

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Reid Residence/Mulberry Cottage

Address

139 Powderham Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

Originally constructed as a rental property for Thomas Lovell during the 1880s, this house was substantially enlarged for sisters Florence and Theodora Bedford in 1917-18. Theodora later became the sole owner and resided in the house on her own until her 1932 marriage to Edward Reid. Edward passed away in 1942, although Theodora remained in the house until her death in 1980; a residence of more than sixty years. The rear portion of the house is a representative example of the types of workers cottages constructed in New Plymouth during the 1880s, whilst the front portion is a relatively early local example of the bungalow style which would become popular during the 1920s and 1930s. Although not confirmed, the architects for the 1917-18 additions are thought to be the partnership of Messenger & Griffiths, whilst noted architect Thomas Herbert Bates was responsible for alterations in 1939. Although the house has been modified to an extent, principally through its conversion into commercial premises, the exterior of the building retains a high degree of integrity and remains much as it was upon completion of renovations in the 1930s. Positioned close to the Powderham Street frontage, being well-maintained and with a striking colour scheme, this building makes a strong positive contribution to the local streetscape.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description PT Lot 5 DP 1727

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction Circa 1880s/1917-18/1933

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Original cottage: Unknown; Messenger & Griffiths (presumed architects 1917-18 additions); W. H. Lobb (architect and builder 1933 additions); Thomas Herbert Bates (architect 1939 alterations)

History

The first transaction in the Land Deeds Register for Town Section 303 is a conveyance from William Mumford Burton to Thomas Lovell in October 1880.¹ Although not recorded in the Deeds Register, Town Section 303 seems to have been in the possession of Burton since at least 1866, when he was noted as the owner for electoral/voting purposes.² During Mumford's ownership the property appears to have remained vacant, with no structures indicated as being present on Thomas Kingwell Skinner's 1880 Map of New Plymouth, compiled during mid-late 1880 and showing all substantial structures present at that time.³

Although the exact construction date of the original cottage is unclear, it is thought to have been constructed soon after Lovell's purchase of the property. Lending weight to this theory is an advertisement placed by Lovell in early September 1881 advertising a four-roomed cottage to let in Vivian Street.⁴ It is possible this advertisement refers to the second cottage on the property which originally had access from Vivian Street, and may indicate a circa 1880-81 construction date; although as the New Plymouth Borough Council rates books for the early-1880s are now missing this cannot be confirmed. The earliest surviving rating records under Lovell's ownership are for the 1887-88 rating year and confirm that by early-1887 two houses valued at £30 (one almost certainly the original portion of the present cottage) were present on Town Section 303 and part Town Section 129.⁵

Lovell doesn't appear in street directories for New Plymouth and appears to have rented-out both cottages to members of the working class. Whilst the turnover of tenants appears to have been initially quite high, this situation changed about 1898, when labourer William Allan moved into the cottage and remained the occupier until 1918.⁶ During October 1901 the property was sold by Messrs Callaghan & Co to Thomas Furlong Jnr, with the sale reported in the *Taranaki Herald* as to a 'local investor'.⁷ The present cottage is clearly present on DP1712, surveyed in 1901 for the purpose of bringing the property under the Land Transfer Act.⁸

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

² *Taranaki Herald*, 14 April 1866, page 4

³ Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand, Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 8 September 1881, page 3

⁵ New Plymouth Borough Council Rates Book 1887-88, NPDC Archives

⁶ Stones Street Directories, 1898-1911; Wises Post Office Directories, 1911-1919

⁷ *Taranaki Herald*, 1 November 1901, page 2

⁸ DP1712, Land Information New Zealand

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In November 1915 the property was purchased by May Olivia Mackay, who the following year sold the western portion of the property (present 141 Powderham Street) to Ernest Charles Heel.⁹ The remaining western portion (this property) was purchased in November 1917 by sisters Theodora and Florence Bedford as tenants in common.¹⁰ Soon after purchasing the property substantial additions were made to the house, with a permit granted on December 22nd for 'additions' to a house on part sections 303, 304, 305, 330 & 629 Vivian Street; Frank Newell was noted as the builder and the estimated construction cost was £400.¹¹ Whilst NPDC doesn't hold plans for this work, it is known to involve the construction of the front bungalow-style gabled portion. Although not certain, the refined bungalow features (still uncommon in New Plymouth at this time) points to the work of a skilled architect(s); likely the recently formed partnership of Messenger and Griffiths (Frank Messenger & Horace Victor Griffiths).

