



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Report for a Historic Place

Chinese Mission Hall (Former), WELLINGTON

(List No. 9739, Category 2)



Chinese Mission Hall (Former) (Charles Collins, Wellington City Council, 10 June 2015)

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Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, regardless of whether they are entered on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero or not. Archaeological sites include 'places associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand'. This List entry report should not be read as a statement on whether or not the archaeological provisions of the Act apply to the property (s) concerned. Please contact your local Heritage New Zealand office for archaeological advice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to support the inclusion of Chinese Mission Hall (Former) in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero as a Category 2 historic place.

Summary

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former), located on the northern side of Frederick Street in Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington's central suburb of Te Aro, was designed by nationally significant architect Frederick de Jersey Clere (1856-1952) and completed in 1906. The human presence in Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington is said to begin with the explorer Kupe. The land which was to become the site of the Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has particular significance to Ngāti Mutunga iwi as it is in the wider environs of Te Aro Pā which was built in 1824. This pā straddled both sides of present-day Taranaki Street and gave its name to the area. The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has historical significance as it is one of the last remaining buildings of Wellington's former Chinatown.

In the 1880s many Chinese goldminers left the depleted goldfields of the South Island. Some settled in Wellington's Haining Street and Frederick Street, the heart of an area which became known as 'Tong Yan Gai'. The Anglican Chinese Mission Hall opened in 1906 to cater for the needs of this community.

It was designed to function as both a church and community hall, a place where members of the Chinese community could attend services, learn the gospel, improve their English literacy through the study of Christian religious texts and celebrate Anglican spiritual traditions. The modest brick building was designed in a relatively plain Gothic Revival architectural style. Today (2023) the hall has a high level of authenticity as there is a significant amount of original fabric.

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) was purchased by the Murdoch family in 1956. They leased it first as a photography studio and then as a sound studio. From 2009 until 2012 it was home to the Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society and between 2013 to 2017 it was a 'Menzshed'. Due to concerns about its vulnerability to earthquakes it currently (2023) sits vacant as the area around it is developed.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

1.1. Name of Place

Name

Chinese Mission Hall (Former)

Other Names

Anglican Chinese Mission

Anglican Chinese Mission Hall

Chinese Mission Room

Church of England Chinese Mission

City Menzshed (Wellington)

Fred's

1.2. Location Information

Address

46 Frederick Street

Te Aro

WELLINGTON

Additional Location Information

X= 1748808.36 (NZTM)

Y= 526849.98 (NZTM)

Local Authority

Wellington City Council

1.3. Legal Description

Pt Section 231 Town of Wellington (RT WN141/92), Wellington Land District

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

1.4. Extent of List Entry

Extent includes the land described as Pt Section 231 Town of Wellington (RT WN141/92), Wellington Land District and the building known as Chinese Mission Hall thereon. ([Refer to map in Appendix 1](#) of the List entry report for further information).

1.5. Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of a building fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

1.6. Existing Heritage Recognition

Local Authority and Regional Authority Plan Scheduling

SCHEDULED in Wellington City District Plan, Operative 27 July 2000 [as amended], front façade only, Chapter 21, Heritage List: Areas, Buildings, Objects, Trees & Maori Sites, Map Ref. 16, Symbol Ref. 124. Demolition and relocation are restricted discretionary activities.

New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme

This place or sites within this place have been recorded by the New Zealand Archaeological Association. The references are R27/270 and R27/405.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. Historical Information

The Māori history and settlement of Te Whanganui-a-Tara reflects many changes and waves of migration over hundreds of years.² Before the arrival of Māori from Taranaki in the 1820s and 1830s³, Te Whanganui-a-Tara was populated primarily by people of Kurahaupō waka descent, including Ngāi Tara, Rangitāne, Muaūpoko, Ngāti Apa and Ngāti Ira.⁴ These people

² Raukura Consultants, 'Orua-Poua-Nui Baring Head Cultural Values Report', 2011, pp.6-7, <http://www.gwrc.govt.nz/assets/council-publications/Orua-Poua-Nui%20Baring%20Head%20Cultural%20Values%20Report%20Feb%202011.pdf>, accessed 15 May 2021.

³ Morris Love, 'Te Āti Awa of Wellington', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 1 March 2017, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/te-ati-awa-of-wellington>, accessed 15 May 2021.

⁴ Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Whanganui A Tara Me Ona Takiwa: Report on the Wellington District*, Waitangi Tribunal Report 2003, WAI 145, p.18, https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_68452530/Wai145.pdf, accessed 15 May 2021.

have been referred to as ‘Whatonga-descent peoples’ since all claimed descent from Whatonga, an early Māori explorer who named the harbour Te Whanganui-a-Tara, for his son Tara.⁵

The Chinese Mission Hall is located very near to the site of one of the largest pā in Te Whanganui-a-Tara – Te Aro Pā. Te Aro Pā was established in 1824 by Ngāti Mutunga near the former shoreline in what is now part of the Wellington central business district, in the vicinity of lower Taranaki, Manners and Cuba Streets.⁶ When Ngāti Mutunga migrated to Rēkohu / Wharekauri / the Chatham Islands in 1835, they left their lands ‘from Waitangi Stream to Ngauranga’ in the possession of Taranaki iwi and Te Aro Pā was subsequently inhabited by whānau and hapū of Ngāti Ruanui, Taranaki iwi and Te Āti Awa.⁷ Te Aro Pā was surrounded by extensive cultivations totalling approximately 60-80 acres, including on Puke Ahu / Mount Cook.⁸ The nearby bush, Waitangi Lagoon and harbour itself were also rich in resources, as were the numerous waterways that are largely unseen today, such as the nearby Waimapihi Stream (also known as Te Aro Stream) and the Waitangi Stream, bounding the Te Aro flats to the west and east respectively.⁹ Waitangi Stream flowed from Newtown along Adelaide Road to the Basin Reserve (originally a significant wetland known as Hauwai), and then along what is now Kent Terrace, feeding into the expansive Waitangi Lagoon which provided Māori with eels, fish and shellfish, flax, fresh water and was also used for launching waka.¹⁰

The New Zealand Company bought land in the Wellington Harbour (Port Nicholson) area in 1839 in preparation for emigration from England. The area was soon colonised with the

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Wellington City Council, *Te Ara o Nga Tupuna Heritage Trail*, 2006 (2nd. ed.), <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/recreation/enjoy-the-outdoors/walks-and-walkways/files/heritage-trails/teara.pdf?la=en&hash=B152AFFB5CD68142D22E8051638A1CBFC36ED67E>, accessed 15 May 2021.

⁷ Ellen Anderson, ‘Toenga o Te Aro (remains of Te Aro Pā)’, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 2008, <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7771>, accessed 16 May 2021. The remains of Te Aro Pā were listed as a Category 1 historic place in 2008.

⁸ *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, Volume IV, 4 October 1843, p.3; Raukura Consultants, ‘Cultural Impact Report, Massey University Wellington, Puke Ahu’, n.d., p.17, <https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/sustainability/documents/Massey%20Wellington%20-%20cultural%20impact%20report.pdf?2C05BBD3E782006293AC51B5443DD2FD>, accessed 15 May 2021.

