

Austin Street Cottage, 1890s

62 Austin Street, Mount Victoria, Wellington



Image: Charles Collins - 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- The original house at 62 Austin Street is representative of the type of cottages built in Wellington before the turn of the twentieth century.
- The house at 62 Austin Street contributes to a sense of place in Mount Victoria as one of Wellington's earliest suburbs. The house also has continuity value having been a residential property for over one hundred years.
- The house at 62 Austin Street has some modest historical value for its association with the settlement and development of Wellington.

1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The residential suburb of Mt Victoria is one of Wellington's oldest and most prominent historic areas. The area was first settled in the early 1840s by New Zealand Company colonists and over the past 170 years it has developed a unique character and identity that is closely associated with the variety of architectural styles seen in the area. The houses are mainly 19th century wooden villas and cottages.¹

We know little about the cottage built at 62 Austin Street, Mount Victoria. It was most likely built in the 1890s and there is a cottage present on the 1892 Thomas Ward map on the site. The cottage was originally a very simple, single storey, worker's villa which featured rusticated timber weatherboards and timber joinery. In 1997 a second storey addition was constructed that dramatically altered the form of the cottage. The house now appears as a two storey, weatherboard, house with a gable roof. There has been some ornamentation added in the form of gable trusses.

It stands as a record of Wellington's domestic heritage architecture, especially of worker dwellings, and the ways in which they can be adapted.

¹ Chris Maclean, 'Wellington Places – Mt Victoria, Oriental Bay and Roseneath', Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 13 July 2012, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/page-2>

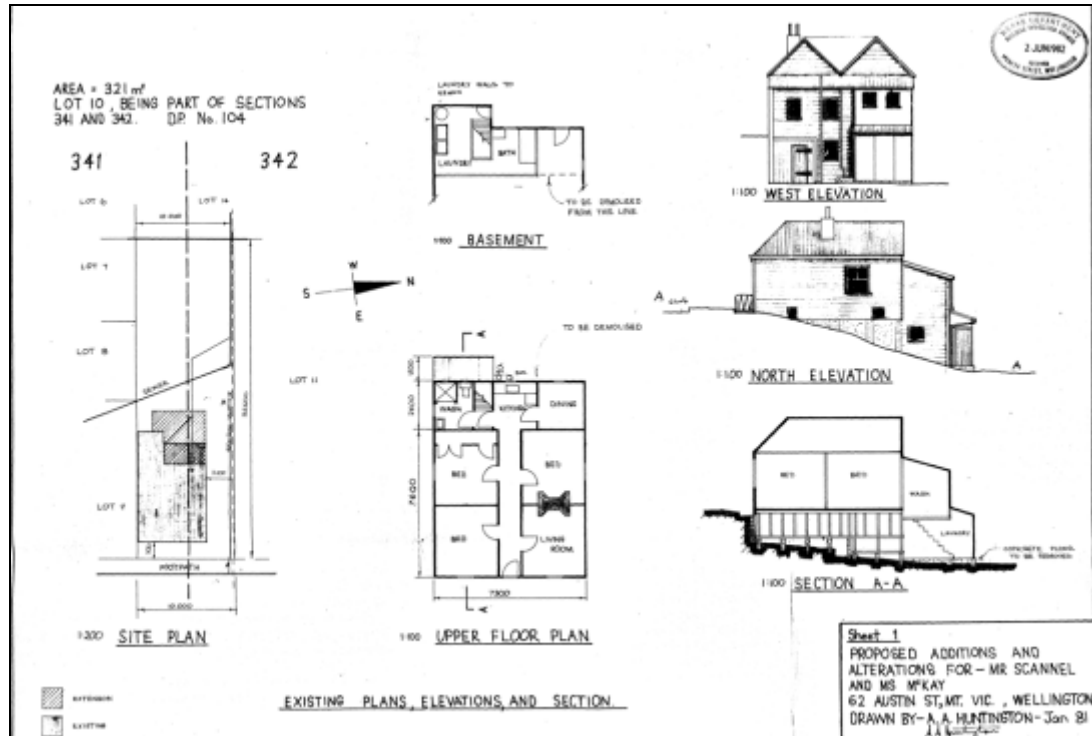
1.2 Timeline of modifications

1890s: Construction

1982: Alterations and additions

1997: Additional storey

2001: Alterations and additions



Earliest available plans:

Proposed alteration for 62 Austin Street, 1981 (Wellington City Council Archive File 00058:0:C59677)

1.3 Occupation history

Unknown

1.4 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

This cottage was a very simple worker's villa with rusticated timber weatherboards and timber joinery. Originally the decoration was limited to crafted timber eaves brackets, which give a minute detailing effect to what is a particularly plain building. Even the window frames have little depth or significant detailing. The original house made up for its lack of ornamentation with character, form, and proportional harmony. The addition of another storey altered the house's character significantly as the timber eaves brackets were removed.

Interior Style:

The interior of this cottage is representative of some of those built in the 1890's, although some of the features are more refined than in a typical workers cottage.. There are two remaining fireplaces, one in the right hand front room, which would have been the parlour. This fireplace has a timber fore surround with the coal grate, and mustard coloured decorative tiles with a relief pattern. The other fireplace (in which would have been the kitchen) is much simpler in design. There are small cupboards either side of the fireplace, one has been removed. The hall is lined with a timber dado, with the doors in the front half of the house being original.

Interior Planning:

The original cottage was small with a four room arrangement either side of a central corridor. Because of the slope of the site there was also a "carriage house" below the main house. The original rooms are quite small and alterations have been made to the back half of the house. In more recent time the owners opened up the back room removing the corridor and added a bathroom. The front rooms are original in their size and planning.

2.2 Materials

Rusticated weatherboards, timber joinery, corrugated iron roof. Timber dado, architraves, skirting, and surrounds.

2.3 Setting

Austin Street lies high on the Mount Victoria, close to the town belt, and running parallel to the ridge that runs run to south. 62 Austin Street lies on the western side of the street, facing westward with an attractive view over the city towards Aro Valley and Kelburn. It is a residential area, and the house is surrounded by houses of similar age, quality, and prestige.

3.0 Sources

Wellington City Council Archive Files 00058:0:C59677; 00078:1277:38036;
00078:638:74415.

Wellington City Council. 'Cottage – 62 Austin Street'. In *Heritage Inventory 1995*.
WCC.

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 cottage was originally a very simple, single storey, worker's villa which featured rusticated timber weatherboards and timber joinery. In 1997 a second storey addition was constructed that dramatically altered the form of the cottage. The house now appears as a two storey, weatherboard, house with a gable roof. There has been some ornamentation added in the form of gable trusses.

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?*

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?*

The house at 62 Austin Street has some modest historical value for its association with the settlement and development of Wellington.

Scientific Value:

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

The house probably has archaeological value for the presence of a likely pre-1900 building.

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?*

The house at 62 Austin Street contributes to a sense of place in Mount Victoria as one of Wellington's earliest suburbs. The house also has continuity value having been a residential property for over one hundred years.

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?*

The original house at 62 Austin Street is representative of the type of cottages built in Wellington before the turn of the twentieth century.

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?*

The house has some authenticity due to the presence of original materials but a lot of the home's heritage integrity was lost with the addition of another storey in 1997.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

The house at 62 Austin Street is significant at a local level.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

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

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*