

Historic Heritage Evaluation

Commercial Building
134 Willis Street, Te Aro



June 2020

Historic Heritage Evaluation

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Date	July 2020
Site visit(s)	July 2020 (exterior only)
Version	Final
Reviewed by	Danielle Campbell, Heritage Advisor Reuben Daubé, Heritage Advisor Moira Smith, Senior Heritage Advisor
Revisions	
Cover image	Ian Bowman, July 2020



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Executive Summary

The Commercial Building at 134 Willis Street has been evaluated because it is listed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga as a Category 2 Historic Place (List No. 7200). It has been listed as a historic place since 1994.

It is believed to have been built in c.1868, making it one of the oldest timber buildings in the CBD, after Old St Paul's (1865-6), the Thistle Inn (1866), and Dr Boor's Residence and Surgery (1866) at 22 The Terrace. This rarity makes it an important heritage artefact in Wellington. Nationally, it is a rare surviving example of commercial timber architecture from the 1860s.

The building's form and fabric, while considerably altered, is typical of nineteenth century timber buildings. The simple Classicism, twin hipped gables, and modest dimensions are representative of the kind of buildings that were constructed in Wellington in the mid-1800s. While the building has retained some architectural values, it has significant technical value for the remaining built-fabric, which can shed light on nineteenth century building practices.

Built near a key city junction, the corner of Willis, Manners and Boulcott Streets, during the city's boom time just after it became the capital, the building's history, while largely prosaic, is remarkable for its variety and longevity.

It also demonstrates the variety of immigrant groups carrying out their trade in the Wellington central city in the twentieth century, having housed businesses owned by Chinese, French, Yugoslav and Greek émigrés.

It is recommended that this place be scheduled in the Wellington City Council district plan.

Summary Statement of Significance

- The building has significant heritage value as a rare survivor of the 1860s. It is one of the oldest non-residential timber buildings in Wellington's CBD. It is believed to have been built in c1868. Only the Thistle Inn (1866), Old St Paul's (1865-66), and the Dr Boor's Residence and Surgery (1866) at 22 The Terrace are known to be older. It is a regionally and nationally rare example of early commercial timber architecture that remains in its original location in a major city.
- The building has significant historic value for its association with everyday trade and commerce from the 1860s until the present day. It has had a range of uses that are representative of the commercial history of Willis Street, recalling the importance of store keeping, craftsmen, trade and hospitality in nineteenth and twentieth century Wellington. It is also significant for its association with a variety of immigrant groups carrying out their trade in the Wellington central city in the twentieth century, having housed businesses owned by Chinese, French, Yugoslav and Greek émigrés. The first business in the building is likely to have been a boarding house,



run, as was often the case, by a woman. It was later used as a shop/residence, another common building type for Wellington in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- The building is a good example of the mid-Victorian Commercial Italianate architectural style. It retains many characteristic features such as the bracketed Classical cornices, (original) symmetry, single double hung sash windows and shallow pitched hipped roof. Its street elevation has rusticated weatherboards while side elevations use shiplap weatherboards.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to consider the Commercial Building at 134 Willis Street against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The document is based on the report prepared by Geraldine Dai and Michael Kelly in 2011, and was updated by Elizabeth Cox and Ian Bowman on the specific instructions of our client, Wellington City Council. It is intended solely for the 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 main elevation of the building was viewed from the road, and is clearly visible. The rear of 134 and the neighbouring building to the south is an open car parking and service area with several large trees and steep bank to the west, which has not been visited. The interior of the building was not viewed.

Heritage Inventory Report

Site Detail	
Site address or address(es) and/or location	134 Willis Street, Wellington
Property Name	Commercial Building
Other names	
Legal Description(s) and Record of Title identifier(s), Deeds register and/or Gate notice information	LOT 1 DP 13389 RT WN521/60
NZTM grid reference	Google grid reference (not converted) = 41°17'22.5"S 174°46'27.5"E -41.289577, 174.774302
District Plan Reference Number	None
Sites of significance to Māori	Near Waikoukou Stream
WCC Heritage Area	None
HNZPT listed	Historic Place
HNZPT category	2
Archaeological site (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Section 6)	The place pre-dates 1900 and is identified in the Thomas Ward Survey 1891
New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) site record number(s)	R27/436 Tustin Building, R27/270
Constructed	1868
Significant alterations or additions	
Architect	Not known
Builder	Not known
Former uses	Accommodation - Boarding/Guest House (Former) Trade - Shop Trade - Restaurant/ Café/ Tearoom (Former) Trade - Laundry (Former)

Current uses	Shop
Earthquake-prone Building Status at the date of assessment.	

