

## **Botanic Garden Stables, Mess Rooms and Tool Shed**

Glenmore Street



### **Summary of heritage significance**

- This group of gardener's sheds is a very good example of Arts and Crafts style design. The buildings were constructed of high quality materials that have mellowed over the past century and fit well in their tranquil garden setting.
- The group of buildings have a historic association with the development of the Botanic Gardens. They date from a time when the horse was a vital means of transport and power and the stables, in particular, are a rare surviving example of utility buildings of this type from this era.
- The buildings have been in continuous use by the Botanic Gardens for nearly 100 years and contribute to the sense of place and continuity of the Botanic Gardens Heritage Area. They have strong public recognition by virtue of their age, their location alongside the camellia garden, and for their intriguing appropriateness in their garden setting.

District Plan:	Map 11, reference 423 [DPC 53]
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 1 DP 8530
Heritage Area:	Botanic Gardens
HPT Listed:	None 2012
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 human activity on the site / Central City NZAA R27/270
Other Names:	101 Glenmore Street
Key physical dates:	1915
Architect / Builder:	City Engineer
Former uses:	Stables, mess Rooms & tool shed
Current uses:	Hazardous chemicals storage, mess rooms, staff WC & tool shed.
Earthquake Prone Status:	SR 268495 Bdg StrengthInv Bldg "Yet to be Assessed" Dec 2012

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



The Stables, Mess Rooms and Tool Shed are located to the south-east of the Treehouse Visitor Centre.

## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History<sup>1</sup>

The site of Wellington's Botanic Garden was included within the public reserves set aside by the New Zealand Company in 1840. The gardens themselves were first separately allocated in 1844. A Crown Grant in 1848, and the purchase of Wesleyan Reserves land in 1874,<sup>2</sup> brought the area of the gardens largely to their present extent.

Development and maintenance of the gardens began in earnest in the 1850s. The key form of motive power for this development was the horse. Horses did heavy carrying and general work and had to be housed and fed. The first stable was located not far from the present stable, in what is known as the sunken gully. There were other gardening buildings nearby. It is not known exactly when they were built, though it may have been around 1893, when the Wellington City Council voted £5 to provide "shelter ... for the horse at the Botanic Garden."<sup>3</sup>

Even as late as the 1910s, horses were still considered to be important for work in the gardens, and current facilities were dilapidated, so new stables, tool sheds and mess were planned in 1911.<sup>4</sup> Nothing happened, however, and it took a desperate plea three years later from Botanic Gardens supervisor, George Glen, for any action.<sup>5</sup> In 1914 the City Engineer, William Morton, drew up plans. Tenders were called and the successful bidders were Mitchelltown builders French and Hampton. The specification called for the reuse of existing joinery where possible.<sup>6</sup>

Work was completed in early 1915, at an estimated cost of £339.<sup>7</sup> Within two months a urinal and flush toilet were added to the eastern wall of the stables. Horses remained in use until the end of World War II and thereafter the stables were used for a variety of purposes, including a workshop. The mess, like the tool-shed, has always been used for the same purpose although, for the first few decades, gardeners were expected to stay on the job during lunch, not return to the mess.<sup>8</sup>

The interior fabric of the mess room has been modernized, while parts of the stable and tool house buildings have been converted into a staff toilet and hazardous chemicals store. However the buildings, particularly the tool shed and stable, are remarkably intact, given their utilitarian function. The buildings have always been in the public eye and have long been a feature of the gardens.

Today they are very close to the entrance of the Treehouse building, a modern public facility. The potting shed, a similar building designed by the City Engineer and constructed in 1924 by E.S Knight, can be found in the nursery behind the Treehouse and administrative buildings.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note: this report is an updated version of the Russell Murray, "Botanic Garden Stables, Mess Rooms and Tool Shed" unpublished report for WCC DPC 53, 2006

<sup>2</sup> W. Shepherd and W. Cook, *The Botanic Gardens, Wellington: A New Zealand History, 1840-1987* (Millwood Press, Wellington, 1988), pp.17, 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> File 00004:497:23/60/30/6: Botanic Garden History, Architecture and Facilities (undated), Wellington City Archives (WCA).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.259.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> File 00205:4:904, 15/10/1914. WCA.

<sup>7</sup> M. Jeffrey, 'Stables and Mess Buildings [Botanic Gardens, Wellington], Heritage Inventory and Conservation Plan (Arch 281, School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Shepherd and Cook, p.300.

<sup>9</sup> Building Permit 00055:38:A3589, 1924. WCA.

