

## Maguire's Building

168-174 Cuba Street



Image: *Charles Collins, 2014*

### Summary of heritage significance

- Designed by prominent Wellington architectural firm Thomas Turnbull and Son in 1900, this Edwardian Classical building retains a high level of architectural authenticity, and is notable for retaining most, if not all, of its original parapet and decorative finials.
- The building has historic value for its connection to several successful Wellington businessmen, and as a representative example of a commercial mixed use investment property built during the growth and development of Cuba Street in the Edwardian period.
- This building is part of a group of Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contribute to the sense of place and continuity of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 85/1 ( <i>front facade - first floor &amp; above</i> )
Legal Description:	Pt Sec 151 Town of Wellington
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 5365
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	McGuire's Building
Key physical dates:	1900 permit
Architect / Builder:	Thomas Turnbull and Son
Former uses:	Retail / residential
Current uses:	Retail / residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	S124 served. Expires 19/8/2026 (SR 185326)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History

This building was designed by Thomas Turnbull and Son and built for Gilmer, McArdle and Maguire.<sup>1</sup> The permit was issued in September 1900.<sup>2</sup> The building was originally planned to house four narrow shops on the ground floor and four residential apartments on the two floors above.

Hamilton Gilmer, Owen McArdle, and Allen Maguire purchased the land in 1899<sup>3</sup> and commissioned this property as an investment. This trio, all shareholders in the brewing firm Staples and Co., were described by the *Free Lance* as “constant companions” and “the three deep in conference, with hands thrust into their pockets, were a familiar sight on the Quay.”<sup>4</sup> Their heirs owned the property until 1977 when it was sold to the Papageorgiou family who continue to own the building today (2012).

Over the years the premises have been leased to a variety of tenants, including a fishmonger, watchmaker, jeweller, tailor, tea merchant, tea rooms, and grocer.

Major alterations were made in 1989 when the building was earthquake-strengthened. This involved inserting three steel frames parallel to the street in the front, centre, and back of the building. Concrete columns were also inserted and the floors were braced with steel cross-bracing and ply on the underside, leaving the original floorboard intact.<sup>5</sup> Various other modifications have been made to the building over time.

#### Hamilton Gilmer

Hamilton Gilmer was born in Ireland in 1838.<sup>6</sup> In 1860 he travelled with four of his brothers to the Victorian goldfields.<sup>7</sup> After a brief time there he sought his fortune in New Zealand, arriving at Gabriel’s Gully in Otago at the height of its fame. He then followed the rush to Hokitika on the West Coast and eventually settled to a business career in Greymouth where, with his brothers, he owned “Gilmers Hotel”. In 1881 he moved to Wellington which he saw as the future political and commercial centre of the nation. Gilmer was well known in business circles, with large brewery, property and hotel interests. He owned the Empire Hotel on Willis Street,<sup>8</sup> and his brother Samuel owned the Royal Oak Hotel on Cuba Street.<sup>9</sup> Among other positions he was the Managing Director of Staples Brewery and the Director of the Atlas Insurance Company. He was also the largest shareholder in the “New Zealand Times”. From 1907-1914 he was a member of the Legislative Council.

Gilmer died at his residence on The Terrace in 1919.<sup>10</sup> His funeral was attended by a large number of leading citizens, including the Mayor of Wellington, Mr JP Luke.<sup>11</sup> His estate was valued at £300,000.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note: Maguire is spelt alternatively as McGuire in various newspaper reports.

<sup>2</sup> “168-174 Cuba Street, four shops”, September 14, 1900, 00053:65:4038, Wellington City Archives.

<sup>3</sup> Land Title Service, CT 24/54 and CT 24/55.

<sup>4</sup> “All Sorts of People”, *Free Lance*, Volume VIII, Issue 397, 8 February 1908, Page 4

<sup>5</sup> Wellington City Council, “168-174 Cuba Street”, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA 23.

<sup>6</sup> “Obituary” *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 149, 26 June 1919, Page 6

<sup>7</sup> “Untitled” *Free Lance*, Volume XIX, Issue 991, 2 July 1919, Page 11

<sup>8</sup> Cyclopedica Co. Ltd, “Hotels”, in *The Cyclopedica of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedica Company Limited, 1897), accessed September 24, 2012,

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d47-d1.html>

<sup>9</sup> “Pars About People”, *Observer*, Volume XXXIX, Issue 46, 19 July 1919, Page 4

<sup>10</sup> “Deaths”, *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 149, 26 June 1919, Page 1

