

Bank of New Zealand – Te Aro Branch

79-85 Manners Street, cnr Cuba Street



Bank of New Zealand, Te Aro Branch Building. (*Charles Collins, 2015*)

Summary of heritage significance

- Designed by prominent architect William Turnbull in 1912, this building has architectural value for its richly-ornamented facade designed in the Edwardian Baroque style, and an impressive banking chamber, largely intact.
- The building has historic significance as the second oldest surviving BNZ building in Wellington after the former BNZ Head Office buildings. It served as a BNZ branch for over 80 years and played a significant role in the commercial life of Te Aro in that time.
- The building has considerable townscape significance, occupying a prominent corner site in what is a major focal point within the city.
- The construction technology used in this building is significant. The technique of using steel framing encased in concrete was advanced for its time and gives the structure distinct technical value in a city where the frequency and strength of earthquakes was a serious challenge to building designers.

District Plan:	Map 16, Symbol 374 <i>(Manners Mall and Cuba Street facades, ground floor banking chamber including the columns, ceilings, decorative wooden elements beneath the windows, window surrounds and stair well.)</i>
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP86037
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Category 1, reference 1338 / Cuba Street Historic Area
Archaeological Site:	
Other Names:	Burger King, Renaissance Apartments
Key physical dates:	Built: 1912-1913 / Rooftop addition: 1997/98
Architect / Builder:	Architect: William Turnbull Builder: Campbell and Burke
Former uses:	Commercial - Finance - Bank
Current uses:	Commercial / residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	Building Strength Inventory status "potentially earthquake prone" (SR 167335)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) was founded in Auckland in 1861.¹ Later that year a branch opened in Dunedin, and in 1862 the first Wellington branch opened on the corner of Lambton Quay and Willis Street.

In October 1876 the 'Te Aro Branch' opened as a sub-branch of the main Wellington Branch (presumably in temporary accommodation).² In 1877 work began on a single-storey building which was to be the permanent premises on the south-east corner of the site of the present building. The bank later purchased the land immediately to the west and a small shop and auction rooms were built on this land in 1896-97.³

Both these buildings and the bank were demolished in 1912 to make way for a new larger branch building. The architect was William Turnbull of Thomas Turnbull and Son and the main contractors were Campbell and Burke. The design used steel framing and reinforced concrete; this was considered an advanced construction method at the time. The ground floor was occupied by the banking chamber and the second and third floors were divided into 26 offices. The final cost of the building was £13,158.⁴ Initially a shop was located on the west end of the Manners Street elevation and, over the years, the offices were frequently leased to businesses that had no connections with the bank.⁵

By 1982 the Te Aro branch was deemed no longer suitable for the banking requirements of the day and BNZ had decided to demolish the building. However, in the furore over the demolition of so much of Wellington's built heritage and, in particular, the bank's plans to demolish its own head office, it was decided to investigate refurbishment. Grahame Anderson of Toomath, Wilson, Irvine and Anderson prepared a feasibility study for the bank and refurbishment was completed in 1985. The work also included minor strengthening. The branch remained open during the execution of the work.⁶ It was highlighted by a vibrant colour scheme designed by Wendy Light, a lecturer at Victoria University's School of Architecture.⁷

Following the refurbishment the BNZ continued to occupy the ground floor until 1994. At this time, as part of a rationalisation of branches, the BNZ left the building and sold it the following year, but it did retain an automatic teller machine in the Manners Street wall. In 1997 the new owners, 79 Manners Street Ltd (Terry Serepisos), subleased the ground floor to Burger King and added two new floors on top of the existing building for apartments.⁸

¹ "History," Bank of New Zealand, accessed September 28, 2012, <http://www.bnz.co.nz/about-us/history>

² Peter Murphy, *Bank of New Zealand Te Aro Branch: A century of Service 1876-1976* (BNZ Archives, 1976).

³ Julia Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, (unpublished report for 79 Manners St, Wellington, 1996) 9.

