

Wright and Carman Publishing Building (former)

177-179 Vivian Street



Image: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- Built in 1954 as an extension to a former factory, this is an early Modern building with Moderne elements. It has townscape value for the way it effectively 'turns' the corner Walter and Vivian Streets.
- The building was built for the printing firm, Wright and Carman, and stands in a district with historic ties to the printing and publishing industry.
- The building has retained a significant amount of its original fabric and therefore has authenticity.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 323
Legal Description:	LOT 1 DP 58799
Heritage Area:	No
HPT Listed:	Not registered
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roberts Printing
Key physical dates:	1954
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Roberts and Mercer
Former uses:	Printers/Publishers
Current uses:	Graphica Printing
Earthquake Prone Status:	124 served – expires 27/07/2027 SR 204716 SR 163344

Extent: Cityview 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The printing and publishing trade had been an integral industry in early colonial Wellington, with the city being home to an assortment of bookstores, libraries, newspapers, engravers and bookbinders.¹ In 1900 two former newspaper compositors, Walter John Carman and Robert A. Wright founded the publishing company Wright and Carman.²

Originally this company had operated out of 37 Featherston Street, having taken over a business previously owned by Edwards, Russell and Company.³ However by 1914 they had purchased property on Vivian Street to which they moved their company. This initial property must have been the 'original old 2 storey building' shown on a later plan (1967).⁴ Over the years the company purchased adjoining properties on both Vivian and Walter Street in order to expand their premises. The Walter Street area also became the location for other printing firms, with the government printing offices being located next to Wright and Carman.

The printing factory underwent new development in 1954 with the construction of an adjoining building on the corner of Vivian and Walter Streets. It was built to house the printing works on the ground floor, the lino type department on the first floor and a store room on the third floor. In 1955 further extensions facing Walter Street were made to this building.

In 1969 the factory became the site of Roberts Printing Company.

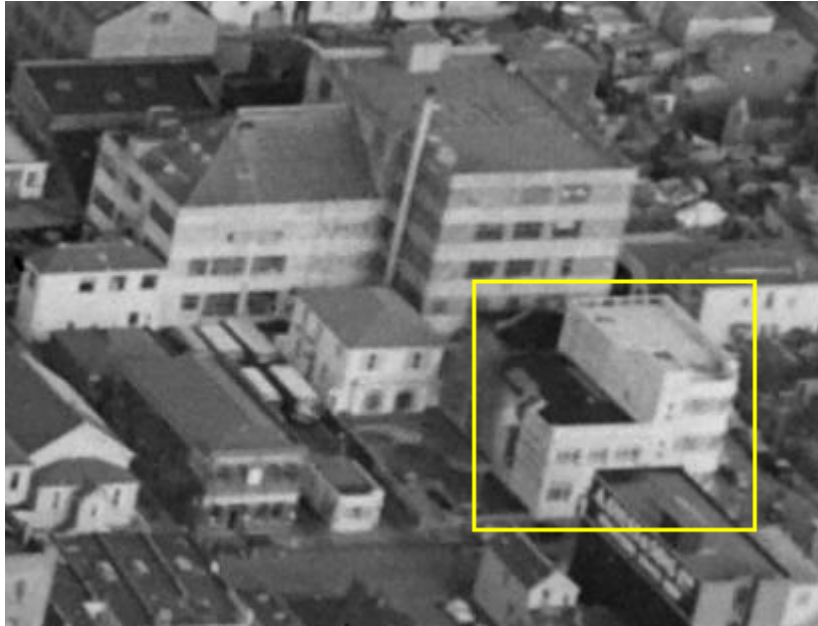
In 1985 the company demolished the original Vivian Street building in order to make way for a new addition to the 1954 corner building. Today, under new ownership, the two buildings appear to operate as separate premises. Despite this, the companies which have occupied the 1954 corner building still remain connected to the printing trade.

¹ New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, 'The print history project: Wellington's book trade 1840-2000,' accessed 23 August 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/projects/php/etexts/1880s.html>.

² New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, 'Wright and Carman,' accessed 23 August 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/projects/php/etexts/wright-and-carman-3.html>.

³ *Evening Post*, Volume LIX, Issue 94, 21 April 1900, Page 1.

⁴ Corner Vivian and Walter Streets, proposed additions to factory,' accessed 23 August 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/etexts/PHW-163/PHW-163a.jpg>.



