

Ghuznee Buildings¹

62-64 Ghuznee Street



The Ghuznee Building (Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*)

Summary of heritage significance

- Built in 1929, this building has architectural value for its elegant stripped classical façade, and as a good surviving example of the commercial work of the designer, architect Llewellyn Williams.
- The Ghuznee Buildings has historic significance as one of the earlier high-rise buildings in Te Aro and for its long association with the early drapery firm of Whitehead and Pears.
- It has high townscape value and group value with the adjoining and nearby buildings that are mostly of a similar scale, and makes a positive contribution to, and is enhanced by, this setting.

¹ This report is adapted from the following document: Russell Murray and Kerry Pollock. *Ghuznee Building, 62-64 Ghuznee Street, VIII*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 53, 2005).

District Plan:	Map 12,16, Reference 433 [Plan Change 53]
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 367308 (City View and current CT) Lot 1 DP 348794 (DP) <i>Pt Sec 175 Town of Wellington / A Plan 2524</i>
Heritage Area:	Cuba Street Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Cuba Street Historic Area
Archaeological Site:	Ghuznee House
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: 1929
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Llewellyn E Williams Builder: Fletcher Construction Company.
Former uses:	Commercial / Offices
Current uses:	Retail / Apartments
Earthquake Prone Status:	Posted, extension expires 23/7/12 (SR 223347)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The Ghuznee Building, designed by architect Llewellyn Williams, was built in 1929 for local drapery firm Whitehead and Pears Limited.² Whitehead and Pears owned a shop at 120-122 Cuba Street, which backed onto the Ghuznee Street site. The firm purchased the site in 1923³, probably with development in mind. The building was connected via a door to their Cuba Street premises, and the ground floor plans have the back half of the building marked as “Shop Extension, Whitehead & Pears”.⁴ However it seems likely that Whitehead and Pears themselves did not occupy the new building⁵ which comprised of a retail space on the ground floor with a shop front to Ghuznee Street, and offices above.

The first tenant was the Lambert Pharmaceutical Company, which was joined by Stone, Son & Co Limited, the publishers of the *Stones* street directories, in 1931 and various clothing manufacturers from 1932. Stone, Son and Co. was established by John Stone in Dunedin in 1883. Its original function was to publish a street directory of Dunedin, but from 1891 began to publish directories for other regions, including Wellington.⁶ His son, also named John, ran the Wellington office from 1891, with various family members taking over management after his death in 1923. Stones ceased operating in 1982 and remained in the building until the late 1970s.⁷

This mix of tenants endured until approximately 1955, when Lamberts left the building.⁸ The building was dominated by clothing manufacturers until the 1960s. It is not clear which businesses occupied the retail space – it may have been the clothing firms. The internal spaces were probably partitioned around this time to cater for a different type of occupant, which included the New Zealand Air Force Association, the Lands and Survey Department photographic workshop, and the New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped.

In 2000, levels 1-3 and the roof space were converted to apartments by Strutron Group Architects.⁹ Though the internal spaces have been modified in light of this change in function, much of the original exterior features remain.

² Building Permit 00056:81:B7739, 1929. Wellington City Archives (WCA).

³ CT WN4/200.

⁴ Building Permit 00056:81:B7739, 1929. Wellington City Archives (WCA).

⁵ Russell Murray. *Ghuznee Building, 62-64 Ghuznee Street*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 53, 2005).

