

Poppelwells Building, 117-125 Russell Street North, Hastings.

Inventory Number: 19; Property ID 21342; TRIM Reference 21342#002#0006

NZHPT Registration Number: 7020

Draft: 4 June 2007; Last amended: 28 October 2009; Michael Kelly / Chris Cochran; Final Report: November 2012, Updated 2015 by the HDC Environmental Policy Team

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



POPPELWELLS BUILDING

OTHER NAMES: Fitzpatrick Building



P. Huddleston, 2015

LOCATION:

Street and Number or location: 117 – 125 Russell Street North

City/ Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lots 4 & 5 DP2709

Certificate of Title (includes Registry): L3/1387, Hawke's Bay Registry

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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

Poppelwells Building is the work of a competent and original architect, Albert Garnett, who played an important role in the development of the city. While drawing on period details for its inspiration, it combines elements of the Stripped Classical and Spanish Mission styles in novel ways, to make a well-ordered, modulated and interesting building of the mid-1920s. Its architectural importance is enhanced by the fact that it is a substantial commercial building of the pre-earthquake period, rare in the city, and in authentic condition in its main façade.

It has aesthetic value for the role it plays in perhaps the most important group of period buildings in the city, those along the eastern side of Russell Street, stretching several blocks from Queen Street East to Eastbourne Street East. The consistent scale of these buildings, their visual interest, their common materials, add up to a streetscape of exceptional quality. They are well seen buildings because of the open space of the wide streets and railway line.

Cultural Value:

Poppelwells Building has stood in Hastings for over 80 years and has retained, to a large extent, its original commercial purpose. Over its life it has been entered and used for many thousands of Hastings residents and it is a most familiar building to them.

Historic Value:

Poppelwells Building has considerable local significance for its long history of retailing and general commercial use. It is particularly associated with Poppelwells, the clothing firm whose association with the building stretched back to the 1920s and only ended in the first decade of the 21st century. The building has had some significant occupants over the years, arguably the most important being New Zealand Aerial Mapping, which spent its first two decades in the building and is today the country's oldest aviation firm. Another is Warrens Bakery, regarded as a Hastings institution. In a city with few buildings that pre-date the Hawke's Bay earthquake, Poppelwells Building is a long-standing and familiar landmark.

Technological Value:

The building has quite specific technical value for its structure and detailing, since it survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake with no significant damage. It is a very good example of best trade practice and design of the decade of the 1920s, before the advent of a national structural building code. That it survived the earthquake unscathed is a tribute to the designer.

HISTORY:

Poppelwells Building, as it would later become known, was designed by architect Albert Garnett and constructed by T. Hill as an investment property for Fitzpatrick and Co. in 1924.¹ The property was leasehold, being land originally set aside for railway use but not required directly for that purpose. By 1929, when the first land records appear, Herbert Knight held the lease of the land.²

¹ See original plans for the building on New Zealand Historic Places Trust file (file no not assigned).

² CT HB L3/1387, Land Information New Zealand, Hastings. The land records relating to the history of the land in question prior to 1929 are unavailable, likely due to the fire at the Hawke's Bay Registry after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake. NB: Huge numbers

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Albert Garnett was one of Hastings' most important architects. Born in Hastings in 1878, he lived all his life in the town. His father James Garnett, later mayor of Hastings, was a builder and his son began his career working for his father before becoming an architect. He practised mainly on his own account, although he formed a brief association with Davies and Phillips in the immediate aftermath of the Hawke's Bay earthquake. Albert Garnett was a borough councillor in the 1920s.³ Among his best known Hastings buildings were the Wesley Methodist Church (1911), Municipal Chambers (1917), Atkins House (1935) and Harveys Building (1935).

Poppelwells Building survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake of 1931. Knight retained ownership of the building until 1964, when he transferred the lease to Poppelwell Building Ltd. It is this family firm and its long-standing association with the building that gives it its name.

Wises Street Directories from the 1920s and 30s do not show street numbers for Russell Street, so it is difficult to be precise in establishing early occupants of the building. The building had commercial tenants on both floors, and, having a long street frontage, up to 12 occupants during its early period of use.

By 1930, Poppelwell & Co., mercers, were occupying the building⁴ and the family business would remain associated with the building into the 21st century. They were joined in the building by its architect, Albert Garnett, clearly pleased with his design. There was a range of other occupants, some of whom became long-standing tenants. Among them were businesses such as Anderson's tearooms, the Dominion Fish Co., and the stationers and booksellers at the northern end of the building, which changed hands a number of times but retained its original use.⁵ The New Zealand Aerial Mapping Co. was another early and significant tenant. The company was established in 1936 and, from 1937 until 1956, its founder Piet van Asch and his small staff ran New Zealand's first private aerial mapping company from Poppelwells Building.⁶ In these early years, the company got most of its work from the government, including some vital mapping work undertaken during World War II. In 1956 it moved to purpose-built premises in Avenue Road. It is now New Zealand's oldest aviation firm.

