

Backhouse Building



Location: 28 Taupo Quay, Whanganui
Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga List Number: nil

Physical Description: This three-storey reinforced concrete building covers almost an entire town section, making it one of the largest buildings in Wanganui. The visual impact of the large scale of the building is reduced by the extensive fenestration, one of its major features. The architects, Sidney and Alfred Luttrell, were known to have been influenced by the “Chicago style” of high-rise buildings developed from the 1880s. The internal steel frames of these early high-rise buildings meant that the walls were no longer load-bearing and therefore the height of the buildings could increase and windows, rather than masonry, could dominate the exterior. With Levin & Co requiring a building that could accommodate expansion at a later date, it was logical that the architects should be commissioned to design a building on these principles.

The “massive” concrete frame and support pillars are important features of this building, together with the reinforced concrete floor plates (noted in a 2001 report on the building’s condition). Externally, the building’s concrete frame is plastered and unpainted, giving it an austere grey appearance enlivened by the regular series of windows on all three floors, each set of windows being

Register Item Number:

381

Building Type:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Other

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological
- Cultural

Thematic Context

- Early Settlement
- Residential
- Industry
- Agricultural
- Commerce
- Transport
- Civic/Admin
- Health
- Education
- Religion
- Recreation
- Community
- Memorials
- Military

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separated by the main pillars. The ground floor has timber framed windows but the upper floors have steel-framed casement windows set within concrete mullions. Cornices at ground floor and second floor levels are the main projecting features with the upper cornice being particularly dominant with dentils underneath. The parapet with its distinctive rainwater drip channels is stepped in the centre of both the Taupo Quay and Drews Avenue elevations. In contrast, the rear and side elevations are unadorned concrete with a few windows at the rear facing the Chronicle building.

The main entrance has a Romanesque style marble arch supported by columns on each side; this reflects a feature seen on many Chicago-style buildings (including the 1892 Mills Building in San Francisco, which survived the 1906 earthquake). This entrance still retains its original tiled floor, doors and expanding gate grill. The Drews Avenue loading bay entrance has a roller door; originally the bay entrance was open.

The interior features on the ground and first floor office areas are largely original, although some ground floor partitions have been moved from their original positions, probably in the 1964 alterations. The doors, wall panelling, partitions and staircase are particularly fine. The timber used is figured Queensland Maple which is most unusual in a Wanganui building. The Axminster carpet may date from the 1960s and is in very good condition. (The carpet is not original fabric. The floors were covered in linoleum in 1926.) There is an original lift.

Other known names: Levin and Co

Current Use: UCOL teaching space

Former Uses: retail, warehousing

Heritage Status. Within the Old Town Conservation Overlay Zone **District Plan: Old Town Area, Class B, 2013**

Architectural Style: Inter-War **Date of Construction:** 1926
Freestyle

Materials:

Registered owner:

Legal Description: Pt Section 71, Town of Wanganui; DP 7312

History: Levin & Co may have commissioned Sidney and Alfred Luttrell to design their new building because of the expertise of these architects in designing large reinforced concrete buildings. By June 1924 the plans had been

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agreed and tenders were sought for the construction. The tender notice in the *Wanganui Chronicle* 5 June 1924 does not mention the architects but notes that the plans and specifications are available at Levin & Co's Wanganui office with tenders due on 20th June. Arthur Bignell won the contract and the building permit was issued by the City Council on 30 July 1924 and the cost was expected to be £26,165.

Arthur Bignell was one of the most experienced contractors in Wanganui at the time, having been a partner in the well-respected firm of Russell & Bignell until 1918 when that partnership was dissolved. Locally, Russell & Bignell had constructed the Imlay Freezing Works in 1915/16, at a cost of £107,000, and Bignell had completed another major reinforced concrete building in 1919, Earles' Building, at a cost of £15,000. In 1924, Bignell had already won the contract to build Foster's Hotel, designed by Leopold Atkinson, which cost over £30,000. The Levin & Co warehouse and office block was, to date, the most expensive of its kind constructed in Wanganui and reflected the company's faith in the future of the district and its farming enterprises.

