

Wellington Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store (Former)

3 Jervois Quay



Image: *Charles Collins, 2015*

Summary of heritage significance

- The former Wellington Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store is a fine example of a Victorian civic building. It is a sophisticated piece of architectural design that is elegant and unembellished for the time, and is a major work of an important Wellington, Frederick de Jersey Clere.
- This building is associated with the Wellington Harbour Board and as their offices has great historic value for the city as the home of harbour management from 1892 until 1989. The building is a potent reminder of 100 years of port and maritime history
- This building has technical value due to the structural system, built upon piles on reclaimed land, and from the high quality finishes that remain in the interior and on the exterior.

District Plan:	Map 17, reference 160
Legal Description:	Lot 207 DP 67374
Heritage Area:	Post Office Square Heritage Area
HPT Listed:	Category 1 reference 234
Archaeological Site:	NZAA Central City R27/270, reclaimed land
Other Names:	Wellington Harbour Board Offices (Former), Maritime Museum (Former), Museum of Wellington City and Sea
Key physical dates:	Constructed 1892
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere; Builder: R. Carmichael and Sons.
Former uses:	Retail and Commercial – Office Building/Offices
Current uses:	Civic Facilities and Recreation - Museum
Earthquake Prone Status:	<i>Not Earthquake Prone – Base Isolated</i>

Extent: Cityview GIS



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

The former Head Office of the Wellington Harbour Board is a building of great historic value to the city. It was the focus of harbour management from 1892 until the dissolution of the Harbour Board in 1989. It is associated with the settlement of Wellington, the harbour, and shipping, which have all been important elements of the development of Wellington. The Head Office building is a potent reminder of 100 years of port history.

The Harbour Board was established in 1880, and after a decade of operation it resolved to build a head office and bond store that would be sited in one building. It appointed a 'Bond Building Committee' to oversee the acquisition of land, the appointment of an architect, and the tendering process. Soon after, prominent architect Frederick de Jersey Clere was chosen to design plans for the building.² By 1891 the committee had accepted the tender of firm Robert Carmichael and Son at a price of £11,264.³ The foundation stone was laid by Governor General, the Count of Onslow, on 9th July and the whole building was constructed in just over a year. The Harbour Board held their first meetings in the building on the 24 March 1892.⁴



Queen's Wharf, Wellington. Brusewitz, Henry Elis Leopold, b ca 1855: Negatives. Ref: 1/1-001016-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22870846>

¹ History based on Wellington City Council, "Wellington Maritime Museum (Bond Store) Jervois Quay", *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), JERV3.

² Wellington Harbour Board, Minute Book No.2 (for years 1890 – 94) Archives, Wellington Maritime Museum.

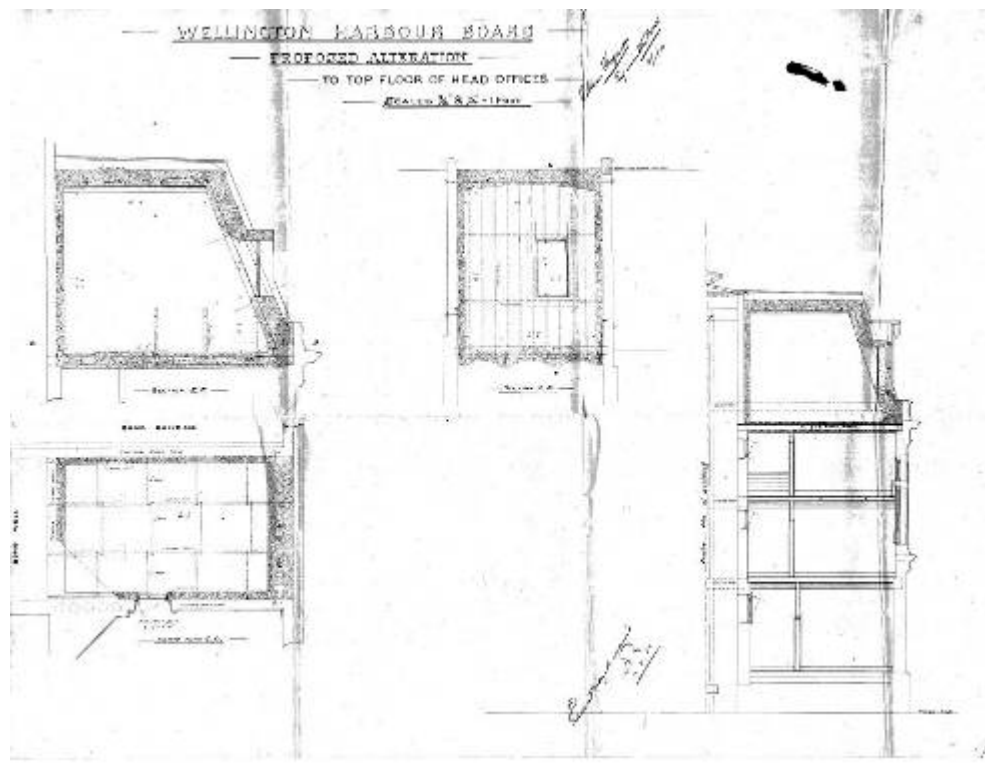
³ Contract (No.62) and specifications for Wellington Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store, WHB Archives, Wellington Maritime Museum

