

archifact

architecture & conservation

limited

www.archifact.co.nz

64 khyber pass road
grafton
auckland 1023
po box 8334
symonds street
auckland 1150
new zealand
p 09. 966 6940
info@archifact.co.nz



fig. 1 Post Office Square and immediate surrounds (including the Huddart Parker Building) with illustrative' photo montage.

huddart parker building - signage wellington central wellington

assessment of effects on historic heritage

for

Huddart Parker Building Ltd
c/- NZ Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust

March 2022

issue history	date
Draft version for review	20-01-2022
Draft version for review	28-01-2022
Final version	31-03-2022

Prepared for:

Huddart Parker Building Ltd
 c/- NZ Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust
 P O Box 2175
 Wellington 6140

attention: Keith Mackenzie

Copyright © archifact – architecture & conservation ltd, 2022

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright above, no part of this report may be reproduced, stored in, or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Auckland, March 2022



contents

1. executive summary	4
2. commission	5
3. brief	5
4. proposed billboard	5
5. identification of the place	6
5.1 address	6
5.2 ownership	6
5.3 legal description	6
5.4 local authority status	6
5.5 heritage new zealand listing	6
6. methodology	6
6.1 assessment of effects on heritage	6
6.2 conservation practice	7
6.3 constraints	7
7. background	8
7.1 site and context	8
7.2 historic heritage values – huddart parker building	9
7.2.1 summary of heritage significance	9
7.2.2 history	9
7.2.3 architecture	11
7.3 post office square heritage area - setting	12
8. assessment of effects on heritage	19
8.1 Chapter 21D.3 Discretionary Activities (restricted) rules	19
8.2 relevant design guide provisions	22
9. conclusion	23
appendix a – wcc heritage inventory report	25
- huddart parker building	25
appendix b – huddart parker building, the dominon post 8 february 2014	27

1. executive summary

This report offers an independent and objective professional assessment evaluating the impacts on the heritage values of the Huddart Parker Building and its setting within the Post Office Square Heritage Area arising from the proposed installation of a digital billboard to the existing rooftop frame atop the Huddart Parker Building at 2 Jervois Quay¹, Wellington, in line with the relevant objectives, policies, guidelines, and design guide objectives in the Wellington City Council Operative District Plan.

The Huddart Parker Building is included within the Wellington City Council District Plan *Chapter 21 Appendix – Heritage List: Areas, Buildings, Objects, Trees and Maori Sites* as a heritage-listed place and also lies in the Post Office Square Heritage Area. There are several heritage-listed items nearby. The Huddart Parker Building is not listed in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero administered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

The proposal represents a reinstatement of an historic condition recognised in itself as having heritage values in the WCC heritage inventory record. A sign fixed to the surviving metalwork signage frame atop the Huddart Parker Building was first established in the early 1960s; nearly two thirds of the buildings 97 years' history thus far. The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was once a familiar inner-city landmark and the WCC heritage inventory record includes (under Cultural value/Social value/Sentimental connection) recognition that the *“building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature”*.

The relatively compressed nature of the Post Office Square Heritage Area in addition to the high rooftop location of the proposed reinstated sign significantly mitigates perceived immediate effects arising from the sign on both the Huddart Parker Building and the Heritage Area. Views of the proposed sign are most apparent (and limited) to south-moving traffic on Customhouse Quay at some distance from the Huddart Parker Building; a view that becomes less complete and more removed from the normal line of sight as one nears the building.

The proposed reinstatement of a billboard (in this case a digital billboard) onto the existing steel signage frame on the roof of the Huddart Parker Building and within the Post Office Square Heritage Area will not present adverse effects on the heritage significance values or context of the Huddart Parker Building or the wider Post Office Square Heritage Area, nor will it affect the ability to interpret heritage features of the Huddart Parker Building, the wider Post Office Square Heritage Area, or other nearby heritage places. In the wider setting, the proposal does not represent cumulative adverse visual “clutter” as its elevation and the necessary horizontal distance to view the sign reduces its relative area within the receiving environment

Overall, the proposed digital billboard is considered appropriate and supportable.

¹ Various addresses are attributed to the Huddart Parker Building. While 2 Hunter Street and 1 Post Office Square have been applied to the building, the address adopted in this report is the address on the Council's Property Search File.

2. commission

archifact – architecture & conservation ltd (Archifact) was commissioned by Huddart Parker Building Ltd c/- NZ Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust in November 2021.

3. brief

The brief for the project required Archifact to undertake an independent and objective professional assessment considering the effects on the historic heritage values of the Huddart Parker Building and the surrounding Post Office Square Heritage Area arising from the placement of the proposed digital billboard on the existing historic steel-framed structure atop the Huddart Parker Building in Central Wellington.

4. proposed billboard

Site measurements of the existing steel frame and of its individual members have led to an assumed maximum sign size of 13m long and 4m high, with the base of the sign effectively at the top of the existing parapet level.

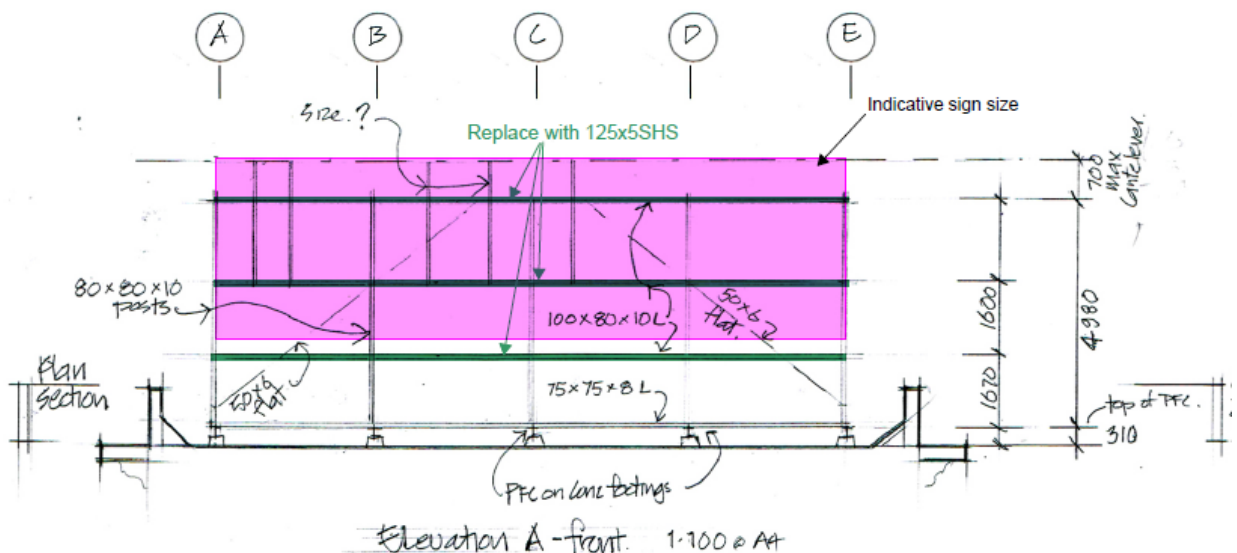


Fig 2: Stantalls Studio Huddart Parker Sign, Existing Structure Elevation A with markup from the Dunning Thornton concept strengthening report (not to scale)

The proposal seeks to establish a single digital landscape-orientated billboard fixed to an existing rooftop steel support structure. The sign will be oriented toward southbound traffic on Customhouse Quay and Jervois Quay. As the Stantec 'traffic impact assessment' report notes (at 4.1 on page 8) "the billboard will be briefly and incidentally visible to eastbound traffic emerging from Grey Street, Johnston Street and Panama Street. However, these views are very much secondary as the oblique angle of viewing sits outside of a driver's normal field of vision, making it unlikely that a driver will even notice the billboard's presence. The billboard's location and orientation will practically preclude any visibility from the Queens Wharf approach".

The billboard is proposed to operate with a minimum image display time of 8-seconds, and with 0.5-second dissolve transitions between images. These operational characteristics have become industry standards in New Zealand. It is also understood that the LED screen will operate with luminance levels that will be automatically managed so that the screen is responsive to changes in ambient lighting conditions.

5. identification of the place

5.1 address

2 Jervois Quay
Wellington Central
Wellington 6011

NZTM reference: Easting: 1748469 / Northing: 5428179

5.2 ownership

The property is owned by Huddart Parker Building Ltd.²

5.3 legal description

LOT 11 DP 11204 on CT WN33D/660.

5.4 local authority status

The Huddart Parker Building is located in the Central Area as described in the Wellington City Council (**WCC**) District Plan (**ODP**). The Huddart Parker building is recorded in the ODP as item 155 on planning map 17 and is also recorded in the ODP as lying within the Post Office Square Heritage Area as described at Appendix 3 of the *Central Area Urban Design Guide* of the ODP.

5.5 heritage new zealand listing

While the Huddart Parker Building does not appear on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero administered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (**HNZPT**), Post Office Square and Clarrie Gibbons Store are recorded as an archaeological site (R27/726) in the ArchSite archaeological recording scheme administered by the New Zealand Archaeological Association and as such at least part of the Post Office Square Heritage Area falls under the archaeological provisions of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

6. methodology

The proposal is for the installation of a digital billboard on the rooftop of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building; an individually listed heritage building within the Post Office Square Heritage Area. The proposed billboard location is to be fixed to an existing landscape-oriented signage support steelwork frame fixed to the roof of the Huddart Parker Building.

6.1 assessment of effects on heritage

The Huddart Parker building is an individually listed historic heritage item in the WCC ODP and also lies in the Post Office Square Heritage Area. Being a listed building within a heritage area provisions of Chapter 21A apply over those associated with the heritage area provisions found at Chapter 21B. That being said, the proposed activity triggers assessment against the Chapter 21D heritage rules for *Signs* specifically at 21D.3 as a restricted discretionary activity where assessment criteria at 21D.3.1.5 – 11

² Huddart Parker Building Ltd is a subsidiary of the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust.

apply. 21D.3.1.11 requires consideration of relevant provisions in the WCC ODP Design Guide for Signs, particularly sections 8 and 9.

The site is within the Central Area. In accordance with the ODP Chapter 13 Central Area Rules (particularly Rule 13.3.9), the proposed development activity is recognised as a Discretionary (Restricted) Activity associated with “*Signs that do not comply with the standards specified for permitted activities*” and is assessed against the relevant policies at Chapter 12 Policies 12.2.10.1-7 (particularly 12.2.10.5).

As such, this AEH considers the impacts of the proposed signage against the relevant Policies in Chapter 12.2 and the relevant Objectives and Guidelines within the Central Area Urban Design Guide (CAUDG) Appendix 3 – *Post Office Square Heritage Area*.

This Assessment of Effects on Heritage (**AEH**) relies on WCC’s Heritage Inventory Reports (see **appendix a**) for commentary on the historic heritage values of the heritage-listed Huddart Parker Building and the wider Post Office Square Heritage Area setting against which the proposed signage, and any impacts arising from the signage on historic heritage values, can be measured. This assessment has been based on information available at the time including drawings of the existing rooftop structure and the photomontages prepared by Stantiall’s Studio. A visit to the site and analysis of the surrounding streetscape was undertaken on 16th of December 2021. All images are copyright of Archifact unless specifically stated otherwise.

This assessment acknowledges the structural engineering report prepared by Dunning Thornton of the existing sign support steelwork situated on the roof of the Huddart Parker Building dated 23 September 2020 and the Stantec traffic safety report (19 January 2021). This assessment also acknowledges the *Pre-Application Meeting Feedback* of the meeting held on the 16th of June 2019 and dated 18th of July 2019. From that feedback it is noted Council’s advice concerning any assumption that there are existing use rights for the previous sign that, in this case’ (due to the loss of the billboard during the period to undertake the consented seismic strengthening of the Huddart Parker Building) any existing use rights for signage had lapsed.

