

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Hinemoa Private Maternity Hospital (Former)

**Address**

240 Courtenay Street, New Plymouth



### **Statement of Significance**

For much of its early history this building was home to the Hinemoa Private Maternity Hospital. Operated by Miss Mabel Pike between 1908 and about 1919, Hinemoa was the birthplace of many babies; a number of whom are likely the ancestors of present New Plymouth residents. The home itself was designed by noted New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger and is an excellent example of an early 1900s bay villa. The building is well-maintained, retains a high degree of integrity, and contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.

## Legal Information and Heritage Status

<b>Legal Description</b>	PT Section 2071 Town of New Plymouth
<b>District Plan Item/ Map No.</b>	
<b>Heritage New Zealand List</b>	Not listed

## Construction Information

<b>Date of Construction</b>	1902
<b>Principal Materials</b>	Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel
<b>Construction Professionals</b>	Frank Messenger (architect)

## History

Town Section 2071 was purchased by George M. White from land agent William Courtney in March 1902.<sup>1</sup> A few months later, on June 9<sup>th</sup>, a permit was granted by the Borough Council to Mr G. White for the construction of a residence on Town Section 2071 Courtenay Street, with Frank Messenger noted as the architect, and the estimated construction cost being £500.<sup>2</sup> George White doesn't seem to have occupied the house, but rather his son, grocer Joseph Temple White is listed as the occupier in Stone's Street Directories.<sup>3</sup> It seems Joseph lived there with his family until about October 1905, when the house was advertised to let.<sup>4</sup>

The property was purchased by land agent Edward James Carthew in 1906, and subsequently reported by the firm Messrs Carthew and Co as a sale to a 'local investor'.<sup>5</sup> The villa became the home of Edward Carthew and his family until January 1908, when the property was purchased by Miss Mabel Nina Pike.<sup>6</sup> Miss Pike appears to have moved to New Plymouth from either Wellington or Nelson in the early 1900s, and her purchase heralded the beginning of the most significant period in the villa's history, with Pike soon to open the house as a maternity hospital.

By the early 1900s, maternity services in New Zealand were mainly provided by lay midwives who generally had low levels of local training under doctors or other midwives.<sup>7</sup> In urban centres, private maternity hospitals were relatively common, and these were often located within private residences.<sup>8</sup> The homes were generally run by women, with services usually provided by those who had been mothers themselves (although not always), and frequently by widows as a way of earning an income.<sup>9</sup>

The *Midwives Act 1904* was introduced to help curb New Zealand's high infant mortality rate, and for the first time established a national structure for training and registering midwives. This Act also established state-run maternity institutions known as 'St Helen's Hospitals'. However, as a state-run maternity hospital was not initially established in New Plymouth, private hospitals continued to cater

<sup>1</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>2</sup> NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

<sup>3</sup> Stones Street Directory, 1903

<sup>4</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 4 October 1905, page 1

<sup>5</sup> *Taranaki Daily News*, 4 July 1906, page 2

<sup>6</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>7</sup> Gilkinson, Andrea, Giddings, Lynne, and Smythe, Liz, 'The Shaping of Midwifery Education in Aotearoa, New Zealand', *New Zealand College of Midwives*, Vol. 47. No. 1, June 2013, pp.18-23.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

for the majority of births well into the Twentieth Century. Mabel Pike was registered as a Class A midwife in 1907, completing her training at the first Wellington St Helens Hospital in Rintoul Street.<sup>10</sup>

The first reference to the property being used as a maternity home is in late January 1908, when music teacher Miss Lisette Pike, Mabel's sister who also lived at the house, advertised for music pupils at 'Miss Pike's Private Hospital, Courtenay Street'.<sup>11</sup> The name 'Hinemoa' first appears around September 1908, and was used by the *Auckland Weekly News* when publishing images of the hospital in October 1908.<sup>12</sup>



'Hinemoa' in 1908, Supplement to the *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 October 1908, page 10, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19081029-10-2

The home was extended in 1910, with a permit granted by the Borough Council to Miss Pike on 15 February 1910 for a 'private hospital' on Town Sections 2071 and 2072; Frank Messenger was again the architect, and the estimated construction cost was £530. In February 1910, Miss Pike advertised that the new addition was to be open by 30<sup>th</sup> March, with fees of between £1 to £2 10s.<sup>13</sup>

When a Herald reporter was invited to view the extended hospital in October 1910, he held low expectations for the standard of the facility, because "... in the case of private hospitals or nursing homes a lower standard is only to be expected".<sup>14</sup> However, the reporter was quite surprised to find "... a hospital which compared favourably with the most up-to-date establishments".<sup>15</sup> The twelve rooms were "well-furnished and provided with electric light, electric heaters, and, in fact, with all the appliances which have been devised to abolish dust and dirt without sacrifice of the comfort which is

