

Woolstore Design Centre

268 Thorndon Quay (also known as 262 Thorndon Quay)



Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- The Woolstore building is a particularly fine example of an industrial structure of the first decade of the 20th century, with aesthetic value deriving from the regular, ordered and solid form of the building, and the colour and patterning of the brickwork. The building is notable for the quality of the design, materials and construction, and is a major work by the prominent local architectural practice of Thomas Turnbull and Son.
- The building makes a major contribution to the streetscape quality of the area in an otherwise undistinguished part of the city. The building has strong townscape qualities as it marks the transition between Thorndon residential areas and the reclaimed land occupied by the railway and shunting yards.
- The building has an association with the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, a historically important company in New Zealand for nearly a century, and this building is an elegant reminder of its success.
- The Woolstore building has a high level of authenticity as all significant structural components are intact, and the main façade to Thorndon Quay is unaltered except for ground floor entrances. This also gives the building high technical value.

District Plan:	Map 15,18 Symbol 454
Legal Description:	Lot 57-60 DP 2055
Heritage Area:	Not part of a Heritage Area.
HPT Listed:	Not listed.
Archaeological Site:	
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	1910
Architect / Builder:	Thomas Turnbull and Son
Former uses:	Woolstore and Warehouse, Indoor Sports Arena
Current uses:	Retail, Café, Offices
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR165664 (124 Served)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency (NZLMA) was a London based subsidiary of the Bank of New Zealand. It was established in 1865, partly as a mortgage agency for British investors in New Zealand, but also to as an agent for produce, and as 'financial and general' commercial agents.¹

New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company purchased lots 57-60 of reclaimed land from the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company in 1908, partly due to its proximity to the wharves.²

The building, designed by noted Wellington architects Thomas Turnbull & Son, was built to meet their requirements for a place to store and display wool, grains, hides and manure and also to provide office space. It was designed as a three storey building, complete with a basement, with a steel frame and brick walls.³ Of note at the time were the link elevators for conveying wool directly from the cart dock to the showroom floors.⁴ Construction was largely carried out by Campbell and Burke in 1910 and at the time the building's construction cost an estimated at £18,000.⁵

The building was transferred in 1961 to Dalgetys, a firm which was subsequently taken over by Fletcher Challenge, then sold to the New Zealand Wool Marketing Corporation (later called the New Zealand Wool Board) in 1976.⁶

In 1984 Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd purchased the property and used the space as an indoor sports arena for hockey and cricket.⁷ In 1991 The Woolstore purchased the property and carried out internal alterations to the building in the late 1990s to convert the building into a large retail and commercial space.⁸ Paulemas Properties Ltd, purchased the building in 2004.⁹ Today there are 18 tenants in the building, including photography studios, an architectural firm and interior decorators. Its largely unaltered street frontage is a feature of the building today, which is largely in use as an upmarket retail centre known as 'The Woolstore Design Centre'.¹⁰

¹ Wellington City Council, "Woolstore Design Centre", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), THOR2.

² Ibid.

³ "Page 2 Advertisements Column 1", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXIX, Issue 69, 23 March 1910, Page 2.

⁴ Wellington City Council, "Woolstore Design Centre"

⁵ "262-276 Thorndon Quay, wool store", June 15, 1910, 00053:157:8690, Wellington City Archives.

⁶ Land Title Service, CT WN 175/139

⁷ "Building, 262-268 Thorndon Quay, Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd", 1984-1989, 00277:1064:6, Wellington City Archives.

⁸ Land Title Service, CT WN 175/139

⁹ Wellington City Council, "Woolstore Design Centre"

¹⁰ "The Woolstore Design Centre", Accessed: July 2012.

