

Commercial Building

1 -13 Todman Street, Brooklyn



Image: Charles Collins, 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- The Cornerstore is a good representative example of an early 20th C commercial building. It is notable for its distinctive wedge-shaped plan, and for its long, stepped verandah, and for the integrity of its façade at first floor level.
- The building is located on a prominent and elevated wedge-shaped site at the corner of Todman Street and Ohiro Road. It is a local landmark that marks the western end of Brooklyn's commercial zone.
- The building's history is representative of a typical multipurpose commercial/residential building of its era. It is also recognized as one of the suburb's oldest commercial buildings and has some local renown as a well-patronised café/restaurant of the 1980s and beyond.

District Plan:	Map 6 reference 406
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 62902
Heritage Area:	None 2013
HPT Listed:	None 2013
Archaeological Site:	Unknown risk
Other Names:	Ferkins' Building Brooklyn Café & Grill Brooklyn Bistro The Cornerstore
Key physical dates:	1903 constructed
Architect / Builder:	F & W Ferkins
Former uses:	Shops with dwelling above
Current uses:	Restaurant with residential above
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 266565 Bdg StrengthInv status 'Yet to be Assessed' Feb 2012

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

Brooklyn was still part of Melrose Borough when this building was planned for the corner of Ohiro Road and Todman St. ¹

It was most probably designed and built by local land speculators and developers, F & W Ferkins in 1903. The Ferkins family were well known in Brooklyn at the time of the development. Mrs Annie Ferkins owned the general store and post office from at least 1893,² and the family appear to have been actively involved in the subdivision and development of land in Brooklyn from 1894 – 1902.³ By 1902 the Ferkins Brothers, William Joseph and Frederick James, were in business as ‘Architects, Builders and Financiers’ and advertised that they owned various urban and suburban building sites including ‘two valuable corner sections at Brooklyn’.⁴

F & W Ferkins applied for multiple building permits on the 12th June 1903 for a house at Lot 120 Todman Street for George Smith for the sum of £500; two shops and dwellings on Lot 58 of Fitchett Town (one of which is likely to be the current *Brooklyn Galleria*) in the sum of £900;⁵ and to construct a shop, dwelling and verandah at Lot 69 (currently the *Cornerstore*) for George Goldstein for the sum of £750.⁶

The 1903 development proposal for Lot 69 included a stable and coach house, yard, and two storey shop and dwelling. It is unclear whether the building was actually originally constructed to the consent drawings as these show a building with a hipped roof and eaves, and with a small verandah that wrapped around the northern tip of the building at the Ohiro Road / Todman Street intersection. The building was also originally only designed to occupy about half of the Todman Street site frontage, with access to a coach house to the south via a yard to the west. A c.1909 photograph shows the building in something like its modern form. A small villa was built at the western corner of the triangular site and a western wing was added to the original shop/dwelling. The roof of the shop/dwelling is shown in the photograph with a tall stepped parapet, and there is a similarly stepped verandah that runs along the Todman Street façade of the building.⁷

¹ Note: this section is an updated version of the WCC Heritage Inventory 2001 – ref TODM1

² It seems likely that this shop was sited on the opposite side of Ohiro Road on the corner of Cleveland Street - See map of the ‘Township of Fitchett’ (c.1906) ATL cartographic collection ref Map Coll 832.4799gbbd Br ca.1906 25593 ; Page 3 Advertisements Column 9 *Evening Post*, 30 June 1894, Page 3;

³ This can be deduced from the number of advertisements for land and buildings for sale or lease in Brooklyn that cited Ferkins’ Store as a contact address during this period – typically - Page 8 Advertisements Column 7 , 12 April 1901, Page 8

⁴ Page 2 Advertisements Column 5 *Evening Post*, 19 December 1901, Page 2; Page 8 Advertisements Column 6 *Evening Post*, , 28 February 1902, Page 8; Page 1 Advertisements Column 7 *Evening Post*, 1 May 1902, Page 1; Page 1 Advertisements Column 2; *Evening Post*, 12 May 1902, Page 1

⁵ Lot 120 was owned by George Smith, Lot 58 by the Ferkins brothers, and Lot 69 by George Goldstein see CT vol 97 folio 55.

