

276-284 Wakefield Street.



Image: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- This building possesses a reasonable amount of architectural value despite the loss of some original decorative elements in the 1940s due to earthquakes. The recent additions do not impact upon the two facades, but they do have a negative affect upon the building itself and more widely the setting of the building.
- Because of its location on a corner alongside a very busy street and its general compatibility with the rest of the Blair/Allen heritage area this building is of great importance. It is part of a collection of Edwardian warehouses that forms one of the city's most important heritage precincts.
- This building has historical value for its association with its first owners, shipbuilders and engineers Luke and Co., one of the city's most important businesses. Samuel Luke, who bought the firm, and his sons Charles and John Luke, built up a very successful business.

District Plan:	Map 16, Reference 328/2
Legal Description:	Lots 8 & 9 DP 1302
Heritage Area:	Yes
HPT Listed:	No
Archaeological Site:	Evidence of human activity prior to 1900-occupation prior to land reclamation.
Other Names:	N/A
Key physical dates:	Built: 1906.
Architect / Builder:	Architect: possibly Alfred Atkins Builder: Luke and Cooper
Former uses:	Warehouse/Commercial
Current uses:	Commercial/Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	Posted SR 172706

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The building in the corner was built in 1906 as a warehouse for S. Luke & Co., Ltd. The land occupied by the building was part of a slum area of Te Aro taken over by the Wellington Harbour Board in 1898. The Board acquired responsibility for the area as part of a land swap with the Wellington City Council – the outcome of legislation to allow further reclamation of Wellington Harbour. The Board was handed the job of removing the insanitary dwellings, building culverts and new roads and selling the land. It took the council some time to remove all the occupants and demolish their houses and it was not until 1903 that the land could be properly drained. The original layout of the block was then redesigned; Allen Street was widened and extended to join Victoria Street, which is now Wakefield Street and Blair Street was formed parallel to Allen Street.

Luke and Co.'s new building was erected by Luke and Cooper, and is likely to have been designed by Alfred Atkins. The evidence for this is a 1907 advertisement by Atkins for tenants for a new 'ferro-concrete' building to be erected on the corner of Victoria (now Wakefield) and Blair streets.¹ The specifications from Luke and Cooper state that they would 'excavate the foundations to a good beach bottom', an indication that the building sat on land that was once on the edge of the harbour. The warehouse was to be constructed with masonry load bearing walls, a cast iron post and timber system supporting timber floors (red pine), with king post trusses spanning the width of each of the warehouses. The building was divided into two with a party wall running parallel to Blair Street.²

Captain Samuel Luke and his family, of Cornwall, England, immigrated to New Zealand in 1874 and settled in Wellington. Samuel Luke, for whom Luke's Lane is named,³ bought the engineering business of Gilchrist and Waters in 1879 and Luke and Son (later S. Luke and Co.) was formed. His sons, Charles (1857-1941) and John (commonly known as John-Pearce, 1858-1931) were apprenticed as engineers. Luke and Co. were shipbuilders, manufacturers and engineers. They built heavy machinery, lighthouse equipment, various ships, cranes and the like.⁴ Both Charles and John, Luke were influential men, with many interests outside their business. Both were mayors of Wellington - Charles in 1895 and John (also a Member of Parliament for two terms) from 1913 to 1921. Both men were knighted.

Their company's factory was located a short distance west on the Te Aro foreshore. As they did import large amounts of raw materials for their company including pig iron, bar, sheet and plate iron, copper and sheet copper, tools, and many other items, their new warehouse may have been required as storage of such items after their arrival at the port.⁵

By the late 1920s the ownership of the building had changed hands. The new owners were Teagle, Smith, and Sons Ltd., who were motor accessory and general merchants. They shared retail space with general merchants Goldingham and Bekett, Ltd.