<http://www.thewoolstore.co.nz/properties/woolstore-design-centre-2/>

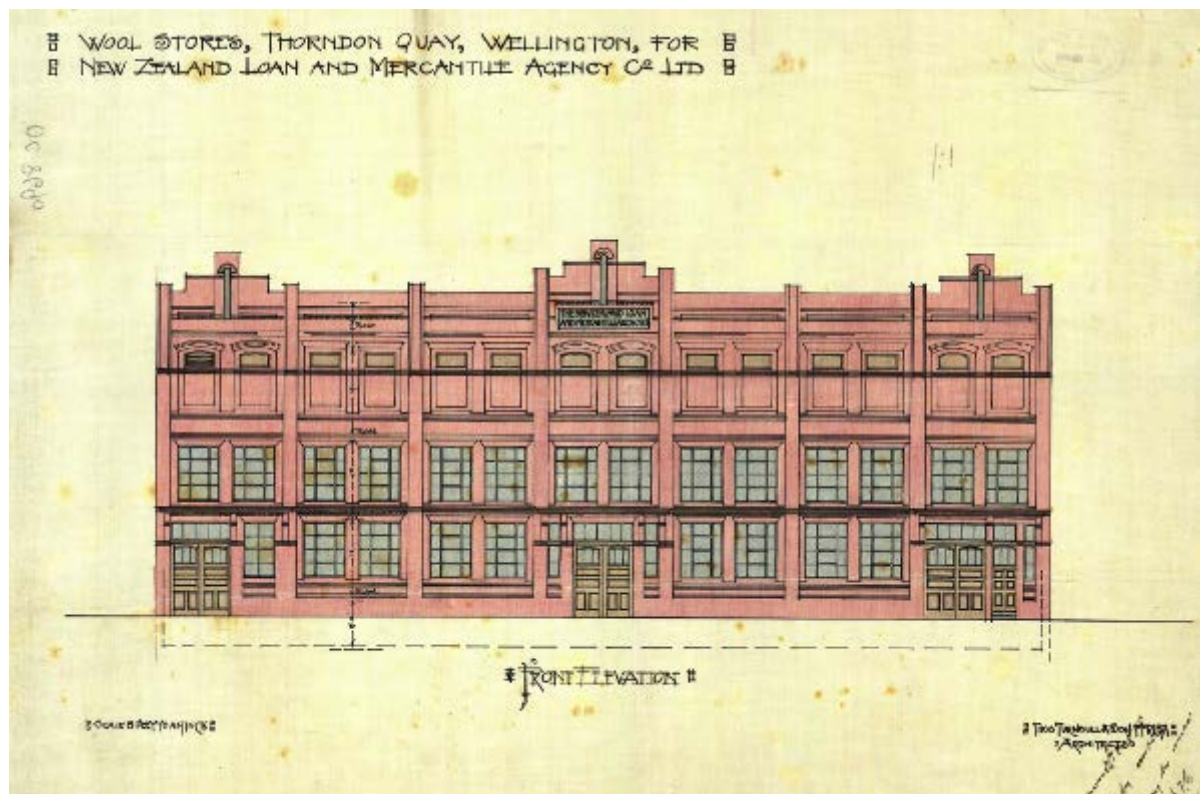
TO BUILDERS.

WOOL STORES, THORNDON-QUAY.

TENDERS are invited until noon of Thursday, the 31st of March, for the Erection of Four-floor Steel Frame and Brick Wool Store Buildings, Thorndon-quay, for the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited. Plans and specifications at our office, 235, Lambton-quay.

