

**Albert Hotel, Heretaunga Street East, Hastings**

Inventory Number: 1; Property ID: 21419; TRIM Reference: 21419#002#0012

NZHPT Register Number 1079

Draft Report by Michael Kelly, and Chris Cochran, 10 October 2005; Final Audit 11 November 2009; Updated September 2012

## Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



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### ALBERT HOTEL

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Photo: M. Kelly, 2004

#### LOCATION:

*Street and Number:* 201 Heretaunga Street East or 100 Karamu Road South

*Location:* Corner of Heretaunga Street East and Karamu Road South, Hastings

*City/ Town:* Hastings

*Region:* Hawke's Bay

#### LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

*Legal Description:* Lot 1 DP 1646 and Lot 2 DP 4068, Hawke's Bay Registry

*Certificate of Title (includes registry):* HBE3/904 and HBE3/905, Hawke's Bay Land District

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### **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

#### *Architectural Value:*

The building is a good example of a nineteenth century hotel, exhibiting many of the characteristics that are typical of such places throughout the country – a prominent corner site, corner entrance to the main bar, verandah around both street facades, double-hung windows and parapet. In addition, for a building of this age and type, it is in reasonably authentic condition with much of the exterior fabric and the main staircase inside true to its 1880s form. The toilet block addition on the Karamu Road side is the only significant exterior change.

The Albert Hotel is a significant Hastings landmark, particularly as a timber building from the 1880s in a central business area now dominated by post-earthquake concrete buildings of the 1930s. It has high townscape value on a prominent corner site, contrasting with its neighbours in terms of age and materials but being compatible in terms of scale and height.

#### *Cultural Value:*

Having existed as a hotel for 120 years, the Albert Hotel is among the most important buildings in Hastings. Not only has it been a long-standing landmark, it has been a meeting place for generations of Hastings residents and visitors and, as such, the role of this building in the town's cultural life cannot be understated.

#### *Historic Value:*

The Albert Hotel is the oldest inner-city building in Hastings and has been continuously operating as a hotel since 1882, which gives it considerable historical significance. As a long-standing hostelry, it has been the scene of events, celebrations and socialising and is a place visited by a great many locals and visitors alike. It is likely that significant individuals stayed in the hotel when it offered guest accommodation, although specific names are hard to find. It is closely associated with its builder and first proprietor, William Dennett, who, as a mayor and prominent citizen, was an important figure in Hastings history. The hotel was also associated with two brewing companies, the local Napier Brewery Co., and Dominion Breweries, one of the two major breweries of twentieth century New Zealand.

#### *Technological Value:*

The building has technological value as a timber-framed structure from the 1880s. Details of timber species used, construction methods and details could be ascertained from a study of the building, information that is not readily available from other sources because of the relative rarity of such buildings in the district.

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### *Archaeological Value:*

Given the continuous activity at this site since at least the hotel's construction in 1882, there is considerable potential that material of archaeological value exists at this site.<sup>1</sup>

### **HISTORY:**

The Albert Hotel is thought to have been built about 1882.<sup>2</sup> It was built by W.T. Dennett, who later became mayor of Hastings (1899-1904 and 1905-1906) and for whom Dennett Street is named. Dennett was the hotel's first proprietor. An Australian, born in Tasmania in 1845, he entered the Colonial Defence Force and was later stationed in Hawke's Bay. After leaving the military, he established a cab service in Napier and then entered the hotel-keeping business in Napier. After he moved to Hastings and built the Albert Hotel (he was still listed as the proprietor there in 1890<sup>3</sup>) he took over the Carlton Club Hotel. Later he established himself as an auctioneer, insurance, land and general agent, and as Registrar of Electors. He was a prominent citizen and a trustee of various schools, friendly societies and other organisations.<sup>4</sup>

Little is otherwise known of the hotel's early history, although it did escape a major fire in Hastings in 1893. It was probably the second hotel built in the town. By 1904 the building was owned by the Napier Brewery Co.<sup>5</sup>, which hired managers to run the hotel. For much of its early history, guests were accommodated in its upstairs rooms. Since 1976, when the hotel became a tavern, these rooms have been occupied by permanent boarders. The hotel maintained a reputation for the quality of its service until the 1940s, but in the second half of the twentieth century it became more of a working class establishment. The hotel remained in the hands of the Napier Brewery Co. until 1944 when it was bought by Dominion Breweries (DB). Their ownership ended in 1993 with the building's sale to Cress Holdings Ltd.<sup>6</sup> The present owners, Durney Land Co., bought the property in 2002.<sup>7</sup>

The hotel has had a number of changes over time. Permit records indicate that about 20 alterations and additions have been made since 1919.<sup>8</sup> A substantial concrete structure was built by the Napier Brewery Co. immediately alongside the hotel on its Heretaunga Street elevation, possibly in the 1920s or earlier. The architect is not known but the original drawings survive.<sup>9</sup> This building was later incorporated into the hotel and in 1931 underwent post-Napier earthquake repairs, designed by Williams.<sup>10</sup> It is no longer part of the hotel. There were undated, substantial alterations to the bar, probably undertaken in the early 1930s and also designed by E.A. Williams.<sup>11</sup> Probably the most significant change externally was the construction of the concrete toilet block on the Karamu Road elevation in 1967.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that under the terms of the Historic Places Act 1993, the land this building occupies is an archaeological site.

