



WHANGANUI DISTRICT HERITAGE INVENTORY

Register Item No: 403 **Type:** Building **Site:** Pre-1900 Archaeological Interest

Name: HATRICK'S BUILDING

Location: 1F Taupo Quay, Whanganui

Legal Description: Lot 1, DP 7126

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

Occupier: Sea Cadets – TS Calliope

Original Owner: Alexander Hatrick

Date: 1904 (1929, 1973 alterations/extensions)

Architect/Designer: Not known

Builder: Not known

Status: District Plan Class B, 2013, in Old Town Conservation Area and River Margin Overlay Zone

Thematic Context: Whanganui River; Transport & Communication

Significance: Historic

Integrity: Altered since 1960s

Photo Reference:

WDC File Ref: Heritage/Inventory/B1 2a

Date: October 2004/March 2010

See pp 5/8 for additional photographs



Originally built to serve as offices and crew accommodation for Hatrick's riverboat services, this building became TS (Training Ship) Calliope and has housed the Sea Cadets since the Navy League purchased it in 1963.

History:

Of the site and wharf:

The river foreshore area was used extensively by Maori up to the 1860s as a camping ground. Bett & Robertson, timber merchants, established their wharf opposite Market Place in 1865. Photographs show their timber stacked at what is now known as Moutoa Gardens. In 1894, Alexander Hatrick is first recorded in the Borough Council property rolls as occupying the Harbour Board reserve land on Taupo Quay by the old Bett & Robertson wharf and in March 1895 Hatrick was given permission by the Board to put in some mooring piles at "Bett's Wharf". This is the first record of Hatrick formally using the wharf; in 1894 he had asked the Harbour Board for permission to erect his new steamer (the *Manuwai*) on foreshore sections near Manson's Store [on the town bridge side of the current Riverboat Centre] but had actually chosen to do this on the riverbank opposite the Gas Works as he considered this was preferable being "some distance away from the madding crowd".

However, in late 1895 Hatrick apparently transferred his interest in the foreshore section to Mrs Barns; this arrangement appears to have only lasted one year as by 1896 Hatrick was once again the occupier of the land which now had a shed and was using Bett's old wharf as the departure point for his riverboats. From 1896/97 to 1903/04 the Borough Council property rolls note Hatrick as occupying the Harbour Board reserve section on the River Bank, with a shed, and paying £10 a year in rates.

Of Alexander Hatrick and his river boat services:

Born in Victoria, Australia, Hatrick came to Wanganui in 1875 and first worked in a local foundry. After opening a grain mill with his brother-in-law he developed a farm produce business that soon began trading with Australia. The firm was known as A Hatrick & Co from 1888, by which time its operations had been considerably extended and included agencies for shipping and insurance companies.

In 1891 Hatrick's first river boat, the *Wairere*, made her maiden voyage on the Whanganui River up to Pipiriki and the following year regular river services started to operate, partly funded by a government mail contract as well as a passenger contract with Thomas Cook & Son, the British travel firm. The *Manuwai* was the second boat to be assembled and fitted out in Wanganui in 1894; by 1904 Hatrick had 12 riverboats (having taken over the *Aotea* from the River Settlers Service and renamed it *Waimarie*) plus a houseboat serving as a floating hotel at the junction of the Ohura and Whanganui Rivers and a hotel at Pipiriki, together with a foundry and workshop in Wanganui on the Shakespeare's Cliff side of the river. The enterprise flourished in the period up to the first World War, with tourism being a major part of the river boat service as well as taking goods in and out of the rural hinterland along the Whanganui River. However, the opening of the Main Trunk Line and development of new back-country roads gradually eroded the river business. Pipiriki House flourished through to the 1950s but eventually burnt down in 1959 and was not replaced.

Alexander Hatrick was also prominent in public life in Wanganui, serving on the Harbour Board and Borough Council and as mayor from 1897-1904. By the time of his death in 1918, his firm had expanded to incorporate motor vehicle sales and had branches or agencies elsewhere in New Zealand, Australia and London. However, when A Hatrick & Co was re-organised in 1928, the riverboat services continued initially under the management of Ronald Hatrick. Wanganui River Service Ltd was the company name until 1958 when it finally ceased operating.

