

House

100 Hobson Street



100 Hobson Street, Thorndon (Photo: *Charles Collins, 2013*)

Summary of heritage significance

- The house has architectural value based on its monumental appearance denoting the wealth and social standing of its residents. The symmetry of the two main elevations and the careful detailing of the timber cladding are also important in this regard.
- 100 Hobson Street is a place of considerable historic significance as the home of some prominent Wellingtonians, among them Walter Nathan, Walter Johnston and Gibson Stott. All were successful businessmen and members of Wellington's social and wealthy elite, who congregated in Hobson Street and lower Tinakori Road and intermarried.
- The house has social and cultural significance for the role it has played in the lives of Thorndon's elite, a number of whom still live in the area and recognise the importance of this house in the immediate area.

District Plan:	Map 15, 18, reference 413
Legal Description:	Sec 1373 & 1375 Town of Wellington & Pt. Lot 1, DP 1362
Heritage Area:	No
HPT Listed:	No
Archaeological Site:	Maori site of significance Central City NZAA R27/270 Pre-1900 building
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	1883: Construction
Architect / Builder:	Unknown
Former uses:	Residential
Current uses:	Residential
Earthquake Prone Status:	Outside Earthquake Policy (SR 269364)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



1.0 Outline History¹

1.1 History

100 Hobson Street was built in 1883 by merchant Walter Nathan (1845-1922), who went on to become a business partner of Harold Beauchamp, Katherine Mansfield's father, in his general merchant's firm.²

100 Hobson Street was one of only three houses on the western end of Hobson Street, which had established itself as the home of Wellington's business and social elite by the turn of the 20th century. Until the construction of the motorway, the western end was joined to the rest of Hobson Street by a footbridge, built in 1878 over the gully that divided the two halves of northern Thorndon. The land was owned by Sir Charles Clifford (1813-1893), an early Wellington settler and notable parliamentarian, businessman and investor, who was by then an absentee landlord in England.³

Walter Nathan first appears on rate books as the lessee of the property in 1883, which may be one source of the date of house's construction. Nathan established himself in business, becoming a partner in Jacob Joseph and Co., general merchants and importers, before establishing his own business, Walter Nathan and Co., ironmongers. In 1894, he became a partner in W.M. Bannatyne, a general importing firm established by William McLeod Bannatyne in 1842. Harold Beauchamp joined the staff in 1876, and later became principal partner. Beauchamp, who was also the father of New Zealand's most famous writer Katherine Mansfield, brought Walter Nathan into the firm as a partner. Nathan and Beauchamp then remained with Bannatyne's for the rest of their working lives. Nathan died in 1922, and the firm was sold to T & W Young the following year.⁴ Nathan was chairman of the directors of the Tawa Land Company and Nathan Street in Tawa is named after him.⁵

The property remained owned by the Clifford family well into the 20th century, by which time it had been inherited by Sir George Clifford. In 1903, Walter Nathan renewed his lease for 21 years, but then transferred it the following year to John Abbott.⁶ He quickly sold it to John Goring Johnston, who was the son of Walter Woods Johnston, a prominent parliamentarian and businessman, and a director of Johnston and Co. Both his sons, John and Walter (Goring) Johnston, worked for the company their grandfather founded. John Johnston transferred the lease to his brother Walter in 1908, although there is reason to believe that he was occupying the house prior to this.

During his tenure, Walter Johnston was famous for his entertaining. At least one source names him as responsible for a significant addition to the rear of the property in 1906,⁷ at a time when the property was leased by his brother. At the conclusion of the lease, in 1924, Walter Johnston bought the property outright from Clifford.⁸ Towards the end of his tenure Johnston stopped living in the house.

¹ Much of this report is taken from Ann McEwan and Michael Kelly, '100 Hobson Street (House), Thorndon', heritage report for Wellington City Council, 2007.

