

Whanganui District Heritage Inventory

Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance

Item: **Glen Logie**

Register Item No: **478** Class: **B**
 Address: **6 Marshall Avenue, Whanganui**
 Legal Description: **Lot 1 Deposited Plan 75953**

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga List Number and Category (if applicable): **N/A**



Glen Logie house, showing gate and stairway to the house. Photo taken 1.2.2024

Inventory Item List
Number:

Significance:

Archaeological

Architectural

Cultural/Social

Historic

Scientific

Technological

Setting/Context

Interior

Statement of Significance

Designed by T.H. Battle, Glen Logie was built for the Keesing family in 1911. It retains associations with Judah Keesing, a prominent community leader who was part of the Jewish community present in Whanganui in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With only relatively minor and reversible additions and alterations to the house, it has survived as a local landmark with thematic linkages to other homesteads which once fronted Anzac Parade, and with botanically significant landscapes in the wider area such as Kowhai Park, the James MacGregor Arboretum, and the Glen Logie Rose Garden which was earlier used as a bowling green and once formed an integral part of the Glen Logie estate. It holds considerable cultural and social historical linkages connecting Whanganui East with the wider town, and with national and international architectural movements.

Decorative elements such as leaded fanlights are of very high quality and contribute to a design which blends a number of architectural styles (including Queen Anne, Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, and Australia's Federation Style). The result is a large homestead which combines many features not normally seen together in Whanganui.

Physical Description

Glen Logie is a large two-storeyed weatherboard house, set close to the footpath on Marshall Avenue. It is flanked on this frontage on each side by iron gates and solid plastered mountings for the gates.

A verandah extends along the southern elevation of the house looking over the Glen Logie Rose Garden and towards Kowhai Park, broken up halfway along by a bay window which becomes a turret on the second storey. An upstairs verandah on the same elevation has been filled in and converted to a sunroom.

Fanlight windows featuring leadlight designs are of particular interest along the Marshall Avenue frontage of the house. A garage has been built at street level at a later date, with a roofed-over stairway connection to the front verandah.

Historical Significance

None Low Moderate High Outstanding

Whether the place is associated with important or representative themes or aspects of local, regional, or national history; whether the place is associated with historically important events, persons, groups, ideas, movements, social patterns, activities, or developments or advancements; and/or whether the place retains a use, function or integrity of association that contributes to the historical importance of the place.

Glen Logie House was constructed for Judah Henry Keesing (1855-1944) and his family in 1911. It is associated with the development of suburban Whanganui East, and with the Keesing family who were influential in the life of the town.

Judah Keesing was born in Auckland, the son of Henry and Rosetta Keesing (nee Kasner). At the time of their voyage from England over 1842-43, the Keesings were joining a very small group of Jewish traders and merchants in Auckland, and they became instrumental representatives of the Jewish community upon their arrival. Henry Keesing was first president of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation.¹

Judah Keesing trained as a plumber in Auckland, and moved to Whanganui in 1876.² His biographical entry in the 1897 *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* states he was in business as a plumber for ten years after his arrival in Whanganui. The first mention of his work as a plumber is from 1878, when it was announced in the *Whanganui Chronicle* that he was going into partnership with David Miller as plumbers, gasfitters, and tin plate workers.³

He began the auctioneering business for which he became more well-known for in 1886, which also imported furniture and hardware from England. By 1897, he was also undertaking valuation work.⁴

¹ (Agnew & Agnew, 2017)

² (The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District], 1897, p. 1407)

³ (Page 1 advertisements Column 6, 1878)

⁴ (The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District], 1897)

Keesing married Clara Salek, the sister of Whanganui pawnbroker, jeweller, and watch-maker Isaac Salek. Clara and Isaac were born in Timaru, and Judah and Clara were wed there in 1888 at a widely-reported wedding ceremony officiated by Rabbi Isaac Zachariah. This was noted to be the first Jewish wedding in Timaru.⁵

Initially the Keesings lived on St Hill Street, but in 1911 they commissioned Thomas Henry Battle to design a substantial homestead on Marshall Street in the then-new suburb of Whanganui East.