⁹ Raukura Consultants, ‘Technical Report 15 Assessment of Effects – Cultural, Basin Bridge Project, Hauwai’, 2013, p.16, <https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/FileAPI/proposal/NSP000026/Applicants-proposal-documents/13a40c1787/TR15-Assessment-of-Cultural-Effects-FINAL-31-MAY-2013.pdf>, accessed 15 May 2021.

¹⁰ Raukura Consultants, 2013, pp. 4, 16, 17, 24, 39; Lesley Adkin, *The Great Harbour of Tara*, Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, Wellington, 1959, p.97; ‘Waitangi Day in the capital’, *Wellington City Council*, <https://wellington.govt.nz/wellington-city/about-wellington-city/history/throwbackthursday/waitangi-day-in-the-capital>, accessed 18 October 2021; Anderson, 2008. See also Map 11, Te Aro Cultivation Clearing in Wellington Tenth Trust, GIS Map Book 2004, Wellington Tenth Trust, 2004, p.13.

Pākehā settlement growing steadily and attracting many immigrants. Te Aro Pā was reserved for Māori in the 1844 deeds of release along with other traditional pā such as Pipitea, but the pressures of Pākehā colonisation, including the transfer of cultivations to less desirable and more remote land, and the effects of the Taranaki wars caused the population of Te Aro Pā to rapidly decline.¹¹ The 1855 earthquake also resulted in dramatic change to the Wellington landscape and the availability of natural resources – a new shoreline was created and the Te Aro flats were raised by around 1.5 to 2 metres.¹² The inhabitants of Te Aro Pā dwindled from 186 in 1850 to 28 in 1881, and by the 1890s the pā was unoccupied.¹³ Remains of the pā were uncovered in 2005 during construction of a multi-storey apartment building, and are now preserved for display at Te Aro Pā Visitor Centre.¹⁴ The Waitangi Stream was culverted as part of the underground storm-water system (original plans to turn it into a canal were abandoned after the earthquake) and it was once again exposed to daylight again as a key element of the Waitangi Park development which opened in 2006.¹⁵

In 1840 Town Acre 231, the future site of the Chinese Mission Hall, was granted to William Liddiard, a land owner who at the same time purchased four other sections in nearby Thompson Street, Kent Terrace, Wallace Street and Tasman Street.¹⁶ In 1865 after the death of Liddiard, Town Acre 231 was purchased by local landowner and brick-works manufacturer William Tonks.¹⁷ Tonks named the street which ran through the Town Acre 'Frederick Street' after his son, the then four-year old Frederick Tonks, the eldest son of what were to be fifteen children.¹⁸ There followed a succession of owners and by 1891 there was a small building on the site.¹⁹

¹¹ Waitangi Tribunal, 2003, p.337; Wellington City Council, 2006; Love, 2017, Anderson, 2008

¹² Wellington City Council, 2006.

¹³ Waitangi Tribunal, 2003, p.339; Love, 2017.

¹⁴ Wellington City Council, *Te Aro Pā Visitor Centre, 39 Taranaki Street*, n.d., <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/community-support-and-resources/our-communities/maori-community/files/te-aro-pa-booklet.pdf?la=en&hash=8C6EE261C3E00E7971CFB9B3E8EDA446C2D89AE1>, accessed 16 May 2021.

¹⁵ Raukura Consultants, 2011, p.24; Kerry Pollock, 'Landscape architecture - Modern landscape architecture, 1960s to 2000s', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/42923/waitangi-park>, accessed 18 October 2021; 'Waitangi Park – an urban wetland recreated', *Envirohistory NZ*, <https://envirohistorynz.com/2010/12/12/waitangi-park-an-urban-wetland-recreated/#more-5898>, accessed 18 October 2021.

¹⁶ Louis E Ward, *Early Wellington*, part of 'The New Zealand Provincial Histories Collection and New Zealand Texts Collection', Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1928, p.191, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WarEarl-t1-body-d16-d4.html> (accessed 20 May 2021).

¹⁷ Archives New Zealand, Deed Register 11, AF1H W5691/110, p.300.

¹⁸ FL Irvine-Smith, *The Streets of My City: Wellington New Zealand*, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948, p.198.

¹⁹ 1891 Thomas Ward Maps. WCC Archives, <https://data-wcc.opendata.arcgis.com/maps/WCC::wellington-thomas-ward-maps/explore?location=-41.296126%2C174.777270%2C18.86> (accessed 31 May 2021).

Wellington's early Chinese community

By the end of the nineteenth century, many Chinese were leaving the depleted Otago goldfields and moving north to resettle in urban centres hoping for new opportunities.²⁰ Most of these goldminers were originally drawn from China's southern Guangdong counties of Poonyu, Jungseng and Seyip.²¹ By 1894 there were approximately 200 Chinese in Wellington, running: '47 fruit and vegetable shops, ten market gardens, three boarding houses, one wholesale house and one laundry, besides a few other houses'.²² Frederick Street, along with nearby Haining Street, became the centre of Wellington's Chinatown. The area, known as 'Tong Yan Gaai', gained a reputation for illegal pakapoo gambling and its 'congestion of tumbledown houses'.²³ Neighbourhood children dared each other to dash down the streets 'braving ... kidnapping or worse'.²⁴ One commentator recalled that at times the smell of opium was so thick you could 'cut it with a knife'.²⁵ These stories reflect the intolerance shown towards Asian people in colonial New Zealand and discrimination against Chinese communities in particular. This was exemplified by the 1881 poll tax placed on Chinese immigrants. It was not waived until 1934 and fully repealed in 1944.²⁶ Other discriminatory legislation included the 1892 Aliens Act and the 1896 Asiatic Restriction Act. In reality, the area was a community where Chinese individuals and families lived and worked.²⁷ The extensive neighbourhood support is evident from the various community and political associations established there.²⁸

²⁰ Lynette Shum, 'Remembering Chinatown: Haining Street of Wellington', in *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Manying Ip, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p.74.

²¹ James Ng, *Windows on a Chinese Past*, Vol I, Dunedin: Otago Heritage Books, 1993, pp.11-12.

²² Shum, 2003, p.74.

²³ Pat Lawlor, *Old Wellington Days*, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1959, p.99.

²⁴ David McGill and Grant Tilly, *The Compleat Cityscapes*, Paekakariki: Silver Owl Press, 2021, p.54.

²⁵ Lawlor, 1959, p.99.

²⁶ 'Poll tax imposed on Chinese', <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/poll-tax-imposed-on-chinese> (accessed 29 October 2021).

²⁷ The 'Haining Street Oral History Project', led by Lynette Shum, interviewed 32 Chinese New Zealanders about their memories of Chinatown in Wellington up until the 1960s. The success of this project and its positive reception by the Chinese community, is indicative that although there are few visual reminders in both Haining and Frederick Streets of its past, many New Zealanders of Chinese descent are pleased to reminisce and share their memories of the area and the people who lived and/or worked there. (See the 'Haining Street Oral History Project', Lynette Shum, OHColl-0455, National Library, <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/35850384> accessed 4 June 2021.)

²⁸ This included the Tung Jung Association; the Poonyu Association (later renamed the Poon Fah Association) and the Seyip Association – each established specifically to support those who originated from their respective counties; the Chee Kung Tong and the Chinese Association (Chung Wah Wui Koon, later the Wah Kiu Leung Hap Wui).

See Lynette Shum, 'Remembering Chinatown: Haining Street of Wellington' in *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Manying Ip, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p.85.

