

Heritage Evaluation

State Pensioner Housing

6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier



**Prepared by Auckland Council Heritage Unit
June 2014**

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Pensioner State Housing, 6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier

Cover image: Taken by David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to consider the place located at 6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier, against the criteria for evaluation of historic heritage in the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan.

The document has been prepared by David Bade, Specialist Built Heritage, Heritage Unit, Auckland Council.

This report was completed in June 2014. Minor updates have been made to section 12 of this report in May 2017, in particular to clarify the primary feature.

2.0 Identification

Site address	6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier
Legal description and Certificate of Title identifier	LOT 2 DP 148881 CT-88D/159
NZTM grid reference	1751824.4890 (Easting); 5918402.0198 (Northing)
Ownership	Housing New Zealand Limited
District/regional plan & zoning	Auckland Council Operative DP: Isthmus Section Res 6a
Proposed Unitary Plan zoning	Mixed Housing Suburban
Existing scheduled item(s)	N/A
Additional controls	Pre-1944 Building Demolition Control Overlay
NZHPT registration details	N/A
Pre-1900 site (HNZ Section 6a(i) and 2b)	No. The place is not recorded as an archaeological site and has no identified archaeological values, but it has some potential as a site of human activity before 1900 resulting from former rural activity in the vicinity.
CHI reference/s	N/A
NZAA site record number/s	N/A

3.0 Constraints

- This evaluation is based on information available or able to be sourced at the time of writing. Information was gained from books on state housing in New Zealand, the Auckland Council archives, the Papers Past website, and a preliminary draft of a study into state housing in Auckland. This research provided a substantial amount of information. However, additional research may yield new information.
- The evaluation is based on historical research and does not address current structural integrity, a systematic assessment of archaeological values, or tangata whenua values.
- A site visit was undertaken on 13 May 2014. The interior was not viewed.

4.0 Historical summary

***PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX 1 FOR A DETAILED HISTORIC OVERVIEW**

In 1937, the Labour Government began a pensioner housing scheme. The group of four single-storey units at 6-12 Pelham Avenue was New Zealand's first state pensioner housing block. Designs were prepared in December 1937, building was underway from February 1938, and the complex was completed by August 1938. The first tenants, Mr and Mrs E.A. Eaton, moved in on 16th August. As they moved in they had a surprise visit from MP John A. Lee, Undersecretary of Housing, and fellow MPs D. G. McMillan and Ormond Wilson.

Francis Gordon Wilson (1900-1959) was the architect for the Point Chevalier pensioner units. He was appointed as chief architect for the department at the time, and served in that position through to 1948 when he was appointed as assistant government architect, succeeding as government architect in 1952. Wilson directed the design of state housing around the country, including the first such development at Orakei, as well as other notable projects.

Substantial single storey pensioner developments were also erected at 430-432 Great North Road, Grey Lynn, and 97 Vermont Street, Ponsonby, in 1942. These developments were a series of single storey units clustered in a "U" shape around a central court. A number of two storey blocks of pensioner flats were built early on, including those at 134 Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn, and several blocks in Ellerslie. In June 1941, it was noted that upstairs flats for pensioners had been found to be unsuitable and it appears that only single storey blocks were built from then on. By March 1947, there were 106 state pensioner units in Auckland. Initially, pensioner flats were only built in the main cities, but by the late 1940s they were also being built in other parts of the country.

These four early building developments provide a good example of the government-led phase of provision for pensioner housing. In 1943, the Housing Construction Department was reorganised to become part of the Ministry of Public Works, and this style of pensioner housing projects by the government largely ceased. The post-war focus of the government was on housing the nuclear family. There continued to be a demand for pensioner housing, and local authorities came under pressure to provide housing. After World War II, pensioner housing projects were carried out by territorial authorities.

5.0 Physical description

Site and context:

The four-unit block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier, is located in an area with a number of 1920s bungalows, as well as post-1940 houses. The roadway of Pelham Avenue is unusually made of concrete as opposed to asphalt.



Design, fabric and any additions/modifications:

The former pensioner flats built in Pelham Avenue are a single level four-unit block. The government adopted an English cottage-like style for state housing during the period it was constructed, characterised by an elongated ridge line which conforms to a Georgian aesthetic. The flats are constructed out of brick and timber weatherboard, with a hipped tile roof and standard three-light timber windows. The building sits on a concrete foundation. Paired timber posts define the entrances. The block appears intact with no additions or modifications. However, fences have been added to the front of each unit to separate them. A few roof tiles have also been replaced (see photos below).

The integrity of the internal spaces is unknown as the interior was not viewed as part of this evaluation. The plans for the internal layout of the block shows a shift towards open plan living which was not an accepted scheme in New Zealand until after the war.¹ These units were designed to conform to the supposed needs of a couple or single person - different to the planning of a majority of detached state houses that were aimed at promoting family living.²

Condition and current use:

The block appears to be in a generally good condition. However, an overgrown frontage and fences obscure much of the building as seen from the street. Fences and walls were seen as an obstacle when creating a successful New Zealand street scene by the Housing and Construction Department at the time the Pelham Avenue flats were constructed – instead, it was important that state houses were integrated into the community.³



6-12 Pelham Avenue as seen from across the street (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).



Unit 12 Pelham Avenue (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).



Unit 10 Pelham Avenue (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).



Unit 8 Pelham Avenue (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).



Unit 6 Pelham Avenue (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).

Key features:

- The form, materials and detail of the block of four-units (i.e. hipped roof with boxed eaves, brick and weatherboard cladding, timber casement windows, and recessed porches)
- The open appearance from the street

6.0 Comparative analysis




The 4-unit block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier, is the first block in New Zealand built for pensioner housing as part of the first Labour Government's state housing scheme (built 1938). By March 1947 there were 106 state pensioner units in Auckland.⁴ Of particular note are two substantial single storey developments which were completed 2 to 4 years after the Pelham Ave block. These are located at Grey Lynn and Ponsonby and consist of a collection of single storey units clustered in a "U" shape around a central court.⁵ Both of these developments are scheduled as Category B historic heritage places for their historical, social, physical attributes, contextual values. The Pelham Avenue block has as much integrity as these two developments.



A number of two storey blocks of pensioner flats were also built in the early 1940s, including one at Grey Lynn and several blocks in Ellerslie. The State-led pensioner housing scheme largely ceased from 1943 when the focus of state housing was put on the nuclear family. Territorial authorities then took over pensioner housing projects. It appears that initially pensioner flats were only built in the main cities, but by the late 1940s they were also being built in other parts of the country.⁶

Francis Gordon Wilson (1900-1959) was the chief state housing architect for these early pensioner units.⁷ Wilson directed the design of state housing around the country, including

the first such development in Auckland at Orakei. As the pensioner housing at Pelham Avenue was the first such development, it is a significant piece of his work.

According to the preliminary report of state housing in Auckland, examples of pensioner housing in Auckland from the late 1930s-early 1940s are relatively rare, with relatively small numbers built, compared with post-1950 examples.⁸ Below is a table of pensioner state housing in Auckland prior to when territorial authorities took over pensioner housing projects. This list is based on a preliminary study into State Housing in the Auckland Region:⁹

Address	Photo ¹⁰ and description	Protection status
6-12 Pelham Avenue, Pt Chevalier.	 <p data-bbox="491 1010 1185 1077">The first pensioner houses built by the state in New Zealand. Built between Feb-August 1938.</p>	<p data-bbox="1217 629 1398 658">Not scheduled</p> <p data-bbox="1217 752 1342 853">Pre-1944 demolition control</p>
97 Vermont Street, Ponsonby.	 <p data-bbox="491 1487 1185 1626">Completed c. 1940-2. A series of single storey units clustered in a “U” shape around a central court.¹¹ It consists of eight single storey blocks – 4 two-house units, 2 three-house units and 2 four-house units.¹²</p>	<p data-bbox="1217 1113 1342 1142">Scheduled</p> <p data-bbox="1217 1171 1398 1272">Category B Historic Heritage Place</p> <p data-bbox="1217 1301 1342 1330">UID# 2484</p>
430-432 Great North Road, Grey Lynn.		<p data-bbox="1217 1659 1342 1688">Scheduled</p> <p data-bbox="1217 1718 1398 1818">Category B Historic Heritage Place</p> <p data-bbox="1217 1848 1342 1877">UID# 2483</p>

	Completed September 1942. A series of single storey units clustered in a “U” shape around a central court. ¹³	
134 Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn.	 <p>The pensioner flats built in Surrey Crescent are a two level block. The building is constructed of plastered brick, with a hipped tile roof and standard three-light timber windows, Built post-1940.¹⁴</p>	Not scheduled Pre-1944 demolition control
2-8 Main Highway, Ellerslie.	 <p>A two-storey block.</p>	Not scheduled Pre-1944 demolition control

The pensioner housing block at Pelham Avenue marked the beginning of a trend in Point Chevalier as a place for the elderly. Numerous (later) pensioner housing and rest homes have been established in the suburb, notably Selwyn Village (rest home) – opened 1952¹⁵ and the John A. Lee Pensioner Village – named after the Member of Parliament responsible for introduction of state housing (the man who opened the Pelham Avenue units) in 1975.¹⁶

7.0 Significance criteria

(a) Historical

The place reflects important or representative aspects of national, regional or local history, or is associated with an important event, person, group of people or idea or early period of settlement within the nation, region or locality.

