



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Report for a Historic Place **Chalmers' Cottage (Former), WĀNAKA (List No. 9045, Category 2)**



Chalmers' Cottage (Former) (Jonathan Howard, Heritage New Zealand, 28 April 2017)

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DRAFT: Last amended 13 September 2017
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, regardless of whether they are entered on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero or not. Archaeological sites include 'places associated with pre-1900 human activity, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand'. This List entry report should not be read as a statement on whether or not the archaeological provisions of the Act apply to the property (s) concerned. Please contact your local Heritage New Zealand office for archaeological advice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to support the inclusion of Chalmers' Cottage (Former) in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero as a Category 2 historic place.

Summary

Chalmers' Cottage (Former), believed to have been built in the late 1870s for Wānaka businessman, farmer and butcher Archibald Chalmers, is a rare surviving example of a colonial cottage in a townscape dominated by large opulent residences. It has a picturesque quality, a high degree of authenticity with respect to construction methods and form, and the potential to reveal further evidence about construction methods and materials through buildings archaeology.

Archibald Chalmers lived in the Cardrona/Wānaka area in the 1870s. Around 1879, with business partner John Kerin, he established a butchery and slaughteryard. An 1880 survey of the town of Pembroke on the shores of Lake Wānaka shows a structure on section 15, the adjoining section to the current property (likely to be an error) which is labelled 'Chalmer's House', with Chalmers slaughteryard and other buildings nearby. A newspaper article from December 1879 noted that Kerin and Chalmers had erected a slaughteryard on Crown land prior to a license being granted.

Town sections in Pembroke were offered for sale in November 1881 – including sections 1 to 16 Block XXX. Section 16 was 'burdened' with a valuation of £60 – indicating a building on site. This is the section on which the cottage stands. The cottage, then, looks likely to be associated with Chalmer's occupation. In September 1880, Kerin and Chalmers offered for sale their 'EXTENSIVE BUTCHERING BUSINESS' including 'Butchers' Shop and Residence, Slaughter Yards, & c., all substantially built.' Chalmers was intending to visit the 'Old Country'.

Tragically, Chalmers committed suicide 8 April 1886. On his deathbed he wrote a will leaving his property to his partner John Ironside. John Ironside carried on the Chalmer's butchering business and the cottage remained in the Ironside or Matheson (Ironside's daughter married a Matheson) families until 1946.

Pembroke was renamed Wānaka in 1940. Although tourism had begun early (the first hotel opened in 1867), for many years Wānaka was a quiet summer holiday place. However, in the closing years of the twentieth century the town grew. The influx of people and the associated building boom have changed the town's landscape, with large residences replacing the early houses and cottages. Chalmers' Cottage (Former) is now surrounded by substantial residences and may be the only residence of its type in the town that represents the lives of the town's first European settlers.

There is little information available about the early history of the cottage. Early photographs show the cottage as built in the vernacular style of the 1870s-1880s. It is a single storey colonial cottage with symmetrical façade with a central front door flanked by multi-pane double hung sash windows and a lean-to at the rear.

The current owners purchased the cottage in 1994 and returned it to its original form. In 2017, Chalmers' Cottage remains a holiday home.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

1.1. Name of Place

Name

Chalmers' Cottage (Former)

Other Names

Ironside Cottage; Matheson Cottage

1.2. Location Information

Address

41 Warren Street and Helwick Street

WĀNAKA

Otago

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

Additional Location Information

N/A

Local Authority

Queenstown Lakes District Council

1.3. Legal Description

Sec 16 Blk XXX Town of Wanaka (CT OT1D/19), Otago Land District

1.4. Extent of List Entry

Extent includes the land described as Sec 16 Blk XXX Town of Wanaka (CT OT1D/19), Otago Land District and the building known Chalmers' Cottage (Former) thereon. The List entry does not include the carport (Refer to map in Appendix 1 of the List entry report for further information).

