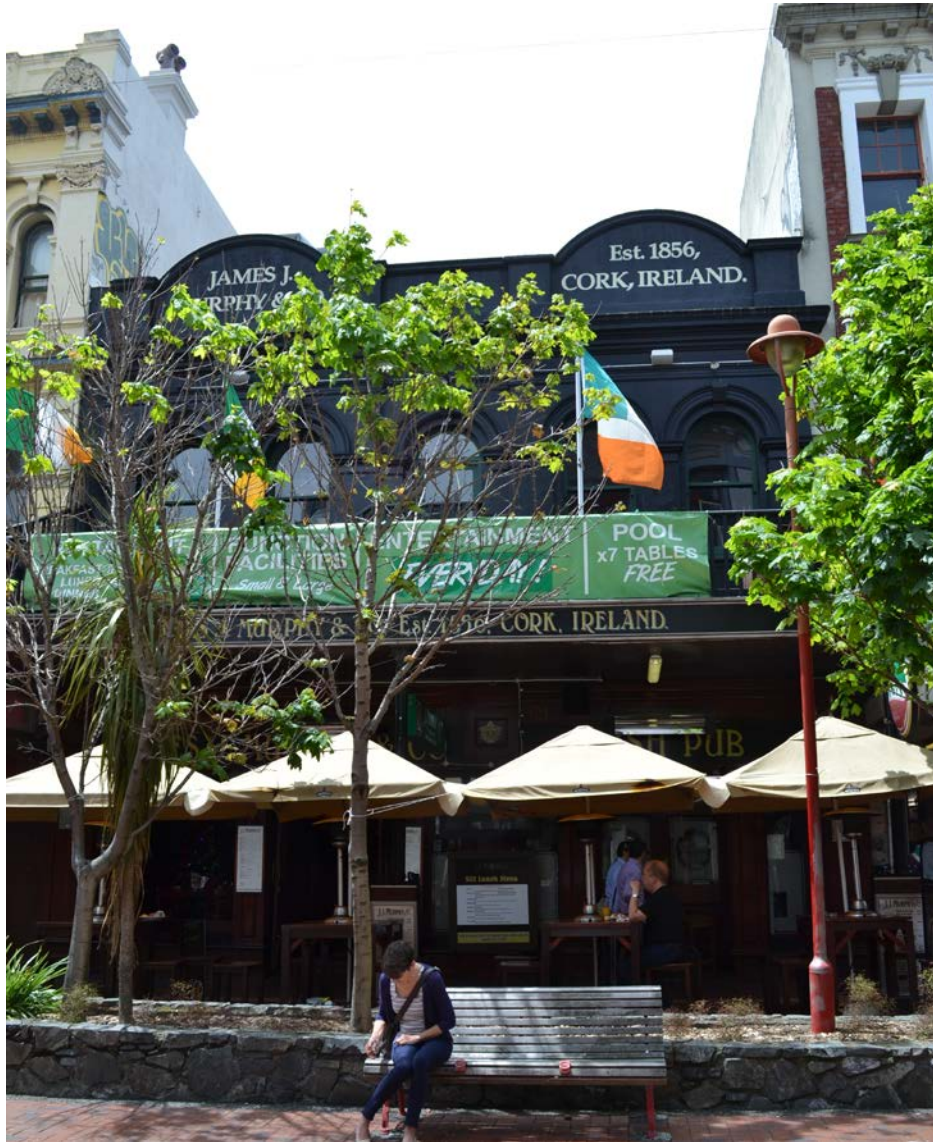


## Nees Hardware Building (Former)

119-121 Cuba Street (known historically 119-123 Cuba Street)



Cuba Street Elevation

Photo: *Charles Collins, 2014*

### Summary of heritage significance

- This two-storey masonry building has architectural value for its restrained Classical façade which remains largely intact, despite modifications and the addition of a balcony.
- This building has historic value for its association with notable Wellington architect William Crichton and with the long-standing retail store Nees Hardware.
- This building is part of a significant group of late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contribute positively to the Cuba Street Heritage

### Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History

This two-storey commercial building was designed by architect William Crichton as an investment property for Mrs Harriet E Underwood.<sup>1</sup> The building permit was issued in June 1900. The building was designed as two shops on the ground floor, with workshops behind and on the floor above. Harriet Underwood is listed as the owner of the property until 1917; however it remained in the Underwood family until 1958.