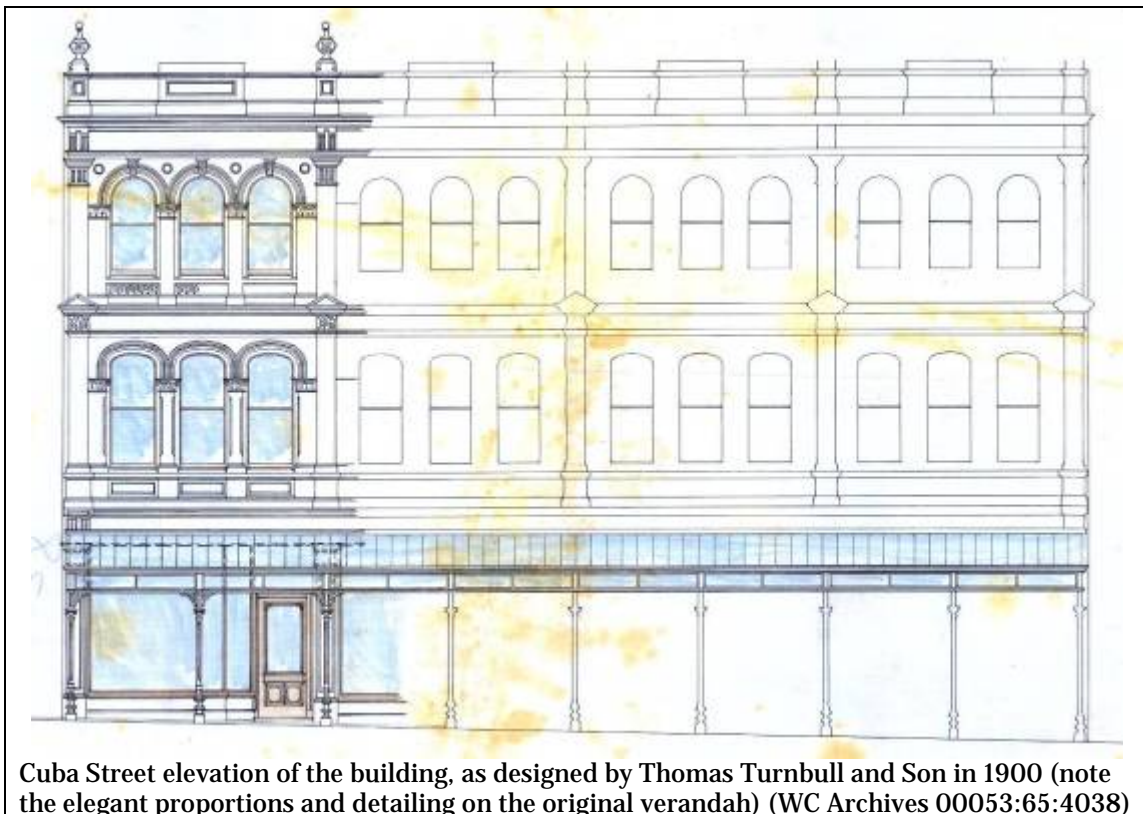
<sup>11</sup> “Funeral of Mr Hamilton Gilmer”, *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 150, 27 June 1919, Page 8

### Owen McArdle

Owen McArdle was born in Ireland and immigrated to New Zealand in the 1870s.<sup>13</sup> He joined his cousins, the Gilmers, on the West Coast where they were running the “Gilmer Hotel”. In subsequent years he was employed by the Staples Brewery as secretary, and was later the Wellington manager. He is known to have had an interest in other properties, such as the Alexandra Building (1905) which still stands at 175-179 Cuba Street, which he invested in with Andrew Wylie, a well-known lawyer.<sup>14</sup> McArdle did not live long to experience the rewards of his property ventures, as he died suddenly of a heart attack in Masterton in 1908 where he was inspecting the new Empire Hotel Building with Hamilton Gilmer and Allen Maguire.<sup>15</sup> His obituary noted he was a “very well-known citizen of Wellington”.<sup>16</sup>

### Allen Maguire

Less is known of Allen Maguire. He was also one of the Directors of Staples and Co.<sup>17</sup> At the time of his death in 1915 he was described him as “the well-known Wellington contractor” who “carried out many big works in Wellington, as well as works on the Midland Railway and in the Auckland District”.<sup>18</sup>



Cuba Street elevation of the building, as designed by Thomas Turnbull and Son in 1900 (note the elegant proportions and detailing on the original verandah) (WC Archives 00053:65:4038)

<sup>12</sup> “Late Mr Hamilton Gilmer's Estate”, *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 6, 7 July 1919, Page 8

<sup>13</sup> Kerryn Pollock, *Alexandra Buildings: 175-179 Cuba Street* (Historic Places Trust, unpublished registration report), July 21, 2006.

