

Commercial Building

104 Cuba Street



104 Cuba Street

Photo: (Charles Collins, 2014)

Summary of heritage significance

- 104 Cuba Street, a two storey 1920s commercial building, is notable for its unusual Art Deco façade, particularly the prominent central oriel window on the first floor.
- The building is part of a group of significant but quite stylistically different heritage buildings that contribute much to Cuba Street's distinctive character.
- The building has an association with the development and changes to the retail trade in Cuba Street.

District Plan:	Map 16, Symbol 77/2 (<i>front facade above the verandah</i>)
Legal Description:	Pt Sec 178 T.O.W
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Cuba Street Historic Area, reference 7209
Archaeological Site:	
Other Names:	Barker and Pollock (90s fabric shop) (HPT website)
Key physical dates:	1920 (built)
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Guido Schwartz / Builder: ES Knight
Former uses:	Commercial
Current uses:	Commercial (café/bar)
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not assessed (June 2012)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This small two storey building was designed by architect Guido Schwartz for the estate of the Swedish draper Johan Emil Lindberg (alternatively spelt Lindberg). The plans are dated March 1920. The builder was ES Knight.

Lindberg worked for a time for Mr. Donnelly, draper, of Courtenay Place.¹ In 1887 he opened his own drapery business at no. 42 on the “the wrong side” of Cuba Street.² He married Donnelly’s eldest daughter Isabel Allan in 1889³. Lindberg bought and occupied the property now known as 104 Cuba Street in 1900.⁴ At this time, the building was occupied by Berry & Orr’s, mercers and outfitters.⁵

Lindberg died in August 1919, age 61, about two years after he retired.⁶ At this time Linney and Co. opened a drapery in the premises.⁷ After Lindberg’s death, ownership passed to his estate. In March 1920 Lindberg’s estate commissioned architect Guido Schwartz to design a new building on the site.⁸ The ground floor had a high ceiling and was designed as a shop with show windows at the front, a small office under the stairs, and two gentlemen’s lavatories at the rear. The first floor was designed as a show room, with a light well in the ceiling, and two ladies’ lavatories at the rear.

Construction of the new building was organised so that the tenants (Linney and Co.) could continue business from the premises for as long as possible. To this end, the plans specified that the south wall was to be moved sufficiently to allow the builders to construct the new south wall and gain a cart entrance to the back of the section.⁹

Linney and Co. leased the building until 1925, when another draper, Radford & Co.’s took over the lease. Radfords would go on to become a notable Wellington drapery in the latter half of the 20th century. In the 1930s Morris & Co., house furnishers, leased the building. From the 1940s to at least the 1980s the building was occupied by clothing shops.

Over time, the building (particularly the shop front and ground floor) has been modified to such an extent that today only the front façade above the verandah is heritage listed.

¹ *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 39, 15 August 1919, Page 8

