

Whanganui Heritage Inventory

Cock & Co 16 Taupo Quay, Whanganui Item **379**

Former Name(s) of Building: Photography & Painting Studios & Gallery, and others

Legal Description: Pt Section 73, Town of Wanganui; A2062

Certificate of Title: WN 44A/216 issued 11 Feb 1994; party wall & ROW rights, see Transfers 61479, 92917 and 105151 plus Deed 117382.

Current Owner: Whanganui District Council

Original Owner: JH Cock & Co

Date: 1916; altered 1996

Architect/Designer: HT Johns; 1996: Southcombe McLean

Location of original plans: Not known; 1996 plans: WDC and BSM Group Architects

Builder: JW Alderton; 1996: CHECK

District Plan: Old Town Area, Class B, 2013



The Architect:

Henry Thomas Johns (c1864-1928), known as “Tommy” Johns, was first a builder in Wanganui in the 1890s, with premises on Taupo Quay next to the *Herald* office. He turned his hand to architectural work quite early on, designing the Odd Fellows Hall in Ridgway Street in 1895. By 1903 he was a Borough Councillor, but two years later he left Wanganui for Wellington, where he remained for the rest of his life. He is listed as a Fellow of the NZ Institute of Architects in *Progress*, Sept 1915 and the *NZ Gazette*, 1921. Little is known of the extent of his architectural commissions, although he did

design Cock & Co's New Plymouth warehouse (Tender notice, WH 25 Nov 1916). His son, Bernard Winton Johns (1902-1982), also became an architect and practised in Wellington.

History:

Of the site:

- 1853: Original land grant to William Hair (together with rest of Section 73.)
- 1879: Purchased by George McLean, a Hawera storekeeper who presumably had a shop here. This part of Taupo Quay had many shops in the 1870s.
- 1896: Matthew Riordan, a baker, purchased the property and leased it to another baker, Edward Cullinane, who remained here until c1904. The land was purchased in 1900 by Margaret Shields, but leased back to Cullinane.
- 1904: Commercial traveller, Frederick Charles Saphir, bought the site when he decided to leave Bing Harris & Co and set up in business for himself. He remains here until 1907 when he returns to Britain and sells to Burgess & Murdoch.
- 1907: **Burgess & Murdoch** move here, having previously been in business on Section 72 before Sargood, Son & Ewen decided to erect a new warehouse on that site.

Arthur Stewart Burgess and his partner, Robert Murdoch, went into Business together in January 1906. In March 1907, they purchase Sargood's old Campbell PI (Rutland Street) premises as well as the adjoining premises on Taupo Quay next to the Herald. The firm expanded rapidly, largely due to their imports of fruit from the Islands and Sydney. They were also agents for insurance companies, Highlander Condensed Milk, NZ Portland Cement Co, Kapai Corn Broom Co and the Kops Ale & Stout (a non-alcoholic drink brewed from Kent hops). The two men remained in business together until c1910 when Burgess became manager and director of Hatrick's. The letters "...ess & Murdoch & Co" can still be seen on the wall of Bing Harris building by left side of the old goods entrance.

Wanganui-born, Arthur Stewart Burgess was a prominent local businessman who served on most local bodies, establishing his own company in 1931 when Hatrick's was wound up. His partner, Robert Murdoch, was better known as a geologist who spent many years supporting Samuel Drew in establishing and running the Wanganui Museum.

- 1913: JH Cock & Co purchase the site with its existing buildings, including the open shed at the rear.

Of the building:

- 1916: JH Cock & Co build their new warehouse on the site, with the covered

right of way leading to the old open shed at the back.
The tender notice in the *Herald*, 14 July, noted that a two-floor warehouse was to be built on Taupo Quay for Messrs J Cock & Co and the architect was HT Johns, FNZIA, 155 Featherston Street, Wellington.
The building permit was issued 17 August; the builder, JW Alderton, and the estimated cost £3,200.

Joseph Henry Cock (1855-1921) was the son of a Cornish copper-miner who came to Nelson in 1880, joining his brother's business there and founding the Anchor Steam Shipping Company which ran passenger and freight services between the North and South Islands and West Coast. JH Cock & Co became the main agents for the Anchor Shipping and Foundry Co as well as other shipping lines. Henry Cock himself was a great music lover, helping to establish the Nelson School of Music. He was also enthusiastic about the arts, becoming involved with the Bishop Suter Gallery in Nelson for which he purchased pictures.
Cock & Co had established a branch in Wanganui in 1891, first based on the corner of Taupo Quay and Drews Ave (site now occupied by Backhouse Building). The Wanganui manager was **Frederick J Johns**, whose brother, HT Johns, was the architect of the new warehouse. Frederick Johns spent 35 years in Wanganui, serving on the Board of Management of St Paul's church. When he left town in 1920 to move to Wellington, it was reported in the *Chronicle* that he had a large circle of friends in Wanganui who would regret his departure.

