

## HERITAGE STATEMENT

### 50 CATHEDRAL SQUARE – WARNERS HISTORIC HOTEL



**PHOTOGRAPH – WARNERS HISTORIC HOTEL**

#### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Warners Historic Hotel is listed in the Christchurch City Plan as a Group 3 protected heritage building and has a high degree of significance. It is also registered by the Historic Places Trust as a Category II Historic Place. This is primarily based on the building's physical presence in Cathedral Square, the city's foremost public space, and Warners' relationship with neighbouring historic buildings that together form the most intact piece of townscape in the heart of Christchurch.

Warners Hotel has social and historical heritage value. From the early 1860s onwards a hotel or tavern has occupied this site in the north-west corner of Cathedral Square. The name 'Warners' has been in use since 1873 after hotelier WF Warner took over part of the present site and subsequently extended the land and altered the building. The site acted as a transport terminus for early coach services in Christchurch and therefore has always been a hub of central city activity.

The bulk of the present building was completed in 1902 for Percy Herman to provide accommodation for 200 guests. Since that date the hotel has undergone several alterations and changes in ownership.

Warners has architectural and aesthetic significance and owes most of its current form to renowned architect Joseph Maddison. JC Maddison (1850-1923), was a prominent and prolific Christchurch architect. Maddison commenced architectural practice in Christchurch

in 1872, and designed a great number of commercial buildings and also residential and industrial buildings throughout his career.

Maddison mainly designed in variations of the classical manner, and his buildings are characterised by a large scale and the use of brickwork. Some of Maddison's other notable buildings include the Government buildings, the Carlton Hotel, Zetland Hotel, Clarendon Hotel, Belfast freezing works, Wood's Mill and the NZ International Exhibition building in Hagley Park.

Maddison was responsible for the 3-storey masonry building facing Cathedral Square. It was designed in the Italianate Classical style, which determined the design of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor addition designed by the Luttrell Brothers in 1910. This in turn influenced the extensions along the south elevation.

The west elevation is the front face of the building with a clearly distinguished 3 bay entry element comprising an iron portico and balcony. Corinthian columns frame the recessed balcony at first floor. The pattern of window forms and horizontal coursing wraps the two public elevations. The south elevation has an interesting mix of window grouping reflecting the development of this wing.

Warners has a long standing place in the community consciousness as a social gathering point and so has cultural heritage value. While the original intention of Cathedral Square was to be a central collegiate space modelled on Christ's Church College at Oxford University, the reality of colonial cultural development was rather different. This meant Cathedral Square became the home of the Anglican Cathedral as well as many of the city's taverns, hotels, newspaper premises, government departments and later banks. These all depended on the Square as a transport hub and the point of arrive and departure to and from the city. Warners Hotel was and remains a significant part of the cultural fabric of the city centre.

Warners Hotel has considerable contextual significance as it sits on a prominent corner site of the foremost public space in Christchurch. Warners is one of several important listed heritage buildings in this area – with others including the former *Star* Building (Gloucester Street), the former *Lyttelton Times* Building, (Cathedral Square) These buildings are also notable examples of the work of many of Christchurch's early and most talented architects - Collins and Harman (former *Star* Building), the Luttrell Brothers (former *Lyttelton Times* Building) and J. C. Maddison (*Warners*) . Together with buildings such as the former Government buildings, the Press, and the Cathedral; the Theatres Royal and the Coachman in Gloucester Street; and the former Trinity Congregational Church and State Insurance Company building in Worcester Street, they form one of the most significant precincts of late Victorian and Edwardian commercial and public buildings not only in Christchurch but also New Zealand.

Archaeological significance is possible on this site as pre-1900 human activity is known to have been present and active. Therefore the site has potential to hold archaeological evidence.

#### **REFERENCES:**

CCC heritage files and plans

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