THE MARK FOY'S BUILDING
LIVERPOOL STREET, SYDNEY

CONSERVATION STUDY

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF N.S.W.

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INTRODUCTION

This report was compiled, following the announcement of an interim conservation order over the Mark Foy's Building, to assess the building's cultural significance and form a basis for making decisions regarding the utilization of the building. It is proposed to use Mark Foy's for accommodation for the Department of Attorney General and Justice and there are currently proposals for the conversion of the ground floor and part of the lower ground floor. This report has been compiled by Jean Rice of the Historic Buildings Group, Special Projects Section.

METHODOLOGY

The building has been assessed using the criteria for establishing cultural significance extracted from the "Conservation Plan" - a guide to the preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance, published by the National Trust of Australia.

There are four basic questions which have been considered; as follows:-

1. Does the place have a high degree of technical and/or creative excellence?
   a) Is it a particularly fine early/seminal/climatic example of its type?
   b) Was it an important prototype which influenced later development?
   c) Is it a rare survival or the only known, or reasonably intact example in the area?
   d) Is it one of a group, the totality of which is important to the area?
2. Does it demonstrate a way of life, custom, process or function of particular interest?

3. Has the place a strong association with an important figure or figures, development or cultural phase and is there evidence of such association in the fabric?

4. Has the place landscape, townscape or environmental value or is it a site of potential archaeological importance?
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BACKGROUND

The first stage of the Mark Foy's building on Liverpool Street between Elizabeth and Castlereagh Streets was built in 1908 by Francis Foy and named after his father Mark Foy. Mark Foy arrived in Australia in 1859 and when his wife Mary Macken and children arrived soon after, he established a drapery store in Bendigo. The shop serviced the goldfields and Francis, the eldest son, worked in the shop as a child. The business prospered and moved to Collingwood in 1868 before the goldfields petered out. In 1872, after a disagreement with his father, Francis went to Dublin and worked in a drapery business. On his return to Australia in 1875 Francis went back into the family business. Mary died in 1880 and when Mark remarried in 1882 he handed the business over to Francis and went to America where he died soon after. Francis also cared for his three younger sisters and two younger brothers on Mark Foy's death.

Francis Foy then went into partnership with William Gibson but this broke up in 1884 and Francis left to establish himself in Sydney. He leased premises in Oxford Street in 1885 and opened a fair as Mark Foy's Drapery Palace. The business prospered and a London buying office was opened in 1890. Francis married Mary Flanagan soon after arriving in Sydney and they went on to have eight children.

As the expiry of his twenty year lease on the Oxford Street shops approached, Foy looked for a site on which he could build new premises. He decided on the block bounded by Liverpool, Castlereagh, Goulburn and Elizabeth Streets and started buying up the fifteen separate titles under different names until he had directly bought the whole site.

He engaged McCredie and Anderson as architects for the new building and with Mr. Anderson travelled England, Europe and America looking at the latest ideas. The final design was for a two-storey building which was influenced by the Bon Marche in Paris, though in an article in the "Magnet" (Foy's magazine) in 1909 H.W. Little states that "the Piazza" was not a copy of other buildings but that its main treatment was original with certain details
Modern Commercial Architecture in Australia.

McCredie and Anderson's rendering of the proposed Mark Foy's Building. From the Mark Foy's "Magnet", 1909.

(See "The Plaza" - A Critical Appreciation by H. W. Little, p. 13.)
taken from other buildings. Prior to construction Foy consulted with the Minister for Works and the building was designed to allow for subway access to the proposed underground railway.

Construction commenced in December 1907 and the foundation store, which remains, was laid by Mrs. J.J. Smith, Formerly Sophie Foy, in 1908. The building was constructed by Douzans Brothers and completed at a cost of 150,000 pounds. The store opened on the new site in September 1909 and aroused much public comment. The following article describing the building appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15th September, 1909:

MARK FOY’S NEW PREMISES

AN EXTENSIVE EMPORIUM

Messrs. Mark Foy’s extensive new premises, with frontages to Elizabeth, Castlereagh, and Liverpool Streets, are now completed. The main building, standing on 149 feet frontage, faces Liverpool Street, and runs back to a depth of 402 feet along Elizabeth and Castlereagh Streets. The front is approached by a broad piazza, level with Elizabeth Street corner, and extending right across the frontage. Advantage has been taken of the fall of Liverpool Street to work in an imposing flight of steps, so that the main entrance can be reached with equal ease from either of the three streets. This piazza is laid with handsome tiles, and has a row of pavement lights giving light to the basement below, which is practically level with Castlereagh Street. Over the piazza is suspended a striking awning constructed of glass and steel. Externally the building presents on three sides fine show windows, with mahogany and brass framework. Those on the piazza and Elizabeth Street fronts are arrange in diamond form, giving a full view of their contents, and in the latter street there are two ranges of 180 feet in length unbroken by any intervening piers.
The newly completed store showing the piazza, the steel and glass awning, the diamond display windows and many other details of the original building. From "Building" Magazine, November 12, 1909.
The upper part of the building is carried out in white glazed bricks, with yellow faience mouldings, decorative panels, etc. The name panels on the two street fronts are in glass mosaic of gold and blue, and the whole is surmounted by a slate roof. At the corners are towers with flagpoles. The show windows on both sides are protected by street awnings, forming colonnades, the under sides of which are carried out in stamped steel.

