

MAHOE – 171 South Street, Feilding



Architect: Charles Tilleard Natusch

Construction date: 1903

Visible materials: Timber cladding & joinery, Marseille tile roof

Architectural style: Edwardian Tudor

Use/building type: Residential

Date and Compiler: Ian Bowman, 2014

Heritage New Zealand listing: Category 2

Proposed Category: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Mahoe was built in 1905 by Norman Ballantyne St George Gorton, who was a partner, with his father, in a stock agent and auctioneer business Stevens and Gorton. The house was sold from the family in 1948. The house was originally on 24 acres which included an expansive garden of many native and exotic trees and shrubs, including the first Chinese gooseberry plant (kiwi fruit).

Stevens and Gorton

The highly successful and influential firm Stevens and Gorton was established in 1878 when Jonathan Stevens entered into a partnership with Lieutenant Gorton as stock and station agents. The firm established saleyards at Feilding and Palmerston North, as well as Marton, Sanson, Awahuri, Foxton, Hunterville, Pohangina and Woodville. The firm became Gorton and Son's in the early 20th century when Norman Gorton joined the firm. In 1916 the firm merged with Levin and Co and has had a number of subsequent mergers and changes of name.

Architect

The architectural practice founded in Wellington in 1886 by Charles Tilleard Natusch later became the partnership of C T Natusch and Sons, and then the Judd, Fenwick, Natusch Partnership.

C T Natusch, having completed his architectural studies in England in 1882, travelled in the United States and Canada. He returned to England in 1883 to become involved in the town planning and development of Southend-on-Sea. He then immigrated to New Zealand in 1886 and after a short collaboration with Atkins and Clere, established a Wellington practice as an architect and quantity surveyor. He then moved to Masterton, Pahiatua and finally to Napier, where he bought the architectural practice of Robert Lamb. From 1908 until World War 1, C T Natusch was in practice with his three sons Aleck, Rene and Stanley and offices were opened in Wellington, Pahiatua, Napier, Gisborne and Palmerston North. For a period during and after World War 1, only the Wellington and Napier offices were kept open for the busy commercial development period of the 1920s and the rebuilding of Napier following the 1931 earthquake. The firm received many domestic commissions from the farming community which favoured its Elizabethan style. Its well-known houses include Bushy Park (Kai Iwi), Gwavas (Tikokino), Matapiro (Napier), Maungaraupi (Marton) and Wharerata (Massey University).

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The house is designed in a Natusch interpretation of the English half-timber framed Tudor style, the original period being 1485-1558. The style is related to the English domestic period revivals of the time of Queen Anne, Free and Carpenter Gothic, and the American Stick styles. Key English architectural practitioners of domestic revival styles were Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield, and is intimately connected with a resurgence of nationalism while also searching for a modern style of architecture. These architects turned to their own unique indigenous styles, particularly the period of Queen Anne. The period of architecture was later extended to the use of styles of the 17th / 18th centuries.

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 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. Other key New Zealand characteristics of the style include highly decorated gable forms, half timbering effects, bay windows and wide verandahs.

The key characteristics of this style are a picturesquely irregular massing, extensive half timbering, medium pitched gabled roofs and Tudor square headed windows. Marseille tile roofs were also a common Australasian characteristic of this style revival. The style was popular between the wars and therefore these Natusch buildings were seminal in their designs.

The house is constructed in timber framing with board and batten painted dark and light colours giving the architectural style of half-timber framing. Marseille tiles are the roofing material while the verandah framing is timber. The plan is compact around a central entrance and hallway. The public rooms are located on the ground floor while the bedrooms are on the upper floor.

The interior also has board and batten walls to the entrance halls but clear coated. The remainder of the interiors are generally lined with panel and battened ceilings with scrim and paper walls. The

original wall and ceiling papers have been retained in the billiards room and some bedrooms. Several ground and upper floor rooms have ornate fireplaces while the original timber cornices, skirtings, architraves and panelled doors also remain. The initials of the original owners are designed into the stained glass windows of the front entrance doors.

The original house has been modified to a limited extent by the original and subsequent owners. Early modifications include the extension and enclosing of the upper balcony and verandah underneath. The house is set in a large suburban section with extensive mature trees and large areas of lawn. There are several garages and outhouses towards the rear of the property.

No plans of the house have been sighted.

REVIEW OF REPORT

Based on a review of the report and viewing of Council files, the assessment undertaken in 2015 for this building is still applicable as at April 2021.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

The building has **moderate to high regional** significance for **physical, historic** and **cultural** heritage values.

The house has **high architectural** and **representative** values as an early, seminal example of the Edwardian Tudor style in the Manawatu that is consistent with the primary characteristics of the style including asymmetry, prominent gables, half timbering, Marseille tile roofing, leadlight glazing, casement windows, (originally) tall chimneys and Gothic detailing.

As an early example of the style, the house also has **high rarity** values.

The house has **moderate** levels of **authenticity**, with modifications to the interior planning carried out in recent years.

Having been built with the wealth earned from the Gorton companies, the house has **moderate** values in an association with the **group** of buildings in the region associated with the stock industry, particularly in and around Feilding including the Feilding Stockyards.

The house has **high associative** values with the Gorton family, successful auctioneers and stock and station agents in the lower half of the North Island from 1878. The house is also associated **highly** with the **pattern** of growth and development of the Manawatu and Rangitikei regions based largely on the success of sheep and cattle farming and which continues today.

Given the style and associations with the development of sheep and cattle farming in the region, the house has **high educational** values in the architectural and economic history of the Manawatu.

The house is listed as Category 2 with Heritage New Zealand.

SOURCE

HNZPT Field record form