This property had a large garden on the lower part of its section fronting Anzac Parade, and this area was used for a bowling green. This garden/bowling green would later become a public rose garden managed by Whanganui District Council, retaining the name Glen Logie. In 1911, the year the house was commissioned and built, local promotional publication *Wanganui-Pretty, Prosperous and Progressive* stated: “there is no better-known resident or more successful business man in Wanganui than Mr J.H. Keesing”.⁶

He was involved with a number of community groups, acting as president of the local Chamber of Commerce, the Justices Association, and the Chess Club, as well as a life member of the Wanganui Bowling Club. Keesing died in 1944 aged 88, within a year of his wife Clara’s passing.⁷

It was not until around the 1930s that the house became known as Glen Logie. Newspaper articles from this time refer to the Alexander family and Glen Logie.

Social Significance

None Low Moderate High Outstanding

Whether the place has a strong or special association with, or is held in high regard by, a particular community or cultural group for its symbolic, spiritual, commemorative, traditional or other cultural value; whether the place makes a significant contribution to the uniqueness or identity of the locality, district, region or nation; whether the place is an icon or marker that a community or culture (past or present) identifies with; and/or whether the place is significant to tangata whenua.

The property has spiritual and cultural value for its associations with the Keesing family, and the historical Jewish community in Whanganui. As with many other larger centres in the nineteenth century, Whanganui was home to a small Jewish community. The tight-knit community in Whanganui was not large enough to warrant a synagogue, however, and homes were used as meeting places.

Architecture, Technological and Construction Significance

None Low Moderate High Outstanding

Whether the place has architectural value; whether the place belongs to important architectural styles or is a good example of vernacular architecture; whether the place has distinctive attributes of an aesthetic or functional nature (including massing, proportion, materials, detail, fenestration,

⁵ (Jewish Wedding, 1888, p. 3)

⁶ (Council, 2012 (originally published 1911), p. 117)

⁷ (Prominent Citizen: Death of Mr J.H. Keesing, 1944, p. 4)

ornamentation, artwork, functional layout, landmark status or symbolic value); whether the place demonstrates innovation or accomplishment, through design, use of materials or technology,, method of construction or of craft skill; and whether the place is associated with an architect, engineer, designer or builder who has made a special contribution to their profession or work.

The house is an example of a large Edwardian homestead, designed by Thomas Henry Battle. He designed a number of buildings in Whanganui, in a diverse array of styles. This house is an example of how overseas influences were adapted for Whanganui. In this case, the house features elements of Australian federation style and Queen Anne architecture – the massing and turret are representative of the latter and the materials are representative of the former. Recent replacement of the roof has somewhat detracted from the Federation Style design, as its Marseilles tiles were replaced with corrugated long-run roofing. Leadlight glass is used to wide effect in a number of fanlights, doors, and windows in the house. These leadlight features depict floral motifs in restrained Art Nouveau style. The use of many side-opening casement windows, rather than double-hung sash windows, was not commonly seen prior to the First World War and was predominantly used in then-new California-bungalow style properties.

The house is therefore an innovative amalgam of a number of styles. The materials used are of high quality, designed and largely manufactured in Whanganui. The house was featured in architectural journal Progress twice in 1913, as an example of architectural designs by T.H. Battle.⁸

A garage has been built at street level at a later date, with a roofed-over stairway connection to the front verandah. This has somewhat detracted from the architectural integrity of the home's street presence although it is an entirely reversible addition.

Setting and Contextual Significance

None Low Moderate High Outstanding

Whether the place contributes to or is associated with a wider historical or cultural context whether the place contributes to the streetscape, townscape or landscape; whether the place has collective value as a part or member of a group of inter-related, but not necessarily contiguous, heritage features or places or a wider heritage landscape; and whether the place is part of a group of heritage features or places (contiguous or discontinuous), that, taken together, have a coherence because of such factors as age, history, appearance, style, scale, fabric or use.

