

Houses

44-46 Aro Street



46 Aro Street – Image: *Charles Collins* – 2015



44 Aro Street – Image: *Charles Collins* – 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- These two houses are of architectural value as representative examples of Victorian Italianate dwellings, a popular style from the period of their construction. They are identical double storey villas, with exteriors that are basically in original condition.
- These houses are good representative of the types of dwellings that were being constructed at the turn of the century. They are constructed in materials, and using techniques, that were common to the period.
- Although these houses have had quiet histories, No. 46 was owned for a number of years by Sir Kerry Burke and the late Helen Paske, giving this building a historical association over and above those of the typical Aro Street house.

No. 44

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 11/7
Legal Description:	Lot 2 DP 6491
Heritage Area:	Aro Valley Cottages heritage area
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 4117
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: 1899
Architect / Builder:	Builder: Richard Keene
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	EQ Not Necessary, Outside EQ Policy – SR 269270

No. 46

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 11/7
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 6491
Heritage Area:	Aro Valley Cottages heritage area
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 4118
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: 1899
Architect / Builder:	Builder: Richard Keene
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	EQ Not Necessary, Outside EQ Policy – SR 269271

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

The two houses at No. 44-46 Aro Street (and a third at No. 48 demolished in 1976) were built in 1899 by speculative builder Richard Keene. Keene had established a building partnership with Henry Pitcher in 1886 and their premises were at Grey Street.

No. 44 was originally occupied by Robert Rice, followed by Anna Flynn. After 1914 there was a regular succession of occupants over the next 15 years; Jessie Burton, then Edward Murphy, an engine driver, the widowed Ellen Murphy, followed by Felix Newfield, a union secretary and his wife Georgina. The Newfield's lived in the house for a considerable period, with Georgina remaining in the house after the death of her husband in the mid 1950s. By 1967 the house was occupied by Stan Noble, a salesman, and by 1975 it was occupied by T. Melesala. Subsequent occupants are unknown, but in 1981 the Wellington City Council acquired the house under the Urban Renewal and Housing Improvement Act 1945. The council sold the house later in 1981 to Arpad and Judith Boros. In 1984 the house was sold to Arthur Kindall, who sold it to Alexander Drummond the following year. In 1998 the house was purchased by Charles and Jacqueline Pope. In 2002 they sold the house to Stephen Wainwright and Judith Thorpe, who remain the owners in 2013.

The house has had a number of alterations since its construction, but few of these appear to have been external. In 1926 the then owner, Elizabeth McEwan (who also owned No. 46 for a period) made £25 worth of alterations to the house. In 2002 a permit for unspecified additions and alterations was issued. In 2004 an application for a new pergola, fence, and shed was received following the demolition of the shed (thought to be the 1899 original) and the fence. In 2005 further unspecified alterations and additions were carried out at No. 44.

¹ History adapted from: Michael Kelly, 'Aro Valley Cottages Heritage Area – Aro Pt 2 doc', unpublished report prepared for Wellington City Council, 2002, 44 and 46 Aro Street.

No. 46 Aro Street was originally occupied by Bernard Watts, a boot maker, and then by William Brown, a 'letter carrier'. By 1920 the house was occupied by Francis Brown, a despatch clerk. It appears that Patrick Dwyer purchased this house in 1907 (as he had 42 and 44), but was forced to sell the property under a mortgagee sale in 1924. The house was purchased by Elizabeth McEwan, who also owned No. 44. In 1925 she made £50 of alterations and in 1929 added a garage and tool shed. In 1933 Elizabeth McEwan died and the house was inherited by her son John, a musician. In 1936 John McEwan sold the house to Isabella and Margaret Morris. By 1941 the house had been converted into two flats, 46 and 46A, with Bentar Westheim, a tie manufacturer, and Sidney Reille, a driver, being the two occupants. These men remained the occupants for a number of years. Later long standing tenants also included Charles Hutton, a civil servant, in No 46 and Leonard Hamilton, a clerk, in 46A. The Morris sisters sold the house to Richard Tolley in 1942, and he sold it to Edwin Daniel in 1949. Daniel was a long standing owner, until 1971 when the house was sold to Arpad Boros, who later owned No. 44. In 1984 Boros sold the house to Kerry (later Sir Kerry) Burke, a speaker of Parliament and his wife, journalist Helen Paske. It is unknown if they ever occupied the house themselves. Helen passed away in 1990 and Sir Kerry inherited the house. The house is now (2013) owned by Morris Flett.²

