

Hawke's Bay Farmers Building, 200 Queen Street West, Hastings

Inventory Number 11; Property ID: 24442; TRIM Reference: 24442#002#0006

NZHPT Register Number 1088

Philip Cleaver and Chris Cochran, 10 August 2005; Final Report November 2012, updated September 2015 by HDC

Environmental Policy Team

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



HAWKE'S BAY FARMERS BUILDING (FORMER)

OTHER NAMES: Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-operative Association Limited Head Office and IMS (Information Management Services Limited) Building



Photo: P. Huddleston, 2015

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 200 Queen Street West and 124 and 128 Market Street North

Location: Corner of Queen Street West and Market Street North

City/ Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

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LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lots 8, 9, and 10, Deposited Plan 745; Units A, B, and C DP 18556

Certificates of Title: HBK4/1419, Hawke's Bay Registry – Unit A DP 18556 (basement and ground floor), HBK4/1420, Hawke's Bay Registry – Unit B DP 18556 (first floor), HBK4/1421, Hawke's Bay Registry – Unit C DP 18556 (second floor).

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

The building is an important example of the Stripped Classical style of architecture, marking the transition between the Classicism of the early 20th century and Modernism which took firm hold in New Zealand in the 1950s. It is a very competent design, by a well-regarded architect Edmund Anscombe.

Aesthetic Value:

The Hawke's Bay Farmers Building has high aesthetic value for its ordered and well balanced facades, which dominate an important corner site in the Hastings CBD. The building fits in its context and plays an important role as a reminder of the prosperity of the city in the 1920s. In addition to its high townscape values, the building has interior spaces of considerable aesthetic value, being those that retain original finishes and joinery, especially those that are panelled in oak.

Historic Value:

The Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-Operative Association (HBFCA) was a successful local business and this building is a reminder of its importance to rural Hawke's Bay and the local economy. The Association was based in Hastings and the building was the organisation's head office, also housing a department store.

Technological Value:

There is significant technical accomplishment in the design of the reinforced concrete structure of the Farmer's Building, since it survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake of 1931 unscathed. There is also some technical value in features such as the original cage lift, and in finishes such as bronze joinery and oak panelling.

Social Value:

Rural service companies, particularly farmers' co-operatives, played an important role in the development of the rural economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they offered an alternative to private companies, who did not necessarily act in the interests of farmers. This in turn had a considerable influence on the prosperity of the entire country through the success of primary producers. The HBFCA was one of many such co-operatives and was a very successful and influential company in its heyday. Farmers' co-ops live on in some of the companies that took them over, although that is not the case with the HBFCA.

HISTORY:

The Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-operative Association was founded in 1891.¹ It was established to enable the region's primary producers to secure a financial interest in the marketing of their produce.² Several similar cooperative associations were established in other rural districts, with coordination provided at a national level by the Farmers Co-operative Association N.Z. Limited. The activities of the Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-op quickly expanded and it soon operated grain and produce stores, grass-seed dressing plants, warehouses, and retail outlets for merchandise.³ In 1899, the Farmers Co-op erected a building on Market Street with what was then the largest floor space in Hastings. Along with the firm of de Pelichet McLeod, the Farmers Co-op helped to generate growth in Hastings' trade, capturing much of the rural business that had previously gone to Napier and Port Ahuriri.

Branches of the Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-op were also opened in other towns, including Napier, Waipukurau, Dannevirke, Wairoa, Takapau, and Woodville. Business interests continued to broaden.⁴ In 1948, the Co-op's activities were listed as those of 'Wool Brokers, Stock Agents & Auctioneers; Insurance & Shipping Agents; Grain, Seed & General Merchants; Garage Proprietors; Land & Estate Agents'.

The Hawke's Bay Farmers Building that stands today on the corner of Market and Queen Streets was erected after the original building was destroyed by fire.⁵ While some secondary sources claim that it was built in 1928, the plans are dated 29 March 1929.⁶ The building was designed by the Wellington architectural firm of Edmund Anscombe and Associates. It was constructed to withstand earthquakes due to the presence of 'floating foundations' meaning that it would not strain with the tension of ground movement during an earthquake.⁷ Along with W.H. Gummer and J.W. Chapman, Anscombe has been described as 'the most eminent architect to have worked in Hastings.'⁸ Believing that the prosperous town would offer further work opportunities, Anscombe set up a branch of his practice in the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Building.⁹ The reconstruction period that followed the 1931 earthquake provided Anscombe's firm with an unexpected source of new work.

Upon completion, head office of the Hawke's Bay Farmers Cooperative Association was transferred to the three-storeyed Hawke's Bay Farmers Building. On the ground floor, there was a large department store that stocked groceries, china, footwear, and hardware.¹⁰ A tearooms and clubrooms for country women were located on the first floor, while the second floor was occupied by offices. The new department store marked a development in the retail trade as existing family businesses were threatened by the advent of chain stores and the entry of stock and station agents into the grocery, hardware, furnishing, and clothing trade. The new Farmers department store also reflected the growth of retail businesses in Hastings, which had become the region's main shopping centre.

¹ *The New Zealand Business Who's Who*, 1948 Edition, Wellington, 1948.

² M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 98.

³ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 123.

⁴ *The New Zealand Business Who's Who*, 1948 Edition, Wellington, 1948.

⁵ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 245.

⁶ Hastings District Council file information. Secondary sources that give a building date of 1928 include Matthew Wright, *Town and Country: The History of Hastings and District*, Hastings, 2001, p 473, and

⁷ Fowler, M 2007 *From Disaster to Recovery: the Hastings CBD 1931-35*, Michael Fowler Publishing Limited, Havelock North p. 10.

⁸ Peter Hallett and Peter Shaw, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991, p 26.

⁹ Peter Hallett and Peter Shaw, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991, p 27.

