

Army Headquarters (Former)

211 Taranaki Street



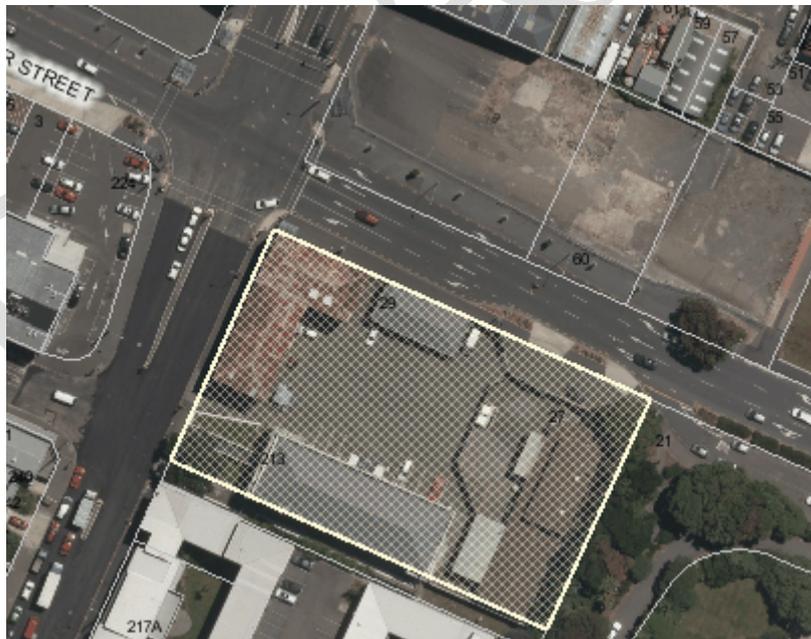
Corner of Taranaki and Buckle Street. (Russell Murray – 2005)

Summary of heritage significance

- Built in 1912 the former Army Headquarters building is representative of early 20th century architecture in the Edwardian Baroque style which was John Campbell's specialty and exhibits stylistic features used by Campbell in his other works.
- The building has historic value due to its original association with the New Zealand military. It was a stores building and then the headquarters of the New Zealand Army for a short period.
- It was a backdrop to the 1913 Buckle Street riots and is only one of two buildings still standing in Buckle Street linked to those dramatic events.
- The building has symbolic value as the oldest military building left on Mt Cook.
- The building has retained a significant amount of its exterior fabric which gives it authenticity.

District Plan:	Map 12,16, Reference 424
Legal Description:	Sec 90 Town of Wellington
Heritage Area:	No
HPT Listed:	Category II – Reference 7518
Archaeological Site:	Central City NZAA R27/270 Māori site of significance
Other Names:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army General Officer Commanding Building • CMD HQ • Defence Headquarters • Defence Store • GOC Building
Key physical dates:	1911-1912
Architect / Builder:	John Campbell
Former uses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence Store • Defence Headquarters • Ministry of Health • Museum of New Zealand
Current uses:	Unoccupied
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 185438 (124 Served)

CityView 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

Mount Cook is an area with a long historical association with the New Zealand military. The first building on this site was a 'Permanent Artillery Barracks' which first appeared on an official map in 1882 but may have been built earlier.¹ It was demolished and replaced by the present building in 1911, which was designed by the Government Architect's office and built at a cost of £2,912, with a further £1,400 spent on lighting and interior fitout.²

The building's construction was the result of military reforms that followed the Defence Acts of 1909 and 1910. These acts led to an expansion of the Territorials and therefore additional facilities were required.³ The stores building was just one of a number of structures built at Mt Cook by the Army, who for much of the first half of the 20th century occupied land on both sides of Buckle Street, including the old prison on the top of Mt Cook, where the Army had its headquarters.

The building was also the scene of public unrest during the 1913 General Strike. When riots broke out on Buckle Street the building was guarded by the special constables.⁴ Police, armed specials and defence forces eventually clashed with the protestors outside the stores building.⁵ Shots were fired, windows were broken and a machine gun was set up outside the building.

In 1930 the Defence Stores were relocated to Trentham. The stores building then appropriated in 1931 when the Army's headquarters in the old Mt Cook prison was demolished to make way for the new Dominion Museum and National War Memorial.⁶ The Army stayed until 1938, during which time the building was occupied by two general officers commanding – Major-General William Sinclair-Burgess (until 1937) and Major-General John Duigan, the first New Zealand-born general officer commanding.

Since the building had not originally been designed for use as offices it soon became overcrowded. In 1938 the General Headquarters was relocated to the former Railways Department offices in Featherston Street. Two years later the General Headquarters was relocated once more to the Departmental Building on Stout Street.⁷

Following the departure of the General Headquarters, the building became the headquarters of the Army's Central Military District (CMD). However by 1942 the

¹ W. Nelson, 'Assessment of Registration Proposal for GOC Building for New Zealand Historic Places Trust Board' (1995), as used in: Wellington City Council, "Former GOC Building," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), BUCK5.

² Taken from a minute prepared by N.H. Boyd, File 205/8 Vol.1, 26 January 1973. This is the only reference to the cost of building that has been located.

