

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Amoore Residence (Former)

Address

25 Vivian Street/73 Brougham Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

The former Amoore Residence was constructed during 1921-22 by Frank Amoore as his private residence. Frank Amoore was not only a skilled builder who pioneered reinforced concrete construction methods during the early decades of the twentieth century, but was also a popular local body politician who served as an Eltham Borough Councillor (1906-15), Whakatane Mayor (1919-21), and New Plymouth Borough Councillor (1923-41). The house is an excellent example of the English Domestic Revival style designed by noted New Plymouth architects Messenger, Griffiths & Taylor, who contributed enormously to New Plymouth's built environment during the early decades of the twentieth century. This property is notable for its completeness, with not only the main dwelling surviving largely unaltered, but also the original detached garage/washhouse and stone boundary wall. Situated on a prominent corner site in New Plymouth's CBD, the house makes a strong positive contribution to the local streetscape.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 1 DP 4145

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1921-22

Principal Materials Reinforced concrete, roughcast plaster, pressed steel roof tiles

Construction Professionals Messenger, Griffiths & Taylor (architects), Frank Amooore (builder)

History

Early History

Located within New Plymouth's colonial heart, Town Section 733 has a long history of occupation stretching back to the 1850s. The section was originally allocated to Thomas Lewthwaite by the Plymouth Company, and likely owing to its central position it was an early selection.¹ By the 1850s the section had come into the possession of builder George Robinson, with buildings noted as being present on the property in April 1857 when the section was listed for sale as part of Robinson's assigned estate.² The property didn't sell in 1857, but ownership later passed to 'Murray', before being transferred to Walter Smith Atkinson; these transactions are not recorded until 1865 and 1866, respectively, but are likely to have occurred earlier.³

In late-1864 the southern portion of Town Section 733 was purchased by the Freemasons who soon erected a substantial hall on the property.⁴ In early 1865 the remaining northern portion of Town Section 733, with frontage to Brougham and Vivian Streets, was listed for sale by W. S. Atkinson.⁵ This was purchased during late-1865 or early-1866 by Mrs Helen Ann Wilson, the widow of former Colonial Surgeon Dr. Peter Wilson.⁶ Mrs Wilson had a more substantial house constructed on the property soon after her purchase and named it 'Calpe Cottage', Calpe being an ancient name for her homeland of Gibraltar.⁷ This new residence can be seen in course of erection on the western side of the property in a mid-1860s photograph of the area.⁸ Mrs Wilson died in 1871, and the property remained part of her deceased estate (with Archdeacon Govett and Octavius Carrington as Trustees) until 1885, when it was purchased by Mrs Harriett Halse.⁹

¹ Reference to the Sections Comprising the Town of New Plymouth, New Zealand, 1842, Puke Ariki, ARC2001-365/5

² *Taranaki Herald*, 25 April 1857, page 1

³ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

⁴ Ibid; Gooch, Mike, 'Masonic Hall 1865 (Brougham Street)', *Kete New Plymouth*, <http://ketenewplymouth.peoplesnetworknz.info/en/site>; accessed 29 April 2019.

⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 15 April 1865, page 1

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

⁷ Lambert, Gail. (1981). *Peter Wilson: Colonial Surgeon*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

⁸ Marsland Hill Barracks, circa 1860s. Puke Ariki Collection, PHO2008-1865

⁹ Helen Ann Wilson, 1871, probate file including will, New Plymouth Probate Files, 1867-1981, Archives New Zealand (21954); Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand



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Marsland Hill Barracks, circa 1860s, [Exposed roofing timbers of Mrs Wilson's 'Calpe Cottage' under construction can be seen at right, partially obscured by Paitawa House]. PHO2008-1865, Puke Ariki (PA)



Part 4 (of 5) Part Panorama of New Plymouth From Marsland Hill, circa 1877, [detail showing rear of Mrs Wilson's 'Calpe Cottage'], A.3.133, Puke Ariki (PA)



