

Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings
116 Wilton Road



Images: Charles Collins, 2015

Summary of heritage significance

- The Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings is a fine example of a nineteenth century farmstead. It is particularly notable for the survival of the remnant parts of the 1860s farmhouse, and for the simple but elegant massing of the 1880s additions. The survival of the milking shed, cobbled yard and dairy is also remarkable.
- The farmhouse was owned and occupied by the Wilton family for whom the surrounding suburb is named. The Wilton family are well known for their association with Wilton's Bush, a nearby botanic gardens and reserve that has been a popular recreation area for over 150 years. The house remains in the ownership of the extended Wilton/Curtis family.
- The farmhouse, outbuildings (including their fixtures and fittings) and the cobblestone yard is a unique assemblage with high group value. The farmstead also has some group value when considered in relation to the nearby Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve as both have an historic association with the Wilton family.

District Plan:	Map 14, reference 361
Legal Description:	LOT 2 DP 32463
Heritage Area:	
HPT Listed:	Historic Place Category 2
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Original Construction: 1860 (circa) Addition: 1883 (circa)
Architect / Builder:	Job Wilton (farmer/owner)
Former uses:	Farmhouse, dairy and yard
Current uses:	House
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 269331 , Bdg StrengthInv, Bldg - Wilton Farmhouse - Added to List Due To Heritage Listing, Outside Earthquake Prone Policy

Extent: Cityview GIS



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

The farmhouse was the residence of Job (1834 - 1916) and Ellen Wilton (1835- 1909), and their family, after whom the Wellington suburb is now named. Both Ellen and Job came to Wellington as young children in the early 1840s, Ellen Curtis arrived on the *London* in 1840, and Job Wilton arrived on the *Oriental* in 1841. They married on the 21st of August 1860 – just four days after Job had purchased a 108-acre (44 hectare) property in the Kaiwharawhara Valley. They built a small cottage in c.1861 from pit-sawn timber that was likely to have been felled on site. The original cottage formed the nucleus of the present house, most of which dates from 1883 when a second storey and a large wing were added. The extension was built in milled timber that family history suggests was felled in the Taupo Riding (Hutt County), and the size of the building, and quality of its materials and workmanship, are indicative of the success of the Wilton family as farmers and landowners.¹

Although the Wilton's were successful farmers, they are also remembered locally for their decision to preserve 17 acres (7 hectares) of native bush from clearance. This land, along with a further 130 acres (52 hectares) of adjacent 'Native Reserve'² was a well known 19th century picnic spot.³ It later became part of the larger *Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve* which is home to New Zealand's only public botanic gardens dedicated solely to native plants, and to 95-hectares of mature and regenerating forest. Otari-Wilton's Bush preserves a rare remnant of the podocarp forest that once cloaked the Wellington Region, and is home to some of Wellington's oldest trees - including an 800 year old rimu.

By the end of the 19th century the Wilton family farmed over 273 acres of land (both leased and freehold) that extended from what is now the Karori Cemetery to the present day Wadestown village. Their farm was subdivided in 1902 and eventually became the suburb of Wilton in 1949. The farmstead is a remarkable survivor of the subdivision process and includes the farmhouse, part of the old fence and gate, the milking shed and dairy, and a cobbled yard paved with large rocks from the Kaiwharawhara stream. The milking shed still contains a wooden plaque with the names and dates of the cows that came in to milk in 1896. It stands in an urban setting where even the former cow-paddocks, to the north, have been converted for use as bowling greens at the adjacent Wilton Bowling Club.⁴

Emily Ann Curtis, who was Ellen Wilton's niece-by-marriage, purchased the farmstead with approximately 2 hectares of land in 1915, and the property is still owned by Curtis family descendents. There have been relatively few major alterations to the property over the past 100 years, but those that have occurred include the addition of a wash house and the installation of a toilet in 1950; a new house was built on subdivided land in 1971; work to restore the milking shed started in 1982, and this was undertaken with the help of the NZHPT, the WCC and various local

¹ This report is based on the, NZHPT Registration Report, prepared by 'Historyworks' in July 2006; and the 'Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings' Summary Registration from the NZHPT website accessed August 2013 <http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=1390>

² LOCAL AND GENERAL. Evening Post, 3 September 1902, Page 4

³ WADESTOWN LAND SALE. Evening Post, 2 December 1902, Page 4; 'Otari-Wilton's Bush Management Plan: Appendix 2 Historic Outline', WCC management plan adopted August 2007 <http://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-policies/a-z/index/otariwiltons-bush-management-plan>

⁴ NZHPT Wellington Branch Committee Newsletter, Autumn 2006

groups including the Ngaio Wadestown Lions⁵; a garage and loft were added to the site in 1992; the original chimney and range were removed at some time after 1993 and the remaining chimneys were reduced in height; and further preservation of the dairy was carried out in 2002-03.