1.5. Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of a building fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

1.6. Existing Heritage Recognition

N/A

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. Historical Information

Early history

Wānaka was a hub for Māori travelling through Central Otago and a staging place for journeys to the West Coast. Seasonal migrations for food and mahika kai were a cornerstone of Kāi Tahu culture. The Mata-au/Clutha headwaters and catchment were a focus of such migrations, with access to resources determined by whakapapa. A pre-European settlement was located at the south end of Lake Wānaka, recorded on

Taiaroa's 1879 map as Takekarara, although the exact location is not known.² The name Wānaka itself is a South Island variant on 'wānanga' which 'refers to the ancient schools of learning.'³

Archibald Chalmers buys the land

Archibald Chalmers was a farmer and butcher in the Cardrona/Wānaka area in the 1870s. Chalmers applied for an agricultural lease at Cardrona in January 1875, one that bounded his business partner John Kerin's.⁴ Kerin and Chalmers were also partners in The Resolute Gold Sluicing Company that held a ground sluicing claim east of Boundary Creek, Cardrona.⁵ Kerin and Chalmers extended their business to Pembroke on the shores of Lake Wānaka where they established a butchery and slaughteryard.

An 1880 survey of the town of Pembroke shows a structure on section 15, the adjoining section to the current property, which is labelled 'Chalmer's House', with Chalmers' slaughteryard and other buildings nearby.⁶ The lack of alignment with the surveyed sections indicates the building was there prior to the survey. A newspaper article from December 1879 noted that Kerin and Chalmers had erected a slaughteryard on Crown land prior to a license being granted. There was a bitter dispute in the local papers about its location being too close to town.⁷

Town sections in Pembroke were offered for sale in November 1881 – including sections 1 to 16 Block XXX. Section 16 was 'burdened' with a valuation of £60 – indicating a building on site.⁸ The title to land on which this cottage sits was issued to 'Pembroke butcher Archibald Chalmers' in April 1886.⁹ This was a formalisation of his earlier Crown Grant of September 1883.¹⁰

² KTKO Ltd, 'Cultural Values Report for: Three Parks Project Wanaka: Site Inspection – 18th August 2006', pp.5-6.

³ KTKO Ltd, p. 7.

⁴ *Lake County Press*, 22 Jan 1875, p. 2. And *Lake County Press*, 2 May 1878, p. 3.

⁵ *Lake County Press*, 12 Feb 1875, p. 3.

⁶ SO 14787 (1880), Land Information New Zealand.

⁷ *Otago Witness*, 6 Dec 1879, p. 18.

⁸ The upset price for land in Pembroke in 1878 (and 1879) was £7 10s a quarter-acre, *Otago Daily Times*, 2 Aug 1878, p. 3.; *Otago Daily Times*, 10 Apr 1879, p. 3.

⁹ Certificate of Title OT79/285, Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office.

¹⁰ Certificate of Title OT79/285.

The cottage, then, looks likely to be associated with Chalmers' occupation and early photographs show the cottage as built in vernacular style of the 1870s-1880s – a single gable cottage with exterior stone chimneys and a lean-to at the rear. The central door was flanked by two-double hung sash windows.

In September 1880, Kerin and Chalmers offer for sale their 'EXTENSIVE BUTCHERING BUSINESS' including 'Butchers' Shop and Residence, Slaughter Yards, & c., all substantially built.' Chalmers was intending to visit the 'Old Country', hence the sale advertisement.¹¹ The business does not seem to have sold. Kerin and Chalmers dissolved their partnership in June 1881 – Kerin carried on the pair's pastoral run on Wilkin River, while Chalmers ran the butchery business.¹² Chalmers also ran butchery businesses at Criffel, a small goldmining settlement.¹³