Chinese Anglican Mission Hall

The first service for the Anglican Diocese of Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington was held in 1839, aboard the ship *Tory*, anchored in the harbour beside Matiu / Somes Island. Two months later, missionaries Henry Williams and Octavius Hadfield arrived in the Wellington area, and set about establishing the groundwork for the Anglican Church. A key Māori figure in this endeavour was Hōhepa Matahau (Ripahau), a Māori who taught Tamihana Te Rauparaha and Hēnare Mātene Te Whiwhi to read through the study of religious texts.²⁹ Wellington's first Anglican church was St Paul's, built on the Government Reserve (now Parliament Grounds) in 1844.³⁰ The church expanded and established its spiritual traditions as its presence as the township grew.

Early Chinese migrants arrived in New Zealand with 'a complex and ancient mixture of beliefs – ancestor worship, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism' but many set about adapting to the traditions and cultures of New Zealand.³¹ Historically, Chinese were encouraged 'not just to integrate but to assimilate', and for some, regular church attendance was a key part of this.³²

In 1900 the Wellington Anglican Diocese identified the need for a Chinese Missioner and church to meet the specific needs of the small but growing Chinese community in Wellington.³³ The Anglican Diocese of Wellington formally set up the Wellington Anglican Chinese Mission (ACM) in 1903.³⁴ The ACM soon became the dominant church for Chinese in

²⁹ 'Anglican Diocese of Wellington – History of the Diocese', https://web.archive.org/web/20120525095024/http://wn.anglican.org.nz/anglican_centre/about_the_anglican_church/history_of_the_diocese (accessed 25 June 2021).

³⁰ Elizabeth Cox, 'The First St Paul's, *Old St Paul's Wellington New Zealand: Bringing the Stories out of the Woodwork*, S. and W. Mackay, 20 November 2014, <https://osphistory.org/2014/11/20/the-first-st-pauls/> (accessed 5 July 2021).

³¹ 'Teacher Don: the mission to the Chinese in Otago' by Susan Irvine in *Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand*, Edited by John Stedhouse and Jane Thompson, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004, p.165

³² Kirsten Wong, 'A Place to Stand: The Chun Family Experience', in *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Edited by Manying Ip, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p.128. Another comparative example in New Zealand is the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Hall and Manse in Carroll Street, Dunedin, built in 1897 to a design by James Louis Salmond. The Presbyterian Chinese Mission Hall in Auckland (1925) and the Baptist Chinese Mission Hall in Christchurch (1898) no longer survive. David Murray, 'Chinese Mission Church,' *Built in Dunedin*, <https://builtindunedin.com/2014/04/22/chinese-missionchurch/>, accessed 31 March 2023; 'Chinese Mission Hall – Auckland' (photograph), Presbyterian Research Centre, <https://prc.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/82802>; Kerry Francis, "NZ Chinese/Chinese NZ: Auckland Architecture's Changing Response," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 31, Translation*, edited by Christoph Schnoor (Auckland, New Zealand: SAHANZ and Unitec ePress; and Gold Coast, Queensland: SAHANZ, 2014), 81–91, https://www.unitec.ac.nz/eypress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NZ-Chinese_Chinese-NZ_Auckland-Architectures-Changing-Response-by-Kerry-Francis.pdf

³³ 'The Wellington Anglican Chinese Mission', <https://timespanner.blogspot.com/search?q=chinese+mission+hall> (accessed 25 June 2021).

³⁴ 'About the Anglican Chinese Mission', <http://www.acm-wgtn.org.nz/> (accessed 25 June 2021).

Wellington.³⁵ They were based out of temporary quarters in nearby Haining Street, but aspired to a dedicated space in which to teach and minister.³⁶

In 1905 a parcel of the land in Frederick Street was purchased by the ACM. The simple hall constructed upon it was designed by nationally significant architect Frederick de Jersey Clere (1856-1952). Clere's motto was 'Designed in beauty, built in truth'.³⁷ He was responsible for the design of over 100 churches around New Zealand, constructed in both timber and brick, almost all of which were 'an economical and unostentatious adaptation of the contemporary Gothic Revival style'.³⁸ The Chinese Mission Hall is a modest design, a contrast with his more ornate and ambitious designs which include Wellington's Catholic Church St Mary of the Angels (List No. 36).

The design and construction of the hall was largely due to the efforts of Reverend Richard Colley, the Vicar of St Marks Anglican Church at Dufferin Street by the Basin Reserve.³⁹ The Chinese community raised half of the cost of the building.⁴⁰ The rest was met by the Anglican Diocese of Wellington, various Trusts and individuals.⁴¹ The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Frederic Wallis in December 1905 and the church was dedicated three months later by Venerable Archdeacon Thomas Fancourt.⁴² The opening on 9 March 1906 was presided over by both Coffey and Fancourt, a number of Europeans and with Daniel Wong interpreting to the over 100 Chinese present.⁴³

Daniel Wong (c. 1864-1908) was an Anglican Lay Evangelist. After an enjoyable visit to the capital in 1900, China-born Wong relocated from Greymouth to Wellington in 1903 to serve the approximately 500 Chinese who were resident there.⁴⁴ He ministered to the community from the hall, teaching Anglican spiritual traditions and English literacy through close

³⁵ Shum, 2003, p.63.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ McGill & Tilly, 2021, p.54.

³⁸ Susan Maclean, 'Clere, Frederick de Jersey', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 1993a. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2c22/clere-frederick-de-jersey> (accessed 27 May 2021).

³⁹ Susan Maclean, *Architects of the Angels: the churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere*, Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2003b, p.77.

⁴⁰ 'St. Mary's Guild', *New Zealand Mail*, 4 April 1906, p.57.

⁴¹ 'The History of the Anglican Chinese Mission in the Diocese of Wellington' in 'Unfolding Chinese New Zealand: Emerging Voices', Conference 9-10 July 2004, Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, p.3.

⁴² Susan Maclean, 2003b, p.77.

⁴³ 'Local and General', *Wanganui Herald*, 10 March 1906, p.4.

⁴⁴ 'The History of the Anglican Chinese Mission in the Diocese of Wellington', 2004, p.2.

examination of gospel stories. He was known as 'the Jesus Preacher' and taught free of charge.⁴⁵ Wong was held in high regard in Wellington and, when he passed away in 1908, as a mark of respect, the nearby gambling establishments were closed and silence reigned in Chinatown for a period of mourning.⁴⁶ Over 200 Chinese attended his funeral at St Marks Anglican Church.⁴⁷

Others took over the leadership at the Chinese Mission Hall and the community continued to prosper. By 1922 there were reportedly between 90 and 160 people attending Sunday church services at the Chinese Mission Hall, where they were often 'packed like sardines' in the small space.⁴⁸ Under the leadership of Baptist Missioner, Mr Chiu Kwok Chun, between 1932 and 1949 Anglicans and Baptists combined in ecumenical cooperation to share the space.⁴⁹ As well as attending church services, Sunday School and English language gospel study, the community also gathered at the hall to celebrate the traditional spiritual celebrations of the Christian calendar, including Christmas - complete with Christmas tree.⁵⁰ Although it was primarily members of the Chinese community who ran and attended these events, Pākehā also assisted with playing the organ and running the Sunday School.⁵¹

The Chinese school, Bible classes, Youth Groups and Chinese folk dance classes who also used the hall catered for Wellington's Chinese youth – both those born in China and New Zealand. Parents sent their children to the hall for not just Chinese language lessons but socialisation, worried that their children might otherwise 'lose their Chineseness' if mixing mainly with non-Chinese children.⁵² The hall also provided a space where romance blossomed – with parents hoping their young people might meet and marry other Wellingtonians of Chinese descent and in doing so hold onto their Chinese culture and traditions.⁵³

⁴⁵ 'Religious Activity', *Dominion*, 2 May 1908, p.11.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ 'The History of the Chinese Mission in the Dioceses of Wellington', 2004, p.4.

