



National Bank, 66 Devon Street West

1939

Themes in development: transport and trade.

Cultural heritage values: historical, architectural, technical, townscape and group values.

Registered: Category II under the Historic Places Act, 1993.
Category III on the New Plymouth District Planning Scheme.

Owner

Black Horse Properties
c/- National Bank Property Services Group
PO Box 1791, Wellington

Title

DP 111 DP 1728
Lot 1 DP 5056
ID: 013712

Use

Banking

Description

The National Bank is a two-storied reinforced concrete building on the prominent Devon Street West / Brougham Street corner. It is in a stripped classical style with full height "columns" emphasised by the spandrel panels at first floor level being recessed. A decorative frieze at roof level and a smaller band above capping the parapet have geometric motifs with a Maori influence.

History

The New Plymouth Branch of the National Bank was opened in April 1873. It was first housed in a simple two-storied timber building on another site in Devon Street. The present site was acquired by the Bank in 1878 and a timber building erected in 1884; further land was purchased in 1901 and extensions made. The present building was erected in 1939, the *Taranaki Herald* (9 March 1939) saying it was "designed in the most modern style ... the building with its plain and simple lines presents a dignified appearance which is striking but in no sense obtrusive."

Alterations designed by the National Bank's own architects were carried out in 1982, and in 1984 and 87 extensions and alterations were carried out to the design of Tse Group Ltd.

Architects

Mitchell and Mitchell of Wellington.

Statement of Significance

The National Bank is a restrained and careful piece of design, a good example of bank architecture of the 1930s. It is essentially classical in concept, but in its clean lines and modest decoration it is nevertheless looking forward to the arrival of modernism. It has a high level of integrity as a period building, with a modern verandah the only significant change to the exterior. The building has high townscape value on the important Devon Street West / Brougham Street corner.

Sources

New Plymouth District Council building file 152/39. This includes copies of the original drawings dated 19 November 1937 and the specification. NZHPT Record Form no 901.