The two ground floor shops have been occupied by various businesses over the years including a fruiterer, Scotts Florist, and Vinsens photography studio. From the 1920s until the early 1990s, Nees Hardware occupied one of the shops, later expanding into the second shop. Nees became something of an institution in Cuba Street.

In 1958 Ernest and Mary Nees bought the property from the Underwood family and as Nees Investments (from 1960) the Nees family remained owners until 1993. There have been several owners since then. Presently the building is occupied by JJ Murphy's Irish Pub.

Several modifications have been made to the building over the years. In 1959 the building was strengthened, renovated, and an addition was made at the rear, followed by a further addition in 1961. In 1993 the building was sold and underwent seismic upgrading. In 2000 a new balcony and verandah were added to the Cuba Street façade and in 2001 an internal fit out for the licensed premises resulted in significant alterations including a new mezzanine floor. Further internal alterations were made in 2006.

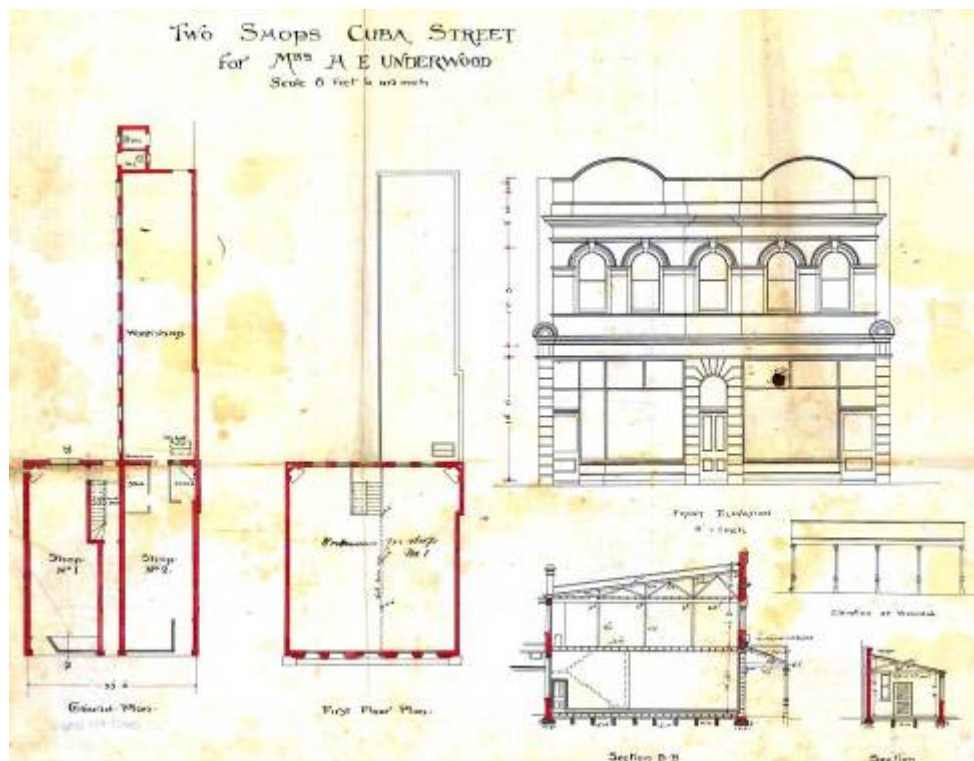


The 1961 rear addition to the building, note the name *Nees* in relief (WCC, September 2004).

<sup>1</sup> William Crichton, "119-121 Cuba Street, two shops", 11 June 1900, 00053:62:3894, Wellington City Archives.