⁴⁹ pers. comm. Lynette Shum, 27 October 2021 and 19 January 2023. The Chinese Anglican Mission and the Chinese Baptist Church used the building for worship on alternate weeks.

⁵⁰ 'Anglican Chinese Mission', *Evening Post*, 27 December 1924, p.7.

⁵¹ 'The History of the Chinese Mission in the Dioceses of Wellington', 2004, p.5.

⁵² pers. comm. Lynette Shum, 27 October 2021

⁵³ *ibid.*

Around this time there were rumoured to be underground tunnels linking the hall with illegal gambling operations further along Frederick Street. They were dug to facilitate a speedy escape during periodic police raids.⁵⁴ These rumours have never been substantiated.

Just next door, the Murdoch family firm built one of the first industrial structures in the street, running a prosperous business on the corner of Frederick and Taranaki Streets. The factory premises, 'Murdoch's Pickles and Anglo-Indian Chutneys', was a large, latterly pink building (demolished 2011). It was originally set up by Scottish-born Alexander Murdoch, in 1886. Successive generations of the family produced 'icing sugar, pickles, jellies, cordials, herbs, spices and vinegar as well as selling kerosene, turpentine, methylated spirits, Epsom salts and mothballs'.⁵⁵ But they were most famous for their chutneys, made with Nelson apples and Hutt-grown tomatoes.⁵⁶ Dean Murdoch, great grandson of Alexander Murdoch, remembers his father frequenting the illegal Chinese gambling dens nearby.⁵⁷ According to the Murdoch family it was the 'evil-smelling vinegar' emanating from their factory which 'proved too much' for the Chinese worshipers next door and prompted them to sell the Chinese Mission Hall to the Murdoch family in August 1956.⁵⁸ The Murdoch's purchased it by auction for £3,725.⁵⁹ The Anglican Chinese Mission moved to a new site at Taranaki Street, then again in 1978 to their current complex at 30 Glenmore Street beside Wellington's Botanic Gardens.

The Murdochs then leased the hall as a photographer's studio. Between 1979 and 1984 it was the photography studio of 'Sal Criscillo Advertising & Illustrative Photography'.⁶⁰ Salvatore Antonio Criscillo, born in Australia of Italian parents, arrived in Wellington at the age of two. He had first worked for advertising firm Catts-Patterson, then Studio 57.⁶¹ After going solo he converted the three small rear rooms of the church into a darkroom (west side) and changing room/toilet (east side). He built a cyclorama as a backdrop for photo shoots, spanning the main part of the hall. Around 1979 he enlarged a split-level mezzanine

⁵⁴ Pers. comm. Daniel Beban, 30 June 2021.

⁵⁵ 'Bit of culinary history on sale, mission church included', *Dominion Post*, 20 June 2009, <https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/the-dominion-post/20090620/282518654479309> (accessed 25 May 2021).

⁵⁶ 'Page 1 Advertisements Column 4', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 30 Dec 1938, p.1.

⁵⁷ 'Bit of culinary history on sale, mission church included', 2021.

⁵⁸ McGill & Tilly, 2021, p.54.

⁵⁹ 'The History of the Chinese Mission in the Dioceses of Wellington', 2004, p.8.

⁶⁰ *Wises New Zealand Telephone Directories*, volumes 1979 – 1984; pers comm (Letter), Submission from Sal Criscillo to HNZPT for Chinese Mission Hall heritage listing proposal, 12 February 2023.

⁶¹ *ibid.* Criscillo joined Auckland firm Studio 57 as a partner and helped set up a Wellington branch in Cuba Mall.

supported by steel beams, which provided further office space.⁶² A kitchenette to the east of the front doors and reception area opposite completed the studio.⁶³ During his tenure in the building he took the cookbook photographs for iconic food writer and television celebrity chef Alison Holst.⁶⁴ He was also responsible for the Wool Board's fashion shoot, among many other commercial assignments.⁶⁵ By 1986 David Hamilton was the leaseholder of the premises for his business 'Yakka/DB Hamilton Photography', sharing the space with an assortment of other artistic tenants.⁶⁶ They occupied the building until 1989.

From 1989 Murdoch leased the hall to a number of sound and music artists. The hall already had excellent acoustics, but the tenants also created two sound proofed spaces within the hall as a place to rehearse and record sound and music. Between 1992 and the late 1990s Nick McGowan, a Wellington-based sound recording engineer, worked and lived in the hall with his young family. Between the late 1990s to the early 2000s indie Wellington rock band The Phoenix Foundation used the hall as a rehearsal space. From November 2004 to October 2007 film composers Plan 9 leased the hall as they worked to craft the music for the *King Kong* film, before relocating to Miramar.⁶⁷ Between 2007 to 2009 the hall sat vacant.⁶⁸

In May 2009 Murdoch leased the hall to the newly formed 'Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society'. The Society was founded by Wellington musician, sound engineer, ethnomusicologist, and instrument inventor Daniel Beban.⁶⁹ He developed the Chinese Mission Hall (Former) into a music, rehearsal, and performance space where musicians could try out new, experimental ideas 'that wouldn't get a look in in other places'.⁷⁰ The hall acquired the moniker 'Fred's' and soon became well-established in the Wellington experimental music scene and as the venue for 'Fredstock'. Snefru Limited, with Director Maurice Clark, purchased the property from the Murdoch family later that year, but the tenancy continued.⁷¹ Fred's gained a reputation as a fixture in the local music scene and

⁶² pers. comm. David Hamilton, 8 June 2021.

⁶³ pers comm Criscillo, 12 February 2023

⁶⁴ 'Criscillo, Salvatore Antonio', <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ethesaurus.235378> (accessed 19 May 2021).

⁶⁵ pers. comm. David Hamilton, 8 June 2021.

⁶⁶ *Wises New Zealand Telephone Directories*, volumes 1986-1989.

⁶⁷ pers. comm. Janet Roddick, 30 June 2021.

⁶⁸ pers. comm. Daniel Beban, 15 June 2021.

⁶⁹ 'Daniel Beban', Sounz, <https://sounz.org.nz/contributors/1179> (accessed 19 May 2021).

⁷⁰ 'Daniel Beban and Scilla Askew', RNZ, https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2510995 (accessed 31 May 2021).

⁷¹ RT WN141/92

regular performers included the Orchestra of Spheres, Fertility Festival, The Mantarays, The Honkies and Bright Colours.⁷² As one attendee explained, 'what is good about life is happening at Fred's'.⁷³ Some musicians shared the music they created there on the YouTube Channel 'Fred's TV'.⁷⁴ Despite its popularity Fred's closed in 2012 at the request of Maurice Clark, the hall's owner.⁷⁵ This was due in part to concerns about the safety of the brick structure in an earthquake. The Society continued to rent and perform in the small garage next door also owned by Clark (since demolished), but they relocated to new premises at 272 Taranaki Street in October 2013.

