



## WHANGANUI DISTRICT HERITAGE INVENTORY

**Register Item No:** 394 **Type:** Building **Site:** Pre-1900 Archaeological Interest

**Name:** DREW'S

**Location:** 19 Victoria Avenue, Whanganui

**Legal Description:** Lot 3, DP 7205 (prev Pt Section 54, Town of Wanganui)

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

Occupier: Jolt Coffee Bar (ground floor); P Robinson, Solicitor (first floor)

**Original Owner:** Henry G Drew (Section owned by William F Russell)

**Date:** 1909

**Architect/Designer:** TH Battle

**Builder:** William Knuckey

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

**Thematic Context:** Industry/Commerce

**Significance:** Historic, Architectural, Context

**Integrity:** Substantially intact, including interior and stained glass windows

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**Photo Reference:**

WDC File Ref: Heritage/Inventory/B6 7m, n & o

Date: December 2003

*See p4 for additional photograph(s)*



The Edwardian baroque architecture of Drew's jewellery store complements Kitchen's pharmacy next door as well as the smaller tailor's shop on the right (B6 7m).

## History:

### *Of the site:*

Samuel Drew became occupier of the previous building on this site in 1872, when William F Russell was noted as being the owner. The old wooden building, which provided accommodation as well as Drew's jewellery store, is still shown on the 1908 Insurance map.

### *Of the Drew family:*

**Samuel Henry Drew** immigrated to New Zealand with his family in 1860, living in Nelson for 10 years before moving to Wanganui in 1870. Drew had been born in Berkshire, England, the son of a watchmaker and jeweller, and first immigrated to Australia in the 1850s where he was educated at Launceston Grammar School. He later returned to England and trained under a London watchmaker, Mr Benson. On return to New Zealand, he established his jewellery business in Nelson in 1864 (the date on the parapet of the Wanganui shop).

Drew's first Wanganui shop was in Taupo Quay but he moved to the Victoria Avenue site in 1872, the year he was married to Catherine Beatson, the daughter of a Nelson architect. Samuel Drew was not only a well-known watchmaker and jeweller in Wanganui, but also had a keen interest in natural history and geology. He collected specimens and established a museum in the family home above the shop. By 1890 Drew's collection had outgrown the family premises so he agreed to sell it for a fraction of its value to become the nucleus of the Wanganui Museum. The collection was transferred to the new Museum building on Queens Park (now the Savage Club, B17.4) which was built in 1893 and opened to the public regularly by 1895. Samuel Drew died suddenly at his shop on 18 December 1901; he had also contributed much to the cultural development of Wanganui through his involvement in the Orchestral Club and Harmonic Society, and also belonged to the Wanganui Rowing Club. The marble bust commemorating Samuel Drew was unveiled at the Museum by the Premier, Richard Seddon, on 26 Nov 1903. This bust with a memorial tablet is now in the Whanganui Regional Museum.

Samuel's eldest son, **Henry George Drew**, took over the family business as jeweller and watchmaker. Like his father, he had an interest in natural history and became a noted taxidermist, having been trained in this art by Andreas Reischek in the late 1880s. His taxidermy collection was exhibited at the Wembley Exhibition in London in 1924. Henry was responsible for rebuilding the family premises in 1909. By 1929, Henry Drew had moved his shop further up the Avenue to Perrett's Buildings, where it remained until the 1950s, then being located in Earle's Buildings (B26.1). By this time, the business was run by Henry's son, **Frank Drew**, who continued as a jeweller in Wanganui until his retirement. In 1991, the retail side of the jewellery business was taken over by Russell and Amanda Jackson, although the Drew family still maintained the wholesale side of the business. In 1995, the firm of Drew's closed after 131 years of jewellery manufacturing and retailing.

### *Of the building:*

The decision by Albert Kitchen to rebuild his premises next door may have influenced Henry Drew to do likewise. The building permit was issued on 20 April 1909 for the new building, comprising a shop and offices. TH Battle was noted as being the architect and William Knuckey the builder. The cost was estimated at £893, substantially less than Kitchen's new building, but the new premises for Drew's premises would not include family accommodation.