Links to early uses were maintained through the decades. The tearooms later became the Cake Shop, and then the Warren tearooms (now Warrens Bakery), another long-standing Hastings business, which dates back to 1891.⁷ Another interesting occupant in the middle of the 20th Century was a piano tutor.

The lease of the buildings remained in the hands of Poppelwell Building Ltd, who also remained occupants of the building.⁸ In 1988, the company sold the majority of the lease to William Dent and Peter Clifford. Three years later they sold it to John and Hilary Poppelwell. Building consents were issued in 2000 (changes to a kitchen for Warrens Bakery), 2001 (alterations for a café involving the demolition of internal walls) and 2002 (conversion of a shop to a hair cutting bar).⁹

of land records were lost in the fire and although some records were able to be reconstituted, in cases where private owners brought in their records, most were not. Confusion over Hawke's Bay land records was compounded by the Registry's reuse of the numbering system. Prior references on surviving titles still exist but have been reassigned, leading researchers to other unrelated pieces of land.

³ *Hawke's Bay Herald Tribune*, 27 February 1956

⁴ *Wise's New Zealand post office directory*, 1930

⁵ See images 'Hastings. Streets. Russell' n.d. 19194 1/1 and 'Hastings. Earthquake. 1931' 4805½, Alexander Turnbull Library

⁶ www.nzam.com/article.asp?id=history

⁷ No doubt this claim refers to the same business at different premises. See

www.hawkesbaynz.com/food_wine/results.htm?q=&cm=18&c%5B%5D=263&r=10&page=2

⁸ CT HB L3/1387, LINZ, Hastings.

⁹ Correspondence and plans on building consents on file. Information supplied by HDC.

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After John Poppelwell's death in 2002, Hilary Poppelwell kept the building for two more years before selling it to Tainui Reserve Ltd.¹⁰ It continues to be used commercially. Among the current occupiers are Hair 2 Go (a hairdressers), Entice Gourmet Kitchen Cafe, Deli Roasts, KBC Restaurant, and the Orphans Aid Shop. The upper level is occupied by Hastings City Business Association.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: Albert Garnett

Date of construction: 1924

Construction details: Reinforced concrete, post and beam structure.

Description: Poppelwells Building stands out in Hastings for its unusual design, with references to both the Stripped Classical style, and of Spanish Mission. Stripped Classical is seen in the quoins and keystones of the window openings, and in Greek key-patterned pilasters dividing the façade into six bays; Spanish Mission is seen especially in the deeply overhanging eaves breaking through the parapet, and in the red clay Cordova roof tiles both of this part of the main roof and the verandah roof. In addition, the main facade has several idiosyncratic details of the architect's own imagination - the decorative brickwork panels on the parapet at either end of the elevation, standing out strongly against the plain plaster wall finish, and the pitched-roof verandah (supported with steel ties from the structure, there being no verandah posts) which is clad on the outside face in the clay tiles; these features render the building unusual in the city.

There are four window openings under the central eaves, with a pair of windows at either end, making a well modulated façade that has plenty of visual interest. Despite changes to the retail outlets on the ground floor, above the level of the verandah the façade is completely unchanged from the original design. It fits well in the streetscape, an important component of the group of period buildings along the east side of Russell Street. Despite stylistic differences, its scale, colour and visual interest means it relates well to its neighbours.

It is a two storey building, in reinforced concrete; the first floor is concrete, and the roof timber framed. The structure was clearly sound, since the building survived the Hawke's Bay earthquake with no recorded damage.

In 2008, the interior of the first floor of the building was largely intact including original fixtures and fittings. Features of interest on the interior include original fireplaces.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Street Façade	Aesthetic, architectural
Cordova roof tiles	Aesthetic
Structure	Technical

¹⁰ Ibid.

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Hawke's Bay Herald Tribune, 27 February 1956.

New Zealand Historic Places Trust file (file no not assigned)

www.hawkesbaynz.com/food_wine/results.htm?q=&cm=18&c%5B%5D=263&r=10&page=2

www.nzam.com/article.asp?id=history

Wise's New Zealand post office directory, H Wises & Co, Dunedin, Eastbourne Street, Eastbourne Street East, Russell Street, vols 1925 to 1959-60.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Poppelwells Building is a Category II historic place (Register No. 1100). It is also part of the Hastings Historic Area (Register No. 7020)

District Plan Listing: Listed as a Category II historic place in the Operative Hastings District Plan and located within the Central Character Precinct (Plan declared operative 10th June 2003). Under the Proposed Hastings District Plan 2015, the building is listed as a Category II Heritage Item (HB58) and is also located within the Russell Street Historic Area and 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.

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ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Proposed Business Premises in Station St for Messrs Fitzpatrick & Co., by A Garnett (1924) (TRIM Ref: 21342#0112)

