New Frederick Ash Building
Heritage Assessment Review

Report prepared for Newcastle City Council
May 2006
The following report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled New Frederick Ash Building—Heritage Assessment Review and Strategic Heritage Advice, undertaken by Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd in accordance with its quality management system. Godden Mackay Logan operates under a quality management system which has been certified as complying with the Australian/New Zealand Standard for quality management systems AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Godden Mackay Logan has been commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide a review of the heritage significance assessment for the New Frederick Ash building, 30 Burwood Street, Newcastle.

Since the sale of the Frederick Ash business in 1969 and the purchase of the Hunter and Burwood Street properties by Newcastle City Council, the New Frederick Ash building has been the subject of numerous development proposals and masterplans.

A previous significance assessment of the New Frederick Ash building as part of the Civic Precinct had been prepared by Godden Mackay in 1995 and was associated with a development proposal at that time.

This heritage assessment review provides a basis on which Council can assess the heritage impacts of any specific future proposals for the site.

1.2 The Site

The New Frederick Ash building, formerly the Reserve Packaging and Stores building of the Frederick Ash Ltd business complex, is located at 30 Burwood Street Newcastle. It is a free-standing, five-storey brick warehouse with frontage to Burwood Street on the southeast. The building occupies a small portion of Lot 4 of DP 1010675 (see Figure 1.1). The boundaries of the study area follow the perimeter of the footprint of the New Frederick Ash building and incorporate the area of pavement directly in front of the building, by virtue of the original placement of horse dray guide rails which extended from the bay doors to Burwood Street itself.

The New Frederick Ash building is part of the larger Frederick Ash complex that includes the Old Frederick Ash building, which was the former retail store of the complex, and is located at 357-361 Hunter Street, Newcastle. Both buildings are located on the same allotment, on an irregular shaped area of land, bordered by Hunter Street to the north, King Street and Civic Park to the south, Wheeler Plaza to the west and Burwood Street to the east.

A further description of the building and its setting is given in Section 3.1.

1.3 Heritage Listings

The New Frederick Ash building is not included as an individual item of heritage significance on statutory registers.

The New Frederick Ash building is within the Newcastle City Centre Heritage Conservation Area.
The New Frederick Ash building, and the Newcastle Urban [City Centre] Conservation Area within which the building is located, are both Classified Items in the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Register, as contributory elements to a distinctive early twentieth century landscape in Newcastle. (see Appendix B, National Trust Listing Card).

The Old Frederick Ash building is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. The New Frederick Ash building, which is on the same allotment, is excluded from the curtilage of the Old Frederick Ash building.

1.4 Methodology and Terminology

This report has been prepared having regard to the methodology outlined in the NSW Heritage Manual (NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the Heritage Council of NSW, November 1996, as amended July 2002). It is also consistent with the relevant principles and guidelines of The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Places of Cultural Significance 1999. The report has also been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Heritage Act 1977 (NSW) and the Newcastle City Council Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2003.

This report provides a heritage significance assessment based on a comprehensive review of existing documentation and additional primary documentary research, examination of the setting, interior and exterior of the building, and on telephone interviews with a number of heritage bodies.

The second part of the report provides strategic heritage impact advice in regards to the various options available to Council as building owners, in the light of constraints and opportunities arising from the heritage significance of the site and building.

The terminology used in this report is consistent with the NSW Heritage Manual, prepared by the NSW Heritage Office, and the Burra Charter.

The New Frederick Ash building refers to the southeast-facing, five-storey brick warehouse located at 30 Burwood Street, Newcastle. The Old Frederick Ash building refers to the north-facing, three storey building located at 357–361 Hunter Street, Newcastle

1.5 Limitations

This report addresses only the heritage significance of the New Frederick Ash building and provides advice on the constraints and opportunities arising from that significance and commentary on potential conservation and development options. As such it does not include detailed policies for the conservation of the subject building and does not take the place of a conservation management plan.
1.6 Author Identification

This report has been prepared by Christina Kanellaki Lowe and Thomas Trudeau, Heritage Consultants, with input and review by Geoff Ashley, Senior Associate. Mark Dunn, historian, provided input into the historical sections of the report.

1.7 Acknowledgements

Godden Mackay Logan acknowledges the assistance of the following people in the provision of information regarding the New Frederick Ash building:

- Grant Halvorsen, Council Business Strategy Project Manager, Newcastle City Council;
- Graham Wilson, Project Manager, Newcastle City Council;
- Sarah Cameron, Heritage Adviser, Newcastle City Council;
- Rod Caldwell, Heritage Group, Newcastle Chapter, Engineers Australia;
- Bill Jordan, Heritage Group, Newcastle Chapter, Engineers Australia;
- Margaret Henry, National Trust of Australia (Newcastle Chapter);
- the staff of the Local Studies Section, Newcastle Regional Library;
- Gionni di Gravio, archivist, University of Newcastle Library Archive, Rare Books and Special Collections; and
- Rosemary Melville, Consultant Historian.
Figure 1.1 Location Plan
Figure 1.2 Location of the New Frederick Ash building in relation to the Frederick Ash complex and surrounding site.
2.0 Historical Overview

2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the history of the New Frederick Ash Building. This history has made use information contained in the Conservation Plan and Archaeological Assessment (Godden Mackay, 1994), the Heritage Impact Statement (Godden Mackay, 1994), and the Newcastle Civic Site Archaeological Research Design Report (Godden Mackay, 1996). Limited primary documentary research has also been undertaken.

Consideration of historic plans has contributed to an understanding of the functions and development of the site and the surrounding area since the 1850s.

2.2 Pre-Contact Aboriginal History

The site is located within the lands originally occupied by the Awabakal and Worimi people, who were present for at least 8,000 years. Evidence of their occupation has been found within the Honeysuckle development area, near the subject site, and along the river banks and coastline. There is no currently known specific evidence of Aboriginal occupation at the site.

2.3 Early Development of Newcastle

Coal originally drew settlement to Newcastle, with convicts being stationed there to mine coal in 1801. In 1802 the settlement was abandoned, but then re-established in 1804 as a place of secondary punishment for convicts from New South Wales and Tasmania. The gaol at Newcastle remained there until 1848, when the prison at East Maitland opened.

Newcastle’s development in the 1830s was mostly influenced by the development of steam navigation and the advent of the Australian Agricultural Company. Prominent Australian historian JW Turner has written:

[Newcastle’s] first mine was equipped with two steam engines (the first to be used for mining purposes in the colony) for raising coal and pumping out water and its coal was delivered to the port by an inclined plane which, though it relied on gravity for its power, has been recognised as the first railway in Australia. Moreover, the casting of certain metal parts for the steam engines, may well have been the first occasion that such work was undertaken in this country. With a producer of such stature Newcastle’s dominance over the southern coalfield of New South Wales was assured. The Company brought stability and efficiency to the town’s basic industry, and after it began to substitute free labour for convict workmen in the 1840’s Newcastle entered a new era.

In the late 1840s, additional mines were opened around Newcastle. The remainder of the nineteenth century saw Newcastle develop steadily, primarily as an industrial and trading port serving the mines and the hinterland. Related industries also supported an increasingly affluent civic population.
The *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1851 describes Newcastle as an active industrial town:

> Newcastle is increasing its repute as a sea bathing resort and summer residence for invalids. Suburban allotments will soon be laid out in the Church land at Honeysuckle. The building that was formerly the gaol is now being used as a stockade for prisoners working on the breakwater. The coal mines that are working are the A. A. Company’s mines near Newcastle; Donaldson’s mines at Burwood; and Mr. Brown is about to open a mine at the Glebe. The working of the Ebenezer mine at Lake Macquarie has been suspended. The A.A. Company have recently sold 46,000 tons at 6/6 per ton; Donaldson’s 6,602 tons at 7/- per ton; while from Hexham has come some 700 tons. The Copper Smelting Works on the sea beach at Burwood is ready for work as soon as a supply of ore is obtainable. Fisher’s Tweed Factory at Stockton, during 1850, turned out 70,000 yards, and 300 yards of flannel. Nearly all the 166 inhabitants of Stockton are engaged in weaving of cloth. The Cottage Bridge has been well repaired and a portion of excellent road has been formed on the heavy sandy track through which the highway to Maitland passes, from the Cottage Bridge to Throsby’s Creek.6

In 1858 the Municipal Act was passed by the government, and eight months later, Newcastle was incorporated under this Act.7

Newcastle’s growth was particularly prosperous during the 1870s and 1880s, a period marked by the establishment of the railway and the expansion of industry. These decades saw the construction of many fine commercial and industrial buildings, which today constitute the greater proportion of the city’s Victorian architectural heritage.8

### 2.4 1853–1898: Site of the Frederick Ash Complex

The New Frederick Ash building is located on land originally held by the Australian Agricultural Company (AA Company).

The AA Company was formed in London in November 1824, and while an agricultural company by origin, it was responsible for introducing large-scale coalmining in Newcastle.9 Granted control of the government coal mines at Newcastle, together with a grant of 2,000 acres of land to the west of the town, the company directed the city’s coal industry towards supplying fuel for the steamers of the East India Company.10 Until 1847 it held a monopoly on the production of coal in the region.

The terms of the AA Company’s initial grant restricted it from selling its land; however, in 1847 the AA Company gave up its coal mining monopoly in Newcastle in return for the right to divest itself of its property. From 1853, the company subdivided its land and sold it in allotments of regular size, which opened up land west of the city centre for residential and commercial development, beyond the previous mid-century city limit of Brown Street.11 Figure 2.1 shows a 1853 subdivision that included the site of the Frederick Ash complex. No buildings are shown on the subdivision; the site of the Frederick Ash complex remained undeveloped for many years to come.
Until the 1870s, the AA Company was the principal lessor of the area around, and including, the subject site. Small businesses and residences, constructed principally of timber weatherboard, developed in the area bordered by Church Street (later King Street), Darby Street and Blane Street (later Hunter Street). The following decades saw many of these structures replaced with brick as prosperity increased.

From the mid-nineteenth century, railways replaced horse tracks to transport coal from mines southwest of the city centre to the ports at the north east. The convergence of a number of these lines in the area that is today Civic Park favoured the development of coal powered industry, with engineering companies and others establishing foundries and warehouses at the site (Figure 2.4). One of these rail lines, laid in c1850 and operated by a variety of companies, came to be known as the Burwood Line. The section of line between King and Hunter Streets was widened into a road between 1888 and 1893 to form Burwood Street (Figure 2.2). The coal hoppers, and later trains, which used the ‘street’, were an accepted part of daily street traffic for over 100 years, and had precedence over pedestrian and vehicular traffic until the closure of the line in c1950. Following the closure, the Burwood Street section of line was paved over.

