The original secondary entrance is located in the second bay at the north end. The south end is flanked by a two storey three bay granite faced bay which gives level access to the Public Office via an internal ramp. This bay was re-constructed in 1989.

Figure 7/63 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Date Plaque; Photo, Author, 2007

Windows

The original bronze window panels to the front façade, incorporating solid panels at the floor junction, survive intact. Some original steel window frames to the rear of the building survive.

Doors

Both sets of external doors to the front façade survive intact. The inner lobby doors to the main entrance also survive intact, retaining their Art Deco style. Figure 7/64.

Figure 7/64 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Entrance Lobby; Photo, Author, 2007

Interiors

None of the public counters survive. Some of the Art Deco style doors and fittings have survived. The high level ventilation covers in the walls are still intact, Figure 7/65. Some original ironmongery and wall finishes survive.

Figure 7/65 – Rathmines P.O. 1934; Internal View; Photo Author, 2007

Signage and Letterboxes

Some original signage survives above the stamp dispenser. There is no evidence of the original stamp dispenser. The original letter box survives but is not in use, Figure 7/66.
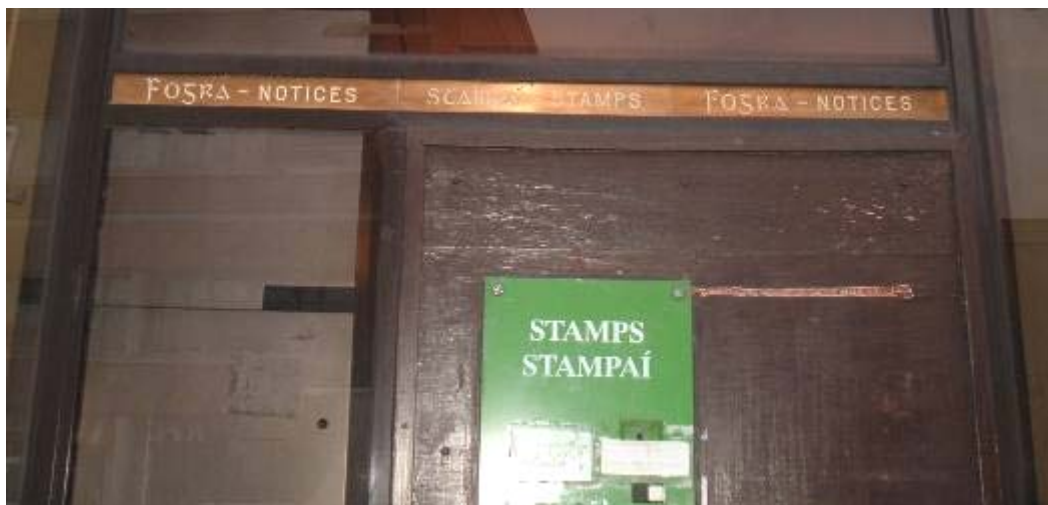
Figure 7/66 – Rathmines P.O. 1834; Original Signage over Stamp Dispenser; Photo, Author 2007

Appraisal

This is a fine example of the middle to large sized postal offices built by the OPW in the early years after the formation of the Irish Free State. It is similar in style and scale to St. Andrew Street Post Office. It has a mix of classical and Art Deco styling. It has a large presence giving the building importance on the streetscape.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This building has a large area of redundant floor space on the First Floor. This area should be refurbished and leased out or used by An Post. The external front façade of the building has a neglected feel, Figures 7/63 and 7/67. As a public building this must not be allowed to occur and should be rectified. The public building importance of the building must be retained.

Figure 7/67 Rathmines P.O. 1934; Stamp Dispenser and Redundant Letter Box, Area Showing neglect; Photo, Author, 2007

St. Andrew Street Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information		
Name:	St. Andrew Street Post Office		OSI Map Sheet No.:	3263-10	
Former Name			OSI Map Scale:	1:1000	
Street Number:			Revision Date 1	1998	
Street Name:	St. Andrew Street				
Town:	Dublin 2		RPS	7729	
County:	Dublin				

Classification			
Original Use		Post Office	
Current Use		Post Office	
Original Type (NIAH Ref)		Commercial	
Date From:	1947	To: 2007	Condition Good

OPW Architect

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	N/A
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	N/A
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 15 7
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1947-1950

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So	T	Regional

Standard Fittings	Existing	Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box		
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	Yes	Original surround, AN Post dispenser fitted
Clock	No	
Post & Telegraph signage	No	
An Post Signage	Yes	
Fireplace behind public counter	N/A	
External light fittings	No	
Exhaust vents to Sorting Room	No	

Location

St. Andrew Street Post Office, Figures 7/68 and 7/69, commonly called
Andrew Street Post Office, is located on St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2. It
faces south east and fronts directly onto the street.
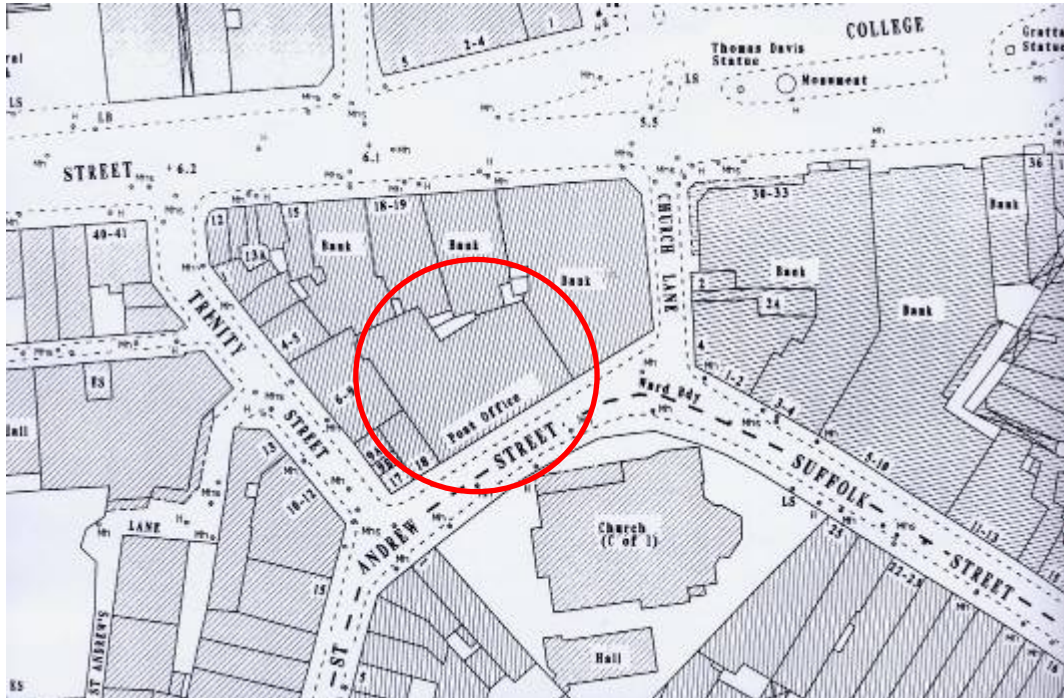
Figure 7/68 – St. Andrew Street P.O., 1947 – Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland,[321]

Figure 7/69 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Photo, Author 2005

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[321] O.S. Map No. 3262-10, Scale 1:1000, 1998 Edition

Original Building Description

This is a four storey terraced seven bay south east facing limestone and granite fronted postal office building designed and built by the OPW Assistant Principal Architect, S.F. Maskell in 1947.

The footprint of the building covered the entire site apart from an open area to the rear measuring approximately 8.50m in width and 2.40m in depth. This Area also included an external steel escape stairs from the upper floors. The centrally located main entrance gave access to the Public Office to the east side of the building and to the Parcels Office to the west, Figure 7/70. A staff entrance was located at the west side of the front façade.
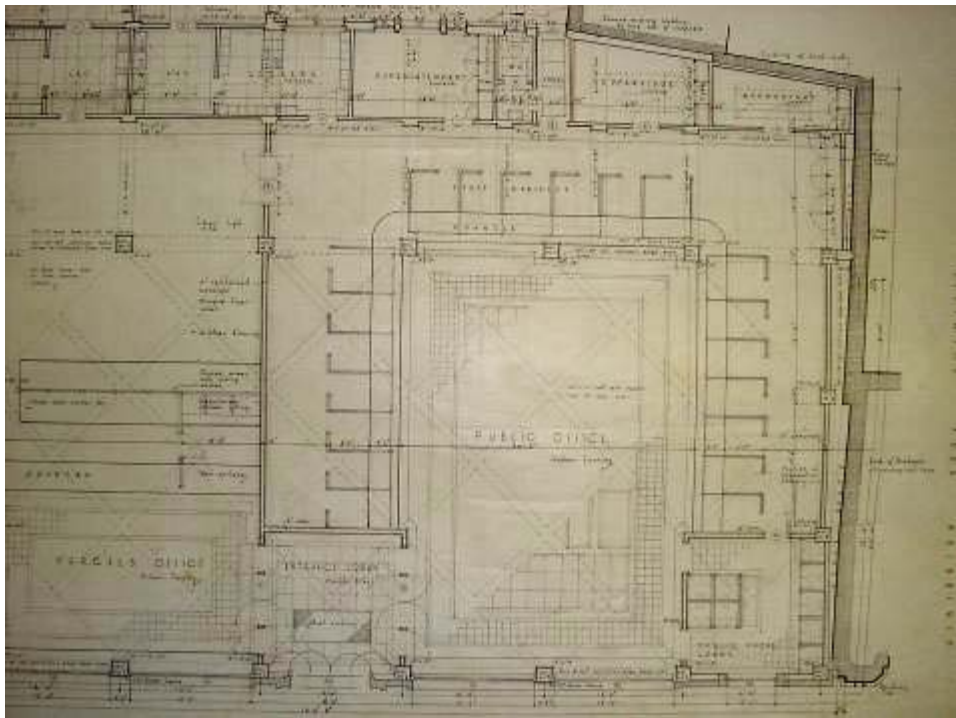
Figure 7/70 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Part Ground Floor Plan[322]

The Public Office consisted of a U-shaped Public Counter with twenty individual Staff Cubicles serving the Public Counter. The counter was faced with marble and was located between the marble faced columns. A glass panel divided the public from the staff, Figure 7/71. No further details of the Public Counter were included in the archive files[323].