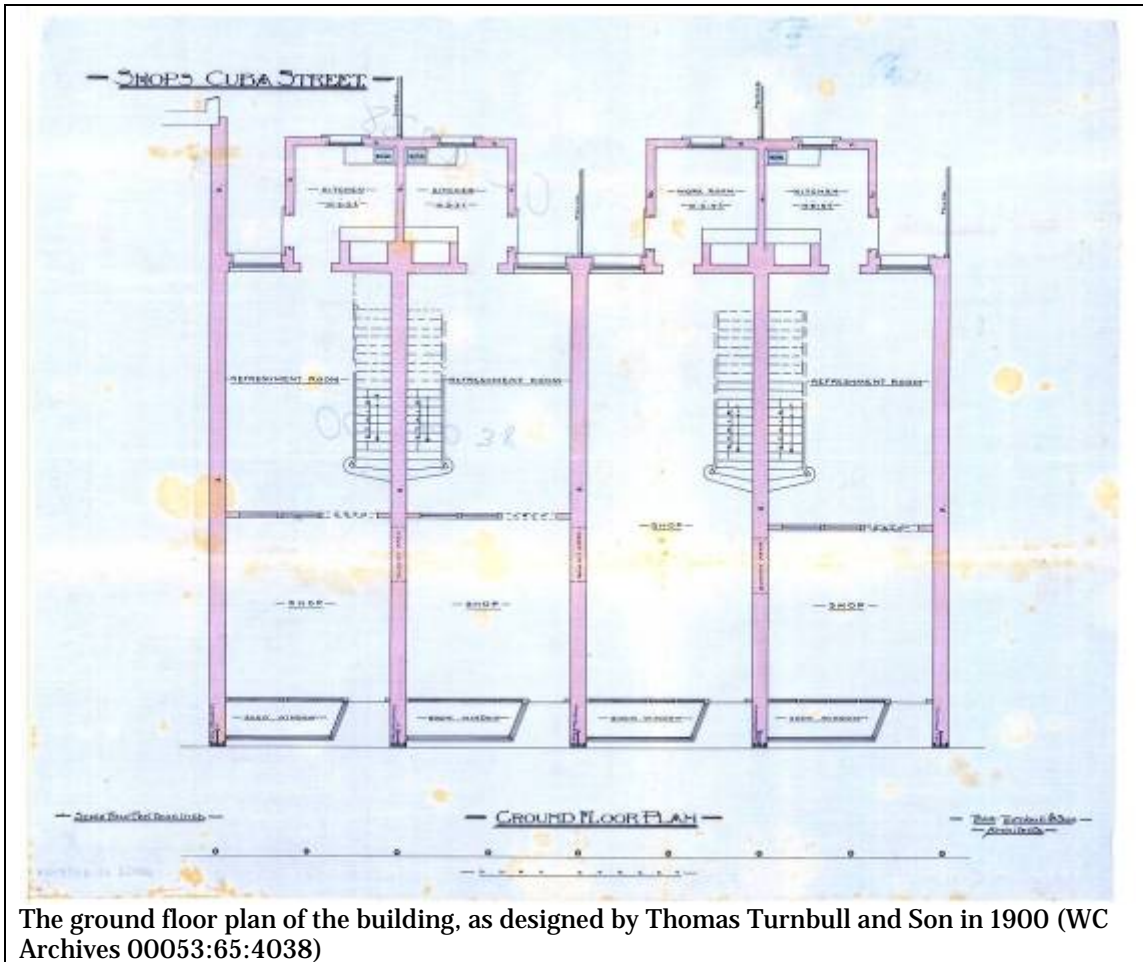
<sup>14</sup> Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, “Barristers and Solicitors,” in *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897), accessed 19 September, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d26-d6.html>

<sup>15</sup> “Death of Mr O. McCardle”, *Wairarapa Daily Times*, Volume LVIII, Issue 8979, 1 February 1908, Page 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> “Personal”, *Colonist*, Volume LVII, Issue 13735, 25 March 1915, Page 4



## 1.2 Timeline of modifications

OC 4038: construction

- 1900 Building constructed (00053:65:4038)
- 1926 168, 170 and 172 Cuba – WCs (00056:24:B2452)
- 1927 Additions to premises (00056:28:B2766)
- 1930 Shop front alterations (00056:100:B9240)
- 1932 168 – shop front (00056:128:B11599)
- 1949 174 – alterations to bakehouse (00056:373:B28717)
- 1954 Verandah (00056:476:B35933)
- 1985 Refurbishment, office building (00059:0:D1705)
- 1989 Business additions and alterations – strengthening (00059:327:E18458)
- 1997 Café additions and alterations (00078:81:30452)