Whilst it appears both sisters initially resided at the house, street directories are somewhat inconsistent and sometimes only one sister is listed as living at the house.¹² From April 1918 Miss F. E. Bedford advertised her services as a 'confidential typist', with her business address noted as 141 Powderham Street (this property in old street numbering).¹³ In 1923 Florence married William Rowan and whilst it is likely she moved out of the house at this time, she appears to have remained a part-owner until 1928, at which time Dora became the sole titleholder.¹⁴ Dora married Edward John Reid during December 1932 and somewhat unusually for the time, Edward moved into this house with Dora following their wedding. The son of former Solicitor-General Walter Scott Reid, Edward (Teddy) Reid was well-known throughout Taranaki as an insurance inspector and relieving manager for the AMP Society.¹⁵ He was a successful hockey player, keen golfer and popular member of the Taranaki Club.¹⁶



View of New Plymouth from Western Park [Detail from circa 1924-25 of New Plymouth looking east with south-western elevation of 139 Powderham Street before 1933 gable addition], William Oakley, Te Papa, C.003409

⁹ CT TN47/110, Land Information New Zealand

¹⁰ CT TN87/106, Land Information New Zealand

¹¹ NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

¹² Wises Post Office Directories, 1917-23

¹³ *Taranaki Daily News*, 22 April 1918, page 6

¹⁴ CT TN87/106, Land Information New Zealand

¹⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 1 September 1942, page 4

¹⁶ Ibid.

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In 1933 two permits were granted to Reid by the New Plymouth Borough Council for work on the property. The first was granted in April for extensions to a now-demolished outbuilding formerly located behind the house; Boon Bros were the builders and the estimated cost of the work was £69.¹⁷ Further alterations (which still survive intact) were also made to the house and saw the enlargement of the south-western projecting bay.¹⁸ A permit for this work was granted to Reid on August 5th, with the estimated construction cost being £100; the architect and builder was W. H. Lobb.¹⁹ In 1939 Teddy engaged noted local architect Thomas Herbert Bates to design further alterations to the house. Although this was principally internal work at the rear of the building, it also involved the addition of further windows on the north-eastern and rear elevations.²⁰ A permit for these alterations was granted to E. J. Reid on May 23rd, with Boon Bros the contractors and the estimated construction cost noted as £84 10s.²¹

Both Edward and Dora resided at the house for the rest of their lives. Whilst Edward passed away on September 1st 1942, Dora continued to reside at the house for the next 38 years until her death on April 11th 1980 aged 95 years; by this time the house had been her home for more than sixty years.²² Following Dora's death ownership of the property was transferred to Ian and Christine Pritchard.²³ The property changed hands several times during the 1980s and 1990s before being purchased by the present owners in 2000. The house was later converted to commercial premises and has latterly been occupied by Central Finance Ltd.



North-eastern elevation

¹⁷ NPBC Building Register Book 1927-33, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

¹⁸ NPDC Archives

¹⁹ NPBC Building Register Book 1933-37, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

²⁰ NPDC Archives

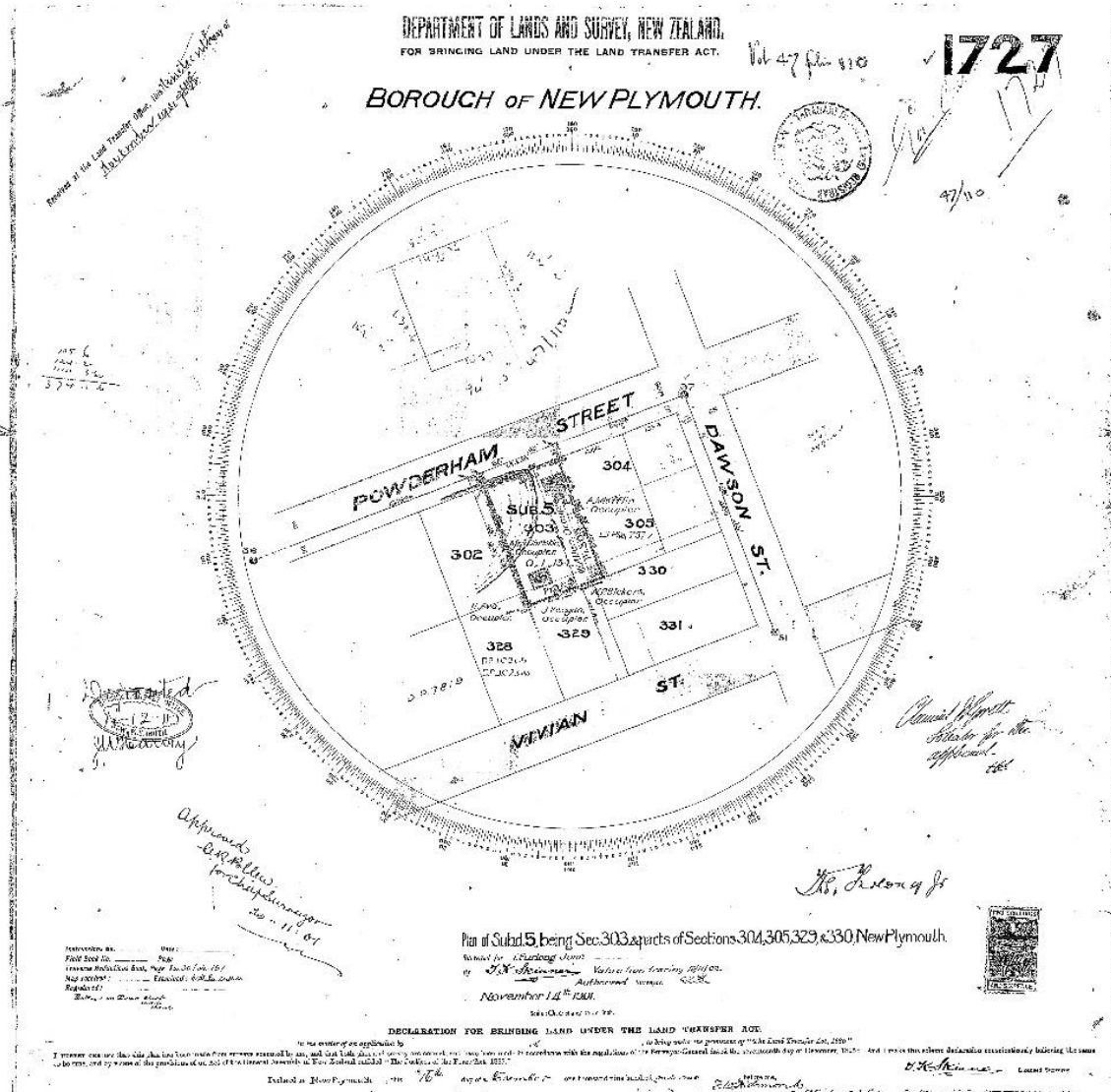
²¹ NPBC Building Register Book 1938-46, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