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[322] OPW Library, *Post Office Drawing Collection;* St. Andrew Street, Ref. L15 7
[323] ibid
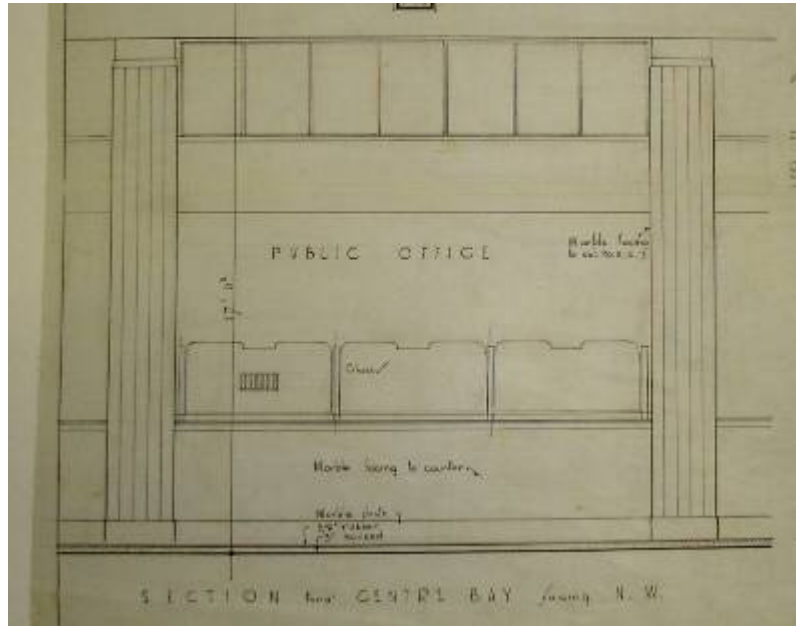
Figure 7/71 – St. Andrew's Street P.O. 1947; Elevation to Public Counter, facing N.W.[324]

The Parcels Office was located on the west side of the Entrance Lobby. It consisted of a Public Counter with a glazed screen dividing it from the rear office. No letter sorting was carried out in this post office as all letter mail was collected and delivered to a central sorting office for the area, most likely the sorting office situated in Pearse Street, Dublin 2[325]. The Public Counter in the Parcels Office was faced with sheet steel and a secure area for registered parcels was located at the east end of the counter[326].

Offices for the Superintendent, Supervisor and Accountant were located behind the staff cubicles. The Female toilets were also located off this area. The Male toilets were located off the rear to the Parcels Office. Both these toilet areas had adjoining locker rooms.

The Staff Entrance gave access to the Bicycle Store at the rear of the building. This Bicycle Store measured 13.00m in width and 6.40m in depth. The Staff Entrance also gave access to the upper floors via a lift or stairs. The upper floors housed the Telephone Exchange with an Apparatus Room, Male and Female toilets and Locker Rooms on the First Floor, The Second Floor consisted of a Switch Room running across the six bays to the east end and measuring 26.00m in width and 12.80m in depth, the full depth of the building at this level. A Sick Bay and

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[324] ibid
[325] In conversation with the St. Andrew Street P.O. Branch Manager, Date 8-2-2007
[326] OPW Library, *Post Office Drawing Collection;* St. Andrew Street, Ref. L15 7

Supervisor's Locker Room and Toilet were located at the bay to the west end. The Third and uppermost floor consisted of five individual offices, a Rest Room, Stairs and Lift to the west end, and a Restaurant and Kitchen to the east end. This footprint of this floor was only 9.80m deep giving a 3.00m wide flat roof over the Second Floor to the rear of the building.

The window frames on all levels to the front façade were bronze framed and the entrance doors to the Public Area and the Staff area were timber. There is evidence on the drawings of marble finish to the walls of the Public areas including the Entrance Lobby, Figure 7/72.
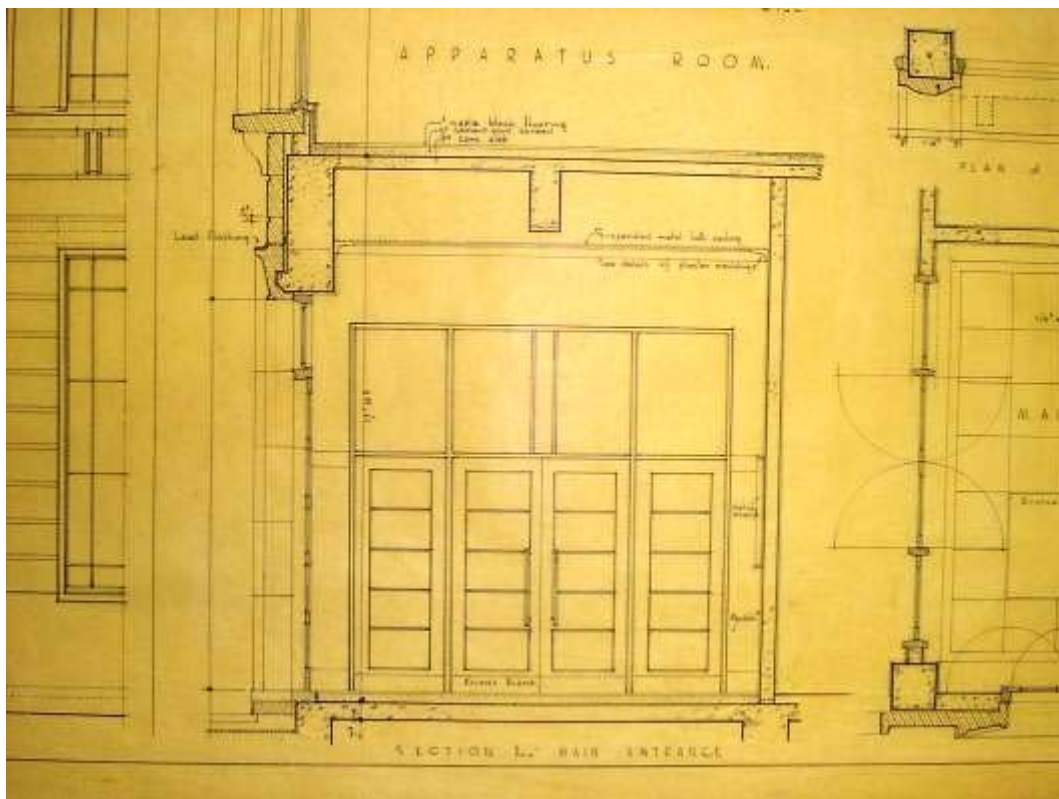
Figure 7/72 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; drawing of Entrance Lobby Internal Doors to Public Office[327]

[327] ibid

Existing Building Description

Composition

The original footprint and floor plan at Ground Floor Level of the Post Office are still intact. However, the internal layout to both the Public Office and the Parcels' Office is much changed. None of the original Public Counter fittings survive in either room. Much of the structure, doors and windows still survive. The Parcels Office is now used as a Public Investment Advice Centre which is owned and run by An Post. The remainder if the building is also occupied by An Post.

Access was not permitted to areas other than the Public Areas.

External Walls

Original limestone and granite façade survives intact. It is constructed of plain ashlar blocks consisting of smooth limestone plinth from ground level to the underside of the Ground Floor windows, and again above the Ground Floor windows to the parapet. There are rebated ashlar joints between top of the Ground Floor plinth and the First Floor window sill and string course. There is a limestone framed break-front bay at First Floor and Second Floor levels to the central five bays with a central horizontal limestone course with five limestone circular carved plaques. Limestone carved ogee brackets under the breakfront give the appearance of support to the breakfront, Figure 7/69. The roof is hidden from view behind a limestone coping at parapet level.

Windows

The windows are the original bronze framed windows with all their opening mechanisms intact and working, Figure7/73. Bronze ventilators to windows are in their original positions apart from those in the two public office windows which have been removed and replaced with glass panes.
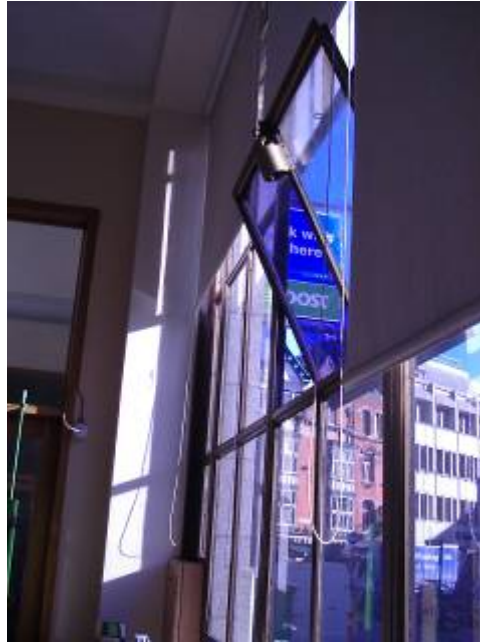
Figure 7/73 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Windows to front façade, Photo, Author, 2007

Doors

External Entrance doors to Public Offices and to Staff Entrance are original. The internal lobby doors are also original and retain all their original ironmongery apart from new overhead closers fitted to the doors to the Public Office at the east side, Figure 7/74.

