

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
LITTLEBOURNE HOUSE STABLES AT 26 LITTLEBOURNE ROAD



(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Littlebourne_House_stables_Dunedin_4.jpg)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No	BX051
Address	26 Littlebourne Road, Dunedin
Located within a Heritage Precinct	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Storage
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 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

Littlebourne Stables and Coach House, constructed c1888 as an ancillary building for John Roberts' Littlebourne Estate, the have historic and architectural significance. Designed by notable Dunedin Architects Mason and Wales, the stables and coach house were part of the estate gifted to the city in 1949 and stand as a reminder of Roberts' importance and legacy to Dunedin. Despite the loss of its original context, the stables and coach house have a good level of authenticity and integrity.

The Stables are comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type and function. When compared with other scheduled buildings, they meet the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

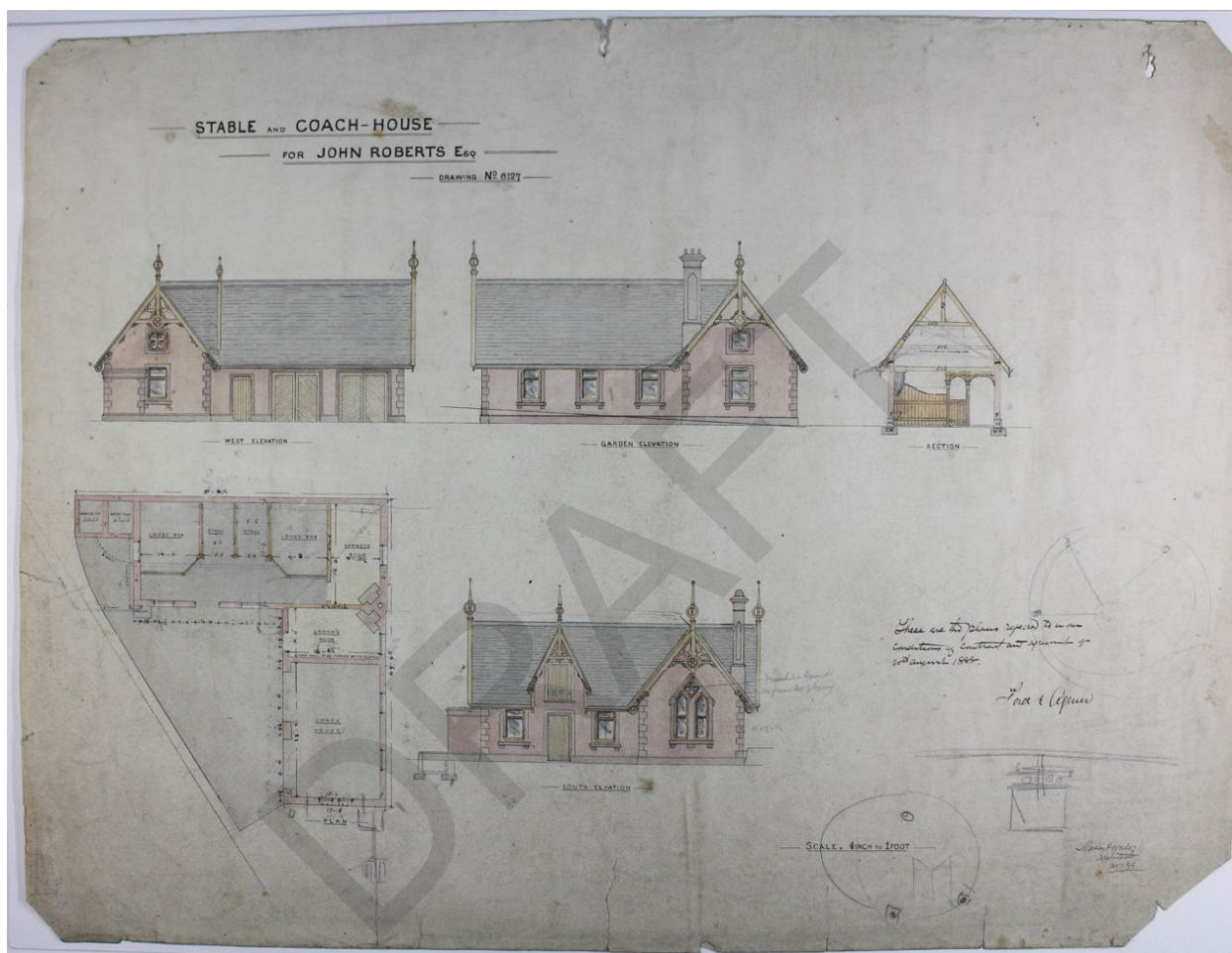
Architectural Period	Victorian (1838-1901)
Style	Gothic elements
Era/Date of Construction	1888
Architect/Designer/Builder	Mason and Wales (architectural partnership) Ford and Agnew (Contractors)
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Stables associated with John Roberts' Littlebourne House that was demolished in 1949
Primary Construction Materials	Rendered masonry, slate roofing, timber door and window joinery.
Notable Architectural characteristics	Steep gabled form, chimneys, gothic detailing, 'L' shaped plan