I am aware of the April 2021 Independent Hearing Commissioner’s decision on an objection to conditions of consent concerning an application for the proposal for signage and additions and alterations to a listed heritage building, the Embassy Theatre, at 10 Kent Terrace and the subsequent Environment Court Mediation (to which I provided expert evidence). However, in the heritage context such decisions do not establish an argument for precedent in my opinion and in the heritage context each instance must be assessed on its own merits.

6.2 conservation practice

Consideration of any conservation issues relating to this place are made in accordance with the principles of the *ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value* (2nd edition, 2010).

6.3 constraints

No archaeological effects assessment of the registered archaeological site has been undertaken as part of this assessment.

7. background

7.1 site and context



Fig. 3 Aerial view of the wider Wellington context with the subject site arrowed.
(Wellington City Council GIS Map, 2021)



Fig. 4 Aerial view of the Huddart Parker building and immediate Post Office Square Heritage Area. (Wellington City Council GIS Map, 2021)

The site is located at 2 Jervois Quay and lies within the Central Area of Wellington City.

7.2 historic heritage values – huddart parker building

7.2.1 summary of heritage significance

- The building is a very bold and competent example of Chicago-style architecture and was designed by Crighton, McKay and Haughton a prominent and longstanding Wellington architectural practice.
- The building is situated on a prominent corner site at a corner of Post Office Square and Jervois Quay and has a strong street presence particularly when viewed from the north.
- The building is part of a group of significant heritage buildings that form the Post Office Square Heritage Area, and of a group of heritage buildings that owed their existence to the nearby wharf trade.
- The building retains the name of Huddart Parker, a large trans-Tasman shipping company and is historically significant for being the last of the shipping industry buildings still standing alongside the waterfront.
- The WCC heritage inventory record includes (under Cultural value/Social value/Sentimental connection) recognition that the *“building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature on the roof. This has somewhat diminished since the removal of the display”*.

7.2.2 history

Huddart Parker was a Melbourne based shipping company which ran services between Australia and New Zealand. They had offices on Post Office Square, in Queen’s Chambers (so named for its proximity to Queens Wharf) from 1893. Prior to this the site was occupied by the Pier Hotel, built on land reclaimed by the Provincial Government between 1857 and 1863. Queen’s Chambers were damaged by fire in 1923 and the building was later demolished (“wrecked to ground level”), along with T.

& W. Young's warehouse next door in Jervois Quay and, in their place, a new building was constructed for Huddart Parker in 1924. It was designed by Crichton, McKay and Haughton and built by Mitchell and King and opened in February 1925.

Huddart Parker became one of the key players in the trans-Tasman shipping trade, a major rival of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand. Huddart, Parker & Co. Ltd was founded in 1876 in Geelong by James Huddart, T.J. Parker, John Traill, and Captain T. Webb. James Huddart's uncle, Captain Peter Huddart made his fortune as a coal merchant for use in the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s and T.J. Parker had been a merchant, shipping agent and (later) ships owner in Geelong from circa 1853.

The company was successful and by 1882 had established a service between Melbourne and Sydney and by 1886 ran another between Melbourne and Adelaide. In the 1890s the shipping company covered the principal ports in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, with a route to New Zealand established in 1893. Wellington was selected as the location for a New Zealand Headquarters, and the company operated from No.3 Queen's Chambers. The company ran the steam ship *Tasmania* on a route from Auckland to Napier, Wellington, Lyttleton and Sydney every three weeks from December 1893, and other routes followed thereafter. Huddart Parker also operated the Australia, New Zealand and Canada mail route for many years from 1893, and it seems likely that the New Zealand to Australia shipping route was established so as to secure government subsidies for the Canada mail run.

One of their ships, the *Wanganella*, was involved in one of most protracted and famous ship groundings in the history of the port of Wellington, after it ran on to Barrett's Reef on 19 January 1947. The *Wanganella* had earlier been requisitioned as an Australian Hospital Ship and served in the Middle East, New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Borneo and the South Pacific and it was ironic that she ran into Barrett's Reef on her maiden voyage after the war. The stranded boat became a major local attraction until, three weeks later, completely stripped of its cargo and fuel, it was finally hauled off the rocks. The company's repair and salvage costs were substantial.

Huddart Parker Ltd was taken over by Bitumen and Oil Refineries of Australia Limited in 1961, but though the company no longer exists the Huddart Parker Building still bears its name. The building was substantially refurbished between 1987 and 1990. Until the 2000s it was well known as the headquarters of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union.

The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was also once a familiar inner-city landmark. The display was said to be the first "weather forecast in lights" for New Zealand and was operated from the meteorological office. The display used a pattern of 1.5m high lights to create the words "fine", "cloudy", "rain", "change" or "gale" and the latter was chosen in "recognition of Wellington's peculiar needs." The display, which was designed to be read from the Wellington Railway Station, also showed the time in hours, minutes and seconds. It was noted that although Auckland had a sign that displayed the time, Christchurch one that displayed the weather forecast and Dunedin one that displayed the temperature and the time, Wellington's was the only one that was linked to an official source such as the Met Office. The weather forecast in lights was reminiscent of an earlier Provincial Observatory and adjacent Time Ball. The Time Ball was used to recalibrate ship's chronometers which in turn were used during journeys to establish longitude, an essential requirement for navigation. The Provincial Observatory was established in 1863 and used to take astronomical, meteorological and climatological readings. Both

the Customhouse and Provincial Observatory were located at Queen's Wharf, very close to the future site of the Huddart Parker Building.

The Huddart Parker Building is now owned by the NZ Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust who recognised in the early 2000's that the building had an earthquake rating of around 30%. To achieve better control of the site the building owners' purchased the freehold of the land and over time the Trustees at the time purchased all the shares in the company (Huddart Parker Building Ltd). With the seismic resilience of the building being what it was, finding tenants became difficult and the cost of insurance prohibitive. Around the time of the Global Financial Crisis the Trust tried to sell the building. Money was tight and this failed. The Trust then had to decide whether to demolish or strengthen. All potential revenue streams, including sign revenue, were considered in coming to the decision, albeit a risky one, to strengthen. Strengthening took almost a year and then a further nine months to fitout and tenant the building. A newspaper article is attached (**appendix b**) giving more information on the process of refurbishment and strengthening the building. The Trust generates revenue from various sources from which the Trustees have a legal responsibility to fulfil the charitable purposes set out the Trust Deed. With the building being the main asset and revenue earner of the Trust, the maintenance of it is essential, but to some degree must not detract from, or hinder, the overall charitable purposes of the Trust. The more revenue there is the more likely it is that the building will be properly maintained.

7.2.3 architecture



Fig 5: Looking along Customhouse Quay towards Post Office Square, Wellington c1929. 1/1-006163-F

The Huddart Parker Building is a good example of what has become known as the Chicago style. The design follows Louis Sullivan's dictum that a building should have a base, trunk and be properly capped. The two-storey base, comprising the ground and first floors, is quite traditional in design. Heavily rusticated, it has a balustraded hood over the main entrance, a plain entablature, and small balconies supported by consoles at second-floor level in the centre and at both ends of the building. A plain cornice separates this base from the four-storey shaft above.

The shaft is more transitional in appearance. Plain and unadorned, with a regular hierarchy of single, paired or triple windows, the shaft exploits the new steel-frame technology that allowed a greater ratio of window to wall area. A horizontal emphasis is present on the facade, balancing the vertical, and giving a sense of proportion and harmony to the building. A pronounced cornice divides the shaft from the building's seventh-floor "crown". This crown is capped by a dentilled cornice and a shallow stepped parapet. Balconies repeat the design and placement of those on the third floor. The building is sparsely ornamented, with most of its feature deriving from the composition of the key architectural elements – the rusticated base, strong pattern of windows and the small balconies and prominent cornice lines. This gives the building an elegant formal quality.

The most important façade is that to Grey Street which contains the main entrance to the building. The central three bays of the façade are brought forward of the two corner bays and the entrance is given additional prominence with an overhanging balcony at the second floor level. The exterior of the building remains largely unaltered.

7.3 post office square heritage area - setting

Post Office Square heritage area is a significant and popular urban open space of over 100 years standing surrounded by a group of important former harbour board and commercial buildings. The area is named for the former General Post Office (GPO), which occupied the site of the present-day Hotel Intercontinental and IBM Tower on Customhouse Quay from 1863 to 1974.

The heritage area is not really a square in the conventional sense, but it is an open, definable space at the confluence of a number of important streets. It is closely related to the establishment and use of the waterfront by the former Wellington Harbour Board (WHB). In particular, the square was, and is, the key point of access to Queens Wharf, Wellington's most historically important wharf reclamation which gave room to construct buildings on the eastern side of the square and accommodate traffic and even, for a period, a railway. A statue of Queen Victoria was placed there in 1906 (and later removed in 1911), while the island was formed in 1912 to accommodate the tram shelter that later became Clarrie Gibbons. The island has grown considerably in extent since then.



Fig 6 Post Office Square Wellington 1914. PACol;l-5932-15. The single storied building in the centre will later become the site of Clarrie Gibbon's business. Queens' Chambers are visible, as is a sign (arrowed) advertising Huddart Parker Ltd.

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.



Fig 7: Looking south west over Custom Quay, Wellington. 1/2-042013-G between 1938-9. The Harbour Board buildings are on the left. The Huddart Parker building is on the right.

The Post Office Square heritage area is an open space defined by a number of significant heritage buildings. The wider area includes all the buildings bounding the square as well as Sheds 11 and 13 to the immediate north and the nearby Wharf Offices and Bond Store buildings. The boundary of the heritage area follows the property lines of the key buildings surrounding the square and extends across Jervois Quay to pick up the four former WHB buildings. With one exception, all the buildings within the heritage area boundary contribute to the formation and qualities of the square.



Fig 8 Wellington City from Queens Wharf, 16 July 1977. EP/1977/127/29-F

The following series of photographs capture the Huddart Parker Building from various points within, and beyond, the Post Office Square Heritage Area setting.

