

Berry Building

145-149 Cuba Street



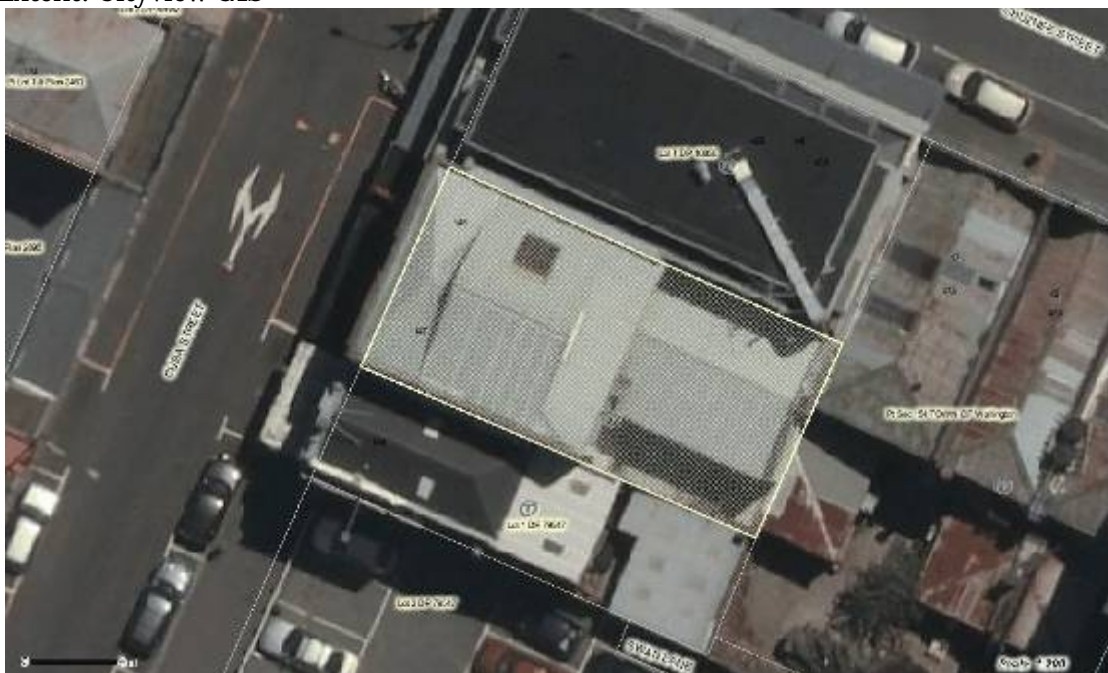
WCC (2011)

Summary of heritage significance

- The Berry Building is a good representative example of an Edwardian Classical commercial building. The building is notable for its simple but graceful composition, but this is somewhat incomplete following the removal of the elaborate original parapet.
- This building has historic value for its connection to the New Zealand Photographic Company and William Berry, a popular portrait photographer. It was designed by William Crichton, an important architect of the period.
- The Berry Building is part of an unbroken 'street-wall' of heritage buildings that wraps around the Cuba/Ghuznee Street intersection and signals the 'entrance' to upper Cuba Street. This group is coherent in terms of height, elaborate facades (albeit in a range of architectural styles), age, history, materials and patterns of use.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 82/2
Legal Description:	Pt Sec 154 Town of Wellington
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 5363
Archaeological Site:	NZAA Central City Archaeological Area R27/270
Other Names:	N/A
Key physical dates:	Built: 1900
Architect / Builder:	Architect: William Crichton. Builder: W.L. Thompson
Former uses:	Commercial – photography studio
Current uses:	Commercial – retail
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not Earthquake Prone – SR 188105

Extent: Cityview GIS



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This building was designed by prominent architect William Crichton and was built as a photographic studio and workshop for William Berry. The permit was issued in June 1900 and the builder was W.L. Thompson. The construction is unreinforced load-bearing masonry, with concrete lintels and foundations reinforced with railway rails; the floor joists and roof trusses were constructed in timber. The roof is clad in corrugated iron and features large glazed skylights over the first floor gallery. Although the exterior of this building is on a modest scale, it presents the commercial confidence of Cuba Street at the turn of the century.¹

The New Zealand Photographic Company was established by William Berry in 1897, and became a prominent portrait photography studio. Between 1914 and 1918 the studio photographed dozens of portraits of young men about to embark on service. This collection of photographs is now housed at Te Papa in the form of glass plate negatives, which were discovered in the building in the 1990s.² The building was sold by Berry in 1925 to a painter and paperhanger, but the building continued to be used as a photography studio until the 1940s.