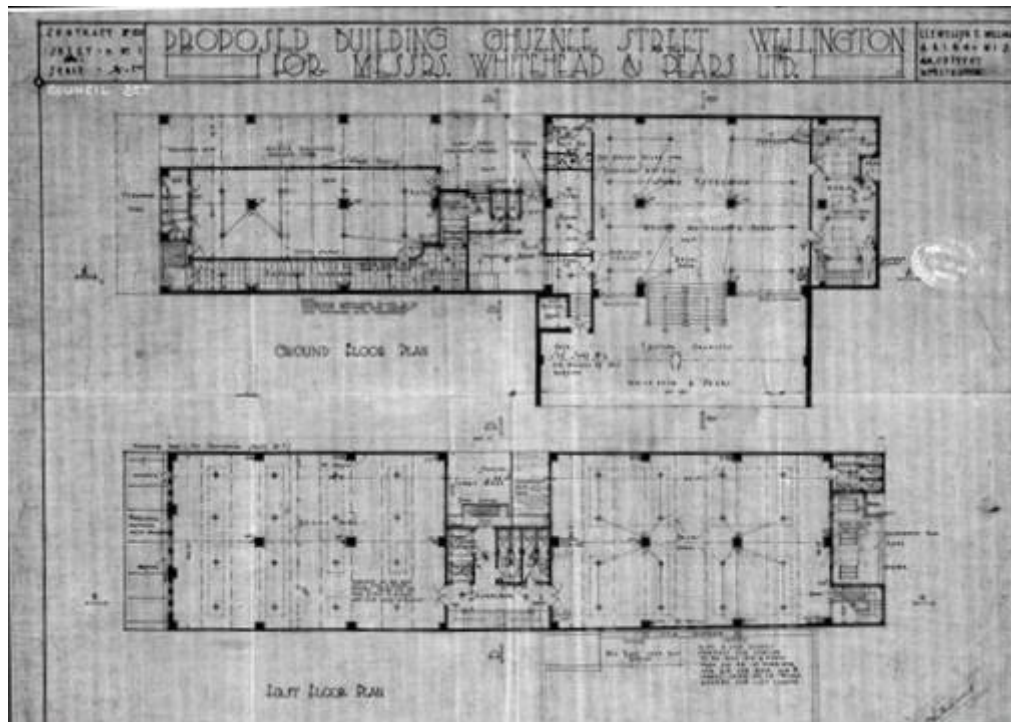
⁶ M. Hamblyn, *Kei Hea To Whare? Titiro Ki Roto: John Stone's New Zealand Directories 1884-1954* (MA Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1995), p.21.

⁷ *Wises Post Office Directory*, 1967-1985.

⁸ *Stones Wellington, Hawkes Bay and Taranaki Directory*, 1930-1955.

⁹ 00078:500:62512, 2000. WCA.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



Original 1929 plans for Ghuznee Buildings, showing the ground and first floor plans (00056:81:B7739, 1929, Wellington City Archives)

- 1929 construction (00056:81:B7739)
- 1968 building alterations - partitioning (00058:583:C27640)
- 1978 building alterations - partitioning, level 2 - Scripture Union of New Zealand (00058:1173:C50500)
- 1990 office building alterations and additions – remedial works to dockway gate and main entrance, and toilets on levels 1 and 2 (00059:423:E21324)
- 2000 conversion to apartments - levels 1-3 and additional rooftop storeys added (00078:500:62512)
- 2008 The building owner applied to WCC to replace the windows on level three at east elevation rear of the building (WCC Records 1041-06-GHU62).

1.3 Occupation history

Whitehead and Pearce themselves did not use the building, however it was connected via a door to their Cuba Street premises. A retail space was provided on the ground floor.

- 19??-1955 Lambert Pharmaceutical Company
- 1931-1970s Stone, Son & Co Limited
- 19??-1960s The building was dominated by clothing manufacturers

It is not clear which businesses occupied the retail space – it may have been the clothing firms.

The internal spaces were probably partitioned around this time to cater for a different type of occupant, which included:

New Zealand Air Force Association
Lands and Survey Department photographic workshop
New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped
Scripture Union of New Zealand

1.4 Architect

Llewellyn Edwin Williams (1884-1967)

Llewellyn Williams was born in 1884 in Newtown, NSW, Australia.¹⁰ His parents, Edwin and Sarah, arrived in Australia in 1882 from Derbyshire, England. Edwin, originally Welsh, was trained as a master stone mason. He did well enough in Australia to become an architect by 1900. Llewellyn followed his father's career path, and studied architecture in France and England.¹¹

In 1919 Llewellyn emigrated with his wife from Sydney to Wellington, where he joined Wellington architect Frederick de Jersey Clere in partnership. With Clere he designed a number of fine buildings, among the best of which was St Mary of the Angels Church (1921), as well as St Barnabas Church, Khandallah, and St Andrew's on The Terrace. At this time he taught at the Banks Commercial College, Wellington, with another prominent Wellington architect, C.H. Mitchell.

