

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
46 YORK PLACE - MASON & WALES ARCHITECTS' STUDIO



Photo: DCC 2022

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX014
Address:	46 York Place, Central Dunedin, Dunedin
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Office
Condition of Property:	Building not known to be at risk due to condition

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building site meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope excluding rear elevation
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
✓	Excluded elements	Rear elevation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mason and Wales Architects' Studio, at 46 York Place, has heritage significance to Dunedin. The building has historic and social significance as the design studio and business premises of New Zealand's oldest architectural practice and design significance as a mid-20th century Regionalist design by one of Dunedin's leading architectural practices for their own use.

The Mason and Wales Architects' Offices are not comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin because this architectural period is underrepresented on the schedule. It compares on a national/regional level with similar recognised heritage places.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Modern (1955-1975)
Style	Regionalism
Era/Date of Construction	1972
Architect/Designer/Builder	Mason & Wales, architects; Stevenson & Williams, contractors
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Commercial
Primary Construction Materials	Concrete block, concrete, roughcast, aluminium window joinery, concrete tiles (now replaced with steel sheets), fibre cement panels.
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Triple gable roof forms, undercroft, strip windows, boxed bay windows; expressed structure, skylights, window fins.

Previous site development

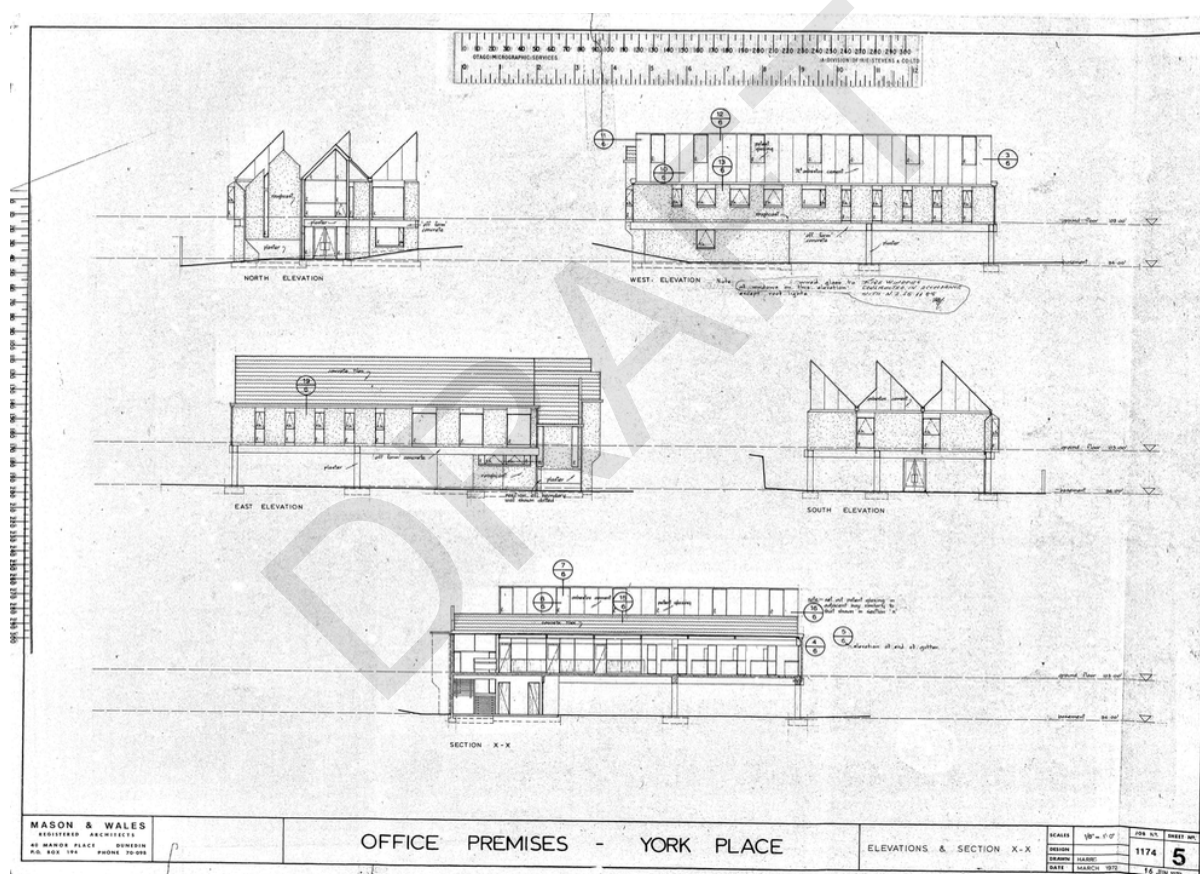
The first title for the subject lot was issued to Matilda Le Brun, who lived in Cargill Street, and Albert Gascoigne, a solicitor, in November 1922. They transferred the property to Jessie and Herbert Payton, the latter an accountant, in 1923; it remained in their family ownership until 1959 when it was transferred to the Otago Pioneer Women's Memorial Association (est. 1939). In 1971 the property was acquired by Cumulus Investment Company, which had been incorporated in 1963 by Nathaniel Young Armstrong &