JH Cock & Co, shipping agents, with Anchor Shipping & Foundry Co and Sun Insurance are listed at 42 Taupo Quay in Wise's Directories from 1929-1955.

- 1953: Alterations made to layout of front offices for Cock & Co. in Sept (RG Talboys & Assocs plans). Plan shows manager's office on right. In October, further alterations are made to offices and tea rooms.
- 1957: Floor of rear warehouse strengthened for JH Cock & Co, plus windows changed on back elevation. New foundations put in place. (RG Talboys & Assocs plans on WDC file.)
- 1962: City Council Engineer's plan shows **Wrightson NMA Grocery Division** in the old Cock & Co warehouse. Alterations are made to the rear storehouse (QSA4b building) noted as 12 Taupo Quay, for **AS Paterson & Co**. (JH Cock & Co still noted as owner on plan). Garland & Lyn Jones, builders; cost £1,322. Work included a new roof.

Alexander (Alec) Stronach Paterson was an accountant, educated at Wanganui Collegiate, who moved to Wellington and became director of a number of companies, including Golden Bay Cement. His firm took over the Sun Insurance and Guardian Insurance agencies formerly held by JH Cock & Co.

- 1969: Doorway alterations by rear brick wall for AS Paterson & Co, including roller door installation.
- c1972 plan: Indicates AS Patterson & Co Ltd in all of Cock & Co building with open shed at rear (QSA4b).
- 1975: The site is sold to **Wayne Granville Barlow**, auctioneer of Wanganui (with a three-year mortgage to AS Paterson & Co.)
- 1985: **Wanganui Engineering** take over the rear part of the building, including the QSA4b building; **Group Rentals** occupy the front portion on Taupo Quay. Alterations are made for Wanganui Engineering (Titter Construction). Work on QSA4 included fire partition between Group Rentals space at front of building, new staircase in rear of Cock & Co warehouse (both QSA4a) and internal office partitions in the rear building (QSA4b) with “Barlows Old Building” noted on plans.
- 1987: David John Toohill, plumber, purchases the buildings.
- 1988: Wanganui City Council purchases the buildings, as part of the buy-out of Wanganui Engineering Works premises along Taupo Quay. Group Rentals still occupy the front part of the warehouse.
- 1993: The property is transferred to Quayside Arts Centre Ltd.
- 1994: Wanganui District Council purchase the property and work begins on alterations for **Quay School of the Arts**.
- 1996: Alterations made CHECK & timing.

Resources Consulted:

Wanganui District Council Building Files: for 16 Taupo Quay and 10 Rutland Street. Papers only from 1953, plus 1996 Quay School of Arts alterations/rebuilding.

BSM Group Architects Files:

CHECK

Wanganui Borough Council Register of Building Permits, Archives Ref: AAF 174:1: 17 Aug 1916 permit issued to JH Cock & Co, new warehouse, Taupo Quay, JW Alderton, £3,200.

LINZ Wellington Registry:

(1) CT 17/292 issued 13 June 1879 to George McLean, storekeeper of Hawera, Taranaki for pt Section 73 (adjacent to Sect 74); refers to original grant dated 18 Jan 1853 to William Hair. Transferred 5 June 1896 to Matthew Riordan, baker of Wanganui who leased it to Edward Cullinane. Transferred 26 May 1899 to Edward Cullinane, baker. Transferred 19 March 1900 to Margaret Elizabeth Shields, wife of Francis George Shields, teacher, and leased to Edward Cullinane for 2 years. Transferred 1 Sept 1904 to Frederick Charles Saphir, commercial traveller (subject to right of way and Transfer No 61479). Transferred 29 April 1907 to Arthur Stewart Burgess & Robert Murdoch, merchants and new CT issued.

(2) CT 161/276 issued 29 April 1907 to Arthur Stewart Burgess and Robert Murdoch, merchants of Wanganui for pt Sect 73 (adjacent to Sect 74), subject to right of way and

party wall rights set out in Transfer No 61479. Mortgage 29 April 1907 to FC Saphir and 10 June 1912 to D Ritchie. Grant of Easement No. 92917 dated 19 Dec 1913 to Bing Harris & Co re party wall rights and right of way (following extension of Bing Harris building). Transferred 19 Dec 1913 to JH Cock & Co. Grant of Easement No. 105151 dated 21 Sept 1916 JH Cock & Co to Macky Logan Caldwell re party wall between Sect 73 and Sect 74. Mortgages, etc for JH Cock & Co between 1933 and 1966. Transferred 20 Oct 1975 to Wayne Granville Barlow, Auctioneer with mortgage to AS Paterson. Transferred 28 Oct 1987 to David John Toohill, plumber. Transferred 17 Aug 1988 to Wanganui City Council. Transferred 3 Dec 1993 to Quayside Arts Centre Ltd. Cancelled 11 Feb 1994 and new CT issued.