Extent: WCC OneMap 19 June 2020



Historical Summary

The date of the construction of 134 Willis Street is difficult to establish with accuracy but it was probably built in 1868.

134 Willis Street sits on Town Acre 197. From early in Wellington history a right of way took pedestrians to and from Town Acre 192, directly behind. This right of way, known as Flagstaff Lane, was subsequently built over. In 1852, a Crown Grant was issued to Emma Jackson,¹ a widow, who lived in Lowry Bay, for the southern side of that town acre. In 1858, Jackson sold the property that today contains 134 Willis

¹ Crown Grant 1 Grants 192, Archives New Zealand (ANZ).

Street to John Pattinson. Pattinson was in business as a butcher with John Brown, and their premises occupied the property immediately adjacent (to the south), which was owned by Brown. Pattinson leased his property to J. Otten, presumably the Mrs Otten who ran a boarding establishment on that location in Willis Street.² However, just to confuse matters, Emma Jackson is recorded as having sold the two properties (Pattinson's and Brown's) as one section to William Leslie in 1860.³

John Pattinson (1815-1910) had numerous investment properties and had a long retirement, living to the remarkable age (for the times) of 95. His daughter Mary Anne (1855-1929) married Frederick Chinchin (1853-1929), a bookbinder, in 1876 and they inherited the property after her father passed away.

Street directory listings for 1864 put a boarding house (run by Mrs Otten) at the location of 134 Willis Street. Rate book information for the same year reveals that only a relatively modest house occupied the land.⁴ The present building first appears in a photograph in 1868, but there were two dated photographs taken of that part of Te Aro that year and the building is shown in only one of them.⁵ During the 1860s and 70s, many of the early rudimentary buildings in this part of Willis Street were being replaced or expanded. It is possible, although not likely, that 134 Willis Street began life as a single-storey building that was later expanded to two storeys.

The Otten lease ended in 1865 and, courtesy of Wellington Town Board rate books, the sequence of occupation thereafter (until 1870) begins with James Jones in 1866 and 1867, then Burwell in 1868 and finally W. Bull in 1869,⁶ when there was a sharp increase in the value of the buildings. This may suggest that the lessee of the building at the time of its construction was either Burwell or Bull. The owner was certainly Pattinson.

By 1872, a boarding house run by Mrs Crowther (her husband was a boat builder) was occupying the building. Charles Williams, an engraver, who had a long connection with the building, established his business there about 1879.⁷ During his tenure, he built a workshop to the rear (in 1897).⁸ Later known as Chas Williams

² *Wellington Street and Trade Directory*, 1864.

³ Conveyance 2081, 4 Deeds 322, ANZ.

⁴ Rate books transcriptions 1863-70, Wellington City Archives (WCA)

⁵ 00138_0_13171, WCA does not show the building, but it is visible in image ref: 1/2-008242-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁶ Rate books transcriptions 1863-70, WCA.

⁷ This is the first year he advertised in the *Evening Post*.

⁸ 00053:37:2385, 85 Willis Street, addition of workshop, 1897, WCA.

and Sons, the business remained in the building for 30 years. He later advertised that he could also carry out electroplating.⁹ During this time, about 1890, the building acquired its first number – 85 Willis Street. This changed to No.138 in 1909.

In July 1909, Frederick Chinchin advertised for a lessee for the 'shop lately occupied by C.H. Williams.'¹⁰ The new occupant was fishmonger William Hurcomb, whose name remained associated with the building until about 1924, although he died in 1915 and various proprietors came and went.¹¹ In 1914, changes were made to the shop.¹²

In 1924, Dunbar Sloane advertised the intentions of the Chinchens to sell the property by public auction, as they were about to go to England. The building's interior was described as follows:

These premises are superbly situated from a business point of view and at present are being very successfully conducted as a fish shop. The shop is beautifully fitted with marble counters, glass cases, scales, latest design electric fans, cash register, etc., etc., while the back premises contain store rooms, ice chests, counters, and smoke-house. There are four living rooms, two of which are well furnished, bathroom, conveniences, etc. If not wanted as a fish shop, would be most suitable for any other class of retail, especially fruiterer. There is a good lease to run, and the rent is exceedingly low.¹³

As it happens, the Wellington City Council bought the property for 'tramway and electric light' purposes, almost certainly to build a concrete substation behind the property.¹⁴ About this time, Wing Kee (also Wong Kee) began a laundry business. In 1928, the building was occupied by both the laundry and a fishmonger by the name of Velimir Bingula, a Frenchman.¹⁵ In 1929 with the laundry gone, Bingula made alterations to the building¹⁶ and opened a restaurant, but by 1930 he was bankrupt.