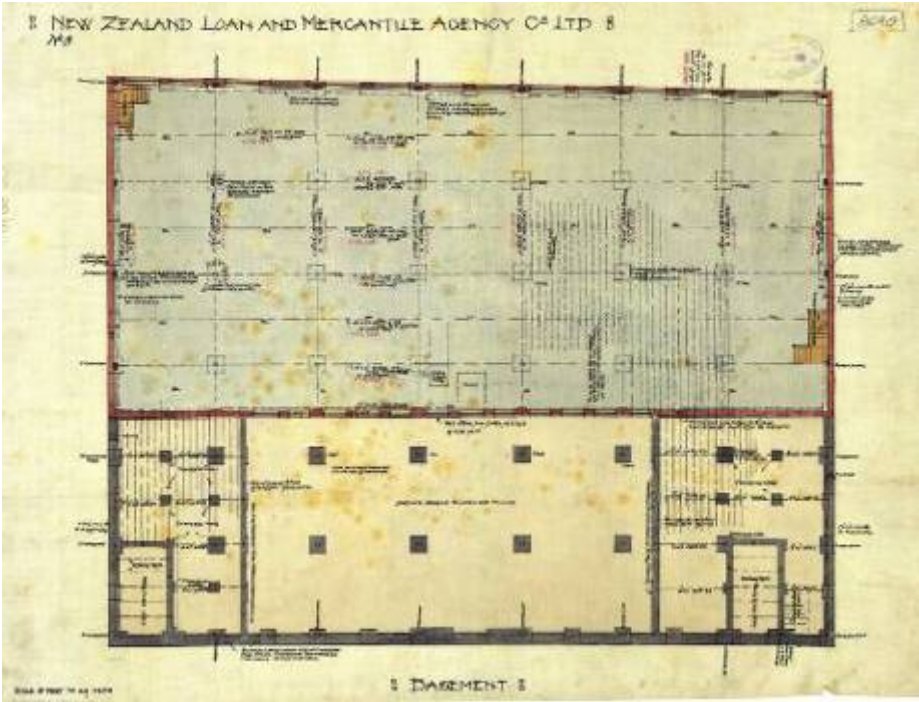
THOS. TURNBULL AND SON,
F.R.I.B.A.'s, Architects.

Tenders invited for construction of the Wool Store, March 1910¹¹

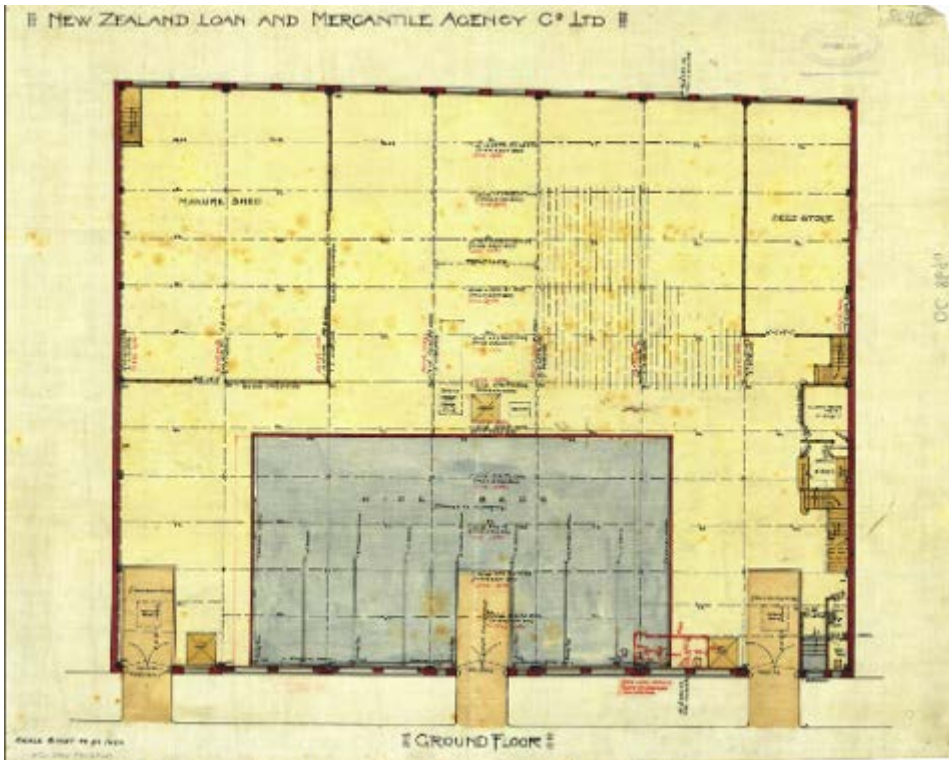


Wool Store, front elevation, 1910.
(00053:157:8690)

¹¹ "Page 2 Advertisements Column 1", *Evening Post*, Volume LXXIX, Issue 69, 23 March 1910, Page 2.