(3) CT 44A/216 issued 11 Feb 1994 to Wanganui District Council.

Wanganui Borough Council Rates Book: (Archives Ref Series AAF 64)

1900/01-1901/02 has Edward Cullinane as occupier, pt Sect 73, Taupo Quay and Matthew Riordan, owner. Property value £26. 1902/03 has same owner/occupier; 1903/04 has Margaret Shields as owner. By 1905/06 Fredk C Saphir is owner of three properties in Section 73, two valued at £60 and one at £30. These are the Bing Harris building and probably the dwelling behind it, as well as other sheds and buildings later transferred to Burgess & Murdoch. The 1917/18 Rates Book has Fredk J Johns, Cock & Co as owner/occupier of pt Sect 73, Taupo Quay, value £200.

Wanganui Borough Council Valuation Rolls Database 1863-1921/22:

Charles Bell, baker, occupier of Pt Sect 73 from xxxx [CHECK DATE AGAIN]; owner is George Beaven, storekeeper. The last entry for Bell is 1879, by which time the property is owned by McLean (see Ct 17/292 noted above).

Wanganui Borough Council 1908 Insurance Assessment map: shows Burgess & Murdoch yard with store, stable and open shed on this part of Section 73.

1990 Heritage Study, Item 3/2 – had no information about the building.

Wanganui Herald, 5 Sept 1896 – news of addition to Taupo Quay premises – Messrs Cock & Co's warehouse, on vacant section facing Wicksteed Place. Mr HT Johns the builder of this single-storey building. [This was previous Cock & Co premises replaced by Backhouse Building.]

Wanganui Herald, 16 Jan 1905 – Local & General news notes that Messrs FJ and HT Johns have received news of the death of their nephew in Nelson. [This information indicates that these men were brothers.]

Yeoman, 27 July 1905 – notes Mr Saphir has resigned as manager of Bing Harris and is commencing business on his own account [at premises next door].

Wanganui Herald, 6 Feb 1907 – advert for Burgess Murdoch & Co. Grain, Produce, Coal, Shipping, Insurance & General Merchants. Agents for Yorkshire Insurance Co, Livestock & General Insurance Co, NZ, Crown Milling Co of Dunedin, Highlander Condensed Milk, Kapaï Corn Broom Co, NZ Portland Cement Co, Ensign Baking Powder, Kops Ale & Stout (advertised separately as non-alcoholic, brewed in England from best Kentish hops).

Wanganui Herald, 23 Feb 1907 – Local & General news: Mr FC Saphir has sold his premises next the Herald office to Messrs Burgess Murdoch & Co. (Mr Saphir was to go to Britain after 21 years in NZ.)

Wanganui Herald, 15 March 1907 – article on Burgess & Murdoch's business extensions.

Wanganui Herald, 14 July 1916: Tender notice: Two-floor warehouse on Taupo Quay for Messrs J Cock & Co, Ltd. Architect: HT Johns, FNZIA, 155 Featherston Street, Wellington.

Wanganui Chronicle, 20 Jan 1920 – Local & General: information about Mr FJ Johns, manager of Cock & Co now moving to Wellington.

Wanganui Herald, 12 Nov 1923 – obituary for Robert Murdoch.

Wanganui Chronicle, 8 Aug 1941 – obituary for AS Burgess (with photograph).

www.dnzb.govt.nz - Tunnicliff, Shirley. "Cock, Joseph Henry 1855-1921, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 16 Dec 2003.

Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Vol 1, c1897 – entry in Wanganui section for JH Cock & Co, including details of FJ Johns, the local manager.

Wise's Directories:

1929, 1941 and 1955 editions all have JH Cock & Co, shipping agents at 42 Taupo Quay.

1971 UBD Wanganui Business Directory.

Comments on Significance:

Historic

Associated with Cock & Co – merchants and Anchor shipping co.

Architectural

Largely original Taupo Quay façade. One of the few examples of HT John's work – an architect and builder who contributed much to Wanganui's development at the turn of the last century before he moved to Wellington.

Recommendations:

1990 Heritage Study recommended registration under Historic Places Act.

Date: 9 November 2004



The rear view of the rebuilt Cock & Co building.