In 1874–1876, John Ash, brother of Frederick, established his timber yard, workshop and sawmills on land to the west of the site, with a frontage to Hunter Street. The site of the Frederick Ash complex remained unoccupied until 1898.

2.5 1898–1925: Construction of the Frederick Ash Complex

Frederick Ash Ltd was established in Newcastle in 1855. In 1860, Frederick Ash and James Norsworthy, Ash’s business partner for six years, initially owned and occupied an iron construction shop in King Street. Following Norsworthy’s departure in 1866, Ash’s shop offered ship plumbing, glazing, decorating and galvanized corrugated iron. The following two decades saw the business expand and include the importation, manufacture and sale of decorative and construction materials.

In 1885 Frederick Ash leased or purchased a store of two floors on the corner of Brown and King Streets, adding three storeys to the building and workshops.

In 1898, the land that became the site of the Frederick Ash buildings was purchased by John Ash. In 1901 John sold the property to his brother Frederick, who also purchased a number of others. In 1905, Frederick established his principal retail store, today’s Old Frederick Ash building, constructed to designs made by Newcastle’s most prominent architect, Frederick B Menkens. It was reported the same year that these premises would meet all possible demands for many years to come. At this time, there is no mention of a building facing Burwood Street.

However, by 1908, a seven-storey brick warehouse had also been constructed on Burwood Street. The scale of the warehouse was unrivalled in its surrounds. Until the construction of the Town Hall c1924, it was among the largest buildings in the locality, and it dominated views of the Cooks...
Hill/Civic area (Figure 2.4). Advertising at the time indicated that Frederick Ash Ltd, in addition to the Hunter and Burwood Street properties, also had a galvanised iron warehouse in Church Street.12

Plans dated 1915 detail a three-storey extension to the Burwood Street warehouse. This building, essentially a second warehouse east of the earlier building (Figure 2.5), was built around this time.

Between 1922 and 1925, a building that became known as the Intermediate Block was built, connecting the Hunter and Burwood Streets warehouses, facilitating the movement of goods and staff (Figure 2.6).

A plan dated c1922 shows the extent of the Frederick Ash complex (Figure 2.3). Displayed are the Hunter Street buildings at Nos 359–361 with the Intermediate block—labelled as an ‘extension’—at the east towards the rear of the building. Behind the Hunter Street store and the Intermediate Block are the two Burwood Street warehouses, noted as the ‘Reserve Stores and Packing Rooms’. One building is recorded as of seven floors, the other of four, roughly corresponding to the 1915 plans. To the southwest of the warehouses, at the junction of Burwood and King Streets, were the Engineers and Tinsmiths Workshops, the Iron Corrugating Shop and Reserve Hardware Stores, of which the latter had a iron and glass sawtooth roof set over an earth floor. On the other side of Burwood Street, immediately opposite the warehouses, was the ‘Store for Galvanised Iron and Sundries’. Closer to Hunter Street, opposite the rear of Garrett & Sons, Ltd., was the storage yard for boxes and cases, together with a cart shed, oil store, lime store, sundries store and glass store.13

In 1925, both Burwood Street warehouses were destroyed by fire, ‘the most disastrous … in Newcastle … since 1908’. Although the fire followed financial difficulties for the company, Frederick Ash Ltd continued, and the burnt out warehouses were replaced with a new, larger warehouse, known today as the New Frederick Ash building.

2.6 1925–1969: The New Frederick Ash Building

The New Frederick Ash building, the subject of this report, was built c1925–1927. Originally a four-storey, rendered brick warehouse that addressed Burwood Street, it occupied the combined footprint of the destroyed buildings, and abutted existing ironwork sheds to the southwest. Pitt & Merewether, one of the largest and most reputable architectural firms in Newcastle at the time, designed the building in the Commercial Palazzo style, characterised by an emphasised treatment of the ground floor, smooth, largely undecorated upper storeys, and a dominant cornice. The warehouse retained a number of characteristics of the destroyed warehouses, and can also be seen to respond to aspects of a planned replacement, designed in 1925 but not built. These characteristics included the use of simple classical motifs along the upper cornice, engaged pilasters as jambs to ground floor entrances, and a projecting cornice between the first and second floors.

The undated plans for the New Frederick Ash building that currently stands in Burwood Street (Figures 2.7–2.10) show a simply proportioned yet substantial building of four storeys, constructed on
foundations that may have incorporated remains of the foundations of the previous two warehouses. Six entrances, with horse dray guide rails, are aligned irregularly along the Burwood Street facade. The bays extend some distance within the building, surrounded by a raised concrete floor. The second bay from the left extended through the building to emerge at the rear.

Beyond the ground floor, the interior of the building comprised four open floors of reinforced concrete slabs, supported by concrete-encased rolled steel I-beams and joists. No permanent internal walls were made, apart from those surrounding the two lift wells.

By utilising a composite structure that incorporated a partial steel frame within load bearing external walls, the New Frederick Ash building displayed ‘comparatively advanced construction’\(^{14}\), particularly with its use of concrete-encased steel joists and columns.\(^{15}\)

Although John Sulman, a prominent architect of the late nineteenth century, recommended the use of concrete-encased steel from 1888, the use of the technique did not begin in earnest in Australia until c1910, and was employed largely as a measure to protect structural members from fire damage.

Two lifts serviced all floors of the building, and were located at the centre of the rear wall and on the northeast wall. Timber partitions created a delivery office in the north corner of the building, adjacent to a spiral staircase along the rear wall that led to the first floor. An internal stair, located west of the main lift on the rear wall, accessed all floors.

An external stair, attached to the rear of the building at its north corner, also gave access to all floors. The stair housing was located nearby a small single-storey ancillary structure at the rear of the building, which, spanned by simple roof trusses, was used to house plumbers’ supplies. The remaining irregular space between the plumbers’ supplies shed, the Intermediate Block and the rear of the Old Frederick Ash building housed a number of toilets.

The exterior of the building was enlivened by restrained decoration. The front facade, with five paired windows placed equidistantly along each floor, was concrete rendered and painted, and bore the company name and office locations in a band at the base of the first floor. The southwest (side) facade, however, with five single windows at the second, third and fourth floors, was more colourful. The words ‘FRED\(^{6}\) ASH LTD’, were painted in large white letters over a red ground between the second and third floors, while in smaller letters, white on black, read ‘BUILDERS, PLUMBERS, PAINTERS SUPPLIES—PLYWOOD AND TEXTILES’, between the third and fourth floors (Figure 2.14).

The northeast (side) facade, although highly visible from the northern end of Burwood Street, was left blind and unpainted, enlivened only by four embedded pilasters and a simple geometric cornice of painted cement render along the top of the fourth floor. The northwest (rear) facade, also unpainted, contained a variety of windows and openings, irregularly spaced.
The original roof featured a skillion-type timber and masonry construction along the rear portion of the building, with two widows in each side. At some point between c1950 to 1969, this structure was extended with lightweight steel trusses mounted on timber posts across the entire surface of the roof, clad in galvanised iron and asbestos, and lined with windows.

2.7 1969–2005: Council Ownership and Development Proposals

In 1969, the Frederick Ash company was taken over as a subsidiary of Swans Limited, with the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings purchased by Newcastle City Council and let to tenants. The company’s remaining properties were all sold by 1972.

The ‘well-constructed’ New Frederick Ash building was seen by Newcastle City Council as ‘a most favourable acquisition of significant advantage [as] valuable space for storage and other purposes would be provided’ when the building was linked, by three enclosed walkways, to the new Civic Administration Centre (CAC) (1972–1977), which replaced the former Frederick Ash Corrugated Iron and Plumbing Shop.16

The CAC had a major physical impact on the western facade of the New Frederick Ash building. All the articulation of the facade (including openings, signage, and all architectural detailing) was removed by bricking up openings and painting over the facade in a uniform colour. The construction of the enclosed walkways also necessitated new openings in the western facade (at the second and third floors, and at the roof level), and a change in level of part of the third floor. Dewatering of the site for the construction of the Civic Administration Centre also changed the foundation conditions, which appears to be the main cause of the major cracking.

Internally, the building underwent minor changes, although some of these, such as the replacement of the spiral stair between the ground and first floor with a dog-leg timber stair, and the substitution of the original office partitions with half-glazed timber partitions in a different alignment, may have occurred prior to Council’s purchase of the building. Certainly, modifications to the third floor occurred following Council’s purchase. These include the construction of masonry walls to create a main open space, a sloping access corridor leading to the enclosed walkway to the CAC, a bathroom enclosure, a storage area, a darkroom and additional space in the east corner. Lightweight floor to ceiling partitions of timber and wire mesh, and plasterboard, were also installed during Council’s use of the building to create storage areas.

Progressively through the 1980s and early 90s, the area around the New Frederick Ash building was cleared, with all buildings east of the Clarendon Hotel being demolished for carparking. It is likely that the plumbers’ supplies shed was demolished during this period.

Between 1996 and 2004, the external stair and the Intermediate Block were demolished, and an electrical substation was constructed in a portion of the westernmost loading bay. Internally, the substation is enclosed by floor to ceiling brick walls.
From the time of Council’s purchase of the building, the New Frederick Ash building has been the subject of numerous proposals, many of which have advocated its partial or complete demolition, usually as part of a broader commercial redevelopment of the Civic Centre. These proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

In 2004, Newcastle City Council adopted the draft Masterplan for Newcastle’s civic and cultural precinct (Government Architect’s Office, October 2003). The Masterplan involves the inclusion of the New Frederick Ash site within a larger building of seven stories.

2.8 Pitt and Merewether

The firm of Pitt and Merewether was a prominent, and likely the largest, architecture practice in Newcastle during the Interwar years. A great number of Newcastle buildings constructed in this period can be attributed to the firm, which designed residential dwellings, shops and commercial buildings, hotels, and industrial buildings, in a range of styles, from highly decorative to functional and sober.

