

Local Heritage Register: National Bank of Australasia

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| Building Name: | National Bank of Australasia / JM Ramsamy Building |
| Street Address: | 33 Sydney Street |
| Property Description: | Lots 1 and 2 on BUP70718 |
| Land Area: | 436m ² |



Artists impression of the National Australasia Bank Ltd in 1934.
Daily Mercury, 24 September, 1934

Description

This distinctive colonnaded building was commissioned for the National Bank of Australasia Ltd in 1934.

The bank occupied a two storey building on this site from 1923, purchasing the site in 1927 and doubling their floor area in 1934.

The bank merged with the Queensland National Bank in 1948. A later merger with the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney Ltd in 1983 and the company eventually became the National Australia Bank Ltd.

The bank was the scene of the city's second bank robbery in 1985, when a villain made off with \$4,000 after wielding a toy pistol. The bandit was a psychiatric patient from the Base

hospital!

The £7,000 contract for the building was awarded to Tom Clarke of Brisbane in 1934 and the building completed in May 1935. In the interim period the bank operated out of the Cangrowers Executive building in Wood Street.

The Building

This distinctive building was constructed to the design of Brisbane architect Mr. L.L. Powell who worked as the bank's state architect. Mr. Powell was born in Rockhampton but was a notable architect of the time, completing his education in Brisbane. Lange Leopold Powell died unexpectedly in 1938 at the age of 52.

The new plain parapet disguises

the original gabled frieze (see image above) and pediment but the original circular window is retained and the neoclassical facade of columns and pilasters dominates the streetscape.

The building is a formal architectural composition of a vertical rectangle, close to the "golden mean" in proportion, taller than the surrounding older buildings. The construction is painted stucco. The upper 25% is a deep spandrel interrupted by a small round central window. A ledge and frieze, serves as the entablature. The facade is strictly symmetrical, with a deep recessed lobby, two storeys high.

An architrave frames the lobby containing modern glass doors,

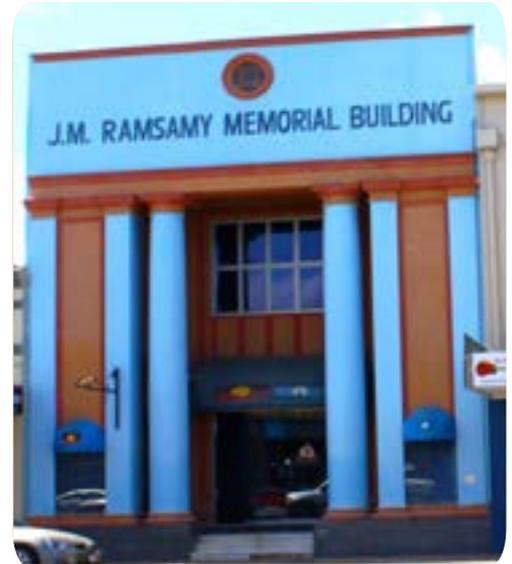
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coffered spandrels above and an upper window wall. Marble steps lead from the street to the vestibule with doors each side leading to upper levels.

Columns stand each side of the vestibule, with classical capital and base. The lower facade is polished grey granite forming a plinth. A pair of square engaged

pilasters forms the outer sections of the facade.

Between the pilasters at street level a window covered with a wrought bronze grill is placed. These are presently covered by notice boards shaded with eyelid canvas awnings. The building is described as Established 1919.



JM Ramsamy Building, 2016, Mackay Regional Council

Statement of Historical Significance

| Criteria | Significance |
|--|---|
| A: Historical significance | Construction of the former NBA bank commenced in 1934, to a plan by architect L.L. Powell. Replacing a timber structure, it is important in demonstrating the inter war building boom. |
| B: All aspects of heritage significance | Does not meet this criterion. |
| C: Scientific significance | Does not meet this criterion. |
| D: Architectural significance | The former NBA bank is important in demonstrating principal characteristics. In particular it demonstrates the use of classical architectural elements, popular in interwar bank buildings. It has a special association with architect L.L. Powell who made an important contribution to the built environment, designing or modifying numerous NBA buildings. |
| E: Aesthetic / architectural significance | The aesthetic significance is demonstrated by the impressive, classically-designed façade. It has undergone a degree of alteration, including a new parapet concealing original frieze and pediments, however the building retains imposing columns and loggia, contributing to its landmark street presence. |
| F: Aesthetic or other significance | Does not meet this criterion. |
| G: Social significance | Does not meet this criterion. |
| H: Historical significance | It has a special association with Brisbane architect L.L. Powell, as an example of his interwar work. |

References:

- Woods, R., 1996, *'Heritage Places Criteria'*, Mackay City Council
- The Daily Mercury, "New Bank Premises", 22 September, 1934, p.8; untitled, 24 September 1934
- Butler, G. & Associates, 1994, *'Mackay Region Pilot Heritage Study'*, Mackay City Council

For more information phone strategic planning on 1300 MACKAY (1300 622 529)