² No direct evidence has been seen for this date although it is asserted by the Thorndon Society and other secondary sources. The date is included in a bronze plaque attached to the house's fence.

³ H. A. L. Laing, 'Clifford, Charles - Clifford, Charles', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 6-Jun-2013, last accessed September 2013 at <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c20/clifford-charles>

⁴ Cyclopedia of NZ, pp.707-708

⁵ www.tawahistory.wellington.net.nz/projects/streets.html

⁶ CT WN 121/294, LINZ

⁷ 'The Perfect Dilettante', in *Thorndon News*, Newsletter No.90, April 1991 p.4

⁸ CT WN 121/294, LINZ

It was in poor condition⁹ when, in 1933, he sold it to Gibson Stott, described then as a factory manager.¹⁰ Stott, who was born in Hobson Street, occupied the house for the next 70 years together with his wife Maude. Maude Stott suffered a stroke in the house at the age of 29 and had to bring up two small children (albeit with the assistance of domestic staff) while partly incapacitated.¹¹ She nevertheless lived to an old age.

The house had been fire damaged during the period it had been unoccupied. There was no wiring or plumbing.¹² The Stotts undertook considerable renovations as soon as they moved in. The Georgian influence on the character of the house was established then by the well known architectural firm of Gray Young Morton and Young. The Stotts built a garage in 1938,¹³ made minor alterations in 1967 and then in 1970 built a double garage and a basement.¹⁴

The Stotts had to contend with major disruption and uncertainty when the house was threatened by the planned motorway. First mooted in the early 1960s, the line of the motorway was established on the Stotts' title in 1966 and earthworks began soon afterwards. The extent of the threat is indicated by the fact that the Stott house was the first house on the western side of the motorway that was allowed to be kept in situ. Nevertheless, land was compulsorily taken for the motorway from the eastern boundary of the Stotts' property under the Public Works Act.¹⁵

Gibson Stott died in 1989 and the property was transferred to Maude Stott. She died in 2004, at the age of 98. In recent years the house has been divided into two flats. Since 2004 the property has been owned and occupied by Ross and Vicky Hughson.

