

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE SITE:
LARNACH'S BYRE AT 1299 HIGHCLIFF ROAD



2017, Peter Petchey (the building on the right was demolished in 2018)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX126
Address	1299 Highcliff Road, Dunedin
Other Site Name	NZAA Site I44/412
Located within a Heritage Precinct	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description	Not listed with HNZPT
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Vacant
Condition of Property:	Known to be at risk because of condition

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

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

RECOMMENDATION:

The site 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 external building envelope
	External/ancillary elements	
	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

Larnach's Byre, the sole extant building of Larnach's farmstead has historical significance for its association with William Larnach's estate where it was developed as a 'model farm.' It also has historical significance as part of a relic landscape of early dairy farms which provide understanding of the significance of dairying in the nineteenth century. The overall farmstead, of which this building was a significant component, has scientific significance for its archaeological value as it provides insight into how an early farm operated, with potential to reveal further information through archaeological methods.

Larnach's Farmstead is comparable to scheduled heritage sites within Dunedin of a similar function and period. When compared with other scheduled sites, it meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Victorian (1838-1901)
Style	Utilitarian farm buildings
Era/Date of Construction	1880-1882
Architect/Designer/Builder	Not known
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	William Larnach's farm steading
Construction Materials	Timber structure, corrugated iron, concrete, brick, stone
Architectural Features	Gabled form, farmstead layout, earthworks/form

Previous site development

European settlers began developing the land around Harbour Cone in the early 1860s. The hills were bush covered, with settlers clearing the land for pasture. Small dairy farms were established. The Harbour Cone Management Plan notes that 'during the days of early colonial settlement, the family economy was dependant on producing butter from the daily milk. Farmsteads often consisted of a dairy as well as a cow byre for over-wintering cows. It was a subsistence economy, with perhaps twelve cows, a flock of hens and a few pigs, some of which would be sold to the butcher when large enough, and gardens producing other food for the family.'

The Harbour Cone Management Plan records that William Larnach began buying land on the Peninsula in 1870 and by about the mid 1880's had developed the "Camp Estate". This estate covered not only Larnach's original purchases in the area but also the smaller sections of land originally granted by the Crown to earlier settlers and then amalgamated by Larnach. The Camp Estate included the castle and associated buildings and the farm buildings.¹ The plan continues 'Within the Hereweka/Harbour Cone property boundaries is Larnach's 'Model Farm' (replacing an original steading) which was accessed through a grand arched entranceway and consisted of a byre, stable, barn and dairy, and the farm manager's house. Constructed as a model of the ideal dairy farm, this must once have formed the heart of Larnach's self-sufficient farming operations.'²

Gosling writes that Larnach built his first farm buildings on the Peninsula, including the old homestead in 1872. These structures were situated close to the current entrance gate to Larnach Castle. The steading burnt down in September 1880 – 'two rows of stables, the cow-byres, and a six-roomed wooden building, occupied by the hands of the place.'³

Design and construction

A second set of buildings (the current farmstead) was constructed before 1882. Peter Petchey describes the farmstead as consisting of 'a farmhouse on a terrace cut into the hillside, with a group of farm buildings surrounding a cobbled farmyard on a large lower terrace. These buildings included a byre (the only building still extant in 2020), a stable, an implement shed and an entrance building (which is the subject of the present investigation). A very derelict small barn opposite the byre that replaced the implement shed was demolished in 2018 as it was on the verge of collapse (Figure 2) (Petchey 2018).'

A May 1882 newspaper article describes the steading: 'The byre, which has accommodation for 30 head of cattle, is similar to Mr Matheson's, Tomahawk, with timbered stalls, cleanliness for the cattle being essentially studied. Ample stables for the farming horses, storerooms, and sheds for agricultural implements, carts, &c., form the four sides of the square. Apartments for the farm servants are comprehended in the building, which will compare favourable with those in any part of the colony.'⁵ It was associated with Larnach's 'Model Farm', as the newspaper article called – 300-400 acres of arable land, arranged to combine the raising of crops with 'superior pasturage, 'for the purpose of rearing the best ovine and bovine strains of blood.'