The 4-unit block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue, constructed in 1938, was the very first block of pensioner housing built by the state in New Zealand. The block was part of the pensioner housing scheme carried out by New Zealand's first Labour Government (between 1937-1942) before the focus of state housing was put on the nuclear family, and territorial authorities took over pensioner housing. The block is therefore historically important and representative of the Labour Government's pensioner housing scheme.

The block represents a time when the first Labour Government was developing a strong welfare state in New Zealand. A state housing scheme was developed with the intention to give every New Zealander the right to have an adequate standard of housing. The block also represents a phase in the late 1930s when there was a concern for old age pensioners and a movement to provide adequate housing for the elderly.

The pensioner housing block, therefore, has **considerable national** historical significance.

(b) Social

The place has a strong or special association with, or is held in high esteem by, a particular community or cultural group for its symbolic, spiritual, commemorative, traditional or other cultural value.

The block has **little local** social significance. Other than those who lived there in the past, there is little evident esteem held by the community or cultural group for the former pensioner housing block.

(c) Mana whenua

The place has a strong or special association with, or is held in high esteem by, mana whenua for its symbolic, spiritual, commemorative, traditional or other cultural value.

An assessment of the place's value to mana whenua has not been undertaken as part of this evaluation.

(d) Knowledge

The place has potential to provide knowledge through scientific or scholarly study or to contribute to an understanding of the cultural or natural history of the nation, region or locality.

The former pensioner housing block at Pelham Avenue provides an understanding and appreciation of the way elderly people were perceived to ideally live, from those who were behind the pensioner housing scheme in the late 1930s. The block typifies the state housing designs of the 1930s and enhances public knowledge of the pensioner housing scheme of the first Labour Government's welfare state. When most housing projects at this time were aimed at family living, this block demonstrates the shift in emphasis from family- to elderly-living through a change of the internal planning of each unit. The knowledge value of these units is of **considerable national** significance. This knowledge value is sufficiently supported by studying the original floor plans and other archival documentation related to the construction of the block, but may potentially be enhanced by viewing the interiors of the units.

(e) Technological

The place demonstrates technical accomplishment, innovation or achievement in its structure, construction, components or use of materials.

The block at Pelham Avenue is an example of early state housing design in an English cottage style. As such, the construction method and materials used for the building are typical of many state housing projects constructed at this time. Mindful of the 'slum' conditions created by a lack of planning and cheaply constructed dwellings, the first Labour government ensured that state housing was built to a very high standard.¹⁷ The block is built on a concrete foundation with reinforced concrete inter-tenancy walls and timber framing and cladding.

The block, therefore, has **moderate local** technological significance.

(f) Physical attributes

The place is a notable or representative example of a type, design or style, method of construction, craftsmanship or use of materials or the work of a notable architect, designer, engineer or builder.

The 4-unit block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue is a notable and representative example of the early design of pensioner housing in the late 1930s. The government adopted an English cottage-like style for state housing, characterised by an elongated ridge line that conforms to a Georgian aesthetic. It is representative of both the style of housing and the policies regarding provision of pensioner housing carried out during the term of office of the first Labour Government. It is the earliest surviving pensioner housing development in the Auckland region. The design of the units is similar to those used at 97 Vermont Street, Ponsonby, and at 430-432 Great North Road, Grey Lynn (both of which are scheduled). Examples of pensioner housing in Auckland developed in the late 1930s to early 1940s are relatively rare, with only a handful built, compared with ubiquitous post-1950 examples.¹⁸

The design and style of the block was overseen by Francis Gordon Wilson, a notable architect and the chief state housing architect at the time. Wilson was involved in the design of a number of other projects across New Zealand, including the first state

housing development in Auckland at Orakei. The block at Pelham Avenue is important in the context of Wilson's work as it was the first pensioner housing project managed by Wilson and the Department of Housing and Construction.

The physical attributes are of **considerable regional** significance.

(g) Aesthetic

The place is notable or distinctive for its aesthetic, visual, or landmark qualities.

The block at Pelham Avenue is not aesthetically or visually distinctive or a landmark for the area. It therefore has **little local** aesthetic significance.

(h) Context

The place contributes to or is associated with a wider historical or cultural context, streetscape, townscape, landscape or setting.

The former pensioner housing block at Pelham Avenue does relate to the wider state housing context in Auckland and New Zealand. However, locally, there are few state houses in the immediate vicinity. The block is located in a neighbourhood with a number of 1920s bungalows. The location illustrates the 'pepper potting' approach to government housing, building them on spare land in established communities, rather than in large estates. Consequently, the block has **little local** context significance (its relationship to the wider state housing context is better addressed under the historical values criterion).

It should also be noted that the Pelham Avenue housing block relates to Point Chevalier as a place for the elderly: numerous (later) pensioner housing and rest homes have been established in the suburb.

8.0 Statement of significance

The 4-unit block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue, constructed in 1938, has considerable national historical significance as the very first block of pensioner housing built by the state in New Zealand. The block is representative of both the style and policies of the pensioner housing scheme carried out by New Zealand's first Labour Government (between 1937-1942) before the focus of state housing was placed on the nuclear family, and territorial authorities took over pensioner housing projects. It represents a time in the late 1930s when concerns for the wellbeing of old age pensioners culminated in a scheme to provide adequate housing for the elderly.

The physical attributes of the block are of considerable regional significance. It is the earliest surviving pensioner housing development in the Auckland region, with other similar examples in Ponsonby and Grey Lynn (both scheduled as category B historic heritage places). The design and style of the block was overseen by Francis Gordon Wilson, a notable architect and the chief state housing architect at the time. The block at Pelham Avenue is important in the context of Wilson's work as it was the first

pensioner housing project managed by Wilson and the Department of Housing and Construction.

The Pelham Avenue block also has considerable national significance for knowledge value as its design provides an understanding of the way elderly people were perceived to ideally live in the late 1930s.

9.0 Extent of the place for scheduling

The identified extent of the place for scheduling is the area that is integral to the function, meaning and relationships of the place. The extent of place for the pensioner housing block at 6-12 Pelham Avenue covers the certificate title area. This area covers the full building footprint as well as the external areas designed to be used by pensioners. Below is a diagram showing the extent of place (red line):



10.0 Recommendations

Based on the preceding evaluation, the former pensioner housing at 6-12 Pelham Avenue meets the threshold for scheduling as a Historic Heritage Place: Category B. See the table of historic heritage values below.

11.0 Table of Historic Heritage Values

Significance Criteria (A-H)	Value* (None, Little, Moderate, Considerable, Exceptional)	Context (Local, Regional, National, International)
A- Historical	Considerable	National
B- Social	Little	Local
C- Mana Whenua	Not assessed in this evaluation	Not assessed in this evaluation
D- Knowledge	Considerable	National
E- Technological	Moderate	Local
F- Physical Attributes	Considerable	Regional
G- Aesthetic	Little	Local
H- Context	Little	Local

*Levels of significance or value:

Exceptional: of outstanding importance and interest; retention of the identified value(s)/significance is essential.

Considerable: of great importance and interest; retention of the identified value(s)/significance is very important.

