

# Soldiers' Club Building (former RSA Building)

Corner, 1-9 George Street and Cuba Street, Palmerston North

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NZHPT Registration Number: 1269  
NZHPT Registration Type: Historic Place – Category II  
NZHPT Registration Date: 02/07/82  
City/District Council: Palmerston North City Council  
District Plan Status: Category 2

Other Names: Soldiers Club Building; Anzac Club



## Brief History

This building was erected for the Anzac Club and Manawatu Patriotic Society in 1917 as a facility for servicemen returning from the First World War. Wealthy local farmer Percy A McHardy donated the land on which the building is situated and the Manawatu Patriotic Society undertook a major fund-raising campaign. The plans were drawn by Danish-born Palmerston North architect Ludolph Georg West, and his son Ernst West who together designed a number of buildings in Palmerston North. Other surviving examples of their work include (among others) the former Club Hotel (1905), the Manawatu-Kilwinning Masonic Lodge (1908), the First Church of Christ Scientist (1931) and the Ward Bothers Building (1935). George West was also Mayor of Palmerston North from 1886 to 1887, a Borough Councillor and a prominent freemason, and Ernst West was a Borough Councillor from 1921 to 1925.

The design is based upon the New World Regency and later Georgian styles, characterised by simple hipped roofs, flat dormer windows set below the roofline, and colonnaded verandas. The veranda, which overhangs the footpath, was partially glazed-in as early as the 1920s and the remaining balcony area was enclosed in 1945. The building is a unique example of this style in New Zealand. Construction of the building cost £6000 and the principal contractor was Rolf & Dickel.

From the end of World War I the building served as the Returned Soldiers' Clubrooms (later the RSA) until December 1966 when they moved to new premises in Broadway. Anchor Holdings purchased the building in the early 1960s and the building changed hands again when the Palmerston North City Council purchased the building in 1974 with the intention of turning the site into a car parking area. However with strong opposition from within the Council to the demolition of the building, discussions about the fate of the site continued until 1993 when refurbishment began and the building was sold. Today the ground floor of the building houses a popular café/restaurant and the upper floor is rented as apartments.

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*Principal Sources:*

Bowman, I. and Kelly, M, *Palmerston North CBD Heritage Inventory*. Palmerston North, Palmerston North City Council, 1993.

Ian Matheson City Archives, 36/81 part 1.

*Palmerston North City Heritage Trail*. Palmerston North City Council, 1993.

Palmerston North City Library Photograph Collection Cha7;Bc 162, 233, 234-37, 357; Z 5157.