

Halfway House

246 Middleton Road



Halfway House, 246 Middleton Road, Glenside, Wellington (Photo: WCC, 2005)

Summary of heritage significance

- The site of the building is associated with the New Zealand Company settlement being one of one hundred rural acre lots received with the purchase of a town acre.
- The site is associated with the Old Porirua Road, a Maori track which was expanded in 1841 by the New Zealand Company to allow communications between the Port Nicholson settlement and Porirua as well as access to the rural acres.
- Halfway House contributes significantly to the sense of continuity in the Wellington region due to its long association with the area. Halfway House has stood on this site for almost 120 years and a building of such an age generates a sense of continuity from the early settlement of the Tawa/Johnsonville area through to the present.
- The building has a significant didactic value for architectural and economic historians as an early building whose site and history is associated with early development of Wellington.

District Plan:	Map 26, reference 439
Legal Description:	Pt Sec 23 Porirua District
Heritage Area:	No
HPT Listed:	No
Archaeological Site:	R27/303
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	1880: Construction
Architect / Builder:	Unknown
Former uses:	Community lodge/residential lodging/
Current uses:	Not in use
Earthquake Prone Status:	Outside Earthquake policy (SR 269376)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



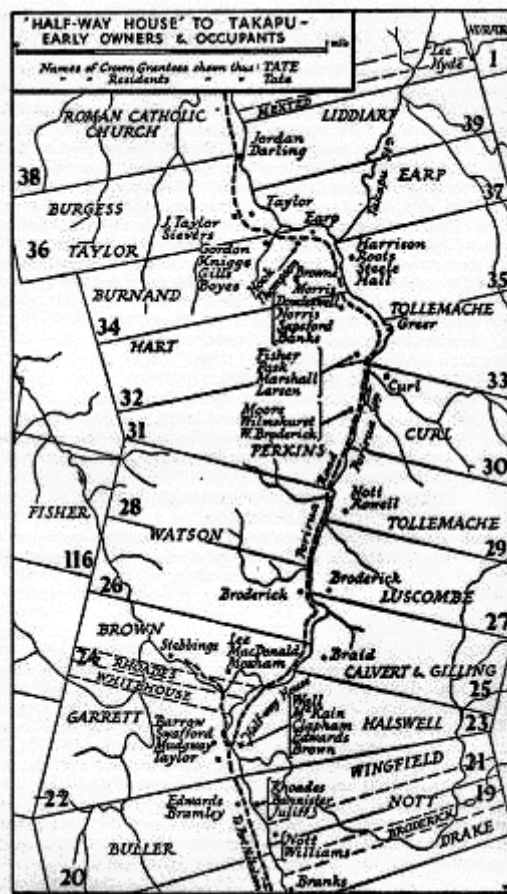
1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

The general site has been associated with travel between Wellington and Porirua since approximately 1840. About this time, Anthony and Susan Wall built a house approximately half way between Wellington and Porirua on section 24 of the old Porirua Road. The house became a place for travellers to stay and was the first to be known as “Halfway House”. It was, later, also where coach horses were changed.

The “Surveyors Arms” was drawn on a plan of the New Zealand Company’s section in the general location of the Wall’s house, but there is no evidence to suggest that it was either the Wall’s house or a separate building.

By 1844 several other houses were constructed close by the Wall’s house and the area became known as ‘halfway’ by the settlers. Buildings included houses, accommodation houses and stables.



In 1849 John McKain built an accommodation house on section 23; it was located on the eastern side of Kenepuru Stream, opposite the Wall’s house. It was known as “Mr John McKain’s Halfway House”. The house was also used for public meetings and is considered to be the site of the present house. Stables were constructed on the opposite side of the road to the house.

In 1850 the house was used for a public meeting to form a committee to encourage the construction of a branch line of “Road from Ngauranga on the Hutt Road to a certain point at or near Johnsonville on the Porirua Road.”

In 1853 Halfway House was used to house a coroner’s inquest into the death of Robert Russell. Dr. J P Fitzgerald was the coroner. In 1854 a public meeting was held at the house to discuss the Road Bill and in the same year the Roll of Voters was left at the house for inspection before voting on levying a rate.

