

Taranaki Street Police Station (Former)

25 Taranaki Street



Summary of heritage significance

- The old Taranaki Street Police Station is a good representative example of an early 20th century civic building. It was designed in an Edwardian Baroque style, and is typical of many buildings designed by the NZ Government Architect's office in the early 20th century.
- This building is associated with the development and subdivision of Courtenay place between 1840 and 1880 and with the Te Aro Pa, which it is at least partially sited upon. It is of historic value for its continuous use as a city police station between 1916 and 1980 and the community which it has served. It is also associated with Government Architect John Campbell.
- The building is part of a row of three heritage buildings that provide visual interest and character to the eastern side of the old 'Taranaki Street Extension'

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 278 <i>Front façade and internal stair case</i>
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 88921
Heritage Area:	-
HPT Listed:	N/A
Archaeological Site:	Sites of significance to Maori - Te Aro Pa R27/15, NZAA Central City Archaeological Area R27/270
Key physical dates:	Built: 1914
Architect / Builder:	Government Architect: John Campbell
Former uses:	Law Enforcement – Police Station
Current uses:	Commercial – restaurant
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not Earthquake Prone – SR 190170

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The Taranaki Street Police Station, designed by Government Architect John Campbell in 1914, is a two-storey Edwardian Baroque building that was in continuous use as a police station between 1916 and 1980.

The early development of Taranaki Street is historically associated with the settlement of Te Aro and the growth of Courtenay Place. The land was originally subdivided in 1840 by the New Zealand Company's Chief Surveyor Captain William Mein Smith. At this time the five acres of land that were to become Manners and Taranaki streets and Courtenay Place, were occupied by Te Aro Pa.¹ By 1835 the pa was occupied by Ngati Haumia (of Taranaki iwi), Ngati Tupaia (of Ngati Ruanui iwi) and their Te Atiawa kin.² The acquisition of Te Aro Pa, and its subsequent subdivision, was one of many controversial actions of the New Zealand Company in Wellington.³ In the 1870s any unsold land at Te Aro Pa was purchased by the Provincial Government so that Taranaki Street could be extended to the harbour.

The Taranaki Street Police Station was planned in 1914 on the 'Taranaki Street Extension'. Newspaper reports of the day noted that the building was built at the seaward side of Te Aro Pa, at "precisely on the spot that the Maoris were wont to pull their canoes up on the beach."⁴ It was designed to house the headquarters of the Mounted Constabulary, with the main station on the street frontage, with police cells and an extensive stable-yard behind.

The main building was constructed with solid foundations, built deep enough to provide a cellar and storage space. The ground floor of the building was occupied by the sergeant-in-charge, other sergeants and detectives, a room for the constables, a watch house, a uniform room, and an apartment in which people who had been arrested were searched prior to being placed in the cells. The upper floors housed sleeping apartments for two unmarried sergeants, five cubicles for constables, a sergeant's sitting room, a bathroom, and a library large enough to accommodate a billiard table.⁵ Construction was completed in 1916, with the Police Commissioner stating that the building was ideally situated, close to the centre of town and within easy range of the theatres, the Town Hall, and the wharf.⁶

The building remained in use as a police station until its closure in the late 1980s. The stables and cells at the back of the building were demolished in the 1990s in favour of car parking, while the rest of the building remained empty until the 2000s. Under new ownership the building was extensively refurbished and seismically strengthened. The ground floor and first floor have been occupied since 2000 by the Zibibbo restaurant, and the basement has been occupied by several different bars (since 2009 this has been Hashigo Zake).

¹ 'Te Aro Pa and Mataurangi: Maori Sites of Te Whanganui a Tara' Wellington City Council Libraries' website accessed March 2014 <http://www.wcl.govt.nz/maori/wellington/ngawaahiara.html>

² Peter Kerr, 'Downtown Discovery' NZHPT website accessed March 2014 http://www.historic.org.nz/publications/heritagenzmagazine/heritagenz2008/hnz08-downtowndiscovery.aspx?sc_lang=en

³ Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Courtenay Place Heritage Area Report* (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006), 5-7.