In 1925, at the time of the construction of the New Frederick Ash building, Pitt and Merewether also designed alterations to the Old Frederick Ash building, modifying the floors at the rear to make four continuous levels through the whole building, and reinstating the connections to the New Frederick Ash building on Burwood Street via two open walkways.17

A number of Pitt and Merewether designs remain in Newcastle. Examples of their work include:

- Tyrrell House, designed in 1921 as the synod hall and diocesan offices of the Anglican Church in an Inter-War Free Classical style;
- Stewart and Lloyd’s Tubemakers of Australia Administration building (former), designed in 1934 adjacent to BHP’s works at Waratah;
- Conversion of the Castlemaine Brewery (former) in 1938; and
- Seven Seas Hotel, at Carrington, in 1938.18

The New Frederick Ash building was designed as a ‘back of house’ storage facility to support the Old Frederick Ash building which served as the primary public interface. While the New Frederick Ash building is part of the body of work of the firm of Pitt and Merewether, it is by no means an exemplar of their work; rather, it is considered to be representative of the wide range of types of work undertaken by Pitt and Merewether.
Figure 2.1 Plan (detail) of Australian Agricultural Company Estate subdivision, Newcastle. GE Darby (Zm3 811/251/1853/1). The approximate location of the New Frederick Ash building is shown by the arrow.
Figure 2.2 The New South Wales Department of Lands Map of Newcastle and Suburbs, 1896. Note the rail line running along Burwood Street; Frederick Ash would build upon lands purchased in this area in 1898. (Source: SH 26 1896; M Ser 3 811.251/1)
Figure 2.3 Building and Functions Detail Survey Map, c1922. The entire Frederick Ash complex can be seen, from the ‘F Ash Limited’ Hunter Street warehouse; the two early Burwood Street warehouses; the Intermediate Block; the large Engineers, Tinsmiths and Iron Corrugating Shops; and, over Burwood Street, further iron stores. Note also the two aerial walkways between the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, the storage sheds adjoining the Burwood St warehouses, and the indication of external and internal lifts. (Source: M3 811.253/19)
Figure 2.4 First of three photographs of an undated panorama (c.1915) of the area around the Frederick Ash complex, most of which is Civic Park today. To the right is the substantial seven-storey bulk of the first Burwood Street warehouse, destroyed by fire in 1925. The street in the immediate foreground is Darby Street, with King Street receding into the distance. The Burwood Street corner can be seen to the right of King Street. (Source: ML L92A)
Figure 2.5 c1915 plans for a three storey 'extension' warehouse to the northeast of the existing seven storey warehouse. Along with the larger warehouse, it was destroyed by fire in 1925. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)
Figure 2.7 New Frederick Ash Building, 1925. Elevation and roof plan. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)
Figure 2.8 New Frederick Ash Building, 1925. Foundation and ground floor plan. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)
Figure 2.9 New Frederick Ash Building, 1925. First and second floor plan. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section).
Figure 2.10 New Frederick Ash Building, 1925. Third and fourth floor plan. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)
Figure 2.11  Undated photograph (c1950?) looking east. The New Frederick Ash building can be seen to the right, beyond the Newcastle Town Hall. Civic Park has been partially cleared of industrial buildings. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)
Figure 2.12  Undated photograph (c1940–1950) looking northeast, showing a loaded coal train heading across on the Burwood line to the port coal loaders. Civic Park has been partially cleared of industrial workshops. The train would pass in front of the New Frederick Ash building, seen in the background. (Source: R Caldwell, Heritage Group, Newcastle Chapter, Engineers Australia)

Figure 2.13  A c1950 view southwest from Hunter Street down Burwood Street, showing the development of the area. The New Frederick Ash warehouse remains a prominent feature along Burwood Street. For more than a century, the precedence of coal trains over other forms of circulation was accepted, as shown here. (Source: R Caldwell, Heritage Group, Newcastle Chapter, Engineers Australia)
Figure 2.14  The New Frederick Ash building, c1970. Seen from Civic Park, the building continues to dominate Burwood Street and its surrounds nearly fifty years after its construction. Note the painted advertising and openings of the southwestern facade (now painted over), and the (disused) Engineers, Tinsmiths and Iron Corrugating Shops in the foreground. (Source: NCC Library, Local Studies Section)

Figure 2.15  The New Frederick Ash building, 2005. Later buildings such as the Roundhouse building (Civic Administration Building, 1977) to the left, and the Australian Taxation Office to the right have entirely obscured the previous sense of scale and dominance of the New Frederick Ash building. Note also the covered walkways joining the Roundhouse and the New Frederick Ash buildings.
2.9 Endnotes

2 ibid.
3 ibid.
5 ibid.
6 ibid.
7 Godden Mackay, op cit, p 16.
8 ibid.
9 Annual Company Returns to New South Wales Securities Commission.
11 Turner, op cit.
14 Godden Mackay, op cit, p 33.
18 ibid.
3.0 Physical Evidence

3.1 Setting

The New Frederick Ash building, located on the northwest side of Burwood Street near its junction with King Street, is situated on a larger block of land bounded by Hunter Street to the north, Wheeler Plaza to the west, King Street to the south and Burwood Street to the southeast. This block is at the centre of a loosely defined area generally referred to as the Newcastle Civic Centre. The Honeysuckle Development and Civic train station are to the north and northwest of this area, while Civic Theatre is located to the west across Wheeler Plaza, and Civic Park to the south.

The block in which the New Frederick Ash building is located contains a collection of buildings, many of which are notable for their heritage value, including, along the Hunter Street frontage, the Bennett Building (1906), the Old Frederick Ash building (1905), Morpeth House (1936), and the Clarendon Hotel (c1940). The Civic Administration Centre (1972–1977) is located immediately adjacent to the southwest of the New Frederick Ash building, while a large open space used as carparking occupies the remainder of the area from the northeast (side) wall of the New Frederick Ash building.

Due to this currently open space, the New Frederick Ash building is highly visible from the junction of Hunter and Burwood Streets, although this is not an historically significant view. The New Frederick Ash building also constitutes a significant visual presence as viewed from Civic Park.

Despite the demolition of the Intermediate Block and the connecting walkways between the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, the proximity of the two buildings, traces of walkway supports, and the similar fabric and style of the buildings continues to suggest their historical and material connections.

3.2 Construction, Design and Style

The New Frederick Ash building is a five-storey brick structure, with concrete encased steel framing supporting concrete floor slabs, in addition to load bearing triple-brick walls. The later portion of the attic roof is of corrugated galvanised iron and corrugated asbestos sheeting.

As with many commercial buildings of this type and period in Australia, the New Frederick Ash building presents a simple interpretation of the Commercial Palazzo style, evident in its use of a distinct ‘base’, ‘shaft’ and ‘capital’, corresponding to an emphasised ground level, undecorated intermediate storeys, and a projecting upper cornice. Overall detail and ornament uses a classical idiom.

The style’s most important contribution to architecture of the early twentieth century was the provision of an acceptable model for the design of the facades of steel or concrete framed buildings which enabled them to take their places comfortably in existing urban streetscapes.¹
In terms of the Commercial Palazzo style, the most significant features of the building are its Burwood Street facade and the southwestern elevation (prior to its rendering).

### 3.3 Building Exterior

#### 3.3.1 Southeast (Front) Elevation

The principal elevation of the New Frederick Ash building is cement rendered with a simple classical cornice ensemble with geometric decoration (Figure 3.3).

The ground level is penetrated by six openings, asymmetrically arranged. Five are closed with modern roller shutters, while the bay on the far left, converted for use as an electrical substation, is closed with double doors and a louvred panel. The openings are flanked by flat engaged pilasters that support a secondary entablature bearing, in cement lettering, the words ‘FREDC ASH LTD ESTD 1855 ... SYDNEY. CESSNOCK ...’ On the left hand side of the entablature, further lettering is shadowed ‘LISMORE. WOLLONGONG’. A second set of outlines underneath these, reads, ‘LONDON. BRISBANE’. A simple projecting cornice surmounts the entablature (Figure 3.4).

Above the ground floor, the facade is symmetrical with an elegant arrangement of five paired windows to each floor, rising to a simple geometric cornice frieze. Additional windows are provided along the first floor, which also features a projecting lintel with corbel brackets.

The attic storey is a lightweight construction of glazed and louvred panels in timber frames. This is a later modification of the original flat roof portion of the building.

#### 3.3.2 Side Elevations

The northeast wall is of plain brickwork with no fenestration. It is divided into five bays by engaged piers that terminate at the cement rendered cornice. The cornice incorporates the words ‘FREDC ASH LTD’ (Figures 3.6, 3.7).

The southwest wall is rendered from the base of the second storey, covering the bricked-in windows, of which five were regularly space along each floor. Below this, across the ground and first floor, the brickwork has been painted. The bottom of the rendered section most probably represents the roof line of the earlier ironwork sheds which abutted the Frederick Ash building (see c1970s elevation in Figure 2.14). Also bricked in are small openings that may represent the location of beams from the adjoining tin shop.

The construction of enclosed walkways from the CAC building has sectioned the upper cornice of the New Frederick Ash building, and necessitated enlarged openings in its third and fifth floors.
3.3.3 Northwest (Rear) Elevation

The northwest (rear) elevation is of plain brickwork with functional window penetrations (Figures 3.8, 3.9).

The rear of the building shows traces of previous elements and changes occasioned by the removal of a ground floor extension of the building, such as exposed flashing between the ground and first floors, and different weathering of now exposed interior bricks. Also evident are the bricked-up openings and connection points of the two walkways which connected the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings (Figure 3.9).

Other modifications include the bricking up of the walkway entrances and doors, and the replacement of some windows.

Figure 3.1 Front facade of the New Frederick Ash building, from Burwood Street. The enclosed walkways to the Civic Administration Centre building are visible to the left.
Figure 3.2
Northeast elevation of the New Frederick Ash building, seen from the junction of Burwood and Hunter Streets. The Old Frederick Ash building can be seen, with the clock tower of the Town Hall behind.

Figure 3.3
Southeast (front) facade of the New Frederick Ash building. Note the electrical substation in the ground floor bay at left; the roller doors on remaining bays; the driveway access to the Civic Administration building to at left, and the covered walkways between the two buildings.
Figure 3.4
Decorative cornices, front facade. Faded lettering at left reads (in part) Lismore. Wollongong., and under this, London. Brisbane. Note the remaining horse dray guide rails at the middle bays, and the damaged cornice at upper right.

Figure 3.5
Structural damage. Thermal expansion and poor bonding between walls and floor, and the impact of new foundations nearby, have caused running cracks, particularly evident at the corners of perimeter walls. Water ingress has also weakened lintels.
Figure 3.6
Northeast elevation, Burwood Street, showing engaged piers (pilasters). Note the later portion of the attic structure, extended from the original brick skillion-roofed portion to occupy the remaining roof area.

