

## **Shed 21**

28 Waterloo Quay



Images: *Charles Collins, 2015*

### **Summary of heritage significance**

- The tallest of the Wellington Harbour Board's (WHB) industrial warehouses, Shed 21 was built in 1910 to store wool and was designed by the WHB Chief Engineer, James Marchbanks.
- The building has historic value for its association with transport and shipping industries and has played an important role in the trading and commercial life of Wellington.
- Shed 21 is a key element at the northern end of Lambton Harbour and is also important to the townscape of the area surrounding the Railway Station.

District Plan:	Map 17, reference 334
Legal Description:	Lot 101 DP 65083
Heritage Area:	
HPT Listed:	Category 1, reference 237
Archaeological Site:	Waterfront reclamation
Other Names:	J Wool Store, Shed J, Waterloo On Quay Apartments
Key physical dates:	1910 constructed 2001-2 converted to apartments
Architect / Builder:	J Marchbank / Sanders Brothers
Former uses:	Wool store
Current uses:	Apartments / commercial space (ground floor)
Earthquake Prone Status:	<i>Not assessed (January 2013)</i>

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History

The tallest of the Wellington Harbour Board's (WHB) industrial warehouses, Shed 21 was built in 1910 to store wool and was designed by the WHB Chief Engineer, James Marchbanks.<sup>1</sup>

Under the 1852 NZ Constitution Act, provinces controlled harbour activities. The Wellington Harbour Board was created by an act of Parliament in 1879. It first met on 20 February, 1880.<sup>2</sup> One of the prime considerations for the new board was the provision of wharves and buildings. For the first 10 years the Board built warehouses and stores, predominantly in timber, for the storage, organisation and distribution of the goods for which it was responsible.

Shed 21 is the second building to be built on this part of the wharf. The original shed (of timber and corrugated iron) was built here in 1882.<sup>3</sup> This shed was used by WHB to store hemp and tow. Known as the "J Shed", it burnt down on 9 March 1909 in a spectacular blaze that threatened the entire port.<sup>4</sup> The valuable contents of the store were lost in the fire, including 2000 bales of flax, 770 bales of tow and 47 casks of tallow,<sup>5</sup> along with machinery, including five trucks.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the fire, plans and specifications were drawn up for rebuilding in brick<sup>7</sup> with steel and concrete in the upper floor.<sup>8</sup> Tenders were received by December 1909.<sup>9</sup>

Constructed in 1910, the new building was used as a wool store and had many features to accommodate this such as large doorways and top floor windows. The lower floor was designed so that wool could be discharged by rail directly into the woolstore. A gallery was built over the railway track and the upper floor was designed to let in maximum light for the exhibition of wool for sale.

The apse-like extension at the northern end of the building housed an 'accumulator', part of a hydraulic mechanism.<sup>10</sup> Accumulated water pressure was used to drive lifts that moved goods between floors. Hydraulic power was once the main source of power on the waterfront and was still used for wool presses, cranes and other equipment until finally superseded by electricity in the 1950s. In 1911 the Board's first electric crane was installed in Shed 21.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Even though James Marchbank is credited with designing the building, it has been suggested that the architect Frederick de Jersey Clere was involved in the design due to the refinement and excellent proportions of the building. For example see: Historic Places Trust, "Wellington Harbour Board: Shed 21", NZHPT Building Field Record Form, 1041-06-SHE21, Wellington City Council Records.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Bowman, *Wellington Maritime Museum Conservation Plan*, 1994, Wellington Maritime Museum

<sup>3</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Wellington Harbour Board: Shed 21",

<sup>4</sup> "A BIG BLAZE", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 58, 10 March 1909, Page 7

<sup>5</sup> "EXTRA EDITION", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 59, 11 March 1909, Page 8

<sup>6</sup> "A BIG BLAZE", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 58, 10 March 1909, Page 7

<sup>7</sup> The bricks were supplied by the Tonks brickworks in Webb Street. See: Historic Places Trust, *Wellington Harbour Board Historic Area (Volume 1): Registration Report for a Historic Area*, 2012, p 27

