Railway Workshop/Rolling Stock Depot
0 Bunny Street, Pipitea, Building 24.

Summary of heritage significance

- The Railway Depot it is a good example of an industrial building designed within the functional tradition, and is well-suited to its rail yard site and engine maintenance function. It is given some architectural elaboration that elevates it above the merely utilitarian and it has architectural value for that.

- This building is significant as a major part of the railway yard re-organisation that occurred in the mid-1930s, which included the construction of the Wellington Railway Station itself. It is the second largest building in the yard, a significant example of industrial architecture and, as a maintenance workshop, a key building in railway operations in the lower North Island for over 60 years.

- It remains in relatively authentic condition, and is still in use for its original purpose.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Plan:</th>
<th>Map 15 ref 457</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Description:</td>
<td>Pt Lot 1 DP 11041, Pt Lot 1 DP 11017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Area:</td>
<td>Adjacent to Wellington Railway Station Heritage Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPT Listed:</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Site:</td>
<td>Pre 1900 reclamation / Central City NZAA R27/270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Names:</td>
<td>Kiwi Rail Rolling Stock Depot, Railway Workshop Bldg 24 - Kiwirail - Rolling Stock Depot Thorndon Quay, Railway Locomotive and Rolling Stock Depot 55 Aotea Quay, Pipitea 86 Hutt Road Pipitea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key physical dates:</td>
<td>Built 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect / Builder:</td>
<td>Unknown - possibly William Gray Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former uses:</td>
<td>Railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current uses:</td>
<td>Railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake Prone Status:</td>
<td>Status ‘Potentially Earthquake Prone’ (SR258975)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extent: Aerial-Railway Workshop.
1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The first railway out of Wellington was laid in 1872 but the present configuration of railyards was not established until the 1930s. In the interim, the acquisition of land and, more particularly, reclamation, offered intermittent opportunity for railway expansion. It was the opportunity to combine the junctions of the western (Manawatu) and eastern (Wairarapa) lines - mooted as early as 1912 - that stimulated the reclamation of a large area of land at Aotea Quay between 1924-31. In conjunction with the reclamation, a more direct main trunk route out of Wellington was constructed. It bypassed the old suburban line to Johnsonville and, instead, followed a new route that became known as the Tawa Flat deviation. Spoil from the huge tunnel ended up in the reclamation, along with harbour dredging detritus.

At the same time planning proceeded on a new rail yard, a new combined head office, station and rail terminal was built to designs by William Gray Young (completed in 1937), and the various lines into Wellington were reconfigured. Amidst the yard, some 800 metres north of the station, a major workshop was built. Completed the same year as the station building, and probably designed by the same architect, William Gray Young, it occupied a large portion of the rail yard. The building had a main repair shop and a steam locomotive shop, electric locomotive shop, and a car and wagon stock shop. The fifth bay provided covered accommodation for railcars. There was a pit beneath each track to gain access to the undercarriages and, over the middle bay, a gantry to lift vehicle bodies off chassis. Rail ran (as it still does) right through four of the five bays.

More than 60 years later, through restructurings and privatisation and the closure of other workshops, the building is still used largely for its original purpose. Today it is mainly used for general servicing but heavy repair work is now done in a workshop in Lower Hutt because the gantry cranes here cannot lift today’s heavier locomotives.

The Railway Workshop is a large concrete and steel industrial building, almost square in plan, situated in the middle of the Wellington railway yards. Although the urban motorway physically impinges on the building, the broader railway yard setting remains much as it was after the 1930s reorganisation and contributes a strong sense of authenticity to the building.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

Alterations have been made to ground floor openings, with modern roller doors installed.

Early photos show smoke stacks to the roof of the western-most bay associated with the servicing of steam engines. These have now gone.