Of the building:

In December 1903, Alexander Hatrick wrote to the Harbour Board asking for permission "to pull down the present old buildings adjoining the Moutoa Square wharf and to erect a two-storied building to be used in connection with the wharf." The Harbour Board considered his request at their meeting on 4 December and noted that Hatrick had said no additional land would be required for the new building. A committee was appointed to deal with the matter and reported back to the Board at their meeting on 8 January 1904. Hatrick's application was to be granted and the rental increased from £5 to £10 per year. The frontage was to be limited to 50ft and the shed known as the Settlers' Company shed was to be removed. In 1900 a rival riverboat company, the Wanganui Settlers' Steamship Company, had been set up and operated two boats on the river, the *Aotea* and the *Aorere*. This company went out of business in September 1902 and Hatrick acquired its assets, including the *Aotea* which he renamed the *Waimarie*. In February 1904, Hatrick changed his mind about demolishing the Settlers' Company shed and asked the Harbour Board if it could

remain on the site. Hatrick considered the “the building was new and not unsightly”. This was agreed and an additional £2 10s in rent was to be paid per year for the shed.

[Note that a number of published books and articles all give 1894 as the date Hatrick built his offices on the riverbank; this is quite incorrect as indicated by the Harbour Board records and photographs dating from the 1890s onwards.]

No building permit was required as the land was outside the brick area (and the Register of Building Permits has no entries between 1902-April 1905) and no architect’s tender notice has been found for the building. Therefore, it is likely that the builder designed the “shipping offices” for Hatrick; at the time, Nicholas Meuli was undertaking most of Hatrick’s work, including fitting out riverboats and building the houseboat in 1904. It is reasonable to assume that a builder such as Meuli may have been given the contract to design and build the offices, although no newspaper report has been found to verify this. 1904 was a busy year for Hatrick – as well as building the houseboat, he took delivery of two new riverboats and the foundry and workshop on the Shakespeare Cliff side of the river were fully operational.

The two-storey wooden building had offices and storage on the ground floor with accommodation for riverboat crew upstairs. It was designed to face Taupo Quay and the office entrance by the wharf – the riverside elevations were clad with corrugated iron and had no upper parapet to hide the roof line. In 1924, Hatrick built a wooden boat shed on the Somme Parade foreshore – this was probably a replacement for the old Settlers’ Company shed alongside the office building. In 1929, Ronald Hatrick built a single-storey addition to the offices on the Taupo Quay side (MD Morris, builder). This became the booking office, as seen in the 1940 flood photograph, and the original “cargo” entrance was replaced with a sliding door. By the 1940s, the building still had its original parapets, which remained in place until the 1960s. In 1950, Wanganui River Services built a “motor garage”, which was the first part of the current boat shed on the northern side of the building (Jordan and Bullock, builders). At some time in the late 1950s, there was a fire in the garage which caused some damage to the rest of the building’s interior. In 1958, Wanganui River Services ceased to operate and the building was vacated.

In 1963, the building was purchased by the Navy League to serve as a naval training establishment. Named the TS [Training Ship] *Calliope*, the training establishment for sea cadets was set up on 2 April 1962 and operated out of other accommodation on Taupo Quay before moving to the Hatrick’s building. [The original *Calliope* was the sailing ship which brought the first British soldiers to Wanganui on 13 December 1846. This *Calliope* later went to Auckland and was involved in surveying the Waitemata Harbour in 1848]. The Navy League planned major alterations to Hatrick’s building, to comply with the needs of a naval training establishment with an upper deck, wardroom, chart room, stores room and armoury. At the time, the commanding officer of TS *Calliope*, Lieutenant E W Mitchell, noted that the building had structural problems – it was badly in need of repiling, the ceiling leaked and a slipway would need to be constructed from the boat shed to the river. (In addition, renovations were needed to resolve damage caused by the 1950s garage fire.) Substantial money was needed to undertake all this work, which was started in 1964; sea cadets themselves raised money from activities such as bottle collections, a wood-chopping project and a jelly bean drive. The *Wanganui Chronicle* on 18 September 1964 noted that “It is fitting that the structure, one of the busiest of Wanganui’s buildings in the heyday of passenger cruises and wool transport on the river, should not be allowed to tumble down but be renovated and employed in the training of sea cadets”.

Work undertaken on the building by the Navy League from 1964 included renewing the foundations, remodelling the roof and parapet, reconstructing the frontage and reorganising the upstairs rooms including the “Upper Deck” (main assembly room) and wardroom (meeting room). A companionway was installed in 1969 (probably a new internal staircase, although this permit might have referred to the external fire escape), the boat shed was extended in 1973 (with timber walls) and further alterations were made in 1976 and 1978. In April 1972, the Sea Cadets joined with the Air Training Corps to form Cadet Forces nationally.