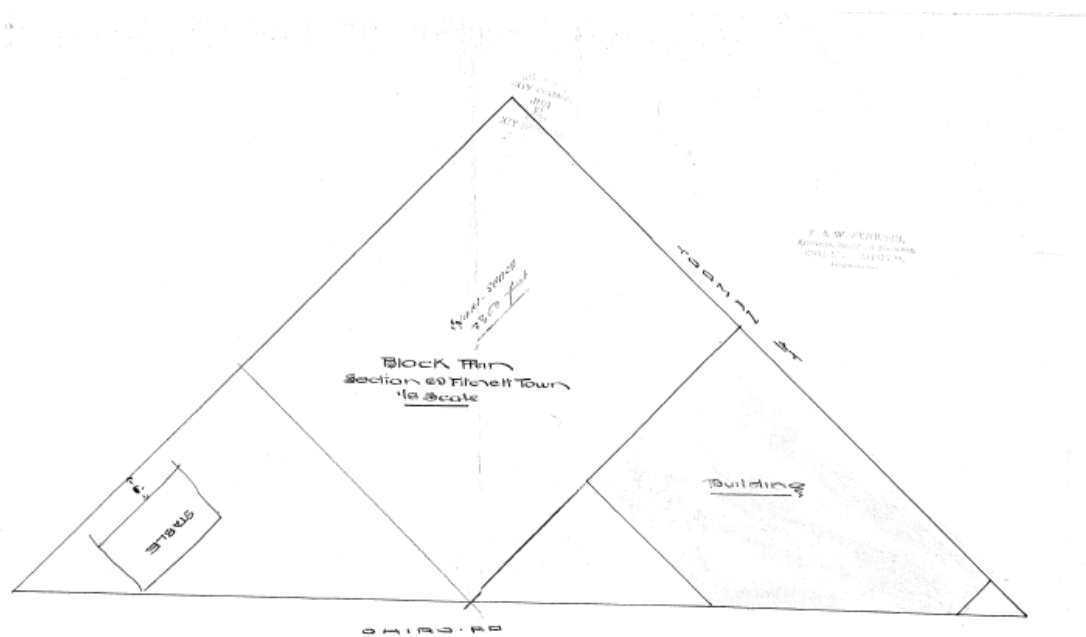
⁶ F & W Ferkins, building permit application (1903) WCC Archives ref 00043:1:33

⁷ See photograph - *Part 2 of a 4 part panorama looking over the suburb of Brooklyn, Wellington*. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/1-019982-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22839086>

Little is known about George Goldstein, the original building owner, although a George Goldstein is known to have operated as a 'gentlemen's mercer and clothier' from a shop on Willis Street from 1889 to at least 1897.⁸ The Ferkins family retained an interest in the Todman Street property by way of a mortgage until Goldstein sold the land and buildings to Annie Ferkins and William Joseph Ferkins in December 1906.⁹

By 1909 the ground floor of the enlarged building had been divided into five or six shops. They served a variety of uses; butchers, fishmongers, confectioners and bootmaker.¹⁰ Slightly more unusually, in the 1970s and early 80s, Lada Krida, gunsmith, had premises here. There was also a planning consent application to convert the ground floor of later (western) wing of the building into a three bedroom flat in 1938, but these alterations do not seem to have been implemented.¹¹

In 1988 chef, restaurateur, writer and radio personality, Lois Daish and others converted the building into a restaurant, the Brooklyn Café and Grill. The restaurant became a very successful institution, popular with locals and those from other parts of Wellington. As part of the conversion, which was estimated to cost \$70,000,¹² interior walls were removed, exterior walls replaced and, in an interesting innovation for the time, cooking and dining were brought together in an open plan arrangement. A carpark was provided at the rear of the building – and the western-most shop was rebuilt as a drive-way to the yard behind. After 11 years the café was sold but it remains today as an eating establishment/bar.



