

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



NATIONAL MAPPING CENTRE

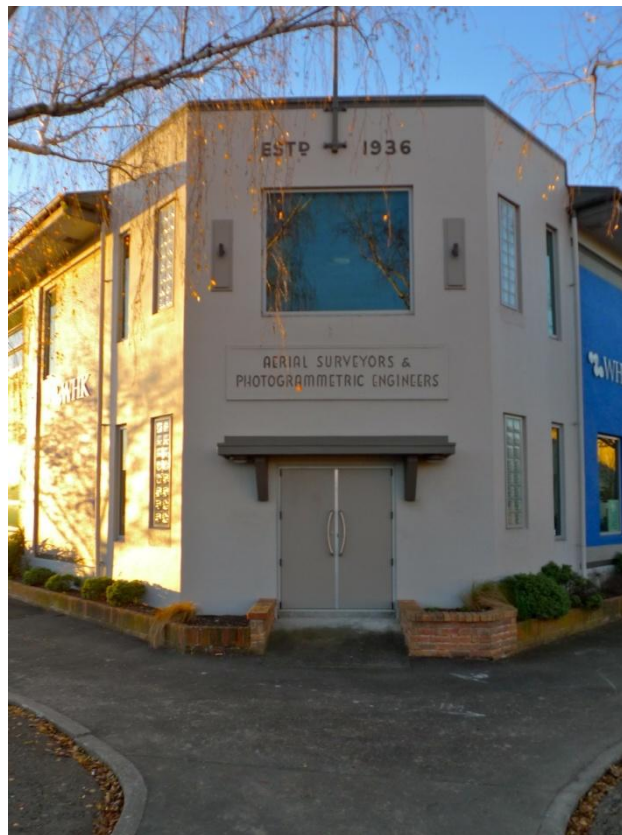


Photo: R. Murray, 2012

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 208 Avenue Road East

City / Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 1, 2 DP 10547, Lot 3 DP 12052, Lot 5 DP 6696, NZG P1283 NO 14 Lot 1 DP 12052

Certificates of Title (includes Registry): 112/33, Hawke's Bay Registry; 195/12, Hawke's Bay Registry; A1/768, Hawke's Bay Registry; A1/769, Hawke's Bay Registry

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

Architectural values are slight, being limited to those of a simple and unglamorous utilitarian structure built for fairly mundane purpose.

Historical Value:

The establishment of New Zealand Aerial Mapping Limited (NZAM) marked a shift in the Hawke's Bay economy away from the depressed conditions of the early 1930s. NZAM was important in the development of agriculture in the region. The construction of a new headquarters in 1956 reflected NZAM's growth, which required larger premises for business offices and photograph development facilities.

Aesthetic Value:

The National Mapping Centre building is located on a corner site at an entry point to the Hastings CBD, so for this reason, in conjunction with its size, has a measure of prominence in the local streetscape.

HISTORY:

Designed by well-known Hastings architect Eric Phillips, the National Mapping Centre building was purpose built in 1956 for New Zealand Aerial Mapping Limited (NZAM). Established in late 1935 by Piet van Asch, NZAM had earlier had premises on Warren and Russell Streets.¹ The building was constructed with a central powerhouse that includes gas-fired water heaters, water pumps for an artesian water supply, gas-fired boilers for air conditioning, and refrigeration units.

Combining his strong interest in aviation and photography, van Asch had founded NZAM because he believed there was a commercial opportunity in specialist aerial mapping. The company was started with support and financial backing from individuals across Hawke's Bay and the East Coast, many of whom were farmers.² Along with other business initiatives at this time, the establishment of NZAM marked a shift in the Hawke's Bay economy away from the depressed conditions of the early 1930s.

After spending about a year in England, where he secured a suitable aircraft, a Monospar ST-25 Universal, van Asch returned to New Zealand early in 1937 and began survey work for the DSIR in the South Island.³ The Monospar was based at the Bridge Pa aerodrome outside of Hastings. During the Second World War, NZAM carried out mapping work to meet the needs of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. In 1943, the Monospar was retired and replaced by a Beechcraft AT-11 Kansen, a new military aircraft imported for NZAM by the RNZAF.⁴ After the war, NZAM was required to expand the amount of work undertaken for civilian purposes and looked particularly to the needs of farmers and local bodies.⁵

¹ Geoff Conly, *Piet's Eye in the Sky: The Story of New Zealand Aerial Mapping*, Hastings, 1986, p 78, p. 122.

