

Fountain Place Heritage Precinct



View north from Fountain Square (Ann McEwan, 2015)

FP.1 Introduction

The Fountain Place Heritage Precinct includes sixteen residential properties in the central portion of the Beachville Estate, which was surveyed in 1860. The vernacular dwellings, which date from the 1860s through to the late 20th century, are single-family homes, many sites having an early association with someone who had a direct connection to the operation of the Port of Nelson, whether as a mariner, fisherman, or customs officer. Beachville Avenue properties were marketed from the late 1860s as having a 'fine view of the bay' (see, for example, *Nelson Evening Mail* 7 October 1871, p. 2); with the development of the port the view is somewhat different today.

FP.2 History

A crown grant of 21 acres of land on the hillside overlooking Haven Road and the Port of Nelson was made to George Schroder in 1851. After Schroder defaulted on his mortgage the property was acquired by John Lewthwaite of the Wakatu Hotel in December 1859. Lewthwaite subdivided the 'Beachville Estate' and duly offered allotments for sale in late 1860. At the time potential buyers were advised thus: 'In order to insure the erection of well-designed dwellings, and the good laying out of the grounds, the vendor will reserve sections in the proportion of one to three for the first eighteen sections, to be conveyed by way of bonus or prize for the best buildings erected and grounds enclosed and laid

out, within twelve months, each prize to be given after the erection of three houses and fencing in of the land' (*Nelson Examiner & NZ Chronicle* 26 December 1860, p. 1). Whether any bonus was ever paid by Lewthwaite is unknown at this time.

From the earliest survey the open space at the top (south end) of Beachville Avenue was designated as Fountain Square; in 1986 this reserve gave its name to the roadway. Today Beachville is the name of the suburb in which Fountain Place is located. Of the six right of ways that are shown on Lewthwaite's Beachville Estate subdivision plan the walkway located between Nos. 21 and 23 is believed to be the only one still in common use.

The oldest dwellings in the precinct date to the early 1860s although the development of the avenue took place over many years. Lots 12 (No. 19), 14 (No. 21), 16 (No. 23), 25 (No. 22) and 27 (No. 20) were offered for sale in June 1861. All were then undeveloped, aside from the plantings of fruit trees that were mentioned in the sale advertisement. Lots 25 and 29 (Nos. 22 and 18), 'being unredeemed', were offered for sale in February 1865 on behalf of the former purchasers. Lot 27 (No. 20) remained undeveloped for some time, EH Bisley of Motueka offering it for sale in December 1881 and again in July 1887.

Owners and/or occupiers of property in Beachville Avenue in the 1870s and 1880s included John Johnson (Lot 31, No. 16), a mariner whose wife Charlotte later owned Lot 8 (No. 15), Henry Barnes (No. 13), who worked on the steamers of the Anchor Line, and fisherman and fish shop owner Joseph Mallamo (Lot 35, No. 12). Mariner John Robb held Lot 10 (No. 17), which was still vacant in 1920, and lived in a cottage on Lot 9 (No. 10 Beachville Crescent).



Mid-1880s view of 21 (former McLachlan cottage) and 23 (former Hill/Hughes cottage) Fountain Place; erected c.1862 and c.1864 respectively (34890, Nelson Provincial Museum)

FJ Hill, a Customs official, purchased Lot 16 (No. 23) in November 1863 and later offered

a four-room cottage with a 'fine view of the bay' for sale in April 1869 (*Nelson Evening Mail* 2 April 1869, p. 3). Andrew Birrell Hughes (c.1840-1918) owned the property from 1874 until 1917. He worked for the Anchor Foundry in Nelson until his retirement.

The property of Frederick Atkinson, his wife Leah and that of Mary Atkinson, including multiple lots within the Beachville Estate, was offered for sale by the trustees of their estates in August 1920. In 1881 Leah Atkinson had held Lots 31 (No. 16) and 37 (No. 10) in Beachville Avenue but when Frederick died in June 1910 his obituary gave his residential address as Trafalgar Street North. At the time of his death, Frederick Atkinson was described as a 'well-known contractor' who had been at sea in his early life, suggesting that he may have built cottages in Beachville Avenue, possibly for both occupation and rental (*Colonist* 29 June 1910, p. 6).

Although the existence of a fountain within the Beachville Estate cannot be confirmed, Lot 4 (No. 11) appears to have been the site of a public well to which John Lewthwaite guaranteed access at the time of his subdivision. Beachville Avenue was declared a public street in 1928 and in 1996 the Fountain Place Heritage Precinct was identified, with local resident support, by Nelson City Council. Heritage interpretation is located in the reserve neighbouring the precinct; it tells the story of both Beachville and the nearby gas works (1874).



