



Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Harlin's Cottage

Address

63 Lemon Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

This building has historic significance as a rare surviving worker's dwelling from the early period of organised European settlement in New Plymouth. Harlin's cottage was constructed circa 1859-60 and has interest as an uncommon example of an early New Plymouth cottage clad in plain horizontal weatherboards, rather than the locally common vertical board and battens. The cottage retains a high degree of integrity compared to other surviving New Plymouth buildings of this style and age and contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description PT Section 1570 Town of New Plymouth

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction circa 1859-60

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Unknown

History

Town Section 1570 was originally allocated to Robert Singlehurst, and he is noted as being in rates arrears during 1855 and 1856.¹ It seems Singlehurst never occupied the property, and he wasn't formally recognised as the recipient of the Crown Grant until 1884, with the transaction not recorded in the Land Deeds Register until 1924.² Singlehurst's failure to pay the rates resulted in the property being sold by the Provincial Government, with ownership conveyed from the Superintendent to 'Ritchie' (probably solicitor James Ritchie), in October 1856.³ Two years later, in November 1859, the section was purchased by William Harlin, and it seems likely the present cottage was constructed soon after.⁴

William Harlin married Ann Alison Hicton, a widow, in 1857, and the couple went on to have several children. William frequently appeared before the Police Court for a number of offences, such as in 1866, when he was charged with neglecting to support his children; at this time was noted as being a shoemaker.⁵ In September 1873 he was convicted of assaulting his wife, and fined £5 plus costs, or one month in prison.⁶ Harlin was also an alcoholic, and in March 1875, during a 'fit of drunkenness', he broke the front and back windows of the house in which his family are living.⁷ This was very likely the present cottage at 63 Lemon Street, and for this he was sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour.⁸

It seems imprisonment was no deterrent, and soon after being released he was convicted of stealing 21s, a bottle of gin, a bottle of brandy, and a bottle of cloves from the Red House Hotel; this time he was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour.⁹ William's antics continued well into old age, and when convicted of drunkenness in March 1900, he was ordered to forfeit the next two instalments of his pension.¹⁰ In 1901, William was again sentenced to prison for 'having no visible means of support'.¹¹ He was described at this time as an 'old and decrepit man', who could not be

¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 November 1855. and *Taranaki Herald*, 18 October 1856

² Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 10 November 1866, page 3

⁶ *Taranaki Herald*, 3 September 1873, page 2

⁷ *Taranaki Herald*, 24 March 1875, page 2

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Taranaki Herald*, 17 July 1875, page 3

¹⁰ *Taranaki Daily News*, 8 March 1900, page 2

¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 5 September 1901, page 2

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controlled by his family, and who had to be turned away from the old peoples home as he 'persisted in stealing the food of the other inmates'.¹² William died a few years later on 11 May 1905, and is buried in New Plymouth's Te Henui Cemetery.



Detail from view of New Plymouth from Fort Niger taken between late-1880 and late-1883, National Library, Fred B. Butler Collection, PAColl-4127-01

Sometime during the 1860s it seems William became estranged from his family and moved out of the house. In 1866, the property was conveyed to Henry Govett, and from then until 1919, the Land Deeds Register is incomplete, with the ownership history unclear.¹³ Ann may have become the owner, and she is listed as the ratepayer for the 1875-76 rating year, which is the oldest known surviving rates book held in NPDC's archives.¹⁴ At this time the property was valued at £15 and the presence of a fire rate indicates that a building was present on the section at this time.¹⁵ The house is clearly indicated on a map of New Plymouth drawn by surveyor Thomas Kingwell Skinner in 1880.¹⁶

William Harlin is listed as residing in Lemon Street up until the 1875-76 edition of Wises Street Directory, and thereafter no Harlin's are listed as residing in New Plymouth. It seems that Mrs Harlin may have shifted to central or South Taranaki to live with her children, and the house was probably rented from this time. Ann Harlin died aged 88 years at Hawera during June 1915, and is buried at Te Henui Cemetery.¹⁷ Town Section 1570, Lemon Street, with dwelling house, was later advertised for sale to 'close an estate', with the auction to be held on Saturday 11 September 1915 at Newton King's Mart.¹⁸

