

Historic Heritage Evaluation

**Robert Stout Building
21 Kelburn Parade, Kelburn**



July 2020

Historic Heritage Evaluation

Prepared by	Wellington City Council
Author(s)	This report was prepared by Michael Kelly in 2006 and updated by Wellington City Council's Heritage Team in 2020.
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Revisions	
Cover image	Image taken by Michael Kelly in 2006 of the Robert Stout Building, 21 Kelburn Parade, Wellington.

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Executive Summary

The Robert Stout Building, 21 Kelburn Parade, was evaluated for assessment as it was recommended for addition to the District Plan Heritage Building schedules in 2005, but was not included in any subsequent proposed District Plan Changes.

The Robert Stout Building is the second oldest purpose-built university building at Victoria University after the Hunter Building. It has had largely the same purpose since its construction, housing the registry and university administration, including the principal or vice-Chancellor's office. On a campus notable for its dearth of early purpose-built buildings, this is a significant survivor. The administrative function of the Stout Building and its location alongside a main entrance to the campus have made it well known to generations of students and staff at the University. It has important historic and social values for these reasons.

The Stout Building is the work of an influential Wellington architect, William Gray Young, and although the original design is now somewhat blurred, there is architectural interest in the way the building has been added to in plan and height. Young designed the first major addition, and he also designed other buildings for the University. The building has townscape value for its scale, colour and decorative interest, and it provides an historical anchor for the modern buildings of the campus that occupy Kelburn Parade to the south and opposite.

The Robert Stout Building is recommended for listing on the District Plan for its significant historic, social and architectural value within the Wellington District.

Summary Statement of Significance

- The Robert Stout Building has significant historic value within New Zealand as Victoria University's second-oldest purpose-built university building. It has had largely the same purpose since its construction, housing the registry and university administration, including the principal or vice-Chancellor's office. The administrative function of the Stout Building and its location alongside a main entrance to the campus have made it well known to generations of students and staff at the University.
- The Robert Stout Building is a notable example of neo-Georgian architecture designed by one of Wellington's pre-eminent champions of this style, architect William Gray Young. Despite a number of alterations, including the addition of an extra floor and mansard roof, the building has retained its distinctive character and has significant architectural value within the Wellington District.
- The Robert Stout Building has townscape value on the Victoria University Kelburn campus for its prominent location next to the neo-Gothic Hunter Building, and for its distinctive red-brick neo-Georgian design. It provides an historical anchor for

the historic villas and modern buildings that occupy Kelburn Parade to the south and opposite.

- The Robert Stout Building has social value as a building well-known to generations of staff and students of Victoria University. A sense of loss is likely to be experienced by this community if it was significantly altered or destroyed.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to consider the Robert Stout Building located at 21 Kelburn Parade against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

This document was prepared by Michael Kelly in 2006 and has been updated by the Wellington City Council Heritage Team. It is intended solely for use by Wellington City Council in accordance with the agreed scope of work.

Scope

This report is a desktop study based on a previous report that has been updated, revised and assessed against the current GWRC and WCC heritage criteria and thresholds. The site was visited by the WCC Heritage Team on 17th August 2020, but the interior of the building was not inspected.

