

## **Taranaki Street Gates**

Taranaki Street/Taranaki Street Wharf



*WCC Image 2014*

### **Summary of heritage significance**

- The Taranaki Street wharf gates are a simplified version of the earlier Wellington Harbour Board gates at Queen's Wharf.
- The gates mark the southern entrance to the Wellington waterfront and provide restricted vehicular access to the pedestrian "public recreation destination".
- The gates have a strong historic association with the Wellington Harbour Board and were instrumental to the way in which the waterfront was secured and managed. They represent the contentious attempts to restrict public access to the working harbour-side, and the subsequent redefinition of the Wellington waterfront as a public recreation zone.

District Plan:	Map 17, reference 53
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 1 DP 1373
Heritage Area:	None 2013
HPT Listed:	Historic Place Category 2 ref 1447 <i>(note this registration includes a greater extent of gates and railings than the WCC heritage object listing)</i>
Archaeological Site:	Unknown risk
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	c.1930s
Architect / Builder:	W. Cable & Co., Wellington
Former uses:	gates
Current uses:	gates
Earthquake Prone Status:	Unknown at time of writing

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History

The Taranaki Street gates define the southern boundary of the old Wellington Harbour Board, and were fabricated by W. Cable & Co. of Wellington in the c.1930s. They form the main access from the waterfront to the southern end of Wellington's CBD and Te Aro, and were once part of a continuous barrier of sheds, railings and gates, that ran from Waterloo Quay to Taranaki Street.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1890s the Wellington Harbour Board began a project to enclose Wellington's wharves. This work was undertaken, in part, to protect the public from a busy working port.<sup>2</sup> The harbour board ordered a set of gates from Bayliss Jones and Bayliss of London/Wolverhampton, and these were installed at Queen's Wharf in 1899. Although the works were undertaken in the name of public safety, the new fences and gates were controversial as they restricted access to a previously popular public promenade. The choice to commission an English, rather than a New Zealand, foundry did nothing to increase the popularity of the harbour board fences and gates.

Within a few years of the construction of the Queen's Wharf gates, others followed. The flanking fencing and gates to the north and south of the Queen's Wharf entrance were also made by Bayliss, Jones and Bayliss, but the subsequent contracts were let to local foundries, particularly J.W. Faulkner & Co. of Dunedin and W. Cable & Co. of Wellington.

The first set of Taranaki Street gates were installed in 1907 and provided restricted access to the newly completed wharf. The wharf developed into a minor freight and passenger terminal that was well-placed to supply the nearby Westport Coal Company head office (WCC 17/408), the gasworks on Courtenay Place (WCC 16/66.1), the head-office of the Odlin Timber Company (1907 - WCC17/49), and the fresh produce market at Allen Street via Shed 24 (c.1906). The gates were used to lock-out unionised workers during the 1913 Great Strike and formed part of the Wellington Waterside Workers' Union picket-line.<sup>3</sup> In WWI the Taranaki Street wharf was the disembarkation point for several contingents of soldiers, and these include the hospital ship *Maheno* which returned in January 1916 with the wounded from Gallipoli,<sup>4</sup> the *Marama* in January 1919<sup>5</sup> and the *Ellenga* from Egypt in September that year.<sup>6</sup>

The current set of gates first appears on the 1934 berthage plan<sup>7</sup> and the 1948 plans for the alterations to Shed 22.<sup>8</sup> The posts are stamped W. Cable & Co. Ltd, Engineers, Wellington. The gates are a simplified version of those at Queen's Wharf and are made up of a composite of rolled, cast and hand-forged elements.

In 1969 the Taranaki Street wharf was extended and remodelled in order to create a new 'roro' (roll-on, roll-off) freight terminal.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based on Karen Astwood and Barbara Fill, 'Review Report for a Historic Place: Wellington Harbour Board Wharf Gates, Posts, and Railings, Wellington.' (NZHPT, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> LOCAL AND GENERAL. *Evening Post*, 20 April 1898, Page 5; LOCAL AND GENERAL. *Evening Post*, 22 April 1898, Page 4

