

Commercial Building

18-22 Courtenay Place



Image: WCC, 2012

Summary of heritage significance

- 18-22 Courtenay Place is a two storey Edwardian Classical building topped by an unsympathetic modern single-storey roof-extension. The original building is a pleasant, well- proportioned Classical design with a fine early 20thC shop-front.
- The building has historical value for its association with the historic development of both the Allen and Blair Street Precinct and Courtenay Place during the early twentieth century.
- The building is part of and contributes to the Courtenay Place Heritage Area, a unique collection of historic buildings of a similar age, style and use.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| District Plan: | Map 16, reference 26/7 |
| Legal Description: | LOT 18 DP 1302 |
| Heritage Area: | Courtenay Place Heritage Area |
| HPT Listed: | No |
| Archaeological Site: | Māori site of significance Central City NZAA R27/270 |
| Other Names: | Paradiso Restaurant Hummingbird Café |
| Key physical dates: | 1907 |
| Architect / Builder: | Architect: Charles Tilleard Natusch Builder: Sykes and Harwood |
| Former uses: | Commercial |
| Current uses: | Restaurant |
| Earthquake Prone Status: | SR 167323 - Clarification RFI Sent |

Extent: Cityview 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

Formerly a slum area, the district surrounding Allen and Blair Streets was redeveloped from 1898-1904 after the land came under the control of the Harbour Board. With preparations to install the new electric tram network in-hand and the Te Aro railway station located nearby, the Harbour Board decided to turn the area into a market. The area's fortunes soon rose with the construction of warehouses along the lengths of Allen and Blair Streets.¹

In 1907 a permit was issued for the construction of a building on the corner of Courtenay Place and Blair Street for James Loudon. It was originally designed as three shops with a frontage opening onto Courtenay Place and with dwellings above on the first floor. In 1919 the building was purchased by the Symonds Brothers who were butchers. That same year they removed the internal partitions to create a single retail unit, constructed a verandah, and a built a two storey addition to the rear of the building with a street façade to Blair Street.² The original building remained a shop until 1976 when it was converted into a restaurant.

Throughout the twentieth century various businesses operated out of the Blair Street addition. Tenants appear to have alternated between furniture shops, a business school and the offices of the New Zealand Student Association.

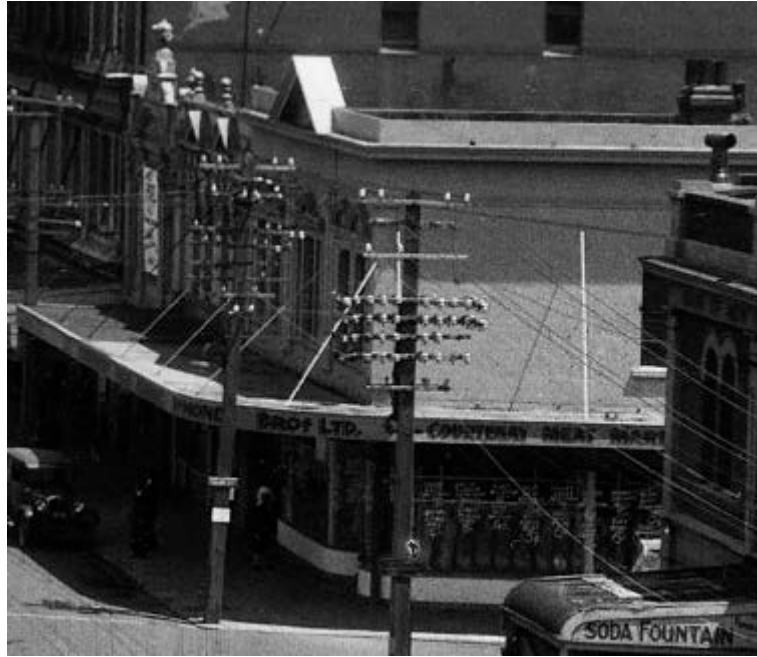
In the 1984 a penthouse was added to the third floor of the entire building, and in 1996 renovations were made to extend the restaurant/bar Café Paradiso into the Blair Street addition.³ It has continued to function in this role and has been known since 2000 as the 'Hummingbird' eatery and bar.⁴

¹ Wellington City Council, 'Allen and Blair Streets,' *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings* (Wellington City Council, 2001), ALLEN & BLAIR.