¹⁰ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 245.

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The Hawke's Bay Farmers Building is an example of a modernist building, predating the 1931 earthquake. It has been noted as Hastings' 'most imposing and prominent survivor' of the quake.¹¹ Built with reinforced concrete foundations and a similar superstructure, the building suffered only superficial damage.¹² Following the quake, the building was reconditioned under Anscombe's direction.¹³ Since then, the interior of the Hawke's Bay Farmer Building, which housed the town's first lift, has been altered many times.¹⁴ Ceilings have been lowered and, especially on the ground floor, original wood panelling has been covered over. Since 1970, several building consents have been issued for the alteration of the interior space.¹⁵

In 1982, the Hawke's Bay Farmers Cooperative Association merged with Dalgety NZ Ltd, creating HBF-Dalgety Limited.¹⁶ The Hawke's Bay Farmers Building was the headquarters of the new company. In March 1985 the building was split into unit titles.¹⁷ Units A and B, the ground and first floors, were transferred to Gillean Properties Ltd; Unit C, the second floor, was transferred to Dalgety Properties (NZ) Limited.¹⁸ In December 1986, Unit C was transferred to Wrightson Properties Limited, which had taken over Dalgety Crown. In September 1987, Unit C was sold to the present owner; Information Management Services Ltd. Units A and B have been acquired by Ross Harold Fitches, Christine Angela Fitches, and Simon Eberlet Gale and are now also owned by G.Y.M. Investments.

Among the building's present occupants on the ground floor are Telecom and the \$2 Shop. On the first floor the building is occupied by NZ Education Hawke's Bay, and on the second floor the building is occupied by Datastore Systems (NZ), Information Management Services, and Herbal Plus.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: Edmund Anscombe and Associates

Construction details: The building is constructed in reinforced concrete, finished in coloured plaster (now painted).

Description: The Hawke's Bay Farmers Building is a very prominent building in the townscape, standing three storeys high and with long facades to both Queens Street West and Market Street North. These facades are symmetrical and are articulated by a grid of columns through the first and second floors which support a frieze with roundels; above this is a stepped parapet at roof level, emphasising the column grid. The windows are grouped in threes and are set back from the façade in tall narrow reveals, with recessed spandrel panels between the first and second floor windows. The building can be described as Stripped Classical in style, where Classical details (in the case of the Farmer's Buildings the frieze, roundels, parapet and mouldings) are used to articulate and lightly decorate an otherwise quite utilitarian concrete framed building.

¹¹ Peter Hallett and Peter Shaw, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991, p 26.

¹² Peter Hallett and Peter Shaw, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991, p 27.

¹³ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 269.

¹⁴ Peter Hallett and Peter Shaw, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991, p 27.

¹⁵ Hastings District Council file information.

¹⁶ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 345.

¹⁷ Certificates of title: HBK4/1419, Hawke's Bay Registry; HBK4/1420, Hawke's Bay Registry; HBK4/1421, Hawke's Bay Registry.

¹⁸ Hastings District Council file information.

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The facades were originally finished in imitation stonework, using coloured cement plaster, but this has now been painted over. The ground floor has large display windows under the verandah; while the windows and shop fronts have been modernised, the verandah, which is hung from the building, retains its original and quite ornate pressed metal soffit. The initials HBF are worked in terrazzo in the floor of the porch at the main corner entrance.

Inside the building, through the main entrance on Queen Street West, there are some special features remaining from 1929, in particular the original cage lift; bronze window joinery; and on both the first and second floors, oak panelling and oak joinery. The bronze and oak suggest a building of very high quality, as befits not only the organisation that built it but the architect Anscombe who designed it. The rooms that retain their oak panelling are now rare, even nationally, as authentic commercial spaces of the 1920s.

The structure is also visible in parts of the interior, and shows 'mushroom' columns (splayed out at the top) supporting thickened concrete floor slabs; these columns were a feature of the tea rooms in its original form. One end elevation of the building shows a plain grid of columns and beams with infill panels in cavity brickwork. The roof is timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Structure	Technical
Main street facades	Technical, aesthetic
Cage lift	Technical
Oak panelling and joinery	Technical, aesthetic, historic

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

Boyd, M.B., *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984.

Certificates of title: D4/231, Hawke's Bay Registry; HBK4/1419, Hawke's Bay Registry; HBK4/1420, Hawke's Bay Registry; HBK4/1421, Hawke's Bay Registry.

Hallett, Peter, and Shaw, Peter, *Spanish Mission Hastings: Styles of Five Decades*, Napier, 1991.

Hastings District Council file information.

New Zealand Business Who's Who, 1948 Edition, Wellington, 1948.

New Zealand Business Who's Who, 1964, Tenth Edition, Wellington, 1964.

'Hawke's Bay Farmers Building', NZHPT File 12009-773

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Wright, Matthew, *Town and Country: The History of Hastings and District*, Hastings, 2001.

OTHER INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register Number: This building is a Category II item (Register Number: 1088)

District Plan: Listed as a Category II heritage item in the Operative Hastings District Plan (declared operative 10 June 2003). Item Number H52. In the Proposed Hastings District Plan 2015, the building is listed as a Category II Heritage Item (HB54).

New Zealand Historic Places Act 1993: This site has been identified as a potential archaeological site under Section 2 of the New Zealand Historic Places Act 1993.

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS:



Photograph of the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-operative Association building on the corner of Queen and Market Streets, Hastings shortly after it was completed in 1930 and prior to the Hawke's Bay earthquake of 1931 (Henry Norford Whitehead, Reference 1/1-004683-G, Alexander Turnbull Library).

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Close up of façade (R. O'Brien, NZHPT, 24 March 2006)

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Hastings District Council does not hold the original plan of this building.