² *Evening Post*, Volume XXXIII, Issue 121, 24 May 1887, Page 1

³ *Evening Post*, Volume XXXVIII, Issue 153, 28 December 1889, Page 2

⁴ CT69/287

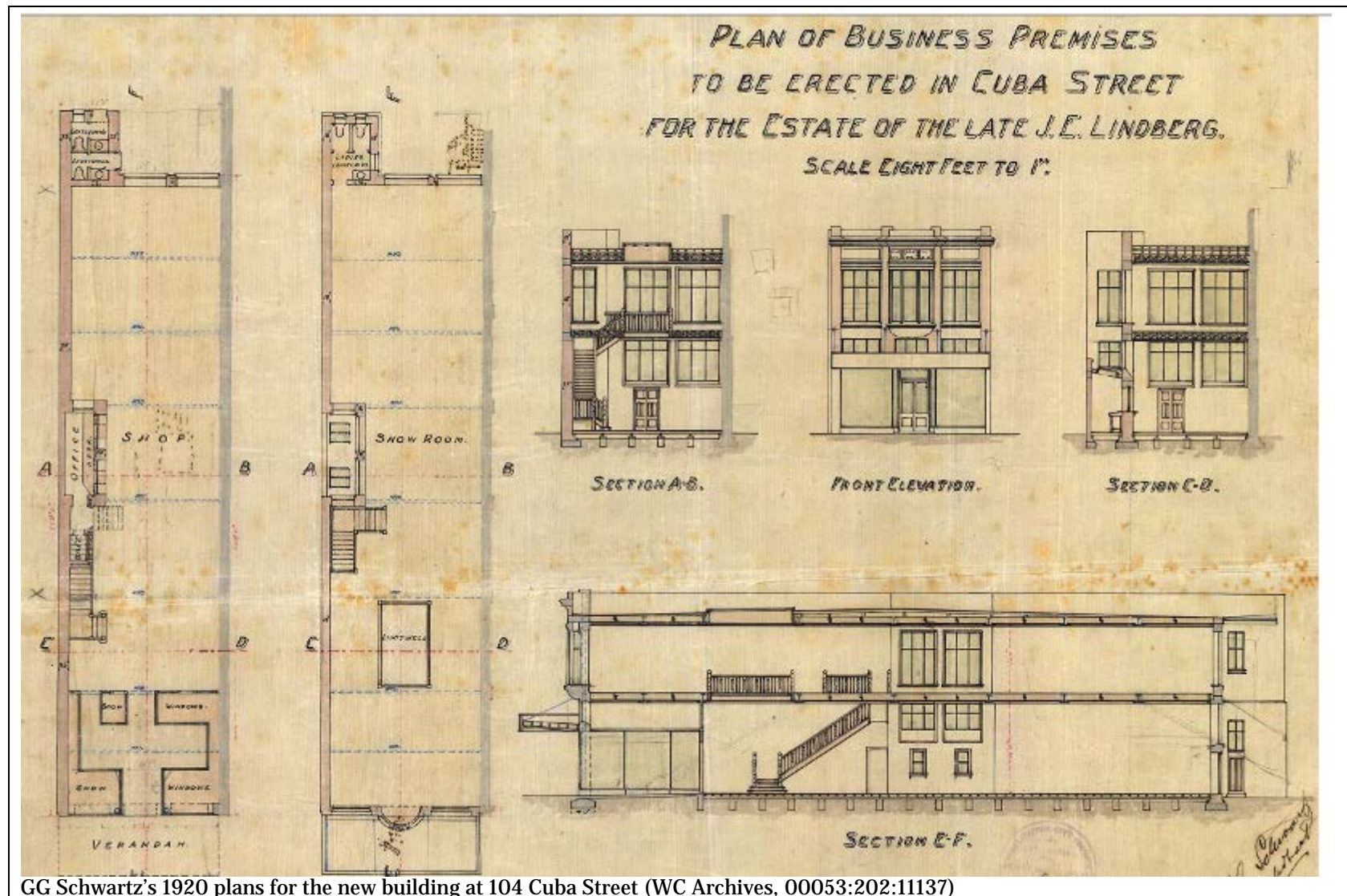
⁵ WC Archives, 00053:67:4113 and *Evening Post*, Volume LX, Issue 95, 19 October 1900, Page 4

⁶ *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 39, 15 August 1919, Page 8