More changes were made to the building by the owners, the WCC, and that same

⁹ *New Zealand Mail*, 1 January 1902, p.3.

¹⁰ *Evening Post*, 23 July 1909.

¹¹ *Wises New Zealand Post Office (NZPO) Directory*, 1910-1924.

¹² 0053:180:9902, 138 Willis Street, alterations to shop, 22 July 1914, WCA.

¹³ *Evening Post*, 22 December 1924.

¹⁴ CT WN 317-112, LINZ.

¹⁵ *Wises NZPO Directory*, 1924.

¹⁶ 00056:68:B6571, 138 Willis Street, alterations and renovate, 16 January 1929, WCA.

year (1930) the St Francis Restaurant (or Café), run by Yugoslav émigré Vincent Marinovic opened for business. A café of this name was then operated from the building for almost 50 years. It advertised itself in the year it opened as:

3 doors from Wellington's Finest Hotel (St. George's). We serve the best 3-course Meal in town, 1s [shilling]. Open until 4 a.m. for Fish, Grills, Oysters, Crayfish Suppers.¹⁷

The restaurant was soon taken over by Simun Marinovic, presumably a relative. The Marinovic family lived upstairs. The business was advertised for sale in 1937¹⁸ and was bought by Greek émigrés Menelaos Kathistidis and John Kontopos, who kept the name. It is worth noting the rarity of this type of venture at the time - only six building permits to establish new restaurants in Lambton Quay, Manners Street, Willis Street, Cuba Street, and Courtenay Place were issued between 1918 to 1935 (although additions and alterations to established eateries did also occur). Often it was immigrants who filled the gaps in the hospitality trade in Wellington.¹⁹

In 1946, the land was subdivided by the WCC, which kept the rear section for its substation and sold the portion in front to Jessie Morgan.²⁰ At this point, the land was occupied by the original timber building, a single storey brick building immediately behind and a small, detached wooden shed.²¹ In 1953, Jessie Morgan sold the property to KK Properties, which was the name of the Kontopos family company formed to buy the building.²² This is probably about the time that John Kontopos took over the St Francis Café. He made changes to the building in 1959. The Kontopos family owned the building until 1971 when it sold it to the Catholic Church.²³ At some point, probably in 1979, when the sprawling Willis Street Village opened just to the south, the street number changed again, to 134.

In 1977, the property was bought by the Bank of New Zealand Officers Provident Association. Over the period of its ownership, the building was probably used as a restaurant. In 1993, the property was sold to broker and company director Mark

¹⁷ *Evening Post*, 31 July 1930.

¹⁸ *Evening Post*, 31 May 1937.

¹⁹ 'Wellington Café Culture', NZHistory feature <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/the-daily-grind-wellington-cafe-culture-1920-2000> and 'Wellington cafe culture 1920-2000' PDF <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/files/documents/wellington-cafe-culture-archive.pdf>; downloaded 25 April 2020.

²⁰ CT WN 521-60, LINZ.

²¹ DP 13389, LINZ.

²² See NZ Companies Office website, accessed 22 June 2011, www.business.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/8265

²³ CT WN 521-60, LINZ.



Levett. During this period, considerable work was proposed for the building, including floor framing and a concrete floor for possible future apartments on the building's first level. Since the early 1990s, the building has been occupied by shops and cafés/ restaurants.

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 listing in the District Plan were thematically coded. The commercial building at 134 Willis Street was shortlisted for consideration for scheduling as a HNZPT Category 1 Historic Place and for its association with the under-represented theme of "Inter-war assisted immigration." It is also associated with the themes "Early Colonists 1840-1869", "Other 19th century/ early 20th century migrations and ethnicities", "Colonisation", "Commercial Offices" and "Socialising." The building was assessed against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The current GWRC/ WCC threshold for inclusion in a District Plan is that a building must contribute to an understanding and appreciation of history and culture under one or more of the assessment criteria. These include historic, physical (archaeological, architectural, scientific, technological, integrity, age, group, townscape or surroundings), social, tangata whenua, rarity and representativeness.

