

## Kelburn Chambers

280 – 284 Lambton Quay



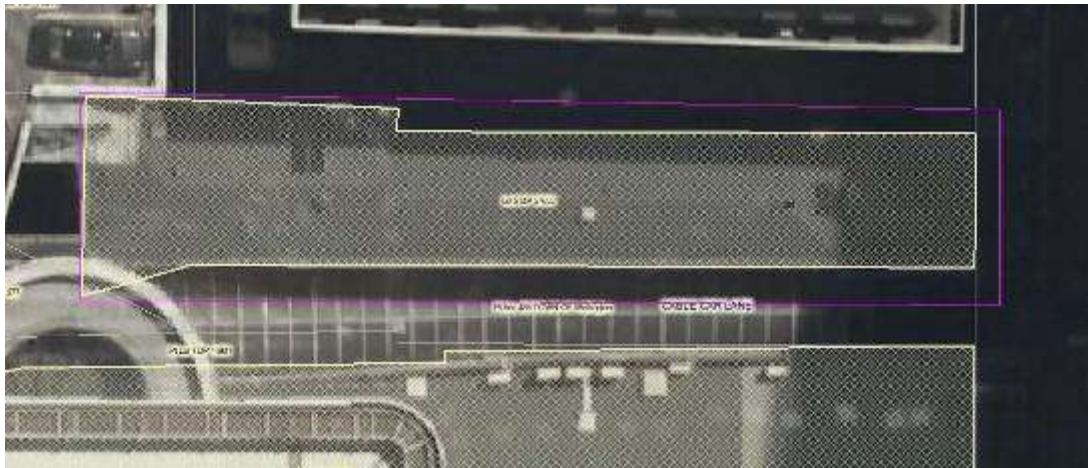
Image: *Charles Collins, 2015*

### Summary of heritage significance

- Kelburn Chambers is an Edwardian commercial Classical style building that has been skilfully designed to fit onto a narrow inner-city site. The building is notable for its elegant proportions, and for the careful use of Classical decoration on its street façade.
- This building has historic value for its association with the Kelburn and Karori Tramway Company, the development of Kelburn as a suburb, and the commercial life of early Wellington.
- The building is a local landmark as one of a very few surviving small Edwardian Classical commercial buildings on Lambton Quay. It neatly marks the Lambton Quay terminus of the Cable Car, a landmark of transport engineering that is its contemporary.

District Plan:	Map 17, reference 188 <i>Lambton Quay and Cable Car Lanes Facades</i>
Legal Description:	Lot 2 DP 57055
Heritage Area:	Cable Car Route Heritage Area (Cable Car Lane)
HPT Listed:	Category 2 reference 1433
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	Stoneham's Building
Key physical dates:	Construction 1901
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere
Former uses:	Retail and Commercial - Shop
Current uses:	Retail and Commercial - Shop
Earthquake Prone Status:	N/A-Unknown at time of writing

Extent: Cityview GIS



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History

History based on Wellington City Council, “280 – 284 Lambton Quay,” *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1999: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 1999), LAMB 12

The Kelburn Chambers, also known as Stoneham’s for its long occupancy by the well known jewellers, is today one of few Victorian buildings left on the landward side of Lambton Quay. Despite being overshadowed by modern buildings, this small scale building remains as a reminder of the architectural richness of the area.

At the turn of the century, Wellington was experiencing a boom with more and more businesses and settlers wishing to set up in the city. This posed a problem, as the area of flat land around the city was, by this time, already under major development. The land above the city, however, was desperate for development. Some of Wellington’s most accessible land for housing was in the hills directly above the city, its potential, lessened by the steep access, was realised by the newly formed Upland Estate Company, and established in 1898. The shareholders of this company formed the Kelburn and Karori Tramway Company to build a tramway to the new subdivision of Kelburn.

As a part of this development the company built offices alongside the lane which linked Lambton Quay with the city end of the tramway. Designs were prepared by Frederick de Jersey Clere and the builders were J. and A. Wilson. The permit for construction was issued on December 1900 and the construction was completed in 1901.<sup>1</sup> It would appear that the Tramway Company did not use the building extensively, instead leasing it out. The first floor was occupied by Lloyd Horace, a watchmaker. The space was occupied by watchmakers/jewellers for many years following this with the Stoneham’s jewellers becoming synonymous with the building. The upstairs had a number of occupiers, including Clere himself along with his then partner, John Swan.

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<sup>1</sup> There is some confusion as to the architect of this building, with the original plans carrying F de J Clere’s signature and the Wellington City Council Heritage Building Inventory 1999/2001 agreeing with this. The 1995 Heritage Building Inventory, however, states that John Swan was responsible for the design and the Historic Places Trust listing for this building is in agreement with this.



