

Westpac Bank (Former Bank of New South Wales)

Address 33 Queen Street (cnr George Street), Brisbane, Queensland.

Practice Hall & Devereux

Designed C1928 Completed 1930

History & Description Located on what was a prominent CBD intersection & adjacent to the former Treasury Building the six storey stone clad bank building, designed in the Inter-War Beaux-Arts style of architecture, provides an important civic presence to the Queen Street Mall with its monumental scale of giant ionic columns within the recessed façade. Built as the Queensland headquarters of the Bank of New South Wales the bank contains classical motifs & details common in bank architecture of this period. The two street facades are divided into three sections & are clad in stone. The expressed plinth, which rises only to the height of the pedestrian, is clad in Uralla polished granite. The upper storeys are clad in Helidon freestone with the base storey, the grand banking level, in smooth faced blocks with their joints greatly emphasised (rusticated) & the piano nobile in smooth-tooled ashlar below the cornice.

The bank was constructed in a steel frame with reinforced concrete floors. Internally the main banking chamber has giant square columns rising from the ground floor through the mezzanine level which are finished with gilded Corinthian capitals. The rooftop atrium courtyard originally included cast iron ionic columns incorporated from the earlier 1860s bank on the site, has been roofed over.

Although the firm of Hall & Devereux was relatively short-lived, the Bank of NSW was a long-standing client of its predecessors - the relationship dating from the time of Hall & Dods (1896-1916). W Alan Devereux, believed to be the designer of the bank, studied in both England & the USA. He practiced for a short time in Brisbane & later returned to work in England.

Statement of Significance The Westpac Bank building (former Bank of New South Wales), on the corner of George & Queen Streets, is an excellent example of the Inter-War Beaux-Arts style of architecture in Australia with the sculptural quality of the symmetrical façade that consists of an expressed base, portion of façade recessed behind giant order of ionic columns & cornice. The building has important civic presence on the Queen Street Mall, & the extensive use of fine materials & quality craftsmanship throughout demonstrates well the prosperity & confidence of the era prior to the Great Depression.

Criteria Applicable **N1** . Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.



West view with giant order facing onto Queen Street Mall.
Source: DERM



View from north east along Queen Street, C1930s. Source: JOL