Moderate: of some importance and interest; retention of the identified value(s)/significance is desirable.

Little: of limited importance and interest.

NA/None: none identified

12.0 Overall Significance

**Updated May 2017 to include primary feature*

Place Name and/or Description	State Pensioner Housing
Verified Location	6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier
Verified Legal Description	LOT 2 DP 148881
Category	B
Primary Feature	State Pensioner house
Known Heritage Values	A,D,F
Extent of Place	All that land contained within the certificate of title boundary (Refer to section 9.0 for diagram)
Exclusions	Interior of building(s)
Additional Controls for Archaeological Sites or Features	
Place of Maori Interest or Significance	

Author: David Bade, Specialist Built Heritage

Date: June 2014 (updated May 2017)

Reviewer: Rebecca Fogel, Built Heritage Specialist (Point Chevalier HHS Project Lead)

Date: 9 June 2014

Appendices

Appendix 1 Historic research

State Housing in New Zealand

The first Labour Government, elected in 1935, initiated New Zealand's first large-scale state housing scheme. The Government instigated the scheme in reaction to a housing shortage, following the depression of the 1920s, and the growing number of slums in New Zealand cities in the 1930s. The Labour Government's housing policy was that every New Zealander should have the right to be provided with an adequate standard of housing. The houses were built and rented with the tenancies administered by the State Advances Corporation.¹⁹ Mindful of the 'slum' conditions created by a lack of planning and cheaply constructed dwellings, Labour ensured that state housing was built to a very high standard. Each block is built on a concrete foundation with reinforced concrete inter-tenancy walls and timber framing and cladding.²⁰

The earliest schemes for state housing were for single unit houses in garden suburbs, rather than inner city flats or apartments. Suburban developments with safe backyards were seen as the best place for families and children.²¹ Government-owned land at Miramar (Wellington) and Orakei (Auckland) became the first sites for development in 1937. By March 1939, the Department had completed or begun approximately 5390 houses.²² The state housing areas represent the time when the Labour Government established a formidable welfare state.

Point Chevalier was one of the suburbs identified for state housing in the late 1930s. By mid-October 1938, 192 state houses were in the process of construction in Point Chevalier.²³ In 1940, a further 215 state houses were under construction.²⁴

The Housing Construction Department developed a cottage-like style for their designs for stand-alone state houses nationwide, as opposed to the Californian bungalow style which dominated the 1920s-1930s. No reason was given by the Labour government for this selection, but a number of people have speculated on this decision. Bill Toothman believes that the English Cottage Style was adopted because it was an "elite style" at the time and Labour wanted to lift the standard of housing.²⁵ Another reason given is that Prime Minister Walter Nash was replicating the Georgian association of the British municipal buildings with which he was familiar.²⁶ Architectural historian Peter Shaw suggests that Labour did not want to frighten the electorate by building in a style that might alienate the local population – English style cottages would have reassured the Pākeha population that the government still saw Britain as "home."²⁷

Fences and walls were seen as an obstacle when creating a successful New Zealand street scene by the Housing and Construction Department at this time – it was important that state houses were integrated successfully into the community.²⁸

The Pensioner Housing Scheme

From the early 1900s, hospital boards slowly excluded able-bodied elderly from institutionalised refuges and homes, and there became a growing need for housing for old age pensioners.²⁹ This need was put forward at a conference in October 1936, which consisted of members of parliament, members of Council, and representatives of various religious and benevolent organisations. A resolution was passed which urged the Government to adopt a national housing scheme to provide adequate accommodation for pensioners, as they were considered to be the worst-housed in the community.³⁰ The following year, the Labour Government began a pensioner housing scheme which consisted of specialised one-bedroom and bed-sitting-room flat designs for married or widowed elderly people.³¹ This scheme followed the cottage style of other early state houses.³² The government expected single elderly people to continue to house themselves privately, despite petitions asking for single elderly people to be included in the scheme.³³

By February 1938, work was underway on the first block of pensioner housing built by the state. The four single-storey unit complex at 6-12 Pelham Avenue in Point Chevalier was completed in August. Substantial single storey pensioner developments were also erected at 430-432 Great North Road, Grey Lynn and 97 Vermont Street, Ponsonby in 1942.³⁴ These developments were a series of single storey units clustered in a “U” shape around a central court. A number of two storey blocks of pensioner flats were built early on, including those at 134 Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn and several blocks in Ellerslie.³⁵ In June 1941, it was noted that upstairs flats for pensioners had been found to be unsuitable and it appears that only single storey blocks were built from then on.³⁶ By March 1947, there were 106 state pensioner units in Auckland.³⁷ Initially, pensioner flats were only built in the main cities, but by the late 1940s they were also being built in other parts of the country.³⁸

6-12 Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier

The four single-storey unit complex at 6-12 Pelham Avenue was New Zealand's first state pensioner housing block. Designs were prepared in December 1937,³⁹ and building was underway from February 1938, using a local builder, Mr E. G. Rose, as the contractor (Figure 1).⁴⁰



Figure 1. The pensioner flats at Pelham Avenue nearing completion in July 1938.⁴¹

Archival correspondence between the Ministry for Housing and the Auckland City Council in early 1938 reveals that the local council was against any further development of multi-unit complexes in Point Chevalier, as they did not comply with the council's zoning.⁴² They preferred these developments to be located on main roads in the city. Further multi-unit state housing developments on Pelham Avenue, Rama and Shakespeare (now Smale Street) Roads were rejected.⁴³

The Pelham Avenue block was completed in August 1938. The first tenants, Mr and Mrs E.A. Eaton, moved in on 16th August. As they moved in, they had a surprise visit from MP John A. Lee, Undersecretary of Housing, and fellow MPs D. G. McMillan and Ormond Wilson (Figure 2).⁴⁴



Figure 2 The official opening of the new pensioner housing at Pelham Avenue, Point Chevalier on 16 August 1938.⁴⁵ From left to right: Mr H. W. Vaughan, secretary of the Grey Lynn branch of the Labour Party, Dr. D. G. McMillan, M.P., Mr. G. H. O. Wilson, M.P. (at back), Mr. Lee, Under-secretary of Housing, the tenants, Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Eaton, and Mr. F. G. J. Temm.⁴⁶

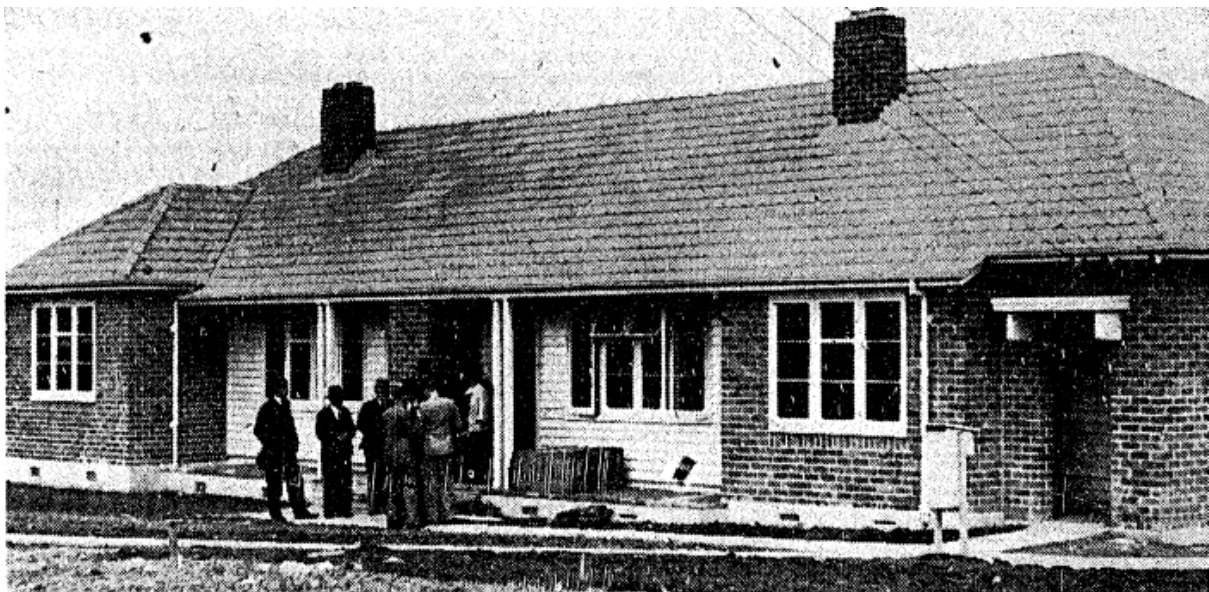


Figure 3 Pelham Avenue units the day of their opening.⁴⁷

In an article from January 1939 – five months after they moved in – Mr and Mrs Eaten expressed that they were ‘supremely happy and grateful for the government for the facilities they have been provided’ – “These flats are fine for us old people.”⁴⁸ The article also commented on the garden of the Youngs, who moved into the block in November 1938. An extract of the article is below:

