

Heritage Inventory Sheet

Recommended Name	Former Auburn Post Office		
Site Image			
Address	4 and 4A Auburn Road and Kerr Parade, Auburn, NSW 2144		
Lot/Section/DP	1	-	455487
	1	-	434432
	1	-	119916
Heritage Study ID	HS2		
LEP ID	Not currently included in the Cumberland LEP		
Heritage Conservation Area	Not included		
Date Updated	January 2021		
Significance Level	LOCAL		
Site Type	Level 1	Built	
	Level 2	Postal and Telecommunications	

Curtilage Map



Statement of Significance

The former Auburn Post Office has local significance for its historic and aesthetic values. The post office building was built in 1912 as a purpose-built post office and relates to the early twentieth century development of the township of Auburn along the south side of the railway. The building remained in use as a post office until 1999 and contributed to the provision of providing postal services to the township of Auburn throughout the Twentieth Century.

The former Auburn Post Office has some significance as a Federation style Post Office, however, as the façade has been heavily modified on the ground level it is almost illegible as a Federation style building which significantly detracts from its aesthetic value. The second storey and central section of the building is considered more intact and is considered to have aesthetic value for its Federation details and intact original material.

At its current state, the building cannot be considered a good representative example of its due to the heavily modified façade. For this building to be considered a representative example of a Federation style post office, the façade would need to be reinstated to its original state and all detracting elements removed.

Criteria Assessment

a) Historic

The former Auburn Post Office was built in 1912 as a purpose-built post office and relates to the early twentieth century development of the township of Auburn along the south side of the railway. The building remained in use as a post office until 1999. It is significant for

	its continued contribution to providing postal services to the township of Auburn throughout the Twentieth Century.
b) Associative	The item does not meet this criterion.
c) Aesthetic/Technical	The former Auburn Post Office has some significance as a Federation style Post Office however, as the façade has been heavily modified on the ground level and is almost illegible as a Federation style building, this significantly detracts from its aesthetic value. The second storey and central section of the building is considered more intact and is considered to have aesthetic value for its Federation details and intact original material.
d) Social	The item does not meet this criterion.
e) Scientific	The item does not meet this criterion.
f) Rarity	The item does not meet this criterion.
g) Representativeness	The item is not considered to be a good representative example of its type at its current state. For this building to be considered a representative example of a Federation style post office, the façade at the ground level would need to be reinstated to its original state.

Physical Description

The former Auburn Post Office is a Federation Free Style two-storey commercial building set on the corner of Kerr Parade and Auburn Road. It consists of two original buildings which have been connected and extended the south and west through the continuation of the parapeted roof and using a sympathetic style.

The parapeted roof consists of terracotta tiled hipped and gabled sections of the original post office interspersed with newer sections of flat corrugated iron. Flanking the front entrance, located on the corner of Kerr Parade and Auburn Road, are two prominent parapeted gables with non-pointed apex and two rectangular louvered vents in the upper gable. Walls are constructed of face brick with sandstone and brick string courses, which have been painted in yellow acrylic paint. Original sections of brick are identified by the use of rat trap bond in comparison to newer sections of wall constructed using stretcher bond.

The ground level of the building has been highly modified and is less legible architecturally than the upper storey. The front entrance consists of an infilled porch which consisted of four brick plinths with corbelled sandstone capping. The entrance now has a modern metal roller door flanked by two metal framed single paned windows. Original windows have been replaced with modern single paned glazed windows with metal framing and terracotta sills or have been infilled with glazed tiling. Original terracotta vents (some of which are damaged) are located along the sandstone footing. Modern signage and modern awnings used on the building detract from the overall aesthetic value of the building. A stone plaque is inset into a tiled wall behind the tiled wall along Auburn Parade. It reads:

THIS STONE WAS LAID
BY
GEORGE CANN ESQUIRE, M.P.
ON THE 19TH October 1912

A highly intact upper storey with terracotta tiled dutch-gabled roof sits in the center of the building and is stepped back from the ground floor parapet. This section features prominent eaves, exposed rafter and original sash windows.

The building was extended in the c.1960s along Kerr Parade and Auburn Road and featured a brick verandah along Kerr Parade. The Post Office was again extended more recently and features a modern driveway and access gate. Auburn Post Office is surrounded by paved pedestrian footpath along which there are three palm trees and hedging along Auburn Road.

Overall, the building is in a good condition except for some damaged terracotta vents and the delamination of the sandstone due to the use of acrylic paint as render.

Condition	Good	Fair	Poor
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Alterations and Additions

- Original chimney removed
- Brick infilled entrance porch
- Modern signage*
- Modern awning with signage at original entry porch*
- Tile infilled windows*
- Modern single paned glazed windows with metal framing*
- Terracotta windowsill
- Acrylic paint on sandstone plinth*
- Rear addition
- Driveway
- Multiple sections of brick infill interspersed with original brick.

The building's street presence has been heavily impacted by a modern façade and several additions that detract from the aesthetic value of the building. The upper storey appears to be highly intact. Overall, the item is considered to have moderate integrity.

