

Heritage Assessment of the Maurice Shadbolt House, Titirangi

Brief

Barnes & Associates Ltd has been contracted to provide a heritage assessment of the former house of Maurice Shadbolt at 35 Arapito St, Titirangi, to evaluate its potential for statutory protection by inclusion as a scheduled item in the Waitakere City District Plan.



Property History

A subdivision shown in Deposited Plan 15824 of December 1921 created 38 lots in Titirangi, close to the Manukau Harbour¹. Lot 4, between View Rd and the Waikomiti River, was transferred to James Sinclair Herring of Auckland, driver, on 8 November 1933. Later Herring took out a mortgage, probably for the construction of his house. (Unfortunately the date that the mortgage was registered on the title is illegible.) Herring transferred his house to Bruce Nicholson of Auckland, radiator repairer, on 7 April 1948. Six years later, on 11 May 1954, Nicholson transferred the property to Edward William Herring of Auckland, carrier, and Dawn Herring, his wife. They transferred the property to Maurice Francis Richard Shadbolt, journalist, on 8 June 1964.

On 7 July 1964 the house was settled under the Joint Family Homes Act 1950, an arrangement that was to change on 27 March 1973 when the house was transferred to Shadbolt alone. An unrelated notice under the Matrimonial Property Act was recorded on 30 October 1984, and another, naming the same person, on 4 October 1989².

The house that was constructed on the property was a modest 'Californian bungalow', similar to hundreds constructed in the Auckland region in the Depression years of the 1930s.

Council records show that a garage was built on the site in 1960. Building permits for additions or alterations to the house during Shadbolt's ownership were issued in 1966 (addition), 1972 (office), 1972 (addition) and 1973 (addition). These included a glazed porch, work studio, and a new elevated wing extending over the garage. The resulting house is highly eclectic but interesting in that it has an unusual form and is an amalgam of styles. The elevated wing maintains views from the point of arrival through to the bush beyond.³

Maurice Shadbolt

Maurice Francis Richard Shadbolt was born in Auckland in 1932, and educated at Te Kuiti High School, Avondale College and Auckland University College. He initially worked as a journalist at several New Zealand newspapers, and also worked as a scriptwriter and director of documentary film at the National Film Unit.

In 1957 he travelled to Europe, publishing his first book, a collection of short stories titled *The New Zealanders*, in Britain in 1959. Another collection followed in 1963, and his first novel, *Among the Cinders*, in 1965. A succession of novels followed including *The Lovelock Version* in 1980. In 1982 he wrote the play *Once at Chunuk Bair*. A trilogy of novels commenced with his best-selling *Season of the Jew* in 1986.

His first autobiography *One of Ben's: A New Zealand Medley* appeared in 1993, and its sequel *From the Edge of the Sky* in 1999.

He was appointed CBE for services to literature in 1989, and a 1990 Commemoration Medal for services to New Zealand. In 1997 the University of Auckland awarded him an honorary doctorate in literature.

His numerous other awards included the New Zealand Book Award in 1981, the James Wattie Award (in 1978, 1981 and 1987), the Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship (1998) and Memorial Award (1963 and 1965), the Burns Fellowship (1963) and the Scholarship in Letters (1959, 1970 and 1982).

Shadbolt was inducted into the Waitakere City Walkway of Fame in 2000.

The last years of his life he lived in Taumaranui where suitable arrangements were available to care for him while his health was declining. He died in 2004.⁴

Assessment Against Plan Criteria

1. historic - the item is associated with a past event, notable people or activity, a social period, a particular technological milestone, scientific history or principles, or scientific data about fabric (such as the composition of mortar);

The house at 35 Arapito Street was the home and work studio of Maurice Shadbolt through most of his career as an author and playwright. The house is a tangible link with Maurice Shadbolt and his works as discussed above.

2. architectural - the item is a good example of a particular architectural style, construction technology or the work of a notable architect;

While not architecturally notable, the house reflects the growth of Shadbolt's family. Some of his writing took place in the basement studio constructed two years after he purchased the property.

The house is interesting as an eclectic composition that allows clear view of the bush from the point of arrival, by the elevation of one wing. The design approach also allows easy access to the basement studio.

3. landmark - the item is a physical landmark within the City which is valued by the community;

The house is partially screened from the road by trees, and can not be considered to be a physical landmark.

4. the item has significance to the community - consideration given to value placed on an object by the local community, irrespective of other values;

The former Shadbolt house has significance to the community as the former house of well-known writer Maurice Shadbolt, as discussed above.

5. visual - the item is important visually and contributes to the amenity, the form, scale, fabric and setting of the place or an area;

As discussed, this house is not clearly seen from the road. What is seen, however, is generally consistent with the form and scale of housing in the area.

6. patterns of settlement - the item is an important representative example of the surrounding settlement pattern (such as an example of a bungalow within an area where housing built in the 1930s dominates), or is a relatively rare example in an area which is dominated by another form of settlement.

The original house dates from the 1930s, but much of its character has been masked by additions and alterations. While the house as a whole does not represent any one period of development, its subdivided site remains unchanged from that set out in the subdivision of 1921, and as a single house on this site it continues to demonstrate the original subdivision pattern.

7. sense of place - contributes to the identity of the local area or city e.g. orchards, special buildings, community halls etc.

In the second half of the twentieth century Titirangi was a favoured location for those in creative occupations such as art and architecture. Their presence assisted in defining the sense of place in Titirangi, even though their houses were in private use. The former Shadbolt house contributes in this way.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the former Shadbolt house is significant as the house and workplace of well-known New Zealand author Maurice Shadbolt, during much of his career as a novelist and playwright. Its significance calls for appropriate statutory protection.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the former Shadbolt house is scheduled in Category II.

Barnes & Associates Ltd

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Barnes', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Tony Barnes

30 August 2010

¹ LINZ DP 15826

² LINZ C/T 649/9

³ ABA-1960-14587; ABA-1966-14101; ABA-1972-17380; ABA-1972-19984; ABA-1973-22388

⁴ NZ Herald 11 October 2004