



Figure 5. Diocesan Hall and Offices, Diocese of Waiapu, Cathedral Lane, built 1929.



Figure 6. St John's Anglican Cathedral, Browning Street, built 1955-65.

the spiritual resilience of the population, replacing a temporary wooden church that had been constructed immediately after the earthquake destroyed New Zealand's only 19th-century masonry Anglican cathedral. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of St John's Cathedral within the proposed World Heritage site.

The architectural quality of the majority of Napier's Art Deco buildings can at best be described as routine, a feature that reflects the necessity to rebuild rapidly and within the rigorous economic constraints resulting from loss of so much capital but also from the depressed economic climate of the period. However, a number of buildings stand out from this comparatively mundane background. These include the Daily Telegraph Offices (1932) (Fig. 7), the Central Hotel (1931), Criterion Hotel (1932) and Masonic Hotel (1932) (Fig. 8), the former Bank of New Zealand (1932), and the AMP Building (1933) (Fig. 9). Although none of these buildings is, by world standards, of particular architectural significance, the cumulative effect of so many buildings in closely related styles within a compact urban setting is striking.

Figure 7. Daily Telegraph
Offices, Tennyson Street,
built 1932.



Figure 8. Masonic Hotel,
Herschell Street, built 1932.



Figure 9. AMP Building,
Hastings and Browning
Streets, built 1933.





Figure 10. Ross & Glendinning Building, Tennyson Street and Cathedral Lane, built 1932.

While many of Napier's new buildings merely adopt the ready-made decorative features of Art Deco, especially the zigzag motif, others reveal the attempts of local architects to adapt the Art Deco preference for 'primitive' and exotic decoration to the local context, with both E.A. Williams in the Ross & Glendinning building (1932) (Fig. 10), and Crichton, McKay and Haughton in the former Bank of New Zealand building incorporating Māori kōwhaiwhai patterns into the decoration of their buildings (Figs 11 & 12). The presence in Napier



Figure 11. Former Bank of New Zealand Building, Hastings Street and Emerson Street, built 1932.



Figure 12. Former Bank of New Zealand Building, detail of ceiling.



Figure 13. J.A. Louis Hay Office Building, Herschell Street, built 1932.

of J.A. Louis Hay, an architect of considerable individuality and distinction, also adds to the architectural interest of the city. Hay's admiration for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and his Prairie School contemporaries was unique in provincial New Zealand at this time (although the American architect R.A. Lippincott, who was also familiar with Wright's work, was currently working in Auckland). Hay's most notable buildings include the former Fire Station (1926 and 1931), AMP Building (1935), Museum and Art Gallery (1936), and his own offices in Herschell Street (1932) (Fig. 13). These display an individual response to the decorative vocabulary of Chicago School architects such as Wright and Louis Sullivan that is unexpected in a place so remote from the architectural innovations of the early 20th century. Thus, while modest in its overall execution, Napier's post-earthquake architecture demonstrates considerable ambition in its aspirations.

4. Perceptions of Art Deco Napier

4.1 NATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

By 1933, Napier was ready to show off its new architecture to the rest of New Zealand, and the Napier Carnival in January 1933 was a celebration of the rebirth of the city. Within the space of 2 years, the city had transformed itself from a Victorian and Edwardian town into a modern city of forward-looking buildings, with widened streets and underground services. The retrospective, historical styles of the British colonial world had been replaced by the up-to-date architectural vocabulary of the contemporary United States of America.

By the end of the 1930s, however, the modernity of Napier's new architecture had already started to appear dated. The impact of European Modernism began to make itself felt in New Zealand architecture from the middle of the decade onwards (Lochhead 1984). The return to New Zealand of young architects such as Paul Pascoe, who had worked in the London architectural office of Lubetkin and Tecton (one of the leading British Modernist architectural practices), and the arrival in New Zealand at the end of the 1930s of émigré European Modernists such as Ernst Plischke, transformed attitudes towards Art Deco, making it seem outmoded and frivolous. In a comparison that echoed Osbert Lancaster's earlier contrast of the 'Modernistic' and the 'Functional', Plischke (1947) juxtaposed the rational austerity of International Modernism with the unthinking decorative frenzies of Art Deco in his influential book *Design and Living*. Subjected to ongoing critiques such as this, Art Deco declined in prestige as the status of the Modern Movement increased in the post-war period. By the 1970s, Napier's Art Deco architecture had become little more than a curiosity, admired by an eccentric few.