Figure 3.7
Northeast elevation, showing decorative cornice at top and undamaged character of the wall.
Figure 3.8  Northwest elevation (rear) showing damaged corner, resulting from removal of external stair.

Figure 3.9  Northwest elevation (rear). Walkways between the New and Old Frederick Ash buildings extended from the two bricked up openings.

Figure 3.10  Northwest (rear) elevation. The location of the former external stair is clearly visible to the left.
3.4 Building Interior

3.4.1 Construction

The interior of the New Frederick Ash building expresses a composite structure of concrete encased steel-framed internal support and loadbearing masonry walls on the perimeter. The rectangular shape of the building comprises six longitudinal (northwest–southeast) bays and five lateral (southwest–northeast) bays. The floor is formed by reinforced steel concrete slabs, extending from the front to the rear of the building, and supported at approximately 4m spans by concrete-encased steel beams between vertical columns. All beams and columns appear to be rolled structural steel (RSJ or I beams) with riveted connections and external gussets. Encasing concrete displays timber formwork impressions.

Supporting each floor slab at their junction with the perimeter walls is a two step brick corbel, projecting half a course wide.

There are several internal walls. The only original internal masonry walls are those forming the stair well and elevator shafts at the northwest (rear) and northeast (side) walls of the building, all apparently of double brick construction. Later masonry walls are found on the third floor. Other internal walls are timber partitions, with plaster or masonite cladding, or wire mesh.

3.4.2 Ground floor

The ground floor, designed as a loading and discharge bay, today comprises three loading bays accessed via five doors, each with a pair of horse dray guide rails embedded in the concrete floor. The floor around these docks is raised approximately one metre above street level, and are reinforced concrete slabs supported on square brick piers (Figure 3.19). The southwest bay has been partitioned with masonry walls to allow the installation of an electrical substation. The bay to its right, which originally continued through the building to the rear (demolished) exterior annexe, has been shortened to match the remaining bays.

A timber staircase on the inside of the northwest wall extends from the ground to the first floor; this replaced an earlier spiral stair. A goods elevator is located at the rear (northwest) wall, with a second elevator at the northern end of the northeast wall. Original timber partitions of an office in the north corner of the ground floor have been removed, and more recent half-glazed timber partitions form an office enclosure in front of the staircase at the northwest wall.

3.4.3 First to Fourth Floors

These floors, apart from the third floor, remain virtually as built: open areas of exposed concrete slab floors and concrete encased steel columns and beams. All brick walls are unpainted. Floors 1, 2 and 4 have varying levels of floor to ceiling partitioning (Figures 3.14–3.18).
The only substantial alterations are to be found on the third floor, where masonry walls have been constructed to create a main open space, a sloping access corridor leading to the enclosed walkway to the Civic Administration Building, a bathroom enclosure, a storage area, a darkroom and additional space in the east corner.

3.4.4 Fifth/Attic floor

The attic storey comprises an original masonry skillion-roofed structure to the northwest (Figure 3.11). Adjoining this section and covering the remainder original roof is an iron and asbestos roof over light welded steel trusses. Steel columns project through the original roof, suggesting a possible extension upwards; most of these have sheet-metal shields. The original roof surface (the floor of the present roof addition) and inside surface of the cornice/parapet is covered in bituminous felt.

3.5 Building Condition

3.5.1 General Condition

The New Frederick Ash building shows evidence of deterioration throughout much of the structure. The comments provided in this section are based on general observations made by the project team on a guided inspection by Graham Wilson, NCC project manager. For detailed structural assessment refer to City Projects and Pedersen Engineers (Fred Ash (Burwood Street) Structural Condition Assessment Report, June 2005, which is included as Appendix C.

Differential settlement has caused minor fractures and cracking throughout the building, although these are particularly evident in the southwest and east corners of the building. In turn, the absence of regular maintenance has allowed water ingress to corrode the steelwork, which has caused spalling and cracking of cement lintels, floors slabs and brickwork.

In addition, the New Frederick Ash building has suffered significantly as a result of differential thermal expansion of its perimeter brick walls relative to that of the concrete floor slabs; this has caused the slabs to detach from the walls at the building corners, particularly to the south and east (Figure 3.20).

It is likely that the construction of the CAC building considerably aggravated a number of substantial structural problems in the New Frederick Ash building, located immediately adjacent. In particular, the dewatering of the CAC site and the cutting of foundations along the southwest wall of New Frederick Ash building exacerbated existing structural weaknesses in the latter building.²

3.5.2 Exterior

There is running cracking down the left side of the front facade, from the first storey to the roof (Figure 3.5). It has been suggested that this is likely due to differential settlement caused by the size and placement of foundations for the City Administration Building. The crack appears to have changed little since 1994 (when the Conservation Management Plan was prepared).
Window lintels and a section of the projecting cornice above the first floor windows are spalling and/or have fallen away, due to oxidation of the steel reinforcements and lintel bars (Figures 3.4 and 3.5).

Damage to exterior brickwork along the northeastern edge of the building has been caused by the removal of the external staircase.

3.5.3 Interior

Extensive corrosion of steel reinforcing due to water ingress is present in many areas. This has caused prominent spalling in all of the window lintels along the southwestern elevation, and at the underside of many flooring slabs (Figures 3.21–3.23).

Due to the lack of lateral reinforcement, many of the floor slabs show longitudinal cracks (southeast–northwest), which has exacerbated water ingress and the oxidisation of steel reinforcing.

3.6 Integrity

In heritage terms, integrity of the fabric is the degree to which an item retains the components required to fully interpret (explain) its significance.

Much of the original fabric of the New Frederick Ash building remains in its original configuration. Despite the loss of ancillary structures to the rear, modifications to the western loading bay and the connection of new walkways, the original function of the New Frederick Ash building, as a packing and reserve storage warehouse, can still be easily appreciated in its current state.

The office and ground floor loading bays, each with their dray cart guide rails and raised surrounding floor, evidence the packing and loading process, while the open upper floors, originally devoid of internal divisions, clearly functioned as a warehouse storage space.

The functional relationship to the components of the larger Frederick Ash complex, in particular to the site’s retail building (Old Frederick Ash) is also readily interpreted.
Figure 3.11  
Level 5, showing later section of roof. Note projecting steel columns, covered with metal shields. The floor is the membrane covered former roof and the solid portion of the perimeter walls is the original parapet.

Figure 3.12  
Fifth floor, northeast corner, showing the door that opened to the external stairway of the intermediate building. Note also the replacement lintel and drilled steel supporting struts.
Figure 3.13
Fifth floor, original elevator shaft. The original elevator mechanism and car are extant but were decommissioned earlier this year as they do not meet the current safety standards.

Figure 3.14
Fourth floor, looking towards the front facade. Columns and beams are concrete-encased steel.
Figure 3.15
Third floor interior, looking towards the south corner.

Figure 3.16
Third floor, looking northwest towards ramp and door, opening to an enclosed walkway to the Civic Administration building.
Figure 3.17
Second floor, general view of interior, still used as repository for Council equipment.

Figure 3.18
First floor, general view of interior, still used as repository for Council equipment. Partitions are made with timber-farmed wire mesh panels.
Figure 3.19
Ground floor, loading bay. Original fittings include the horse dray guide rails on floor and wooden stairs.

Figure 3.20
Fourth floor, south corner, showing recent propping. A compactor storage unit was formerly located in this corner, which would have added considerable load. Similar propping has been added to most floors at this corner of the building. Also note the wall/floor bracing.
Figure 3.21
Third floor, interior showing the wall/slab junction. Extensive spalling at the edge of the slab has exposed the corroding steel reinforcement bars. The staining on the brickwork indicates that water ingress is the source of the problem in this area.

Figure 3.22
Third floor, southeast (front) facade. Spalling window heads showing damage from corroding steel lintels.
3.7 Endnotes


2 City Projects and Pedersen Engineers, Fred Ash (Burwood Street) Structural Condition Assessment Report, June 2005, pp 3, 6, 8.
4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 New South Wales Heritage Assessment Guidelines

4.1.1 Introduction

The NSW Heritage Manual guidelines prepared by the NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (as amended July 2002) provide the framework for the following assessment and statement of significance for the New Frederick Ash building. These guidelines incorporate the five types of cultural heritage values identified in The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Places of Cultural Significance 1999 into a specifically structured framework which is currently accepted as the required format by heritage authorities in New South Wales.

Under these guidelines, items (or ‘places’, to use Burra Charter terminology) are assessed in accordance with a specific set of criteria, as set out below:

a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of NSW (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s:

– cultural or natural places; or
– cultural or natural environments

(or a class of the local areas’– cultural or natural places; or
– cultural or natural environments.)
In applying the assessment criteria, both the nature and degree of significance of the place need to be identified, with items varying in the extent to which they embody or reflect key values and the relative importance of their evidence or associations.

The assessment also needs to relate the item’s values to its relevant geographical and social context, usually identified as either Local or State contexts. Items may have both Local and State significance for similar or different values/criteria.

Statutory protection of heritage places (ie by local and/or state governments) is usually related to the identified level of significance. Items of State significance may be considered by the Heritage Council of NSW for inclusion on the State Heritage Register.

4.1.2 State Historical Themes

The NSW Heritage Manual identifies a specific set of ‘Historical Themes relevant to New South Wales, within which the heritage values of a place can be examined. Given the historical, commercial and physical links between the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, themes that are more generally applicable to the Frederick Ash complex are also taken into account here. Relevant themes for the New Frederick Ash building include:

- **Mining**—Burwood Street represents the alignment of an early coal rail line to the Burwood Colliery, and the front of the New Frederick Ash building strongly marks this alignment.

- **Townships**—The group of buildings on the land bounded by Hunter Street, Burwood Street and Wheeler Plaza represents harmonious yet diverse group of buildings, mostly of brick, that represent differing periods and styles.

- **Labour**—Historical associations with unions and trade groups are represented by the Frederick Ash complex.

- **Commerce**—The New Frederick building, as part of Frederick Ash complex (and in association with nearby buildings such as Morpeth House and the Bennett building), is one of the earliest and most important building to document the history of commercial activity in Newcastle and, in particular, this part of the city which is now more ‘civic’ in its uses.

- **Technology**—Early use of concrete cladding of steel frame for fire protection.