⁹ 'The Perfect Dilettante' p.4

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

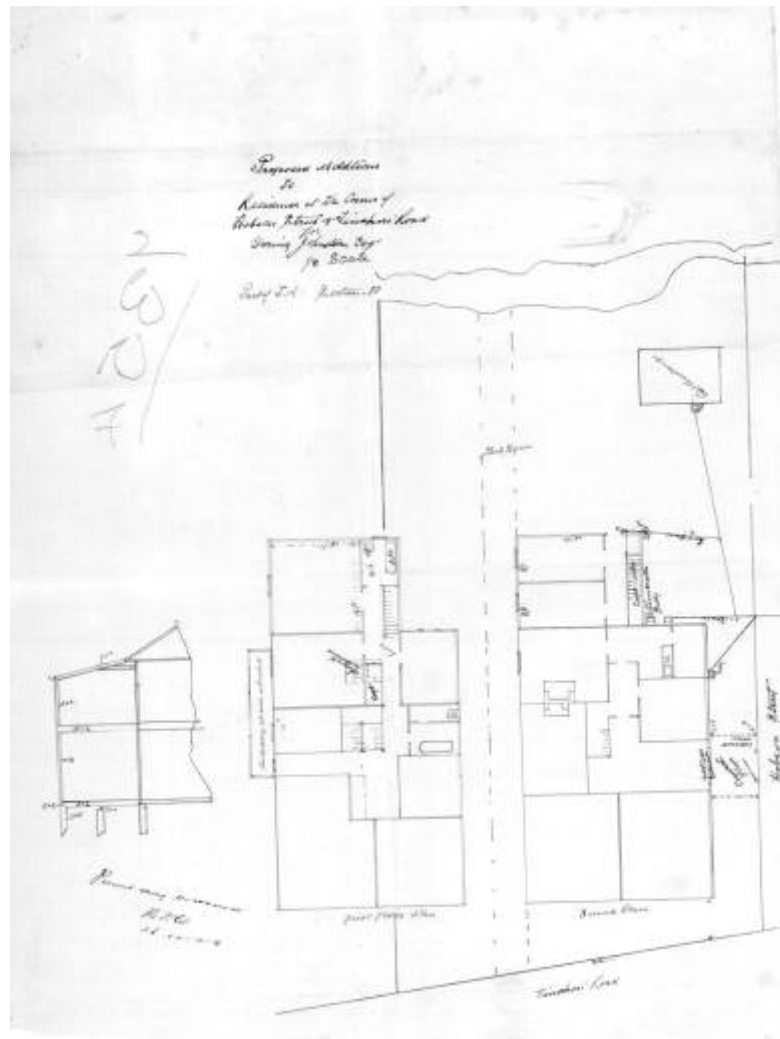
¹² Ibid. p.5

¹³ 00056:212:B18258, 100 Hobson Street, garage, Wellington City Archives

¹⁴ 00058:538:C25968, 100 Hobson Street, dwelling alterations, WCA

¹⁵ Ibid.

1.2 Timeline of modifications



1906 plans showing proposed additions to the house (WCA 00053: 131: 7354)

1883	Construction (assumed)
1906	Rear extension corner Hobson Street and Tinakori Road [100 Hobson Street], additions 00053:131:7354
1933	100 Hobson Street, dwelling alterations 0056:137:B12439
1936	Garage built
1938-1991	Garage encroachment: 100 Hobson Street, B M Stott, R G King 00001:1767:47/574
1938	100 Hobson Street, garage 00056:212:B18258
1967	100 Hobson Street, dwelling alterations 00058:538:C25968
1970	100 Hobson Street, double garage and basement 00058:697:C31818
Recent	House divided into flats

1.3 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

Exterior

100 Hobson Street is a large two-storeyed house in the Italianate style, with Colonial Georgian Revival detailing that dates from the early 1930s. The Italianate mode was popular throughout New Zealand in the 1870s and 1880s, as can be seen from the styling of two contemporaneous houses in Tinakori Road; Premier House, 260 Tinakori Road with major alterations and additions by W.H. Clayton in 1873, and the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace dating from 1887-8.

The house is of timber construction, with rusticated weatherboard cladding and a corrugated iron roof. Brick chimneys indicate the positioning of fireplaces on the side walls of the two main living rooms and a third chimney half way down the house once served the dining room and kitchen on a shared internal wall. In keeping with the Italianate style, the roof is hipped, with a central valley, the eaves are bracketed and the windows lighting the principal rooms are round-headed.

As indicated on plans for the house, which date from 1906 and 1933, the two principal living rooms of the house overlook Tinakori Road, whilst the main entrance provides access from Hobson Street. Alterations made by premier Wellington architectural firm Gray Young, Morton & Young in 1933 included the erection of a covered entrance porch in the Colonial Georgian Revival style. Judging from the porch's appearance and the 1933 plans, which specified that it should be fully glazed, there may have been some alterations to this part of the house carried out at a later date.

At the rear of the house is a two-storeyed section under a lean-to roof, which was added in 1906. A single first floor window overlooking the motorway lights a bathroom, but otherwise the end wall of this addition is blank.

Shutters almost certainly added to the north and west walls in 1933 are to be found on countless Colonial Georgian Revival houses of the period. A bay window on the eastern wall was probably added at this time, but the two bays lighting the drawing and sitting rooms overlooking Tinakori Road appear to be original to the house.

The 1970 garage is at least the third on the site, replacing a single garage aligned on an oblique angle to the house on the Hobson Street boundary, which in turn replaced one on the eastern boundary with access off Tinakori Road. Despite its bulk and close proximity to the house the garage is in sympathy with the house and echoes the major elements of the entrance porch.