The main entrance, through handsome mahogany doors, leads into the dress and manchester departments, which occupy the north-western portion of the main floor. From this entrance an uninterrupted view of the whole length of the building can be obtained; the effect, looking down a colonnade of handsomely decorated columns is most striking. The remainder of the northern half of the ground floor is taken up by the departments which cater for men and boys. This portion has its separate entrance from Elizabeth Street, as well as two large archways, opening, one into the dress and manchester departments, and the other into the central staircase hall. The main staircase hall is octagonal in form, with splendid cedar stairways, wrought iron balustrades, capped with a great dome of glass and steel and fitted with internal skylights. On the left is the central entrance from Elizabeth Street, with four wide swing doors, while on the right is the passenger lift which will bring the public from the central entrance on the Castlereagh Street side to the elevator, or take them on to the upper floor. Close to this elevator is the 'Escalier Hocquet', a travelling staircase upon which one may step, and without any further exertion be landed on the upper floor. Other departments extend right across the building. The main floor has been fitted with oak, with the exception of the showroom, in which cedar has been used. The lighting of the main floor affords one
Photograph of the original piazza store from the "Magnet" in 1910. Note the glazed awning, the "diamond" shaped piazza windows, and the details of the original structure generally.
of the finest results in the whole building. Eight large well-holes with glass roofs over, six of them having internal glass ceilings of figured rolled glass in addition to the windows, secure an ample supply of clear, soft light without glare.

The upper floor has a public dining-room at the southern end, with very fine painted glass screens round the well-hole into the show-room. There are also a dining-room for employees, and the book department. Walking towards Liverpool Street, the visitor has on his right a ladies' reading and writing-room, also surrounded with beautifully painted glass screens. Next to this is the chemist's department, and close handy is the post pillar. On the left hand is the basketware and trunks department, which opens out upon the main staircase, with its fine octagonal gallery. The artificial lighting is by electricity and the lifts, etc., are electrically-driven. To facilitate the handling of parcels throughout the building, another feature, new to Australia, has been introduced; viz, a spiral chute, which extends from the top floor to the bottom, and occupies the south east corner of the staircase hall. This chute delivers the parcel on to a travelling conveyor, which carries them into the sorting department, where they are checked and put on to another conveyor, which in turn takes them to the despatch-room in the adjoining building at the rear. In this adjoining building, separated from the main edifice, are the receiving and opening-up room at the Castlereagh Street end, whence the goods will be distributed to the various departments, and at the Elizabeth Street end is the despatch room, into which the travelling conveyor previously mentioned brings its continuous stream of goods. On the next floor, level with the main floor of the principal building are the milliners', dressmakers' and other work rooms.
Original shopfront showing the light wells in the awning, its ceiling and lighting and a portion of a column capital. From the "Magnet", 1910.
Then comes the kitchen, level with the dining-room. The offices and more work rooms occupy the remainder of this building, which has its own goods lift, staircases, strongrooms, etc. The architects were Messrs McCredie and Anderson, who designed and supervised the entire construction of the premises. The Contractors for the building were Messrs Dousans Brothers.

A photograph of the building appeared in "Building" magazine in November 1909 but no comment was made. A further long article describing this remarkable building appeared in "Art and Architecture", Volume 6, Number 5, 1909 illustrated by McCredie and Anderson's rendering of the building. This article is very similar to that which appeared in the Herald. There are discrepancies in the dimensions given and more detail is given on some elements. The article describes the ceramic piazza tiles and the collapsible gates which protected all entrances to the building. The escalator is described as being the first of its kind in Australia, and possibly in the Southern Hemisphere and had handrails covered in crimson plush. There is further description of various departments in the store and the interior is described in detail. The ceilings were stamped steel finished old ivory and columns were finished in keens cement. There were specially designed brass wall brackets for electric lights with powerful arc lights where necessary. The corner towers are described as having zinc corners and hips (in the photograph the remainder appears to be of slate). The adjoining receiving and despatch building had windows on three sides and halfway round the fourth and was carried out in red bricks with coloured cement dressings. Wunderlich Ltd. did the ceilings and the parcels chute, Crisp Brothers, the decorative work, Standard Way good the elevators and moving staircase. Painted glass was by Lyon, Cotterill and Company, Crane and Sons did the tiling, J.P. Johnstone the electric lighting with Mr. A.C.F. Webb the electrical engineer, Mr. Klindt and Castle and Company the wrought iron work and Mr. East had charge of the fittings.

McCredie and Anderson's rendering also appeared in the October, 1909, article in the Magnet. This article is much more generous in its praise of the building and conveys a sense of the building's magnificence. It mentions that the white glazed bricks were imported from Shaw's Riggs Company in Glasgow and that the yellow faience brickwork came
The original store in 1914 photographed from Hyde Park. Note the canvas awnings to the piazza windows. From the "Romance of the House of Foy", 1935.
from Bermotoff in Yorkshire. The awning to the piazza was described as being perfection in the architectural sense with armoured plate glass and held in position by gilded steel cables. The visible portion of the roof was slate but the major part was glass providing wonderful light to the interior. Inside there were endless rows of graceful composite pillars, richly gilt and relieved with cool, soft colours and there were hundreds of huge mirrors in windows and through the building arranged so its reflection was conveyed to another portion of the building.