### 1.3 Occupation history

Long-term tenants include:

Nicholas Fernandos, fishmonger (168) (Stones 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920)  
Donald Gillies, watchmaker /jeweller (170) (Stones 1905, 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920, 1925)  
Osborne & Baker, tailors (172) (Stones 1905, 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920, 1925)  
Gamble & Creed, tea merchants & tea rooms (174) (Stones 1915-16, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935, 1940)  
J.W Batten Ltd (170), pawnbrokers & jewellers (Stones 1930, 1935, 1940)  
Hill Bros Ltd, grocers (172) (Stones 1930, 1935)  
Wong Tong Fruiterers, later Cuba Fruit Mart (168-170) (Stones 1935, 1940, 1945, Wises 1950-51, 1955, 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1975, 1980,1985,1990)  
Briot & Sons, pawnbrokers (170) (Stones 1945, Wises 1950-51, 1955)  
Excelsior Cake Shop & Tea Rooms (late Gamble & Creed 174) (Stones 1945, Wises 1950-51)  
Walker's Umbrella Shop's Ltd (172) (Wises 1950-51, 1955)  
Empire Jewellers (Wises 1961-62, 1967-68)<sup>19</sup>

2012:

Olive (from at least 1999)  
Cuba Street Fruit Mart

### 1.4 Architect

#### Thomas Turnbull and Son

Turnbull and Son was founded by Thomas Turnbull (1824-1907) who was born in Scotland and trained under David Bryce, Her Majesty's Architect for Scotland.<sup>20</sup> Turnbull moved to Melbourne in 1851 and then to San Francisco in circa 1860 where he became interested in earthquake resistant design, particularly for brick masonry buildings. He arrived in New Zealand in 1871, established a thriving business of which his son William (1868-1941) became a partner in 1891.<sup>21</sup> Thomas Turnbull is noted for the significant part he played in the transformation of the Wellington CBD from a town of two storey timber buildings to a city of "substantial masonry buildings."<sup>22</sup>

Thomas Turnbull was a prolific architect and the best known of the many buildings that he designed include:

- St Peter's Church, Willis Street(1879)
- St John's Church, Willis Street (1885)
- Former National Mutual Building (1883-84)

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, Thomas - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012,

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

<sup>21</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, William (1868-1914) - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012,

[http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+\(1868-1941\)](http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+(1868-1941))

<sup>22</sup> Chris, Cochran, *Turnbull House Conservation Plan* (Wellington: Department of Conservation, 1991), 19.

Thomas Turnbull & Son from 1891 – 1907 when both Thomas and William Turnbull were in partnership, buildings include:

- Dairy, 58 Ghuznee Street (1897)
- General Assembly Library (1899)
- Commercial/Retail Building 289-291 Cuba St (1900)
- Fletcher's Building 2-6 Willis St (1900)
- Former Bank of New Zealand Head Office (1901)
- Maguire Building, 168-174 Cuba St (1901)
- Dr Henry Pollen's House, Boulcott Street (1902) - French Renaissance style
- Masonic Hotel, 97-99 Cuba Street (demolished in 1970s) (1903)
- Antrim House, Wellington (1905)
- Wellington Workingmen's Club Building, 107 Cuba Street (Building 1: 1904)

William Turnbull continued in practice after the death of his father in 1907 and retained the name of Thomas Turnbull and Son. William Turnbull was also a skilful designer and responsible for many of Wellington's "best and most convincing revivalist buildings"<sup>23</sup> and these include:

- Dr McGavin's house and surgery cnr Willis and Ghuznee Street (1907) – half-timbered Tudor style
- Whitcoulls Building 312-316 Lambton Quay (1907-8)
- Wellington Workingmen's Club Building, 107 Cuba Street (Building 2: 1908)
- Kirkcaldie and Stains Department Store Façade 165-169 Lambton Quay (1909)
- House for A Blacklock, 60 Tinakori Road (1910)
- Woolstore, 268 Thorndon Quay (1910)
- BNZ Te Aro Branch, cnr Manners and Cuba Streets (1912)
- Turnbull House, Bowen Street (1916) – Scottish Baronial style
- Northland Fire Station (1930)
- Free Ambulance Building, Cable Street (1932) – Art Deco style

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

The facade has been designed in a plain version of the Edwardian Classical style. It is regular and symmetrical, divided by plain pilasters into four shallow bays of three windows apiece. The only variation between floors lies in the treatment of the window heads: segmentally-arched on the first floor, round-arched on the second. Secondary pilasters flank each window, each with stylised capitals. A projecting cornice between floors is ornamented with five small triangular pediments. The building is capped by a heavy projecting cornice, and a parapet and finials. It has a comparatively wide frontage and the regular proportions of the facade, coupled with the restrained handling of ornament, make it an unobtrusive but decorative component of the Cuba Street townscape.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cochran, *Turnbull House Conservation Plan*, 21

<sup>24</sup> Wellington City Council, "168-174 Cuba Street".