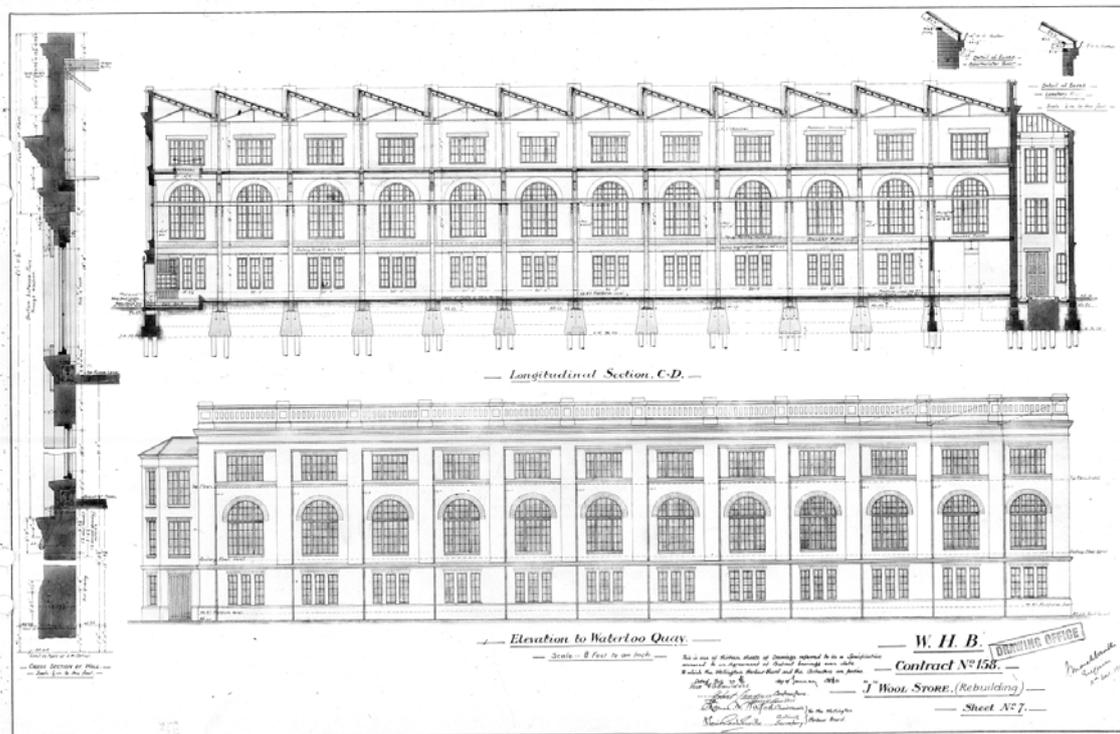
<sup>8</sup> "Rebuilding J Wool Store [Shed 21]", 27 January 1910, AC016:3:158, Wellington City Archives

<sup>9</sup> "HARBOUR BOARD", *Dominion*, Volume 3, Issue 692, 17 December 1909, Page 3

<sup>10</sup> Tony Wilson and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*, brochure published by Wellington City Council.

<sup>11</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Wellington Harbour Board: Shed 21"

The sky lighting and tall ceilings of Shed 21 and other sheds have made them ideal for, among other things, exhibitions and concerts.<sup>12</sup> As early as 1911 Shed 21 was used as exhibition space for an Industrial Exhibition.<sup>13</sup>



Detail from the original plans (AC016:3:158, Wellington City Archives)

In 1922, Shed J became Shed 21. This was because the WHB's letter naming system reached Z, so they changed to numbering the sheds instead.

With the arrival of container shipping and the reduction of coastal trade in the 1970s, structures like Shed 21 became largely redundant. In the late 1990s, while the future of the building was uncertain, it was partly used for conservation work on the remains of the *Inconstant* (known as 'Plimmer's Ark' remnants of this ship were excavated in 1997) and as a car park.<sup>14</sup> The building was converted into apartments in 2001-2 and commercial retail/office space on the ground floor. The building is now known as Waterloo on Quay Apartments.

The three storey building is a key element at the northern end of Lambton Harbour. It is also important to the townscape of the area surrounding the Railway Station.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Tony Wilson and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*

<sup>13</sup> "Wellington Exhibition", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXXI, Issue 38, 15 February 1911, Page 2

<sup>14</sup> Tony Wilson and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*

<sup>15</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Wellington Harbour Board: Shed 21"



Mounted Special Constables during the 1913 waterfront strike. Shed 21 is on the right. Photograph taken by Sydney Charles Smith. (Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2-048789-G)

## 1.2 Timeline of modifications

- 1910 Building constructed (AC016:3:158)
- 1910 Floors asphalted (AC016:3:159)
- 2001 Converted to apartments (00078:890:78202, 00078:893:79134, 00078:1017:80550, 00078:1019:82325)
- 2006 Office building alterations (00078:2191:147897 and 00078:2363:152249)

## 1.3 Architect

### James Marchbanks (1862-1947)

Marchbanks was born and educated in Dunedin and joined the Public Works Department as a draftsman in 1878. He worked mostly on railway survey and construction. He became an authorised surveyor in 1883. In 1890 Marchbanks joined the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company as assistant to the Chief Engineer and in 1895 he assumed the top position. When the railway company was sold to the Government, Marchbanks became Chief Engineer to the Wellington Harbour Board, succeeding William Ferguson. He was appointed Chief Engineer and General Manager in 1923. He retired in 1932 and remained a consulting engineer until 1935. His son D.S.G. Marchbanks was also a very prominent Harbour Board employee. He was acting Chief Engineer and later Chief Engineer, from 1945 to 1966.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Tony Wilson and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

Shed 21 is a solid and functional Edwardian industrial warehouse which reflects the high standard of building which the Harbour Board has always tried to maintain along street frontages.<sup>17</sup>

Built of sturdy red brick and masonry with a steel framed glazed saw tooth roof, the charm of Shed 21 lies in the fine use of brickwork to embellish an otherwise plain and functional building facade.<sup>18</sup> The Waterloo Quay façade holds additional ornamentation and detailing, as does the northern façade with the apse. The remaining facades are slightly simpler in detail.

