

Stewart's Building
43 Courtenay Place

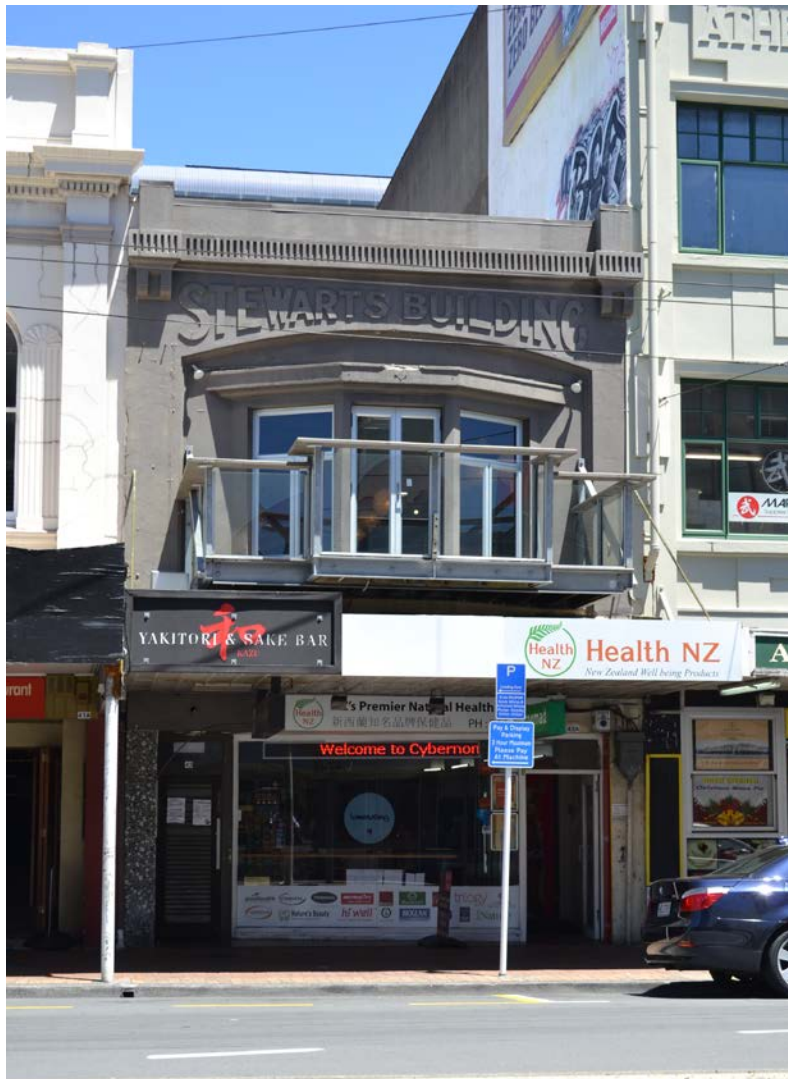


Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- Stewart's Building is a diminutive commercial building designed in an eclectic style with elements of Classical, Gothic and Art Deco architecture. It is notable for the unusual first floor bay window, although this is partly concealed by a poorly conceived modern balcony.
- The building contributes to the Courtenay Place Heritage Area and to the character of Courtenay Place.
- The building has a representative historical value. Its pattern of use and occupation is typical of many small businesses that lined Courtenay Place in the early decades of the 20th century.

District Plan:	Map 16, Symbol Ref 63/6
Legal Description:	Pt Section 277 Town of Wellington
Heritage Area:	Courtenay Place Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Not listed.
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	1919
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Unknown, Builder: Unknown
Former uses:	Retail, Beauty salon, Restaurant, Café, Tailor, Poker Club
Current uses:	Bar, Internet Cafe
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR167322 (124 Served)



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

No. 43 Courtenay Place is a small two-storey building built for James Stewart, a Wellington electrician, in 1919.¹ The architect, today unknown, designed the building in an eclectic style with elements of Classical, Gothic and Art Deco architecture.

In December 1919 Stewart opened for business and offered 'the transaction of Electrical Work of all kinds'. The premises was specially designed 'to enable patrons to inspect all the latest electrical appliances, including fittings of all kinds, lamps, shades, globes, irons, kettles and other cooking utensils'.² Stewart advertised his business as 'personally supervised and promptly executed'.³ He operated in the building for 8 years and his name is still visible on the face of the building today.

The building has since been home to an assortment of other small businesses, including the 'Don' Tailors who occupied the building between 1930 and 1955. Don Tailors produced not only civilian clothing, but also naval, military and air force uniforms.⁴ In recent years it has been occupied by various restaurants and cafes⁵, and is currently in use by an internet café at ground floor and a Japanese bar on the first (2012).



