

**Commerce Buildings, 227 - 235 Heretaunga Street West**

Inventory Number: 30; Property ID: 94263; TRIM Reference: 94263#002#0004

Report by Warwick Johnston

Draft: 10 August 2007, updated December 2009, updated July 2012 (Cochran & Murray)

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## Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



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### COMMERCE BUILDINGS

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#### LOCATION:

*Street and Number:* 227 – 235 Heretaunga Street West

*City / Town:* Hastings

*Region:* Hawke's Bay

#### LEGAL DESCRIPTION

*Legal Description:* Lots 2 – 4 Deposited Plan 22385

*Certificates of Title (includes Registry):* HBP2/207(1992), HBJ1/645(1980), NB144/276(1954), HB119/281(1948), HB28/238(1930), HB38/151(1924), HB75/226(1892), Hawke's Bay Land District.

## **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

### *Architectural value:*

The Commerce Buildings has modest architectural value for its well-proportioned Stripped Classical design.

### *Historic value:*

The building has a long-standing association with the retail history of Hastings, as it has housed a variety of retail outlets since its construction. It is of modest importance as one of the few non-timber buildings in the CBD to survive the earthquake.

### *Technological value:*

The concrete-framed building is of some technological value due to the fact that it survived the 1931 earthquake structurally intact, one of a small population of non-timber buildings in the CBD to do so.

### *Aesthetic value:*

Although it is large, the building has a somewhat demure presence in the local streetscape, nevertheless it contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area.

## **HISTORY:**

In the mid 1920s Jane Sharp, Robert Sharp's widow, sold this section to Maurice Millar and Arturo Giorgi, clothiers.<sup>1</sup> It was at this time that the Commerce Building, with five shops, was built (the exact date is not currently known). The building was designed by the young Hastings-born architect Sidney George Chaplin, who went onto design, among other things, the well known Hastings Clock Tower in 1934;<sup>2</sup> Chaplin later ended up in partnership with other well-known local architects Davies & Phillips.

The concrete-framed building survived the 1931 earthquake with some minor damage.<sup>3</sup> It was refurbished shortly after and has become one of the core structures in the Central Business District around which the area was re-developed. The building has been altered and added to over time; however the street façade is largely intact.

Ownership of the Commerce Building was kept in the Giorgi family until 1980, when it was sold to Phillip Hamish McHardy.<sup>4</sup> McHardy sold the property in 1992 to the East Coast Permanent Trustees, who subsequently sold it to Rockefeller Properties in 1996.<sup>5</sup> The Giorgi family had been the longtime owners (1929 to 1980) prior to that. The current owners are the TJP & DMK Sherratt (No.2) Family Trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Certificate of Title HB38/151 (1924)

<sup>2</sup> See Building Plan

<sup>3</sup> Photograph for Insurance purposes. Hawke's Bay Museum. Number 10,089 (negative X86/6/18)

<sup>4</sup> H.B J1/645

<sup>5</sup> Certificate of Title HBP2/207 (1992)

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The building has had a variety of tenants over the years, including a bakery, dentists and dress makers. It would appear that Chaplin himself had his offices in the building in 1934.<sup>6</sup> Other notable tenants have been the Red Cross Society, the Women's Division of the Farmers Union and Rolf Keys, photographer. The current tenants are, Sushimi, McNaughton Clothing, Core, and Health 2000.

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

*Architect:* Sydney George Chaplin

*Builder:* Munn & Co.

*Date of construction:* ca. 1925

*Construction details:* Two-storied, reinforced concrete construction with original steel window joinery, timber-framed roof with corrugated steel roofing.

*Description:* The Commerce Buildings sit in the middle of a mixed block of single- and two-storey commercial buildings, all of a similar era that brings a strong 1930s flavour to the local streetscape.

The building has a simple symmetrical design in a Stripped Classic idiom. Above the verandah, the building retains a high level of authenticity. This part of the façade is composed in five bays, a central bay with three steel windows, flanked on either side by two additional bays with a single steel window each. The windows are trimmed with a simple plastered surround featuring a stylised *fascies* motif. The façade is divided up with shallow moulded pilasters spaced between the windows, supporting a shallow entablature ornamented with roundels at each pilaster and a modest cornice with a dentil trim below. At the top of the flat parapet is a simple reeded trim.

Several of the tenancies retain the original high ceilings with exposed concrete beams, pilasters and haunchings.

The verandah retains an old timber-battened soffit. Below the verandah, the shop-fronts are all of modern aluminium joinery, of differing vintages. Some older tiles survive, painted over.

### ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Element	Significance
Form and detail of the main façade above verandah level	Townscape, architectural, aesthetic
Verandah	Townscape, architectural

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<sup>6</sup> *Wises Streets Directory*, 1934.

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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:**

*Wises Streets Directory, 1934*

CT HB 38/151 (1924)

CT HB P2/207 (1992)

Photograph for Insurance purposes. Hawke's Bay Museum, Number 10,089 (negative X86/6/18)

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

*NZHPT Register:* Not registered

*District Plan:* The building is not specifically listed as a Heritage item in the Hastings District Plan, but is 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.

**OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS:**



Close up of Commerce Buildings façade (A. Sanders, 2009).

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Close up of Commerce Buildings façade (A. Sanders, 2009).

**ARCHIVE PLAN(S):**

Hastings District Council does not currently hold the original plans for this building.