It's unclear who the property was sold to following the auction, but in November 1919 it was conveyed from 'Hopkins' to labourer John Jordan, who is listed in Wises Street Directories as residing at the property from 1915 onwards.¹⁹ Jordan had the section subdivided in 1924, selling the eastern portion to Bertie Roberts, who had the bungalow at 65 Lemon Street constructed the following year.²⁰ The property title was issued under the Land Transfer Act in 1928. John Jordan remained living in the

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

¹⁴ New Plymouth Town Board Rating Book 1875-76, NPDC Archives

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand, Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

¹⁷ *Taranaki Daily News*, 26 June 1915, page 7

¹⁸ *Taranaki Daily News*, 8 September 1915, page 8; *Taranaki Herald*, 9 September 1915, page 2

¹⁹ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand; Wises Street Directory 1915

²⁰ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand; NPBC Building Register Book 1922-27, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

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cottage until his death on 12 February 1943 and is buried in the Te Henui Cemetery.²¹ In 1976-77 the rear lean-to was replaced with a third gable of slightly larger dimensions than the original gables.

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

Harlin's Cottage is located in a city fringe street several blocks from New Plymouth's CBD, and just west of New Plymouth's main southern entrance on Eliot Street/SH3. This area was settled early in New Plymouth's history, and the surrounding blocks contain a number of dwellings constructed during the mid-Nineteenth Century; including Cassel's Cottage at 99 Lemon Street (circa 1840s-60s), and the 'Hen and Chickens' Historic Area on nearby Pendarves Street (1860s). Whilst development pressures since the 1970s have resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, the area still retains a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

Originally constructed as a single-storey double-gabled cottage, later additions have resulted in a triple-gabled building with a small rear extension, and carport projecting from the western wall. The exterior walls of the original cottage are clad in wide rough-sawn horizontal kauri weatherboards, and those of the extension in horizontal fibre cement boards of similar dimensions. Plain horizontal weatherboards are somewhat uncommon for an 1850s-60s building in New Plymouth, with the predominant cladding at this time being vertical board and battens. A feature of the building, and a marker of an early construction date, are the andesite stone foundations; likely obtained from a nearby river or the foreshore. The roof is sheathed in corrugated steel, although this was probably originally clad in timber shingles.

The front (SE) elevation is symmetrically composed with a central entrance door and shallow gabled open porch, flanked by two twelve-light double-hung sashes. The front door, although dating to the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, was fitted as a second-hand replacement during the 1970s or 1980s. About the same time, the lower six panes of the western sash window were replaced with a single large pane; reinstating the wooden muntins in this window would enhance the aesthetic appeal and symmetry of the frontage.

An external brick chimney rises from the north-eastern wall of the original rear gable. An identical chimney was originally located on the north-eastern wall of the front gable, although this has since been removed and replaced with a pair of casement windows. On the south-western elevation, a pair of wooden casements are located in the front gable, and a four-light double-hung sash in the original rear gable. The 1970s extension incorporates windows in a variety of styles.

²¹ NPDC Cemetery Search, <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Cemetery-Search>; Accessed 20 February 2019



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Assessment:

Historical	This building principally has historic significance as a workers' cottage from the early period of organised European settlement in New Plymouth. The working class has until recently been largely silenced in the historical record, and this building offers valuable insights into the dwellings lived in by an under-studied, yet important societal group during the nineteenth century.	✓
Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	The cottage is somewhat unique in New Plymouth as an early surviving example of a building clad in horizontal weatherboards, rather than the locally common vertical board and battens.	✓
Setting and Context	Located near the street frontage, this building contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.	✓
Archaeology	As the cottage was constructed circa 1859-60, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900 human activity and has the potential to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.	✓
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	Despite minor exterior modifications and rear additions, the original cottage retains a high degree of integrity, and retains key features such as kauri weatherboard cladding and twelve-light sash windows.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