Spurred by changing international attitudes towards Art Deco, and prompted by a recognition that redevelopment was threatening to destroy a unique 20th-century townscape, research on the city's architecture was carried out in the Napier office of the Ministry of Works and Development, resulting in the publication of Heather Ives' (1982) book *The Art Deco Architecture of Napier* (Fig. 14). This was the first attempt to assess the value of Napier's Art Deco heritage. One consequence of Ives' research was the decision by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust/Pouhere Taonga to register the Napier City Centre Historic Area in 1983, a listing that was reviewed and reregistered under the revised Historic Places Act (1993) in 1995. During the intervening period, the Trust registered a large proportion of the individual buildings within the Historic Area as either Category One or Category Two under the Historic Places Act. At a more popular level, Peter Wells' 1985 film, *The Newest City on the Globe: Art Deco Napier*, was screened on national television in that year and directed further attention to the Hawke's Bay city's distinctive character. The increased recognition of the importance of Napier's 20th-century architectural heritage also led to the foundation of the Napier Art Deco Trust in 1985.

Growing popular interest in Art Deco, the publication of Peter Shaw and Peter Hallett's well-illustrated monograph *Art Deco Napier: Styles of the Thirties* (Shaw & Hallett 1987), the inauguration of the Art Deco Trust's annual Art Deco Weekend in 1989, and the incorporation of the Trust in 1992 all played an essential

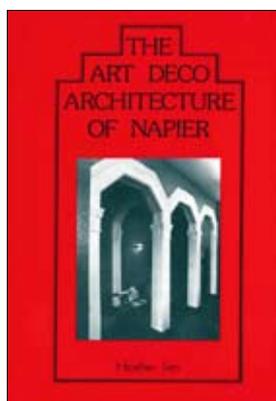


Figure 14. Cover of Heather Ives *The Art Deco Architecture of Napier* (1982).



Figure 15. Flyer for Fifth World Congress on Art Deco: Art Deco on the Edge, Napier, 14-18 February, 1999.

role in raising public awareness of the city's distinctive architecture. The Napier City Council's *Art Deco Inventory*, prepared in 1991 and revised in 1995, 1997 and 2004 (Bilman & Gill 2004), documented the extent of the city's Art Deco heritage. By 1999, when Napier hosted the Fifth World Congress on Art Deco, the city had become a destination for both national and international cultural tourism based around its Art Deco architecture (Fig. 15). The national profile of Napier's Art Deco has been further enhanced by the impressive series of local and national awards that the Art Deco Trust has received, beginning with its winning of the Cultural Heritage Section of the New Zealand Tourism Awards in 1993, and culminating with success as winner of the Best Large Event for the Fifth World Congress on Art Deco in the New Zealand Events and Management Conference Events Awards in 1999, and as New Zealand winner of the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards in 2000 (Fig. 16).

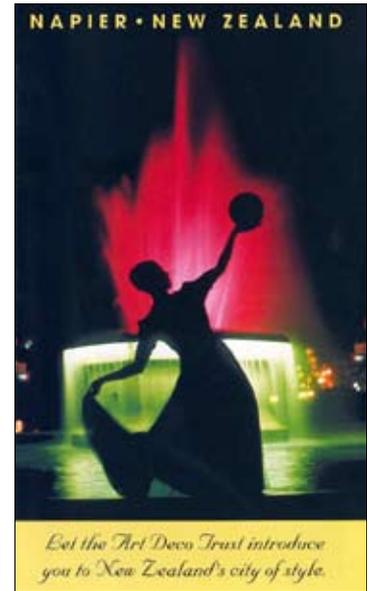


Figure 16. Tourist brochure, Art Deco City, Napier, New Zealand.

