

## **Building**

9 - 11 Marion Street



*Image: Charles Collins, 2015*

### **Summary of heritage significance**

- 9-11 Marion Street is a much altered commercial building that has elements of Arts and Crafts, and Classicism. Despite many alterations, the building is notable as an early example of reinforced concrete construction, and has a pleasant, well organised and neatly proportioned Stripped Classical street-façade.
- The building has historic value due to its history as a private hotel and its association with the New Zealand Chinese Association.
- The building has technological value as it was the first building in Wellington to use a new reinforcing method offered by the Patent Indented Steel Bar Company.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 209
Legal Description:	PT LOT 21 DP 582 (City View)
Heritage Area:	N/A
HPT Listed:	Not registered
Archaeological Site:	Pre-1900 human activity on the site
Other Names:	Hotel Mayo Chinese Association Building
Key physical dates:	1910
Architect / Builder:	unknown
Former uses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel</li> <li>• Offices of New Zealand Chinese Association</li> </ul>
Current uses:	Offices/Retail
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 179965 (124 Served)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History<sup>1</sup>

This building was designed as a residence and private hotel for J.H. Meyer in 1910. Meyer was a well known local builder and contractor who arrived in Wellington on the Humboldt in 1874.<sup>2</sup>

Construction costs for the house and hotel were around £3,000. The reinforcement was designed by S.T. Silver of the Patent Indented Steel Bar Company and the building is likely to be an early example of reinforcing of this type in Wellington. The Patent Indented Steel Bar Company was formed to supply a bar of 'special section' for reinforced concrete construction. The principal feature of this method was said to be that a greater adhesion was achieved owing to the 'mechanical bond formed by its indented surface'.<sup>3</sup>

The original plans of the building show a two-storey Arts and Crafts style house, and adjoining hotel, that were topped with a steep pitched roof and overhanging eaves. It is unclear whether the design was changed during construction, or shortly thereafter. By the 1950s the building was three storeys tall at the Marion Street (west) end of the site, and two-storeys at the rear. The pitched roofs and eaves had been replaced with flat roofs and tall parapets, and the Marion Street façade was embellished with Classical ornamentation – particularly the entrance porch, a large cornice at parapet level, and smaller cornices over the first floor windows. The only remaining features of the original Arts and Crafts design scheme were the casement windows, the octagonal tower, and a bow-window at ground floor level.

The New Zealand Chinese Association purchased the hotel / boarding-house in 1950 and appears to have used the building as a private hotel for members. They Structon Group Architects to undertake alterations and work included a curved window on the front ground floor of the building, the removal of a balcony/entrance porch at the Hotel entrance, and the removal of cornices from above the windows of the building and the tower. These alterations have dramatically altered the appearance of the building.

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<sup>1</sup> Wellington City Council, "Building-11 Marion Street" *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> J. H. MEYER. *Evening Post*, 20 March 1923, Page 8

<sup>3</sup> 'Reinforced concrete', *Progress*, Volume II, Issue I, 1 November 1906, Page 13.



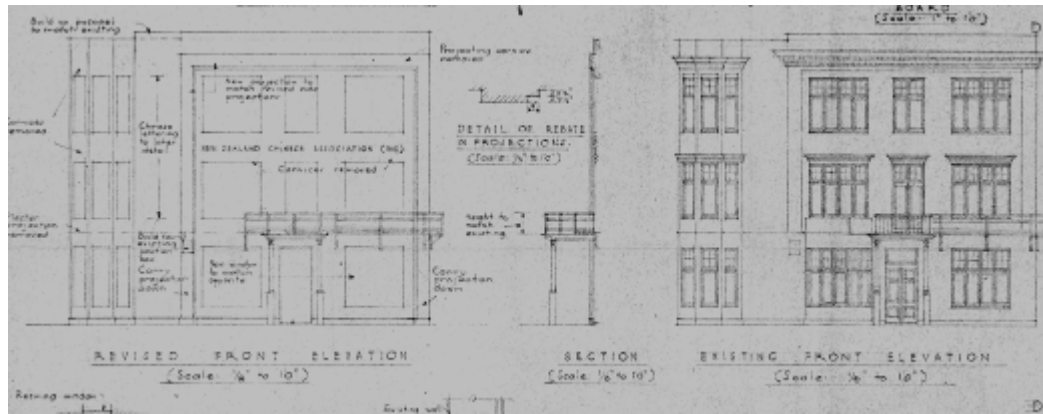
New Zealand Chinese Association Building 1950 (ATL: 114/195/12-G)

## 1.2 Timeline of modifications



Original Plans dated to 1910, Wellington City Archive, WCA 00053:156:8638

- 1910 Dwellings and private hotel (00053:156:8638)
- 1948 Fire escapes (00056:349:B26921)



1950 Alterations (00056:386:B29701) – the earlier Classical façade is shown to the right, and the proposed Stripped Classical design is shown on the left.

1963 Building additions and alterations (00058:314:C13635)

1973 Building additions and alterations (00058:875:C38938)

1980 Partitioning (00058:1292:C54733)

1994 (00060:227:6560)

1996 Plumbing alteration (00061:186:15920)

### 1.3 Occupation history

Not assessed

**1.4 Architect**  
unknown

## 2.0 Physical description

### 2.1 Architecture

11 Marion Street is a much-altered commercial building. It was designed as a two-storey Arts and Craft house and adjoining hotel, and is an early example of reinforced concrete construction. The early history of the building is difficult to assess, but it may have either been adapted during construction to create a three-storey Classical building with flat roofs, or these alterations may have occurred between 1910 and 1950. The building was certainly altered in the 1950s when almost all of the Classical ornamentation was removed, or adapted. The current decorative scheme and configuration dates from this era.

