LOCATION:

Street and Number: 234-238 Heretaunga Street East (Council) and 240-242 Heretaunga Street East (Business)
Location: Corner of Heretaunga Street East and Warren Street North
City/ Town: Hastings
Region: Hawke’s Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 1 DP 11756
Certificate of Title (including Registry): HB C2/1429, Hawke’s Bay Registry
SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

Begley's Buildings has architectural value as a competent design of the post-earthquake period in Hastings, interesting for its strong composition, well-considered proportions and elegant shop-fronts. This building is in relatively authentic form. An unusual architectural feature is the outdoor living area at first floor level, which is screened by an extension to the Warren Street façade.

Historic Value:

Begley's Buildings has, at best, modest local historical significance. Although it is a reasonably well-known landmark, it has had an uneventful history and has not been associated with any major people or events. However, the story of its origins with poor Irish immigrants making good in their adopted country provides some distinct local interest.

Aesthetic Value:

The townscape value of Begley's Building is high, given its prominence on a busy city intersection and contribution to the pervading character of the area, which is made up of buildings of similar age and style. Its appropriate scale, and quiet dignity on the corner make it an important part of the streetscape. With shops on the ground floor, and accommodation on the first floor, the building is typical of the period.

Technological Value:

The building has technological interest in the fabric of the building which remains from the time of its construction. This includes the verandah and shopfronts – particularly the pressed metal panels in the verandah soffit and terrazzo wall panels, polished timber shop-front joinery and fine lead-light windows.

Social Value:

This building has had a continuous, if varied, retail function since it was built. It is a well-known landmark and has been patronised by many Hastings residents over its life.

HISTORY:

This building is named for its long-standing proprietors, the Begley family, who bought the land in 1914. Michael and Ellen Begley (b.1878) were Irish immigrants who met in New Zealand and farmed in the Hastings district. Ellen Begley bought the property on the corner of Heretaunga and Warren Streets as an investment and built a timber building on it, sometime in 1914.¹ A note of interest is that surviving drawings show a two-storey masonry building, apparently all on Warren Street, constructed by Duncan & Abbott Builders for Mrs Begley, ca. mid-1914, presumably adjoining this building.

The timber building was destroyed in the 1931 earthquake and the family replaced it with the present building. The replacement building was designed by architect J T Watson in 1931 (although the specification was written by prominent local architect A Garnett). The date of construction remains uncertain, although it was definitely completed by 1935 as the United Friendly Societies took out a lease on the building in that year.²

The building appears to have been well occupied over its life. The UFS pharmacy, for instance, became a long-standing tenant. It was eventually replaced by a rubberware and plastics store.³ Another long-standing occupier was Kelly’s grocers, a retail outlet run by Edward Kelly.⁴ Other occupiers have included a shoe shop, art gallery and most latterly a flower shop (Flowers By Tanya) and a finance company (Rapid Finance). Much of the first floor has been continuously occupied by residential flats since the building’s construction.

The property remained in the Begley family until 1968, when part of the land was sold.⁵ Begley’s Buildings was transferred to chemist Jack Johnson and his wife Marjorie in 1972 and it remained in their hands until it was purchased by its current owners, Russley Investment Proprietors.⁶

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

*Architect:* J T Watson (specification prepared by A Garnett)

John Thomas Watson (d. 1960) was born in Hull, England and came to New Zealand in 1905. He began his practice in Napier in 1932 after working in Greymouth, Masterton and Wellington (for Edwards Construction Co.). He worked as city architect in Napier, and while in both private and public practice he designed a number of structures along Marine Parade, including the Sound Shell. He also designed the Colonnade, the Municipal Theatre and the airport buildings.⁷

*Builder:* unknown

*Date of construction:* prior to 1935

*Construction details:* Reinforced concrete construction, steel windows, terrazzo wall paneling, timber shop-front joinery with leadlight windows

*Description:* Begley’s Building is a bold but straightforward two-storey structure standing on the north corner of Heretaunga Street East and Warren Street North. Although it has a relatively small footprint, the design of the building gives it a strong presence in the local streetscape.

The building is wrapped asymmetrically around the corner, with the longer façade on Warren Street and a large faceted face on the corner facing the intersection. Outwardly, the building remains in largely authentic condition. It is sparingly decorated with a combination of simple Art Deco and Spanish Mission motifs; the building’s architectural interest largely lies more in its carefully balanced proportions and composition and in the high quality of its finish.

² Lease dated 21 March 1935, HB11/150, LINZ
⁴ *Wises Street Directories,* 1935-1960
⁵ Certificate of Title HB126/48
⁶ Certificate of Title HBC2/1429
Above the verandah, the façade has three steel windows to the Heretaunga Street elevation and five to Warren Street. The groups of windows on either side of the corner are tied together visually by a small cornice, resting on corbels, running above the windows, while the windows further down Warren Street rest on a ‘sill’ supported on brackets. Above these, and the corner window, is incised Art Deco-style decoration, a simple geometric banding with stars set in small squares. Otherwise wall surfaces are plain plaster, now painted.

A stayed verandah wraps around the corner of the building, sheltering the shops. The underside of the verandah retains the original pressed metal soffit lining and cast vents, attractive decorative features that compliment the design of the shop-fronts. The shop-fronts are set in terrazzo paneled surrounds and are elegantly made, with polished timber joinery holding large plate glass windows, and along Warren Street, fine lead-light windows above the display windows (the shop-front joinery on Heretaunga Street, although it marries in well with the original, is modern replacement work).

The verandah extends a short distance along Warren Street. Beyond the end of the verandah, the building has a uniform two-storey façade, where there is access to the accommodation on the first floor. An unusual feature of the first floor is the open north-facing balcony, which occupies the space behind the last window on the façade, maintaining the visual balance of the upper façade while offering some privacy to the outdoor living space.

**ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Form and detail of the two main façades, including steel windows</td>
<td>Townscape, architectural, aesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop-fronts, including terrazzo cladding, timber joinery and stained glass windows</td>
<td>Architectural, aesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verandah and pressed metal lining</td>
<td>Architectural, aesthetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:**

Certificate of Title HB126/48, LINZ

*Wises Street Directories*, 1935-1960

*HDC permit records:*


Tender, 6.4.1928 for Mrs Begley, architect H Hyland, builder T Flowers

“Building in Warren Street for Mrs E Begley” 30.4.1914, Duncan and Abbott Builders
OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Not registered

District Plan: Begley’s Building is not listed specifically 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:

Warren Street shop-front, 2012. Note the paneled pressed-metal verandah soffit and trims, cast soffit vents, polished timber shop-front windows with fine lead-lights and terrazzo wall paneling.
Warren Street façade, 2012. The open deck area behind the right-hand window serves the residential tenancies of the top floor.

Heretaunga Street view of building (Sarah Akers, 2009)
ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Building in Warren Street for Mrs E Begley, demolished prior to 1931 earthquake (1914) (TRIM Ref: 21351#0006)