Enlargement of the elevation to Courtenay Place from the original plans, 1919.
(00053:197:10873)

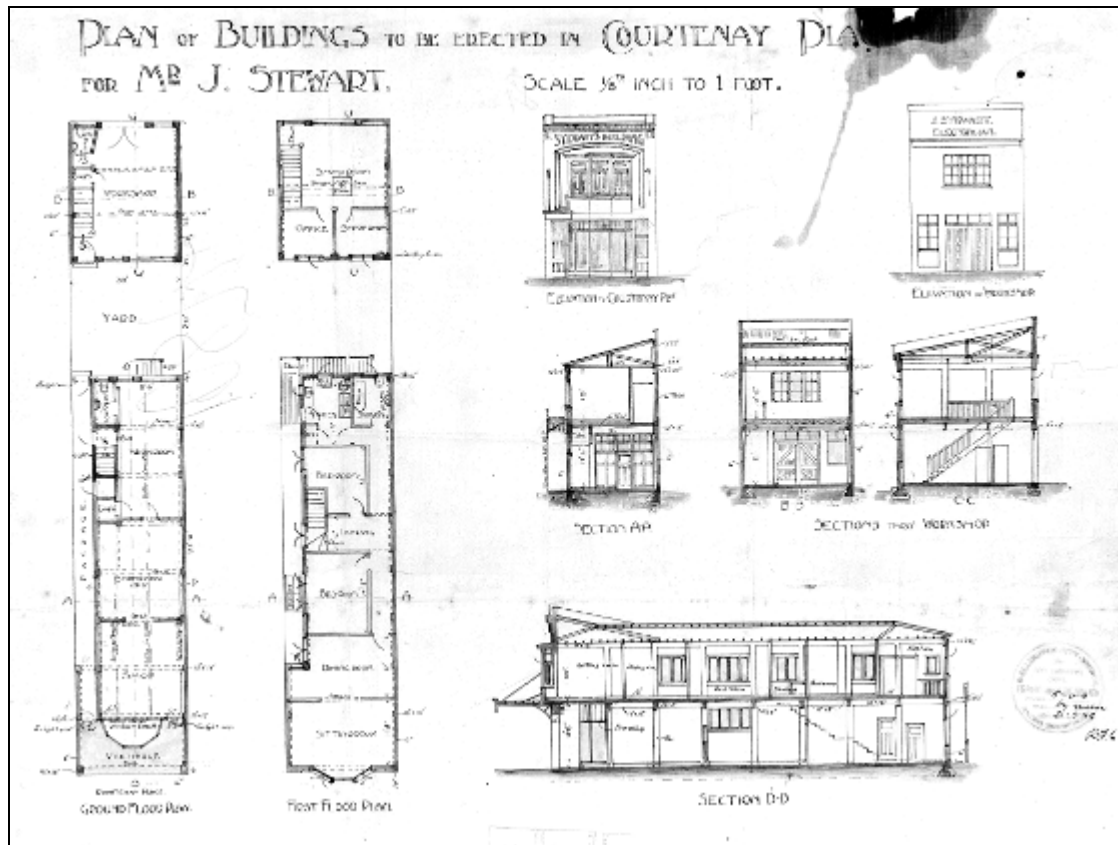
¹ "43 Courtenay Place, building", 8 May 1919, 00053:197:10873, Wellington City Archives.

² "Page 2 Advertisements Column 1", *Dominion*, 22 November 1919, Page 2.

³ "Page 1 Advertisements Column 6", *Dominion*, 29 January 1920, Page 1.

⁴ "Page 6 Advertisements Column 2", *Evening Post*, 7 October 1942, Page 6.

⁵ Wisers Directory 1967/8



Original plans, 1919. (00053:197:10873)

1.2 Timeline of modifications

- 1919 Building constructed for owner J. Stewart. (00053:197:10873)
- 1931 Sign erected. (00056:121:B10984)
- 1935 Sign erected. (00056:158:B14032)
- 1937 Sign erected. (00056:195:B17046)
- Shop front altered. (00056:196:B17063)
- 1938 Sign erected. (00056:217:B18577)
- 1961 Alterations to the shop front. (00058:206:C9397)
- Shop alterations for a beauty salon (00058:208:C9490)
- 1963 Shop alterations. Erection of a two storied concrete block structure linking front & rear parts of upper floor. (00058:275:C12179)
- 1964 Alterations to coffee bar. (00058:352:C15142)
- 1967 Alterations to the premises. (00058:489:C21046)
- 1972 Building alterations. (00058:818:C36660)
- 1973 Building alterations for a restaurant. (00058:841:C37585)
- 1991 Business additions and alterations for a restaurant. (00059:491:E23558)
- 1997 Conversion to apartments. (00078:104:34005)
- 2005 Internal alterations to restaurant. This included an upgrade of toilet ventilation, construction of deck over existing balcony footpath and replacement of toilet fittings. (00078:1649:135665)