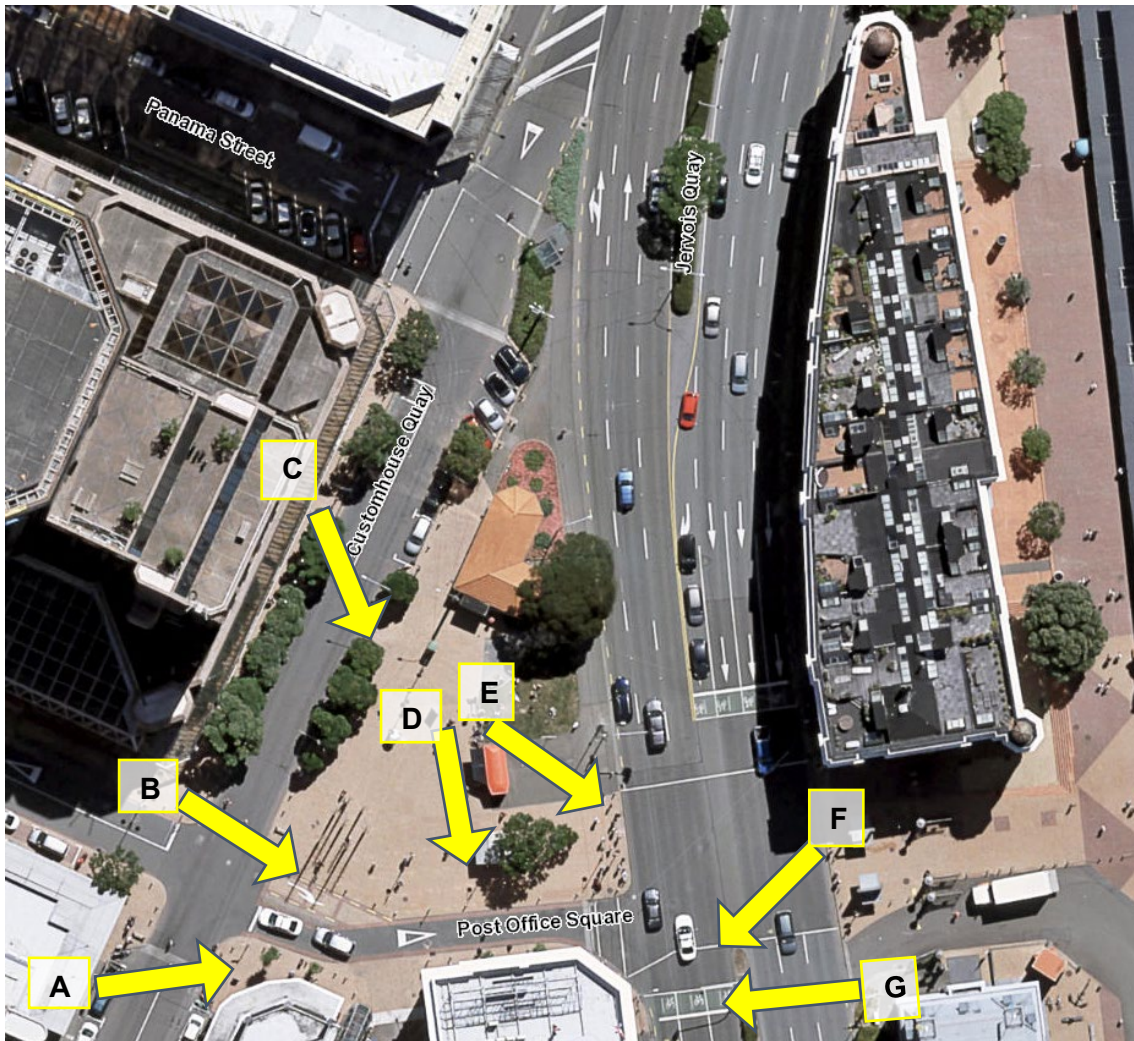


Fig. 8 Aerial view of the Huddart Parker Building and immediate Post Office Square Heritage Area. (Wellington City Council GIS Map, 2021) with images reference locators.



Image A

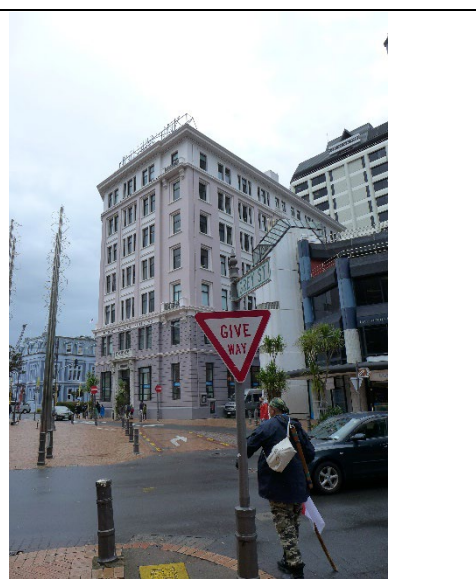


Image B



Image C



Image D

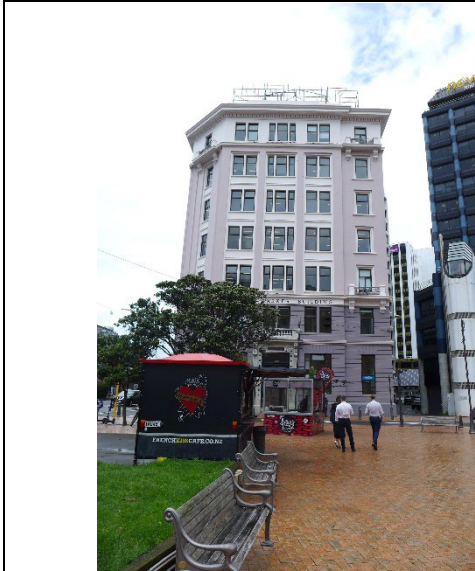


Image E



Image F



Image G



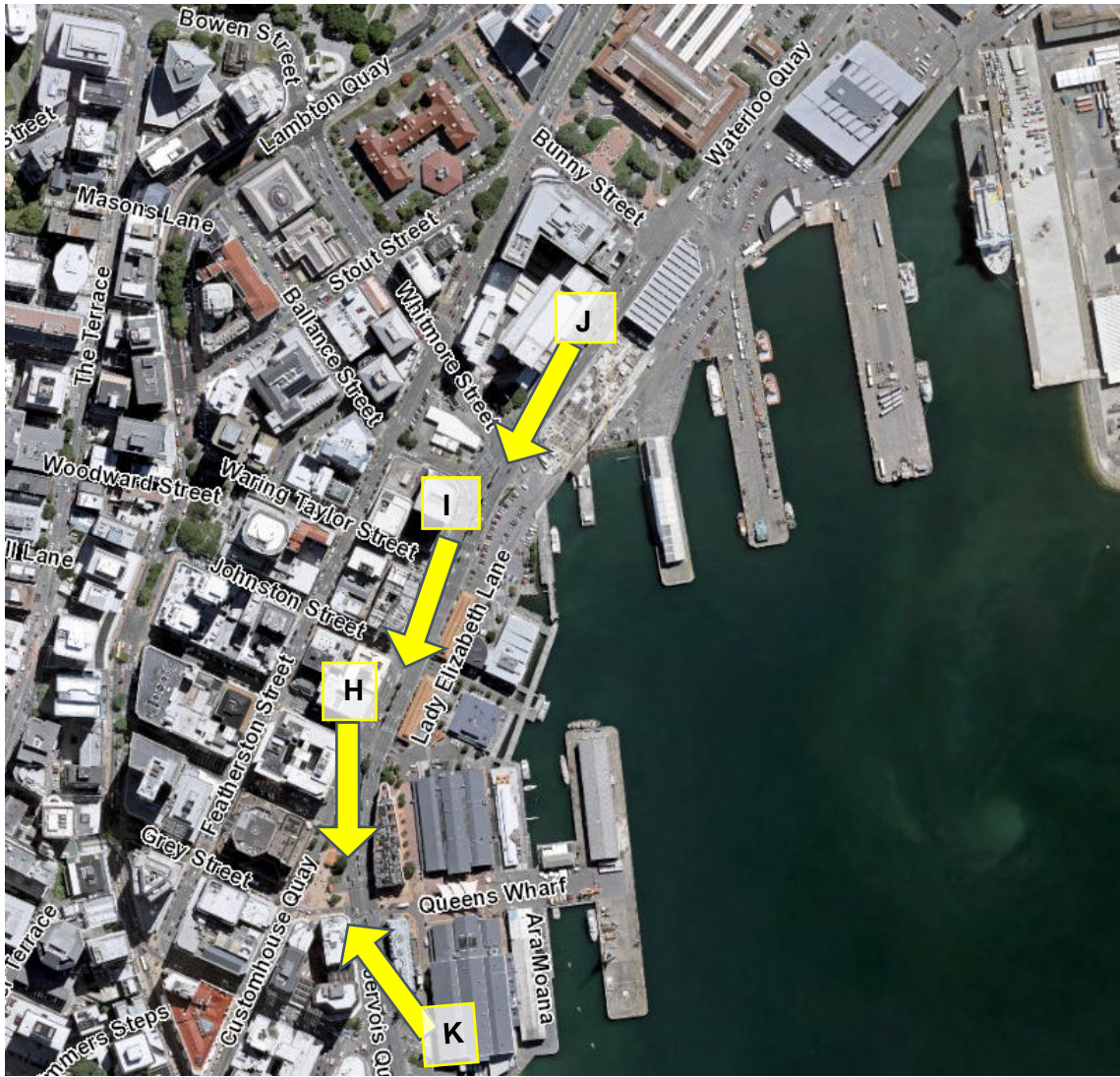


Fig. 9 Aerial view of the Huddart Parker Building and wider context beyond the Post Office Square Heritage Area. (Wellington City Council GIS Map, 2021) with images reference locators.



Image H



Image I



Image J



Image K

8. assessment of effects on heritage

The site is within the Central Area. In accordance with the ODP Chapter 13 Central Area Rules (particularly Rule 13.3.9), the proposed development is recognised as a Discretionary (Restricted) Activity associated with “*Signs that do not comply with the standards specified for permitted activities*” and is assessed against the relevant policies at Chapter 12 Policies 12.2.10.1-7 (particularly 12.2.10.5). As such, this AEH considers the impacts of the proposed signage against the relevant Policies in Chapter 12.2 and the relevant Objectives and Guidelines within the Central Area Urban Design Guide (CAUDG) Appendix 3 – *Post Office Square Heritage Area*.

The Huddart Parker Building is an individually listed historic heritage item in the WCC ODP and also lies in the Post Office Square Heritage Area. Being a listed building within a heritage area, provisions of Chapter 21A apply over those associated with the heritage area provisions found at Chapter 21B. While, with the exception of repairs and maintenance of the existing signage support frame (a Permitted Activity), no work is proposed to the listed building and accordingly assessment under the criteria at 21A is not triggered. That being said, the proposed activity does trigger assessment against the Chapter 21D heritage rules for *Signs* specifically at 21D.3 as a restricted discretionary activity where assessment criteria at 21D.3.1.5 – 11 apply. 21D.3.1.11 requires consideration of relevant provisions in the WCC ODP Design Guide for Signs.

The proposal is for the installation of a digital billboard on the rooftop of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building; an individually listed heritage building within the Post Office Square Heritage Area. The proposed billboard location is to be fixed to an existing landscape-oriented signage support steelwork frame fixed to the roof of the Huddart Parker Building.

8.1 Chapter 21D.3 Discretionary Activities (restricted) rules

Chapter 21D.3 Rules	Archifact comment
<p>21D.3.1 Signs on:</p> <p>Listed heritage buildings or objects, or sites on which a listed heritage building or object is located, which are not a Permitted Activity are Discretionary Activity (Restricted) in respect of:</p>	
<p>Assessment Criteria</p> <p>21D.3.1.5 <i>The extent to which any sign including supporting structures detracts from the heritage significance or values of a heritage building or object</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sign fixed to the surviving metalwork signage frame atop the Huddart Parker Building was first established in the early 1960s; nearly two thirds of the buildings 97 years’ history thus far. • The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was once a familiar inner-city landmark and the WCC heritage inventory record includes (under Cultural value/Social value/Sentimental connection) recognition that the “<i>building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature</i>”.

