

Museum Stand, Basin Reserve

2 Rugby Street

(Note: Sussex Street entrance)



The Museum Stand. Images: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Statement of heritage significance

The Museum Stand is one of the two prominent stands on the ground [at the Basin Reserve]. As the first purpose-built stand, one with a strong association with recreational and sporting development in Wellington and a very long-standing connection with cricket, it has high historic value. It has high social value, providing ongoing amenity value for spectators at the ground, and with the rest of the Reserve, is held in high esteem by Wellingtonians.

The building has high aesthetic significance. It has architectural value for its simple but elegant composition, Stripped Classical detailing and careful use of structure to suit its function. The stand has been little modified over the years and retains a high level of authenticity; its construction and structure is of high technical value.

The Museum Stand is a landmark structure both within and without the Reserve and has a particularly strong presence on Rugby Street and accordingly high townscape value. It has group value in particular with the new stand but also with the other buildings and structures on the grounds, with which it forms part of a wider historical precinct that is of high significance to Wellington and Wellingtonians.

District Plan:	Map 16 / 449
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 90475 (CT WN58A/615)
Heritage Area:	WCC none 2012
HPT Listed:	Basin Reserve Historic Area; Basin Reserve Pavilion listed Category II registry number 1339 NZHPT registration "Basin Reserve Pavilion, Basin Reserve, Sussex Street, Wellington"
Archaeological Site:	Pre-1900 human activity on site
Other Names:	District Plan symbol 275; Basin Reserve Pavilion; Also note entrance from Sussex Street 2 Rugby Street (Building B = Museum Stand) Old Museum Stand, Old Grandstand, New Zealand Cricket Museum Note adjacent structure at 2 Rugby Street (Building H = William Wakefield Memorial) NZHPT Cat 1
Key physical dates:	1924 Built 2006 William Wakefield Memorial relocated to original site nearby
Architect / Builder:	A Paterson (Acting City Engineer) WCC City Engineer's Department Builder: Higgins & Arcus
Earthquake Prone Status	Section 124 Notice (Expires 27/01/2022)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

The Museum Stand is part of the historic and well-loved sporting ground, the Basin Reserve. The swampy land comprised in the Basin Reserve was surveyed in 1840 by New Zealand Company surveyor Captain Mein Smith as a possible site for a sheltered inner mooring for boats, to be accessed via a canal.² The proposal was not advanced, and work was forever shelved by the 1855 earthquake that raised much of the land around Te Aro and made an inner harbour impracticable. The name remains from this proposal.

In 1857 the land was set aside as a recreational reserve and was drained in 1863 using prison labour from nearby Mount Cook Gaol. In 1866 a group of Wellington citizens formed a committee to develop the ground, with the assistance of the Provincial Council Board of Works, so it could be used for cricket matches. The first game was played on 11 January 1868 between the Wellington Volunteers and the men of the HMS *Falcon*. The lease of the reserve for sporting purposes was renewed to a committee of three, who represented the interests of the general public, the Caledonian Games Committee³ and cricketers, in 1870. This purpose was secured in 1873 when the Provincial Council vested the reserve in the Wellington City Council “for such purposes of public utility.”⁴ Thus it remains to this day.

The first grandstand was built by the Caledonian Sports Association in 1868. It was demolished in 1923 to make way for what is now called the Museum Stand, which was by this date in a dilapidated state, provoking adverse comments from cricketers.⁵ The Council called for entries in a competition to design a new pavilion. The successful entrant was an architect by the name of P.H Graham. However, the City Engineer’s Department was not familiar with his work and expressed doubts about the suitability of his design. He was paid the prize money of £100, but was informed that his involvement was at an end. Aggrieved, he pursued the Council in an attempt to obtain a contract to prepare working drawings and to guarantee his supervision of the project. This was the usual outcome of such competitions. He involved the New Zealand Institute of Architects in the matter, but all protests were fruitless. A completely new pavilion was designed by the City Engineer’s Department. Contracting firm Higgins and Arcus Brothers submitted a successful tender, and work started in late 1924, supervised by the City Engineer. The new pavilion, which cost £16, 710, was officially opened by the Mayor Robert Wright.

The stand was used by those prepared to pay a higher ticket price to sit in relative comfort. Patrons entered the grounds from Sussex Street, and walked up a grand, sweeping staircase to reach their seats. Today, the entrance is at the base of the pavilion, and the old side entrances are blocked off. The cricketers’ changing facilities were on the north side of the pavilion. Aside from the sporting ground, the pavilion was the central feature of the reserve, a status that it held until 1981.

