

# 14 SOUTH STREET - SUGARTREE COTTAGE - 1864

## Architectural Style: Colonial Cottage

*Heritage Precinct*



### ABOUT THE AREA

South Street was originally known as Town Acre 456 and many of the houses date back to the 1860s. These humble cottages, likely rented to workers and widows from the local port and tannery, tell the story of the ordinary folk of the colony.

As a group, South Street is unique in Nelson with a typical colonial character characterised by the closeness of the buildings to the street and each other, the narrowness of the street and the early colonial style of townhouses of the period.

Over the years, some of the cottages became run down and in 1981 a few were threatened with demolition to make way for a motel. However South Street residents campaigned to keep the street intact and in 1983 it was recognised and protected as a Heritage Precinct by Nelson City Council.

To help enhance the character of the street cobblestone footpaths were laid, overhead wires were removed and placed underground, and lantern style street lights were added. South Street is now known as New Zealand's oldest fully preserved street.

### HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

#### **The Honourable Constantine Augustus Dillon**

The first owner of South Street (then known as Town Acre 456) was the Honourable Constantine Augustus Dillon who bought the land from the New Zealand Company in 1851. The younger son of the 13th Viscount Dillon of Ditchley, Oxfordshire, Constantine Dillon served in the Royal Navy, working as aide-de-camp to key military figures. He was supported in all of his endeavors by his beautiful, distinguished and intelligent wife, Frances Dorothy (known as Fanny), whom he married in 1842. The Dillons sailed for New Zealand on the *George Fyffe*, arriving in Nelson on December 12, 1842. Although they were the first owners of the land, the Dillons never lived here themselves. On 16 April, 1853, Dillon was returning from inspecting his Delta Dairy in the Waihopai and drowned as the party crossed the Wairau River. He was buried in the graveyard at St Michael's Church in Waimea West. On his death, the property was passed to his widow. Heartbroken, Fanny and the children returned to Oxfordshire and the land was later sold to builder William Rout.



## 14 SOUTH STREET - SUGARTREE COTTAGE

### George Haydon

In 1864, a wooden 4 roomed house (now No. 14 South Street) was built and occupied by a George Haydon, but whether it was erected by him or Rout is uncertain. The value was 70 pounds with a capital value of 130 pounds, which by 1866 had increased to 160 pounds. Haydon was born in Hampshire, England, circa 1815 – 1817. In 1857 he married a Susan Scutter at his Hardy Street residence. They had three children together before moving to South Street in 1863-64 and stayed until at least 1878. George Haydon and William Rout were both builders and it is likely that Haydon rented the house from Rout. The cottage at No 14 has had many owners since including a builder, baker, grocer, Nelson College governors, master mariner, art dealer, cabinet maker, potter and the Dominion Hotel. Former owners Justin and Lorraine Gardener did much to encourage the concept of the street as a conservation area.



Constantine Augustus Dillon  
– the first owner of  
Town Acre 456.

### STYLE & CONSTRUCTION

Often admired for their unadorned simplicity, the little wooden cottage of one or two rooms with a central door and a window either side remained the basic unit of ordinary house design throughout the 19th century. When the cottages were built, the bathrooms and toilets would have been out-buildings and kitchens would have been at the back- sometimes adjoining a scullery – often a converted verandah. The kitchen is now at the front to catch morning sun and the old kitchen block was demolished and a new extension of two rooms added at the south side of the back of the house with a verandah along the west and north walls.

The South Street cottages are simple buildings clad with timber weatherboards and either corrugated iron or timber shingle roofing. The joinery is timber with simple clean detailing. Owners have added window boxes which are an attractive addition.

### CURRENT OWNERS

Ali and Kevin Newton have owned Sugartree Cottage for 18 months. They say they are entranced by their little neighbourhood in historic South Street and are thoroughly enjoying restoring and preserving this A-listed heritage cottage and gardens. "It is an ongoing labour of love for us both. It is an honour to be able to share our 'piece of paradise' with all, for this worthy cause," says Ali.

### KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS HOUSE?

If you have some knowledge or memories about this house, we'd love to hear them! Please share on the sheets provided and leave your contact details.

#### SOURCES USED IN THIS STORY

• Carl Walrond, 'Nelson places - Nelson city', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/photograph/28989/south-street-cottages> (accessed 2 March 2018) • Lash, M. D. (1992). Nelson Notables 1840 – 1940 A Dictionary of Regional Biography. Nelson: Stiles Printing Ltd. • White, J. (1988). Town Acre 456 Nelson, N.Z. South Street 1851 – 1988. General Printing Services Ltd. • White, J. & Edwards, P. (1995). Windows on the Past. Nelson: Nelson Bays Print Agency. • Salmond, J. (1966). Old New Zealand Houses 1800 – 1940. Auckland: Reed Methuen Publishers Ltd. • History of Town Acre 456. Retrieved from <http://www.townacre456nelson.co.nz/history-of-town-acre-456.html> • Design Guide South Street. Retrieved from: <http://nelson.govt.nz/assets/Building-Planning/Downloads/design-guide-south-st.pdf> • Stephens, J. (2007). Constantine and Fanny Dillon retrieved from <http://www.theprow.org.nz/people/constantine-and-fanny-dillon> • South Street History Boards. PHOTO: Constance Dillon, The Nelson Provincial Museum, Tyree Collection, T-69659-3.

#### Words by Sarah Ryder, Life Story Writer, Forget-Me-Not Life Stories