<sup>3</sup> PICKET LINE. *Dominion*, 1 November 1913, Page 6

<sup>4</sup> MAHENO RETURNS, *Dominion*, 4 January 1916, Page 8

<sup>5</sup> QUARANTINE OF THE MALTA *Dominion*, 29 January 1919, Page 5

<sup>6</sup> PALESTINE CAMPAIGNERS *Dominion*, 15 September 1919, Page 5

<sup>7</sup> 'Wellington Harbour Board Berthage Plan' ATL Cartographic Collection

<http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/content-aggregator/getIEs?system=ilsdb&id=865385>

<sup>8</sup> WCC Archives ref 00056\_358\_B27465

The wharf re-opened on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1969 with the arrival of the *Maheno*, which began a fortnightly trans-Tasman shipping container service, and the diminutive Customs Post building dates from this era. The new facility became redundant when, a week later, the construction of a new container port at Aotea Quay was announced. The wharf was later used for the importation of second-hand cars in 1970s,<sup>9</sup> and, more controversially, an attempt at a live-sheep shipment in 1992. This was blocked by a picket of seamen and Watersiders who were opposed to the use of non-unionised workers. Within two days the service moved to Glasgow Wharf, where any protests could be better controlled by police.

Restrictions to public access to the old wharves began to change in the closing decades of the twentieth century and accelerated when the Wellington Harbour Board was disbanded in 1989. Control of the waterfront was divided into two commercial enterprises; the commercial port to the north of Wellington railway station at Aotea Quay run by Centreport, and a “public recreation destination”<sup>10</sup> to the south run by Wellington Waterfront Ltd.

The Taranaki Street wharf area was transformed from a minor shipping terminal to one of the city’s key waterfront public spaces when the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa opened nearby in 1998. The line of perimeter buildings and fences, that once extended from north of the old Wellington Free Ambulance Building (WCC 17/47) to the Jervois Quay gates, were removed to enhance public access. The gates and fences were dismantled and stored at the old Overseas Passenger Terminal; the Wellington Rowing Club (WCC 17/284) and Star Boating (WCC 17/285) clubrooms were relocated to the east of the new lagoon; and the remaining sheds were demolished. The area around the museum was reconfigured to form a boating lagoon, parkland, and a landscaped open space. Shed 22, the Odlin’s Building, and the former Wellington Free Ambulance Building were refurbished and re-purposed, and the new Circa Theatre (WCC 17/408) and the Wharewaka were built.

The Taranaki Street gates now frame the southern (vehicular) access to the waterfront. Restricted vehicular access is provided by electronic bollards and the gates have been fixed open to allow for unrestricted access for pedestrians and cyclists.

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<sup>9</sup> Rows of imported second-hand cars delayed on Taranaki Street wharf, Wellington. Further negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1974/3995/10a-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand .<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23007250>

<sup>10</sup> “Time in Wellington: History...[abridged]” Wellington Waterfront Ltd website accessed November 2013 <http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/>



1913 – Taranaki Street Wharf during the Great Strike. The view includes policemen and horses, with Shed ‘Y’ (Shed 24) and the *Dorset* in the distance. <sup>11</sup>



Enlarged image of the 1913 gates.

<sup>11</sup> Wellington wharf during the 1913 waterfront strike. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972 :Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/2-048781-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23017426>

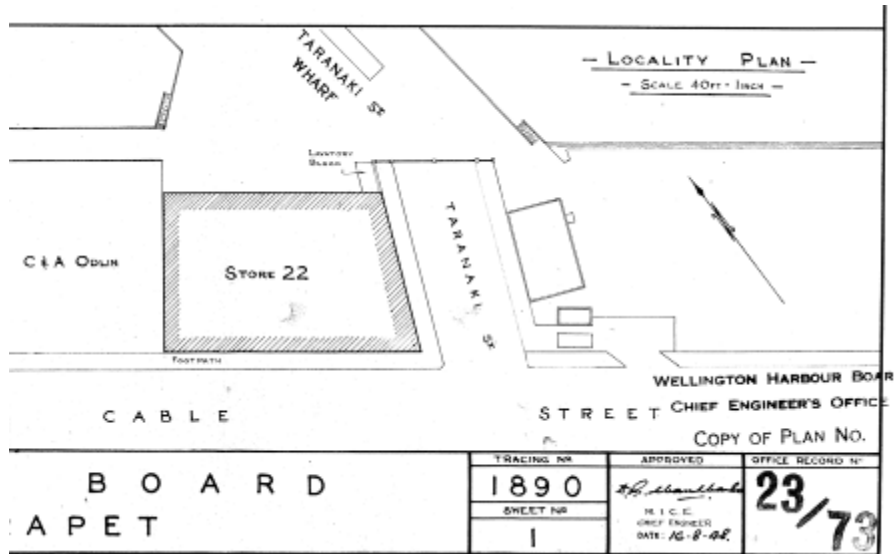


c.1929 view of the Taranaki Street wharf gates<sup>12</sup>



Enlarged image of the gates in 1929 shows the previous configuration of gates.

