

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AT 350 RICHMOND ROAD, GREY LYNN



**REPORT TO  
THE NEW ZEALAND HISTORIC PLACES TRUST  
AND  
STEPHEN AND SUSAN HIRST**

**HPA AUTHORITY 2012/907**

**JADEN HARRIS**

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**CFG**  
**HERITAGE**

CFG Heritage Ltd.  
P.O. Box 10 015  
Dominion Road  
Auckland 1024  
ph. (09) 309 2426  
jaden.h@cfgheritage.com

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Prepared by:

  
.....  
Jaden Harris

Reviewed by:

  
.....  
Matthew Campbell

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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AT 350 RICHMOND ROAD, GREY LYNN

JADEN HARRIS

Stephen and Susan Hirst have recently undertaken a program of works across their property at 350 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn (Lot 2A DP 938A), including the installation of a new driveway and garage, a swimming pool and poolhouse, relocating a cottage, and general landscaping and drainage works across the property. The main residence on the property is a late 19th century villa of solid concrete construction and is registered as a Category II building by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in the national register of historic places under the Historic Places Act 1993 (Registration No. 592) and is scheduled as Category B in the dis-



1. The location of Lot 2A DP 938A.

trict plan. The house and grounds have been recorded as site R11/2770 in the New Zealand Archaeological Association site file ([www.archsite.org](http://www.archsite.org)). An archaeological authority (2012/907) to undertake the proposed works was issued by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust under section 14 of the Historic Places Act 1993. The condition of the authority required that works which had the potential to disturb any in-ground archaeological deposits were monitored and recorded by an archaeologist. This related mainly to the area of the new ornamental pond and poolhouse and works to shift the cottage. All archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Jaden Harris of CFG Heritage on 2 April, 10 July and 26 July 2012.

### Historic background

The current lot at 350 Richmond Road was originally created by a subdivision of land owned by the Warnocks in 1884. This subdivision created sections 1A (334 Richmond Road) and 2A (350 Richmond Road), being a subdivision of part Allotment 44, Suburban Section 8, Parish of Waitemata (Figure 2). This subdivision was on land purchased by the Warnock Brothers on 6 May 1874 (Table 1). The deed for the sale (28D 335) records that an area of 1 acre, 2 roods and 35 perches, being part of Allotment 43 and 44, Section 8, Suburbs of Auckland, was purchased by James Warnock, William Warnock, Richard Warnock and Robert Taylor Warnock, soap and candle manufacturers, from James Thomas Boylan for the sum of £150. The deed further states that the original Crown Grant for this piece of land was granted to Christie in 1844 who then on sold it in 1846, before it was purchased by Boylan in 1864. It would seem unlikely that there was any development on the land prior to the purchase by the Warnocks in 1874.

