

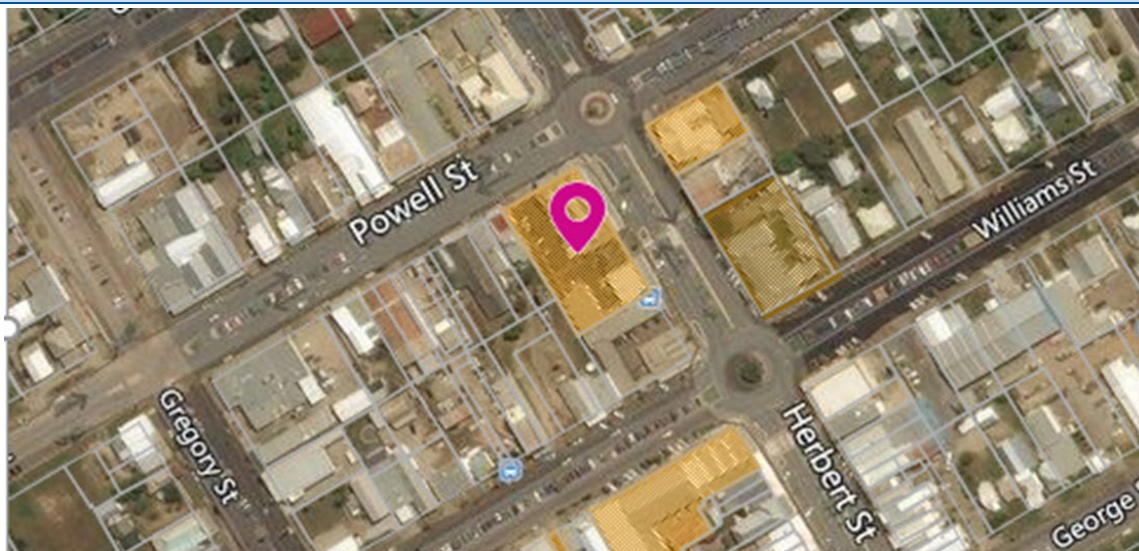
**BOWEN COUNCIL OFFICE**

|                               |   |
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| <b>Address</b>                | 67 Herbert Street (Corner Powell Street), Bowen   |
| <b>Lot Plan</b>               | 5B66104   |
| <b>Coordinates</b>            | E: 630361 N: 7786666  |
| <b>Integrity</b>              | Good  |
| <b>Condition</b>              | Good  |
| <b>Statutory Listings</b>     | Nil   |
| <b>Non-Statutory Listings</b> | Nil   |
| <b>References</b>             | DERM. State-wide Survey Draft Research Report, 2007. The Queenslander, Saturday 6 July 1912, p.9. |

**Street View**



**Location Map**



## Physical Description

The Bowen Shire Council Office is a two-storey face-red brick building located on the corner of Herbert and Powell Streets within the central business district of Bowen. The roof is set behind a substantial parapet wall on both the Herbert and Powell Street elevations. The parapet is rendered with three sections on each façade with 'X' mouldings. In the center of the higher sections of the parapet adjacent to the truncated corner are two coat of arms, one either side.

The Herbert Street elevation (east side) is divided into nine bays. The Powell Street elevation (north side) is divided into five bays. Each bay on the upper storey is divided by pilasters. The building has a truncated corner. At the upper storey level is a large, round-arched timber-framed door and window assembly featuring coloured-glass leadlight panels. This door provides access to the small Juliet balcony from which a three-flag mast rises. At ground level the corner between two pilasters contains a local notice board, adjacent to which is a plaque which reads:

"TO COMMEMORATE

FRANCIS CLARKE

NOTED ARCHITECT

FIRST MAYOR OF BOWEN 1863-1866

ERECTED BY BOWEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1982".

Along the eastern and northern elevations on the upper storey are large, window openings most of which are grouped in threes. The original timber frames have been replaced with white metal frames. The style of the lower-level windows accurately reflects the original windows, the upper-level windows are now only two pane windows rather than the original six pane windows.

Most window groups are comprised of one central vertical 1:2 sash style window and two vertical 1:4 sash windows either side. The central section of windows on the upper eastern frontage and the upper sections adjacent to the corner truncation are comprised of vertical 1:2 sash windows. On the ground level, each window opening is divided into three rectangular panes, most are vertical 1:3 ratio on the eastern façade, as well as two adjacent to the access on the southern facade. The sets of windows in the section adjacent to the corner truncation are the original timber framed windows with a vertical 1:3 ratio, three rectangular panes. At ground level the building has a series of glazed panels and entrances to shops.

Access to the offices is via glazed, sliding doors on Herbert Street, newer additions to the building. On either side of the truncated corner is a set of timber-framed windows grouped in threes. The windows which face Powell Street have coloured-glass and leadlight design, similar to the upper-storey door and windows. These windows are now set behind protective glass. The Herbert Street windows are plain glass. An awning extends from the building over both Herbert and Powell streets. The soffit is painted timber panels with cover strips.

Internally the ground floor comprises offices, other administrative and commercial spaces. The ceiling is plastered and painted and finished with cover strips.