In 2013 the hall began being used as a Wellington City branch of the national organisation Menzshed New Zealand.⁷⁶ Operating around 120 sheds throughout New Zealand, from Kaitia to Invercargill, the group 'brings men together in one community space to share their skills, have a laugh, and work on practical tasks individually ... or as a group'.⁷⁷ After regular meetings and the completion of a wide assortment of projects the Frederick Street 'shed' closed in 2017 due to the ongoing concerns about its earthquake prone status.⁷⁸ The club moved to a new premises at Wellington's Ewart Hospital in Coromandel Street.⁷⁹ Around this time the mezzanine was removed and the hall has since sat vacant.⁸⁰

Associated List Entries

N/A

2.2. Physical Information

Current Description

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) is located on the northern side of Frederick Street, a narrow street linking Taranaki Street and Tory Street in Wellington's central suburb of Te Aro. The hall is surrounded on its northern, western and eastern sides by an empty lot, which is under development for an apartment block to provide social housing (and possibly a park)

⁷² pers. comm. Daniel Beban, 15 June 2021.

⁷³ 'Fredstock', RNZ, https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2530393 (accessed 19 May 2021).

⁷⁴ 'Fred's', Stuff, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/4038622/Freds> (accessed 19 May 2021).

⁷⁵ 'Daniel Beban', <https://www.danielbeban.nz/Fred-s> (accessed 2 June 2021).

⁷⁶ 'City Menzshed (Wellington)', <https://menzshed.org.nz/citywellington/> (accessed 8 June 2021).

⁷⁷ 'What is a Men's Shed?', <https://menzshed.org.nz/about-us/what-is-a-shed/> (accessed 15 June 2021).

⁷⁸ 'City Menzshed (Wellington)', <https://menzshed.org.nz/citywellington/> (accessed 8 June 2021).

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ pers. comm. Daniel Beban, 30 June 2021.

due to be completed in 2023. Between the 1880s and the 1960s, Frederick Street and the parallel Haining Street were the centre of Wellington's Chinatown. On Frederick Street only the Chinese Mission Hall (Former), the Chinese Masonic Society Building / Tung Jung Association at 2 Frederick Street and the Chee Kung Tong hall at 23 Frederick Street remain as tangible links to the street's past.⁸¹ The hall is built in a simple Gothic Revival style to a design by nationally significant architect Frederick de Jersey Clere. This ecclesiastic architectural style is a striking contrast to the other buildings on Frederick Street which are utilitarian light industrial, residential, and commercial buildings.

Frederick de Jersey Clere designed the building in brick with concrete foundations and a symmetrical façade. The brickwork for the walls is in English bond. Pilasters with minimal decoration are positioned at either corner of the front façade. The central timber front double-door has two steps leading up to it and a fanlight above. The fanlight and the door, sit within a smaller, projecting entrance gable. There are lancet arch windows, each with eight lights, on either side of the door and three smaller lancet arch windows above in the gable of the façade, each comprised of five lights. Above these, at the top of the gable there is a five-sided star shape raised and set within a sunken circle. There is a simple cross fixed to the top of the front gable. The original cross which was fixed above the entrance gable has been removed. The original raised lettering for the signage of 'Chinese Mission Hall' is largely gone, only the fragment of 'NES.....M..SION' still remains.

Typical of New Zealand's Gothic Revival churches, the roof is a relatively steep-pitched gable and there are four main internal timber trusses which support it. It incorporates a clerestory of small, pivoted lancet windows on the western and eastern elevations which admit natural light into the interior. There is a nave with a chancel at the northern end of the hall. It extends out the rear of the building using an arched format echoing the shape of the rest of the building, but on a smaller scale. The roof above this chancel has a lower roof and it has a row of windows on each side. There are two smaller doors at either end of the hall on the western side. Two small rooms, originally with toilets and doors to the outside, flank the chancel. The western one has been roughly blocked up with concrete blocks. The eastern one is blocked by fixed timber. Both are currently (2021) inaccessible. The brickwork of the interior has been plastered with plaster containing lime, sand and cow hair.⁸² There is a

⁸¹ The Poon Fah Association building nearby in Vivian Street, the original NZ Chinese Association headquarters building in Marion Street and the Seyip Association building in Ghuznee Street are also reminders of the Chinese presence in the area.

⁸² Building Application Form in 1905 Specifications and Plans, Wellington City Council, p.5.

timber dado and other joinery is fixed to the brickwork with tōtara plugs. There are eight wall ventilators. The mezzanine, added in the mid-1980s and used for office space, has been removed but it has not been painted and where it was fixed to the walls is still evident.

A previous tenant describes a small cellar accessed by a trapdoor in the timber floor in the northwest corner of the hall.⁸³

Construction Professionals

Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere (DNZB)⁸⁴

Builder: Mr Brickley⁸⁵

Construction Materials

Timber: rimu and tōtara

Brick

Concrete

Corrugated iron

Glass

Key Physical Dates

1905 - 1906	Construction
c.1979	Mezzanine added
2003	Seismic strengthening
2017	Mezzanine removed

Uses

Religion	Church (Former)
Religion	Meeting House (Former)
Religion	Church Hall/Sunday School (Former)
Education	Adult Education/Training (Former)
Civic Facilities Hall	Concert (Former)
Civic Facilities Hall	Community (Former)

<https://wellingtoncityheritage.org.nz/buildings/1-150/124-chinese-mission-hall?q=> (accessed 4 June 2021).

⁸³ pers. comm. Daniel Beban, 30 June 2021.

⁸⁴ Susan Mclean, 'Story: Clere, Frederick de Jersey', <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2c22/clere-frederick-de-jersey> (accessed 1 June 2021).

⁸⁵ 'Page 4 Advertisements Column 6', *Evening Post*, 8 December 1905, p.4.

Accommodation	Studio/granny flat (Former)
Vacant	Vacant

2.3. Chattels

There are no chattels included in this List entry.

2.4. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

There is a good amount of specific and background source material on this place. Susan Maclean's *Architects of the Angels: The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere* provides information about the architect and catalogues his life's work. Shum's 2003 chapter of 'Remembering Chinatown: Haining Street of Wellington', in *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand* was an excellent source of contextual information on the history of Wellington's Chinatown, particularly of Frederick Street and nearby Haining Street. Two photographs and Frederick de Jersey Clere's original plans for the Hall are held in the Alexander Turnbull Collection. PapersPast was used for contemporary articles, particularly about the opening and early use of the Hall. *Wises Street Directories* were also insightful for establishing a building occupation history between 1956-2009. The Wellington City Council website has an entry about the Chinese Mission Hall which includes a link to the Chinese Mission Hall's 1905 specification and plans. Later material relating to the history of the use of the building from 2009 to 2021 as a music venue is found on Radio New Zealand and has several relevant interviews relating to its time as 'Fred's', a rehearsal space and music venue for the Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society and other musical groups. Group founder Daniel Beban provided invaluable assistance. As did photographers Sal Criscillo and David Hamilton. Andrew Ross kindly provided photos.

A site visit was conducted on 10 June 2021.

Further Reading

Maclea, Susan, *Architects of the Angels: The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere*, 2003, Wellington: Steele Roberts Ltd, 2003.

