

Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-operative Garage, Queen Street, Hastings

Inventory Number 12; Property ID: 25706; TRIM Reference 25706#002#0005

NZHPT Register Number 1095

Report by Michael Kelly and Chris Cochran, with NZHPT, 10 October 2005; Final Report August 2012, Updated 2015 by the HDC Environmental Policy Team

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



HAWKE'S BAY FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION LIMITED GARAGE

OTHER NAMES: Hawke's Bay Farmers' Garage, Farmers' Garage, Buick Service Station Motor Garage, Briscoes and Payless Plastics



P. Huddleston, 2015

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 206 Queen Street West

Alternative: 206-216 Queen Street West

City/ Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

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LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 1 DP 5310, Lot 1 DP 22385

Certificate of Title (including Registry): HB D4/235, Hawke's Bay Registry

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

The architectural quality of the building is compromised by unsympathetic alterations, albeit that some of them are superficial. Under the paint and hoardings, there is a well articulated and strong industrial façade to Queen Street, a character that would extend to the interior had it not had major changes too. The rear elevation, still raw concrete and brickwork, displays the robust, working character of the building.

Historic Value:

The Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-Operative Association 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 was the organisation's garage. It represented the other half of the company's Hastings' operations, with its head office and department store nearby. This is probably the oldest surviving motor garage in Hastings.

Technological Value:

The technological value of the building is high, especially for the concrete frame, the barrel-vaulted roofs and the steel roof trusses. Lesser elements, such as the skylights and ventilators, are also of technological value. It is a very good industrial building of the inter-war period, and although some of its qualities are presently hidden, the elements that give the building its technological interest are completely authentic. The fact that the original part of the building survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake enhances this interest; its structural capacity is underlined by the fact that the addition of 1934 followed the design of the earlier part. The existence of drawings, specification and structural calculations increases the technological value of the building.

Social Value:

There are two parts to the social and historical use of this building. The first is the relationship this building had with the farming community, in particular its co-operative members. The second is its more recent retail history, which has brought many other people into the building. Over its history this building has had a significant social role in the community and is a distinctive landmark to the people of Hastings.

HISTORY:

The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-operative Association was founded in 1891.¹ It was set up to enable the region's primary producers to secure a financial interest in the marketing of

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

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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 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 and Land & Estate Agents'.

The rising popularity of the motorcar in the early twentieth century, and the profits to be made, prompted an increasing number of firms to enter into the motor trade [industry]. At this time motor garages did nearly everything from constructing and selling cars, to servicing and filling them with petrol. The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op was one of the earliest to enter into the trade in Hastings, alongside firms such as Sullivan, Ross and Company, D. E. Davis, and S. Boyd.⁵ The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op opened garages near many of its branches.⁶ The Garage on Queen Street in Hastings was constructed behind the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op's main building in 1925.

Plans compiled by the Vulcan Foundry indicate that the building design was completed in June 1925, and the structure was completed at the cost of £7,800 later that same year.⁷ A panoramic photograph of Hastings, taken in 1927, is the first known photograph showing the structure. The garage was first advertised that same year in *Wise's Post Office Directories*.⁸

Providing fuel for vehicles was originally via imported two gallon (18 litre) cans that were sold at motor garages, as well as places such as general stores and chemists. Later, cans were refillable. By the mid-1920s, government concerns over a spate of tragic accidents and property loss caused by the mishandling of the use and storage of cans led to the decision to move to underground storage and fixed pumps, or bowsers as they were known.

By the end of 1926 most motor garages had installed underground storage and bowsers. The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op garage in Hastings was, at the time of its completion, likely to have been one of the first purpose-built garages with bowsers in New Zealand.

From 1928 the Garage was advertised as a 'Buick Service Station Motor Garage', indicating the vehicle franchise it was then associated with, and was managed by William Alexander (Bill) Greer (1895?-1975). Greer had originally worked at the Hawke's Bay

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.128

⁶ *Wise's Post Office Directories*; 'Obituary', *Napier Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1975 in 'NZ Biographies', 1975, vol.1, p.90, Alexander Turnbull Library

⁷ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 243.

⁸ *Wise's Post Office Directories*, 1927; R. P. Moore, 'Hastings', New Zealand, 1927, vol.1, PA6-216, Alexander Turnbull Library

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Farmers' Co-op's garage in Napier before being transferred to Dannevirke to manage a new garage there. He went on to found the company Stuart Greer Motors Limited.

The building was used to store cars and undertake mechanical repairs. It included a showroom at the front, a service station, and a workshop.

On 3 February 1931 an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale hit the Hawke's Bay. In the two and a half minutes that it lasted 256 people lost their lives, huge tracts of land rose out of the sea, and much of the built environment in Napier and the wider Hawke's Bay was destroyed.⁹ The earthquake changed the face of Napier, which had been a small seaside town, with a picturesque harbour and Victorian buildings comprising the commercial centre. Many of the buildings not damaged by the earthquake were destroyed by fire. The records of the Insurance Council of New Zealand indicate that the Garage had a severe crack in one of its walls, but was otherwise undamaged. The business reopened one week after the quake, and other businesses used the front part of the buildings as temporary premises¹⁰.

In October 1934 a permit to alter the building was granted.¹¹ This allowed for the addition of a western bay, and from that time the building has had the three-bay form that exists today. The cost of the addition was estimated at £3,980.¹²

The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op underwent a number of changes in the 1980s. In 1982 it became the Hawke's Bay Farm & Finance and HBF Dalgety & Company Ltd.¹³ This company was then subsumed into Dalgety & Company Ltd and then acquired by Common Shelton Ltd.¹⁴ The following year, Dalgety New Zealand Ltd and Crown Consolidation merged.¹⁵ The Garage was closed and the building became a retail outlet, specifically Briscoes on one side and Payless Plastics on the other.¹⁶

The property, including the garage, was sold by the HBFCA in 1991 to Douglas Crawford and Thomas Harris.¹⁷ In 1996, a new front wall was built on its northern side and the retail area extended.¹⁸ Part of the the building is currently not tenanted, with the other part being occupied by Bay City Tae Kwon Do.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: The building permit drawings for the 1934 addition were drawn by S J Crabbe.