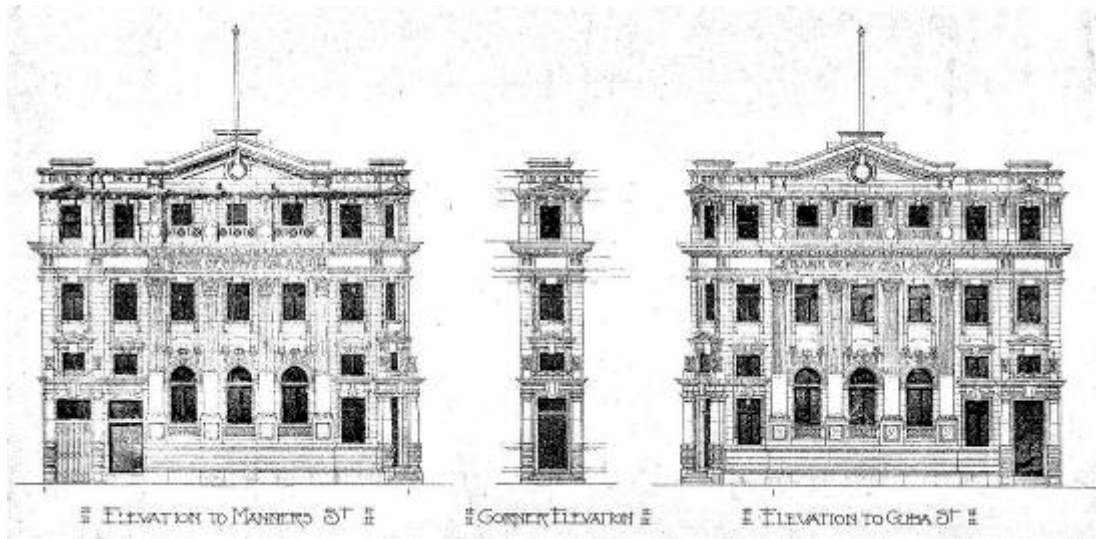
⁴ Summary of construction details in *Progress*, Vol. VII No.8 June 1912 page 1153, in Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 9.

⁵ For a comprehensive history of occupants see Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 9-10.

⁶ Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 10

⁷ Wellington City Council, "79-85 Manners Street, Bank of New Zealand, Te Aro Branch," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), MANN 1.

⁸ Ibid.



Detail from the building plans (00053:0:9424)



Looking west along Manners Street (centre) from the intersection with Cuba Street (foreground left to right) showing (on the left corner) the Union Clothing Company and (on the right) the Bank of New Zealand. Date unknown. (Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 35-R2277).

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1912	Building constructed (00053:0:9424)
1964	Additions and alterations (00058:348:C14941)
1984	Alter and reinstate building - refurbishment and minor strengthening (00058:0:C64205)
1989	Office building additions and alterations. Note: Addition of window on the first floor of the Cuba Street facade. The window restores the BNZ Chambers to reflect the original drawings by Thomas Turnbull. (00059:361:E19432)
1991	Alteration to floors 1 and 2 of the BNZ Chambers, creating store room. (00059:400:E20664)
1995	Commercial alterations (00061:137:14429)
1996	Disabled toilets (00078:27:23700)
1996	Restaurant fitout – Burger King (00061:179:15712)
1997	Strengthening (00078:57:28010)
1997	\$18,300 (plus GST) paid to the owner (79 Manners Street Ltd) from the Earthquake Risk Building Fund (Memorandum of Encumbrance to WCC). Building strengthened to meet full code requirements. ⁹
1997-98	Two new floors of apartments added
2010	New take away coffee shop and new canopy (00078:3555:215741)

