



WHANGANUI DISTRICT HERITAGE INVENTORY

Register Item No: 386 **Type:** Building **Site:** Pre-1900 Archaeological Interest

Name: HALLENSTEIN'S

Location: cnr Victoria Avenue & Ridgway Street, Whanganui

Legal Description: Lot 2, DP 8238 (Pt Section 63, Town of Wanganui)

Current Details: Owner: [Contact Whanganui District Council for details]

Occupier: Anderson's for Men (ground floor); various tenants in offices

Original Owner: Alfred Burnett (section); Hallenstein Brothers (building)

Date: 1912

Architect/Designer: England Bros, Christchurch with Leopold Atkinson, Whanganui

Builder: Husband & Son

Status: District Plan Class: Class B, 2013, in Old Town Conservation Area.

Thematic Context: Industry/Commerce

Significance: Architectural, Context

Integrity: Substantially intact after 1930s "modernisation"

Photo Reference:

WDC File Ref: Heritage/Inventory/B5 22m, n & o

Date: December 2003

See p3 for additional photograph(s)



The distinctive Edwardian bay windows complement the Art Deco features of the

Hallenstein's building, once again occupied by a men's clothing store, Anderson's (B5 22o).

History:

Of the site:

The section was owned by **Joseph Burnett**, farmer of Oneida at Fordell, for many years, and then by his sons, Alfred Burnett and Cornelius Burnett. The old building on the site once housed the Bank of Australasia, before it moved to a Ridgway Street site now occupied by the Chief Post Office. The New Zealand Clothing Factory, known as **Hallenstein Brothers**, moved into the building in 1878. Part of the site facing Victoria Avenue was also occupied by a restaurant, which in 1908 was run by Mr Hodgson (or James Hodson?).

Of the building:

Plans were drawn up in November 1911 for a new building to accommodate **Hallenstein's** as well as provide offices for the growing town of Wanganui. Originally, the building was to be faced with Oamaru stone; when the tenders were called in 1912, alternative costings were requested and the stone option was eventually turned down. The architects, England Brothers of Christchurch, worked alongside Wanganui architect, Leopold Atkinson, who took charge of supervising the building work and minor contracts.

At the time of its construction, this was one of the most significant buildings in Wanganui, being three stories in height with high parapets. (These parapets were supposedly a copy of turrets in an English prison.) The Majestic Theatre, built later in 1912, was the only other building on such a scale in Victoria Avenue in this post-Edwardian/pre War era. Hallenstein's cost £6,335 to construct, with additional contracts being let for the shop fittings. The builders, Husband & Son, were also from Christchurch and had presumably undertaken other work for the architects, England Bros.

The building permit was issued in February 1912, by which time the old buildings had been taken down and the site cleared. It was completed by the end of August 1912, taking just six months to construct. Hallenstein's celebrated the opening by inviting the public to inspect their new premises and view a "Grand Display of new Spring and Summer Goods." Ladies and Gentlemen's boot departments were a special feature of the new store.

Early tenants of the upper floors included the architect, Leopold Atkinson, who moved his offices to the first floor in May 1913 (rooms which were later occupied by another architect, Clifton Newton Hood); also in 1913, Johnston & McBrearty, Dental Surgeons, moved their rooms here. Bernard McKay had an art school here from the 1940s to the 1950s. The café space later become the Waldorf (by 1941) then the Peking Café until the 1970s at least.

The building was altered significantly in the 1930s after the Napier earthquake. The parapets were removed and part of the façade re-plastered in an Art Deco style.

Hallenstein's moved out of the building into premises further up the Avenue in 1962 (see B16.4). Two years later, the **Wanganui Savings Bank** moved into the building. The bank made alterations to the shop and later took over part of the first floor for their Head Office. Internal alterations were made throughout the 1960s and up to 1981 for the bank, which later merged with **Westpac** and by 1989 had moved out to new premises further up the Avenue (B37.13).

The building survived the 1994 Ridgway Street fire, which resulted in the neighbouring Phoenix Insurance building being demolished. At this time, the fire wall in Ridgway Street was reinstated.

In 1994 **Anderson's for Men** moved into the shop and the building took on a new lease of life, once again serving as a clothing store. Bill Anderson had bought out Dick Owen's menswear shop in the mid-1980s, which burnt down in the Ridgway Street fire. The firm won several Mainstreet Heritage Awards following the 1995 repainting of the building to complement its Art Deco style.

Description:

A three-storey brick building with cement render finish which today presents a mixture of Edwardian classical and 1930s Art Deco features. The original upper parapet was taken down in the 1930s, when the Art Deco "modernization" would have been put in place. The first floor bay windows on the Avenue corner and at each end of the building are distinctive features. The upper floors have a separate entrance on Ridgway Street and were designed to be let separately as offices with the ground floor retail space for Hallenstein's, as well as what was once a separate café next to the Melbourne House Drapery. The casement windows are original, as are the awning supports. Another distinctive feature of the building is the number of leadlight windows above the plate-glass shop fronts. The original "HB New Zealand

Clothing Factory” is retained in one of these windows. The building was painted in 1995 to enhance the Art Deco features and today is one of the most photographed buildings in Wanganui, being located at the pivotal Victoria Avenue/Ridgway Street intersection with the Watt Memorial Fountain opposite.