Wales, in whose name it remains today. The lot appears to have been in residential use by 1901, if not earlier, before its redevelopment by Mason & Wales Architects in the early 1970s.

Building design and construction

It is understood the design of the building originated from an office-wide design competition with staff each producing their own concept.

Dunedin City Council issued a building permit for the office building in June 1972, based on architectural drawings dated March / April 1972. The two-storey building has a rectangular footprint and three-part sawtooth-style roof with the form extending north-to-south and occupying most of the lot. The main entry is set below the level of the footpath and provides access to a ground floor entrance foyer from which stairs rise to the principal office spaces on the first floor. The first floor extends beyond the ground floor towards the rear of the lot allowing for parking underneath the building.



Source: DCC Property File

Later history and development

In 1973, the building was given a design award by the Otago branch of the NZ Institute of Architects. Minor alterations were undertaken to the interior in c.2007.

In 2023 the building was renovated – the existing concrete tile roof was replaced with coloursteel and the fibre cement cladding was replaced, and the high-level glazing replaced with double glazed aluminium windows in the existing openings.

In 2024, the Mason and Wales Office Building received an Enduring Architecture Award from the New Zealand Institute of Architects.¹ It has remained in use as the business premises of Mason & Wales Architects since it was erected.

Notable people/Themes

Mason and Wales

Mason & Wales Architects is New Zealand's oldest architectural practice. The firm was established in 1863 by William Mason after a brief partnership with David Ross, which commenced in September 1862 and was dissolved in February 1863. Known as Mason & Clayton from 1864 and Mason & Wales since 1871, the firm has designed the full gamut of architectural commissions, from churches and commercial buildings to private houses and industrial structures and garnered numerous architectural awards.

Comparative Examples

The building can be compared with the Warren & Mahoney office in Christchurch built a decade earlier (1962 Item No. 1356, 'Commercial Christchurch District Plan) and the Athfield House and Office in Wellington (1968+, Category 1 historic place), both of which have been recognised as modern heritage buildings. The Mason and Wales Offices feature in 'A Guide to Otago Architecture'.²

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Mason and Wales Architects' office building has historic and social significance for its association with New Zealand's oldest architectural practice and the contribution the firm has made, since 1863, to the nation's built environment.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Mason and Wales Architects' Studio has design significance as a later 20th century office building that was designed by a noted architectural practice for its own use. The building demonstrates the Regional Modernism of the period, in which architects inflected their designs with a greater awareness of local building traditions while at the same time maintaining the geometric functionalism of the International Style. In design significance, Mason and Wales Office is comparable to the Warren & Mahoney office in Christchurch (1962) and the Athfield home and office in Wellington (1968+), both of which are recognized as heritage buildings.

¹ <https://www.masonandwales.com/awards> accessed 29 May 2024

² [Itinerary: Mason & Wales Dunedin | Architecture Now](#)

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

Otago Daily Times 27 September 1862, p. 3; 5 February 1863, p. 7.

H Knight & N Wales *Buildings of Dunedin- An Illustrated Guide to New Zealand's Vitoria City* John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1988.

<https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/itinerary-dunedin/>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/latest/126036047/our-midto-late-20thcentury-architectural-heritage-is-under-threat-say-architects>

<https://www.masonandwales.com/>

Initial Assessment Completed	12 December 2022	Author	AM
Date Assessment Updated	4 January 2023 - Updated to add information.	Author	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	4 July 2024 - Updated to add information.	Reviewer	MM
Date Peer Reviewed	26 July 2024		