

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Dalgety & Co Ltd Building

Project File No: 0986

Address: 1-7 Malop Street Geelong 3220

Approx. Date: 1924-25

Integrity: High

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 08.09

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This site at 1-7 Malop Street, Geelong, is located on Lots 1,2,3 and 4 of Subdivision PS 408252, which are parts of Crown Allotments 10 and 11, Section 36, of the 1881 Geelong Town Plan. T. P. Galletty was the original owner.

Dalgety & Co. Pty. Ltd., wool brokers, bought the land at this site in 1924 from W. G. Hearne & Co., chemists, of Ryrie Street, and plans were prepared by architects Laird and Buchan for a building to house the company's administrative offices. The contractors, H. Beach & Son, commenced work in October and completed the project in 1925. The Geelong Advertiser published an illustrated article about the proposed "massive building" in 1924. The article reads in part:

"The progressive firm of Messrs. Dalgety and Co. Ltd. some few months ago purchased the valuable site at the corner of Malop and Gheringhap-streets, with a view to erecting a block of modern offices thereon ... The scheme has now advanced to a stage of reality ... [and] ... comprises a spacious well-lighted basement, and two floors above for offices, and will face Gheringhap-street to a depth of ninety feet, while occupying the total available frontage of forty-eight feet to Malop-street. The main entrance to the offices will be from Malop-street and a second entrance, given easy accessibility to the three floors will be provided from Gheringhap-street. The walls are to be built of brick and the floors of

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reinforced concrete, and the whole of the building externally will be finished in fine stucco. The building while fulfilling all the requirements of up-to-date offices, has been designed in a modern adaptation of the classic style, which, besides forming an imposing edifice at the main entrance to the city proper, will be in complete harmony with the fine buildings of the civic centre opposite."

The building continued to be owned by the parent company of Dalgety and Co Ltd until the late 20th century.

The modern French Renaissance style employed for the design of the Dalgety and Co Ltd building had its roots in the Beaux-Arts French pavilions of the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 held in London, and more particularly, the home of Beaux-Arts architecture, Paris. The Paris Exposition Universale of 1900 and its two permanent buildings, the Grand Palais and Petit Palais instigated the wide popularity of the style in London and throughout the British Empire.

Interestingly, the Paris Exposition of 1900 was partially the French answer to the highly successful Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, U.S.A., in 1893. By 1913, the effect of the Columbian Exposition had reached its peak in United States institutional architecture, and it also led to the City Beautiful development of tree-lined boulevards and public squares as settings for modern French Renaissance styled buildings.

Examples of modern French Renaissance styled buildings include:

- * Spencer Street Parcels Post Building, Melbourne, 1913-14;
- * Perth GPO, 1913-24;
- * New York Post Office, U.S.A., 1906-08;
- * Municipal Buildings, Singapore, 1926-29;
- * General Post Office, Singapore, 1928;
- * Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China, Tianjin, China, 1926;

Description

The Dalgety and Co Ltd building, 1-7 Malop Street, Geelong, is situated on a corner allotment and takes up the full capacity of the site.

The symmetrical, two storey, rendered brick and concrete, interwar modern French Renaissance (Classical) styled building is characterised by giant Ionic colonnades of flat stuccoed pilasters, solid banded corners with deep and narrow steel framed windows (emphasising the verticality of the corners), large austere entablatures containing the a Greek key pattern (typical of the style) and the title "Dalgety and Co. Ltd", projecting dentillated cornice and a rudimentary parapet having stepped piers that form the terminals to the banded corners below.

Between the giant Ionic pilasters are early steel framed 12 paned windows on the first floor. The first and second floors are separated by stuccoed transoms having early incised rectangular panelling. Similar windows define most of the bays of the Gheringhap Street facade which also have plain stuccoed wall bases, except for the southern bay near the corner of Gheringhap and Malop Streets, which has a larger and altered opening and blind transom panel above. Identical altered windows also flank the central arched ground floor door opening on the Malop Street facade. This opening has introduced aluminium framed and glazed doors with a blind fanlight above (the doorway was originally banded and open, leading recessed doors within).

Other early features of the design include the smooth-finished rendered plinth (although the early steel framed basement windows have been blocked up or removed), incised

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star-patterning to the parapet piers and the timber flag poles that surmount the building. The signage on the parapet appears to be early. On the Gheringhap Street facade it reads: "Wool Brokers Land & Stock Agents" and on the Malop Street facade it reads: "Wool Shipping, Insurance, Stock".

Statement of Cultural Significance

The Dalgety and Co. Ltd. building, 1-7 Malop Street, has significance has an intact example of the interwar modern French Renaissance (Classical) style and for its long associations with the Dalgety company. Built in 1924-25 as the company's administrative offices to a design by the Geelong architects Laird and Buchan, the building appears to be in good condition.

The Dalgety and Co. Ltd building is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities of the interwar modern French Renaissance (Classical) style. These qualities include the giant Ionic colonnades of flat stuccoed pilasters, solid banded corners with deep and narrow steel framed windows (emphasising the verticality of the corners), large austere entablatures containing a Greek key pattern (typical of the style) and the title "Dalgety and Co. Ltd", projecting dentillated cornice and the rudimentary parapet having stepped piers that form the terminals to the banded corners below. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the symmetrical composition, two storey height (plus basement), steel framed 12 paned windows, stuccoed transoms having incised rectangular panelling, plain stuccoed ground floor wall bases, arched ground floor door opening on the Malop Street facade (but not the aluminium framed and glazed doors or blind fanlight above), smooth-finished rendered plinth, incised star-patterning to the parapet piers, timber flag poles that surmount the building, and the parapet signage: "Wool Brokers Land & Stock Agents" and "Wool Shipping, Insurance, Stock".

The Dalgety and Co. Ltd. building is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with commercial wool broking developments in Geelong during the interwar (1920s-1940s) period. In particular, this building has long-term associations with Dalgety and Co. Ltd. as the original owner from 1924-25 until the 1990s. The building also has associations with the Geelong architectural firm of Laird and Buchan.

Overall, the Dalgety and Co. Ltd. building is of LOCAL significance.

References

D. Rowe, 'Building a National Image: The Architecture of John Smith Murdoch, Australia's First Commonwealth Government Architect', PhD (Architecture) Thesis, Deakin University, 1997.

Reports and Drainage Plans, Barwon Water profits system, 1950, 1989.

Geelong City Council Rate Books (Villamanta Ward), 1924-1960, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

Town Plan of Geelong 1881, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

Geelong Advertiser 11 October, 1924, Geelong Historical Records Centre.