<sup>12</sup> Wellington city scene including the intersection of Taranaki and Cable Streets. Just, F R :Two albums of photographs and captions relating to the Just family and 119 negatives taken by his father in the 1920s and 1930s of around Wellington and the Bell Bus Company. Ref: 1/2-071478-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23117809>



1948 This drawing of Shed 22 shows the gates in the current configuration.<sup>13</sup>



1956 – aerial photograph of Wellington<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> WCC Archives ref 00056\_358\_B27465

<sup>14</sup> Wellington Harbour southern wharf area with Cable and Taranaki Streets and city, with Kelburn Park and Victoria University, Wellington City. Whites Aviation Ltd :Photographs. Ref: WA-40792-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/30113905>



Enlargement to show the Taranaki Street gates set beside Shed 22 (1919 – 21) WCC 17/50 to the west and the future site of the Circa Theatre to the east.

### 1.2 Timeline of modifications

1907	first gates installed
1919 – 21	Shed 22 built
c.1930s	current set of gates and posts installed
c.1990s	electronic bollards added

### 1.3 Ownership history

c.1880 – 1989	Wellington Harbour Board
unknown date	Wellington Waterfront Ltd (Wellington City Council owned)

### 1.4 Architect

W. Cable & Co. Ltd

In 1921 it was said that: “The history of the iron trade in Wellington is indissolubly associated with the firm of William Cable and Co., whose big up-to-date works at Kaiwarra...are well known throughout the country.<sup>15</sup> This Wellington engineering works was started by E.W. Mills, where William Cable (1848 – 1922) worked as the foundry manager from the late 1870s. A few years later, in 1883, Cable was made a senior partner of the firm operating as Mills and Cable. Eventually Mills retired and, since he had no other partners, Cable’s business became W. Cable & Co. Ltd. By the late nineteenth century the company employed up to 200 people working in the pattern-making, moulding blacksmithing, turning and fitting, and boiler making departments. The company specialised in the repair of small to large ship mechanisms. In the late nineteenth century they were also said to have made boilers for most of the freezing works in the North Island, manufactured the lighting system for Parliament Buildings, and fabricated bridge girders.

<sup>15</sup> ‘The Iron Trade’, *Evening Post*, 8 November 1910, 10



Many components of the Wellington Harbour Board gates, and the post and railings, were created by the company. Cable was closely connected with the Wellington Harbour Board being the chairman (1904- 06) and serving as a member of the board for fifteen years.<sup>16</sup>

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

The location of the Taranaki Street Wharf gates is relatively remote corresponding to the location of the wharf, which, excluding the Clyde Quay Wharf, was the only one located to the south of Lambton Harbour. The gates define the northernmost end of Taranaki Street and are set between Shed 22 and Circa Theatre. There are five tall gateposts across the width of the road, with the gates opening away from the wharf.

The configuration of the gates is symmetrical, and starts with a post, pedestrian gate, post, pair of vehicular gates, post, pair of vehicular gates, post, pedestrian gate, post.

The posts are very similar to those found at Queen's Wharf, they are square in plan and topped by an orb. The orbs are fixed to a circular plate and the transition between the angular to the spherical is broached through an inverse fluted pedestal. The pedestal intersects with a tri-petal gable shape on each of the four sides of the post, and the cornice at the top of the post features a zigzag pattern.

The Taranaki Street wharf gates are a simplified version of those at Queen's Wharf. They are made up of a mix of rolled, cast and some hand-forged elements.

### **2.2 Materials**

Gate posts – assumed cast iron

Gates – are a composite of rolled, cast and hand forged elements. Probably iron, but could possibly be steel.