1903 site layout plan¹³

⁸ *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District]*, (Wellington: The Cyclopaedia Company, Limited, 1897), 640

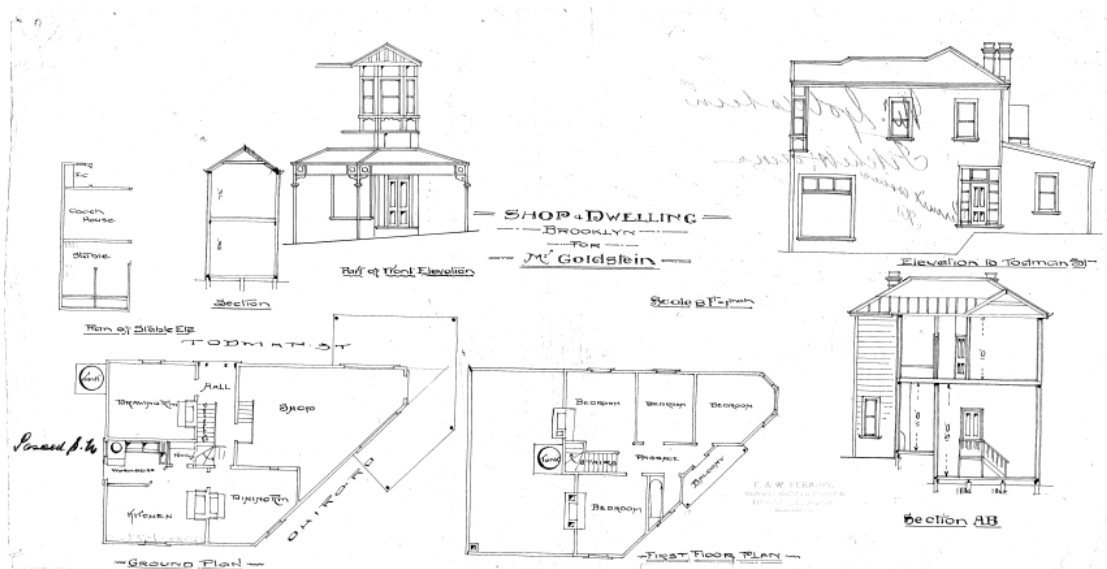
⁹ CT vol 89 folio 255. James Frederick had died from peritonitis in 1904 see – 'PERSONAL MATTERS'. *Evening Post*, 30 September 1904, Page 5

¹⁰ Various Wises Post Office Directories 1918 – 1982; Karen Needham, *Heritage Inventory and Conservation Plan: Prepared for 1-11 Todman Street, Brooklyn, Wellington. Brooklyn Café and Grill*, unpublished conservation plan prepared as student work for VUW Arch 273, 1999.

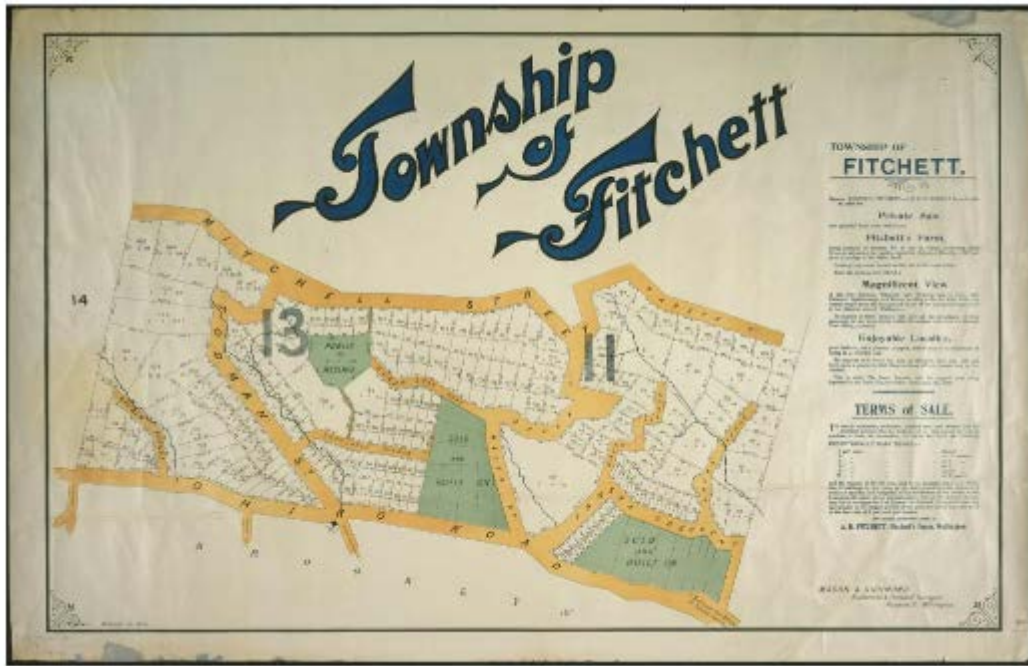
¹¹ WCC archives ref 00056:215:B18459; see also plans as existing for the 1988 Barbara Webster scheme which appear to show a simplified lateral conversion of the back rooms of the three shops - SR D9741.