4.2 Heritage Assessment of the New Frederick Ash Building, 30 Burwood Street

This section sets out an assessment of the heritage significance of the new Frederick Ash building, in accordance with the standard criteria identified in the NSW Heritage Office guidelines. The evaluation includes consideration of the original and subsequent layering of fabric, uses, associations and meanings of the place, as well as its relationship to its immediate and wider settings.
The evaluation also takes into account previous evaluations, as developed in the Conservation Management Plan and the Heritage Impact Statement, and any changes that may have occurred to the site since the writing of these reports.

### 4.2.1 Criterion A (Historic: Evolution)

\[ a \] An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The New Frederick Ash building is significant under this criterion as a major component of the Frederick Ash complex and the Frederick Ash company. The company, itself a major mercantile enterprise for shop and domestic fittings, is testament to the growth of entrepreneurial activities, and to the general economic and domestic development of Newcastle over the century of 1850 to 1950.

The New Frederick Ash building provides important evidence of renewed growth in Newcastle following the economic difficulties of the 1920s, characterised not only by the re-establishment of the company at this time, but its expansion of the company throughout New South Wales and overseas, displayed through physical evidence (signage) at the site. The company had established an office in London by 1908; had a presence in Wollongong from 1929, and established an office there in 1937, and offices were also established at Cessnock (1929), Lismore (date unknown), and Sydney (Leichhardt 1929, Marrickville 1969).

As part of the Frederick Ash complex, the New Frederick Ash building provides evidence of the functional arrangements of the complex as well as evolution of the site.

The New Frederick Ash building, constructed on the footings of two earlier warehouses on the site, evidences the continued pattern of use, as much for the site as the surrounding area, for commercial warehousing and goods storage.

### 4.2.2 Criterion B (Historic: Association)

\[ b \] An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of NSW (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The New Frederick Ash building was designed by architects Pitt and Merewether. The firm of Pitt and Merewether was the leading architectural practice of its day in Newcastle during the interwar years. A large number of Newcastle’s finest buildings are attributed to Pitt and Merewether, including Tyrrell House (1925), Stewart and Lloyd’s Tubemakers of Australia Administration building (former, 1934), and Seven Seas Hotel, Carrington (1938). The New Frederick Ash building is associated with the firm of Pitt and Merewether as a representative example of the range of the firm’s work rather than being an outstanding example.
The building is also associated with Frederick Ash ‘a self–made merchant who built up a flourishing business over forty years, selling and importing building supplies to both trade and retail customers’.1

4.2.3 Criterion C (Aesthetic Significance)

   c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).

The New Frederick Ash building demonstrates both aesthetic and technical significance, expressed in the interplay between the architectural style and the construction technology employed.

The use of concrete-encased steel to form the internal structure of the New Frederick Ash Building, alongside load-bearing external brick walls, typifies the advances in structural and material technology during the interwar period. It represents a transition from traditional load bearing masonry to concrete frame structures, that dominated later twentieth century construction. Further, this transition from load-bearing exterior walls to full internal support is exemplified by the building’s stylistic treatment as a simplified Commercial Palazzo design. This style, generated in part as a response to the increasing strength of internal structural support, created an aesthetic form which allowed taller, steel-framed structures to sit comfortably in existing (pre-1920s) streetscapes.

The New Frederick Ash building is also of aesthetic significance in relation to its streetscape contribution. The solid, rectangular massing of the building, enlightened by its soft palette and restrained neoclassical decorations, is an important visual component in general views of the Civic Centre precinct from Civic Park, and from the junction of Burwood and Hunter Streets. The building is also visible from Wheeler Plaza, where it can be seen adjacent to the Old Frederick Ash building and its place in the Frederick Ash complex more easily interpreted.

The building has technical significance for its early use of a steel framework encased in concrete for fire protection.

The building maintains a moderate level of intactness with nearly all its original external structure and the potential for the northwest face to be reconstructed. The building also retains most of its original internal elements including the structure and lifts.

4.2.4 Criterion D (Social Significance)

   d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

A full social significance survey has not been carried out as part of this assessment, as it is beyond the scope of the present brief. It is not possible to make an assessment of the social value of the building without broad consultation with the community. (An indicative impression of the social value of the building may be gained by referring to the community feedback to the Civic and Cultural...
Precinct Masterplan Development, March 2004 and to the heritage-specific enquiries made as part of this study, outlined in Appendix D.

4.2.5 Criterion E (Research Potential)

ea) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The New Frederick Ash building has some limited value under this criterion in relation to archaeological potential. The archaeological assessment for the site in the 1994 CMP identified the area occupied by the New Frederick Ash building as a Unit Ila area, that is, an area ‘likely to contain archaeological features.’ The Ila zoning recognises that, where nineteenth and twentieth century buildings are located, foundations may have damaged the pre-nineteenth century archaeological resource.

4.2.6 Criterion F (Rarity)

f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The New Frederick Ash building is the only remaining purpose-built structure associated with the State significant Old Frederick Ash building.

In addition, the New Frederick Ash building is one of a small number of warehouse buildings and industrial structures remaining in central Newcastle associated with the formerly dominant industrial character of this area. In relation to Burwood Street, the New Frederick Ash building has a rare aesthetic presence as the only industrial remnant remaining on the earlier industrial alignment of the rail line. (It should be noted that the New Frederick Ash building is not from the same period as the former rail line).

The Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style is a rare style for warehouse buildings in the Civic precinct and Newcastle generally.

4.2.7 Criterion G (Representativeness)

g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s:

– cultural or natural places; or
– cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local areas) – cultural or natural places; or
– cultural or natural environments.

The New Frederick Ash building is a simplified but representative example of the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style.
The building is also representative as a modest but unusual example of the range of work of the architectural firm of Pitt and Mereweather.

The New Frederick Ash building is part of a group of warehouse buildings with structures that display a transitional building technology, having both load bearing and concrete frame construction.

### 4.2.8 Aboriginal Archaeology

To date, no assessment of the site’s potential as an Aboriginal archaeological resource has been carried out.

While archaeological research has indicated that Aboriginal occupation occurred for over 8,000 years within the Newcastle area, no Aboriginal archaeological research has been conducted on or around the site of the New Frederick Ash building, nor within the wider Civic Centre Precinct.

### 4.2.9 Integrity/Intactness

The New Frederick Ash building retains a moderate level of intactness and integrity (refer to section 3.6) as a bulk storage facility in the Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style. Nearly all fabric and elements of the New Frederick Ash building are original and are largely as built.

The greatest degree of modifications has occurred on the southwest elevation, where original openings have been bricked in and the face of the building rendered over. Other minor alterations involve the removal of external adjoining buildings and elements (such as the aerial walkways external stairwell), the installation of limited fixed internal partitioning (on level 3), and the connection of the building to the Civic Administration Building via three enclosed walkways.

Overall, these changes detract very little from an understanding of the historic function and presentation of the building.

### 4.3 Statement of Significance

#### 4.3.1 Frederick Ash Complex

The significance of the Frederick Ash complex is generally identified in the significance of the retail store on Hunter Street, known as the Old Frederick Ash building, which is a very fine building demonstrating a very high level of creative and technical achievement.

Only two buildings remain (the ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Frederick Ash buildings) of the complex which had included the Retail store on Hunter Street (Old Frederick Ash building), the Reserved Stores and Packing Warehouse (New Frederick Ash building) on Burwood Street, the Intermediate building (which linked the Hunter and Burwood Street buildings), the iron and corrugating shop to the southwest of the New Frederick Ash building, and the ‘Store for Galvanised Iron and Sundries’ located directly opposite across Burwood Street.
The Frederick Ash site has been associated with hardware retailing and manufacture for 65 years and has been a significant provider of services, facilities, goods and new developments in hardware and homemaking for the local community and building trade. The site is associated with the prominent architectural practice of Frederick Menkens and, later, that of Pitt and Merewether, and Yeomans and Castleden, which has left a legacy of fine buildings in Newcastle. The Frederick Ash complex is also significant for its association with the Frederick Ash company whose entrepreneurial activities and growth relates to a key period of growth for Newcastle in the mid-nineteenth century.

4.3.2 The New Frederick Ash Building

The New Frederick Ash building, formerly known as the Reserved Stores and Packing Warehouse, is significant for its role in the overall operation of the Frederick Ash complex. This building was constructed at the beginning of a confident period of expansion for the firm which saw branches located in Lismore, Wollongong, Cessnock and Sydney. The New Frederick Ash building provides evidence of a continuum of storage, warehouse and factory operations on this part of the site, having replaced an earlier warehouse on exactly the same location which was destroyed by fire in 1925.

The building was designed by the architectural firm of Pitt and Merewether, who continued the practice established by Frederick B Menkens, Newcastle’s foremost architect, and who were themselves the leading practice of the time in Newcastle. Individual directors of the firm were also responsible for a majority of Newcastle’s most significant early twentieth century buildings.

The building has aesthetic significance as an imposing element in Burwood Street, which, though monumental in scale, expressing an economical and functional design, is enlivened by a sensitive, restrained use of Classical motifs on the Burwood Street facade.

Other significant features in this building include the horse dray guide rails in the loading dock area, the electric lifts, the attic storey and flat roof. The building retains a moderate level of intactness with the potential for recovery of modified elements.

Whilst some values of this building are at a State level of significance because of the Frederick Ash association with the complex as a whole, the overall assessment places it at Local level significance.

4.4 Significance of Components

The following table, which sets out the terms used to describe the relative grades of heritage significance for different components of a place, is taken from the NSW Heritage Office publication Assessing Heritage Significance (2001).
The following grading of significance for components of the building is undertaken with reference to all the remaining fabric of the Frederick Ash Complex. In relation to the Old Frederick Ash Building which is identified on the NSW State Heritage Register as having State level significance, the New Frederick Ash building is considered to be of High significance. The components and attributes of the New Frederick Ash building are then graded accordingly. The elements considered to have the highest value are those that demonstrate the association with the Frederick Ash complex, the warehousing aspects of the building and elements of particular aesthetic significance.

**Exceptional**

- Historic and functional associations with the Frederick Ash Complex.

**High**

- Physical relationship between the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, as expressed by their proximity, the intervening open space at the rear of the New Frederick Ash building and the bricked in openings where the former covered walkways connected the two buildings.
- Signage on the façade.
- Horse dray guide rails, both internal and external (their extent under Burwood Street pavement and at the rear of the building has not been determined).
- Rectangular form, including attic roof, and general scale.
- Visibility of overall massing and materials (ie brick and render) from Burwood and Hunter Streets.
- The front (southeast) façade facing Burwood Street, including all constituent elements, with particular emphasis on projecting cornices and entablatures at ground, first and fourth floors, and pattern of openings.
• Cornice and entablature of the northeast wall, and remains of the cornice and entablature of the southwest wall.