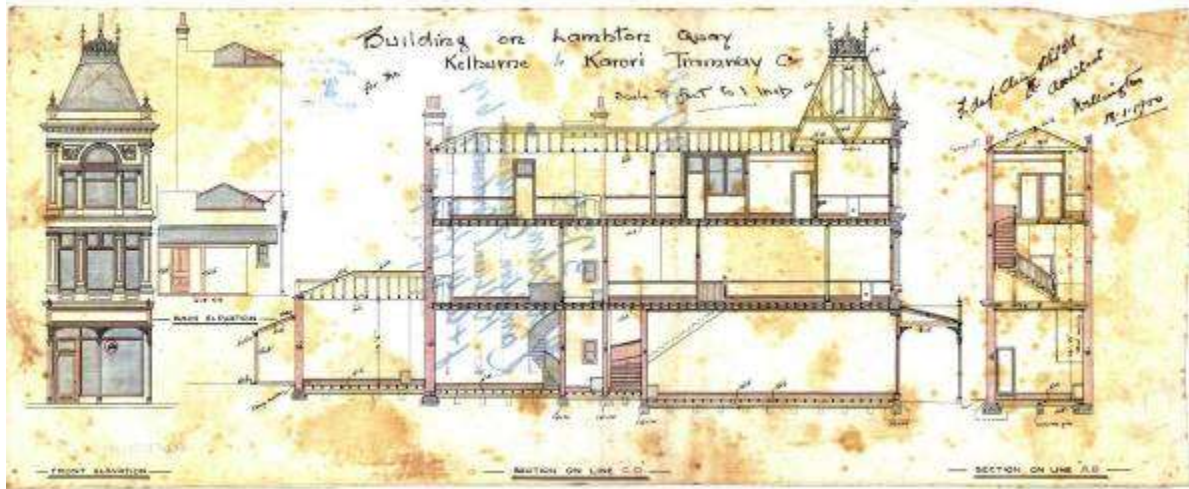
Cable Car Lane, Lambton Quay, Wellington. Negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1956/1199-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23230070>

Ownership of the Cable Car passed to the Wellington City Council in 1948 but it is unclear when the ownership of the building was passed on. The building has had some major renovations and modifications carried out primarily on the ground level.

The building now houses an accessory store on the ground level and a bar on the first floor.



## 1.2 Timeline of modifications



Original Plans showing front elevations. Wellington City Archive, 00053-59-3730.

1900	Building permit/consent issued – construction begins (00053:59:3730)
1903	Addition – Glass Verandah designed by J. S. Swan (00053:96:5448) Addition to building (00053:99:5625)
1906	New ticket office and additions to building – addition to rear of Stoneham's Building (00053:128:7160) Additions and alterations including fruit stall and alterations to ticket box (00053:132:7415)
1908	Additions to building – This is for a third storey addition at the rear of the Stoneham's building (00053:142:7923)
1950	Addition – Substation- includes additions to the Cable Car Terminal off Lambton Quay (00056:388:B29887)
1957	Alterations to Cable Car Terminal (00058:26:C1327)
1981	Alterations to Lambton Quay Cable Car Terminal (00058:1314:C55412)
1982	Demolition – Demolish Stoneham Building as part of Phoenix Centre development \$25, 000 (00058:0:C58400)
1983	Addition – Mezzanine floor (00058:0:C61714) Shop fittings, shop g07 \$1,500 (00058:0:C62549) Addition – Mezzanine floor (00058:0:C63112) Shop fittings – Phoenix Centre \$5,000 (00058:0:C63170)
1983	Fitting out restaurant in Phoenix centre \$41,080 (00058:0:C63948)
1984	Fit out of single tavern bar \$135,000 (00058:0:C65279)
1986	Office Block alterations \$121,256 (00059:0:D2989)
1991	Additions and alterations to office building (00059:420:E21230) Cancelled application (00059:478:E23079) Business additions and alterations \$10,000 (00059:504:E23923) Business alterations and additions \$32,000 (00059:512:E24226)
1992	Business alterations and additions \$29,500 (00059:516:E24343) Business alterations and additions \$101,000 (00059:517:E24361)
1993	Plumbing alterations (00060:17:687)
1999	Addition/alteration – fit-out of hair salon \$46,000 (00078:317:57304) Addition – New balconies \$40,000 (00078:346:52605)

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2001	Commercial retail fit-out \$60,000 (00078:885:76051)
2002	Alterations to Shop 18 – Suspended ceiling and installation of under bench hot water cylinder and sink unit \$1,000 (00078:922:86904)
2005	Office fit-out (00078:1640:130358)
2009	Alterations – Minor works: plumbing – Cable Car Centre – Shop 11, Samson and Delilah Hair Salon. Replace instantaneous HW units with 180 Litre HWC \$2,000 (00078:2866:171573)