Chalmers committed suicide on 8 April 1886 (after a two week drinking binge). The coroner's verdict was that he died through poisoning 'by strychnine administered by himself, he being then in a sound state of mind.'¹⁴ His heavy drinking had led to the local constable obtaining a 'prohibition order' against him, with Chalmers threatening to 'jump into the lake rather than appear before the magistrate.'¹⁵ As a suicide, Chalmers' interment took place at 11pm with 'almost all the men about the place' attending 'with lanterns to follow the remains.'¹⁶ The coroner's '*felo de se*' verdict was unusual.¹⁷ An obituary in *Lake County Press* reported that Chalmers' was a 'very old resident' of the district, resident some 22 years, where he had followed the business of 'slaughterman and stock dealer.'¹⁸ On his deathbed he wrote a will leaving his property to his partner John Ironside.¹⁹ His will does not have a schedule of property and provides no information about his estate.²⁰

¹¹ *Cromwell Argus*, 7 Sep 1880, p. 4.

¹² *Cromwell Argus*, 21 Jun 1881, p. 4.

¹³ *Evening Star*, 30 Apr 1886, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Otago Witness*, 14 May 1886, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Otago Daily Times*, 7 May 1886, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Otago Daily Times*, 7 May 1886, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 30 Apr 1886, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Lake County Press*, 29 Apr 1886, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 20 Apr 1886, p. 2.

²⁰ New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Probate Records, 1843-1998, " database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T6-Y9G8-2?cc=1865481&wc=7H25-N9H%3A1291146802%2C1583247703> : 15 October 2015), Dunedin

Later history and occupants

John Ironside carried on the Chalmer's butchering business.²¹ The cottage remained in the Ironside or Matheson (Ironside's daughter married a Matheson) families until 1946.

Pembroke was renamed Wānaka in 1940. Although tourism had begun early (the first hotel opened in 1867), for many years Wānaka was a quiet summer holiday place (except at New Year's Eve celebrations). The opening of the nearby ski fields in the 1970s made the town into an all-season tourist resort. The population doubled between 1996 and 2006.²² The influx of people and the associated building boom has changed the town's landscape, with large residences replacing the early houses and cottages. Chalmers' Cottage is now surrounded by substantial residences and it may be the only remaining residence of its type in the town that represents the lives of the town's first European settlers.

Over subsequent years the cottage had several owners, with the current owners buying the property in 1994.²³ The current owners removed the tacked-on enclosed veranda on the front elevation, and rebuilt the rear lean-to, returning the cottage to its original form. In 2017, Chalmers' Cottage remains a holiday house.

Associated List Entries

N/A

2.2. Physical Information

Current Description

Setting

While early photographs show Chalmers' Cottage in an isolated position on the flats back from the beach of Lake Wānaka, the area is now built up and largely residential. Nearby houses reflect the intensification of development in this area over a long period – with Summerhill stone houses from the 1960s, stone-clad 1980s residences as

²¹ *Lake Country Press*, 11 Sep 1902, p. 5.

²² Malcolm McKinnon, 'Otago places - Wānaka district', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/otago-places/page-20> (accessed 29 May 2017)

²³ Certificate of Title OT79/285

well as modest weatherboard houses. This area of Wānaka, located close to the modern town centre, but tucked against the hill that rises at the rear of the town, is notable for its mature gardens. Further west, the townscape is newer and less settled in its planting.

The cottage is set on a corner section, a drystone wall demarcating the section boundary. A sympathetically designed carport/garage is located on the corner. Plantings screen the cottage from the adjacent modern residence on Warren Street.

The Cottage

Chalmers' Cottage is a single storey colonial cottage of a form typical from the 1860s through until the 1880s - symmetrical façade with a central front door flanked by multi-pane double hung sash windows and a lean-to at the rear. Conservation architect Jeremy Salmond describes the typical early cottage as being two small rooms under a gable roof, with a lean-to at the rear.²⁴

The cottage is clad in weatherboard with a corrugated iron roof. There are two stacked stone chimneys on the south elevation. Much of the cladding is original fabric, as are some of the windows. The interior doors are original. Where window joinery was replaced, it was matched to the original. The interior is made up of the living room and bedroom at the front of the cottage, and the kitchen, a second bedroom, and bathroom to the rear.