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Mrs Halse resided in the cottage until her death in 1913, when the property became part of her deceased estate with Edward Halse and John Barton Roy as Trustees.¹⁰ Upon Mrs Halse's death, the house appears to have been initially rented to Miss J. Shodroske, who seemingly remained until May 1915 when it was advertised for let.¹¹ In October 1915 the property was conveyed to Minnie Amoores, the wife of builder Frank Amoores.¹² Based in Eltham, the Amoores don't seem to have ever occupied the old cottage on the property and continued to rent it out. Persons noted as residing at this address during the first years of the Amoores' ownership include Miss L. Whitcombe, Alfred George Capon, and Mrs Sarah Evelyn Hogg.¹³

Frank Amoores

Frank Amoores was not only a skilled builder, but he also had a penchant for local politics and was involved in a number of community organisations. As a builder Frank was an early adopter of reinforced concrete and was involved in the erection of a number of large concrete industrial and commercial buildings across the North Island. In August 1910 Amoores became secretary of the Camerated Concrete Construction Company of Taranaki upon the relocation of the firm's offices to Eltham, and by 1914 was described by the *Taranaki Herald's* Eltham correspondent as "our concrete champion".¹⁴ Major concrete industrial and commercial projects completed by Amoores included the Kaupokonui Dairy Factory (1911); Cheese Store for the Eltham Dairy Company (1912); additions to the shop of Messrs Blair & Sellar at Hawera (1913); Wilkinson's Building at Eltham (1913-14); Lowgarth Dairy Factory additions (1915); re-erection of the Patea Freezing Works (1915); construction of a new showroom at New Plymouth for Newton King (1915); construction of the East Coast Freezing Works at Whakatane (1917); erection of a reinforced concrete wharf at Whakatane (1918); construction of the four-storey Collier's Building in New Plymouth (1925-26).

His first foray into local politics saw him elected as an Eltham Borough Councillor in 1906, being re-elected in 1909, 1912 and 1915; he resigned in December 1915 owing to business demands.¹⁵ Whilst at Whakatane the locals seemingly took a liking to Frank and he was elected mayor of Whakatane in 1919.¹⁶ During his term as mayor Amoores was instrumental in securing a loan of £60,500 to undertake one of the largest public works projects in Whakatane's history; with Amoores determined to make Whakatane "one of the best towns in the Dominion".¹⁷ Whilst the public works program was a resounding success, his tenure as mayor was later marred when in 1922 he was convicted of nine breaches of the Municipal Corporations Act related to illegal construction contracts (conflicts of interest with Amoores' own firm).¹⁸ On his return to New Plymouth, Amoores once again thrust himself into local politics, and notwithstanding the recent controversy surrounding his term as Whakatane mayor, was easily elected to the New Plymouth Borough Council at the 1923 elections.¹⁹ He soon became chairman of the council's Works Committee and also chairman of the Harbour Board; he later stood for mayor at the 1925 elections, although was defeated by the incumbent.²⁰ He remained a New Plymouth Borough Councillor until 1941.

¹⁰ Harriett Halse, 1913, probate file including will, New Plymouth Probate Files, 1867-1981, Archives New Zealand (21954)

¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 13 May 1915, page 1

¹² Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

¹³ Wises Post Office Directories, 1916-21

¹⁴ *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 22 August 1910, page 7; *Taranaki Herald*, 11 February 1914, page 5

