
Central Area Urban Design Guide

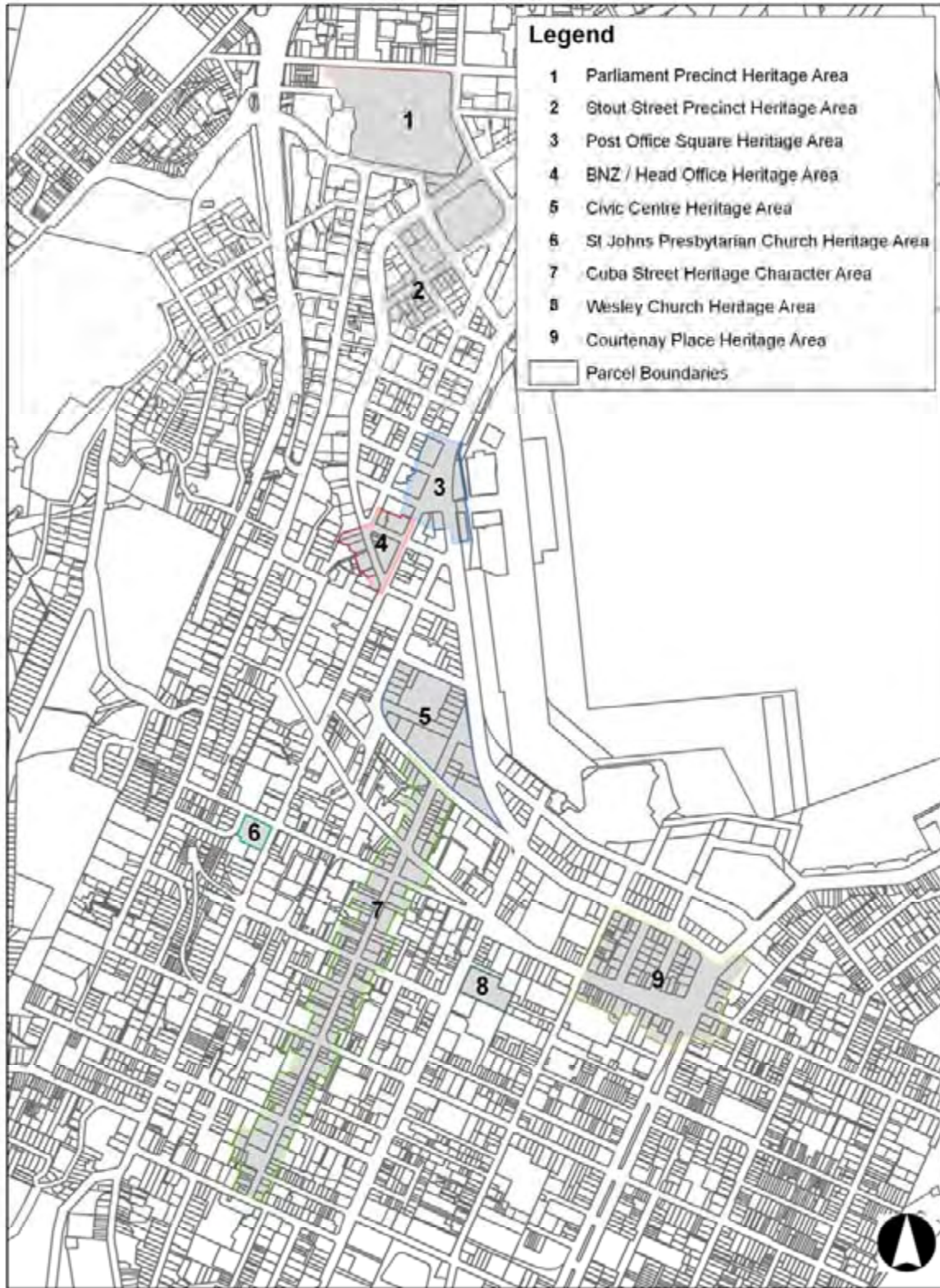
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Central Area - Heritage Areas



1:10,000

Location-Specific Guidelines

1 Parliamentary Precinct Heritage Area (PP)



The revamped Parliamentary grounds nearing completion, about 1912. (PAColl-4355, ATL)



Current

Introduction

The Parliamentary Precinct Heritage Area gives its name to the area occupied by the collection of parliamentary buildings and associated grounds and features, together with the nearby Government Buildings, Cenotaph and Waititi Landing Park. It is one of the most important historic precincts in the country.

The Government Reserve was established in 1840, the year Wellington was founded, and it has been the centre of national government since 1865, when the capital shifted from Auckland to Wellington. In that time, the reserve expanded with the acquisition of adjoining private land and a number of buildings have come and gone. Today the oldest remaining structure at Parliament is an addition to the original General Assembly Library built in 1883. The two oldest Parliamentary buildings are the Parliamentary Library (1899-1901) and Parliament Buildings (1907-1922). They are joined within the reserve by the Executive Wing or ‘Beehive’, (1969-1984), as well as statuary, landscaping, lawns, paths, roads, walls, gates and plantings.

Lambton Quay divides the area between Government Buildings and Parliament. There have been long historical and physical links between the two places, beginning in 1873 when it was decided to build Government Buildings on land reclaimed in front of Parliament from spoil excavated from Parliament grounds. Government Buildings is the oldest building within the heritage area and was completed in 1876 and once housed the entire Wellington-based civil service.

Also within the area are two other significant items. One is the Cenotaph, Wellington’s war memorial, built on the corner of Bowen Street and Lambton Quay in 1929 and dedicated in 1932. The other is Waititi Landing Park, a small triangle of land on the corner of Molesworth Street and Lambton Quay that commemorates a significant waka landing site for tangata whenua.

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

The heritage area encompasses the Parliamentary buildings and grounds, including the key heritage buildings – Parliament House, the Parliamentary Library and the Executive Wing or Beehive, along with the numerous features, including statuary, that are contained within the grounds, and the extensive landscaping, which was begun after fire destroyed most of the Parliament Buildings in 1907 and was finished in 1913. It also includes the nearby Cenotaph and Waititi Park, and extends across Lambton Quay to include the Government Buildings and land and features associated with that complex.

The area is bordered by Hill, Molesworth and Bunny Streets, Bowen and Whitmore Streets and Stout Street and terminates at the western edge of the park space formerly occupied by



Parliamentary Precinct Heritage Area



The Parliamentary Library after the completion of the 1899-1901 addition. The 1907 fire razed the earlier timber portion. (F106917½, ATL)

Broadcasting House.

At the rear of the Parliamentary buildings, the boundary line is drawn along the common property line to the adjoining state service buildings and incorporates the entirety of Museum Street and the sculpture park on the site of the former Broadcasting House. This will enable any future development of the present car-park to be managed in a way that does not adversely affect the heritage values of the area.

Setting

The key characteristics of this area's setting are the relatively low scale of the buildings (distinctive in an area which is rapidly becoming dominated by high-rise construction) and the spaciousness associated with the extensive landscaping, plantings and green areas around the major buildings. The streets around the area create a definitive, physical border and help separate the formality of the older state buildings from nearby buildings. Any large buildings are located on the other sides of streets (such as Bowen Street) or sufficiently far away not to crowd the major buildings of the heritage area.

This area has several significant wider settings. To the east and south the flat of the reclaimed land stretches away from Government Buildings towards the harbour, the Supreme Court and the larger buildings of the CBD. To the north and north-east is the Government Centre, dominated by such prominent buildings such as Kate Sheppard Apartments, Vogel House, the National Library and St Paul's Cathedral. To the west is the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Bolton Street Cemetery, the motorway, residential Thorndon and Tinakori Hill, which has been a prominent backdrop to this area since the town was established.

Assessment of heritage significance

Area and buildings

The proposed Parliamentary Precinct heritage area is nationally significant. It is one of the most important **historic** precincts in the country and features perhaps the best known group of buildings in the country. The area, through its site and buildings and longstanding governmental history, exemplifies the political and social history and development of New Zealand.

All of the existing Parliamentary buildings have great significance for their **historical** role in the governing of New Zealand and are of high heritage value. They are places where significant decisions affecting the nation have been made and where major national events have taken place. Government Buildings similarly has great significance as a place of national **architectural** and **historic** importance and is held in great affection in Wellington.