In 1855 Joseph Clapham bought the McKain halfway house. In the same year a public meeting was held at the house to hear candidates for election for the

¹ Taken from Ian Bowman, ‘Half Way House – Conservation Plan’, report written for Wellington City Council, July 2004.

Wellington County Council. In 1857 the house was used to hold a public meeting to audit the Warden's accounts under the District Highways Act.

In 1857 William Chapman became the owner. He was followed by William Edwards. By 1870 the owner of the house was Alexander 'Sandy' Brown who replaced it with the current building. He continued to own the property until approximately 1890.

History of the building

About 1880 Sandy Brown constructed the present house. Whether this resulted in the demolition of the 1849 house is not known, nor when the stables on the opposite side of the road were demolished.



Halfway House to 1954, in Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1955, A H Carman, 1955, page 79

There is debate as to whether this house was ever used as a hotel or was Brown's private residence. Claire Bibby's research suggests that Brown was the proprietor of a hotel named Halfway House, nearby².

By 1910 licences were withdrawn and with better roads and communications, the need for a hotel in this location would have waned.

Mrs P C Watt owned the house during the early part of the century. Her nephews emigrated from Scotland during WWI and lived in it. She won a competition to rename The Halfway, with her suggestion Glenside. She undertook the first subdivision for "The Town of Glenside."³

Other people connected with the house, according to an oral history of local resident Len Stebbings⁴, who lived in Glenside from 1901 to 1979, include Hamlyns, Fisher, and Dymocks although no dates have been given. Olaf John and his wife lived in a flat in the house between 1953 and 1955⁵. At the same time Mr Richardson, a boiler man at Porirua Hospital, and his family lived in the other flat. Ian McClean who worked at the Wellington City Council was the next tenant after Richardson.

In 1951 the land and house were purchased by the Wellington City Council with the intention of creating a reserve, which was carried out. In 1951 and 1956 additions were made to the house which comprised of relining the interior, closing in the veranda as a sun porch and adding a bathroom and laundry to the rear of the house. Probably at the time of the additions, the house was converted into two flats.

A search of Wellington City Council archives lists minor changes in the 1950's and 1960's and also changes in tenants. On March 12 1954 drawings showing the current enclosed veranda were approved⁶ while other reports between 1979 and 1991 covered

² Claire Bibby, notes to Ian Bowman, 19 July, 2004

³ Claire Bibby, Future Options, "The Halfway House", unpublished report, 2003

⁴ Claire Bibby, Future Options, "The Halfway House", unpublished report, 2003, memories of Len Stebbings, 1 December, 2001

⁵ Claire Bibby, Future Options, "The Halfway House", unpublished report, 2003, memories of Olaf John, 30 May, 2003

⁶ file 1642/50 12 March, 1954 "Alterations to Verandah and DP A2839 pt 23 Belmont SD for WCC"

options for repiling, repairs and maintenance, with little, if any carried out. In 1991 architects Burwell Hunt prepared a report on the condition and maintenance options with an estimate of \$175,000 to carry out the maintenance work. The estimate was updated in 1993 to \$210,000.

In 1984 the house was listed in the Transitional District Plan but due to an oversight, its listing was not carried through to the current District Plan.

The house was tenanted until 1995 and is currently empty.

In 2012 Wellington City Council was granted \$149,000 by the Lotteries Commission to restore the house.

Half way house is locally significant occupying a site associated with development by the New Zealand Company in the early 1840's. Its name and original function is intimately linked to the Old Porirua Road and it is one of a group of three houses still surviving from the early development of the Johnsonville/Tawa area.

Background to the name “Halfway House”⁷

The Halfway House is an old name for Irish, Welsh and English accommodation houses or public inns. These “coaching stops” were located at strategic travelling points, usually halfway to a destination and sometimes on a border between counties. On the internet there are more than 600 references to The Halfway House and more than 215 references to The Halfway House Pub. Some surviving houses date back to the 17th century.