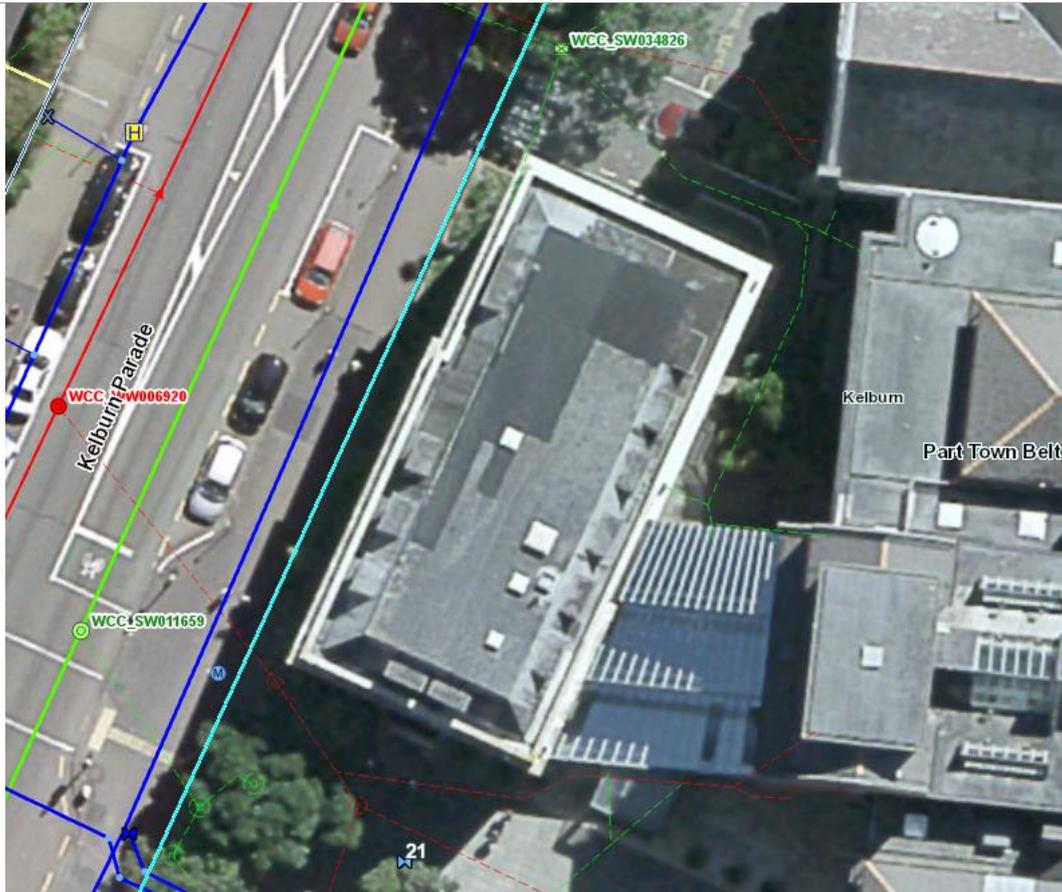
Heritage Inventory Report

Site Detail	
Site address or address(es) and/or location	21 Kelburn Parade, Kelburn
Property Name	Robert Stout Building
Other names	Stout Building
Legal Description(s) and Record of Title identifier(s), Deeds register and/or Gate notice information	Part Town Belt Town of Wellington Record of Title: WN704/84
NZTM grid reference	Google grid reference (not converted) = 41°17'16.3"S 174°46'07.2"E -41.287856, 174.768656
District Plan Reference Number	
Sites of significance to Māori	Near M55 Te Herenga Waka Marae
WCC Heritage Area	None
HNZPT listed	Not listed
HNZPT category	None
Archaeological site (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Section 6)	Potential - Victoria University of Wellington was founded in 1897.
New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) site record number(s)	
Constructed	1938/1959
Significant alterations or additions	1959: The building was extended and another two stories were added 1992-93: The Robert Stout Building was linked with the Hunter Building
Architect	William Gray Young and Francis Swan
Builder	
Former uses	Victoria University's administration building
Current uses	Victoria University's administration building



Earthquake-prone Building Status at the date of assessment.

Extent: WCC OneMap July 2020



Historical Summary

The Robert Stout Building has always been Victoria University's main administration building and is one of the oldest structures on the campus. It was completed in 1938 to a design by Francis Swan and William Gray Young, of whom the latter, in particular, had a long and fruitful association with the university and designed several of its best-known buildings.

The building was named for Robert Stout (1844-1930), former Prime Minister, Chief Justice and Victoria University Chancellor for 20 years from 1903-23. He was

probably more responsible than anyone else for the founding of Victoria University College, as it was originally known.¹

Administration was first conducted from temporary buildings and then from the Hunter Building after its completion in 1906. The absence of a separate administration building was not keenly felt until pressure grew on the Hunter Building during the 1920s. The Depression temporarily ended expansion plans but the new Labour Government of 1935 raised the university's grant in 1937², which enabled a self-contained administration block and new biology block (now the Old Kirk building) to be built.