Although the group of buildings is heterogeneous in period and style, the high quality of design and materials used, their relationship in the landscape and open nature of the wider setting and their common governmental history establishes a strong



Construction of the Beehive underway in 1971. It would take another decade before it was finally completed. (PAColl-6301-83, ATL)



The cortege for Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage passes by the Cenotaph, 30 March 1940. (G021741-1/1, ATL)

sense of **architectural** and **historic** cohesiveness to the precinct.

The precinct illustrates both the early landform of and the subsequent development of the northern end of Wellington City. Government Buildings and Lambton Quay illustrate how the use of reclamation expanded the available flat land in the central city area, a process initiated and substantially carried out by the government.

Open space and landscaping

One of the special features of the precinct is the extent of open space around the buildings. The high proportion of open space to built area and the relatively low scale of the buildings imparts a special character to the precinct, reinforced by the great quantity of mature trees and plantings. This use of the land enhances the status of both the buildings and the area as a whole and effectively sets the area apart from the intensive commercial development on Lambton Quay and beyond.

The principal open space is that to the front of the Parliamentary complex and includes the forecourt, winding paths, large lawns and many mature trees. The landscaping of this area is founded on the original, early 1900s design and is reflective of the original topography of the site. It incorporates a number of original features (including the formation of the driveway to Lambton Quay, boundary walls, fences and gates and many of the larger trees, including the two Norfolk Pines). Within this space are items of heritage significance, including the Ballance and Seddon statues and the Cook Bicentenary memorial plaque.

Planting, principally native trees, enhances the quality of the open space, with a series of substantial seams and buffers that masks nearby buildings from view, provides shade and conveys a sense of permanence and history to the area. The mature pohutukawa, although not native to Wellington, add considerably to the sense of place.

However, particular aspects are not of a quality fully commensurate with the significance of the buildings, including some of the more recent hard landscaping, while the driveway to the car-park under the Parliamentary Library is a particularly discordant feature.

At the rear of the buildings – the lesser elevation – are reconstructed boundary walls, fences and gates to Museum Street and a picket fence along Hill Street.

The Cenotaph has a wider setting that is only fully realised at formal events such as Anzac Day commemorations. At such times the area nearby, including adjacent Lambton Quay, is full of people, illustrating the importance of its wider social and historical context.

Government Buildings' boundary fence and wall dates from the early 1900s and is of heritage significance, as is the Fraser statue in front of the main entrance. The remaining cabbage trees also date from the early 1900s. The planted exotics and natives have been in place for over 40 years and can now be considered significant landscape features. The latest plantings, although interesting for their diversity, have only been in place since 1996.

Objectives

- (PP) O1.1** To ensure that the Parliamentary Precinct Heritage Area's buildings and structures are retained and conserved.
- (PP) O1.2** To ensure that the dignified open spaces at the front of Parliament buildings are retained and enhanced.
- (PP) O1.3** To ensure that there is minimal impact on the immediate setting of the area by buildings and structures on adjacent land.
- (PP) O1.4** To ensure continuity of public access to the formal forecourt area in front of Parliament buildings.

Guidelines

- (PP) G1.1** No heritage building should be altered externally, except to reinstate lost features or remove non-contributing fabric. There should be no interruption of original rooflines, parapet lines and elevations in this area.
- (PP) G1.2** Locate any new buildings in Parliament Grounds at the rear of Parliament Buildings, the Beehive and the Parliamentary Library.
- (PP) G1.3** Maintain Museum Street as a formed space between the existing buildings and any new buildings; and maintain the pedestrian access between Hill St and Bowen Street.
- (PP) G1.4** General sight lines to, from and around the area and the associated open spaces and wherever possible enhanced.
- (PP) G1.5** Assess any proposed new buildings on immediately adjacent land to ensure they will not have adverse effects on the wider setting of the area.
- (PP) G1.6** Encourage the removal of visually and aesthetically discordant features, e.g. underground car-parking entries.
- (PP) G1.7** Any proposed changes to the general layout of Parliament Grounds on the Molesworth Street elevation, should be undertaken to enhance the existing values of the area.
- (PP) G1.8** Any necessary security measures should take into account traditional public access and views both to and from the front of Parliament.

- (PP) G1.9** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material when any earthworks or subsurface investigation are planned.
- (PP) G1.10** Enhance views of all the elevations of the Cenotaph, including keeping large vegetation clear of the structure.

MAP 1



 Parliamentary Precinct Heritage Area

0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Meters

2 Stout Street Heritage Area (SS)

Introduction

The Stout Street Heritage Area is entirely sited on land reclaimed from Lambton Harbour by the government from the mid-to-late 1870s. Centered around the western end of Stout Street, the area includes a nationally significant collection of heritage buildings spanning the period from 1879 to 1940.

The first building constructed here, in 1879, was the Supreme Court, the country's most important court. Other buildings followed, including those built for important government agencies, such as the Public Trust (1908) and State Insurance (1939), as well as the Departmental Building (1940), constructed to house the expanding civil service. The area also includes two significant private buildings - the Missions to Seamen (1903) and Wellesley Club (1925) which have played notable social roles in the area.

The key buildings in the Stout Street heritage area are characterised by their high quality of design, construction and materials, and their relatively low scale. In conjunction with the nearby Parliamentary precinct, these attributes confer a distinctive low-rise townscape quality to the north east of Lambton Quay, a quality enhanced by the many nearby towers of the 'high city'.



Stout Street Precinct Heritage Area

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

This heritage area takes in the western end of Stout Street, between Whitmore Street and Lambton Quay (plus the Wellesley Club on the corner of Maginnity and Whitmore Streets), focussing on the most important remaining heritage buildings in the vicinity. There are seven buildings contained within the area, of which five are significant heritage buildings. Justice Park, on Lambton Quay, the former site of the Central Police Station and Magistrates Court, is very closely associated the courts and so is also included in the area. It is also a place of potentially high archaeological value.



The Supreme Court in the 1890s. (G011634½, ATL)

Along with the nationally important collection of heritage buildings, the area is also notable for its key vistas which remain much as they were in the 1940s. The longest view, from Lambton Quay, terminates at the Railway Station and forms an interesting conceptual link with the area's long history of public service and its intimate association with the development of Wellington as a centre of government.

The key buildings in the heritage area decrease in scale and increase in age towards the eastern end of the area – an important

transition. The oldest buildings, the former Supreme Court and the Missions to Seamen provide a link in age, scale and streetscape quality with the nearby Parliamentary precinct and reflect the initial pattern of development in the area. The most recent heritage buildings, State Insurance and the Departmental Building, connect the expansion of government with the commercial development of the north end of Wellington city and are of a scale that relates well to the surrounding high city area.

Setting

Stout Street Heritage Area, although a relatively small area, has a wide range of settings. At the western end, the gateway buildings – State Insurance and Public Trust – are a strong presence on Lambton Quay, which is in turn a major influence on the setting at that end of the area. The enclosed canyon of the western portion opens on to the lower and more expansive eastern end of the street. There are long vistas down Stout Street to the Wellington Railway Station, and down Whitmore and Ballance Streets to Lambton Quay and Featherston Street.

Further afield, the hill of Parliament Buildings, and behind it Tinakori Hill, are landmarks. As befits this part of the CBD, tall office buildings are omnipresent without necessarily being directly in view.

Assessment of heritage significance

The Stout Street Heritage Area is of particular importance to Wellington as it contains a nationally significant group of heritage buildings, most of which were built by central government. The key buildings have very high historic significance for their longstanding association with the government and for their role in Wellington's economic, financial, legal and political history.

The area is historically important as it demonstrates the role of central government in Wellington's transition from provincial to national capital in the 19th century. It shows how government helped drive the city's progress and physical formation through reclamation and then the steady development of that land for various governmental purposes, including the courts, civil service and other agencies. This activity established the pattern of this part of the central city and it remains largely the same today, although the government does not build new inner-city office accommodation anymore and a number of Government buildings are now in private hands. The buildings also have social and economic significance for the government's past and present role as the city's major employer.