¹⁵ *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 19 April 1906, page 8

¹⁶ *Waikato Times*, 1 May 1919, page 5

¹⁷ *Auckland Star*, 30 July 1919, page 5

¹⁸ *Stratford Evening Post*, 28 January 1922, page 7

¹⁹ *Stratford Evening Post*, 27 April 1923, page 5

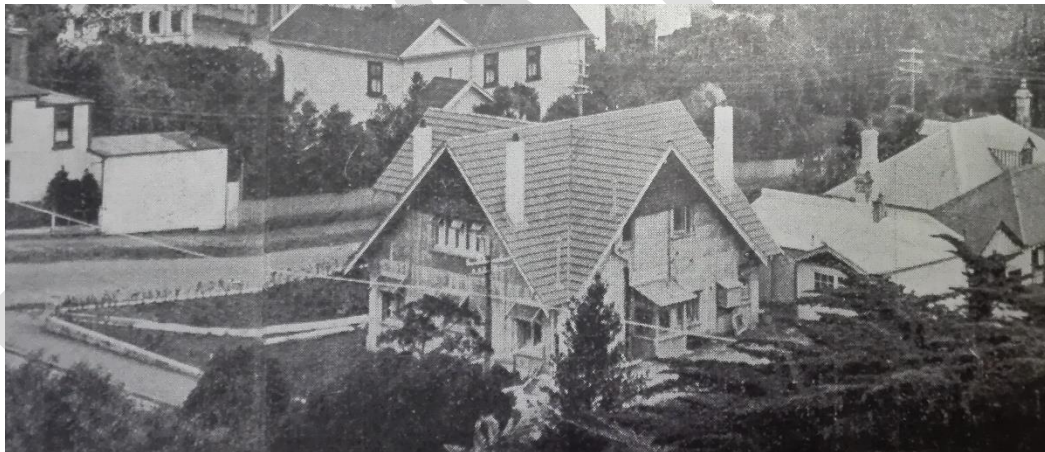
²⁰ *The Evening Post*, 30 April 1925, page 9

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The Present House

By mid-1921, and sometime before his return to New Plymouth, Amoore commissioned noted New Plymouth architects Messenger, Griffiths & Taylor (Frank Messenger, Horace Victor Griffiths & William Henry Taylor) to design a new residence for the Brougham Street property. A permit for construction of the house was granted to Frank Amoore by the New Plymouth Borough Council on the 12th of October 1921 with the estimated construction cost being £1800.²¹ As a skilled builder, Frank constructed the house himself, unsurprisingly, utilising concrete. It is unclear when the house was complete, as construction is unlikely to have commenced until very late in 1921 following Amoore's return from Whakatane. The detached washhouse and garage, along with the front stone wall, were also constructed at the same time as the house; it is likely that the hedge of hardy Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) is also the original planting.

The centrally located house likely served as a showpiece to potential clients, and indeed Amoore would go on to construct a number of English Domestic Revival style houses during the 1920s. Many of Amoore's projects were high value builds designed by prominent local architects such as Messenger Griffiths and Taylor, Thomas Herbert Bates, and William Newton Stephenson. A notable group of four houses constructed by Amoore during 1923-24 are located nearby at the corner of Brougham and Fulford Streets.²²



Another Splendid Panoramic View from Marsland Hill Showing the North-East Portion of the Town [Detail showing Amoore House and outbuildings soon after completion], S. C. Smith, *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News*, 22 February 1923, page 43

Although not certain, it seems the Amoore's ran into financial difficulties and were unable to service to their mortgage on this property, forcing mortgagee Alice Ahier to enact a power of sale clause during 1935.²³ In September 1935 the property was sold and ownership was transferred to Maye Blackley, the widow of well-known local doctor David Blackley, who had died during March 1935.²⁴ The house was rented from soon after the purchase by James H. Scanlan, who is noted as residing at the address from 1936 onwards.²⁵

²¹ NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

²² This group includes 7 Hempton St (1923), 9 Hempton St (1923), 83 Brougham St (1923-24), 85 Brougham Street (1923)

