

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1991

THE REGISTERED BUILDINGS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1991

To: J. M. E. Securities Ltd., per its Agents Messrs Michael Chapman & Co, Chartered Surveyors, 48; Athol Street, Douglas

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting held on the 31st January 2002, the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in pursuance of its powers under the above Acts and Regulations REGISTERED

**The former Isle of Times Office
9 Athol Street, Douglas**

as represented by the buildings shown outlined in red on the plan hereto attached, in the PROTECTED BUILDINGS REGISTER by reason of its special architectural and historic interest.

THE EFFECT OF THIS REGISTRATION IS IMMEDIATE and prohibits the alteration or demolition of the structure or appearance of any part of the building except in compliance with an obligation imposed by or under any statutory provision or with the prior written consent of the Planning Committee.

Dated this 20th day of September 2002

By Order of the Committee



J Callow

Secretary, Planning Committee.

1st Floor, Murray House,
Mount Havelock,
Douglas,
IM1 2SF.

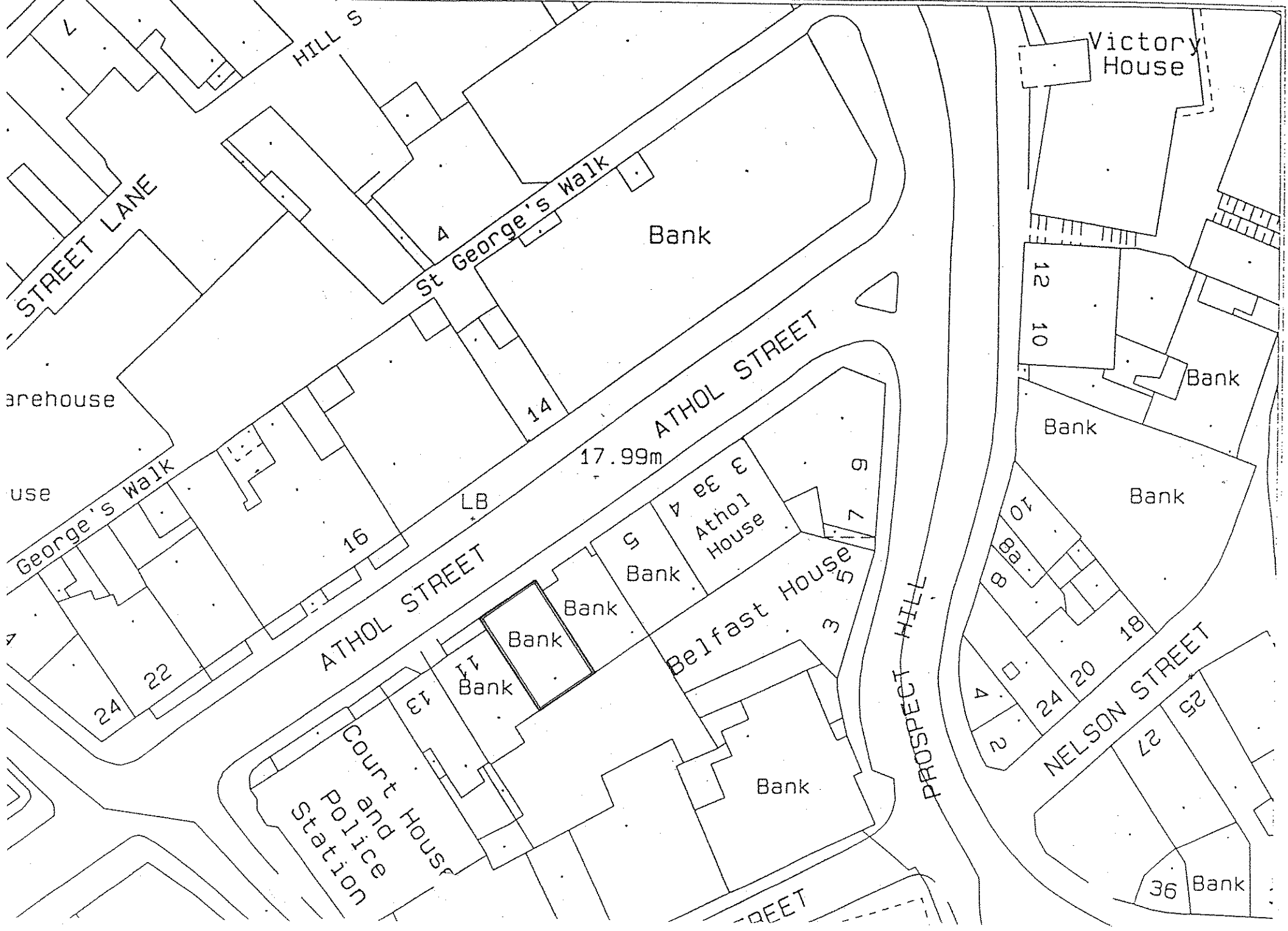
NOTE:

Rights to request de-registration of the building are provided under the Registered Building Regulations and in summary are that:

Applications in writing for the de-registration of the building may be made by the owners or occupier of, any other person having an interest in the building, within a period of 28 days of service of this notice. Such application should be sent to the Secretary, Planning Committee, 1st Floor, Murray House, Mount Havelock, Douglas, IM1 2SF.