The area has high streetscape value with, several key vistas remaining relatively unchanged since the 1940s, particularly the southern entrance to the street and the long view from Lambton Quay to the Railway Station. This is one of the few places in the city that has remained relatively constant, as demonstrated by its



State Insurance and the Departmental Building in 1942, soon after both buildings were completed. (G018038 1/1, ATL)

use in numerous ‘period’ TV commercials and films. It is an established visual feature in the townscape of the northern end of the city, familiar to generations of Wellingtonians. The key buildings form an important transition of scale in the urban setting between the condensed “high city” of Lambton Quay and The Terrace and the comparatively low and open Parliamentary precinct.

The heritage buildings represent the work of a number of important architects and are architecturally notable for their innovative construction and uniformly high quality of design, materials and workmanship. Many of the materials and the craftsmanship employed in these buildings are irreplaceable. The interplay between the richly detailed old buildings and the rather more austere modern buildings enriches and enlivens the streetscape and gives it a very distinctive character. The area has a strong cohesiveness of purpose, building quality and history.

Objective

- (SS) O1.1** To maintain and enhance the heritage values of the Stout Street heritage area, and protect the architectural integrity and significance of the heritage buildings.

Guidelines

- (SS) G1.1** No heritage building should be altered externally, except to reinstate lost features or remove non-contributing fabric. There should be no interruption of original parapet lines, rooflines or elevations in this area.
- (SS) G1.2** The scale of the heritage buildings should be respected by any new building work nearby, with particular care taken in areas between the key buildings where transitions between differing scales are of great importance.
- (SS) G1.3** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material when any earthworks or subsurface investigation are planned.

MAP 1



 Stout Street Precinct Heritage Area

0 10 20 40 60 80 Meters

considerably in extent since then. With a couple of notable exceptions, the square has undergone only incremental change since the early 20th century and, as a result, it has maintained its basic configuration and essential characteristics. It is, despite the presence of modern buildings on the edges, still recognisably the same place it was 100 years ago.

Post Office Square is a place of high heritage value and importance to Wellington and contains a number of significant heritage buildings. It is a place very familiar to many Wellingtonians and is passed daily by thousands of people, in cars or on foot.

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

The Post Office Square heritage area is principally an open space defined by a number of significant heritage buildings.

The area includes all the buildings bounding the square – on Grey Street and Customhouse and Jervois Quays, as well as the nearby Wharf Offices and Bond Store buildings. The boundary follows the property lines of the key buildings surrounding the square and extends across Jervois Quay to pick up two former WHB buildings. With one exception, all the buildings within the area boundary contribute to the formation and qualities of the square.

With the exception of the Intercontinental Hotel, Todd Corporation and Chapman Tripp buildings, all buildings within the area are of high heritage significance.

There are a number of other features within the square and on its margins that can be considered part of the heritage area, many of which contribute to its values, including the Queens Wharf gates (1899), a heritage telephone box (c.1938) and a heritage postal box (dating from between 1879 and 1910).

Setting

The setting of the square is, in the immediate sense, the streets and buildings that surround it to the south, north and west. Most of the buildings in the vicinity are new but there are important heritage buildings within a short distance, including several on Customhouse Quay – AMP Building and Old Bank Arcade to name but two, along with Sheds 11 and 13 immediately to the north on Waterloo Quay. One block to the west is Featherston Street, which also contains heritage buildings of note, including Old Wool House, Agriculture House and Riddiford House. To the east is the waterfront, and of particular interest is Queens Wharf (1863) a most important heritage feature with two historic



Post Office Square c.1908-1910.



A view looking north in 1940, with the new Government Life Building behind the General Post Office. (G041966½, ATL)

sheds still standing on it.

More broadly, the square's setting is, to the landward side, the CBD, to the north and south the two prominent carriageways of Jervois and Customhouse Quays, and to the west, Lambton Harbour – the waterfront, sea edge and harbour.

Assessment of heritage significance

Post Office Square is one of Wellington's important public places and is a well-established and familiar visual feature in the city. It is particularly notable for its historic form having largely survived since it achieved its present dimensions and appearance in the early 20th century. The square is clearly defined by a range of buildings of high architectural significance, many of which have a maritime association. The heritage buildings have a uniformly high quality of design, construction and materials, all of which helps invest the square with a strong sense of architectural cohesiveness.

The heritage buildings give the square a strong and distinctive townscape character. They represent several different eras of construction and a range of architectural types and styles. The two wharf buildings are the most visually rich of the buildings and, being set hard to the road edge, make a significant contribution to the spatial qualities of the square. The curved sweep of the Wharf Offices is one of the most visually stimulating of all Wellington's landmarks.

The square is identified with the General Post Office, one of Wellington's more important and distinctive early buildings, and despite the removal of that building, the location of the square on Customhouse Quay still emphasises the historic importance of reclamation in spurring the development and growth of Wellington. Strong links remain between the space and the waterfront with the WHB buildings, the entrance to the historic Queens Wharf and the Huddart Parker building still closely identified with the harbour and exemplifying the importance of early Wellington's almost total reliance on the sea for commerce.

The square has important ongoing social value as a public place – a meeting place and a space where people pass through on their way to and from the waterfront. For south-bound traffic, it has been a place where, for many decades, time and temperature have been checked from the neon sign on the Huddart Parker Building.

Objective


- (PO) O1.1** To support and enhance the open space qualities and public amenity of the square, its heritage buildings and historical associations, and to retain its visual and physical links with Queens Wharf.

Guidelines

- (PO) G1.1** There should be no interruption of existing original rooflines and elevations of the adjacent heritage and contributory buildings that define the edge of the square.
- (PO) G1.2** The construction of verandahs, balconies or colonnades at the edges of the open space is not appropriate.
- (PO) G1.3** No additions should be built on the Clarrie Gibbons building
- (PO) G1.4** Reduce visual clutter in the streetscape to the minimum necessary, particularly at the entrance to Queen's Wharf and on the island itself.
- (PO) G1.5** Focus all development work in the square on the enhancement of the island as a distinct public space. The original footprint of the island should be demarcated.
- (PO) G1.6** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material should when any earthworks or subsurface investigation is planned.

MAP 1



 Post Office Square Heritage Area

0 10 20 40 60 80 Meters

4 BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area (BNZ)



Introduction

The BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area incorporates clusters of heritage buildings that together form one of the most significant and highly regarded streetscapes in New Zealand. The area mainly occupies land reclaimed between 1857 and 1863, but it also includes a part of the city, a stretch of southern Lambton Quay, that has been permanently settled since 1840.

The centre-piece is the block containing the former BNZ buildings – four buildings associated with the Bank of New Zealand, only one of which was built by the BNZ, plus the MLC Building. The area also includes a significant cluster of late Victorian / Edwardian commercial buildings around the Stewart Dawson’s Corner, a row of very fine 1930s’ head offices built for insurance companies and banks on Lambton Quay and one of the finest 20th century buildings in Wellington – the AMP building on Customhouse Quay.

The oldest of the buildings is the former National Mutual Life building (1883), later incorporated into the BNZ complex, on the corner of Hunter St and Customhouse Quay. The most recent buildings are modern structures on Lambton Quay, although they are not considered contributors to the area. In between is a



BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area

collection of buildings that offer a broad and interesting sweep through a range of architectural eras, incorporating a variety of styles and materials.

The heritage area is nationally significant for its association with both the early physical development of Wellington, the establishment of the city’s financial centre and the development of Wellington as the country’s financial and corporate capital.

Description of area

Contents and boundaries

The boundaries of the heritage area contain the most important buildings and streetscape elements in this part of Wellington. The boundaries follow the property lines of the most significant buildings – from the AMP Building on the corner of Customhouse Quay and Hunter Street, to Featherston Street and over to the row of 1930s commercial buildings on the western edge of Lambton Quay, to Stewart Dawson’s Corner (and just into Willis Street to incorporate the Fletcher’s Building) and down the western edge of Customhouse Quay to incorporate the former BNZ group.

The buildings are, in general, grouped by common purpose and / or location;

- the BNZ buildings between Lambton Quay and Willis Street,
- the financial and insurance institutions on Lambton Quay, and
- the retail block associated with Stewart Dawson’s.

Each group has an individual character associated with the main period of development of the group – from 1880s Victorian neo-Classical for the early commercial buildings, through to Art Deco and Modern for the 1930s financial and insurance buildings. Scale is also a significant feature, with the low-rise bank and retail buildings contrasting with the relatively high-rise buildings for the Lambton Quay group and the MLC and AMP buildings.