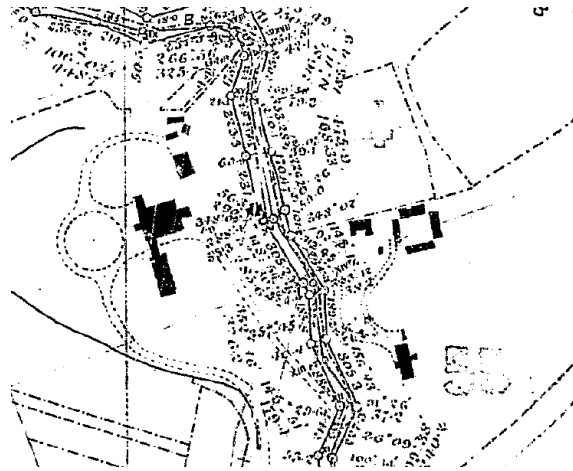
¹ Extracted from the 'Harbour Cone Project – Archaeological Assessment for the Dunedin City Council; Angela Middleton November 2008

² Hereweka Harbour Cone Property Management Plan – Final Draft Version Amended by Submissions.

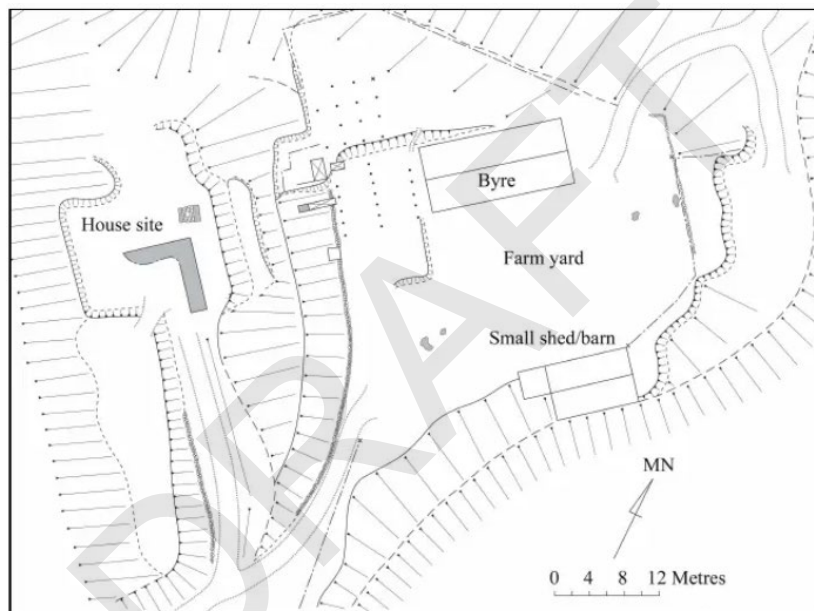
³ *Otago Daily Times*, Issue 5807, 29 September 1880, Page 2

⁴ Peter Petchey, 'Larnach's Farmstead, Otago Peninsula, Dunedin Site I44/412: Archaeological Investigation of Entranceway, Archaeological Authority No. 2017/521, March 2020.

⁵ *Otago Witness*, Issue 1592, 13 May 1882, Page 26.



Farmstead (around rectangle courtyard) shown in MISC 1 (1888)



Gosling (2009)

Later history and development



Undated image (Larnach's Farmstead, probably in the 1960s. The byre is to the left, the stable centre and a small shed to the right. Only the Byre still exists today (Hardwicke Knight, Hocken Library Collection)

In the twentieth century, the land was converted to drystock, specifically sheep farming, a use which continues into the twenty first century. Aerial photographs cited by Gosling show the changes to the farmstead as buildings fell into disuse and were demolished.⁶ The farmstead itself was altered to make it suitable for sheep farming, including converting the cow byre into a woolshed.