The only other photographs known of the building, prior to its extension, are the photograph used on the back page of the "Magnet" in 1910 and a photograph which appeared in Mark Foy's golden jubilee publication of 1935, "The Romance of the House of Foy". This photograph dates from 1914 and is from a different angle to that of the other two. The photos show the glass awning over the piazza though by 1914 canvas blinds have been added. The structure appears to be the same as the present day awning. Other details shown are the diamond shaped shopfronts, the towers (which differ in detail from the later towers) and the cast iron detailing to the parapet (a panel of which survives today at the southern end of the building). The photographs show the semi circular windows, to Elizabeth and Castlereagh Streets, which were later removed except in the southernmost bay and also show the adjoining brick building which is currently being demolished.

The photographs show the towers at the southern end of the building and the 1914 photograph shows large Foy's flags being flown from the piazza store towers as well as from other Foy's buildings to the south. Another photograph from an advertisement in the "Magnet" shows a shop window with its timber and brass surrounds (many of which remain) as well as pressed metal ceilings to the awning, light wells, what appears to be an arc lamp and a portion of the capital on one of the awning's posts.

The firm became a company in 1909 and the first meeting of the board of directors was held on 16th November, 1909. The minutes of the board meetings mention the company's architect Mr. Anderson on several occasions in respect of various other properties. In September and October 1914 mention is made of renovating the outside of the store and of the supply and installation of pneumatic cash tubes. Francis Foy retired in 1916 and the firm was
The newly extended store in 1930. From "Building" Magazine, April 12, 1930.
The newly extended store in 1930. From "Building" Magazine, April 12, 1930.
managed by H.V. Foy, his brother. The minutes of 1916 also mention the intention to enlarge the building by adding two storeys and record that Spain, Cosh and Dods, prominent architects of the day, recommended that the staircase in the additions be steel. In late 1917, the lift was removed and the escalator relocated and Stuart Brothers' tender, through Spain, Cosh and Dods, for changes to the door and steps to Castlereagh Street was accepted. A report on the stability of the building was also received from Spain and Stuart in 1917. There is then a gap in the minutes until 1923 when they record the retreading of the main stairs with brass nosing and the taking out of existing windows above the Castlereagh Street awning to install larger windows to drawings by Spain and Cosh. Concrete Constructions carried out the work. In 1924 the windows to the piazza frontage were realigned and parquetry laid in them.

On the 8th July 1924 Ross and Rowe's plans for what was variously called the reconstruction, remodelling or alteration of the building were accepted. The architectural firms Spain and Cosh and Esplin and Mould were notified of this and Spain and Cosh were paid 1,050 pounds in fees for drawings for alterations and additions. Various works seemed to happen in stages:- alterations to the windows above the awning, presumably in Elizabeth Street, to the central doorway and the receiving room and for the filling in of well holes (presumably light wells in the awning) in this area in 1925, repairs to the pavement lights in 1925, excavation of a sub-basement in early 1926 and later further excavation for the installation of an electrical plant to supply the building. The minutes discuss the first "segment" of the works and also record that the signing of the contract was delayed for the insertion of a clause concerning the ownership of second-hand materials. In 1927 there were discussions about various aspects of the work with references to the completion of various portions, for example, in mid 1927 the board hoped soon to be in occupation of the third stage of the building which would enable the sale of the hardware building to help finance these works. This building is opposite Mark Foy's on Elizabeth Street and is now used as a car park.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment. Lower ground floor plan showing the Museum Station tunnel, escalator and parcel chutes. The last four column bays at the left of the plan were not built. City Council Archives.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment.
Lower ground floor plan showing the Museum Station tunnel, escalator and parcel chutes. The last four column bays at the left of the plan were not built. City Council Archives.
Mark Foy's, 1927 redevelopment. Ground floor plan showing the location of the well opening and the island display cases on the Piazza. The last four column bays at the left of the plan were not built. City Council Archives.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment.
Ground floor plan showing the location of the well opening and the island display cases on the Piazza. The last four column bays at the left of the plan were not built.
City Council Archives.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment. Part ground floor plan showing the location of original walls, columns and a lift.
City Council Archives.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment.
Castlereagh Street elevation.
City Council Archives.
Mark Foys', 1927 redevelopment. Section and elevations. City Council Archives.
Mark Foy's, 1927 redevelopment.
Sections.
City Council Archives.
Mark Foy's 1927 redevelopment.
Section
City Council Archives.
The Sydney City Council holds a copy of Ross and Rowe's drawings of the building submitted to it for approval. The plans are dated December 1926 with Council's approval dated 25th March 1927 and they also refer to staged construction. This scheme stripped out the interior of the building and, with a new structure, added four storeys and a roof terrace but maintained the character and detailing of the building. It repeated the details of the first building but with the old portion forming a base course, introducing columns running three storeys and a higher decorative cornice. This was applied over an innovative concrete structure designed by the well-known structural engineer, A.M. McDonald. Towers were erected at the higher level but were new towers with different detailing and a room under each at roof level. The building was originally intended to occupy the whole block running through to Goulburn Street but was never completed. Ross and Rowe's plans show another four bays and two more towers at the southern end. One bay of the original structure remains, at the south end of the present building where work was halted. The former receiving and despatch building, now partly demolished, was constructed at the same time as the first store and its timber structure and white pressed metal decoration where probably the same as those in the original store.