• Original corrugated skillion roof section at rear, and projecting elevator shaft.

• Original elements and spaces of ground floor, notably the enclosed loading bays and the raised ground floor, and the exposed concrete floor slabs and columns.

• Both goods lifts including lift cars, machinery, and enclosing shaft walls.

**Moderate**

• Stairwell walls (on all floors).

• Scale of the trussed roof extension, and its relationship to the original skillion roof portion at rear.

• Internal concrete-encased steel structure, including floor slabs and columns.

• Internal double course brick corbels supporting floor slabs.

**Low**

• All internal partitions, including timber half glazed partitions on the ground floor.

• Steel I-beams projecting along roof surface.

**Intrusive**

• Enclosed walkways connecting the CAC building to the New Frederick Ash building on third and fifth floors.

• Recent electrical sub-station and associated walls on the ground floor.

• Internal ramp connection to enclosed walkway on third floor.

• Internal masonry partitions (all) on third floor.

• Storage enclosures within skillion roof portion.

• Rendered southwest elevation (adjacent to Civic Administration building).

4.5 Endnotes

5.0 Appendices

Appendix A
Proposals for the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, 1973 to 2005

Appendix B
National Trust Listing Card

Appendix C
Structural Condition Report

Appendix D
Social Significance Discussion
Appendix A

Proposals for the Old and New Frederick Ash buildings, 1973 to 2005
# Appendix A

## Proposals for the Old and New Frederick Ash Buildings, 1973 to 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Building Concerned</th>
<th>Development Proposal or Heritage Listing</th>
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<tr>
<td>1973, 1977</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Relocation of the Newcastle Art Gallery.</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>New Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Renovation of Burwood Street facade to 'blend in' with City Administration Centre.</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Expansion of Council offices, connection to City Administration Centre, bank offices on first floor.</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Listing on Newcastle City Council LEP.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Approval for redevelopment to incorporate a bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Offers made for restaurant, offices and craft centre to be established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Concept plan for 13-storey hotel that would incorporate and restore the original warehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Upgrading of listing on National Trust (NSW) Register (recorded item to classified item).</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Old Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Section 130 Order placed on Old Frederick Ash Building (26 June 1987).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Protection order lifted by State Government to allow development plans to proceed.</td>
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<td>• Stage 1 DA proposed an international hotel, 16 storey office block and retail development, with retention of the Hunter Street facade only (New Frederick Ash to be demolished).</td>
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<td>• Interim Conservation Order placed (29 August 1987) placed by State Government stymies proposal.</td>
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<td>Development Proposal or Heritage Listing</td>
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<td>1989</td>
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<td>• Permanent Conservation Order issued for the Old Frederick Ash building (No. 642, May); National Trust (NSW) recognises Old and New Frederick Ash Buildings as contributing to a distinctive early twentieth century landscape.</td>
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<td>‘Frederick Ash Group of Buildings’</td>
<td>• National Trust (NSW) lists the ‘Frederick Ash Group of Buildings’—11 buildings, both extant and demolished, associated with the Frederick Ash company are listed.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>New Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Three architectural firms asked to provide ideas towards adaptive reuse of the building; retention of facade only considered likely.</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>New Frederick Ash Building</td>
<td>• Proposal for use as student accommodation.</td>
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Appendix B

National Trust Listing Card
FREDERICK ASH BUILDINGS GROUP

Comprising:

WBS BUILDING
ISRAEL'S BUILDING
COMMERCIAL/DETAIL BUILDING
THE 'MOWW DERRY' RESTAURANT BUILDING
JERRETT'S WAREHOUSE
CLARENDAW HOTEL
MONKSHOUSE

THE 'OLD' FREDERICK ASH BUILDING
JERRETT'S BUILDING
THE 'NEW' FREDERICK ASH BUILDING

[CARD 1 of 11]

2300 Newcastle City

R. Irving, C.Aplin (January 1990)

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly R.Tarsom, R.Wark
MCC Green Design and Heritage Guidelines, 1989

HISTORY

See individual cards.

DESCRIPTION

This group comprises all buildings on the southern side of Hunter St between
Burwood St and Wheeler Place, except for a modern bank building on the Wheeler
Place corner. All are of a similar height and they form a unified group despite
being of varied styles. Also included are the WBS Building which wraps around
into Burwood St and the 'New' Frederick Ash Building further south along
Burwood St, but joined physically and functionally to the 'Old' Frederick Ash
Building in Hunter St.

BOUNDARY -- group boundary is relevant street frontages and the sides and
rears of included buildings.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Frederick Ash Group characterises many aspects of Newcastle's development
during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the
twentieth century. Commercial, retail and residential interests are
represented, illustrating changing social forces, building uses and
architectural progress. The group is very varied in appearance yet retains a
harmony of scale and a great townscape attractiveness.
NEWCASTLE
"OLD" FREDERICK AND BUILDING
(Part of FREDERICK AND (GROUP)
[CASE 9 of 11]
359-361 Hunter St
2300 Newcastle City
Owner: Newcastle City Council
B. Irving, C. Apolin (January 1990)

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, R. Meak
MCE Urban Design & Heritage Guidelines No.16.5

HISTORY
This building was designed by F.B. Menkens and built in 1902-03 as a warehouse
for Frederick Ash. It has since been internally altered and appears to have
served as a retail showrooms with office and storage space on upper floors. Used
by Ash to sell hardware and store building materials with workshops and packing
crosses behind. It suffered some damage in the December 1989 earthquake.

DESCRIPTION
This is a building of comparatively small size which, by its design, achieves a
considerable streetscape scale and dignity. It has a robust four-storey façade
in three bays articulated by large end piers and smaller intermediate ones. The
fine brickwork is red-brown in colour. The first and third-floor windows have
semicircular arched heads, those at first-floor level being treated as
 Dissolution windows with multiple panes in the semicircles. The windows of the
second floor have segmental arched openings. The skylight is delightfully
elaborate, with brick archivolts, stepped piers with corbelled tops, and a
tall parapet. In the parapet are the words "FRED ASH. LTD." and in the panel
surrounding it, "ESTAB 1835".

Internally, the building is revealed as long and narrow and the site extends at the
rear to fill an odd shape resulting from the alignment of Burwood St to the
south. The building was either erected in several stages or has, over the
years, been modified. The front section has traditional construction of
external brick bearing walls, lateral timber girders supported on cast iron
columns below and timber posts above, and hardwood longitudinal joists.
The rear section has no internal supports to the lower floors, but there are steel
lateral girders, composite and riveted at first and second floor levels, and
simple large members over the ground floor. The structure filling the complex-
shaped southeastern extension of the site is not architecturally notable, but
has an internal structure of steel with brick piers and steel girders platform walls: this section was
most likely built at the same time as the "New" Frederick Ash Building, or
perhaps even later.

The ground floor has a tall ceiling sheeted with decorative pressed metal in
the five northern bays, which also have slender columns of cast iron. There are
four shallow (fireplaces which formerly held gas fires (strangely, three on the
western wall, only one on the eastern). The staircase, at the rear of the
building, is of timber with turned timber balustrading. The first floor has
wide semicircular front windows and, in the front bays, ceilings, cornices and
beau casings of pressed metal with Art Nouveau decorative panels. As in all the
stretches, there are attached brick wall piers of bullnose bricks. At the rear there are full-width composite rivetted steel girders marked "Boram Long". Here, and at all other levels, the floor is of timber. There are toilets at this level, as well as a connection to the "New" Frederick Ash Building (there are possibly connections at all levels, but the others are closed off if present). On the second floor are the former offices, which have some remnants of fine joinery and panelling. Here there is a central row of timber posts supporting the lateral timber beam, and the ceilings are mainly of ripple iron. The third or top floor has 14" brick perimeter walls. The central posts are timber-bracketed. The goods elevator at the rear services all floors. Above this the timber boarded ceiling serves also as an attic floor beneath a collared rafter roof which is covered with terracotta tiles.

SIGNIFICANCE

The "Old" Frederick Ash Building has a distinguished facade which contributes considerably to this lively and historic streetscape. It was the premises of a well-known Newcastle entrepreneur and was designed by the city’s most famous architect: it is one of his very best commercial buildings of the first decade of this century. This building is a key element in the group.
Built in 1905 as a warehouse for Frederick Ash Ltd., hardware merchants (est. 1855). Architect: F.B. Monkens. It is a three storey building of English bond red brick, with cement rendered sills and lighter brick slightly arched lintels to upper storey windows at the side. The upper facade has wide arched Edwardian windows and simple brick decorative elements: bullnosed brick sills, pilasters, decorative patterns below the parapet level, brick parapet with central pediment and decorated pilaster tops. The rear retains loading doors and pulley holsters. Gabled nassposite tiled roof. The ground floor facade has been altered; the ground floor interior has a pressed metal ceiling; the rest of the interior is largely intact, including an exposed timber and cast iron structure, and an open timber stair. The ground floor is used as shops and the upper floors are vacant.

Note: 363 Hunter Street (1906 on parapet) covers some of the side openings of 361 Hunter Streeet.

This Federation period warehouse makes a major contribution to the townscape of the Civic area. It is probably the best preserved of the warehouses of Monken's design of the 1901-1906 period, and features excellent and unusual brick detailing on the parapet.
COMMITTEE REFERENCES:

LSC/83 30/6/79: recommended CLASSIFY
HB/C49 7/5/79: RECORD pending inspection
Council 25/6/79: approved RECORD
LSC/86 7 confirm
HB/C339 20/5/85: appears worthy of CLASSIFIED listing but referred to Editorial sub-committee

HB/C342 29/7/85 (editorial): considered
HB/C342 19/8/85: recommended CLASSIFY
Council 16/11/85: approved CLASSIFIED
Owner advised CLASSIFY 23/12/85; copy to LCA; form letter HB/C5a
NEWCASTLE
MORPETH HOUSE
(Part of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)
355-357 Hunter St
2300 Newcastle City
Owner: ??

R. Irving, G. Aplin (January 1990)

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, R. Wark

HISTORY

Probably built in 1936, the date on the parapet.