‘To-day these pensioners, who previously were forced to live with relatives or in rooms, are enjoying all the conveniences of modern homes, on a small scale, of course, and they are paying only 14/ a week for them. The rent for the flats is 10/0 a week, but a reduction is made for prompt payment. They are good payers, for that extra half-crown means a lot to a pensioner, and judging by the gay and well-kept appearance of the environs of the flats, they are excellent tenants. Many a landlord, no doubt, would be pleaded to exchange the pensioners for some of their tenants, all things being equal, and the Government must have cause for satisfaction in the knowledge that these old people find enjoyment, both indoors and out of doors, in their new surroundings.’⁴⁹

Francis Gordon Wilson

Francis Gordon Wilson (1900-1959) was the architect for the Point Chevalier pensioner units. He was appointed as chief architect for the department at the time, and served in that position through to 1948 when he was appointed as assistant government architect, succeeding as government architect in 1952.⁵⁰ The December 1937 plans for the units show “G F Wilson” as architect, which must refer to F. G. Wilson (Appendix 5). Their similarity with those built at Ponsonby and Grey Lynn would indicate that the same architect was involved with the design.⁵¹ However, as Wilson was an advocate of modernist ideas, the design of the buildings should be attributed to the Department of Housing Construction rather than Wilson himself.⁵² These cottage-style designs have characterised state housing suburbs.

Wilson studied at the Auckland University College School of Architecture from 1920. He was employed by the prominent architectural firm of William Gummer and Reginald Ford as a draughtsman from 1923 until he completed his professional examinations and joined the Housing Construction Department in 1936 to advise on architectural designs for state houses.⁵³ Wilson directed the design of state housing around the country, including the first such development in Auckland at Orakei. Other notable projects included: the Berhampore Flats (1939-40), the Hanson Street State Flats (1941-44), Auckland’s Grey’s Avenue Flats (1945-47), Symonds Street Flats (1945-47), the Bledisloe State Building, the Bowen State Building and The Terrace Flats in Wellington, the School of Engineering building at the University of Canterbury, the University of Otago Dental School building, and a portion of the Milford Hotel, Fiordland. Wilson was ultimately responsible for the architectural designs of the department and was also an advocate of town planning. He became a member of the Town and Country Planning Institute in London as well as the New Zealand Institute of Town and Country Planners.

Later Pensioner Housing

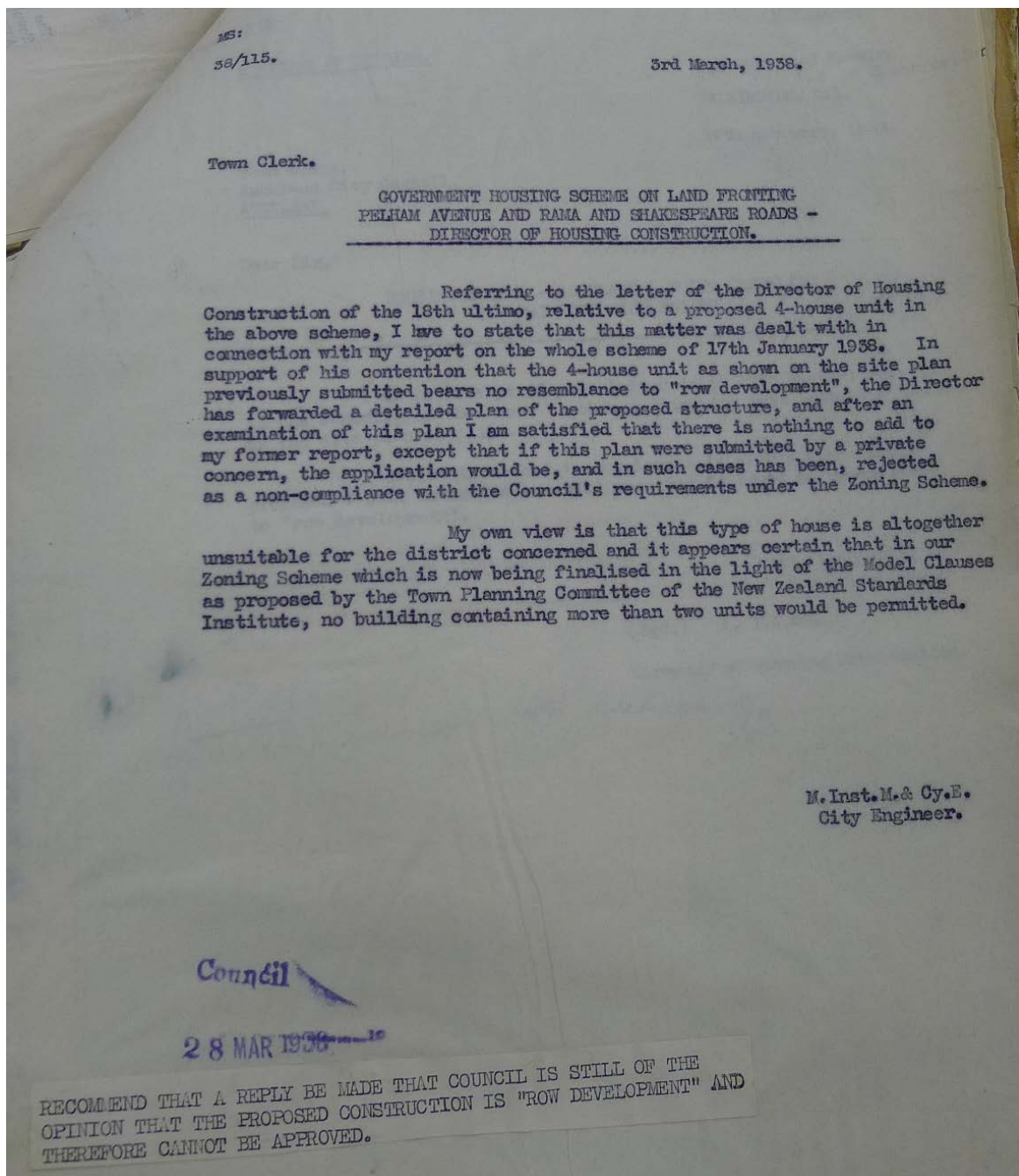
The Pelham Avenue complex was followed by four more pensioner housing developments (built between 1938 and 1942), at Surrey Crescent, Great South Road, Great North Road and Vermont Street.⁵⁴ An article from 1942 describes the developments in Auckland:

*"Honestly, mister, I feel I'm in heaven!" This was the comment of Mrs. A. T. Chapman, one of the first tenants to occupy a pensioner's flat in the new block just completed by the State Housing Department in Great North Road, Grey Lynn, close to St. Joseph's Catholic Church. There are 25 flats in all contained in four four-unit dwellings and three of three units. Five tenants moved in this week and within the next few days the whole 25 flats will lie occupied by married couples, all beneficiaries under the Social Security Act. Pensioners' flats have also been built and occupied in Vermont Street, Surrey Crescent, Point Chevalier and Great South Road.*⁵⁵

The early pensioner flats did receive some criticism, however, for their small size – having only a bedsitting room, a kitchen and a bathroom. By the late 1940s, new larger designs had been developed with a separate bedroom and living room.⁵⁶ During the 1950s large numbers of pensioner houses were built using these new more generous designs.⁵⁷

The four early building developments provide a good example of the government-led phase of provision for pensioner housing. In 1943, the Department of Housing Construction was reorganised to become part of the Ministry of Public Works, and this style of pensioner housing projects by the government largely ceased, along with other construction projects by the department not directly linked with the needs of the war effort.⁵⁸ The post-war focus of the government was on housing the nuclear family.⁵⁹ There continued to be a demand for pensioner housing, and local authorities came under pressure to provide housing. After World War II, pensioner housing projects were carried out by territorial authorities. Christchurch city council had already begun a housing scheme for old-age pensioners from the late 1930s.⁶⁰

Appendix 2 Supplementary research



Letter related to construction of Pelham Avenue block (3 March 1938)⁶¹

31st March, 1938.

