

III ART DECO TRUST

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NAPIER'S RECONSTRUCTION ARCHITECTS

There were four architectural practices in Napier at the time of the Earthquake, and almost all of the reconstruction work was undertaken by them, working together as the Napier Associated Architects. Sharing premises and facilities and working round the clock, they brought a unity of purpose to the immense task of rebuilding the town. But except in rare instances where a building might be designed jointly, each architect designed in his own way, each tending to favour a particular style.

The local practices were those of Natusch & Sons, Finch & Westerholm, E A Williams and J A Louis Hay. J T Watson arrived in Napier in 1934. Buildings owned by national companies, such as the banks and the Masonic Hotel, were designed by the architects retained by those firms, in particular Crichton McKay & Haughton, Atkin & Mitchell, Prouse & Wilson, Stanley Fearn, Llewellyn & William, (all of Wellington) L G West Son & Hornibrook of Palmerston North and Gummer Ford Hoadley & Budge of Auckland. The Government Building and the Telephone Exchange were designed by J T Mair, the Government Architect of the time.

Other buildings were designed by D B Frame 1863-1938, W Atherfold, Alfred Hill, H J Doherty, H Faulknor, A B Davis & Sons, R Holt & Sons. The Wellington architect Edmond Anscombe, who operated an office in Hastings in the early 1930s, designed two buildings at Ahuriri.

NATUSCH & SONS

PREFERRED STYLES: Early Modernism, to a lesser extent Art Deco.

Founded in 1886 by Charles Tilleard Natusch (1859-1951), who designed many large country houses in Hawke's Bay and the Manawatu area, this practice is the only one active in the 1930s which still operates today as Judd Dougan Team Architects. His three sons Aleck (1883-1971), Stanley (1889-1973) and Rene (1885-1971) joined the firm which had branches in Gisborne, Palmerston North and Wellington. Stanley, who practiced in London during the early 1920s, brought back with him three folios of photographs of pavilions at the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative and Industrial Arts (now held by the Napier Public Library) and was no doubt influenced by those.

Buildings produced by this firm are typically restrained in ornamentation, and include the Market Reserve Building, Blythes Department Store (now the Farmers), Lockyers Building and McGruers Building. The firm did much of the surveying and reporting of damage after the earthquake, and Rene Natusch was chairman of the Associated Architects. Stanley Natusch, who had a town planning as well as an architectural background, created the concept plan for the Marine Parade.

J A LOUIS HAY (1881 – 1948)

PREFERRED STYLES: Prairie Style, and to a lesser extent the Chicago School.

James Augustus Louis Hay, who was as a young man an articulated pupil of C T Natusch, gave free rein to his admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. The work by Sullivan which inspired him dates from the 1880s and 1890s, and the buildings in Wright's Wasmuth Folio, a copy of which Hay possessed, was published in 1912 and depicted designs from the first decade of the century.

Not surprisingly, his colleagues tended to consider his work rather dated at the time, but Hay's Napier buildings were of necessity simpler than those which influenced them, and so must have seemed modern to his clients and to the public in the 1930s. Today, with their rich ornament and their association with Wright, who is now a cult figure, and because of the rarity of their type, they appeal to tourists in Napier as much as the most flamboyant of the Art Deco facades - perhaps even more so.

Hay's best known work is the National Tobacco Company Building in Ahuriri, which combines elements of Art Deco, Art Nouveau and the Chicago School. Gerhard Husheer, the firm's founder, commissioned retained Hay to

design all of the many buildings or alterations which he commissioned. Hay was chairman of the Hawke's Bay branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, and represented them on the Napier Reconstruction Committee after the earthquake.

One of Hay's articulated pupils, Basil Ward, later joined fellow New Zealander Amyas Connell to form the famous English practice of Connell Ward and Lucas, which designed some famous International Style houses there in the 1930s.

H A WESTERHOLM (FINCH 1890 – 1972)

PREFERRED STYLES: Spanish Mission, to a lesser extent Stripped Classical.

In 1932 Walter P Finch, a conservative architect who had been practising in Napier for a long period and had designed the Hawke's Bay Club in 1905, entered into partnership with Herbert A Westerholm, the firm being called Finch & Westerholm. Born in Palmerston North of Swedish and Finnish parents. Westerholm was considered progressive and was almost certainly the reason for the adoption of the Spanish Mission style which was used on a large number of the many buildings which this productive firm designed – they produced more buildings than any other firm during the reconstruction. The most notable examples were the State Cinema, the Gaiety de Luxe Cinema, the Shakespeare Hotel and the Provincial Hotel. Westerholm was also a versatile architect who designed freezing works and wool stores, as well as commercial and domestic buildings, and he also used the Stripped Classical style, examples being the State Insurance Building and the offices of Sainsbury Logan & Williams.