³ Michael Kelly and Chris Cochran, 'Former General Headquarters Building, Corner Taranaki and Buckle Streets, Wellington: an assessment of heritage values,' p. 2.

⁴ Soldiers facing strikers on Buckle Street, Wellington. Ref: 1/2-020721-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁵ Michael Kelly and Chris Cochran, 'Former General Headquarters Building, Corner Taranaki and Buckle Streets,' unpublished report (2003), p. 2.

⁶ Kelly and Cochran, 'Former General Headquarters Building,' p.2.

⁷ Kelly and Cochran, 'Former General Headquarters Building,' p.4.

CMD had relocated its headquarters to a newly constructed building next door (the HMNZS *Olphert*).⁸

An earthquake on 24 June 1942 caused damage to the building which eventuated with the parapet being removed and strengthened with steel, capped with concrete and render.

In 1947 the Army made the building available to the Government Office Accommodation Board. Despite the Army's reversal on their offer, the building was then occupied by the Health Board's Publicity Department who remained there until 1979. The building then came into the care of the Ministry of Works and in that same year the Department of Internal Affairs, acting on behalf of the National Museum, became the occupants.⁹

The building was used for storage by the National Art Gallery and 1980 it became the National Museum conservation laboratory.¹⁰ It is understood to have been, with the exception of storage, largely unoccupied since the mid-1980s. Beyond being used as a place to hang large billboards, the building is presently unused while its future remains uncertain.



At Buckle Street, Wellington, during the 1913 waterfront strike. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972: Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/2-048786-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kelly and Cochran, 'Former General Headquarters Building,' p.5.

¹⁰ Personal communication between Russell Murray and Jack Fry, former National Museum conservator July 07 1999, as used in: Wellington City Council, "Former GOC Building," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), BUCK5.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

Government building – previous permits may not be accessible.

1946 Masonry above first floor window heads demolished

Chimneys replaced with lighter flues

External plaster removed

2007 Alterations ground floor (00078:2717:169605)

1.3 Ownership history

Crown land – New Zealand Defence Force

1.4 Occupation history

1911 Defence Stores

1931 Defence Headquarters

1940 Central Military District Headquarters

1942 Army offices

1947 Health Department Education Board

1980 National Museum conservation laboratory

1.5 Architect

John Campbell (1857-1942) served his articles under John Gordon (c1835-1912) in Glasgow. He arrived in Dunedin in 1882 and after a brief period as a draughtsman with Mason and Wales joined the Dunedin branch of the Public Works Department in 1883. His first known work, an unbuilt design for the Dunedin Railway Station, reveals an early interest in Baroque architecture. In November 1888 Campbell was transferred to Wellington where in 1889 he took up the position of draughtsman in charge of the Public Buildings Division of the Public Works Department.

He remained in charge of the design of government buildings throughout New Zealand until his retirement in 1922, becoming in 1909 the first person to hold the position of Government Architect. Government architecture designed under his aegis evidences a change in style from Queen Anne to Edwardian Baroque. His best-known Queen Anne design is the Dunedin Police Station (1895-8), modelled on Richard Norman Shaw's New Scotland Yard (1887-90).

Among his most exuberant Edwardian Baroque buildings is the Public Trust Office, Wellington (1905-09). Although Campbell designed the Dunedin Law Courts (1899-1902) in the Gothic style with a Scottish Baronial inflection, he established Edwardian Baroque as the government style for police stations, courthouses and post offices throughout New Zealand. In 1911 Campbell won the nation-wide architectural competition for the design of Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Although only

partially completed, Parliament House is the crowning achievement of Campbell's career.¹¹

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The Former Defence Stores building stands on the corner of Taranaki and Buckle Streets, a plain and solid structure that reflects its army origins. Red bricks, laid in English bond (alternate courses of headers and stretchers), form the main structural material of the building, while plastered bands may indicate that there are concrete tie beams within the walls. The plan is L-shaped, the height is two storeys, and the main entrance is centred on the Buckle Street elevation. Decoration is subtle; it consists of panels of very shallow relief plaster work, with stylised keystones emphasizing the window heads.

Windows are all timber and double-hung, while over the door, an emblematic *GRV 1911* is the only flourish in an otherwise very simple design. (It should be noted that the stripped appearance of the building may be partly a result of the removal or loss of decorative work at roof level.) The roof is sheathed in corrugated iron (now rusty) and its form may indicate two stages of construction. The wing on Taranaki Street has a gabled roof, and it makes an awkward junction with the wing on Buckle Street which has a hipped roof. In addition, there is a change to plinth and window sill lines that indicate a staged construction, although architectural details between the two parts still match.

