

Cottage and Curtilage

Site F41/611

Near the Old School Road entrance to the property is a small timber cottage with a stone chimney (Figure 7), in association with several old pine trees and a number of farm buildings. The cottage is of particular interest as it exhibits a number of design elements that indicate that it is a very early building in the Wakatipu Basin.

The cottage is a small weatherboard single-storey building with a large stone chimney. The roof is corrugated iron, beneath which are the original timber shingles. One original window is in the front wall, but the other window and the original front door are missing. At the rear is a more recent land-to addition, which is in poor condition. The original floor has been replaced with a poured concrete floor. The construction details of the cottage are discussed further below.



Figure 7

The small cottage, front view, showing the remaining original window.

Roof Structure

The roof of the cottage is corrugated iron, but beneath this the original timber shingles are still in place (Figure 8). Shingles, while easy to make and transport, were relatively expensive, labour-intensive, short-lived and potentially leaky (Thomson 2005: 36). Corrugated iron, on the other hand, was relatively light, long-lasting and waterproof. It also had the distinct advantage of integral structural strength (Thomson 2005), something seen in this cottage, where the building would probably have collapsed if the roof had only been shingles.

Once the railway reached Kingston at the foot of the lake in 1878 it was possible to more easily bring building materials to the Wakatipu Basin, via the lake steamers. Prior to that date, road transport was the only option, and this was slow and expensive given the state of the

roads of the day. Corrugated iron therefore became an easy and relatively cheap option, and it is likely that the existing iron roof on the cottage was put on over the old shingles after 1878.

It was not uncommon for corrugated iron roofs to be laid directly over the old shingles, and other nearby examples of this are the original Ayrburn homestead and implement shed and the original St. Peter's Vicarage in Queenstown.



Figure 8

Interior view of the cottage, showing the wall and roof framing, and the timber shingles still intact beneath the roofing iron.

Wall framing & cladding

The wall framing is constructed using mortice and tenon joints between the studs and the top and bottom plates. Salmond (1986: 113) stated that mortice and tenon joints in wall framing ceased to be used from about 1890, while Arden & Bowman (2004: 38) suggest a pre-1910 date for this feature. The framing itself is light, with only a limited number of diagonal braces. The existing front door is not original, and examination of the top plate shows that the original doorway has been widened by the removal of one side of the frame, and the insertion of a new stud.

The exterior cladding is very thinly sawn weatherboards, most of which appear to be original. Those on the front wall are weathered and warped, but the rear boards have been protected by the lean-to and are in better condition. Both the framing and weatherboards at the western end of the building are in poor condition. A large elderberry is growing immediately beside the wall there, and although it is providing some shelter from the weather, it is also causing dampness and decay in this part of the building.

There is no interior cladding. There is the remains of a sacking internal division hung from a rafter.

Chimney and fireplace

The chimney is a large stone structure, largely built from schist, but with some water-worn cobbles also included. There are some cracks in the stonework, and the top courses are missing, but overall it appears to be in reasonably good condition. It is of substantial construction, and is matched by a large internal fireplace. This fireplace may have held a coal range, but determination of this will require a more detailed examination.

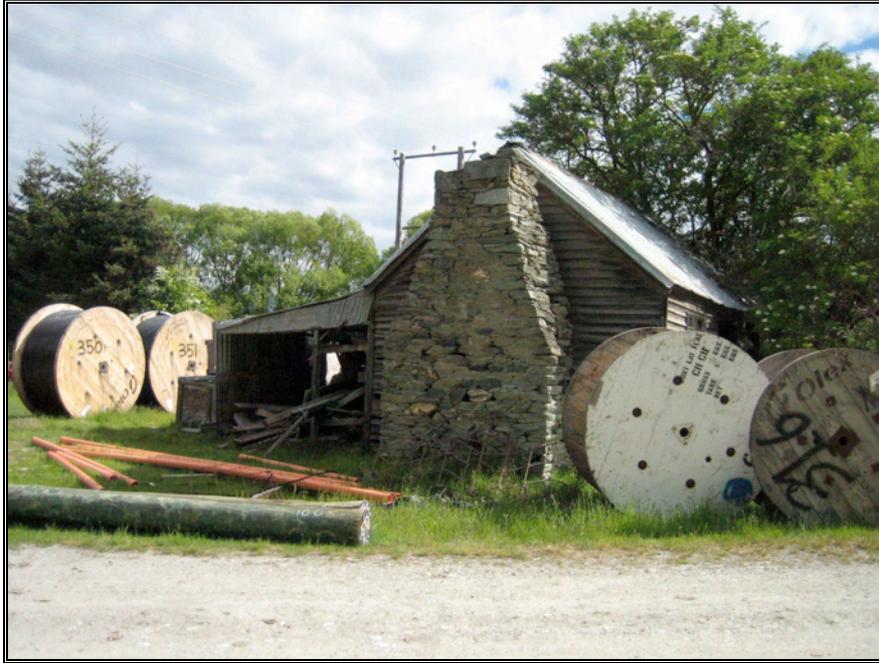


Figure 9
End view of the cottage, showing the large stone chimney.



