

Albemarle Hotel
59 Ghuznee Street, Wellington



Images: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- The Albemarle Private Hotel is an exuberant and eclectic example of Edwardian Classical commercial architecture.
- The building was designed by James Bennie, a prominent local architect
- The building has an historic association the 19th and 20th century Temperance Movement
- The building is part of the social history of the Cuba, Vivien and Ghuznee Street 'red-light' district of Wellington, and the subsequent gentrification of the area.
- The building retains significant original building fabric particularly at the façade and the interior (although the current status of the interior requires verification)

Building / structure: Albemarle Private Hotel
District Plan: Map 16/ 130
Legal Description: 59-61 Ghuznee St/Pt Sec 152 T.O.W
Heritage Area: Cuba Street Heritage Area – block 4
HPT Listed: Category II reference 3633 (28 June 1984)
Archaeological Site: Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names: The Albemarle Private Hotel, Brahan Lodge, Mayfair Massage and Spa, Mayfair Hotel
Key physical dates: 1906
Architect / Builder: Architect: James Bennie. Builders: A & E Reynell¹
Former uses: Hotel; boarding house; massage parlour.
Current uses: vacant
Earthquake Prone Status: Earthquake Prone Building. Notice Exp 29 March 2012. OLD POLICY

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



Not to scale

¹ NZHPT buildings field record form

1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The Albemarle Private Hotel was built in 1906 at the height of the Edwardian building boom which occurred in the Cuba Street area, due in part to the electrification of the horse drawn tram system in 1904 and a sharp rise in the city's population. This was a period of construction of high quality buildings and over half of the listed heritage buildings in the Cuba Street Heritage Area were built in the years from 1900 to 1910.

The Albemarle Private Hotel was originally built as a temperance hotel. Social reformers of the early nineteenth century formed temperance societies in an attempt to reduce the use and abuse of alcohol which was seen as a cause of poverty, ill health and immorality. The temperance movement began in Britain and the USA as church based temperance societies in the 1820s and 1830s and soon spread to New Zealand. In 1893 the 'Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill' allowed for communities to reduce the numbers of liquor licenses, or to close all licensed premises in their area. In 1908 'Wellington South', 'Wellington Suburbs', and Masterton went 'dry'.² The word 'private' in the title of the Albemarle Private Hotel denotes that the hotel is 'unlicensed' so that although it could provide accommodation and meals it could not serve alcohol.³ By 1910 it was difficult to open a new hotel with a liquor license, hotels that held liquor licenses were generally more profitable than those that did not, and hotels without liquor licences generally operated as boarding houses.⁴

The hotel appears to have generally served a working class clientele of tradesmen. During WWI many of the residents of the hotel were listed in the ballots of men called up to serve in the armed forces, and the professions of Albemarle Private Hotel residents noted in these ballots include labourers, engine drivers, butchers and tinsmiths. That the hotel served a working class clientele is also to be inferred by the listing of hotel accommodation in the newspaper the 'Maoriland Worker', the national monthly publication of the sheep shearer's union.

A decline in the fortunes of the hotel can be traced from 1918 to 1931 in the advertised rates for the overnight / weekly rent of rooms. This varied from 30 shillings per week in 1918, rose to a peak of 60 shillings (£3) in 1921, and fell in January 1931 to 35s a week, and in December 1931 to 25s per week, and this was most likely due to the Great Depression. The building was later listed as a boarding house in Wise's 1950-1951, and finally as a massage parlour, a term which was (before the decriminalisation of prostitution) was often used as a euphemism for a brothel; at a time when the area around Cuba, Vivian Streets and Ghuznee Streets was known as Wellington city's 'Red Light District'.

The most notable personality associated with the property during these years was Clare Hallam (1885-1976), a property owner and boarding-house keeper who made her name and fortune from her willingness to rent boarding house accommodation to homeless alcoholics and others who struggled to find long term housing. Hallam, who also hired rooms by the hour, was described by Canon Walter Arnold, the City