58/115.

Town Clerk.

RE FOUR-UNIT HOUSE - GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEME AT PELHAM AVENUE, POINT
CHEVALIER.

Referring to the letter of the Director of Housing Construction of 25th instant, relative to the above, and forwarding an extract from the Christchurch "Star-Sun", showing the attitude which is being taken by the Christchurch City Council in regard to multiple units; I have to state that this matter was covered in my reports of 17th January last and 3rd instant and that the Council has already twice disapproved the proposal to include four-unit houses in this locality.

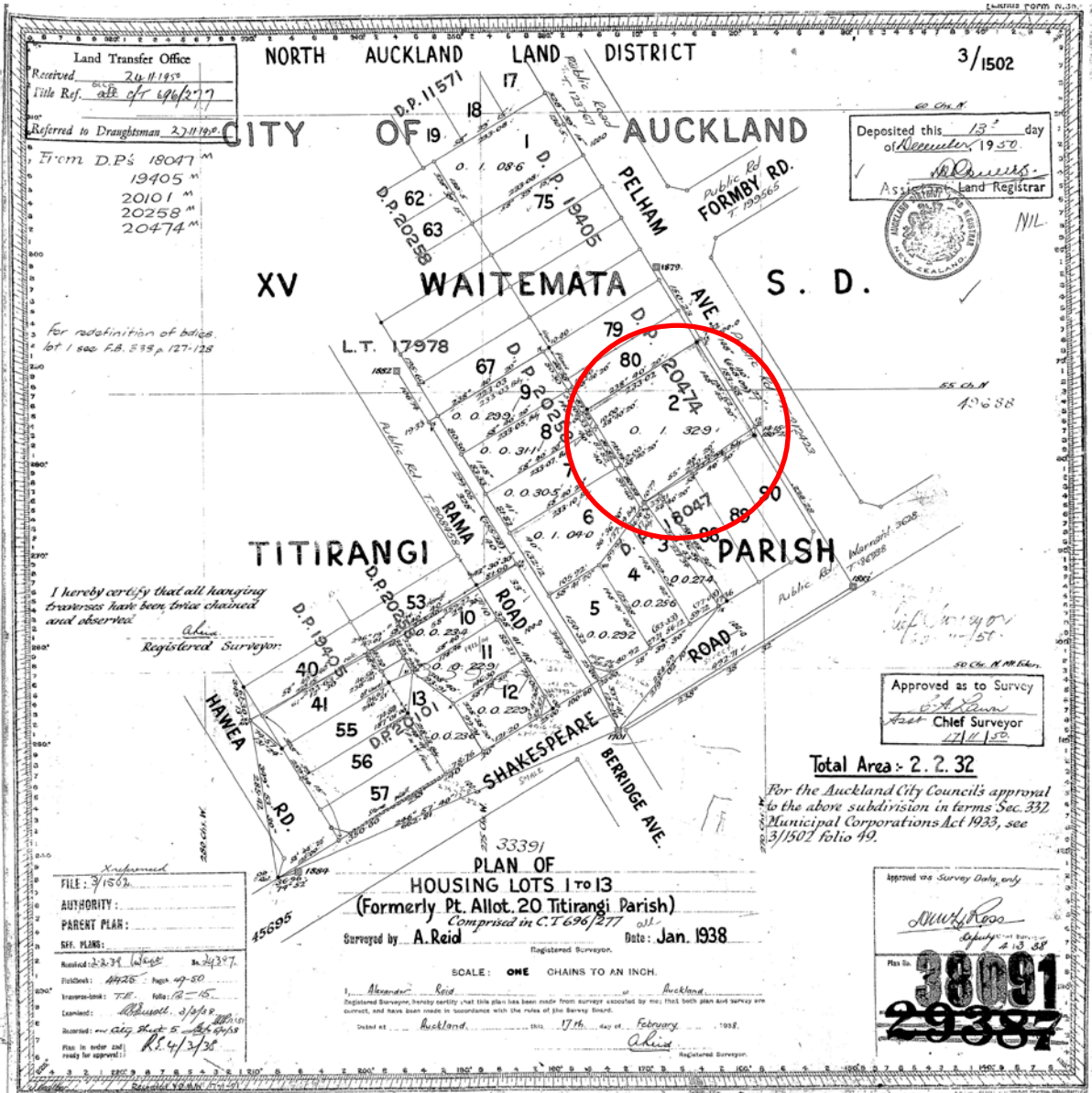
My own view is that any attempt on the part of the Government to provide economic housing on the multi-family principle should be welcomed by the Council, provided that such proposal conforms to the Zoning Scheme. There can be no objection to multiple dwellings as such, provided that they are located in correct relationship to the city structure, and I am still definitely of the opinion that these portions of the Pt. Chevalier District which are removed from the main roads are not suitable locations for any type of multiple dwelling which provides for more than two family units.

I might point out that there are considerable areas closer in to the City where houses of the type in question are permissible, and where such buildings should be encouraged on economic grounds.

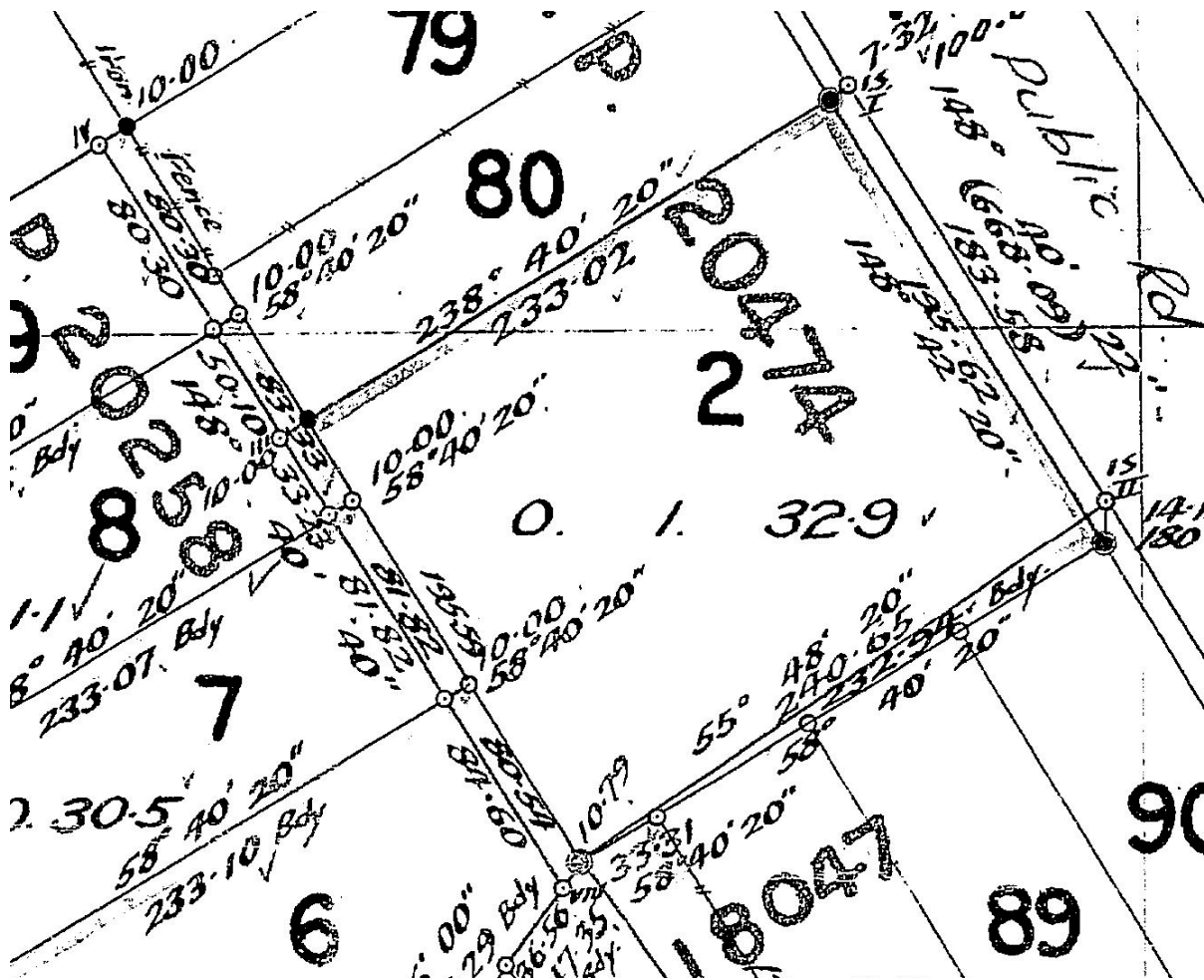
M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.
City Engineer.-