1.3 Occupation history

James Stewart, electrical engineer (Stones 1919-1928). The "Don", tailors (Stones 1930 - 1945; Wises 1950-1 to 1955). Attic Coffee Lounge (Wises 1967-8); Various restaurants/cafes (Wises 1971-2 to 1990). Wellington Poker Club (Wises 1985).⁶

1.4 Architect

The architect is unknown.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

43 Courtenay Place is a diminutive two-storey building constructed of reinforced concrete designed in an eclectic style with Classical, neo-Gothic and Art Deco elements. The building has Classical proportions but the second storey is dominated by an almost Gothic bay window which has three segments set within a structural arch. The building's name, in cement render, can be seen above the arch. The facade is capped by a stylised, Art-Deco-esque cornice.⁷ The streetscape value of this building is diminished by a clumsy, modern smoker's balcony set above the verandah.⁸

2.2 Materials

Reinforced concrete.

2.3 Setting

Stewart's Building is located in a block of buildings on the south side of Courtenay Place. This section of Courtenay Place is characterised by its continuous line of buildings between Cambridge Terrace and Tory Street which emphasise the original survey line. The buildings are diverse in nature and age but, despite some particularly intrusive modern buildings, have a high streetscape quality which contributes significantly to the heritage value and character of Courtenay Place as a whole.

Adjoining the western side of the Stewart's Building is the Athenic Building. This 1923 building is a tall four-storeyed concrete construction of elegant vertical proportions. Its street façade is symmetrically arranged about a narrow central bay and features pilasters rising the full height to a pediment, with the intervening spaces divided between bands of windows and decorated spandrel panels. The decorative motifs on the pilasters and the spandrels are precursors to the elaborate geometric details that became popular with the Art Deco style.

Adjoining the eastern side of Stewart's Building is No. 41. It has a distinctive upper façade with square Doric pilasters at each side rising through a strong cornice and

⁶ Wellington City Council, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area spreadsheet*. Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006.

⁷ Wellington City Council, "Stewarts Building", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995*. (Wellington City Council, 1995), C.

⁸ Adapted from: Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area Report*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

bracketing round headed windows divided by fluted pilasters, each capped with palmettes.⁹

As a group these buildings contribute to the character of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

3.0 Sources

CT WN 93/14, Land Information New Zealand

Kelly, Michael and Russell Murray, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area Report*. Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006.

Stones Directories - 1919, 1928, 1930 and 1945.

Wellington City Council, "Stewarts Building", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995*. Wellington City Council, 1995.

Wellington City Council, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area spreadsheet*. Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006.

Wises Directories – 1950/1, 1955, 1967/8, 1971/2, 1985 and 1990.

Newspapers

"Page 1 Advertisements Column 6", *Dominion*, Volume 13, Issue 106, 29 January 1920.

"Page 2 Advertisements Column 1", *Dominion*, Volume 13, Issue 50, 22 November 1919.

"Page 6 Advertisements Column 2", *Evening Post*, Volume CXXXIV, Issue 85, 7 October 1942.

Wellington City Archives

"43 Courtenay Place, building", May 8, 1919, 00053:197:10873, Wellington City Archives.

"43 Courtenay Place, erect electric sign", June 23, 1931, 00056:121:B10984, Wellington City Archives.

"43 Courtenay Place, erect sign", June 20, 1935, 00056:158:B14032, Wellington City Archives.

"43 Courtenay Place, erect sign", September 23, 1937, 00056:195:B17046, Wellington City Archives.

"43 Courtenay Place, alter shop front", October 28, 1937, 00056:196:B17063, Wellington City Archives.

⁹ Adapted from Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area Report*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

“43 Courtenay Place, erect sign”, December 5, 1938, 00056:217:B18577, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, shop front alterations”, October 25, 1961, 00058:206:C9397, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, shop alterations (beauty salon)”, November 9, 1961, 00058:208:C9490, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, shop alterations”, March 13, 1963, 00058:275:C12179, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, alterations to coffee bar”, July 22, 1964, 00058:352:C15142, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, alterations to premises”, January 10, 1967, 00058:489:C21046, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, building alterations”, November 16, 1972, 00058:818:C36660, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, building alterations - restaurant (fire damage specs only)”, April 16, 1973, 00058:841:C37585, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, conversion to apartments”, 1997, 00078:104:34005, Wellington City Archives.

“43 Courtenay Place, internal alterations to restaurant”, 2005, 00078:1649:135665, Wellington City Archives.