Drew's moved to temporary accommodation up the Avenue to a shop next to Young & Collins (B6.3) while their new building was under construction. They moved back into the new shop on 11 October 1909, which they described in their advertisements as being the firm's "beautiful new Buildings, The Avenue". The *Wanganui Herald* described Drew's "fine new building" as being a "credit to the town" and noted that the firm was "now known as one of the leading jewellery establishments in the Dominion". The front of the shop was praised as being "one of the most artistic we have seen." It was designed in Wanganui and manufactured at the Home of Repousse copper, with the plate glass windows, lead lights, etc being supplied by Messrs Hughes Allomes and Tarrant, local painting and lead light contractors. The newspaper report on 11 October 1909 noted that the name "Drews" was "beautifully worked out in coloured lead lights above the shop window, and was also seen in the Repousse copper below. (Both these features have been removed from the shop front at some point in time.) The shop fittings were dust-proof cedar and glass show cases with mirror backs. The ceiling – still in place – was of Wunderlich stamped steel, panelled with

a handsome cornice and “very quaintly picked out in art tints”. A feature of the shop was the lighting, with a row of artistically glazed fanlights in front (still in place) and a handsome leadlight at the rear. Two Repousse copper burners gave light at night. The building “is entirely of brick with cement pilasters with tiled panels in front, and the main ground is finished in red brick, tuck pointed”. The upstairs suite of rooms was suitable for offices.

The Herald also noted that “a word of praise is due to Messrs TH Battle (the architect), W Knuckey (contractor), Hughes, Allomes and Tarrant (painters) and J Arnold who did the plumbing.”

The first tenant of the upstairs “rooms above Drew’s” was Richmond Dunn, a dentist, who moved there in April 1910.

By 1929, the shop housed the National Electrical and Engineering Co and the Radio Service Co, radio dealers, who were still located in the premises in 1955. By 1972, **John Souter** had moved his photography business into the shop, and at some time he took over the premises next door as well.

The shop was renovated considerably in 1992 (Dickson Lonergan, architects). Lean-to’s and outbuildings were demolished at the rear and the interior pressed tin ceiling removed then replaced after work on the building. The front verandah was redesigned and replaced at this time. The shop was then occupied by Ramages, the sewing machine specialists, until it became a coffee bar c2003.

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#### **Description:**

Two-storey brick building with corrugated iron roof. The upper front façade is designed in an Edwardian baroque style, with an upper pediment surmounting side pilasters and a lower, arched pediment over the central front window. Decorative plaster ornamentation above the two side pilasters and under the arched pediment provide a contrast to the brick infill.

A feature of the shop window is the stained glass and leadlight windows, including what would have been the original fan lights above.

The original pressed tin ceiling and cornice, complete with rose above the light fitting, complete the decorations inside the shop.

#### **Condition:**

Good.

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#### **Resources Consulted:**

Whanganui District Council building file – 19-21 Victoria Avenue, includes 1992 renovations of both this building and the one next door (B6.6), which have access between the first floors of each.

Whanganui Borough Council Building Register of Building Permits, Archives Ref AAF 174:1 – includes Permit issued 20 April 1909 for Wm Knuckey for new building for Drew Bros, shop and offices, Victoria Avenue; TH Battle, architect, cost £893.

Whanganui Borough Council Valuation Rolls Database, 1863-1922 – 1872 first ref. to Drew in Section 54. Value of property increases from £120 to £166 in 1910/11.

*Whanganui Chronicle*, 11 October 1909 (and other dates) – Drew’s advert while they are in temporary premises, next to Young & Collins (B6.3).

*Whanganui Herald*, 11 Oct 1909 – article describing Drew’s new jewellery establishment, naming all contractors.

*Whanganui Herald*, 12 Oct 1909 and other dates – advert for Drew’s “beautiful new buildings, the Avenue”.

*Whanganui Chronicle*, 16 April 1910 – Richmond Dunn, Dental Surgeon advert, in “rooms over Drew’s.”

1990 Heritage Study – included in Item 6/9.

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol 2 – entry for Samuel Henry Drew by Kaye Noble.

Whanganui District Library, Biographical Index – card entries for Samuel, Henry G and Frank Drew.

*River City Press*, 12 Dec 1991 – article on new owners for Drews.

*Whanganui Chronicle*, 12 Dec 1995 – Drew’s closing after 131 years in business.

Wise’s Directories, 1914, 1929, 1941, 1955.

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**Comments on Significance:**

*Historic*

With the name “Drews” on the parapet, this building is a continual reminder of the Drew family and their contribution to the development of Wanganui. Samuel Drew was the founder of the Whanganui Regional Museum and his sons and grand-son were respected jewellers in Wanganui.

*Architectural*

This is an excellent example of an Edwardian baroque shop with its “artistic” shop front. The stained glass and leadlight windows and pressed tin ceiling are original; there are few such shops that have these features intact.

*Context*

This is one of an important trio of buildings in the Bridge Block of the Avenue. Kitchen’s, Drew’s and the tailor’s shop next door complement each other and together make a significant contribution to Wanganui’s Edwardian architectural heritage.

**Recommendations:**

Consider for registration with Historic Places Trust.

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**Date:** 4 October 2004 **Research by:** Wendy Pettigrew



The pressed tin ceiling and Hughes Allomes & Tarrant stained glass leadlights in Drew’s (B6 7o).