It is thought that the building was not completed because of financial difficulties and problems over the ownership of land at the southern end. These matters were discussed in the board of directors minutes which mention in 1930 and again in 1933 that they were experiencing difficulty in selling the hardware building. By this time it was the midst of the depression and finance would have been difficult. Mention is also made of buying land at the back of the building, fronting Goulburn Street, of leasing land at the back of the piazza store and of a petrol station on the Goulburn Street frontage but the details regarding these arrangements are not known.

A photograph of the building appeared in "Building" magazine in April 1930 noting that Concrete Constructions were the builders and making brief comments. The caption remarks on the boom period in retail construction in Sydney and goes on to say that the yellow terra cotta work is "more startling than appealing in effect, but, no doubt useful for advertising purposes. The mansard towers and pinnacles make a distinctive skyline, but appear to be waiting for a great central feature."
Mark Foy's from Hyde Park in about 1930. The earth works in the foreground are for the Anzac War Memorial. Sydney City Council Archives.
View of the piazza in about 1930. Sydney City Council Archives.
View of the southern end of the Castlereagh Street frontage in about 1930. Sydney City Council Archives.
In 1931 agreement was reached over the Museum Station entrance and in 1933 a new Castlereagh Street entrance was constructed, the builder being Sidegreaves Ltd. At this time the City Council required that the temporary end be bricked up and though this was agreed it did not go ahead; perhaps the board still envisaged finishing the building. The building's interior features included three island display windows facing the piazza, the central well with chandelier, the Empress ballroom on the top level and the building's fine restaurant.

The business thrived on the site with people flocking to view the display windows, go to functions at the ballroom and to shop. The building had a fine reputation for display and window dressing and illustrations show the building decorated and lit up at night for various festive occasions over the years. At Christmas a children's fun fair was erected on the roof complete with small boats and cars and model railways. In 1983 in an article in the Sydney Morning Herald the playwright Peter Kenna described his work as a window dresser at Foys and how the imaginative window settings drew crowds to the store. He describes two of the island windows which had tanks and pumps and could be flooded to the level of where the glass began to create lakes, and how taps in the ceiling could simulate rain. One display featured a paper mache tree which appeared to have crashed through the glass onto the piazza; at Christmas there were mechanised displays.

There were minor changes to the building over the years including the enclosure of stairs to form fire escapes. The firm was prominent in the Retail Trader's Association but as the retail market changed the firm opened suburban stores and the city store declined. Floors were progressively let to other occupants as the store's size decreased. The City Council has plans by Edmund Dykes of additions to the roof for offices for the State Planning Authority in 1966. This work significantly altered the parapet of the building replacing terra-cotta decoration with concrete beams.

At this time Foys altered the Piazza shopfront removing the island showcases and adding the corner entrance and modern doors and at the same time vinyl tiles were laid over the travertine. The Housing Commission rented various floors of the building and members of staff still remember the chandelier being lowered from their floor and replaced with a
Mark Foy's decorated as a battleship during the visit of the Duke of Gloucester who opened the nearby Anzac War Memorial in 1934. Photograph from Sydney City Council Archives.
The store in 1935 faintly showing the piazza display windows. From the "Romance of the House of Foy", 1935.
The store i: 1935.
Photograph from
Department of
Environment and Planning.
The piazza with crowds waiting for the opening of Foy's Fair in 1935. The photograph shows the arched treatment of the entrances, the collapsible gates, the island showcases and part of the second row of showcases. Photograph from Mark Foy's Limited.
1. Window decorated for Foy's 50th Birthday Fair in 1935. The second row of display windows can be seen behind this island display case.

2. Feature at the main entrance behind the island display cases showing the main entrance doors and the mosaic tiled floor. Date unknown but pre 1965.

Photographs from Mark Foy's Limited.
Christmas tree each year. Mark Foys was bought out by McDowells in 1968 and by Waltons in 1972 though the store continued under its own management and name. It closed as Mark Foys when Grace Brothers took over in 1980 and closed as a retail store in 1983. The whole building had been owned by the AMP Society for some years. At some stage in the late 1960's the interior well was closed up to enable the first floor to be separately leased and the chandelier was removed and reputedly hangs in a shopping complex in Brisbane.