Wool Store, basement plan, 1910
(00053:157:8690)



Wool Store, ground floor plan, 1910.
(00053:157:8690)



Overlooking Thorndon, Wellington showing Thorndon Esplanade (prior to reclamation), Thorndon Quay, and the railway yards. Sign advertising 'Loan and Mercantile Stores' visible, date unknown. (1/2-026970-F, Tapuhi Photographic Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library).

1.2 Timeline of modifications

- 1910 Building constructed. (00053:157:8690)
- 1947 Timber floor. (00056:333:B25916)
- 1960 Alterations. (00058:145:C6843)
- 1961 Alterations. (00058:374:C15993)
- 1968 Alterations and egress. (00058:579:C27486)
- 1984 Warehouse alterations. (00058:0:C66644 and 00058:0:C66644)
- 1985 Warehouse alterations. (00059:0:D1014)
- 1987 Business additions and alterations. (00059:164:D8409)
- 1991 Office and building partitions. (00059:476:E22991)
- 1994 Plumbing. (00060:184:6647)
- 1999 Internal alterations to toilets, (00078:289:57068),
Internal alterations to entry foyer, (00078:383:54401)
Demolition and tenancy fitout (00078:405:58356)
Office fit-out (00078:769:54968)
Office fit-out (00078:1690:54002)
- 2006 Thorndon Quay, new partitions for offices in basement, existing
partition walls on ground floor demolished, stair void and opening to
Woolstore, new shop frontage on first floor, opening to Woolstore, alter WC
on second floor (00078:2723:149373), and existing kitchen refurbished.
(00078:2724:155978)
- 2008 Two sinks added to level 1. (00078:2706:184082)
- 2009 Interior fitout on Level 2. (00078:2746:120282)

1.3 Occupation history

Over the years the building has accommodated many uses including, storage warehousing, retail, indoor sports arena and more recently offices and showrooms.¹²

The current 18 occupants include a strong representation from design-related fields, including interior and kitchen decorators, architects, photographers and designers. There is also a café and deli.¹³

1.4 Architect

Thomas Turnbull and Son

Thomas Turnbull (1824-1907) was born and educated in Scotland and trained under David Bryce, Her Majesty's Architect. He travelled to Melbourne in 1851 and after nine years there moved to San Francisco. He arrived in New Zealand in 1871 and soon established a thriving business. His son William, a distinguished architect in his own right, became a partner in the firm in 1891. Turnbull was a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He was a pioneer in the design of buildings to withstand earthquakes and he was responsible for breaking down prejudice against the use of permanent materials for building construction. He specialised in masonry construction for commercial purposes but was also responsible for some fine houses. Among his most important buildings were the Willis Street churches of St Peter (1879) and St John (1885), the former National Mutual Building (1883-84), the General Assembly Library (1899) and the former Bank of New Zealand Head Office (1901), all in Wellington. Among his numerous domestic designs Antrim House, Wellington (1905), remains his best known.¹⁴

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The Woolstore Design Centre is an impressive brick building, three tall storeys high with a basement floor below the street level, one of a group of industrial buildings at the junction of Tinakori Road, Thorndon Quay and the Hutt Road. It has strong townscape qualities in this area, marking the transition between Thorndon housing and reclaimed land now largely occupied by railway uses. Opposite the building on Thorndon Quay there is a stand of old pohutukawa, while behind it are rail tracks and the urban motorway.

The structure of the building is typical for its time, and of good quality materials. Foundations are concrete piers, walls are brick with concrete-encased steel beams at each floor level, and the timber-framed floors are supported on steel stanchions. The flooring is heart matai. The roof has a saw-tooth form, facing south, with short steel trusses spanning at right angles to the line of saw-tooth profile. The main facade, facing west onto Thorndon Quay, is divided into seven bays by tall brick columns that rise above the main parapet line to give a stepped profile to the silhouette of the building.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "The Woolstore Design Centre", Accessed July 2012, <http://www.thewoolstore.co.nz/properties/woolstore-design-centre-2/>

¹⁴ The Historic Places Trust, "Thomas Turnbull", Accessed: July 2012, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=221>

Between the columns, strong horizontal elements break the facade up into a regular grid. There are two large windows to each of the bays, the middle and outer bay windows on the top floor having arched openings. Patterned brickwork at the base of the parapet is the only decorative feature in an otherwise orderly and logical facade. The colour and careful detailing of brickwork, the strong functional ethic that pervades its design, and the sheer bulk of the building, make this one of the city's best industrial structures.