Setting

This heritage area is located right in the middle of Wellington’s CBD and has mostly modern office buildings as its near neighbours. The main topographical element in the area is the escarpment on its western side – today occupied at the top by The Terrace. For much of the 19th century it was a backdrop to the growing city and, before reclamation was undertaken, a considerable obstacle to expansion. Access to the cliff was via steps through land owned by John Plimmer, the bottom section of which is an integral part of the heritage area. Even today, there is room for little more than one building per site on the western side of Lambton Quay, even after material for reclamation was taken from the cliff. The rest of the immediate setting is dominated by the CBD and the mixture of old and new that is 21st century Wellington.

An important part of the character of the area derives from the geometry established by the pattern of the streets, which reflects the early development of the city and illustrates the contribution of land reclamation to today’s urban form. The rectilinear street grid imposed on the Lambton Harbour reclamation intersects



Lambton Quay in the 1920s. (G047590½, ATL)



Stewart Dawson’s Corner in 1905, soon after the existing buildings were constructed. (G024873-1/1, ATL)

irregularly with the serpentine form of Lambton Quay (which marks the original shore-line); among the intersections are a number of dramatic triangular corner sites for buildings, chief among those the BNZ block and the MLC.

Statement of significance

Area

This area can be regarded as a place of great historic importance to Wellington and one of the key heritage streetscapes in New Zealand. It is significant for its very high townscape values, high quality of heritage buildings and architectural interest, all of which exemplify its important contribution to Wellington's social and economic history.

Following reclamation and the establishment of the BNZ, the area developed as Wellington's, and later New Zealand's, financial centre with banks, financial and insurance institutions clustering around the area. While this role is now mostly conducted elsewhere and most of the buildings in the heritage area no longer have their original uses, the buildings are strongly linked by their shared commercial history. They all reflect significant elements of Wellington's economic and social history for the important part they played in the development of the city. As befits the status of some of these companies, the quality of design and materials used in their buildings is particularly high.

The area has very high townscape value as a very well-established and recognised part of Wellington. Nearly all the buildings in the area retain their original external form, scale and relationship to one another and the immediate streetscape of the area remains much as it was by 1940, albeit with some modern intrusions on Lambton Quay and beyond the area's boundary.

Plimmer's Ark, a portion of which remains conserved in the BNZ buildings, and Plimmer's Steps, are historically significant links to the earliest days of the city's settlement and to one important settler, John Plimmer. Plimmer's Steps is also a physical reminder of what a significant impediment Clay Point's narrow beach once was, and the important role the steps played in allowing movement around it in poor weather. A significant heritage feature in the streetscape is the lamp-post erected in 1888 to commemorate the arrival of electric lighting in Wellington.

Views to and through the area retain much of their old character and importance, particularly the long vistas north down Willis Street to the BNZ complex, and south along Featherston Street to the 1930s commercial buildings.

The buildings

Each cluster of buildings in the BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area incorporates a range of ages, styles and forms, but one of the special qualities of the area is the high level of homogeneity of design within each group. The buildings embody a rare collection of high-quality architecture and construction, with many designed by prominent architects. The buildings showcase a range of styles and periods, with many notable for their especially high quality of design, materials and construction, consistent with the status of their original purposes of banking, insurance, finance and retail.

The majority of the buildings in the area have high **architectural** significance and make important contributions to the quality of the streetscape.

The BNZ buildings are the prime focus of this area and, on their triangular site in the heart of the city, are of critical **historic** and **streetscape** importance. The other key buildings in the area include the AMP building, the MLC Centre, the row of office buildings on Lambton Quay including the Prudential, and the distinctive Edwardian commercial buildings around Stewart Dawson's Corner.

Many of the buildings are **historically** and **socially** important for their present or past uses. The former banks and insurance companies played a significant role in both the city's and nation's economy as well as the lives of its citizens. Stewart Dawson's Corner has been a significant meeting point for Wellingtonians since it was built in 1900. It remains the only building in the area that retains one of its original uses. Many of the buildings are familiar landmarks with strong public recognition.

Objective

(BNZ) O1.1 To retain and enhance the heritage values and the integrity of the BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area and to conserve the various clusters of buildings and interrelated, associated features that form the basis of the area.

Guidelines


(BNZ) G1.1 No existing heritage building should be altered externally, except to reinstate lost features or remove poorly-designed additions and non-contributing fabric. There should be no interruption of original rooflines and elevations and no rooftop additions in this area.

(BNZ) G1.2 Respect the scale of each of the groups of buildings by any nearby new work, with particular care taken in areas between the key groups of buildings where transitions between differing scales are of great importance (e.g. between Stewart Dawson's and the 1930s commercial buildings).

(BNZ) G1.3 Protect and conserve the portion of Plimmer's Ark remaining within the former BNZ buildings.

MAP 1



 BNZ / Head Office Heritage Area

0 10 20 40 60 80 Meters

5 Civic Centre Heritage Area (CC)



Introduction

The Civic Centre heritage area has quickly become one of the most important public spaces in Wellington. Formed in 1990 – 92, it filled an obvious need in a city with many public spaces but no civic centre. Although it is relatively newly established and contains a number of buildings and features of recent vintage, the area contains and is defined by a collection of important civic buildings, two of which have very high heritage values.

Civic Centre also represents the long and important association by the Wellington City Council with this area of the city. The land was reclaimed by the Council in the mid-1880s, then, over time, it built a series of important council buildings – Town Hall (1901-04), Wellington Public Library (1938-40) and Administration Building (1946-51) – on three blocks of land that were bounded or intersected by Mercer, Wakefield, Harris and Cuba Streets and Jervois Quay. It is therefore entirely appropriate that this area was eventually transformed into a meaningful enclosed public space.



Civic Centre Heritage Area

As one of the largest public spaces in central Wellington, it is a very popular place for gatherings and events and is widely used by Wellingtonians and visitors alike. The important heritage values of Civic Centre lie not only in the historic buildings but also in their (mostly) sensitive reuse and their seamless integration into a carefully designed and interesting space. Another important part of Civic Square's character, which emphasises its public role, is the complete exclusion of traffic from the area. There is little doubt that this area will become even more significant as the decades pass.

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

The boundary of the heritage area is a straightforward one – the contiguous block of land physically bounded by Wakefield Street to the south, Jervois Quay to the east, Harris Street to the north and Victoria Street to the east. It includes all the buildings surrounding the square and the Michael Fowler Centre (MFC) as well as the present MFC car-park area and gardens. Both the MFC car-park and Ilott Green have been included so that future development on those sites can be easily managed to protect the heritage values of Civic Square and its buildings and features.



Wellington Town Hall soon after its completion, with the Central Fire Station to the left and the band rotunda in front. This view looks across the intersection of Cuba and Mercer streets and Jervois Quay. (G-MM-2278-1/1, ATL)

Setting

The setting of Civic Centre is a complex one in that it includes the immediate setting of the square itself, a largely self-contained space, as well as the wider heritage area, which includes the MFC carpark and gardens, Ilott Green and the open space to the rear of the City Gallery. More broadly, the area is surrounded by a range of different settings, including the urban cityscapes to the south, west and north (Wakefield, Cuba, Mercer, Victoria and Harris Streets). To the east is the elevated piazza and City-to-Sea bridge, which presage the open space of the waterfront beyond the broad carriageway of Jervois Quay. Fine views of the waterfront buildings and open space, and beyond that the harbour, can be had from the piazza and the bridge, which emphasise the importance of the harbour's proximity on the setting of the square.

Statement of significance

The square at the Civic Centre has, very quickly since its formal opening in 1992, become a place of great importance to Wellington City. As one of the largest single public areas in Wellington it is a very popular place for gatherings and events and is widely used by Wellingtonians and visitors alike. It has acquired very high social significance for this role.

The space of the square is defined and framed by a heterogeneous collection of civic buildings of high importance to Wellington, particularly the two key heritage buildings – the Wellington Town Hall and City Art Gallery. Together with the other buildings in the square, most of which contribute significantly to the aesthetic appeal of the square, they imbue this area with great historic and architectural value.