²⁴ Jeremy Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940*, Reed Methuen, Auckland, 1986, pp. 58-59.

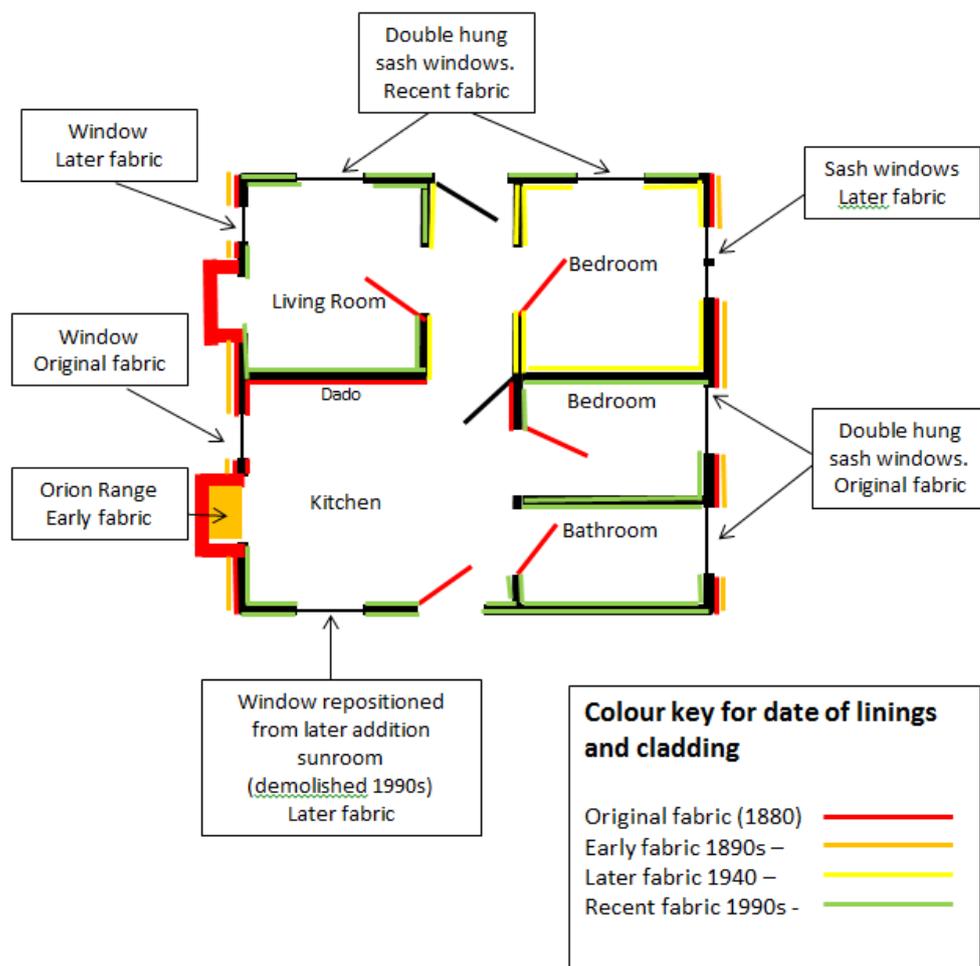


Figure 1: Sketch plan of building fabric (Jonathan Howard, Heritage New Zealand, 1 May 2017)

Construction Professionals

Not known

Construction Materials

Timber, corrugated iron, schist

Key Physical Dates

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Pre-1880 | Original construction |
| 1997 | Renovations begun |

Uses

Accommodation – House

2.3. Chattels

There are no chattels included in this List entry.