Special features include circular headed windows and concrete lintels over the railway and accumulator tower doors. A gallery was subsequently built around the two sides.

### **2.2 Materials**

Red brick, with an upper floor of timber on heavy steel beams supported on concrete columns.

### **2.3 Setting**

Shed 21 is a key element at the northern end of Lambton Harbour and is also important to the townscape of the area surrounding the Railway Station.

The space between Pipitea Wharf and Ferry Wharf, known as “CentrePort”, “comprises four finger wharves of various sizes, as well as Kings Wharf whose northern berth has been absorbed into the Thorndon Container Terminal as has the whole of Pipitea Wharf. Kings, Glasgow, Railway, Wool Jetty and the ferry wharves were constructed between 1880 and 1923, and all except Pipitea were built in timber. Strait Shipping operates its two passenger ferries from Kings Wharf. The area adjacent to the wharf to the north is currently used for cold storage facilities and still has an operating berth.”<sup>19</sup>

“There are still a number of early WHB and wharf buildings in this area, including Shed 35, Kings Wharf Office (Former), and Shed 21 which are all constructed in brick, and the Eastbourne Ferry and Borough Council Offices (Former) which is constructed in timber. These buildings are interspersed with new commercial buildings that have been constructed in the last decade and which have no commercial relationship with the port. The recent developments and demolition of older wharf buildings has resulted in an overall lack of architectural cohesion and connectivity in this area. The area south of Shed 21, where the old Custom house was located, is awaiting redevelopment.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Wellington Harbour Board Shed 21”, Heritage Inventory, 1995, Wellington City Council.

<sup>18</sup> Tony Wilson and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*

<sup>19</sup> Historic Places Trust, *Wellington Harbour Board Historic Area (Volume 1): Registration Report for a Historic Area*, 2012, p 19

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

### **3.0 Sources**

Bowman, Ian. *Wellington Maritime Museum Conservation Plan*, 1994, Wellington Maritime Museum

Historic Places Trust, *Wellington Harbour Board Historic Area (Volume 1): Registration Report for a Historic Area*, 2012

Historic Places Trust, "Wellington Harbour Board: Shed 21", NZHPT Building Field Record Form, 1041-06-SHE21, Wellington City Council Records

"Wellington Harbour Board Shed 21", Heritage Inventory, 1995, Wellington City Council

Wilson, Tony, and Michael Kelly, *Wellington's Maritime Heritage Trail*, brochure published by Wellington City Council

#### **Archives**

"Rebuilding J Wool Store [Shed 21]", 27 January 1910, AC016:3:158, Wellington City Archives

#### **Newspapers**

"A BIG BLAZE", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 58, 10 March 1909, Page 7

"EXTRA EDITION", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 59, 11 March 1909, Page 8

"HARBOUR BOARD", *Dominion*, Volume 3, Issue 692, 17 December 1909, Page 3

"Wellington Exhibition", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXXI, Issue 38, 15 February 1911, Page 2

## 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 tallest of the Wellington Harbour Board's (WHB) industrial warehouses, Shed 21 is built of sturdy red brick. The charm of Shed 21 lies in the fine use of brickwork to embellish an otherwise plain and functional building facade.

***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 three storey building is a key element at the northern end of Lambton Harbour. It is also important to the townscape of the area surrounding the Railway Station.

***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?

Shed 21 is part of a group of former WHB buildings along the Wellington Waterfront.

#### **Historic Value:**

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

Shed 21 was designed by James Marchbanks (the WHB Chief Engineer) and built by the WHB.

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

The building has historic value for its association with transport and shipping industries and has played an important role in the trading and commercial life of Wellington.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

***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?

Designed specifically for use as a wool store, the building has several design features to accommodate this purpose, such as large doorways, skylights and top floor windows to let in maximum light.

#### **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?

Shed 21 has been an integral part of the Wellington waterfront for over 100 years. The building makes a strong positive contribution to the sense of place and continuity of Lambton Harbour.

***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 interior of Shed 21 has been altered with its conversion to apartments with car parks and commercial space on the ground floor. The exterior has had few significant alterations.

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

Shed 21 is of national significance for its association with transport and shipping industries, particularly the wool industry.

## 5.0 Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	Wasn't included
WCC Records – building file	Y	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
Plan change?	N	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files	N	
Conservation Plan	N	
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

### Background research



Mounted Special Constables during the 1913 waterfront strike. Wellington Harbour Board sheds, 21 (left) and 17, are visible. Photograph taken by Sydney Charles Smith.

(Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2-046171-G)



Photograph of Bunny Street, Wellington, circa 1940s. Looks towards Harbour Board Shed 21. Includes trams. Photographer unidentified. (Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-9042)