The site was on Kelburn Parade, parallel with Hunter Building. The two-storey building with Mansard roof was designed in Gray Young's favoured Georgian style and it was built to accommodate the university registrar, council and associated administrative services. It was completed in 1938.

Within 20 years the building was too small and Gray Young (and his firm Gray Young, Morton and Calder) were brought back to extend the building and add another storey, which effectively filled in the Mansard roof. Another dormered storey was added above. Work was completed about 1959 and more than doubled the building's size.³

The other significant physical change to the building came in the early 1990s when it was decided to link the Stout Building with the Hunter Building as part of a major refurbishment of the latter. As a result it is now less easy to see the building as a discrete entity. Various internal alterations have been made to accommodate its evolving administrative function.⁴ The Robert Stout Building has been used for much the same purpose for its entire history.

In 2013, a thematic heritage study of Wellington city was undertaken by the Wellington City Council's Heritage team. Themes in the history of the city that have shaped it physically, culturally, socially and politically were identified. Using this study, a thematic heritage analysis of Council's scheduled heritage listings was undertaken in order to identify under-represented themes.

This analysis was continued in 2020 and heritage sites that had been proposed for

¹ See J.C Beaglehole, *Victoria University College* (Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1949).

² *Ibid*, p.222.

³ D. Kernohan and T. Kellaway, *Wellington's Old Buildings* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1994), p.225.

⁴ R. Schmid, 'The Robert Stout Administration Building: Heritage Inventory' (Undated student report, School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington).

listing in the District Plan were thematically coded. The Robert Stout Building was shortlisted for consideration for scheduling due to its association with the under-represented themes of universities and tertiary. The building was assessed against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

Photographs and Images

Images of the Robert Stout Building, 21 Kelburn Parade, taken by Danielle Campbell in August 2020.



Images of the Robert Stout Building, 21 Kelburn Parade, taken by Ian Bowman in 2009 for a Conservation Plan commissioned by Victoria University of Wellington.





Chronologies and Timelines

Timeline of events, including modifications

- 1906 - The Hunter Building was constructed and used to conduct the University's administration
- 1937 - The new Labour Government of 1935 raised the university's grant
- 1938 - The Robert Stout Building was constructed to accommodate the university registrar, council and associated administrative services
- 1959 - The building was extended and another two stories were added
- 1992-93 - The Robert Stout Building was linked with the Hunter Building as part of a major refurbishment of the latter
- 2019-20 - Construction of a new atrium connecting Hunter and Robert Stout Buildings

Occupation history

The Robert Stout Building has been owned and occupied by Victoria University of Wellington since its construction.

Biographies

William Gray Young

William Gray Young is one of Wellington's pre-eminent architects of the early 20th century. He was born in Oamaru, but moved to Wellington with his family as a child.

After leaving school he was articled to the Wellington architectural firm of Crichton and McKay. In 1906 he won a competition for the design of Knox College, Dunedin, and commenced practice on his own account shortly after. He started designing houses at the age of 18 with a home for his father in Kelburn in 1903. His domestic buildings were in various styles including the English domestic revival, Californian bungalow, colonial revival and neo-Georgian. It is for houses in the Georgian style that he is best known. An excellent example is the first he built in this style, Elliott House, which is still standing at 43 Kent Terrace.

Gray Young was elected a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects in 1913, served on the executive committee from 1914 to 1935, and was President from 1935 to 1936. He was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Prior to World War I, Gray Young worked in collaboration with Stanley Fearn and Austin Quick, and a formal partnership was formed between Young and Fearn in 1922. He later formed the practice of Gray Young, Morton and Young which is best known for the design of the Wellesley Club, Weir House and the Wellington Railway Station.

WCC Architects Biography

Francis Swan

Swan and Swan was a successful Wellington architecture practice of the 20th Century. It was founded by John Sydney Swan, along with his younger brother Francis in 1915. The practice became Swan, Lawrence & Swan with the addition of Charles Lawrence (who had formerly been in partnership as Penty & Lawrence) in 1919 and briefly practised as Swan, Lawrence, Swan & Hamilton until 1923.