## 1.2 Timeline of modifications



William Crichton's 1900 plan for 119-121 Cuba Street. (WC Archives, 00053:62:3894)

- 1900 Construction (3894)
- 1955 New verandah (B37496)
- 1959 Strengthening work and addition to rear (C4614)
- 1961 Addition to rear facing Leeds Street (C9734)
- 1993 Seismic strengthening (SR 2893)
- 2000 New balcony and verandah (SR 69085)
- 2001 New mezzanine floor and alterations (SR 75006)<sup>2</sup>
- 2002 Internal fit out (SR 75006)
- 2004 New Canopy/Verandah (SR 69085)
- 2005 Balcony on top of existing verandah (SR 107967)
- 2005 New balcony handrail and access door (SR 112805)
- 2007 Removal of part existing ceiling to create a void between floors (ground & first) (SR 152565)
- 2011 Separation of part of façade from adjacent buildings within Cuba Street Precinct for earthquake safety and heritage (\$7,500 grant from WCC)

<sup>2</sup> Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area spreadsheet (blocks 1-3)*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

### 1.3 Occupation history

*NB: Historically there was no 121 Cuba Street, the address was known as 119-123 Cuba, and Barber's Building next door was 123a-125 Cuba.*

#### 119:

1910-1911 Simon Edilson, fruiterer (Stones 1910-11) - Edilson constructed 173 Cuba Street  
 1920-1935 Scott's Florists (Stones 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935),  
 1940-1955 Paris Fur Company (Stones 1940, 1945, Wises 1950-51, 1955).  
 1961-1985 Nees Hardware (Wises 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1975, 1980, 1985,

#### 121:

1910-1920 Deslandes & Lewis, printer (Stones 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920).  
 1925-1955 Not listed 1925-55.

#### 119 and 123

1961-1962 From 1961-62 119-123 occupied by Nees Hardware.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.4 Architect

William Crichton (1862-1928) was born in Cornwall, England. He trained as an architect before immigrating to New Zealand in 1879. Upon arriving he joined the Colonial Architect's Office.<sup>4</sup>

In 1891 he was made redundant from this position and started his own architectural firm. This was the same year that his design for the Wellington Municipal Library (now demolished) was successful in a competition of 22 entrants. In 1897 Crichton was described as having "designed and superintended the erection of a large number of private dwellings, shops and warehouses in and around the city."<sup>5</sup>

In 1901 Crichton joined with James Hector McKay to form the firm Crichton and McKay. In the 1920s the firm became Crichton, McKay & Haughton when Vivian Haughton joined the firm.<sup>6</sup>

Crichton, McKay and Haughton became a prominent architectural firm responsible for numerous domestic and commercial buildings in Wellington, such as Barber's Building (1910), Huddart Parker Building (1923), and the Dominion Building (1926-1927).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Crichton, William", *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District]*, 1897. Accessed 18 June 2012. <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d33-d3.html>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Historic Places Trust, "Crichton, McKay & Haughton", *Professional Biographies*. Accessed 18 June 2012. <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=47>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

This small commercial building carries a restrained late-Victorian/Edwardian Classical façade. The format is symmetrical with six plain pilasters on the first floor set between deeply recessed windows with round-headed arches. String courses below and above the windows ties the composition together, and the building is capped by a parapet featuring two recessed arched pediments. The ground floor is rusticated. The simplicity of this facade forms a pleasing contrast to the elaborate Classical facades of the buildings on either side.<sup>8</sup>

The building is closely related in style to the nearby Toomath's Building at 43-47 Ghuznee Street (1900-01), which has a similarly restrained palette of materials, decoration and detailing and was also designed by William Crichton.

The façade at 119-121 Cuba Street is now painted black and has a strong presence in the streetscape. Its verandah has been delicately converted to a balcony with a simple and thin steel railing which does not detract from the streetscape value of the building.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.2 Materials**

The construction is load-bearing brick masonry (English bond) on concrete foundations. A rolled iron girder was fixed in place over each shop front. All interior floor joists and roof beams are timber, and the roof is corrugated iron.

### **2.3 Setting**

This building sits among a row of the most significant Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street, including the Wellington Working Men's Club, Barber's Building and the Hotel Bristol.

The building's immediate neighbour to the north is the Wellington Working Men's Club. Its southern neighbour is Barber's Building (also designed by Crichton).

The characteristic scale of the block 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. There are a number of two-storied buildings, including this building, no. 118 and no. 130; the tallest building on the block is no. 126 (occupied by the Friendly Bakery) at a high four stories.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Wellington City Council, "119-121 Cuba Street," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA 12.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006), 34.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from: Kelly and Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report*.

