Collinsville Post Office

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	Cnr Conway and Pelican	Collinsville
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	2RP732399	(E: 588265 N: 7727033)

Historical Context

The town of Collinsville was originally named Moongunya; a name that is said to be an Aboriginal word meaning 'coal'. This name was chosen by the Railway Department when Moongunya was comprised of bag humpies, bark huts, corrugated-iron shacks and canvas tents. The Collinsville area was first opened up as a grazing run in early 1861, Strathmore Station being the first in the district. During the 1880s several gold mines were operated at Ukalunda, Mt Wyatt, Normandy and later at Mt Coolon. In 1865, reports of large coal deposits at Moongunya resulted in extensive testing. In 1918 the site for the Collinsville State Mine site was chosen and in March 1919 the mine began operations. As the Queensland State Government decided that the town would service the State Coal Mine and that it would be a model of a good contemporary township it was renamed Collinsville in 1921 for the MLA of Bowen, Charles Collins who represented Bowen from 1915 until his death in 1936. By building a model township it was the Government's intention to eliminate the huts, tents, humpies and shacks from the townscape. The government subsequently commissioned the Town Planning Association to advise on the layout of the town. The administration of the town became the responsibility of the Department of Mines. By 1922 almost 100 lots had been sold and Collinsville comprised 20 miners' houses, a store, police station, butcher shop and a school. By 1925 the town boasted a population of approximately 800 and had a licensed hotel, picture show, dance hall, bowling-green, a number of shops and a hospital under construction. Two large tanks provided the town with water, with electricity being generated by the mine. Despite the government contribution to town planning and local infrastructure, it appears that the post office facilities were confined to a single roomed building in the central part of town from a Mrs Fidler. The post office, which (like many early post offices) was also responsible for recording meteorological statistics, was well used and calls for updated facilities began as early as 1930. However, the economic depression at the beginning of the 1930s, coupled with Bowens need for new a post office meant, Collinsville had to wait. Renewed calls in 1935 went unanswered and by 1938 the poor state of the town's postal facilities was raised by the Labor Member for Herbert, George Martens. He lamented the fact that high officials in the Post Office Department could not spend a summer in Collinsville where "the existing building [is] worse than any other post office building in any other town of a similar size. It ha[s] no furniture, no room to put furniture and the only accommodation for documents [is] a kerosene tin provided by the previous post master."
Finally, in 1940, plans for Collinsville's new post office were drawn up by the Queensland Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Works. The new post office was constructed by Lowcock, a contractor from Bowen, for a cost of £1180. It was built in a style similar to a range of regional Queensland post offices constructed between 1920s and 1930s, in timber with an entrance porch and gabled roof. Of the different types designed during this period, the Collinsville Post Office is an example of the single porch and gable style.
The Post Office has undergone changes since World War II – although specific dates for these are unknown. Changes include alterations along the Pelican Street elevation (the side of the building) which comprise the construction of a disabled access ramp and an extension to the rear which has changed the roofline and which incorporates private post boxes in a concrete wall. The front of the building is largely intact, although the entrance door is now aluminum framed.

Physical Description

Collinsville Post Office is located on the corner of Conway and Pelican Streets in Collinsville. The front section of this timber post office is raised on stumps and has a gabled front with the lettering "Collinsville Post Office" and a front entrance porch which is accessed via concrete steps. The front elevation has timber window frames with six pane sash windows. Windows /notice boards alongfront are contemporary and affixed to a fibro wall. The Pelican Street elevation has a visible concrete block extension at the rear of the building (built at ground level) which incorporates a wall of private post boxes. This elevation also has a disable access ramp and the building, and the extension has altered the roofline.

Integrity	Fair	Condition	Good
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	18/02/2011		

References

Worker, Tuesday 25 October 1938, p.10.

Townsville Daily Bulletin, Wednesday 26 June 1940, p.6.

The Courier-Mail, Tuesday 20 August 1940, p.12.

DERM. QHR Entry 602730 Collinsville Cemetery.

University of Queensland, 1983. Historic Post Offices in Queensland: A National Estate Study, Department of Architecture.

Heritage Significance

Criteria	Definition
A	*The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.*
Statement	Collinsville Post Office demonstrates the evolution of postal and telecommunication services in the Whitsundays Regional Council and of post office design in regional Queensland. Although it wasn't constructed until 1940 due to the competing demands of other regional towns, it is significant for its provision of postal and communication services to one of Queensland's principle coal mining districts.
D	*The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places important to the region.*
Statement	With its extant front gable and single porch, Collinsville Post Office demonstrates the principle characteristics of a 1920-1939 timber post office designed by the Queensland Branch of the Commonwealth Department Of Works.

Location Map