¹ *Evening Post*, 11 March 1907, Page 4

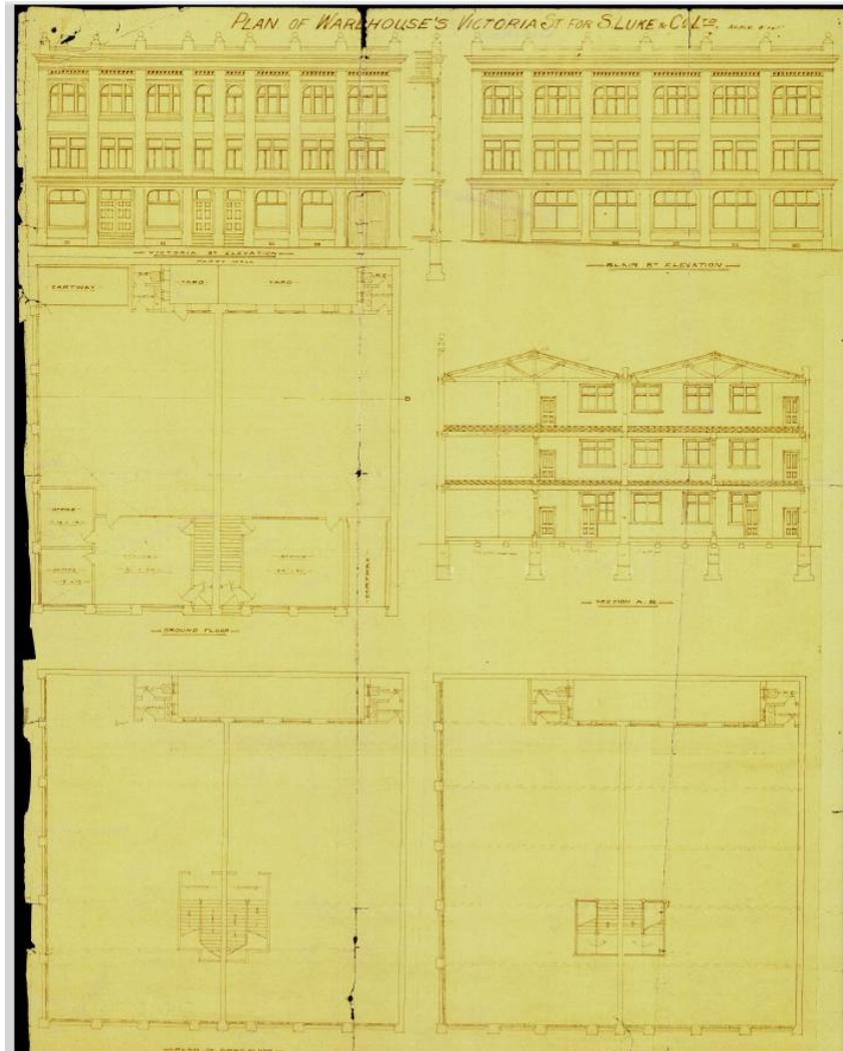
² WCC Heritage Inventory 2001. 276-282 Wakefield Street...

³ Irvine-Smith, Frances 1948, *The Streets of My City*, A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington p.184

⁴ Luke, S. and Co., Ltd., *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand-Wellington Provincial District*. The Cyclopaedia Company Limited, 1987, Wellington. <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d48-d17.html>; Charles Manley Luke in <http://www.taylorhistory.co.uk/charlesmanleyluke.html> and John Pearce Luke in <http://www.taylorhistory.co.uk/johnpearceluke.html> [both accessed 18 October 2012]

⁵ *Ibid.*

The warehouse on the corner of Wakefield and Blair Streets housed W. Burbidge and Co., who were fruit auctioneers and produce merchants. Both warehouses were damaged when a large fire broke out in the block of buildings between Allen and Blair Streets.⁶ The buildings suffered further damage in the 1942 Wellington earthquake but were reinstated by 1944.



Original plans of the building on the corner of Victoria and Blair Street (WCA 00053-128-7130).