The close association of the farmhouse with the establishment of the suburb and Otari-Wilton Bush is well known to the residents of Wilton suburb, making the house of special importance to the local community. The NZHPT also notes the close connections formed by the current owners/occupants and the local Otari School which has allowed school children to visit the farmhouse and learn about the lives of early Wellington settlers.



c. 1995 photograph of the Wilton Farmhouse. Image: WCC Heritage Inventory 1995

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1860	Job Wilson purchased the 108 acre section from Samuel Maxton
c.1861	Small cottage constructed
1883	Cottage extended to a five-bedroom, 2-storey farm house
1902	Subdivision of farmland began
1949	Sale of cow paddock to the WCC for the establishment of the Wilton Bowling Club
1950	00056:383:B29534; 116 Wilton Road, wash-house
1971	Subdivision of farmstead
1977	Report of works to restore the Curtis House cowshed by the Ministry of Works and Development ⁶
1982	Milking shed restoration
1992	00059:543:E25242; 116 Wilton Road, garage
1993	00060:38:1457; 116 Wilton Road, alterations (including garage)
Unknown date (1993 – 2006)	Chimneys removed
2002 – 03	Further restoration to milking shed

⁵ Richard Wright, letter to Mr JA Burns dated 13 April 1982

⁶ Chris Cochran, 'Curtis House: Cowshed' Ministry of Works and Development, 1977

1.3 Architect

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The farmhouse is a large, two-storey, five-bedroom house with a small lean-to wash house that was added in 1950. It reflects the simplicity, versatility and durability of early wooden framed and weather-board colonial architecture. The original c.1861 two-bedroom cottage was enlarged in c.1883, leaving the extant totara and rimu timber two-storey, six-bedroom house. The original cottage and outhouses were constructed using the common colonial technique of using the roughly hewn pit sawn timber cleared for the new farm. The c.1883 addition was built from milled timber and is clad in rusticated weatherboards.

The ground floor kitchen and bathroom are housed in the oldest (1860s) section of the farmhouse. The reception rooms, entrance hall, and main bedroom are also located on the ground floor, but in the c.1883 extension. The first floor consists of four bedrooms, loft and roof storage room. The interior still contains original rimu and kauri paneled doors, rimu profiled mouldings and well made heart rimu stairs. The original locks, ceramic knobs and fingerplates also remain. One original cast iron fireplace is also extant.

The outhouses consist of a 40-foot long rectangular milking shed (later used as a stable) with a hay-chaff storage loft above the cow-bails. The shed is entirely clad in corrugated iron with the exception of the east façade which is open to the interior, providing the original access for the cows. A cobblestone yard next to the milking shed is still extant and was paved with stones from the Kaiwharawhara Stream. Nearby is the smaller rectangular washhouse/ dairy/ workshop which is divided into three sections, a washhouse with copper and kauri tubs, dairy for processing milk and workshop added on as a lean-to on the down hill side of the dairy.

2.2 Materials

1860s farmstead and associated outbuildings

Pit-sawn and hand-worked timber, generally totara and rimu.

Hand-made nails

1883 and later additions

Heart matai rusticated weatherboards

Heart rimu timber framing

Corrugated mild steel/ iron roofs

3.0 Sources

Cochran, Chris. 'Curtis House: Cowshed' Ministry of Works and Development, 1977

LOCAL AND GENERAL. Evening Post, 3 September 1902, Page 4

NZHPT Registration Report, prepared by Historyworks in July 2006

NZHPT Wellington Branch Committee Newsletter, Autumn 2006

NZHPT 'Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings' Summary Registration from the NZHPT website accessed August 2013

<http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=1390>

'Otari-Wilton's Bush Management Plan: Appendix 2 Historic Outline', WCC management plan adopted August 2007 <http://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-policies/a-z-index/otariwiltons-bush-management-plan>

WADESTOWN LAND SALE. Evening Post, 2 December 1902, Page 4

Wright, Richard. Letter to Mr JA Burns dated 13 April 1982

4.0 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 Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings is a fine example of a nineteenth century farmstead. It is particularly notable for the survival of the remnant parts of the 1860s farmhouse, and for the simple but elegant massing of the 1880s additions. The survival of the milking shed, cobbled yard and dairy is also remarkable.

