

SHANWOOD – 99A Waituna Tapuae Road



Architect: Thomas Turnbull and Son

Construction date: 1903

Visible materials: Painted timber weatherboards and joinery, corrugated steel roofing

Architectural style: Edwardian Italianate

Use/building type: Residential

Date and compiler: Ian Bowman, December 2014

Heritage New Zealand listing: -

Proposed category: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

The house was built in 1903 for George Vance Shannon. When he purchased the farm it was 1361 acres, with 60 acres left in bush. On his death, his youngest son Trevor became the owner of the property in 1919 but unfortunately he died only nine years later leaving a widow and young family with the farm in dire straits. Trevor's cousin and trustee secured the future of the farm during the depression until Trevor's son, Brian Shannon, was able to take over the farm.

George Vance Shannon¹

Shannon was born in 1842 in Country Antrim, Ireland and emigrated to New Zealand in 1865. For nine years he was in business in Nelson before entering into partnership with Mr J S M Thompson, establishing a wholesale food goods and manufacturing firm of Messrs. Thompson, Shannon and Co. in Panama Street, Wellington. Following a fire that burned down their warehouse and saw the dissolution of the partnership he moved to the Totaras estate in 1887, which he had bought from the Manawatu Corporation ten years earlier.

¹ [http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d17-d2.html?__utma=1.861378439.1424291530.1424291530.1424291530.1&__utmb=1.2.10.1424291530&__utmc=1&__utmx=-&__utmz=1.1424291530.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=\(organic\)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=\(not%20provided\)&__utmv=-&__utmk=14041527](http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc01Cycl-t1-body-d4-d17-d2.html?__utma=1.861378439.1424291530.1424291530.1424291530.1&__utmb=1.2.10.1424291530&__utmc=1&__utmx=-&__utmz=1.1424291530.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utmv=-&__utmk=14041527)

While in Wellington he formed the Wellington Rifles, which he commanded for six years. When the government decided to form the volunteers into battalions, Shannon, then a Captain, received his commission as a Major in the New Zealand Militia. He was commanded the Wellington Fire Salvage Brigade, the Chairman of the Terrace School Committee, a member of the Wellington Education Board, a member of the Government Insurance Board and a Justice of the Peace².

In 1880 he was elected a director of the Manawatu Railway Company and in 1884 became the agent of the Wellington directors in London. He was deputy-chairman of the company for seven years and resigned in 1887 to settle in the Rangitikei district. His co-directors in the railway company named the township of Shannon after him.

In 1888 he was appointed Chief Customs Expert by the Prime Minister, Sir Harry Atkinson to assist the government in the classification of the tariff of 1888. He advised mercantile matters and inspector of invoices and merchandise. He retired from the post after 21 years in 1909. He died in 1919.

Thomas Turnbull and Son (Architect)

Thomas Turnbull (1824-1907) was born and educated in Glasgow. He was the son of a prominent lawyer but orphaned at an early age. He was apprenticed as a carpenter and then later trained as an architect under David Bryce, a notable Scottish architect and at one time a partner of William Burn, another distinguished Scottish architect. Turnbull travelled to Melbourne in 1851 and worked in the gold mining towns of the Ovens district of Victoria. After nine years there he moved to San Francisco. Turnbull established several partnerships there and was at one point Honorary Secretary to the Architectural Association of San Francisco but in 1871 he moved again, apparently for health reasons, to New Zealand.

Turnbull settled in Wellington. It is not known when he began his private practice. What is known is that by 1872, and with another important 19th century architect, William P.F.M. Burrows, he worked in the office of Colonial Architect, William Clayton. Burrows and Turnbull formed a partnership, most likely after this initial association. Later in the decade, in 1878, Turnbull took over the design of St Peter's Church, Wellington, from a Mr Grosholtz. He then bought Grosholtz's practice.

Thomas Turnbull was a pioneer in the design of earthquake resistant buildings and was responsible for breaking down the prejudice against the use of permanent materials for building construction. When he arrived Wellington was predominantly a timber town. Within a couple of decades masonry construction was standard. He was one of the first people to write about New Zealand architecture. While he specialised in masonry construction for commercial purposes he was also responsible for the design of a great many churches, schools and houses. He was a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and first president of the Wellington Association of Architects.

William Turnbull (1869-1942) was born in San Francisco, the youngest of four boys. He entered his father's office in 1882 and received his professional education from him. In 1890 he visited Melbourne and Sydney and was engaged for a short time in the office of J.A. Gordon, a Melbourne Architect who at that time was engaged in the design of several major commercial buildings in the Melbourne (now Victoria) Markets.

² <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=FS19090608.2.21>

In 1891 William returned to Wellington and was admitted into partnership in the firm of Thomas Turnbull and Son. The firm was by now one of the foremost in Wellington. By the following year Thomas had effectively handed over day-to-day running of the firm to his son. From this time most of the design work was undertaken by William although it is quite probable Turnbull Senior had a role in the design of the more prestigious commissions. He was personally called in by Premier Richard Seddon to design the General Assembly Library, a building he later eschewed responsibility for after financial constraints dictated the top storey not be built.