<sup>10</sup> 'Register of Nurses and Midwives', *Supplement to the New Zealand Gazette*, 29 April 1907, Issue 39, p.1191

<sup>11</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 24 January 1908, page 7

<sup>12</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 17 September 1908, page 7; Supplement to the *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 October 1908, page 10, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19081029-10-2

<sup>13</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 4 February 1910, page 7

<sup>14</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 21 October 1910, page 6

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

particularly welcome in times of illness".<sup>16</sup> It is unclear where the new wing was constructed and given that a building containing twelve rooms would be of a considerable size, it seems likely that it has since been demolished.

Miss Mabel Pike notified the public that from 1 October 1919 she would be closing her private hospital owing to ill health.<sup>17</sup> The furniture and effects from the hospital were later sold, with potential purchasers invited to inspect them at Hinemoa on Friday 5 September 1919.<sup>18</sup> However, it is unclear if Miss Pike entirely closed the hospital, as she is still listed as operating a private hospital from the site until the 1924 edition of *Wises Post Office Directory*.<sup>19</sup> From 1925 until 1934 Miss Lissette Pike is listed as the sole occupier, and then from 1936 onwards Mabel Pike is listed as the sole occupier.<sup>20</sup> Mabel appears to have lived in the house until her death on 6 May 1946, following which her body was transferred to Wellington, where she was cremated and her ashes interred at Karori Cemetery.<sup>21</sup>



Interior of 'Hinemoa' in 1908, Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News, 29 October 1908, page 10, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19081029-10-2

#### Reference Sources

See footnotes.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 26 August 1919, page 1

<sup>18</sup> *Taranaki Daily News*, 4 September 1919, page 1

<sup>19</sup> *Wises Post Office Directories*, 1909-1924

<sup>20</sup> *Wises Post Office Directories*, 1925-46

<sup>21</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 7 May 1946, page 10

## Description

This single-storey house is located in the eastern New Plymouth suburb of Strandon, just a short distance from the CBD. The area was settled early in New Plymouth's history, and whilst development pressures since the 1970s have resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, the area still retains a number of older dwellings that contribute to a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

The house is located on a small rise above street level, and a concrete retaining wall and modern concrete block garage have been constructed on the street frontage. A second modern garage in a style sympathetic to the house is located up a short driveway on the eastern side of the section. The rear of the section drops away steeply into a gully now occupied by Leach Street/Northgate; although this route originally carried New Plymouth's first railway from 1875 until it was realigned along the seafront in 1907.

Although not located on a corner section, this building follows the typical plan of a centre-gutter corner bay villa incorporating two projecting gables, return veranda and rear lean-to. The walls are clad in rusticated weatherboard, and the roof is sheathed in corrugated steel. A double brick chimney rises from the eastern north-south gable, with a single brick chimney located near the eastern side wall.

The front elevation incorporates a single faceted bay with three double-hung sash windows. The gable end incorporates decorative timbering, fretwork eaves brackets, and applied rosettes on the upper bargeboards. A return post and beam veranda with bullnose roof and fretwork links the northern and eastern bays. The boxed eaves above the veranda are decorated with slightly detailed wooden brackets.

The principal entrance door to the front elevation is timber, with two solid panels to the bottom, and a single glazed panel to the top. The door is flanked by narrow solid timber and glazed panels, with further glazed panels above. A pair of double-hung sash windows are located to the east of the front door. On the eastern elevation there is a single double-hung sash, and another panelled and glazed entrance door is located on the northern side of the eastern gable. A pair of double-hung sashes on the eastern gable end replace the original square bay window.

## Assessment:

<b>Historical</b>	This building principally has historic significance for its use as a private maternity hospital from 1908 until about 1919 and is associated with a period in New Zealand's history where many births occurred in such institutions.	✓
<b>Importance to Community</b>	For present New Plymouth residents whose ancestors were born at the hospital (of whom there are likely many), this building provides a tangible link to an important event in their family histories.	✓
<b>Architecture &amp; Construction</b>	This building is a good example of an early twentieth century villa designed by capable local architect Frank Messenger.	✓
<b>Setting and Context</b>	Located on a small rise above street level, this building makes a positive contribution to the character of the local streetscape.	✓
<b>Archaeology</b>	-	



## Heritage Buildings Report

**Representativeness, rarity and integrity**

This house is representative of the high-quality architect-designed villas which were once common in New Plymouth's CBD fringe streets. The building has been well-maintained, and consequently retains a high degree of integrity with many original external features surviving intact.

✓

**Meets threshold for listing** (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)

✓

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