The building was completed by July 1926 and was reported in the *Wanganui Chronicle* on 9 July as being "an outstanding" and "a conspicuous signal" of development in the city. The newspaper went on to say that the building "is probably the largest and best-fitted, of its class, between Wellington and Auckland. Indeed, except in point of size, it is unsurpassed in the Dominion." It was the first reinforced concrete building constructed on the "steel frame principle" in Wanganui with massive columns supporting the solid floors. The "substantial nature of the construction work" was remarked on in the newspaper again the following day, when it was also noted that all three floors of the building were already occupied. The building was designed to have another three storeys added in the future; a number of large buildings erected in Wanganui between 1919 and 1927 were also designed to accommodate additional floors in the future, but none of these additions were constructed.

The *Chronicle's* 9 July description of the new building comments on the office fittings of figured Queensland Maple which "adds a distinctive note to the internal appearance". The newspaper notes that "office and administration quarters are notable" being "extraordinarily spacious and well set out". The new building had space for a machinery hall on the first floor, a sample room adjoining the main office and a bond store on the top floor. The building was

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equipped with steam-heating supplied by a basement furnace, with internal telephones to all departments and English-made electric lifts to hoist merchandise to upper floors. Finally, the newspaper remarks that “externally, the building is handsomely finished in white cement, the design being simple, but artistic.” The architects are named as Messrs S and A Luttrell of Christchurch.¹

Summary of Key Events

- 1923 Levin & Co purchased Section 71
- 1924 Architects Sidney and Alfred Luttrell designed new building for Levin & Co. The tender for the contract to build building was won by Arthur Bignell of Russell & Bignell at cost of £26,165.
- 1926 The new building was completed by July 1926.
- 1952 Levin & Co expanded their operations in Wanganui and purchased the adjoining warehouse that had originally been built for Sargood Son & Ewan. This coincided with the rise in wool prices at the time.
- 1953 Levin & Co constructed a new roof on the 28 Taupo Quay building. The old bituminous roof was removed and a new frame installed to take a coroplast roof. Dickson Construction prepared plans and specifications and undertook this work.
- 1955 A fire escape was built at the rear (Dickson Construction).
- 1956 Levin & Co moved their machinery department into Sargood’s building.
- 1963 Levin & Co made minor interior alterations to 28 Taupo Quay.
- 1964 Murray Roberts merged with Levin & Co in Wanganui. This new firm was totally owned by National Mortgage and Agency Co (NMA). Murray Roberts had previously been located in Drews Avenue and were well-established stock and station agents in Wanganui. At this time, Levin & Co undertook major alterations to the Sargood’s building and made new openings between their 28 Taupo Quay building and Sargood’s at both ground and first floor levels. From this time, the two buildings were

¹ Wendy Pettigrew Wanganui District Heritage Inventory (WDHI) Register Item:B3.9

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- used as one. A covered way was built to provide access from Wicksteed Place between 28 Taupo Quay and the Chronicle building (Dickson Construction).
- 1972 Levin & Co/NMA merged with Wright Stephenson to become Wrightson NMA. Operations were transferred to the old Wright Stephenson building, corner Taupo Quay and St Hill Street (originally built for Alexander Hatrick and demolished in the late 1980s).
- 1975/6 By this time, the top two floors of the building at 28 Taupo Quay were unused and WK Backhouse Ltd moved their waterproof clothing and tent factory into the upper floors. Company employees volunteered their time at weekends to renovate the first and second floors, completing the work by June 1977. The ground floor of the building was rented out separately as office and retail space.
- 1977 Wrightson NMA sold the Sargood's building to Wanganui Newspapers and the access between that building and 28 Taupo Quay was blocked up. By this time, WK Backhouse had purchased 28 Taupo Quay from Wrightson NMA.
- 1987 Quin & Quin, insurance assessors and loss adjusters, moved into offices on the ground floor where they remained until 2006.
- 1990 WK Backhouse Ltd merged with J Barbour & Sons Ltd of South Shields, England. WK Backhouse (Canvas) Ltd purchased the old Sargood's warehouse which was vacated by Wanganui Newspapers in 1989 and the two buildings were once again used by the same company.
- 1993 Backhouse sold the Sargood's warehouse to Bob Bourdon; it was subsequently sold to Wanganui District Council for redevelopment as part of the Quay School of the Arts.
- 2006 The 28 Taupo Quay building was sold for renovation as part of the Wanganui UCOL campus development and all tenants moved out, including WK Backhouse Ltd (which was no longer owned by Barbour), Quin & Quin and the golf shop (which closed down).²

