

Nelson Street Hall, 105 Nelson Street North

Inventory Number: 47; Property ID: 21016; TRIM Reference: 21016#002#0003

Report by Phillip Cleaver

Draft: 16 August 2007, updated December 2009, updated July 2012 (Cochran & Murray); Final Report: November 2012

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



NELSON STREET HALL

OTHER NAMES: New Gospel Hall and Nelson Street Bible Chapel



Photo: R. Murray, 2012

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 105 Nelson Street North

City / Town: Hastings

Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 5 Deeds Plan 827, Lot 7 DP 4760, and Part Lot 1 DP 4850.

Certificates of Title (includes Registry): HB45/28 & HB135/88, Hawke's Bay Registry

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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value: The Nelson Street Hall is a modest and simply styled building but one that has an interesting character arising from its well-balanced symmetrical composition enhanced with the understated use of Moderne decorative motifs. It is a good example of a late 1930s congregational hall.

Historical Value:

The building has a long-standing association with religious groups in Hastings stretching back over 80 years. Known as both the New Gospel Hall and Nelson Street Bible Chapel, the building represents a continuation of use of this site

Aesthetic Value:

The building is located in a reasonably prominent location (made more so after Nelson Street was converted to two-way traffic in the early 1990's.¹) It is part of a group of contemporaneous buildings of heritage interest, including the adjacent Bistro 103/Electrician building and Wades building on the Heretaunga Street corner. The building's distinctive visual character makes a positive contribution to the local streetscape.

HISTORY:

The plans for the building refer to it as the 'New Gospel Hall'.² Street directories indicate that, since at least 1930, an earlier building known as Gospel Hall had been on the Nelson Street site.³ Nothing is known about this building, but it may have been demolished as a result of damage caused by the 1931 earthquake.

The present Nelson Street Hall (also known as the Nelson Street Bible Chapel) was built in 1939.⁴ It was designed by W. Dickson (architect of the adjacent Bistro 103 building) and constructed by R.J. Potts⁵ for the Trustees of the Nelson Street Hall. With the words 'God is Love' and 'God is Light' on the façade, the Hall was built for use as a church. It appears to have been used by an evangelical congregation.

In 1994, the Nelson Street Hall was given a grant under the HDC Façade Enhancement Scheme. The application for this grant noted that the Chapel is a small building containing a mix of Spanish Mission, Stripped Classical and Art Deco architecture and that each style has been used to highlight certain features of the building (for example, Art Deco at the entrance).⁶

Until recently, the property appears to have been owned by individuals acting as trustees of the church.⁷ In 2001, it was transferred to the current owners, Thomas Henry Doonan,

¹ Façade Enhancement Scheme – Nelson Street Hall application, 1994.

² Hastings District Council file information.

³ *Wises Street Directory*, 1916 to 1959-60.

⁴ Hastings District Council file information.

⁵ Hastings District Council file information.

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⁷ Certificate of title 135/88, Hawke's Bay Registry.

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Sheryl June Doonan, and Grant James Doonan, who operate under the name of the Doonan Family Trust. The building is presently available to lease.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: W. Dickson

Builder: R.J. Potts

Date of construction: 1939

Construction details: Reinforced concrete structure, some brick infill partitions and panels, timber truss roof, corrugated steel roofing, timber windows and doors

Description: The Nelson Street Hall is a large-ish single-storey building of reinforced concrete. It is sited in the middle of the block, with a car-park to the north that enables views around most of the building, and is positioned well back from the street edge, an alignment which sets it somewhat apart from the neighbouring buildings.

The building's architectural style differs markedly from that of the churches of the older, more established Christian denominations. It is essentially a simple decorated shed, more like a commercial building than a traditional church, with Moderne and Deco influences evident in its decoration.

The main elevation faces Nelson Street and is most distinctive for its entry porch, a rare feature in the CBD area. The main elevation has a straightforward symmetrical composition centred about the front porch and entry doors, and with a single multi-light timber window set evenly on either side of the porch. The porch, which stands above a flight of wrap-around steps, has a plain flat roof and fluted square columns and pilasters, sheltering a pair of timber doors that are recessed back into the plan. The main wall face bears prominent horizontal striations flanking the legend "Nelson Street Hall" and is capped with a simple stepped parapet, with the central section slightly gabled for emphasis.

The north side elevation is of interest for its unusual tapered piers supporting the wall, and features a regular rhythm of plain rectangular timber windows. Modern alterations, including a roller shutter door, are visible at the rear of the building. There is an undistinguished concrete block shed at the rear of the property; many of the adjacent buildings appear to have been associated with the use of the hall.

The plan consists of a single large hall space, with small amenity areas at front and rear. The interior of the hall, such as can be seen through the windows, appears to be in relatively authentic condition. The original vestibule and cloak spaces remain, with elegant timber doors finished with bevelled glass and chrome hardware.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Element	Significance
Form and detail of street elevation and front porch	Townscape, aesthetic, architectural
Form and detail of north-east elevation	Architectural

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

Certificate of title 135/88, Hawke's Bay Registry.