Letter related to construction of Pelham Avenue block (31 March 1938)⁶²

Appendix 3 Certificate(s) of title



Plan of Housing Lots (January 1938) – DP 38091



Close up of Plan of Housing Lots, showing 6-12 Pelham Ave (January 1938) – DP 38091

Completed
Plan
21/11/93

702/223 and 712/45 H.S.
457/129, 457/124, 461/48, 473/259, 662/149, 696/277
Vol. 357, Folio 88; 442/159, 455/5-
450/95
Reference: Transfer No. 45093
Order for N/C No. C.36124

NORTH

Land and Deeds - 4
FORM No. 23

Register-book,

Vol. 1511, folio 100



DUPLICATE DESTROYED

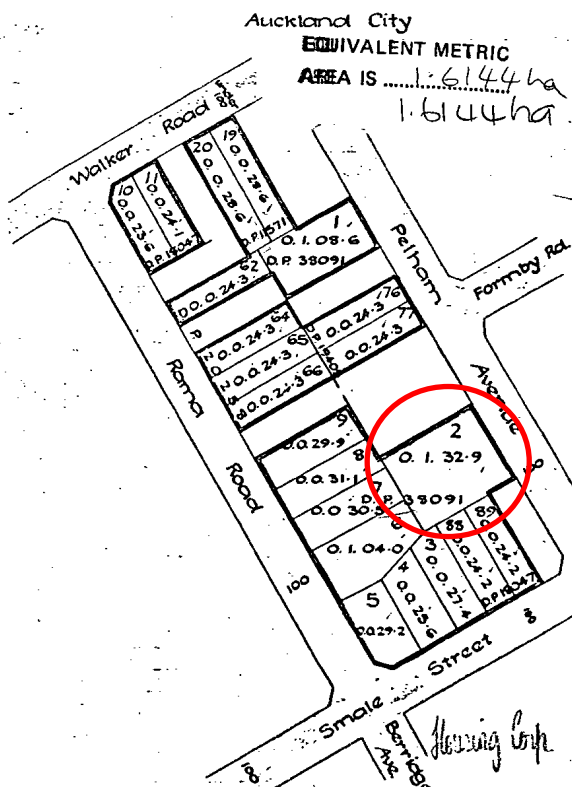
NEW ZEALAND

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT

1511/100

This Certificate, dated the eighth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven
under the hand and seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of AUCKLAND Witnesseth that
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN is seized of an estate in fee simple for State Housing Purposes under the
Housing Act 1955

is seized of an estate in fee simple (subject to such reservations, restrictions, encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified by memorial under
written or endorsed hereon, subject also to any existing right of the Crown to take and lay off roads under the provisions of any Act of the General
Assembly of New Zealand) in the land hereinafter described, as the same is delineated by the plan hereon bordered green, be the several
admeasurements, a little more or less, that is to say: All that parcel of land containing those parcels together 3 ACRES 3 ROODS 38.3 PERCHES
more or less being Lots 19, 20 Deposited Plan 11571 Lots 11, 88, 89 Deposited Plan 18047 Lots 76,
77 Deposited Plan 19405 Lots 62, 64, 65, Deposited Plan 20258 Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Deposited Plan 38091 and being part of Allotment 20 Parish of Titirangi.



W. J. ...
District Land Registrar,
Assistant

- Agreements as to fencing contained in:
- Transfer 123762 affecting Lots 19, 20 Plan 11571
 - Transfer 207691 affecting Lot 77 Plan 19405
 - Transfer 208351 affecting Lot 10 Plan 18047
 - Transfer 210024 affecting Lot 62 Plan 20258
 - Transfer 212377 affecting Lot 88 Plan 18047
 - Transfer 212382 affecting Lot 76 Plan 19405
 - Transfer 214317 affecting Lot 89 Plan 18047
 - Transfer 220358 affecting Lot 11 Plan 18047
 - Transfer 272075 affecting Lot 64 Plan 20258.

67730 Certifying the existence of a sum of 1000
for swage
Dominant Land Swinnell
Lot 3 DP 38091 (lots 4 and 5 DP 38091)
Lot 4 DP 38091 (lot 5 DP 38091)
intend 1.10.1958 at 11.2002

Transfer 655171 of Lot 66 Plan 20258
to Abri Haumaitia Clark - Produced
28-2-1961 at 1.45.02 9/3/61 1/10/62
1910/37
Transfer 654815 of Lot 89 Plan 18047 to
Victor Reginald Gordon and Eugene Catherine
Gordon - Produced 15.8.1962 at 2.25.02
2076/100
Transfer 691360 of Lot 10 Plan 18047
to Robert Phillip Jones - Produced
6-12-1962 at 10.46.02 7/1/63
2106/99

THIS REPRODUCTION (ON A REDUCED SCALE)
CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY OF THE
ORIGINAL REGISTER FOR THE PURPOSES OF
SECTION 215A LAND TRANSFER ACT 1952.
W. J. ...
District Land Registrar

Certificate of Title – Housing New Zealand (8 October 1957)

References
Prior C/T 1511/100
Transfer No.
N/C. Order No. 383811.1

Land and Deeds 69



REGISTER

No. 37D / 365

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT

This Certificate dated the 26th day of June one thousand nine hundred and seventy eight under the seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of North Auckland

WITNESSETH that HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN for the purposes of the Housing Act 1955

is seized of an estate in fee-simple (subject to such reservations, restrictions, encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified by memorial underwritten or endorsed hereon) in the land hereinafter described, delineated with bold black lines on the plan hereon, be the several admeasurements a little more or less, that is to say: All that parcel of land containing 1015 square metres more or less being Lot 1 Deposited Plan 81152 and being part of Allotment 20 Parish of Titirangi



[Signature]
Assistant Land Registrar

Plan 14881 Lodged 17-10-91

C.358346.2 Transfer of part Lot 1 Plan 14881 to Robyn Francine Arnerich of Auckland sales representative - 24.3.1992 at 11.08 o'clock

A.L.R.
C.358346.3) Cancelled as to part Lot 1 O.N.C.T) Plan 14881 and new C.T 88D/157 24.3.1992) issued

A.L.R.
C.358346.4) Cancelled in terms of Lot 2 O.N.C.T) Plan 14881 and C.T 88D/159 24.3.1992) issued

A.L.R.
**CANCELLED
DUPLICATE DESTROYED**

Scale: 1 inch =

No. 37D / 365

Certificate of Title – Housing New Zealand (26 June 1978).

References

Prior C/T 37D/365

Land and Deeds 69

Transfer No.

N/C. Order No. C.358346.4



REGISTER

No. 88 D / 159

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT

This Certificate dated the 24th day of March one thousand nine hundred and ninety-two under the seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of: NORTH AUCKLAND

WITNESSETH that HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN for the purposes of the Housing Act 1955

is seised of an estate in fee-simple (subject to such reservations, restrictions, encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified by memorial underwritten or endorsed hereon) in the land hereinafter described, delineated with bold black lines on the plan hereon, be the several admeasurements a little more or less, that is to say: All that parcel of land containing 987 square metres more or less being Lot 2 Deposited Plan 148881 and being part Allotment 20 Parish of Titirangi.

D.068084.1 Application pursuant to Section 28(1)a of the Housing Restructuring Act 1992 whereby Housing New Zealand Limited is registered proprietor of the within land - 15.11.1996 at 10.22 o/c

Assistant Land Registrar

A.L.R.