Previous site development

This land was originally granted to surveyor Charles Henry Kettle in January 1862 – an 18-acre block located between the Town Belt and Highgate. The title was issued to Dunedin merchant John Macfarlane Ritchie in 1881. The land was subdivided into 34 lots in 1881. The subdivision plan shows a house already on Lot 27, the largest lot, at just over 5-acres. Lot 27 was sold to John Roberts (Kettles' son-in-law) in August 1881.

Design and construction

John Roberts built the Coach-House and Stables in 1888, and Littlebourne House in 1890. The builders, Ford and Agnew, invited tenders for painting, plumbing, and plastering Roberts' stable in September 1888, so it is presumed construction was nearly complete at this date. The Coach-House and Stables were designed by prominent Dunedin architectural partnership Mason and Wales. The Plans held at OSM Archives dated July 1888, identify the contractors as Ford and Agnew.



Stable and Coach House Plans (Toitū OSM Archives)

The plans show an L-shaped building, with steep gables, quoins, and lancet windows. A door on the projecting gable on the west elevation provided access to the loft. The plans show timber decorative detailing, but much of this has been removed. The interior was laid out with two stalls, two loose boxes, a harness room, groom's room, and coach house.

Later history and development

On Roberts' death in 1934, his family offered the house and grounds to the city for a vice-regal residence or some other civic or public purpose. From 1938, Littlebourne House was used for student accommodation. From 1942, for the duration of the war, it was used by the army.



Littlebourne House with the stables in the foreground (Toitu Collection)

In 1949, the house was demolished to make way for the realignment of Stuart Street (then Albert Street). The stables and coach-house were retained alongside what became Littlebourne Park.

Notable people/Themes

John Roberts

These stables are the remaining structure associated with Sir John Roberts (1845-1934) estate, Littlebourne House. Roberts was a prominent Dunedin businessman, Mayor, and Provincial Councillor. Born in Scotland, Roberts moved to Otago in 1868. He established a fellmongery, Murray, Roberts & Co, with Scottish partners. The company speculated in Otago wool and invested in pastoral land, establishing branches throughout New Zealand. By 1900, the company was the second largest exporter of wool in the country. He encouraged the development of several significant companies, including the Mosgiel Woollen Factor and the New Zealand Refrigerating Co. Roberts held several public roles, including Mayor of Dunedin and Vice-Chancellor of Otago University. He was knighted in 1891. He was posthumously inducted into the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame for his leadership and industry involvement.

Roberts had married Louse Kettle, Charles' Kettle's daughter, in 1870. They had a family of five sons and four daughters.

Mason and Wales

Andrew Barrie and Julia Gatley's summary of Mason and Wales' architectural practice is reproduced below:

With its origins in the practice formed by William Mason (1810–1897) in Dunedin in 1862, Mason & Wales is New Zealand's oldest architectural practice. Mason had worked in England and Australia before moving to Auckland in 1840, where his outputs included the building now known as Old Government House (1855–1956), and then on to Dunedin in 1862, where the discovery of gold signalled potential. He set up partnership briefly with David Ross (1827–1908) and then, more significantly, with William Clayton (1823–1877). Tasmanian-born Clayton had designed numerous buildings there before immigrating to Dunedin in 1863, again attracted by the gold rush.

Mason & Clayton's key buildings included the Colonial Museum in Wellington (1864–1865), Dunedin's Post Office (1864–1868) and the Otago Provincial Council Buildings (1867). None of these survives.

Mason had been elected to parliament in 1861 and then served as mayor of Dunedin (1865–1867). In semi-retirement, he lived on a North Otago farm from 1867. Meanwhile, Clayton was appointed Colonial Architect in 1869 and moved to Wellington. Mason returned to Dunedin practice in 1871, with Nathaniel YA Wales (1832–1903) as his junior partner. Wales, also English, had immigrated to Dunedin via Melbourne and worked for Mason & Clayton from 1862 as a clerk of works and then as an architect. Mason retired fully in the mid-1870s, and Wales continued the practice.

