

House

108 Abel Smith Street



Charles Collins – WCC, 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- The house at 108 Abel Smith Street is a typical tall Victorian villa, it has aesthetic value for the design, proportions, and (although there is little) ornamentation of the street façade.
- This house is of townscape value as it helps to define the corner of Abel Smith and Victoria Streets. It makes a significant contribution to the character and sense of place of Abel Smith Street, and is a reminder of the predominantly residential use of this area and upper Cuba Street.
- This house has retained a significant amount of original exterior fabric and has authenticity.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 3/1
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 1 DP 795
Heritage Area:	-
HPT Listed:	-
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 building, NZAA Central City Archaeological Area R27/270
Other Names:	-
Key physical dates:	Built: 1897. Additions: 1955, 1957, 1973, 2007
Architect / Builder:	Unknown.
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not Earthquake Prone – SR 262235

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This house at 108 Abel Smith Street has experienced a fairly typical, uneventful, history that is representative of many inner city houses.

The site was originally owned by Robert Spurway a Wellington contractor, and it appears that there was a smaller house occupying the property prior to the present one.¹ No original plans for this house are available, so it is difficult to know the exact date of its construction. Its features are typically late Victorian, and it is likely to date from around the turn of the century.

In 1899 the property was sold to Abraham Berman, a tobacconist, who owned the property until 1907, when it was sold to William Ryan, who is listed as formerly being a gatekeeper from Palmerston North. It appears that Ryan did not live at the property and that it was occupied by tenants.²

It is difficult to ascertain when or if Ryan sold the property; it was subject to transmission to the Public Trustee in 1941. In 1944 the Public Trustee transferred the property to Patrick Commons, but in 1949 it was transferred back to the Public Trust. Later in 1949 it was transferred to John Commons. In 1954 the property was sold to Edward McCready. The following year McCready converted the house into two flats and in 1957 added a rear porch and stairs to the house. In 1973 a garage was built on the rear portion of the property. In 1987 the property was transferred to Kathleen McCready as the survivor, and she sold the property to Abel Victoria Limited, a company directed by David Melling. In 2006 and 2007 additions and alterations were carried out at the house many of which were 'making good' the heritage fabric of the house, adding two dormer windows for bedrooms, and painting the exterior.

The house appears to be owned as an investment property and is let for residential use.

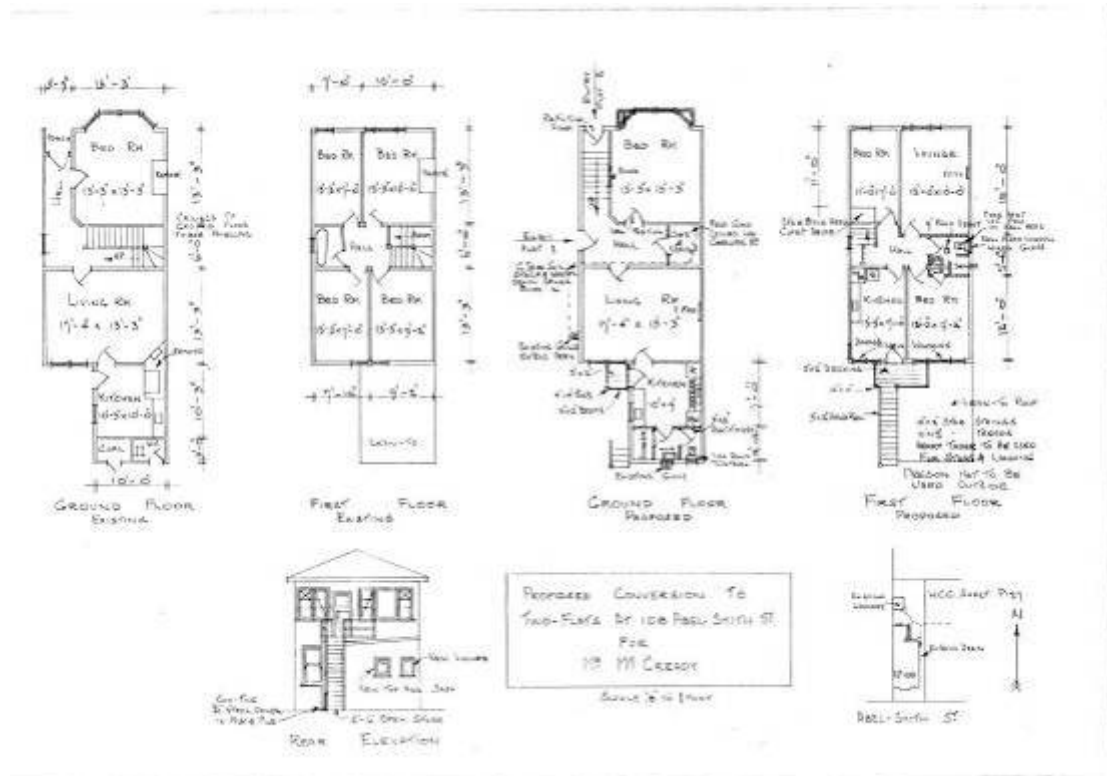
¹ The present house does not match the footprint that appears on the 1892 Thomas Ward Map, so is likely to be a later addition,