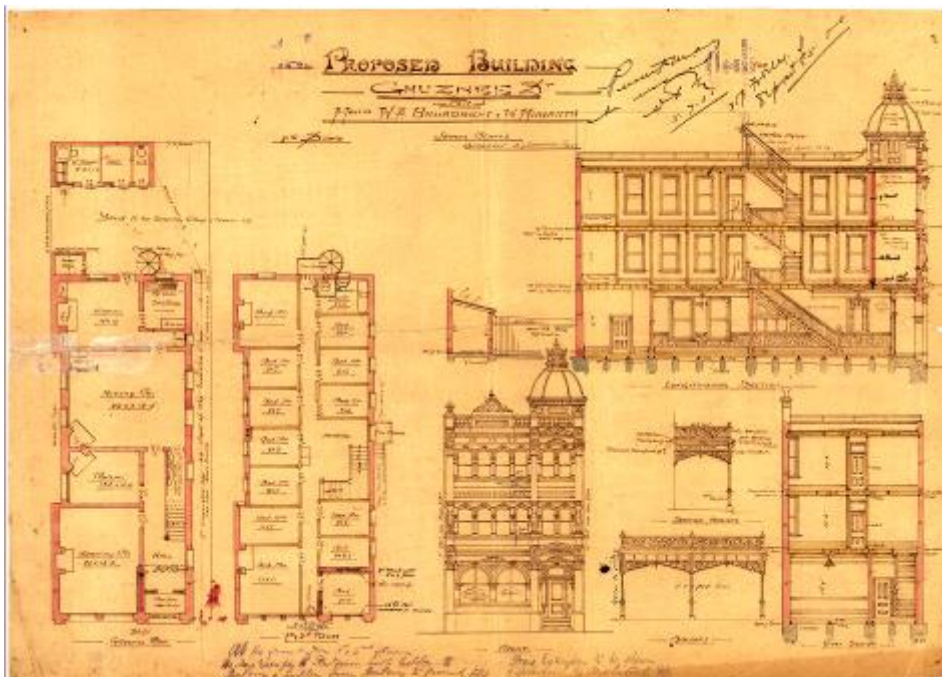
² 'Beginnings - NZ temperance movement', URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/temperance-movement/beginnings>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 26-May-2010

³ Paul Christoffel. 'Hotels and motels - Types of early hotels', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 26-Nov-10 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/hotels-and-motels/3>

⁴ Paul Christoffel. 'Hotels and motels - Hotels and liquor laws', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 4-Oct-11 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/hotels-and-motels/4>

Missioner, as 'a very lovable rogue' for her ability to combine business acumen with 'philanthropy of sorts'.⁵ She spent the last five years of her life at the Albemarle before she died in 1976 at the age of 91.

In the 1990s the relaxation of the liquor licensing laws, the decriminalisation of prostitution, and a trend towards inner city living led to the gentrification of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.⁶ The building exterior was cleaned and repaired in 2007, and some of the original ornamentation was reproduced / reinstated including the copper cupola roof, the timber exterior fire escape was removed at about this time. The building is currently vacant awaiting earthquake strengthening and was sold in May 2012 by the Heritage Property Group to property developer Ian Cassells for \$820,000.⁷ The developer plans to convert the ground floor of the building into a restaurant with access to the adjacent Glover Park, and with apartments in the floors above.⁸



1906 Original plans, section and elevations as proposed. Image: James Bennie held by WCC Archives

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1906	SR 6631 - construction,
1906	SR 7004 - add servants rooms on roof
1973	SR C38191 - new fire escapes,
2002	WCC grant from the Earthquake Assistance Fund in the sum of \$25,000 (\$4500 feasibility study, \$10,000 working

⁵ Megan Hutching, 'Hallam, Clara Evelyn - Biography', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 1-Sep-10
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/4h8/1>

⁶Further information may be contained in 'Old Wellington Hotels: Some History, Personalities and Anecdotes' Pat Lawlor, 1974 Millwood Press.⁶ Cuba Street Heritage Area

⁷ Nikki MacDonald, "Property developer walks the talk" *Dominion Post*, 17/11/2012; Hank Schouten, "Grand old lady spurns early suitors", 25/02/2012

⁸ Hank Schouten, "Developer pays \$820,000 for quake-prone brothel" *Dominion Post* 23/05/2012

	drawings, \$15, 000 contribution towards the works). The building is subject to a memorandum of encumbrance.
2004	SR111781 - seismic strengthening
2006	SR145559 – RC – a Res.Con. Land use consent for additions to a heritage building in the central area.
2007	SR 143381 aBLDG CONSENT Reinstate cupola and finials to original design on existing turret. - Mayfair Hotel.
2012. SR179936	Bdg StrengthInv Earthquake Prone Building. Notice Exp 29 March 2012. OLD POLICY.