### **3.0 Sources**

“Crichton, William”, *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District]*, 1897. Accessed 18 June 2012. <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d33-d3.html>

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

Historic Places Trust, “Crichton, McKay & Haughton”, *Professional Biographies*. Accessed 18 June 2012. <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=47>

Michael Kelly and Russell Murray, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Report*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006), 34.

Wellington City Council, “119-121 Cuba Street”, *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA 12.

#### ***Wellington City Archives***

William Crichton, “119-121 Cuba Street, two shops”, 11 June 1900, 00053:62:3894, Wellington City Archives.

“119-121 Cuba Street, seismic upgrading”, 29 October 1993, 00060:77:2893, Wellington City Archives.

“119-121 Cuba Street, additions”, 2000, 00078:1180:69085, Wellington City Archives.

“119-121 Cuba Street, internal fitout”, 2001, 00078:796:75006, Wellington City Archives.

“119 Cuba Street, office building alterations”, 00078:2438:152565, Wellington City Archives.

#### ***Wellington City Council Records***

Land Title Service, CT454/123, 454/124, 454/125, 454/126 & 802/53, C4614, C9734

#### ***Newspapers***

*Evening Post*, Volume CVII, Issue 146, 25 June 1929, Page 4

## 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?*

This two-storey masonry building has architectural value for its restrained Classical façade which remains largely intact, despite modifications and the addition of a balcony.

**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 contributes to the townscape of Cuba Street. The block this building is on has the highest concentration of late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings in Cuba 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?*

This building is part of a significant group of late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings on Cuba Street which contribute positively to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

#### **Historic Value:**

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

This building has historic value for its association with notable Wellington architect William Crichton and the long-standing retail outlet Nees Hardware.

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

This building is associated with the commercial growth and development of Cuba Street, which resulted in the building of many fine late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

The building is located in the Central City archaeological site, reference NZAA R27/270.

**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?*

This building is a good representative example of late-Victorian Classical commercial architecture.

**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 first floor façade of this building remains largely intact, despite modifications and the addition of a balcony.

**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.

## 4.0 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)	Y	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report	Y	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

### Background research

#### ***This may be the tender?***

*Evening Post*, Volume LIX, Issue 114, 15 May 1900, Page 8

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19000515.2.49.7&srpos=6&e=-1900---1906--10--1----Ocrichon+cuba-->

#### **Henry James Underwood**

- died 1909 on SS Penguin, crossing Cook Strait from Picton
- aged 59 (*Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 52, 3 March 1909, Page 1)
- “Holly Lodge” on Tasman Street (*Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 52, 3 March 1909, Page 1)
- Body was found in Sydney and identified by his son (*Wairarapa Daily Times*, Volume LX, Issue 9331, 29 March 1909, Page 4)
- “settler” (*Evening Post*, Volume LXXVII, Issue 73, 27 March 1909, Page 7)
- Estate of 11,265 pounds (*Colonist*, Volume LII, Issue 12685, 2 November 1909, Page 3)
- <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/cemeteries/search/details.php?id=86315&Service=Burial>

#### **Papers Past Search on 119 Cuba**

**1914** – The Hawkes’ Bay Fruit Growers’ Co, *Maoriland Worker*, Volume 5, Issue 185, 19 August 1914, Page 8

**1923** - Scott’s Florist, 119 Cuba, *Evening Post*, Volume CVI, Issue 8, 10 July 1923, Page 3

**1924** - Vinsens Studio, 119 Cuba, *Evening Post*, Volume CVII, Issue 113, 14 May 1924, Page 4

**1926** - Vinsens Studio, 119 Cuba, *Evening Post*, Volume CXI, Issue 57, 8 March 1926, Page 3

**1935** - Scott’s Florist, 119 Cuba, *Evening Post*, Volume CXX, Issue 116, 12 November 1935, Page

**123**

**1927** - TC Daws and Co, Auctioneers and land agents, 123 Cuba Street, Evening Post, Volume CXIII, Issue 97, 27 April 1927, Page 11

**1929** - Nees, 123 Cuba, Evening Post, Volume CVIII, Issue 55, 2 September 1929, Page 71

**119-123**

**1940** - Nees, 119-123 Cuba, Evening Post, Volume CXXX, Issue 70, 19 September 1940, Page 20

**1941** - Nees, 119-123 Cuba, Evening Post, Volume CXXXI, Issue 37, 13 February 1941, Page 16