The land here is historically important, as it has been used for municipal purposes for well over 100 years. The building collection in turn uniquely reflects Wellington's civic growth and social and political history. It also illustrates a wide variety of styles designed by a succession of important and well-known architects and offers an interesting insight into Wellington's 20th

century architectural history. The buildings have significant collective value for this role. The strength of this collection of buildings is greatly enhanced by the public use and recognition of the square and their role in surrounding streetscapes.

The Square has become an established and familiar feature in Wellington. It seems likely Wellingtonians will continue to use and identify with the square for generations to come and over time the whole square will accrue even greater heritage significance.

Objective

- (CC) O1.1** To maintain and enhance the values of this area, and its special civic status, by protecting the special configuration of the public space, and protecting and conserving its heritage buildings.

Guidelines

- (CC) G1.1** Retain all existing heritage buildings.
- (CC) G1.2** Reinststate lost features and decoration on heritage buildings.
- (CC) G1.3** Maintain and enhance the relatively low scale and relationship of existing buildings to the square.
- (CC) G1.4** The construction of new buildings in the open space of the square is not appropriate.
- (CC) G1.5** Retain and enhance the key entrances to the square.
- (CC) G1.6** Promote the development of new active edges in existing buildings on the edge of the square.
- (CC) G1.7** Maintain views into, around, and from the square.
- (CC) G1.8** Maintain the openness and access to sunlight in the square.
- (CC) G1.9** The placement of artworks and signage should respect the heritage values and fabric of the buildings.

MAP 1



 Civic Centre Heritage Area

0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Meters

6 St John’s Church Heritage Area (SJ)



Introduction

The St John’s Presbyterian Church Heritage Area, which has as its centrepiece the church of St John’s (1885), is a significant inner-city precinct of ecclesiastical buildings and a place of great importance to members of the Presbyterian Church.

The church has occupied at least part of this land since the 1850s and had acquired all of it by 1901. The present church is the third on the site – the first was built in 1856 and was replaced by a larger building in 1875, which later burned down. A number of other buildings have occupied the land over its history, among them Spinks Cottage, built sometime between 1857 and 1863 and now one of the city’s oldest houses. The area presently contains four buildings; the church and Spinks Cottage are listed by the Wellington City Council and registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

St John’s Presbyterian Church Heritage Area is a place of high heritage value and importance to Wellington. The church in particular, one of three timber churches designed by Thomas Turnbull in central Wellington, is an outstanding example of timber Gothic architecture and still a significant city landmark long after larger buildings have been constructed nearby. Its combination with Spinks Cottage is a distinctive 19th century element in an otherwise modern urban streetscape.



St. John’s Church Heritage Area

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

The boundaries of this area are established by two main factors. The first is that the area occupies a discrete parcel of land owned by the one organisation – St John’s Presbyterian Church – and all the buildings are owned by the church, although not all are used for church purposes. The second is that there is an absence of a number of other closely associated heritage, character or landmark features that might easily be linked to the church precinct to create a meaningful, larger area.

The church land is roughly square on one title – Lot 1, DP 72762. It is bounded on three sides by Willis and Dixon Streets and MacDonald Crescent, and bounded on the fourth, or south side, by a right of way and one commercial building.

A number of buildings have been built on this land since the early 1850s and today four buildings occupy the site. Two of those buildings, St John’s Presbyterian Church and Spinks Cottage are very significant heritage places. The other two buildings on the site are the recent Convention Centre (Church Hall), Troup House and crèche play area.



The church pictured about 1940. (F036459½, ATL)

Setting

The immediate setting of the area is a varied one and, in architectural and historic terms, not greatly authentic. To the east – the other side of Willis Street – and south are largely new buildings, some even taller than the church’s spire. To the north are more buildings of a recent vintage, along with Dixon Street flats (1940), which is an early and very significant Government-built apartment building in the Modern style. To the west, on the hill above the precinct, is mostly Victorian and Edwardian housing, the church’s longest-surviving companions. In the middle of this housing are the Dixon Street steps, a long-standing landscape feature.

The broader setting consists of the central business district to the north, Te Aro to the east and south (along with the motorway and bypass), and Victoria University and more housing on the hills to the west.

Statement of Significance

The area

St John’s Presbyterian Church Heritage Area is an important precinct of church buildings, the result of over 150 years of continuous occupation of the site by the church. As the land has been used for generally the same purpose during that time, it has great historical significance. St John’s has been the city’s most prominent Presbyterian complex for much of that time and has evolved and changed in response to the shifting needs of the church.

After many changes, disasters, rebuildings and reorientations, two important colonial era buildings, the St John’s Presbyterian Church and Spinks Cottage, remain on the site. Less than 20

years ago the precinct was even more intact, as the other old buildings on the site – the former Church Hall and Sunday School building – still survived. Despite that, the landmark church building and Spinks Cottage give the area a very high prominence and recognition in Wellington city.

Buildings

St John's is one of Wellington's finest churches and the most historically significant of Wellington's Presbyterian churches. It has been used for worship by generations of Presbyterians, among them some of Wellington's most famous citizens, including former prime ministers, mayors and other notables.

It is a glory of timber Gothic architecture, made all the more interesting for the quirky but successful use of a range of architectural styles inside. The main space is magnificent, with a combination of exposed and painted native timbers and a beautiful collection of carved pews. This space has been virtually untouched; in fact the entire building, with the exception of the MacKay Chapel, some windows, and a few other minor alterations, is little altered from the original. It is architecturally significant as one of the city's finest remaining 19th century churches.

This is one of three major timber Gothic churches designed by an important 19th century Wellington architect, Thomas Turnbull, that still stand in central Wellington, all within a short distance of each other (the others are Wesley Church and St Peter's), and it has considerable group value with these other buildings.

The magnificent church spire remains a significant landmark, despite the proliferation of large buildings nearby. It is a constant in an ever changing cityscape.

Spinks Cottage is among the very oldest of Wellington's houses and historically important for that. It was built by 1863, but possibly earlier, and with the scarcity of truly old houses in Wellington it is an important relic of the city's earliest days. The house has been moved twice and altered over time and its conversion into an office in the 1990s did not necessarily serve its fabric well. Nevertheless, the benefit of the cottage's present site, which it has occupied for the past 23 years, is its visibility from Willis Street and its easy compatibility with the church. With its obvious, but rare colonial appearance it is a minor city landmark, rather like Plimmer House on Boulcott Street. Its pairing with St John's Presbyterian Church is a significant 19th century element in a predominantly late 20th century streetscape.

The remaining buildings are purpose-designed for their situation and compatible with the older buildings. Some effort was made to ensure that the architecture of the Convention Centre matched the older buildings. The newer buildings make good use of restricted sites and in time will likely gain a heritage significance alongside the older buildings.

Grounds and landscaping

Despite the many changes that have taken place, the grounds and landscaping remain important aspects of the area's heritage significance. The perimeter wall and fence and the main entrance gate posts have been key elements in defining the precinct for decades. Despite the considerable changes in other parts of the

heritage area in recent years, the steep slope of the site requires a particular approach to designing and building structures and this has helped maintain a consistency in the area's appearance. In general the trees, courtyard arrangement and paving are sympathetic to the church and the more recent structures.

Objective


- (SJ) O1.1** To protect and enhance the St John's Church Heritage Area, and in particular the primacy of the church on its site.
- (SJ) O1.2** To ensure that new buildings, and changes to existing buildings, within and around the area do not compromise the areas heritage values.

Guidelines

- (SJ) G1.1** Retain and conserve the heritage buildings and other significant features within the area.
- (SJ) G1.2** Any new buildings, or changes to existing buildings, within the area should be designed to respect the scale, form and architectural detailing of St John's Presbyterian Church and Spinks Cottage and the relationship of these two 19th century buildings to each other on the site.

MAP 1



 St John's Church Heritage Area

0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Meters

7 Cuba Street Heritage Area (CS)



Introduction

Cuba Street Heritage Area is one of the best known of Wellington’s heritage areas and a place celebrated for its character and social life. Cuba Street was first surveyed in the early 1840s and is one of the settlement’s earliest streets. It was later extended both south and north and at one stage, before Cuba Street was truncated at Wakefield Street, it ran all the way to the waterfront at Jervois Quay. The street has had significant periods of development and notable cycles of prosperity. It became an important retail area after the first tram service was established in 1878. During the late Victorian and early Edwardian era, a building boom transformed the street and helped establish the character still visible today.