Shum, Lynette, 'Remembering Chinatown: Haining Street of Wellington', *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Ed. Manying Ip, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003.

'Fredstock', Radio New Zealand,

https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2510995

'Playing Favourites with Daniel Beban', Radio New Zealand,

https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2510995

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT⁸⁶

3.1. Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess architectural, cultural, historical, social and traditional significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Architectural Significance or Value

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has architectural value as an example of the Gothic Revival style of church architecture which was characteristic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in New Zealand. Its steep-pitched roof and pointed lancet windows are representative features of this style. Comprised of mainly original fabric, the building's architectural integrity and the design of prominent New Zealand architect, Frederick de Jersey Clere, has not been compromised.

Cultural Significance or Value

⁸⁶ For the relevant sections of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 see Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information.

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has cultural significance as a worshiping space for the Anglican Chinese community in Wellington between 1906 and 1956. The majority of those who attended church services there shared not just a religion, but also the heritage, beliefs, values, languages and customs of China. The cultural significance of the Chinese Mission Hall (Former) was enhanced by its location within the bounds of what was historically Wellington's Chinatown. As 'Fred's' it has also been a place of importance to the Wellington arts community.

Historical Significance or Value

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has a historic association with the establishment and internal migration of Chinese people in New Zealand and their integration into Anglicised society. There was movement in the late 1800s as some Chinese goldminers left the depleted goldfields of the South Island and migrated to settle in urban centres. In Wellington these former miners found occupation in various businesses around the city. The hall has historical significance as a centre of the Anglican Chinese Mission, where the Chinese community could study both Christianity and the English language. Today (2021) the broken lettering of the sign 'Chinese Mission Hall' is especially significant as one of the last explicit vestiges indicating the historic connection of the Chinese community with this part of Wellington.

Social Significance or Value

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) has a history of bringing people together. From its 1906 opening until its congregation moved to new premises in Taranaki Street in 1956, it was a central element of Wellington's Chinatown, bringing Wellington's Chinese residents together to meet for social, educational and spiritual purposes. Anglican Lay Evangelist Daniel Wong (c. 1864-1908) and those who continued the work after he passed on, taught the congregation both Christianity and English. Latterly, the hall continued to bring people together – first as the venue for the Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society and then as a 'Menzshed'.

Traditional Significance or Value

Between 1906 and 1956 the Chinese Mission Hall (Former) was at the centre of the religious worship and spiritual life of Wellington's Anglican Chinese community. The weekly pattern of regular church attendance, English language gospel study, Sunday School and the annual celebrations of the Christian calendar meant that for 50 years the Hall was central to the spiritual traditions of many in this community.

3.2. Section 66 (3) Assessment

This place was assessed against the Section 66(3) criteria and found to qualify under the following criteria: a and k. The assessment concludes that this place should be listed as a Category 2 historic place.

- (a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

The history of the Chinese Mission Hall (Former) reflects the migration of the Chinese community in New Zealand from the increasingly depleted South Island goldfields into urban centres like Wellington. It was also an important centre for Chinese Anglicanism in New Zealand.

- (k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) was part of Wellington's historic Chinatown. Established in Te Aro at the end of the nineteenth century, centered around Haining and Frederick Streets, the area developed into a social and economic centre for the Chinese community which came to be known as 'Tong Yan Gai'. The area also housed other community groups, including the Tung Jung Association; the Poonyu Association (later renamed the Poon Fah Association) and the Seyip Association – each established specifically to support those who originated from their respective counties; the Chee Kung Tong and the Chinese Association (Chung Wah Wui Koon, later the Wah Kiu Leung Hap Wui).

Summary of Significance or Values

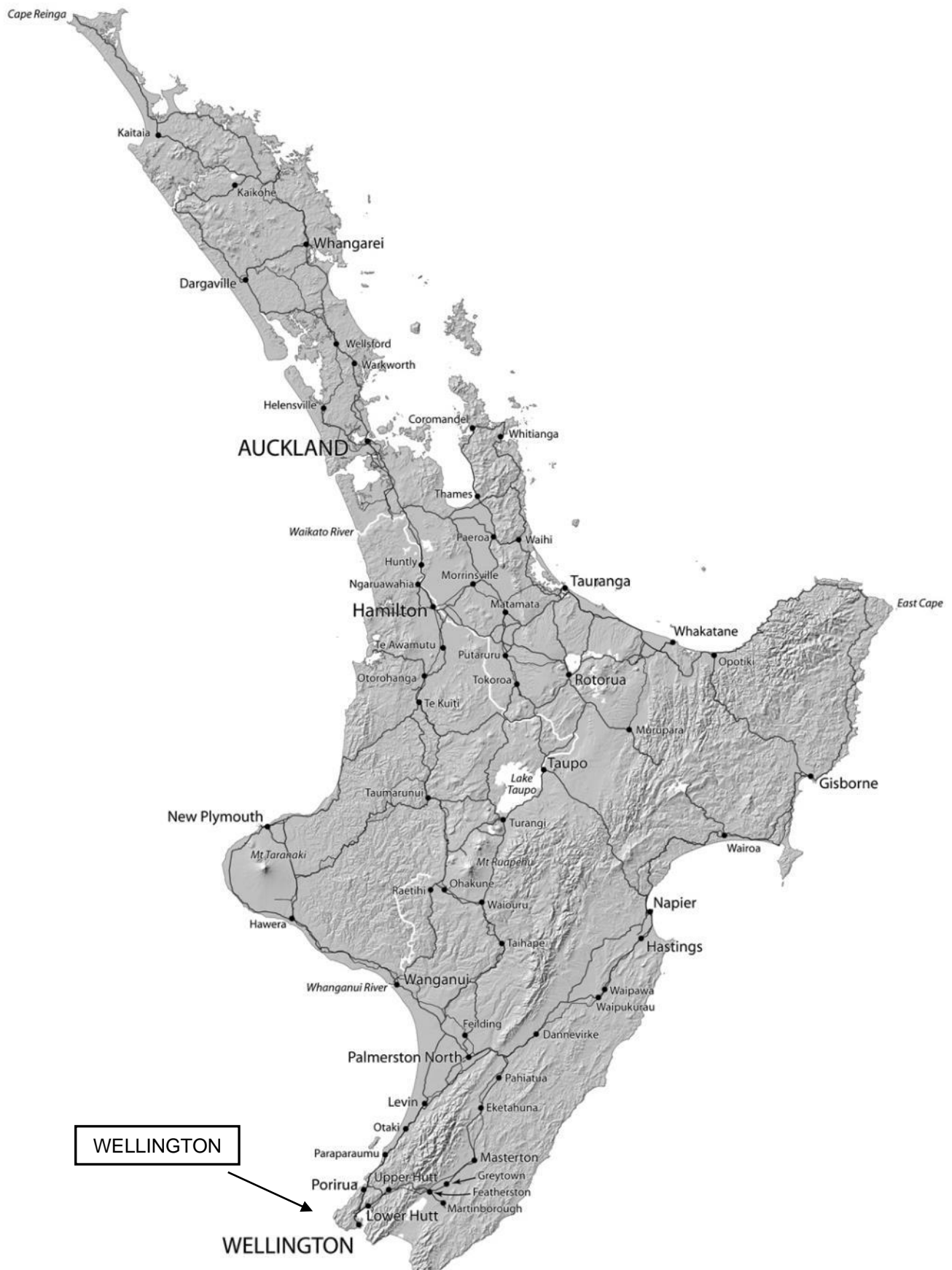
The Chinese Mission Hall (Former), located on the northern side of Frederick Street in Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington's central suburb of Te Aro, was designed by nationally significant architect Frederick de Jersey Clere (1856-1952) and completed in 1906. It has historical significance as it is one of the last remaining buildings of Wellington's historic Chinatown. It also has social significance as a community hub, first as a church and mission hall, later as a venue for the Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society and then as a Wellington 'Menzshed'. The Chinese Mission Hall (Former) was an important place for the Wellington's early twentieth century Chinese community because it was a centre of cultural

exchange and for developing their spiritual traditions. The Hall has a high level of authenticity as there is a significant amount of original fabric.