Subject to Part IVA of the Conservation Act 1987

A.L.R.

Subject to Section 11 of the Crown Minerals Act 1991

A.L.R.

Subject to a gas supply easement over part marked J on DP 205267 specified in Easement Certificate D696108.3 8.4.2002 at 9.00

for RGI

UN TG

No. 88 D / 159

Measurements are Metric

Certificate of Title – Housing New Zealand (24 March 1992).

Appendix 4 Photographs



The opening of the pensioner housing at Pelham Avenue in 16 August 1938.⁶³



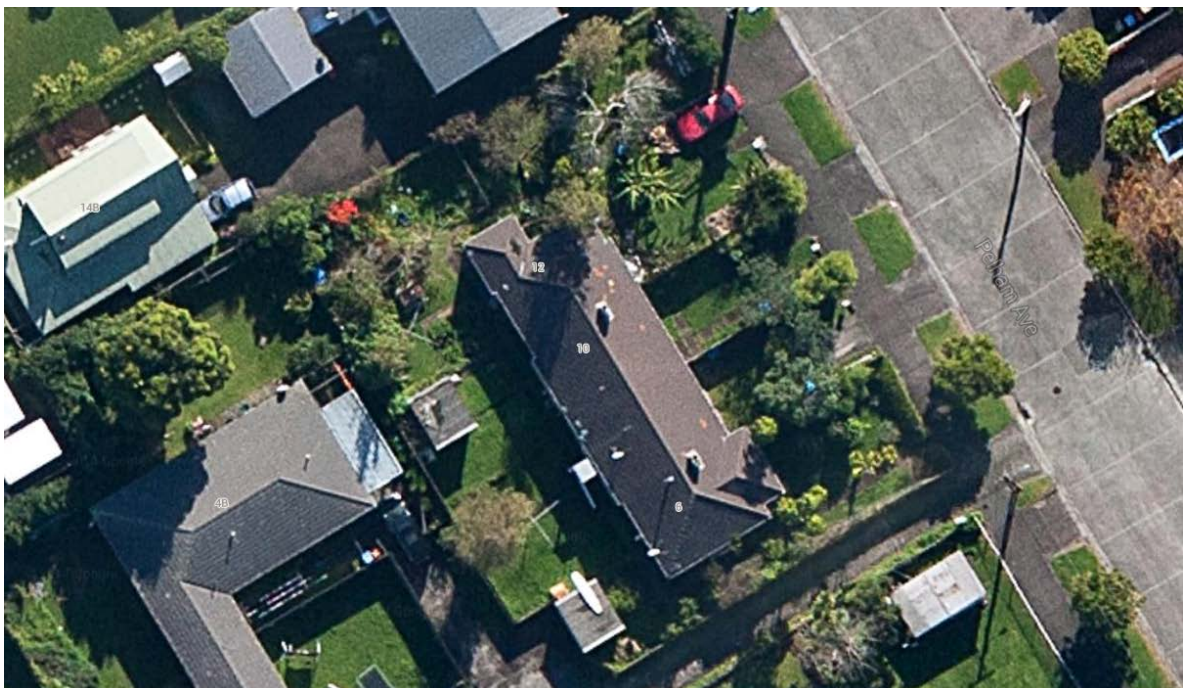
1940 Aerial (Auckland Council GIS Viewer)



1959 Aerial (Auckland Council GIS Viewer)



2010 aerial (Auckland Council GIS Viewer)



Recent aerial photo from Google Maps

Below are three photos from Google Street View (2008-2012):



February 2008



November 2009



March 2012

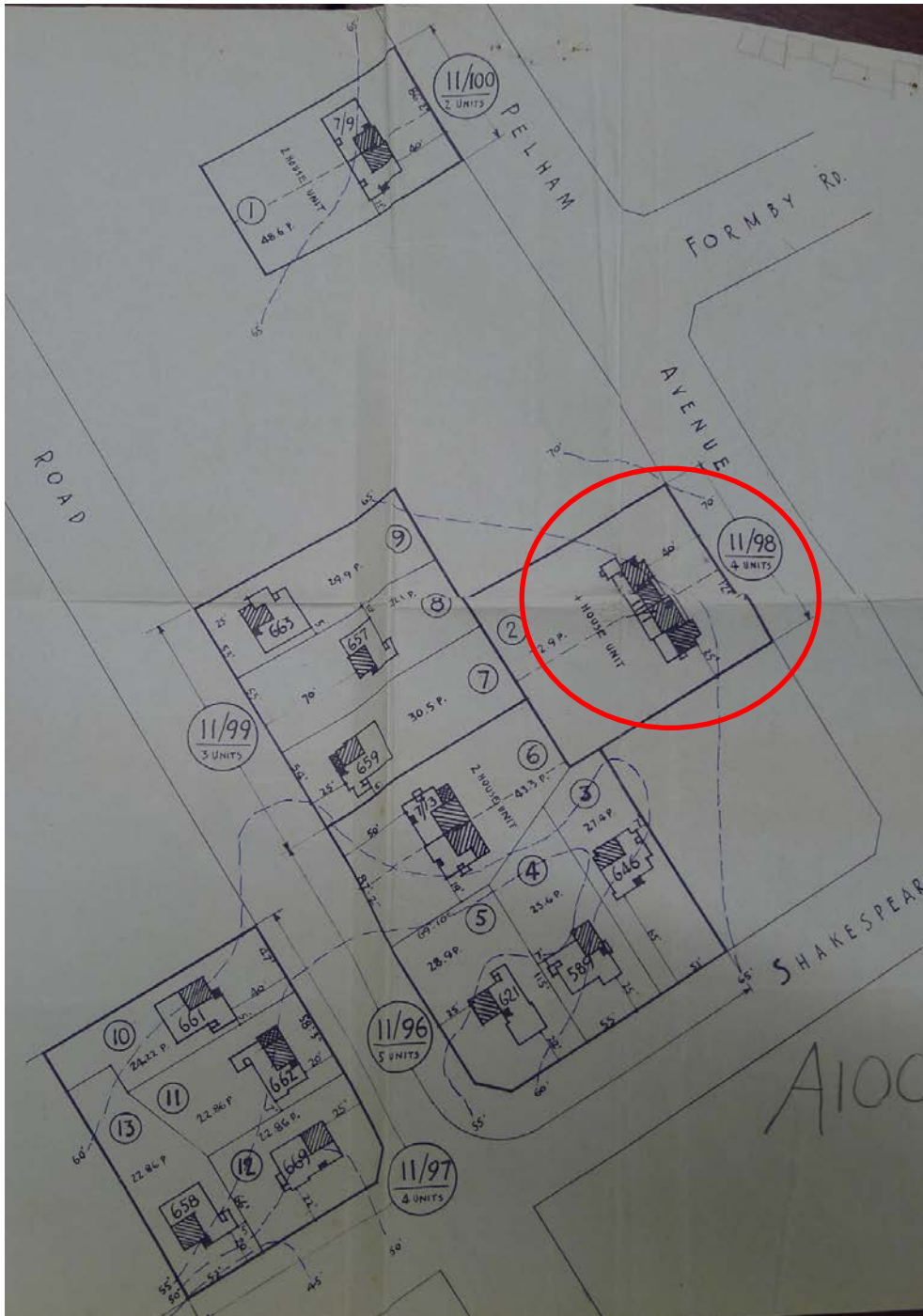
State Pensioner Housing Heritage Evaluation, June 2014

Views from Pelham Avenue (David Bade, Auckland Council, 13 May 2014).