J T WATSON (d.1960)

PREFERRED STYLES: Art Deco.

John Thomas Watson was born in Hull, England, and came to New Zealand via South Africa in 1905. He arrived in Napier in 1932 and after some years in private practice was employed as the Borough Architect. He designed almost all of the architectural features on the Marine Parade, as well as a few inner city buildings. He favoured the Art Deco style, and in 1937 designed the Napier Municipal Theatre after Louis Hay's original prize-winning design was rejected as too expensive.

E A WILLIAMS (1875 – 1962)

PREFERRED STYLES: Art Deco, to a lesser extent Spanish Mission.

Born in London, Ernest Arthur Williams emigrated in 1907. He arrived in Napier in 1908 and worked initially for W P Finch. After working for the Napier Borough Council as Clerk of Works, during which time he oversaw the construction of the Municipal Baths on the Marine Parade, he set up practice in 1912 and being registered as both architect and engineer, he had many skills to offer after the disaster. His reconstruction buildings include some of the most flamboyant Art Deco designs, such as the Daily Telegraph, Masson House and the Hotel Central (now Countrywide Bank), and also some Spanish Mission designs including the Criterion Hotel and Harston's building. Stepped building profiles, intricate plaster decoration, the zigzag motif, and the use of Spanish balconies are characteristic of his work.

In 1939, his son Lawrence joined him in the practice and introduced the International Style to Napier with the Automobile Association Building in Herschell Street (now the Community Health Centre).

HASTINGS ARCHITECTS

DAVIES PHILLIPS & CHAPLIN

This firm, Hastings' major architectural practice, was formed as Hyland & Phillips around 1920. By 1931, the firm had become Davies Garnett & Phillips, but in 1933 was just Davies & Phillips. In 1947 it became Davies Phillips & Chaplin. In 1963, with the retirement of Eric Phillips and the addition of Keith Sands, a consulting engineer, the firm became Davies Phillips, Chaplin & Partners, Registered Architects & Consulting Engineers. On the retirement of S G Chaplin, the last of the partners in the firm's title, in 1978, the firm became Kingsford, Sands, Norwell & Partners.

In the late 1920s, the firm designed the original section of the Hastings Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, and immediately after the 1931 earthquake the firm was responsible for the rebuilding of the Hastings Municipal Theatre (now the H B Opera House) and the new Hastings Fire Station (1933) in Hastings Street (now part of an office complex).

Buildings by Davies & Phillips built in the reconstruction period include: Roaches Department Store (now Westpoint Plaza) 1934, Heretaunga Chambers 1935 (which included some stylish shop fronts), the Hastings Methodist Church 1931-32, Medical & Dental Chambers (now Las Palmas) 1935, Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board Building, Ross Dysart & McLean's garage, Baillie Motors Garage (now part of the Opera House complex). It is difficult to identify which of the buildings designed by Davies & Phillips during the reconstruction period were by Davies and which were by Phillips.

In 1957, the Eric Phillips designed the Iona College Chapel in Spanish Mission style, and in 1959, the Hastings War Memorial Library.

HAROLD DAVIES 1888 - 1976

Harold Davies was born in Wellington and after working for the Wellington Education Board, moved to Hastings to establish his own practice in 1914. He later joined Eric Phillips in partnership and the firm operated throughout the 1930s and 40s. He did a great deal of hospital work, in Hastings, Wairoa, Gisborne and Waipukurau. He was involved in musical productions, racing, cricket and golf. His work in the 1930s and 40s was modern, sometimes Art Deco and sometimes, particularly from the late 1930s on in the Streamline style. His hospital blocks in Waipukurau, now closed, are evidence of this. He retired from the firm in the early 1960s.

ERIC PHILLIPS 1897 - 1980

Born in Hastings, Herbert Eric Phillips was employed by the firm of Hoggard, Prouse & Gummer in Wellington from 1914 and supervised the construction of Tauroa in 15-16. Following service overseas during World War 1 he returned to work in Gummer's Auckland office. In 1920 he joined Henry Hyland in partnership and in 1922 he won a national competition with his design for the Napier Public Trust Office. In the years after the second world war, he designed many homes in a Cape Cod style, an example being the home built for the Toogoods in Te Mata Road, near the intersection with the Waimarama Road and River Road. He retired in 1963. He was involved with the NZ Historic Places Trust and was well-known as an historian, being very knowledgeable on Maori lore, and was a keen angler.