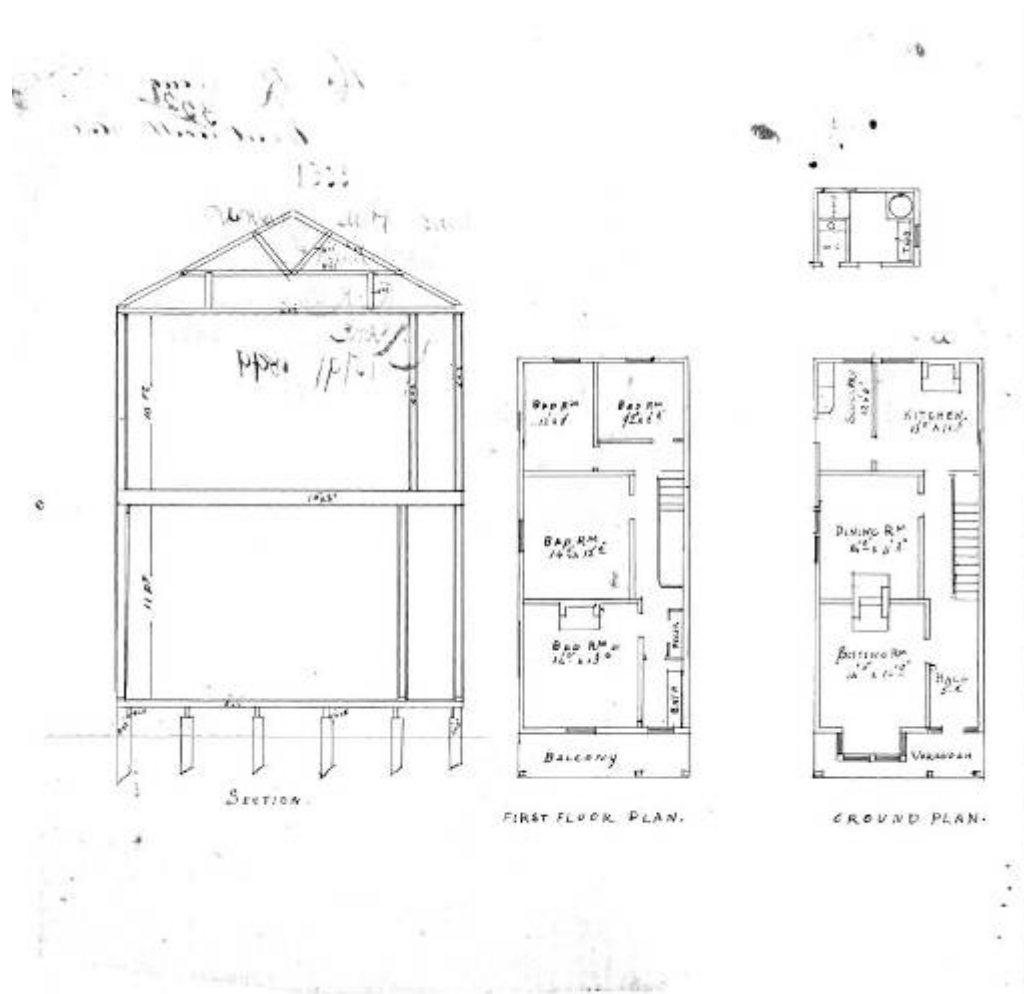
No. 46 has had few alterations since its construction, with additions being made to the house in 1925, the construction of a garage and tool shed in 1929, and repiling in 1971.

The two houses form a small group of modest but elegant late Victorian two-storey villas and add a considerable amount of character to lower Aro Street and to the Aro Street Cottages heritage area. Both of these villas are rectangular in plan, and clad in rusticated weatherboard, with corrugated iron hipped roofs surmounted by a chimneystack. The street facades have a two storey square bay window, with groupings of sash windows, and a main entrance incorporating a verandah above. The entrance porch and verandah balustrade both feature finely detailed wrought iron filigree. There is also another entrance on the western elevation. Both houses originally had seven rooms, although the layout is unknown.

These two houses are among the most decorative in the Aro Street Cottages heritage area and possess considerable streetscape value because of their prominence, their relationship to the street, and the quality of their finishing's, in particular the wrought iron filigree, of which there is no other examples of this kind of treatment nearby.

² (N.B current ownership information for internal use only).