² Matthew Wright, *Town and Country: The History of Hastings and District*, Hastings, 2001, p 500; Geoff Conly, *Piet's Eye in the Sky: The Story of New Zealand Aerial Mapping*, Hastings, 1986, p 122.

³ Matthew Wright, 'van Asch, Henry Piet Drury', <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Geoff Conly, *Piet's Eye in the Sky: The Story of New Zealand Aerial Mapping*, Hastings, 1986, p 95.

By the mid-1950s, NZAM's progress was such that the ground-based operation – its business offices and facilities for developing and storing film – was becoming increasingly squeezed in the building occupied on Russell Street.⁶ It was decided that a new, custom-designed headquarters would be built, a suitable site being available on the corner of Avenue Road and Warren Street. The design of the new building was determined partly by financial constraints, with annual capital expenditure being limited to £10,000. Hastings architect Eric Phillips suggested an L-shaped concrete building with block panels, the interior of which could be divided in later years. This plan was accepted, with provision made for a central powerhouse, which fed both arms of the building while excluding noise from the working areas. The powerhouse included gas-fired water heaters, water pumps for an artesian water supply, gas-fired boilers for air conditioning, and refrigeration units.

Operating from the new building, NZAM continued to expand its field of work to include aerial photography for city surveys, engineering surveys, and forestry purposes.⁷ The company also reached agreements to carry out further work for the Crown, enabling the production of more detailed topographical maps.⁸ By the mid 1980s, with the company flying its fourth aircraft, there was an increase in specialised surveys (including colour and infra-red) of subjects such as farm settlements, railways, schools, gas pipelines and irrigation schemes.⁹ By this time, NZAM was also undertaking work in the Pacific.

In 1983, the NZAM building was modified with a re-organisation of the internal layout.¹⁰ Changes were also made to the heating system and new storage facilities were built. The building was repainted and a new roof added. The current owners are PG Gavin, EE Gavin, Gavin Family Trust & Napier Independent Trustees 2008 Ltd, and is currently tenanted by WHK Coffey Davidson.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: Eric Phillips

Builder: Unknown

Date of construction: 1956

Construction details: concrete structure with block infill panels

Description: The National Mapping Centre is located prominently on a corner site to the east of the CBD. As it stands today, the building is a U-shape in plan, with a small landscaped area between the arms of the U, and it backs on to a large open car-park area that affords views all around the building. It is enfiladed by mature trees along both main elevations, which partly screen it from view in the wider streetscape. It nevertheless has some distinction in the streetscape for the corner elevation and for its length.

The building is essentially undecorated. The most elaborately-designed element is the corner elevation, which has a simple symmetrical composition of a pair of doors sheltered by a weather hood with prominent brackets, surmounted by a large rectangular picture window. Glass block panels are set symmetrically on either flank. Beyond the corner, the building has a simple slightly expressed concrete frame and panel construction, with

⁶ *Ibid*, pp 122-123.

⁷ *Ibid*, p 135-140.

⁸ *Ibid*, p 161.

⁹ *Ibid*, p 139, p 166.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 164.

National Mapping Centre, 208 Avenue Road East

Inventory Number: 46; Property ID: 21214 and 21215; TRIM Reference: 21214#002#0003

Report by Phillip Cleaver

Draft: 28 August 2007, updated 5 January 2010, updated July 2012 (Cochran & Murray); Final Report: November 2012

modern aluminium joinery. The east wing, and part of the Warren Street elevation are new construction which is unobtrusively blended in with the style of the old building. The north elevation features prominent modern architectural work, with the main elements set skew to the original building.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Element	Significance
Corner elevations	Townscape

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

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

Conly, Geoff, *Piet's Eye in the Sky: The Story of New Zealand Aerial Mapping*, Hastings, 1986.

Heretaunga Intermediate School, *From Swamp to City*, Hastings, 1961.

<http://www.nzam.com>

Wright, Matthew, *Hawke's Bay: The History of the Province*, Palmerston North, 1994.

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

Wright, Matthew, 'van Asch, Henry Piet Drury', <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>

OTHER INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Not registered.

District Plan: The building is not included in the Hastings District Plan.

New Zealand Historic Places Act 1993: This site has not been identified as a potential archaeological site under Section 2 of the New Zealand Historic Places Act 1993.

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OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS:



Warren Street North façade
of National Mapping Centre
(S. Akers, 2009)



Avenue Road East façade
of National Mapping Centre
(S. Akers, 2009).

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

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