

Shop

274 Cuba Street



274 Cuba Street (Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*).

Summary of heritage significance

- This building is a rare example of a simple one roomed shop, constructed c1896.
- The building has historic value for its association with the Tonks family, in particular Kate Tonks, a prominent businesswoman. It also has historic value for its long use as a boot-makers shop.
- The building is one of a group of commercial and residential buildings built for the Tonks family which make a positive contribution to the character of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.
- The building was relocated and restored in 2005/6 as part of the Inner City Bypass project.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 92/1
Legal Description:	Lot 4 DP 414239 <i>Note: heritage encumbrances</i>
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Historic Place Category 2, register no. 5352
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	Norml Tattoo Studio The Freedom Shop
Key physical dates:	Built: 1896 Relocated: 2005
Architect / Builder:	Unknown
Former uses:	Commercial - shop
Current uses:	Commercial - shop
Earthquake Prone Status:	Outside EQ Policy 30/01/13 (SR 268794)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This tiny one roomed shop was constructed in 1896¹ for Kate Tonks (c 1850-1937), a successful Wellington business woman and property owner.² Wises street directories indicate that by 1889 the shop was occupied by a boot maker.³ The shop was consistently occupied by a boot maker until at least 1955, except for a period from 1946-1955 when it was a butchers.

Tonks Family

Kate (nee Helyer) was born on the Isle of Wight and immigrated to Australia when she was 4.⁴ The Helyer family moved to New Zealand in c.1862, and her sister, Miss Elizabeth Helyer, later became the head mistress of Mt Cook Girls School. In 1873 Kate married Henry Edward Tonks,⁵ who was a Māori interpreter in the law courts. He also owned a steam mill, land agency, and grocery shop and acted as a wood and coal merchant.⁶

The Tonks family had a long association with Cuba Street dating from c.1842 when Henry's parents, William and Jane Tonks, arrived in Wellington. The couple built a house at 270 Cuba Street (now 17 Kensington Street) in 1862 and the family built several workers cottages in Tonks Grove (later renamed Tonks Avenue). The extended family were involved in many early business enterprises including the establishment of several brickworks; the reclamation of land between Panama and Waring Taylor streets; the supply of gravel and fill for various Wellington construction projects; and they also acted as merchants and importers, owned a shipping line, blacksmith shop, flour mill and bread factory.⁷

Henry Tonks was declared bankrupt in 1877⁸ and his estate was claimed by his many creditors.⁹ He died in 1884 at the age of 40, and left Kate to raise five children. The large section at the end of Tonks Avenue came to Kate in 1894 via her brother-in-law Enoch Tonks.¹⁰ It is possible that Enoch had held the land in trust to avoid claims by Henry's creditors.

Kate subsequently constructed at least four buildings in Tonks Avenue and owned other buildings within the city, in Karori and beyond.¹¹ Surviving buildings in upper Cuba Street that are associated with Kate Tonks include: -

- 272 Cuba Street (now 274 Cuba Street) – constructed as a shop for Kate Tonks and let as a bootmaker's.

¹ Ian Bowman, *272 Cuba Street, Wellington: Heritage Inventory* (Unpublished report, prepared for Opus International Consulting, October 2006, revised edition), p11.

² NZ Transport Agency, "272 Cuba Street," *Wellington Inner City Bypass*, accessed January 14 2013, <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/buildings/272-Cuba.html>

³ Flemming, 1996, p3 in Ian Bowman, *272 Cuba Street, Wellington: Heritage Inventory*, p11.

