

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Lacey's Cottage

Address

94 Lemon Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

Constructed by/for Henry Lacey during the 1880s, this house has historic significance as an early example of a bay villa in New Plymouth City. Home to several different families during its early life, the Roch family subsequently occupied the house for a significant period from the late-1910s through to the late-1950s. Although subject to alterations, the building largely retains its original form, and retains key exterior features such as front sashes in an uncommon arrangement. This building has strong contextual value as both part of a continuous row of three single-storey wooden villas (including 92 and 96 Lemon Street) constructed between the 1880s and early 1900s, and as part of a wider group of interesting heritage buildings along Lemon, Eliot and Pendarves Streets.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 1 DP 9183

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction Circa 1882-1887

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Unknown

History

Town Section 1605 was advertised for sale by local land agents Edward L. Humphries & Son between November 1880 and February 1882. The advertisements make no mention of any dwelling on the section, Skinner's 1880 map of New Plymouth doesn't show any structures present on the section, and a photograph of New Plymouth taken from Fort Niger between late-1880 and late-1883 also reveals the section to be vacant at this time.¹ In June 1882, this section, and also neighbouring Town Section 1630 fronting Pendarves Street, were purchased from Humphries by Henry Lacey.²

Emigrating to Taranaki with his first wife Eliza and four children aboard the *Leicester* in 1876, Lacey was a farmer who also took an active role in the Methodist Church as a Lay Preacher for many years.³ Eliza died in 1885, and at this time a memorial service was held at New Plymouth's Primitive Methodist Church in Queen Street.⁴ It seems the Lacey family relocated to Cardiff, near Stratford, following Eliza's death, with Henry later marrying local resident Louisa Lundberg in 1890.⁵ Henry died at Stratford on the 7th of November 1927, and is buried in New Plymouth's historic Te Henui Cemetery with both his wives.⁶

Whilst it seems likely that the present dwelling was constructed soon after Lacey purchased the property, the earliest confirmed record of a house on the section is from the 1887-88 New Plymouth Borough Council rates book. This is the oldest known surviving rates book covering Lacey's period of ownership, and at this time a house (almost certainly the present dwelling), was noted as being present on Town Section 1605; the combined rateable value of the property being £16.⁷ The present house can be seen in an undated (circa early-mid 1890s) photograph of New Plymouth taken from Fort Niger.⁸ At this time, 92 Lemon Street (circa 1896-97), and 96 Lemon Street (circa 1902-03), were still to be constructed.

¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 18 February 1882, page 1; Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand, Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

² Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

³ Passenger Lists, 1839-1973, Archives New Zealand; *Taranaki Herald*, 9 November 1927, page 3

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 6 June 1885, page 2

⁵ Births, Deaths and Marriages Online - <https://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/>

⁶ *Stratford Evening Post*, 7 November 1928, page 4

⁷ New Plymouth Borough Council Rating Book 1887-88, NPDC Archives

⁸ Puke Ariki, A.3.297



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In April 1897, the property was conveyed to Mary Jane Coleman (nee Coulthard), who was the wife of New Plymouth carpenter Arthur John Coleman.⁹ The Coleman's had married in 1894, and appear to have occupied the house themselves, with Arthur first appearing as residing in this location in Lemon Street in the 1897 edition of *Stones Street Directory*.¹⁰ During the 1901-02 rating year Town Section 1605 was purchased by Hawera resident Edwin Barber Bates, the property was subdivided, and titles issued under the Land Transfer Act.¹¹

A Land Transfer Act Notice appearing in the *Taranaki Herald* during early February 1902 noted that Bates was the applicant, with Coleman listed as the occupier of the section.¹² During the 1902-03 rating year, the eastern portion was sold to Edward Hunt, with Bates retaining ownership of the western portion with house.¹³ During the 1908-09 rating year the property was sold to property investor Jessie Hills, who only retained ownership for a short period before the property was purchased by Catherine Elizabeth Hart.¹⁴

Catherine resided at Inglewood and rented-out the house to builder James Frederick Webber (son of ropemaker William Webber), for much of her period of ownership, with Webber first appearing as living in this location in the 1913 edition of *Wises Street Directories*.¹⁵ Upon her death in 1918, the property was sold to Florence Mary Roch (nee Williams).¹⁶ Florence was the wife of the late Johan (John) Gottlieb Roch, who had unfortunately died the previous year from pneumonia following influenza contracted during the 1918 epidemic whilst stationed at the Featherston Military Camp training with the 48th Reinforcements.¹⁷