1.2 Timeline of modifications



1899 Wordsworth Street [44, 46, 48 Aro Street], three dwellings (00053:56:3551)

No. 44:

- 1926 44 Aro Street, additions to dwelling (00056:7:B616)
- 2002 44 Aro Street, additions and alterations (00078:1458:93314)
- 2004 44 Aro Street, pergola and shed (00078:1366:120260)
- 2005 44 Aro Street, dwelling additions and alterations (00078:2030:133178)

No 46:

- 1925 46 Aro Street, additions to dwelling (00056:5:B428)
- 1929 46 Aro Street, garage and tool shed (00056:68:B6535)
- 1971 46 Aro Street, repile dwelling (00058:748:C33864)

1.3 Occupation history

No. 44

- 1899 Robert Rice – occupation unknown
Anna Flynn – occupation unknown
1914 Succession of tenants:
Jessie Burton – occupation unknown
Edward Murphy – Engine driver and Ellen Murphy
Felix Newfield – Union secretary and Georgina Newfield
1967 Stan Noble – Salesman
1975 T. Melesala – occupation unknown

No. 46

- 1899 Bernard Watts – Boot maker
William Brown – Letter carrier
1920 Francis Brown – Despatch clerk
1941 Bentar Westheim – Tie manufacturer
Sidney Reille – Driver
Charles Hutton – Civil servant
Leonard Hamilton – Clerk

1.4 Architect

Unknown – possibly designed by builder – Richard Keene.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

These buildings are identical double storey villas, with exteriors that are basically in original condition. They have been built in a late Victorian Italianate style.

Each is essentially rectangular in shape, with a hipped roof, double storey bay, and a side entry with a verandah above the doorway, capped with a balustrade. Balusters are cut out patterns, the fretwork below the verandah, and the eaves brackets are the principle decorative elements of these dwellings. Both of these villas are rectangular in plan, and clad in rusticated weatherboard, with corrugated iron hipped roofs surmounted by a chimneystack. The street facades have a two storey square bay window, with groupings of sash windows, and a main entrance incorporating a verandah above. The entrance porch and verandah balustrade both feature finely detailed wrought iron filigree. There is also another entrance on the western elevation.

2.2 Materials

- Rusticated weatherboards
- Corrugated iron roofing
- Timber joinery

2.3 Setting

The houses at 44-46 Aro Street are part of the group of houses that make up the Aro Street cottages historic area. They are well preserved externally and are excellent representatives of the period in which they were constructed. These houses have a simplicity that is indicative of their age and purpose as workers' housing.

The area is confined to the older, visually compatible structures that flank Aro Street, an area that has coherence as all the buildings were constructed between 1875 and 1910 and share similarities in history – predominantly that of working class people of the area – and in design and the use of construction materials. The area shares a homogeneity of design, appearance, and construction, and most of the buildings are typical of their times.

3.0 Sources

Kelly, Michael. 'Aro Valley Cottages Heritage Area – Aro Pt 2 doc.' Unpublished report prepared for Wellington City Council, 2002.

Wellington City Archive

- 1899 Wordsworth Street [44, 46, 48 Aro Street], three dwellings (00053:56:3551)
- 1926 44 Aro Street, additions to dwelling (00056:7:B616)
- 2002 44 Aro Street, additions and alterations (00078:1458:93314)
- 2004 44 Aro Street, pergola and shed (00078:1366:120260)
- 2005 44 Aro Street, dwelling additions and alterations (00078:2030:133178)
- 1925 46 Aro Street, additions to dwelling (00056:5:B428)
- 1929 46 Aro Street, garage and tool shed (00056:68:B6535)
- 1971 46 Aro Street, repile dwelling (00058:748:C33864)

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?*

These two houses are of architectural value as representative examples of Victorian Italianate dwellings, a popular style from the period of their construction. They are identical double storey villas, with exteriors that are basically in original condition.

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?*

These houses are of townscape value as they are extremely prominent in the streetscape as they are among the most obviously decorative of the houses in the historic area, and due to the double height bays, as well as the quality of the wrought iron filigree on the verandah/entrance.

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?*

These buildings are a part of the largest collection of intact working class buildings in Wellington, giving them an important local significance. These houses should be recognised for their outstanding group heritage value.

Historic Value:

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

Although these houses have had quiet histories, No. 46 was owned for a number of years by Sir Kerry Burke and the late Helen Paske, giving this building a historical association over and above those of the typical Aro Street house.

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

Their historical significance is primarily associated with the fact that the area has an almost unbroken history of working class life, and the houses consistently reflect this history.

Scientific Value:

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

This area of the Aro Valley is known to have been occupied pre 1900, so the risk of discovery of archaeological materials is relatively high. These buildings were also constructed pre 1900.

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?

These houses contribute to the sense of place and continuity on Aro Street due to the retention of their original features and their long standing place on the street.

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?*

These houses are good representative of the types of dwellings that were being constructed at the turn of the century. They are 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?*

Allied to their consistent history is that these houses retain a significant amount of authenticity and have had few negative exterior alterations.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

These buildings are a part of the largest collection of intact working class buildings in Wellington, giving them an important local significance

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*