² Wendy Pettigrew Wanganui District Heritage Inventory (WDHI) Register Item:B3.9

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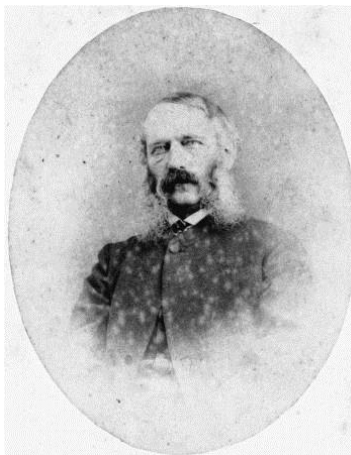


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Significant people associated with the Backhouse building:

Nathaniel William (1819–1903)

N. W. Levin was born in London on 24 May 1819, son of a Jewish merchant. He arrived at Port Nicholson on 30 May 1841 and commenced trading in Wellington on 2 August in the same year under the style of "Levin & Co.". He took an active part in the early social life of the colony, was prominent in the Jewish community, and was a foundation member of many notable public institutions. He devoted unremitting attention to his business interests, and in June 1862 entered a partnership with C. J. Pharazyn and W. W. Johnston, which terminated in 1868. On 25 June 1869 Levin was appointed to the Legislative Council, resigning on 11 January 1871, when he decided to settle in London. There he became a partner of Redfern, Alexander, and Co. He retired from business in January 1882, and remained in London until his death on 30 April 1903.



Nathaniel William Levin,
http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/Enlarged_Pic.asp?ImageID=603

Levin married, on 31 January 1844, Jessie, daughter of Abraham Hort and sister of Margaret, wife of Sir F. D. Bell. To them was born, on 7 August 1845, William Hort, who, in 1868, succeeded his father in the firm of Levin and Co.³

William Hort Levin (1845–93)

William Hort Levin ("Willie") William Hort Levin, joined the company in 1864 as a wool clerk and became a director a few years later when his father retired. He took over a thriving business, which enabled him to devote much of his time to public services. He married, on 20 March 1876, Amy, daughter of James Edward FitzGerald. He was elected to the House of Representatives for Wellington City on 5 September 1879, and for Thorndon, 9 December 1881, but resigned owing to ill health on 23 March 1884. During his term he piloted through the House the Bill establishing the Wellington Harbour Board, of which

³ 'LEVIN, Nathaniel William', from An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966. Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, updated 26-Sep-2006. URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/1966/L/LevinNathanielWilliam/en>

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he subsequently became first chairman (1880–83). He served on the Wellington City Council, and was president or an office bearer of many local public, sporting, and cultural bodies. His public benefactions included £1,000 to form the nucleus of a public library, recreation facilities for the Workingmen's Club, and a gift to help establish the Home for the Aged and Needy (1888).

When he died at his home in Tinakori Road on 15 September 1893, most business firms in the city closed to mourn him, Parliament passed condolences, and the Governor, Lord Glasgow, cancelled his engagements as a mark of respect.

The Levins, father and son, were greatly respected not merely on account of their large charitable endowments, but more especially because they were always ready to give generously to needy causes.⁴

Levin & Co in Wanganui

The company supplied merchandise to farming pioneers in the Wairarapa and, from 1846, exported wool to London on behalf of clients. The company prospered and in 1889 was amalgamated with Edward Pearce's business but still known as Levin & Co. In 1896 Levin & Co was restructured as a public company primarily owned by the National Mortgage and Agency Company of New Zealand.

The first mention of Levin & Co in the Wanganui area was in 1891 when the company sent their representative, Thomas Pettigrew, to demonstrate the Wolseley patent machine shears to local farmers. Pettigrew was a friend of Alex Hutchinson, New Zealand's first shearing machine expert who had joined Levin & Co in 1890. The two men became brothers-in-law in 1892. By 1893 Levin & Co were considering opening a branch in Wanganui but the sudden death that year of William Hort Levin put these plans on hold.

In November 1901 Levin & Co purchased the Nelson-based company, Sclanders & Co which had operated a branch in Wanganui from 1885 and had built a large warehouse and bond store on Taupo Quay in 1894. Levin & Co opened their Wanganui branch in Sclander's old warehouse on 1 April 1902 with Charles Hoult as the first manager. In September 1905, Levin & Co held their

⁴ URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/1966/L/LevinNathanielWilliam/en>

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first Wanganui sale of wool, sheepskins & hides and tallow, presumably at their Taupo Quay warehouse.