Today Cuba Street runs the length of Te Aro from Wakefield Street to Webb Street, a distance of 1.8 kilometres. It takes in seven blocks in all, gently rising in elevation as it goes and changing in scale from high, at the north, to low at the southern end. The many cross-streets create long vistas which physically connect the area with wider Te Aro and the surrounding hills. Along the way are some of the city’s most intact heritage streetscapes, containing a variety of interesting



Cuba Street Heritage Area

and important heritage buildings. In some places the area extends around corners of the many cross-streets to take in buildings that make a clear historical and architectural contribution.

The heritage character of the area is not continuous; there are considerable differences between blocks and there are portions that make relatively little contribution to the values of the area. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the area retains a high level of coherence and collective value that transcends the less historically significant sections.

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

The Cuba Street Heritage Area is a long and narrow area based around one street. The entire street is included, although it has a number of buildings along the route that make no more than a modest contribution to the area, or none at all. The area also includes immediately adjacent heritage buildings on cross-streets, service lanes, pedestrian passages, outbuildings, and stand-alone buildings that are physically or historically linked to buildings directly on Cuba Street.

The visual quality of the streetscape is notable for the low-rise character of the area, the continuity of the street wall line created by the building façades and the common features of the buildings – an ornamented façade, capped with a parapet, set above a verandah with a well-glazed shop-front below; it is the consistent expression of this pattern which considerably enlivens the street.

The street wall is relatively evenly scaled in each block and heights, which are typically two- to three-storeyed, varying by just a storey above or below the median building height in each block (with a few notable exceptions).

The buildings, ranging in age from the 1860s to the present, illustrate the different influences brought to bear on the development of the area over time. The northern end has a large collection of substantial commercial buildings which are an extension of the central business district. Buildings such as the Kennedy Building, in lower Cuba Street, built in 1904, reflect the demand at that time for larger commercial space at the city end. Further south, the original development of the street was mainly to serve the nearby suburbs, and the buildings, among them small Victorian houses and shops such as those near the intersection with Webb Street, reflect this in their progressively smaller scales, primary retail and residential uses, and increased age. However, the transition from north to south is not necessarily an orderly one, with some blocks, particularly that between Vivian and Abel Smith Street, featuring several large buildings, such as the former Railton Hotel and People's Palace.

The street as a whole is most remarkable for its large and diverse collection of Edwardian commercial and mixed-use buildings. The predominance of the Edwardian buildings contributes a degree of



Laying of tracks for the electric tramway, 1903, at the intersection of Manners and Cuba Streets. The still newly constructed Royal Oak is in the immediate background, with the Union Clothing Co. on the other side of the road. (G002130-1/1, ATL)

visual detail and texture to the street wall rare in Wellington – the more modern curtain walls and planar façades of the later 20th century are few and the street is a visually richer place for that.

The area also contains prosaic items that any street might contain, such as street and traffic lights, signs, cables and the like, but there are other features, such as the ‘Bucket Fountain’ in Cuba Mall, that contribute to the heritage values of the area.

Setting

In a relatively narrow concourse, surrounded by mainly two and three storey buildings at the edges, the only significant interruptions are the streets that intersect Cuba Street and some taller buildings in the wider Te Aro area that are visible over the top of the Cuba Street buildings. The exception to this is the open area and modern buildings between Manners and Dixon Streets. Towards the southern end of the street the setting becomes a more expansive one as the land rises from the seaward end, an impression enhanced by more vacant space and smaller buildings, and affords views to Mt Cook, distant hills, and other parts of Te Aro.

Cuba Street’s broader setting is Te Aro. Cuba Street sits in the middle of this area, and within a short distance of Cuba Street are the wider avenues of Taranaki and Victoria Streets. Te Aro is a rapidly changing part of Wellington, a mixture of the commercial and high-density residential, with a smattering of older buildings. Cuba Street, particularly its older portions, sits somewhat distinct from this general pattern but forms an important part of it.

At the bottom (northern) end of the street, Civic Square is close by, as are the taller buildings of the CBD and wharf area. Cuba Street once extended all the way to Jervois Quay, before the construction of the Michael Fowler Centre.

At either end of the street there are significant visual stops that play their part in defining the street’s setting. At the southern end is the large bulk of the former MED building on Webb Street (now enlarged as Webb Street Apartments) and at the northern end is the Michael Fowler Centre.

Assessment of heritage significance

As one of Wellington’s signature streets Cuba Street is a firmly established and familiar visual feature well known to Wellingtonians, New Zealanders and overseas visitors and one held in high public regard.

Cuba Street is an area of great historic, architectural and social importance to Wellington. Its formation dates back to the beginning of organised European settlement in 1840 and, for the majority of the time since then, it has been one of Wellington’s premier streets, known for its long history of retailing, especially drapers and



Looking north from the Ghuznee Street corner, down what would become Cuba Mall, in the late 1920s. Many buildings shown here still stand, with the exception of the Hotel Bristol on the north-eastern corner. (G048945½, ATL)



The big sign erected to welcome shoppers to the newly-created Cuba Mall, c.1969. (F4160-DW, ATL)

department stores, as a place where people have lived and plied trades and crafts, and more recently for its nightlife and alternative culture. Cuba Mall itself has historic significance as the first street in the country to be re-designed for exclusive pedestrian use.

The street has important physical and historical connections to the wider city. As the commercial importance of the street rose, particularly with the introduction of tram services, it became an important link between the growing city and the (then) outer suburbs of Brooklyn, Mount Cook and Newtown.

The street is long enough to include a variety of buildings that tell us something about the part of the street and era that they were built in. Of particular townscape interest is the gradual transition from larger buildings at the northern end to smaller buildings at the south, which still largely mirrors the kind of Cuba Street townscape that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century. Many mixed use shop / dwellings, once a common feature throughout Te Aro and other parts of Wellington, have survived in upper Cuba Street, as have some residences.

While Cuba Street's significance as an important thoroughfare serviced by trams has been undermined somewhat by their removal, the creation of a pedestrian mall and the construction of the inner-city bypass at its northern end, the social importance of the street remains, reinvigorated by the recent influx of apartment dwellers on its margins.

One of the key physical characteristics of the street is its essentially low-rise character and relatively uniform scale of buildings in each block, with the tall buildings at the north end quickly transitioned to the typical two- and three-storey heights of the greater part of the street. The low-rise nature of the buildings creates an open and inviting precinct with good views from upper Cuba Street across the skyline of the buildings to the hills framing the city beyond.

The aesthetic significance of the street is apparent in the variety and general high quality of its older buildings, which include distinctive examples of all major styles employed in New Zealand since the 1860s spread over a range of building types. In particular, the period of unprecedented prosperity at the beginning of the 20th century is well represented by a rich collection of Edwardian mixed-use and commercial buildings.

Cuba Street has a high level of historic and architectural cohesiveness related to its relatively original form and numerous remaining old buildings. Its best buildings rival any others in Wellington for the quality of their design and inventive use of decoration. A number have technical value for the different methods and styles of construction used. There are buildings now rare, or even unique, in central Wellington for the combination of shop / residence, for their original shopfronts and for the various outbuildings that accompany them.

Objectives

- (CS) O1.1** To protect and enhance the heritage values of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.
- (CS) O1.2** To encourage the enhancement of the established character of the street through the upgrading of non-heritage buildings and vacant sites.
- (CS) O1.3** To ensure that the general transition in building height and scale from north to south is maintained.
- (CS) O1.4** To retain significant features associated with heritage places, including ancillary buildings, rear elevations, service passages etc.
- (CS) O1.5** To ensure that Cuba Mall’s heritage buildings and features, including the ‘Bucket Fountain’, are protected and enhanced, while maintaining their role in the mall’s commercial and social life.
- (CS) O1.6** To retain the broader heritage setting(s), and vistas to and within the street, in particular the north-south axis and the connections east and west.