¹² WCC archives ref SR D9741

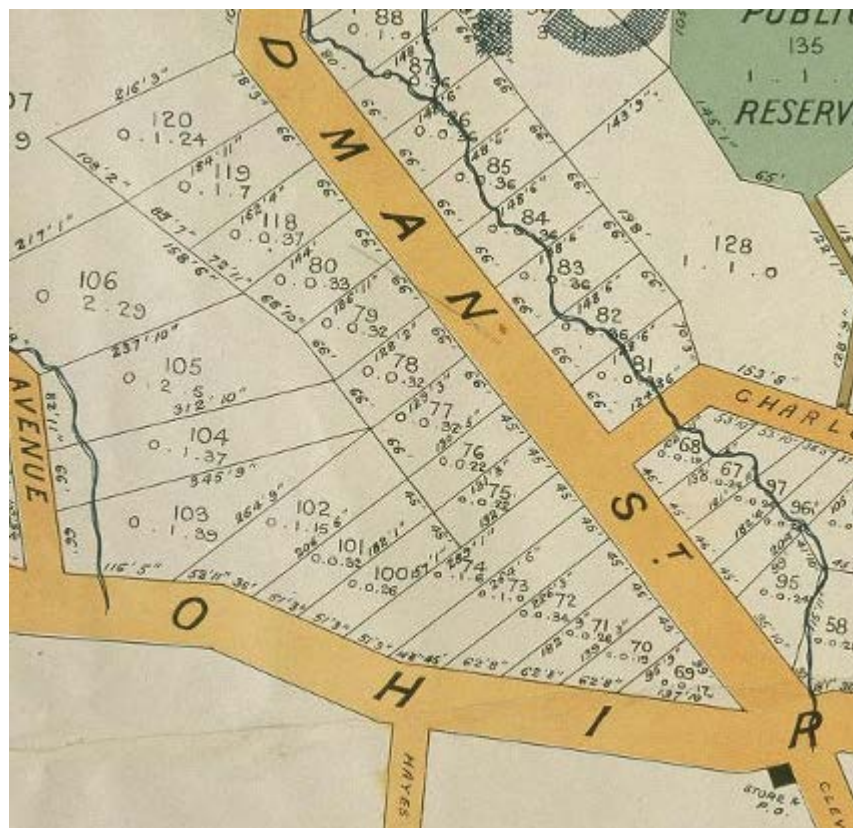
¹³ WCC archives ref 00043:1:33



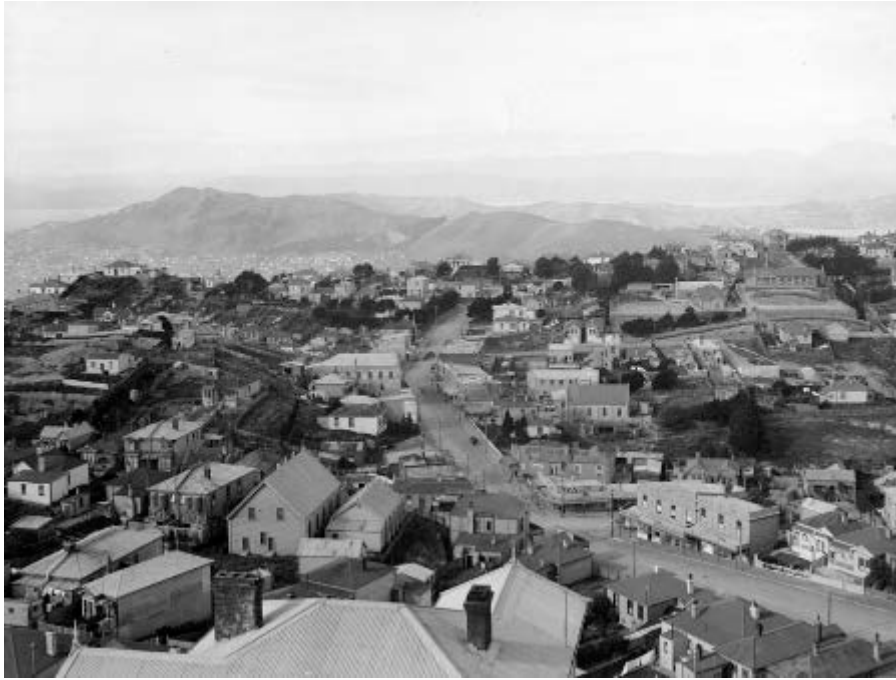
1903 plans, section and elevations as proposed. Note that this building was approximately half the size of the current commercial building on this site. The house and shop were designed with a hipped roof with eaves, and with a large lean-to roof to the west over the single storey drawing room and kitchen. The shop only occupied the north eastern corner of the building on the ground floor, and there was a large balcony to the Ohio Road façade.



