

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Reo Moana Flats

Address

10 Weymouth Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

The Reo Moana flats were designed and built by Sidney Raymond Smith during 1938-39 for salesman/commercial traveller Arthur Charles Jackson. A relatively early example of medium density housing in New Plymouth city, construction of the building is associated with an inter-war shift towards the provision of higher density housing in larger New Zealand towns and cities and has been home to a diverse mixture of persons since its completion more than eighty years ago. A substantial example of the Art-Deco/Moderne style in the local vernacular, the building has a dominant and distinctive presence in the local streetscape. Aside from the loss of its original timber window joinery, the building retains a relatively high level of external integrity.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 1 DP 13430

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1938-39

Principal Materials Reinforced concrete, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Sidney Raymond Smith (architect & builder)

History

During September 1938, the southern portion of New Plymouth Town Section 40 was purchased by salesman/commercial traveller Arthur Charles Jackson and his wife Rubina.¹ It seems the Jackson's purchased the property with the express intention of developing it, as they had soon engaged local builder Sidney Raymond Smith to design a large block of flats for the property; A copy of the original plans are held by the New Plymouth District Council.² Development of the Reo Moana flats is associated with growing inter-war interest in the development of medium density housing close to city centres or main public transport routes, and by the late-1930s, buildings of similar style and scale were becoming increasingly common in larger New Zealand cities such as Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, along with some smaller regional centres such as New Plymouth and Napier.³

A permit was granted by the Borough Council to Arthur Jackson on the 18th of November 1938 for the construction of six flats on Town Section 40, Weymouth and Hine Streets; Sidney Smith was noted as the builder, with the estimated construction value being £6285.⁴ Little is known about Sidney Smith, but he appears to have constructed a number of dwellings across New Plymouth during the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ Whilst he designed some of these buildings himself, others were designed by local architects with Smith acting as contractor. A prominent surviving building where Smith acted solely as contractor is the Messenger, Griffiths & Taylor designed, Art Deco style, L. H. Johnson Motor Garage at the intersection Devon and Gover Streets (1929).⁶ Sidney passed away at his Seaview Road home on August 2nd 1968 aged 81 years.

It is unclear exactly when the Reo Moana flats were completed, however, they are first listed in the 1940 edition of Wises Post Office Directory. At this time, the building is listed under Weymouth Street and only William M. Collins is noted as residing in the building; although it is assumed others had also taken up residence by this time.⁷ By 1942, the flats are listed at 24 Hine Street, with occupants including dry cleaner Ernest G. Forbes, tea room proprietor Samuel Murray, David R. McCowatt,

¹ CT TN124/66, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)

² NPDC Property File

³ Moyle, Terry. *Art Deco New Zealand: An illustrated guide*. Auckland: New Holland, 2016.

⁴ NPBC Building Register Book 1938-46, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

⁵ See <http://ketenewplymouth.peoplesnetworknz.info/> for a list of buildings constructed and/or designed by Sidney Smith

⁶ Gooch, Mike, 'L. H. Johnson Motors Ltd., Devon Street East (1929)', *Kete New Plymouth*, <http://ketenewplymouth.peoplesnetworknz.info/en/site>; accessed 16 May 2019.