Having previously resided at Frankleigh Park, Florence intended shifting into the house with her young son, Newton, soon after purchase; however, despite being given a months' notice to vacate the house, Webber would not leave.¹⁸ At this time, New Plymouth, and New Zealand, was suffering from an acute housing shortage, and Webber claimed that he couldn't move as he could not find another house for he and his wife and five children to live; to make matters worse, Webber had been unable to work for the previous nine months owing to illness.¹⁹ The case ended up in the Magistrates Court, where the judge ordered Webber to vacate the house and pay costs.²⁰

Martha only lived in the house for a short period, as following her husband's death, her health declined quite rapidly, and she died at New Plymouth Hospital during March 1921.²¹ The house entered into the possession of Johann's brother, plumber Charles William Roch, and his wife Martha (nee Ridland). Charles remained living at the property until his death on 3 November 1946, and Martha until her death on 23 April 1959.

⁹ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

¹⁰ *Stones Street Directory*, 1897

¹¹ DP1751, Land Information New Zealand

¹² *Taranaki Herald*, 1 February 1902, page 3

¹³ New Plymouth Borough Council Rating Book 1902-03, NPDC Archives

¹⁴ CT TN65/8, Land Information New Zealand

¹⁵ *Wises Post Office Directory*, 1913

¹⁶ CT TN65/8, Land Information New Zealand

¹⁷ *Taranaki Herald*, 19 November 1918, page 2

¹⁸ *Taranaki Herald*, 10 June 1919, page 7

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Taranaki Daily News*, 23 March 1921, page 4



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Detail from photograph of New Plymouth taken between late-1880 and late-1883. National Library, Fred B. Butler Collection, PAColl-4127-01. Note vacant Town Section 1605 – the two cottages in foreground are on Town Section 1606, present site of 98 and 100 Lemon Street.



Detail from circa early-mid 1890s (pre-1895) view of New Plymouth from Fort Niger showing rear and SE elevation of 94 Lemon Street; 92 and 96 Lemon Street are yet to be constructed. Puke Ariki, A.3.297.

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Detail from view of New Plymouth taken from Fort Niger showing both 92 and 94 Lemon Street.
Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News, 25 June 1898, page 2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-18980625-2-2

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

This building is located in a city fringe street several blocks from New Plymouth's CBD, and just east of New Plymouth's main southern entrance on Eliot Street/SH3. Located within Frederick Carrington's original Town of New Plymouth, this area was settled early in New Plymouth's history, and the surrounding blocks contain a number of pre-1900 dwellings. Whilst development pressures since the 1970s have resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, the area still retains a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

94 Lemon Street is the oldest building in a continuous row of three single-storey wooden villas (including 92 and 96 Lemon Street) constructed between the 1880s and early 1900s. This row is part of a larger group of interesting heritage buildings along Lemon, Eliot and Pendarves Street, with the HNZ listed 'Hen and Chickens' Historic Area (1860s) also located nearby on Pendarves Street.

The main form of this cottage is a narrow north-south half-hipped gable intersected by a wide east-west gable, with a range of rear lean-to extensions. Early photographs reveal that the hipped front gable end is not original and was originally formed as a simple flush gable with finial. Although the date of this alteration is not known, it occurred sometime prior to early-1965, with the current form present in a White's Aviation aerial photograph taken that year.²²

The building is currently clad in fibre cement sheet, with the original cladding probably either horizontal rough-sawn or rusticated weatherboard; this may survive underneath. The roof is sheathed in corrugated steel, and the windows are a mixture of sashes and modern aluminium joinery. The surviving two pairs of sashes on the front elevation are somewhat unusual in having a short six-light upper sash, and a tall two-light lower sash.

²² New Plymouth Boys' High School, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, WA-63601-F



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The glazed front entrance door located adjacent to the projecting gable is probably a later addition, and is now also covered with a small sloping porch. A brick chimney finished with dentil courses rises from the front of the western wall.

Assessment:

Historical	Although not inhabited by any persons of particular note, as a rental property Lacey's Cottage was home to several, principally working-class families, during its early life. Later the house was occupied by the Roch family for a significant period from the late-1910s through to the late-1950s.	✓
Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	This house is an early example of a bay villa in New Plymouth City, and	✓
Setting and Context	This house has contextual value as part of a continuous row of three villas constructed between the 1880s and early-1900s. Both individually, and as part of a group, this building contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.	✓
Archaeology	As this building was constructed between 1882 and 1887, 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 building is representative of the early bay villas constructed during the 1880s, and although subject to alterations, largely retains its original form.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