Integrity	High	Moderate	Low
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* *element detracts from the overall cultural significance of the place*

Historical Notes

Construction years	1912
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Auburn

The land which forms part of the modern suburb of Auburn was first developed in the 1790s when a track from Sydney to Parramatta was first developed and early land grants were given to free settlers and ex-convicts in the area. Most early land grants were small, measuring between 30-100 acres and were awarded to people such as Edward Gould, Henry Marr, Thomas Bates and John O'Donnell. Larger grants were given to established merchants and officials, such as James Chisholm, a merchant, who received a 600-acre grant, and Joseph Hyde Potts, who was given 410 acres.

In 1855, the first railway line from Sydney to Parramatta Junction allowed for suburban development around the area. The suburb of Auburn developed in the 1860s-80s from the subdivisions by John Yelverton Mills near the railway station. Mills named the suburb after the village in Oliver Goldsmith's poem 'The Deserted Village'. During this period, several main roads were built through the area and by 1880 it was reported that there were about 40 residences and a population of 200 people living in Auburn. By 1912-13, Auburn had established itself as suburb with the 11th largest number of new buildings in the metropolitan area for that year, with 268 approvals.

Former Auburn Post Office

A postal office first opened at Auburn railway station in 1880 which was a common practice of the time. Following the appointment of a Postmaster in 1886, the postal service moved for a short period to Macquarie Road prior to being accommodated in a new Station building in 1887. The Post Office then moved to a space in the new Town Hall in 1898 before a final move in 1912 to a purpose-built premises at the subject site on the corner of Auburn Road and Kerr Parade. It appears that the post office was constructed in two stages in 1912 with the corner building with plinths designed initially and a Federation style building added later that same year.

The building was extended in the c.1960s along Kerr Parade and Auburn Road and featured a brick verandah along Kerr Parade, infilled sections along Auburn parade and modernised windows replacing original multi-paned sash windows. The Post Office was again extended and modified more recently and features a modern driveway and access gate, tiled walls, new windows and further extensions along Kerr Parade.

When the post office moved to new premises in 1999 the building was converted to a medical centre. Presently, the former Post Office remains in use as a medical centre, 'Auburn Healthcare Centre' and chemist, 'Family Care Centre'.

Recommendations					
Heritage Management		Existing Built and Landscape Elements		Future Development and Planning	
1. Include this item as a new heritage listing on the LEP.	X	5. Original fabric is highly significant and should be maintained.	X	11. Alterations and additions should respond to the existing pattern of development, with careful consideration of the setting (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	X
2. Include this item's listing as part of or as a Heritage Conservation Area.		6. Unsympathetic alterations that detract from the cultural significance of the item should be removed.	X	12. New alterations and additions should respect the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X
3. Consider additional research to nominate this item for the State Heritage Register.		7. Maintain heritage landscape elements and schemes.		13. Future uses for this item should be compatible with its historical functions/associations.	
4. The heritage curtilage for this item should be revised/reduced.		8. Maintain the existing setting of the heritage item, informed by the historic pattern of neighboring development (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	X		
5. Not recommended for inclusion on the LEP.		9. Maintain the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X		
		10. The condition of this item is poor. Condition and maintenance should be monitored.			

Other recommendations and/or comments:

- The façade of the Auburn Post Office has been heavily modified. Should the opportunity arise, it is highly recommended that the contemporary signage on the facade, including the awnings should be removed from the façade and more sensitive heritage options investigated.
- It is highly recommended that the delaminated sandstone be conserved by a skilled heritage tradesperson. Acrylic paint should not be used on sandstone, and this should be rectified.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number
Heritage Act – State Heritage Register	N/A	-
Local Environmental Plan	N/A	-
Cumberland Heritage Study	Former Auburn Post Office	HS2
National Trust Australia Register	N/A	-

Other References

- Kass, T 1996, *Auburn Heritage Study Draft Final Report. Volume 2 Historical Context Report*. Sydney: Auburn Council.
- Kass, T 2008, *Auburn*, retrieved 27 March 2019, <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/auburn>
- Jervis, J 1933, *The story of Parramatta and district*, Sydney.
- DPC Heritage. 2007. *Auburn Town Centre Heritage Review*, prepared for Auburn Council

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage items was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not assessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. Unless additional research was required, historical research for all heritage items was based on existing information in the Cumberland Heritage Study Stage 1 2019 prepared by Extent Heritage.

Additional Images



View along elevation fronting Kerr Street.



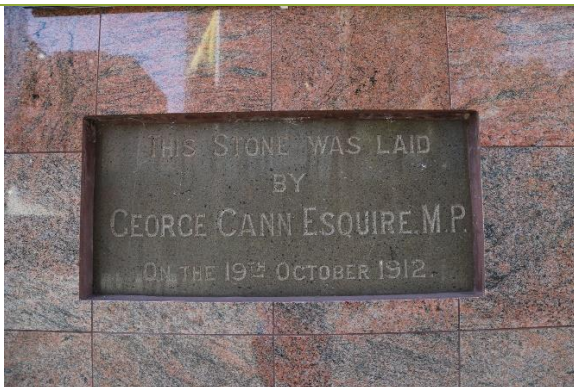
View to upper level of post office.



View to rear of Post Office along Kerr parade showing rear extension.



Overview of stone wall with foundation stone inset at the lower section.



Detail of foundation stone.



Detail to damage caused to sandstone footings by acrylic paint. Not also damage to vent.



View along Auburn Road c.1912-1920, showing Auburn Post Office (left) as it originally stood
(Source: SLNSW Call No. PXA 635/19-24)



Auburn Post Office 1947 (Source: National Archives of Australia, Item No. 1649731)