Chapter 21D.3 Rules	Archifact comment
<p>21D.3.1 Signs on:</p> <p>Listed heritage buildings or objects, or sites on which a listed heritage building or object is located, which are not a Permitted Activity are Discretionary Activity (Restricted) in respect of:</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relatively compressed nature of the Post Office Square Heritage Area in addition to the high rooftop location of the proposed sign significantly mitigates perceived immediate effects arising from the sign on both the Huddart Parker Building and the Heritage Area. Views of the proposed sign are most apparent (and limited) to south-moving traffic on Customhouse Quay at some distance from the Huddart Parker Building; a view that becomes less complete and more removed from the normal line of sight as one nears the building. • Covenant 2 of the Second Schedule of the Deed relating to the purchase of land³ by Huddart Parker Limited from the WCC made on the 8th of March 2002 includes provisions to “undertake and complete development work to the satisfaction of the vendor that will not change the character of the Huddart Parker Building”⁴. This covenant did not exclude the existing rooftop signage frame structure or any reference to future signage.
<p>21D.3.1.6 <i>whether any sign detracts from the architecture of the building including decorative detailing, structural divisions, windows or doorways</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed reinstatement of a sign fixed to the existing frame above the building will not detract from the architecture of the building being clearly separate from it and legibly unrelated to the Chicago-style architectural detailing. • As a digital billboard the proposed signage offers a number of advantages including ease of change; active and live data outputs (time and temperature as per the historic signage); and, illumination levels that will be automatically managed so that the screen is responsive to changes in ambient lighting conditions, i.e. illumination will increase in brighter conditions and decrease in duller conditions.
<p>21D.3.1.7 <i>Whether additional signs will result in clutter</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed sign does not represent additional signage on the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building, there being none currently fixed to any other part of the building (even the signage that once was fixed to the rear (southern) elevation of the building has been removed, but does represent a reinstatement of an historic condition recognised in itself as having heritage values in the WCC heritage inventory record. • In the wider setting, the proposal does not represent cumulative adverse visual “clutter” as its elevation and the

³ 720sqm more or less of fee simple land situate in the City of Wellington and being Lot 11 on Deposited P{Lan 11204 and being all land in certificate of title 33D/660 (Wellington Registry).

⁴ Deed – conditions of sale 22.1 (a) and (b) and Second Schedule Covenant 2.

Chapter 21D.3 Rules	Archifact comment
<p>21D.3.1 Signs on:</p> <p>Listed heritage buildings or objects, or sites on which a listed heritage building or object is located, which are not a Permitted Activity are Discretionary Activity (Restricted) in respect of:</p>	
	<p>necessary horizontal distance to view the sign reduces its relative area within the receiving environment.</p>
<p>21D.3.1.8 <i>The extent to which the quality of the sign and the standard of graphics compliment the building or object</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed design of the sign has not been reviewed, but modern digital billboards are typically composed of an array of standard sized panels arrayed or tiled together to an overall dimension as indicated in the application. This is a size that relates closely to the existing signage frame fixed to the roof of the Huddart Parker Building and typically the sides and rear faces of the digital billboard are finished in a dark colour to reduce the visual impact of any incidental details on those surfaces. • The billboard is proposed to operate with a minimum image display time of 8-seconds, and with 0.5-second dissolve transitions between images. These operational characteristics have become industry standards in New Zealand. • Council has recognised the historical nature of the sign that stood from the early 1960s to the mid-2010s. Any Wellingtonian who was around when the sign was active remembers it fondly. While sign technology has changed, the applicant wishes to continue with the community aspects that the sign has always had.
<p>21D.3.1.9 <i>Whether the means of fixing the sign to a listed building or object including associated cabling or wiring for illuminated signs will adversely affect the heritage fabric and heritage values of the listed building or object</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the proposed digital billboard will be mounted to the existing steel-frames signage frame there are not perceived to be any associated works that will adversely affect the heritage fabric and heritage values of the listed Huddart Parker Building.
<p>21D.3.1.10 <i>Whether intensity of illumination will adversely affect the heritage values of the building or object</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illumination levels that will be automatically managed so that the screen is responsive to changes in ambient lighting conditions, i.e. illumination will increase in brighter conditions and decrease in duller conditions
<p>21D.3.1.11 <i>The extent to which signs comply with the Design Guide for Signs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer Section 8.2 (below)

8.2 relevant design guide provisions

Consideration of these provisions has, for completeness, embraced a relatively broad approach to their consideration with respect to this application noting that there are more specific ODP Objectives and Policies (particularly those in Chapter 21) which are concerned with an assessment of effects arising from proposed signage on historic heritage values.

The *Guidelines* promote “*general design principles that can be applied in different ways appropriate to each proposal and site*”. Such an approach can be seen in the outcome of the recent Environment Court Mediation concerned with resolution of proposed digital signage on the Embassy Theatre.

Relevant Central Area Design Guide for Signs Provisions	Archifact comment
Relevant Design Guide for Signs – Objectives:	
Scale and location	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – O1.1 – <i>To ensure that new signs are well integrated with the building or site to which they are attached, and are compatible with the scale, design and visual character of that building or site.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal seeks to reinstate a sign on an existing signage frame on the roof of the Huddart Parker Building. That frame has been in situ for the sole purpose of mounting signage since the early 1960s.
Relationship to surrounding context	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – O2.1 – <i>To ensure that new signs fit with the character of the surrounding area and acknowledge the wider city context.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notwithstanding the removal of a legally established billboard fixed to the rooftop signage frame on the Huddart Parker Building in anticipation of enabling the recently completed seismic strengthening and building upgrade works, the immediate area has seen the emergence of a number of significantly taller modern buildings. The proposed reinstatement of the Huddart Parker Building sign does not detract from that surrounding urban grain.
Visual obtrusiveness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – O3 – <i>To protect the significant characteristics of buildings, streetscapes, vistas and the city skyline from obtrusive signage.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinstatement of the proposed billboard will maintain, and make no significant change to, the historic built condition, streetscape characteristics, and skyline within the area, being located within the elevation of an existing building. • The exercise illustrated at Section 7.3 (above) has tested the impact of the proposal from a number of distances. Notably the historic views of the former Huddart Parker Building rooftop billboard from the Wellington Railway Station acknowledged on page 4 of the WCC July 2012 heritage inventory record have been lost due to more recent building development not associated with this site or proposal.
Signs and heritage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – O8 – <i>To ensure that new signs do not detract from the heritage context and</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heritage environment has already experienced modified and changed contexts which have not adversely affected the values of the Huddart Parker Building or the immediate Post Office Square Heritage Area.

Relevant Central Area Design Guide for Signs Provisions	Archifact comment
<i>significance of listed heritage items.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reinstatement of the proposed billboard on the existing metal signage framework on the rooftop of the Huddart Parker Building is consistent with a long-standing visual urban condition and contextual element.

9. conclusion

The proposed reinstatement of a billboard (in this case a digital billboard) to the existing signage frame atop the roof of the historic heritage Huddart Parker Building does not present any adverse effects on the heritage contexts of the individually listed building or the surrounding Post Office Square Heritage Area. Nor will it affect the ability to interpret features of the heritage building or area or the relationships with other nearby heritage places. Mitigation has, in part, been achieved through the integration of the proposed billboard onto the existing signage frame on the roof of the building and its historic (meaning old) positioning and location, as well as an acknowledgement of the orientation of arterial roads relative to the subject site and billboard location.

Overall, the proposed digital billboard is considered appropriate and supportable.

Post Office Square Heritage Area

Grey Street, Customhouse and
Jervois Quays



2006

1 Introduction

1.1 Executive summary

Post Office Square heritage area is a significant and popular urban open space of over 100 years standing surrounded by a group of important former harbour board and commercial buildings. The area is named for the former General Post Office (GPO), which occupied the site of the present-day Hotel Intercontinental and IBM Tower on Customhouse Quay from 1863 to 1974.

The heritage area is not really a square in the conventional sense but it is an open, definable space at the confluence of a number of important streets, and is closely related to the establishment and use of the waterfront by the former Wellington Harbour Board (WHB). In particular, the square was, and is, the key point of access to Queens Wharf, Wellington's most historically important wharf.

The square was created partly by 19th century additions to the original 1857-63 reclamation which gave room to construct buildings on the eastern side of the square and accommodate traffic and even, for a period, a railway. A statue of Queen Victoria was placed there in 1906 (and later removed in 1911), while the island was formed in 1912 to accommodate the tram shelter that later became Clarrie Gibbons. The island has grown 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.

2 Description of area and boundaries

2.1 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 extent of the heritage area is shown in the District Plan, Chapter 21, Appendix 17 and includes: -

- Wharf Offices (Shed 7 / Wharf Office Apartments, 1896)
- Head Office and Bond Store (Museum of Wellington - City and Sea, 1891-92)
- Shed 11 (1904-05)

- Shed 13 (1904-05)
- Clarrie Gibbons Store (and traffic island, 1912)
- Huddart Parker Building, 2-6 Jervois Quay (1924)
- Tower Building, 50 – 64 Customhouse Quay (1936)
- Intercontinental Hotel, 2 Grey Street (1988) (*identified as non-heritage for the purpose of rule 21B.2.2*)
- Todd Corporation Building, 95 Customhouse Quay, (1987) (*identified as non-heritage for the purpose of rule 21B.2.2*)
- Chapman Tripp Building, 1-13 Grey Street (1976) (*identified as non-heritage for the purpose of rule 21B.2.2*)

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).

2.2 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. 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 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.

3 Historic context

Establishing a square

The formation of Post Office Square as a public space took some time. The square occupies land reclaimed between 1857 and 1863, which was the second publicly funded reclamation in Wellington (the first was at lower Willis Street in 1852). When the earliest post and telegraph building was constructed in 1863, its site on the western side of Customhouse Quay was only a short distance from the reclamation breastwork and the water. From this point, Queens Wharf, also completed in 1863, jutted out into the deeper waters of the harbour. Customhouse Quay was named for the presence of the Customs Building at the entrance to Queens Wharf.

The open space was created in part because the imposition of a roading plan on the reclaimed land beyond the meandering margins of Lambton Quay was not an easy task – the triangular shape of the reclamation did not readily suit an orderly, rectilinear arrangement of roads, especially after reclamation from the north was completed by 1876. At the tip of the triangle was Queens Wharf. Various streets meet here and coincide with the entrance to the wharf, which became the dominant influence on the square and remained Wellington’s most important wharf for many decades. Traffic of all sorts moved on and off the wharf and through the square. For much of the 19th and early 20th century, Grey Street was a significant conduit of port traffic from Lambton Quay, in marked contrast to its more sedate use today.

Despite Queens Wharf’s role as a focal point, the present appearance of the square did not begin to be established until reclamation in the mid-1870s filled areas to the north. Then more reclamation around Queens Wharf in the late 1880s allowed the construction of substantial buildings on the eastern side of Customhouse and Jervois Quays.¹



The General Post Office, about 1913.
(F106914½, ATL)

The General Post Office

The first post and telegraph building was a timber structure built in 1863. It was replaced two decades later by a large, Classical, masonry building, designed by the noted architect Thomas Turnbull. This building burned down in 1887 and was immediately replaced, to the same design on the same site. By this time,

¹ See map of reclamation in Anderson G. 1984, *Fresh About Cook Strait*, Methuen Publications, Auckland p.126

reclamation around Queens Wharf had begun the process that would transform the area into a square. The first reference to Post Office Square, and how it formally acquired its name, is not recorded. The name began to feature regularly in WCC correspondence from at least the early 1900s, but it may have been in use earlier.

The General Post Office was both a post office and the Post and Telegraph's head office, and its scale and decoration were recognition of the building's status. On its site near the waterfront, the building was a most prominent landmark. The building was more than doubled in size by a monumental, five-storey addition on the Featherston Street side of the block, built between 1909 and 1911. This structure, designed by John Campbell in his favoured Edwardian Baroque idiom (very similar to his design for the Chief Post Office in Auckland), was as impressive as its companion, before the Hawkes Bay earthquake of 1931 led to the precautionary removal of much of its decoration.