From 1923, Williams practised on his own designing a number of prominent buildings, including Druids Chambers cnr Woodward Street and Lambton Quay (1923), part of Kircaldie and Stains (1924), Todd Motors Building, Courtenay Place (1926), Kelvin Chambers, The Terrace (1927), Civic Chambers, Cuba St (1927), and Chevening House, Salamanca Road Kelburn (1929).

He was also responsible for the design of many new theatres around the country, including the De Luxe (now the Embassy) Theatre in Wellington (1924), The Regent (1926) and Kings (1936) cinemas in Wellington (both demolished), and the Avon cinema in Christchurch (1934).¹²

In the 1930s the family moved back to Sydney after work became scarce in Wellington due to the Depression.¹³ Here he was forced to work several jobs, including cleaning and drafting, to support his family. During WWII Llewellyn worked as an architect for the Department of Interior in Townsville, Queensland. However, he returned to Sydney when his eldest son John was shot down over the Middle East and became a prisoner of war. Unfortunately John was killed after participating in the "Great Escape". After the War, Llewellyn returned to Townsville where he continued to work as an architect and branched out into property development until his death in 1967.

¹⁰ *New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages*, No 7973/233.

¹¹ <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/heritage/pdfs/oldshorelinetrail.pdf>

¹² <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=239>

¹³ This paragraph requires checking – from an unreferenced source
<http://megansfamily.com/Legacy/familytree/5.htm>

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The public appearance of this building remains much as it was when it first opened for business in 1929 despite a recent ungainly apartment addition to the roof-top.

This building is part of an important group of low-rise buildings on Ghuznee Street, in both the immediate context and in the broader area and has high group and townscape value for that. Williams was both an architect and engineer and often generated innovative structural solutions for his buildings. He favoured a predominantly Chicago style of design, with symmetrical compositions of classical vertical proportions and the use of simple moulded detail and relief to enliven the building; this building is a good example of his work.

The building appears to be constructed entirely in reinforced concrete, although the primary structure may be Williams' preferred concrete-encased structural steel. It is four principal storeys in height (plus a modern roof-top addition), is very long in plan and originally was conjoined with one or more of the neighbouring buildings to service the requirements of the original owners, Whitehead & Pears. The principal visible element is the front façade, which remains almost entirely original. There is little to be seen of the other elevations, which are almost entirely obscured by adjoining buildings.

The front façade is only lightly detailed with simple mouldings, but is patterned to considerable effect and has slightly Art Deco overtones informing the proportions and decorations. It is arranged symmetrically into three vertical framed bays by the use of columns and a flat pediment area (which bears the painted name "Ghuznee Buildings").

Above the verandah, the outer two bays are of equal width and the centre of greater width. Each bay is recessed slightly from the outer plane of the façade and contains three windows for each floor level; each window is separated from its neighbour with and further recessed between square secondary pilasters which run the height of the window bays. In the vertical plane, the windows are separated between floors with moulded spandrel panels and trims. The spandrels of the two side bays have a panel of diaper-work below the window sill and a blank panel to the head of the next window. The spandrels of the central bay have a recessed moulded panel occupying the whole space between the windows. A similar but smaller horizontal panel trims the heads of the very top windows.

A low parapet, trimmed with a Deco-inspired moulded cornice consisting of triangular forms, conceals the roof and apartment beyond. From certain angles on the street, the awkward apartment addition, which, although painted in like colours, in form and detail has nothing to do with the building itself, can be seen peering uncertainly over the parapet.

A broad but slender verandah separates the upper part of the façade from the street level. This verandah is the original structure, although it has lost the ornament originally applied to the front edge and the soffit appears to have been relined, although it is unknown what the original finish was to this area.