The east façade is less ornamented and is mainly seen from the railway yards, although the upper part, and the saw-tooth roof, is very visible from the elevated motorway to the east.

Now adapted internally for modern retail and office uses, the exterior of the building maintains a very high level of authenticity. Comparison with the original drawings by Thomas Turnbull show alterations at the ground floor door openings but otherwise very little change apart from modern light-wells, stair-wells lifts, and partitioning.¹⁵

2.2 Materials

Brick, steel and concrete.

2.3 Setting

The Woolstore Design Centre is located at the north end of Thorndon Quay, sandwiched between the road at the foot of Tinakori Hill and the railway yards. The Wellington urban motorway flies at high level to the east of the building, affording good views of the dramatic roofscape and the wider setting of northern Thorndon. The building is set in a commercial area, and is one of the few large brick warehouses remaining in Wellington. It is abutted at the north by a modest two-storied commercial building and at the south by a more recent warehouse building of similar scale and with a matching saw-tooth roof.¹⁶

¹⁵ Wellington City Council, "Woolstore Design Centre"

¹⁶ Ibid.

3.0 Sources

CT WN 175/139, Land Information New Zealand

Historic Places Trust, "Thomas Turnbull", Professional Biographies, Accessed: August 2012,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=2>

Wellington City Council, "Woolstore Design Centre", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001, THOR2.

"The Woolstore Design Centre", Accessed July 2012.
<http://www.thewoolstore.co.nz/properties/woolstore-design-centre-2/>

Wellington City Archives

"262-276 Thorndon Quay, wool store", June 15, 1910, 00053:157:8690, Wellington City Archives.

"262-276 Thorndon Quay, wool store", 15 Jun 1910, 00053:157:8690, Wellington City Archives.

"262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272 Thorndon Quay, timber floor", 22 May 1947, 00056:333:B25916, Wellington City Archives.

"262/276 Thorndon Quay, woolstore alterations", 17 Jun 1960, 00058:145:C6843, Wellington City Archives.

"262/276 Thorndon Quay, alterations to store", 26 Nov 1961, 00058:374:C15993, Wellington City Archives.

"262/276 Thorndon Quay, egress", 09 Sep 1968, 00058:579:C27486, Wellington City Archives.

"262/276 Thorndon Quay, alt store", 09 Sep 1968, 00058:579:C27487, Wellington City Archives.

"268-274 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations", 13 Sep 1984, 00058:0:C66198, Wellington City Archives.

"258-264 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations", 12 Nov 1984, 00058:0:C66644, Wellington City Archives.

"258-264 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations", 16 Jul 1985, 00059:0:D1014, Wellington City Archives.

"258-264 Thorndon Quay, business additions and alterations", 1987, 00059:164:D8409, Wellington City Archives.

"268 Thorndon Quay, office building – partitions", 1991, 00059:476:E22991, Wellington City Archives.

"262 Thorndon Quay, Plumbing", 07 Sep 1994, 00060:184:6647, Wellington City Archives.

“262 Thorndon Quay, internal alterations to toilets”, 1999, 00078:289:57068, Wellington City Archives.

“262 Thorndon Quay, internal alterations to entry foyer”, 1999, 00078:383:54401, Wellington City Archives.

“262-264 Thorndon Quay, demolition and tenancy fitout”, 1999, 00078:405:58356, Wellington City Archives.

“262 Thorndon Quay, office fitout”, 1999, 00078:769:54968, Wellington City Archives.

“262-264 Thorndon Quay, office fitout”, 1999, 00078:1690:54002, Wellington City Archives.

“268 Thorndon Quay, new partition for offices in basement, demolish existing partition walls on ground floor, stair void and opening to Woolstore, new shop frontage on first floor, opening to Woolstore, alter WC on second floor”, 2006, 00078:2723:149373, Wellington City Archives.