²² *Taranaki Herald*, 12 April 1980, page 15

²³ CT TN87/106, Land Information New Zealand



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DP1712, Land Information New Zealand

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

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Description

The former Reid Residence is located in a formerly residential area on the western side of New Plymouth city, a short distance from the CBD. Whilst this area was settled early in New Plymouth's history, intensification didn't begin until the 1920s. Development pressures have seen the demolition and removal of a number of older dwellings in recent years, with the area now home to an eclectic mix of architectural styles with a growing commercial presence.

Positioned close to the front boundary on a relatively level section, this building is highly visible to passing motorists on the busy one-way Powderham Street. A rubble concrete wall faced with smooth riverstone and topped with 11 rows of red brick runs along most of the street frontage. The wall is intersected at the western end by a pedestrian entrance with timber gate, whilst a single-car garage (now boarded over with fibre-cement board) is located at the extreme western boundary. Most of the rear of the property is now carparking, with access gained through neighbouring 141 Powderham Street.

The building is comprised of two main sections, a simple 1880s gabled cottage with rear lean-to and a more complex front gabled addition. Although features such as exposed rafters, shingling and hoods give the front addition an overtly bungalow appearance, it is of a similar form and scale to the earlier cottage. The timber-framed building is clad in horizontal rough-sawn weatherboards with the roof sheathed in mild corrugated steel; the window and door joinery is predominantly timber.

The asymmetrical main front elevation faces roughly north-west into Powderham Street. A shallow projecting flat-faced gable incorporates a trio of slender eight-light timber casements, above which a stayed and shingled hood rises to a shingled (bell-cast) gable end. Further west, a pair of divided timber French casements, also fitted with a stayed and shingled hood, provides access to the front courtyard area.

The south-western face of the south-western projecting gable incorporates a small entrance porch with timber panelled door, and a set of five timber casements with fanlights incorporating patterned glass; the upper gable-end is bell-cast and shingled. A single casement with fanlight is positioned on the north-western gable wall, whilst perhaps the building's most significant individual architectural feature, a buttressed brick chimney, stuccoed with dentiling, rises from the front internal corner. A single divided fixed casement is positioned in the south-eastern gable wall.

The south-western wall of the original cottage incorporates a small timber casement, with a twelve-light timber sash window positioned in the lean-to. At the rear of the cottage the lean-to roof has been altered and now incorporates a projecting glazed dormer above a set of divided French casements, flanked by slender divided casements. Further east is positioned a timber panelled and glazed rear entrance door with simple hood above.

Centrally positioned on the front north-western gable wall is a small four-light timber casement. The rear north-western gable wall incorporates two twelve-light sashes, thought to have been repositioned from the front of the original cottage in 1917-18, and two further divided casements; one asymmetrically positioned between the sashes and another within the lean-to.



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Assessment:

Historical	Originally constructed as a cottage rented to members of the working class, this building is associated with late-nineteenth century speculative property development and has the potential to offer insights into the types of dwellings occupied by a marginalised section of nineteenth century society. The more than sixty-year occupation of the house by Theodora Reid (nee Bedford) is also significant.	✓
Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	The building is an excellent example of how nineteenth century cottages were adapted to cater to changing trends and needs during the early decades of the twentieth century. Architectural features are associated with both late-nineteenth century cottage architecture and the early-twentieth century bungalow style.	✓
Setting and Context	Located close to the street frontage, being well-maintained and with a striking colour scheme, this building contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.	✓
Archaeology	As the original cottage was constructed during the 1880s, 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.	✓
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	The rear portion of the house is a representative example of the types of cottages constructed in New Plymouth during the 1880s, of which few local examples now survive. Whilst the house has been modified to an extent, principally through its conversion into commercial premises, the exterior of the building retains a high degree of integrity and remains much as it was upon completion of renovations in the 1930s.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