²³ CT TN103/221, Land Information New Zealand

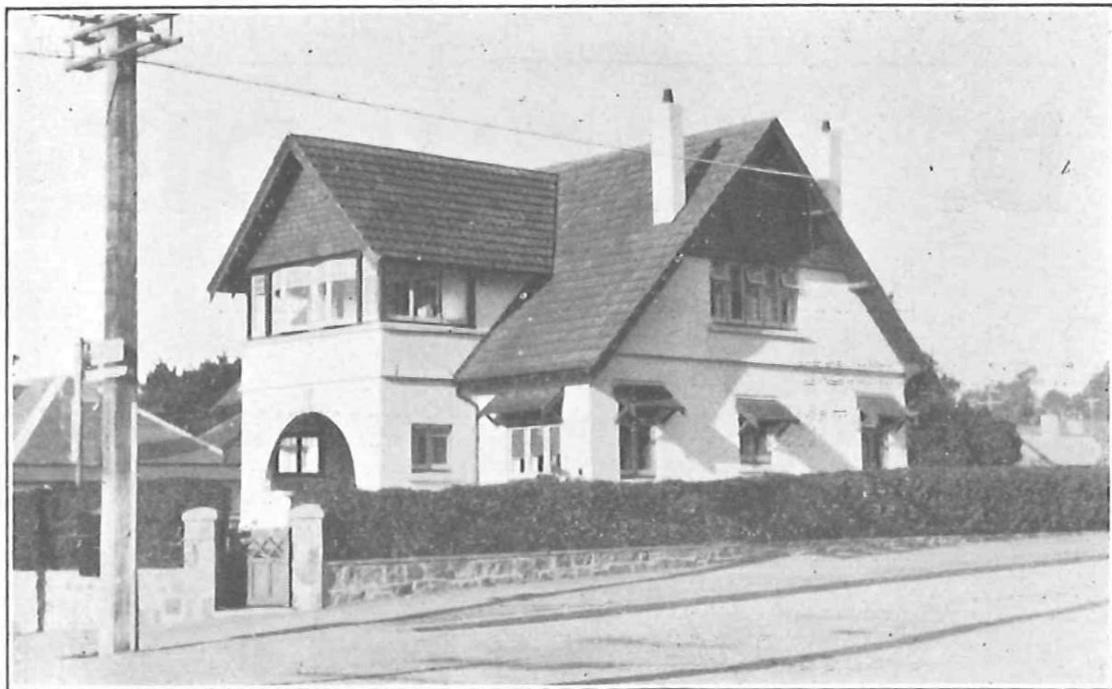
²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Wisers Post Office Directories, 1936-55



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Maye died in 1950 and upon her death the property was held by her Trustee, solicitor Campbell McCormick. As per her will, the property was later transferred to her daughters Barbara Thomson (later Broadbent) and Jeanne Blackley (later Higgins) as tenants in common in equal shares.²⁶ In 1960, Barbara's share of the property was transferred first to her brother Donald Blackley, before being transferred from Donald to Jeanne; making Jeanne the sole owner.²⁷ Phone directories indicate that James Scanlan and his wife Joan continued to occupy the house until the mid-1960s, last appearing at this address in the 1964-65 edition.²⁸ In June 1978 ownership of the property was transferred to Ernest and Susan Upritchard, before later being purchased in 1984 by Phil Clemow.²⁹ It seems Clemow attempted to sell the house during 1985, with the YFC (Youth for Christ) looking to purchase the property for use as their city headquarters; it is unclear if YFC ever occupied the house.³⁰ In 1991 the building was purchased by Taranaki Healthcare Ltd for use as offices; the present owners acquired the property in 1998.



Photos by]

[F. S. Hodson.

NEW PLYMOUTH HOMES.

There are many beautiful private residences in New Plymouth. The above illustrate some types of those recently erected.

Bradbury, Ernest. (1926). *The Settlement and Development of Taranaki, New Zealand: Early history, industrial resources, scenic attractions.* Auckland: E. Bradbury & Co.

²⁶ Helen Ann Wilson, 1871, probate file including will, New Plymouth Probate Files, 1867-1981, Archives New Zealand (21954); CT TN103/221, Land Information New Zealand

