

Ashdene – 1385 Cheltenham-Huntermville Road, Waituna West



Architect: Unknown

Construction date: 1908

Visible materials: Timber cladding & joinery, corrugated steel roofing

Architectural style: Edwardian Queen Anne

Use/building type: House

Date and Compiler: Ian Bowman, 2015, Val Burr 2019

Heritage New Zealand listing: -

Proposed ranking: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

The Manawatu Branch Committee of the NZ Historic Places Trust file records some details of early history of Ashdene. This information appears to have been the result of a telephone conversation between David Guylee (who still owns the property) and the late Jim Lundy, of the aforementioned Branch Committee. This conversation took place on 11 March 1980.

‘Ashdene’ – which means ‘ash tree in a hollow’ - has been occupied by generations of Guylee family members. Lundy’s report records that Mr Guylee had stated that the house’s architect was unknown; however, there have been suggestions that it resembled a Natusch design. Evidently the original owner, Joseph Guylee, had based its design on the family home in England. Built in 1908, it was the third house on the property - succeeding the original whare, followed by a small lean-to cottage. However, ‘Ashdene’ was never actually completed. It had originally been intended to be about twice its present size, with the ‘right’ side of the house having originally been planned to have been extended outwards. In its present form, it is reputed to be about 6,500 square feet in size.¹ It is noteworthy that the book *Makino Memories* (p. 130) states that the present house was built between

¹ Manawatu District Council (MDC): Building Permit records – RH17 ‘Ashdene’, 1385 Cheltenham-Huntermville Rd.

1905 and 1907, and that it was an addition to the second house, rather than a complete replacement of that house.²

The house “has a very perpendicular emphasis, enhanced by the vertical boarding and the 2nd storey.” It has an iron roof with a straight gable, and the timber cladding is rusticated. The sash windows are of an unusual design, and are generally in sets of two or three. It was also very dark inside, with high ceilings and dark timber panelling. The house was built of native timbers, and most was hand-dressed. A Mr Sporle, an apprentice, made all the doors and fitted them into the house. The house once had a balcony, but this had been removed, and at the time Lundy’s report was compiled in 1980, the roof was leaking in the location where the balcony had been. At this time the house was looking a bit run down and in need of a repaint, and the old (1980s) photos included in this report seem to reflect this.³



Figure 1 (Source: An unidentified book page in HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003, this copy from the Manawatu District Council file on this house)



Figure 2 The first home at Ashdene around 1900, with five of the couple’s seven children present. (Source: An unidentified book page in HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003, this copy from the Manawatu District Council file on this house)

Joseph Guylee

The original owner of the house, Joseph Guylee, had been a school teacher before becoming a farmer. He was born on 30 June 1859 at Caythorpe, Hough-on-the-Hill, Lincolnshire, England. He had then arrived in New Zealand in January 1880, and on 10 January 1881 he was appointed as the teacher at Makino Road School. His obituary states that his health and his hearing (or presumably declining

² Robyn Corpe & Ngaire Stantiall, *Makino Memories* (Feilding, 2001), p. 130

³ MDC: Building Permit records – RH17 ‘Ashdene’, 1385 Cheltenham-Hunterville Rd.

hearing) eventually led to his decision to take up farming – although he taught at the school until 1891, well after the ‘Ashdene’ farmland had been purchased.⁴

Guylee married Elizabeth Sarah Diamond on 9 January 1890⁵. She was the daughter of James Henry and Mary Diamond, and this couple helped with clearing the bush and establishing the new farm. James Diamond, who had been born in Tasmania, had emigrated to New Zealand with his family in the 1870s, with their last child, William Martin Hayes Diamond being born in New Zealand in 1875.⁶

Elizabeth Diamond had been a successful pupil at the Feilding State School, and in 1884 she became a pupil teacher at Makino Road School with her future husband as her teacher. She eventually resigned from this position when the couple married. They moved to Ashdene in 1892, initially living in a whare there until the first house was built.⁷ They went on to have seven children: Muriel (1891), Marjorie (1893), Kathleen (1895), Norman (1897), Mildred (1899), Beryl (1901) and Howard (1905)⁸, prior to the construction of the present house.

An unsourced article written in about 1959 by Howard Guylee, gives an overview of the ‘Ashdene’ property’s history:

“At Waituna West, 15 miles north of Feilding on the Main Highway between this town and Hunterville and Taihape, is Ashdene, a property taken up by the late Joseph Guylee in 1888. The present area of 320 acres, which was all in native bush, is now wholly cleared and in grass pasture – except for a four-acre reserve. Apart from a few small gullies, the farm is rolling country very suitable for fat lamb and wool production and the grazing of cattle, which are its functions today.