Work on the building was completed by June 1979 when it was commissioned as TS *Calliope* by the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral ND Anderson. The *Wanganui Herald* reported on the ceremony on 11 June 1979, noting that Lt Comm Mitchell said “the blood, sweat and tears are nearly over. We would like to see a greater number of boys joining, to experience the privilege of naval tradition and expertise in small boats.”

The building served as the base for sea cadets for some 47 years, continuing the tradition of its involvement in activities on the Whanganui River.

Description:

This is a simple two-storey wooden building with a single-storey section on Taupo Quay and a single-storey boatshed which links to the slipway to the river built for the Sea Cadets. The external cladding is weatherboard on two sides with corrugated iron cladding on the north and east (river) sides; some upper panel cladding dates from the 1960s renovations. The parapet has been altered, but is substantially at its original height on the southern side. A fire escape has been placed on the southern side and the original riverside external staircase has been removed.

Internally the decorations are basic and appropriate for a naval training establishment (as well as for their original use as Hatrick's riverboat offices and crew base). The main upstairs room (the "Upper Deck") has brass fittings, a stage area and a number of naval decorations. There are upstairs rooms that served as crew accommodation for the riverboats; one of these became the wardroom (meeting room) for the Sea Cadets. Downstairs, the accommodation was reorganised for the Sea Cadets to provide three classrooms, two offices, a naval store, armoury, galley and clothing store.

Original features dating from the Hatrick era include the sash windows, many of which are in need of restoration.

Condition:

Not good. Many external weatherboards and the 1960s panel cladding need to be replaced; a number of window frames are rotten and internal decorations show the wear and tear of the past 40 years. A conservation plan should be commissioned to guide plans for restoration work on the building and its potential new use. Depending on the future new use, restoration of the external weatherboard cladding, parapet and windows should be a priority for any new owner.

Resources Consulted:

Whanganui District Council Building files: 1F Taupo Quay file, papers from 1924. Includes 1973 letter from Lt Comm. E W Mitchell re addition to T S Calliope; 5 Taupo Quay file, 1929 single-storey addition to office for R Hatrick (mis-filed).

Whanganui Borough Council Register of Building Permits, Archives Ref AAF 174:1 – None listed as building was outside Brick Area and no permit required.

Whanganui Borough Council 1908 Insurance Assessment Plan – this part of riverbank not shown.

Whanganui Borough Council Property (Valuation) Rolls database – entries for Hatrick on Harbour Board reserve from 1894/95; shipping offices listed from 1904/05.

Whanganui Harbour Board Minute Book, District Council Archives ref AAD 25/3: references to Hatrick's plans to build two-storey building on foreshore site from 4 Dec 1903-5 Feb 1904.

Whanganui Heritage Study 1990, Register Items 1/1 River Settlers Steam Navigation Co Wharf, 1/2 Navy League of New Zealand. 1/2 gives incorrect information but recommends classification; 1/1 has no information at all.

Whanganui Herald 2 Jun 1894 – Harbour Bd report: Hatrick asks for permission to erect new steamer [Manuwai] on foreshore sections near Manson's store – but later reports note he did this on the riverbank opposite Gas Works ("away from the madding crowd" as noted in WH 6 Aug 1894).

Whanganui Herald 2 Mar 1895 – Harbour Bd report: Hatrick seeks permission to put in mooring piles at Bett's Wharf. Granted.

Whanganui Herald 3 April 1895 – report that *Manuwai* arrived from Pipiriki yesterday with 150 bales of Karioi wool from Studholme's station, which used to go out to Napier by road.

Whanganui Herald 2 Nov 1895 – Harbour Bd report: Mr Hatrick wrote asking permission to transfer their interest in the foreshore section to Mrs Barnes. Granted.

Whanganui Herald 11 Dec 1895 – Borough Council report: Mrs Barnes' name transferred to Burgess Roll in place of A Hatrick & Co for Harbour Board foreshore section.