Photographs and Images



Willis Street, looking north, between 1894 and 1899 [detail of larger image]. 134 Willis Street is the two storey building directly to the south of the three-storey building in this image. Willis Street, Wellington. Ref: 1/1-001012-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. [/records/22805368](#)

Chronologies and Timelines

Timeline of events, including modifications

c1868	Original construction
Unknown	Alterations of interiors and windows, removal of chimney
c1920s	Verandah added
Unknown (after 1978)	Verandah removed
Unknown	Additions and removals of various outbuildings

Occupation history

- c1868-1879 Boarding House run by Mrs Crowther
- 1879-1909 Engraving business, owned by Charles Williams
- 1879-1909 Chas Williams and Sons
- 1928-1930 Fishmonger and laundry
- c1930-1978 St Francis Restaurant

Biographies

Plans and Elevations

Physical Description

Setting – geographical / physical context

134 Willis Street occupies the western side of the street in a built up area of central Wellington. It is a short distance from the Hotel St George, a well-known landmark in the area. Behind the building is the steep face of Flagstaff Hill, where a celebrated right of way (Flagstaff Lane) once ran. A remnant of this right of way can be found in the drive that gives access to the rear of 134 Willis Street.

The majority of the buildings in the vicinity are multi-storey modern towers, but on the western side of Willis Street the buildings are relatively low-rise, with the MacDonald Building (128 Willis), 140 Willis Street and the Willis Street Village all two or three-storey in height.

Buildings or structures

No. 134 Willis Street is a typical nineteenth century inner-city building, with formal Classical detailing. Two storeys high, it has twin hipped gabled roofs, clad with corrugated iron, running contiguous with the street façade. The more authentic portion of the main elevation, the first floor, has rusticated weatherboards and one

double hung sash window, although this itself is not likely to have been original. The other window has been replaced with a two-pane arrangement; one larger fixed pane and the other a side-opening casement. A prominent cornice, an eave with paired brackets, hides the roof. This cornice extends along the hidden north elevation, and is likely to be on the south elevation too. The ground floor has sheet cladding and two large shop windows, along with the main door. There is also an access way to the upper storey to the immediate right of the building.

The rear elevation has also been considerably altered. The cladding is lapped weatherboards, which may be original in some places. It was not unusual for buildings of this period to have rusticated weatherboards on the street elevation and less expensive lapped weatherboards on the remaining elevations. On the upper level two old windows remain in place, although the double hung sash window to the south is older. Between them is a door that leads out on to a deck. The solid balustrade has matching lapped weatherboards. On the ground floor there are two multi-pane fixed windows with a door on the south side and an access way on the north side of the building. The weatherboards on this level are lapped.

The building has undergone many changes since it was constructed. Among the major alterations are:

- Most of the windows, including all those on the rear elevation, have been changed over time. Early photographs show that the first floor of the rear elevation originally had a slender multi plan light in the middle of the facade. Note that it is likely (although not certain) that in other parts of the building there were originally small paned, double hung sash windows. If so, these have either been replaced by larger paned sash windows or removed altogether from the building.
- The ground and first floor interiors have been refurbished, room configuration changed, walls removed and replaced, and services moved, on numerous occasions.
- A chimney in the middle of the building (original) was removed many decades ago.
- A verandah, fixed to the main elevation c.1920s, was removed some time after 1978.
- Extensive outbuildings and lean-tos have been built and removed, more than once. Today there are no outbuildings associated with the building.

Materials

- Timber frame
- Timber cladding
- Corrugated steel roofing
- Timber joinery

Archaeological sites

R27/436 Tustin Building and R27/270.

Setting – surroundings / site description

The building is located in a small block on Willis Street between the corner with Boulcott Street and Flagstaff Lane. To the north of 134, on the corner is the WCC District Plan listed 1930 Art Deco St George's Hotel, as well as the 1919-20 three storey brick and rendered Edwardian Baroque McDonald Building, which is also listed in the District Plan. To the south of 134 is the rendered three-storey Stripped Classical building. Opposite 134 is the eleven-storey Kordia building, likely to have been built in the 1980s. The rear of 134 and the neighbouring building to the south is an open car parking and service area with several large trees and steep bank to the west.

Extensive outbuildings and lean-tos have been added and removed to 134 more than once. Today there are no outbuildings associated with the building.

HNZPT Extent of List Entry

The HNZPT extent of list entry has been included in this report to ensure that Council has regard to the full extent of any entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/ Rāanga Kōrero.