Guidelines

- (CS) G1.1** No existing heritage building should be altered externally, except to reinstate lost features or remove non-contributing fabric. To protect building forms and fabric, and to preserve existing access to light, sun and views, there should be no interruption of rooflines and elevations.
- (CS) G1.2** The replacement of non-heritage fabric with more sympathetic fabric on heritage buildings, including shop-fronts, verandahs, parapets and significant exterior decoration, is encouraged.
- (CS) G1.3** Encourage the removal of redundant external fire escape stairs on main façades.
- (CS) G1.4** Protect rear elevations, alleys and service passages, paths and similarly significant minor spaces, and outbuildings.
- (CS) G1.5** Retain and enhance the pedestrian network, particularly long-established routes..
- (CS) G1.6** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material when any earthworks or subsurface investigation are planned.

MAP 1



 Cuba Street Heritage Area

0 37.5 75 150 225 300 Meters

8 Wesley Church Heritage Area (WC)



Introduction

The Wesley Church Heritage Area has as its centrepiece the Methodist Wesley Church, part of a significant collection of old inner-city ecclesiastical buildings. It is a place of great importance to members of the Wesley Church and is of high heritage value in Wellington.

The heritage area reflects the longstanding association of the Methodist Church with Wellington, from the founding of the settlement in 1839 to the present day, and illustrates the important role that churches played in the social and spiritual lives of the settlers and their descendants.

The site has been in continuous ownership and occupation by the Methodist Church since 1879. At least two of the three principal heritage buildings are the work of the distinguished architect Thomas Turnbull and have readily identifiable commonalities in style and appearance. The hall was built just two years after the church, with which it forms an important historic pairing.

The group of buildings has enduring townscape value in Taranaki Street, an area that has undergone great change in the last 125 years. Today the complex is still a distinctive feature in the street, in terms of its architectural form which sets it apart from its neighbours (a collection of largely undistinguished rectangular boxes), in the relatively small scale of the buildings and in the relatively high proportion of open space around the buildings, particularly the forecourt at the front of the church with its large pohutukawa.



Wesley Church Heritage Area

Description of area

Contents and boundaries

The extent of this area is naturally constrained to the extent of the land owned and occupied by the church on Taranaki Street. There is nothing of historical or architectural value nearby to be linked to the precinct in a meaningful way.

The proposed Wesley Church Heritage Area is composed of five buildings, including the church itself, all on land owned by the church at 77 Taranaki Street. Of the five buildings, three are of heritage importance. There are two other buildings of relatively recent vintage that make up the rest of the area.

The area incorporates the most distinctive group of surviving 19th century buildings on Taranaki Street. The principal features of the complex are the three heritage buildings and the open space around the complex including the large forecourt and the large pohutukawa fronting Taranaki Street. The two larger buildings are oriented along the length of the site close towards the original boundary of the Town Acre, providing space on the site for the Drama Christi Studio to the south and the modern Wesley Centre to the north.

Buildings

1. Wesley Church
2. Wesley Church Hall (Hall 1)
3. Drama Christi Studio
4. Concrete building (at rear)
5. Wesley Centre (including Café Doria, Epworth Bookshop, Hall 2 and glazed canopy between Church and Centre)

The nearby buildings, a mixture of commercial and apartment developments, are all relatively tall compared to the low scale of the church buildings. This represents an inversion of the original situation when the church was one of the dominant buildings in Te Aro. Despite this significant change in circumstances, the church complex retains a distinctive scale and presence on Taranaki Street.

There are other features of significance in the area, particularly the two substantial pohutukawa at the front of the property, while there are numerous other items included in the area, such as ramps, steps, walls and plantings.

Setting

The immediate setting of the Wesley Church Heritage Area is a varied one. To the west is the wide open space of lower Taranaki Street lined with its mixture of taller office buildings, low-rise retail and car yards. On the northern boundary, on the other side of York Street, is a line of large commercial buildings that includes the CMC Building, which has stood there since the 1920s. To the east is the increasingly medium-rise townscape at the end of Holland Street which is once again becoming a burgeoning inner-city residential area.

The variety of building sizes and the inconsistent extent of site coverage in the immediate vicinity of the heritage area give a relatively high proportion of open space near the church building and a relatively open skyline, which means that the church is not

overwhelmed, despite the larger buildings on either side of its Taranaki Street elevation. In addition, the breadth of the Taranaki Street frontage enables clear views of the area from the street.

More broadly, the heritage area's context is wider Te Aro, and the mixture of commercial, light industrial and high-rise residential uses that now characterise this area. Nearby is Courtenay Place, which is one of the principal thoroughfares in Wellington and a place with its own distinctive character.

Assessment of heritage significance

The Wesley Church Heritage area is the home of the principal Methodist church in Wellington. The area has been in continuous church use since its establishment. It includes a tightly knit and distinctive group of heritage buildings and is a place of great spiritual significance to local Methodists.

Historically, the area has significance as the centre of Methodist activities in Wellington since 1879, but it is also a link to the very beginnings of Christianity in Wellington and the founding of the settlement. It is a short distance from the place where the first Methodist service was given – at Te Aro Pa – and where the first Methodist church was built in Cuba Street. The oldest buildings are evidence of the key role that religious education played in Methodist life, with both the hall and Drama Christi starting out as teaching facilities.

Collectively the buildings represent the most intact of all the inner city church heritage complexes. At least two of the buildings were designed by one of the leading architects of the day, Thomas Turnbull, and the church is a particularly fine example of timber church architecture. The church is one of a group of important timber church buildings designed in central Wellington by Turnbull – St John's Presbyterian and St Peter's Anglican, both on Willis Street, being the others. Modifications and additions to the area and its heritage buildings have largely been low in impact and respectful of the values and scale of the older buildings, and the area retains a high level of historic cohesiveness.

The heritage area (and the church in particular) has high townscape value along Taranaki Street, as it has done since it was opened and it is an established and familiar visual feature on the street. While the scale of the adjoining buildings has considerably changed in the intervening 120 years and most distant views of the church have long since been built out, the church complex remains distinct in the streetscape of Taranaki Street.

The townscape qualities of the heritage area are characterised by the relatively low scale of the buildings and the distinctive architectural form of the church, enhanced by the relatively open nature of the setting which is given further prominence by the prominent pohutukawa and the set-back of the church from the street edge. These qualities emphasise the special character of the complex and distinguish it from the adjoining high-rise buildings.

Objectives


- (WC) O1.1** To protect and enhance the Wesley Church Heritage Area, and in particular the primacy of the church on its site.
- (WC) O1.2** To ensure that new buildings, and changes to existing buildings, within and around the area do not compromise the areas heritage values.

Guidelines

- (WC) G1.1** Retain and conserve the heritage buildings and other significant features within the area.
- (WC) G1.2** Any new buildings or changes to existing buildings maintain the views of the existing heritage buildings and the clear space around them, and are no larger in scale than the present structures on the site.
- (WC) G1.3** That any new buildings on adjoining sites be of a scale compatible with the heritage area buildings, and offer a transitional form between the scale of the Wesley site and the neighbouring high-rise buildings.
- (WC) G1.4** Retain and protect the heritage trees.
- (WC) G1.5** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material when any earthworks or subsurface investigation are planned.

MAP 1



 Wesley Church Heritage Area

0 5 10 20 30 40 Meters

9 Courtenay Place Heritage Area (CP)



Introduction

Courtenay Place Heritage Area is a rectangular portion of eastern Te Aro that encompasses seven streets and a number of listed heritage buildings.

The area has had a long and varied history. Although part of the New Zealand Company's planned settlement, it was slow to be formed. Much of the area was originally covered by an extensive swamp which remained unsuitable for building until raised and drained by the 1855 earthquake. Building commenced during the 1860s but the area was never well regarded during the 19th century. It was dominated by the backdrop of the Tory Street gasworks and the housing – particularly around Grainger (later Blair and Allen Streets) – was poor, if not outright slum-like. Things began to improve when the tram service was inaugurated in 1878 and more particularly when the electric service began in 1904.

The transformation of the old housing area into Wellington's fruit and vegetable market in the early 20th century also changed the appearance of the area. There were many other uses of the streets of course, with importers and exporters using the area for warehousing. At the same time, the arrival of picture theatres, coffee lounges, restaurants and better shops in the following decades further reinforced the area's transformation and Courtenay Place became known for the quality of its shopping. At the end of the 20th century, the departure of the markets and the influx of restaurants, cafés and nightclubs, small businesses and apartments, again



Courtenay Place Heritage Area

revived the area, but at a cost to the heritage fabric of some of the buildings and the absolute authenticity of some of the key streetscapes.

