

Commercial Building

46 Courtenay Place



Image: Charles Collins, 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- 46 Courtenay Place is a pleasant Art Deco style building. Although the shop-fronts and verandah have been much-altered, the façade above verandah level is in near original condition.
- This building is associated with the early social and economic history of Wellington, helping to tell the story of Wellington's development. The building, while originally a retail premises, has for nearly a decade housed restaurants and cafes. This is an important element of Courtenay Place's development as the entertainment district.
- The building makes a positive contribution to the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

Extent: Cityview GIS



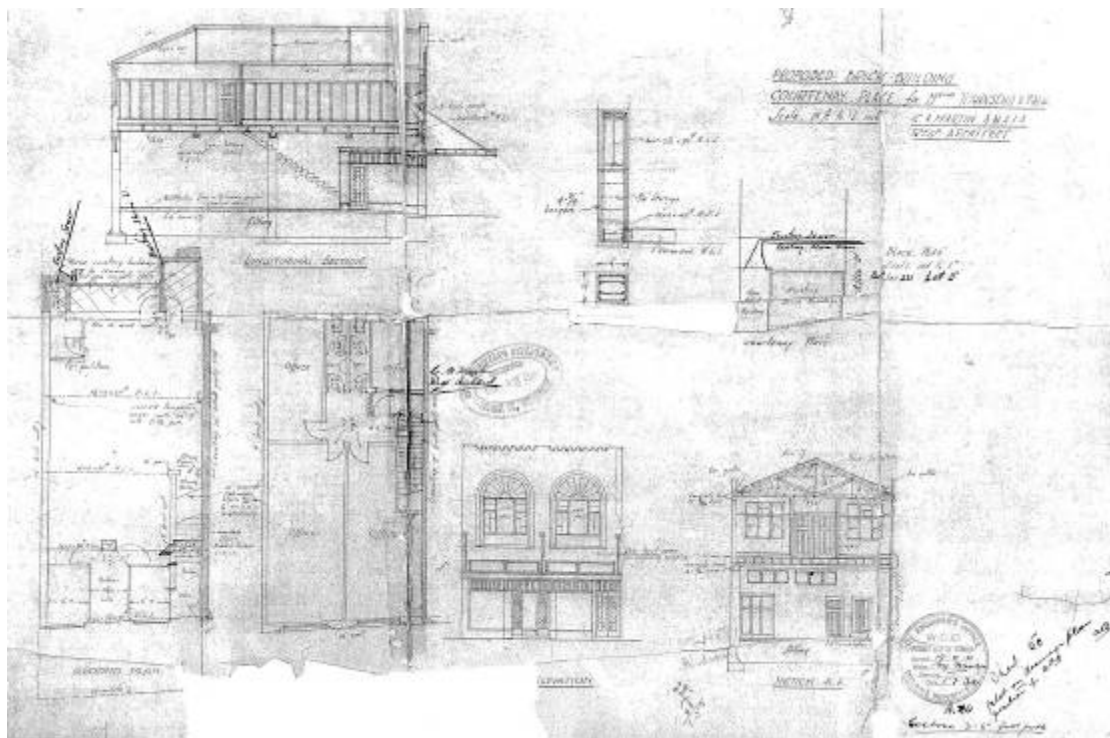
1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This is a unique building that was constructed to a creative and unusual design. It was designed by architect C. A. Martin in 1930 for the Townsend and Paul partnership, who owned several businesses around Wellington, including a fish market in Allen Street.¹ The building has had an uneventful history that is typical of its neighbours on Courtenay Place. It was occupied by the Hall's Shoe Company from 1939 - 1966² and then divided into ground and first floor tenancies in the c.1970s. It has been occupied by various cafés and take-away outlets since that time. Most notably it was the home of The Coachman restaurant owned by Des Britten - food writer, TV presenter and later head of the Wellington City Mission.³

In 2003 the building received earthquake strengthening.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



WCA 00056-88-B9693

1931	Original Construction
1957	Alterations – reinstatement
1966	Additions and alterations
	Additions and alterations
1986	Additions and alterations

¹ 'Proposed Brick Building', WCA 00056-88-B9693; Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand Ref: 1/2-047903-G.. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23102386>

² *Evening Post*, 5 December 1939, Page 3; *Evening Post*, 13 February 1945, Page 3.