1.3 Occupation history

1912-1994	Bank of New Zealand
1913	Jas Slattery, accountant (Wises 1913)
1916	NZ National Provident Fund, Jackson Herbt (manufacturers agent), the Friendly Society of NZ (Wises 1914).
1917	Gordon Cox (bookseller and stationer), NZ National Provident Fund, the Friendly Society of NZ, TEK Burgess (dentist) (Wises 1917).
1930s	The shop was occupied by a hairdresser
1950s	The shop was occupied by a tobacconist
1960s	The shop was used by BNZ as the Assistant Manager's Office
1960s-70s	The second floor was leased, the majority by Baldwin Heal and Co, and the smaller south west portion by Fouhy (denstis).
1990	First floor: Jasmad (later Jasmox) Architects Ltd took out a 12 year lease.
1996-2012	Burger King (ground floor) ¹⁰

⁹ "Heritage building - 79 Manners Street - Old BNZ Building, Te Aro Branch", 1041-06-MAN79, Wellington City Council Records.

¹⁰ Summarised from: Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 9-10

1.4 Architect

Thomas Turnbull and Son

Turnbull and Son was founded by Thomas Turnbull (1824-1907) who was born in Scotland and trained under David Bryce, Her Majesty's Architect for Scotland.¹¹ Turnbull moved to Melbourne in 1851 and then to San Francisco in circa 1860 where he became interested in earthquake resistant design, particularly for brick masonry buildings. He arrived in New Zealand in 1871, established a thriving business of which his son William (1868-1941) became a partner in 1891.¹² Thomas Turnbull is noted for the significant part he played in the transformation of the Wellington CBD from a town of two storey timber buildings to a city of "substantial masonry buildings."¹³

Thomas Turnbull was a prolific architect and the many buildings that he designed include:

- St Peter's Church, Willis Street (1879)
- St John's Church, Willis Street (1885)
- Former National Mutual Building (1883-84)

Thomas Turnbull & Son from 1891 – 1907 when both Thomas and William Turnbull were in partnership, buildings include:

- General Assembly Library (1899)
- Fletcher's Building 2-6 Willis St (1900)
- Former Bank of New Zealand Head Office (1901)
- Dr Henry Pollen's House, Boulcott Street (1902) - French Renaissance style
- Antrim House, Wellington (1905)
- Wellington Workingmen's Club Building, 107 Cuba Street (Building 1: 1904)

William Turnbull continued in practice after the death of his father in 1907 and retained the name of Thomas Turnbull and Son. William Turnbull was also a skilful designer and responsible for many of Wellington's "best and most convincing revivalist buildings"¹⁴ and these include:

- Dr McGavin's house and surgery cnr Willis and Ghuznee Street (1907) – half-timbered Tudor style
- Whitcoulls Building 312-316 Lambton Quay (1907-8)
- Wellington Workingmen's Club Building, 107 Cuba Street (Building 2: 1908)
- Kirkcaldie and Stains Department Store Façade 165-169 Lambton Quay (1909)
- Turnbull House, Bowen Street (1916) – Scottish Baronial style
- Northland Fire Station (1930)
- Free Ambulance Building, Cable Street (1932) – Art Deco style

¹¹Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, Thomas - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+Thomas>

¹² Historic Places Trust, "Turnbull, William (1868-1914) - Architect", *Professional Biographies*, accessed September 25, 2012, [http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+\(1868-1914\)](http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Turnbull,+William+(1868-1914))

¹³ Cochran, Chris, *Turnbull House Conservation Plan* (Wellington: Department of Conservation, 1991), 19.

¹⁴ Cochran, *Turnbull House Conservation Plan*, 21

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The former BNZ is a stately neo-Classical building finished in 1913, and is remarkable as much for its excellent use of its corner site, elegant proportions, rich decoration and high street appeal from the parapet down, as it is for the poorly designed roof-top apartment addition above the parapet line.¹⁵ The original BNZ building makes a good use of its corner site with two essentially identical principal façades articulated around a chamfered corner containing the main entrance. The low base is deeply rusticated; above this giant-order fluted Corinthian columns rise two stories to a richly detailed Corinthian cornice with prominent dentils and consoles. At the extreme end of either façade secondary entrances are housed within shallow Doric porticos that are proud of the main line of the façade. The ground floor windows to the double-height banking chamber are arched; the first floor windows are square-headed. Both sets of windows have moulded architraves and keystones. Above the cornice, the second floor forms part of the entablature of the building. It has square-headed windows similar to the first floor and is surmounted by an elaborate parapet which features central triangular pediments to each façade. The modern apartments loom above this. Their poor design, which has little to do with the building they are on, and their poor quality of materials detracts greatly from the high quality of this otherwise magnificent building and of the streetscape as a whole.