By 1908 Levin & Co had a wool & hide store further along Taupo Quay on Section 75. In 1915 the company built a wool store on Heads Road, to take advantage of rail links to the port at Castlecliff. This was designed by a local architect, Leopold Atkinson, and built by Russell & Bignell for £1,297. In 1923 the old Taupo Quay wool store was sold to the Allen Brothers (Wanganui Engineering) who vacated the Taupo Quay/Drews Avenue property enabling Levin & Co to purchase Section 71 for their new warehouse and office block. By this time farmers were getting over the short, sharp depression of the early 1920s and prospects were good enough for the company to expand in Wanganui.⁵

WK Backhouse Ltd

This company was established in 1971 by William Kenneth Shearer (Ken) Backhouse. He had extensive experience in the canvas and waterproof clothing industry having joined the Wanganui firm Eide & Co in 1955. Eide & Co's factory was located in Trinity Buildings in Victoria Avenue (where Eide's sportswear shop is still located). Eide & Co relocated their factory to Ingestre Street in 1957 and expanded in 1967 when they purchased the Wanganui assets of JJ McCaskey, another clothing manufacturer. In 1971, Eides' sold their factory assets to Backhouse who then set up his own manufacturing company. In 1972 Backhouse purchased the old Drummond's warehouse building at 17 Taupo Quay and the company continued to expand at a time when many other clothing manufacturers were closing down. By this time, Billie Takarangi had been recruited as factory forewoman and the company developed close working relationships with local Maori, particularly those from Ratana.

Backhouse continued to expand after its move into the old Levin & Co building, purchased from Levin & Co/NMA in 1977. The top floor of the building at 28 Taupo Quay was used for making oily japara and canvas garments. In 1980 Richard Young, ex-factory manager for Eides returned from Tauranga to become general manager of WK Backhouse Ltd. Ken Backhouse retired in 1987. In 1990 Tom Priest was director of the company. Priest had developed

⁵ Wendy Pettigrew Wanganui District Heritage Inventory (WDHI) Register Item:B3.9

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the working relationship with J Barbour & Sons Ltd of South Shields, near Newcastle, a company with an international reputation for quality waxed cotton waterproof jackets. The two companies merged in 1990, but by 1992 Barbour had purchased the entire Backhouse business. The Backhouse staff celebrated in 1995 when Barbour won the 1994 Queen's Award for Export Achievement, assisted by the contribution of the Wanganui factory in manufacturing waxed cotton jackets such as the "Beaufort". The Backhouse general manager at the time was Michael Warnock and staff members were each given a little silver plate to commemorate the award. By this time, the ethos of the Wanganui factory had changed and English working methods had supplanted the long-standing connections with the workforce from Ratana.

By 2006, Barbour had ceased to own WK Backhouse Ltd; the company name was bought by Noel Boyle with manufacturing operations moved to Pacific Place.⁶

Edgar Alfred Luttrell

Alfred Luttrell was born in Hobart, Tasmania, on 21 October 1865; his younger brother, registered as Edward Sydney, was born in Sydney, New South Wales, on 20 June 1872. The elder brother was known as Alfred Edgar, the younger as Sidney. Their parents were Alfred Ernest Luttrell, a cabinet-maker and contractor, and his wife, Thomasina Louisa Woollett.

The circumstances of Alfred Luttrell junior's early education are unknown, but about 1882 he began his architectural apprenticeship with Harry Conway in Launceston, northern Tasmania. Alfred learnt to design a wide range of building types in a variety of late nineteenth-century architectural styles. His invention of a hydraulic pump in 1896 was an early indication of his aptitude for engineering. In 1886 Alfred established his own practice in Launceston and subsequently developed a successful business which was responsible for the design of domestic, commercial and ecclesiastical buildings. He married Ellen Mary Croft on 1 April 1888 in Launceston; their three children were all born in Tasmania. Alfred was 'of a most jovial disposition' but seems to have been largely overshadowed by his younger brother. Alfred Luttrell died at Christchurch on 7 May 1924, 15 years before his wife, Ellen.