Glen Logie is one of the large, earlier homes along Anzac Parade which read as part of the first few decades of development of Whanganui East as a suburb. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this area of Whanganui East was developed as part of the Sedgebrook Estate. For more history on the early administration and development of Whanganui East, see Felicity Campbell's *Townhal*⁹

A comparable property is Haslemere a few blocks along on Willis Street. While not contiguous they are of similar scale and have accompanying gardens which are also valued in their own right. Along

⁸ (Buildings Designed by Mr. T.H. Battle, Architect, Wanganui, 1913, p. 826); (Residence for Mr G.H. [sic] Keesing, Wanganui East, 1913, p. 295)

⁹ (Campbell, 2016)

with the James MacGregor Memorial Arboretum, this stretch of Anzac Parade has distinctive features associated with the botanical heritage of Whanganui. Glen Logie can be prominently seen from the surrounding area, as well as from the neighbouring Glen Logie Rose Gardens and Kowhai Park. Its turret and verandahs are placed on the river-facing side of the house to take advantage of the expansive views. Accordingly Glen Logie is of substantial contextual value to the wider area and its prominent setting above the Rose Gardens gives it strong collective landmark value for the wider community.

Archaeological and Scientific Significance

None Low Moderate High Outstanding

Whether the place has the potential to contribute new or important information about the history of the place or wider area through archaeological or scientific investigation; whether the place retains a physical form that can be appreciated by the community to aid in the understanding of past uses or history; whether the place has the potential to provide evidence to address archaeological or scientific research questions.

N/A

Representativeness, rarity and integrity

None Low Moderate **High** Outstanding

Whether the place is a representative example of a particular class or type of place; whether the place or a component of it is rare, unique, the first such place or is the only such place in the locality, district, region or nation; whether the place retains a significant amount of original or early fabric, or fabric from an important period in the place's history.

Glen Logie is an uncommon example of overseas Queen Anne style and Federation style architecture adapted for New Zealand conditions and tastes, combined with decorative elements of Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts Movement, expressed across a large suburban homestead form. A significant amount of fabric from its 1911 construction has been retained, although not all of it (such as replacement of the Marseille-tiled roof with longrun corrugated sheets).

Some parts of the verandah facing onto Marshall Avenue have been closed in, to allow for covered access to a later garage addition, and to convert the upper verandah into a sunroom. These alterations are reversible and impacting architectural integrity to only a minor degree. They do not impact the built integrity of the house. Leadlight glass details are of particularly high quality and applied across the design of the house (largely though not exclusive in fanlight windows). These have been retained and are an important contributor to the quality of the house that makes it so unusual.

Date: 1 February 2024

Research by: Scott Flutey

References

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- Buildings Designed by Mr. T.H. Battle, Architect, Wanganui. (1913, December 1). *Progress*, p. 826.
- Campbell, F. (2016). *Townhall: The Independent Years of Eastbrook, Gonville and Castlecliff*. Whanganui.
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- Page 1 advertisements Column 6. (1878, May 18). *Wanganui Chronicle*.
- Prominent Citizen: Death of Mr J.H. Keesing. (1944, January 4). p. 4.
- Residence for Mr G.H. [sic] Keesing, Wanganui East. (1913, February 1). *Progress*, p. 295.
- The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Wellington Provincial District]*. (1897). Wellington: The Cyclopedia Company.

Additional Photographs and/or images:



Residence for Mr. G. H. Keesing, Wanganui East T. H. Battle, Architect

Photograph of the Keesing house taken shortly after completion, published in *Progress* magazine, 1 February 1913, p,295.



North-facing elevation of the house including the rear entrance with rendered fencing allowing drive-on access. Leaded fanlights are placed over each side-opening casement window – this is an uncommon level of ornament helping to elevate the homestead above more typical suburban villas and early bungalows built in the years leading up to the First World War. Photo taken 31.1.2024.



Judah Keesing, who Glen Logie was built for, was involved in numerous community organisations. Among them was the local Debating Union, of which he served as President. This portrait was taken in 1909 when the St Paul's debating team won the local championship shield, which Keesing presented to them. Photo taken from The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, 10 March 1909, p.21. Accessed via Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections NZG-19090310-0021-03.