DESCRIPTION

This is an unusually fine three-storey brick building in a conservative Art Deco Style. There is a wide central bay and narrower side bays making a symmetrical composition. The bays are separated by vertical brick fins and the angle windows are framed by moulded brick fins giving the facade a very vigorous and stylish quality. Windows are timber-framed and double-hung, with brick spandrels in herringbone and diagonal stack bond. The quality of the workmanship is notable. There is a suspended footpath awning. Ground-floor fenestration has been altered. The parapet is stepped and crowned by moulded brickwork. It bears the legend "MORPETH HOUSE 1936" in metal letters.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

Morpeth House is one of the best remaining examples of this conservative Inter-War Art Deco idiom, notable not only for good design but also for excellent craftsmanship. It is compatible in scale to other buildings in the group and contributes effectively to the streetscape.
NEWCASTLE

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL BUILDING
(2300 Newcastle City)
Owner: ??

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, H. Wood

DESCRIPTION

This is a moderately scaled building with a twin-arched facade at the upper level. Bands of stucco and imitated arch veneers give the facade a Free Style character. There are large windows in the arches. The parapet, street awning and ground floor fenestration have been altered.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

This commercial/retail building is an effective contributor to the diverse yet pleasantly scaled streetscape of this part of Hunter St.
NEWCASTLE

"BROWN DERBY" RESTAURANT
(Part of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)
( Card 5 of 11)

339-341 Hunter St

2300 Newcastle City

R. Irving, C. Aglin (January 1990)

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, R. Work

HISTORY

Not known.

DESCRIPTION

This is a late nineteenth century two-storey building having a prominent semicircular pediment above the parapet. There are rectangular windows with stucco label courses. The parapet is composed as a free Classical entablature including consoles.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

This modest, pleasant architectural example is an effective contributor to the diverse yet pleasantly scaled streetscape of this part of Hunter St.
NEWCASTLE

ISRAEL'S BUILDING
(Part of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)
[CARD 5 OF 11]

333-335 Hunter St

2300 Newcastle City Owner: ??

R Irving, G Aplin (January 1990)

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K Parsons, R Mark

HISTORY

May have been built in 1886 when the firm was established, but may well be later. c.1900-1905.

DESCRIPTION

Israel’s Building is an unobtrusive two-storey building with Art Deco characteristics. Its scale and architecture are conservative but appropriate. There is an obtrusive awning and the ground-floor fenestration has been altered. The legend “ISRAEL’S EST. 1886” appears in the parapet.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

Israel’s Building is an effective contributor to the diverse yet pleasantly scaled streetscape of this part of Hunter St.
NEWCASTLE

GARRETT'S WAREHOUSE

(Des of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)

[CARD 6 of 11]

343-345 Hunter St

2300 Newcastle City

R. Irving, G. Aplin (January 1990)

Owner: ??

CLASSIFIED 1.2.90

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, R. Wark
NCC Urban Design & Heritage Guidelines No.16.4
Menkens Centenary Exhibition Catalogue, Newcastle Region Art

HISTORY

Designed by F.B. Menkens and built by Thomas Taylor and Samuel Miles for T.
Garrett & Sons in 1905.

DESCRIPTION

Garrett's warehouse is a three-bay, three-storey building which has a deal of
similarity with the nearby 'Old' Frederick Ash Building, although Garrett's is
simpler. The facade design comprises recessed bays between piers. The fine
brickwork is decoratively contrived and there is a tall parapet with the end
piers and central motif all corbelled and stepped in the characteristic Menkens
mode. The building is somewhat altered and has a later awning. Some earthquake
damage was sustained in December 1989.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

Garrett's Warehouse is a distinguished though reticent building which enlivens
its context. It is a good example of the more modest commercial work of
prominent Newcastle architect, F.B. Menkens. It is an effective component of
this group and echoes the 'Old' Frederick Ash Building, though the two show
somewhat different aspects of Menkens's work.
The Clarendon Hotel is an inter-War city hotel of three storeys designed with Functionalist and Art Deco characteristics. Of brick construction, its facade largely comprises cream-brown tapestry bricks and, in the manner of its style, introduces strongly contrasting horizontal and vertical elements into the composition. The eastern section has double-hung windows between projecting horizontal brick bands at sill and head levels. There is a parapet, an additional set-back parapet, and a recessed balcony. The western section, over the residential entrance, is a vigorous Art Deco composition with two vertical fins of faience set in faience surrounds. The fins have return curves at the top. The stopped parapet feature here includes flanking brick piers which are capped by a narrow frieze of faience. The cantilevered awning appears to be original. The ground floor fenestration has been altered.

Internally, the public areas are largely original with fibrous plaster ceilings, banded cornices and friezes. The bar has a cantilevered tiled, as is its border, with tesselated tiles. The bar walls to dado level are also tiled, while the bar floor has much smaller tiles of cream and brown hues. The residential foyer, green throughout, features a drop-panel in the ceiling, though the original light fitting for it no longer survives. Walls have rough-finish panelling below a darker green painted band some two metres above floor level. Some of the windows and doors have retained their original glass glazing decoration.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Clarendon Hotel is a bold and largely intact inter-War architectural statement with bold, well crafted Art Deco detailing both externally and internally. Despite its size, the hotel's height is compatible with the rest of the group and it is thus an effective contributor to the streetscape impact of the group as a whole.
BENNETT'S BUILDING
(Part of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)
[CARD 10 of 11]

230 Newcastle City

R. Irving, G. Aplin (January 1990)

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Zarisons, R. Mark

HISTORY

Built in 1906.

DESCRIPTION

This is a single, two-storey brick retail and commercial building whose principal attraction is an elaborate parapet in which the legend "AD 1906" is formed in cement lettering. Faded painted lettering below that reads "BENNETT", possibly followed by "& SONS LTD". The parapet and eaves-casting piers are stopped as though echoing the detailing of the Ash building next door. The ground floor facade has been altered and the suspended awning is modern.

The interior could not be inspected.

SIGNIFICANCE

This single, but pleasantly detailed little building is an effective component of the group. It is interesting in that its design appears to take account of the Ash building next door, which adds to the harmony of the western end of the group.

See Harriett House for photograph.
NEWCASTLE

"NEW" FREDERICK ASH BUILDING

(Part of FREDERICK ASH GROUP)

262 King St, cnr

Burwood St

CARD 11 of 11

Owner: Newcastle City Council

2300 Newcastle City

K. Irving, C. Daly (January 1990)

Bibliography: Information from Hunter Branch, particularly K. Parsons, R. Ward

NCC Urban Design & Heritage Guidelines No. 20.2

HISTORY

Built 1913-27 for Frederick Ash and connected to Ash's "Old" building in Hunter St. Architects: Pitt, Merewether, Castleden and Journas are all credited with a role in the building's design. Damage was suffered in the December 1989 earthquake.

DESCRIPTION

This is a five-storey warehouse with what appear to be perimeter walls of solid bearing brickwork and an internal structure of riveted steel encased in concrete. There is an attic story partly original, and partly added at a later time over the concrete flat roof and perimeter parapet.

The southeast facade addresses Burwood St. It is cement rendered, with a simple Classical cornice ensemble with geometric decoration, windows in five pairs at each storey, and six loading-dock doorways with roller shutters at street level. Above the doorways there is a secondary entablature bearing the words "FREDERICK ASH 1913-27" and "STOKE'S ASH 1935 ... SYDNEY Ciskeirock ..." in letters that appear to be metal letters. The jambs of the doorways are treated as pilasters. There is also a small, bracketed entablature above first floor windows. The attic added above the parapet has timber-framed glazing and louvred fenestration. The other exterior walls are plain brickwork, without fenestration at southwest and northeast sides, and with functional window penetrations on the northwest side (rear). There are no exterior piers and no external indication of the steel and concrete structure.

The interiors are quite dramatically different, reflecting comparatively advanced construction, considering the date of the building's erection. The rectangular shape of the structure comprises six longitudinal (NE-SW) bays and five lateral (SI-NW) bays. The main beams run NE-SW. Main beams, secondary beams and columns appear to be of rolled steel sections with riveted connections. Columns have head brackets for beam seatings: these brackets, along with a few of the intimate column/beam connections, have escaped the concrete encasing which covers almost all of the structure. All floors are of concrete. There is no sign of perimeter columns, though the walls have interior piers at bay lines and are thick enough to contain built-in steelwork. The concrete casing displays timber formwork impressions.

There is one staircase, on the inside of the northwest wall. There are also two goods elevators, only the rear one of which extends to all floors. There is a connection, via the complex-shaped intervening building, to the "Old" Ash Building at the first-floor level and probably at other levels, too. This building is also connected to the new Newcastle City Administration Building.
at the three topmost levels (ACC uses some floors for printing and storage).

The attic storey comprises what appears to be an original 'penthouse' section on the northwest, with a skillion roof of timber construction. The newer southeastern section has light welded steel trusses. Steel columns project through the roof deck as though awaiting a subsequent extension upwards, and most of these have sheet-metal weather shields. The former roof is covered in bituminous felt.

The truly functional nature of the building is most evident at ground-floor level, where the loading docks occupy a considerable area of floor space. The floor behind the docks is about a metre above street level. In each dock is a pair of steel cartwheel guides.

SIGNIFICANCE

The "New" Frederick Ash Building is a very early example of riveted, rolled steel frame construction with concrete encasement. It also has an imposing presence in Burwood St, pleasantly monumental in scale without being intimidatingly overbearing. It is historically related to a key period in Newcastle's growth when the entrepreneurial activities of Frederick Ash were growing with the town.
Appendix C

Structural Condition Report
Fred Ash (Burwood Street) Structural Condition Assessment Report June 2005

Written By: Grahame Wilson – City Projects
Structural Assessment: Ian Pedersen – Pedersen Engineers

30 June 2005

The City of Newcastle

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a condition assessment of the building's structural condition specifically the facade onto Burwood Street.

The Fred Ash building on Burwood Street is a building that has many structural defects. Its poor structural condition as seen by cracking of external brickwork, cracking of internal suspended floor slabs and exposed steel reinforcement in concrete floor slabs. These defects can be attributed to a multitude of factors such as poor design of the floor slab to walls detail, incorrect placement of reinforcing steel and water ingress into the building accelerating corrosion of building elements. The excavation and dewatering adjacent to the site for the construction of the CAC has considerably aggravated the degree of failure, especially on the southern end of the building.

The poor condition of the structure has lead to a high possibility of falling facade elements both externally and internally. The building must be monitored on a regular basis and minor make safe works undertaken as required to remove loose building materials.