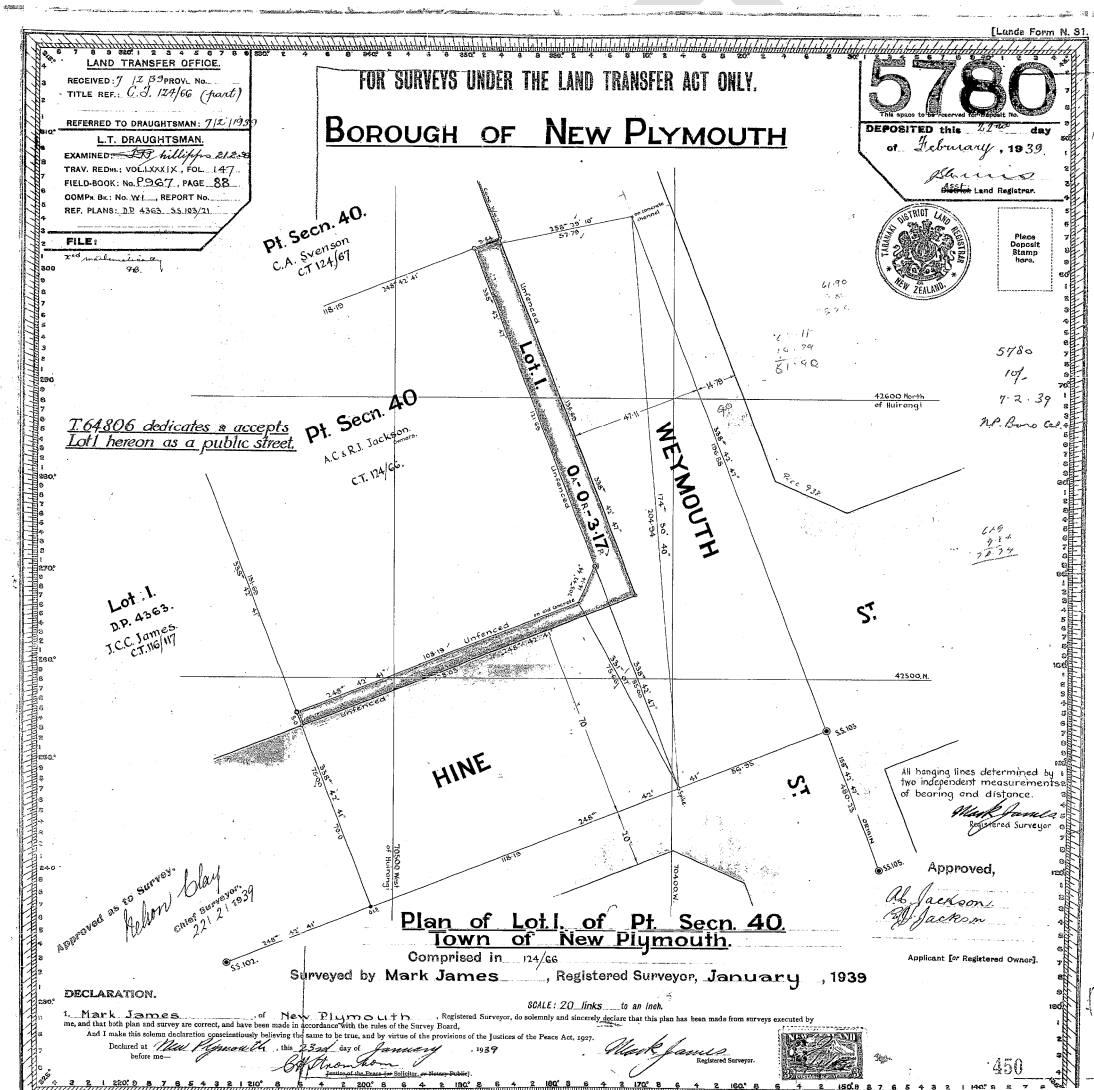
⁷ H. Wise & Co. *Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory*, 1940. Dunedin: H. Wise & Co, 1940.



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Dryden Hoken, and Arthur Jackson.⁸ Wises 1946 directory records that all six flats were occupied, with tenants including Mrs Frances M. Bond, Mrs Ada Knuckey, surveyor Nelson Clay, Clive F. Shaw, grocer Ronald C. O'Dowda, and Arthur Jackson.⁹

During mid-1946, Arthur and Rubina Jackson sold the flats to insurance manager Arthur Cecil Owain Lloyd, who rather unfortunately, only resided at the property for a year before his death during August 1947 aged just 41 years.¹⁰ During 1949, the property was transmitted to Ivan McGuire and Arthur Coad as executors of Lloyd's estate.¹¹ Arthur's widow, Joyce Lydia Lloyd continued to reside in the flats for a number of years following her husband's death, with ownership later transferred to Joyce Lydia McNeil and Karen Elsa Lloyd during January 1969.¹²



DP5780, LINZ

⁸ H. Wise & Co. *Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory*, 1942. Dunedin: H. Wise & Co, 1942.

⁹ H. Wise & Co. *Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory*, 1946. Dunedin: H. Wise & Co, 1946.