⁴ WHB, Minute Book No.2

The dual function of the building continued through to the late 1920s, when the board expanded their offices and removed the bond store to another building.⁵ Following this, the building retained a singular function as offices. By the 1970s the Harbour Board had become a significant repository of maritime material, particularly that relating to the Wellington Harbour and New Zealand maritime history. It was decided by the Harbour Board that they should utilise the largely vacant bond store to display the growing collection of objects. In 1972 the Wellington Maritime Museum opened after extensive renovations. The museum was a great success, and the end of the Harbour Board in 1989 saw it taken over by a charitable trust. Financial responsibility for the museum's operation was taken over by the Wellington City Council. The Museum also filled the offices of the Harbour Board building.

By the 1990s Wellington was experiencing a cultural renaissance, particularly in the museum and art gallery sectors. With the opening of Te Papa Tongarewa as the museum of New Zealand, it was decided that Wellington needed a museum that would tell its stories. The old Bond store building was deemed to be an ideal location, and in late 1999 after extensive restoration, conservation, and development, the museum reopened as the Museum of Wellington City and Sea. The redevelopment of the museum also included extensive earthquake strengthening, with the building being completely base-isolated while also maintaining the original heritage listed interiors and facades. This new museum incorporated the old maritime museum collections as well as adding to new collections based on Wellington early Maori history and 20th century social history.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



'Proposed Alterations', WCA 00053-106-5922

⁵ WHB, Minute Book (1924)

1892	Building construction
1904	Alterations to the top floor of the Queens Bond Building (00053:106:5922)
1998	Maritime Museum redevelopment (00078:362:39101)
2001	New internal partition walls and new office layout – third floor of the maritime museum (00078:603:73266)
2003	Installation of three shipping containers as entrance features (00078:1160:103275)
2009	Removal and addition of partition walls on level 3 (00078:3148:198666)

1.3 Occupation history

1892	Wellington Harbour Board
1972	Wellington Maritime Museum
1999	Museum of Wellington City and Sea

1.4 Architect

Clere, Frederick De Jersey – Architect

Clere (1856-1952) was born in Lancashire, the son of an Anglican clergyman, and was articled to Edmund Scott, an ecclesiastical architect of Brighton. He then became chief assistant to R J Withers, a London architect. Clere came to New Zealand in 1877, practising first in Fielding and then in Wanganui. He later came to Wellington and practised there for 58 years. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1886 and held office for 50 years as one of four honorary secretaries in the Empire. In 1883 he was appointed Diocesan Architect of the Anglican Church; he designed more than 100 churches while he held this position. Clere was a pioneer in reinforced concrete construction; the outstanding example of his work with this material is the Church of St Mary of the Angels (1922), Wellington. As well as being pre-eminent in church design, Clere was responsible for many domestic and commercial buildings including Wellington's Harbour Board Offices and Bond Store (1891) and Overton in Marton. Clere was also involved in the design of large woolsheds in Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa. He was active in the formation of the New Zealand Institute of Architects and served on their council for many years. He was a member of the Wellington City Council until 1895, and from 1900 a member of the Wellington Diocesan Synod and the General Synod. He was also a member of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. ⁶

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The former Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store was designed as a dual-purpose building, as bond-store and office premises, requiring a utilitarian character but also one to impress. The architect has chosen a stripped down French Renaissance or Second Empire style, which admirably suits the purpose of functionality and elegance. The construction is load-bearing brick masonry on reinforced concrete foundations and piles. The roof is clad in corrugated iron.