The building was modified over the years to accommodate the changing needs of the Post Office, but by the early 1970s it was felt to be inadequate to meet future needs and a new building was planned for the same site. Work on a new GPO started in 1974 with the demolition of the old building² and the excavation of a large hole for the new basement. The project progressed particularly slowly and was finally abandoned around 1980 with little to show for the effort made in the intervening years.

Eventually, work began on the Hotel Intercontinental / IBM tower and it was completed in 1988. A new GPO was built further down Customhouse Quay on a site next to the Waterloo Hotel, and it remains New Zealand Post's headquarters.

New Harbour Board building

The reclamation on either side of Queens Wharf swallowed up some of the wharf structure itself and provided room for buildings. There had always been sheds on the wharf itself, but the WHB, which had been established in 1880, began to construct a series of more substantial buildings on the newly reclaimed land along the eastern side of Customhouse and Jervois Quays. The Head Office and Bond Store (1891-2), the Wharf Offices (1896) and the nearly identical Sheds 11 and 13 (1904-5), slightly to the north of the square, were built during this period by the WHB. The WHB at one time presided over the busiest port in New Zealand and in its heyday was a supremely important organisation in the city. The grander buildings it erected were intended to display that success and influence.

² See Permit 00058:893:C39664, Wellington City Archives

The former Head Office and Bond Store was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and completed in 1892. It was divided into two parts - the WHB's first and only head office and a secure bond store that replaced an earlier timber building dating from 1863. An ornate timber boardroom was installed in 1925/6. In 1972, the Wellington Maritime Museum was established in part of the building and in 1989, the WHB was disestablished. In 1999, the entire building was converted into the Museum of Wellington - City and Sea.

The WHB's Wharf Offices (also known as Shed 7) was built in 1896 as a woolstore and wharf office. It was also designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and an extra floor was added during construction to exhibit wool.³ It was converted into apartments in 1994. The ground floor has been the home of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts since 2000.

Sheds 11 and 13 were designed by William Ferguson, the WHB's first Chief Engineer and for decades were used as temporary storage for goods. In 1985, Shed 11 was converted into a temporary gallery space for the National Art Gallery. It continues to be used for a variety of uses, such as for movies, exhibitions and catered dinners. Shed 13 has been fully restored and refurbished, including a new Marseilles tile roof replicating the original material that had been removed from both buildings in 1938.⁴

Other features of the square

Three significant but ultimately temporary features of the square were also installed during this period of the square's development. The Te Aro branch railway ran from the Wellington Railway Station to the bottom of Wakefield Street from 1893 to 1917 and there was a station outside the Wharf Offices.⁵ In 1905, a statue of Queen Victoria was erected on the southern side of Post Office Square. It was originally commissioned to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. In 1911 the statue was moved to the island between Kent and Cambridge Terraces, as it had become something of a traffic hazard standing on its own in the middle of the busy square.

The first decade of the 20th century also signalled the arrival of the electric tram. Construction work began in Wellington in 1902. A London-based firm was contracted to lay the tracks, timber blocks, and to erect poles and overhead wires for a fleet of 33 tramcars. The electric tram began running in Wellington in 1904. About three million woodblock pavers (creosoted Australian (jarrah) blocks) were

³ Boffa Miskell and Chris Cochran, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001*, for Wellington City Council – WATE1

⁴ *Wellington Harbour Board Annual Report*, October 1939 as quoted in Boffa Miskell and Chris Cochran, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001*, for Wellington City Council – WATE1

⁵ See image G10X8-0025A, Alexander Turnbull Library

imported for paving around the tram tracks, with work beginning in 1903, although they were used for other purposes such as intersections; a plan for paving the entrance to Queens Wharf was prepared in 1906.⁶ Post Office Square was a major tramway intersection and was one of the first places to get the paving, but to what extent it was used there is not known and is not illustrated by contemporary images. Later, in 1911, a tram shelter was built between the two major lines (see below).

Paving at Post Office Square did not begin with the tram. Up until the advent of woodblocks, the square was probably unpaved, or metalled at best, but some sort of paving – possibly cobbles – was in use on pedestrian crossings, as evidenced by at least one image from that time.⁷ Lifting of the woodblocks began in Jervois Quay 1937 and, by 1956, timber paving only remained in parts of Courtenay Place, Manners, Willis, Vivian and Lower Cuba Streets, Lambton and Customhouse Quays.⁸ It is not known when they were finally removed from Post Office Square.



Post Office Square
c.1908-1910.

Later buildings

During the 20th century, three more important heritage buildings were added to the square. The Huddart Parker Building, on the south side, was built for a Melbourne-based trans-Tasman shipping company of that name, who had

⁶ See plan 1335, Wellington City Archives.

⁷ See F150998½, Royal Irish Fusiliers marching in Post Office Square on 9 February 1901, Alexander Turnbull Library

⁸ See file 00009:478:30/90 Pt 2, WCA

occupied offices on Post Office Square from 1904.⁹ Designed by the firm of Crichton, McKay and Haughton and completed in 1924, the building is well known for a time / temperature neon display (with advertising) that has sat on its roof for decades. It was also, for many years, the headquarters of the New Zealand Rugby Union.

Located on an island that early images suggest was created for the building,¹⁰ Clarrie Gibbons was built in 1912 originally to serve as, among other things, a tram stop, freight depot and women's restroom.¹¹ At this time, the island it occupied had a footprint not much larger than the building itself. In 1945 the building was converted into a newsagents and tobacconists. It had two previous occupiers before being taken over by Clarrie Gibbons, a noted sportsman and coach, after whom the building is named and with whom the building is most closely associated.

Opposite Clarrie Gibbons is the Tower Corporation building, built in 1936 for Government Life Insurance on a site originally occupied by the second Wellington Provincial Council chambers (1871). Government Life was established in 1869 as the Government Life Insurance Department to provide affordable life insurance for New Zealanders. The organisation was privatised in 1989 as Tower Corporation, although today the building is no longer directly associated with that company.

⁹ Boffa Miskell and Chris Cochran, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001*, for Wellington City Council – JERV1

¹⁰ See images G41966 ½ and F06163 1/1, Alexander Turnbull Library (www.timeframes.natlib.govt.nz)

¹¹ Murray Gibbons, caption to photo 24913 1/1, Alexander Turnbull Library, as quoted in Boffa Miskell and Chris Cochran, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001*, for Wellington City Council – JERV2



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

4 Physical description

4.1 The Square

The physical space of the square is defined by the confluence of roads and the surrounding buildings. The principal edges of the space are formed by the taller buildings to the south and west, which confer an open aspect to the north and east of the square. This is emphasised by the much lower scale and regular open spacing of the WHB buildings that form the eastern edge to the square along Jervois Quay and the broad 'no man's land' of the quays themselves, the combination of which allow views through to the waterfront beyond and ample sunlight into the area. The principal elevation of the old GPO was to the square (and to the waterfront) and the square enjoyed a strong relationship with the Post Office and surrounding buildings. The other buildings in the area still open out to the street and retain a visual connection with the square, although the Hotel Intercontinental presents a secondary elevation to the square.

The central feature of the square, the island, is still isolated by the enveloping traffic, particularly the six lanes of Jervois Quay that separate it from the waterfront. While the form of the island has expanded greatly since its inception and the recent use of bricks both as paving for Grey Street and as paving within the island area has blurred its formal edge, it maintains a separate identity. The principal identifying features are the Clarrie Gibbons building, the pohutukawa and recent sculpture installations.

Despite the six lanes of traffic along Jervois Quay and the often windswept nature of the area, current WCC surveys indicate that the square is well-used with a level

of patronage similar to Midland Park. Traffic-calming measures and pedestrian shelters have been deployed in both Grey Street and Customhouse Quay to help make the island and Queens Wharf more accessible to pedestrians.

4.2 Buildings

The square is defined by the principal buildings and the high quality of heritage streetscape they create. The oldest surviving buildings around the square are the four WHB buildings, dating from 1891 to 1905. There are three 20th Century buildings on the square that have high heritage values – Clarrie Gibbons, Huddart Parker and Tower Corporation. The other buildings are the modern Hotel Intercontinental, which although not of heritage value has its own design integrity, and the undistinguished modern Todd Corporation building (adjoining the Huddart Parker building) which does not contribute to the values of the area.

This group of buildings represents an eclectic range of styles, including the English neo-Classicism of the former Wharf Offices (Shed 7), the restrained Deuxième-Empire style of the former Head Office and Bond Store, the Dutch influenced Sheds 11 and 13, the early Modernity of the former Tower Building and the thoroughly Modern Hotel Intercontinental. This group is notable for the nearly complete absence of verandahs, allowing the buildings to be seen as they were intended. Unusually in the central city, it is possible to view the roofs of four of the buildings, with the tiling employed on the Clarrie Gibbons building and Shed 13 a particularly notable feature.

4.2.1 Clarrie Gibbons

Designed by the City Engineer, as one of many public utility buildings in Wellington, this modest building was completed in 1912 to serve as a tram shelter and women's rest room. The building today is a simple single storey structure built on an L-shaped plan with a pitched clay Marseille tile roof, brick and roughcast stucco walls and steel joinery. The plan is distinctive for its facets at either end of the L, which add interest to the key elevations and the roof line and contribute to the lively architectural character of the building.

Externally, the building appears little changed from the original; although modifications would have been necessary for its conversion into a retail outlet in 1945, these are not readily apparent. Its utilitarian style, domestic scale and quirky character make it one of the city's more distinctive buildings and it is a major contributor to the heritage values of Post Office Square.

4.2.2 WHB Buildings

There are four WHB buildings lining Customhouse and Jervois Quays on their eastern sides - Sheds 11 and 13 (1904-5), set slightly to the north of the square, the Wharf Offices (1896) and the former Head Office and Bond Store (1891-2). These buildings provide a visual edge to the square and exemplify the important connection of the square to the waterfront.

Sheds 11 and 13

Sheds 11 and 13 were designed by William Ferguson, the WHB's first Chief Engineer, between 1904 and 1905. The buildings are of a similar scale and are practically identical, save for minor variations in the disposition of windows and their present roofing materials and internal fit-out, and despite their utilitarian nature are carefully designed and detailed and built with quality materials by skilled craftsmen. The minor variations in detail provide a subtle architectural contrast and add to the heritage and streetscape qualities of the buildings.

The two sheds are single-storey masonry structures with rendered plaster detailing, principally to door and window lintels (which on the side elevations are elaborately formed shallow stepped pediments with scrolls), and other structural features and internally are single-span spaces, with the steel framed roof spanning the building plan. They are basically symmetrical on both plan axes. Aside from the façades, the main interest in each building is provided by the roof form, which is a complex Dutch gable arrangement with clerestory glazing. Exterior joinery is limited to the clerestory lights and solid timber doors (although Shed 11 has a modern glassy entranceway) and small double-hung windows at the corners of each building. The new Marseille tile roof on Shed 13 restores the original material, which had been removed from both buildings in 1938.

Head Office and Bond Store

This building, completed in 1892, is one of the major commercial works of architect Frederick de Jersey Clere. It is a long rectangular building, elegantly proportioned, with three main levels. The elevations are composed as a two storey base with a mansard roof cap and are divided into regular bays along the length and width of the building. The multifarious dormer windows in the steeply-pitched mansard roof and prominent ironwork trims at the ridge impart a strong *Deuxième-Empire* flavour to the building, fit for the Quais of Paris. The main entrance is located on the short north end and is marked with a large arch and overhanging balcony supported on corbels. The building, a prestigious commission for Clere, is distinctive for its sophisticated lack of embellishment and spare detailing in a period where heavy ornament was often *de riguer*.

