Elizabeth Street Houses 1890s

68, 70, and 72 Elizabeth Street

72,70, 68 Elizabeth Street (L-R), Mount Victoria, Wellington
(Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*)

Summary of heritage significance

- The houses at 68, 70, and 72 Elizabeth Street are three of the most elegant on the street, and their quality and grouping give them streetscape value. Having said that, this can perhaps be overstated, given the similar quality and type of housing that characterise Mount Victoria.
- The group value of the Elizabeth Street houses is the primary reason why they are heritage listed. The three cottages form an attractive precinct of late 19th century dwellings.
- The Elizabeth Street houses contribute a sense of place to Mount Victoria as one of Wellington's original suburbs with considerable heritage value and distinguished houses.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 107	
Legal Description:	68: Lot 1 DP 5692 70: Lot 2 DP 5692 72: Lot 3 DP 5692	
Heritage Area:		
HPT Listed:	No	
Archaeological Site:	Pre-1900 buildings	
Other Names:		
Key physical dates:	1890s: Construction	
Architect / Builder:	Unknown	
Former uses:	Residential	
Current uses:	Residential	
Earthquake Prone Status:	Outside Earthquake Policy (SR 68=269357)	

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013

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]

The houses that make up 68, 70, and 72 Elizabeth Street are attractive and authentic examples of the type of domestic architecture that was popular during the later part of last century. The cottages appear on the 1892 Thomas Ward map and stylistically they can be expected to date from the late 19th century. It is likely that they were constructed as speculative housing and appear to have had few significant alterations made to them since this time.

The cottages do not appear in archival records until the 1930s, and there is little known about the early history of these cottages or the people who occupied them.

No. 72 was owned between 1986 and 1992 by Sir Geoffrey Palmer and his wife Margaret while Sir Geoffrey was New Zealand's prime Minister. In 1989 the property was occupied by the Honourable Margaret Wilson, Labour Cabinet Minister and the first female speaker of the House of Representatives, when she was the then president of the Labour Party. The Palmer's then lived at 72 Elizabeth Street after Sir Geoffrey Palmer was replaced as Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party in 1990.[2]

Although there is little information about these houses, we are still left with three impressive 19th century villas in a row, each in beautiful condition and with high degrees of authenticity, standing symbolically in for wider Mount Victoria built domestic heritage. The cottages represent an important precinct of late nineteenth century dwellings that have remained substantially unaltered from their original form and contribute significantly to the streetscape and character of Mt Victoria.

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[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
[2] Pers Comm. David Lee to Trevor Keppel, '72 Elizabeth Street', 24/02/2014

1.2 Timeline of modifications
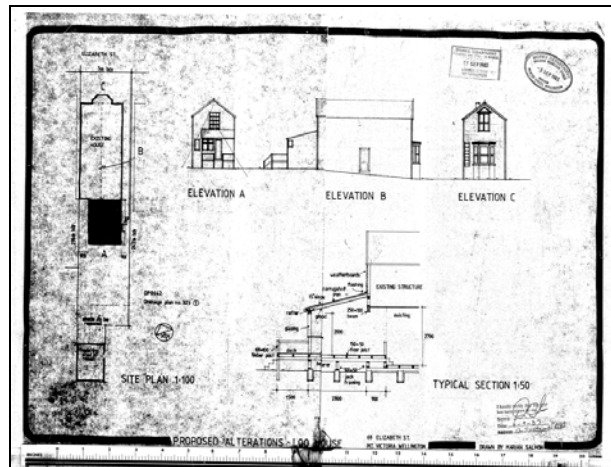
Dwelling alterations and additions, 68 Elizabeth Street, Wellington City Council
Archive File 00058:0:C63696 (1983)

68 Elizabeth Street
1933   Addition of shed
1982   Repiling
1983   Alterations and additions

70 Elizabeth Street
1982   Alterations, additions, and repiling

72 Elizabeth Street
1982   Alterations and additions
1991   Conservatory added

1.3 Occupation history

Not assessed

1.4 Architect

Not assessed

2.0   Physical Description

2.1 Architecture

These three cottages stylistically date to the late 19th century and were likely
constructed as speculative housing. They share a number of characteristics that have
become synonymous with bay villas that became common during the later part of last
century.

The buildings are clad in rusticated weatherboards. The upper storey windows are decorated with an intricate pediment, an imitation of stone detailing in timber, while the gabled ends have finials and piered bargeboards. Such details were added to dwellings of this type, lifting them above the realm of humble dwellings.

It is unusual to find three identical houses without the effect of being marred by alterations; they form an attractive precinct.

2.2 Materials

Rusticated timber weatherboards, timber joinery, and corrugated iron.

2.3 Setting

The three houses stand on the southern side of the middle block of Elizabeth Street. The area feels like deep suburban Mount Victoria, very near to the city but feeling otherwise. The houses are surrounded by other domestic abides similar in age, style, and use. It is an attractive part of the city, and the houses at 68, 70, and 72 Elizabeth Street enhance the heritage value of the area while their collective heritage value is enhanced by the area as well.

3.0   Sources

Maclean, Chris. '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

Pers Comm. David Lee to Trevor Keppel, '72 Elizabeth Street', 24/02/2014

Wellington City Council. 'Houses – 68-72 Elizabeth 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 Elizabeth Street houses have architectural value for their attractive, uniform design.

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?*

The houses at 68, 70, and 72 Elizabeth Street are three of the most elegant on the street, and their quality and grouping give them streetscape value. Having said that, this can perhaps be overstated, given the similar quality and type of housing that characterise Mount Victoria.

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?*

The group value of the Elizabeth Street houses is the primary reason why they are heritage listed. The three cottages form an attractive precinct of late 19th century dwellings.

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

No 72 is associated with Sir Geoffrey Palmer and his wife Margaret who were ether owners of the house between 1986 and 1992. It is also associated with the Honourable Margaret Wilson who occupied the house in 1989.

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

These houses are associated with the residential suburb of Mt Victoria, which is one of Wellington's oldest and most prominent historic areas. It is likely that they were constructed as speculative housing and are attractive and authentic examples of the type of domestic architecture that was popular during the later part of last century.

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

The Elizabeth Street houses have archaeological value for the presence of pre-1900 buildings.

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 Elizabeth Street houses contribute a sense of place to Mount Victoria as one of Wellington's original suburbs with considerable heritage value and distinguished houses.

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?*

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 Elizabeth Street houses retain high levels of authenticity of material, design, use, setting, and craftsmanship.

Local/Regional/National/International
Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

The Elizabeth Street Houses are important at a local level.

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)		