²⁷ CT TN103/221, Land Information New Zealand

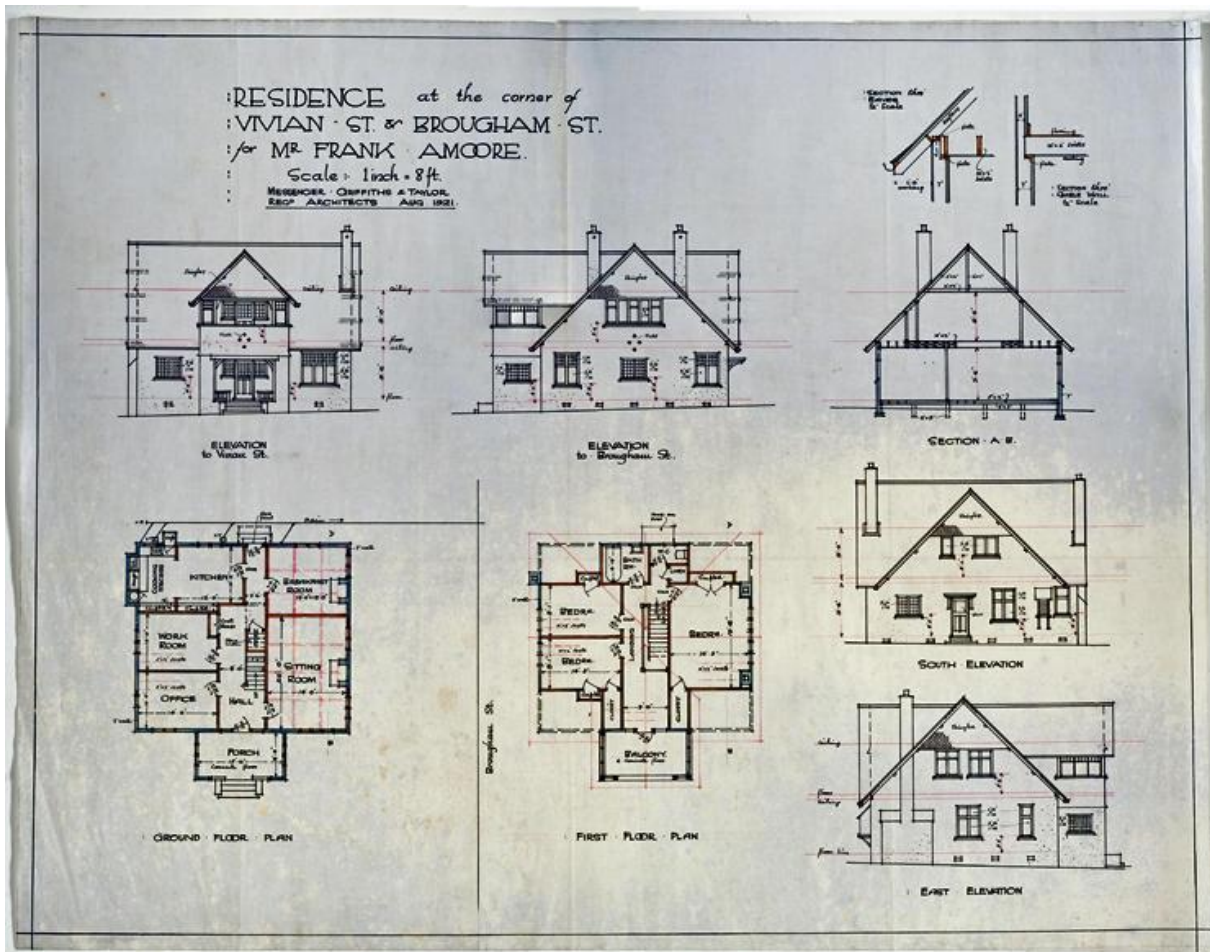
²⁸ New Zealand Post Office. *New Zealand Post Office Telephone Directories: Taranaki and District 1964-65.* (1964). Wellington: New Zealand Post Office.

²⁹ CT TN103/221, Land Information New Zealand

³⁰ *Taranaki Herald*, 27 November 1985, page ?



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Residence at the corner of Vivian Street & Brougham Street for Mr Frank Amoore, Messenger, Griffiths & Taylor, Puke Ariki, ARC2008-188

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

This substantial two-storied home is prominently positioned at the corner of Vivian and Brougham Streets, adjacent New Plymouth's central business district. The area was settled early in New Plymouth's history and although the surrounding blocks still contain some interesting heritage buildings (notably St Mary's Cathedral), development pressures since the 1960s has seen the demolition and removal of many older buildings.

The house is an excellent example of the English Domestic Revival style in the local vernacular and retains a high degree of integrity. The main form of the building is a primary two-storey NE-SW gable with central projecting gables on the north-west and south-east elevations; for a house belonging to the English Domestic Revival style it exhibits a relatively high degree of symmetry. The house is finished with roughcast plaster and the roof is sheathed in lightweight pressed steel tiles. Three single-flue chimneys finished with roughcast plaster rise from the main gable roof; two at the south-western end and one near the north-east elevation.