The building was fully converted to its present museum use in 1999 and has been strengthened by base isolation to minimise the disruption to the existing heritage fabric. While a large amount of original building fabric remains both internally and externally, the ungainly external stair on the seaward side of the building dominates that elevation and detracts from the simple lines and massing of the building. The principal museum entrance is now located on the seaward side, away from the building's formal entry. An unfortunate stacked pair of brightly-coloured containers serve to direct wayward visitors to the museum entrance and to interrupt the important view of the building from the wharf area. These add to the general visual clutter at the main entrance to Queens Wharf.

Wharf Offices / Shed 7 (Queens Wharf Offices)

This building was also designed by Clere and was completed in 1896 on the opposite side of the main Queens Wharf entrance to the Bond Store. It is a large masonry building, four stories high, with a complex plan form reflecting its site on the curve of Jervois Quay.

Apposite to the rather French Bond Store, the design is neo-Classical with strong English influences in the composition and ornamentation. The elevations have a strong horizontal emphasis with prominent cornice and pediment lines and are anchored at either end of the building with a turret form, spectacularly cantilevered as an oriel on the south-east corner. The ground floor is definitively marked as the base of the building with heavy rustication and predominantly arched openings. The remaining floors share a common pattern of windows divided by light mullions and separated into groups with decorated pilasters. The first and second floors are divided into a horizontal band, with the third floor set apart by a heavy cornice line. A flat roof terrace is concealed behind the parapet line.

4.2.3 Hotel Continental / former Post Office Site

The General Post Office was the Post and Telegraph's head office and after it was extended in 1911 it occupied the whole of the city block from the square to Featherston Street. It was intended to build a new GPO to replace this building and work began in 1974 but eventually it petered out and work on the Park Royal Hotel (now Hotel Intercontinental / IBM tower) began in 1980, making some use of the extensive foundations already completed. A mixed-use building from the start, it includes commercial offices and street level retail with the hotel facilities.

This Modern building is by far the best example of the work of the designers in Wellington (Peddle Thorpe & Montgomery) and is notable for its interesting and well-proportioned stepped prismatic design executed in bronze reflective glass and pink marble. Although the building turns its back on the square, with its

principal hotel and commercial entrances on other streets, its strong general form, careful massing and relatively fine scale helps it make a positive contribution to the qualities of the square.

4.2.4 Huddart Parker Building

This seven-storied office building was completed in 1924 to the design of Crichton, McKay & Haughton. It has a steel frame and is finished in rendered concrete with metal windows and a flat roof. Located on a prominent corner site facing the square, the design has two principal facades, articulated by a splayed corner. The building follows the Chicago style, with a formal division into base, trunk and capital. The base is two stories high and heavily rusticated, the next four stories quite plain and the top floor finished with a heavy cornice and a shallow parapet. Small balconies emphasise the three principal corners of the building.

The building is sparsely ornamented, with most of its feature deriving from the composition of the key architectural elements – the rusticated base, strong pattern of windows and the small balconies and prominent cornice lines. This gives the building an elegant formal quality.

The most important façade is that to Grey Street which contains the main entrance to the building. The central three bays of the façade are brought forward of the two corner bays and the entrance is given additional prominence with an overhanging balcony at the second floor level. The exterior of the building remains largely unaltered.

4.2.5 Tower Corporation

Opposite Clarrie Gibbons is the Tower Corporation building. This was completed to the design of Government Architect John Mair in 1938. It is a massive concrete edifice occupying almost half of the city block with three street frontages. More than 40 m high it is a significant element in the streetscape around Post Office Square.

The building is characterised by its somewhat severe but elegantly detailed exterior, which has minimal adornment and principally relies on its carefully proportioned composition to provide architectural interest. It is divided into a double-height base (which is visually split by the prominent horizontal verandah) with a small level above, surmounted by four principal floors and capped by a fifth. The upper levels are set back from the parapet line of this floor and help to reduce the visual bulk of the building. It is capped with a singular feature, the landmark bronze lantern (which still features on Tower Corporation letterhead), which makes an interesting, although not deliberate, visual connection to the area's maritime heritage.

The principal façade faces the harbour on Customhouse Quay with the main entrance set in a recessed portico in the centre, disfigured somewhat with a clumsy modern canopy rising above the verandah. A large extent of original interior fabric remains and the exterior is in highly authentic condition, giving the building very high heritage values.

4.3 Other features

The current features of the square include several items that have a high level of interest. A telephone box and a cast-iron postal box, alongside Clarrie Gibbons, both historic and painted in Post Office red are the last tangible evidence of the Post Office's association with the site. There are two art installations nearby. One is a France Telecom telephone box and the other is a new stainless steel and neon sculpture – *SkyBlues* by Bill Culbert – installed in 2006. The form of the island is augmented with flower beds, small raised lawns, pohutukawa, seats, bollards, bins and a broad area of paving.

The entrance to Queens Wharf is now cluttered with an untidy assemblage of pedestrian shelters, traffic lights, container sheds and randomly-placed signs and other items, but these elements are at least all relatively small in scale when seen from the square and do not detract significantly from the values of the buildings in relation to the square (although they certainly detract from the visual quality and heritage values of the wharf area).

The restored wharf fence adds another layer of detail and historical interest to the area with its monumental cast-iron pillars surmounted by grand lights and finely detailed wrought iron and steel infill panels. It neatly defines the key demarcation between harbour and city. While this fence is no longer complete along Jervois Quay, a number of sections are stored outside the Overseas Passenger Terminal for future re-use.

4.4 Archaeology

The greatest potential for archaeological evidence in the area relates to harbour development and reclamation activity. It could include buried wharf timbers, construction material for breastworks for reclamations, seawalls and reclamation fill. The reclaimed land would also have contained drains and culverts that may still be in use today. Depending on where fill for the reclamation was obtained it is possible that it may contain pockets of domestic and other rubbish dumped during the reclamation process.

The first buildings in the area were constructed in the 1860s, and it is possible that archaeological evidence of the construction and functions of those buildings, and later structures, may also survive beneath existing building or roads and the

square itself. It is also possible that an early section of Queens Wharf exists beneath the road. Any intact wharf fabric, even if subsurface, would have considerable heritage value.

Other excavations around previous harbour fringes provide some idea of the type of material that may survive subsurface, e.g. the *Inconstant*, and also wharf timbers found during excavations for the Police Station on Victoria Street and reclamation material at Waitangi Park.

Archaeological evidence of this nature has limited information potential, but could provide information about the sequence and nature of harbour developments and reclamations, construction techniques and materials and, in the event of the location of rubbish dumps, information about the consumption habits of Wellington residents. Structural remains surviving in place would also be a tangible reminder of the development of the harbour.

5 Assessment of heritage significance

5.1 Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic value

Does the area have architectural or artistic value because it embodies distinctive characteristics that may include design, style, type, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?

Does the area have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?

Does the area convey a sense of cohesiveness through characteristics that may include age, history, design, style, scale, materials, setting, craftsmanship, or use?

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 four 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.

Historic value

Does the area contain parts or places associated with an important person, group, or organisation?

Does the area contain parts or places associated with important historic events, themes, patterns, phases, or activities?

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.

Scientific value:

Does the area have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?

Does the area have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?

Does the area have technological value because it embodies a collection of elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent significant construction or architectural achievement or innovation?

The heritage area includes 19th century reclamations and is likely to have significant archaeological value.

Social value:

Does the area represent a focus of high public esteem?

Does the area have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual, or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?

Does the area represent a focus of community, regional, or national identity

Does the area contribute to sense of place or continuity?

Does the area represent a focus of community sentiment and connection?

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.

5.2 Level of cultural heritage significance

Is the area rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?

Is the area a good example of the class it represents?

Does the area have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?

Although there is no longer a post office associated with the square, the space retains a high degree of historic integrity for its general configuration and the external appearance of the many important original buildings surrounding the square, from which its original character remains readily apparent.

Is the area important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

Regional

6 Sources

Secondary

Anderson G. 1984, *Fresh About Cook Strait; an appreciation of Wellington Harbour*, Methuen Publications, Auckland, 1984

Boffa Miskell and Chris Cochran, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001*, for Wellington City Council

Johnson D. 1996, *Wellington Harbour*, Wellington Maritime Museum Trust

Kelly M. 2005, *Maritime Heritage Trail*, Wellington City Council, Wellington

McGill D. 1984, *The Pioneers of Port Nicholson*, A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington

McKinnon, J. 1991. *John Plimmer and his family, 150 years, 1841-1991*, Plimmer Family Reunion Committee, Wellington

Other

Permit 00058:893:C39664, Wellington City Archives

Wellington City Corporation plans 948, 1335 and 2630, Wellington City Archives

File 00009:478:30/90 Pt 2, Wellington City Archives

Images G41966 ½, F150998½, F06163 1/1 and G10X8-0025A, Alexander Turnbull Library (www.timeframes.natlib.govt.nz)

Written 2006

Last updated June 2015

appendix a – wcc heritage inventory report

- **huddart parker building**
- **post office square heritage area**



Huddart Parker Building

2 - 6 Jervois Quay (1 Post Office Square)



Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- The building is a very bold and competent example of Chicago-style architecture and was designed by Crighton, McKay and Haughton a prominent and longstanding Wellington architectural practice.
- The building is situated on a prominent corner site at a corner of Post Office Square and Jervois Quay and has a strong street presence particularly when view from the north.
- The building is part of a group of significant heritage buildings that form the Post Office Square Heritage Area, and of a group of heritage buildings that owed their existence to the nearby wharf trade.
- The building retains the name of Huddart Parker, a large trans-Tasman shipping company and is historically significant for being the last of the shipping industry buildings still standing alongside the waterfront.

District Plan:	Map 17, Symbol 155
Legal Description:	LOT 11 DP 11204 on CT WN33D/660.
Heritage Area:	Post Office Square Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Not registered 2012
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	1 Post Office Square 1 - 9 Post Office Square 2 Jervois Quay 10 – 26 Jervois Quay (in error?) 2 – 8 Hunter Street (in error?)
Key physical dates:	1924 (building opened 1925)
Architect / Builder:	Owner: Huddart Parker and Co. Builder: Mitchell and King. Architect: Crichton, McKay and Haughton.
Former uses:	Shipping office
Current uses:	Commercial offices
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 160289 Bdg StrengthInv AKA 1 Post Office Square. Notice Issued 1/10/2009 Notice Exp 18/3/2023

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

Huddart Parker was a Melbourne based shipping company which ran services between Australia and New Zealand. They had offices on Post Office Square, in Queen's Chambers (so named for its proximity to Queens Wharf) from 1893.² Prior to this the site was occupied by the Pier Hotel, built on land reclaimed by the Provincial Government between 1857 and 1863. Queen's Chambers were damaged by fire in 1923³ the building was later demolished ("wrecked to ground level"⁴), along with T. & W. Young's warehouse next door in Jervois Quay and, in their place, a new building was constructed for Huddart Parker in 1924.⁵ It was designed by Crichton, McKay and Haughton and built by Mitchell and King and opened in February 1925.⁶

Huddart Parker became one of the key players in the trans-Tasman shipping trade, a major rival of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand. Huddart, Parker & Co. Ltd was founded in 1876 in Geelong by James Huddart, T.J. Parker, John Traill, and Captain T. Webb. James Huddart's uncle, Captain Peter Huddart made his fortune as a coal merchant for use in the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s and T.J. Parker had been a merchant, shipping agent and (later) ships owner⁷ in Geelong from circa 1853.⁸