Figure 10
The interior of the cottage, showing the large fireplace.

Curtilage

The cottage is associated with several other farm buildings and a number of mature exotic trees. The other buildings are utilitarian in design, and of twentieth century construction. The age of the trees was not estimated,³ but beneath one pine tree at the entrance to the property is an old reaper-binder and other farm equipment (Figure 11). The significance of this is discussed below.



Figure 11

The reaper-binder sitting underneath a pine tree beside the entrance to the property.

³ This would require the expert opinion of an arborist.

Discussion

The farm cottage described above is in poor condition, but the combination of archival evidence and physical construction details suggests that it is an extremely early building in the context of the Wakatipu Basin, and is therefore extremely significant. Much of the remaining fabric is original, and the corrugated iron roof has both protected the original timber shingles, and has provided structural strength to the building allowing it to stand for many years in a semi-derelict state.

The exact history of the cottage is unknown, but the known history of the area and this property provide some clues. As discussed above, settlement of the area really got underway in the wake of the gold rushes of the 1860s. By 1865 there were numerous farms dotted about the Wakatipu Basin, and in 1867 the first of three flourmills was built in the area, providing a market for grain. The 1865 map of the Shotover Survey District, (S.O. 1489, see Figure 3 above) does not show this cottage, and given the known accuracy of this map it is therefore likely that the cottage did not exist then. In 1867 this area was subdivided for agricultural lease areas, most of which were 50 acre blocks. The cottage is in what was originally Section 94 Block II Shotover Survey District. The Agricultural Lease (No. 177a) for this section was held by Thomas Hicks (farmer), who later bought the freehold of the property in June 1872 (Application for the Purchase of Waste Lands of the Crown, No. 249G).

It therefore seems most likely that it was Thomas Hicks who built the small cottage, as its construction details strongly suggest the date range within which Hicks took up the land, ie the mid-1860s to the mid-1870s. It is also likely that he was cropping some of the flat terrace land, probably for grain crops. The existence of an old reaper binder on the property indicates that grain was grown on the property at some stage in its history.

It is likely that there are sub-surface archaeological remains near the cottage. These may include rubbish pits, latrines (which often also contain discarded domestic material), outlines of original farm buildings and evidence of old garden layouts. In association with a surviving early building, this evidence is of some significance.

The cottage itself is a relatively rare survivor from the first decade of European settlement in the Wakatipu Basin. William's Cottage in Queenstown was probably built in 1866-67, there is good evidence that parts of the Ayrburn Farm complex near Arrowtown pre-date 1865 (see Petchey 2006), and the Threepwood Farm stables beside Lake Hayes also pre-date 1865 (Petchey 2005). A number of buildings in Arrowtown may also be this early. Hick's Cottage is therefore a member of the small group of very early local buildings, and despite its somewhat derelict condition, it retains a great deal of its original fabric.

It also remains a possibility that other cottages were built on the neighbouring sections. No evidence has been found of other cottages, and many of the farmers who held sections here also held land elsewhere in the Wakatipu Basin (including Thomas Hicks, who has land where the Queenstown Airport is now), and so their residences may have been elsewhere. Nevertheless, this possibility remains, and an accidental discovery protocol will need to be in place during construction in case archaeological evidence of any such residences is found.

Recommendations

The only historic or archæological site found during the site inspection and associated archival research was Hick's Cottage and curtilage. Therefore, no archæological authority is required for the majority of the proposed development to proceed. However, any construction activity in the vicinity of the cottage will require an authority because of the very high likelihood of sub-surface archæological material associated with the cottage being present. The cottage itself will probably also be considered an archæological site as defined under the Historic Places Act (1993) by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and will therefore also require an authority prior to any modifications.

