

NAME: Former Post Office, 404A Main Road, COROMANDEL VALLEY

CURRENT USE: Dwelling
FORMER USE: Dwelling & post office
DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION: c.1902 with later additions and alterations

LOCATION: 404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley
LAND DESCRIPTION: CT 5482/496, Section 863, Hundred of Noarlunga

OWNER: Private ownership

RECOMMENDATION: Local Heritage Place



Former Post Office, 404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley (GGA, 2021)

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DESCRIPTION:

C. mid-19th century symmetrical cottage constructed of freestone with brick quoins, surrounds and dressings. Brick chimney with original timber window fittings to former external windows. Recent replacement corrugated steel roof cladding to original hipped roof form. C. 1960 east additions and extensive later 20th century additions and alterations.

While the building's historic appearance is currently marred by later unsympathetic 20th century additions, the core c. 1902 dwelling retains a high degree of original fabric in restorable condition.

It is recommended that the c. 1902 former Post Office at 404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley be included on the South Australian Heritage Register as a Local Heritage place.

A delineation of significant historic fabric is provided in the Extent of Listing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley is of local significance as an early 20th century cottage dwelling, dating to an important development period for the district. The former cottage has played a significant role in the lives of local residents as a former post office and general store from 1906 to 1999, a significant local service lasting for almost the entire 20th century. Despite current unsympathetic later additions, the c. 1902 building retains a high degree of original fabric.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (As defined in Section 67(1) of the PDI Act 2016):

- a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area; being an early 20th century residence dating to an early period of development for the Coromandel Valley township, used as the district's post office and general store for almost the entire 20th century.
 - b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area; being an early 20th century cottage dating to the early settlement of the Coromandel Valley district used as a local post office and general store for almost the entire 20th century.
 - c) it has played an important part in the lives of local residents; having been used as the Coromandel Valley post office and general store for almost the entire 20th century.
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RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales

- 2.1 Cottages and small dwellings
- 2.6 Communication infrastructure

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The former Post Office at 404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley does not appear to have been identified or assessed as part of any previous heritage survey.

The National Trust of South Australia's Coromandel Valley Branch has provided the following historical description on a plaque located on the site:

POST OFFICE

Post Office services in the early days were a part-time occupation, being provided by somebody whose main business and income were otherwise derived.

The district's first post master, in 1850, was the preacher and teacher Samuel Gill, who provided services from his home Coromandel House, located in the vicinity of the Coromandel Valley cemetery.

The post service was then followed by Mr Shepley from his general store near the Winns Road ford and by Mr. Wait and later Mr & Mrs. Vawser from the Wait house opposite the Government Watering Reserve, now known as the Weymouth Reserve.

Mrs Dorman and her daughter Grace operated the Post Office in the house adjacent to the Institute from 1900-1913. A number of proprietors followed, operating a general store and post office on this site until it closed in 1999.

The Post Office was an agency for the State Bank and the place for registering births, marriages and deaths. It was the distribution centre for telegraphic messages and also a meeting place where people of the community collected and posted mail, waited for the stage coach and eventually the bus.

Current research has identified Land Title records dating to April 1882 when the allotment was acquired by Donald Bremner of Coromandel Valley, labourer. Historical photography indicates that the site remained vacant in the mid-1880s (see Historical Images); a 'D. Bremner' at Coromandel Valley is first recorded in the Sands & McDougall Directory of 1903, suggesting a likely construction date of approximately 1902. In 1909 the residence was described in an auction advertisement as a "Dwelling, situated Coromandel Valley, on Main Road, adjoining Institute. Stone House of Five Rooms, two Cellars, Front and Enclosed Back Verandah, Quarter-acre Land, Underground Tank and large Iron Tank; at present occupied by tenant."

The Sands & McDougall directories indicates Mrs. E. Dorman as township postmistress from 1906 until 1914; Dorman would acquire the property in 1910 following Bremner's death in 1909 (Dorman was likely the tenant mentioned in the 1909 auction description) before transferring to Florence Amelia Elworthy in August 1913, who would become the subsequent postmistress, retaining the property until her death in 1945. The property would change hands frequently during the 20th century, though the site would continue to operate as the township's post office and a general store until closure in 1999, as mentioned in the above quotation. A number of unsympathetic additions were undertaken in the mid-20th century, resulting in the current building form. The property was most recently sold in 2018; it is understood that the property is currently being developed into bed & breakfast accommodation.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of all surviving masonry fabric to the original c.1902 residence including all walls, chimneys, window & door openings, quoins, surrounds and dressings. Surviving original window and door timberwork dating from the c.1902 construction is considered of significance and is included in the listing, though current replacement materials are not included in the listing. The original roof form and corrugated steel cladding is considered of significance and is included in the listing, though current replacement materials are not included in the listing.

All later additions and alterations are not included in the listing. The incorporation of a timber-framed, corrugated steel-clad verandah with cast iron decorative panelling to the west elevation, as documented in historic photography, is included in the listing and is recommended for reinstation as part of any future restoration works.

REFERENCES:

CTs 387/230; 2238/19; 3352/194; etc.
Sands & McDougall Directory, 1903, p. 254
Sands & McDougall Directories, 1906-1914.
Advertising, Evening Journal, Mon 1 Nov 1909, p.3.
National Trust of South Australia, Coromandel Valley Branch, plaque.

SITE MAPPING:



Site of 404A Main Road, Coromandel Valley (Planning SA SPPA)

HISTORICAL IMAGES:



Coromandel Valley Post Office in c.1914; E. Dorman, proprietor photographed (SLSA B 56059)



C.1911 photograph of Coromandel Valley Post Office, C. A. Petts photographer (National Trust of S.A., Coromandel Valley Branch).



Coromandel Valley Post Office, c.1960 (National Archives of Australia, B5919, 548)

OTHER IMAGES:



South elevation of c.1902 cottage, showing deteriorated fabric and current repairs (GGA, 2022)



East elevation c.1902 cottage, showing current restoration work, including re-roofing with corrugated steel and external masonry repairs (GGA, 2022)



Former external east wall, including former front door entrance, to c.1960 additions in 2018 (<https://www.domain.com.au/property-profile/404a-main-road-coromandel-valley-sa-5051>, accessed 20/1/2022).



Former external west wall to later lean-to bathroom additions in 2018, looking south (<https://www.domain.com.au/property-profile/404a-main-road-coromandel-valley-sa-5051>, accessed 20/1/2022).



Fireplace to former bedroom, looking west (<https://www.domain.com.au/property-profile/404a-main-road-coromandel-valley-sa-5051>, accessed 20/1/2022).