

Commercial Building
24-26 Courtenay Place



Image: Charles Collins, 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- 24-26 Courtenay Place is a good representative example of a Victorian shop/dwelling and is one of the oldest buildings in the Courtenay Place Heritage Area. It is notable for its handsome, symmetrical façade that is decorated by a restrained palette of Classical ornamentation.
- 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 contributes to the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 64/1
Legal Description:	Pt Sec 223 Town of Wellington
Heritage Area:	Courtenay Place Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Not Registered
Archaeological Site:	NZAA Central City R27/270
Other Names:	Nicolini's restaurant, The Minibar
Key physical dates:	Built: 1895
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Francis Penty
Former uses:	Commercial and residential
Current uses:	Commercial – restaurants
Earthquake Prone Status:	<i>Not Earthquake Prone- SR 188101</i>

Extent: Cityview GIS



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This small two storey building was built for Mr William Boocock, boot-maker, in 1894 and designed by prominent 'architect and sanitary engineer' Francis Penty and the applicant was John Collins.

The building originally contained two shops on the ground floor, each with a sitting room and kitchen behind. On the first floor each living unit had a bedroom facing onto Courtenay Place, a box room and drawing room. It appears that Mr Boocock did not remain in the building for long, as this advertisement from 1900 shows.

TO BOOTMAKERS AND OTHERS.

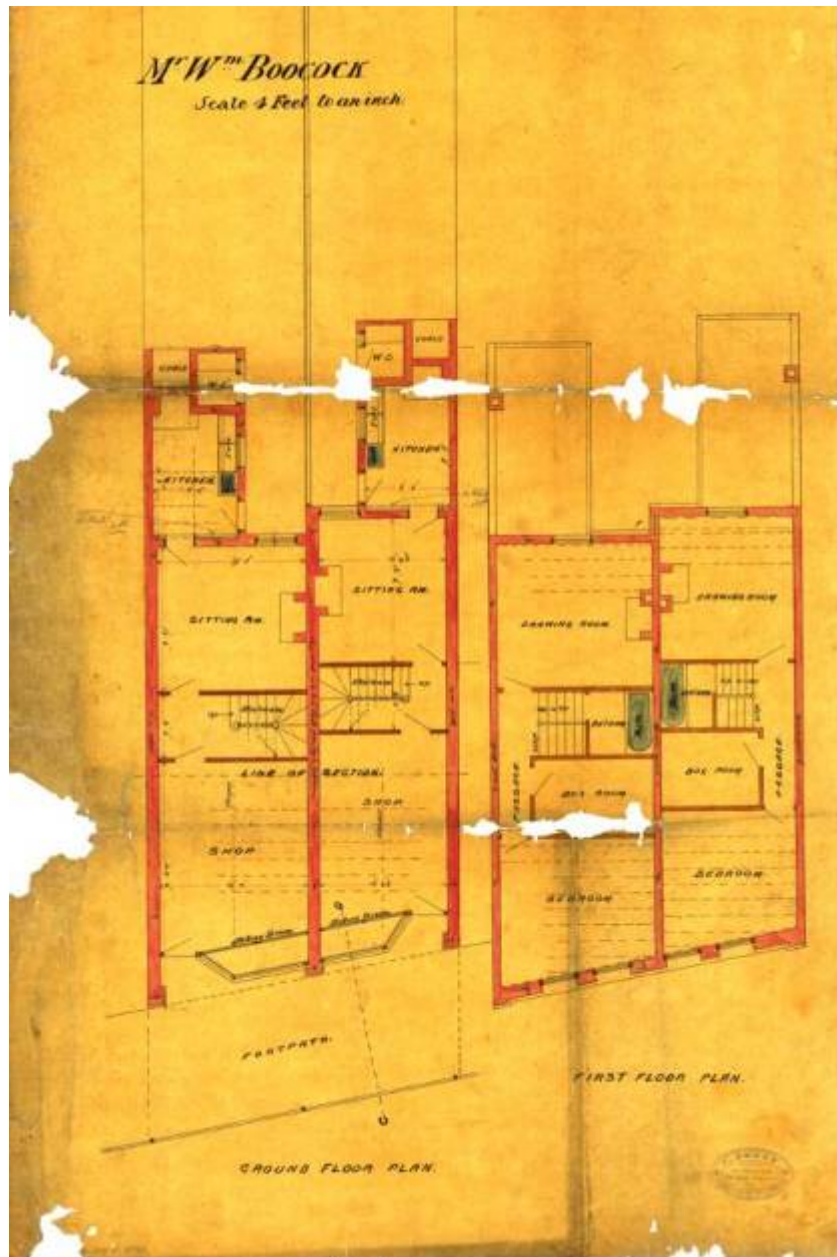
A GOOD Genuine Business For Sale,
together with Stock of Boots and Shoes,
and all necessary plant, press, rollers, lasts,
knives, necessary sewing machines; all in
complete going order. Owner leaving for
England. Apply
WILLIAM BOOCOOCK,
Courtenay-place.