The main front elevation faces roughly north-west towards Vivian Street. Central to this elevation is a steeply-pitched two-storey projecting gable incorporating ground floor entrance and first-floor sunroom.

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The main ground-floor entrance is arched and although originally open, is now fitted with a central glazed (divided) entrance door flanked by further arched (divided) casements; a pair of small timber casements with upper divided panes are inset on the SW and NE walls. West of the gable is a trio of timber casements with fanlights and stayed hood, whilst a pair of casements is sited to the east. At first-floor level the sunroom is extensively glazed with timber casements incorporating small divided upper panes. The bell-cast upper gable-end is sheathed in timber shingles with heavy timber brackets, exposed rafters and purlins.

The south-western elevation faces into Brougham Street and across to St Mary's Churchyard. The ground floor features a pair of central timber casements, flanked either side by pairs of casements with fanlights; each is fitted with a stayed and shingled timber hood. The first-floor is bell-cast and features a central set of five casements, three with fanlights. The bell-cast upper gable-end is sheathed in timber shingles with heavy timber brackets and exposed purlins.

A small ground floor lean-to projects from the rear south-eastern elevation and is fitted with a slender timber casement. Further west is another single casement, with a rear entrance door sited further to the east; an attached carport extends towards the boundary from the roof of the lean-to. The first-floor incorporates further timber casements, with the bell-cast upper gable-end again sheathed in timber shingles with heavy timber brackets and exposed purlins.

The north-eastern elevation incorporates a single casement with fanlight and a pair of casements with fanlights at ground floor level, with a further pair of casements with fanlights at first-floor level. The main alteration to this elevation is the removal of a set of first floor casements and the subsequent erection of a small porch with associated entrance door and external timber stairs.

This property is notable for its completeness, with not only the main dwelling surviving largely unaltered, but also the original detached garage/washhouse and stone boundary wall. Located at the south-eastern corner of the property and constructed hard against the boundary, the principal form of the washhouse and garage is a lean-to with projecting gable. The main entrance to the garage is fitted in the gable end, with the original timber doors now replaced with a modern steel roller door; the upper gable end is shingled with exposed purlins. The washhouse is fitted with divided timber casements, a chimney rises from the north-eastern boundary wall, and the structure is finished in roughcast plaster to complement the house.

The stone boundary wall of rubble Taranaki andesite extends along much of the north-western and south-western boundaries. A pair of cut stone pilasters with peaked stone caps frame the chamfered pedestrian entrance, although the original timber entrance gate is now absent. Whilst most of this wall is contemporary with the present house, several stones at the eastern end are remnants from a much earlier nineteenth century wall. On the inside of the wall is a rambling hedge of Cape Honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*), which is thought to be the original hedge planted soon after completion of the house.

Assessment:

Historical

This house principally has historic significance as the former residence of Frank Amoore and his family. Frank Amoore was not only a skilled builder who pioneered reinforced concrete construction during the early decades of the twentieth century, but was also a popular local body politician who served as an Eltham Borough Councillor (1906-15), Whakatane Mayor (1919-21), and New Plymouth Borough Councillor (1923-41). Further historic significance is derived from the house being designed by noted New Plymouth architecture firm Messenger,

✓



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Griffiths & Taylor, who contributed much to New Plymouth's built environment during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	An excellent example of the English Domestic Revival style in the local vernacular. The house has some technical value for the use of concrete construction methods.	✓
Setting and Context	This property is notable for its completeness, with not only the main dwelling surviving largely unaltered, but also the original detached garage/washhouse and stone boundary wall. Situated on a prominent corner site in New Plymouth's CBD, the house makes a strong positive contribution to the local streetscape.	✓✓
Archaeology	Although the present buildings on this property were all constructed post-1900, the section has been occupied since at least the 1850s, and thus likely contains 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	This house is a representative example of the types of architecturally designed English Domestic Revival style houses constructed in New Plymouth during the 1920s. The house, outbuildings and stone wall retain a high degree of integrity.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