### 1.3 Occupation history

Not assessed

### 1.4 Architect

#### Clere, Frederick De Jersey

Clere (1856-1952) was born in Lancashire, the son of an Anglican clergyman, and was articled to Edmund Scott, an ecclesiastical architect of Brighton. He then became chief assistant to R J Withers, a London architect. Clere came to New Zealand in 1877, practising first in Fielding and then in Wanganui. He later came to Wellington and practised there for 58 years. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1886 and held office for 50 years as one of four honorary secretaries in the Empire. In 1883 he was appointed Diocesan Architect of the Anglican Church; he designed more than 100 churches while he held this position. Clere was a pioneer in reinforced concrete construction; the outstanding example of his work with this material is the Church of St Mary of the Angels (1922), Wellington. As well as being pre-eminent in church design, Clere was responsible for many domestic and commercial buildings including Wellington's Harbour Board Offices and Bond Store (1891) and Overton in Marton. Clere was also involved in the design of large woolsheds in Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa. He was active in the formation of the New Zealand Institute of Architects and served on their council for many years. He was a member of the Wellington City Council until 1895, and from 1900 a member of the Wellington Diocesan Synod and the General Synod. He was also a member of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.0 Physical description

### 2.1 Architecture

This three-storey building has been skilfully designed in the Edwardian commercial classical style to fit onto a narrow inner-city site. The building is one room wide and features a finely-detailed Venetian window with embossed spandrels on the second floor. The first-floor windows keep the same proportions but are square-headed and have small fanlights. The architect has also used the classical device of superimposed orders - the second floor has Corinthian pilasters, the first floor Ionic pilasters. The building is capped by a small Mansard roof which sits atop a traditional entablature and shallow parapet. Kelburn Chambers has been successfully refurbished and adds a characteristic Edwardian classical note to the local townscape, despite the indignity of a grossly over scaled balcony terrace/verandah.

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<sup>2</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Fredrick de Jersey Clere", *Professional Biographies*, accessed February 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Cler e,+Frederick+De+Jersey>. See also biography of Clere, Frederick de Jersey (1856–1952) in the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2c22/1>

## 2.2 Materials

The construction was load-bearing brick masonry (English & Colonial bond) on concrete piles and foundations; cast iron columns and steel girders provided internal support and the roof-truss system was timber.

## 2.3 Setting

Despite the small stature of this building, it contributes greatly to the overall setting of Lambton Quay. It marks the Lambton Quay terminal of the Cable car system on the street. The street facing façade has prominence of decoration and form, particularly the mansard roof, which stands apart from nearby buildings.

## 3.0 Sources

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Cable Car Lane, Lambton Quay, Wellington. Negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1956/1199-F. Accessed February 2013,  
<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23230070>

Historic Places Trust, “Fredrick de Jersey Clere”, *Professional Biographies*, accessed February 2013,  
<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Clere,+Frederick+De+Jersey>

“280 – 284 Lambton Quay,” *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1999: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 1999), LAMB 12

Wellington City Archive. 00053-59-3730.

## 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?*

Kelburn Chambers is an Edwardian commercial Classical style building that has been skilfully designed to fit onto a narrow inner-city site. The building is notable for its elegant proportions, and for the careful use of Classical decoration on its street façade.

**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 is a local landmark as one of a very few surviving small Edwardian Classical commercial buildings on Lambton Quay. It neatly marks the Lambton Quay terminus of the Cable Car, a landmark of transport engineering that is its contemporary.

**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 has some group value for its historic association with the Cable Car, particularly the Cable Car Route Heritage Area (WCC Heritage Area ref 08), and the Cable Car Winding House (WCC ref 17/30).

#### **Historic Value:**

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

This building has historic value as it is associated with the Kelburn and Karori Tramway Company and the development of Kelburn as a suburb.

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

The Kelburn Cable Car was a major milestone in the development of New Zealand transportation and is one of New Zealand's most enduring engineering achievements.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

This building is included in the Central City NZAA R27/270 archaeological area.

**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 contributes to a sense of continuity in the central business area due to its long association with the Wellington Cable Car.

**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?*

This building is a now rare example of the many Edwardian commercial buildings that were once common on Lambton Quay.

**Representative:** *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

This building is a good example of a small scale Edwardian building. It is a reminder of the types of Victorian and Edwardian Classical commercial buildings that once lined Wellington's premier commercial street -Lambton Quay.

**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 has been modified at ground level quite extensively, meaning that this aspect of the building has lost some of its authenticity and integrity. The first floor, with the exception of glass terrace/verandah, has been relatively unmodified, meaning that it retains a great amount of its authenticity. The building retains authenticity of design, craftsmanship, materials and functions.

**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, due to the contribution that it makes to the Lambton Quay streetscape and its association with the Wellington Cable Car.

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## 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)		