Extent includes the land described as Lot 1 DP 13389 (CT WN521/60), Wellington Land District, and the building known as Commercial Building thereon.

Comparative Analysis Summary

134 Willis Street is one of the oldest non-residential timber buildings in Wellington's CBD. It is believed to have been built in c.1868. Only the Thistle Inn (1866), Old St Paul's (1865-66), and the Dr Boor's Residence and Surgery (1866) at 22 The

Terrace are known to be older. All of those buildings are listed by Heritage New Zealand as Category 1 Historic Places. There are another nineteen residential timber buildings on the WCC District Plan Heritage List within Wellington city of a similar age.

Nationally, 134 Willis Street seems likely to be a rare surviving example of early commercial timber architecture in New Zealand. Many other early surviving timber shops from the 1860s are no longer on their original sites, such as Shands Emporium in Christchurch (now relocated), or are located in smaller early settlement towns such as Akaroa, and goldmining towns such as Naseby, Arrowtown and Thames, which have undergone considerably less development than central Wellington.

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 building at 134 Willis Street has significant historic value within the District for its association with the history of trade and commerce in Wellington. It is also significant for its association with a variety of immigrant groups in the twentieth century, having housed businesses owned by Chinese, French, Yugoslav and Greek émigrés. For almost 50 years it was a café/restaurant run by Yugoslav and then Greek families.

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

N/A

(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

N/A

- (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.**

The building at 134 Willis Street has significant historic value within the Wellington District for its association with everyday trade and commerce from the 1860s until the present day. It has had a range of uses that are representative of the commercial history of Willis Street, recalling the importance of store keeping, craftsmen, trade and hospitality in nineteenth and twentieth century Wellington.

It is also significant within the District for its association with a variety of immigrant groups carrying out their trade in the Wellington central city in the twentieth century, having housed businesses owned by Chinese, French, Yugoslav and Greek émigrés.

The first business in the building is likely to have been a boarding house, run, as was often the case, by a woman. It was later used as a shop/residence, another common building type for Wellington in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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 building has architectural value within the Wellington District as a good example of the mid-Victorian Commercial Italianate architectural style. It retains many characteristic features such as the bracketed Classical cornices, (original) symmetry, single double hung sash windows and shallow pitched hipped roof. Its street elevation has rusticated weatherboards while side elevations use shiplap weatherboards.

(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 building has little local townscape significance as a small-scaled building in Wellington's CBD and stands in contrast to its newer and larger neighbours.

(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 building at 134 Willis Street is part of a group of heritage buildings either side of the Willis Street and Boulcott Street junction, including the Hotel St George, the McDonald Building and Dr Henry Pollen's House.

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

The setting or context of the site is relatively modified and provides some appreciation or understanding of the character, history and development of the building. The wider context includes a number of buildings constructed during or after the inter-war period and which provide a significant contrast in building age, style and scale to 134 Willis Street. The remnant of the right of way to Flagstaff Hill contributes to an understanding of the history of the area.

(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.**

The building has significant technological value within the Wellington District as it provides evidence of the use of materials, technology, and craftsmanship of the mid-Victorian period. The use of rusticated weatherboards, compared with the simple shiplap weatherboards, is an innovation from the early 1860s.

- (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 building has some heritage value for the integrity of surviving early or original built-fabric, even though the shopfront and a first floor window on Willis Street have been replaced, and the rear of the building has undergone change.

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

The building at 134 Willis Street is believed to have been built in c.1868, making it one of the oldest timber building in the CBD, after Old St Paul's (1865-6), the Thistle Inn (1866), and Dr Boor's Residence and Surgery (1866) at 22 The Terrace. This rarity makes it an important heritage artefact in Wellington. Regionally and nationally, it is a rare example of early commercial timber architecture that remains in its original location in a major city.

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 building is recognised as a Category 2 Historic Place by HNZPT and is held in high public esteem for its historic heritage values.

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

The building's form and fabric, while considerably altered, is characteristic of nineteenth century timber buildings. Although diminutive, it makes a positive contribution to the sense of place and continuity of this area of Willis Street, as a very rare survivor of the timber constructions of colonial commercial Wellington.

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 building has significant heritage value within the District and within New Zealand as a rare survivor of the 1860s. It is one of the oldest non-residential timber buildings in Wellington's CBD. It is believed to have been built in c.1868. Only the Thistle Inn (1866), Old St Paul's (1865-66), and the Dr Boor's Residence and Surgery (1866) at 22 The Terrace are known to be older. Regionally and nationally, it is a rare example of early commercial timber architecture that remains in its original location in a major city.