² '32 Blair Street, new building built as an addition,' 1919, 00053:199:11005, Wellington City Archives.

³ '18-22 Courtenay Place, shop front alterations,' 1996, 00078:36:24663:001, Wellington City Archives.

⁴ Wellington City Council, '32 Blair Street,' *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings* (Wellington City Council, 1995), B.

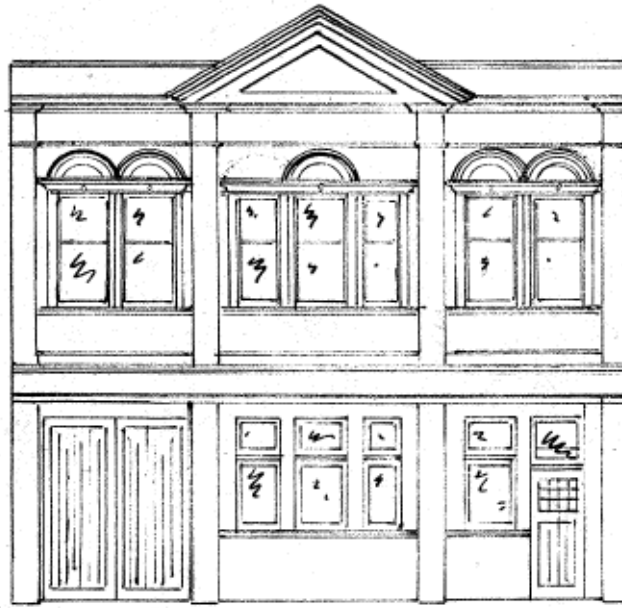


Looking north west along Courtenay Place in Wellington, 1920. Original photographic prints and postcards from file print collection, Box 2. Ref: PAColl-5584-26. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.



Courtenay Place, Wellington, 1939. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/2-048355-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



ELEVATION

'32 Blair Street, new building built as an addition,' 1919, 18-00053:199:11005, Wellington City Archives.

- 1919 Remove brick party walls, chimney, verandahs, shop fronts and internal fittings. Erection of verandah and new building addition. (00053:198:10915)
- 1919 Part of premises sectioned off and divided into separate shop (00053:198: 11005)
- 1930 1st floor of 22 Courtenay & adjoining 32 Blair opened up more (00053:198:B8956)
- 1939 Stairs removed (00053:198:B19212)
- 1940 Building alts Spiral stair added, ground floor exterior wall altered, windows added (00053:198:B20275)
- 1976 Converted shop to restaurant (00053:198:C44788)
- 1984 Strengthening (00053:198:C64403)
- 1984 Additional top floor, extended verandah (00053:198:C64100)
- 1988 Fire reinstatement (00053:198:D8818)
- 1995 Fire reinstatement (00053:198:15097)
- 1995 Shop front alts (00053:198:15059)
- 1996 Opening in existing wall & extension of verandah (SR24663)

1.3 Occupation history

Courtenay Place

- 1910 James Henry Bettany, confectioner
- 1919 Symonds Bros Butchers
- 1955 Radio Sound and Service Limited
- 1980 A1 Trading Mart
- 1990 Café Paradiso
- 2000 Hummingbird Café

Blair Street

- 1925 J. Bowie, furniture salesman
- 1935 City Furnishings Company
- 1940 Gilby's College
- 2000 Hummingbird Café

30 Blair Street

- 1955 George Thomas and Company Limited
- 2000 Hummingbird Café

32 Blair Street

- 1961 Flockton and Company Limited
- 1985 Kerr Cowan Limited
New Zealand University Students Association
- 1990 Kerr Cowan Limited
Percival Publishing Limited
Tall Poppies Limited
- 2000 Hummingbird Café