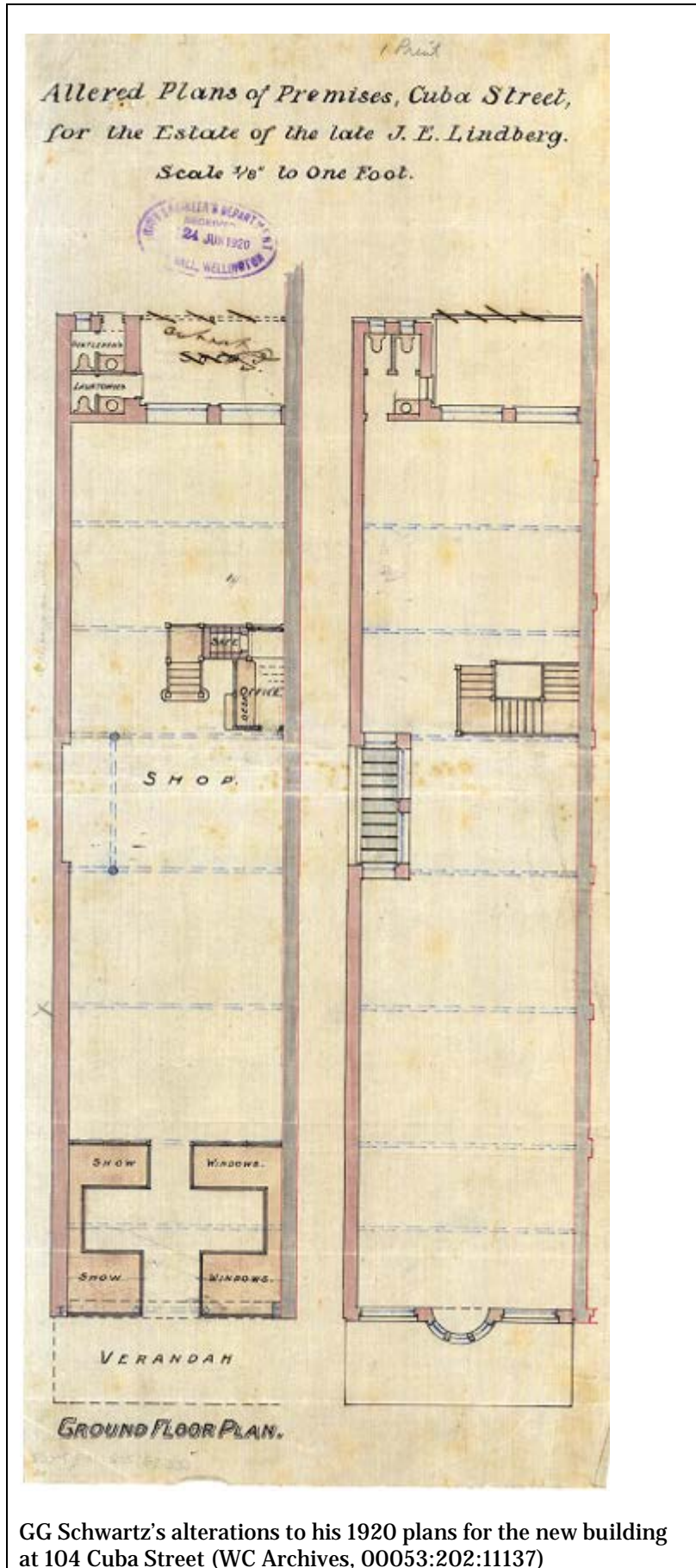
⁷ *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 44, 21 August 1919, Page 1

⁸ WC Archives, 00053:202:11137

⁹ WC Archives, 00053:202:11137



GG Schwartz's 1920 plans for the new building at 104 Cuba Street (WC Archives, 00053:202:11137)



GG Schwartz's alterations to his 1920 plans for the new building at 104 Cuba Street (WC Archives, 00053:202:11137)



View of Cuba Street in 1939. No. 104 is second from the right, next to "C Smith, Drapers". (ATL 1/2:048347)



104 Cuba St to the left, with Farmers to the right, date unknown. Photographed by K E Niven and Co of Wellington. (1/2-212476-F, ATL)

1.2 Timeline of modifications¹⁰

1920	Building constructed (11137)
1956	New entry and repositioning of stairs (B40361)
1993	Restaurant fit out on 1st floor (SR2651)
1993	New fire escape stairs at rear (SR2763)
1994	Seismic strengthening (SR3785)
1999	Seismic strengthening (SR54061)
1999	Café fit out (Mr Bun) (SR58507)
2006	Restaurant additions and alterations 1 st floor – for Mighty Mighty (00078:2172:149543)