The following are my recommendations regarding the archæological requirements of the Historic Places Act (1993):

- As a first principle, every practical effort must be made to avoid damage to any historic or archæological site, whether known or discovered during construction.
- There is evidence to indicate both prehistoric and historic use of the general area. It is also possible that more cottages once stood on this property. Therefore, an Accidental Discovery Protocol should be put in place for all initial earthworks and soil stripping.
- The Accidental Discovery Protocol must be approved by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu,
- If any prehistoric or pre-1900 historic archæological evidence is found, an Archæological Authority will be required from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust before that evidence can be further disturbed.
- Any ground work in the immediate vicinity of the small timber cottage, or on the cottage itself, will require an archæological authority from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. At present, "in the immediate vicinity" should be considered to be within 100 metres.

I would also make the following suggestions regarding the cottage and its curtilage:

- The cottage is a significant historic structure. Before any modifications to it are made, advice should be sought from a qualified conservation architect with experience with similar structures. It is strongly suggested that a conservation plan is prepared.
- Advice should be sought from a qualified arborist regarding the age, condition and future management of the old trees in the vicinity of the cottage.
- An inventory of early farm equipment in the vicinity of the cottage should be made, to ensure that any associated artefacts are identified and retained in context with the building. No equipment should be removed until its significance is assessed.
- Stabilisation and restoration of the cottage is strongly recommended, because of its significance. Retention of open space around the building, with suitable historic garden design, is also suggested.

References

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Maps & Plans

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Appendix A

Relevant Legislation

Historic Places Act (1993)

The primary legislation dealing specifically with archaeological sites is the Historic Places Act (1993) (“HPA (1993)”). The HPA (1993) is administered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (“NZHPT”). Of relevance here are the criteria for the legal definitions of an archaeological site, the legal protection for such sites, and the process for gaining permission to destroy, damage or modify such sites.

Definition of an Archaeological Site, from HPA (1993)

Section 2 of the HPA (1993) defines an archaeological site thus;

“Archaeological site” means any place in New Zealand that-

(a) Either-

(i) Was associated with human activity that occurred before 1900; or

(ii) Is the site of the wreck of any vessel where that wreck occurred before 1900; and

(b) Is or may be able through investigation by archaeological methods to provide evidence relating to the history of New Zealand.

Protection of an Archaeological Site under the HPA (1993)

The HPA (1993) specifically protects any archaeological site that meets the above criteria. Any such site is protected under section 10 of the HPA (1993), which states that;

“Except pursuant to an authority granted under section 14 of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any person to destroy, damage, or modify, or cause to be destroyed, damaged, or modified, the whole or any part of any archaeological site, knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that it is an archaeological site.”

Any person wishing to so destroy, damage or modify the whole or part of any archaeological site must first obtain an Authority under section 11 or 12 of the HPA (1993) from the NZHPT.

The NZHPT can take up to three months to make a decision after an application is accepted.⁴ If an Authority is issued, it may come with conditions relating to archaeological recording or investigations required before the site can be modified. It is the applicant’s responsibility to commission this mitigation work, and final reports will be required to go the NZHPT and relevant institutions and museums.

The life of an authority issued by the NZHPT will be stated on the authority. If no date is specified, the authority will lapse five years after the date of issue.

⁴ If an Authority application does not contain adequate information, the Trust can request more information, and the three month period only begins after this additional material is received and the application finally accepted.

Resource Management Act (1991)

Resource Management Amendment Act (2003)

The heritage provisions of the Resource Management Act (1991) have been considerably strengthened by the Resource Management Amendment Act (2003), which contains a more detailed definition of heritage sites, and now considers historic heritage to be a matter of national importance under Section 6.

The Act now defines historic heritage thus:

(a) means those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities:

- (i) archaeological:
- (ii) architectural:
- (iii) cultural:
- (iv) historic:
- (v) scientific:
- (vi) technological; and

(b) includes-

- (i) historic sites, structures, places, and areas; and
- (ii) archaeological sites; and
- (iii) sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu; and
- (iv) surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources.

It should be noted that this definition does not include the 1900 cut-off date for protected archaeological sites that the Historic Places Act (1993) contains, and that any historic feature that can be shown to have significant values must be considered in any resource consent application.

Protected Objects Act (1975)

Any artefact found anywhere in New Zealand after 1976 is deemed to be *prima facie* the property of the Crown.

An artefact is any chattel, carving, object or thing which relates to the history, art, culture, traditions, or economy of the Maori or other pre-European inhabitants and which was manufactured, modified or used by any such inhabitant in New Zealand prior to 1902.