



King's Wharf (1909)

1.0 Outline History

Named after King Edward VII (who reigned from 1901 to 1910), King's Wharf was designed in 1906 and completed in 1909. The contractors were C. F. Pulley and Co, and the contract price was £79,440.

Shortly after the completion of the wharf two stores, Sheds 31 and 33 were constructed along the middle of the wharf. These were used for storage, particularly wool. Early photographs show that railway tracks were laid on each side of the sheds, for convenient distribution of cargo by rail. Large mobile cranes on either side facilitated the loading and unloading of cargo.

As well as the day-to-day workings of the wharf, it was also the scene of several special events. On 23 October 1913, at the beginning of the 1913 Waterfront Strike the *Rimutaka* was being unloaded at King's Wharf by non-union labour when it was stormed by striking workers and several ship's officers were assaulted. Within days the port had ground to a standstill.

On 2 May 1940 the wharf was packed with family and friends to farewell men of the Second Echelon 2 NZEF to World War II. Two years later 'on a cold grey morning of 14 June, a large two-funnelled liner berthed at King's Wharf'. This was the 'USS Wakefield' bringing over 6,000 marines of the 1st Echelon of the 1st Marine Division to New Zealand. Shed 33 was demolished in 1943 and replaced by a new shed.

With the advent of containerisation in the 1960s, major reclamation was carried out in the area, with Pipitea Wharf becoming fully landlocked and the reclamation extending to enclose the eastern edge and part of the southern end of King's Wharf; the western edge remains open to the sea.

CentrePort demolished the two wharf sheds in the early 2000s. A new coolstore was constructed on the wharf by the privately-owned Kings Wharf Holdings but this company was later liquidated. In 2008-09, CentrePort upgraded the wharf. Contractors Brian Perry Civil demolished 7000m² of decking (exposed to the weather since the demolition of the wharf sheds) and replaced it with post tension concrete slabs, removed and replaced 550 original hardwood joists and 400 metres of damaged cap beams, repaired piles, installed new bollards and rebuilt the southern end of the wharf. Kings Wharf was by then the base of Strait Shipping; its offices on the middle of wharf were moved to the northern end as part of this work, while the Bluebridge ferry terminal (2003) sits on reclaimed land between Kings and Glasgow wharves.

Major damage to the wharf in the Kaikoura earthquake of 14 November 2014 has required the removal of buildings and significant repairs and strengthening, including the removal of the southern tip of the wharf. The deck is presently used for marshalling of vehicles for Bluebridge ferries.

2.0 Location

2.1. Map



2.2. Legal description

None evident.

3.0 Physical Description

3.1. Setting

King's Wharf was originally a finger wharf, oriented approximately north - south and parallel to others nearby including Pipitea Wharf to the north and Glasgow to the south. Today the eastern side has been subsumed by reclamation, and the wharf forms part of a large area used for the storage of freight and containers; the western side remains clear of reclamation and boats can still moor alongside it.

The wharf is part of the working area of the port controlled by CentrePort Wellington, so that the setting is an industrial one of containers, cranes, rail and trucking. It is not able to be visited, but clearly viewed from the seaward side.

3.2. Item

Kings Wharf in its original dimensions was 263 metres long by 13.7 metres wide and was founded on 903 piles which were sheathed in Munz metal. These supported a heavy superstructure of timber beams, joists, bracing, decking and bollards. The complete set of engineering drawings for the wharf and the two sheds (which were part of the contract let to C. F. Pulley) still exist in Wellington City Archives, and these provide a full description of the structures in their original form.

CC, description of current wharf in here ...

3.3. Chronology, modifications

date	Activity
1908	King's Wharf completed; Sheds 31 and 33 built on the wharf.
1943	New shed built to replace Shed 33.
1960s	Reclamation enclosed the eastern edge of the wharf.
c.2000	Sheds on the wharf demolished and a new coldstore constructed.
2008	Wharf foundations upgraded, 7,000 square metres of deck replaced in concrete.

4.0 Evaluation of Significance

The criteria for this assessment of significance are taken from policy 20 of the proposed Regional Policy Statement (GWRC 2009).

4.1. Summary statement

Kings Wharf has some heritage value for its century and more of near continuous use for port activities and its distinctive finger form. The wharf is much changed but does retain some heritage fabric in its foundations.

4.2. Historic Values

These relate to the history of a place and how it demonstrates important historical themes, events, people or experiences.

King's Wharf has historic significance for having been an integral part of the shipping and cargo handling facilities of Wellington's working port for well over a century. It also has representative value for this period of use. It has some additional value for having been the point of troop embarkation during World War II.

4.3. Physical Values

Architectural Values

The place is notable for its style, design, form, scale, materials, ornamentation, period, craftsmanship or other architectural values.

The architectural values of King's Wharf relate to those aesthetic values that arise from a well-designed engineering structure, one that is fit for its purpose in servicing a heavy industrial process. It is a logical, intelligent design, making sound use of materials that were chosen to fulfil a demanding engineering brief.

Technological Values

The place provides evidence of the history of technological development or demonstrates innovation or important methods of construction or design.

The technological value of the wharf is significant for its design and construction in heavy timber, enhanced by drawings that document the design in every detail, and exemplified by its having had a life of over 100 years.

Integrity

The significant physical values of the place have been largely unmodified.

The wharf retains some original sub-deck framing and a reasonable number of piles, but the majority of the wharf and its decking has been replaced and all the buildings that were on the wharf have been removed.

Age

The place is particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

The wharf, a little over 100 years old, is not particularly old in the context of wharf structures in the port and harbour.

Group or Townscape Values

The place is strongly associated with other natural or cultural features in the landscape or townscape, and/or contributes to the heritage values of a wider townscape or landscape setting, and/or it is a landmark.

King's Wharf has some associational value with the Glasgow Wharf and other timber wharves further west and south; it reinforces the strong geometric pattern of the north-south orientation of Wellington's inner harbour wharves. The townscape value of the wharf is very slight, by the nature of its discreet form and its connection to the reclamation and its location in a working port area that is closed to the public.

4.4. Social Values

Sentiment

The place has strong or special associations with a particular cultural group or community.

None that is especially significant.

Recognition

The place is held in high public esteem for historic heritage values or contribution to the sense of identity of a community.

King's Wharf could not be seen to hold any place of note in the public esteem.

4.5. Surroundings

The setting or context of the place contributes to an appreciation and understanding of its character, history and/or development.

The surroundings of King's Wharf are entirely appropriate for such a structure, since the activities it supports are fundamentally those that it was

built for. It is part of an industrial shipping landscape, and fits in this context, albeit that it abuts the reclamation.

4.6. Rarity

The place is unique or rare within the district or region.

The wharf is not rare, but it is noteworthy in being built in timber.

4.7. Representativeness

The place is a good example of its type or era.

It is a good representative example of a timber wharf of the first decade of the 20th century.

5.0 Recommendation

This wharf does not have sufficient heritage value to merit listing on the GWRC heritage inventory.

6.0 Photographs



The south end of Kings Wharf.

7.0 References

Evening Post, 25 March 1909 p.8, 26 March 1909 p.4

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 'Wellington Harbour Board Historic Area (Volume II)', pp.21-25

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Wellington City Archives

AC016:3:138, Kings Wharf and erect Stores [Shed 31 and 33], 1906

AC046:42:2, Kings Wharf - Amended Details of Landing Steps, 1907

OMAC046:42:3, Kings Wharf - General plan of railway sidings and approaches, 1908

00206:1:24, Kings Wharf, Lambton Harbour, c1945