For some years the upper floors of the complex have been used for courts and in 1981 the "temporary" south wall was finally bricked up in conjunction with the conversion of one floor to courts. It is now proposed that the building will become a court complex with the first stage being the conversion of the ground floor and parts of the lower ground floors. In early 1985 an interim conservation order was placed over the building by the Minister for Environment and Planning.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The information contained in this report was readily available from the Sydney City Council, the Heritage Council, members of the Foy family and former staff and magazines, newspapers and other reports. Repositories such as the Mitchell Library and the State Archives Office and photographic collections such as the Tyrell collection have not been searched thoroughly and are likely to contain further historical information about the Mark Foys building. Other family members and former staff members are known to have information about the store, its operation, and about the Foy family.
1. Mark Foy's decorated for the Queen's visit in 1954.

2. Crowds during the visit of Princess Alexandra in

3. The Emperess Ballroom in the 1950's or 1960's.

4. Fun fair on the roof. Date unknown.

Photographs from Mark Foy's Limited.
1. View of the shop windows lit up at night. Date unknown but between 1934 and 1955.

2. Mark Foy's in 1960. The island display cases remain but the decorative emblems on the awning have been removed.

Both photographs from Mark Foy's Limited.
Photographs showing the central well in the 1950's or 1960's. Note the ceiling, chandelier, balustrade and edge details. Photographs from Mark Foy's Limited.
The escalator photographed from the Elizabeth Street level showing the spiral parcel chute to the left. A portion of the central well can be seen to the right and its ceiling is visible above the escalator. Photograph from Mark Foy's Limited.
DESCRIPTION

The Mark Foy's building is now an eight storey structure plus basements. The original building appears in fact to have been a three storey structure - two storeys facing Elizabeth Street and three to Castlereagh Street. Parts of the original structure remain including the external walls to the level of the lower cornice, the piazza stair and balustrade, the piazza awning structure and some of the terra-cotta decorative work appears to have been reused in the 1927 parapet. The windows over the Castlereagh and Elizabeth Street awnings are altered and it is not clear whether shopfronts to these streets were altered in 1927 or not - those to the piazza level were certainly changed at this time. The 1927 plans show that the earlier stone piers were removed and steel scaffolding installed and encased.

One bay of the original building remains at the southern end of the building. This two/three storey bay still has the original stone columns (including the foundation stone), three original windows with curved heads and remnants of the original parapet with its cast iron panels. The original detail treatment returns around the southern face for one bay on each side. Unfortunately on the Elizabeth Street frontage the shopfront in this bay has been removed and replaced by a blank wall of modern dark bricks. To the south of this bay is the receiving and despatch building linked to the store by the infilled drive-through cart dock, all now being demolished. This four storey building is a timber post and beam structure with load bearing brick perimeter walls. The interesting method of supporting the beams is shown in photographs taken when the building was partly demolished. The brickwork facades are divided into three bays and the elevation is treated to form a one storey base, two storey columns and then a cornice and parapet with rendered dressings. Windows are timber and some have been covered over on the north and south sides by additions.

Internally the columns are rendered or plastered, with a decorative capital in pressed metal. The beams are also clad in pressed metal in geometric patterns with a cornice adjoining the ceiling. The ceiling is of the same material with an Art Nouveau pattern.
1. Receiving and despatch building and the remaining bay of the original structure.

2. Foundation stone on original stone pier.

3. Detail of southern facade.

4. Mosaic tiled border to terrazzo paving.
Details of southern face of building revealed by demolition works.
The receiving and despatch building during demolition showing

1. Timber post and beam structure.

2. Pressed metal decoration.
which uses naturalistic motifs in a rectangular grid. The space between the store and this building was filled in at some later date with a three storey structure.

The main part of the Mark Foy's building is the well-known eight storey yellow and white building. The exterior treatment is the most unusual and prominent aspect of the structure. The walls are constructed of brickwork with a white glazed finish which is laid to form quoins and columns and decorative spandrel panels. The brick work is set off by marvellous and unique faience work in brilliant yellow used in consoles and cornices, column bases and capitals and extravagant relief panels with swags of fruit and flowers. Yellow faience work also adorns the pediment which has gabled wall sections, with decorative work to the top and apex, and columns with curved tops emphasising the bays. It appears that the decorative iron work was never in fact installed despite the space left in the brickwork. The corner towers have yellow pinnacles and at the southern end and midway down the building are larger gabled sections with rooms behind which originally served the roof terrace. One gable features the date 1927 in the faience work. This provided a lively skyline since spoilt in a large part by the removal of elements of the parapet and their replacement by a concrete beam.

The facade is also decorated at the top level by green glazed twisting columns and green panels between the consoles, and just above the awnings by yellow and green/blue tiles panels advertising goods and services available in the store. The towers are formed by a structure with sloping sides and topped by decorative metal capping. They feature oval windows on each side and lions heads at the top corners. The exterior walls are supported at the base by steel columns encased in timber and behind the shopfronts. To a large extent the decorative metal shopfronts remain except for the southern end of the Castlereagh Street frontage where they have been replaced by brickwork. The island display cases to the piazza which are shown on 1927 plan and in photos have been removed but the original fronts remain with their decorative surrounds, though there are unfortunate modern doors in the central and new corner entrances. The only early entrance doors remaining, though they differ in detail to those shown on the drawings, are those to the two Elizabeth Street entrances, to the entrance on Castlereagh Street adjacent to the Museum Station.
1. Elizabeth Street Facade.