<sup>2</sup> Various secondary sources cite this date.

<sup>3</sup> *Wises Directory* 1890

<sup>4</sup> Biographical information from *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand Vol.6 – Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington Provincial Districts*, The Cyclopedia Company Ltd., Christchurch p.449

<sup>5</sup> HB 60/272, LINZ, Napier. Land information records don't reveal if (and when) Dennett sold the property to the brewery.

<sup>6</sup> HB E3/905, LINZ, Napier

<sup>7</sup> HB E3/904, LINZ, Napier

<sup>8</sup> See Land Information Memorandum 20020132, Hastings District Council

<sup>9</sup> Held by the Hastings District Council

<sup>10</sup> Permit 21397, BBT P4754, Rec. 24198, Hastings District Council

<sup>11</sup> Permit 21419, BBIE P605, Rec. 3378, Hastings District Council

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In 1976, when DB wanted to change the building from a hotel to a tavern, the building's condition was described by the Licensing Control Commission as poor and its bars 'dilapidated'.<sup>12</sup> It was recommended to DB that they demolish the building, but they were reluctant to take that step, citing the profitability of the hotel.<sup>13</sup> Again, in 1984, the hotel's demolition was mooted, this time by DB itself. In response, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust pushed for its retention and a 'Save the Albert' campaign began. The building was even offered free for removal. The plans were quietly shelved and the hotel survived. In 2002 plans for restoration and upgrading were announced, but as yet nothing has happened.

The building is currently unoccupied, and is owned by Durney Land Company Limited.

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

*Architect:* Not known

*Builder:* William Dunnett

*Date of construction:* c1882

*Construction details:* Two-storey timber framed building, weatherboard cladding, corrugated iron roofing.

*Description:* The Albert Hotel is unusual in the Hastings Central Business District (CBD) in being a timber structure, with verandah, an unmistakably nineteenth century building in a townscape of predominantly concrete buildings of the 1930s. It is two storeys high, with a verandah at first floor level that is bracketed out from the ground floor; this is possibly as a result of ground floor verandah posts having been removed at some time. The verandah has a typical 'Union Jack' infill balustrade between the posts, and brackets supporting the main verandah beam. Above the verandah roof is a parapet (with panels) that hides the corrugated iron roof.

The whole of the cladding to the main elevations is rusticated weatherboarding. The ground floor has some original double-hung windows still in place (which is unusual in a building of this type), while at first floor level there are double-hung windows and doors opening out onto the verandah. There is a corner entrance into the main bar; alongside this a timber trapdoor in the pavement opens down to a cellar.

The main entrance is in the middle of the Heretaunga Street elevation; the hall has doors to the public spaces, and the original staircase (with balustrade) giving access to the first floor where there are rooms opening off either side of a central corridor. Linings are generally hardboard and modern. An automatic sprinkler system has been installed in the building.

The Albert Hotel has a strong presence in the Hastings Central Business District, being sited on the central Heretaunga Street East/Karamu Road South intersection. It has six bays along the Heretaunga Street facade, and eight on the Karamu Road façade. The hotel has two entrances, one on the corner to the main bar and the other on the

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<sup>12</sup> *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune* 11 May 1976

<sup>13</sup> The company had considered demolition in 1971 and abandoned the plan after realising how profitable the hotel was.

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Heretaunga Street façade with the stair to the first floor. The hotel is set back a little from the building line (the outer edge of the verandah lines with the next door buildings), giving wider footpaths and a strong presence in the street.

**ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:**

Element	Significance
First floor verandah, weatherboard cladding and original joinery on the two street elevations	Architectural, townscape, technical importance
Interior staircase	Architectural, technical importance
Cellar	Technical importance
Timber framing	Technical importance
Form of the building, layout of spaces	Architectural, townscape, historic importance

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:**

Certificates of Title HB 60/272, HB E3/904 and HB E3/905, Land Information New Zealand, Hawke's Bay land District

*Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune* 11 May 1976

New Zealand Historic Places Trust File 'Albert Hotel', 12011-088

*The Cyclopedia of New Zealand Vol.6 – Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington Provincial Districts*, The Cyclopedia Company Ltd., Christchurch.

*Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory*, H Wises & Co, Dunedin, volume 1890

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

*NZHPT Registration Number:* The Albert Hotel is a Category II Historic Place (Number 1079).

*District Plan Listing:* Listed as a Category II Historic Place in the Operative Hastings District Plan (Heritage Item H26) and 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.

A report has been commissioned by Council on the Albert Hotel to determine the buildings earthquake readiness. An Initial Evaluation Procedure (IEP) for earthquake readiness was undertaken by Council contracted structural engineers. The Albert Hotel was evaluated at 10%NBS (New Building Standard) which is well below the 33%NBS that the New Zealand Society of Earthquake Engineers (NZSEE) Guidelines requires. Therefore the Albert Hotel is deemed to be earthquake-prone. At the date of finalising this report, no work has been undertaken or approval sought, to address the findings of the Seismic Behaviour Engineering Report. A copy of this report is held by the Hastings District Council (TRIM Reference: 21419#001#0012).

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**ARCHIVE PLAN(S):**

**The Albert Hotel Hastings, by Davies, Philips & Chaplin (1963) (TRIM Ref: 21419#076)**