The building interior is also notable for its banking chamber, particularly for the wall panelling, floor finishes, decorative plastered ceilings, and for the doors and columns that were left intact when the fittings and furniture were removed in 1994.¹⁶

The building is sited on a prominent corner at the intersection of Cuba and Manners Streets and is one of three key Cuba Street buildings that are made more prominent by their lack of a verandah. The other two buildings are the former National Bank on the corner of Vivian and Cuba Streets, and the Workingmen's Club that is now disfigured by a modern steel and glass verandah with little aesthetic or heritage value.

2.2 Materials

The exterior is clad in rendered brick masonry. The construction is steel framing with reinforced concrete. Concrete beams support the reinforced slab bearing onto stanchions encased in concrete, exposed on interior walls. Internal columns are of steel encased in concrete. The original interior fittings were to be of Sydney cedar.¹⁷

The steel frame construction technology employed in this building is significant. The technique was advanced for its time, and its use in this building has been described as "state of the art...and to the highest standard".¹⁸ This gives the structure distinct technical value in a city where the frequency and strength of earthquakes was a serious challenge to building designers.

2.3 Setting

This building has considerable townscape significance, occupying a prominent corner site at the intersection of Manners Street and Cuba Street. The immediate area has a

¹⁵ Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report* (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006), 29.

¹⁶ Wellington City Council, "79-85 Manners Street, Bank of New Zealand, Te Aro Branch"

¹⁷ *Progress* Vol. VII No.8, June 1912, 1153 in Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 9

¹⁸ EMPA Group Consultants, quoted in Gatley, *BNZ Te Aro Branch: Cultural Heritage Assessment*, 13.

heterogeneous mix of buildings of different ages, scales, types and styles which assemble to create a varied and interesting streetscape.

The building is flanked to the north by a pair of compact three-storey masonry buildings originally built in 1987: the TG Macarthy building with a largely original façade; and the former Manchester Unity building, with a much altered façade. The two buildings are of the same scale and share a party wall.

On the other side of the street James Smiths and Civic Chambers book-end an important group of early Edwardian buildings.¹⁹

3.0 Sources

Cochran, Chris. *Turnbull House Conservation Plan*. Wellington: Department of Conservation, 1991.

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Wellington City Council, “79-85 Manners Street, Bank of New Zealand, Te Aro Branch,” *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), MANN 1.

Wellington City Council Records

“Heritage building - 79 Manners Street - Old BNZ Building, Te Aro Branch”, 1041-06-MAN79, Wellington City Council Records.

¹⁹ Adapted from: Kelly and Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report*.

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?*

Architecturally the building is notable for its excellent use of its corner site, elegant proportions, a richly-ornamented facade designed in the Edwardian Baroque style, and an impressive banking chamber, largely intact. The poorly conceived two storey apartments at roof level detract from the aesthetic value of this fine Edwardian 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?*

This distinctive building has high street appeal and makes a strong contribution to Cuba Street. The building has considerable townscape significance, occupying a prominent corner site in what is a major focal point within the city.

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?*

This building is part of a group of buildings built for the BNZ in Wellington, including: Old BNZ Buildings 1 & 2, 1904 (233-247 Lambton Quay), Old BNZ Building No.3, 1883-84 (98-102 Customhouse Quay), Old BNZ Building No.4, 1903 (29 Hunter Street).

This building is one of several Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which makes a strong positive contribution to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

Historic Value:

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

The Bank of New Zealand Te Aro branch has historic significance as the second oldest surviving BNZ building in Wellington after the former BNZ Head Office buildings. It served as a BNZ branch for over 80 years and played a significant role in the commercial life of Te Aro in that time. The BNZ has been one of New Zealand's most significant trading banks since its foundation in 1861. The building also has historic value for its association with William Turnbull, a prominent Wellington architect.