The parapet, with its distinctive pair of tall window pediments, was replaced with a simple reinforced concrete ring-beam following the 1942 Wellington/Wairarapa earthquake.³ This gives the building a strange, unfinished or truncated appearance. The building was refurbished and strengthened in 2001.

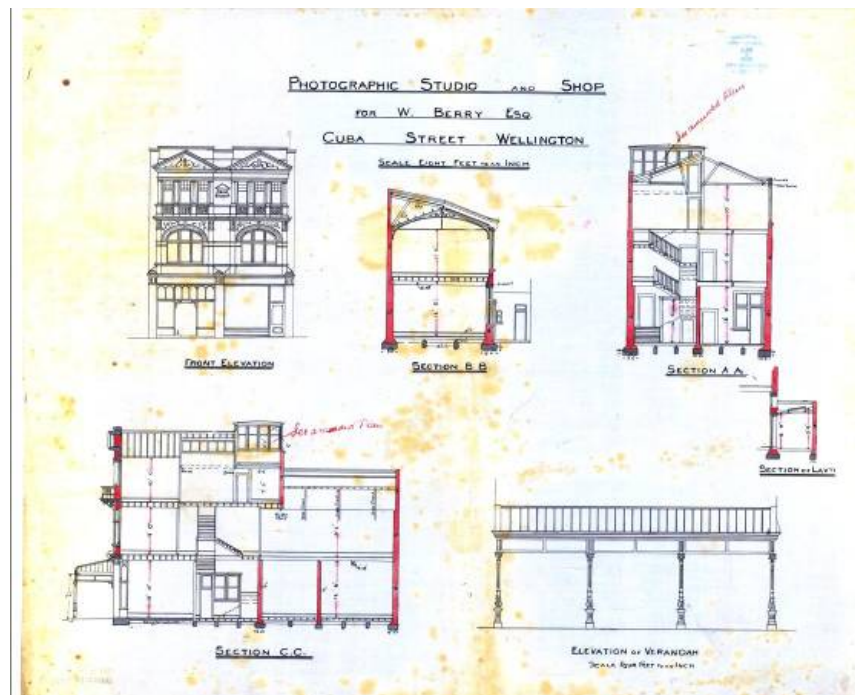
The Berry building is a well-known building in Cuba Street, and is part of the unique group of buildings which create the significant historic streetscape of the Cuba Heritage Area.

¹ Wellington City Council, "145-149 Cuba Street", *Wellington Built Heritage Inventory: Non Residential Precincts 2001*, (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA20.

² Paul Easton, 'Positive search via War negatives', 5/6/2012, accessed 24 July 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/culture/7042026/Positive-search-via-war-negatives>

³ WCC Archives ref 00056:282:B22674

1.2 Timeline of modifications



- 1900 145-147 Cuba Street, photographic studio and shop (00053:63:3926)
- 1943 145-147 Cuba Street, reinstate premises (00056:282:B22674)
- 1945 145-147 Cuba Street, verandah (00056:305:B24108)
- 1993 145 Cuba Street, foul water drain (00060:37:1416)
- 2001 145 Cuba Street, seismic strengthening (00078:807:78496)

1.3 Occupation history⁴

147: Berry & Co, photographers (147) (Stones 1905, 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920, 1925),

Henri Harrison, photographer & violin teacher (147) (Stones 1930, 1935, 1940),

Victor Smith, architect (147) (Stones 1930, 1935),

Dancing school (147) (Stones 1930, 1935).

Cuba Studios, photographers (Stones 1945, Wises 1950-51),

Perfection Tailors (147) (Stones 1945, Wises 1950-51, 1955, 1961-62, 1967-68),

Peter McLeavy Gallery (147) (Wises 1971-72, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990)

145: Wong, Yung, Chough and Co, fruiterers (Stones 1910-11, 1915-16, 1920), various fruiterers after this (Stones 1930, 1935, 1940),

Young & Co, fruiterers (Wises 1945, 1950-51, 1955),

New Asia Fruit Co (Wises 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1975, 1980, 1985),

⁴ Wellington City Council, *Cuba Street Heritage Area Spreadsheet (Blocks 1-3)*, (Wellington City Council: Unpublished Report prepared for Plan Change 48, 2006).

Super Fruit Market (Wises 1990)

149: Vincent Dentice, hairdresser (Stones 1910-11, 1915-16),

Various hairdresser & tobacconists (Stones 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, Wises 1950-51, 1955, 1961-62, 1967-68, 1971-72, 1980),

Denis Hawthorne (149) (Wises 1975, 1980)

Not listed after this.