4.2 INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

The hosting of the Fifth World Congress on Art Deco in 1999 could be seen as the culmination of Napier's international recognition as a centre for Art Deco architecture, with delegates travelling from around the world. However, this process had begun much earlier in the decade, in 1992. Several of Napier's Art Deco buildings, including the Daily Telegraph office, featured in Bayer's *Art Deco Architecture* (1992). In addition, Bayer highlighted Napier's concentration of post-earthquake Art Deco buildings. The presence of Napier's Art Deco buildings in a book dominated by American, British and European architecture marked an important step in the city's emerging international profile. Nevertheless, discussions of Napier in international publications, such as Hillier & Escritt's *Art Deco Style* (1997), have relied heavily on Shaw & Hallett's *Art Deco Napier* (1987) and have seldom added to existing knowledge or understanding. While Napier featured in the catalogue of the major 2003 Art Deco exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Benton et al. 2003), the discussion of the New Zealand city came within a chapter devoted to Art Deco in Australia.

Napier's remoteness from world cultural centres, and its comparative isolation even within New Zealand, means that international tourists or scholars have to make a special effort to visit the city. Therefore, almost inevitably, isolation has been a serious factor limiting the profile that Art Deco Napier has achieved internationally. This, combined with the equivocal attitude of many architects, architectural historians and critics towards Art Deco, continues to present obstacles to a wider acceptance of the significance of Napier's Art Deco architecture. Napier's place is now firmly established in the specialised literature on Art Deco, although its position remains peripheral to that of the major centres and monuments of the style. However, Napier has not yet established a profile in the mainstream, international literature on 20th-century architecture and it seems unlikely to do so.

5. Authenticity and integrity of the site

5.1 AUTHENTICITY

The reconstruction of Napier in the years immediately following the 1931 earthquake created a cityscape of remarkable consistency, which still forms the commercial heart of the modern-day city. The great majority of the buildings constructed during the post-earthquake period still survive, along with a small number of buildings that predate the earthquake. Thus, in terms of form and design as well as materials and substance, a high degree of authenticity exists. Although the specific uses of many buildings have changed, the Art Deco precinct is still regarded by the people of Napier and by visitors as the city's commercial centre, although tourism has emerged as a significant use in the last two decades. Because the earthquake occurred 79 years ago, there is a small but diminishing number of people who remember both the earthquake and the reconstruction of the city.

The earthquake, and the associated reconstruction form an important part of the identity of the city and this is commemorated annually in February through the events of the Art Deco Weekend, as well as on a daily basis through the promotional and educational work of the Art Deco Trust, in particular their walking tours of the Art Deco precinct. The displays of the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum devoted to the earthquake also document and illustrate the experiences and recollections of Napier's citizens at the time of the earthquake. Napier City's recognition of the importance of the site through the creation of its Art Deco Inventory, and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust's registration of the Napier City Centre Historic Area and of 31 individual buildings within the Historic Area as Category One or Category Two Historic Places further affirm the authenticity of the site.

5.2 INTEGRITY

Following the reconstruction period of the 1930s, there was little new building in central Napier until the late 1950s and early 1960s. Further rebuilding in the 1970s and 1980s has added to the loss of 1930s heritage. The loss of important individual buildings, including the former National and ANZ Banks, and the insertion of new, multi-storey structures, such as the former Manchester Unity Building in Emerson Street and the Tennyson Motor Inn on the corner of Tennyson Street and Clive Square east, have compromised the period unity of the site and, more importantly, disrupted the uniform scale of the precinct (Figs 17 & 18). The fact that a number of new buildings occupy key corner sites is particularly damaging. Smaller scale, post-war buildings such as the former Red Cross Hall in Tennyson Street, an accomplished Modernist design, complement rather than detract from the character of the area.