Interior

The 1906 and 1933 plans for 100 Hobson Street describe a large house, built for a wealthy family able to afford the services of live-in servants. The 1933 floor plans indicate the provisions of night and day nurseries, separate from the three family bedrooms but adjacent to a maid's bedroom. Such distinctions between family and servants, adults and children owe their origins to the increasing specialisation of Victorian planning, which in turn reflected the evolution of the nineteenth century upper-class family. The house has been divided into two flats although it is understood that it will soon be returned to one dwelling.

No internal inspection was possible.

2.2 Materials

The house is of timber construction, with rusticated weatherboard cladding and a corrugated iron roof.

2.3 Setting

The house stands on the northern corner at the T-junction of Hobson Street and Tinakori Road, immediately next to the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace, located at 25 Tinakori Road. From the south, it is the first house standing on the eastern side of Tinakori Road. When viewed from Hobson Street, given its proximity to the motorway, the house looks somewhat isolated from the residential fabric of Thorndon. This impression is negated when the house is viewed from Tinakori Road, where it takes its place amongst a significant inner-city suburb of houses built for Wellington's wealthy elite.

3.0 Sources

CT WN 121/294, LINZ

Laing, H. A. L. 'Clifford, Charles - Clifford, Charles'. From the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. Updated 6-Jun-2013, last accessed September 2013, at <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c20/clifford-charles> Encyclopedia of NZ, pp.707-708

McEwan, Ann, and Michael Kelly. '100 Hobson Street (House), Thorndon'. Heritage report for Wellington City Council. 2007

'The Perfect Dilettante'. In *Thorndon News*, Newsletter No.90, April 1991, p.4

www.tawahistory.wellington.net.nz/projects/streets.html

Wellington City Council Archive Files.

00056:212:B18258
00058:538:C25968
00053:131:7354
0056:137:B12439
00001:1767:47/574
00056:212:B18258
00058:538:C25968
00058:697:C31818

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 house has architectural value based on its monumental appearance denoting the wealth and social standing of its residents. The symmetry of the two main elevations and the careful detailing of the timber cladding are also important in this regard.

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 townscape value of the house is established by its corner siting and the ornamental treatment of the two elevations that address Hobson Street and Tinakori Road, both plainly visible to pedestrians despite the large concrete block wall around the property.

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 house is linked historically and physically to the many other grand houses that still stand in the immediate area. This is most particularly true of Katherine Mansfield Birthplace, which stands right next door and which was the home of Nathan's long-standing business partner, Harold Beauchamp.

Historic Value:

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

100 Hobson Street is a place of considerable historic significance as the home of some prominent Wellingtonians, among them Walter Nathan, Walter Johnston and Gibson Stott. All were successful businessmen and members of Wellington's social and wealthy elite, who congregated in Hobson Street and lower Tinakori Road and intermarried.

It is also worth noting that the Depression-era 'makeover' the house received soon after the Stott family bought the property is proof, should it be required, that not everyone was financially incapacitated at this time.

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?*

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?*

Built in 1883, the house is now 130 years old, giving the building obvious age value. Because of this, the house contributes to a sense of continuity in Thorndon.

Sentiment/Connection: *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

The house has social and cultural significance for the role it has played in the lives of Thorndon's elite, a number of whom still live in the area and recognise the importance of this house in the immediate area.

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?*

It is also an unusual representative of a composite 19th and 20th century design, given its hybrid Italianate / Colonial Georgian Revival styling. In this happy marriage of two Classically-inspired styles of domestic architecture, two generations of designers have reflected upon the adaptation of masonry idioms to timber construction in the New World.

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?*

Authentic fabric on the exterior of the building highlights the house's two chief periods of architectural evolution, being 1883 and 1933.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

This building is significant at a local level.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	N	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
WCC Records – building file	Y	
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)	N	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
Plan change?	Y	PC 58
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*