## **1.2 Architect**

WCC City Engineer

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture**

There are three buildings in the hollow below the Treehouse Visitor Centre that are now known as the Gardener's sheds. They are uniform in their design, being good examples of the Arts and Crafts style that was popular early in the 20th century. The mess building is on the south side of the path, and the stables (now a tool-shed) and a utility building are on the north side. Together they make a coherent group, giving a picturesque quality to the area alongside the camellia garden.

Materials are appropriate for the garden setting – walls consist of a brick plinth and unpainted roughcast stucco infill above, with Marseille tile roofs (a variety of brands including “Turtle” and “Les Milles B. du A.”). The roofs are gabled, and they have wide eaves and rafter and purlin ends exposed. The timber window and door joinery appears to be original.

The mess building is L-shaped in plan, with the main door in the north elevation, a large window that lights the mess room on the west elevation, and a fireplace and chimney on the back (south) wall. It has been heavily modified internally over the years and includes a crude modern fireplace to the old chimney.

The stable building is rectangular in plan, with a small lean-to on the back elevation. The east end has a loft door in the gable end with a lifting beam set in the wall above. One of the loose boxes retains its original clinker brick-on-edge flooring, while other floors are now concrete. It remains generally original in form and materials; new work is confined to modern internal partitioning.

The Potting Shed appears unchanged from 1924, with tiled roof on timber framing, roughcast walls above brick and timber joinery.

Although altered internally, principally by modern partitioning, the form and exterior detail of these buildings is largely original. They have technical interest as the materials and workmanship evident in the structures are of good quality for their time and in authentic condition.

### **2.2 Materials**

Brick, cement plaster, timber frame and Marseille tile roofs

### **2.3 Setting**

The three buildings known as the Gardener's Sheds are located in the lower reaches of the Botanic Gardens on the Glenmore Street side. They are set well back from the formal gardens adjoining the road and past the camellia garden in a small gully below the contemporary visitor centre. The path to the visitor centres wends its way past and above the buildings, enabling them to be seen largely in the round. The immediate area is lushly and diversely planted and although many of the plantings are native to New Zealand it nevertheless has, with the many mature trees, a strong sense of a carefully managed “English” informal garden around these buildings completely appropriate to their Arts and Crafts character. The buildings make a

strong contribution to, and are enhanced by, their garden setting.

The wider context includes the visitor centre itself and the potting sheds beyond (one of which is of a similar vintage to these sheds), and in the broader garden area, a wide range of old buildings of a variety of types, styles and sizes, all bound together by their common association with the development of the gardens and tranquil garden settings.

### **3.0 Sources**

Jeffrey, M. 'Stables and Mess Buildings [Botanic Gardens, Wellington].' Unpublished heritage inventory and conservation plan. Arch 281, School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington, 1998.

Murray, Russell. "Botanic Garden Stables, Mess Rooms and Tool Shed" unpublished report for WCC DPC 53, 2006

Shepherd, W. and W. Cook. *The Botanic Gardens, Wellington: A New Zealand History, 1840-1987*. Millwood Press: Wellington, 1988.

WCC Archives File 00004:497:23/60/30/6: Botanic Garden History, Architecture and Facilities (undated), Wellington City Archives (WCA); File 00205:4:904, 15/10/1914; Building Permit 00055:38:A3589, 1924

## 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?*

This group of gardener's sheds is a very good example of Arts and Crafts style design. The buildings were constructed of high quality materials that have mellowed over the past century and fit well in their tranquil garden setting.

**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 buildings have townscape value as part of the Botanic Garden's Heritage Area and the informal grouping of the three buildings adds to their picturesque quality.

**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 Stables, Mess Rooms and Tool Shed are part of a group of utility buildings associated with the day-to-day operations of the Botanic Gardens.

#### **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?*

The group of buildings have a historic association with the development of the Botanic Gardens. They date from a time when the horse was a vital means of transport and motive power and the stables, in particular, are a rare surviving example of utility buildings of this type from this era.

#### **Scientific Value:**

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

Recorded pre 1900 human activity on the site – Central City NZAA R27/270.

**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 buildings have been in continuous use by the Botanic Gardens for nearly 100 years and contribute to the sense of place and continuity of the Botanic Gardens Heritage Area. They have strong public recognition by virtue of their age, their location alongside the camellia garden, and for their intriguing appropriateness in their garden setting.

***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 buildings are a rare surviving group of Arts and Crafts ancillary buildings and the stables have particular rarity value.

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

The buildings are a good representative example of Arts and Crafts design.

***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 building exteriors retain much of their original building fabric and remain in near-authentic condition.

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

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

## 5.0Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory	N	
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	Y	
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?	53	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	Y	
HPT website	N	
HPT files	N	
Conservation Plan	N	
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*