

Longbeach Estate Item M

Flourmill Waterwheel



Location

Address:	1034 Lower Beach Road, Ashburton
Co-ordinates:	Northing 5678525 , Easting 2404702
Legal Description:	Lot 2 DP 39648 (CT CB18K/390), Canterbury Land District
Owner:	Longbeach Estate Limited

Purpose

Current Use:	Unused
Original/Past Uses:	Waterwheel for Flourmill

Heritage Significance and Category

Heritage Significance:	Physical; Historic		
Heritage NZ:	Historic Place Category 2	List # 271	Date Listed: 28 June 1990
Ashburton DC:	Category B		

Site Assessment

Assessed by:	Arlene Baird, Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd.
Date Assessed:	9 December 2014

Detail

Description:

This is the original waterwheel, still in its original location but now unused. This waterwheel would have powered the flourmill on the Estate. The date of construction is unknown, but thought to be during the 1880s when John Grigg was establishing his model farm, Longbeach.

The waterwheel is constructed of cast iron with a number of blades arranged on the outside rim forming the driving surface. The wheel is mounted vertically on a horizontal axle, with the tub or Norse wheel mounted horizontally on a vertical shaft.

The leat (the open watercourse conducting water to the mill) and the tailrace (watercourse conveying water away from the mill) are formed of concrete, to bring water to and from the wheel. There is a section of timber fluming which would have channelled the water from the leat to just above the wheel.

Most external elements of the waterwheel are still intact and in situ, albeit the wheel itself is considerably rusted. Internally much of the mechanism also still remains.

History:

The Waterwheel

At its height in the early 1880s Longbeach covered thirty-two thousand acres and supported a small village for its many workers and their families. John Grigg's permanent staff totalled around 90 people with this number rising to over 350 during busy harvest times. Grigg was known to be a good employer who looked after his staff and their families.

The water wheel was an important part of this Estate as it powered the flour mill. The Estate was almost totally self-sufficient for food with a butchery, bakery, flourmill, cookshop and general store.

The water wheel, though now disused, is still a tangible link with the remarkable agricultural enterprise developed by John Grigg and his family in the last decades of the 19th century.

Longbeach Estate

John Grigg was born in Cornwall in 1828. After his parents death he became responsible for his siblings. He inherited a freehold farm which he sold in 1853 and then sailed for Australia (with his siblings) in the ship "Blackwall," reaching Melbourne early in 1854. Mr. Grigg remained only about six months in Australia, and then came to New Zealand.

At first Grigg lived in Auckland but by his mid-30s he moved south with his wife Martha, their children (of which there were eventually 6) and his siblings. The land was described as Valueless Bog on the Lands Office Map in 1864. This was to become Longbeach and total 32,000 acres stretching from the Ashburton River in the North to the Hinds River in the South, and from the Pacific Ocean on the East to the present North/South Railway in the West.

The Grigg family, including John's sisters, step-sisters and brother, lived in Christchurch for several years while work began on draining the swamp and establishing dwellings. He purchased the Chertsey Accommodation House and transported it by bullock wagon through the Ashburton River to the farm. The family arrived in a convoy of horses and wagons across the swamp in 1872.

Detail

The Station was a self-supporting Community with its own Post Office, School, General Store, Flourmill, Brickworks, Church, Smithy, Bakery, Cookhouse as well as Stables, Cowsheds, Pig Sties, Woolshed, most of these buildings still remain today.

The Garden was first established in 1864 with trees planted as shelterbelts against the North West winds. Longbeach garden has prospered over the years as each generation of the Grigg family has continued with plantings and maintenance. Today there is 16 acres of sweeping lawns and garden.

In 1882 Longbeach was put up for sale, due to the amicable end of the agreement between Thomas and John. John purchased back 16,000 hectares and 13,000 sheep. With the frozen export trade firmly in his sights, he grew that number to 37,000 in 12 years and concentrated on lamb fattening. John was also interested in dairying and his son JCN Grigg, was sent to source the best dairy cattle he could find. He settled on Dutch Friesian cattle, descendants of which are still important in local dairy herds today.

Besides devoting great enterprise, intelligence, and energy to the development of Longbeach, John Grigg actively assisted in the establishment of the Belfast Freezing Works, in the management of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association, and in the work of the Ashburton County Council, the Longbeach Road Board and school committee. He was also for some time a member of the House of Representatives. Mr. Grigg died at Longbeach on the 7th of November, 1901, in his 74th years, and was buried in the Longbeach churchyard beside his wife who had predeceased him by about sixteen years.

Longbeach has remained in the same family, passing from John Grigg, to J.C.N. Grigg, to his son J. H. Grigg, who in turn passed it on to his daughter and son in law Virginia and David Thomas, and today it is farmed by their son Bill Thomas, his wife Penny and their four children. Bill was just 23 when he took over running Longbeach from his mother Virginia and her husband David Thomas in 1985.

Notable features:

Waterwheel; concrete leat and tailrace; timber flume; internal mechanism; setting.

Condition:

The waterwheel and its associated items are remarkably intact. The wheel itself is very rusted but still in its original position. The concrete leat and tailrace are still in place and in relatively good condition. The timber flume is well weathered but still in place and recognisable for its function. The mechanism for the wheel, inside the flour mill, is in place and in very good condition.

Setting:

The waterwheel is located against the southern elevation of the flour mill with the race running parallel to the building. To the south west of the wheel sits the small concrete smokehouse/bakery. The setting is of high importance due to the wheel's relationship with the flour mill and the other Estate buildings.