In the event that de-registration is not requested by any party within the 28 day period described above, then de-registration may not be requested within a period of 3 years.

c.c.:- Town Clerk, Douglas Corporation, Town Hall, Ridgeway Street, Douglas
Director, Manx Museum and National Trust, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
Advisory Council on Planning & the Environment, 52 Alberta Drive, Onchan



arehouse

use

Court House
and Police
Station

Bank

17.99m

Bank

Athol
House

Bank

Victory
House

Bank

Bank

Bank

18

36 Bank

**THE FORMER ISLE OF MAN TIMES OFFICE
9, ATHOL STREET, DOUGLAS**

The Isle of Man Times newspaper came into existence on the 4th May 1861, when Brown's Advertising Circular was merged with the first number of the Isle of Man Times. The founder was James Brown and his son, John Archibald Brown, was the first reporter. From the second publication, James Brown began an attack on the methods of government of the self-elected Legislature. These attacks resulted in Brown being imprisoned in Castle Rushen in March 1864. He was later released and awarded £500 damages against the 'Keys' for false imprisonment. He continued to fight for the end of self-elected 'Keys', which was achieved in 1866.

In the edition dated 11th May 1872, number 9 Athol Street replaced the newspaper's previous address of Wellington Street. James Brown died in 1881, but his son, John Archibald, had become responsible for the editorship and management of the paper in February 1877.

The Isle of Man Times of 6th May 1882 writes: 'In May 1870, our offices were removed to the St. George's Hall, Athol Street; and on the purchase of the building by Mr James Kissack, in 1872, we became owners of our present premises, which were rebuilt in 1879 and 1880. By Excavating, a splendid machine-room was made downstairs, whilst in the upstairs rooms have been established bookbinding, lithography, stereotyping, and other industries connected with a well-appointed and extensive printing and publishing business.'

The business was incorporated as a limited company, called Brown and Sons Limited, in 1896. John Archibald Brown died in 1925, and the Directors appointed his son, George John Archibald Brown, as Editor of the newspaper and Managing Director of the printing business.

It is not clear how complete the rebuilding was but, with the exception of the ground floor, the elevation created was that which exists today. It was vastly different to the previous building shown in an engraving and photograph dated 1867.

As the works included excavation to form the machine-room in the basement, it can reasonably be assumed that the works of rebuilding were extensive. In 1894, permission was granted to extend the four-storey Athol Street premises backwards, to emerge on Nelson Street. An impressive façade, over three floors and some twenty-two feet in width, abutted the premises of Dumbell's Bank (now NatWest Bank).

In 'The Times' dated 2nd May 1936, a photograph of the Athol Street elevation shows the ground floor premises as we see them today. It has not been possible to ascertain with any accuracy the date of the ground floor alterations. It seems likely that they were carried out in the mid-1920s, probably at the same time that the oak panelling was applied to the walls of the interior.

An article in 'The British and Colonial Printer and Stationer' of 14th July 1898, includes a photograph showing the ground floor front room adjacent to Athol Street. It is fitted out as the stationery department with the shop front as fitted in 1879-1880.

The next major change to the building took place in 1934, when the Nelson Street premises were demolished to make way for a large new building running along an extended Nelson Street frontage of sixty feet. This new building was of striking Art Deco design and still remains today, although almost unrecognisable under a heavy coat of pebbledash with extensive alterations to its once handsome elevations. The building now stands isolated from the Athol Street premises, a ramp having been created through one of the loading bays to access a parking area created between the buildings. This has left the rear elevation of the Athol Street building severed and looking extremely blank, with only a few upper floor window openings.

The Athol Street elevation, however, remains looking as fine as ever, although decorative finials on the summit of the building have disappeared. This elevation is unique in design on the Island and has been described as being in French chateau style.

The principle elevation is built in red brick and decorated with limestone. This decoration comprises cills to the first floor pair of windows, carved panels above these and immediately below the segmental brick arches. There are also stone string courses, a matching cornice at second floor level and three decorative stone roundels inset into the brickwork.

There are recessed panels within the brickwork to either side of the first and second floor windows, a recessed decorative relief below the second floor windows and a substantial cornice with ornamental brickwork below the top floor. The third floor of the building features a projecting brick dormer with stone decoration; set into a steeply pitched, slated turret roof designed to be visible from street level. At ground floor level, the hardwood bow window, with fine glazing bars, has entrance doors to either side.

A passageway giving direct access to the staircase, without the need to enter the front office, was created in 1980 when the premises became a bank. At the same time, at first floor level, new toilet and kitchen accommodation was created. Velux windows were provided at third floor level and a strong room in the basement.

Today, internally, very little remains which is of obvious historical significance. It is possible that some of the sash windows at first or second floor level maybe original, as could be the staircase. These facts cannot be verified. Suspended ceilings now hide all original ceilings. On the rear elevation, replacement windows have been provided, presumably when the building linking the Athol Street premises to the Nelson Street premises was removed.

Today, it is impossible to realise the influence that the Isle of Man Times had on the shaping of the future of the Isle of Man, and the importance of 'The Times' building before the advent of other types of media. In times of crisis, it is said that large crowds would gather at 'The Times' office awaiting news, and this was the case as recently as 1958 following the Winter Hill air disaster.

In World War Two, the building was designated as a centre for the gathering of information should an invasion of the British Isles have taken place.

It is recommended that the former Isle of Man Times office, 9 Athol Street, Douglas, be added to the Register of Protected Buildings on the following grounds:

- 1 High degree of external originality
- 2 Architectural style unique on the Isle of Man
- 3 Historical association of the building with the political development of the Isle of Man, and the prominent 'Brown' family who greatly influenced the development of newspapers and publishing on the Island.

SOURCES

Cubbon's Bibliography Vol 2, William Cubbon, 1939
The Isle of Man Times, 6th May 1882 and 2nd May 1936
The British and Colonial Printer and Stationer, 14th July 1898
Mr Robert Kelly, Author, Onchan



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