“The 71-year ownership of Ashdene began with the success of Joseph Guylee – then a school-teacher – in a Crown Lands ballot at Marton on July 27th, 1888, when he drew a 200-acre section of the West Waitapu Block. Soon afterwards, he purchased the adjoining 120 acres to complete the present holding. The first woman to reside in the West Waitapu Block was Mrs Elizabeth Guylee, who died in 1954, having lived there for the whole period and being at the time of her death the last of the original settlers of her generation still residing at Waituna West - the name given to the West Waitapu area. Bushfelling and clearing of the land took several years, and was done by Mr Guylee, local workers, and Mrs Guylee’s father, James Diamond.

“Mr and Mrs Guylee raised a family of five daughters and two sons (all of whom are living) amidst all the vicissitudes and trials of early settlement life. Difficulties of access, lack of transport and bush fires were some of the troubles of the Guylee family. Timber for the first buildings on the property was actually carried manually across the Waituna stream by Mr Guylee and Mr Diamond, then sledged some three miles to Ashdene. The present house was erected in 1908 and took the place of the original house of two rooms.

“The elder son, Norman Guylee, managed the property from his father’s death in 1936 until 1954, when he retired. The farm was then purchased by the younger son, Howard Guylee, the present owner, who has one son, David, to carry on the name. Ashdene is in good heart and a fitting monument to the work of a pioneering family.”⁹

⁴ *Wanganui Chronicle*, 29 March 1882, p. 2, 3 April 1882, p. 3, & 11 July 1889, p. 2; *Manawatu Standard*, 16 January 1936, p. 4(2); Corpe & Stantiall, pp. 123, 127, 130

⁵ NZ BDM online marriages: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/> : 1890/228

⁶ *Manawatu Times*, 17 March 1924, p. 2; *Feilding Star*, 14 March 1904, p. 2; NZ BDM online births: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/> : 1875/8466

⁷ *Feilding Star*, 20 January 1883, p. 3 & 9 October 1884, p. 2; *Wanganui Herald*, 27 July 1886, p. 2; Corpe & Stantiall, p. 123

⁸ Source – births listed in MDC: Building Permit records – RH17 ‘Ashdene’, 1385 Cheltenham-Hunterville Rd.

⁹ HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003, this copy from the Manawatu District Council file on this house

Joseph Guylee died on 13 January 1936, aged 76 years; and Elizabeth Sarah Guylee died on 6 May 1954, aged 85 years.¹⁰ They are buried together at the Waituna West Cemetery.¹¹

The current Certificate of Title, WN52/174 was issued on 27 August 1889 to Joseph Guylee. This CT covered Guylee's aforementioned 200-acre portion of the property. In 1936, it was transferred to Joseph's widow Elizabeth Sarah Guylee, and the older of her two sons, Norman Guylee, took over running it. Then on 15 July 1953, ownership was transferred jointly into the names of Elizabeth Sarah Guylee and her nephew and solicitor, Maxwell Barltrop.¹² In January 1955 - after Elizabeth's death in 1954 - the property was transferred into Barltrop's name alone as survivor. Then, immediately after that transfer, the property was again transferred – this time to Howard Guylee, the younger son of Joseph and Elizabeth Guylee. He then ran the farm between 1954 and 1976, at which time his son David took it over, and remains its present owner.

Of the two brothers who, in turn, ran the farm between 1936 and 1976 when David took it over, Norman Guylee died on 1 May 1980 aged 83 years, and Howard Guylee died on 10 August 1979 aged 74 years.¹³

A negative of a photo of the house is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library collection that appears to show this house in its heyday. It is a panorama dating to between 1923 and 1928 and it was taken by photographer R.P. Moore. The photo shows the house with gardens, a straight road at the edge, which is lined by tall trees, and with farmland beyond. There are shrubs and flax around grass, with assorted trees behind that. There is an open-topped car parked near the house and a hedgerow at the side of the image. There are also outbuildings in the background, and a tennis court is mentioned.¹⁴

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Planning, style, construction

This large, two storeyed, timber framed house is designed in the Edwardian Queen Anne style. The main entry to the house is in the centre of the south elevation and is marked with a gabled porch. Another door, with a hood is located on the north eastern corner adjacent to a bracketed bay window with leaded coloured glass.

The house has an approximate 'T' shaped plan with a main central gabled wing facing north/south, and a single storey gabled wing facing east which forms the stem of the 'T'. This gable covers a large open verandah which has several doors into the house. There is also a large open single storey gable parallel and to the east of the main wing. There are two secondary gables of different pitch to the upper floor facing west and two facing east, one of which extends over the parallel single storey gabled wing. Under the north gable is a faceted bay over which the gable is cantilevered. Adjacent to this gable is a narrow two storied bay and gable at 45 degrees to the main wing. There are additional two and single storey skillion roofs to the east and west elevations.

