

## Shops and Dwellings

250-262 Riddiford Street



*Image: Charles Collins, 2015*

### Summary of heritage significance

- 250 – 262 Riddiford Street is a much-altered terrace of seven shop/dwellings. The buildings are good representative examples of Edwardian timber mixed-use commercial buildings, but their architectural/aesthetic value has been somewhat diminished by the removal of the original shop-fronts.
- These buildings have had uneventful histories that are typical of their Newtown neighbours. They are associated with the development of twentieth century Newtown and its commercial development into a central shopping and commercial district.
- The terrace is made up of a distinct group of seven individual buildings that were built for Hamilton and Gilmer in 1901.

District Plan:	Map 6, reference 404
Legal Description:	Lots 1-7 DP 89342
Heritage Area:	-
HPT Listed:	-
Archaeological Site:	City Central NZAA 27/270, Maori Site of Significance
Other Names:	Russell Terrace
Key physical dates:	Built: 1901
Architect / Builder:	Architect: Unknown, Builder: E. Bishop
Former uses:	Mixed use – commercial and residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not EQP – SR 232016



## **1.0 Outline History**

### **1.1 History**

These seven buildings at 250-262 Riddiford Street were built as a terrace of shop/residences at the turn of the century. They are now an important element of the Riddiford and Newtown streetscapes, adding significant architectural and historic character of southern Newtown.

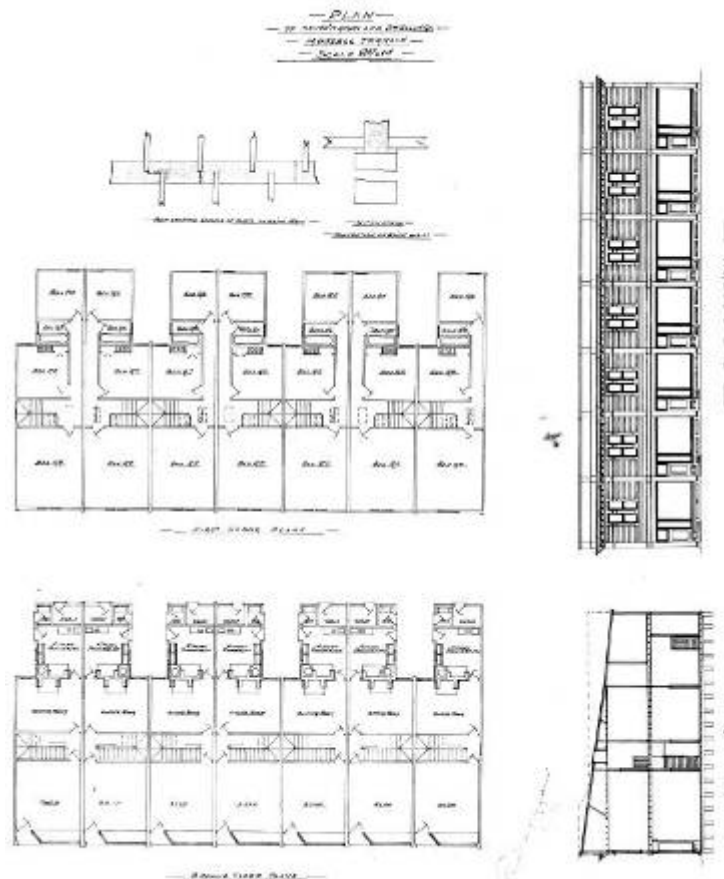
The buildings were originally built on Russell Terrace, but the address was changed to Riddiford Street when the road layout was altered. They were constructed as a speculative housing and retail development for Hamilton Gilmer by contractor E. Bishop. Each unit was built as a mixed use building, with a retail space on the ground floor and accommodation above. This arrangement appears to have survived until at least 1995, and many of the original shop-fronts are visible in photographs in the WCC Heritage Inventory of that date.<sup>1</sup>

The shops have all since been adapted for residential use, and the original shop-fronts replaced with a bay window and an entrance door. The central building – No.256 – now has a splayed bay window that was installed in c.1998; the remaining buildings all have near-identical rectangular bays and appear to have been converted into ground and first floor apartments in c.2001.

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<sup>1</sup> Wellington City Council, '250-262 Riddiford Street', *Wellington Built Heritage Inventory 1995*, (Wellington City Council 1995).

