

**Repertory Theatre****1882 - present****List Entry Information**

List Entry	None
Authority Plan Scheduling	Whanganui District Plan (PC55 17.04.19) - Appendix A Heritage Items Heritage Inventory Item No. 348, Class B, (PC 29), 2013

**Location**

Physical	4 Ridgway Street, Central, Whanganui
Legal description	Pt Section 548, Town of Wanganui
Owner	Whanganui District Council
District	Whanganui District
Region	Horizons (Manawatu-Whanganui)

**Details**

Name/Title	Repertory Theatre
Type	Theatre
Architect/ Designer	John Robinson Wright 1882 Original Alfred Atkins 1894 & 1904 extensions Don Wilson 1957 alterations
Builder/Maker	Saunders and Griffin 1957 alterations
Medium and Materials	Reinforced concrete, Coromandel granite
Place Made	Whanganui
Measurements	41 feet x 44 feet (original)
Former use	Library/Reading Room
Other	Also known as Wanganui Repertory Theatre

## History

In 1879 the government made available a section of the reserve with a frontage onto Ridgway Street. Funds for the building were raised by exhibitions and by the sale of debentures as the government had declined to assist with the construction of the building.<sup>1</sup>

Whanganui's first public library was opened in December 1882. The original plans for the building were scaled back due to the cost and location of the site in Ridgway Street.<sup>2</sup> & <sup>3</sup>

The library was built with expansion in mind; possibly for a museum or an art gallery. It was also envisaged that an upper story would eventually be added above the proposed wings and the back portion of the present building.<sup>4</sup>

In 1894 it was extended after a bequest from the estate of William Alexander financed the addition of the west wing. The east wing was added in 1904 with the aid of a bequest from Thomas Reid.<sup>5</sup> The building remained the public library until 1933 when the Alexander Library opened. Since then the building has housed the Repertory Theatre and has undergone some modifications, however, the exterior of the building has remained relatively unchanged.<sup>6</sup>

## Physical

The Ridgway Street frontage of the theatre; the 1894 and 1904 wings on either side of the original 1882 building remain; the central part of the façade was altered in 1957

Building needs earthquake strengthening with a conservation and engineer's report to provide advice on how best to go about this. Front façade could be improved.

Status: Whanganui District Plan Heritage Inventory Item 348 (Plan Change April, 2019),

Thematic Context: Cultural, Civic

Significance: Historic, Cultural, Context

Integrity: Altered to accommodate theatre from 1933; major façade and other alterations in 1957.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wanganui Herald*, 9 May 1882, p.2

<sup>2</sup> *Wanganui Chronicle*, 28 December 1882, p.3

<sup>3</sup> *Wanganui Chronicle*, 7 July 1882, p.2

<sup>4</sup> *Wanganui Herald*, 30 January 1883, p.2

<sup>5</sup> Wanganui Borough Council 1908 Insurance Assessment Plan

<sup>6</sup> <http://maps.whanganui.govt.nz/Wanganui/Photos/HeritageInventory/348.pdf>

## Significance Assessment

Aesthetic Significance or Value

Architectural Significance or Value

Cultural Significance or Value

Historical Significance or Value

Scientific Significance or Value

Social Significance or Value

Technological Significance or Value

Archaeological Significance or Value

## Sources

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>

Wanganui Herald, 9 May, 1882

Wanganui Chronicle, 28 December, 1882

Wanganui District Council Building files:

Wanganui Borough Council 1908 Insurance Assessment Plan

Wanganui Borough Council Register of Building Permits, Archives Ref AAF 174:1 –

<http://maps.whanganui.govt.nz/Wanganui/Photos/HeritageInventory/348.pdf>

<http://www.whanganuilibrary.com/site/pages/heritage/queens-park-tour/repertory-theatre.php>



## Photographs



Repertory Theatre, Wanganui Public Library, c1885.



Kyle Dalton, Whanganui History and Heritage for the Whanganui District Council, May 2019.



## Visual Aid



Site No. 18 Repertory Theatre Pukenuamu Queen's Park Reserve Site Plan 2019