... Across more than 150 years, the firm's oeuvre has encapsulated the story of New Zealand architecture, most particularly of Dunedin architecture – from colonial-era pluralism and gold rush exuberance to the gradual embrace of modernism, the adoption of regional inflections, a return to international themes and, now, the response to environmental imperatives.¹

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Stable and Coach House has historical significance for its connection with important Dunedin businessman Sir John Roberts. As the remaining structure associated with Roberts' Littlebourne residence, the building provides a reminder of the life and status of Roberts in Dunedin society. Gifted to the City, the building stands as the legacy of Roberts' generosity.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

¹ <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/itinerary-dunedin/>

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. Architecturally, in its form and design, the stable and coach house is significant as a high quality nineteenth century ancillary building associated with Roberts' grand estate. It also has architectural significance as a design from the practice of Mason and Wales, although it is noted that some of the original detailing has been lost.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

See appended information

Donald Gordon, 'The Knights of Littlebourne', *Otago Settler News*, March 2010, Issue 104

Dunedin Amenities Society, 'Littlebourne', <https://dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz/the-dunedin-town-belt/the-town-belt/littlebourne/>

Biography <http://www.toituosm.com/collections/smith-gallery/wall-4/sir-john-roberts>

Biographical sketch of John Roberts, *Otago Daily Times* 26 November 1889 Page 6 (Supplement)
'First Owner was Early Settler', *Otago Daily Times* 29 June 1949 Page 4

http://www.businesshalloffame.co.nz/past-laureates/?query=roberts&action_search=Go , accessed 17 November 2022

Architectural drawing; Stable and Coach-House for John Roberts Esq [Littlebourne house, Dunedin], OSM Archives

Date Assessment Completed	18 November 2022	Author	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	6 August 2024	Reviewer	MM
Date Confirmed Complete			

APPENDIX



› Evening Star › 1 October 1888 › Page 1 › Th

MASTER BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION.
At the monthly meeting of the Dunedin Master Builders' Association (Mr A. Bain in the chair) the secretary reported that the number of financial members on the roll consisted of forty-three firms of builders and contractors of Dunedin and suburbs.
The following were elected directors: Messrs. J. H. McEwen, J. H. Ford and Agnew, J. Blaikie, and J. Walker.
Correspondence from the Building Trades' Association was read.

NO KNOWN
To the best of th
Zealand law, the





The subject building is located on Lot 27 DP 308. This was a lot formed by the 1881 subdivision of Part Sections 1 and 2 Block I of the Upper Kaikorai District.

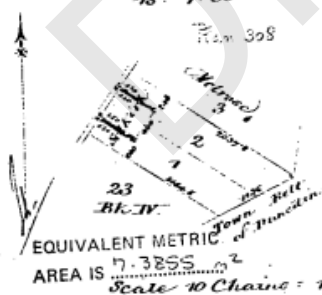
PART - CANCELLED
NOT
TO BE CONVERTED



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In witness whereof I have hereunto signed my name and affixed my seal the tenth
(10th) day of June One thousand eight hundred and eighty one. J. D. S.

Block I.
Upper Kaikōrai District
18. 7. 60



Handwritten: 4494 of Attorney General's Office. John A. ...
... to
... ..

Transfer of 100% of Attachment 5 Littlebourne John Macpherson Street Chicago
Jonathan Rivers purchased 25 August 1941 at Boston - cancelled in part
see Vol 57 (div 2) H. J. [unclear]

Transfer to ROSS of Attachments 24 and 25. With reference to the above, I have referred to James Dunn Bradstreet, Esq., President of the Board of Directors, and he has cancelled in full all that I have written.

1. *Thymus* 5% total of all flowers 2% *bellidiflorus* *deinandra* *prostratus* *villosus*
 2. *Delon* *strobilatus* 2% *prostratus* 2% *prostratus* 2% *prostratus* 2% *prostratus* 2%
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 Kitchie Johnson Haynes produced 19th September 1851 at 3000
 Connected in heat to vol 57 folio 245. 182th.

Examine 19 AUGUST of all obtained by Frederick Inc. & Mr.
Archibald Ritchie & Co. & Mr. Boardman & Co. & Mr.
August 1891 at 12 o'clock. 19 AUGUST 1891
just before 72. 19 AUGUST 1891. 19 AUGUST 1891.

J. C. MacFarlane L-10