## 1.2 Timeline of modifications (original plans - 00053:74:4451)



1901 Russell Terrace [250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262 Riddiford Street], seven shops and dwellings (00053:74:4451)

2001 250-262 Riddiford Street, apartment fit-outs (00078:622:72431)

### 256 Riddiford

1998 256 Riddiford Street, installation of bay window (00078:379:42608)

2001 256 Riddiford Street, fitout of two units, bathrooms, kitchen (00078:815:80957)

### 258 Riddiford

1946 258 Riddiford Street, alter dwelling (00056:326:B25429)

2001 258 Riddiford Street, additions and alterations, level 1 and ground floor (00078:1225:80118)

2001 258 Riddiford Street, additions and alterations (00078:1225:81200)

## 1.3 Occupation history

(not assessed)

## 1.4 Architect

Unknown

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

This terrace of seven two-storey Edwardian shop/dwellings has been much-altered over the past 110+ years. The buildings are tall and narrow and are separated by a (presumably brick) party wall. The roofs are mono-pitch and are concealed behind a high parapet. Each building has a typical terrace 'L' shaped plan that allows light to penetrate into the rear rooms.

The street façade of the terrace is the most decorative. The façade is divided vertically into units by the projecting party wall. Each unit is topped by a tall parapet that terminates with a simple stepped 'coping'. The most prominent horizontal element is the projecting timber cornice that is 'supported' by a row of ornate brackets and punctuated by consoles at each party wall. The cornice is the only decorative feature of the building. The paired sash windows were also a feature of the original design.

At each building the ground floor conversion from shop to residential unit is somewhat less successful. All of the buildings have had their original shop-fronts removed, and replaced with a recessed wall clad in rusticated weatherboards and a new bay window. The three northernmost & southernmost buildings all have a similar rectangular bay window. The central building - No. 256 – differs slightly and features a splayed bay window. This building has also been adorned with a somewhat random collection of balustrading that has been incorporated as a 'fence' around the ground floor bay, applied to the first floor façade above the entrance door. This is a c.1990s addition that appears to bear no relation to the original external appearance of the building.

The modern alterations to the shop-fronts are problematic. The design of the alterations has obscured the buildings' original use – as the southernmost group of shops in the Newtown town centre. Despite this lack of sensitivity to the history of the buildings; the somewhat difficult proportions of the new bay-windows; and the fact that the buildings are now in multiple ownerships - some care has been taken to preserve the terrace as a row of near-identical buildings. The terrace is remarkably cohesive, and there is some value in the contribution it makes to the streetscape.

### **2.2 Materials**

- Painted timber weatherboard
- Timber joinery and detailing
- Rendered brick party walls

### **2.3 Setting**

The terrace of buildings at 250 – 262 Riddiford Street is flanked to the north by a two-storey Victorian/Edwardian shop/dwelling, and to the south by a row of two-storey villas that were built at a similar date.

The buildings mark the south-western extent of the Newtown shopping centre – although it does not form part of the Newtown Central Suburban Centre Heritage Area. This heritage area is known for its largely uninterrupted streetscape of Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings - which impart a distinctive character and strong sense of identity to the area. The wider context is suburban Newtown – one of Wellington's largest and best-known suburbs that was developed in the 'tram-era' between about 1880 and the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.0 Sources**

Wellington City Council. '250-262 Riddiford Street.' *Wellington Built Heritage Inventory 1995*. Wellington City Council, 1995.

#### **Wellington City Archive**

- 1901 Russell Terrace [250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262 Riddiford Street], seven shops and dwellings (00053:74:4451)
- 2001 250-262 Riddiford Street, apartment fitouts (00078:622:72431)

#### **256 Riddiford**

- 1998 256 Riddiford Street, installation of bay window (00078:379:42608)
- 2001 256 Riddiford Street, fitout of two units, bathrooms, kitchen (00078:815:80957)

#### **258 Riddiford**

- 1946 258 Riddiford Street, alter dwelling (00056:326:B25429)
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- 2001 258 Riddiford Street, additions and alterations (00078:1225:81200)

## 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?*

250 – 262 Riddiford Street is a much-altered terrace of seven shop/dwellings. The buildings are good representative examples of Edwardian timber mixed-use commercial buildings, but their architectural/aesthetic value has been somewhat diminished by the removal of the original shop-fronts.

**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?*

This terrace of converted shop/dwellings marks the south-westernmost extent of the Newtown Central Shopping Area, and forms the transition between the commercial zone to the north, and the suburban residential housing to the south.

**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 terrace is made up of a distinct group of seven individual buildings that were built for Hamilton and Gilmer in 1901.

#### **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?*

These buildings have had uneventful histories that are typical of their Newtown neighbours. They are associated with the development of twentieth century Newtown and its commercial development into a central shopping and commercial district.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

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**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?*

Although this row of shop/dwellings have been somewhat altered by the removal of their original shop-fronts they continue to make some contribution to the sense of place and identity of Riddiford Street (as a streetscape of Victorian and Edwardian buildings.)

***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 buildings are representative examples of the type of Edwardian shop/residences that were once commonplace throughout Wellington and its suburbs.

***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 buildings retain much of their original built fabric, but have been somewhat compromised by the loss of their original shop-fronts.

***Local/Regional/National/International***

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

This group of buildings are locally significant for their architectural, townscape, and group values.



## 5.0 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*