Evening Post, Volume LX, Issue 121, 19 November 1900, page 8.

The building has housed a mix of retail uses with the Zealandia café occupying part of it by 1920, and the Wellington Continental Cakes Ltd in the 1970s/80s.¹ The building has now been split between two businesses, with one half being occupied by Nicolini's restaurant, and the other half by the 'Minibar'.

¹ 'Advertisements', Evening Post, Volume C, Issue 63, 11 September 1920, page 1.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



- 1895 Original Construction (00053: 18: 1034)
- 1925 Repair work and alterations (00056: 95: B8843)
- 1928 Building alterations (00056: 63: B6062)
- 1942 Alteration – Neon sign (00056: 276: B22264)
- 1951 Kitchen alterations and out building (00056: 401: B30849)
- 1960 Alterations – first floor café (00058: 163: C7602)
- 1969 Shop alterations (00058: 616: C28778)
- 1996 Alterations – Shop front fit-out (00078: 46: 25918)
- 2003 Building modifications – Earthquake strengthening (00078: 2500: 83283)

1.3 Occupation history

William Boocock, boot manufacturer (Stones 1895-6 to 1900)

Walter James Jackson, butcher (Stones 1910-11)

John Symonds, butcher (Stones 1915-16)

Paxie & Gerondis, restaurateurs (Stones 1910-11 to 1915-16)

Rafto & Andrews, restaurateurs (Stones 1920)

Zealandia Cafe (Stones 1925 - 1940)

Christies Oyster Bar & Dining Room (Stones 1945; Wises 1950-51 to 1955)

New Zealandia Oyster Bar (Wises 1961-2 to 1967-8)

International Cakes (Wises 1971-2 to 1975)

Wellington Continental Cakes (Wises 1980 - 1990)

1.4 Architect

Francis Penty

Mr. Penty was born in Yorkshire in 1841, and was educated at private schools in York, where he studied for his profession, prior to becoming a pupil of Mr. J. E. Oates, of York and Halifax. On the completion of his articles in 1862, Mr. Penty was employed on the Liverpool Exchange works for five years, after which he went to Manchester.

There he entered the office of one of the best architects in England, his employer being a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and vice-president of that institute. During the time that Mr. Penty stayed in this office, a period of seven years, the firm erected buildings, some of them costing upwards of £10,000. Mr. Penty then went to Windsor, and superintended a large job which occupied some fifteen months. Subsequently he joined the Royal Engineers, on the civil staff, and was engaged, under the 'Localisation of Forces Act', in the erection of new barracks. He then took charge of the architectural branch of the London and North Western Railway, the northern division being allotted to him, and this appointment he retained for twelve years.

Mr. Penty settled permanently and established himself in business in Wellington in the year 1887. He has erected during the time he has been in the Empire City no less than 150 private houses, at a cost of £60,000. Amongst the buildings which he has erected may be mentioned the Convalescent Home in Oriental Bay; the warehouse and livery stables of Messrs. Townsend and Paul in Victoria Street, the fruit market in Harris Street, Mr. George Webb's premises in Tory Street, and the residence of Mr. J. C. Edwards, Brougham Street, a picture of which is given herewith. At the present time (1896), Mr Penty is erecting a handsome brick warehouse for the Wellington Woollen Company on Jervois Quay, and some brick shops in Willis Street.