2. Southernmost Elizabeth Street Entrance.

3. Main Elizabeth Street Entrance.

4. Exit from fire stair to Elizabeth Street.
1. Detail of northern facade.
2. Main entrance from piazza.
3. Corner entrance from the piazza.
4. Museum Station tunnel under the piazza.
tunnel and those opening onto the tunnel itself. About half of the shop fronts facing the
tunnel are intact and the remainder have been bricked in. The early doors are simple
timber-framed and glazed with Art Nouveau door furniture much of which has been recently
removed. Stone cladding to each side of one Elizabeth Street entrance has the Mark Foy's
emblem engraved but other entrances are emphasised by arched awnings.

The building has awnings on three sides with pressed metal ceilings and suspended by cables
from lion's head anchors attached to the building's face. The two long awnings date from
1927 and it appears that the front awning may date from the earlier structure though the
metal roofing and ceiling has been added. This awning has had decorative emblems removed
but is still supported by elaborate metal brackets as well as the steel cables. There is
also decorative metal work where the awning forms arches over entrances. The piazza awning
now has unsympathetic aluminium sun shades suspended from it which replaced canvas blinds,
one of which remains. These blinds though more appropriate were also crudely attached,
especially at the curved corner. The ceramic tiles to the piazza have been replaced with
terrazzo but tiles in mosaic patterns remain in the Elizabeth Street entrances. The coffee
shop that has been added to the western side of the piazza unsympathetic in design and
should be removed. (Food was formerly served from a restaurant within the building)

Other incompatible external changes are the addition in some areas of external sunshading
devices and the installation of new aluminium windows which do not maintain the original
fenestration pattern. These elements interrupt the consistent external treatment but are
superficial and could be altered at some time in the future.

Internally the major item of interest is the structure itself which used the latest
technology of the time, in contrast to the facade which faithfully matched the earlier
building. The structure comprises octagonal concrete columns with mushroom heads in a grid
at about 7.4 x 8 metre centres with flat plate reinforced concrete floors. Interestingly
the shear heads over the columns are raised on the floor above rather than the more common
practice of using a dropped panel which would be visible in the ceiling below. The
structural drawings by A.M. McDonald survive at the Sydney City Council and show
1. Main Castlereagh Street entrance.
2. Northern end of Castlereagh Street Facade.
3. Door furniture to northernmost Castlereagh Street Entrance.
reinforcing and other structural details. The structure was designed to be exposed and unimpeded by beams giving a smooth ceiling and, it was claimed, allowing better penetration of natural light. This was one of the first (if not the first) structures of this kind erected in Australia. The building was designed to be a fire-proof structure and was fully sprinklered from the start and lit by electricity generated on the site by a former submarine engine. When the plant closed the fly wheel could not be removed and was laid on its side and concreted over.

Other than the structure only a few elements of the original interiors remain and there have been major internal alterations. There are two banks of lifts in the building, on the Castlereagh Street frontage, each with a major stairwell adjacent and there is a third major stair on the Elizabeth Street frontage. These stairs were originally open but have been enclosed to form fire escapes, though they do have windows and thus do not strictly comply with today's fire regulations. They are however very generous and each occupy a whole structural bay. Each stair has a wrought metal balustrade with a timber handrail and they have been altered to discharge directly to the street. On the piazza level there are two minor stairs giving access to Elizabeth Street, and then to the Castlereagh Street Level though this access is now closed off. These stairs are terrazzo with railings similar to the major stairs. The grand central stair connecting with the first floor was recently removed. The travertine floor on the piazza level remains in part but is in poor condition. Spiral parcel chutes shown on the 1927 plans and in early photos have presumably been removed and in their place are air conditioning ducts.

The Castlereagh Street level has been converted as offices for the Housing Commission and the space has been partitioned and a suspended ceiling installed. The basement comprises further office space (recently vacated) and plant rooms. Pavement lights which are in poor condition light parts of these floors.

The first floor is also occupied by the Housing Commission offices and comprises largely open plan offices with some partitioning and a suspended ceiling throughout. In the area over the former central well the decorative plaster ceiling, visible in some of the early
1. Brackets supporting awning over main entrance from piazza.

2. Canvas blind under piazza awning.

3. Pressed metal ceiling to piazza awning.

4. Addition on piazza.
Interior photos, remains intact above the false ceiling. The next two floors are also now used as government offices and the fourth and fifth floors have been adapted for use as courts. Two court rooms on the fifth level occupy the former ballroom and some of the original detailing remains.

A sixth floor has been added on the former roof and this floor is now occupied as offices associated with the courts. The space has a sawtooth roof structure and is set back from the edge forming a walkway behind the parapet. At the northern end of the west side a section of the original slate roof remains behind the parapet forming some small rooms. It is not clear whether this type of roof was built around the whole perimeter of the former roof terrace. It is shown on the 1927 plans but is not visible in early photos of the building.

The southern wall of the building has only recently been completed having been a temporary wall of corrugated iron for about forty years. The wall has been finished with white brickwork which reflects the fenestration pattern in the main facades.