1.3 Occupation history to 2006

Albermarle Hotel (*Stones*1910-11, 1915-16, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935), Brahan Lodge (*Stones*1940, 1945), Un-named boarding House (*Wises*1950-51), Albermarle Private Hotel (*Wises*1955, 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1975), not listed 1980, Mayfair Massage & Spa (*Wises*1985). Not listed 1990. Massage Parlour

1.4 Architect

BENNIE, James, 1874-1945⁹

James Bennie was born in Ayrshire, Scotland. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1880 and settled in Brunnertown near Greymouth. In the early 1890's he attended the Working Men's College in Melbourne, Australia, where he studied under artist and architect Thomas Searell. On completion of his studies he returned to Greymouth and set up in practice as an architect. In 1903 Bennie moved to Wellington and went into practice with E.C. Farr before establishing his own practice in 1905.

Some of Bennie's designs include the Albermarle Hotel, Wellington (1905), the Carnegie Library at Levin (1910), the Karori Methodist Church (1912), and the Oriental Bay Tea Kiosk (1912, demolished 1978). He designed a number of theatres including Kings (1910), Queens (1916), the Crown (1916) and Paramount (1917), all in Wellington. He was responsible for the design of many houses including the Wedge, Glenbervie Terrace (1906) and his own house in Salamanca Road (1907), both in Wellington. He also had an interest in prefabricated house design.

Bennie was an inaugural member of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, founded in 1905, and was later elected a Fellow. He retired in 1935 and his son Malcolm, who had joined his father in 1927, continued to run the practice.

⁹ WCC Heritage Building Inventory 2000 ref Appendix III

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The building is a three storey Edwardian Hotel with tower and cupola, four storeys at rear. The Edwardian Classical (albeit eclectic) style façade features Doric columns on ground floor, foliated Corinthian columns on first floor, plain columns topped by ornate Corinthian capitals on the second floor and a balustrade and parapet at roof level. The cupola and crown are modern reproductions of the original as are the urns at parapet level. The original design included decorative acroterion at parapet level, and a cast iron veranda / terrace with cast iron railings which have since been removed.

The building interior retains many original features.¹⁰

2.2 Materials

The original specification includes:

- Concrete: foundations, vestibule, hearths, outside door sills
- Brick: walls, tower, arches
- Timber: Jarrah (bottom joists, sleepers, bottom bearers and bearers on brickwork); totara (all lintels to suit openings, exterior sashes and frames, sills and doors); matai – heart (floors); rimu – heart (all interior joinery and finishings); Rimu – ‘o.b.t.’ (F.F joists and trimmers, GR. Floor studs, F floor studs and plates, F. floor ceiling and 2d F ceiling joists, 2d floor studs and plates, all timbers for wash house, herring bone struts, Dado T and G. & V. round Kitchen and scullery).¹¹

Modern reproduction cupola roof clad with patinated ‘Italian copper shingle’, crown, skirt and standing seam clad with copper sheet. The cupola was originally clad with corrugated iron.¹²

2.3 Setting

Ghuznee Street where it forms part of the Cuba Street Conservation Area comprises of a mix of buildings that range from single storey stables and ancillary buildings, two storied timber or masonry mixed use residential and commercial buildings, and three to four storey commercial buildings. The street includes many surviving original/early shop fronts.

To the west of 59 Ghuznee Street is Glover Park. To the east of 59 Ghuznee Street is a two storey 1897 Victorian commercial building with an Art Deco front façade including fan-shaped leaded glass panels over the shop-fronts. The building at the corner of Ghuznee and Cuba is the two storey former Hallenstein’s building dating from 1920 with an original shop front, and very high parapet.

¹⁰ Cuba Street Heritage Area report

¹¹ From WCC Archives 1998

¹² WCC Archives original plans

3.0 Sources

- 'Beginnings - NZ temperance movement', URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/temperance-movement/beginnings> , (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 26-May-2010
- Christoffel, Paul. 'Hotels and motels - Types of early hotels', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 26-Nov-10 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/hotels-and-motels/3>
- Christoffel, Paul. 'Hotels and motels - Hotels and liquor laws', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 4-Oct-11 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/hotels-and-motels/4>
- Hutching, Megan. 'Hallam, Clara Evelyn - Biography', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 1-Sep-10 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/4h8/1>
- NZHPT register listing. <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=23>
- NZHPT buildings field record form
- Paperspast website accessed May 2012 <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.MW&e=-1905-----100-EP%2cMW-201-byDA---oalbeamarle+hotel-->
- WCC Archives (1998 search)
- WCC Cuba Street Heritage Area report (c.2006)