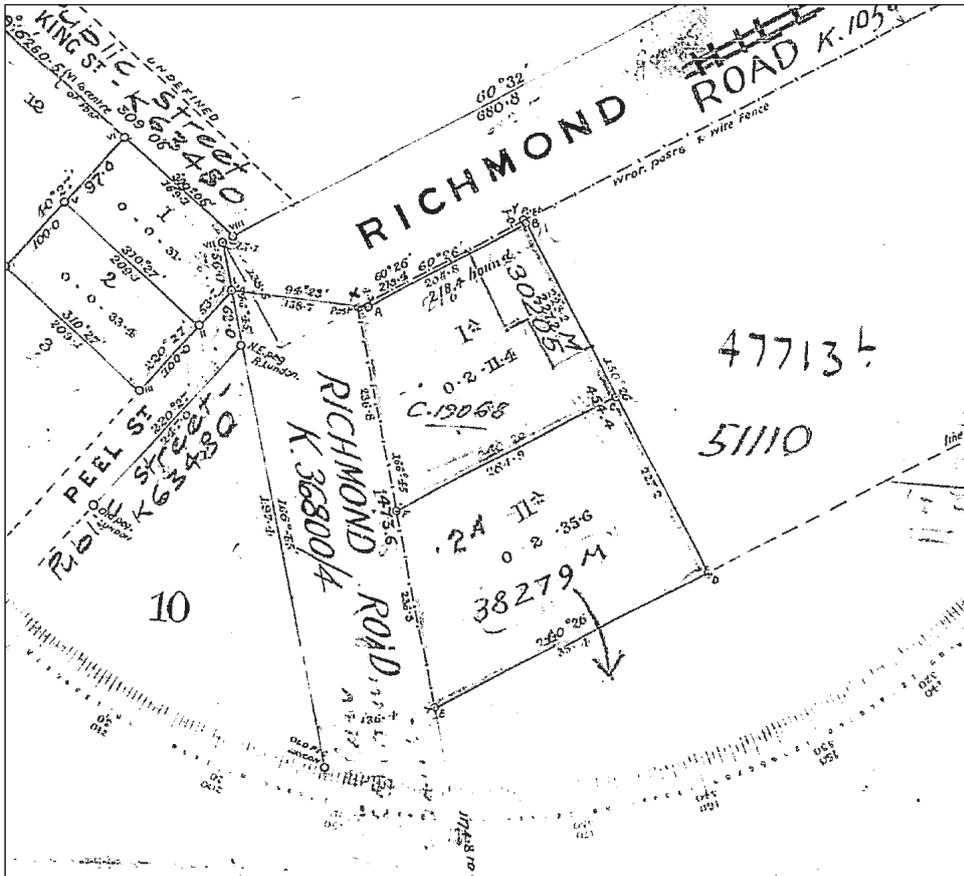
Type	Parties	Date	Reference
Conveyance	Boylan to Warnock Bros.	6 May 1874	28D 335
Conveyance	Warnock & or. to R. Warnock & or.	10 Nov 1877	24M 364
Conveyance	Warnock & or. to Warnock Bros. Ltd	27 Jan 1920	R314 535

Table 1. Summary of land ownership (Deeds Index 15A, folio 508).

The original Certificate of Title (North Auckland, 40/94) was issued to Mary Warnock (wife of Richard) on 31 August 1885, after the section had been formally subdivided. After Mary's death in 1899 the title passed to her husband Richard Warnock and on his death in 1924 to their sons John Robinson Warnock and Andrew George Warnock. The title references after this date indicate that the property remained in the Warnock family until 1995.

### *Aerial photographs*

In the 1940 aerial photograph the layout of the house and gardens at 350 and 334 Richmond Road can clearly be seen, along with Warnock Brothers Soap and Candle Factory beside Cox's Creek (Figure 3). A building at the back of 350 Richmond Road in the paddock may be the original stables but is no longer extant as this area has since been developed.



2. Detail of plan DP 938A, surveyed December 1884, showing the subdivision that created the section on which the house at 350 Richmond Road now stands.



3. 1940 aerial photograph showing the houses at 350 and 334 Richmond Road and Warnock Brothers Factory (<http://maps.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz>).

### **Warnock Brother's Works: A visit to their factory**

When, some 20 years ago, Messrs Warnock Brothers secured an acre and a-half at Richmond, and removed their soap works to the banks of Cox's Creek, it is doubtful if even the most sanguine member of the firm would have dreamed that a day would come when the area of ground would be increased to 20 acres, and the soap works developed into a large tannery, oil works, wool-scouring establishment, and manure manufactory, giving employment to over 60 hands, and sending its products not only round the colonies, but also to the South Pacific Islands. Yet such has been the result, notwithstanding two serious drawbacks, one being a cyclone which simply swept away the factory, and the other a fire which destroyed a large portion of the building last October. It was in order to see the improvements effected in the new premises that one of our staff recently visited Richmond. He was shown over the whole factory by Mr Taylor Warnock, the partner who practically looks after that end of the business, the other brother, Mr Richard Warnock, being generally attending to the interests of the firm at the offices in Durham Street and elsewhere. This enterprising firm first started soap boiling at Newmarket in 1862, and subsequently removed to Chapel Street; but, being in want of more room, the factory was afterwards taken to Spring Bank, Ponsonby, and ultimately to its present position...