¹ Note: This report is based on the WCC Heritage Assessment prepared for DPC 53 by Russell Murray and Kerryn Pollock for WCC In September 2006

² M. Kelly, ‘A History of the Basin Reserve’, HPT file 12023-079. The following information is derived from this source, unless stated otherwise.

³ The Caledonian Sports was a major event in the 1860s and the ground was frequently used for this purpose.

⁴ Another further deed in 1883 from the Crown to the council confirmed this and gave cricket primacy over other sports.

⁵ M. Kelly, ‘Museum Stand – a brief history’, HPT file 12023-079. All information on the Museum Stand is derived from this source.

That year, as part of a major redevelopment of the Basin Reserve, a new stand was constructed to the north of the Museum Stand. Known as the R.A. Vance Stand, it included facilities for the members and players, and the ground, previously rectangular in shape, was re-orientated into an oval shape. The Museum Stand, which had been declining in status and suffering from lack of maintenance for some time, was no longer side on to the action and was further marginalised as a result. The building was re-roofed in the 1990s and the grandstand and WC facilities are now used by the general public.

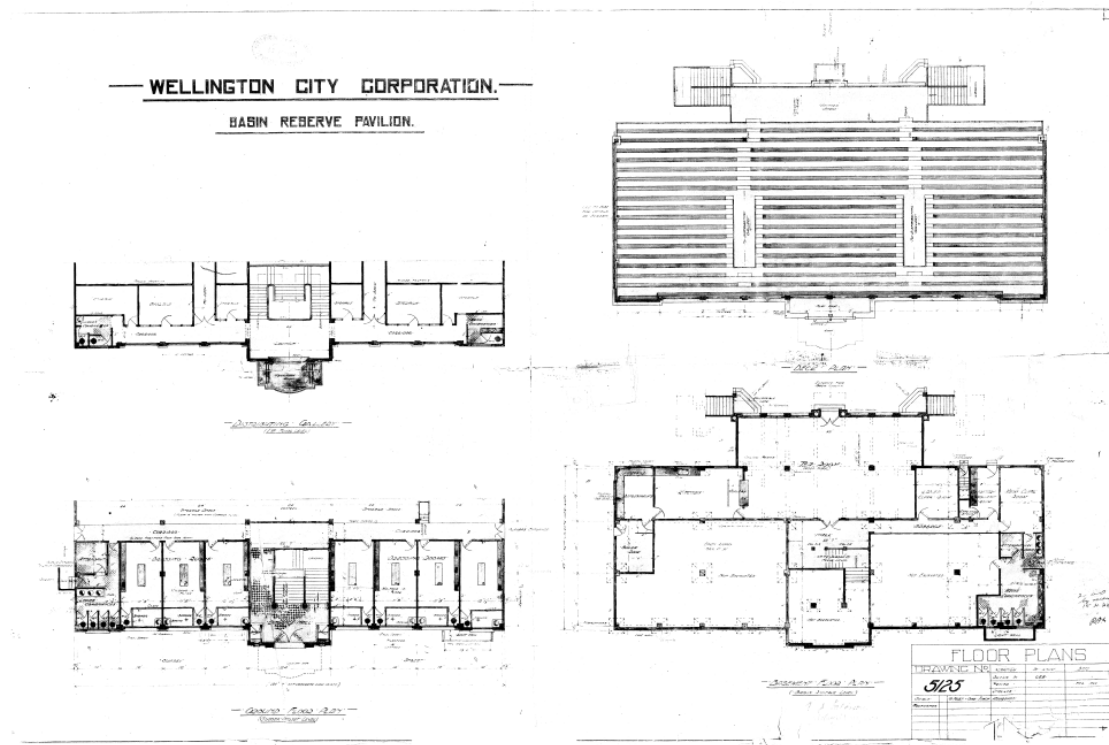
However, the growing interest in New Zealand's cricketing heritage gave it a new purpose. In 1986 the Council approved the establishment of a cricket museum in the main reception room under the stand. Charged an annual rental of \$1,000, it took over residency on 1 December 1986 and has remained in the building ever since. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) took over funding responsibilities in 2003, and unused rooms in the bowels of the stand were turned into exhibition space. The museum is now jointly run by NZC and the Wellington City Museums' Trust, and has a full-time curator.