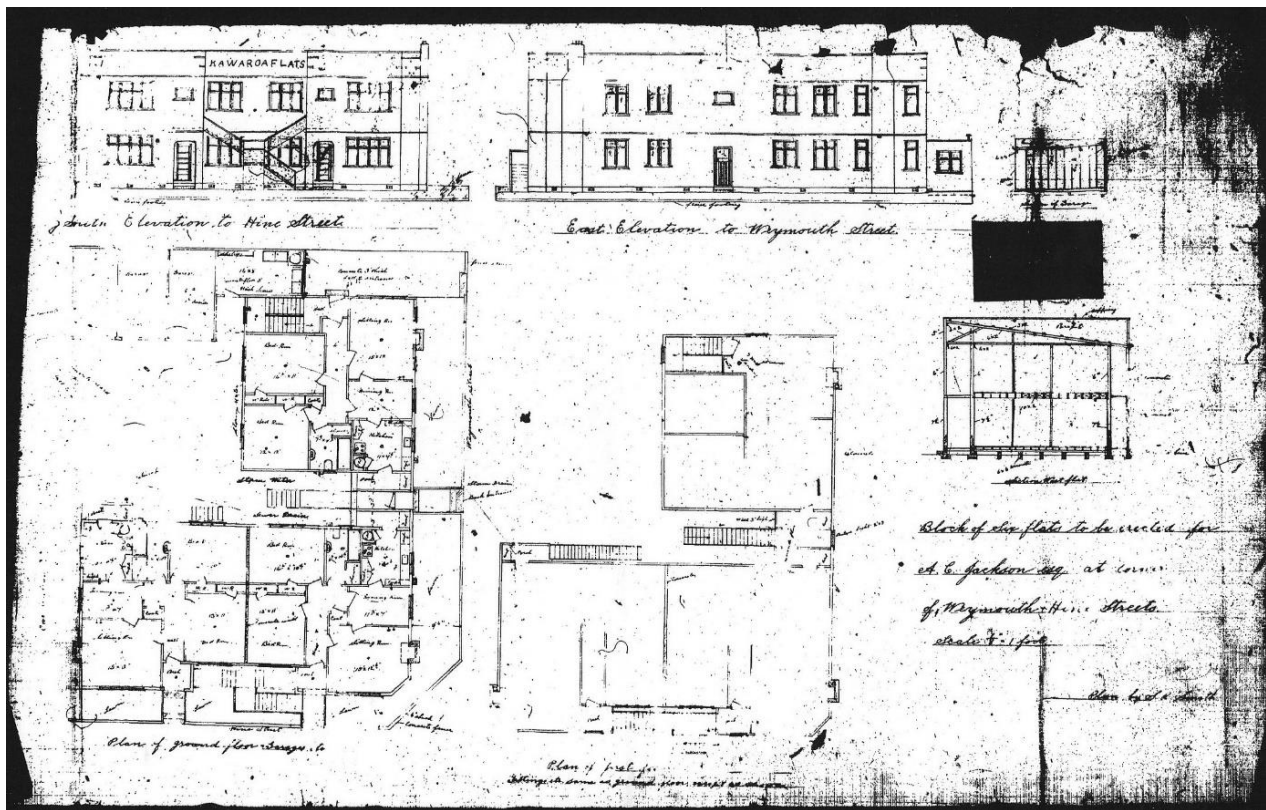
¹⁰ CT TN124/66, LINZ

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*



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Plans [copy] showing elevations and floor plans for Reo Moana flats, Sidney Raymond Smith, c.1938, NPDC Property File

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

Located a short distance west of New Plymouth's central city, the Reo Moana flats occupy a prominent corner position on the northern side of Hine Street. This building is part of an interesting group of two-storied heritage buildings located near the intersection of Hine and Weymouth Streets, which also includes the villa residences at 12 Weymouth Street (1903), 13 Weymouth Street (1913) and 23 Hine Street (1908). Such groupings of older two-storey residential buildings are now very rare in New Plymouth, and both individually and as part of a group these buildings make a strong positive contribution to the historic character of the area.

A building of some scale located within an area still principally comprised of detached dwellings, the Reo Moana flats are set-back from the street and fringed by a contemporary retaining wall and garden. The flats are designed in the then popular Art Deco/Moderne style, which was reaching the height of its New Zealand popularity at the time. This building is one of the largest surviving Art Deco style blocks of flats in New Plymouth city and are comprised of two principal structures joined near the centre of the north-eastern elevation; the southern portion facing Hine Street being almost twice the size (comprising four flats) of that facing Weymouth Street (comprising two flats). Both are constructed of in-situ reinforced concrete finished with lightly textured stucco plaster and incorporate sloping corrugated steel roofs behind a low parapet.



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The Hine Street elevation is symmetric around a central, recessed, set of first floor stairs leading to two recessed front entrance porches either side. At ground floor level, a further two recessed entrance porches are positioned either side of the stairs. All entrances on this elevation appear to retain their original glazed timber entrance doors, although the original timber casement windows have regrettably been replaced with incongruous aluminium joinery. Decoration limited to applied bandings and the name 'Reo Moana' applied to the central, recessed portion of the parapet.

The Hine Street elevation gives way to the Weymouth Street elevation by way of a prominent chamfered corner. Two full-height chimneys are positioned at either end of the Weymouth Street elevation, with a central ground floor entrance door providing access to an internal staircase. The original timber windows have been replaced with aluminium joinery, and two first-floor window openings fitted with aluminium French casements; these opening onto modern balconies supported by large steel brackets. As with the Hine Street elevation, decoration is applied sparingly, comprising mostly of applied bandings.

Assessment:

Historical	This building has historic significance as a relatively early example of medium density housing in New Plymouth city, with construction of the building associated with an inter-war shift towards the provision of higher density housing in larger New Zealand towns and cities. The building has been home to a diverse mixture of persons since its completion more than eighty years ago.	✓
Importance to Community	A well-known and prominent Hine Street landmark.	✓
Architecture & Construction	An excellent local example of the Art-Deco/Moderne style in the local vernacular.	✓
Setting and Context	This building has a dominant and distinctive presence in the local streetscape.	✓
Archaeology	-	
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	A rare example of a two-storied block of flats from the 1930s period in New Plymouth city. Aside from the loss of original timber window joinery, the building retains a relatively high level of external integrity.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