*Auckland Star* 15 October 1894

### *The Warnock family*

When the Warnock Brothers started their soap and candle manufactory business in Newmarket in 1862, they had just recently immigrated to New Zealand from Ireland. The business was a success and the two principal partners involved in the day to day running of the operation were Robert Taylor Warnock and Richard Warnock. James Warnock and William Whittaker Warnock were also involved in the business. Information from an article in the *Auckland Star* (part of which is reproduced in the box) shows that the business had greatly expanded by the end of the 19th century with an extensive network of buildings on a land holding of some 20 acres employing 60 workers.

The house at 350 Richmond Road was built for and lived in by Richard Warnock and the almost identical house at 334 Richmond Road presumably for his brother Robert Taylor Warnock. Richard Warnock married Mary Finlay in 1872 and online birth records indicate that they had at least six children between 1873 and 1890. Mary Warnock died in 1899 aged 48 and was survived by her husband Richard who died in 1924 at the age of 82.

Whether the two houses were built at the same time or separately or exactly when they may have been constructed is not clear. What is known is that the land on which they are situated was purchased by the Warnocks in 1874 and then subdivided in 1884 to create two residential sections. Evidence from electoral rolls for the electorate of Newton (the name by which the area was known until around 1900 when it was changed to Grey Lynn) for the year 1874-1875 lists Richard Warnock as resident in Springbank, with a freehold property, being Lot 15, Springbank. This information is the same for the 1875-1876 roll and does not change until the 1876-1877 roll where Richard Warnock is listed as resident at Cook Street, and his occupation as soap manufacturer, Cox's Creek. In the same roll James, Robert Taylor and William Whittaker Warnock are also listed as soap manufacturers at Cox's Creek. Richard Warnock's place of residence is not listed as Newton (Grey Lynn) until the 1879-1880 roll where it is recorded as owning a freehold property and having a factory on Richmond Road (along with his brothers).

The most likely date for the construction of the house at 350 Richmond Road then would appear to be somewhere after the initial purchase of the land in May 1874 and before 1879. Presumably the house at 334 Richmond Road, which is of the same design and construction, was built at the same time or shortly after.

The house is a double-storey single-bay villa constructed of concrete. This is an early date for the use of this material and the house is still largely in its original configuration on its original site, which remains unusually large (2931 m<sup>2</sup>). It is from this that the significance of the house and grounds derives.

## Results

No archaeological features of significance relating to the 19th century occupation of the property by the Warnock family were uncovered. However, some information regarding the construction of the cottage building and its possible original use was recorded.

### *The pool and poolhouse area*

The only feature of note in this area was a well adjacent to the boundary which had been uncovered during preliminary works prior to archaeological monitoring commencing. The location of the well suggests that it would originally have serviced the villa at 350 Richmond Road and the near identical building next door, both of which were constructed and owned by the Warnock family. The well is currently covered over and there are no plans to modify or disturb this feature.

The remaining topsoil stripping for the pond area was monitored on 2 April 2012. No rubbish deposits or other features were uncovered, with the just the occasional fragment of ceramic and glass mixed into the topsoil. Not enough historic material was present to be analysed but two fragments of Willow pattern vessels printed in light blue dated to the very late 19th or early 20th century. A remnant asphalt path leading down towards the old garage noted during the assessment was found to be very insubstantial and overlaid an earlier ceramic drain, suggesting that it was of 20th century construction.

### *The cottage*

The cottage is a small two-roomed weather-board structure with a corrugated iron roof, kauri tongue-and-groove floorboards and kauri tongue-and-groove match-lining. The building has clearly been modified over the years, including plumbing and electrical installations, new roofing iron and some internal refitting to convert it into a studio sleepout. The construction date is not known but is presumably after the erection of the villa and possibly late 19th century.

Prior to works starting the cottage was situated with the back wall hard up against the boundary of the property, with no space in between the boundary fence and back wall to service or maintain the building. The cottage was also seated very close to the ground and the proposal was to shift the building forward approximately 1.5 m and place it on new and higher wooden pile foundations. For this to be achieved the cottage had to be completely removed from its original foundations in order for the new foundations to be constructed. The site was inspected at the start of works to shift the cottage on 10 July and after the cottage had been shifted on 26 July 2012.

The main original foundation for the cottage was a boxed concrete footing approximately 230 mm wide. The concrete was not reinforced and was quite crumbly due to the presence of large scoria and basalt rock inclusions in the mix. On the outside the footing had been plastered over to present a more uniform finish. The height of the footing varied with the land naturally sloping down towards the back of the section.