Senior partner, John Sydney Swan was born in Wellington, the eldest of 13 children. His early architectural training was with the noted Wellington architect Frederick de Jersey Clere. Swan was articled to Clere and worked with his mentor on a number of designs, including the Wellington Rowing Club (then Naval Artillery Boat Shed) 1894, and several churches. From 1901-05 he was a partner with Clere. Among the buildings that survive from their partnership is Kelburn Chambers (or Stoneham's Building), Lambton Quay (1905).

From 1905-1916 Swan practised on his own account. He is probably best known during this time for a series of major commissions for the Catholic Church, including Sacred Heart Convent, later Erskine College, Island Bay (1906); St Gerard's Church (1908-10); Our Lady of Compassion Convent, Island Bay (1908-1921); Sacred Heart Convent, Wanganui (1911); and, with his brother, St Bede's School, Christchurch (1919). Swan also designed a number of commercial buildings,

including the now demolished National Bank head office (1907) and Clarendon Hotel, Wellington (1908), now “The Glasshouse”. One of Swan’s best known domestic designs is his own house, “The Moorings”, Thorndon (1905), which features imaginative use of nautical motifs. He was a keen sailor and a Commodore of the Port Nicholson Yacht Club.

Swan was first joined in practice by his brother Francis in 1915. Francis Swan (1885-1956) was the second youngest child in the Swan family. The practice was then renamed Swan and Swan. They were soon joined in practice by Charles Lawrence who had previously been in partnership with Francis Penty. Penty and Lawrence was the successor to the well-known practice of Penty and Blake, designers of Victoria University’s Hunter Building (1906). Andrew Hamilton, an assistant architect at Penty & Lawrence, joined the partnership from 1919 – 1923.

