

## Heritage Buildings Report

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Lawson's Cottage no.2

**Address**

92 Lemon Street, New Plymouth



### Statement of Significance

This house is one of two near identical villas (including 107 Pendarves Street), constructed for retired farmers John and Mary Lawson about 1896-97. As an investment property, the house was rented for much of its early history and subsequently home to a number of different tenants. Aside from some minor alterations, the exterior of the house retains a high degree of historical authenticity and remains much as it was when first constructed. The building has strong contextual value as both part of a continuous row of three single-storey wooden villas (including 92 and 96 Lemon Street) constructed between the 1880s and early 1900s, and as part of a wider group of interesting heritage buildings along Lemon, Eliot and Pendarves Streets.



## Heritage Buildings Report

### Legal Information and Heritage Status

**Legal Description** Allotment 2 DEED 49

**District Plan Item/ Map No.**

**Heritage New Zealand List** Not listed

### Construction Information

**Date of Construction** Circa 1896-97

**Principal Materials** Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

**Construction Professionals** Unknown

### History

The eastern portions of Town Sections 1604 and 1629 were owned by Jonathan C. Adams between 1879 and late-1896, and remained vacant during his period of ownership; rate books for both 1894-95 and 1896-97 confirm no dwellings were present on the sections at start of these rating years.<sup>1</sup> In November 1896 the sections were purchased by Mrs Mary Lawson, the wife of John Lawson, and both this house and 107 Pendarves Street are thought to have been constructed soon after.<sup>2</sup> 107 Pendarves Street became the Lawson's home, whilst this house was rented-out. The whereabouts of NPBC rate books for 1897-99 are currently unknown, but the present dwelling can be seen in a photograph taken from nearby Fort Niger and published in a *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News* in June 1898.<sup>3</sup> Although the architect is currently unknown, based on the style of the dwellings, either Frank Messenger or James Sanderson was probably responsible their design.

John Richard Lawson married Mrs Mary Carrick, a widow, in 1890, and before moving into New Plymouth it seems they were farmers residing at Lepperton, inland from Waitara. John fought in the significant battle of Waireka during the First Taranaki War, and remained in the militia as a lieutenant until his forced retirement upon reaching the age of 65 in 1900.<sup>4</sup> On the morning of 22 September 1908, a boy driving cattle off the racecourse discovered John's body hanging from a pine tree located between the Avenue Road (present Coronation Avenue), and the grandstand; it seems his health had been in decline since suffering a stroke earlier in the year.<sup>5</sup> John was aged 74 years, and is buried at nearby Te Henui Cemetery.<sup>6</sup> Mary continued to occupy the house at 107 Pendarves Street until her death in July 1917, aged 56 years, and is also buried at Te Henui Cemetery.<sup>7</sup>

Following Mary's death, Part Town Section 1604 and house entered into the possession of A. E. Ricketts until July 1919, when it was conveyed to P. C. Sorensen.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear if Sorensen resided at the house, but he only retained ownership until September 1921, when the property was purchased

---

<sup>1</sup> New Plymouth Borough Council Rate Books, 1894-95 & 1896-97, NPDC Archives

<sup>2</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

<sup>3</sup> *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News*, 25 June 1898, page 2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-18980625-2-2

<sup>4</sup> *Taranaki Daily News*, 12 December 1900, page 2

<sup>5</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 22 September 1908, page 5

<sup>6</sup> NPDC Cemetery Search, <http://www.newplymouthnz.com/Residents/Facilities-and-Services/Cemeteries-and-Crematorium/Cemetery-Search>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

## Heritage Buildings Report

by E. M. Clark.<sup>9</sup> It seems Clark may have rented out the house, and isn't listed in street directories as residing at this location. Clark was still the owner when the property title was issued under the Land Transfer Act in 1929.<sup>10</sup>



Detail from image of New Plymouth from Fort Niger showing rear of 92 & 94 Lemon Street. *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News*, 25 June 1898, page 2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-18980625-2-2

### Reference Sources

See footnotes.

### Description

This building is located in a city fringe street several blocks from New Plymouth's CBD, and just east of New Plymouth's main southern entrance on Eliot Street/SH3. Located within Frederick Carrington's original Town of New Plymouth, this area was settled early in city's history and the surrounding blocks contain a number of pre-1900 dwellings. Whilst development pressures since the 1970s have resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, the area still retains a sense of historical character now uncommon in New Plymouth.

92 Lemon Street is the second-oldest building in a continuous row of three single-storey wooden villas (including 96 and 94 Lemon Street) constructed between the 1880s and early 1900s. This row is part of a larger group of interesting heritage buildings along Lemon, Eliot and Pendarves Street, and includes the near identical villa at 107 Pendarves Street. The HNZ listed 'Hen and Chickens' Historic Area (1860s) is located nearby on Pendarves Street.

Situated near the front of the section upon a small rise above street-level, the house is highly visible from Lemon Street. A low concrete retaining wall runs along the street boundary, with two capped pilasters forming a pedestrian entrance at the western end. The main form of the building incorporates a wide hipped bay with single projecting bay and rear lean-to extensions. The building is wooden-framed, with the exterior walls clad in square profile rusticated (ship-lap) weatherboards; a somewhat uncommon weatherboard profile in New Plymouth. The roof is sheathed in corrugated steel, and a double-brick chimney rises from the rear of the hipped gable on the south-western side.

The main front elevation faces north-west into Lemon Street, with a projecting bay incorporating a shallow-pitched Dutch gable extending forward at the eastern end. The gable end wall incorporates a

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



## Heritage Buildings Report

bay window fitted with double-hung sashes (two-lights per sash), flanked either side by slender sashes. The plain frieze, rather unusually and to strong effect, is boxed either side of the bay window using horizontal soffit boards. To the immediate west of the projecting bay, the panelled and glazed main front entrance door is enclosed within a sloping post and beam veranda. Originally open, much of the veranda has now been enclosed using wooden casements, horizontal boarding and a pair of wooden French casements.

### Assessment:

<b>Historical</b>	As this villa is not known to have been occupied by any significant persons its historical associations are slight. However, it is associated with speculative building practices during the 1890s, with this house constructed about 1896-97 for retired farmers John and Mary Lawson for the express purpose of being rented; likely to provide an income during their retirement.	✓
<b>Importance to Community</b>	-	
<b>Architecture &amp; Construction</b>	A good and well-proportioned example of an 1890s inner-city villa. The Dutch gable with boxed soffit is an uncommon architectural feature in New Plymouth.	✓
<b>Setting and Context</b>	This house has contextual value as part of a continuous row of three villas constructed between the 1880s and early-1900s. It is also related to the adjacent house at 107 Pendarves Street, which is almost identical, being constructed at the same time for the same owner. Both individually, and as part of a group, this building contributes positively to the surrounding streetscape.	✓
<b>Archaeology</b>	As this building was constructed during 1896-97, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900 human activity and has the potential to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.	✓
<b>Representativeness, rarity and integrity</b>	The building largely retains its original exterior form and key features such as weatherboard cladding and sash windows.	✓
<b>Meets threshold for listing</b> (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