

Former Grand Hotel Building

47-51 The Square, Palmerston North

NZHPT Registration Number: 192
NZHPT Registration Type: Historic Place – Category I
NZHPT Registration Date: 28/06/90
City/District Council: Palmerston North City Council
District Plan Status: Category 1

Other Names: Grand Hotel (1906-1972) Former Grand Hotel (1972-)



Brief History

The Grand Hotel building (1906) is the second hotel to occupy this site. In 1889 the Provincial Hotel was completed and leased to boardinghouse keeper Martin Craven who purchased the property the following year. However, in 1906 the building was destroyed in a fire and Craven commissioned Christchurch based architect Joseph Clarkson Maddison (1850-1923) to design a new hotel for the site. Although Maddison is best known for his designs for freezing works and abattoirs, he also designed a number of public buildings including churches and hotels and also private residences.

The building is of the Second Empire style popular at the time, which developed in France during the reconstruction of Paris by Napoleon III in the late nineteenth century. The circular dormer windows and mansard roof are typical of the style, which is closely associated with Classical architecture, as is apparent in the use of elements such as columns, rusticated masonry, pediments, and entablatures in the Grand Hotel.

The four-storey building was designed to accommodate 66 bedrooms, two conservatories, a large dining room and a shop on the ground floor. The building has a concrete foundation and is constructed of load-bearing brick. The building work was carried out by Trevor Bros Co, and James Trevor, a partner in the firm purchased the building from Craven in 1908.

In 1927, the building was sold to Edmond Lionel Barnes, and has changed hands a number of times since. The hotel hosted the Duke and Duchess of York in 1927, and Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1954. In 1963, the tower was removed, and the hotel was closed in 1972. During the 1980s, the ground floor was subdivided into a number of retail spaces, and the upper floors converted into office space. The imposing timber main staircase is the only remaining authentic interior feature of the building. The Grand Hotel is of national historical significance as it hosted the first reigning monarch to visit New Zealand and is architecturally noteworthy as an excellent example of the Second Empire style and as an example of the work of prominent New Zealand architect Joseph Clarkson Maddison. It is of local historical importance as a link with Palmerston North's prosperous Edwardian past, and is a landmark building.

Principal Sources:

Bowman, I & Kelly, M. *Palmerston North CBD Heritage Inventory*, Palmerston North, Palmerston North City Council, 1993.

NZHPT File, Grand Hotel Building, Palmerston North 12011-027.

O'Brien, Rebecca, *Upgrade Report: Grand Hotel Building*. NZHPT. (nd).

Palmerston North City Library Photograph Collection Z 5134; Sq 94, 98, 154, 246, 249, 351, 256, 275, 361, 364.