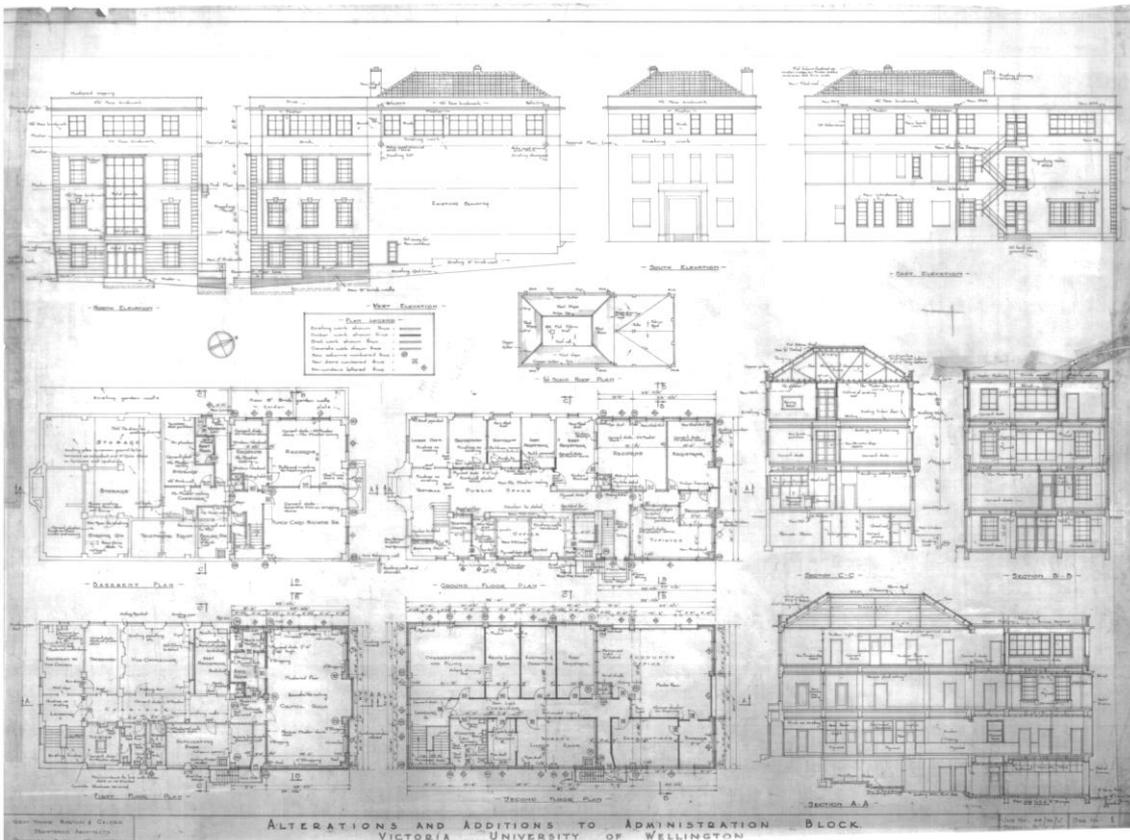
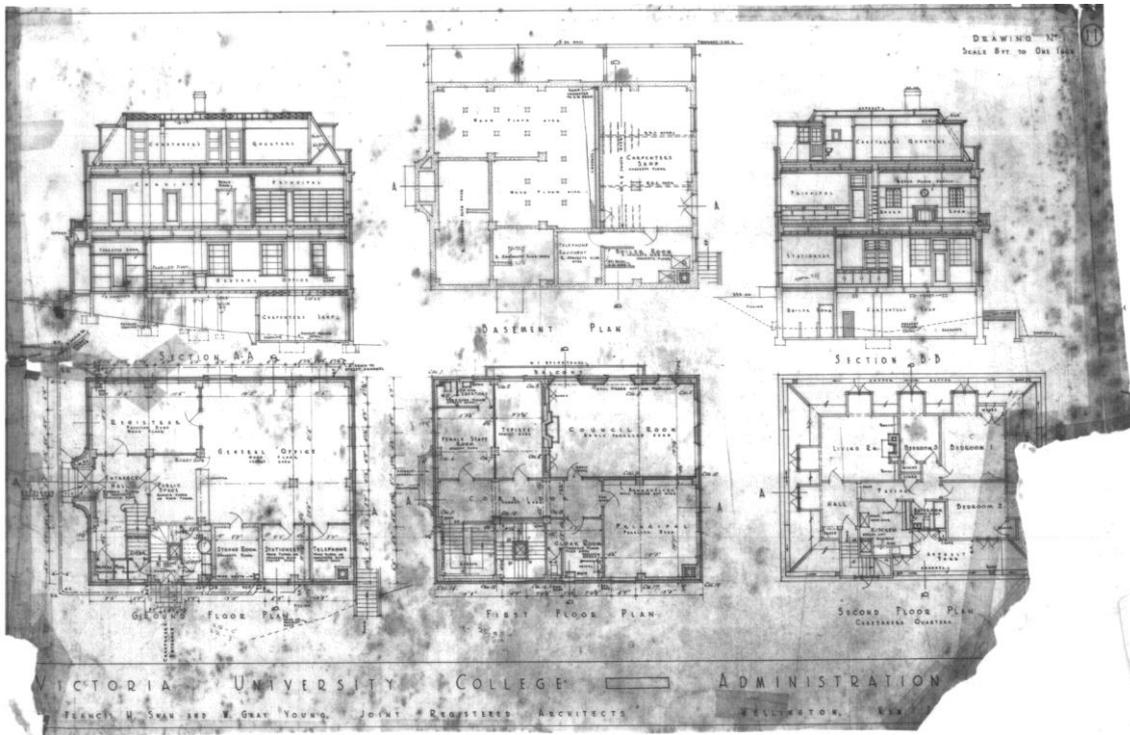
Swan, Lawrence and Swan were responsible for, among others, the former Home of Compassion Crèche, Buckle St, (1916); the library wing of the Hunter Building (1918) and the Physics Wing (1920) at Victoria University. Swan also designed, with William Gray Young, the Wellington Technical School (1919) (now Wellington High School) and, in 1930, the celebrated Erskine College Chapel (1930). John Swan was a director of the Kelburn and Karori Tramway Co. which led to the firm’s commission to make major changes to the cable car Winding House in 1933.