Builder: Not known

Engineer: Vulcan Foundary, Napier.

⁹ Longshaw, J. (2004), 'The Earth Moved: Napier Earthquake 1931', *Kiwi Herald*, <http://www.kiwiherald.com> (downloaded 23.12.2004)

¹⁰ Fowler, M 2007 *From Disaster to Recovery: the Hastings CBD 1931-35*, Michael Fowler Publishing Limited, Havelock North, p. 12.

¹¹ Permit 3984, BP1153, Farmers' Co-op Assn Ltd, Hastings District Council

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Provided care of Fletcher Challenge's archivist – www.fclarchives.co.nz

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ NZHPT Field Record Form, see NZHPT File 12009-473.

¹⁷ CT HB P2/185, LINZ, Napier

¹⁸ See plans on file. No ref. no. shown but copied from HDC files.

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Construction details: Reinforced concrete frame, brick infill panels, steel roof trusses.

Description: The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-operative Association building, on the south side of Queen Street West, has an unusual vaulted form, most clearly evident on the rear elevation. Here, the reinforced concrete frame of the building is exposed, with columns, a horizontal beam at eaves level, and arches above. There are two wide arches (the west one is a later addition of 1934, confirmed by the details and materials being slightly different) with a small arch between. The infill material is unpainted brickwork.

The front elevation has a dramatic arched parapet, of a shallower curve than the barrel-vaulted roof behind, with a short horizontal parapet on the east side. The parapet has a moulded capping, the name of the building running around under the capping, and five blanked off windows with curved heads. An advertising hoarding now covers a large part of the elevation above verandah level. Changes below the verandah include modern doors, but the original structural layout of columns is still evident. A stark blue and yellow colour scheme, along with advertising, obscures much of the quality of what was a handsome industrial street elevation.

The main part of the façade is symmetrical, and covers the original part of the building, a wide and narrow bay. The third bay, added on to the west side and flush at the back wall, is set back from the road frontage and has a lean-to roof, rendering it subservient to the main part of the facade.

Inside, the original character of the building is disguised by modern finishes, the suspended ceiling in particular. Visible through holes in the ceiling are steel trusses with curved top chords (apparently shaped from steel with a profile close to that of railway line); tongue and groove boarding, and impressive skylights, which together suggest a high degree of authenticity in the roof structure of the building.

The plan layout is presently two main spaces, one in the west addition, and the other the original part of the building. A row of columns in this space indicate the spans of the wide bay and the narrow central bay. The drawings of 1934 indicate the uses of the whole of the ground floor which included at that time showroom (left front) and service station (front right); offices and workshops behind, and sundry other rooms such as toilets, tyre room, car wash, battery room and 'bulk benzine store' at the rear.

The building is largely in its form of 1934, although with small-scale changes. Two building consents (1991 and 1996) deal with signage and a new shop front to the west bay in place of the service station, while the installation of a false ceiling (date unknown) has altered the appearance of the interior. There is an architectural drawing by architects Kingwell Malcolm, dated 1952, which shows internal changes to offices and car showroom area.

The building is in reasonable condition, although large parts of it are presently empty.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Form and fabric of the street elevation	Architectural and townscape importance

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Concrete structure and steel roof trusses	Technical importance
Other original fabric, including linings and skylights	Technical importance

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

NZHPT File 'Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-Operative Association Ltd. Garage', 12009-772

Boyd M. 1984, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Victoria University Press for Hastings District Council.

OTHER INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register Number: The Hawke's Bay Farmers Co-Operative Association Limited Garage is a Category II Historic Place (Number 1095).

District Plan Listing: Listed as a Category II Historic Place in the Operative Hastings District Plan (Heritage Item H53). In the Proposed Hastings District Plan, 2015 the building is listed as a Category II Heritage Item (HB55). The building is also located within the Central Character Precinct.

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.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS:



This panorama of Hastings shows the rear of the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-op Garage. The Garage is shown in the upper portion of the photograph near the centreline. The barrel-vaulted roof, and the false shop front can be made out. This photograph confirms that the building was constructed by 1927. (Robert Percy Moore, 'Hastings', New Zealand, 1927, vol.1, PA^216, Alexander Turnbull Lib.)

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This picture shows the Garage in operation in the 1930s. Note the sign 'Buick Sales and Service'. (The Dave Williams Collection of Photographs, W204, Hawke's Bay Museum)



This photograph shows the head office of the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Co-operative Association building (centre) on the corner of Queen Street West and Market Street North, Hastings. This building was completed in 1930. The garage is located to the right of the picture, down Queen Street West. (Henry Norford Whitehead, 'Negatives of Napier, Hastings and district', PA-Coll-3068, Reference number: 1/1-004683-G, Alexander Turnbull Library).

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This photograph shows the Hawke's Bay Farmers' Garage after the earthquake. ('Insurance Council of New Zealand album relating to the Hawke's Bay earthquake, PA1-f-145, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington)

Rear elevation showing the barrel-vaulted form of the building; the far bay is the one added in 1934. (Chris Cochran, October 2004)



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ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Proposed Addition to Premises for HB Farmers Co-op Assn Ltd, (1934) (TRIM Ref: 25706#010)