The Museum Stand has been used by patrons at a vast number of events, even though the Basin Reserve is now largely associated with cricket. Some of the activities that have taken place at the ground since 1924 include hockey, rugby union, rugby league, Australian Rules, cycling, brass band displays, soccer, school sports, athletics, baseball, softball, military tattoos, open air religious services, concerts and fireworks displays, all eagerly watched from the seats of the Museum Stand.

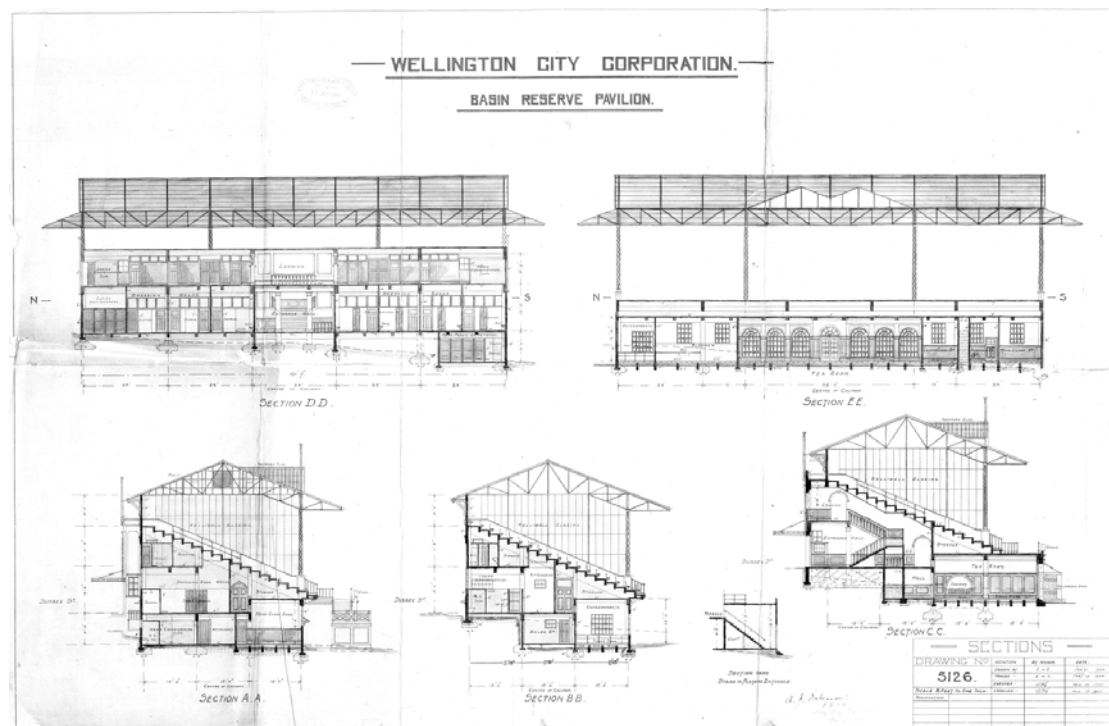
The Basin Reserve as a complete site has significant historic value. Aside from the Museum Stand features include the R.A Vance Stand, groundsmen's shed, playing oval and picket fence, Reid and Dempster gates, former Midland St Patrick's Cricket clubrooms, the main fence, William Wakefield Memorial, toilets, scoreboard, light towers and embankment.



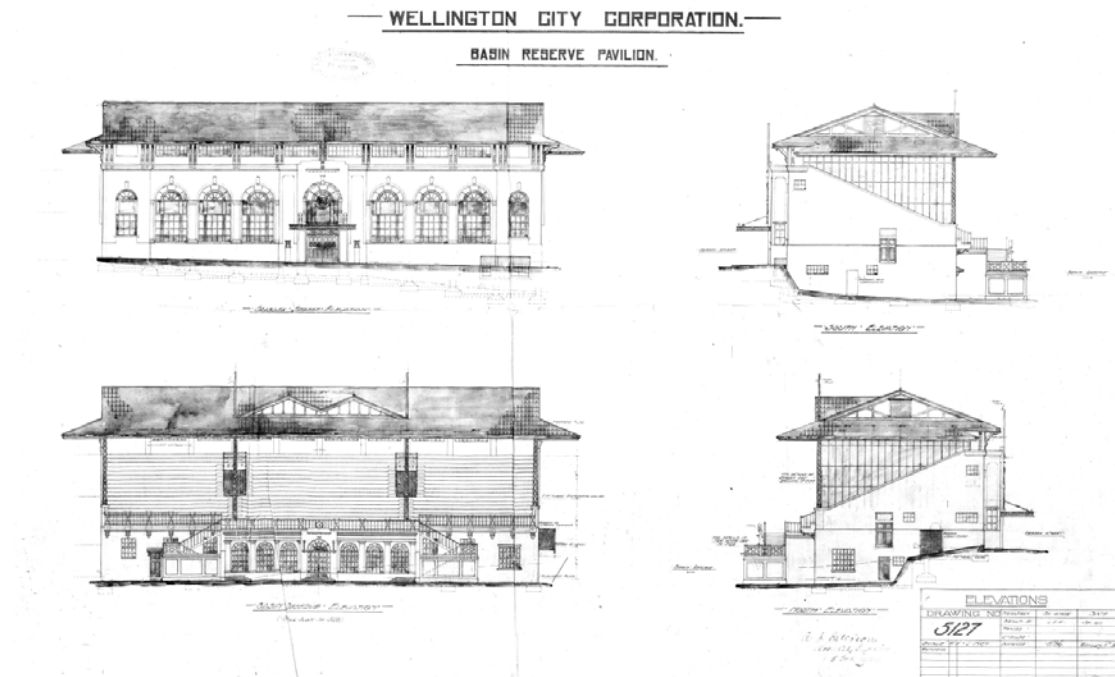
Anzac Day ceremony, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 1930. Evening Post photograph.
Ref: EP-0496-1/2-G



