

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING: TAIERI BANK COTTAGE (HIGGINS' COTTAGE)



### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Heritage Schedule Site Number	BX064
Address	128 Hartfield Road, Middlemarch
Building Name	Taieri Bank Cottage (Higgins' Cottage)
Located within a Heritage Precinct	N/A
HNZPT List Reference & Description	N/A
Heritage Covenant	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Residential
Condition of Property	Not known to be at risk because of condition

### SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

#### RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

## RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building Envelope	Entire building envelope
✓	External/ancillary elements	Upright slab schist fence
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
	Excluded elements	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Taieri Bank Cottage has historical significance for its association with the generation of farms that followed the breakup of the pastoral stations in the Strath Taieri in the 1880s. The cottage has design and aesthetic significance as a good representative example of a vernacular schist residence reflecting local practices and materials.

Taieri Bank Cottage is comparable to scheduled heritage buildings in the 2GP of a similar type and period. When compared with other scheduled buildings, it meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Victorian (1838-1901)
Style	Vernacular square plan stone cottage
Era/Date of Construction	1891
Architect/Designer/Builder	William Higgins
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Farm cottage
Primary Construction Materials	Schist, timber, corrugated metal roof
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Vernacular Victorian cottage form and detailing

### Previous site development

The Strath Taieri was originally included in the large pastoral holdings of the mid-nineteenth century, including nearby Cottesbrook. The Strath Taieri was opened for closer settlement in the early 1870s when the "Hundred of Strath Taieri" was declared.<sup>1</sup> Block 10 was surveyed in 1883 (SO 1569). Sections 21, 22, 23, and 24 were surveyed in April 1883. There were no structures shown on this land at the time of the survey. This 201-acre block was first leased to Hugh O'Donnell in 1885. The lease was transferred to William Higgins in 1891.<sup>2</sup>

Higgins' house and farm represent the architecture and history of the generation of farmers that followed the breakup of the large runs.

<sup>1</sup> *Otago Witness*, 17 June 1871, Page 21.

<sup>2</sup> OT70/103

### Design and construction

The schist cottage was built for William Higgins. In May 1891, the *Otago Witness* article recorded that Higgins was erecting 'a fine stone cottage' on the Cottesbrook side of the river.

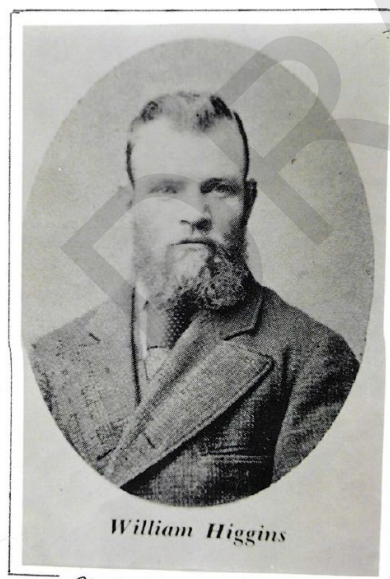
The house is a square plan villa, symmetrical around the central front door, which is flanked by two four-light double hung sash windows. The house is built of schist, shaped stone brought to course. It has a hipped roof and a hipped verandah decorated with a fretwork frieze, post brackets, and crossed timber rails. The house has two chimneys. There is a timber lean-to addition to the rear. The curtilage of the house is fenced with upright schist slabs. A garage is a later addition to the south elevation.

The cottage and its schist slab wall are vernacular architecture of the area. Jill Hamel writes that schist slabs, like those used for the wall, were widely employed in Central Otago.<sup>3</sup> The farmstead is a node in the archaeological landscape reflecting the changing pattern of development when the pastoral stations were split up.<sup>4</sup>

### Later history and development

After Elizabeth's death, William was cared for by his niece Sophie Burn. William died in 1945. Sophie lived on in the house until her health deteriorated. She died in Dunedin in May 1957. The property was sold to Lesley Tisdall in 1958, and to Taieri Ridge farm Limited in 1968.

### Notable people/Themes



William Higgins

Photo taken late 1880's



Elizabeth Higgins (wife of William Higgins) with her daughter, Annie, who in 1907, married Richard Gleaver. Her sons featured overpage

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<sup>3</sup> Jill Hamel, *The Archaeology of Otago*, Department of Conservation, Wellington, 2001, pp.124-25.

<sup>4</sup> Hamel, p. 108.

proved to be unsuitable.

**NEW BUILDINGS.**—The erection of Mr Swanson's premises and the public hall goes on apace. The hotel will be ready for occupation in a few days, and the hall in a fortnight or so. The opening event in the new hall will be a concert and ball in aid of the fund for building a shelter shed at the school. The

programme will contain a feature that is quite novel in this district—that is, the acting of an extravaganza by an amateur juvenile troupe, who are being assiduously drilled up for the occasion by a lady who takes a great interest in school affairs.—Mr Steel is busy building a comfortable and substantial boot shop, in which he can attend to his work and his customers with pleasure to both.—Mr Higgins is erecting a fine stone cottage on his section on the Cottesbrook side of the river.—Messrs Harrison and Harvey, of the upper part of the plain, are both building; and improving is the order of the day.—The school committee are determined not to be outdone in the race for improvement, and have been diverting a water race over part of the school ground in order to soften it and make it fit to plough, with a view to putting in some trees to give the playground both shelter and a better appearance. The dry weather does not daunt them, as they are evidently bent on making art overcome Nature.

**RABBIT FACTORY.**—It is currently rumoured here

› Otago Witness › 28 May 1891 › Page 19 › T

### *William Higgins*

Higgins, born in 1851 aboard ship on the voyage between England and Tasmania, emigrated to New Zealand in 1878. In 1879-80 Higgins came to Cottesbrook Station, near Middlemarch, to work as a butcher and gardener. Higgins purchased land in 1883. Higgins' and his brother's names being mentioned in an inquiry into dummyism by the Land Board. Dummyism was the act of buying land in one's own name on behalf of another. In this case, the accusation was being made against Gellibrand and Company, the owners of Cottesbrook Station, for whom the Higgins brothers worked.<sup>5</sup>

Higgins then worked at nearby Garthmyle station as a gardener. In 1891, Higgins purchased O'Donnell's farm, adjoining Cottesbrook. He supplied vegetables for Middlemarch township. He was active in the local community, serving on the Saleyards Committee, and that of St Chad's Anglican Church.<sup>6</sup> His wife, Elizabeth, died in 1909, with William donating a memorial window in her name to the church.

## ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. Taieri Bank has historical significance as a dwelling associated with the early farms that followed the breakup of the pastoral runs in the Strath Taieri in the mid-1880s.

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<sup>5</sup> *Otago Daily Times*, 15 Jun 1883, Page 1.

<sup>6</sup> Information supplied with the Heritage Fund Application, supplemented with additional research. See land titles OT70/103, OT99/7, OT9B/734.

## SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

## DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. Taieri Bank Cottage has design significance as a vernacular building reflecting the building practice and materials from the Strath Taieri district. Built of local stone, using the slabs of schist as fencing, Taieri Bank is a good representative example of a nineteenth century farmhouse.

## TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

## REFERENCES

See Dunedin Heritage Fund Application #36 Wilson Land Holdings  
Land titles OT70/103, OT99/7, OT9B/734.

<b>Date Assessment Completed</b>	22 September 2023	<b>Author</b>	HB
<b>Date Peer Reviewed</b>	12 July 2024	<b>Reviewer</b>	MM
<b>Date Confirmed Complete</b>	19 July 2024		

## APPENDIX



Date taken: 9/04/1945 (LINZ CC-BY 3.0)