Figure 7/74 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Lobby Door Ironmongery, Photo, Author, 2007

Interiors

None of the counters survive but the Art-Deco style diagonal ceiling beam grid is left exposed and enhances the public spaces. The original columns, between which was located the public counter are still intact although without their original cladding 7/75.

Figure 7/75 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Public Office; Photo, Author, 2007.

Night Post Box

The original receiver box has been blocked up with granite slabs to match the existing façade, although it is reversible, Figure 7/76. The internal writing bench and boxing for night posting box, although renewed, still reflects the original design, Figures, 7/77 and 7/78.

Figure 7/76 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Blocked up Night Post Box; Photo, Author 2007
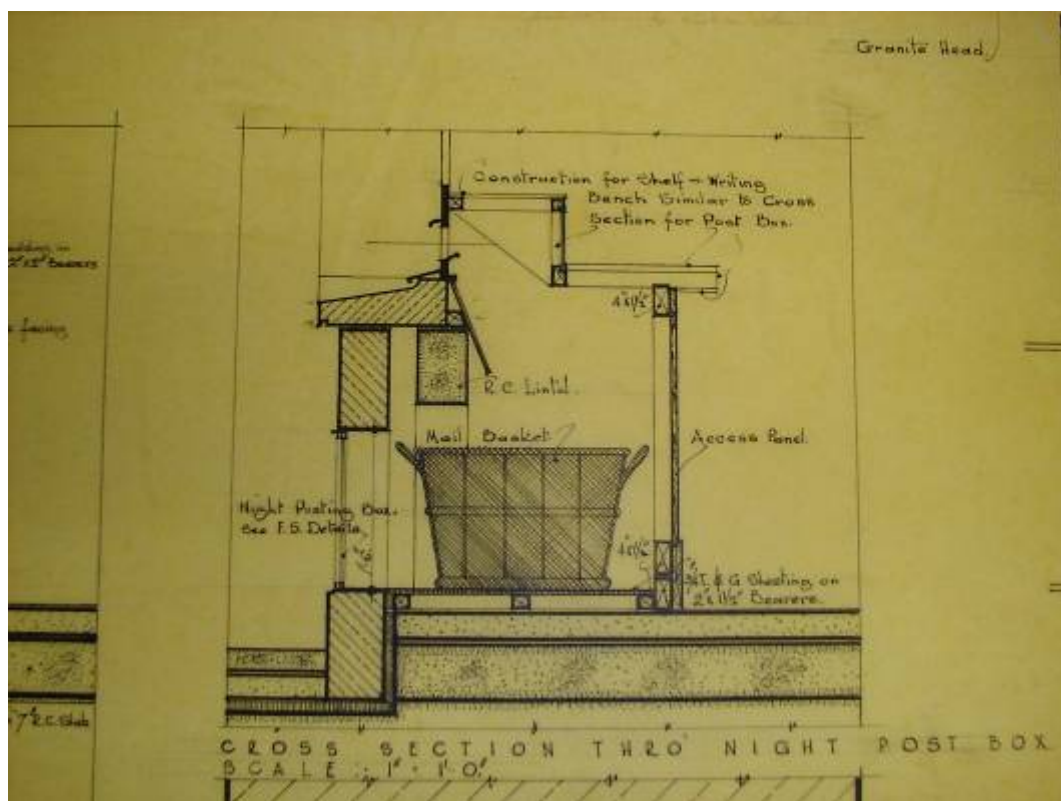
Figure 7/77 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Drawing of Night Post Box[328]

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[328] OPW Library, *Post Office Drawing Collection;* Ref. L 17 7

Figure 7/78 – St. Andrew Street P.O. 1947; Photo showing writing bench; Photo, Author, 2007

Appraisal

This building is a fine example of a middle to large sized postal office building designed and built by the OPW. It has a mix of classical and art deco detailing and retains much of its original fabric. It resembles Rathmines Post Office in its overall design. It is an important building on the street. It is one of the last OPW postal offices designed in this classical style.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The re-use of the Parcels Office in this building is of major importance as it has retained the building's public use. An Post must ensure that this use is retained and should endeavour reciprocate these changes in other postal offices.

Westport Post Office

Building Inventory Form

Location			Map Information	
Name:	Westport Post Office		OSI Map Sheet No.:	2078-15
Former Name			OSI Map Scale:	1:1000
Street Number:			Revision Date	1999
Street Name:	The Mall			
Town:	Westport		RPS	Not recorded
Townland:				
County:	Co. Mayo			

Classification				
Original Use		Post Office		
Current Use		Post Office		
Original Type (NIAH Ref)		Commercial		
Date From:	1899	To:	2007	Condition	Public Office – Good Sorting Office – Fair First Floor – Poor

OPW Architect	John Howard Pentland

NAI OPW Archive File Reference	OPW5HC/4/966
NAI OPW Archive File Reference Date	1899-1913
OPW Library Archive File Reference	L 18 4
OPW Library Archive File reference Date	1944-1948

Categories of Special Interest								
A	Ar	C	Ag	H	Sc	So	T	Rating
A		C				So		Regional

Standard Fittings		Condition/remarks
Receiver / Letter Box External Box	No	Steel plate covers the aperture for a Letter Box. Original drawings indicate a letter box, but in a different location
Receiver / Letter Box Internal Box	No	
Stamp Dispenser	No	
Clock	No	A modern clock is fitted into window frame; not located as shown on the original drawings
Post & Telegraph signage	Yes	WESTPORT POST OFFICE fitted; not as shown on original drawings
An Post Signage	Yes	
Fireplace behind public counter	No	Fireplace indicated on original drawings
External light fittings	No	
Windows	Yes	Replacement windows fitted at Ground Floor and First Floor
External Doors	Yes	Additional external door fitted Existing original entrance door to First Floor

Location

Westport Post Office is located on the east of the River Carrowbeg on The North Mall. It is south-west facing and enters directly off the street, via two steps. It is a detached building situated between a two storey rendered building to the north and a two storey granite building to the south, Figures 7/79 and 7/80.
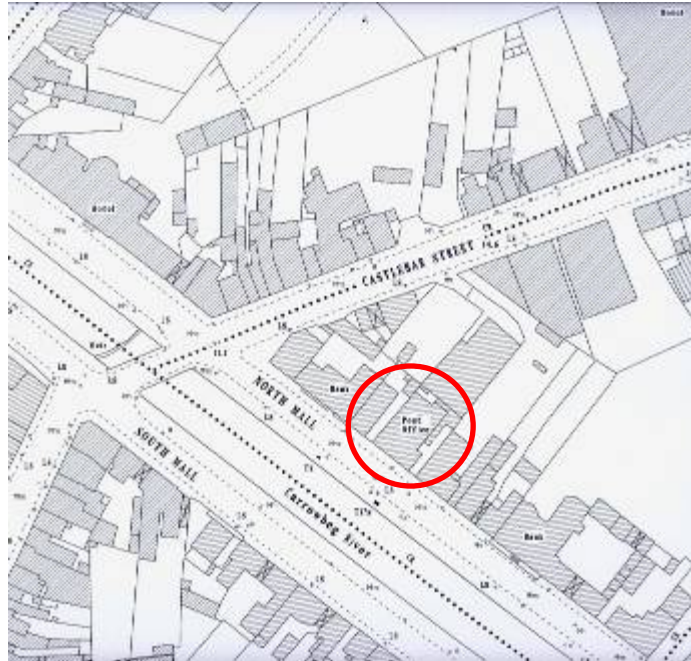
Figure 7/79 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Base Map Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland[329]

Figure 7/80 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Photo, Author, 2006

[329] O.S. Map No. 2078-15; Scale 1:1000; 1999 Edition

Original Building Description

This building is a two storey three bay detached T-shaped granite and rendered post office built c. 1899.

The Ground Floor layout, Figure 7/81 consisted of an Entrance Porch, without an external door, with a door leading into the Public Area to the south east, and a door, opposite the entrance, to the First Floor. The Public Area was 8.83m long and 3.05m wide and rectangular in shape with a L-shaped Public Counter and Clerks Area. A fireplace was fitted in the Clerks Area. The Postmaster's Office was directly off the Clerks Area. A door from the Clerks Area led to the Sorting Office at the rear via a short passageway. The Telegraph Room led off this passageway. The Telegraph Room was fitted with a fireplace and had a Lav. (sic) and a W.C. directly off the room. The Sorting Office was 8.84m long and 5.50m wide. It included a centrally located fireplace at the south. The Clerks and Postmen(s) rooms led directly off the Sorting Office at the south end. External doors from the Sorting Office led into the Van Yard.

The Van Yard consisted of a Battery Room, a Basket Store, a Hand Carts Store, a P.O. Coals Store, a Latrine and an Ashes Store. A door led from the Post Office Van Yard into the P.M. (sic) (Postmaster's) Yard.

The Postmaster's Yard consisted of an Ashes Store, which was shared with the Post Office, a W.C. and a P.M. Coals Store. There was access to the water Well for the Bank building adjoining on the west side together with access for the Postmaster.