Wright and Carman building, 1957. Aerial view of Taranaki and Manners Streets, Wellington. Negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1957/2621-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1951	175	Convert to office (00056:418:B32071)
1954	177-179	Additions to printing works (00056:479:B36078)
1955	177-179	Factory additions (00056:521:B38764)
1978	175	Reinstatement of building (00058:1166:C50221)
1985	175	Demolish commercial building (00059:0:D171)
	175	Factory extension (00059:0:D1269)

1.3 Occupation history

1914	Wright and Carman Limited
1969	Roberts Printing Co. Limited
1998	Winspears Gallery/Workshop
Current (2012)	Graphica Limited

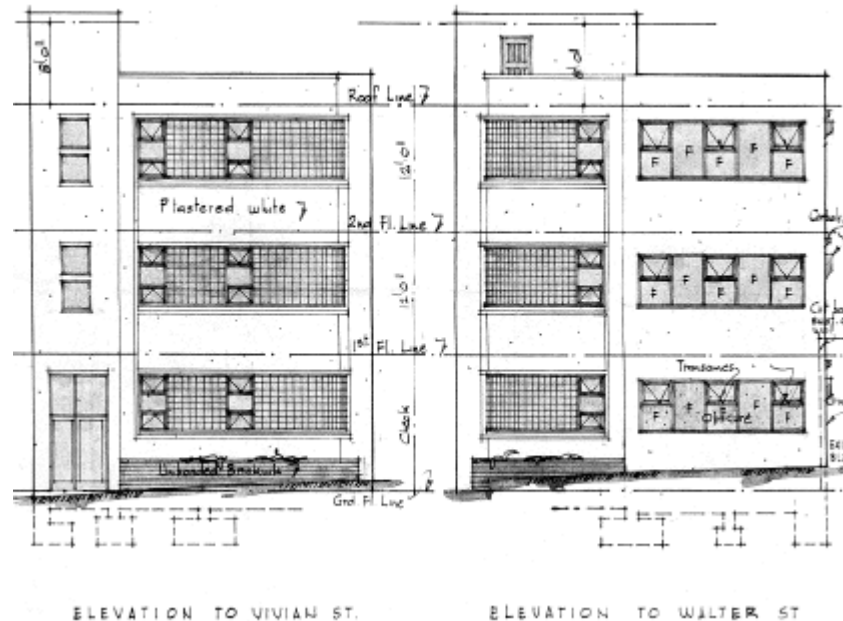
1.4 Architect

Roberts and Mercer

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The building shows the influence of the sources of modernism – Le Corbusier, Mendelssohn and Adolf Loos. The curved corner, in particular, is perhaps a reference to Eric Mendelssohn's own works. The building appears to be a hybrid of Moderne and Modernism. The former is evident in its simple geometric streamlined forms, asymmetrical massing and extensive use of glass and blocks.⁵



'177-179 Vivian Street, additions to printing works,' 1954, 00056:479:B36078, Wellington City Archives.

2.2 Materials

- Reinforced concrete
- Glass blocks

2.3 Setting

The building is situated on the edge of Vivian Street and Walter Street. To the east, along Vivian Street, it is adjoined by a modern building which was built in 1985 as an extension to replace the original factory building. Adjoining it to the south, along Walter Street, is the former Government printing building which has since been turned into apartments. To the west, the building is separated by Walter Street from the remaining buildings on Vivian Street. This block of Vivian Street contains an eclectic mixture of buildings, from nondescript modern structures to significant heritage buildings at or near the Cuba Street intersection.

⁵ Architecture taken from: *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 1995), V.

3.0 Sources

'Corner Vivian and Walter Streets, proposed additions to factory.' Accessed 23 August 2012. <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/etexts/PHW-163/PHW-163a.jpg>.

New Zealand Electronic Text Centre. 'The print history project: Wellington's book trade 1840-2000.' Accessed 23 August 2012.
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/projects/php/etexts/1880s.html>.

New Zealand Electronic Text Centre. 'Wright and Carman.' Accessed 23 August 2012.
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/projects/php/etexts/wright-and-carman-3.html>.

Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings.
(Wellington City Council, 1995), V.

Newspapers

Evening Post. Volume LIX, Issue 94. 21 April 1900. Page 1.

Evening Post. Volume CXXXVI, Issue 147. 18 December 1943. Page 3.

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?

Originally built as an extension to a now demolished building, this building has architectural value as it is a good example of an early Modern building with Moderne flourishes.

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 townscape value for the elegant way in which its curved architectural style effectively 'turns the corner' from Vivian to Water 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 located next to the former government printing offices and collectively they have a historic association with the printing and publishing trade in Walter Street.

Historic Value:

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

The building is associated with Wright and Carman Limited, an important New Zealand publishing company.

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

Scientific Value:

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

The building is located in the Central City archaeological site reference 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?

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?

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?*

The corner of the building has retained its exterior fabric therefore it has authenticity.

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

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
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



Premises of the Government Printing Office, Walter Street, Wellington, 1957. Negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1957/4807-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

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who would like to learn a well-paid, in-
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Printers, 177 Vivian St., Wellington.

Evening Post, Volume CXXXVI, Issue 147, 18 December 1943, Page 3.