The building retains a substantial amount of original shop-front, and is notable for retaining most, if not all, of its original parapet.<sup>25</sup>

The open spaces at the rear of the building remain much as they were when they were first built.

## **2.2 Materials**

The construction is load-bearing brick masonry on concrete foundations and piles. Floor joists and internal partitions are timber.<sup>26</sup>

## **2.3 Setting**

The building is located on Cuba Street between Garrett Street and Vivian Street. Adjoining the building to the south, and completing the block to Vivian Street, is the substantial Watkins Building (1904) which is the largest Edwardian building in the southern part of Cuba Street – at a very tall four storeys. To the north of the building is a pair of rare two-storied Victorian 1870s timber buildings (no. 160 and no. 162-166), both outwardly in a state of fairly poor repair. The immediate area is predominantly low-rise and older in character, with the exception of two very large, modern buildings to the north. The building is close to the mid-point of the Cuba Street Heritage Area in a part of the precinct that retains a high concentration of heritage buildings. The narrowness of the streets means that broader views are not easily obtained.

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report* (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006), 30.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



### 3.0 Sources

Cochran, Chris. *Turnbull House Conservation Plan* (Wellington: Department of Conservation, 1991),

Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, "Barristers and Solicitors," in *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897), accessed 19 September, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d26-d6.html>

Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, "Hotels", in *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897), accessed September 24, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d47-d1.html>

Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, William (1868-1914) - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012, [http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+\(1868-1914\)](http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+(1868-1914))

Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, Thomas - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+Thomas>

Kelly, Michael and Russell Murray. *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report* (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

Pollock, Kerryn. *Alexandra Buildings: 175-179 Cuba Street* (Historic Places Trust, unpublished registration report), July 21, 2006.

Wellington City Council, "168-174 Cuba Street", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA 23.

Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area spreadsheet (block 4)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

#### **Newspapers**

"Death of Mr O. McCardle", *Wairarapa Daily Times*, Volume LVIII, Issue 8979, 1 February 1908, Page 5.

"All Sorts of People", *Free Lance*, Volume VIII, Issue 397, 8 February 1908, Page 4

"Personal", *Colonist*, Volume LVII, Issue 13735, 25 March 1915, Page 4

"Obituary" *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 149, 26 June 1919, Page 6

"Deaths", *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 149, 26 June 1919, Page 1

"Funeral of Mr Hamilton Gilmer", *Evening Post*, Volume XCVII, Issue 150, 27 June 1919, Page 8

"Untitled" *Free Lance*, Volume XIX, Issue 991, 2 July 1919, Page 11

“Late Mr Hamilton Gilmer's Estate”, *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 6, 7 July 1919, Page 8

“Pars About People”, *Observer*, Volume XXXIX, Issue 46, 19 July 1919, Page 4

***Wellington City Archives***

“168-174 Cuba Street, four shops”, September 14, 1900, 00053:65:4038, Wellington City Archives.

***Wellington City Council Records***

Land Title Service, CT 24/54 and CT 24/55.

## 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?

This building retains a high level of architectural authenticity, and is notable for retaining most, if not all, of its original parapet.

***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 scale, materials and style of this building contribute to the townscape of Cuba Street.

***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 group of Edwardian commercial buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

#### **Historic Value:**

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

The building has historic value for its connection to several successful Wellington businessmen, and for its association with the prominent Wellington architects Thomas and William Turnbull.

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

The building also has historic value for its association with the strong growth and development of Cuba Street during the Edwardian period, which resulted in the building of many fine commercial buildings.

#### **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; hence this site has potential archaeological value.

***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 is part of a group of Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contribute to the sense of place and continuity of the Cuba Street Heritage 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?*

The building is representative of the architecture and history found on Cuba Street.

**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 façade of this building remains largely intact with a high level of original building fabric.

**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 for its contribution to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

## 5.0 Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
WCC Records – building file	N	Can't find
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report	Y	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
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*