Floor plans (1924). Image: WCC Archives



Sections (1924). Image: WCC Archives



Elevations (1924). Image: WCC Archives

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1924	Constructed
1990s	New roofing installed
2006	William Wakefield Memorial relocated to original site nearby

1.3 Occupation History

- 1924 Cricket Pavilion, changing rooms, ticket booths, grandstand, WCs, refreshment area & Tearooms.
- 1925 'De Luxe Confectionary Co.' listed as purveyors of confectionary
- 1925 Wellington Hockey (noted as occupiers of the pavilion)
- 1986 New Zealand Cricket Museum

1.4 Architect

A Paterson (Acting City Engineer) WCC City Engineer's Department
Builder: Higgins & Arcus

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture⁶

The Museum Stand is a substantial concrete building, decorated predominantly in the Stripped Classical style popular at the time.

Its form is very much a product of its function of providing shelter and views from the sharply raked seating bleachers, and has resulted in a mainly solid back wall (to Rugby Street), side walls solid below the bleachers and glazed above and an open front, all covered with a vast over-sailing metal roof, its soffit lined with corrugated iron, which soars over the concrete bleachers to land on a concealed beam, which in turn is supported on four riveted lattice-work plate columns spanning down to the plinth of the Stand.

The main decoration is concentrated on the Rugby Street façade and on the plinth inside the grounds. The main entry to the stand was once at the Rugby Street side. This elevation is carefully and symmetrically composed in a neo-Classical fashion. The main feature of the façade is the former entrance, which is brought well forward of the main wall line and is further marked with a large horizontal canopy and a large round-headed window and architrave, complete with a keystone moulding. The main plane of the façade is then symmetrically divided about the entrance into four bays on either side. The end bay on either side is brought slightly forward of the main plane of the wall to offer further modelling of the façade. Each bay in the façade contains a round-headed window at high level, lined with a square window closer to the ground. The first three bays are divided with plain Doric pilasters. In the end bays, the round-headed window is at a lower level. The façade is trimmed below the roof with a simple but heavy cornice, enriched with roundel mouldings in pairs. Above this cornice are the substantial eave brackets, in triplets on either side of the entrance, in pairs elsewhere – these return around both sides of the building and give a great deal of visual interest to the top of the façade and add some striking shadowing to the building.

Above all this the great roof is finished with a large timbered dutch gable at the north and south ends. Below the eave of this roof, the hipped part of the dutch gable roof is cantilevered out at either end to shade the glass. The overall roof form conceals the trusses needed to span across the stand and contains two, presumably modern, commentator's boxes in large dormers near the front edge.

The sides are quite unornamented – under the large eave projection is a plane of glass to the sides of the bleachers, which is in line with the plain surface of the concrete wall supporting the bleachers, which itself is relieved only by small windows and doors necessary to service the space under the Stand.

Coming around to the Basin side of the Stand, the main ornament is at the front of the plinth of the stand, which consists of an arcaded central section of seven arches, flanked on either side by a dog-leg stair giving access to the Stand from the Basin. The central arcade is decorated in similar style to the Rugby Street façade, with the central section, which now contains the Cricket Museum entrance, brought forward of the adjoining walls – this is surmounted with a prominent gabled pediment which features the Edward Dixon memorial clock. The entrance is deeply recessed in this section and is further marked by a prominent horizontal canopy. On either side of the centre, three round-headed windows, run floor to ceiling, are divided by Doric pilasters running up to a heavy cornice line which caps the arcade.