SYDNEY CHAPLIN 1905 - 1990

S G Chaplin was born in Hastings and was articled to Hyland & Phillips for one year. He attended the Auckland University School of Architecture for one year while working part-time for Gummer & Ford in 1924. He travelled to England in 1925, studying at the Bartlett Atelier of Architecture, University College of London, part-time for 4 years, and worked for several London firms. He was a finalist for the Rome Scholarship, and in Burma worked on drawings for Rangoon University. He returned to New Zealand just prior to the 1931 earthquake, when work was scarce for architects. In 1935 he won the competition for the design of the Hastings Clock Tower, and in 1938 designed the John Hill building, a remodelling of an older building. He served overseas in World War 2 and in 1947 became a partner in Davies & Phillips. He retired in 1978.

ALBERT GARNETT 1878 - 1956

Albert Garnett was born in Hastings, the son of James Garnett, a building contractor and a mayor of Hastings who died in office. Albert worked with his father for some years before taking up architecture. He won a national competition for the design of the Municipal Buildings in 1915, and designed the Methodist Church opposite which was destroyed by the 1931 earthquake. Other notable Hastings buildings he designed were Credit House (1914) in Queen St, Villa d'Este (1929), Poppelwell's Building (1924), Harvey's Building (1933 - the Hastings Community Arts Centre), Holden's Building (1934) and Carlsson House (1933). He also designed some fine Californian bungalows in the Hastings District.

He was in partnership with Davies & Phillips for a brief period from 1931 – 1933.

HENRY HYLAND 1894 – 1966 (?)

Henry (Harry) Hyland was born in Auckland. He studied at Auckland University and the Gower St University, London, qualifying as an architect and structural engineer. He moved to Hastings in 1920 to join in partnership with Eric Phillips, and completed studies in town planning. He returned to England in 1930 where he worked on some important projects including major hospitals, Lloyds Bank Head Office, the Daily Telegraph, Unilever House, and bridges for Dorman Long which included a bridge across the Nile at Cairo and Sydney Harbour Bridge. He returned to New Zealand in 1935 and joined the Government Architect's Office. He retired during World War 2.

EDMUND ANSCOMBE 1874 - 1948

Anscombe was born in England and the family emigrated to Dunedin when he was 7. He attended the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888, when he was 14, and this created a life-long interest in the design of international exhibitions. After serving as an apprentice carpenter, he left for the United States in 1901 to study architecture, where it is believed that he studied by correspondence and supported himself as a carpenter, working on the construction of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in ST Louis. The Beaux Arts style of this exposition influenced his later design work.

He returned to Dunedin in 1907 and between 1908 and 1929 designed 7 buildings for the University of Otago, as well as many other major buildings in Otago and farther afield. He supervised the construction of the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui which had been designed by his pupil, Donald Hosie, who was killed in World War 1. Following a tour of Canada and the USA in 1922, Anscombe proposed an international exhibition for Dunedin which was adopted, with him as the official architect. But for various reasons his association with the project was not a happy one and in 1929 he left Dunedin for Wellington, establishing an office there, and after receiving the commission for the Hawke's Bay Farmers Coop building, an office in Hastings. With frequent overseas trips, his work kept pace stylistically with overseas trends, and included Art Deco, Spanish Mission & Streamline styles. He designed a number of important buildings in Wellington, including the Herd St Post Office, Franconia and the Anscombe Flats. He also designed the Rotorua Municipal Buildings.

Anscombe's Hawke's Bay buildings include the H B Farmers Building, the Dominion Restaurant, Kershaw's Building, Westermans Building, the Central Building, the State Theatre (in association with Vernon Brown of Auckland), the post-earthquake reconstruction of Iona College in Havelock North and Washpool at Maraekakaho.

WILLIAM RUSH 1872 - 1965

William Rush was born in Northampton, England, where he was articled to an architectural firm. He arrived in New Zealand in 1904 and in 1906 formed an association with E T James which lasted till 1914. During this period he designed St Luke's Hall (1911 – demolished in the 1990s) and St Luke's Church (1912). In addition to many Californian bungalows, he designed the original wings of Woodford House (1911) and Iona College (1913), Hereworth School (1913).