Walls are generally plastered and painted throughout. Timber stairs lead to the first floor. The first floor primarily comprises offices and administrative spaces. The stairs lead to a large open office area with a recent timber counter. A hallway leads to other offices and an open plan office station which is an extension. In the original section of the first floor is a recessed section of ceiling with coloured glass. A number of offices in this section have a breezeway assembly above the timber-paneled door. Throughout the first-floor area walls are generally plastered and painted and divided into panels by a series of the timber strips with above-door head height picture rails.

Ceilings are painted and finished with cover strips similar to the ground floor area. Double timber-and-glazed doors with fanlight and breezeway assembly provide access to the council chambers. Glass panels in the doors have been etched with the Bowen Shire Council insignia. The council chambers have parquetry floor with moulded-timber skirting boards, plastered and painted walls, and ceiling with timber cover strips. The ceiling has moulded cornices and a timber picture rail.

Coloured glass-and-leadlight double doors have bronze handles and open to a small balcony overlooking the street. The original silky oak council table and chairs still exist. Timber folding doors separate the Council chambers from the adjacent office (which was originally the Mayor's office).

## Historical Context

Bowen was the first port established in North Queensland. The settlement was officially proclaimed on 11 April 1861 and named Bowen after Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Ferguson Bowen. The township of Bowen quickly grew to support the northern pastoral industry as a strategically placed supply centre. Over the course of several decades, it developed into a thriving commercial port. Bowen soon became a major administrative and commercial centre and was declared a municipality on 17 March 1863.

The deed of grant for the land on which the shire council offices was to be built was first issued to the Municipality of Bowen in February 1865. The title consisted of an area of two roods (0.4ha). A new deed of grant, including a slight increase in the area of land of 32 perches (about 800<sup>2</sup>m), was issued in November 1966.

The council offices were at least the second constructed in town. A two-storey timber town hall and clock tower was erected in Bowen in 1890 but were completely destroyed by fire in July 1912. New administrative facilities were provided, although there is little information available about these. During the Depression era, the Forgan Smith Labour Government implemented an Unemployment Relief Scheme to support employment throughout the state. In conjunction with the Intermittent Relief Work Scheme, and projects managed by the Bureau of Industry, this initiative served to assist the economy during a period of financial instability. As well as a number of large infrastructure projects, local authorities were also encouraged to provide employment by building new shire halls or council chambers.

Local authorities were offered a pound for pound subsidy and well as loan funds. Bowen was one of more than 20 local authorities that took advantage of the scheme. In March 1935, the Bowen Town Council approached the Minister for Health and Home Affairs to enquire about the possibility of obtaining a government loan to construct new council chambers. By July of the same year, the town clerk, Mr A. B. Moore submitted building designs to the council, and an application had been made for a loan of £8000 to cover the cost of the building and furniture. Noted architect, C.D. Lynch was employed to draw up the plans, which included five commercial shops and three offices.

Construction of the offices was made possible by low interest loans provided by the state government and the use of day labour. According to news articles at the time it was the first semi-government building constructed under the new 40-hour week award. The foundation stone for the new building was laid by Alderman, E.J.Riordan, MLA.

The building was opened on 17 September 1937 by the Minister for Labour, The Honorable M.P. Hynes. The opening coincided with renewed optimism about the town's future as an industrial city. The new premises were seen as a reflection of a progressive council with a firm vision for the town and harbour's development.

In the 1960s the building was extended on the east side (along Herbert Street) and replaced a ladies' rest room and school of arts building. Further refurbishments in the 1970s occurred when the former accountant's office and health office were replaced with toilet facilities.

The current staff room was at one point used as a doctor's office with an adjacent room used as a reception area. Bowen Shire was established on 6 February 1960 from the town of Bowen and the Shire of Wangaratta. The Council offices remain as a service delivery office for the amalgamated Whitsunday Shire. The commercial spaces that form part of the building's design are all leased to businesses. The Shultz family jewellery business was one of the first in the building, the family having successfully tendered for the lease of the shop when the building was first constructed in 1937.

## Historical Significance

**Criteria A** - *the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history*

The Bowen Shire Council Office is a substantial building for a small administrative centre and is important in demonstrating the evolution of Bowen's history, and the broader Queensland government initiatives during the Depression era under the Intermittent Relief Work Scheme. Constructed in 1937, and used continuously as government offices since that time, the building reflects the growth and development of Bowen during the 1930s and is an expression of confidence in the district's future.

**Criteria D** - *the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a*

The Bowen Shire Council Office is a good representative example of a regional civic complex designed for government and commercial uses. It remains substantially intact and is important in illustrating the principal characteristics of a 1930s civic building located in the centre of town. It comprises intact council chambers and original council furniture (table and chairs); offices and purpose-built commercial



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| <i>particular class of cultural places</i>  | shops. The building is also significant as an example of the work of architect CD Lynch, who made a substantial contribution to North Queensland architecture in the early 20th century.  |
| <b>Criteria E</b> - <i>the place is important because of its aesthetic significance</i> | The Bowen Shire Council Offices is prominently sited on the corner of the main street (Herbert Street) and Powell Street and its distinctive compositional qualities contribute to its aesthetic significance. The building's overall symmetry and unity of scale, form and materials make it an important part of a municipal precinct between Powell and William Street (along Herbert Street). |

**Bowen Council Office – 2020**



Bowen Council Office – 2020











Post Card of Bowen Council Chambers, c1955.

<https://queenslandplaces.com.au/category/contributor/centre-the-government-queensland-ms?page=29>