<http://wellington.govt.nz/webmap/wccmap.html?xmin=1747759&ymin=5427052&xmax=1749533&ymin=5428719&base=0&map=0&moredata=0>

² 'Child knocked down', *Evening Post*, 7 August 1934, Page 11,

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19340807.2.101&srpos=1&e=-----10--1--0108+Abel+Smith+Street-->; 'Traffic Accidents', *Evening Post*, 8 February 1938, Page 11, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19380208.2.108&srpos=2&e=-----10--1--0108+Abel+Smith+Street-->

1.2 Timeline of modifications (original plans cannot be found – 1955 plans)



- 1955 108 Abel Smith Street, conversion to two flats (00056:498:B37360)
- 1957 108 Abel Smith Street, dwelling additions (00058:26:C1325)
- 1973 108 Abel Smith Street, garage (00058:850:C37901)
- 2007 108 Abel Smith Street, garage (00078:1956:156172)
- 2007 108 Abel Smith Street, dwelling refurbishment (00078:2786:169863)

1.3 Occupation history

Not assessed

1.4 Architect

Unknown architect

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

This house is a typical two storey Victorian villa with a side entrance that is accessed from the rear or a narrow walkway that follows down the side of the house. The street elevation features a rectangular bay window. The side elevations of the house have had windows added, including two dormer windows that are set some way back from the main building face and are detailed in a sympathetic manner. The elevations are relatively simple and unadorned.

2.2 Materials

- Timber structure
- Weatherboard cladding
- Corrugated steel roof

2.3 Setting

This house is situated on the corner of Abel Smith and Victoria Streets. It's neighbours at 110 and 112 are also heritage listed, and are good examples of single storey dwellings from the same period as 108. This block is made up of a number of timber houses that act as a reminder of the residential use of this area and upper Cuba Street, but this setting has been impacted upon by the construction of the Wellington urban motorway and Karo Drive which detract from the aesthetic value of these buildings and the area.

3.0 Sources

Papers Past

'Child knocked down'. *Evening Post*. 7 August 1934, Page 11,
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=EP19340807.2.101&srpos=1&e=-----10--1--0108+Abel+Smith+Street-->

'Traffic Accidents'. *Evening Post*. 8 February 1938, Page 11,
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Thomas Ward Map

<http://wellington.govt.nz/webmap/wccmap.html?xmin=1747759&ymin=5427052&xmax=1749533&ymin=5428719&base=0&map=0&moredata=0>

Wellington City Archive

1955 108 Abel Smith Street, conversion to two flats (00056:498:B37360)
1957 108 Abel Smith Street, dwelling additions (00058:26:C1325)
1973 108 Abel Smith Street, garage (00058:850:C37901)
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Land Information New Zealand

WN 93/16

Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: *Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?*

The house at 108 Abel Smith Street is a typical tall Victorian villa, it has aesthetic value for the design, proportions, and (although there is little) ornamentation of the street façade.

Townscape: *Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?*

This house is of townscape value as it helps to define the corner of Abel Smith and Victoria Streets. It makes a significant contribution to the character and sense of place of Abel Smith Street, and is a reminder of the predominantly residential use of this area and upper Cuba Street.

Group: *Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?*

Historic Value:

Association: *Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?*

Association: *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

This house has had a modest, uneventful, and typical history that is representative of many inner city residential properties.

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: *Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?*

This house is likely to predate 1900, and is found in the NZAA Central City Archaeological area R27/270.

Educational: *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: *Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?*

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:

Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?

Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

Representative: *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

This house is a good representative of a timber Victorian villa, with a history that is representative of the area, and was constructed in materials and using techniques that were common to the period.

Authentic: *Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?*

This house has retained a significant amount of original exterior fabric and has authenticity.

Local/Regional/National/International

Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

This house is locally important for the role that it plays in the streetscape, and for its representative values.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*