The company was successful and by 1882 had established a service between Melbourne and Sydney and by 1886 ran another between Melbourne and Adelaide. In the 1890s the shipping company covered the principal ports in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, with a route to New Zealand established in 1893.⁹ Wellington was selected as the location for a New Zealand Headquarters,¹⁰ and the company operated from No.3 Queen's Chambers.¹¹ The company ran the steam ship *Tasmania* on a route from Auckland to Napier, Wellington, Lyttleton and Sydney every three weeks from December 1893,¹² and other routes followed thereafter. Huddart Parker also operated the Australia, New Zealand and Canada mail route for many years from 1893, and it seems likely that the New Zealand to Australia shipping route was established so as to secure government subsidies for the Canada mail run.¹³

¹ WCC Heritage Building Inventory 2001 ref Jerv1

² *Evening Post*, 15 December 1893, Page 3

³ FIRE IN THE CITY *Evening Post*, 23 April 1923, Page 8

⁴ Permit A2390, .Offices, Jervois Quay for Huddart & Parker and Co., WCC Archives

⁵ A GREAT SHIPPING BUILDING *Evening Post*, 20 February 1924, Page 8

⁶ *Evening Post*, 9 February 1925, Page 5

⁷ Flotilla Australia Website accessed July 2012 <http://www.flotilla-australia.com/huddart.htm>

⁸ The Ship's List website accessed July 2012 <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/huddart.htm>

⁹ The Ship's List website accessed July 2012 <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/huddart.htm>

¹⁰ OUR STEAM SERVICES. HUDDART, PARKER & CO.'S NEW ARRANGEMENTS. WELLINGTON TO BE THE HEAD. QUARTERS. [B... [truncated] *Evening Post*, 25 November 1893, Page 2

¹¹ *Evening Post*, 15 December 1893, Page 3

¹² EVENING POST. MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1893. MINISTERIAL ABUSE OF POWER. *Evening Post*, 4 December 1893, Page 2

¹³ THE VANCOUVER SERVICE. CALLS TO BE MADE AT WELLINGTON BOTH WAYS. *Evening Post*, 7 June 1897, Page 6; THE VANCOUVER MAIL SERVICE. *Evening Post*, 16 February 1899, Page 5;

One of their ships, the *Wanganella*, was involved in one of most protracted and famous ship groundings in the history of the port of Wellington, after it ran on to Barrett's Reef on 19 January 1947.¹⁴ The *Wanganella* had earlier been requisitioned as an Australian Hospital Ship and served in the Middle East, New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Borneo and the South Pacific and it was ironic that she ran into Barrett's Reef on her maiden voyage after the war.¹⁵ The stranded boat became a major local attraction until, three weeks later, completely stripped of its cargo and fuel, it was finally hauled off the rocks. The company's repair and salvage costs were substantial.¹⁶

Huddart Parker Ltd was taken over by Bitumen and Oil Refineries of Australia Limited in 1961, but though the company no longer exists the Huddart Parker building still bears its name. The building was substantially refurbished between 1987 and 1990.¹⁷ Until the 2000s it was well known as the headquarters of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union.

The (1963) combined clock and temperature display on top of the building was also once a familiar inner-city landmark. The display was said to be the first "weather forecast in lights" for New Zealand and was operated from the meteorological office. The display used a pattern of 1.5m high lights to create the words "fine", "cloudy", "rain", "change" or "gale" and the latter was chosen in "recognition of Wellington's peculiar needs."¹⁸ The display, which was designed to be read from the Wellington Railway Station, also showed the time in hours, minutes and seconds. It was noted that although Auckland had a sign that displayed the time, Christchurch one that displayed the weather forecast and Dunedin one that displayed the temperature and the time, Wellington's was the only one that was linked to an official source such as the Met Office.

The weather forecast in lights was reminiscent of an earlier Provincial Observatory and adjacent Time Ball.¹⁹ The Time Ball was used to recalibrate ship's chronometers which in turn were used during journeys to establish longitude, an essential requirement for navigation. The Provincial Observatory was established in 1863 and used to take astronomical, meteorological and climatological readings.²⁰ Both the Customhouse and Provincial Observatory were located at Queen's Wharf, very close to the future site of the Huddart Parker Building.

The Huddart Parker building is now owned by the Fruitgrower's Charitable Trust who plan to refurbish and strengthen the building with a proposed completion date of 2013.²¹

¹⁴ Johnson D., 'Wellington Harbour', Wellington Maritime Museum Trust, Wellington 1996 pp.347-349

¹⁵ Wikipedia accessed July 2012 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_Wanganella

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kernohan op.cit.


¹⁸ *Evening Post*, "Weather on the Skyline" 5/2/1963; Marklin-users website accessed July 2012 http://www.marklin-users.net/cookee_nz/gasworkstramway/IBMClock-HuddartParker.htm

¹⁹ Maggy Wassilieff. 'Astronomy – overview', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 24-Sep-11 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/astronomy-overview/1/2>

²⁰ Friends of the Botanic Gardens Website accessed July 2012 <http://www.friendswb.org.nz/observatories.html>

²¹ Hank Schouton, 'Wellington's Huddart Building Getting New Lease,' *DomPost* 19 May 2012

**HUDDART, PARKER AND COMPANY
(LIMITED.)**

 **T**HE magnificent new and fast Passenger Steamer,
T A S M A N I A,
2252 tons, 290 h. power,
Will leave as under (circumstances permitting),
FOR LYTTELTON,
ON THURSDAY, 7th DECEMBER.

FOR SYDNEY, VIA AUCKLAND,
Calling at Napier and Gisborne, if sufficient inducement offers,
ON SATURDAY, 9th DECEMBER.
For freight and passage apply to
LEVIN & CO.,-
Agents.

For continuation of shipping advertisements see first page

1893 advertisement for the new New Zealand route for Huddart Parker and Company Ltd.²²



Post Office Square. Image: WCC Archives ref 00138_0_08668

²² *Evening Post*, 28 November 1893, Page 3

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1857 to 1863	Reclamation
Circa 1865	Pier Hotel constructed ²³
Circa 1888	Queen's Chambers constructed ²⁴
1889	Pier Hotel moved to the corner of Customhouse Quay and Grey Street ²⁵
1893	Huddart Parker occupied offices in Queen's Chambers
1925	Huddart Parker Building opened
1941	Fruit-grower's Charitable Trust moved into the building
1961	Huddart Parker Ltd sold to Bitumen and Oil Refineries of Australia Limited
1963/1964	Weather-clock constructed on the roof (C15146)
By 2005	Fruitgrower's Charitable Trust accumulated 100% of ownership of the building.
2012	Proposal by the Fruitgrower's Charitable Trust to refurbish the building and strengthen it to 100% of the current Building Regulations. ²⁶

1.3 Architect

Crichton, McKay & Haughton

William Crichton (1862 – 1928) was born in Cornwall and was trained as an architect in the office of James Hicks of Redruth. He arrived in New Zealand in 1879 and joined the Colonial Architects Office where he “designed several of the largest public buildings in the Colony.”²⁷ Crichton established a private practice in 1891 when he was “retrenched” due to a reduction in size of the public service. He went into partnership with James Hector McKay in 1901 to form Crichton and McKay.

James Hector McKay (d. 1944) was probably originally from Scotland and arrived in New Zealand from Australia in 1890.²⁸ He established an architectural partnership with Robert Roy MacGregor which lasted from 1898-1901, before he formed Crichton and McKay with William Crichton. McKay returned to Britain on his retirement in 1926.²⁹

Vivian Haughton (1891 – 1956) joined the practice of Crichton and McKay in 1909 as a pupil, served at Gallipoli in WWI and received a “severe head wound” at the Somme.³⁰ He became a partner in 1926 and sole principal in 1928, as by then Crichton had died and McKay had retired. In 1935 Haughton went into partnership with William McKeon (1896-1973) and in 1952 Haughton established Haughton and Sons³¹ with his son R.B (Bob) Haughton, who later became president of the NZIA, as did William McKeon in 1945-1946.

²³ *Evening Post*, 19 April 1865, Page 2

²⁴ *Evening Post*, 17 April 1888, Page 3

²⁵ ‘Enlargement of the Pier Hotel.’ *Evening Post*, 5 March 1889, Page 2

²⁶ Schouton, 2012

²⁷ *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District] 1897*

²⁸ DNZB entry for McKay from www.teara.govt.nz

²⁹ Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (DNZB) database entries for individuals are available from www.teara.govt.nz; Bullyment Fortune website accessed July 2012

http://www.bullymentfortune.co.nz/BFA_history.html

³⁰ Bullyment Fortune website accessed July 2012

http://www.bullymentfortune.co.nz/BFA_history.html

³¹ NZHPT Professional Biographies accessed May 2012

<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=47>

After Vivian Haughton's death in 1956 the firm became Haughton and Mair. Lindsay Mair was the son of Government Architect John Mair, and in the 1980s the practice became Bullement Fortune Architects (BFA).

Crichton, McKay and Haughton were a prominent Wellington architectural practice and designed a number of fine buildings including the Missions to Seamen Building (1903-4), the Alexandra Road Fever Hospital (1918-1920), Braemar (1924), the Huddart Parker Building (1924), and the Dominion Building (1926-28).³²

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture³³

The Huddart Parker building is a good example of what has become known as the Chicago style. The design follows Louis Sullivan's dictum that a building should have a base, trunk and be properly capped. The two-storey base, comprising the ground and first floors, is quite traditional in design. Heavily rusticated, it has a balustraded hood over the main entrance, a plain entablature, and small balconies supported by consoles at second-floor level in the centre and at both ends of the building. A plain cornice separates this base from the four-storey shaft above.

The shaft is more transitional in appearance. Plain and unadorned, with a regular hierarchy of single, paired or triple windows, the shaft exploits the new steel-frame technology that allowed a greater ratio of window to wall area. A horizontal emphasis is present on the facade, balancing the vertical, and giving a sense of proportion and harmony to the building.

A pronounced cornice divides the shaft from the building's seventh-floor "crown". This crown is capped by a dentilled cornice and a shallow stepped parapet. Balconies repeat the design and placement of those on the third floor.

The building is sparsely ornamented, with most of its feature deriving from the composition of the key architectural elements – the rusticated base, strong pattern of windows and the small balconies and prominent cornice lines. This gives the building an elegant formal quality.

The most important façade is that to Grey Street which contains the main entrance to the building. The central three bays of the façade are brought forward of the two corner bays and the entrance is given additional prominence with an overhanging balcony at the second floor level. The exterior of the building remains largely unaltered.³⁴

³² Ibid

³³ WCC Heritage Building Inventory 2001 ref Jerv1

³⁴ WCC Post Office Square Heritage Area report for DPC 48

2.2 Materials

- Reinforced concrete piles, structural frame, piers, columns, beams, floor and roof slabs.
- Timber ceiling joists with fibrous plaster ceilings
- The original drawings are faint, but the external walls appear to be constructed in reinforced concrete, and the floors to the WCs directly behind the main stair appear to be constructed with timber joists & flooring.
- Internal walls – reinforced concrete walls to stair, elevator, WCs and strong-rooms. Coke filled “patent coke breeze blocks” for all other partitions
- Entrance vestibule – marble cladding

2.3 Setting³⁵

Post Office Square heritage area is a significant and popular urban open space of over 100 years standing surrounded by a group of important former harbour board and commercial buildings. The area is named for the former General Post Office (GPO), which occupied the site of the present-day Hotel Intercontinental and IBM Tower on Customhouse Quay from 1863 to 1974.

The heritage area is not really a square in the conventional sense but it is an open, definable space at the confluence of a number of important streets, and is closely related to the establishment and use of the waterfront by the former Wellington Harbour Board (WHB). In particular, the square was, and is, the key point of access to Queens Wharf, Wellington’s most historically important wharf.