2.4. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

There is little specific information that refers to the cottage. This report relies on land records and contemporary newspapers. These have been sufficient for the purposes of the List entry.

Further Reading

New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Probate Records, 1843-1998," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T6-Y9G8-2?cc=1865481&wc=7H25-N9H%3A1291146802%2C1583247703>: 15 October 2015), Dunedin

Jeremy Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940*, Reed Methuen, Auckland, 1986

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT²⁵

3.1. Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, historical significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Aesthetic Significance or Value

Chalmers' Cottage (Former) has a picturesque quality set within mature hawthorn hedges and drystone walls on the street corner. The cottage is significant in the

²⁵ For the relevant sections of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 see Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information.

Wānaka townscape, and may be one of the only early buildings remaining. It provides a stark visual contrast to the opulent residences characteristic of the modern town.

Archaeological Significance or Value

Chalmers' Cottage as a building is an archaeological site - the core of the building being built in the 1870s. Through buildings archaeology, the cottage has the potential to provide evidence about the construction methods and materials.

Architectural Significance or Value

Chalmers' Cottage displays a high degree of historic authenticity in its construction materials and form. As a rare survivor of an 1870s cottage in Wānaka it is valuable for the example it contributes to both understanding of early settler's residences and the construction methods of the period.

Historical Significance or Value

Chalmers' Cottage provides a largely original example of an 1870s cottage, reflecting the establishment of Wānaka. The materials, plan form and natural site development all combine to provide authentic and historic insights into its construction and the everyday living experiences of pioneers in Wānaka. The history of the cottage relates to the experience of Wānaka's earliest settlers and businessmen, with ties to the goldfields and pastoralism.

3.2. Section 66 (3) Assessment

This place was assessed against, and found to qualify under the following criteria: a and i. It is considered that this place qualifies as a Category 2 historic place.

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

Chalmers' Cottage represents small-town family life in nineteenth and twentieth century New Zealand, and its intactness and authenticity mean that it can represent this aspect of New Zealand history particularly well. Locally, the Ironside/Matheson families were long term residents of Wānaka from the 1880s and the cottage is part of the cultural heritage fabric of Wānaka and a reminder of the town's humble past.

(i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement

Chalmers' Cottage dates from the late 1870s prior to the town survey of Wānaka in 1880. As such it is a significant early survivor of the earliest period of Wānaka's development as a town.