Former Johnson/Atkinson house (foreground, built before 1870) at 16 Fountain Avenue (31649, Nelson Provincial Museum)

FP.3 Visual Characteristics

FP.3.1 Height and Roof Form

Houses are one or two-storeys in height but it is the topography of the street that gives rise to the varied roofline of the dwellings in the precinct. Gabled roof forms predominate, with some of the older homes featuring rooms within the attic space.

FP.3.2 Setback from the Street

There is no consistency in the positioning of the houses, with the setback from the roadway depending more on the size, shape and location of the plot. The sections are quite large, typically allowing space for trees and gardens. The spacious character of the house sites should be maintained.



The topography, gabled roof forms and garden plantings contribute to the picturesque streetscape.

FP.3.3 Materials and Detailing

Timber weatherboards and corrugated iron roofing are authentic to the houses within the precinct, although timber shingles are historically correct in some instances. The use of authentic materials is highly desirable whilst the retention or restitution of decorative detailing is preferred to the replication of features that may not be authentic.

FP.3.4 Windows and Doors

Depending on the age of the dwelling, double-hung sash, multi-pane casement or casement and fanlight type windows are authentic to the houses in the precinct. Timber-framed windows and doors are authentic and maintain the integrity of the streetscape. Inappropriate replacement of windows and doors can detract from the integrity of an individual house and compromise the overall appearance of the historic streetscape. The fenestration of new houses should be designed in sympathy with the typical size, scale and materials of existing housing.

FP.3.5 Verandas and porches

The houses in the precinct typically have verandas, porches or decks overlooking the street, although this depends on the topography of each site. Verandas and porches are important features of the vernacular cottage and villa styles, providing a transition space between the public street and private home. Development should maintain the appearance and detailing of verandas and entrance porches, where these are authentic to the building.

FP.3.6 Fencing

The historic character of the street depends upon the openness of the houses to the roadway. Low-scale fencing and planted borders can define the property boundary while maintaining visual contact between the public domain and the principal elevation of each house. High fences on the street frontage undermine the historic character of the street and are therefore inappropriate. Fencing materials should be sympathetic to the individual house concerned.



Planted borders may be more in keeping with the house and historic streetscape than picket or other styles of fencing.

FP.3.7 Garaging

Off street parking is often difficult to achieve in this street and the location of the garage is largely determined by site constraints. Garaging should be done sensitively to ensure that it does not dominate the house or streetscape and is complimentary to the form, style and materials of the house concerned.

FP.4 Performance Guidelines

Applications for resource consent will be evaluated for their alignment with the following guidelines.

FP.4.1 Scheduled Heritage Buildings

The scheduled heritage buildings in Fountain Place are the defining elements of the precinct. Proposals relating to scheduled heritage buildings are appropriate where:

- a) Group A and B buildings are retained in all but exceptional circumstances, with demolition or removal a last resort;
- b) additions or alterations continue the use of timber weatherboards, corrugated metal roofing, timber joinery and detailing in keeping with the original dwelling is encouraged; and
- c) proposals consider the reinstatement of original façade elements, including verandas and entrance porches, when undertaking alterations.

FP.4.2 Non-scheduled Buildings

Non-scheduled buildings within the precinct contribute to its overall character. It is important that alterations and additions which impact on the streetscape are in keeping with the historic character of the precinct but do not try to replicate the appearance of the original houses:

- a) materials used complement and enhance the historic character of the precinct; and
- b) the size, scale and proportion of new roof forms, doors and windows, as well as verandas or porches, are in sympathy with the authentic detailing of the scheduled houses in the precinct.

FP.4.3 New Dwellings

New dwellings within a heritage precinct, whether due to removal of an existing dwelling and replacement, or construction of a second dwelling, also have the potential to adversely affect the character of the precinct, unless done in a sympathetic manner. Proposals for new dwellings are appropriate where:

- a) the new building is designed in such a way as to maintain and enhance the historic character of the streetscape;
- b) the form and scale of new work is in sympathy with the existing scheduled houses when viewed from the street;
- c) materials used complement and enhance the historic character of the precinct;
- d) the building may be one, one-and-a-half or two-storeys in height depending on the

site and with regard to neighbouring properties;

- e) proposals consider the inclusion of street front verandas and entrance porches;
- f) roof lines are in sympathy with the form of existing houses; and
- g) the setback of new houses from the street boundary takes into account that of neighbouring houses.

FP.4.4 Accessory Buildings

Accessory buildings are appropriate where:

- a) they are designed to be complementary to the historic streetscape in their form, detail and use of materials when viewed from the street; and
 - b) they are not constructed in the front yard (except where physical and legal access to the rear or side of the site is not possible).
- b)

FP.4.5 Fences

New fences are appropriate where they are a maximum 900mm in height and constructed from materials in keeping with the dwelling on the property.

FP.4.6 Fountain Square

This area will be kept open and grassed for communal use.



The steep roadway and garden plantings are defining features of the precinct.