Newspapers and periodicals

- MacDonald, Nikki. "Property developer walks the talk" *Dominion Post*, 17/11/2012;
- Schouten, Hank. "Grand old lady spurns early suitors", *Dominion Post* 25/02/2012
- *Evening Post*, 16 January 1906
- *Evening Post*, 4 July 1907
- *Evening Post*, 2 November 1909
- *Evening Post*, 11 February 1910
- *Evening Post*, 17 February 1912
- *Evening Post*, 17 February 1912
- *Maoriland Worker* , 7 June 1916
- *Evening Post*, 24 November 1916
- *Evening Post*, 13 February 1917
- *Evening Post*, 17 April 1917
- *Evening Post*, 6 June 1917
- *Evening Post*, 3 September 1917
- *Evening Post*, 6 September 1918
- *Evening Post*, 22 May 1919
- *Evening Post*, 10 July 1919
- *Evening Post*, 5 July 1919
- *Evening Post*, 10 December 1918
- *Evening Post*, 3 March 1919
- *Evening Post*, 13 June 1919
- *Evening Post*, 3 November 1921
- *Evening Post*, 14 February 1925
- *Evening Post*, 30 January 1931
- *Evening Post*, 8 December 1931
- *Evening Post*, 13 February 1934
- *Evening Post*, 28 March 1938

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 Albemarle Private Hotel is an exuberant and eclectic example of Edwardian Classical commercial architecture. The principal façade is a well articulated composition in the Edwardian Classical style and retains most of the original building fabric without intrusive modern additions or alterations.

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 (three storeys), materials (rendered masonry), design style (simple Edwardian with classical ornamentation) contributes to the character of Blocks 3 & 4 of the Cuba Street Heritage Area

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 Berry Building is part of an unbroken 'street-wall' of heritage buildings that wraps around the Cuba/Ghuznee Street intersection and signals the 'entrance' to upper Cuba Street. This group is coherent in terms of height, elaborate facades (albeit in a range of architectural styles), age, history, materials and patterns of use.

Historic Value:

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

The building was designed by a well known local architect - James Bennie.

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

The building was built as a 'temperance hotel' and in response to the 19th and 20th century Temperance Movement. It was built during a Late Victorian /Edwardian building boom which furnished Cuba Street with many high quality buildings.

The building is part of the social history of the Cuba Street Heritage Area and was originally in use as accommodation for the working class and tradesmen. It later functioned as part of the Cuba, Vivien and Ghuznee Street 'red-light' district, an area that has since been gentrified.

Scientific Value:

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

The building has some archaeological significance – Inner City Wellington Site. Central City NZAA 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?

The building retains significant original building fabric particularly at the façade and the interior (although the current status of interior requires verification). The original plans, sections and elevations survive, and these give a good insight into Edwardian hotel design.

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 has remained (relatively) unchanged on the site for over 100 years and contributes 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 a good example of Edwardian commercial architecture

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 building retains significant original building fabric particularly at the façade and the interior (although the current status of the interior requires verification)

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

6.0 Appendix

Checklist – desktop research

1995 Heritage Inventory		2/5/2012
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		2/5/2012
WCC Records – building file		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		missing
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		2/5/2012
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		2/5/2012
Heritage items folder (electronic)		2/5/2012
HPT file		1998
HPT Website		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		

9000351	Bldg Cons<500K	Office Bldg, Site Address is 59 Ghuznee St	Completed	11/07/1905
9059003	Bldg Cons<500K	Adds and Alts, Site Address is 59 Ghuznee St	Completed	12/11/1973
9070168	Bldg Cons<500K	Adds and Alts, Site Address is 59 Ghuznee St	Completed	8/07/1980
8681597	BC Smallworks	Sign, Site Address is 59 Ghuznee St	Not Completed/Ltd to S.64 Bldg Act 1991	1/07/1992
9200617	Property Featur	BUILDING HERITAGE ITEM (DISTRICT PLAN): Details migrated from RHS #617, (Restrictions and Hazards System - RHS System 1991-2006) on 28-06-2006	To be verified	24/01/1995
9201312	Property Featur	EARTHQUAKE RISK BUILDINGS: Details migrated from RHS #1312, (Restrictions and Hazards System - RHS System 1991-2006) on 28-06-2006	To be verified	2/08/1995
111781	Bldg Cons<500K	Stage 1 - Structural re-strengthening (for seismic purposes) of an existing building.	Inspection	18/11/2004
145559	RC - a Res.Con	Land use consent for additions to a heritage building in the central area	Passed to CME	23/05/2006

