



## Heritage Buildings Report

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Woon House

**Address**

149 Vivian Street, New Plymouth



### Statement of Significance

This two-storied building has considerable historical significance as the home of prominent New Plymouth citizen, and co-founder of the *Taranaki Herald*, Garland William Woon. The building also has associations with other well-known early New Plymouth citizens including William Bayly, and two of Taranaki's Chief Surveyors. The house has significance as a locally uncommon example of a mid-Nineteenth Century two-storied house in the Victorian Georgian style. Despite some exterior modifications, the building retains a relatively high degree of integrity, and stands out amongst more contemporary homes in the area.



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## Legal Information and Heritage Status

**Legal Description** Lot 2 DP 8126

**District Plan Item/ Map No.**

**Heritage New Zealand List** Not listed

## Construction Information

**Date of Construction** Circa 1864

**Principal Materials** Wooden framing, plaster, steel tiles

**Construction Professionals** John Veale (builder)

## History

This two-storied house was constructed for Garland William Woon and his family about 1864. Garland Woon was born in July 1831 at Nukualofa, Tonga, and was the eldest son of Rev William Woon and his wife Jane Garland.<sup>1</sup> In 1834, at just four years old, Garland emigrated to New Zealand with his parents, and first lived at Hokianga, where his father was stationed at the Wesleyan Mission Station. Garland moved to Auckland in 1846, where he was apprenticed at the *New Zealander* office.<sup>2</sup> In 1849, upon completion of his apprenticeship, he joined his family at the Heretoga Mission Station, near Hawera.<sup>3</sup>

He later relocated to New Plymouth, and on 28 July 1852 married Ann George. The following week, on 4 August 1852, Woon, along with William Collins, published the very first edition of the *Taranaki Herald*; the first marriage notice published in the new paper was his own.<sup>4</sup> The partnership with Collins didn't last, and Woon was to be sole proprietor of the *Taranaki Herald* for fourteen years; a period which included the tumultuous Taranaki Wars.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the conflict, Woon published a comprehensive journal of daily events connected with the war; without which our knowledge of the conflict would be greatly diminished. During this period, Woon was also a member of the volunteers, and later of the New Zealand Militia, where he rose to the rank of captain.<sup>6</sup>

In February 1864, Woon purchased from Robert Parris eleven town sections located at the western end of Vivian and Fulford Streets.<sup>7</sup> Following his purchase of the sections, and probably during 1864, Woon had the present house constructed by New Plymouth builder John Veale.<sup>8</sup> The house was certainly constructed by 1867, with Puke Ariki in possession of a watercolour of the house by artist Hamar Humphrey Arden dated that year.<sup>9</sup> The Woon's relocated to Whanganui in late 1867, then to the Thames goldfields, and later to Auckland, before returning to Whanganui in 1874, where Garland had been appointed Clerk of the Resident Magistrates Court, a position he held until his retirement in

<sup>1</sup> Woon, J. G, *Wanganui Old Settlers* (1902). H. I. Jones & Son, Whanganui

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Woon, Garland William, *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Wellington Provincial District* (1908)

<sup>4</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 4 August 1852, p.2

<sup>5</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 8 June 1895, p.2

<sup>6</sup> Woon, Garland William, *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Wellington Provincial District* (1908)

<sup>7</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>8</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 30 November 1867, p.2

<sup>9</sup> Untitled, Residence of G.W. Woon, New Plymouth (1867), Hamar Humphrey Arden, Puke Ariki, A75.437

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1892.<sup>10</sup> Garland Woon died of a heart attack at Whanganui in 1895.<sup>11</sup>

The house was listed for sale in the *Herald* during late 1867 and early 1868. It was described as:

*That valuable town property belonging to G. W. Woon, Esq., situate at the west end of the town, in Vivian and Morley Streets, comprising 11 freehold and 7 leasehold quarter acre sections, together with a two story house, well and faithfully built by Mr. John Veale, slated roof, lead capping and guttering, lined and ceiled with kauri timber and papered, with every convenience...*<sup>12</sup>