Below the verandah, the central bay of the building still contains the original timber shop-front window; the original iron-work gate on the left side has been replaced with a more modern timber gate, and the original solid timber panelled doors have been replaced with modern glazed aluminium doors.

The interior was not inspected. It is unknown if any original interior fabric remains, but is considered unlikely given the history of different uses the building has been put to over the years.

2.2 Materials

The building appears to be constructed entirely in reinforced concrete, although the primary structure may be Williams' preferred concrete-encased structural steel.

2.3 Setting

The immediate setting of the building is the block in which it is embedded. To the west is an undistinguished two-storey concrete building, to the east is a string of interesting buildings, including – immediately next door, the startling No. 60 (the Cadbury Building), an Edwardian masonry building of similar proportions to the Ghuznee Buildings, Thomas Turnbull's small Satay Village at No. 58, the remains of the Ware Press at No. 56 and the former Gear Meat building at the Cuba Street Corner. Across the road are the Krazy Lounge (132 Cuba), Albermarle Hotel, the refurbished Glover Park and other buildings.

The majority of these buildings are of a broadly similar scale to the Ghuznee Buildings and this gives the streetscape in this section of Ghuznee Street a high level of coherence that enhances and is enhanced by the heritage values of the buildings.

The wider setting includes central Te Aro, particularly Cuba Street.

3.0 Sources

Russell Murray. *Ghuznee Building, 62-64 Ghuznee Street, VIII*. (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 53, 2005).

M. Hamblyn, *Kei Hea To Whare? Titiro Ki Roto: John Stone's New Zealand Directories 1884-1954* (MA Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1995), p.21.

Stones Wellington, Hawkes Bay and Taranaki Directory, 1930-1955.
Wises Post Office Directory, 1967-1985.

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, No 7973/233.

<http://www.wellington.govt.nz/services/heritage/pdfs/oldshorelinetrail.pdf>

<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=239>

<http://megansfamily.com/Legacy/familytree/5.htm>

WC Archives

Building Permit 00056:81:B7739, 1929.
00078:500:62512, 2000.

Land Information New Zealand
CT WN4/200.

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 has high architectural value as a good surviving example of the commercial work of the designer, architect Llewellyn Williams and for its elegant stripped classical façade with Art Deco overtones.

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 distinctive building has high townscape value and group value with the adjoining and nearby buildings that are mostly of a similar scale, and makes a positive contribution to, and is enhanced by, this setting.

This building makes a strong positive contribution to 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?

This distinctive building has high townscape value and group value with the adjoining and nearby buildings that are mostly of a similar scale, and makes a positive contribution to, and is enhanced by, this setting.

This building makes a strong positive contribution to the Cuba Street Heritage Area.

Historic Value:

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

This building has historic significance as one of the earlier high-rise buildings in Te Aro and for its long association with the early drapery firm of Whitehead and Pears, for whom it was built.

This building also has historic significance for its association with the architect Llewellyn Williams, a prominent architect of the day.

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?

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?

The building structure is of some technical interest.

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 Ghuznee 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 has good representative value as a late 1920s commercial building.

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 remains largely intact with a high level of original building fabric, 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.

5.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	N	Not included
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	Not included
WCC Records – building file	Y	Info on 2008 window alterations
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	Not included
Plan change?	53	Russell Murray report
Heritage Area Report	Y	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	Y	Little info included - refers to Pollock and Murray 2005
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