Charles Lawrence died in 1933 and, a year later, John Swan left the practice he established to form Swan and Lavelle with Jim Lavelle, but he died in 1936. This firm later became Structon Group. Francis Swan continued Lawrence and Swan, as it became, and then later practised on his own.

WCC Architects Biography

Plans and Elevations

Original plans for the Robert Stout Building included in Ian Bowman's 2009 Conservation Plan commissioned by Victoria University of Wellington.



Physical Description

Setting

Although the Hunter Building is the most widely recognised built symbol of the University, the Robert Stout Building is its functional centre. It occupies a highly visible and readily accessible site on Kelburn Parade, marking one of the main entrances to the campus. It stands at an angle to the Hunter Building and parallel to Kelburn Parade, setting the orientation for later campus buildings up Kelburn Parade to the south.

Its immediate setting is bounded by the Hunter Lawn to the north, Kelburn Parade to the west and an open courtyard to the south. The Hunter building is visible to the east. The wider setting is the main university campus, which includes a diverse range of buildings, from modified old houses to large modern slab-like buildings and some surprising interventions including the Adam Art Gallery.

Buildings or structures

The Robert Stout Building is five storeys high, built in reinforced concrete with brick facing. In its original form it was three storeys high with five bays facing Kelburn Parade; additions have seen three bays added to the north, a full fourth storey added in similar style to the original, and a fifth floor added as dormer windows in a mansard roof. Recently, changes have been made to create a foyer between it and the refurbished Hunter Building. Given such a history, one might expect a very poor aesthetic result. While the original portion can still be seen as a well-ordered and carefully executed Georgian design, later additions have respected the style, and although they have disturbed the original symmetry and composition, the end result remains a building of some distinction.

Red brick is the dominant external material. It is finished flush, the only decoration being subtly recessed quoins at the corners. Bands of light-coloured plaster demarcate the floors, with the same material forming a rusticated pattern over the whole of the ground floor level. Small-paned steel-framed windows are dominant features of all facades, with the three central windows of the original part of the building facing Kelburn Parade ornamented with moulded architraves and a small balcony.

Materials

The building is constructed from reinforced concrete with red brick facing. It has plaster floors and steel-framed windows.



Archaeological sites

Potential – Victoria University of Wellington was founded in 1897.

Comparative Analysis Summary

The Robert Stout Building is one of Wellington's neo-Georgian style buildings that were purpose-built for educational purposes. Other buildings that make up this collection include Scots College Main Building, William Booth Memorial College (Former) and Weir House.

The Robert Stout Building, Scots College Main Building and Weir House were all designed by the neo-Georgian style's most accomplished local advocate, architect William Gray Young. Although the Robert Stout Building and Weir House have had major additions, they have both retained a significant amount of original fabric.

All four buildings have been continuously used for educational purposes since their construction. While the Scots College Main Building remains part of the school and both the Robert Stout Building and Weir House have been owned and occupied by Victoria University since their construction, the William Booth Memorial College changed ownership in 1983 when the Salvation Army sold the building to the School of Philosophy. Therefore, the Robert Stout Building has a greater historical association with its founding organisation than the William Booth Memorial College.

All four buildings have strong sentimental value to the former staff and students who lived, trained, studied or worked in these education-related institutes. Many of the graduates from Scots College and Victoria University have gone in to play prominent roles in New Zealand society.

Although there are several education-related neo-Georgian buildings listed in the District Plan, the Robert Stout Building's high level of historical and sentimental value is due to its association with one of New Zealand's oldest and most prestigious tertiary institutions. While Weir House and the Robert Stout Building both have significance for this reason, the sentimental value of Weir House is limited to those with a connection to the residence, whereas the Robert Stout Building has value to a wider group of former university staff and students as the on-campus administration building.

Evaluation Criteria

A. Historic values: these relate to the history of a place and how it demonstrates important historical themes, events, people or experiences.

(i) Themes: the place is associated with important themes in history or patterns of development.