⁴ "OBITUARY," *Evening Post*, Volume CXXIII, Issue 137, 11 June 1937, Page 14

⁵ BDM Online, ref 1873/10390

⁶ NZTA website accessed January 2013

<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/resources/pdf/Newsletter-200508.pdf>

⁷ Ian Bowman, "13 Tonks Ave, Wellington: Heritage Inventory" 2001; NZTA website accessed January 2013 <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/resources/pdf/Newsletter-200508.pdf>

⁸ TELEGRAMS. *Tuapeka Times*, Volume X, Issue 667, 9 May 1877, Page 5

⁹ SUPREME COURT. IN BANKRUPTCY. Saturday, 28th April. (Before his Honor the Chief Justice.) *Evening Post*, Volume XV, Issue 100, 30 April 1877, Page 2

¹⁰ CT vol.39 folio 118

¹¹ For example Kate & her sons purchased 600 acres at Gladstone in 1895 see "Gladstone Farm Homestead Association". *Feilding Star*, 2 October 1895, Page 2

- 274 Cuba Street (now 268 Cuba Street) – constructed as a shop for Kate Tonks and let as a butcher shop.
- 276 Cuba Street – a known early residence
- 12 Tonks Avenue (relocated to 23 Kensington Street) – a large two storey house designed for Kate Tonks in 1905 by J.M. Dawson (later of King Cook and Dawson).
- 13 Tonks Avenue (relocated to 15 Kensington Street) – ‘Wharanui’, a large two storey house built for Kate Tonks in 1906. It is particularly significant as it is known to have been occupied by Kate Tonks in the years before she died in 1937. She is said to have lived there with her spinster sister, and to have operated the large, eight bedroom property, as a boarding house.

Kate died aged 87 in 1937.¹² Her obituary noted her long-standing membership of the Salvation Army. She was survived by three of her sons, thirteen grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

After Kate’s death, the land remained in the Tonks family until 1950 when it was sold to Godfrey Phillips (NZ) Ltd. In 1977 it was acquired by the Crown.

1990s: Norml Tattoo Studio & the Freedom Shop

In 1995 the “Freedom Shop” was established and began operating out of this building.¹³ Prior to this the building was occupied by the “Norml tattoo studio”, which it is sometimes still known as (see WCC District Plan listing, and Historic Places Trust Register). The Freedom Shop is a non-profit anarchist collective. They operated from this building until 2003 when they relocated further down Cuba Street due to the construction of the inner city bypass.



View of buildings in upper Cuba Street. One houses The Freedom Shop. Photographed by Ngaio Chalmers in about 2002. PAColl-8768-1.

¹² OBITUARY. *Evening Post*, 11 June 1937, Page 14

¹³ “Freedom Shop,” Wikipedia, last updated 11 December 2011, accessed 25 March 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Shop



May Day 2001, outside The Freedom Shop, upper Cuba Street (Photo: Lisa White).¹⁴

2005 Relocation

In 2005 the building was relocated 3 metres north along Cuba Street.¹⁵ Restoration was complete by June 2006, and the building now forms the corner of Cuba Street and Karo Drive (the new bypass). The building is located immediately south of 270-272 Cuba Street, which was relocated at the same time from 289-291 Cuba (across the road).



8 June 2005: Preparing the building for relocation¹⁶



5 July 2005¹⁷

In 2010 The Crown and the Historic Places Trust entered into a heritage covenant on the building.

The building continues to be used as a one room shop, and since c2011, has been occupied by "Groom Barber Stylist"

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ NZ Transport Agency, "272 Cuba Street," *Wellington Inner City Bypass*, accessed January 14 2013, <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/buildings/272-Cuba.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1896 Building constructed
2005 Temporarily relocated (July) ¹⁸
2005 New concrete foundation poured (December)
2006 Restoration commenced (January)
2006 Relocated onto new foundations (March)
2006 Restoration completed (June)
2010 Heritage Covenant between Crown and HPT

1.3 Occupation history

1898 William Lightfoot, bootmaker
1900 Frederick Coyle, bootmaker
1901 Frederick Rutherford, bootmaker
1903 William Findley, bootmaker
1904 Otho Smith, bootmaker
1906 Jackson, bootmaker
1908 Bryant, bootmaker
1914 Bryant and Coxon, bootmaker
1921 Kat Hansen, bootmaker
1924 Albert Mitchell, bootmaker
1932 Edward Heartfield, bootmaker
1946 M Bowe, butcher
1955 H Burke, bootmaker¹⁹

Further research required to establish ownership between 1955 – 1990s

1990s (?) Norml Tattoo Studio

1995-2003 Freedom Shop

Vacant

c2011 (?) Groom Barber Stylist

1.4 Architect

Unknown

¹⁸ NZ Transport Agency, "272 Cuba Street,"

¹⁹ Ian Bowman, *272 Cuba Street, Wellington: Heritage Inventory*, p9-10.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture ²⁰

This tiny building is a unique in Wellington for its style and size, comprising only one room of 13m². It is a simple, quirky and rare building of the period which makes an important contribution to the urban fabric and streetscape of Cuba Street. It has timber weatherboards, simple cornice and plain capitals, suggesting a Free Classical Style.