The Postmaster's Residence consisted of the remainder of the accommodation at ground level and all the first floor accommodation. The Ground Floor, Figure 7/81, consisted of a Hall which led off the Public Entrance Porch. The Hall consisted of a staircase to First Floor Level and a door which led into the Kitchen. A Scullery, Larder and Pantry were located at the east end of the Kitchen. A door led from the Scullery into the Postmaster's (P.M.) Yard.
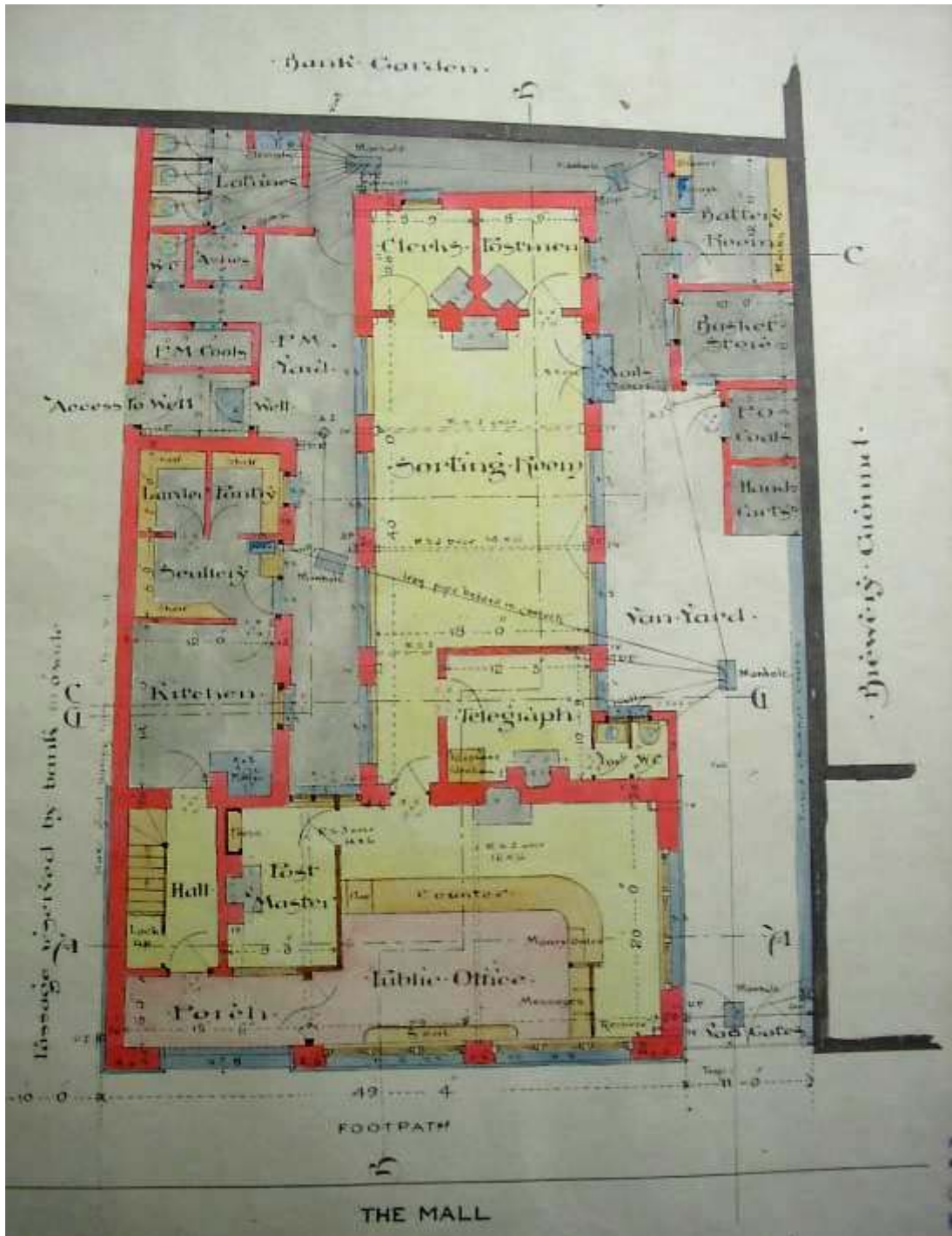
Figure 7/81 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Original Ground Floor Plan[330]

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[330] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/921 and 966

The First Floor layout, Figure 7/82, consisted of a Dining Room, including a cupboard for China, and a Drawing Room, both located at the front of the building overlooking the river. A fireplace was provided in both the Dining Room and the Drawing Room. Four bedrooms were located off a 1.50m wide passage-way which led to a Bathroom and W.C., and a Servant Room. Each of the bedrooms and the Servant Room had fireplaces. The fireplaces in the two centre bedrooms were placed at an angle to the rooms the remaining fireplaces were square to the rooms.
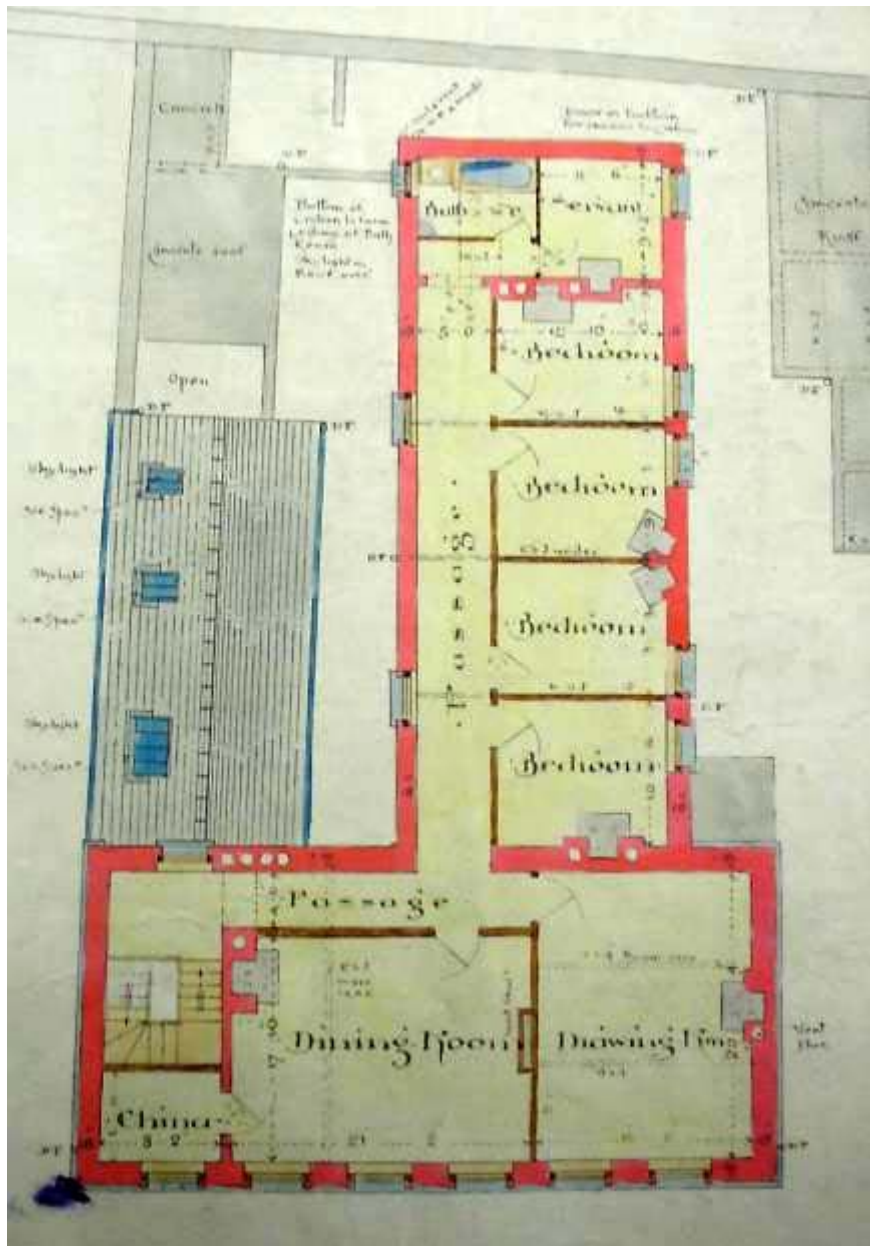
Figure 7/82 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Original First Floor Plan[331]

[331] ibid

The front façade of the building consisted of a granite plinth which extended to underside of Ground Floor windows. The three openings at ground floor level were arched with alternating granite and ashlar limestone voussoirs. Quoins consisted of regular coursed rubble granite at the north and south corners to the front façade. These were placed between the granite plinth and the granite string course underneath First Floor windows. The Royal insignia was fitted over the central ground floor window, Figures 7/80 and 7/83.
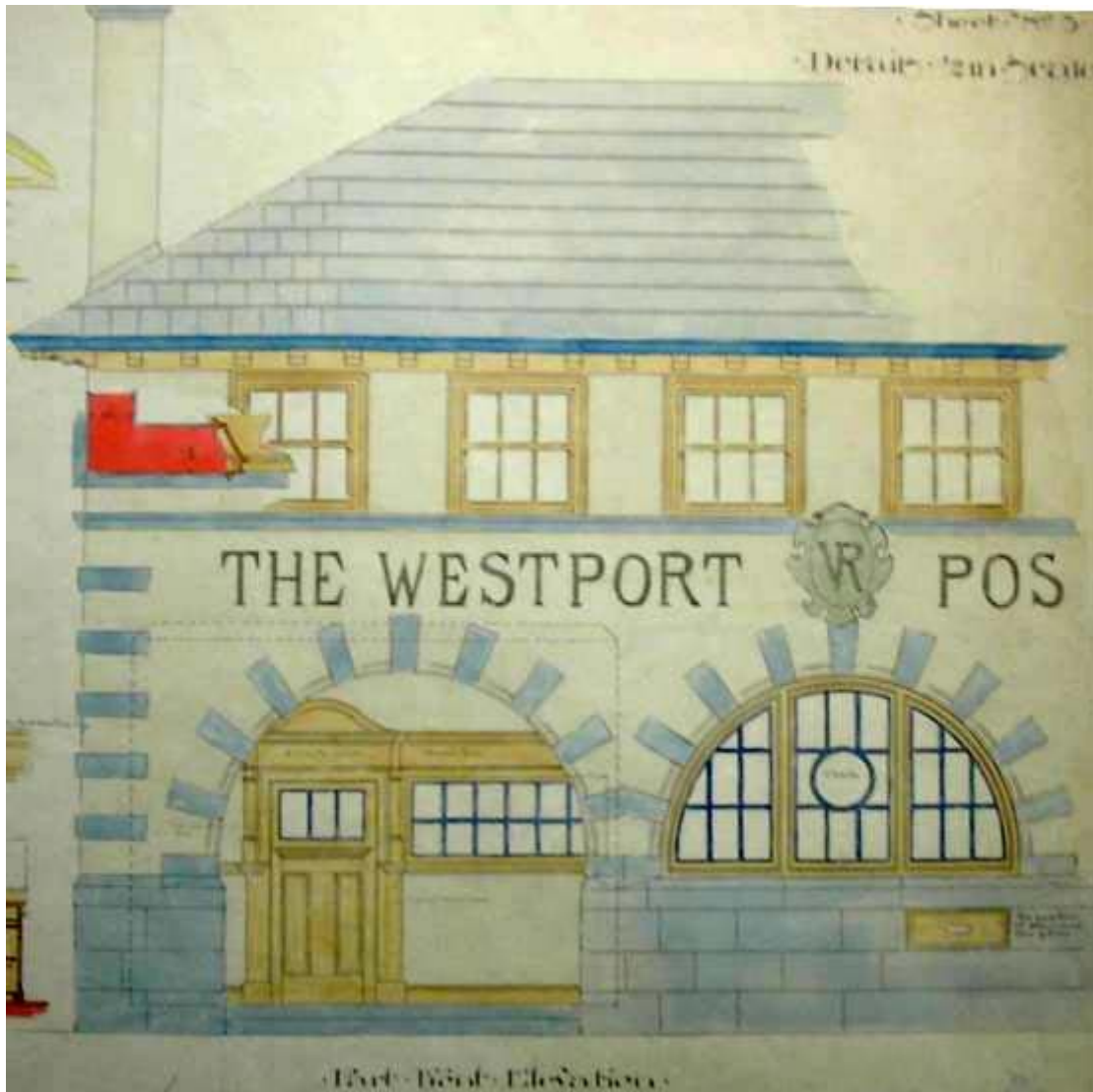
Figure 7/83 – Westport P.O., c.1900; Original drawing of Part of the Front Elevation[332]