The most important feature of Mark Foys, which gives the building its name, is the piazza. Ideally located on the north side, it is sunny with views to Hyde Park and forms an ideal meeting and open air eating place. It has been one of the store's major attractions throughout its life. A large set of stairs across the entire width of the site accommodates the change in level between Elizabeth and Castlereagh Streets and in a sweeping curve turns the corner from Liverpool into Castlereagh Street. Though often interpreted as a grand public gesture on the part of Francis Foy the building was in fact set back and the piazza formed to allow the tunnel to Museum Station to cross the store's Liverpool Street frontage. An obvious advantage to the emporium but also making a major civic contribution.
1 & 2. Details of stairs at the Elizabeth Street Entrances.

3 Detail of a major stair well.
CURRENT PROPOSALS

The N.S.W. Government has recently leased the remaining floors of Mark Foy's and proposes to adapt the ground floor as courts with associated facilities on the Castlereagh Street and basement levels. The AMP Society, owners of the building, are carrying out works at the southern end of the building in association with the requirements of the Government as tenant of the building.

It is proposed to accommodate the Sydney District Courts for the Department of Attorney-General and Justice. In Stage 1 the piazza level will house four courtrooms with associated facilities for judges, juries and prisoners, a jury assembly room, offices for crown prosecutors and the solicitor for public prosecutions, public defenders chambers and public circulation and waiting spaces. The facility is to be secure with one entry only, from the plaza. The scheme has been altered to retain existing display windows and to accommodate a restaurant within the building. In proposals for later stages this floor will house one more courtroom and the first floor, now occupied by the Housing Commission, will also become courts, accessible by escalator from the plaza level.

In the current proposal the lower ground floor will become police facilities, prisoners cells and various plant rooms. The drive through dock will be used for secure access for prisoners and police and the northern portion of the floor will be used by the Housing Commission. It is proposed that this area will become 2 or 3 high security courts at a later stage.

The basement is proposed to be a car park for judges with further plant rooms and police facilities and a new access ramp from Castlereagh Street.

It is proposed that access between floors will be via a secure lift and three new stairs. At a later stage it is proposed to add three more lifts and two more sets of stairs. The stairs from Elizabeth Street to the plaza level and the lower ground level are to be removed but the entrance doors will remain.
The proposal has been approved by the Heritage Council and has been submitted to the Sydney City Council for development approval and is also awaiting for approval of funds for the work.
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mark Foy's building exhibits a high degree of technical and creative excellence in several respects.

The original two storey building caused a sensation and the 1926 rebuilding is an example of sympathetic additions which maintained the character of the earlier building. In the light of current interest in facade retention it is interesting to note that the 1927 works to Mark Foy's are an early and successful example of the retention of a facade and the construction of a major new structure behind it. Some of the unique and innovative early features such as the glass roof and dome, the Wunderlich ceilings and the octagonal cedar stair, were lost but other important elements were added including the early mushroom column structure.

The building embodies a high point in department store architecture as well as being a prototype which influenced the development of that area of the city and department stores generally. The building is unique in Australia and remains largely intact externally though some internal features have been lost. The remarkable faience work is a rare surviving example particularly with the recent demolition of the only other example of comparable quality in Sydney, the University and School's Club. The escalator removed in the 1960's was the first in Australia and notable interior features such as the central two storey space or well and the island show cases were removed in about 1966. The well's ceiling decoration remains. The reinforced concrete structure of 1926 is an early and innovative use of the mushroom column and flat plate floor slab system. Additionally the building was of fire-proof construction, fully sprinklered and served by lifts. The awning to the piazza appears to be the original 1909 structure though the glass has been replaced with metal.

The building is important to the area particularly with regard to its sunny piazza. The nearby buildings are generally of similar height (with the exception of the Commonwealth Bank building to the West) enhancing the building's impact and allowing sunlight to penetrate to the piazza for much of the day.
1. Gable over Elizabeth Street Entrance.

2. North-East corner tower.
The building demonstrates the role the emporium played in people's lives and in the development of the city. It was one of the earliest buildings of this type to provide large uninterrupted spaces for retailing. Many of the detailed elements demonstrating retailing techniques have been lost including the main internal stair, spiral parcel chutes and conveyor distribution, pneumatic cash tubes and the escalator. Elements that remain are the large spaces (though there are false ceilings on many floors) shop windows, some entrances and the piazza. The building has an obvious association with the Foy family and with the development of retailing in Sydney and in Australia generally. It is also associated with several important architectural and engineering firms of the day. The building played an important part in the cultural phase when the department store revolutionised shopping and retailing habits and played a large and socially important part in the lives of Australians.

The building's association with the Foys is made evident by the several signs which are part of the building fabric. Additionally, the building itself embodies Francis Foy's vision of a department store on the European model and realised his father's frustrated hopes of establishing the family in Australia.

The Foy's pioneered the development of the department store culminating in the Mark Foy's emporium designed by McCredie and Anderson and extended by Ross and Rowe (Ross is reputed to be related to the Foy's via Francis Foy's mother, Mary Macken). The engineer, A.M. McDonald, is well known for his introduction of modern structural technology to Australia.