1906 map of the Brooklyn subdivision titled 'Township of Fitchett' – ATL cartographic collection ref MapColl 832.4799gbbd Br ca.1906 25593



Enlarged portion of previous map to show section 69 (and sections 58 & 120)

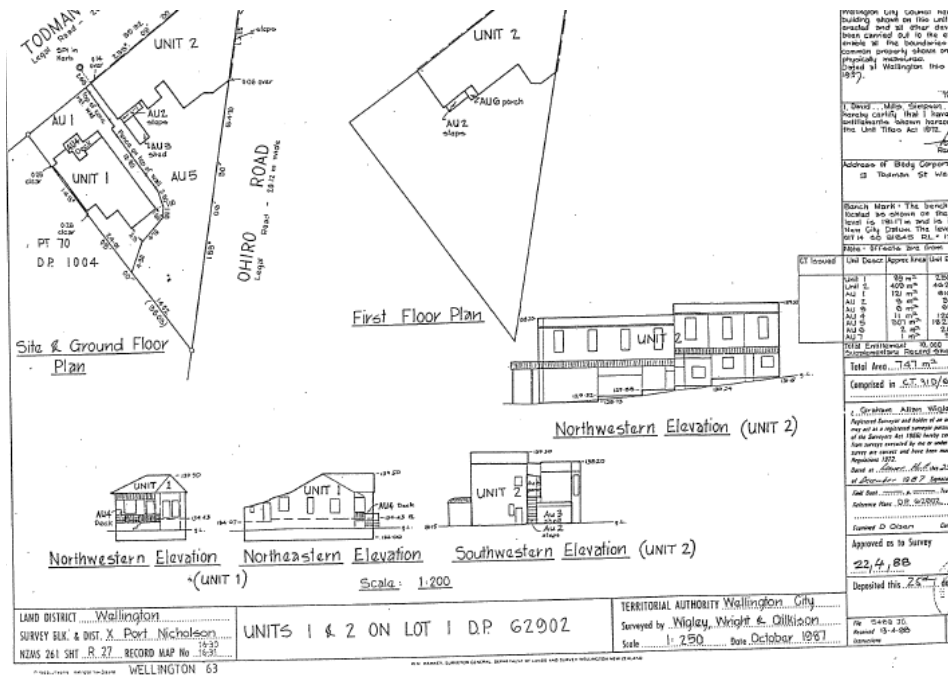


c.1909 photograph of Brooklyn showing Todman Street and Ohiro Road.¹⁴



Enlargement of part of the 1909 Sydney Charles Smith photograph to show the dwelling/shop and the adjoining villa to the west of the property. Note the detail to the parapet, including the entablature/acroterion to each part of the commercial building – this has since been replaced. The verandah also once supported an up-stand/parapet, and the decorative ironwork to the verandah has been altered. The stable / coach-house can be seen behind the villa to the right of the photograph, and a horse and cart can be seen waiting at the far left of the image, perhaps this was the delivery cart. The building appears to have been divided into approximately six separate shop tenancies, with 'The People's Butchers' to the far left (east) of the photo.