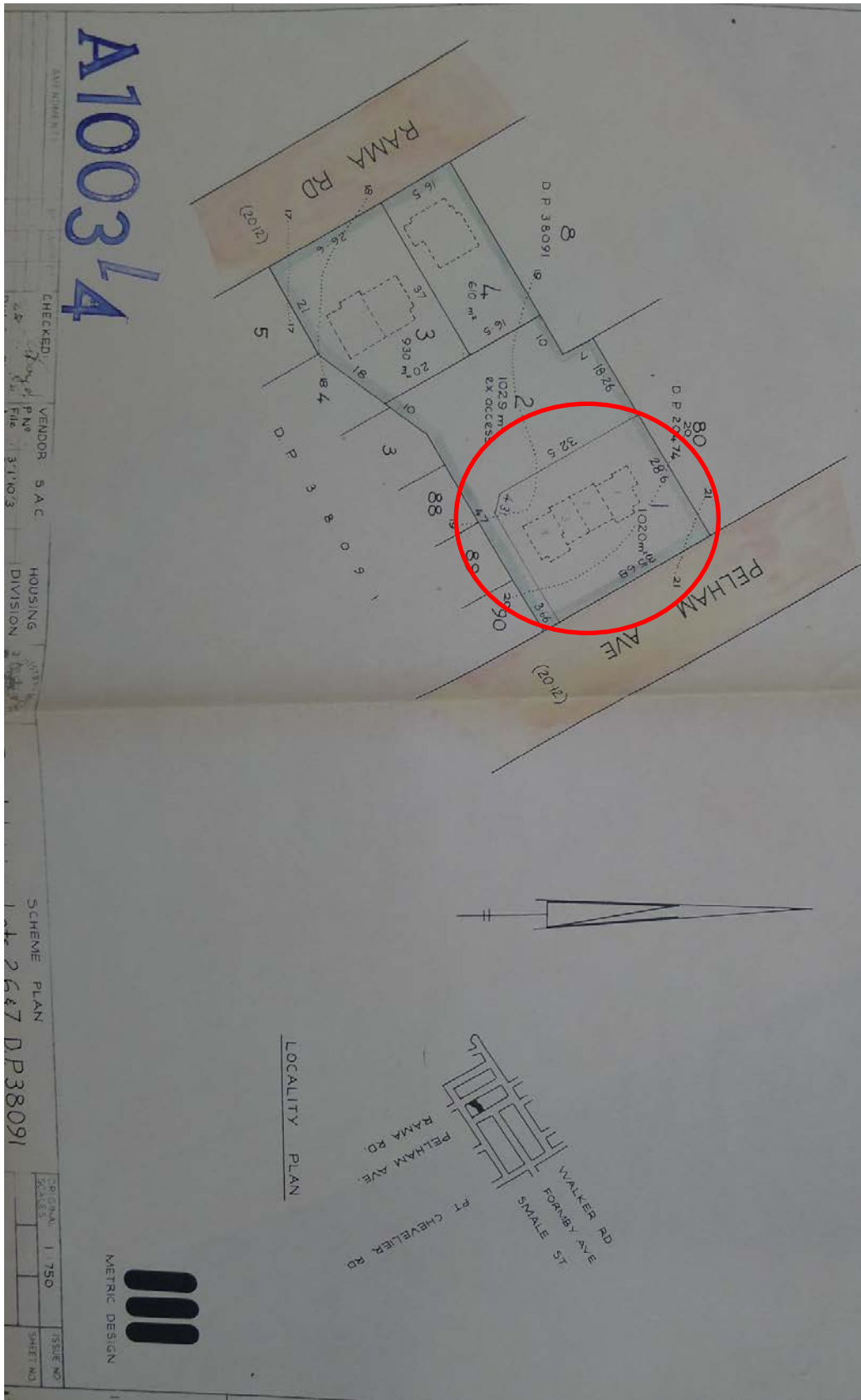




Close up of plan from 1938⁶⁶



State housing subdivisions close to Pelham Avenue.⁶⁷



Plan of Pelham Avenue and Rama Street from 1974.⁶⁹

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- ¹ Salmond Reed Architects 2012: 12.
- ² Salmond Reed Architects 2012: 12.
- ³ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ⁴ Mace 2014.
- ⁵ Mace 2014: 103.
- ⁶ Mace 2014.
- ⁷ Julia Gatley. 'Wilson, Francis Gordon', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 8-Apr-2014 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w36/wilson-francis-gordon>
- ⁸ Mace 2014: 104.
- ⁹ Mace 2014: 103.
- ¹⁰ All these photos are from google street view (May 2012)
- ¹¹ Mace 2014: 103.
- ¹² Salmond Reed Architects 2012: 6.
- ¹³ Mace 2014: 103.
- ¹⁴ Mace 2014: 105.
- ¹⁵ Selwyn Care website, <http://www.selwyncare.org.nz/45/>
- ¹⁶ Auckland Council archives scrapbook, March 1975 - September 1975 p.2.
- ¹⁷ Mace 2014; Salmond Reed Architects 2012: 9.
- ¹⁸ Mace 2014: 104.
- ¹⁹ Mace 2014: 9.
- ²⁰ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ²¹ Mace 2014: 10.
- ²² Mace 2014: 10.
- ²³ Point Chevalier Summary – Lisa Truttman
- ²⁴ *Auckland Star*, 26 April 1940, p. 6
- ²⁵ Schrader 2005: 90.
- ²⁶ Schrader 2005: 90.
- ²⁷ Schrader 2005: 90.
- ²⁸ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ²⁹ Fergusson 1994: 158.
- ³⁰ *Evening Post*, Old Age Pensioners, 6 October 1936, p. 13.
- ³¹ Fergusson 1994: 158.
- ³² Schrader 2005: 90.
- ³³ Fergusson 1994: 159.
- ³⁴ *Auckland Star*, 2 September 1942, p.4.
- ³⁵ Flats for Old Age Pensioners, 1937-1952, SAC 1 35/210 part 1, Archives New Zealand, 10 March 1947.
- ³⁶ Flats for Old Age Pensioners, 1937-1952, SAC 1 35/210 part 1, Archives New Zealand, 5 June 1941.
- ³⁷ Flats for Old Age Pensioners, 1937-1952, SAC 1 35/210 part 1, Archives New Zealand, 10 March 1947.
- ³⁸ Mace 2014: 10.194 For example by March 1947 pensioner flats had been built in Thames, Napier and Timaru. Flats for Old Age Pensioners, 1937-1952, SAC 1 35/210 part 1, Archives New Zealand, 7 March 1947, 25 March 1947 and 28 March 1947.
- ³⁹ *Auckland Star*, 'More State Houses', 21 December 1937, p. 8.
- ⁴⁰ *Evening Post*, 'State Housing', 12 February 1938, p. 13; *Auckland Star*, 'News of the Day', 15 February 1938, p. 6.
- ⁴¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 July 1938, p. 6.
- ⁴² Auckland Council Archives, ACC 219/38-115.
- ⁴³ *New Zealand Herald*, 29 March 1938, p. 10
- ⁴⁴ *Evening Post*, 27 December 1937, p.6 and *Auckland Star*, 15 August 1938, p.8.
- ⁴⁵ Fergusson 1994: 160.
- ⁴⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 16 August 1938, p. 11.
- ⁴⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 16 August 1938, p. 11.
- ⁴⁸ *Auckland Star*, 'Keen Gardeners', 6 January 1939, p. 11.
- ⁴⁹ *Auckland Star*, 'Keen Gardeners', 6 January 1939, p. 11.
- ⁵⁰ Julia Gatley. 'Wilson, Francis Gordon', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 8-Apr-2014 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w36/wilson-francis-gordon>
- ⁵¹ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ⁵² Schrader 2005: 90.
- ⁵³ Truttman, L. 2012. Historical research, in *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects; McKay & Stevens 2014: 38.
- ⁵⁴ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ⁵⁵ *Auckland Star*, 'Filled with joy,' 2 September 1942, p. 4.
- ⁵⁶ Flats for Old Age Pensioners, 1937-1952, SAC 1 35/210 part 1, Archives New Zealand, 17 October 1949.
- ⁵⁷ *Auckland Star*, 1 October 1949.

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- ⁵⁸ *97 Vermont Street Evaluation*, Salmond Reed Architects, 2012.
- ⁵⁹ Fergusson 1994: 158.
- ⁶⁰ Ben Schrader. 'Housing and government - Council housing', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 13-Jul-12, URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/housing-and-government/page-4>
- ⁶¹ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 219/38-115
- ⁶² Auckland Council Archives, ACC 219/38-115
- ⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, 16 August 1938, p. 11.
- ⁶⁴ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 005/494
- ⁶⁵ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 005/494
- ⁶⁶ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 005/494
- ⁶⁷ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 380/59
- ⁶⁸ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 380/59
- ⁶⁹ Auckland Council Archives, ACC 380/59