Department stores, such as this, pioneered the selling of different types of goods in one store and were important in introducing ready to wear clothes, establishing local factoriies to make goods and in marketing via catalogue to country and suburban areas. The glamorous store also made shopping into a social occasion providing restaurant, reading rooms and library etc. The store's decline, the decentralisation of shopping facilities and its conversion to office space also reflects changes in the retail industry. The store's development on this site is associated with the shift of Sydney's commercial centre during the early 20th Century.
The building has significant townscape value occupying nearly a whole city block and with fine facades to three sides. The inclusion of an outdoor public space on Liverpool Street in the form of the Piazza made an important contribution to the city particularly in its location near Hyde Park and its sunny aspect. The Piazza itself became a well-known Sydney meeting place particularly with the early introduction of outdoor eating facilities. The building's intricate detailed design environs the surrounding streets with its exotic forms and brilliant colours.

The building in its original concept was never completed but the building is still of sufficient size to have a major impact on the townscape with its details providing interest at the human scale. The towers in particular have major townscape value.

CONCLUSION

The Mark Foy's building is of major cultural significance and is of importance in all the areas considered. The importance of the building is recognised in its inclusion on the Register of the National Estate, its classification by the National Trust and its listing as a Twentieth century building of significance by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. An interim conservation order under the Heritage Act has recently been made over the building and a proposal for a permanent conservation order has been advertised.

The building's value lies to a large extent in its exterior and in some interior elements such as the structural system and the large spaces. Some remaining detail including stairs, doors and the surviving ceiling decoration in the area of the former well are of interest. There is some loss of cultural significance inherent in the building's closure as a department store and it would be desirable for a new use to maintain aspects of its former function such as public access and open air eating on the piazza.
The central well in 1955 showing the chandelier, the ceiling, and balcony railing. Photograph from Woman's Day.
As a major heritage item it is important that its significance is conserved. Restoration of the exterior should be a priority. Adaptation of the interior appears to be the only option for the conservation of the place however in view of the building's value such adaptation must not detract from its cultural significance and should in fact enhance it. Changes to culturally significant fabric should be avoided and any unavoidable changes should be reversible or have a minimal impact.

In summary items of major, moderate and minor significance are listed below as are items detracting from the building's significance.

MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE

Exterior of the building, especially - overall design, its form and roofline

- Intricate detail such as brickwork and faience work
- Piazza, its urban space and the steps
- Relationship to street with shop windows and awnings

Structure - mushroom columns and flat plate slab.

Remaining bay of 1909 structure.
MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE
Former despatch and receiving building.
Roof treatment at north end of west side.
Ceiling decoration over former well.
Early entrances including doors and tiles floors.
Three major stair wells.
Former ballroom.
Large uninterrupted spaces.

MINOR SIGNIFICANCE
Side stairs off Elizabeth Street
Pavement lights
Decorative treatment to lift openings on some floors.
ITEMS DETRACTING FROM BUILDING'S SIGNIFICANCE

Modern entrance doors.
Exterior sunshades and modern windows.
Bricked up shopfronts.
False ceilings.
Concrete beam to parapet.
Piazza snack bar.
Partitioning.
CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

The Mark Foy's building is presently privately owned and the whole building is leased to the State Government. Over the years alterations have detracted from the building's significance and in the haphazard execution of internal works on different floors no-one has taken responsibility for the maintenance of the exterior or in ensuring that alterations or additions to the facades did not detract from its original appearance. The exterior is generally in good condition but the removal of excrescences and attention to the windows and awnings is urgently required as part of the restoration process.

The face that the building has been leased to a variety of users has exacerbated the problem; the government's works to the building have, to date, been restricted to the interiors. In any future works attention should be given to the control of, and responsibility for, all exterior works.

In broad terms the restoration of the exterior is most important. Whatever use is made of the building its significance would be enhanced by the preservation of the display windows and their use. The feasibility of such use requires investigation. Similarly the use of the piazza for open air eating has been a feature of the place since its construction, serviced from within the building. The existing kiosk however is incompatible in design with the building it should be demolished and these facilities incorporated inside the building. These social values are particularly important in the case of this building in view of its previous history of public accessibility.

In detail the treatment of entrances and display windows has been changed several times during the building's history though their function has continued throughout. Windows which have been bricked in and present a blank face to the street have detracted from the building. In the case of the piazza window, the original windows with diamond shaped segments were realigned in 1924 and then in 1926 the famous island windows were installed. These were removed in 1966 and though replacements are generally sympathetic the modern doors are inappropriate.
Mark Poy's 1982.
As regards the interior of the building it is desirable to retain and enhance features of significance. In particular the installation of false ceiling on some floors means that the columns and large uninterrupted spaces cannot be appreciated. On the ground floor especially, the building would be enhanced if these features could be displayed in some large spaces and if the reinstatement of the central well was considered. Generally it is more appropriate to expose the original structure and use exposed air conditioning ductwork than to conceal ducts and the structure with a false ceiling. However, in general any works should minimise the impact on original fabric and should be reversible. Elements such as stairs are of lesser significance and should be retained if possible. If removal or alteration is unavoidable such elements should be recorded.