This site is within the Herewaka/Harbour Cone property. In the archaeological survey of this property, Angela Middleton described it as a 'pristine archaeological landscape of historic occupation') of early colonial/Pakeha settlement in Dunedin makes this property and the surrounding areas an important cultural landscape. Larnach's Farmsteading is a site within this cultural landscape.⁷ Middleton writes that while Larnach's castle now forms 'a focal point on the peninsula, his neglected complex of farm steading is of more archaeological interest, once forming the heart of Larnach's self-sufficient farming operations.'⁸

⁶ Gosling, see pages following pp.33-40.

⁷ Angela Middleton, 2008; and Middleton, 'Hereweka/Harbour cone: a relict landscape on the Otago Peninsula', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 30, 2012, p.34.

⁸ Angela Middleton, 'Hereweka/Harbour cone: a relict landscape on the Otago Peninsula', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 30, 2012, p.39.



2017-2018 (DCC, Geocortex)



1990 (reproduced from Gosling, p. 39.)

Notable people/Themes

William Larnach (1833-1898)

The farmstead is associated with well-known politician and businessman William Larnach. Located to the east of the family estate “The Camp” (Larnach’s Castle, built 1874), the farmstead formed the working part of Larnach’s holding. Larnach was heavily involved in land speculation, banking, politics, and business. He took political office under Sir George Grey as colonial treasurer and minister for public works, in 1885 serving in the Stout-Vogel ministries.

Farm Steadings and Agricultural Buildings

In his study of McMeeking’s farmstead archaeologist Peter Petchey notes that on the Otago Peninsula, ‘where dairying was the predominant agricultural activity, and the traditional farmstead model was adopted more completely than in many other parts of New Zealand, lie some of the best comparative examples of farmsteads, cow byres and stone walls.’⁹ Larnach’s farmstead is an element in this landscape story.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

Larnach’s Byre demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The building has historic significance for its association with William Larnach. Larnach developed the byre and other buildings as a ‘model farm’ to service his adjoining estate. It is also an element in the history of dairying on the peninsula and is significant as part of the relic historic landscape, demonstrating the history and operation of a nineteenth century dairy farm.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The site does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

DESIGN

The overall farmstead had the potential to demonstrate design significance as a model of the ideal Victorian era dairy farm in Dunedin. As the sole extant building of the original farmstead, the ability of this building to demonstrate design significance has been compromised, however, the building retains a low level of design significance.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The site demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The farmstead has high archaeological significance both for its pre-1900 origins and for its potential to reveal more about the history and

⁹ Peter Petchey, ‘Heritage Assessment McMeeking’s Farmstead Otago Peninsula, Archaeological Site 144/769,’ Southern Archaeology Ltd for Department of Conservation, 2017, p. 90. And p. 96.

operation of Larnach's model farm. In addition, the farmstead is an important element in the relic farming landscape of the Otago Peninsula.

REFERENCES

Angela Middleton, 'Herewaka/Harbour Cone: a relict landscape on the Otago Peninsula', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 30, 2012

Dunedin City Council, Herewaka Harbour Cone Property Management Plan – Final Draft Version Amended by Submissions.

Alana Kelly, 'Larnach's Farmstead Survey and Excavations, Herewaka/Harbour Cone, Otago Peninsula', *Archaeology in New Zealand*, New Zealand Archaeological Association, v60 (4), December 2017, 42-52

Otago Daily Times, Issue 5807, 29 September 1880, Page 2

Peter Petchey, 'Larnach's Farmstead, Otago Peninsula, Dunedin Site I44/412: Archaeological Investigation of Entranceway, Archaeological Authority No. 2017/521, March 2020.

F. R. J. Sinclair. 'Larnach, William James Mudie', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/212/larnach-william-james-mudie> (accessed 17 April 2023)

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