This area has great significance for the integrity of the primarily Edwardian streetscapes contained within its boundaries, particularly Blair and Allen Streets. While not all of the buildings are outstanding on their own merits, there are buildings and structures of great heritage significance within the area. The real glories though are the long and unbroken vistas of heritage buildings that are a feature of several streets. These are rare and highly significant in Wellington and represent the greatest concentration of heritage buildings in the central city.

The area's rejuvenation has turned Courtenay Place area into something of a social mecca, particularly at night, and engendered considerable public interest in and affection for the buildings. It has also shown how heritage buildings can have a positive economic and social value in Wellington city.

Description of area

Contents and extent of area

Courtenay Place Heritage Area is the name given to a rectangular block of Te Aro, incorporating the eastern half of Courtenay Place, along with Allen and Blair Streets, the northern ends of Tory Street and Kent and Cambridge Terrace, and the southern side of Wakefield Street (at its eastern end).

This area has clearly delineated boundaries determined by the buildings and the grid-like streets they line. The area is tightly confined to the greatest concentration of heritage buildings – the eastern block between Courtenay Place and Wakefield Streets and the five streets between. The only street that sits outside this configuration is Kent Terrace, but as it directly faces Cambridge Terrace and includes a number of important heritage buildings, it can be considered a key part of the area.

Many of the buildings were constructed in the early-20th century, particularly the Blair and Allen Street block, which was redeveloped from 1903 onwards, but the area contains buildings from several different eras and designed in a range of mainly Classically-based styles. A few buildings predate 1900, but there are no surviving buildings of any great age. Aside from Blair and Allen Streets, the most strongly evident era of development is the 1920s. Scattered infrequently are buildings of a more recent vintage, but few of these are contributors to the heritage values of the area.

The buildings are primarily two or three stories in height, but the southern side of Courtenay Place and some other streets – notably Wakefield and Kent and Cambridge Terraces – contain larger buildings. However, these larger buildings are the exception rather than the rule and the area remains distinctive for its low-rise character.

Along with the former warehouses of Blair and Allen
Wellington City District Plan



Trams in Courtenay Place, c.1910. (G007722½, ATL)

Streets, one of the most distinctive features of the area is its theatres (both cinema and live performance). There are places as diverse as the Embassy, Paramount and Bats Theatres and Hannah Playhouse. Courtenay Place can be considered the heart of Wellington’s theatrical district.

Setting

Courtenay Place Heritage Area has a variety of settings, all of which contribute to the broad values of the area. Overall, the area is relatively open, with the wide streets and low-scale buildings responsible for that. This open character, which other than the wide arterial routes is unique in Te Aro’s streets, is not unduly compromised by the odd large building. On the Wakefield Street side the New World supermarket and carpark block views to Waitangi Park beyond, which would otherwise emphasise the spacious aspect of the area; further west on Wakefield Street the taller buildings make more of an impact. Tory Street is something of a narrow canyon, opening up only its north and south ends. It also has a substantial carparking building on its west side, a dominant and unsympathetic feature opposite the ‘heritage side’.

Perhaps the most famous vista is the view east up Courtenay Place, with the imposing front façade of the Embassy Theatre and behind it the timber houses of Mt Victoria. Mt Victoria is an equally significant presence in views from Wakefield Street and Cambridge Terrace. While the southern edge of Courtenay Place has the buildings of Te Aro behind it, the northern side is a relatively short distance from the sea, albeit that the waterfront is now only partly visible from Blair, Allen and Wakefield Streets.

The broader setting of the Courtenay Place heritage area includes the second principal block from Tory Street to Taranaki Street which includes a number of significant buildings including the former Wellington Gas Company building, St James Theatre, and the public toilets in the triangle at Taranaki Street among others. The long view down Courtenay Place is arrested across Taranaki Street at the Hope Gibbons building although the views continue further east along Manners and Dixon Streets.

The wider setting includes the Te Aro area which is characterised by a high proportion of old commercial buildings of a wide range of purposes, styles and scales.

Statement of significance

The architectural and aesthetic value of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area is derived from its townscape quality which is significant for the consistency and quality of the buildings, the range of heritage on display and the low-rise and open character of the area. There are excellent examples of buildings from the late Victorian period to the present day, with a particular concentration of buildings of the first two decades of the 20th century.

Blair and Allen Streets, in particular, contain buildings of a relatively uniform height and scale and while their design often varies, the common purpose and



A very spruce Courtenay Place, during its 1920s transformation. Courtenay Chambers has just been finished so the photograph was probably taken in, or just after, 1927. (PAColl-5584-26, ATL)



The smokestack of the destructor partially obscures the finishing touches being made to buildings on Wakefield Street in 1908, part of the complete rebuilding undertaken of the former Grainger Street slum. (G019581/1, ATL)

architectural character of each building is such that they form a compatible whole. As befits the nature of the uses these buildings were intended for, they lack extensive decoration, which enhances their visual cohesiveness and demonstrates on a fundamental level the link between use and design. Together these two streets have a strong sense of place that enhances the heritage value of the wider area.

While the remainder of the area, particularly Courtenay Place itself, contains buildings of much greater variety in age, style and scale, this contrast plays a key part in the overall heritage value of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

Because the buildings in this area have remained in reasonably authentic condition for up to a century or more, they provide a valuable record of commercial, warehouse and office building technology from the late 1890s onwards. The work of many notable Wellington architects is represented by buildings in Courtenay Place and environs.

The historic significance of this area lies to a considerable degree in the sheer diversity of its history. It has been a place of industry, commerce, entertainment, transport and living, and while Courtenay Place and its associated streets bear no evidence of their swampy beginnings, there is an overall theme of continuous historical development that adds to its obvious visual quality.

Against a backdrop of anxiety about poor housing and unsanitary living conditions, the transformation of the area surrounding what was Grainger Street into a warehousing precinct in the early 1900s was a calculated and historically significant attempt at urban renewal. Blair and Allen Streets also have important historic value as the focal point of the area that housed the wholesale produce markets for the city for approximately 90 years, from shortly after the turn of the century until 1993. The markets saw an immense amount of life, some of it when the city was otherwise quiet in the early hours of the morning, and they brought into the area a wide variety of characters, including growers, wholesalers, auctioneers, retailers, 'truckies' and others. The markets strongly influenced the growth and development of this part of the city, and left behind an important legacy of Edwardian warehouse buildings.

Courtenay Place's growing social value had its origins in the theatres, hotels and cafés that appeared in the 20th century. Today it is Wellington's premier night spot and nationally (and even internationally) famous for that. Its theatres have long been a significant part of the city's cultural life and include landmark buildings such as the Embassy Theatre (1924) and Hannah Playhouse (1974), and the historically significant Paramount (1917), Wellington's oldest surviving picture theatre.

Objectives


- (CP) 01.1** To protect and enhance the heritage values of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.
- (CP) 01.2** To encourage the enhancement of the established character of the area through the upgrading of non-heritage buildings.
- (CP) 01.3** To recognise and protect the height, scale and special architectural character of Blair and Allen Streets.
- (CP) 01.4** To recognise and protect the special vista east along Courtenay Place to the Embassy Theatre.
- (CP) 01.5** To retain significant associated features, service passages, ancillary buildings and rear elevations.
- (CP) 01.6** To ensure that existing sun and light access is retained within the area.
- (CP) 01.7** To retain the broader heritage setting(s), and vistas to and within the area.

Guidelines

- (CP) G1.1** No existing heritage building should be altered externally, except to reinstate lost features or remove non-contributing fabric. To protect building forms and fabric, and to preserve existing access to light, sun and views, there should be no interruption of rooflines and elevations or the open quality of the existing skyline.
- (CP) G1.2** Visual clutter in the streetscape should be reduced to the minimum necessary.
- (CP) G1.3** Encourage the replacement of non-heritage fabric with more authentic fabric on heritage buildings, including shop-fronts, verandahs, parapets and significant exterior decoration.
- (CP) G1.4** Encourage the removal of redundant external fire escape stairs on main façades.
- (CP) G1.5** Consider the possibility of uncovering archaeological material when any earthworks or subsurface investigation are planned.

MAP 1



 Courtenay Place Heritage Area

0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Meters