APPENDICES

3.3. Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

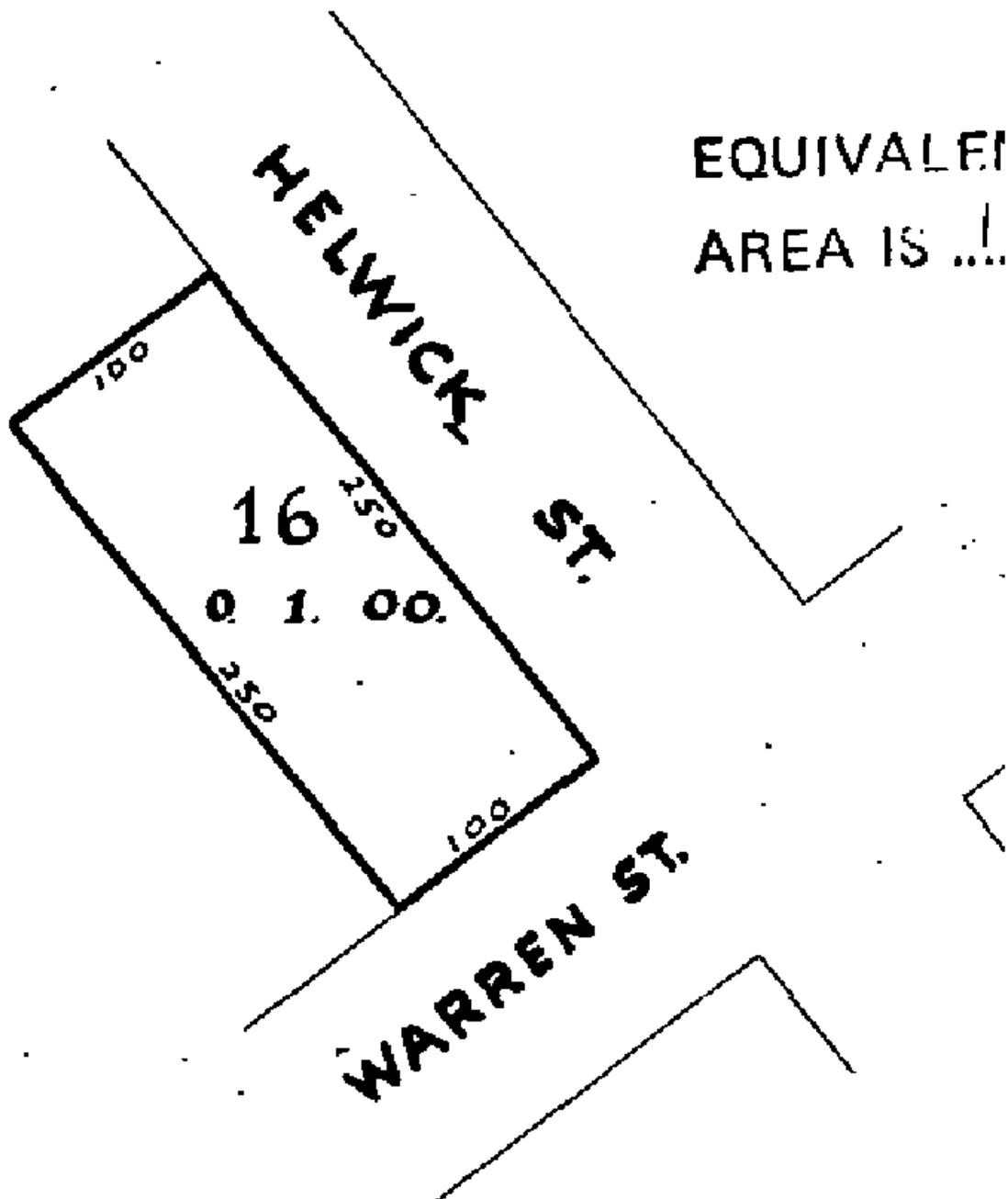
Location Maps



Map of Extent



Figure 2: Extent of List entry: Section 16 Blk XXX (CT OT1D/19), Otago Land District. The cottage is indicated by the white arrow. The other structure is a modern carport and is not included in the List entry (QLDC aerial mapping).