Figure 17. View of Tennyson Street with the Tennyson Motor Inn on the right, showing the intrusive impact of multi-storey buildings on the townscape.



Figure 18. Vero Building on Tennyson with adjacent single-storey buildings dating from 1931 to 1932 on the right.



Figure 19. Amcal Pharmacy; an example of sympathetically scaled infill on Emerson Street.

The survival of unbroken sequences of 1930s facades (at least above street level), particularly in Hastings Street, Market Street, and sections of Tennyson and Emerson Streets, are of particular importance in maintaining the architectural character of the precinct. Sympathetic infill buildings that recognise the importance of consistency of scale and materials, along with more self-conscious attempts to evoke period style, are found in small numbers within the precinct but contribute to an overall consistency of architectural character (Fig. 19). These structures do not compromise the integrity of the areas, as their more recent date is readily discernible.

While a significant number of original shop fronts have survived, including many that incorporate a distinctive Art Deco use of geometric patterns in leaded glass, shop fit outs dating from recent decades have seriously eroded the experience of the precinct at street level. The cumulative impact of the standardised signage and shop fronts of chain stores, franchises and other commercial premises in many parts of the precinct substantially compromises its original character. This problem has recently been addressed through the Signage Guidelines prepared by the Napier City Council, although it will take time for this policy to have an impact on streetscape values (Napier City

Council Planning Department 2009). Conservation of original shop fronts and reconstruction of lost shop fronts (albeit using aluminium frames rather than the original timber) has helped to ameliorate the loss of original fabric at street level, but the proliferation of modern fittings and signage in what is, by its very nature, primarily a commercial area, remains problematic (Fig. 20). Consistency of architectural character is mainly achieved above the veranda line.



Figure 20. Detail of reconstructed Art Deco shop window on Emerson Street.



Figure 21. Parking areas on the north side of Dickens Street.



Figure 22. Former Imperial Tobacco Company Building, Ahuriri, built 1933.

where one of the most notable buildings of the era, Louis Hay's former National Tobacco Company (1933), is to be found, as well as to the suburb of Marewa, an area that was elevated during the earthquake and opened for residential development in 1933 (Fig. 22). Beyond Napier itself, there are significant examples of Art Deco and related styles in the Hawke's Bay hinterland, as well as an extensive group of post-earthquake buildings in Hastings. All this architecture gives added context and meaning to the most concentrated focus of development in Napier itself. Of particular commemorative significance is the grave site of those killed in the earthquake, designed by Louis Hay on an elevated site overlooking the city and surrounding area.

For all the coherence of the Art Deco precinct, the integrity of the area is also compromised by the number of significant buildings that have been isolated on its periphery and thereby excluded. This is particularly problematic on Dickens Street, which remains built up and includes a number of important 1930s buildings on its south side, but has been severely eroded in a wasteland of car parks on the north side of the street. Thus, what should be a transitional, buffer zone to the Art Deco precinct is, instead, an unappealing backyard (Fig. 21).

Much attention has been directed towards creating desirable pedestrian environments within the precinct, especially as a result of the pedestrianisation of Market Street and the conversion of Emerson Street into a one-way, slow street. However, heavy traffic volumes on Tennyson Street, Hastings Street and along Marine Parade degrade the experience of the precinct. A proliferation of street furniture and planting, especially in Emerson Street, and the erection of an incongruous and ineffectual canopy adjacent to the former Bank of New Zealand at the intersection of Emerson and Hastings Streets further erode the integrity of the area.

It was inevitable that the commercial centre of a small, provincial city such as Napier would not remain static over an almost 80-year period, meaning that the loss of several key 1930s buildings, the construction of new buildings that are out of scale and also different in style and materials, as well as more minor, incremental changes to many buildings, have cumulatively diminished the integrity of the site. In qualitative terms, the integrity of the site is high but certainly not exceptional.

It is important to recognise that Napier's Art Deco architecture is not restricted to the designated Art Deco precinct, but extends beyond it on the fringes of the central business district, to the port of Ahuriri,