Generally the cladding to the ground floor is rusticated weatherboards and board and batten to the upper floor. Bargeboards are plain while the single storey parallel wing has a simple gable screen. Windows are double hung sash with five panes to the upper sash and single pane to the lower sash.

¹⁰ NZ BDM online deaths: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/>: 1936/15811 & 1954/22001

¹¹ BillionGraves: <https://billiongraves.com/grave/Joseph-Guylee/19214707>

¹² Maxwell Barltrop (born 1913) was the son of Elizabeth's sister Jane and her husband John Edward Barltrop. Ref: *Nelson Evening Mail*, 28 December 1900, p. 2; and NZ BDM online births: : <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/>: 1913/28414

¹³ NZ BDM online deaths: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/>: 1979/41058 & 1980/47888

¹⁴ This photo, which was not sighted for this study, has the Reference No. Pan-0542-F, Alexander Turnbull Library: <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.78703>

The upper floor windows have double panes to the upper sash and single panes to the lower sash. There are chimneys to the south and east gables and the centre of the main ridge.

Style background

The Victorian/Edwardian Queen Anne style was a revival style of late 17th and 18th century architecture popularised by British architects Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield in the 1870's initially for large country houses. American architects Charles McKim and Henry Hobson Richardson also adapted the style and less academic versions of the American and British styles were used in New Zealand.

The Victorian/Edwardian Queen Anne style was part of the picturesque movement and commonly the houses were designed to be asymmetrical, with conical towers and tall chimneys to create an interesting skyline and interplay of complex forms. Details often included flying gables, gable screens, double hung and casement windows, window or door hoods, square and canted bay windows, prominent chimneys, decorative entry porches and exposed eaves. Other key New Zealand characteristics of the style include highly decorated gable forms, half timbering effects, bay windows and wide verandahs.

Single storey versions of the style were typically less decorative.

Art Nouveau inspired lead lights were also common with the style.

Setting

The house is located in extensive rolling farmland some distance from the main road. It is accessed off a drive with an avenue of large trees. Other farm buildings are located to the north east of the house.

No plans of the building have been sighted and the interior could not be inspected.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

Ashdene has **low to high local** significance for **physical, historic** and **cultural** heritage values.

The house has **high architectural** and **representivity** values as a good example of the Edwardian Queen Anne style with planning, forms, silhouette, materials and many details characteristic of the style. Being representative of the style and there being a number of houses of a similar style and quality it has **low rarity**.

The house has **low technological** values having been originally constructed of timber from the property.

The exterior appears to have **high authenticity** with little apparent change to the house since it was constructed.

The house has **moderate associative** values with the Guylee Diamond families, who were both early settlers in the district, and which the family still own.

The design and construction of the house has **moderate pattern** values reflecting the growth and development of farming in the Manawatu in the late 19th century.

Given the range and levels of heritage values, Ashdene has **moderate education** values as it can contribute to an understanding of settlement, emigration, and architectural history of the Manawatu.

SOURCES

Printed Sources

Corpe, Robyn, & Stantiall, Ngaire, *Makino Memories* (Feilding, 2001)

Guylee, Howard, 'Ashdene' – section from unknown book (page 113) found in MDC Heritage file RH17 'Ashdene', 1385 Cheltenham-Huntermville Rd.

Online Sources

Billiongraves: <https://billiongraves.com/grave/Joseph-Guylee/19214707>

Companies Office <https://www.companiesoffice.govt.nz/> (As per footnote)

Manawatu District Council: <http://www.mdc.govt.nz> (District maps)

National Library: Alexander Turnbull Library <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.78703>

NZ Births, Deaths & Marriages (BDM) online: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/> (As per footnotes)

Papers Past: <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers> (*Feilding Star*, *Manawatu Standard*, *Manawatu Times*, *Nelson Evening Mail*, *Wanganui Chronicle*, *Wanganui Herald*) - (as per footnotes and text)

Other Sources

HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003. The copy sighted was from the Manawatu District Council file on this house

Manawatu District Council: (Building Permit records; Heritage file RH17 'Ashdene', 1385 Cheltenham-Huntermville Rd.; Certificates of Title)



Figure 3 'Ashdene' in the 1980s (Source: HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003, this copy from the Manawatu District Council file on this house)



Figure 4 'Ashdene' in the 1980s (Source: HP Manawatu-Horowhenua Inc. File: 310003, this copy from the Manawatu District Council file on this house)



Figure 5 'Ashdene', in relation to the road, as seen from above in January 2016 (Source: Manawatu District Council online map).