3.4. Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Plans

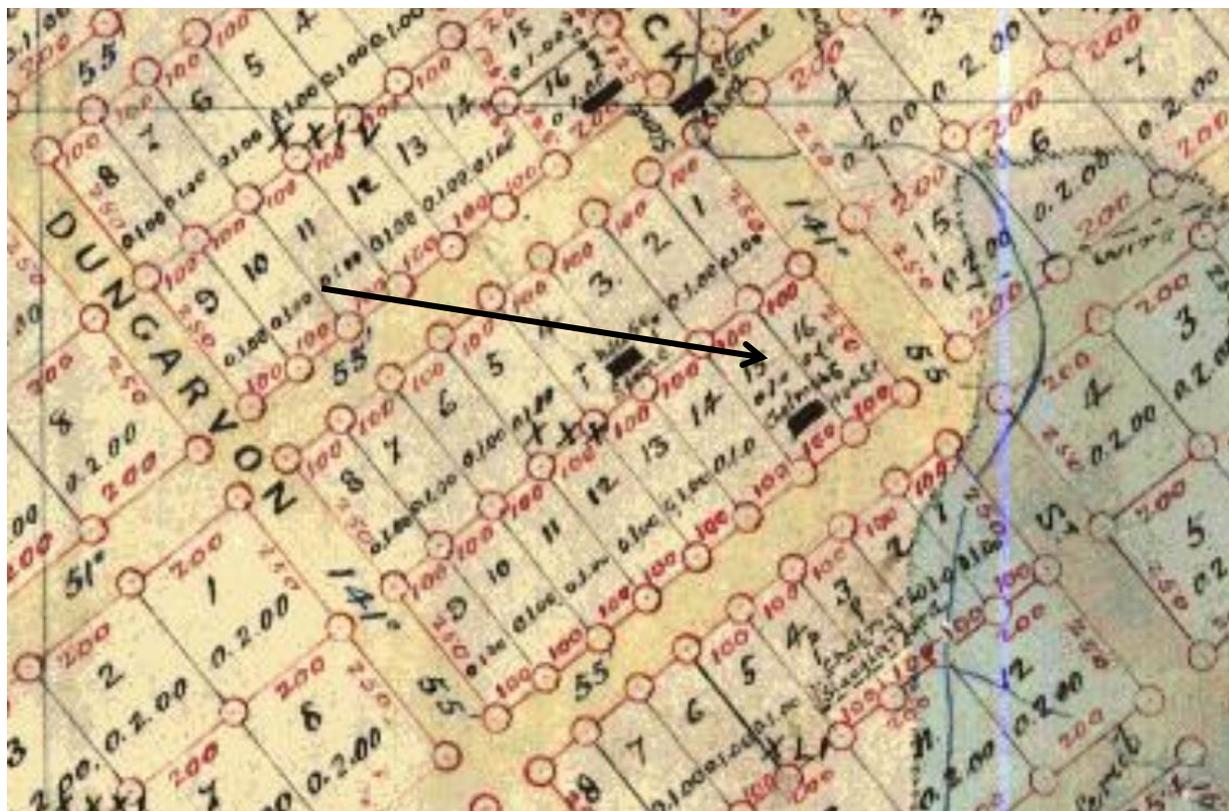


Figure 3: Detail of an 1880 plan showing Chalmers' House and Chalmers Slaughteryard closer to the creek (Detail of SO 14787, Land Information New Zealand)

Historical Photographs



Figure 4: Pembroke in 1883 – Location of Chalmers' Cottage (Detail of Lake Wanaka, 1883, New Zealand, by Burton Brothers studio, maker unknown. Te Papa (C.017105))



Figure 5: Detail showing Ironside's section in 1951. The location of the cottage is indicated by the arrow (WA-28376-F, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)



Figure 6: John Ironside's funeral in 1908 with his cottage in the rear (Photograph provided by nominator, Heritage New Zealand file 12013-1423)



Figure 6: Removal of addition at the front of the cottage (Eliott collection)

3.5. Appendix 3: Visual Aids to Physical Information

Current Photographs of Place (Jonathan Howard, Heritage New Zealand, 28 April 2017)



Figure 7: View from the street



Figure 8: Front elevation



Figure 9: Side and rear elevations



Figure 10: Coal range



Figure 11: Front room showing fireplace and window detail

3.6. Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information

Part 4 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (Section 65(6))

Under Section 65(6) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, an entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero relating to a historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- a) Situated in or on that place; and
- b) Considered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- c) Proposed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero.

Significance or value (Section 66(1))

Under Section 66(1) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

Category of historic place (Section 66(3))

Under Section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may assign Category 1 status or Category 2 status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history
- b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history
- c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history
- d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua
- e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place
- f) The potential of the place for public education
- g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place
- h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place
- i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement
- j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places
- k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for the purpose of assigning Category 1 or Category 2 status to a historic place, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3)

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for entering historic places or historic areas of interest to Māori, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, or wāhi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3) or (5) or in regulations made under subsection (4).

NOTE: Category 1 historic places are ‘places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.’ Category 2 historic places are ‘places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.’