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?*

Stewart's Building is a diminutive commercial building designed in an eclectic style with elements of Classical, Gothic and Art Deco architecture. It is notable for the unusual first floor bay window, although this is partly concealed by a poorly conceived modern balcony.

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?*

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 an important group of heritage buildings which together form the Courtenay Place Heritage Area. Although most of the buildings were constructed in the first half of the 20th century, there are significant differences in age and style among some of the buildings in this group.

Historic Value:

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

The building was first occupied by Wellington electrician James Stewart for 8 years and his name is still on the face of the building.

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

The building has a representative historical value. Its pattern of use and occupation is typical of many small businesses that lined Courtenay Place in the early decades of the 20th century.

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 - there was pre-1900 human activity on this site.

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?

This building is part of a group of commercial buildings on Courtenay Place and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

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

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?*

This building is representative of commercial buildings built in Wellington in the early 1900s.

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's name is still visible on the face of the building.

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	Not listed
WCC Records – building file	Y	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website	Y	Not listed.
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

00053:197:10873	43 Courtenay Place, building	Legal description: Part Town Acre 277. Applicant: F G Mace. Owner: J Stewart. Index to scans: 1 Plans	08 May 1919
00056:121:B10984	43 Courtenay Place, erect electric sign	Owner: Don Tailors. Builder: Singleton Signs. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £12.	23 Jun 1931
00056:158:B14032	43 Courtenay Place, erect sign	Owner: The Don Tailor. Builder: Claude Neon Lights Ltd. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £50.	20 Jun 1935
00056:195:B17046	43 Courtenay Place, erect sign	Owner: The Don Tailors. Builder: Singleton Signs. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £9 10s.	23 Sep 1937
00056:196:B17063	43 Courtenay Place, alter	Legal description: Part Town	28 Oct

	shop front	ACre 277 . Owner: The Don Tailors. Builder: Barr Brown Construction. Application value: £40. Index to scans: 1 Plans	1937
00056:217:B18577	43 Courtenay Place, erect sign	Owner: Smart Wear Tailors. Builder: A Truman. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £45.	05 Dec 1938
00058:206:C9397	43 Courtenay Place, shop front alterations	Legal description: Part Town Acre 277. Owner: C Chait. Builder: A I Jury. Application value: £800. Index to scans: 1 Plans	25 Oct 1961
00058:208:C9490	43 Courtenay Place, shop alterations (beauty salon)	Owner: C Chait. Builder: A I Jury. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £450.	09 Nov 1961
00058:275:C12179	43 Courtenay Place, shop alterations	Owner: C Chait. Builder: C Chait. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £1,400.	13 Mar 1963
00058:352:C15142	43 Courtenay Place, alterations to coffee bar	Owner: L A Gheysen. Builder: W VanDeBorst. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £400.	22 Jul 1964
00058:489:C21046	43 Courtenay Place, alterations to premises	Owner: C Chait. Builder: Commerical Concrete Limited. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: £3,450.	10 Jan 1967
00058:818:C36660	43 Courtenay Place, building alterations	Owner: Glenvale Wines Limited. Builder: F L Jeffries Limited. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: \$6,500.	16 Nov 1972
00058:841:C37585	43 Courtenay Place, building alterations - restaurant (fire damage specs only)	Owner: Mr Chait. Builder: Barker and Leedbetter Limited. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: \$2,000. Note: Contains	16 Apr 1973

		documentation only, does not contain plans.	
00059:491:E23558	43 Courtenay Place, business additions and alterations - restaurant		1991
00078:104:34005	43 Courtenay Place, conversion to apartments	Owner: Keith and Selwyn Family Trust. Applicant: Vorstermans Whitwell Architects. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: \$60,000.	1997
00078:1649:135665	43 Courtenay Place, internal alterations to restaurant	Owner: Hamao Ltd. Applicant: MM Architecture Ltd. Legal description: Part Section 277 Town of Wellington. Application value: \$100,000. Note: Upgrade of toilet ventilation, construction of deck over existing balcony footpath and replacement of toilet fittings.	2005

ELECTRICAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

EARLY in December my new and up-to-date **ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT STORE**, situated at 43 **COURTENAY PLACE**, will open for the transaction of Electrical Work of all kinds.

The premises have been specially designed to enable patrons to inspect all the latest Electrical Appliances, including Fittings of all kinds, Lamps, Shades, Globes, Irons, Kettles, and other cooking utensils.

Electrical work entrusted to me will be personally supervised.

Watch for my opening.

J. STEWART,
43 Courtenay Place.



MEN!

**YOUR OWN MATERIAL
MADE UP**

**Civilian, Naval, Military, or
Air Force**

"DON" TAILORS

43 COURTENAY PLACE. TEL. 51-604.

Evening Post, Volume CXXXIV, Issue 85, 7 October 1942, Page 6