The building is now three storeys tall at the west (Marion Street) elevation, and two storeys to the rear. The main entrance is set centrally on the main façade. It is flanked by casement windows at ground floor level, and the rhythm of 'wide, narrow, wide' windows is repeated on the floors above. A broad rendered frame surrounds the nine door or window openings, and the frame emphasises the symmetrical design of the main façade. This 'frame' is a 1950s adaptation of an earlier cornice and pilasters. An octagonal tower rises three-stories at the north-west corner of the building, and path leads to a secondary entrance (that was once the main entrance of the house).

The building is a pleasant mix of Arts and Crafts fenestration patterns, Classical proportions, and a re-worked, simplified, Classical decorative/ornamentation scheme that dates from the 1950s. It is similar to other buildings in the nearby Cuba Street Heritage Area that have been 'modernised' by the removal of Classical ornamentation in the 1930s – 1950s. An example is Arco House at 45-47 Cuba Street (WCC 16/74.1).

## **2.2 Materials**

Reinforced concrete exterior, timber panelling interior, cast iron balusters, timber handrails and newel posts, tiled bathrooms.

## **2.3 Setting**

The building is located on the eastern side of Marion Street. To the south it is separated from a two storey wooden period house by an access driveway. On its northern side it is situated next to an open parking lot where the Waverly Hotel once stood. Since it is not overshadowed by neighbouring buildings, the former hotel is able to stand apart from its surroundings.

## **3.0 References**

ATL 114/195/12-G

"Street History – Marion Street", The Wellingtonian, accessed 12 March 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/the-wellingtonian/7396623/Street-history-Marion-St>

Wellington City Council. *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 1995: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 1995.

### ***Newspapers***

Evening Post, Volume CXXXVII, Issue 146, 22 June 1944, Page 6

Evening Post, Volume CXL, Issue 134, 4 December 1945, Page 9

Progress, Volume II, Issue I, 1 November 1906, Page 13

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

WCA, 00053:156:8638

## 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?*

9-11 Marion Street is a much altered commercial building that has elements of Arts and Crafts, and Classicism. Despite many alterations, the building is notable as an early example of reinforced concrete construction, and has a pleasant, well organised and neatly proportioned Stripped Classical street-façade.

**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 positive contribution to the Marion Street streetscape.

**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?*

#### **Historic Value:**

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

The building was built as a semi-detached house and hotel and operated as a boarding house for many years. It was owned by the New Zealand Chinese Association from 1950 – 1980.

**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?*

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?*

The building has technological value as an early example of reinforced concrete with an indented steel reinforcing bar.

#### **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?*

Although the building has been much altered the overall effect is of a pleasant mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design that contributes to the sense of place and continuity of Marion Street.

***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?*

The building is an early example of reinforced concrete design in Wellington. It is of particular note for its use of an indented steel reinforcing bar.

***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?*

**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 important at a local level due to the contribution that it makes to the Marion Streetscape, and as an early example of reinforced concrete construction.



## 4.0 Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file	Y	
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	Y	
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	

### Background research

The death took place at Marion street yesterday morning of Mr. J. H. Meyer, the well-known builder and contractor, who has been identified with the progress of Wellington for 49 years. The late Mr. Meyer arrived in Wellington by the ship Humboldt in February, 1874, and shortly after arriving here started in business as a builder and contractor, and continued as such up to the time of his death. During his residence here Mr. Meyer built very extensively, and is said to have erected probably more buildings than any other contractor. Amongst the more notable structures built by him are His Majesty's Theatre, P. Hayman and Co.'s warehouse, Pipitea No. 1 Harbour Board shed, Technical Training College, W. M. Bannantyne and Co.'s warehouse, the Hotel Cecil, and Occidental Hotel. Mr. Meyer also erected substantial buildings at Levin, Palmerston North, New Plymouth (where he built the A.M.P. Society's fine new edifice), Pahiatua, and Featherston, while he also constructed quite a number of bridges in the Wellington district. In later years Mr. Meyer's son Henry became associated with him in the business. The late Mr. Meyer is survived by a widow and three sons: Messrs. F. H. and J. H. Meyer (Wellington), and G. Meyer (Taumaranui); and five daughters: Mrs. W. Illingworth (Oamaru), Mrs. J. Croft (Johnsonville), Mrs. W. Minnitt (Christchurch), Mrs. H. Mowbray (Auckland), and Mrs. C. Brown Chingford (England). The interment takes place to-morrow afternoon.

After the hearing of evidence in the dispute over an agreement for the sale of the Mayo Hotel, Marion Street, between Mark Doyle, barman, and Bernard Augustus Weyburne, land agent, and Harry La Vine, hotel proprietor, the case was adjourned until December 11 to enable additional evidence to be brought.

Evening Post, Volume CXL, Issue 134, 4 December 1945, Page 9

The hearing of charges brought by the Price Tribunal against Kenner's Ltd., home furnishers, continued in the Magistrate's Court today before Mr. A. M. Goulding, S.M. There are eight charges in all, alleging that unreasonably-high prices for furniture had been charged to the lessee of the Mayo Private Hotel in Marion Street, Mrs. I. E. Ryan.

Today's hearing continued with the evidence of members of the furnishing trade on the matter of prices and the controls which had been instituted on them. The case is expected to continue tomorrow.

The prosecution is being conducted by Mr. W. H. Cunningham, and the defence by Dr. O. C. Mazengarb.

Evening Post, Volume CXXXVII, Issue 146, 22 June 1944, Page 6