The sub-floor area was able to be partly inspected through two holes which had been punched through the north wall of the footing for the installation of plumbing and electrical utilities. At this end there was a clear gap between the ground and the bottom of the floor joists and a scattering of concrete and scoria rubble was visible. No artefacts were visible and it appeared unlikely that any such underfloor deposit would be present as the original concrete footing would have sealed off the underfloor space. The original sub-floor framing of the cottage appeared to be

floor joists running across the footprint and sitting directly on the outside concrete footing with a central bearer running length-wise down the centre. The pile visible at the north end for the central bearer was a modern H4 treated wooden pile.

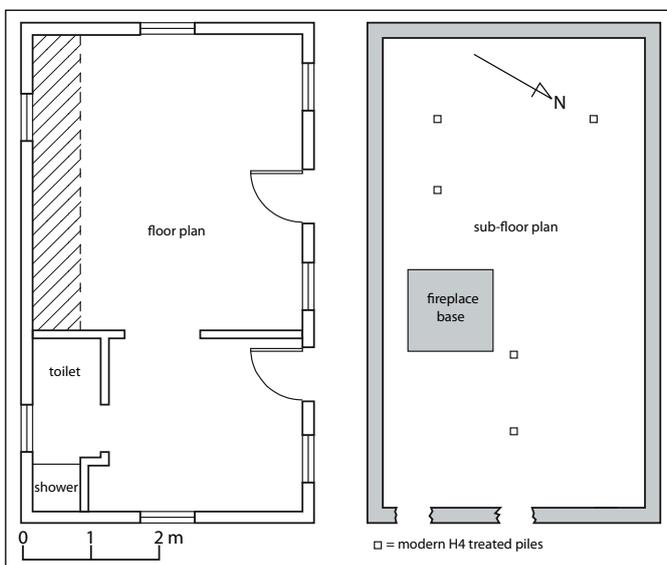
At this stage the interior of the building was also inspected to check for evidence of any structural or functional modifications. In the main room it was evident that the floorboards in a strip 700 mm wide out from the south wall were later replacements. These replacement boards were much narrower than the 135 mm wide kauri tongue-and-groove boards used in the rest of the structure and were not kauri. Part of the original lining of the south wall below the window had also been replaced with MDF sheeting. Plumbing and electrical fittings suggested that these modifications had been to install kitchen facilities in this area. The exposed sub-floor where the later floorboards had been removed also showed that many of the original joists and bearers had been replaced or repaired with modern treated timber. The original wall lining is 210 mm wide tongue-and-groove kauri match-lining and on the ceiling narrower tongue-and-groove boards have been used, with the roof rafters and beams left exposed. In the north-east corner of the main room the ceiling lining showed a square patch 50 mm out from the internal wall and 1050 mm wide marking the location of a former chimney.

In the internal wall the open doorway through to the smaller room at the northern end of the building does not appear to be original and the presence of an external door into each room suggests that they did not originally have internal access to the other and may have been used for quite separate functions. This smaller room has had a modern toilet and shower installed along the south-east wall.

When the cottage had been shifted off of its original foundations the site was inspected again and the underfloor area briefly investigated. In the area roughly corresponding with the patch in the ceiling marking a former chimney was a square concrete fireplace foundation 1200 x 1250 mm (see Figure 5). The fireplace base had been demolished to below the level of the floor joists and was constructed of rough concrete containing large basalt rock inclusions, the same as the outside footing. The foundation did not extend to the edge of the outside footing and was inset 370 mm from the inside of the footing. There was no evidence of there having been an external brick chimney in the underfloor area or in the back wall of the cottage and so the fireplace must have been a freestanding range or stove with a metal flue chimney. When looking at Figure 5 it is clear that the fireplace foundation does not quite align with the current internal layout of the cottage (especially the section of replaced flooring), suggesting that this has also been modified over the years.

4 (top). Square patch in the ceiling lining in the north-east corner of the main room marking the location of a former chimney.

5 (bottom). Left, floor plan and, right, sub-floor plan of the cottage (adapted from plan supplied by Pearson and Associates Architects Ltd).