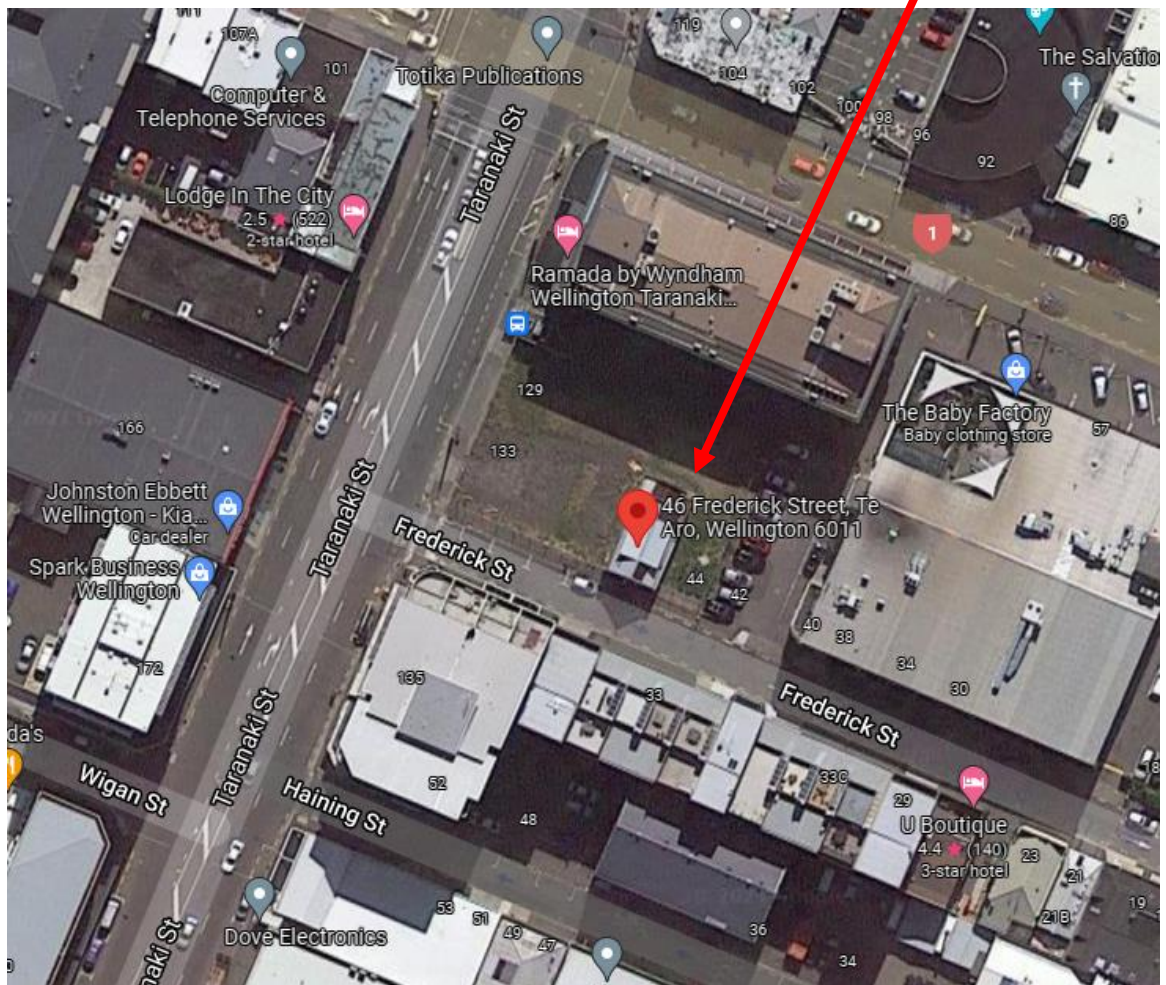
APPENDICES

4.1 Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps



Quick Maps



46 Frederick Street is located within the Wellington suburb of Te Aro. Google maps.

Maps of Extent



Extent includes the land described as Pt Section 231 (RT WN141/92), Town of Wellington, Wellington Land District, and the structure known as Chinese Mission Hall (Former) thereon. Quickmap with Google maps overlay.

Current Identifier



**RECORD OF TITLE
UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 2017
FREEHOLD
Search Copy**




R.W. Muir
Registrar-General
of Land

Identifier WN141/92
Land Registration District Wellington
Date Issued 26 July 1905

Estate Fee Simple
Area 139 square metres more or less
Legal Description Part Section 231 City of Wellington
Registered Owners
Snefru Limited

Interests
8614724.1 Mortgage to ANZ National Bank Limited - 20.10.2010 at 9:21 am
8703231.5 Variation of Mortgage 8614724.1 - 28.2.2011 at 4:06 pm

Transaction ID 64753549
Client Reference mvwilliamson002

Search Copy Dated 18/05/21 2:23 pm, *Page* 1 of 2
Register Only

4.2 Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Plans



Fig 1: Clere, Frederick de Jersey 1856-1952: Chinese Mission room, Wellington 1905. Ref: Plans-80-0866. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

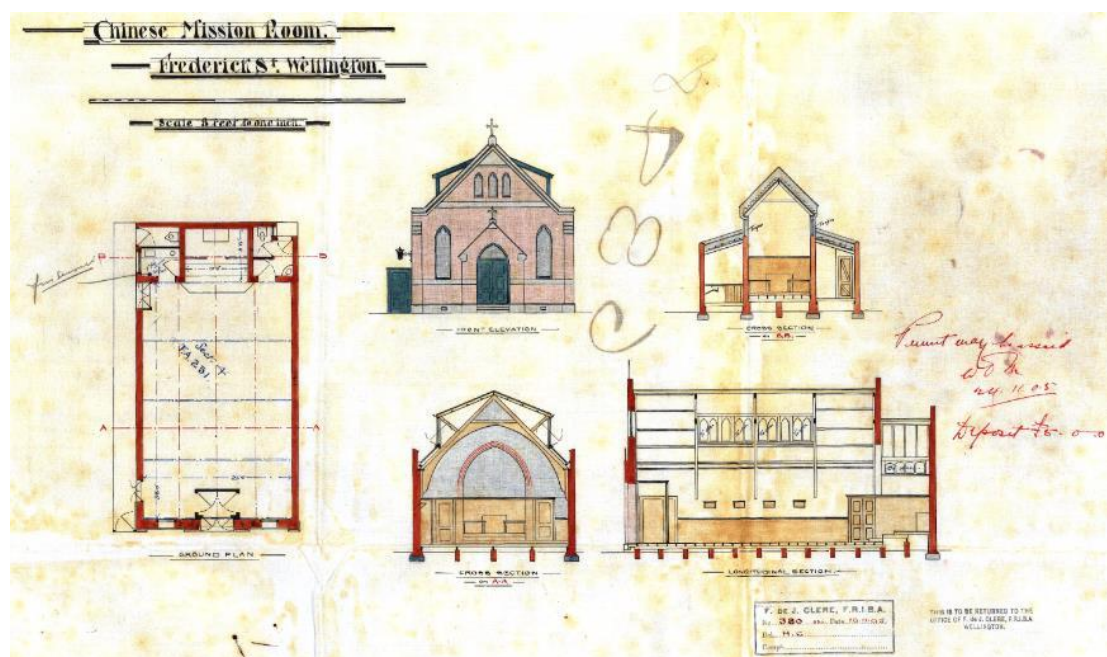


Fig 2: 'Building Application Form', 00053-123-6848 (1), Wellington City Council Archives.