1.3 Occupation history¹¹

1919-1925	H Linney and Co., Drapers ¹²
1925-1930	Radford & Co, drapers & general house furnishers (Stones 1925, 1930)
1935-1940	Morris & Co, house furnishers (Stones 1935, 1940)
1945-1975	Herberts, ladies' outfitters (Stones 1945, Wises1950-51, 1955, 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1975)
1985	Paull's Fashions (Wises1985)
1980, 1990	Not listed
2012	Mr Bun café downstairs, Mighty Mighty (bar & venue) upstairs

1.4 Architect

Guido Schwartz (25 Nov 1853 - 1926)

Guido Schwartz was articled to Theo Necker of Hamburg, Germany in 1871, attended the Hamburg and Stuttgart Technical Schools, and went on to work as an assistant in offices in Hamburg, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Saarbrücken, and Stuttgart in Germany. He moved to New Zealand in 1879¹³ to join his brother J.H. Otto Schwartz who was employed as an actuary for the Government Life Insurance Department, Otto later became the company secretary for Equitable Building Society. Both Otto and Guido were keen musicians who both later helped found the Wellington Orchestral Society.¹⁴

Guido Schwartz worked in offices in Timaru and Christchurch,¹⁵ until he moved to Wellington about 1886.¹⁶ In 1897 Schwartz had premises in Lambton Quay with a private address of Hawker Street.¹⁷ He later moved to Lower Hutt, but kept his business premises in Lambton Quay.¹⁸

¹⁰ Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area spreadsheet (blocks 1-3)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

¹¹ Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area spreadsheet (blocks 1-3)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

¹² *Evening Post*, Volume XCVIII, Issue 44, 21 August 1919, Page 1

¹³ "Personal Matters", *Evening Post*, Volume CXI, Issue 123, 25 May 1926, Page 9

¹⁴ "Obituary", *Evening Post*, Volume CXIII, Issue 108, 9 May 1932, Page 9

¹⁵ Antonia Brodie (ed), "Schwartz, George Guido, b. 1853", *Directory of British Architects, 1834-1914: Vol. 2 (L-Z)*, (British Architectural Library: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001)

¹⁶ "The Equitable Building Society's Permanent Offices", *Evening Post*, Volume XXXII, Issue 192, 31 December 1886, Page 3

¹⁷ Cyclopedica Co. Ltd, "Other Architects, Civil Engineers, Etc." in *The Cyclopedica of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedica Company Limited, 1897), accessed September 26, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d33-d10.html>

¹⁸ Brodie, "Schwartz, George Guido, b. 1853"

Schwartz was proposed for membership of the RIBA in 1912 by fellow architects Alfred Atkins, Roger Bacon and Frederick de Jersey Clere.¹⁹ Other buildings by Schwartz on the WCC Heritage Inventory include 360 Lambton Quay, 149 Cuba Street, and a row of cottages at 2-8 Footscray Street, and a fine house at 23 Pat Lawlor Close and several Wellington hotels.²⁰

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

104 Cuba Street is a two storey 1920s commercial building, constructed of brick. Its most distinctive feature is the prominent central oriel window on the first floor that is flanked on either side by a set of windows of matching proportions. The window joinery is steel. The central spandrel has three moulded decorations, while the flanking spandrels are plain. The building is capped by a simple cornice, projecting in the middle and at the ends, and a low parapet. The central device of the oriel window gives the building something of a domestic flavour on the upper floor, providing a stylistic focus on an otherwise plain facade.²¹

The scheme for the façade was once plain facing brick with rendered panels and mouldings, and has since been painted with a distinctive pattern that includes blue chevrons and red stars on a pale yellow / cream background. While colour schemes come and go, the decorative scheme on 104 currently makes a positive contribution to the “quirky” character of Cuba Street.

2.2 Materials

The construction is load-bearing brick masonry on concrete foundations and piles. The window joinery is steel. The projection of the oriel window is supported with a bent railway iron.

