

## Heritage Buildings Report

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Heard Residence (Former)

**Address**

23 Hine Street, New Plymouth



### Statement of Significance

This house was constructed for Robert Heard and his wife Blanche during 1908 and has stood as a prominent Hine Street landmark for more than a century. Robert Heard was the local manager of prominent piano firm H. Collier & Co, and the son of nineteenth century theologist John Bickford Heard. The principal significance of this building is as a two-storied double bay villa of a type now uncommon in New Plymouth city, and also as part of a group of three substantial two-storied timber villas located near the intersection of Hine and Weymouth Streets, just west of New Plymouth's central city. The building has an imposing frontage and contributes positively to the historic character of the surrounding area. Although retaining its original form and other key exterior elements, almost all of the original timber joinery has been replaced with incongruous aluminium windows.



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## Legal Information and Heritage Status

**Legal Description** Section 64 Town of New Plymouth

**District Plan Item/ Map No.**

**Heritage New Zealand List** Not listed

## Construction Information

**Date of Construction** 1908

**Principal Materials** Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

**Construction Professionals** Henry Wallath (architect & builder)

## History

During August 1907 Town Section 64 was purchased by Alice Gilmour (nee Teed), wife of Everard Robert Cranston Gilmour.<sup>1</sup> Everard was a property developer and it seems the section was purchased with the express intention of subdividing and on selling, with the northern portion of Town Section 64 acquired by Blanche Enichi Heard (nee Moore), the wife of Robert Heard, during mid-1908 (although this transaction wasn't formalised until January 1909).<sup>2</sup>

Robert Heard was the son of nineteenth century theologian John Bickford Heard. John held the positions of Rector of Woldingham and Vicar of Caterham Valley, and was also the author of several religious texts including *Alexandrian and Carthaginian Theology Contrasted; National Christianity or, Cæsarism and Clericalism;* and *The Tripartite-Nature of Man, Spirit, Soul, and Body, Applied to Illustrate and Explain the Doctrines of Original Sin, the New Birth, the Disembodied State, and the Spiritual Body.*

Rather than follow in his father's footsteps and take Holy Orders in the Church of England, Robert Heard emigrated to New Zealand. He initially appears to have lived in the Wellington region for a time, before relocating to the West Coast during the mid-1880s, where he entered into business as a piano tuner.<sup>3</sup> He later relocated to Whanganui, where he took a position with the prominent piano firm of H. Collier & Co, whose New Plymouth branch he was transferred during the early 1900s, and where he was appointed manager.<sup>4</sup> An early local motor vehicle owner, Robert Heard was appointed secretary for the newly formed Taranaki Automobile Association in December 1908.<sup>5</sup>

Planning for the Heard's new residence seems to have commenced sometime during mid-1908. At the July 1908 meeting of the New Plymouth Borough Council it was noted that the Drainage Committee recommends installing a sewer in Weymouth Street, between St Aubyn and Hine Streets, upon Mr R. Heard letting a contract for his new residence.<sup>6</sup> A permit for the construction of the house was granted by the Borough Council on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1908, the estimated construction cost being £650, with the architect (and presumably also the builder) noted as Henry Wallath.<sup>7</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *Grey River Argus*, 6 September 1884, page 2

<sup>4</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 4 February 1903, page 5

<sup>5</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 11 December 1908, page 2

<sup>6</sup> *Taranaki Daily News*, 27 July 1908, page 2

<sup>7</sup> NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)



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The Heard's resided at the property until April 1918, when they departed New Plymouth for their new home at Hamilton.<sup>8</sup> Unsurprisingly, it seems they had at least one piano, which prior to leaving the house was advertised for sale 'cheap' (£18) by Heard, it being described as a "modern piano in good condition; iron frame tri-chord".<sup>9</sup> The Hine Street property was purchased by Archibald Arthur Thompson just prior to the Heard's departure, although he only retained ownership for a short period.<sup>10</sup>

In July 1919, the property was purchased by Rose Emily Healy, wife of Michael Healy, a well-known New Plymouth tailor and director (later chairman), of the New Plymouth Gas Company.<sup>11</sup> The property title was issued under the Land Transfer Act in October 1927, with Rose still the owner.<sup>12</sup> Michael died in 1935, although Rose retained ownership for the next decade until her death in 1946, after which time ownership was transferred to two of her children, Norman and Maud Healy, as executors of her estate.<sup>13</sup> Whilst Rose's will permitted the unmarried Maud to reside in the house, it seems she did not wish to reside at the property and in May 1946 the property was sold to building contractor Thomas Victor Lord.<sup>14</sup>

Little is known about Lord, but he retained ownership until March 1960, when the property was purchased by grocer Norman Leslie Des Forges.<sup>15</sup> In September 1976 ownership was transferred from Des Forges to David and Cynthia Wolland, who remained the owners until December 1983, when the property was purchased by engineer Bruce Saunders.<sup>16</sup> In September 1987 ownership was transferred to Fletcher Residential Ltd and it appears they may have had development plans for the property.<sup>17</sup> Thankfully no development occurred and in February 1988 ownership was transferred to Vincent Baas, who only retained ownership for just over a year, before selling the property to Philip and Mary Thomson in July 1989.<sup>18</sup>

