

Houses

205-207 Aro Street



205, 207 – Image: Charles Collins -2015

Summary of heritage significance

- 205 and 207 are important representative examples of the modest workers cottages that typify pre 1900 European settlement in the Wellington region.
- While the historical associations may appear slight, as these buildings have not been associated with any events of great importance, their historical significance is associated with the fact that the area as a whole has an almost unbroken history of working class life, and the houses consistently reflect this history.
- They contribute significantly to the wider historic townscape of workers cottages and larger villas that make up Wellington's Aro Street contributing visual interest as a matching pair.

No. 205

District Plan:	Map 11, reference 15/1
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 44 DP 710
Heritage Area:	
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 4120
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 Building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: c.1897
Architect / Builder:	Builder: George Baker
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	EQ Not Necessary, Outside EQ Policy – SR 269259

No. 207

District Plan:	Map 11, reference 15/2
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 44 DP 710
Heritage Area:	
HPT Listed:	Category II, reference 7082
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 Building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: c.1897
Architect / Builder:	Builder: George Baker
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	EQ Not Necessary, Outside EQ Policy – SR 269260

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

The houses at 205 and 207 Aro Street have had quiet histories but are important representative examples of the modest workers cottages that typify pre 1900 European settlement in the Wellington region.

The land that these cottages now occupy was originally settled by Maori, and subsequently placed in Maori ownership following the subdivision and colonisation of Wellington. The land was further subdivided by its original owners and the part known as section 5 was purchased by Richard Kirk in the early 1890s (1893). Kirk, in the late 1890s, subdivided this section into two lots, lot 43 and lot 44. Lot 43 was sold to Robert Mason, while lot 44 was sold to William George Baker, a noted landscape artist.

It is probable that the houses built on section 44 (now 205 and 207) were built around this time by William's father, George Baker, a well known builder and developer in Wellington at this time. The land was further subdivided by Baker, and two caveats were placed upon the land, one in 1911 by Thomas Lavin, and one in 1916 by Harriet Harding. It is not clear from Certificate of Title information, but city archive permit records state that an H. Harding was the owner of 207 Aro Street in 1919.

The section occupied by 207 was sold to Thomas Lavin in 1924, and in 1927 the balance of the land was sold to Thomas's wife, Susan. The Lavin's lived at 205 Aro Street, with Susan remaining the owner following the death of Thomas in 1928. In 1935 Susan transferred the property to Isabella Elizabeth Wells, who in 1940 sold the property to Harry and Myra Harding. In 1952 the house at 205 was sold to Frederick Adams, who almost immediately sold it to Thomas Lane. In 1974 there was a transmission of the property to the Public Trustee as administrators, and in 1975 there is notice of compensation being paid under the Public Works Act. Later that same year the land was gazetted for the use of Victoria University who remain the owners of 205 and 207.

The houses are intact examples of the type of housing that once dominated New Zealand construction. Designed and constructed by the builders, the materials of native timbers and corrugated iron were easily accessible, cheap, and provided flexibility for future alterations and additions. These houses continue to serve their residential purpose and add to our understanding of how people lived at the turn of the twentieth century. They contribute significantly to the wider historic landscape of workers cottages and larger villas that make up Wellington's Aro Street.

1.2 Timeline of modifications (original plans cannot be accessed)

No. 205

1958 205 Aro Street, dwelling additions (00058:48:C2401)

¹ History based on Certificate of Title information – WN 376/176; WN 92/126; WN 67/46; WN 52/63 ; WN 46/124.

No. 207

1919 207 Aro Street, brick wall (00053:197:10897)
1949 207 Aro Street, bathroom (00056:362:B27862)
1999 207 Aro Street, additions and alterations (00078:301:55652)

1.3 Occupation history

Not assessed

1.4 Architect

Baker, George - Builder²

George Baker was a well-known builder and developer in Wellington. Baker was responsible for a number of developments in Mount Victoria and Te Aro, including the twin cottages located at 125 & 127 Aro Street, and the cottages at 205 & 207 Aro Street.

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

These workers cottages possess single gables, are rectangular in plan, and are one room wide. They have rusticated weatherboards and a bay window on the street façade, and corrugated iron side walls. The bay windows give some depth to otherwise flat and uninteresting elevations. The cover board beneath the window sills are a feature of many early houses. The simplicity and small scale of these cottages add to the character of the Aro Valley streetscape.

2.2 Materials

- Rusticated weatherboard
- Corrugated iron roof and sides
- Timber window joinery

2.3 Setting

These cottages are situated on Aro Street, in the Aro Valley. They are a pair of valuable additions to one of the best preserved precincts of period workers dwellings in Wellington.

² Historic Places Trust, 'George Baker – Builder', *Professional Biographies*, accessed 29 August 2013, <http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Baker,+George>

3.0 Sources

Historic Places Trust. 'George Baker – Builder'. *Professional Biographies*. Accessed 29 August 2013,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/corporate/registersearch/ProfessionalBio/Professional.aspx?CPName=Baker,+George>

Naus, Natasha. '205 and 207 Aro Street'. Unpublished registration report, 10 April 2013. Accessed 29 August 2013,
<http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=7082>

Certificate of Titles

WN 376/176

WN 92/126

WN 67/46

WN 52/63

WN 46/124

Wellington City Archive

1958 205 Aro Street, dwelling additions (00058:48:C2401)

1919 207 Aro Street, brick wall (00053:197:10897)

1949 207 Aro Street, bathroom (00056:362:B27862)

1999 207 Aro Street, additions and alterations (00078:301:55652)

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?*

205 and 207 are important representative examples of the modest workers cottages that typify pre 1900 European settlement in the Wellington region.

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?*

They contribute significantly to the wider historic townscape of workers cottages and larger villas that make up Wellington's Aro Street contributing visual interest as a matching pair.

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?*

They are a pair of valuable additions to one of the best preserved precincts of period workers dwellings in Wellington. These buildings are a part of the largest collection of intact working class buildings in Wellington, giving them an important local significance.

Historic Value:

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

While the historical associations may appear slight, as these buildings have not been associated with any events of great importance, their historical significance is associated with the fact that the area as a whole has an almost unbroken history of working class life and the houses consistently reflect this history.

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

Scientific Value:

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

These cottages are in an area known to have pre 1900 human activity associated with it, and were built pre 1900. Risk of accidental discovery is high.

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 in the streetscape.

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 representative of the types of workers dwellings from 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?*

These houses retain a significant amount of authenticity having had few exterior modifications.

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 and should be recognised for their outstanding group heritage value.

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*