

House – 238 Heads Road, Whanganui



Location: 238 Heads Road, Gonville, Whanganui
Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga List Number: Nil

Physical Description: This single storied, timber framed house, is designed in a version of the Californian Ranch style, known as the Atomic Ranch. The principle characteristics of the style, which the house exhibits includes the enveloping shallow gabled roof extending almost the width of the section facing the street, the open carport under the roof, exposed timber rafters supporting extended eaves, large open windows following the gabled form of the house, the recessed wall next to the carport allowing for a protected entry directly into the living area and different coloured or textured wall materials on the street elevation.

The plan form is a 'T' including the carport, with the widest part of the house facing the street and the narrower part of the house extending towards the rear of the section.

The Californian Ranch was the most popular style for housing for new subdivisions in New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s and adapted examples are

Register Item Number:

442

Building Type:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Other

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological
- Cultural

Thematic Context

- Early Settlement
- Residential
- Industry
- Agricultural
- Commerce
- Transport
- Civic/Admin
- Health
- Education
- Religion
- Recreation
- Community
- Memorials
- Military

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

still being built today. Southern California was the origin of the style where, in the early to mid-nineteenth century ranch houses were built that were simple, linear, unadorned adobe or timber framed houses. As with their later counterparts, they were single story, one or two rooms deep with one or more porches extending across the front of the house and sometime on the back or side. Adding a room changed the floor plan from rectangular to 'L' or 'U' shaped. Patios were added between the wings, creating shelter from the sun. The porches were usually supported on slender steel single or double posts with fretwork between the posts. The internal plan usually combined living and dining and large areas of glass made up for the relatively small spaces. Typical materials were stone, stucco, vertical board and batten, weatherboard and brick, with a combination on the one house being popular.

As in the States, it was the builder speculator who built most of these homes in New Zealand. It is assumed that the Sunset magazine and other similar magazines available in New Zealand also made the style popular as it was cheap to build and looked homely. New subdivisions in the 1950s to 70s saw this style of house replicated with little variation throughout New Zealand. Even today, variations on the basic style are still being built by builders.

There were a number of variations to the style. These included the split-level, popularised by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Soft Modern and the Atomic Ranch.

Other known names:

Current Use: Dwelling house

Former Uses: Dwelling house

Heritage Status:

District Plan Class: BR

Architectural Style: Californian **Date of Construction:** ca 1974
Ranch/Atomic Ranch

Materials: Asbestos weatherboards, aluminium joinery, corrugated steel roofing

Registered owner:

Legal Description: Lot 22 DP 41650

History: The Certificate of Title that covers the likely construction period of this house (WN 203/165), was issued in 1911 to William Samuel Dustin, a Wanganui baker. The land concerned consisted of about one acre, being Lots 106 to 109 of DP 1455. In 1920, these four sections were transferred into the ownership of the New Zealand Refrigeration Company Ltd. This company then retained

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

ownership of them until 1974.

It is not clear when this house was built from the information sighted, and certainly it is clear that a previous generation of houses were there before it. The house site is opposite the Imlay Freezing Works, and, as the sections the house and its neighbours stand on were owned by the New Zealand Refrigeration Company Ltd. (which owned Imlay Freezing Works) for over fifty years, it seems likely that houses there were used for staff housing.

At present there are nineteen sections in the portion of Heads Road between Gunn Street and Abbott Street. The 1925 *Wises' Post Office Directory* records seven houses in this stretch of road, with some of the residents' mixture of occupations being likely to be found in a freezing works. The seven households present in the 1944 *Wises' Directory* reveal a similar array of employment types. By the 1955 *Wises' Directory*, there were ten households in this stretch of road, with the same varied array of occupations. There were also two households headed by women, and three households who were also there in the 1925 *Wises' Directory*.

The New Zealand Refrigeration Company's Imlay Freezing Works opened in late 1916 and in its first season, it processed 230,322 sheep and 16,665 cattle.¹ At its peak, the Imlay Freezing Works employed 700 people, including seasonal workers, maintenance teams and "Assure quality" staff.² The Freezing Works, now owned by Affco, celebrated its 95th Anniversary reunion in 2011.³

In 1974, the four sections were sold to John Russell Farquhar, a Palmerston North accountant. He then had separate titles issued for them, and began selling them off. The new Certificate of Title applicable to this house (WN 13C/405) indicates that in late 1975, Farquhar sold the property to the current owners, Amrit Patel, a butcher, and his wife Johanne Patel.

¹ Cyril Loach, *A History of the New Zealand Refrigeration Company* (Christchurch, 1969), pp. 143-145

² *Wanganui Chronicle*, 11 April 2011: <http://www.wanganuichronicle.co.nz/news/remember-the-good-old-implay-days/1051223/>

³ *Wanganui Chronicle*, 8 April 2011: <http://www.wanganuichronicle.co.nz/news/implay-reunion-practice-session-for-centenary/1050987/> & 11 April 2011: <http://www.wanganuichronicle.co.nz/news/remember-the-good-old-implay-days/1051223/>

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Bibliography

Chapple, L.J.B., & Veitch, H.C., *Wanganui* (Hawera, 1939).

Loach, Cyril, *A History of the New Zealand Refrigeration Company* (Christchurch, 1969).

Wises' New Zealand Post Office Directories (various years).

Archival sources, newspapers and online articles as referred to in the footnotes.

Architect/Designer: Beazely Homes

History of changes:

Date Period: ca 1974

Rarity / Special Features: The house is an excellent example of the Californian Ranch/Atomic Ranch style.

Integrity: The condition of the house was not inspected.

Representativeness: The house has the characteristic planning, materials and design of the Californian Ranch/Atomic Ranch style.

Context/Group Value:

Diversity (Form and Features):

Fragility / Vulnerability: As a timber framed house, it is potentially vulnerable to fire.

Summary of Significance:

Architectural Qualities

The house exhibits the principle characteristics of the Californian Ranch/Atomic Ranch style, including the enveloping shallow gabled roof extending almost the width of the section facing the street, the open carport under the roof, exposed timber rafters supporting extended eaves, large open windows following the gabled form of the house, the recessed wall next to the carport allowing for a protected entry directly into the living area and different coloured or textured wall materials on the street elevation.

Built Heritage Inventory



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

The house was designed and built by Beazley homes who adapted standard American plans for the Atomic Ranch style. The house was known as the Kensington (Basic).

Technical Qualities

The house uses typical materials and building technologies of the period.

Cultural Qualities

The house has educational values as an excellent residential example of the Californian Ranch/Atomic Ranch style.

Reference Source:

Bowman I., "Exploring the California Ranch Precinct of Hamilton East, New Zealand", APT Bulletin Vol XLIII, No. 1 2012, APT International

Associated Pictures:

Date of Survey: 2012

Prepared by: Ian Bowman and Val Burr