



Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

L. A. Nolan Hide Store

Address

15 Liardet Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

This building has considerable heritage significance for its occupation by well-known New Plymouth firm L. A. Nolan and Co for over sixty years. It is also significant as the first building constructed in New Plymouth (and likely Taranaki), utilising hollow-core reinforced camerated concrete. This is currently the only known surviving New Plymouth building constructed using this method and is a nationally uncommon example of a two-storied camerated concrete structure. The building retains a high degree of integrity, and although simple in design, adds interest to the surrounding streetscape which is now mostly composed of more modern buildings.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description PT Section 879 Town of New Plymouth

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1910

Principal Materials Camerated Concrete, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Sanderson and Griffiths (architects); Messrs R. Bond and Co (Robert William Bond) (builders)

History

This building was erected in 1910 as a hide store and saleroom for New Plymouth auctioneers, land and general agents, L. A. Nolan and Co.

L. A. Nolan and Co was established in 1907 by Leslie Adams Nolan. Nolan came from a family of successful auctioneers and was for a number of years a representative for Messrs Macky, Logan and Co in Taranaki.¹ In 1906, Nolan entered into partnership with John Wilson under the name Nolan and Wilson. They purchased the former business premises of Messrs Bewley and Griffiths (present 36-38 Devon Street East), and commenced business soon after. However, the partnership was short-lived, and was dissolved in late 1907, with Nolan to continue the business under the name L. A. Nolan and Co.²

Nolan's firm was successful, and with the sale of hides, wool and tallow a major component of the business, it was decided to erect purpose-built premises in which to hold their monthly sales of these goods.³ New Plymouth architects Sanderson and Griffiths (James Sanderson and Horace Victor Griffiths), prepared plans for a new two-storied structure to be constructed using camerated concrete; this would be the first building in New Plymouth (and very likely Taranaki), constructed from camerated concrete. Henry Arthur Goddard, of Sydney, first patented his camerated concrete wall system in New South Wales in 1905, and then in New Zealand in 1906.⁴ Camerated concrete was touted as a revolutionary construction method, and was popular because it was fire proof, eliminated dampness, and was relatively quick and cheap to use.⁵

In November 1910 Nolan applied to the New Plymouth Borough Council for permission to erect his new warehouse, however, special approval had to be given because the hollow nature of camerated concrete contravened Borough by-laws.⁶ The Borough Council, in seeing the merits of camerated concrete construction, waived the bylaw, and on January 29th 1910, granted a permit to Nolan for the construction of a warehouse on Town Section 879, with estimated construction cost was £1,100.⁷ Robert William Bond was the builder, and also owned the land on which the building was constructed;

¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 8 August 1906, p.2

² *Taranaki Herald*, 13 November 1907, p.3

³ *Taranaki Daily News*, 12 May 1910, p.3

⁴ Making of the New Zealand House 1792-1982. Isaacs, Nigel P., PhD thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, 2015

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Taranaki Herald*, 13 December 1909, p.7

⁷ NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

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this being conveyed to Nolan in June 1910 following completion of the building.⁸

Construction seems to have commenced in early February 1910, and generated some public interest, with several articles explaining camerated concrete construction published in the *Taranaki Herald* and *Daily News*.⁹ The holder of the New Zealand rights for camerated concrete, Mr H. Leslie Friend, along with the local Taranaki agent, Mr J. W. Wilson, both visited the site in February to answer questions from the media, engineers, and the general public about camerated concrete.¹⁰ The new warehouse was opened with a successful hide and skin sale on 11 May 1910; with the mayor, Mr G. Tisch, in attendance.

L. A. Nolan occupied the building for the next six decades, with the last hide sale taking place on 8 August 1972.¹¹ Nolan's Devon Street Mart closed three years later in March 1975, and both buildings were sold¹² An article in the *Taranaki Herald* on the 22nd of January 1976 reported that a nightclub was to be opened in the building.¹³ This was confirmed by a spokesman for the owners, Maui Holdings, Mr J. F. Luxton of Urenui, although it is unclear if it went ahead. In more recent times the antique shop "Blue Moon" was located in this building; It closed about 2006. The building is now occupied by Escape, a skate store and popular coffee outlet.



L. A. Nolan's Building, 7 August 1938. Fred B. Butler Album, Puke Ariki Collection, ARC 2013-1426

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

⁸ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

⁹ *Taranaki Daily News*, 29 January 1910, p.2; *Taranaki Herald*, 14 February 1910, p.2

¹⁰ *Taranaki Daily News*, 14 February 1910, p.2

¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 27 March 1975, page 1

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Taranaki Herald*, 22 January 1976, page 1



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Description

The former L. A. Nolan Hide Store building is located on a prominent section at the corner of Liardet and Gill Streets in New Plymouth’s Central Business District. Lower Liardet Street was an important commercial and industrial hub from the late-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century, with both the Sash and Door Company and Gasworks located in the vicinity. This mix shifted towards modern offices in the 1960s and 1970s, with most of the older factories and warehouses demolished by the late 1980s.

The exterior of the building is largely unadorned and reflects the nature of the building as a 1910s commercial warehouse. The plan of the structure is a plain rectangular form, with a gabled roof. The symmetrically composed front elevation faces south-west into Liardet Street. On the ground floor of this elevation is a central entrance door, flanked by two modern (circa 1980s) aluminium windows, replacing the original double-hung sashes.

The first floor features a row of five regular double-hung sashes. Above which is a heavy moulded cornice, stopped at either end by simple brackets, and topped with an unadorned gable-end. This same detailing (although now largely hidden), is used on the neighbouring former Criterion Motors building, also constructed by Bond (from masonry), in 1908, and this helps add some continuity to the streetscape.

The ground floor of the Gill Street elevation has been similarly modernised. The original four-light double-hung sash windows have been replaced with aluminium joinery, although the openings remain largely unaltered. A larger opening with a steel roller door is located at the centre. On the first floor is a row of six evenly spaced four-light double-hung sashes.

Assessment

Historical	This building is historically significant for its connection with the long-lived New Plymouth firm L. A. Nolan and Co. Nolan’s occupied the building for just over sixty years - a considerable period of time. The sale of skins and hides was an important income earner for Taranaki farmers.	✓
Importance to Community	Given Nolan’s occupation of the building until 1972, many local residents will still recall the well-attended monthly hide sales.	✓
Architecture & Construction	Whilst the building’s exterior is relatively simple, it has considerable technical interest as a relatively early example of a two-storied camerated concrete building in New Zealand.	✓
Setting and Context	The prominent corner location, and relatively unaltered exterior, ensures this building has a strong street presence.	✓
Archaeology	–	
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	The building was the first to be constructed in New Plymouth (and likely Taranaki), using camerated concrete. This is currently the only known surviving New Plymouth building constructed using this method and is a nationally uncommon example of a two-storied camerated concrete structure.	✓✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