Condition:

Good, although the building has not been subject to earthquake strengthening.

Resources Consulted:

Wanganui District Council Building files – for 4a Ridgway Street (also known as 50 Victoria Ave) and 38 Victoria Avenue (which contains some mis-filed papers relating to the café). Papers from 1926.

1990 Heritage Study, Item No 5/6.

Wanganui Borough Council Building Register, Archives Ref AAF 174:1 – building permit issued 16 Feb 1912 to Hallenstein Brothers for new Victoria Avenue shop and offices, brick, Husband & Son, £6,335.

Wanganui Herald, 3 Sep 1878 – News: Hallenstein Bros to open branch in Wanganui and have secured lease of ex-Bank of Australasia premises.

Wanganui Herald, 4 Nov 1911 – Local & General – news re plans for Hallenstein Brothers’ new building. Notes that the building will be of brick, faced with Oamaru stone, and “will be one of the finest business premises in Wanganui.”

Wanganui Herald, 2 Jan 1912 – Tender: for purchase and removal of buildings now occupied by Hallenstein’s. Leopold Atkinson, Architect.

Wanganui Herald, 17 Jan 1912 – Advert: Hallenstein’s moving to temporary premises during rebuilding. Notes their new building “to be one of the finest and most up-to-date business premises in the Dominion.”

Wanganui Herald, 20 Jan 1912 – tender for Business Premises, cnr Victoria Ave & Ridgway St for Messrs Hallenstein Bros. Plans etc at Mr Leopold Atkinson’s office, Lennard Buildings. England Bros and Leopold Atkinson, Joint Architects.

Wanganui Herald, 8 Feb 1912 – Local & General: notes that “tenders closed yesterday for erection of a three-storey structure to replace the old building which has just been pulled down at Hallenstein’s corner. All that remains now are a few cartloads of timber to be cleared by Saturday.”

Wanganui Herald, 10 Feb 1912 – L&G: lists all tenders for Hallenstein’s – Husband & Co (Christchurch) tender in stone £6,935 and in brick £6,335. Brick tender accepted, with cement finish to building.

Wanganui Herald, 22 June 1912 – Tender for Shopfitters: Shop fronts and enclosures for Messrs Hallenstein’s new premises. Leopold J Atkinson, Architect.

Wanganui Herald, 6 Aug 1912 – advert for Hallenstein’s Removal Sale, from their temporary premises (six doors above Rutland Hotel) [Hallenstein’s temporarily in B17.14 during rebuilding.]

Wanganui Herald, 6 Aug 1912 – ad for “Hallenstein’s Buildings - upstairs rooms, frontage to Victoria Avenue, suitable for Dining or Tea Rooms”

Wanganui Herald, 28 Aug 1912 – advertisement for opening of “New Premises of the New Zealand Clothing Factory”. [Note that no article has been found in either the *Herald* or the *Chronicle* describing the new premises. This was a time of considerable building in Wanganui so it is not surprising that few new buildings were singled out for attention.]

Wanganui Herald, 2 May 1913 – Removal Notice: Leopold J Atkinson, Architect, has removed to more commodious offices, 1st Floor, Hallenstein’s Buildings.

Wanganui Herald, 11 Aug 1913 – removal Notice: Johnston & McBrearty, Surgeon Dentists, to new Rooms, in Hallenstein Bros new Buildings, entrance from Ridgway Street.

Cornelius Burnett’s Diaries, Whanganui Regional Museum – 1912 Retrospect of Year (in Diary JAB2) notes the “chief event has been erection by Hallenstein Bros & Co of a very handsome three-storey brick building of shops and offices at corner of Ridgway Street and Avenue.”

Progress – Nov 1912, Dec 1913, Sept 1913 with photograph of this and other buildings designed by Messrs England Bros, Architects, Christchurch.

River City Press, 1 Aug 1995 – history of Anderson’s Menswear.

Wanganui Chronicle, 16 Nov 2001 – Mainstreet Business Awards, including Anderson’s Heritage Award.



Comments on Significance:

Architectural

This is an excellent example of Art Deco modernisation, put in place when the parapets were removed in 1930s. However, the essential features of the Edwardian-style building remain, with the distinctive bay windows that are quite unusual in Wanganui.

Context

This is an important corner site occupied by an imposing building that complements its neighbours. The building is frequently photographed by tourists, together with the Rutland Hotel and the Watt Fountain.

Recommendations:

Date: 25 August 2004 **Research:** Wendy Pettigrew

Historical photographs to scan:

Hallenstein Bros, ATL 16187 1/1 – shows the building with its original upper parapets and pilasters.



The leadlight windows include a reminder of the origins of this building (B5 22n).



The rounded bay windows are a distinctive feature of the corner of the building, which retains its original verandah supports (B5 22m).