The report does not consider the building's fire status and occupancy requirements as regulated within the BCA and other standards. By observation, much of the building would fail these regulations.
1. Introduction

Fred Ash is a brick and concrete structure, which adjoins the CAC building. It is in a state of deterioration and was assessed in September 2000 by Ian Pedersen as not suitable for continuous occupation. In late 2003 the building was vacated. The 2000 inspection and report recommended that certain remedial actions be completed to maintain the building stability. To date these recommendations have not been completed.

In 2003/2004 financial year it was planned to implement the 2000 Pedersen report and strengthen the south eastern corner of the building. This work did not proceed due to possible intent to demolish the structure; instead a further inspection was completed. This report details the results of an inspection in April 2004 to deduce if further deterioration of the building has occurred since the 2000 inspection.

Nothing in this report is a plan to upgrade the building to bring it into compliance with any building structural code especially in the area of earthquake, cyclone wind and external acts of sabotage loading scenarios.

2. Objectives

The objective of the inspection and reporting process was to document the buildings condition as at April 2004 and the changes that have occurred since 1977.

3. Scope of work

The scope of work for this project includes only structural elements on the building including

- External facade
- Internal floor structure

4. Heritage

The Fred Ash Building on Burwood Street is within the Newcastle Cultural precinct but is not listed in the 2002 Local Environmental Plan, as a heritage item nor on the State Heritage Register.

5. Buildings construction

The construction of the building is a steel framed, concrete slab and brick structure with a galvanised iron and asbestos roof. Most internal walls and all external walls are masonry. The building contains asbestos in various locations predominantly in the roof and roof membrane on the top level.

External brick walls consist of a triple brick (18") with every 6th course layed perpendicular to act as a tie between the skins. The skins are layed without a cavity. Just below each of the floor levels a two step corbel (2 1/4" per brick) is created in brickwork to support the edge of the floor slab above. This corbel typically extends (4 1/2") half a brick course from the inner surface of the wall.

Window lintels are supported by a combination of a reinforced concrete and steel materials. On the outer layer of brickwork a 2" x 3/8" flat bar is used as the lintel. This is embedded into the brickwork on each side of each window opening about 3". The inside two layers of brickwork are supported by a reinforced concrete lintel 8" x 8", which acts as the brick support and part of the corbel that retains the floor slab.
The floor is formed by reinforced steel concrete slab, which extends from corbel to corbel and is supported at approximately 4 metre spans by concrete beams between vertical columns. The concrete beams and columns are rolled structural steel "I" sections all of which are concrete encased.

The engaged brick piers on exterior walls are laid on the internal floor slabs. These engaged brick piers do not have a bond breaker between the brick and the upper or lower slab surface.

There are several internal walls, some are masonry and some are plaster and Masonite clad timber partitions. The stairway and lift shaft forms the two main masonry walls in the building. All internal masonry walls appear to be double brick in construction.

6. Inspection Process
An inspection was carried out on Saturday 17 April 2004 using a cherry picker to access the Burwood Street facade. The area inspected in detail included half the Burwood side of the building commencing at the southern corner and 3 metres of the southern end commencing at the easterly corner. Additional to the external inspections, a complete internal audit was conducted except for the area in the switch rooms at the south eastern corner on ground floor. The inspection team consisted of Graham Wilson and Ian Pederson.

A further inspection on 26 May 2005 was undertaken with Ian and Graham to confirm that the building had not undergone any visible change since the April 2004 Inspection.

7. Inspection Results and Discussion
The April 2004 Inspection from the cherry picker revealed many areas of deterioration as described in Pedersen's previous reports. It appeared that there was not any substantial change in the appearance in the building's condition from the 2000 to this inspection. It is anticipated that the condition of the internal elements has been in decline without changing the external appearance.

The May 2005 was an inspection from the ground and internal inspection. It revealed no evident change in the buildings condition.

7.1 General
It was shown that the building has several reoccurring structural faults that occur throughout the building. These being

1. Cracks in the brick walls on the exterior corners of the building
2. Cracks in the Intersection between floor slabs and masonry walls.
3. Spalling concrete on lintels
4. Cracks in the exterior facade at window corners

7.2 External wall cracks
The wall facades were inspected from both the inside and outside and it was confirmed that the cracking on both inside and outside matched. To confirm that the bricks were not delaminating internally within the wall, three wall areas had bricks removed on the inner skin and the intermediate brick layer. This showed the mortar interfaces of each brick skin. It was evident that the interface between the brick layers was uncracked and no debonding had occurred.

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External wall cracks on all facades appear to be full penetration from the external to internal surfaces. Typically the cracks are greater in width and length on the southern end of the building than the northern end of the structure. They are also are greatest in width at corresponding internal floor slabs. Cracks are predominantly in two locations, vertical cracks on both sides, 1.5 m from each corner of the building and emanating from the corners of window openings.

On the south eastern corner there are several cracks extent the full height of the structure. Crack widths in this location are typically 12 mm. (See Appendix A Photo 1 to photo 1d)

On the south western corner there is a diagonal crack where the entire corner of the building has subsided and moved towards the CAC. (See Appendix A Photo 2 and photo 3) This occurred during construction of the CAC in 1974. This crack has been rendered up and hence it appears as though the corner has not moved substantially. The movement at this location is the most significant in the building appearing to be up to 35 mm horizontally and 15-mm vertically. There is no evidence of further movement of this part of the building since 1974.

Window headers on a majority of windows have suffered corrosion of the reinforcing bar expanding the lintel. This expansion appears to have facilitated cracking at the corners of each window as the lintel expands.

7.3 Floor slabs cracks

The internal floor slabs intersect at the external walls by butting up against the wall and are supported on a brick corbel below. The slab is poured directly up against the brickwork without expansion material. (See Appendix A Photo's 3a, 3b, 4)

At all of the corners of the building the floor slabs have moved on the corbels. The most movement is evident at the corners where up to 35 mm is evident usually reducing to nothing at 4 metres from each corner. There are places where this crack has extended 10 metres or more along the slab wall interface.

Floor slabs are typically cracked at the corners of the building in the first 1 metre from the corner. This failure occurs at about 50% of all floor slabs.

The floor slabs are showing signs of degradation. At the underside of the concrete slabs the reinforcing is evident as rusted bars which have spalled the concrete in local areas. (See Appendix A Photo’s 6, 6a and 6b) It appears that the reinforcement was placed too close to the bottom of the slab and now has corroded due to low cover and possible water ingress into the building over time. This is particularly evident on level 3 on the Burwood Street frontage.

It appears that the main steel in the floor slabs runs east west typically 7/8" bars at 4“centres. In the north South direction are ½" bars at 12 “centres. The main steel, in the corroded areas appears to have only 1” cover to steel.

The floor slabs are also cracked at where it passes over the support beams running in the east west direction but not the north south direction.
There is also cracks in internal brick engaged columns where the slab has moved dragging the column and splitting the bricks. The crack is greatest at the floor slab extending up to 1 metre up the engaged columns. (See photo 3a)

7.4 Wall lintels

All steel lintel bars that support the external layer of brickwork have severely corroded. Most have corroded all the way through the 3/8” thickness at some point along the lintel. The bars currently do not provide any structural strength as a lintel.

The concrete lintel bars above the windows, which support the internal two layers of brickwork, are spalling badly due to corrosion of the reinforcing steel. (See Appendix A Photo 7) The spalling and subsequent growth of the steel in the masonry has cracked the brickwork adjacent to the lintels.

8. General Discussion

8.1 History

In 1972 it was identified that the Bunwood Street Fred Ash may not be stable and a 5-year monitoring plan was undertaken to deduce the buildings movements. The building was surveyed monthly over the five years and the results showed that some sections of the building were relatively stable while other areas moved up to 12 mm.

In 1977 the CAC was built requiring the excavation and dewatering of the site adjacent to the Fred Ash’s southern wall. As part of the process major modifications were made to the southern and foundations including replacing part of the footing and establishing a concrete floor and brick structure to house a local high voltage sub-station.

It is clear from the report cover photograph that the site works for the CAC had a major impact on the Fred Ash building. 1974 photographs of the cracks in the east and west facades appear similar to the current day cracks in length and width.

The photographic history of the building has shown that even though the cracks appear severe on the buildings facade, the movement of the cracks has not increased since the CAC was built. Further the building has undergone an earthquake in 1989 and the cracks in photographs appear to have not increased.

8.2 Likely failure mechanisms

Even though the cracks in the building appear to be stable and not growing there are other factors that will be degrading the buildings structural capacity.

The building has water ingress problems. This has allowed water to enter the building over many years. It typically runs down the inside of the walls and is allowed to pass to lower levels by the cracks created at the corners between the floor and the wall elements. This promotion of corrosion of steel reinforcing and lintel elements attacks the steel reducing its cross section and strength.
This is particularly important to the reinforced concrete internal floor slabs. These slabs are showing continuing corrosion of the internal reinforcing steel. This is shown by new spalling of the concrete surface on the under side of the floor slabs.

Conclusion

The building probably had structural cracking shortly after being built due to poor design. However between 1972 and 1977 there is evidence that an increase in cracking of the masonry facades has occurred. This is due to the excavation of the C&C adjacent and the replacement of the foundations on the south end of the building. Even though cracking was documented in 1977, nothing was done to reinforce the building.

Since 1977 the building's exterior facade has not significantly changed in appearance. From the exterior the cracking of the facades remains similar to the 1977 photos. However the ongoing corrosion on the buildings structural components has steadily increased. Reinforcing within the internal floor slabs has caused the concrete to explode in many locations. Supporting lintel beams are growing causing increasing structural instability around window heads.

9. Fred Ash Photo's
Appendix D

Social Significance Discussion
Appendix D: Social Significance Discussion

There has not been broad community consultation carried out as part of this study in order to assess social heritage value. However a number of individuals, some representing community groups have been contacted during the course of this study and their interest in the site is outlined below.

While the value of the New Frederick Ash building to the broader community of Newcastle cannot be extrapolated from the limited surveying carried out by this study, it is likely that the place is held in esteem by the following groups:

- Users of the Civic Precinct—the users of this area would enjoy views across Civic Park that encompass the New Frederick Ash building in the background.
- Older residents of inner Newcastle—the site and its alignment on the former goods line is likely to have associations and memories of the precinct's industrial past.
- The community of Newcastle professional historians and heritage practitioners—contact with a number of professional historians indicates that those with an understanding of the building’s historical associations value the building for its contribution to the cultural landscape of the Civic Precinct.

Members of the National Trust in the Hunter region—The New Frederick Ash building is classified by the National Trust as part of the Frederick Ash Group. Its members support the conservation of New South Wales heritage places.