Thomas Turnbull died in 1907, shortly after the firm's most successful period when major commissions were secured for public buildings, such as the Bank of New Zealand head office and General Assembly Library and residences such as Antrim House. The wide-ranging nature of the practice's work was carried on by William into the 20th century. He was still practising architecture nearly 30 years later. One of his last prominent commissions was the Wellington Free Ambulance building designed in the vogue Art Deco style. William was, like his father, a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He died in 1942 and was buried next to his father in the Karori cemetery.

Among the most significant buildings designed by Thomas Turnbull were the following (* indicates if still extant):

Warehouse, W & G Turnbull (1876)
Turnbull House, 36 Grant Road (1877)
St Patrick's Church, Blenheim (1877)*
St Peter's Church, Willis Street (1879)*
Wesley Church Taranaki Street (1880)
Wellington Post Office, Post Office Square (1880)
St John's Church, Willis Street (1885)*
St Patrick's College (1885)
National Mutual Life Association building, Customhouse Quay (1885)*
New Zealand Loan and Mercantile building (1889)
Jacob Joseph's building

Among the significant buildings designed by the practice (post-1891) were the following:

Kent Terrace Presbyterian Church (1897)
Bank of New Zealand building, corner Customhouse and Lambton Quays (1901)*
General Assembly Library (1901)*
Henry Pollen House, corner Boulcott and Willis Streets (1902)*
former Phoenix Insurance Co. Ltd building, Lambton Quay (1904)*
Antrim House, Boulcott Street (1905)*
Whitcombe and Tombs building, Lambton Quay (1908)*
Turnbull House, Bowen Street (1918)*
Northland Fire Station (1930)*
Free Ambulance building, Cable Street (1932)*

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The single storey timber framed and clad house was designed in the Italianate style. This was a style, which was influenced by the picturesque movement and was popular from the early 1850s in New Zealand. The Italianate style was first made popular particularly for large English residential buildings

from the early 1800s with Cronkhill, the first building in the style, designed by architect, John Nash. Sir Charles Barry was another significant architect who championed the style.

Pattern books were influential in the spread of the style with Englishman Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica*, style books by Andrew Jackson Downing, and American Calvert Vaux's *Villas and Cottages*. Prince Albert also encouraged the style when he assisted in Thomas Cubitt's design for his house on the Isle of Wight, Osborne. Many of the larger houses in the style were designed with arcaded porticos, which was quickly adapted into the ubiquitous verandah in Australasia. The development of the bay villa style in New Zealand was largely a modest interpretation by speculative builders of the Italianate style but which combined the Queen Anne flying gable bays. Typical Italianate style buildings used classical details such as modillions under eaves, pilasters, low pitched roofs, and asymmetry of building forms.

The evolution of timber residential styles in the States included the Eastlake style which was based on an exuberant use of jig-saw and turned patterned timber decoration on Queen Anne, Italianate, Stick, and other late nineteenth century 'eclectic' styles. Various timber companies in New Zealand published catalogues showing a wide range of these highly decorative timber elements, which could decorate windows, verandahs, gables and roofs.

The house has a 'T' shaped floor plan with projecting gable wings typical of the style to create an asymmetrical design. The front door leads to a 'T' shaped corridor with living and dining rooms either side and with bedrooms and kitchen towards the rear of the house. A verandah wraps around the south and west elevations joining two of the gabled wings. An outhouse at the rear of the house, designed in the same style, is joined with a covered walkway. The gables have simple gable screens and barge decorations. The round headed windows and tall, prominent chimneys are essential characteristics of the style.

The house has rusticated weatherboards, timber double hung sash windows and a low pitched roof with corrugated steel roofing.

The house has expansive lawns, it is surrounded with mature trees and has an elaborate fence and gate to the main road.

The interior could not be inspected.

REVIEW OF REPORT

Based on a review of the report and viewing of Council files, the assessment undertaken in 2014 for this building is still applicable as at April 2021.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

The building has **moderate** to **high regional** significance for **physical, historic** and **cultural** heritage values.

The house has **high architectural** and **representative** values with most of the characteristics planning, form and detailing of the Italianate style.

The house has a **low to moderate** level of **rarity** of style, with few other more typical examples in the Manawatu.

The house has **moderate to high** levels of **authenticity** with the only obvious modifications visible from the exterior being the French doors to the side and covered walkway to the rear.

In the immediate environment, there are three main buildings, an outhouse and stables (now converted to a dwelling) on the property that could be considered to form a **group** however, considering the Manawatu area, the house is one of a wider **group** of significant homes built by wealthy farmers in the area, which has a **moderate to high** heritage values.

The house and farm have **high associational** values as the home of G V Shannon, a businessman and public servant of considerable importance to the development of the Manawatu and the establishment and early administration of the New Zealand Customs department. His importance is recognised in having the township of Shannon named after him.

The house and farm are **moderately** representative of a **pattern** of later 19th and early 20th century where successful farmers in the Manawatu had large houses and outbuildings constructed.

The house and farm have **moderate educational** values in revealing the lifestyle of a successful New Zealand businessman, popular styles and forms of construction for residential buildings of the era and as an example of the architectural practice of Thomas Turnbull and Son.

SOURCES

Former NZHPT Manawatu Branch Committee file

NZHPT Architects Glossary, 1990

Cyclopaedia of New Zealand Ltd 1897, -- Cyclopaedia of NZ, Wellington

Personal Communication - J.W.F. Cattell - 7 December 1992