

Heritage Item 21

WWII Hangar, Ashburton Airport



Location

Address:	387 Seafield Road, Ashburton
Co-ordinates:	Northing 5700106 , Easting 2413918
Legal Description:	Lot 1 and 2 DP 9711 Res 39798/99
Owner:	J. D. Sim

Purpose

Current Use:	Vacant
Original/Past Uses:	Hangar

Heritage Significance and Category

Heritage Significance:	Physical; Historic
Heritage NZ:	Not registered
Ashburton DC:	Category A

Site Assessment

Assessed by:	Arlene Baird, Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd.
Date Assessed:	27 November 2014

Detail	
Description:	<p>This item consists of a WW2 hangar located at Ashburton airport.</p> <p>Although unconfirmed, the hangar may be a local version of the steel-framed Over Blister hangar used, in various sizes, by the RAF in the UK. The original doors may have been canvas curtains which were then replaced by iron doors. These are now completely gone, having been removed following strong winds in 2013. The roof is now corrugated iron, however it would have originally have been constructed of timber covered with tarpaper. The rear wall was also constructed of timber covered with tarpaper – the timber is still in place with only remnants of the tarpaper attached at the joins.</p> <p>The hangar is a unique construction with light-weight box girder wooden trusses - there are four of these, one front, one back and two close together supporting a lifting beam. The intermediate trusses are just planks nailed together. The front truss appears to have been damaged, presumably by the weight of the replacement iron doors.</p> <p>The hangar is in a bad state of disrepair. The iron roof does not continue right to ground level and so the bottom section of internal timber is exposed and rotting. The timber on the rear wall, now missing its tarpaper, is also rotting with holes already appearing.</p>
History:	<p>Ashburton has a strong aviation history. The airfield is the former home of a World War II Royal New Zealand Air Force Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) station. This airport was used as a wartime training base and sent over 1100 pilots off to fight in World War II.</p> <p>At one time there were 50 Tiger Moths based there. The Tiger Moth is a 1930s biplane designed by Geoffrey de Havilland and was operated by the Royal Air Force (RAF) and others as a primary trainer. The Tiger Moth remained in service with the RAF until replaced by the de Havilland Chipmunk in 1952, when many of the surplus aircraft entered civil operation. Many other nations used the Tiger Moth in both military and civil applications, and it remains in widespread use as a recreational aircraft in many countries. The Ashburton Aviation Museum displays a Tiger Moth as one of their exhibits, along with a large number of other aircraft and aviation items from throughout aviation history.</p> <p>The Ashburton Aviation Museum operates from the airfield - it originated in October 1974 and was initiated by 17-year-old aviation enthusiast Peter McQuarters, then a typographer for the Ashburton Guardian. Eight men joined him and the following month they gained their first charge: a Bofors AA gun donated by Burnett's Motors. Slowly over time the museum fundraised and obtained a number of serious exhibits including a North American Harvard, a McDonnell Douglas A4 Skyhawk and a British Aerospace Harrier.</p> <p>There is a section of the original WWII tarmac still evident at the airfield, as well as the tie-down rings which helped to secure the planes from Mid Canterbury's strong nor-west winds. (These items are included in the heritage schedule as H22)</p>
Notable Features:	<p>Box girder wooden trusses; timber wall covered with tarpaper; lifting beam; back timber wall with remnants of tarpaper.</p>

Detail	
Condition:	This historic hangar is in a very bad state of disrepair. The roof is still watertight; however the interior woodwork is open to the elements due to having no doors which has left one whole side exposed. The tarpaper is nearly all missing from the back wall, leaving the timber exposed and rotting. The timber along the bottom of the sides is also rotting due to the iron roof not reaching the ground. The Aviation Museum is keen to purchase and restore this WW2 hangar, however have not been able to reach an agreement with the owner. Unless repairs are undertaken in the near future, much of this historic hangar will be lost.
Setting:	This hangar was originally one of many similar hangars located at the centre of this busy WW2 training camp. It is now the only one remaining and is set at the edge of the current airfield. This and the compass rose, tarmac and tie-downs are the last remnants of the WW2 history of this airfield. The setting is of high importance due to being the original location of the last remaining one of several WW2 hangars.