¹⁴ Part 2 of a 4 part panorama looking over the suburb of Brooklyn, Wellington. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/1-019982-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22839086>



1988 – Subdivision plan showing the location of the villa (Unit 1) and the commercial building (Unit 2)¹⁵

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1903	Construction
Pre- 1909	Addition to the west, villa constructed to the north west of the site
1938	Application to convert three of the ground floor shops into apartments – this may not have been built
Unknown date	Alterations to parapet & replacement verandah
1988	Restaurant conversion

1.3 Architect

F & W Ferkins 'Architects, Builder's and Financiers' – see history section 1.1

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The Brooklyn Café is one of Wellington' distinctive wedge-shaped buildings, built up to the boundary on the corner of Todman Street and Ohiro Road. It has unusual prominence because the site is elevated above the intersection, which is a busy one at the end of Brooklyn's main shopping area on Cleveland Road.¹⁶

It is a two storied timber framed building, clad in rusticated weatherboards. A modern verandah supported on galvanised steel posts wraps around the corner and,

¹⁵ CT 32C / 65

¹⁶ Note: this section is an updated version of the WCC Heritage Inventory 2001 ref TODM1

along with the building, it steps in two parts up the steep incline of Todman Street. The ground floor has been relatively sympathetically altered for the present-day use as a café while, above the verandah, the façade is in near-original condition.¹⁷ It has a row of double-hung windows, with small 6-pane top sashes and plain bottom sashes, and the frames are ornamented with key stones. A cornice runs above the windows, and a weather-boarded parapet hides the corrugated roof behind. At the upper end of the Todman Street facade, a passage runs through the building to a small yard now used for parking.

The extant drawings, which are unsigned and undated, indicate that the building was constructed in two stages. If this is so, care was taken to match external details in the two parts, so that with the exception of the step in the form of the building, it could have been built at one time.

2.2 Materials

Timber structure and weatherboard cladding
Corrugated mild steel roof

2.3 Setting

The 'Cornerstore' is a wedge shaped building set on a prominent corner site that is located above the busy Ohiro Road/Todman and Cleveland Street intersection. The villa at 15 Todman Street is located within the original site boundary for the Lot 69 and may have some historic connection with the Cornerstore. Other similar villas, set in leafy gardens, line Todman Street. The Brooklyn Galleria at 190 Ohiro is a commercial building built at a similar date, in a similar style, and designed and constructed by the same architect/builders as the Cornerstore. The pair of buildings sit on either side of Todman Street at its intersection with Ohiro Road and serve as a neat frame to the western half of suburban Brooklyn.

¹⁷ See the 1909 photograph for the early/ original parapet and verandah details

3.0 Sources

CT 32C / 65; CT vol 97 folio 55; CT vol 189 folio 255; CT vol 288 folio 11; CT 31D / 648

Evening Post, 30 June 1894; Evening Post, 12 April 1901; Evening Post, 19 December 1901; Evening Post, 28 February 1902; Evening Post, 1 May 1902; Evening Post, 12 May 1902

Needham, Karen. *Heritage Inventory and Conservation Plan: Prepared for 1-11 Todman Street, Brooklyn, Wellington. Brooklyn Café and Grill*, unpublished conservation plan prepared as student work for VUW Arch 273, 1999.

Part 2 of a 4 part panorama looking over the suburb of Brooklyn, Wellington. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/1-019982-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.
<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22839086>

'PERSONAL MATTERS'. Evening Post, 30 September 1904

The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District], (Wellington: The Cyclopaedia Company, Limited, 1897) 'Township of Fitchett' (c.1906) ATL cartographic collection ref Map Coll 832.4799gbbd Br ca.1906 25593

WCC archives ref 00056:215:B18459; WCC archives ref SR D9741; WCC archives ref 00043:1:33

WCC Heritage Inventory 2001 – ref TODM1

Wises Post Office Directories 1918 - 1982

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 Cornerstore is a good representative example of an early 20th C commercial building. It is notable for its distinctive wedge-shaped plan, and for its long, stepped verandah, and for the integrity of its façade at first floor level.

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 located on a prominent and elevated wedge-shaped site at the corner of Todman Street and Ohiro Road. It is a local landmark that marks the western end of Brooklyn's commercial zone.

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 association with the Brooklyn Galleria located on the opposite corner of Todman Street and designed and constructed by the same architects / builders in 1903.

Historic Value:

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

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

The building's history is representative of a typical multipurpose commercial/residential building of its era. It is also recognized as one of the suburb's oldest commercial buildings and has some local re-known as a well-patronised café/restaurant of the 1980s and beyond.

Scientific Value:

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

Unknown risk

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?

The building has had few intrusive modern alterations or additions and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Brooklyn.

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 a good representative example of an early 20th century mixed use commercial/residential building.

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 building retains much of its early/original façades, particularly at first floor level.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

5.0Appendix
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?	N	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files	Y	
Conservation Plan	Y	
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	y	

Background research