The house took some time to sell, and in the interim the house was broken into and damaged, with items such as locks and window fastenings stolen.<sup>13</sup> Ownership of the property seems to have passed to 'King', before being sold to William Bayly in February 1870.<sup>14</sup> Despite the changes in ownership, the home continued to be known as 'Captain Woon's late residence' until at least 1871.<sup>15</sup>



Circa 1885 view whilst in occupation of Caverhill's: Puke Ariki, LN2032 : A.2c.25

In 1877, Bayly sold the property to John Scott Caverhill, a farmer who had recently shifted to New Plymouth from Canterbury. Caverhill retained ownership until 1888, when the property was purchased by Thomas Farley.<sup>16</sup> In late 1889, the property title was issued under the Land Transfer Act, with Farley the owner, and Sidney Weetman, Chief Surveyor for The Department of Lands and Survey, the occupier.<sup>17</sup> Weetman seems to have then purchased the property from Farley, and during the 1890s rented it first to Thomas Shailor Weston Jnr, and then to John Strauchon, Weetman's successor at the Department of Lands and Survey.<sup>18</sup> In 1902, Weetman sold the property to Edward Burgess Kingdon, who lived at the house until his death in 1926.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Woon, J. G, *Wanganui Old Settlers* (1902). H. I. Jones & Son, Whanganui

<sup>11</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 8 June 1895, p.2

<sup>12</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 30 November 1867, p.2

<sup>13</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 18 January 1868, p.1

<sup>14</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>15</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 8 March 1871, p.3

<sup>16</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>17</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 10 September 1889, p.3

<sup>18</sup> Stones Street Directories, 1893-02

<sup>19</sup> CT TN21/10, Land Information New Zealand



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## Reference Sources

See footnotes.

## Description

This substantial two-storied wooden house is located in an elevated position at the western end of Vivian Street in New Plymouth City. The building is set back from the street up a short, sloping drive, and is visible from a number of vantage points across western New Plymouth. The building is probably best described as a local adaptation of the Victorian Georgian style common during the early period of organised European settlement in New Zealand.

The building is orientated towards the north-east, with the main structure being a simple rectangle with U-shaped gable roof. The roof is of pressed steel tiles, although originally this was slate. Two brick chimneys (possibly original), rise from the rear and south-east of the building. The exterior walls are clad in a lightly textured plaster, and this replaces the original vertical board and batten cladding, which may remain underneath.

The ground floor of the front elevation features a central wooden door (possibly original), partially enclosed by an entrance portico added prior to the 1950s. To the right of the front door is an original pair of 28-light French casements. An open, post and beam veranda with a simple, low balustrade partially encloses the northern corner of the building; originally, a narrower and more elaborate veranda wrapped around entire front and sides of the building. To the left of the portico is a small extension glazed with circa 1940s style casement windows. The front first floor elevation incorporates three evenly-spaced twelve-light double-hung sash windows flanked by faux wooden shutters.

On the ground floor of the north-western elevation is a small, single story addition, within which one of the original pairs of French casements appears to have been relocated. The first floor features a row of evenly spaced twelve-light double-hung sashes flanked by faux wooden shutters. The south-eastern side elevation features a row of French casements on the ground floor, and two twelve-light double-hung sashes on the first floor.

## Assessment:

<b>Historical</b>	This building has considerable heritage significance as the home of prominent New Plymouth citizen, and co-founder of the Taranaki Herald, Garland William Woon. The building also has associations with other well-known early New Plymouth citizens including William Bayly, and two chief Taranaki surveyors, Sidney Weetman and John Strauchon.	✓✓
<b>Importance to Community</b>	-	
<b>Architecture &amp; Construction</b>	This building is a good example of the Victorian Georgian style adapted to suit local conditions. Although now hidden, that the house was originally clad in vertical board and battens is significant.	✓
<b>Setting and Context</b>	Located in an elevated position and nestled amongst mature trees, Woon House contributes positively to the western New Plymouth townscape.	✓
<b>Archaeology</b>	As Woon House was constructed circa 1864, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900	✓



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human activity and has the potential to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.

**Representativeness, rarity and integrity**

The house has significance as a locally uncommon example of a mid-nineteenth century two-storied house which retains a relatively high degree of integrity.

✓

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

✓

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