“258-268 Thorndon Quay, refurbish existing kitchen”, 2006, 00078:2724:155978, Wellington City Archives.

“268-274 Thorndon Quay, add two sinks to level 1 The Woolstore Design Centre”, 2008, 00078:2706:184082, Wellington City Archives.

“268 Thorndon Quay, The Woolstore, interior fitout, level 2”, 2009, 00078:2746:120282, Wellington City Archives.

Newspapers

“Page 2 Advertisements Column 1”, *Evening Post*, Volume LXXIX, Issue 69, 23 March 1910.

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 Woolstore building is a particularly fine example of an industrial structure of the first decade of the 20th century, with aesthetic value deriving from the regular, ordered and solid form of the building, and the colour and patterning of the brickwork. The building is notable for the quality of the design, materials and construction, and is a major work by the prominent local architectural practice of Thomas Turnbull and Son.

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 makes a major contribution to the streetscape quality of the area in an otherwise undistinguished part of the city. The building has strong townscape qualities as it marks the transition between Thorndon residential areas and the reclaimed land occupied by the railway and shunting yards.

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 set within a group of industrial buildings at the junction of Tinakori Road, Thorndon Quay and the Hutt Road.

Historic Value:

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

The quality of this warehouse is evidence of the prosperity of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, and the economy in general, during the early 20th century. The NZLMA was an historically important company in New Zealand for nearly a century and this building is an elegant reminder of its success.

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

This high quality industrial building is indicative of the huge historical importance of wool in the economy, both locally and nationally.

Scientific Value:

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

As the building is on land reclaimed after 1900, it is unlikely that there is archaeological value to the site.

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 use of brick for both structural and decorative purposes marks this out as a building of some technological value.

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 façade has remained (relatively) unaltered for over 100 years and makes a strong positive contribution to the sense of place and continuity of the Thorndon Quay streetscape.

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?*

As one of the best of the surviving privately-owned harbour-side warehouses in Wellington, it has rarity value.

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

It is a very good example of an industrial structure of the first decade of the 20th century.

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 Woolstore building has a high level of authenticity as all significant structural components are intact, and the main façade to Thorndon Quay is unaltered except for ground floor entrances. This also gives the building high technical value.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)	Y	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	Not listed
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	Nothing

Background research

WCC Permits

00053:157:8690	262-276 Thorndon Quay, wool store	Applicant: Campbell and Burke. Owner: New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Ltd. Architect: Thomas Turnbull and Son. Legal Description: Section 57, 58, 59 and 60.	Building Permit/Consent	15 Jun 1910
00056:333:B25916	262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272 Thorndon Quay, timber floor	Owner: New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Co Ltd. Builder: MG Templeton and Sons. Legal description: Lots 57, 58, 59 and 60 DP 2055. Application value: £200.	Building Permit/Consent	22 May 1947
00058:145:C6843	262/276 Thorndon Quay, woolstore alterations	Legal description: Lot 55-60 DP 1000/2055. Owner: Dalgetty & Co. Builder: Hume Industries Ltd. Application value: £452. Index to scans: 1 Plans	Building Permit/Consent	17 Jun 1960
00058:374:C15993	262/276 Thorndon Quay, alterations to store	Legal description: Lot 55-60 DP 1000/2055. Owner: Dalgetty & Co. Builder: Braun Construction Limited. Application value: £5200	Building Permit/Consent	26 Nov 1961
00058:579	262/276	Legal description: Lot 55-60 DP	Building	09 Sep