[332] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Collection;* Ref OPW5HC/4/966

The first floor windows were flat headed openings and were located immediately beneath the deep fascia of the eaves. There was a hipped roof over the two storey building with a deep overhanging eaves with console support brackets, Figure 7/84. The roof over the Kitchen and Scullery on the Ground Floor was an A-pitched roof with skylights. There was a concrete flat roof to each of the yard buildings.
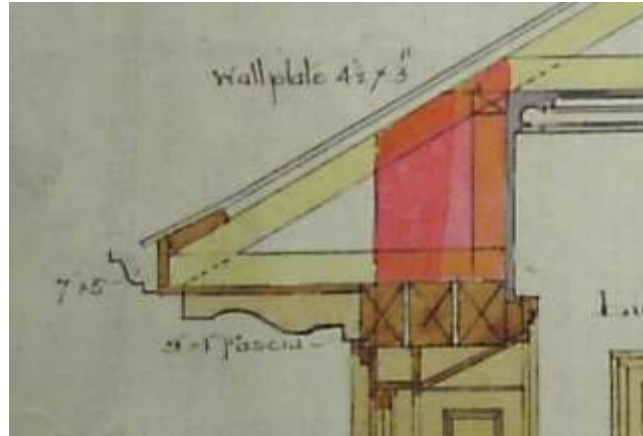
Figure 7/84 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Original Eaves Detail Drawing[333]

Existing Building Description

Layout

The overall footprint of the building site has not been altered, although changes have been made to the Postmaster's Kitchen, Scullery, Pantry and Postmaster's Yard incorporating them into the Sorting Office.

The Entrance Porch is now enclosed with a glazed door and screen to match the window fenestration, Figure 7/80. The original doorway and screen to the Postmaster's residence is still intact, Figure 7/85, with the addition of a door leading into the Postmaster's Office.

The original Public Office remains intact, however, the original counter no longer exists and the current public counter is a single straight counter running from east to west across the room.

The footprint of the First Floor Dining Room and Drawing Room is intact and much of the skirting and covings remain. However, all the partitions in the bedroom wing have been removed. The chimney breasts to the 'angled' fireplaces remain intact.

The original staircase to the Postmaster's residence survives intact, Figure 7/86.

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[333] ibid

Figure 7/85 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Original Door to Postmaster's Residence; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 7/86 –Westport P.O., c. 1900; Original Staircase; Photo, Author, 2007

External Walls

The original granite and render façade survives as does the period WESTPORT POST OFFICE lettering. There is no evidence of the removal of the royal insignia as it was shown on the original drawings, Figure 7/83. There is, however, evidence of repair work carried out to the render on the front façade. This, I suggest, was where the old Post & Telegraph signage was fixed, Figure 7/87. This would have been replaced by the new An Post company logo, Figure 7/80.

Figure 7/87 – Westport P.O., c. 1900; Repair work on Front Façade; Photo, Author, 2007

Roof

An A-pitch roof has been added over the old kitchen, scullery and yard area. The roof over the front building is intact. The roof over the T-section to the rear is also intact but is damaged and leaking in places. Much of the original cast iron rainwater goods survive but are showing damage.

Windows

All the windows to the front façade have been replaced with new timber windows. A number of original windows to the rear survive but are in poor condition.

Doors

The original entrance door and screen to the Postmaster's Residence survives with some additions. Some original internal doors survive.

Appraisal

This is a fine example of a late nineteenth century stone and render finished postal office building. Its scale and proportions blend in well with the adjoining buildings and it makes a strong visual statement on the Mall and to the town of Westport.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This building retains much of its original fabric and some internal fittings and features. The First Floor is vacant and repair work is needed to the roof. Repair work is also required to the rainwater goods.

The public use of this building must be retained by An Post. The upper floor should be refurbished and leased or used by An Post.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

While awareness of our built heritage has increased over the last number of decades, only one group of buildings, Courthouses[334], has been studied and published as a typology. Other typology groups have been studied in varying levels of detail, but not published. No study, published or unpublished, has been carried out on the post office building typology.

The importance of this group of buildings is inextricable linked to the communities the post office network serves. The public perception of the post office as a community service is extremely sensitive to the activities of An Post, especially, as explained in earlier chapters, when post offices are threatened with closure. When post offices are closed it inevitably threatens the post office buildings. In order for the future use of these buildings to be safe-guarded An Post and the Government must take a positive role in their continuing use and protection.

With the exception of the General Post Office in O'Connell Street in Dublin, these buildings have survived, intact, through the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War. It was no accident that the GPO was picked by the rebels of the Easter Rising as it would have been seen as a major public building in the ownership of the British. Through these activities the post office has become a symbol of public identity and community and of 'Irishness'. It is used as an assembly point for public gatherings and used as a backdrop for parades and marches.

When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was agreed and signed in 1922, the Government was very anxious to portray its newfound independence. One way of doing this was by removing symbols of British Rule.

The post offices designed and built by the Office of Public Works at the turn of the last century are a considerable contribution, architecturally, historically and socially to the streetscape of the towns and villages they

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[334] Mildred Dunne, Gerry Browner; *The Courthouses of Ireland;* Dublin 1999

occupy. Even at their construction the Irish Builder & Engineer was endorsing their design over that of the English post office[335].

The significance of these buildings has been established in Chapter 6. It manifests itself within community by the regard in which the buildings are held by that community. However their custodians, An Post and the Government, the major shareholder, are not pro-active enough in developing this significance.

In a report commissioned by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2004[336] the 'Examination of the Issue of Trust-type Organizations to Manage Heritage Properties in Ireland' buildings in state ownership and in private ownership were studied, the post office buildings as a group were not mentioned. While it is understood that post office buildings would not be suited to a 'Trust-type' management or operating system, the fact that they were not mentioned as a typology is ominous. It is no longer acceptable that the government take a back seat in this matter. As the sole shareholder they must take on the responsibility and, if necessary, supply the funding to safeguard these buildings.

With the introduction of new working methods and procedures it is understood that the future for the postal system is changing. An Post must, at the very least, make provision for their historic building stock on the lines of the work carried out by the ESB on their own building stock. The ESB have carried out a comprehensive inventory of all their building stock, including their shops. These shops are now closed and have been sold into private ownership. Although many were had little architectural merit they were a part of the heritage of the ESB.

It is by sheer good luck that so much of the original fabric of the post office buildings survives. While it is understood that security was the reason for up-grading the public counter, with careful consideration more of the original counter fitting could have been retained. The public counter in the GPO has been successfully retained without the

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[335] Irish Builder and Engineer, June 1st 1907
[336] Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government; *Examination of the Issue of Trust-type Organizations to Manage Heritage Properties in Ireland';* 2004

intervention of the typical bland security counters fitted to almost all the post office outlets in the country, Figures 8/1 and 8/2. The GPO has fitted period-style counters and security railings, including the An Post logo, Figure 8/3.

Figure 8/71 – G.P.O., Dublin; Public Counter and Screen; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 8/72 – Rathmines P.O., Photo showing 'modern' public counter; Photo, Author, 2007

Figure 8/73 – G.P.O., Dublin; Detail of Public Counter and Screen; Photo, Author, 2007

If the fabric is disturbed before conservation policies are adopted, there is a risk that its significance might not be fully understood and the disturbance may result in loss of fabric and the evidence and meanings associated with it[337]. Curragh Camp PO is the only surviving photograph of an early brass counter screen I have been able to find. It also retains its stamps dispenser. Evidence shows that much of these fittings are being removed by An Post. The photograph of Athy Post Office taken by NIAH as part of their inventory survey carried out in 2003 clearly shows the stamp dispenser still in place beside the entrance door, Figure 8/4. The photographs taken in 2006 indicate that the stamp dispenser has been removed and replaced by An Post's own unit, Figure 8/5. All these fittings and features are part of the cultural significance of this group of buildings and unless An Post or the Government takes a pro-active role in retaining them they will be lost forever.