As discussed above, the name “Halfway” in the Wellington area referred to a location half way between Wellington and Porirua and was used to describe the area and several houses and stables in this general location. The existing Halfway house is the last to have this description.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1880 Construction

1.3 Occupation history

1849-1855	John McKain
1855-1857	Joseph Clapham
1857-1870	William Chapman
1870- building.	Alexander ‘Sandy’ Brown, who replaced it with the current
Current house	
1880-c.1890	Alexander ‘Sandy’ Brown
Early 20 th century	Mrs P C Watt (and joined by her nephews from Scotland during World War I)
1953-55	Olaf John and his wife / Mr Richardson
c.1955-	Ian McClean

⁷ Claire Bibby, Future Options, “The Halfway House”, unpublished report, 2003.

1.4 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The building has been designed in a very simplified example of the Victorian Georgian style. The house is almost devoid of ornament. This is a style which was used in New Zealand in the early period of settlement and again between the First and second World Wars.

The house is rectangular in plan with central hall and stair with rooms symmetrically located off either side of the hall. The same plan is repeated on the first floor with a bathroom over the entry hall. A lean-to is attached at the south of the building. A veranda wraps around the north and west elevations. Part of the northern veranda has been enclosed for a sun porch.

The house was originally heated by two back to back fireplaces centrally located in the ground floor rooms. The southern chimney appears to have been removed.

2.2 Materials

The house is timber framed with timber rusticated weatherboards, timber window and door joinery and corrugated steel roofing to the main and veranda roof.

2.3 Setting

Halfway house is on Pt Sec 23 Porirua District. The area is known as Glenside and the site is bounded by Twiglands Garden Centre, residential properties and the Council reserve.

The setting of Halfway House is a key element of its heritage value, given its association with the Old Porirua Road and early settlement. The Wellington City Council recognised this when they purchased the property in 1951 and turned it into a reserve. The property retains an atmosphere of isolation and wilderness, and this has been identified as an emotional value associated with the house.

Sources

Bibby, Claire. 'Future Options, "The Halfway House"'. Unpublished report, 2003

Bowman, Ian. 'Half Way House – Conservation Plan'. Report written for Wellington City Council, July 2004

Carman, Arthur H. *Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road 1840-1955*. Wellington: A H Carmen, 1956

File 1642/50 12 March, 1954. "Alterations to Verandah and DP A2839 pt 23 Belmont SD for WCC"

3.0 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?*

Halfway House is designed in a simplified version of the Victorian Georgian style with clear plan form. The design has taken the simplicity of the Victorian Georgian to an extreme with almost no ornamentation associated with the style such as pediments, console brackets, pilasters or fanlights.

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?*

Halfway House is the last building of the name associated with early Wellington development, and is one of a group of three early surviving houses on the Old Porirua Road.

Historic Value:

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

The site of the building is associated with the New Zealand Company settlement, as a rural 100 acre lot purchased with the town acre. The site is also associated with the Old Porirua Road, a Maori track which was expanded in 1841 by the New Zealand Company to allow communications between the Port Nicholson settlement and Porirua as well as access to the rural acres. Although not the original Halfway house, its name and original function relate to the need for accommodation and refreshment on the Old Porirua Road.

Association: *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

Halfway House is associated with the early settlement of Wellington. The building is also associated with the early hotel trade, although this use could not have continued for more than 30 years.

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?*

The building has a significant didactic value for architectural and economic historians as an early building whose site and history is associated with early development of Wellington.

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

The house is constructed using vernacular technology of the period including timber framing and cladding, brick for chimneys and corrugated steel for roofing.

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?*

Halfway House contributes significantly to the sense of continuity in the Wellington region due to its long association with the area. Halfway House has stood on this site for almost 120 years and a building of such an age generates a sense of continuity from the early settlement of the Tawa/Johnsonville area through to the present.

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?*

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 house has largely retained authenticity of design, materials, craftsmanship and immediate setting. There are later additions to the veranda and south elevation, but these have been constructed onto or around original fabric.

Local/Regional/National/International

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

Halfway House is important 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)	Y	
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory	N	
Plan change?	N	
Heritage Area Report	N	
Heritage Area Spreadsheet	N	
Heritage items folder (electronic)	N	
HPT website	N	
HPT files	N	
Conservation Plan	Y	
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*