⁶ Wendy Pettigrew Wanganui District Heritage Inventory (WDHI) Register Item:B3.9

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Sidney Luttrell

Sidney Luttrell was enrolled at the prestigious Launceston Church Grammar School in September 1888, which suggests that the family enjoyed a measure of prosperity by this date. After serving his apprenticeship with his elder brother, Sidney became a partner in the firm of A. & S. Luttrell in 1897. Alfred maintained the office in Launceston while Sidney ran branch offices in the west coast townships of Strahan, Zeehan and Queenstown. Henceforth the two men gradually assumed different responsibilities within the firm; Alfred acted as the principal designer and engineer while Sidney supervised major construction projects and liaised with clients and the public. This division of labour was undoubtedly less rigid in practice.

Sidney Luttrell married Elizabeth Dixon, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel in Queenstown, on 7 May 1898 in Melbourne. Two of their three children were born in Tasmania; their youngest daughter was born in New Zealand in 1903.

Sidney Luttrell's great interest in horse-racing seems to have been the catalyst for a significant number of the firm's commissions. It also resulted in his part-ownership of Sasanof, the winner of the 1916 Melbourne Cup. Nicknamed 'Luttrell the Limit', Sidney was known as someone of limitless energy who could achieve things where others would have failed. He was renowned for his willingness to take extravagant bets, and for his reckless daring: on one occasion, with his daughter in his car, he raced a train, zigzagging over the line at various points.

At the time of his death at Christchurch on 17 July 1932, Sidney had been separated from his wife, Elizabeth, for some 20 years.

S & A Luttrell Architects

The date of the Luttrell brothers' move to Christchurch, New Zealand, is unknown, but they had both established residence there by October 1902 when their first joint tender notice appeared in the Christchurch *Press*. By 1906 they were employing their younger brother, George, who had previously worked for them in Tasmania. S. & A. Luttrell, as the firm was known in New Zealand, enjoyed a high level of professional and commercial success. From their base in Christchurch the brothers introduced the so-called Chicago skyscraper to New Zealand, fostered the use of reinforced concrete, became specialists in the design and construction of racecourse grandstands, acted as the unofficial

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diocesan architects for the Catholic church in Canterbury, and ran their own contracting firm which undertook a number of their major building projects. As in Tasmania, Alfred was principally responsible for the design work, Sidney for the business proper. For a time they owned the Golden Bay Cement Company.

The Luttrells' most notable works in Christchurch, executed between 1904 and 1912, included the King Edward Barracks, the Royal Exchange building (now the Regent Theatre), the New Zealand Express Company building, the Theatre Royal, and the chapel for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Mount Magdala. They were also responsible for churches for the Catholic parishes of Hokitika, New Brighton and Sumner, and the racecourse grandstands at Addington (1912--15), Riccarton (1920--23), and Trentham (1919--25). Much of their work shows Alfred's debt to Harry Conway's involvement in engineering projects. The New Zealand Express Company building in Dunedin (1908--10) was notable for its use of pre-cast reinforced ferro-concrete slabs manufactured off-site. Their commercial buildings were among the first in New Zealand to show the influence of American architectural styles.

After Alfred's death in 1924 the design work of the firm was undertaken by Jack Hollis and Allan Manson. The latter took over the practice when Sidney Luttrell died in 1932, and maintained its links with the racing world and the Catholic Church.

Together the Luttrell brothers made a significant contribution to New Zealand architecture, both stylistically and technologically. Most of their New Zealand buildings survive today, providing visible evidence of their architectural ability and business acumen.⁷

Contractor

Arthur Bignell was one of the most experienced contractors in Wanganui in the early part of the twentieth century. He had been a partner in the well-respected firm of Russell & Bignell until 1918 when that partnership was dissolved. Locally, Russell & Bignell had constructed the Imlay Freezing Works in 1915/16, at a cost of £107,000, and in 1919 Bignell had completed another major reinforced concrete building, Earles' Building, at a cost of £15,000. In 1924,

⁷ McEwan, Ann. 'Luttrell, Alfred Edgar 1865 - 1924; Luttrell, Edward Sidney 1872 - 1932'. Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, updated 7 April 2006. [URL: http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/](http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/)

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Bignell had already won the contract to build Foster's Hotel, designed by Leopold Atkinson, which cost over £30,000. The Levin & Co warehouse and office block was, to date, the most expensive of its kind constructed in Wanganui and reflected the company's faith in the future of the district and its farming enterprises.⁸

Architect/Designer: Sidney and Alfred

History of changes:

Little work has been done on this building since it was constructed, apart from a new roof, which is now leaking.

