

## Heritage Buildings Report

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Barron's Cottage

**Address**

4 Hempton Street, New Plymouth



### Statement of Significance

This attractive cottage nestled amongst mature trees overlooking the Huatoki Stream valley was constructed about late-1892 for John Barron. In 1912 additions were designed by accomplished New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger for then owner Miss Ann Jones. These additions involved the construction of a projecting gable in the villa style and is a good illustration of how buildings were adapted to account for changing architectural styles during the early part of the twentieth century. The original portion of this building is representative of the types of cottages constructed around New Plymouth during the 1890s and 1900s, of which many have since been demolished. Whilst subsequent alterations have been completed, the cottage's nineteenth century origins are still evident, and the building continues to contribute positively to the historic character of the immediate area.



# Heritage Buildings Report

## Legal Information and Heritage Status

**Legal Description** Section 750 Town of New Plymouth

**District Plan Item/ Map No.**

**Heritage New Zealand List** Not listed

## Construction Information

**Date of Construction** Circa 1892

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

**Construction Professionals** Frank Messenger (architect for additions)

## History

This cottage was likely constructed for John Barron during late-1892. The early history of Town Section 750 is unclear, and the first (and only), entry in the Land Deeds Register is a conveyance from Edward Hales to Wellington businessman William Waring Taylor in April 1876.<sup>1</sup> However, it is recorded on the certificate of title that the section was officially granted to Edward Hales in 1878, some years after the sale to Waring Taylor.<sup>2</sup> The section remained vacant and appears to have been let to Edward Dorset, presumably for grazing, for a number of years from about late-1880.

In November 1880, Mr Edward Dorset complained that a house located in the middle of Fulford Street was obstructing access to Town Section 750; the council ordered the building to be removed within fourteen days.<sup>3</sup> This building is clearly visible on Thomas Kingwell Skinner's 1880 Map of New Plymouth, although no building is indicated as being present on Town Section 750 at this time.<sup>4</sup>

On the 3rd of March 1885 the property title was issued to Catherine Alice Hutchinson, wife of Thomas Hutchinson, of Hawera.<sup>5</sup> Advertisements in the Taranaki Herald during January 1885 notifying of the intention to issue a property title for Town Section 750 under the Land Transfer Act still list William Waring Taylor as the owner, and Edward Dorset as the occupier.<sup>6</sup> In October 1891 ownership of the property was transferred from Catherine Hutchinson to Mary Webster, wife of local shipping agent and property investor William Dawson Webster.<sup>7</sup>

Webster only retained ownership for just under a year, and in September of 1892 the property was conveyed to John Barron. Mr Barron is thought to have had the original portion of the present cottage constructed soon after purchasing the section, and in October 1892 Mr Barron was informed by the Borough Council that water cannot be laid on to the section as there were no pipes available.<sup>8</sup> In July 1897 Mr Barron wrote to the council regarding repairs needed in Fulford Street.<sup>9</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> CT TN15/253, Land Information New Zealand

<sup>3</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 3 November 1880, p.2

<sup>4</sup> Plan of New Plymouth, New Zealand, Thomas Kingwell Skinner, 1880, ARC2010-220, Puke Ariki

<sup>5</sup> CT TN15/253, Land Information New Zealand

<sup>6</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 13 January 1885, p.3

<sup>7</sup> CT TN15/253, Land Information New Zealand

<sup>8</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 11 October 1892, p.2

<sup>9</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 13 July 1897, p.2

## Heritage Buildings Report

On 20 July 1911, Elizabeth Barron, John's wife, died at the house.<sup>10</sup> Soon after Elizabeth's death, the six-roomed house and ¼ acre section was listed for sale.<sup>11</sup> The property was soon purchased by Miss Ann Jones, who the following year employed noted New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger to design additions to the house. A permit for this work was granted to Miss Jones by the Borough Council on 3 October 1912, and had an estimated construction cost of £365.<sup>12</sup> It seems Miss Jones' health declined, and in late September 1918, she advertised for home help, with applicants required to be able to do 'plain cooking'.<sup>13</sup> She died at New Plymouth on 2 December 1918, aged 64 years.<sup>14</sup> Whilst Ann's death occurred during the influenza epidemic, her cause of death is not reported.