³ "Wellingtonian of the Year: Des Britten" *The Dominion Post*, 17/11/2011; Pauline Clayton, Michael Fowler and Jeff Kennedy. *Eating Houses of Wellington*. (Wellington: Anchor Communications, 1980)17-19

1992	Additions and alterations – restaurant fit-out
1998	Additions and alterations – shop fit-out
2004	Seismic strengthening of building
2009	Building additions/alterations – Commercial, new accessible toilet, change swing door, new doors to rear store rooms, remove front windows and replace with bifold doors, window to disabled toilet.

1.3 Occupation history ⁴

1939-1966	Halls Shoe Company
1971 – 72	Multiple Tenants: First floor – The Coachman restaurant (first floor) Stevenson's footwear, The Take Away Food Shop, Food Bar.
1990	Cathy's Takeaways and Jazz Lunch Bar
2013	Café Baba, CGR (Coffee, Gin, Rum) Merchants and Co.

1.4 Architect

C. A. Martin

Unfortunately no information could be found about this architect.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

This diminutive building at 46 Courtenay Place is a unique element in the streetscape, and is one of the few Art Deco influenced buildings in the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

The street elevation features a distinctive crenellated parapet that is reminiscent of a Spanish Mission style. The tall, arched windows are particularly unusual, and feature an embossed 'sunburst-motif' that fills the arch above the window head. The original windows, with their decorative arrangement of glazing bars that divide the casements into square and rectangular panes, are also noteworthy.

The exterior wall, above the verandah, is coated in a roughcast render, with smooth render within the recessed window arches and on the panel under the window.

The verandah and ground floor shop fronts are intrusive modern replacements.

2.2 Materials

Visible materials include concrete foundations, brick walls, steel roof trusses, stucco finishing, and terracotta half round pipes.

⁴ Wellington City Council, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area spreadsheet (Part 2)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

2.3 Setting

The diminutive two-storey Art Deco building at 46 Courtenay Place is bounded to the west by the fine, four-storey, Art Deco style Newport Chambers, and to the east by the pleasant and well scaled four-storey, modern, glass curtain-wall clad BNZ.

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.

3.0 Sources

Wellington City Council, "46 Courtenay Place," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 1995.

Wellington City Council. *Courtenay Place Heritage Area spreadsheet (Part 2)*. Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006.

Papers Past

Evening Post, Volume CXXVIII, Issue 135, 5 December 1939, Page 3

Evening Post, Volume CXXXIX, Issue 37, 13 February 1945, Page 3

Wellington City Archives

WCA 00056-88-B9693

Alexander Turnbull Library

Ref: 1/2-047903-G. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23102386>

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?*

46 Courtenay Place is a pleasant Art Deco style building. Although the shop-fronts and verandah have been much-altered, the façade above verandah level is in near original condition. The building makes a positive contribution to the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

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?*

This building has townscape value for the contribution that it makes to the character of Courtenay Place. It is coherent with the overall nature of Courtenay Place as a heritage area.

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?*

Historic Value:

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

The building was once home to The Coachman, a fine-dining restaurant owned by (Father) Des Britten - food writer, TV presenter and later head of the Wellington City Mission

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

This building is associated with the early social and economic history of Wellington, helping to tell the story of Wellington's development. The building, while originally a retail premises, has for nearly a decade housed restaurants and cafes. This is an important element of Courtenay Place's development as the entertainment district.

Scientific Value:

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

This building is included in the NZAA Central City Archaeological area 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?*

This building has housed restaurants and bars for a number of years as a part of the commercial development of Courtenay Place into the entertainment area of Wellington. For this reason, this building is well liked by Wellingtonians in an important historic area. It retains its social and economic use values.

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 (above verandah level) has had few alterations over the past 80+ years and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of Courtenay Place.

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 a representative of a small scale commercial building from the 1930s. Its value is somewhat diminished by the installation of a modern replacement verandah and shop-fronts.

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?*

This building retains some authenticity of materials, design and craftsmanship for the external façade above verandah level.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

This building is important at a local level for the contribution that it makes to the Courtenay Place heritage area. It is a lively composition and in a reasonably authentic condition.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
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		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*