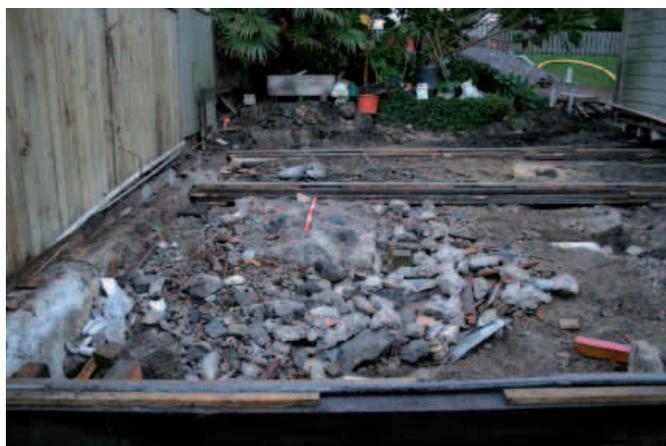
To further investigate the underfloor deposit an area was excavated from around the north and west side of the fireplace base and back to the inside edge of the west exterior footing. Over much of this area there was a layer of loose soil and rubble 50 – 70 mm deep containing artefactual and faunal material. Artefacts consisted of bottle glass, ceramics, a metal matchbox and footwear. Faunal material consisted of sawn and butchered animal bones and shell, including oyster, scallop, mussel, cockle and toheroa. A more unusual item was an exotic queen conch shell which was almost completely buried with just the distinctive knob-like spines on the shoulder of the shell protruding above the surface. Much of this material had been churned into a single homogenous deposit by rat burrowing.

The range of artefactual material present and the manufacturing dates of individual items suggest that most, if not all, of the assemblage is 20th century in date. A complete clear glass Alva Mineral Water Company bottle found right under the centre of the building has 'NZ' on the base and while the company started in 1912, clear glass bottles were not produced in New Zealand until 1927 and so this item dates 1927–1931 (Robson 1995). The bottle, which originally would have had a crown-seal cap, also has the remains of a cork in it indicating that it had been reused and may not have been finally discarded until much later. An 'ABC' brand beer bottle base is also securely dated with the year of manufacture '1927' embossed on the glass. Fragments of an Alfred Meakin 'Bleu De Roi' pattern saucer back-marked "BLEU DE R.../ALFRED MEA.../ENGLAND" dates from no earlier than c. 1914 and possibly as late as the 1940s. One item which may possibly have been manufactured in the late 19th century at least is a fragment of a ceramic stoneware water filter with the partial marking 'SILICATED', produced by the Silicated Carbon Filter Company, Battersea, London (<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk>). An aqua glass softdrink bottle base from an Auckland firm embossed 'AUCKL...' on the body and 'BGW' on the base, standing for the Botany Glass Works, New South Wales, must have been produced 1890–1910 (<http://www.aussiebottledigger.com.au/bottledating.html>).

How the rubbish came to be deposited under the cottage is uncertain, although numerous alterations, including the removal to sub-floor level of a fireplace base suggest that parts of the underfloor space were exposed at various times by the floor being lifted or removed. It would not otherwise have been possible for large items such as shoes or whole softdrink bottles to have been deposited under the building. While the artefacts more likely date the removal of the fireplace rather than the construction of the cottage, evidence in the form of a probable former freestanding stove or range rather than a built-in open fireplace with external chimney, suggest a date sometime in the early 20th rather than the late 19th century.

6 (top). View of the underfloor area immediately prior to investigation showing the concrete and basalt rubble from the fireplace base demolition. The 1 m scale is on the base of the fireplace foundation.

7 (bottom). The fireplace base after excavation showing the remnant wooden boxing along the north edge and various artefacts from the surrounding underfloor fill sitting on top (scale 1 m).



### *Miscellaneous finds*

A small number of artefacts found during other works across the property also dated largely to the 20th century. One such item was a complete 'Spooner's Navy Dressing' brand boot polish bottle with an 'M' on the base standing for the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works and dating 1900–1915.

### **References**

Harris, J. 2012. 350 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn, Auckland: archaeological assessment. Unpublished CFG Heritage report to Stephen and Susan Hirst and Pearson & Associates Architects Ltd.