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[337] Peter Marquis-Kyle & Meredith Walker; *The Illustrated Burra Charter, Good Practice for Heritage Places*; Australia ICOMOS; p.86

Figure 8/74 – Athy P.O.; Photo showing the period stamp dispenser units. Photo, courtesy NAIH *Buildings of Ireland*, 2003

Figure 8/75 – Athy P.O., Photo showing An Post Stamp dispenser; Photo, Author 2006

The Royal insignias which remain are also an integral part of the building's significance. Although none of the charters would condone the removal of any such work, it was important, to the post masters of the time of the formation of the Free State, to have them removed. Their removal, I suggest was seen, by them, as small scale cultural battles over the English regime. This removal could also be seen as destruction of national monuments and while the OPW were not specifically coming out and refusing to have these removed on the grounds of conservation, their tardiness in doing so may have been their way of carrying out this conservation. It could be seen as conservation by stealth or 'sins of omission', a very Irish trait.

Many of the buildings studied in this thesis are not included in the Record of Protected Structures for their county, see Appendix 4. When in conversation with the Conservation Officer for County Kildare in July 2005 he could give no good reason why the Post Office in Kildare Town was not included in the RPS for the County. The building is included in the NIAH records and is rated as Regional but to have full protection the building must be included on the RPS. Unless all post office buildings are recorded and listed in the Record of Protected Structures many of this building group will disappear. It is the responsibility of the building owners and occupiers to ensure their buildings are protected. An Post does not have the inclination to do this.

Almost all extant buildings are in the ownership still of An Post. There are some exceptions - Navan P.O. is a MacDonald's and is in private ownership. Blackrock also in private ownership has secured a fire safety certificate with Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council for a change of use to a restaurant and is in the process of refurbishment. Longford former Post Office is in private ownership but has been refused planning permission for a restaurant and is vacant at present. Many of the extant buildings are still in their original form externally. Interior fittings have been removed but original skirtings, doors, architraves, ironmongery covings, roof structures rooflights, roof ridge vents, rainwater goods remain. Most if not all have had their windows replaced. Lift up the floor covering and the original floor is still there to be seen.

Recommendations

Policy Guidelines

Policy guidelines must be established for these historic buildings. An Post must take an active role in establishing a policy for the protection of these buildings. At present there is no one person responsible for heritage issues in An Post. A heritage officer should be appointed to establish these policies.

Heritage Inventory

Carry out a full inventory of the purpose built post offices remaining in An Post's property portfolio and as a follow-on do a complete inventory of all the sub-post offices. Those buildings already sold into private ownership should also be included in order to get a full picture of the building typology. An example of this is the work carried out by the ESB in creating a comprehensive inventory of their building stock.

Publish Information

Publish information on the history and significance of these buildings in order to assist An Post and new owners in the conservation and up keep of the buildings.

An Post and Government Responsibility

The Government is directly responsible for the care and maintenance of our built heritage including those buildings built by government departments. An Post, as a state sponsored body, should insist on funding to support the protection of these buildings. It is not acceptable for the Government to stand back and use the excuse that it leaves the day to day running of An Post to itself -

> *……the opening, conversion and closure of individual post offices is a matter for the board and management of the company[338].*

The Government must insist that these buildings are properly protected. The Government can, because of its vested interest in the company, insist that this protection is carried out. It should not allow any further dilution of the building group through sale into private hands.

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[338] John Browne, Minister of State for Communications, written Dail reply; 18-04-2006

Sale and Lease Back

The sale and lease back of the post office buildings was recommended as an option in the IDG's report of 2001. While this would certainly give An Post a cash injection it does nothing to protect the buildings as a group. An Post should carry out this refurbishment themselves with government funding if necessary. This additional accommodation could then be leased out by An Post bringing in rental financial support without diluting the building stock.

Cease Closures

The closure and therefore down-grading of the purpose built post office must cease immediately.

Government Responsibility

Finally, it is no longer acceptable that the government take a back seat in the protection of these buildings. As the major shareholder it has the power to insist that procedures are set in place to facilitate this. An Post state one thing, public representatives state another[339]. Meanwhile post offices are closing. The end result will be the downgrading of the importance of the post office in society.

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[339] Irish Examiner 25-07-2006 'An Post disputes claims of post office closures'

Appendix 1

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
1	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/69-98	1915-1966	429	
2	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/156-158	1894-1922	16	
3	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Ballsbridge P.O.	OPW5HC/4/615-617	1889-1915	66	Edward Kavanagh
4	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Blackrock P.O.	OPW5HC/4/599	1905-1909	41	John Howard Pentland
5	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	College Green P.O.	OPW5HC/4/682, 683	1871-1907	25	John Thomas Groves
6	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Fairview P.O.	OPW5HC/4/654	1889	9	Robert Cochrane
7	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	James' Street P.O.	OPW5HC/4/895	1891-1893	7	Robert Cochrane & John Howard Pentland
8	Dublin	Kingstown	Leinster	Kingstown P.O. & Telegraphs	OPW5HC/4/611,612	1877, 1887-1915	21	Enoch Traynor Owen
9	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Phibsborough P.O.	OPW5HC/4/651	1892-1922	17	John Howard Pentland
10	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Rathmines P.O.	OPW5HC/4/635	1883	6	William Henry Howard Cooke
11	Carlow	Muine Bheag	Leinster	Muine Bheag P.O.	OPW5HC/4/614	1921	6	
12	Carlow	Carlow	Leinster	Carlow P.O.	OPW5HC/4/603	1880-1912	15	Edward Kavanagh
13	Kildare	Athy	Leinster	Athy P.O.	OPW5HC/4/594	1909-1915	6	John Howard Pentland
14	Kildare	Curragh	Leinster	Curragh Camp P.O.	OPW5HC/4/597,656	1899-1909, 1910	11	Robert Cochrane & Thomas John Mellon
15	Offaly	Birr	Leinster	Birr P.O.	OPW5HC/4/598	1902-1915	5	
16	Longford	Longford	Leinster	Longford P.O.	OPW5HC/4/643	1905-1917	4	
17	Meath	Kells	Leinster	Kells P.O.	OPW5HC/4/898	1902-1903	14	Robert Cochrane
18	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/637	1905-1908	10	Robert Cochrane
19	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/638	1908	8	
20	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/639	1908	12	
21	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/640	1907-1917	12	
22	Westmeath	Athlone	Leinster	Athlone P.O.	OPW5HC/4/954	1935-1936	18	
23	Westmeath	Killucan	Leinster	Killucan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/899	1911-1914	23	
24	Westmeath	Mullingar	Leinster	Mullingar P.O.	OPW5HC/4/641	1884-1913	13	
25	Wexford	Enniscorthy	Leinster	Enniscorthy P.O.	OPW5HC/4/620	1901-1922	12	Thomas John Mellon & B.W. Webster
26	Wicklow	Bray	Leinster	Bray P.O.	OPW5HC/4/601	1902-1912	19	Robert Cochrane
27	Wicklow	Greystones	Leinster	Greystones P.O.	OPW5HC/4/653	undated	1	

Appendix 2

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
1	Cavan	Belturbet	Connacht	Belturbet P.O.	OPW5HC/4/596	1903-1917	16	Robert Cochrane & Ed Kavanagh
2	Galway	Ballinasloe	Connacht	Ballinasloe P.O.	OPW5HC/4/595	1915-1920	14	
3	Galway	Galway	Connacht	Galway P.O.	OPW5HC/4/893	1885-1910	16	Joseph Patrick Alcock
4	Galway	Galway	Connacht	Galway P.O.	OPW5HC/4/894	undated	16	James Henry Webb
5	Galway	Tuam	Connacht	Tuam P.O.	OPW5HC/4/965	1910-1913	28	Harold G. Leask
6	Leitrim	Carrick-on-Shannon	Connacht	Carrick-on-Shannon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/604	1906	22	
7	Longford	Castlerea	Connacht	Castlerea P.O.	OPW5HC/4/608	1911-1912	32	
8	Mayo	Castlebar	Connacht	Castlebar P.O.	OPW5HC/4/605	1902	9	John Howard Pentland
9	Mayo	Swinford	Connacht	Swinford P.O.	OPW5HC/4/962	undated	3	
10	Mayo	Westport	Connacht	Westport P.O.	OPW5HC/4/921	1896-1899	15	John Howard Pentland
11	Mayo	Westport	Connacht	Westport P.O.	OPW5HC/4/966	1899-1913	24	
12	Roscommon	Boyle	Connacht	Boyle P.O.	OPW5HC/4/600	1907-1921	15	
13	Roscommon	Roscommon	Connacht	Roscommon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/677	1906-1911	13	Harold Graham Leask
14	Roscommon	Roscommon	Connacht	Roscommon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/678	1911	6	
15	Roscommon	Roscommon	Connacht	Roscommon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/679	1911-1912	24	
16	Roscommon	Roscommon	Connacht	Roscommon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/680	undated		
17	Roscommon	Roscommon	Connacht	Roscommon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/681	undated		
18	Sligo	Sligo	Connacht	Sligo P.O.	OPW5HC/4/646	1898-1900	8	
19	Sligo	Sligo	Connacht	Sligo P.O.	OPW5HC/4/647	1901-1921	14	
20	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/76 - 98	1915	20	
21	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/69	1910	11	
22	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/70	1911-1912	16	
23	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/71	1913	6	
24	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/72	1913	7	
25	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/73	1913	14	
26	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/74	1914	11	
27	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/75	1914	14	
28	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/77	1916	19	