Hastings District Council file information.

Wises Street Directory, 1916 to 1959-60.

HDC Permit records:

"Proposed New Gospel Hall, Nelson Street, Hastings", not dated, W R Dickson

OTHER INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Not registered

District Plan: The building is not specifically listed as a Heritage item in the Hastings District Plan and it borders on 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 PHOTOS



View from north-east, showing the modeling of the front and side elevations, 2012.

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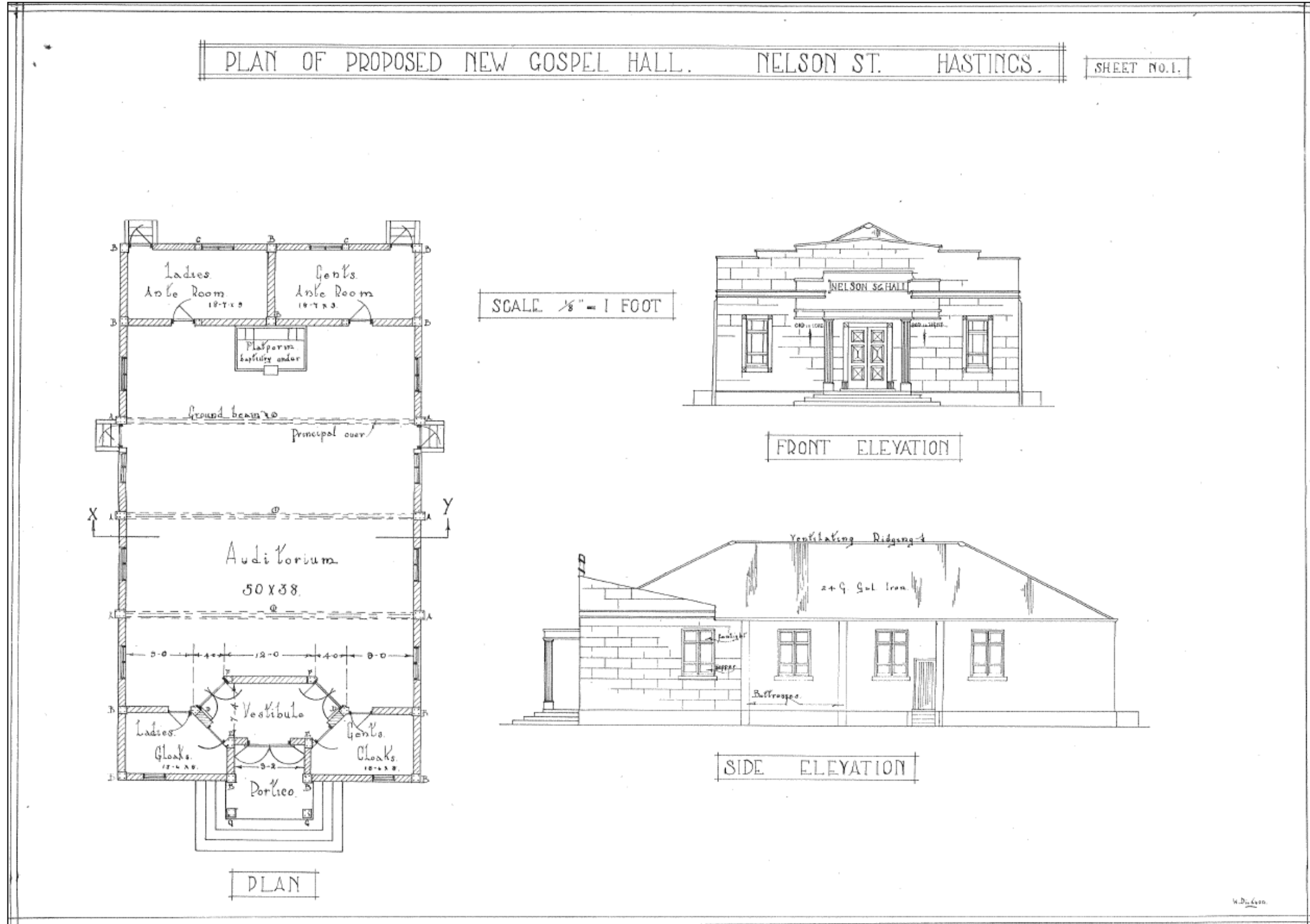
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View from north-west, showing rear elevation and shed, 2012

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Plan of proposed new Gospel Hall (Sheet No.1), Nelson St, Hastings, W. Dickson (1939) (TRIM Ref: 21016#006)



Details of proposed new Gospel Hall (Sheet No. 2), Nelson St, Hastings, W. Dickson (1939) (TRIM Ref: 21016#006)

