

South Street Heritage Precinct



View of east side (Mike Scott, 2019)

SS.1 Introduction

The South Street Heritage Precinct comprises a single parcel of land (Town Section 456) that has been developed since the early 1860s. The street was initially a private road along which small cottages and houses were built for rental or owner occupation. Historic aerial photographs taken in the mid-20th century show that the street retains a high level of integrity, with only the large parcel at the western corner of Nile Street West and South Street experiencing major redevelopment.

Since the 1980s South Street has been admired and appreciated for its historic character and urban form. Except for late 20th century neo-colonial buildings fronting Nile Street West and at 2 South Street, the dwellings in the precinct typically date from the 1860s and 1870s. The small-scale colonial dwellings in South Street are built up to the road boundary and generally occupy most of the land parcel. Community awareness of and appreciation for the South Street precinct is high and the residents of Section 456 have their own web site and organise street parties and events that showcase the history of South Street.

SS.2 History

South Street, the residential properties on either side of it and the commercial buildings at its northern end are all situated on Town Section 456. The street began as a private thoroughfare and dwellings have stood upon Section 456 since the early 1860s. In the early 1980s the potential redevelopment of part of South Street brought into focus heritage preservation efforts in Nelson. Subsequently, new developments at 12 Nile

Street West and 8 Nile Street West / 2 South Street, the latter erected by the Nelson Civic Trust in 1998, were designed in response to the architectural character of the historic streetscape.

Town Section 456 was initially awarded by crown grant to Constantine Augustus Dillon (1813-53) in October 1851. Dillon and his wife Fanny had settled in Nelson in December 1842 and after a period in Auckland, where Constantine served as Governor Grey's secretary, the Dillons returned to Nelson in late 1850. Constantine Dillon drowned in April 1853 but his estate retained Section 456 for another decade, selling it in June 1863 to William Rout (1830-1909), who immediately sold the lots on the east side of the street to John Graham. Graham sold the southern lots in his possession during the period 1863-65, while Rout did much the same with the west side, all of which was in other hands by 1883.

MR. H. J. L. AUGARDE has received instructions from Mr. JAMES WOOLLEY, the Mortgagee thereof, to Sell by Public Auction, at his Auction Rooms, on SATURDAY, the 18th day of November, 1871, at Noon—

Part of Section 456, having a Frontage to a Private Road known as South-street, of 145 feet, and extending in depth at right angles to the front thereof, 51 feet, with the Four Cottages thereon.

The Plan and Title Deeds of the above property can be seen at the Offices of Messrs. ADAMS AND KINGDON, Solicitors, Nelson. 2157

Nelson Evening Mail 4 November 1871, p. 3 (PapersPast)

The cottages built in South Street were originally a mix of rental and owner-occupied dwellings. Whereas the likes of Dillon, Graham and Rout were investors, early residents in the street included Harriet McArtney (13 South Street, c.1863) and William Robertson (12 South Street, from 1865). The Robertson family bought up almost all of the west side of South Street over a fifteen year period (1868-83). William died in 1897 but his wife Janet continued to live in South Street in to the early 20th century.

On the east side, Peter Buchanan (died 1908) was resident in South Street by 1873. He and his wife Isabella were both immigrants from Scotland and Isabella Buchanan died at their South Street home in 1910, two years after her husband. The Buchanans were tenants, judging from contemporary deeds records, whereas Ann Burke, widow of John, purchased 11 South Street in 1906 and died there in 1919. Earlier still ABW Goldsmid (died 1887) gave South Street as his address in September 1867 in an advertisement for his Nelson jewellery business.

Deed 37 (dated c.1909) provides a snap shot of ownership at the turn of the 20th century, at which time the Robertson family owned five properties on the west side of the street (8 Nile Street West/2 South Street, also Nos. 4, 6, 10 and 12) and Henrietta McCoig owned both Nos. 5 and 14. AE Wilkens then owned Nos. 7 and 9 South Street. Mary Reardon had acquired 8 South Street in 1895 and Mary Johnston became the owner of number 13 in 1890. Although female ownership of property might appear unusual in the 19th century, the deeds records for South Street show this was not uncommon and the women concerned might be wives, widows or spinsters.



*South Street, Nelson; 21 November 1980
(WA-75354-F, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington)*

SS.3 Visual Characteristics

SS.3.1 Height and Roof Form

The buildings are single storey, except for those fronting Nile Street and standing at 2 and 4 South Street. Both hipped and gabled roof forms are present in the precinct, adding variety to a streetscape that gains its coherence from the common height, size and scale of its historic buildings.

SS.3.2 Closeness to the Street

The precinct's historic buildings are built right up to the street boundary. This gives South Street its intimate character and is one of the precinct's defining features. It is important that any new houses and additions to existing houses maintain this direct relationship between the roadway and the precinct's buildings.

SS.3.3 Materials and Detailing

Horizontal timber weatherboards, brick external chimneys and corrugated iron roofing are the materials authentic to the precinct's cottages and houses. Decorative timber detailing is focused upon the gable end and veranda of the villa style dwellings within the precinct. Detailing on the vernacular cottages is typically limited to sun hoods over doors and windows, panelled doors and the use of rusticated weatherboards. Over-ornamentation of vernacular cottages can undermine their historic and architectural integrity and is therefore not encouraged.



The vernacular cottages in the precinct have simple symmetrical facades and are accessed directly off the footpath.

SS.3.4 Windows and Doors

Double-hung sash windows are typically authentic to the houses in the precinct, although casement windows are also in evidence, some as a sign of later modification. The main entrance door is typically on the principal elevation facing the street; it may be a solid panelled door or inset with glazing. 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.

SS.3.5 Verandas and porches

The villas in the precinct typically have verandas or entrance porches overlooking the street. These are an important feature of villa design, providing a transition space between the public realm and private home. Development should maintain the appearance and detailing of verandas and entrance porches, where these are authentic to the building. The absence of a veranda across the front of the cottages within the precinct enhances the sense of connectivity between residents and visitors to the street.



The colour scheme of this bay villa highlights its architectural features.

SS3.5 Fencing

The intimacy of the street depends upon the openness of the cottages to the street. Where fencing can be accommodated and/or is required, low timber picket fences are ideal as they define the boundary but maintain openness. Fencing materials should be sympathetic to the individual house concerned.

SS.3.7 Garaging

Where garaging and off-street parking can be accommodated it is located at the side or rear of the property. This allows the streetscape to maintain a high level of visual continuity and authenticity. Off-street car parking requirements in this precinct may be waived.

SS.4 Performance Guidelines

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

SS.4.1 Scheduled Heritage Buildings

The scheduled heritage buildings in South Street are the defining elements of the precinct. Proposals relating to scheduled 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.

SS.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.

SS.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 keeping 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 is be single storey with roofs in keeping with existing heights, form and pitch when viewed from the street;
- e) the street boundary line is maintained.

SS.4.4 Accessory buildings

Accessory buildings are appropriate where:

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

SS.4.5 Fences

New fences are appropriate where they are timber picket fences, a maximum of 900 mm

in height from footpath level.