The Robert Stout Building has significant historic value within New Zealand as Victoria University's second oldest purpose-built university building. It has had largely the same purpose since its construction, housing the registry and university administration, including the principal or vice-Chancellor's office. The administrative function of the Stout Building and its location alongside a main entrance to the campus have made it well known to generations of students and staff at the University.

(ii) Events: the place has an association with an important event or events in local, regional or national history.

Not assessed.

(iii) People: the place is associated with the life or works of an individual, group or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the district, region or nation

The Robert Stout Building was completed in 1938 to a design by Francis Swan and William Gray Young, of whom the latter, in particular, had a long and fruitful association with the university and designed several of its best-known buildings. Swan and Gray Young were both well-known Wellington architects who made a significant contribution to the District.

As a building named for the principal founder of Victoria College, Robert Stout, it also has significant historic value within New Zealand. In addition to his legal and political prominence, Stout was a member of the Victoria College Council for fifteen years and Chancellor of the University of New Zealand for twenty. The development of the New Zealand university system likely owes more to Stout than to any other single individual.

(iv) Social: the place is associated with everyday experiences from the past and contributes to our understanding of the culture and life of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.

B. Physical values: these values relate to the physical evidence present.

(i) Archaeological: there is potential for archaeological investigation to contribute new or important information about the human history of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.

(ii) Architectural: the place is notable for its style, design, form, scale, materials, ornamentation, period, craftsmanship or other architectural values

The Robert Stout Building is a notable example of neo-Georgian architecture designed by one of Wellington’s pre-eminent champions of this style, architect William Gray Young. Despite a number of alterations, including the addition of an extra floor and mansard roof, the building has retained its distinctive character and has significant architectural value within the Wellington District.

(iii) Townscape: the place is strongly associated with other natural or cultural features in the landscape or townscape, and/or contributes to the heritage values of a wider townscape or landscape setting, and/or it is a landmark.

The Robert Stout Building has townscape value on Victoria University’s Kelburn campus for its prominent location next to the neo-Gothic Hunter Building, and for its distinctive red-brick neo-Georgian design. It provides an historical anchor for the historic villas and modern buildings that occupy Kelburn Parade to the south and opposite.

(iv) Groups: The place is 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 Robert Stout Building has group value with the Hunter, Old Kirk, Rankine Brown and Student Union buildings, as one of the oldest purpose-built buildings on the Victoria University Campus. It has a particular historic association with the adjacent Hunter Building.

It is also one of Wellington's neo-Georgian style buildings purpose-built for educational purposes. Other buildings that make up this collection include Scots College Main Building, William Booth Memorial College (Former) and Weir House. Although dispersed across the city, they have significant group value locally.

(v) Surroundings: the setting or context of the place contributes to an appreciation and understanding of its character, history and/or development.

Not assessed.

(vi) Scientific: The area or place has the potential to provide scientific information about the history of the district or region

Not assessed.

(vii) Technological: the place provides evidence of the history of technological development; and/or demonstrates innovation or important methods of construction or design; and/or contains unusual construction materials.

Not assessed

(viii) Integrity: the significant physical values of the place have been largely unmodified. This includes the retention of important modifications and/or additions from later periods.

The Robert Stout Building has some heritage value for its integrity. Despite major additions and modifications to the building in 1959 and the early 1990s, the original portion can still be seen as a well-ordered and carefully executed Georgian design. Later additions have respected the style, and although they have disturbed the original symmetry and composition, the end result remains a building of some distinction.

(ix) Age: the place is particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

Not assessed.

C. Social values: these values relate to the meanings that a place has for a particular community or communities.

(i) Sentiment: the place has strong or special associations with a particular cultural group or community for spiritual, political, social, religious, ethnic, national, symbolic or commemorative reasons.

Not assessed.

(ii) Recognition: the place is held in high public esteem for its historic heritage values, or its contribution to the sense of identity of a community, to the extent that if it was damaged or destroyed it would cause a sense of loss.

The Robert Stout Building has social value as a building well-known to generations of staff and students of Victoria University. A sense of loss is likely to be experienced by this community if it was significantly altered or destroyed.

