

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Llantwit Cottage

Address

35 Gilbert Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

The original portion of Llantwit Cottage was probably constructed by/for Patrick Houlahan during the early-1870s. The building principally has heritage significance for its long history of occupation by members of the working class from its construction until the 1950s. The working class has until recently been largely silenced in the historical record, and this building offers insights into the dwellings lived in by an under-studied, yet important societal group. This cottage has rarity value as a surviving 1870s dwelling located near central New Plymouth and is a representative example of the types of smaller cottages constructed in New Plymouth during the 1870s-80s, of which only a small number now survive. Although alterations have been made to the cottage, the primary structure of the original cottage remains largely intact.

Heritage Buildings Report

Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description	PT Section 1054 Eastern Moiety Town of New Plymouth
District Plan Item/ Map No.	
Heritage New Zealand List	Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction	Circa 1870s
Principal Materials	Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel
Construction Professionals	Unknown

History

Although an exact construction date for this cottage has proved elusive, it was likely erected during the early-mid 1870s Patrick Houlahan. Town Section 1054 was originally granted to Charles Ibbotson, purchased by 'Richards' in 1862, and then sold to Patrick John Houlahan in 1867.¹ Whilst the present cottage doesn't appear to be present in a circa 1870 photograph of the area, it may have been constructed by 1872, with Houlahan listed as residing in nearby 'Liardet Street' in street directories for 1872-73.²

Houlahan sold the property to Henry Smith Lee in March 1875, with street directories listing Lee as residing in 'Gilbert Street' during 1875-76.³ Lee didn't own the property for long, and it was purchased by James Turner in July 1876.⁴ The New Plymouth Town Board Rating Book for 1875-76 notes a rateable valuation of £18, with the existence of a fire rate indicating a substantial structure, almost certainly the present cottage, was present on the section at this time.⁵

On 19 January 1878, Turner mortgaged the property, and a month later, advertised to let "a five-roomed house in good repair, with good well of water, in Gilbert Street, near the entrance to the Botanical Gardens", with interested persons requested to "apply to James Turner, on the premises".⁶ In mid-late 1880, New Plymouth surveyor Thomas Kingwell Skinner produced a map of New Plymouth showing the locations of all dwellings. On this map, the present cottage, with both its front east-west gable and the western north-south gable, can be clearly distinguished.⁷

In September 1880, the property was purchased by Margaret Sutton (nee Davies), a widow, whose second husband Charles had died in 1878.⁸ Mrs Sutton was living at the cottage in 1883, when she advertised her previous house in Barrett Street for sale or let; enquirers were to apply to "Mrs Sutton, Llantwit Cottage, Gilbert Street".⁹ It's unclear how long Mrs Sutton resided at the cottage, but she doesn't appear in Street Directories for 1892 or 1893, and it seems likely she rented out the property for a short period before selling it. In August 1893, auctioneer Newton King advertised for sale Mrs

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

² Wises Post Office Directory, 1872-73

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

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ New Plymouth Town Board Rating Book 1875-76, NPDC Archives

⁶ *Taranaki Herald*, 19 February 1878, page 3

⁷ Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand, Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

⁸ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

⁹ *Taranaki Herald*, 30 May 1883, page 3

Heritage Buildings Report

Sutton's "snug little property in Gilbert Street, being Sec No. 1054, with good 5-roomed cottage and garden, with water laid on".¹⁰

The property didn't immediately sell, and it wasn't until April 1895 that it was purchased by Frederick Charles Boulton, an expressman. Boulton is listed as living in this location until the 1898 edition of Stone's Street Directory.¹¹ After which, Boulton seems to have rented the property to watchmaker William Roberts, who is still listed as the occupier when the property title was issued under the Land Transfer Act in late 1901.¹²

In 1902 the house was purchased by Annie E. Curline, with Annie's father, groom James Curline, listed as the occupant in street directories from 1903 onwards.¹³ The Curline's resided in the house until 1920, when it was purchased by gas works employee Henry William Melton, who resided in the house with his wife Mary Alice until his death on July 7th 1952.¹⁴



Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand [Detail showing original portion of present cottage on eastern part of Town Section 1054], Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

¹⁰ *Taranaki Herald*, 18 August 1893, page 3

¹¹ Stone's Street Directory, 1898

¹² *Taranaki Herald*, 29 November 1901, page 3

¹³ Stone's Street Directory, 1903

¹⁴ NPDC Cemetery Search, <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Cemetery-Search>; Accessed 8 May 2019



Heritage Buildings Report

Description

This building is located in a city fringe street several blocks south of New Plymouth's CBD. Settled early in New Plymouth's history, this area contains a number of dwellings constructed between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1930s. Whilst development pressures since the 1970s have seen the demolition and removal of a number of character buildings, the area still retains a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

The original portion of this combined box cottage follows a T-plan, with a narrow NE-SW gable intersected by a wide NW-SE gable. It is representative of the types of cottages erected in New Plymouth during the 1870s, a decade which saw a local shift from predominantly single or double box cottages to more complex combined boxes, often with projecting front gables. Surviving examples of cottages of this style and age are now rare in New Plymouth, although two similar examples can be found in the pair at 129 and 131 Lemon Street (circa 1876-77); neighbouring 37 Gilbert Street (circa 1860s-70s) may have originally followed a similar form.

The cottage is principally clad in horizontal rough-sawn weatherboard with the roof sheathed in mild corrugated steel. Whilst most of the windows are 1920s-30s style timber casements, it's likely the front portion of the cottage was originally fitted with double-hung sashes. A wide gable extension was added at the rear of the cottage during the 1990s and replaced the original lean-to. The construction of a large garage and high timber fence along the street boundary somewhat obscures the house from public view.

The main front elevation faces roughly south-east in Gilbert Street and incorporates a projecting bay fitted with a pair of timber casements with coloured glass fanlights. A slightly detailed post and beam veranda extends eastward, although a portion has been removed to provide space for the garage.

Assessment:

Historical	This building has heritage significance as an 1870s cottage principally occupied by members of the working class from its construction until the 1950s. The working class has until recently been largely silenced in the historical record, and this building offers insights into the dwellings lived in by an under-studied, yet important societal group.	✓
Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	This building is a good example of an 1870s combined box cottage with front bay.	✓
Setting and Context	The contextual value of this building is strengthened by the existence of the similarly scaled (although much modified) neighbouring Wells Cottage at 37 Gilbert Street (circa 1860s-70s).	✓
Archaeology	As the cottage was constructed during the 1870s, 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.	✓



Heritage Buildings Report

Representativeness, rarity and integrity

This cottage has rarity value as a surviving 1870s dwelling located near central New Plymouth. It is a representative example of the smaller cottages constructed in New Plymouth during the 1870s-80s, of which only a small number now survive. Although alterations have been made to the cottage, the primary structure of the original cottage remains largely intact.

✓

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

✓

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