The square was created partly by 19th century additions to the original 1857-63 reclamation which gave room to construct buildings on the eastern side of the square and accommodate traffic and even, for a period, a railway. A statue of Queen Victoria was placed there in 1906 (and later removed in 1911), while the island was formed in 1912 to accommodate the tram shelter that later became Clarrie Gibbons. The island has grown 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.

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 Sheds 11 and 13 to the immediate north and 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 the four former WHB buildings. With one exception, all the buildings within the area boundary contribute to the formation and qualities of the square.

³⁵ WCC Post Office Square Heritage Area report for DPC 48

Buildings

- Wharf Offices (Shed 7 / Wharf Office Apartments, 1896)
- Head Office and Bond Store (Museum of Wellington - City and Sea, 1891-92)
- Shed 11 (1904-05)
- Shed 13 (1904-05)
- Clarrie Gibbons Store (and traffic island, 1912)
- Huddart Parker Building, 2-6 Jervois Quay (1924)
- Tower Building, 50 – 64 Customhouse Quay (1936)
- Intercontinental Hotel, 2 Grey Street (1988)
- Todd Corporation Building, 95 Customhouse Quay, (1987)
- Chapman Tripp Building, 1-13 Grey Street (1976)

With the exception of the latter two, these are all buildings 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).

3.0 References

Alexander Turnbull Library

Evening Post. "Weather on the Skyline" 5/2/1963

Kernohan, D. and Kellaway, T. 1994 *Wellington's Old Buildings*. VUW Press, Wellington

Schouton Hank. 'Wellington's Huddart Building Getting New Lease'. Dominion Post 19 May 2012.

The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District] 1897

WCC Heritage Building Inventory 2001 ref Jerv1

WCC Post Office Square Heritage Area report for DPC 48

WCC Archives

Websites

Bullement Fortune website accessed July 2012

http://www.bullementfortune.co.nz/BFA_history.html

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (DNZB) database entries for individuals are available from www.teara.govt.nz

Flotilla Australia Website accessed July 2012 <http://www.flotilla-australia.com/huddart.htm>

Friends of the Botanic Gardens Website accessed July 2012

<http://www.friendswbg.org.nz/observatories.html>

NZHPT Professional Biographies accessed May 2012

<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=47>

Marklin-users website accessed July 2012 http://www.marklin-users.net/cookee_nz/gasworkstramway/IBMClock-HuddartParker.htm

The Ship's List website accessed July 2012

<http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/huddart.htm>

Wassilieff. Maggy. 'Astronomy – overview', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 24-Sep-11 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/astronomy-overview/1/2>

Wikipedia, accessed July 2012 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_Wanganella

Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: *Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?*

The building is a very bold and competent example of Chicago-style architecture.

Townscape: *Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?*

The building is situated on a prominent corner site at a corner of Post Office Square and Jervois Quay and has a strong street presence particularly when viewed from the north. Its rooftop has long been occupied by signage, historically by an illuminated clock and weather forecast, presently by an advertisement for a local radio station and a temperature display. This signage takes advantage of the prominence of the building, particularly for passing traffic along the key transport route of Customhouse and Jervois Quays.

The configuration of open space Post Office Square and the curved junction of Jervois and Customhouse Quay add to the townscape value of this key Wellington corner site.

Group: *Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?*

The building is part of a group of significant heritage buildings that form the Post Office Square Heritage Area.

The building is one of a group of heritage buildings that owed their existence to the nearby wharf trade.

Historic Value:

Association: *Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?*

The building retains the name of Huddart Parker, a large trans-Tasman shipping company and is historically significant for being the last of the shipping industry buildings still standing alongside the waterfront.

The building was designed by Crighton, McKay and Haughton, a prominent and longstanding Wellington architectural practice.

Association: *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

The building is associated with the nineteenth and twentieth century shipping industry.

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: *Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?*

Central City NZAA R27/270

Educational: *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: *Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?*

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:

*Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?
Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?*

The building façade has remained (relatively) unaltered for over 80 years and makes a strong positive contribution to the sense of place and continuity of the BNZ /Head Office Heritage Area.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

The building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature on the roof. This has somewhat diminished since the removal of the display.

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

Representative: *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

Authentic: *Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?*

The building exterior has had few intrusive modern alterations and additions and retains much of the authentic building fabric.

Local/Regional/National/International

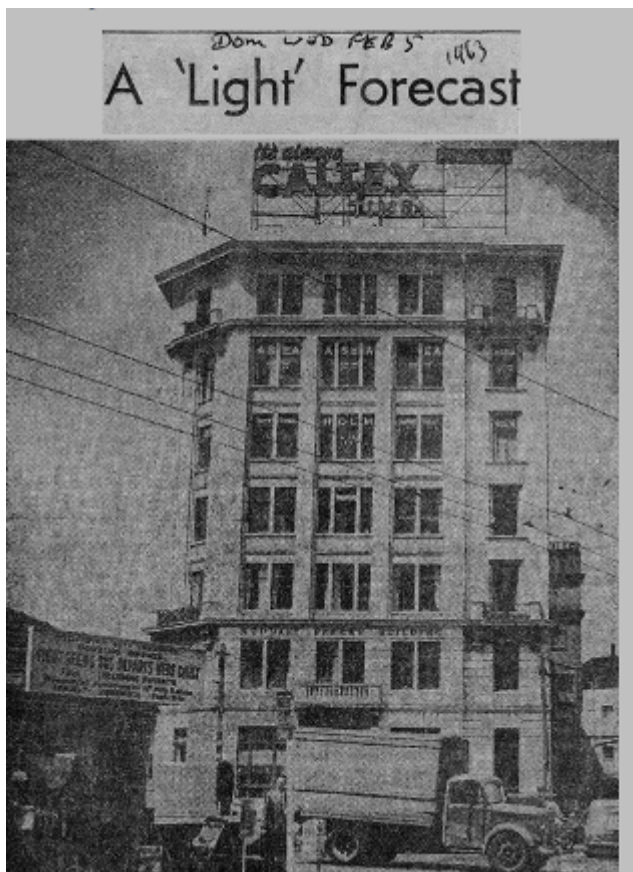
Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
WCC Records – building file	Y	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)	Y	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	none
Plan change?	Y	
Heritage Area Report	Y	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files	Y	
Conservation Plan	N	
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	

Background research



Weather On The Skyline

New Zealand's first weather forecast in lights operated from the meteorological office is being built on Wellington's skyline 125 feet above Post Office Square.

The word "gale" has been selected for inclusion in the five alternative weather messages, in recognition of Wellington's peculiar needs.

The pattern of lights, five feet high, on top of the Huddart, Parker Building, will otherwise read "fine," "cloudy," "rain" or "change," in response to mechanism something like a telephone which weather men will dial in the Kelburn observatory.

The sign is being installed so that it can be clearly read from the entrance of the railway station.

It will also tell the time in hours and minutes in lighted figures operated by a precision clock inside the building said to be foolproof against power failure. The figures will not light up during an electricity

breakdown, but "stored-up" time will enable the correct time to be flashed on when power resumes.

Some of the mechanical equipment has not yet arrived in New Zealand, so it may be six weeks or two months before the sign is fully operative.

Auckland has a sign which records time and temperature. In Christchurch there is a weather sign, but it is not worked direct from an official source.

**appendix b – huddart parker building, the dominon post 8
february 2014**



Huddart building better than new

HANK SCHOUTEN

THE handsome old Huddart Parker Building in Post Office Square is being touted as an example of how old Wellington buildings can be turned around.

Two years ago the 90-year-old office block was tired and facing an uncertain future with a seismic rating of just 29 per cent of new building standard.

Its owner was faced with a tough financial decision in the face of a dual challenge of rocketing insurance premiums and a loss of rental income as increasingly nervous tenants began looking for safer accommodation.

Two years and nearly \$9 million later the transformation is complete – the building has been refurbished, strengthened to more than 100 per cent of new building standard and all the space has been let to tenants lining up to get into a safe, well-appointed character space in a well-located city landmark.

The project had gone very well, said Michael Gaffaney, chairman of owning company Huddart Parker Building Ltd.

“We’re very pleased with the end result,” said Gaffaney, who worked in the building for many years.

As well as preserving an important part of Wellington’s architectural heritage, he was convinced that the cost of doing it up was worthwhile.

Valuations were done to assess if the spending made sense and he was certain it was a good investment, but acknowledged it would not have been if the building was in a back street up near the Basin Reserve.

Tenants were paying an average of just under \$400 per square metre for space in the building, slightly less than he hoped.

Gaffaney was not able to accurately calculate the percentage return it was getting but was convinced it was better than money in the bank for the Fruitgrowers Charitable Trust who wanted a long-term steady return.

Timing of the project was a factor in its success, he said.

“It’s a bit like the sharemarket. If you’re going to panic it’s better to panic first.”



Retro fit: The Huddart Parker building in Post Office Square where almost \$9 million has been spent on a major refit and strengthening project.

This meant they were ahead of the game in securing contractors and consultants and getting the job done ahead of everybody else.

Gaffaney praised all the consultants and contractors who had been involved in the project led by LT McGuinness.

Engineering consultant Adam Thornton, of Dunning Thornton Consultants, who outlined the project at a Property Council meeting this week, said the Huddart Parker building was a Wellington icon and one of the first fully-reinforced buildings in the country when it was built between 1925 and 1928.

It had always been a high value waterfront site and that gave the owner confidence in going to a high level of seismic retrofit.

But it was a punt. The building was earthquake-prone and tenants moved out so the owners did not have many options if they wanted to get tenants back.

He explained that the original hardwood piles, which were in good condition, had been supplemented by new anchor piles sunk 5-8 metres down to bedrock.

New reinforced concrete columns had been installed around the interior periphery of the building and the original exterior load-bearing walls were now effectively a heavy veneer.

The ends of cross beams had been strengthened with carbon fibre wrapping and a lot of weight had been taken out of the building by removing heavy strong rooms on most floors.

Jeff McHardy, of L T McGuinness,



It's a bit like the sharemarket. If you're going to panic it's better to panic first.

Michael Gaffaney
Huddart Parker Building chairman



said it was a complex project which required a lot of collaboration with the engineers, architects and the building owners.

The construction phase, which took 11 months, involved humping over 170 tonnes of reinforcing and 800 cubic metres of concrete into the building without the use of a crane.

There were also over three kilometres of concrete cuts as slots were cut around the perimeter walls and beams as they created a new building frame.

Marian Salmond, of Seddon Architects, said building services also needed to be upgraded to attract tenants.

This included adding a third lift, improving ventilation and heating, and providing toilets, access and other services as near as reasonably practical to those prescribed by the

building codes.

David Fisher, of leasing agents CBRE, said it was a great project to be involved in right from the start.

No expense was spared in future proofing the building while retaining its historic character and this was very appealing to tenants.

The floors had high studs, there was good natural light and the views, especially from the top floors.

Tenant interest picked up after the July and August earthquakes and the building was fully tenanted within nine months.

Ground-floor tenants were Margies Coffee House and the Charley Noble restaurant/bar.

Level one has been leased to the Assignment Group, MBM and Eighty-One, levels two and three to Clemenger BBDO, level four will be occupied by Boffa Miskell, level five has been leased to the Banking Ombudsman Scheme and Crown Irrigation Investments Limited with level six leased to Stout Street Chambers.

CBRE director of asset service Ray Di Leva, who is now managing the building, said it was a testimony to the effort and vision of the landlord.

"The preservation of the heritage features of this waterfront property along with its high seismic rating has created a unique offering in the market which has been well received."

The building was originally built by Mitchell King for the Huddart Parker shipping company and designed in the Chicago-style by Crichton, McKay and Haughton.