Fig 3: Chinese boys in Wellington with semaphore flags that spell 'China'. Seyip Association: Group portraits and photographs relating to the Anglican Mission Church in the 1920s. Ref: 1/2-168564-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. [/records/22751251](#)

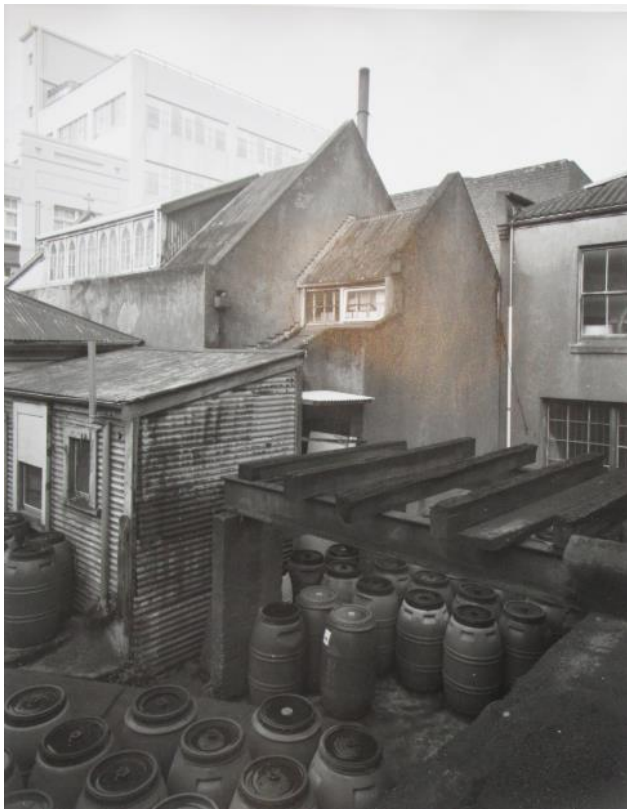


Fig 4: Rear, Jan 2000, Andrew Ross



Fig 5: Interior, Sept 2007, Andrew Ross



Fig 6: Interior, Sept 2007, Andrew Ross

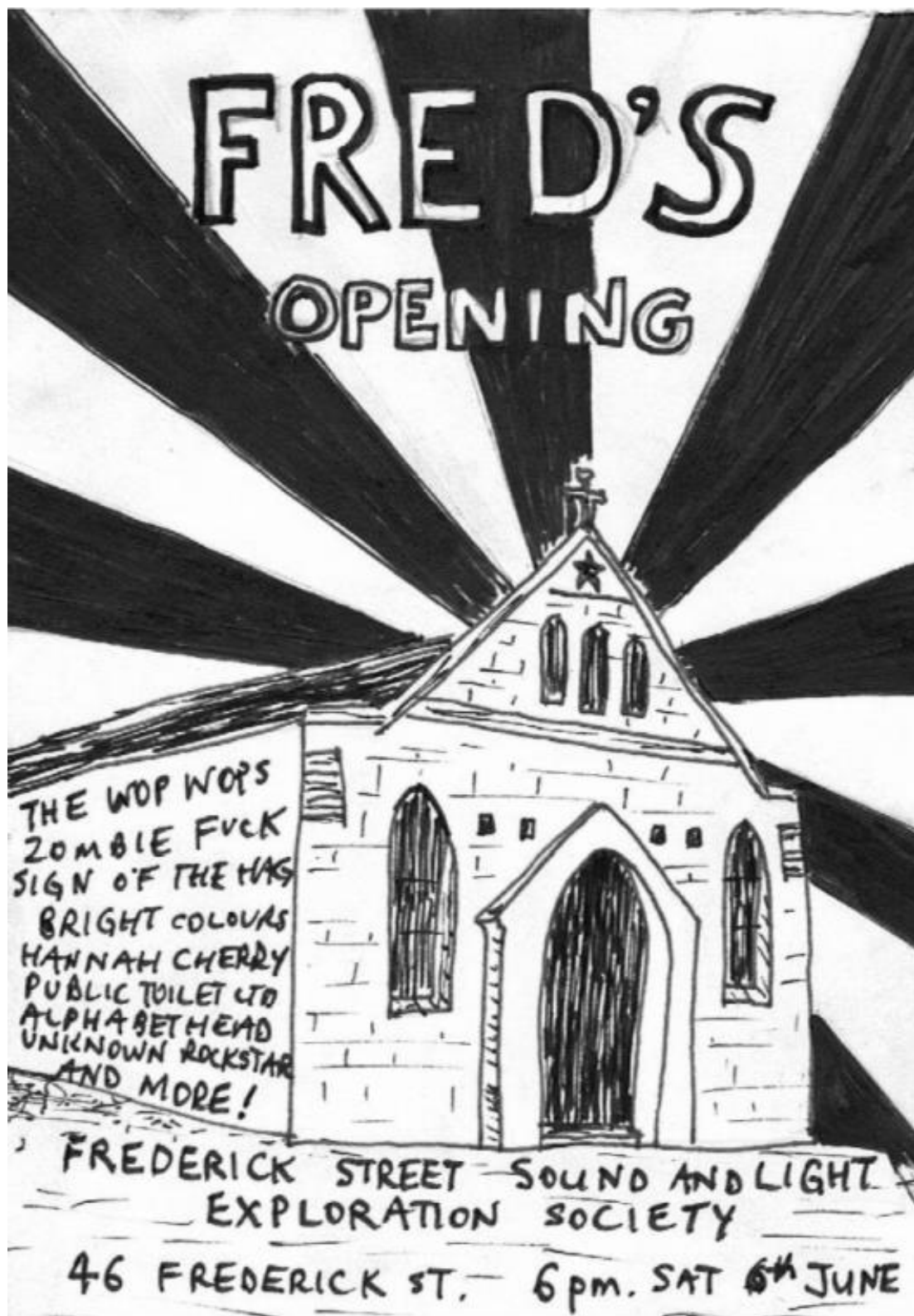


Fig 7: This poster advertises 'Fred's' opening on 6 June 2009 as the venue for the Frederick Street Sound and Light Exploration Society. <https://www.danielbeban.nz/Fred-s>, accessed 17 June 2021.

4.3 Appendix 3: Visual Aids to Physical Information

Current Photographs of Place



Fig 8: Exterior



Fig 9: Interior