2.3 Setting²²

Block 3 Cuba Street

This well-proportioned building contributes a note of contrast amid the (often elaborate, highly enriched Edwardian) commercial character of much of the Cuba Mall area.

104 Cuba Street adjoins the stripped Classical Farmers Building at 94-102 Cuba Street to the north and a two storey commercial building with a simple Moderne or Art Deco façade to the south. The west side of Cuba Street was once referred to by J. E. Lindberg as the “wrong” side of the road, which may refer to the fact that the finest, largest, and more elaborately decorated Edwardian buildings on Cuba Street (particularly the Working Men’s Club, Barber’s Building and the People’s Palace and Railton Hotels) were all built eastern side of the street.

Cuba Mall (established in 1969) is a public space paved with clay pavers and is a pedestrian mall closed to (most) vehicular traffic. Cuba Street Blocks 3 and 4 have the highest concentration of Edwardian commercial buildings in Cuba Street and consequently have the highest architectural, heritage and streetscape value in the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *2 Footscray Ave* (unpublished report for Wellington City Council, April 17, 2007).

²¹ Wellington City Council, “104 Cuba Street”, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA 8.

²² Adapted from Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

Cuba Street Heritage Area, and the most important of the surviving Edwardian buildings are found on this block. The characteristic scale of Block 3 is three tall stories, a level defined by the Wellington Working Men's Club and reflected in the Farmers Building, Hotel Bristol, Barbers Building, and others (although there are some two storied buildings and one building has four storeys). Most of the buildings in Block 3 have flat-roofed verandahs attached at the first floor which have a strong similarity of form and scale. The street edge reads very strongly in this block with nearly all the buildings conforming to the common line.



View south along Cuba Mall towards 104 Cuba Street and the Farmers Building.
(Image: WCC ref 30 Dec 2005 002)

3.0 References

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

RIBA Directory of British Architects 1834-1914: L-Z By Antonia Brodie, British Architectural Library, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001

Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area spreadsheet (blocks 1-3)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

Wellington City Council, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001.

Michael Kelly, 2 Footscray Ave report 17/04/07.

Wellington City Archives

CT69/287

WC Archives, 00053:67:4113

WC Archives, 00053:202:11137

Newspapers

The Equitable Building Society's Permanent Offices. *Evening Post*, Volume XXXII, Issue 192, 31 December 1886, Page 3

Evening Post, Volume XXXIII, Issue 121, 24 May 1887, Page 1

Evening Post, Volume XXXVIII, Issue 153, 28 December 1889, Page 2

Evening Post, Volume LX, Issue 95, 19 October 1900, Page 4

Evening Post, Volume XCVIII, Issue 39, 15 August 1919, Page 8

Evening Post, Volume XCVIII, Issue 44, 21 August 1919, Page 1

PERSONAL MATTERS. *Evening Post*, Volume CXI, Issue 123, 25 May 1926, Page 9

OBITUARY. *Evening Post*, Volume CXIII, Issue 108, 9 May 1932, Page 9

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?*

104 Cuba Street is notable for the prominent central oriel window on the first floor of the street façade. The heritage listing for this building is restricted to the front facade above the verandah.

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 building is part of a group of historic commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contributes positively to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

The unusual design of the building gives it some prominence on the western side of Cuba Street, particularly as it is surrounded by less decorative buildings.

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 part of an eclectic collection of heritage buildings, including the 1920s Farmers Building to its north and the Art Deco building to its south, which, as a group, make a fine contrast to the highly wrought, exuberant Edwardian commercial buildings in Cuba Street, particularly the Working Men's Club (opposite) and the nearby Barber's building.

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 has an association with the development and changes to the retail trade in Cuba Street in the early 20th century.

Scientific Value:

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

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?*

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?

This building is part of a group of historic 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 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 building façade above verandah level has had few intrusive modern alterations and retains much of the original building fabric.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

This building is of local importance, as it contributes to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

5.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research