⁶ From the report prepared by Russell Murray and Kerry Pollock for WCC In September 2006

The front rows of bleachers are supported on a cantilevered balcony in front of the main wall line of the stand – heavy moulded plaster Composite corbels offer support to this balcony, which is finished with a moulded cornice, further enriched with projecting blocks trimmed with roundels at regular spacings. The seating is low timber benches, supported on steel legs off the concrete bleachers. Handrails and guardrails are all metal. Windows are steel, exterior doors in timber. Within the plinth, and under the Stand itself, is the Cricket Museum. Much of the original fabric of this service area of the Stand remains in the parts not taken up with the display area of the Museum.

2.2 Materials

Summary of materials

- Concrete foundations, floors & walls
- Steel trussed roof structure
- Corrugated mild steel roof cladding
- Steel &/or timber windows
- Timber bench seating to grandstand
- Internal finishes include lime-wash to concrete, plastered finish to concrete, timber T&G lining, some kauri panelling, fibrous plaster cornices & ceiling to entrance hall.

2.3 Setting

The immediate setting of the Stand, the Basin Reserve itself, is of considerable interest. Features near the Museum Stand include the terraces, the new stand to the north, mature pohutukawa, the concrete and timber perimeter fence, caretaker's residence and the two main gates. The Stand is very much an integral part of this Reserve and contributes as much to the setting as it derives value from it. The Reserve is of great importance in the streetscape of southern Te Aro and, in its evolved role as the largest roundabout in the country, marks the confluence of many important streets in the area.



Museum Stand photographed in November 2011. Image: WCC DSC02704



Museum Stand from Sussex Street. Image: Google Maps

References

- M. Kelly, 'Museum Stand – a brief history', HPT file 12023-079
- NZHPT Registration Proposal Form (1998)
- Report Prepared By Russell Murray & K Pollock For WCC 09/ 2006

Cricket Wellington webpage accessed 10/05/2012

<http://www.cricketwellington.co.nz/content/about/Basin-Reserve-History.aspx>

3.0 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 building has aesthetic value for its simple but elegant Stripped Classical detailing and use of structure to suit its function

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 a 'landmark' structure both within and without the Reserve and has a particularly strong presence on Rugby 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 an integral part of the Basin Reserve
- The building is a prominent item within the NZHPT Basin Reserve Historic Area
- The stand functions as part of a group of buildings, playing fields, structures and heritage items including the listed William Wakefield Memorial

Historic Value:

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

- The item has strong association with National / International cricket from 1924 – 1981

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

- The building has an association with sport and recreation in Wellington
- The building is the first 'purpose-built' stand / grandstand on the site
- The building has a long-standing association with cricket in Wellington

Scientific Value:

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

- The building has archaeological value for the pre- 1900 human activity on the site

Educational: Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?

- The building (including the interior) retains significant areas of original building fabric – this may be of interest to researchers & historians

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?*

- The building provided key amenities for players, spectators and visitors to the Basin Reserve grounds from 1924 – 1981.
- The building continues in use as a cricket museum and provides some amenities for spectators (although this is limited by the current concerns over its earthquake prone status).
- The building is held in high esteem by many Wellingtonians⁷

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?*

- The Basin Reserve has been used for military tattoos, religious and commemorative services

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 Basin Reserve is recognised nationally as a cricket venue.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

- The building is held in high esteem by many Wellingtonians⁸

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

- There are relatively few surviving sports stadia of this scale and age that remain in an unmodified state within NZ.

Representative: *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

- The building is good example of sports pavilion or 'stand'

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?*

⁷ Report Prepared By Russell Murray For WCC 09/ 2006

⁸ Report Prepared By Russell Murray For WCC 09/ 2006

- The building is relatively unmodified and retains a high level of authenticity
- The building retains original interior features including ticket booths
- The building contains the Edward Dixon Clock (1904)

Local/Regional/National/International

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

- The Basin Reserve is recognised nationally as the 'home' of cricket in Wellington. The building is part of a collection of buildings that comprise the NZHPT listed Basin Reserve Historic Area.

4.0 Appendix

Source		Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		05/2012
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		not found
WCC Records – building file		05/2012
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		Not found
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		05/2012
HPT files		05/2012
Conservation Plan		Russell Murray report 2006
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		