- In 1953 Levin & Co constructed a new roof on the 28 Taupo Quay building. The old bituminous roof was removed and a new frame installed to take a corroplast roof. Dickson Construction prepared plans and specifications and undertook this work.
- In 1955 a fire escape was built at the rear (Dickson Construction).
- In 1964 Levin & Co undertook major alterations to the Sargood's building and made new openings between their 28 Taupo Quay building and Sargood's at both ground and first floor levels. From this time, the two buildings were used as one. A covered way was built to provide access from Wicksteed Place between 28 Taupo Quay and the Chronicle building (Dickson Construction).
- In the mid-1970s Company employees volunteered their time at weekends to renovate the first and second floors, completing the work by June 1977.
- At some unknown date reinforcing rods have been inserted within the façade. These are corroding in places, particularly at the concrete mullions between the steel framed windows.
- Several upper windows have been replaced with unsympathetic aluminium framed ones.
- Several windows, including some on the ground floor, have now been boarded up.

⁸ Wendy Pettigrew Wanganui District Heritage Inventory (WDHI) Register Item:B3.9

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Date Period: 1926 with modifications listed above

Rarity / Special Features: The building is the first substantial reinforced concrete building in Wanganui and the first designed in the city by Luttrell Brothers while the style they chose. The Inter-War Free style is rare, if not unique, in Wanganui.

Integrity: The building has had some interior alterations on the top floor, minor alterations in the warehouse area and some replacement of steel windows with aluminium. The roof addition, now considered as authentic, is unchanged since its construction.

Representativeness: The building is a highly inventive interpretation by the Luttrell brothers of the Inter-War Free style with Gothic, Art Nouveau and Romanesque reference. In this respect the building is unique in Wanganui. It would also have been one of the last buildings, which involved Alfred Luttrell as an architect as he died in May 1924. The building retains many of its original interior features unlike a number of the other remaining warehouse/office buildings in Wanganui.

Context/Group Value: The building is associated with other buildings designed by the Luttrell Brothers, buildings designed and built by Levin and Company and other significant heritage buildings in the OTCOZ.

Diversity (Form and Features): The characteristics, diversity and pattern of a place. The cultural and historical influences which have affected the form and components of the place. Form, scale, colour, texture and materials.

Fragility / Vulnerability: The building has recently been refurbished and it is anticipated that the building is in a good state of repair.

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Summary of Significance:

Archaeological Qualities

The site may have archaeological values associated with the pre-European Maori settlement of the area in the form of middens; and the early European and later 19th century colonial history of the area that may provide important information about the early history and use of this part of the Whanganui River bank. As the site was occupied prior to 1900, it is defined an archaeological site under the Historic Places Act.

Architectural Qualities

The building type maintains a long standing tradition in the construction of warehousing to house and distribute goods since the eighteenth century and but updated in its significant use of reinforced concrete for strength and large open spans. The building is indicative of the dependence of the city and country on importing and exporting goods and the past, present and future need for these building types. The building design reflects warehouse requirements for large, unimpeded interior spaces, large window openings as well as reflecting the period in building style.

Historic Qualities

The Backhouse building has significance in the economic development of Wanganui and its association with two nationally significant companies. It was constructed at a time when Wanganui was looking forward to a vibrant future and an expanding local economy thus reflecting the status and prosperity of Wanganui in the 1920s. The style and history of the Backhouse building indicate the social and cultural changes in Wanganui that occurred with the changes in the city's economy, while maintaining a long tradition in the construction of warehouse buildings.

The building is significant for its associations with two companies that have contributed much to Wanganui's economy over the past hundred years: Levin & Co, which operated in Wanganui from 1902 until its merger with Wright Stephenson in 1972, and WK Backhouse Ltd whose quality waterproof clothing resulted in its relationship with the UK manufacturer, Barbour. Although the building was constructed after the deaths of the founders of the company it is an important reminder of the Levins, father and son, important merchants and philanthropists in 19th century New Zealand. The history of the merging of companies that occurred throughout the 20th century is represented in the

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history of the Backhouse building and this contributes to our understanding of the development of New Zealand commerce.

Technical Qualities

The steel-framed reinforced concrete construction used in this building was the first of its kind in Wanganui.

Cultural Qualities

The building represents the historical development of Wanganui, particularly the retail warehousing sector and is a physical reminder of a period of growth and prosperity. As a large corner building it is a landmark on Taupo Quay.

Reference Source:

Associated Pictures:

Date of Survey: 2012

Prepared by: Ian Bowman and Val Burr