The ground floor of the buildings have since been used for a number of purposes, mostly retail or commercial businesses, while the top floors have been converted for use as offices and residences. The ground floor premises have most recently been used by a computer business, a home ware store, and a clothing boutique. In 2000 the building had a modern rooftop addition of three penthouse apartments that took the building to five storeys. The addition was designed by James Fenton at Architecture Workshop Limited.

⁶ 'Disastrous Fire', *Evening Post*, Volume CVI, Issue 121, 27 November 1928, 10.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

- 1906 Construction of building. (00053:128:7130)
- 1929 Reinstatement of building (after 1929 fire). (00056:73:B6993)
- 1943 Reinstatement of building (After 1942 earthquake). (00056:287:B23003; 00056:289:B23138)
- 1956 Alterations to 276-278 Wakefield Street. (00056:544:B40116)
- 1966 Alterations to building-offices- at 282-284 Wakefield Street. (00058:486:C20952)
- 1973 Building alterations to 282-284 Wakefield Street. (00058:832:C37256)
- 1979 Alterations to offices, subdivision to 282-284 Wakefield Street. (00058:1186:C50986)
- 1991 Sign added to 282-284 Wakefield Street. (00059:510:E24161)
- 1995 Alteration to 276 Wakefield Street. (00061:73:12177)
- 1996 Construction of new toilets 278-284 Wakefield Street. (00078:549:24930)
- 1996 Strengthening 282-284 Wakefield Street (SR 16788).
- 1998 New toilets and partitions 282 Wakefield Street. (00078:765:44006)
- 2000 Construction of lift lobbies, fire walls and fire rated door 276 Wakefield Street. (00078:872:69638)
- 2000 Addition of three penthouse apartments 282 Wakefield Street. (00078:1013:71022).
- 2001 Rooftop Additions.

1.3 Occupation history

- 1906 S. Luke and Co., Ltd.
- 1966 The National Electrical and Engineering Company Limited.
- 1987 Price Downer Limited

1.4 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The building is a three storey Edwardian warehouse constructed of masonry load bearing walls, with a cast iron post and timber system supporting timber floors, and king post trusses spanning the width of the building. There is a party wall dividing the building into two warehouses running parallel to Blair Street. The building is stylistically similar to others in the area with rounded corners on the heads of the ground and second floor windows, square headed windows on the first floor, and prominent brackets at roof level holding up a straight horizontal cornice. The building is six bays wide to Blair Street and eight bays wide to Wakefield Street, with the two bays at the centre of this façade being narrower. ⁷

There have been some alterations to the ground floor openings, and a row of spherical bollards that capped each of the pilasters have been removed. An addition of three new apartments on top of the existing three storey building was made in 2000. The construction of these apartments consisted of the removal of the existing roof structure and replacement with a new concrete slab.

⁷ Wellington City Council 2001. "276-282 Wakefield Street" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Precinct AL & BL 16*. Wellington City Council, 2001, AL & BL 16.

The floor level is below the top of the existing parapets. The apartments have been constructed from timber framing clad with a detailed compressed sheet and a flat roof.⁸

2.2 Materials

The building is built on concrete foundations, with masonry load bearing walls, and a cast iron post and timber system supporting timber floors.⁹

2.3 Setting

This building is found on a prominent corner location and possesses logic of design and authenticity of fabrics that make it an important feature in this precinct. It is cohesive with the designs of other buildings in the Blair and Allen Street precincts and helps to create the sense of consistency and homogeneity that characterises the area.¹⁰

The building's original elevations clearly conform with Allen Street's largely homogenous form, which in turn fits well with the generally lower scale of building in the wider Courtenay Place area. The building is highly visible from the east, particularly because of its two storey addition, which draws attention to the corner of the block. Here Wakefield Street is very open, with a wider street, the supermarket and Chaffers Park to the north-east.

3.0 Sources

Irvine-Smith, Frances 1948, *The Streets of My City*, A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington p.184

Kelly, Michael and Russell Murray. *Courtenay Place Heritage Area*. Wellington City Council: Unpublished Report, prepared for Plan Change 48.