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

This building is associated with the strong growth and development of Cuba Street during the Edwardian period, which resulted in the building of many fine commercial buildings.

Scientific Value:

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

Central City NZAA R27/270. It is known that there has been pre-1900 human activity on the site; hence this site has potential 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 steel frame construction technology employed in this building is significant and was advanced for its time. The building has technical value for this.

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

The building is held in high public esteem and this can be seen by the furore that followed its proposed demolition in the mid-1980s.

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 is part of a group of Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contribute 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 also strongly representative of the architecture and history found in Cuba Street.

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 façade of this building remains largely intact with a high level of original building fabric, despite modifications and the addition of two modern storeys.

Local/Regional/National/International

Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

This building has local significance as a landmark and for its association with the Bank of New Zealand.

5.0 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)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report	Y	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	But no information – refers to 2001 inventory
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files		
Conservation Plan	Y	
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	

Background research

3.2 Block histories

3.2.1 Block 1 - Wakefield Street to Manners Street

This is the only block on Cuba Street that is built (partly) on reclaimed land. In the settlement's early years, Cuba Street did not extend to the shoreline and for much of the period the land that was later used for the street extension (part Town Acre 211) was occupied by prominent settler William Barnard Rhodes' store and residence, which was in turn sited in front of his wharf. It is possible that prior to reclamation a nascent Cuba Street was extended towards the shore, but there is only scant evidence for this.

Reclamation was undertaken by the Wellington City Council from 1882 to 1886. Following this, Cuba Street extension and Wakefield Street (then Victoria Street) were formed. Cuba Street was extended all the way to Jervois Quay, but was later blocked off and incorporated into the site of the Michael Fowler Centre.

Sections were sold by the council to private purchasers but building construction was slow. By 1891 just six buildings stood on Cuba Street and two on Wakefield Street near the Cuba Street intersection (where Anvil House is today). By 1900 this number had changed only slightly – nine on Cuba Street and three on Wakefield. One of those was George Winder, who established his ironmongery business on the corner of Cuba and Manners Street soon after Cuba Street extension was put through. He later sold the property to James Smith.

In the period during and after the construction of the electric tramway in 1903-04, the remaining sections quickly filled up. Many of the buildings on this block are the first constructed on their sites, including the Columbia Hotel (1908) and the Kennedy Building (1905) opposite it. On the corner with Manners Street are two long-standing buildings, the former Te Aro branch of the Bank of New Zealand (1917), which replaced an earlier building on the site, and the former James Smith building, which was established on the site in this building in 1907, after the business moved from the corner of Cuba and Dixon Streets. The Art Deco façade dates from 1932, with an extension along Manners Street (1934). Subsequent additions

in the 1960s extended the building a considerable distance north along Cuba Street. Its chamfered corner accommodated trams turning into Manners Street. On Wakefield Street, the only original building within the heritage area is the Hyams Building (1903), but the street is notable for a number of buildings from the 1950s and 60s that now occupy prominent sites opposite the Civic Centre.

CSHA Report
p51

Objective - That if the opportunity arises, the former BNZ be returned to its original exterior appearance, particularly in respect of the removal of the present roof-top additions.

THE GREAT FIRE – from Laura’s interpretation – for the bus shelter

In 1879, a fire broke out at the old Imperial Opera House, now 73 Manners Street. The “Great Fire” as it became known, devastated an area covering 10 acres, three city blocks, and reduced 30 major buildings to ashes including the BNZ Bank building. Thankfully no lives were reported lost.



Manners Street, Wellington, circa 1930. Cuba Street is visible. The Bank of New Zealand is on the right and Vance Vivian Ltd, with a sign advertising Lynx suits, is on the left. Photograph taken by Sydney Charles Smith (ATL Ref 1/2-048949-G).