1.4 Architect

Crichton, William

- 1900-1901: Toomaths, 43-47 Ghuznee Street, 16 / 128
- 119-121 Cuba Street (JJ Murphy's)
- 123-125 Cuba Street (Barber's Building)

Crichton, McKay & Haughton (see also McKay & Macgregor)

William Crichton (1862 – 1928) was born in Cornwall and was trained as an architect in the office of James Hicks of Redruth. He arrived in New Zealand in 1879 and joined the Colonial Architects Office where he “designed several of the largest public buildings in the Colony.”⁵ Crichton established a private practice in 1891 when he was “retrenched” due to a reduction in size of the public service. He went into partnership with James Hector McKay in 1901 to form Crichton and McKay.

⁵ Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, “Crichton, William,” in *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897), accessed January 10, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d33-d3.html>

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture⁶

This three-storey masonry building has a simple but effective Edwardian Classical façade that has been somewhat truncated by the removal of the original parapet that once featured elaborate window pediments. The building was constructed in unreinforced load-bearing brick walls, with concrete lintels and foundations reinforced with railway rails, with timber floor joists and trusses.

The main features of the remaining façade are the four sets of windows, two on each storey, designed for ample natural light to the studio spaces. The first floor windows are recessed into wide arches and are divided by slender transoms and mullions. Festoon work in stucco fills the spandrel above. The free surface runs through the centre the building and holds a triangular plinth with “1900” embossed onto it. The building is capped by a simple pediment. The entablature carries the legend, “Berry & Co, Photographers”. This building shares similar elevation lines with its neighbour to the south and is notable for its simple but graceful (albeit incomplete) composition.

The interior of this building is potentially still reasonably intact, possessing an impressive timber stairwell, a pressed metal ceiling in the reception area (now a gallery), and dados in the hallways.

2.2 Materials

- Unreinforced load-bearing brick masonry
- Timber floor joists and trusses
- Concrete lintels and foundations
- Railway rails (reinforcing foundations)
- Stucco

2.3 Setting

The Berry Building is situated on the east side of Cuba Street from the Ghuznee Street Corner. It is flanked to the south by Lazule (WCC ref 16/429), an elaborate two-storey Victorian Classical building, and to the north by Scopa (WCC ref 16/82.1) a two-storey stripped-Classical building with a distinctive parapet (with cross shaped motifs) and a modern mansard roof-addition.

In townscape terms this group of buildings, and their near neighbours on both Cuba and Ghuznee streets create an unbroken ‘street-wall’ of relatively ornate, similarly scaled heritage buildings that wrap around the Cuba/Ghuznee Street intersection and signal the ‘entrance’ to upper Cuba Street. This is an important visual element of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

⁶ Wellington City Council, “145-149 Cuba Street”, *Wellington Built Heritage Inventory: Non Residential Precincts 2001*, (Wellington City Council, 2001), CUBA20.

3.0 Sources

Cyclopedia Co. Ltd, "Crichton, William," in *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District* (Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897), accessed January 10, 2012, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d33-d3.html>

Easton, Paul. 'Positive search via War negatives', 5/6/2012, accessed 24 July 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/culture/7042026/Positive-search-via-war-negatives>

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

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.

Wellington City Archive

00053:63:3926

00056:282:B22674

00056:305:B24108

00060:37:1416

00078:807:78496

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 Berry Building is a good representative example of an Edwardian Classical commercial building. The building is notable for its simple but graceful composition, but this is somewhat incomplete following the removal of the elaborate original parapet.

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 has significant townscape value for the visual interest that it adds to the Cuba Streetscape and as a part of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

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 Berry Building is part of an unbroken 'street-wall' of heritage buildings that wraps around the Cuba/Ghuznee Street intersection and signals the 'entrance' to upper Cuba Street. This group is coherent in terms of height, elaborate facades (albeit in a range of architectural styles), age, history, materials and patterns of use.

Historic Value:

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

This building has historic value for its connection to the New Zealand Photographic Company and William Berry, a popular portrait photographer. It was designed by William Crichton, an important architect of the period.

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

The building also has historic value for its association with the strong growth and development of Cuba Street during the Edwardian period, which resulted in the building of many fine commercial buildings.

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. Central City 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 Edwardian 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 on Cuba Street. It has a distinctive character and adds significantly to the variety of 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?*

This building retains significant original material and has maintained a high level of authenticity – for exterior and interiors.

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 for its contribution to the Cuba Street Heritage Area. It is a modestly scaled but attractive building, designed by a prominent Wellington architect. It retains economic and functional uses as well as retaining a significant amount of original material and authenticity.

4.0 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

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*