Ownership was transferred to Henry Marfell for a brief period in early-1919, before the property was purchased by spinster Kate Ethel Jones during July of that year.<sup>15</sup> Kate Jones retained ownership until April 1921, when the property was purchased by accountant and property investor Stanley Eric Shaw; the house then appears to have become a rental property.<sup>16</sup>



Detail from undated (circa early-mid 1890s) view of New Plymouth from Marsland Hill showing rear of cottage before 1912 alterations. Collis, William Andrews, 1853-1920: Negatives of Taranaki. Ref: 1/1-006109-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

### Reference Sources

See footnotes.

<sup>10</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 21 July 1911, p.2

<sup>11</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 17 August 1911, p.1

<sup>12</sup> NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

<sup>13</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 30 September 1918, p.1

<sup>14</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 3 December 1918, p.2

<sup>15</sup> CT TN15/253, Land Information New Zealand

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

# Heritage Buildings Report

## Description

Barron's Cottage is located on the western slopes of the historic Huatoki Stream valley, just a short distance south of New Plymouth's colonial heart and present CBD. This area was settled early in New Plymouth's history, and the surrounding area contains a number of pre-1900 buildings and historic sites such as Red Coat Lane (route used by soldiers between Marsland Hill Barracks and Parade Ground) and the Alpha Mill remains (constructed in 1844). Whilst development pressures since the 1960s have resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, the area still retains a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

The original form of the building was a simple gabled structure with full-length veranda on the original north-eastern main front elevation. The cottage is clad in horizontal timber weatherboards and the roof sheathed in corrugated steel. Various alterations beginning in 1912 have considerably enlarged the original cottage and the addition of a front gable gives the appearance of a bay villa. Although extensive, subsequent alterations have mostly been sympathetic to the original style of the cottage, and the original structure is still clearly identifiable.

The main front elevation faces roughly north-east across the Huatoki Stream valley. A flat faced gable projects from the southern end of this elevation and incorporates a pair of single-pane double-hung sashes with stayed window hood above; the upper gable end is finished with battened cement sheet. A simple post and beam veranda with sloping roof extends along the rest of this elevation, terminating at a lean-to addition fitted with casement windows in a variety of styles.

The south-eastern elevation faces into Hempton Street and incorporates an interesting projecting bay with steeply pitched roof. The western portion of the bay is fitted with a square bay window with Chicago double-hung sash window at the front, and a single, slender double-hung sash either side; a further pair of standard double-hung sashes are fitted in the eastern portion of the bay. At the rear of this elevation a half-hipped gable projects to the south-west and is fitted with a single double-hung sash window. The rear of the projecting bay has been extended at a later date and is fitted with circa 1950s style timber casements.

## Assessment:

<b>Historical</b>	This building principally has historic significance as an uncommon example of a late-nineteenth century cottage situated close to New Plymouth's CBD. Additions completed in 1912 were designed by accomplished New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger and are an interesting example of his smaller-scale domestic work.	✓
<b>Importance to Community</b>	-	
<b>Architecture &amp; Construction</b>	This building has technical interest as a nineteenth century cottage with the later addition of a projecting bay in the villa style. It is a good illustration of how extant buildings were adapted to account for changing architectural styles during the early part of the twentieth century.	✓
<b>Setting and Context</b>	-	
<b>Archaeology</b>	As the original portion of the cottage was constructed circa 1892, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900 human activity and has the potential	✓



## Heritage Buildings Report

to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.

**Representativeness, rarity and integrity**

The original portion of this building is representative of the types of cottages constructed around New Plymouth during the 1890s and 1900s, of which many have since been demolished.

✓

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

✓

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