143381	aBLDG CONSENT	Reinstate cupola and finials to original design on existing turret. - Mayfair Hotel	Completed	12/02/2007
179936	Bdg StrengthInv	Earthquake Prone Building. Notice Exp 29 March 2012. OLD POLICY	Owner Contacted	26/04/2012

Brief summary of information available from Papers Past (1906 – 1945):

- 16 January 1906 – Hotel opened by Mr A.M Fyfe.¹³ The hotel was located next to the Te Aro Post Office has over ‘thirty well-furnished rooms, is fitted up with all modern conveniences.’
- 4 July 1907 – Hotel is listed with 14 hotels and restaurants as part of a dispute with the Wellington Cooks and Waitresses Union as part of an attempt to limit the working week to 70hours.¹⁴
- Nov 1909 – Hotel for available for lease.¹⁵
- Feb 1910 – Hotel renovated by Mrs Keys and rooms available. ¹⁶
- Feb 1912 – Mortgagee sale¹⁷ / Sold by Order of the Supreme Court.¹⁸
- 1916 Hotel rooms advertised in the ‘Maoriland Worker’ Newspaper.¹⁹
- ‘The Maoriland Worker is widely considered the most important publication of the New Zealand labour movement. Early in the 20th century the labour movement had two main strands – those wanting revolution and those working for reform and both had publications reflecting their views. Militant trade unionists did not fit easily into either camp. The Shearers’ Union in Christchurch felt the full weight of press condemnation after a 1910 wage dispute and decided to begin their own paper, The Maoriland Worker, as a monthly.’²⁰
- Residents of the Albemarle who were called up in WWI include: William Meinung, butcher 1916²¹, A.Flutter, labourer 1917²², E.H. Auld, tinsmith April 1917²³, C Taggart, seaman 1917²⁴, K Anderson, Sailor 1917²⁵, WC Harwood, farm labourer 1918²⁶, James Moye, engine driver – military defaulter May 1919²⁷.
- July 1919²⁸ Returned Soldier found dead in room
- July 1919 Theft from hotel room²⁹
- December 1918 – Hotel Rooms to let 30shillings per week³⁰. 30s was also the wage offered to a ‘Relieving Girl’ advertised in the help wanted section of the Evening Post by the Albemarle Hotel in March 1919³¹.

¹³ Evening Post, 16 January 1906, Page 8

¹⁴ Evening Post, 4 July 1907, Page 4

¹⁵ Evening Post, 2 November 1909, Page 1

¹⁶ Evening Post, 11 February 1910, Page 2

¹⁷ Evening Post, 17 February 1912, Page 8

¹⁸ Evening Post, 17 February 1912, Page 3

¹⁹ Maoriland Worker , 7 June 1916, Page 4

²⁰ Paperspast website accessed May 2012 <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=CL1.MW&e=-1905-----100-EP%2cMW-201-byDA---oalbemarle+hotel-->

²¹ Evening Post, 24 November 1916, Page 3

²² Evening Post, 13 February 1917, Page 3

²³ Evening Post, 17 April 1917, Page 3

²⁴ Evening Post, 6 June 1917, Page 10

²⁵ Evening Post, 3 September 1917, Page 10

²⁶ Evening Post, 6 September 1918, Page 8

²⁷ Evening Post, 22 May 1919, Page 7

²⁸ Evening Post, 10 July 1919, Page 10

²⁹ Evening Post, 5 July 1919, Page 6

³⁰ Evening Post, 10 December 1918, Page 5

³¹ Evening Post, 3 March 1919, Page 1

- June 1919 – Hotel rooms advertised at 7s / day, 32s 6d per week. The Bristol Hotel (corner of Cuba and Ghuznee advertised rooms at 8s/d, the Grand Hotel Central at 107 Cuba advertised rooms at 9s/day & 45s/week. ³²
- Nov 1921 – advertised that the hotel has been refurbished and is now under new management and is ‘now one of the leading hotels in the city.’ 10s 6d / day, £3 / week.³³
- Feb 1925 – under new management³⁴
- Jan 1931 – 35s / week ³⁵
- Dec 1931 – 25s / week ³⁶
- February 1934 non-fatal fall from 3rd floor window³⁷
- March 1948 Death of resident in Wanganui train accident³⁸

³² Evening Post, 13 June 1919, Page 5

³³ Evening Post, 3 November 1921, Page 16

³⁴ Evening Post, 14 February 1925, Page 5

³⁵ Evening Post, 30 January 1931, Page 2

³⁶ Evening Post, 8 December 1931, Page 3

³⁷ Evening Post, 13 February 1934, Page 14

³⁸ Evening Post, 28 March 1938, Page 10