Of country buildings that have been erected by Mr. Penty, the large house of twenty rooms for Messrs. R. and J. F. Maunsell, of Te Nui, must not be omitted. Mr. Penty brought with him from England testimonials of a very high order, including one from Mr. Joseph Boulton, F.R.I.B.A., surveyor to the Liverpool Exchange Company, and to the Northern Committee of the Fire Offices. He has also testimonials from Mr. Jonathan Parsons, superintendent of the new Exchange at Liverpool, which was constructed in 1871; from Messrs. Robert Neill, James Reiss, Thomas Worthington, F.R.I.B.A., and from Mr. S. B. Worthington, member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, Manchester. During his residence in Wellington Mr. Penty has taken an active interest in public matters. For three years he was Councillor for the City, and particulars concerning him in that capacity are given under the heading of "Ex-Councillors."²

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

No.24-26 Courtenay Place is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the Courtenay Place Heritage Area. It is a diminutive two-storey building that was designed as a pair of shop/residences. It has a simple but handsome symmetrical façade divided in two bays; each bay has two arched windows with architrave mouldings and a string course at the springing line and surmounted by an entablature formed with two further string courses and a small triangular pediment set against a plain parapet.³ The structure of the building is concrete foundations, masonry walls, and timber floors and roof structure.

This building is a lively composition and in relatively authentic condition, although the ground floor shop frontages have been altered, and the original bull-nosed verandah has been replaced.⁴ This building and the next are also largely obscured from view by modern bus shelters.

2.2 Materials

This building is constructed on concrete foundations with masonry walls and with timber floors and roof structure.

2.3 Setting

No.24-26 is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the Courtenay Place Heritage Area and contributes to the diversity of styles and periods of building that are found within this precinct. It is an important element of the streetscape, effectively helping to maintain the historic character of this inner city area where other parts of the city have now been overtaken with modern buildings.

² The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District] 1897.

<http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d13-d63.html>

³ 'Courtenay Place Heritage Area' unpublished report produced for DPC 48 (2006)

⁴ Wellington City Council, "24-26 Courtenay Place," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Historic Precincts*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), COURT 7.

3.0 Sources

Courtenay Place Heritage Area' unpublished report produced for DPC 48 (2006)

'Francis Penty', The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District] 1897., accessed 18/04/2013. <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d13-d63.html>

Wellington City Council, "24-26 Courtenay Place," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Historic Precincts*. Wellington City Council, 2001

Papers Past

Evening Post, Volume LX, Issue 121, 19 November 1900

Evening Post, Volume C, Issue 63, 11 September 1920

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?*

24-26 Courtenay Place is a good representative example of a Victorian shop/dwelling and is one of the oldest buildings in the Courtenay Place Heritage Area. It is notable for its handsome, symmetrical façade that is decorated by a restrained palette of Classical ornamentation.

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 some townscape value, but is partly obscured from view by a row of intrusive modern bus shelters.

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?*

This building, as an element of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area, is part of a group of historic buildings that are coherent in age, history, scale, materials, and use.

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?*

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 in the development of Courtenay Place's as an entertainment district.

Scientific Value:

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

This building was constructed pre 1900 so is classed as an archaeological site by the HPA (1993). It is also included in the NZAA Central City R27/270 listing.

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?*

The building may be held in public esteem for its continuing use as an hospitality venue.

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 has had few intrusive modern alterations or additions (with the notable exception of the modern shop-fronts & verandah) 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 good representative of the Victorian Italianate style and contributes positively to the architectural character of the Courtenay Place Heritage Area.

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 authenticity of materials, design and craftsmanship. It has had few exterior modifications, with the removal of the original bull-nosed verandah being one of the few that may negatively impact upon the value 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?

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*