⁶ NZHPT professional biographies, 'Frederick de Jersey Clere', accessed 27 March 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Clere,+Frederick+De+Jersey>

This three-storey building has two obvious components - the two storey base and the mansard roof. The base is divided into nine squares or rectangles on each floor over the long elevation, and three squares at both ends of the building. The mansard roof features rather elegant dormer windows complete with small triangular pediments, and is capped by nine flagpoles, each with an ironwork surround which were called "widows'-walks" or "captain's-walks". The flagpoles are a very appropriate maritime feature.

The facades demonstrate a good balance between horizontal and vertical elements, with strong, plain cornices between levels and a plain entablature between upper floor and roof. There is little decoration as such apart from the ironwork on the roof and the carved panels over the main entrance on the north elevation. The visual harmony of the building derives from the rhythms and proportions set by the bays and windows. Inside the building there is a magnificent staircase and boardroom.

The Head Office building is a major landmark on the Wellington waterfront, one of a group of stylistically varied buildings that have been successfully converted to new uses. The building has been base-isolated and earthquake strengthened.

2.2 Materials

The construction is load-bearing brick masonry on reinforced concrete foundations and piles.

2.3 Setting

The former Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store is a major work by a prominent Wellington Architect. It has extremely high townscape values; it marks the entrance to Queen's Wharf and is easily seen from inner city streets around Post Office Square. It is one of a precinct of historic maritime buildings, being opposite the former wharf offices (also designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere), and close to Shed 5. More broadly it is related to the masonry Sheds 11 and 13. This group of buildings tell the story of Wellington's maritime history and the commercial development of Wellington's port.

3.0 Sources

NZHPT professional biographies. 'Frederick de Jersey Clere'. Accessed 27 March 2013.

<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Clere,+Frederick+De+Jersey>

Wellington City Council. *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001

Wellington City Archive

WCA 00053-106-5922

Alexander Turnbull Library

Ref: 1/1-001016-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22870846>

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 former Wellington Harbour Board Head Office and Bond Store is a fine example of a Victorian civic building. It is a sophisticated piece of architectural design that is elegant and unembellished for the time, and is a major work of an important Wellington, Frederick de Jersey Clere.

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 high townscape values as it marks the entrance to Queen's Wharf and is a major landmark on the Wellington waterfront.

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 one of a group of stylistically varied buildings that are related to the maritime history of Wellington that have been successfully converted to new uses. Together with the Wharf Offices building, Shed 5, and Sheds 11 and 13, this building is related to the commercial development of the port. It makes a strong positive contribution to the Post Office Square Heritage Area.

Historic Value:

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

This building is associated with the Wellington Harbour Board and, as their former head-office, has great historic value for the city. The building is a potent reminder of 100 years of port and maritime history.

It is also associated with prominent Wellington architect Frederick de Jersey Clere.

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?*

This building is constructed on reclaimed land and is in an area that was occupied prior to 1900. It is also included in the NZAA Central City archaeological site 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?*

This building has technical value due to the structural system, built upon piles on reclaimed land, and from the high quality finishes that remain in the interior and on the exterior. The refurbishment of the interior has been well-managed and retains many original features.

This building has now been base-isolated with very little damage to the original fabrics, this also gives it technical value as it demonstrates how a historic building may be earthquake strengthened.

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

The former Wellington Harbour Board Offices and Bond Store is a fine / high profile local landmark that is likely to be 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 has had few intrusive modern alterations over the past 110+ years and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Post Office Square Heritage Area and the Wellington waterfront.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

This building is likely to be a focus of community sentiment as it now houses the Museum of Wellington, a museum dedicated to telling the story of Wellington and connecting the present to the past.

Level of cultural heritage significance

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

This building is an outstanding example of Frederick de Jersey Clere's work, it is a landmark, has a high level of traditional and cultural value, has technical value, and is associated with the commercial development of Wellington as a port city.

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?*

This building retains authenticity and integrity as it retains much of its original fabric and significant features.

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 and national level as it is a significant building on the Wellington waterfront, is the second oldest building in the precinct, and is architecturally important. It is associated with over 100 years of activity at the port.

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)		