⁴ 'New Police Station', *Dominion*, Volume 8, Issue 2407, 12 March 1915, Page 7.

⁵ 'New Police Station', *Dominion*, Volume 8, Issue 2407, 12 March 1915, Page 7.

⁶ 'New Police Station', *Dominion*, Volume 9, Issue 2731, 28 March 1916, Page 8.

In 2005 a nearby c.1908 commercial building at 39-43 Taranaki Street was demolished to make way for a new apartment building. Work on site was halted when foundation work for the new building uncovered the remains of Te Aro Pa. The plans for the new apartment building were amended - the planned two-storey basement was omitted so that the archaeology could be preserved on site, and in return the developer was permitted to extend the apartment building in height by two additional floors. The remains of the pa are now publically accessible in glass-encased displays.⁷ The area around the old Taranaki Street Extension must now be considered as high-risk for archaeological discovery.

1.2 Timeline of modifications (original plans could not be located)

1914-1916	Original construction
2000	Renovation, refurbishment, seismic strengthening
2002	Alterations and upgrade of existing bar (basement)
2009	New signage – Hashigo Zake

1.3 Occupation history

1914 – 1980	New Zealand Police
2000-present	Zibibbo Restaurant
2000-2009	Different bars
2009-present	Hashigo Zake Cult Beer bar

1.4 Architect

Campbell, John (1857–1942)

“John Campbell (1857-1942) served his articles under John Gordon (c1835-1912) in Glasgow. He arrived in Dunedin in 1882 and after a brief period as a draughtsman with Mason and Wales joined the Dunedin branch of the Public Works Department in 1883. His first known work, an unbuilt design for the Dunedin Railway Station, reveals an early interest in Baroque architecture. In November 1888 Campbell was transferred to Wellington where in 1889 he took up the position of draughtsman in charge of the Public Buildings Division of the Public Works Department. He remained in charge of the design of government buildings throughout New Zealand until his retirement in 1922, becoming in 1909 the first person to hold the position of Government Architect. Government architecture designed under his aegis evidences a change in style from Queen Anne to Edwardian Baroque. His best-known Queen Anne design is the Dunedin Police Station (1895-8), modelled on Richard Norman Shaw's New Scotland Yard (1887-90). Among his most exuberant Edwardian Baroque buildings is the Public Trust Office, Wellington (1905-09). Although Campbell designed the Dunedin Law Courts (1899-1902) in the Gothic style with a Scottish Baronial inflection, he established Edwardian Baroque as the government style for police stations, courthouses and post offices throughout New Zealand. In 1911 Campbell won the nation-wide architectural competition for the design of Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Although only partially completed, Parliament House is the crowning achievement of Campbell's career.”⁸

1905 – 1909 Public Trust Building, 131 – 135 Lambton Quay

⁷ Peter Kerr, 'Downtown Discovery' NZHPT website accessed March 2014
http://www.historic.org.nz/publications/heritagenzmagazine/heritagenz2008/hnz08-downtowndiscovery.aspx?sc_lang=en

⁸ Historic Places Trust, 'John Campbell', *Professional Biographies*, accessed 31 July 2013,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Campbell,+John>

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture⁹

The former Taranaki Street Police Station was designed by Government Architect John Campbell in 1914. It was designed in the standard government style of the time – Edwardian Baroque. It is in some respects a scaled-down version of the former Wellington Central Police Station in Waring Taylor Street.