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?

The farmhouse, outbuildings (including their fixtures and fittings) and the cobblestone yard is a unique assemblage with high group value. The farmstead also has some group value when considered in relation to the nearby Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve as both have an historic association with the Wilton family.

Historic Value:

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

The farmhouse was owned and occupied by the Wilton family for whom the surrounding suburb is named.

The Wilton family are well known for their association with Wilton's Bush, a nearby botanic garden and reserve that has been a popular recreation area for over 150 years. The house remains in the ownership of the extended Wilton/Curtis family.

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?

Pre 1906 buildings on the site

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

The building owners/occupiers have been proactive in the use of their property to educate local school children in the lives of early settlers / farmers. That the farmstead retains its original outbuildings – the milking shed and dairy – adds to the educational value of this group of buildings

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

The farmhouse has technological value for their construction materials – pit-sawn and hand-worked timber, river-stone cobbles, and handmade nails – and for the survival of the farm out-building which demonstrate minute details of daily farm life of the 19th century.

Social Value:

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

The building is held in high public esteem and for its association with the Wilton family for whom the suburb of Wilton was named. This connection is illustrated by numerous newspaper articles published on the history of Wilton and the Wilton family, by the community involvement in the restoration of the milking shed, and by the organisation of school visits by the local Otari School.

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 farmstead has been central to Wilton's farm and to suburban Wilton for over 150 years and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the local community.

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?*

The farmstead is the most complete set of colonial farm buildings in the Wellington city area.

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

The farmstead is a good representative example of a 19th century farmhouse and outbuildings.

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 farmstead is notable for the survival of original buildings, fixtures and fittings.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

5.0 Heritage Value Assessment Matrix

Wilton Farm House and Outbuildings - 116 Wilton Road- Summary of key heritage values:	Rare	Representative	Authentic	At what level is the item important?			
				Local	Regional	National	International
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wilton Farmhouse and Outbuildings is a fine example of a nineteenth century farmstead. It is particularly notable for the survival of the remnant parts of the 1860s farmhouse, and for the simple but elegant massing of the 1880s additions. The survival of the milking shed, cobbled yard and dairy is also remarkable. The farmhouse was owned and occupied by the Wilton family for whom the surrounding suburb is named. The Wilton family are well known for their association with Wilton's Bush, a nearby botanic gardens and reserve that has been a popular recreation area for over 150 years. The house remains in the ownership of the extended Wilton/Curtis family. The farmhouse, outbuildings (including their fixtures and fittings) and the cobblestone yard is a unique assemblage with high group value. The farmstead also has some group value when considered in relation to the nearby Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve as both have an historic association with the Wilton family. 							
THIS BUILDING IS NOT INCLUDED IN A HERITAGE AREA							
Aesthetic Value							
Architectural	•	•	•	•	•		
Townscape/Landscape/Landmark							
Group	•	•	•	•	•		
Historic Value							
Association	•	•	•	•			
Scientific Value							
Archaeological		•	•	•			
Educational		•	•	•			
Technological		•	•	•			
Social Value							
Public Esteem	•	•	•	•			
Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual							

Identity/Sense of Place/Continuity		•	•	•	•			
Sentiment/Connection								
Earthquake Prone under Building Act?	SR 269331 , Bdg StrengthInv, Bldg - Wilton Farmhouse - Added to List Due To Heritage Listing, Outside Earthquake Prone Policy	None found						
Thematic Framework		People and the Environment	Developing Economies	Governing	Building Social and Cultural Life			
Where does this item sit within the Thematic Framework?		A4.8A Farm buildings, fences, sheds, tracks A3.4B Early timber structures A2.2F Housing A4.5A remnant forest						

6.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	Y	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	none	
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)	none	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	None	
Plan change?	N	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	Y	
HPT files		
Conservation Plan	None	
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*