

Heritage Item 27

Akaunui



Location

Address:	902 Longbeach Road, Ashburton
Co-ordinates:	Northing 5686646 , Easting 2403839
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 1 DP 6895 (CT 191749), Canterbury Land District
Owner:	R I C Mackenzie

Purpose

Current Use:	Dwelling
Original/Past Uses:	Dwelling

Heritage Significance and Category

Heritage Significance:	Physical; Historic		
Heritage NZ:	Historic Place Category 2	List # 1751	Date Listed: 26 November 1981
Ashburton DC:	Category A		

Site Assessment

Assessed by:	Arlene Baird, Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd.
Date Assessed:	12 December 2014

Detail	
Description:	<p>Akaunui is an elegant homestead built in 1904-05 for Edward F. J. Grigg, son of the pioneering John Grigg of Longbeach Estate. The architect is unknown, however it is believed that Grigg had a major influence in the design and layout of the house.</p> <p>The two storey building is large in scale, constructed of triple brick walls and a corrugated iron roof. A number of written sources refer to the original roof having been constructed of shingles; however the current owners confirm that they possess photographic evidence of the original roof being iron. This original was replaced with a decramastic roof (steel which has been pressed into a roof tile shape then coated with stone chips to be hard wearing and give a decorative appearance), then further replaced with the current roof about 5 years ago. The chimneys were originally built of brick, however they twisted in the 2010/11 earthquakes and have been replaced with an inner metal flue and an outer fiberglass layer. There is a double storey colonial style verandah to the front of the building, giving the frontage a grand appearance. The verandah has plain columns and balustrades with arched wooden fretwork above.</p> <p>There are numerous windows with varying styles of opening and frame – most are sash opening with some side opening and to the front of the building there are two shallow dormer windows in the roof. The windows to the front have a delightful feature of a shingle canopy over double sets of windows.</p> <p>The homestead is set in mature landscaped gardens. These were originally designed and laid out by Alfred William Buxton and have been extensively added to and redesigned by the current owners. The garden now covers some 10 hectares and includes magnificent mature trees. There is a pond, a creek and a bog garden, a woodland garden with a large collection of rhododendrons and associated plants, formal and less formal gardens, many roses and a productive vegetable garden.</p>
History:	<p>Edward F. J. Grigg was the youngest son of Mr. John Grigg, one of the pioneer settlers in the Ashburton district. He was born at Longbeach Estate and educated at Christ's College, Christchurch, and Jesus College, Cambridge. In January 1900, 2500 acres were subdivided off the Longbeach Estate for Edward to farm. The land was said to grow excellent crops of wheat and oats and Grigg carried a large number of sheep. Mr. Grigg also had a farm of 2100 acres at Lowcliffe, mainly for grazing purposes.</p> <p>In 1902 Grigg married a daughter of Professor Cook, of Canterbury College, Christchurch and the homestead was built shortly afterward. Edward apparently played a huge part in the design of the house and oversaw the construction, insisting upon the highest standards of workmanship. The bricks were purpose made at the Eifflerton kiln from the clay pits on Akaunui land and were of very high quality. As was the brick-laying and of particular interest is the triple brick construction. The house was built with its own generator, driven by a water wheel, so always had an electrical supply.</p> <p>Grigg and his wife only lived at Akaunui for a few years before the farm was split up and sold, prior to the war years.</p> <p>The gardens were originally designed and laid out by Alfred William Buxton and have since been extended by the current owners. Buxton was born in 1872 in Staffordshire, England and came to New Zealand with his parents in around 1886 where he was immediately apprenticed to Thomas Abbott, Canterbury's leading nurseryman.</p>

Detail	
	<p>During his career Buxton acquired three principal nurseries. The first, initially one acre on Springfield Road, was bought in 1893; a second, Opawa Nursery, in stages after 1902 in partnership with a Christchurch businessman, J. A. Pannett; and a third, Belfast Nurseries, in 1923. Buxton and Pannett formed a private company, A. W. Buxton Limited, landscape gardeners, nursery gardeners and asphalters.</p> <p>The company landscaped urban and rural properties throughout the South Island, mainly on the east coast, and at various locations in the lower half of the North Island. Its clients were predominantly members of the rural élite, particularly stud farmers, who had been attracted by the company's promotional exhibitions at agricultural and pastoral shows. Buxton's landscape designs were typified by curved entrance drives, perimeter plantings of forest trees, water, and Japanese features such as lanterns, pergolas and rockeries.</p>
Notable Features:	Triple brick construction; double storey verandah; decorative brick chimneys; shingle canopies over windows; mature landscaped setting.
Condition:	The building suffered quite extensive damage in the 2010/11 earthquakes and as a result of that has just undergone 4 months of repair work which has involved the replacement of all the chimneys (as detailed above), repair work to some walls and replacement of many of the internal ceilings. The building is now in an excellent condition, with strong brickwork, roof of only 5 years and pristine paintwork on window and door frames, fascias and verandahs.
Setting:	Akaunui is located on the road to Longbeach, but is set back and screened by the mature trees and gardens. It is accessed by a sweeping driveway. The immediate setting of the house is stunning with mature plantings, manicured lawns, box hedging, rose gardens, vegetable gardens and a lake. There are beautiful vistas available both to and from the building, particularly to the west across the lake. The setting is important due to the property's links with the Griggs and Longbeach Estate.