The street façade is asymmetric and is divided into five equal bays by a row of tall giant-order pilasters, and horizontally - by a solid base, a rusticated ground floor, string course, a simple cornice and parapets. The main entrance to the building is via the central bay, and there is a wide archway with access to a rear yard via the southernmost bay. The three remaining ground floor bays are in-filled with rusticated render and inset by arched windows. The first floor windows have rectangular heads and are set above rendered panels. The external wall at the first floor is exposed brick. The central window above the main entrance is more elaborate than the flanking windows. The giant-order pilasters are linked in pairs at parapet level and perhaps once supported a pair of elaborate pediments – but the cornice and parapet is now somewhat reduced.

Although the façade is multi-layered and well-considered, the overall effect is of a simplified Edwardian Baroque without the Mannerist excesses of the old Public Trust Building on Lambton Quay.

2.2 Materials

- Concrete
- Brick
- Steel framed windows

2.3 Setting

The old Taranaki Street Police Station is located on the Taranaki Street Extension – a wide six-lane road that is one of the key transport routes through the east of the city. It is part of a group of five buildings that make up the eastern ‘street-wall’ on Taranaki Street between Wakefield Street and Courtenay Place. These buildings are the fine two-storey Manthel Motors Building (1913 - WCC ref 16/377) on the corner of Wakefield and Taranaki Streets, the old Police Station, a three-storey Art Deco building (1924 - WCC ref 16/280), a new 12-storey apartment building that preserves a part of Te Aro Pa in its subfloor, and ‘Molly Malones’ on the corner of Taranaki and Courtenay Place. The street-wall of two to three storey early 20th century rendered masonry buildings is only broken by the modern apartment block that rather towers over its diminutive neighbours.

⁹ Wellington City Council, ‘Taranaki Street Police Station’, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory: Non Residential Precincts*, (Wellington City Council, 2001), COURT25.

3.0 Sources

Historic Places Trust, 'John Campbell', *Professional Biographies*. Accessed 31 July 2013.

<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Campbell,+John>

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

Wellington City Council. *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001.

Papers Past

'New Police Station', *Dominion*, Volume 8, Issue 2407, 12 March 1915, Page 7.

'New Police Station', *Dominion*, Volume 9, Issue 2731, 28 March 1916, Page 8.

4.0 Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

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

The old Taranaki Street Police Station is a good representative example of an early 20th century civic building. It was designed in an Edwardian Baroque style, and is typical of many buildings designed by the NZ Government Architect's office in the early 20th century.

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

The building is part of a row of three heritage buildings that provide visual interest and character to the eastern side of the old 'Taranaki Street Extension'.

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 one of a row of three brick masonry heritage buildings on Taranaki Street that share a similar construction date, history of use and scale. It is flanked to the north by the two-storey Manthel Motors Building (1913 - WCC ref 16/377) on the corner of Wakefield and Taranaki Streets, and to the south by a fine three-storey Art Deco building (1924 - WCC ref 16/280).

Historic Value:

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

This building is associated with the development and subdivision of Courtenay place between 1840 and 1880 and with the Te Aro Pa, which it is at least partially sited upon. It is of historic value for its continuous use as a city police station between 1916 and 1980 and the community which it has served. It is also associated with Government Architect John Campbell.

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

Scientific Value:

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

This building is associated with two known archaeological sites: Sites of significance to Maori – Te Aro Pa R27/15. 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?*

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 contributes to a sense of community identity in Wellington and to a sense of place within Wellington through its continuous use as a police station between 1916 and the 1980s. The exterior has had few modifications and creates a sense of grandeur and dignity far beyond its modest scale.

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 highly successful and confident interpretation of Edwardian Baroque by one of the most prominent architects of the period. It is a good representative of both the style and of John Campbell's work.

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 exterior of this building retains significant original materials and has had few modifications. It has a high level of exterior authenticity in design, craftsmanship, materials, and setting.

The interior of the building has been significantly altered although the original staircase is included in the District Plan listing.

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 of local importance due to its architectural qualities, the connection that it has to the history of Wellington, the contribution that it makes to the present character of Wellington, its townscape values, and its historical associations.

5.0Appendix

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*