Kelly, Michael, '*Old Shoreline Heritage Trail*', Wellington City Council, 1996.

'Luke, S. and Co., Ltd.,' *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand-Wellington Provincial District*. The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1987, Wellington.
<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d48-d17.html>

Wellington City Council 2001. "276-282 Wakefield Street" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Precinct AL & BL 16*. Wellington City Council, 2001, AL & BL 16.

Wellington City Council 2001. "Allen and Blair Streets Precinct" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory-Non Residential Precincts 2001: Allen and Blair*. Wellington City Council, 2001. Allen & Blair.

⁸ "Heritage Building-276 Wakefield Street". 1997. 1041-06-WAK276. Wellington City Records; "Heritage Building-278 Wakefield Street". 1997. 1041-06-WAK278. Wellington City Records; "Heritage Building-282 Wakefield Street". 1996. 1041-06-WAK282. Wellington City Records

⁹ Wellington City Council 2001. "276-282 Wakefield Street" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Precinct AL & BL 16*. Wellington City Council, 2001, AL & BL 16.

¹⁰ Wellington City Council 2001. "Allen and Blair Streets Precinct" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory-Non Residential Precincts 2001: Allen and Blair*. Wellington City Council, 2001. Allen & Blair.

Newspapers:

Disastrous Fire', *Evening Post*, Volume CVI, Issue 121, 27 November 1928, 10.

Wellington City Council Records

"Heritage Building-276 Wakefield Street". 1997. 1041-06-WAK276. Wellington City Records.

"Heritage Building-278 Wakefield Street". 1997. 1041-06-WAK278. Wellington City Records

"Heritage Building-282 Wakefield Street". 1996. 1041-06-WAK282. Wellington City Records

World Wide Web

<http://www.taylorhistory.co.uk/charlesmanleyluke.html> [accessed 18 October 2012]

<http://www.taylorhistory.co.uk/johnpearceluke.html> [accessed 18 October 2012]

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 possesses a reasonable amount of architectural value despite the loss of some original decorative elements in the 1940s due to earthquakes. The recent additions do not impact upon the two facades, but they do have a negative affect upon the building itself and more widely the setting of the building.

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 style, scale, features of this building and its prime corner location all contribute strongly to the character and townscape value of the immediate area. Its impact is all the greater for the two storey addition on top.

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?

Because of its location on a corner alongside a very busy street and its general compatibility with the rest of the Blair/Allen heritage area this building is of great importance. It is part of a collection of Edwardian warehouses that forms one of the city's most important heritage precincts.

Historic Value:

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

This building has historical value for its association with its first owners, shipbuilders and engineers Luke and Co., one of the city's most important businesses. Samuel Luke, who bought the firm, and his sons Charles and John Luke, built up a very successful business. Both sons and were mayor of Wellington and were knighted for their achievements.

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

The building has historical value as one of a group of warehouses constructed in a planned development in one place in the early 20th century. The slum clearance and its replacement by Wellington's produce markets in one new location - Blair and Allen Streets – showed remarkable vision and organisation by the government and local councils. That activity continued for over 80 years before it gave way to the expansion of the bar and restaurant district of Courtenay Place in the early 1990s, another significant era in the history of this area.

Scientific Value:

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

The site is reclaimed land but it was occupied prior to 1900 and may have 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?*

The building has remained in a relatively authentic condition over the past 90 years so it may provide a record of early 20th century construction technology.

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 is a part of a heritage precinct and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Courtenay Place, Blair and Allen Street precinct.

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 representative of the architecture and history of the buildings that make up the Allen/Blair Street precinct.

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 façades of this building are largely intact apart from the alterations made during the 1940s. The roof was removed to make way for the two-storey addition in 2000.

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 due to its contribution to the Blair/Allen Street precinct and the wider Courtenay Place heritage area.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

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

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*