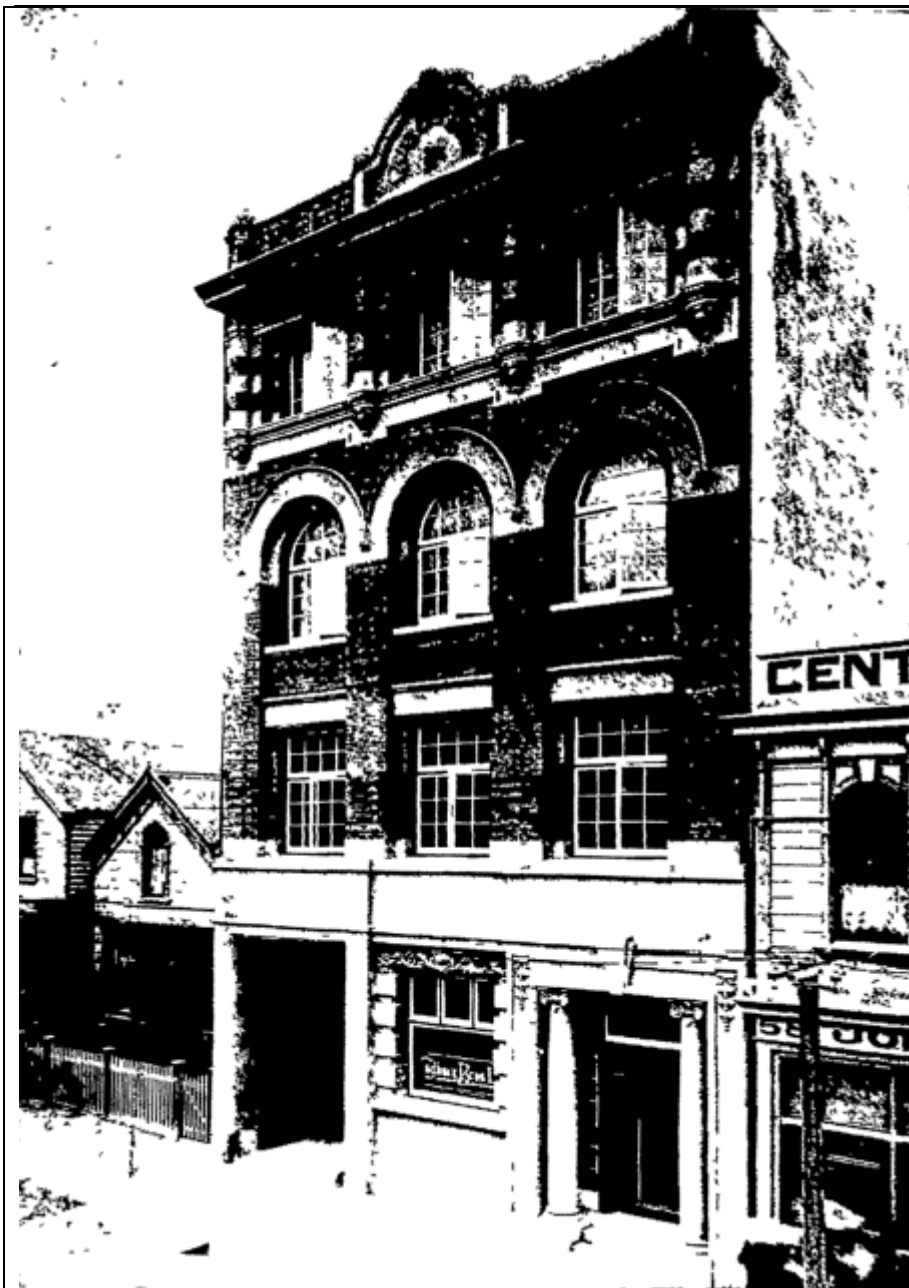
Background research

CSHA Report p35

...the Ghuznee Building, an elegant 1929 Stripped Classical affair of four main stories. It has notably Art-Deco-ish vertical proportions highlighted by the composition of windows, mullions and spandrel panels, a mostly original verandah, substantial traces of the original shop-fronts, and an incongruous modern roof-top apartment addition.

R Murray 2005

This building has good representative value as a late 1920s commercial building, high architectural, townscape and group value, reasonable historic value, and is one of the few buildings remaining in the city by the well-known architect Llewellyn Williams. Although altered for an apartment use, this change does not impact highly on the publicly visible parts of the building, and most of the Ghuznee Street façade is in original condition.



This photo of the newly completed Cadbury building in 1909 shows the present day site of the Ghuznee Buildings on the left, occupied by two small cottages (Progress, Volume IV, Issue 9, 1 July 1909, Page 316).