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
29	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/78	1917	16	
30	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/79	1918-1919	12	
31	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/80	1920	18	
32	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/81	1921-1924	7	
33	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/82	1925	12	
34	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/83	1925	9	
35	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/84	1925	11	
36	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/85	1925	5	
37	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/86	1926	12	
38	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/87	1927	24	
39	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/88	1928-1933	12	
40	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/89	1933-1966	13	
41	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/90	undated	26	
42	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/91	undated	10	
43	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/92	undated	20	
44	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/93	undated	13	
45	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/94	undated	14	
46	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/95	undated	20	
47	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/96	undated	16	
48	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/97	undated	15	
49	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/98	undated	26	
50	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/156	1892	9	
51	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/157	1893-1894	10	
52	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	General Post Office	OPW5HC/1/158	1894-1922	16	
53	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Ballsbridge Branch P.O.	OPW5HC/4/615	1889-1913	8	Edward Kavanagh
54	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Ballsbridge Branch P.O.	OPW5HC/4/616	1914-1915	21	
55	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Ballsbridge Branch P.O.	OPW5HC/4/617	1915	37	
56	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Blackrock P.O.	OPW5HC/4/599	1905-1909	41	John Howard Pentland

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
57	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	College Green P.O.	OPW5HC/4/682	1871-1907	13	John Thomas Groves
58	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	College Green P.O.	OPW5HC/4/683	1907	12	
59	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Fairview P.O.	OPW5HC/4/654	1889	9	Robert Cochrane
60	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	James' Street Branch P.O.	OPW5HC/4/895	1891-1893	7	Robert Cochrane & John Howard Pentland
61	Dublin	Kingstown	Leinster	Kingstown P.O. & Telegraphs	OPW5HC/4/612	1887-1915	15	Enoch Traynor Owen
62	Dublin	Kingstown	Leinster	Kingstown P.O. & Telegraphs	OPW5HC/4/611	1877	7	
63	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Phibsborough P.O.	OPW5HC/4/651	1892-1922	17	John Howard Pentland
64	Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	Rathmines P.O.	OPW5HC/4/635	1883	6	William Henry Howard Cooke
65	Carlow	Bagenalstown	Leinster	Bagenalstown P.O.	OPW5HC/4/614	1921	6	
66	Carlow	Carlow	Leinster	Carlow P.O.	OPW5HC/4/603	1880-1912	15	Edward Kavanagh
67	Kildare	Athy	Leinster	Athy P.O.	OPW5HC/4/594	1909-1915	6	John Howard Pentland
68	Kildare	Curragh	Leinster	Curragh Camp P.O.	OPW5HC/4/656	1899-1909	10	Robert Cochrane & Thomas John Mellon
69	Kildare	Curragh	Leinster	Curragh Camp P.O.	OPW5HC/4/597	1910	1	
70	Offaly	Birr	Leinster	Birr P.O.	OPW5HC/4/598	1902-1915	5	
71	Longford	Longford	Leinster	Longford P.O.	OPW5HC/4/643	1905-1917	4	
72	Meath	Kells	Leinster	Kells P.O.	OPW5HC/4/898	1902-1903	14	Robert Cochrane
73	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/637	1905-1908	10	Robert Cochrane
74	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/638	1908	8	
75	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/639	1908	12	
76	Meath	Navan	Leinster	Navan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/640	1907-1917	12	
77	Westmeath	Athlone	Leinster	Athlone P.O.	OPW5HC/4/954	1935-1936	18	
78	Westmeath	Killucan	Leinster	Killucan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/899	1911-1914	23	
79	Westmeath	Mullingar	Leinster	Mullingar P.O.	OPW5HC/4/641	1884-1913	13	
80	Wexford	Enniscorthy	Leinster	Enniscorthy P.O.	OPW5HC/4/620	1901-1922	12	Thomas John Mellon & B.W> Webster
81	Wicklow	Bray	Leinster	Bray P.O.	OPW5HC/4/601	1902-1912	19	Robert Cochrane
82	Wicklow	Greystones	Leinster	Greystones P.O.	OPW5HC/4/653	undated	1	
83	Clare	Ennis	Munster	Ennis P.O.	OPW5HC/4/619	1890-1919	10	

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
84	Cork	Bandon	Munster	Bandon P.O.	OPW5HC/4/613	1905-1909	9	
85	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/658	1868-1876	7	John Howard Pentland
86	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/659	1876	7	
87	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/660	1876	11	
88	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/661	1876-1877	4	
89	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/662	1899	14	
90	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/663	1900	14	
91	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/664	1900	11	
92	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/665	1900	10	
93	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/666	1901-1903	13	
94	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/667	1904-1918	21	
95	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/668	1916-1923	8	
96	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/670	undated	15	
97	Cork	Cork	Munster	Cork P.O.	OPW5HC/4/669	undated	21	
98	Cork	Mallow	Munster	Mallow P.O.	OPW5HC/4/636	1891-1918	18	
99	Cork	Queenstown	Munster	Queenstown P.O.	OPW5HC/4/609	1877-1916	18	Enoch Traynor Owen
100	Cork	Skibbereen	Munster	Skibbereen P.O.	OPW5HC/4/625	1917	4	Thomas John Mellon
101	Kerry	Killarney	Munster	Killarney P.O.	OPW5HC/4/897	1883-1913	29	
102	Kerry	Tralee	Munster	Tralee P.O.	OPW5HC/4/626	1886	26	Thomas John Mellon
103	Limerick	Kilmallock	Munster	Kilmallock P.O.	OPW5HC/4/945	1921	1	
104	Limerick	Cecil Street Lower, Limerick	Munster	Limerick P.O.	OPW5HC/4/671	1873-1866	11	Enoch Traynor Owen & Thomas John Mellon
105	Limerick	Limerick	Munster	Limerick P.O.	OPW5HC/4/672	1900-1902	11	Thomas John Mellon
106	Limerick	Limerick	Munster	Limerick P.O.	OPW5HC/4/673	1902-1920	19	
107	Limerick	Limerick	Munster	Limerick P.O.	OPW5HC/4/674	undated	16	
108	Tipperary	Tipperary	Munster	Tipperary P.O.	OPW5HC/4/602	1901-1918	29	Edward Kavanagh
109	Tipperary	Cashel	Munster	Cashel P.O.	OPW5HC/4/675	1930	11	
110	Tipperary	Clonmel	Munster	Clonmel P.O.	OPW5HC/4/606	1899-1901	17	Edward Kavanagh & Thomas John Mellon
111	Tipperary	Roscrea	Munster	Roscrea P.O.	OPW5HC/4/645	1903-1904	6	

No	County	County Town	Province	Building	OPW Ref No	Dates	Number of Items	Architect
112	Tipperary	Tipperary	Munster	Tipperary P.O.	OPW5HC/4/964	1892-1949	13	
113	Waterford	Dungarvan	Munster	Dungarvan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/618	1873-1917	16	
114	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O.	OPW5HC/4/628	1875-1885	13	Enoch Traynor Owen
115	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O.	OPW5HC/4/634	undated	18	
116	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O	OPW5HC/4/629	1898-1911	23	
117	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O	OPW5HC/4/630	1911-1917	22	
118	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O	OPW5HC/4/631	1912	18	
119	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O	OPW5HC/4/632	1934	16	
120	Waterford	Waterford	Munster	Waterford P.O	OPW5HC/4/633	undated	24	
121	Armagh	Armagh	Ulster	Armagh P.O.	OPW5HC/4/691	1897-1899	11	Robert Cochrane
122	Armagh	Armagh	Ulster	Armagh P.O.	OPW5HC/4/692	1900-1919	21	
123	Armagh	Lurgan	Ulster	Lurgan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/685	1900-1906	12	
124	Armagh	Portadown	Ulster	Portadown P.O.	OPW5HC/4/687	1895-1900	14	Robert Cochrane
125	Armagh	Portadown	Ulster	Portadown P.O.	OPW5HC/4/688	1904-1915	19	
126	Down	Newry	Ulster	Newry P.O.	OPW5HC/4/686	1897-1898	10	Robert Cochrane
127	Fermanagh	Enniskillen	Ulster	Enniskillen P.O.	OPW5HC/4/655	undated	1	John Howard Pentland
128	Derry	Londonderry	Ulster	Londonderry P.O.	OPW5HC/4/689	1874-1916	4	
129	Monaghan	Clones	Ulster	Clones P.O.	OPW5HC/4/607	1901-1917	7	George William Crowe
130	Monaghan	Monaghan	Ulster	Monaghan P.O.	OPW5HC/4/642	1903-1912	11	Robert Cochrane
131	Tyrone	Omagh	Ulster	Omagh P.O.	OPW5HC/4/650	1902-1903	7	Robert Cochrane & John M. Robinson

Appendix 3

National Archives of Ireland, Department of Communications Collection

Record of any file in this collection with a reference to a post office building.