The building has some townscape value, anchoring the historically important block of land known as Mt Cook in a similar way to that of the former Mt Cook Police Barracks at the other end of Buckle Street.¹²

2.2 Materials

- Red bricks
- Concrete tie beams
- Timber joinery

2.3 Setting

The General Army Headquarters building is located at the corner of Buckle and Taranaki Streets and over looks the intersection formed by the meeting of these two streets with Karo Drive and Webb Street. With the exception of a low lying red brick structure to the east, the building is unencumbered by other buildings, and its relative isolation is amplified by the adjacent wide streets and vacant land on the opposite side of Buckle Street (soon to be turned into the National War Memorial Park). The Defence compound contains two other buildings, HMNZS *Olphert* and the recently-constructed security building. At the eastern end of the Buckle Street block is the former Mt Cook Police Station; both buildings act as red-brick bookends. The principal landmark in the vicinity is the National War Memorial, which despite the presence of large pohutukawa is visible from most vantage points.

¹¹ New Zealand Historic Places Trust Professional Biographies, 'John Campbell,' accessed 7 August 2012, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=38>

¹² Architecture taken from: Wellington City Council, "Former GOC Building," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*.

3.0 Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?

The building has architectural value as a now rare example in Wellington of the Edwardian Baroque style which was used by architect John Campbell for many government buildings.

Townscape: Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?

The pattern and colour of brickwork and plaster give the building some aesthetic value and a presence on an extremely busy street intersection.

Group: Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?

The building is part of a group of military related structures on the corner of Buckle and Taranaki Streets. This is the only surviving portion of Mt Cook land still in defence hands. Together with the single storey building to the east and the former Mt Cook Police Station (on the corner of Tory Street) these are also the only red brick buildings in a precinct that was once dominated by such buildings. The building shares an historical connection with other sites on Mt Cook, including the former Dominion Museum and the vacant land opposite, once the site of the Army drill hall.

Historic Value:

Association: Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?

The building has historic value as it was the temporary home of the General Officer Commanding for the Army from 1931-1938. During this time both Major General Sir William Sinclair-Burgess and Major General Sir John Duigan, two distinguished commanding officers, served in the building.

Association: Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?

The building is associated with various phases of historical activity. Its construction was the result of defence reforms prompted by the Defence Acts of 1909 and 1910. During the 1913 Strike the building was a backdrop to the 'Buckle Street Riots.' The building was also the Army headquarters during the build up to the Second World War.

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?

Since Mount Cook was the site of Pukeahu pa the area will contain pre-1900 human activity. The building is also located in the Central City archaeological site reference NZAA R27/270.

Educational: *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

The building can reveal information about the materials, details and trade practices that were in use at the start of the twentieth century.

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: *Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?*

The building should be considered in a wider context with past military uses of Mt Cook and with landmarks such as the National War Memorial Carillon, which is a link to Mt Cook's former military past as well as hugely important national symbol.

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:

*Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?
Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?*

The building should be considered in a wider context with other military structures on Mt Cook such as the Carillon which act as a reminder of Mt Cook's former military past. In this way it contributes to the overall sense of place.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

The building is the oldest general administrative military building left in Wellington.

Representative: *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

Authentic: *Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?*

The facades on the building have retained a significant amount of original fabric, therefore they have authenticity.

Local/Regional/National/International

Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

As a former military headquarters, the building is important on both a local and national level.

4.0 Sources

Primary sources

Boyd, N.H. File 205/8 Vol.1. 26 January 1973.

Murray, Russell. Personal communication with Jack Fry, former National Museum conservator July 07 1999.

Nelson, W. Assessment of Registration Proposal for GOC Building for NZHPT Board. 1995.

Secondary sources

Kelly, Michael and Chris Cochran. 'Former General Headquarters Building, Corner Taranaki and Buckle Streets, Wellington: an assessment of heritage values.' 2003.

Murray, Russell. 'Former Army General Officer Building, corner of Buckle and Taranaki Street.' Unpublished report for Wellington City Council. 2005.

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<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?ID=38>

Wellington City Council. "Former GOC Building." *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001. BUCK5.

Newspapers

Press. Volume XLIX, Issue 14815. 5 November 1913. Page 10.

Wellington City Council Records

Hadley and Robinsons Limited. GOC Building Corner of Taranaki and Buckle Streets: Review of proposals to improve performance in earthquake. 2003. File: 1041:04:23

5.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
WCC Records – building file	Y	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)	Y	

Background research



Buckle Street, Wellington, during the 1913 Waterfront Strike. Smith, Sydney Charles, 1888-1972:Photographs of New Zealand. Ref: 1/2-049061-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

The following official report has been supplied to the Minister of Justice regarding the riot in Buckle street last night:—Police Department: Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington: "I have to report for your information that during the past few days crowds have congregated at the intersection of Buckle and Taranaki streets, for the purpose of using insulting language towards members of the permanent staff and police, and special constables who are employed at the Buckle street special constables camp, the result being that Taranaki street has been blocked of ingress or egress to Buckle street, and free use as a thoroughfare through Taranaki street by persons wishing to go up or down the latter street has been prevented. A couple of days ago some person in a crowd that was then there drove a knife into a tyre of a motor-car which was being used by the police while it was passing through the crowd. Residents who had to pass up Taranaki street, and special constables complained of the insults they were being subjected to, as well as the inconvenience of being denied the right free use of the street and footpath.

Press, Volume XLIX, Issue 14815, 5 November 1913, Page 10.