:C27486	Thorndon Quay, egress	1000/2055. Owner: Dalgetty Properties (NZ) Ltd. Builder: VL Rutter. Application value: \$550	Permit/Consent	1968
00058:579 :C27487	262/276 Thorndon Quay, alt store	Legal description: Lot 55-60 DP 1000/2055. Owner: Philips & Pike Ltd. Builder: VL Rutter. Application value: \$6050	Building Permit/Consent	09 Sep 1968
00058:0:C 66198	268-274 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations	Owner: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Legal description: Lot 57-60 DP 2055. Application value: \$29,500. Floor area: 1,581 square metres.	Building Permit/Consent Microfiche	13 Sep 1984
00058:0:C 66644	258-264 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations	Legal description: Lots 57-60 DP 2055 [Lots 53-56 DP 2055]. Owner: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Builder: Owner. Application value: \$235,000. Floor area: 696 square metres.	Building Permit/Consent Microfiche	12 Nov 1984
00059:0:D 1014	258-264 Thorndon Quay, warehouse alterations	Owner: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Builder: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Legal description: Lots 57-60 DP 2055 [Lots 53-56 DP 2055]. Application value: \$40,100.	Building Permit/Consent Microfiche	16 Jul 1985
00059:164: D8409	258-264 Thorndon Quay, business additions and alterations	Owner: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Builder: Anthony Stevens Holdings Ltd. Legal description: Lots 57-60 DP 2055 [Lots 53-56 DP 2055]. Application value: \$105,000.	Building Permit/Consent	1987
00059:476 :E22991	268 Thorndon Quay, office building - partitions		Building Permit/Consent	1991
00060:184 :6647	262 Thorndon Quay, Plumbing		Building Permit/Consent	07 Sep 1994
00078:289 :57068	262 Thorndon Quay, internal alterations to toilets		Building Permit/Consent	1999
00078:383 :54401	262 Thorndon Quay, internal alterations to entry foyer		Building Permit/Consent	1999
00078:405 :58356	262-264 Thorndon Quay, demolition and tenancy fitout		Building Permit/Consent	1999
00078:769 :54968	262 Thorndon Quay, office fitout		Building Permit/Consent	1999

00078:169 0:54002	262-264 Thorndon Quay, office fitout		Building Permit/Con sent	1999
00078:272 3:149373	268 Thorndon Quay, new partition for offices in basement, demolish existing partition walls on ground floor, stair void and opening to Woolstore, new shop frontage on first floor, opening to Woolstore, alter WC on second floor	Legal description: Lots 53-60 DP 2055. Owner: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Applicant: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Designer: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Project value: \$95,000. Note: The Woolstore Design Centre	Building Permit/Con sent	2006
00078:272 4:155978	258-268 Thorndon Quay, refurbish existing kitchen.	Legal description: Lots 57-60 DP 2055. Owner: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Applicant: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Designer: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Project value: \$20,000. Note: The Woolstore Design Centre.	Building Permit/Con sent	2006
00078:270 6:184082	268-274 Thorndon Quay, add two sinks to level 1 The Woolstore Design Centre	Legal description: Lots 57 , 58 , 59 and 60 DP 2055. Owner: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Applicant: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Designer: Paulemas Properties Ltd. Project value: \$4,000. Note: The Woolstore Design Centre.	Building Permit/Con sent	2008
00078:274 6:120282	268 Thorndon Quay, The Woolstore, interior fitout, level 2	Legal description: LOTs 57 , 58 , 59 & 60 DP 2055. Owner: The Woolstore Ltd. Applicant: Inside Ltd. Designer: Inside Ltd. Project value: \$50,000.	Building Permit/Con sent	2009

The building now being erected for the N.Z. Loan and Mercantile Company in Thorndon-quay is said to be the first of its kind in New Zealand. It is a steel-frame building of the true type—the whole skeleton is erected first, and the builder commences his “curtain work” where he pleases. More often than not he starts at the top story and builds down, for the frame is set in solid foundations and is sufficiently strong to sustain the weight of the brick and stone work of the top story without the aid of the lower walls. Messrs. Turnbull and Son are the architects for the building.

Evening Post, Volume LXXX, Issue 96, 20 October 1910, Page 6

LITTLE STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

(P.A.) WELLINGTON, this day.

Fire broke out early this morning in Dalgety's Thorndon Quay wool store, the building which comes under the Protected Places Emergency Regulations. About 30 bales of wool were damaged by fire and a much larger number by water, but the structural damage was confined to a section of the floor which fell through and some windows that were cracked by the heat.

The source of the blaze is, hidden under a pile of burst and damp bales, where the door fell in and these will have to be removed before further investigation made.

Auckland Star, Volume LXXII, Issue 36, 12 February 1941, Page 8