(iii) Sense of place/ continuity: the place provides evidence of cultural or historical continuity, or contributes to a sense of place for a community

Not assessed.

D. Tangata whenua values: the place is sacred or important to Māori for spiritual, cultural or historical reasons.

Not assessed.

E. Rarity: the place is unique or rare within the district or region.

The Robert Stout Building has some rarity value within the Wellington District as Victoria University's second oldest purpose-built university building.

F. Representativeness: the place is a good example of its type, era or class it represents.

The Robert Stout Building has significance within the Wellington District as a good representative example of the neo-Georgian style buildings that architect William Gray Young is best known for designing.

Recommendations

The Robert Stout Building is recommended for listing on the District Plan as it reaches the threshold for eligibility as a Historic Heritage Building, having significant historic, social and architectural value within the Wellington District.

Extent of the Place

The extent of place should encompass the current form, scale and materials of the building, excluding the most recent alterations on the courtyard side, which sit uneasily with it.

Sources and References

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Vorstermans, Robert I. P. "William Gray Young, Architect, 1885-1962." Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 1982.

Wellington City Council Heritage Inventory 2001.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Neo-Georgian buildings purpose-built for educational purposes				
Place name	Address/ location/ NZTM	Heritage Listing or recognition of significance	Photographs	Analysis
William Booth Memorial College (Former)	33 Aro Street, Aro Valley, Wellington	WCC District Plan Heritage Building		<p>The William Booth Memorial College (Former) was designed by architects Fearn and Quick and built in 1913-14. The building is a very grand example of a purpose-built training college designed in Neo-Georgian Revivalist style. It makes good use of its prominent sloping site, particularly the approach of gates and steps that lead to the main entrance in the symmetrical street façade.</p> <p>The building is a local landmark and has a strong historic association with the Salvation Army for the nearly seventy years that Army staff trained here. When the Salvation Army moved to a new training centre in Upper Hutt in 1982, they sold the building to the School of Philosophy, a non-profit teaching organisation. The school continues to conduct courses from the building.</p>

<p>Scots College Main Building</p>	<p>1 Monorgan Road, Strathmore Park, Wellington</p>	<p>HNZPT Category 2 Historic Place, WCC District Plan Heritage Building</p>		<p>The Scots College Main Building was built in 1918-19 and designed by architect William Gray Young. It is one of the finest collegiate versions of Neo-Georgian architecture in Wellington. The building is historically associated with the Presbyterian community, who founded Scots College to provide an education for the male children of its congregation. Many former pupils of the school have gone on to play prominent roles in New Zealand society.</p> <p>The building has retained a significant amount of its original fabric and is one of the city's few original founding college buildings that remain intact. The main facade has been simply and effectively detailed, with an excellent face work of English bond brick. The rest of the facade is symmetrical with regular multi-paned windows, each with a keystone.</p>
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Weir House	49 Salamanca Road, Kelburn, Wellington	WCC District Plan Heritage Building		<p>Weir House is one of Wellington's best examples of Georgian Revival style. Built in 1931, it was designed by Charles Lawrence and William Gray Young. The building is historically significant for its association with Victoria University of Wellington and as a residence for generations of students, many of whom have gone on to become prominent New Zealanders. The university's hostels play a key role in introducing school leavers to university life and Weir House is the oldest surviving of these institutions. The building's prominent location upon the Kelburn hillside makes it a significant Wellington landmark. It makes clever use of its site, with its grand but not overwhelming west elevation a significant contrast with the dominant form of the eastern elevation overlooking the city. Although the building has had two major additions, it has retained a significant amount of its original fabric.</p>
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Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Refer to the Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

<https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/services/community-and-culture/heritage/files/thematic-heritage-study.pdf>

	Select the themes & subthemes which apply to the place	Yes / some (add explanation)
A2.2	Colonisation	
A2.2D	Early public works	Yes
B6.1	Technology and engineering	
B6.1D	Centres of research and development	Yes
D2.3	Tertiary	
D2.3A	Universities	Yes
D5.2	Universities	
D5.2A	Administration buildings, laboratories	Yes