---

1 This report is adapted from Russell Murray, "Railway Workshop" unpublished report for WCC District Plan Change 53.
3 Dominion, 18/6/1937.
1.3 Occupation history

New Zealand Railways Department
New Zealand Railways Corporation/Ontrack

1.4 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The workshop is divided longitudinally into 5 bays, each with a gable roof, the middle bay elevated above the two pairs of flanking bays with clerestory glazing in the upper walls. Each of the five bays, except the central bay has three roads; the latter has two roads. Although the north elevation is dominated by the motorway pier that penetrates the building, the south elevation is relatively unaffected by the motorway. The structural materials are concrete end frames and dividing walls with steel roof trusses spanning across the bays supporting the moderately pitched roofs. The roof and gable cladding is corrugated iron. Roofs to the four smaller bays have extensive sky-lighting in the form of clear corrugated sheets worked in to the main roofing. At ground level, the ends of the bays have roller doors; the rail tracks (“roads”) run through the building, over long pits used for servicing. The gable ends have multi-paned windows, while the middle bay has a huge steel-framed window made up of small panes 30 wide by 8 high. Some attention to detail above the purely functional can be seen in the pale pink render originally applied to the concrete (now painted over), and the stepped profile of the broad and tall concrete columns that separate the bays.

Internally, there is variation in the fit-out of each of the bays, including a variety of gantry cranes, elevated working platforms and the like. One of the small bays is principally given over to storage. The central bay is distinctive for its tall proportions, clerestory glazing and riveted lattice-work columns supporting the roof trusses; this space has abundant natural light and is principally used for servicing locomotives.

2.2 Materials

The Railway Workshop is a large concrete and steel industrial building, almost square in plan, situated in the middle of the Wellington railway yards.

2.3 Setting

The Railway Workshop building is located at the northern end of the railway yards near Thorndon Quay at the foot of Tinakori Hill. The immediate setting of the building is this large open area, which is bounded by major roads to the east and west. There are smaller workshop buildings nearby, including a distinctive Quonset type arched shed just to the west, and a timber administration building just to the south, perhaps of early 1930s vintage but considerably altered.

The broader setting includes another group of workshop buildings further south, the Wellington urban motorway which sails over the railway yards and directly over (and into) this building, with piers strategically placed between the tracks and into the structure of the building, the adjacent commercial area of Thorndon Quay, and the working wharves at Aotea Quay. The surrounding areas have a long historical association with the railways.
3.0 **Sources**


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 Railway Depot is a good example of an industrial building designed within the functional tradition, and is well suited to its rail yard site and engine maintenance function. It is given some architectural elaboration that elevates it above the merely utilitarian and it has architectural value for that.

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?

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 a part of the group of buildings that make up the Wellington Railway station and is located within close proximity to the Wellington Railway Station – Bunny Street Heritage Area.

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

This building is associated with the New Zealand railway system and the development of railways in New Zealand.

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

This building is significant as a major part of the railway yard re-organisation that occurred in the mid-1930s, which included the construction of the Wellington Railway Station itself. It is the second largest building in the yard, a significant example of industrial architecture and, as a maintenance workshop, a key building in railway operations in the lower North Island for over 60 years.

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

Pre 1900 reclamation / Central City NZAA R27/270

Educational: Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?

The building has educational and technological value as an example of a building designed for the maintenance of railway locomotives and rolling stock. It gives an insight into the 1930s infrastructure required for the maintenance of New Zealand's rail network.
**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 contributes to the sense of continuity and place of the Wellington Railway Station. It is in an authentic condition and has retained its original uses.

**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 is representative of a utilitarian railway workshop. As such it is of some architectural and technical interest.

**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 has had few alterations and retains a large majority of its original fabric. It is also still in use for its original purpose which lends this building authenticity.

**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 regional level due to its association with the Wellington Railway Station itself and the development and extension of the railway system.
4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995 Heritage Inventory</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCC Records – building file</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening,</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhancement of heritage values)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan change?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Area Report</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Area Spreadsheet</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage items folder (electronic)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPT website</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPT files</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Plan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*