2.2 Materials

Timber weatherboards, new (2005) concrete foundations.

2.3 Setting

The building was moved in 2005 and the new inner city bypass (Karo Drive) was created. As such, the original setting and context for this building has been lost.

The building now occupies a prominent site on the route of the new inner city bypass, on the corner of Cuba Street and Karo Drive. Immediately to the north is 270-272 Cuba, which was relocated from across the road in 2005.

²⁰ Architecture text taken from: NZ Transport Agency, "272 Cuba Street," and Ian Bowman, *272 Cuba Street, Wellington: Heritage Inventory*, p11.

3.0 Sources

Bowman, Ian. *272 Cuba Street, Wellington: Heritage Inventory* (Unpublished report, prepared for Opus International Consulting, October 2006, revised edition).

“Freedom Shop,” Wikipedia, last updated 11 December 2011, accessed 25 March 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Shop

Historic Places Trust, Norml Tattoo Studio: 272 Cuba Street [relocated to 274 Cuba Street], WELLINGTON, accessed 18 March 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=5352>

NZ Transport Agency, “272 Cuba Street,” *Wellington Inner City Bypass*, accessed January 14 2013, <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/buildings/272-Cuba.html>

NZTA website accessed January 2013

<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wicb/resources/pdf/Newsletter-200508.pdf>

http://www.upthepunks.co.nz/wiki/index.php?title=File:Section7_18.jpg

Newspapers

SUPREME COURT. IN BANKRUPTCY. Saturday, 28th April. (Before his Honor the Chief Justice.) *Evening Post*, Volume XV, Issue 100, 30 April 1877, Page 2

TELEGRAMS. *Tuapeka Times*, Volume X, Issue 667, 9 May 1877, Page 5

“Gladstone Farm Homestead Association”. *Feilding Star*, 2 October 1895, Page 2

“OBITUARY,” *Evening Post*, Volume CXXIII, Issue 137, 11 June 1937, Page 14

Archives

CT vol.39 folio 118

BDM Online, ref 1873/10390

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?*

This building is a rare example of a simple one roomed shop, constructed c1896.

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 style, materials and rare scale of this building contribute to the townscape of 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?*

The building is one of a group of commercial and residential buildings built for the Tonks family which make a positive contribution to the character of the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

Historic Value:

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

The building has historic value for its association with the Tonks family, in particular Kate Tonks, a prominent businesswoman. It also has historic value for its long association with the boot making industry in Wellington.

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

Scientific Value:

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

The site has been much disturbed by 2006 road-works but is located within the 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?

Despite being relocated, this building is part of a group of 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?*

The heritage properties around upper Cuba Street, Abel Smith, Tonks Avenue and upper Willis Street that were affected by the Wellington Inner City Bypass route were a focus of strong community sentiment. This can be seen from the objections raised to the demolition of heritage properties in the proposed roading scheme that was referred to the Environment Court.

Level of cultural heritage significance

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

This one roomed building is unique in Wellington for its small size.

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

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 façade of this building retains authenticity of design, and was restored on its new site in 2005/6.

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.

5.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	Very little
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	Not included
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	Not included
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	Very little
HPT website	Y	
HPT files		Emailed request 18/3/13
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

“The building is a unique building in Wellington of its style and size, comprising only one room. Its general style, materials and detailing are consistent with Upper Cuba Street but in miniature, creating a visual surprise in the streetscape.” BOWMAN p12



http://www.acpalmer.com/html/17_february_2002.html