

Auckland Council District Plan (North Shore Section)

Proposed Plan Change 38

Proposed New Item

Appendix 11A: Schedule of Buildings, Objects and Places of Heritage Significance



Name: Firth house

Address: 9 Kitchener Road, Takapuna

ID:	544	Category:	A	Use:	Residential	DP Map:	21
Material 1:		Condition:		Cultural Heritage:			
Material 2:		Integrity:		Streetscape:			
<u>Construction Dates</u>							
From:	c.1941?	To:		Alteration Dates:	unknown		
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 26028			Zoning:	Residential 4A		

Architect/Designer/Contractor:

Unknown. Imi Porsolt, architect - additions

Architectural Style:

Vernacular / New Zealand 'bach modern'

Reference Source:

Survey Plan 24085; DP 26028. CTs 566/276; 671/25; 742/36

'Takapuna-Milford Walk' *North Shore City heritage trail* available at <http://www.northshorecity.govt.nz/leisureandculture/parkswalksandplay/walkways/documents/takapuna-milford-walk.pdf>

Clifton Firth biographical entry, Auckland City Libraries

Sunday Star Times 22 November 2009

J Gillam 'Firth, Reginald Clifton 1904-1980' *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* available at www.dnzb.govt.nz

R Brownson 'Fixed in Time – Auckland Photographers' *The 1950s Show* Auckland City Art Gallery, 1992

NZHPT Listing:

Not registered by NZHPT.

Significant Elements:

Rectangular footprint with hipped roof and inset porch on eastern/seafront elevation. Extensions to north-east and south-west corners. Three-pane casement windows & four-pane French doors. Weatherboard and corrugated iron construction.

Extent of Listing:

Entire exterior of house

History:

A newspaper interview with Paul Firth, son of Paul and Ann Firth, states that the house was built in c.1921 as a weekend holiday home or bach. The property was purchased by Otto Nilsson, an Auckland accountant, in 1923 but when it was transferred to the Public Trustee in 1935 it was described as unoccupied. Otto and Gwendoline Nilsson's address in the 1928 electoral roll is given as 21 Hinemoa Drive [Aramoana Avenue], Devonport. The land information therefore suggests that the house was built by Charles Sidford, who acquired the property from the Public trustee in 1941. The property was purchased by Reginald Clifton Firth [1904-80] in 1945 and remains in Firth family ownership today.

Clifton Firth was a noted mid-20th century New Zealand photographer. His father and brother were responsible for founding the Firth Concrete Company, for which Firth worked at one time as a designer. Firth married Patricia Fitzherbert in 1933 and ran a studio in Queen Street, Auckland between 1938 and 1974. He was divorced in 1940 and married Melva Martin in the same year. They had three children. Firth counted the poets RAK Mason and ARD Fairburn amongst his friends and was therefore part of the North Shore's bohemian artistic and literary community. Firth also painted and wrote poetry.

Auckland City Libraries hold a very large collection of Firth's photographs, gifted by the photographer when he retired. The house was used as a set during the filming of *Under the Mountain* in 2009.

Statement of Significance

Architecture:

The house has architectural significance as a survivor of the modest houses, many baches or weekenders, that used to line the beach at Thorne Bay. As Clifton Firth is particularly known as a glamour portrait photographer the rustic simplicity of his seaside home illustrates another aspect of his life and personal aesthetic.

History:

The house has significance as the home of Clifton Firth, a notable New Zealand photographer. It may be compared with Frank Sargeson's Esmonde Road 'bach' in its simplicity and association with the North Shore's artistic community.

Context:

The Firth house makes a notable contribution to the built environs of the Black Rock shoreline, standing in stark contrast to the much larger, architecturally designed homes in the vicinity. The house's shoreline setting and large pohutukawa in the garden are also notable features of the Milford-Takapuna walkway.