

The Design of the Dilworth Building

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Abstract

The Dilworth Building was architecture firm Gummer and Ford's first significant building. It was completed in 1927 and sits on one of the most prominent locations in Aotearoa New Zealand, the corner of Queen Street and Customs Street East in downtown Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The Dilworth Building has been referred to as one of this country's finest examples of classical architecture by critics such as Miles Warren, Bruce Petry, Peter Shaw, John Stacpoole and Peter Beaven, among others. It holds a Category 1 rating from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Paradoxically, this building remains under-researched in current architectural discourse – the most written about it has been in newspaper articles from the 1920s. This paper aims to bring the building's design and construction methods to light, investigating the brief, the client's motivations, the limitations of the site, budget and typology, and the application of William Gummer's design principles to maximise sunlight and air circulation, and with efficient circulation and structure. The building's materiality, design of the façades, and spatial sequences will also be analysed to discover their contribution to the building's overall composition and character. It is hoped that today's architecture students can benefit from formal and practical analysis and use a similar approach in their own architecture and writing.

Keywords: Gummer and Ford, the Dilworth Building, heritage architecture, classical architecture

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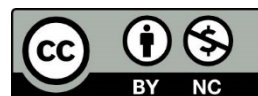
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