

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



MURRAY ROBERTS BUILDING

OTHER NAMES: Taheke Building



LOCATION:

Street and Number: 125 Queen Street East
City / Town: Hastings
Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 13, 14 DP 2795
Certificate of Title: HBC2/1067

Murray Roberts Building, 125 Queen Street East

Inventory Number: 86; Property ID: 21314; TRIM Reference: 21314#002#0003

Report by Sarah Akers & Chris Cochran

Draft: 14 December 2009; Final report: August 2012

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architectural Value:

The Murray Roberts Building has modest architectural value as a commercial building, typical of its time (possibly mid-1920s), and serving a useful purpose through a long life. It appears to pre-date the Hawke's Bay earthquake, as indicated by the strengthening drawing for the doorway of April 1931, which gives the building a technical and historic value.

Historic Value:

The historic value of the building derives from the range of commercial tenants that have occupied it, a history that is typical of many like buildings in the CBD, also for its surviving the earthquake.

Aesthetic Value:

The Murray Roberts Building is located in a key part of the Hastings CBD, a main entry point to the central city. While not distinguished in itself, it is part of an impressive row of buildings on the south side of Queen Street that has very high townscape value because of their compatible scale, their design and their individual visual interest.

HISTORY:

In 1913 Heathcote Beetham Williams was listed as the owner of Lot 13, 14 DP 2795.¹ Presumably the building was constructed sometime between 1913 and 1916, when the offices of Murray Roberts and Co-occupied 125 Queen Street East.² In 1925 ownership of the property was transferred to George Ebbett,³ and the occupiers were Ebbett and Gifford (solicitors) and Murray and Cameron (brokers).⁴ The building survived the 1931 earthquake and was later found to have some structural damage which cost £1,260 in repairs.⁵ Ebbett and Gifford continued to occupy the building until at least 1960, along with a variety of other tenants including E. J Harman (surveyor), S. G Chaplin (architect), A. E Wishart (accountant), Hawke's Bay Hunt Club, Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corp, Engineering Alliance Limited and Riding Devices.⁶

Ownership of the property has also transferred a number of times since 1955, when Ernest Gifford and Albert Wishart were listed as the new owners.⁷ Other owners have included Bressey Building Ltd, C. M. A van Florenstein Mulder, Taheke Buildings and Tels Investments.⁸

The present owner is 125 Limited, who have owned the property since 2007 when ownership was transferred from Tels Investments. It is occupied by Bay Legal, B. R William Consulting Engineers Limited, Arrow International and Dispute Solutions, Interconimex NZ Limited, Taheke Buildings Limited, Seafield Farm HB Limited and Eskridge.

¹ H. B 32/222

² Map created by the Council of Fire and Accident Underwriters Associations of New Zealand, April 1925

³ H. B 32/222

⁴ *Wises Street Directory*, 1925.

⁵ Fowler, M 2007 *From Disaster to Recovery: the Hastings CBD 1931-35*, Michael Fowler Publishing Limited, Havelock North.

⁶ *Wises Street Directories*, 1934, 1940, 1946, 1950-51.

⁷ H. B 32/222

⁸ H. B 32/222, H. B C2/1067

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: Not presently known.

Builder: Not presently known.

Date of construction: Not presently known.

Construction details: Not known; possibly brick masonry, with reinforced concrete surround to main entrance doorway.

Description: The Murray Roberts Building has no special distinguishing features, but it fits well in its context of two storey buildings in this part of Queen Street East. It is three bays wide, with the entrance porch in the narrow central bay with a wider bay either side, each with large steel framed windows. The façade is divided by horizontal cornice mouldings, and the large plain areas are finished with a textured stucco plaster; the line of the parapet is broken with four stubby ‘capitals’ with scrolls, an unusual device.

The only architectural record for the building is a drawing titled ‘New Doorway Reinforcement for J Ebbett’ and drawn by Edmund Anscombe and Associates. It shows reinforced concrete columns and archway surrounding the main doorway. The drawing is dated 24 March 1931, less than two months after the Hawke’s Bay earthquake, and the work was approved on 16 April 1931, so that repairs were affected very quickly indeed. There are still terrazzo steps at the entrance.

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Form and detail of the front façade, including the terrazzo steps.	Architectural, aesthetic.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

Fowler, M 2007 *From Disaster to Recovery: the Hastings CBD 1931-35*, Michael Fowler Publishing Limited, Havelock North.

H. B 32/222

H. B C2/1067

Map created by the Council of Fire and Accident Underwriters Associations of New Zealand, April 1925 in Fowler, M 2007 *From Disaster to Recovery: the Hastings CBD 1931-35*, Michael Fowler Publishing Limited, Havelock North.

Wises Street Directories, 1925-1959-60.

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.

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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.

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

The Hastings District Council does not hold the original plan for this building.