

222 High Street

222 High Street, located in one of the most prominent streets in Christchurch and opposite the bustling City Mall, was unique both historically and in terms of its architectural style.

Constructed at the end of the First World War for Stewart Dawson,¹ this four-storey building is still occasionally called the Stewart Dawson building due to its long association with the jewellers. “Stewart Dawson and Co., Jewellers and Silversmith” was founded in the early 1870s in Liverpool, England, before expanding to British colonies.² The Christchurch branch of the firm, originally located near 222 High Street, was the first of many stores in New Zealand.³ “Stewart Dawson and Co. NZ” was on the building’s Certificate of Title until 1991,⁴ when it moved to the Colombo and High Street intersection.⁵ However, the construction date “1918” and “Stewart Dawson and Co, Estd. 1871” remained on the centre of the building’s frontage above the oriel windows.⁶

The architects Collins and Harman overcame the challenge posed by the triangular shaped land parcel by designing a corner-site building with a triangular frontage.⁷ With its pilaster features and arched windows, the building was classical in style.⁸ The oriel windows, decorative cornice and balustrade also further accentuated the corner design of the building.⁹ Collins and Harman designed each floor according to its prospective occupants, which, other than Stewart Dawson, included an optical department, dentist, general offices and a photographic studio.¹⁰

The Stewart Dawson building was renamed the “Jean Jones” building after the clothing store which occupied the premises from 1992.¹¹ 222 High Street was home to Christchurch city centre store of City Chic at the time of 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes.¹² This chain store was forced to close after decision was made to demolish the building.

¹ Christchurch City Council, *Christchurch City Plan- Listed Heritage Item and Setting Heritage Assessment- Statement of Significance for Jean Jones/Stewart Dawson-222 High Street*, (Christchurch: Christchurch City Council, c2009).

² Christchurch City Council, *Jean Jones/Stewart Dawson-222 High Street*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Photograph “Stewart Dawson and Company Ltd, High Street, Christchurch c1901,” taken by Chris Taylor, University of Canterbury, c1980s.