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

The building is a good representative example of mid-Victorian Commercial Italianate architecture.

Recommendations

The commercial building at 134 Willis Street has significant heritage value for its history, age and rarity. It meets the threshold for eligibility as a Historic Heritage Building and is recommended for listing in the District Plan.

Extent of the Place

Extent includes the land described as Lot 1 DP 13389 (RT WN521/60), Wellington Land District, and the building known as Commercial Building thereon.

Non-heritage fabric / exclusions

None.

Sources and References

Alexander Turnbull Library

Images F-008242-1/2, G001012-1/1, G-000697-1/1, G-017880-1/1, 135964-1/2, F003801-1/2, PA7-21-38

Archives New Zealand

Crown Grant 1 Grants 192, Conveyance 2081, 4 Deeds 322, A 155, SO 10296 (Frame 7), SO 10326, SO 18009, DP 13889

Land Information New Zealand

CT WN 317-112, LINZ

CT WN 521-60, LINZ

DP 13389, LINZ

Newspapers

23 July 1909, 22 December 1924, 31 July 1930, 31 May 1937, *Evening Post*

Te Papa

Image C.011277 of Willis Street, 1882

Wellington City Archives

Rate books transcriptions 1863-70

00053:37:2385, 85 Willis Street, addition of workshop, 1897

0053:180:9902, 138 Willis Street, alterations to shop, 22 July 1914

00056:68:B6571, 138 Willis Street, alterations and renovate, 16 January 1929

Images 00138_0_13171, 00138-0-4818 1858

Ward Map, Sheet 32, 1891

Other

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Wellington Street and Trade Directory, 1864.



Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory, 1878-2011.



Appendices

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Early commercial timber buildings				
Place name	Address/ location/ NZTM	Heritage Listing or recognition of significance	Photographs	Analysis
Thistle Inn	Corner of Mulgrave and Sydney Street East	HNZPT Category I Historic Place & WCC DP Heritage Building	 <p>Photographed by Charles Collins, 2015. Wellington City Council.</p>	The Thistle Inn was built in 1866, approximately 2 years prior to 134 Willis Street. Externally it is of a similar style but in more original condition.
Dr Boor's Residence And Surgery (Former)	22 The Terrace, Wellington	HNZPT Category I Historic Place & WCC DP Heritage Building	 <p>Photographed by Charles Collins, 2015. Wellington City Council.</p>	22 The Terrace (1865) is a fine example of a large Victorian villa built as a doctor's surgery and residence, and the only Victorian villa remaining on the northern end of the Terrace. The house is two stories high and clad in rusticated weatherboards.

<p>Shand's Emporium</p>	<p>217 Manchester Street, Christchurch</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place</p>	 <p>Photographed by Anna Crighton, 2018. Christchurch Heritage Trust.</p>	<p>Shand's (1860) is a timber shop built at a similar time to 134 Willis Street and is likely to be more authentic, however it has been relocated from its original site following the 2010/11 earthquakes.</p>
<p>Strong's Watchmaker Shop</p>	<p>Leven Street, Naseby</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place</p>	 <p>Photographed by Phil Braithwaite, 2012. PhilBee NZ.</p>	<p>The diminutive Watchmaker Shop in Naseby is a rare surviving example of a goldfields-era timber commercial building, dating from sometime in the late 1860s.</p>

Shops	64-76 Rue Lavaud and Rue Balguerie, Akaroa	HNZPT Category 2 Historic Place		Large timber shops, constructed in 1863 in timber of a similar style to 134 Willis, although externally more authentic.
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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)
A1.3	Early Colonists 1840-1869	
A1.3C	Houses and Cottages	Yes, as a boarding house and home for the storekeepers
A1.5	Other 19th century/ early 20th century migrations and ethnicities	
A1.5E	Restaurants/ cafes/ hotels	Yes
A1.6	Inter-war assisted immigration	
A1.6A	Meeting Places	Yes
A1.6B	Restaurants/ cafes/ hotels	Yes
A2.2	Colonisation	
A2.2C	Staging posts/ accommodation	Yes
A2.2E	Early commercial ventures	Yes
A3.4	Forest Clearance	
A3.4B	Early timber structures	Yes
B2. 5	Commercial Offices	
B2.5F	Retail	Yes
D7.1	Socialising	
D7.1B	Restaurants	Yes
D7.1C	Café	Yes