1.4 Architect

Charles Tilleard Natusch founded his practice in Wellington in 1886, having completed his architectural studies in England in 1882. He immigrated to New Zealand in 1886 after spending the intervening time in the United States, Canada and working in town planning in England. Over the years, Natusch was based in Wellington, Masterton, Pahiatua and finally Napier. When he was commissioned to work on the Feilding Club, his three sons had joined the practice and the firm had offices in Wellington, Pahiatua, Napier, Gisborne and Palmerston North. Natusch is particularly well known for his residential buildings, which include Bushy Park (Register Number 157), Gwavas (Register Number 173) Matapiro (Register Number 171), Maungaraupi (4916) and Wharerata (Register Number 1188).⁵

⁵ New Zealand Historic Places Trust Professional Biographies, 'Charles Tilleard Natusch,' accessed 11 September 2012, [http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Natusch,+Charles+Tilliard+\(1859-1951\)](http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Natusch,+Charles+Tilliard+(1859-1951)).

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

18-22 Courtenay Place is a two storey Edwardian Classical building topped by a modern single storey roof extension. The ground floor shop-fronts, although not original⁶ are an early alteration that make a strong contribution to the building. They consist of large glazed shop-front windows set above a low plinth, and with a row of multifaceted lead-light top-light windows above. The façade above verandah level consists of a central bay of three windows, topped at parapet level with a triangular pediment and flanked on either side by a pair of sash windows. The decorative scheme of pilasters, cornice and semi circular mini-pediments over the windows are in relatively low-relief and the building is fairly sparsely adorned, particularly when compared with its near neighbour, "Kitty O'Shea's". The secondary facade to Blair Street has almost no decorative ornamentation, with the exception of the cornice that extends around the corner.

There is a two-storey 1919 addition to the rear of the building at Blair Street constructed in a simple transitional Classical/modernist style with timber casement windows that makes a contribution to the Blair Street Heritage Area, and a poorly conceived 1984 roof extension that does not.

2.2 Materials

- Brick
- Cement render

2.3 Setting

The former shop is situated on the corner of Blair Street and Courtenay Place. It marks the eastern end of a block of buildings between Blair and Allen Streets which face onto Courtenay Place. To the north, along Blair Street, are former warehouse buildings which are consistent with the former shop in their age and style. To the west, along Courtenay Place, are buildings which are also of a similar height and style. Its immediate western neighbour on Courtenay Place also has triangular pediments.

⁶ See elevations from: '32 Blair Street, new building built as an addition,' 1919, 00053:199:11005, Wellington City Archives.

3.0 Sources

New Zealand Historic Places Trust Professional Biographies. 'Charles Tilleard Natusch.' Accessed 11 September 2012.

[http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Natusch,+Charles+Tilliard+\(1859-1951\)](http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Natusch,+Charles+Tilliard+(1859-1951))

Wellington City Council. "Allen and Blair Streets." *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001. ALLEN & BLAIR.

Wellington City Council. '32 Blair Street.' *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 1995.

Wellington City Archives

'18-22 Courtenay Place, shop front alterations.' 1996. 00078:36:24663:001.

'32 Blair Street, new building built as an addition.' 1919. 00053:199:11005.

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?*

18-22 Courtenay Place is a two storey Edwardian Classical building topped by an unsympathetic modern single-storey roof-extension. The original building is a pleasant, well- proportioned Classical design with a fine early 20thC shop-front.

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 has some townscape value as it not only marks the corner of Blair Street and Courtenay Place, but its style is in keeping with that exhibited by adjoining buildings on both streets. This value is somewhat diminished by the modern roof-top addition.

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 the Blair and Allen Street Precinct and the Courtenay Place Precinct which contain buildings of a similar size, age and style.

Historic Value:

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

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

The building is associated with the historical development of the Allen and Blair Street Precincts that took place between 1898 and 1904 and the development of Courtenay Place at the start of the twentieth century.

Scientific Value:

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

It is known that there has been pre-1900 human activity on the site. Te Aro Pa was located nearby and the area 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?*

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 is part of the Courtenay Place heritage area which, because of its unique collection of heritage buildings, contributes to both a local Wellington and a greater New Zealand identity.

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?*

Local/Regional/National/International

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

Because the building is part of a unique collection of heritage buildings within the Courtenay Place Heritage Area it is important on both a local and national level.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

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

Background research