### **2.3 Setting**

The Taranaki Street wharf gates provide restricted vehicular access to the south of the Wellington waterfront pedestrian zone. They are flanked to the west by Shed 22 (WCC ref 17/50), the Odlin's Building (WCC ref 17/49) and the former Wellington Free Ambulance Building (WCC ref 17/47) and to the east by the Circa Theatre (WCC ref 17/408). Views to the east incorporate the national museum Te Papa, and the floating crane the 'Hikitea'. To the north is an open space with views across Wellington harbour, and near neighbours here are the Wharewaka, and two significant heritage buildings, the relocated Wellington Rowing Club (WCC ref 17/284) and Star Boating Club (WCC ref 17/285).

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<sup>16</sup> 1897 Cyclopaedia; *Evening Post*, 27 July 1922, 6

### 3.0 Sources

1897 Cyclopaedia; *Evening Post*, 27 July 1922

Astwood, Karen and Barbara Fill, 'Review Report for a Historic Place: Wellington Harbour Board Wharf Gates, Posts, and Railings, Wellington.' NZHPT, 2012.

LOCAL AND GENERAL. *Evening Post*, 20 April 1898

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MAHENO RETURNS, *Dominion*, 4 January 1916

PALESTINE CAMPAIGNERS *Dominion*, 15 September 1919

PICKET LINE. *Dominion*, 1 November 1913

QUARANTINE OF THE MALTA *Dominion*, 29 January 1919

Rows of imported second-hand cars delayed on Taranaki Street wharf, Wellington. Further negatives of the *Evening Post* newspaper. Ref: EP/1974/3995/10a-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23007250>

'The Iron Trade', *Evening Post*, 8 November 1910

'Time in Wellington: History... [Abridged]' Wellington Waterfront Ltd website accessed November 2013 <http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/>

WCC Archives ref 00056\_358\_B27465

Wellington city scene including the intersection of Taranaki and Cable Streets. Just, FR: Two albums of photographs and captions relating to the Just family and 119 negatives taken by his father in the 1920s and 1930s of around Wellington and the Bell Bus Company. Ref: 1/2-071478-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23117809>

Wellington Harbour southern wharf area with Cable and Taranaki Streets and city, with Kelburn Park and Victoria University, Wellington City. Whites Aviation Ltd: Photographs. Ref: WA-40792-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/30113905>

Wellington wharf during the 1913 waterfront strike. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/2-048781-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23017426>

## 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 Taranaki Street wharf gates are a good representative example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century gates and are a simplified version of the earlier Wellington Harbour Board gates at Queen's Wharf.

***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 gates mark the southern entrance to the Wellington waterfront and provide restricted vehicular access to the pedestrian "public recreation destination"

***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 gates are part of a group of remaining former Wellington Harbour Board fences and gates that once stretched along Waterloo, Jervois, and Customhouse Quays to Taranaki Street of which near neighbours include Shed 22, the Odlin's Building, the former Wellington Free Ambulance Building and the relocated Wellington Rowing Club and Star Boating Club.

They are one of two sets of Wellington Harbour Board gates represented on the WCC Heritage Inventory.

#### **Historic Value:**

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

The gates have a strong historic association with the Wellington Harbour Board and were instrumental to the way in which the waterfront was secured and managed.

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

The Wellington Harbour Board fences and gates represent the contentious attempts to restrict access to the working harbour-side, and the subsequent redefinition of the Wellington waterfront as a public recreation zone.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

Risk unknown

***Educational:*** Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?

The Wellington Harbour Board fences and gates are a reminder of the infrastructure required to run a working port in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**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?*

The Wellington Harbour Board fences and gates represent the contentious attempts to restrict access to the working harbour-side, and the subsequent redefinition of the Wellington waterfront as a public recreation zone. They are likely to be held in high public esteem for both their contribution to social history and for the quality of their design and workmanship

**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 former harbour board gates contribute to the sense of place and continuity of the Taranaki Street wharf 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?*

**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 Taranaki Street wharf gates are the second set of gates used by the Wellington Harbour Board to secure the southern entrance to the waterfront. They have had few changes over the past 70+ years and retain most of their original built fabric.

**Local/Regional/National/International**

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

The Taranaki Street wharf gates have local significance.

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## 5.0 Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	N	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
WCC Records – building file	n	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)	N	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
Plan change?	N	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files	Y	
Conservation Plan	N	
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	

### 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*