Ref	Description	Date
	Pages 1-30	
9426/27	Post Office Buildings destroyed or damaged during the disturbances of 1922	1927-28
R1657/28	Travelling PO	1928
R8054/29	Conveyance of mails from 1846-1858 on the travelling PO Dublin – Cork line	1856-58
BS11309/32	Listowel Sorting Office – Water Rent	1932-34
B/S6358/35	Westport PO Shelter Hut	1928-35
B248/36 Vol 1 -7	Youghal PO Accommodation	1919-51
M6232/42 Vol 1	Transfer of Postal Services to the Irish Free State	1922
H22943/42 Vol 1, Vol 2, Vol 3	Curragh Camp Staff Residence	1942-43 1947-49 1955-66
B&S 3560/43 Vol 2	GPO – Block D Princess St Construction Work	1928-34
B&S 23010/44 Vol 14 Vol 17	Bray P.O. Alterations to Bray P.O. Buildings Requirements	1931-38 1935-46
B18671/46 Vol 1 Pt 1	Portlaoise Post Office Improvement Works to Premises	1951-59
B&S14879/491 Vol 12	Sorting Office Fittings – Portlaoise	1959-60
B20907/49 Vol 1	Ballinrobe Sub Office	1927-28
B20943/49 Vol 2 Vol 3 Vol 4 Vol 5	Athlone Post Office – Lease, Repairs	1931-39 1936-39 1952-53 1949-59
G1082/50 Vol 1 Vol 2	Bunbeg P.O. (Letterkenny) Office Destroyed by fire	1950 1950-53
B2392/50 Vol 1	Cork Sorting Office extension	1950-57
B&S 6253/50 Vol 6 Vol 7 Vol 8 Vol 9 Vol 11	Pearse Street Office – Staff Facilities " " " "	1927-32 1926-27 1942-43 1932 1950-51
B&S 7636/50	Dundalk P.O. – Ashpit Cleaning	1919-1948
B 12105/50 Vol 1 Vol 3	Post Office Buildings – Removal of Royal Monograms and providing Irish Free State Symbols State Symbols for Post Offices	1922-24 1938-39
B13138/50 Vol 2 Vol 2A pt 1 Vol 3 Vol 4A Vol 4B Vol 5 Vol 6	Kilkenny P.O. – Improvements	1950-56 1956-59 1953-57 1952-57 1951-56 1958-59 1959-61

B472/51 Vol 2 pt 1 Vol 3 pt 1 Vol 6 Pt 1 Vol 12 Pt 1	Ballina P.O. Extension and Reconstruction " " "	1946-59 1951-61 1956-61 1957-58
B3342/51 Pt 1	Killarney P.O. Official Residence Renovations	1949-59
B3809/51	Carlow Post Office	1952-60
H6143/51 Vol 1	P & T Activities of Department since August 1923	1927
B11863/51 Vol 17 Pt 1	Mullingar Post Office – alterations and Improvements to Public Office	1949-60
B9104/52 Vol 1 Pt 1	Blackrock (Dun Laoghaire) Garage accommodation	1947-59
B1017/53	St Andrews St. Post Office and Telephone Exchange Building	1951-54
H4084/53 Vol 1 Vol 2 Pt 1	North Wall Branch P.O. status of Office	1925-34 1953-61
B9679/53 Vol 3	Cashel P.O. – Site for new Post Office	1931-37
B11445/53	Castlerea P.O. Alterations to counter fittings	1953-56
R848/54 Vol 2 Pt 1	Phibsboro Branch Office – Alterations to Public Office	1954-57
B1441/54 Vol 1 Vol 2 Vol 3 Vol 4	Mallow Post Office – alterations to adjoining premises	1917-18 1918-19 1919-20 1921-60
4347/54	St Andrew St. P.O. Furniture and Fittings	1954-55
B8032/54 Vol 4	Carlow: Local Authority development plans affecting site for new Post Office Building	1949-53
B2460/55 Vol 3	Rathmines Branch Office – Improvements	1955-60
B11536/56 Vol 10 Vol 11 Vol 13	Enniscorthy – Post Office site and facilities " "	1924-25 1926-28 1931-50
B13973/56	Belturbet P.O. Cleaning Arrangements	1905-57
H17495/56 Vol 1	Transfer of control of Post Office from Britain to Ireland "	1922 1922
B18674/57 Vol 1	Expenditure on Post Offices	1957-59
B20903/57 Vol 1	Athenry P.O. Galway – Acquisition of site for new office and telephone exchange	1947-63
S23978/58 Vol 6	Castlebar P.O. Indoor revisions	1958-59
S25635/58 Vol 6 Vol 7 Vol 9 Vol 10	Carrick-on-Shannon – indoor revisions " " "	1954-55 1955-56 1960 1960
B29872/59 Vol 1 Vol 2 Vol 3 Vol 4 Vol 5 Vol 6 Vol 7 Vol 8	Buildings Branch Estimates	1949-50 1950-51 1951-52 1952-53 1953-54 1954-55 1955-57 1956-58

Vol 9 Vol 10 Vol 11		1957-59 1958-60 1959-60
B32193/60	Modernisation of public office	1959-60

Appendix 4

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

	Building	County	Dates	NIAH Reference No.	Record of Protected Structure yes/no Ref. No	Exterior Finish	No. of Bays	No. of Bays	Building Status	Published by NIAH yes/no	Building Use
1	Athlone P.O.	Westmeath	1935-1936	15000013	No	stone	1	7	existing	No	Post Office
2	Athy P.O.	Kildare	1909-1915	11505063	I.P. 081	render	2	3	existing	Yes	Post Office
3	Ballsbridge	Dublin	1915	No	7678	Brick	1	2	existing	No	Post Office
4	Birr P.O.	Offaly	1902-1915	14819011	No	brick / stone	2 + attic	3	existing	Yes	Post Office
5	Blackrock	Dublin	1889	No	Yes	brick / stone	2	3	Existing	No	Vacant
6	Bray P.O.	Wicklow	1902-1912	1630122	No	brick / stone	2	2	existing	Yes	Post Office
7	College Green	Dublin	1871	Demolished	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Curragh Camp P.O.	Kildare	1899-1909	11902303	No	brick	2	12	existing	Yes	Post Office
9	Drogheda	Louth	1900	13619017	No	brick	3	2	existing	No	Shop / retail unit
10	Dun Laoghaire	Dublin	1887	No	1878	Stone	2	4	existing	No	Council Offices
11	Dundalk P.O.	Louth	1900	13704004	No	brick / stone	2	3	existing	No	Post Office
12	Enniscorthy P.O.	Wexford	1901-1922	15603101	No	brick	2	2	existing	No	Post Office
13	Fairview	Dublin	18	No	No	brick / stone	2	1	existing	No	Retail / offices
14	Gorey P.O.	Wexford	1890	15601072	No	brick	1	7	existing	No	Post Office
15	James's Street	Dublin	1887	No	4128	brick / stone	1	3	existing	No	P.O. Sorting Office

	Building	County	Dates	NIAH Reference No.	Record of Protected Structure yes/no Ref. No	Exterior Finish	No. of Bays	No. of Bays	Building Status	Published by NIAH yes/no	Building Use
16	Kells P.O.	Meath	1902-1903	14313091	No	brick / stone	2	3	existing	Yes	Post Office
17	Kildare P.O.	Kildare	1900-1920	11817054	No	brick	1	3	existing	Yes	Post Office
18	Killucan	Westmeath	1912	No	No	render	1	3	existing	No	Vacant
19	Longford	Longford	1905-1917	13002263	40	brick	3	1	existing	No	Vacant
20	Muine Bheag P.O.	Carlow	1921	10400605	10400605	render	1	3	existing	Yes	Post Office
21	Mullingar	Westmeath	1887	Demolished	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	Navan	Meath	1905-1908	14009481	No	brick / stone	1	2	existing	Yes	Restaurant
23	New Ross P.O.	Wexford	1900-1905	15605235	No	brick	1	7	existing	No	Post Office
24	Phibsborough	Dublin	1892	Demolished	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25	Rathmines Lower	Dublin	1883	No	7325	brick	1	2	existing	No	Offices
26	Rathmines Upper P.O.	Dublin	1934	No	7410	stone	2	7	existing	No	Post Office
27	St. Andrew Street P.O.	Dublin	1948	No	7727	stone	2	7	existing	No	Post Office
28	Tullamore P.O.	Offaly	1905-1910	14807023	No	render	3	4	existing	Yes	Post Office
29	Westport P.O.	Mayo	1899	No		stone	2	3	existing	No	Post Office
30	Wexford P.O.	Wexford	1890	15503043	No	brick	3	4	existing	No	Post Office

Appendix 5

	The buildings examined in this thesis in Leinster are as follows:		
	Building	Current Use	Number of Bedrooms in Original Layout
1	Athlone, Co. Westmeath	extant	n/a
2	Athy, Co. Kildare	extant	4
3	Ballsbridge, Dublin	extant	n/a
4	Birr, Co. Offaly	extant	3
5	Blackrock, Co. Dublin	extant	2
6	Bray, Co. Wicklow	extant	2
7	Carlow, Co. Carlow	extant	0
9	College Green, Dublin	extinct	0
9	Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare	extant	n/a
10	Drogheda, Co.Louth, (1890)	extant	unknown
11	Dun Laoghaire, Dublin	extant	3
12	Dundalk, Co. Louth	extant	unknown
13	Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford	extant	2
14	Fairview, Dublin	extant	0
15	Gorey, Co. Wexford	extant	0
16	James's Street, Dublin	extant	0
17	Kells, Co.Meath	extant	2
18	Kildare, Co. Kildare	extant	0
19	Killucan, Co. Westmeath	extant	0
20	Longford, Co. Longford	extant	0
21	Muine Bheag, Co. Carlow	extant	0
22	Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	extinct	4
23	Navan, Co. Meath	extant	0
24	New Ross, Co. Wexford	extant	unknown
25	Phibsborough, Dublin	extinct	0
26	Rathmines, Dublin (1883)	extant	0
27	Rathmines, Dublin (1934)	extant	0
28	St. Andrew Street, Dublin	extant	0
29	Tullamore, Co. Offaly	extant	unknown
30	Westport, Co. Mayo	extant	4 + servant's
31	Wexford, Co. Wexford	extant	4

Appendix 6

Figure App/6/76 – Wexford P.O., Furniture Schedule[340]

[340] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref: OPW 5-7558/96

Figure App/6/77 – Wexford P.O., Furniture Schedule[341]

[341] National Archives of Ireland; *OPW Drawing Collection;* Ref: OPW 5-7558/96

Bibliography

Primary Sources

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National Archives of Ireland Papers; *Office of Public Works Collection;* Ref. 32906/81: North Wall Telegraph Office 1879-1881

National Archives of Ireland Papers; *Office of public Works Collection;* Ref OPW 7558/96; Wexford Post Office 1892-1896

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National Archives of Ireland Papers; *Department of Communications papers;* (See Appendix 3)

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