In March 1996 the property was purchased by Marie Norma Simpson, who retained ownership until June 1999, when ownership was transferred to Dianne Pool and Lillian Maclean in equal shares.<sup>19</sup> The following month a suburban brothel opened in the house under the name 'Lily's Villa'.<sup>20</sup> However, the operation was met with staunch opposition from neighbours and later landed Lillian in court, where, in December 1999, she was found guilty of permitting the house to be used as a brothel and subsequently fined \$3000.<sup>21</sup> In December 1999, the house was put on the market, with Lillian claiming that harassment from neighbours was behind the move.<sup>22</sup> The house didn't immediately sell and Lillian was soon declared bankrupt, with her interest in the property transferred to the Official Assignee.<sup>23</sup> In May 2000, the house was purchased by present owner Sarah Jane Barnett.<sup>24</sup>

### Reference Sources

See footnotes.

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<sup>8</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 20 April 1918, page 6

<sup>9</sup> *Taranaki Daily News*, 18 February 1918, page 1

<sup>10</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>11</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 1 July 1935, page 3

<sup>12</sup> CT TN124/80, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *The Daily News*, 3 September 1999, page 3

<sup>21</sup> *The Daily News*, 20 November 1999, page 7

<sup>22</sup> *The Daily News*, 7 December 1999, page 2

<sup>23</sup> CT TN124/80, LINZ

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



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### Description

Located a short distance west of New Plymouth's central city, the former Heard Residence occupies a prominent position on the southern side of Hine Street. This building is part of an interesting group of three two-storey timber villas located near the intersection of Hine and Weymouth Streets, which also includes 13 Weymouth Street (1913) and 12 Weymouth Street (1903); the Art Deco/Moderne style Reo Moana flats at 10 Weymouth Street (1938-39) are also an important element of the immediate area. Such groupings of older two-storied buildings are now very rare in New Plymouth and both individually and as part of a group these buildings make a strong positive contribution to the historic character of the area.

The main form of this building is a two-storey double-bay L-plan villa with some Queen Anne and Eastern Stick style influences. Timber framed and clad in scallop profile rusticated weatherboard, the roof of this building is sheathed in corrugated steel, with a two-flue brick chimney featuring corbelling and half round caps rising through the roof of the rear gable. Although retaining its original form and other key exterior elements, almost all of the original joinery (thought to have been double-hung timber sashes), have been regrettably replaced with incongruous aluminium windows. This has had a negative impact on the overall appearance of the dwelling and reinstating the original joinery (at least on the front elevation), would considerably enhance the aesthetic and heritage values of this building.

The imposing main front elevation faces roughly north-west and features a central recess flanked by projecting gables. The central ground floor porch is fitted with a replacement timber panelled door, three slender coloured glass windows incorporating geometric patterns, and balustrade incorporating turned timber balusters. The upper balcony follows a similar design with a central entrance door and sidelight, along with a balustrade with turned timber balusters.

The eastern bay incorporates a ground floor square bay window with shingled hood supported by arched brackets, with the first floor stepped-out and fitted with another, slightly smaller central window with shingled hood; the upper gable end is clad in fibre cement board and features decorative timbering. The western bay incorporates a substantial ground-floor bay window, central first floor window with shingled hood, and an upper gable end clad in fibre cement board with decorative timbering.

The remaining elevations are largely unadorned, excepting the rear gable, which features vertical timber boarding. A lean-to extends along part of the rear elevation.

### Assessment:

#### Historical

This large house was constructed during 1908 for Robert Heard, the local manager of prominent piano firm H. Collier & Co, and the son of nineteenth century theologian John Bickford Heard. The house is a good example of the types of dwellings occupied by New Plymouth managers and business owners during the early part of the twentieth century. The house gained local notoriety during the late-1990s during its use as an unlicensed brothel.

✓

#### Importance to Community

-

#### Architecture & Construction

This building is a good example of a two-storied double-bay villa constructed during the 1900s.

✓



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|---|--|---|
| <b>Setting and Context</b>  | This building is part of an interesting group of three two-storey timber villas located near the intersection of Hine and Weymouth Streets, which also includes the residences at 12 Weymouth Street (1903) and 13 Weymouth Street (1913). Such groupings of buildings are now very rare in New Plymouth and both individually and as part of a group these buildings make a strong positive contribution to the historic character of the area. | ✓ |
| <b>Archaeology</b>  | -  |   |
| <b>Representativeness, rarity and integrity</b>   | Although retaining its original form and other key exterior elements, almost all of the original timber windows have been replaced with incongruous aluminium joinery.   | ✓ |
| <b>Meets threshold for listing</b> (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion) |  | ✓ |

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