Wanganui Herald 14 Jan 1896 – news that Hatrick’s steamer would leave for a Sunday School excursion from Bett’s Wharf.
Wanganui Herald 12 Feb 1896 – letter re Bett’s wharf now used by Hatrick & Co.
Wanganui Herald 8 Jan 1904 – Harbour Bd report re Hatrick’s application to build two-storey building on site of his present shed (and demolish old Settlers’ Company shed).
Wanganui Herald 1 Feb 1904 – report on house boat; notes Nicholas Meuli has built this and fitted up all of Hatrick’s river boats to date.
Wanganui Herald 5 Feb 1904 – Harbour Bd report re Hatrick now wanting to retain the old Settler’s Co shed on foreshore site. “The building was new and not unsightly.”
Wanganui Herald 27 Oct 1904 – report on Hatrick & Co’s progress, including foundry and workshop at Shakespeare’s Cliff.
Wanganui Chronicle 1 Nov 1963, “Old River-bank building bought for city’s sea cadets”.
Wanganui Herald 2 June 1979 “Calliope: Famous name in Wanganui history”, article by Athol Kirk.
Wanganui Herald 11 June 1979, p3 – “TS Calliope Commissioned” photograph and text.

Diana Beaglehole, “Hatrick, Alexander 1857-1918”, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Volume Two, 1993. See website: www.dnzb.govt.nz.
Robert D Campbell, *Rapids and Riverboats on the Wanganui River*, Wanganui Newspapers, 1990.
MJB Smart and AP Bates, *The Wanganui Story*, Wanganui Newspapers, 1972. Chapter 24: River Transport.
Trevor Gibson, personal information provided to Wendy Pettigrew, 16 March 2010.

Comments on Significance:

Historic

This building is highly significant as it is the only remaining land-based structure associated with Alexander Hatrick and his riverboat services which were such an important part of Wanganui’s development in the pre-World War I era. [Hatrick’s 1909 hotel at Pipiriki burnt down in 1959; his house in Ingestre St became a maternity hospital (Picardy) and was demolished to make way for a plumbing depot; his 1910 house on St John’s Hill was demolished and the land use for the Alexa Place subdivision in the 1970s.] The building is also significant for its use as TS Calliope, the naval training base for sea cadets, and for its continued involvement as a structure associated with the Whanganui River.

Recommendations:

Register under Historic Places Act 1993. A conservation plan needs to be prepared, to take in issues such as restoration of the exterior cladding and parapets as well as replacement windows prior to any new use.

Date: March 2010 **Research by:** Wendy Pettigrew



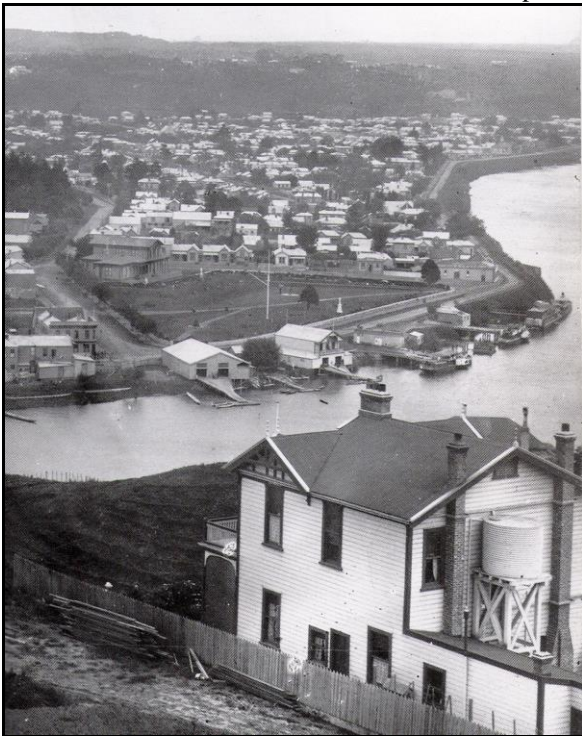
Hatrick's building from the Whanganui River.



Photograph c1870s showing wharf used by Bett & Robertson with timber piled up on Market Place, surrounding Moutoa Monument (erected 1865).



Photograph c1882 showing old Bett & Robertson's wharf upstream from the first Union Boat Club shed. The riverbank reclamation scheme has been completed by this date.



Auckland Library photograph c1903, published in *Pictures from the Past: Manawatu and Wanganui*, Dorothy Pilkington and Penny Robinson, Whitcoulls, 2002. Shows river bank with old Settler's Co. shed by one of Hatrick's wharves before construction of riverboat building.

