

THE PINES – 7 Pines Court, Feilding



Architect: Charles Tringham?, R Thorrold-Jaggard, L G West, R Hood

Construction date: 1873¹ 1874-7, 1925

Visible materials: Timber cladding & joinery, corrugated steel roofing

Architectural style: Victorian Georgian/Italianate/English Domestic Revival

Use/building type: Residential

Date and Compiler: Ian Bowman, 2014; Val Burr, 1996

Heritage New Zealand listing:

Proposed Category: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

This house, which has been considerably added to over the years, was subdivided between 1972 and 1983. Now three privately owned apartments, the apartment with the historical significance is 7 Pines Court.

Built for Arthur William Follett Halcombe, the agent for the Emigrants & Colonists' Aid Corporation (E&CAC), and his wife Edith Stanway Halcombe (née Swainson), 7 Pines Court was completed by or during 1878. That year Edith Halcombe, an accomplished artist, prepared and dated a lithograph of the house for a book the couple produced. Some publications have erroneously claimed this picture was dated 1875 and as a result the present house has been said to date from 1874-5. As 7 Pines Court includes pit-sawn tōtara flooring, possibly it was built after the town's transportation difficulties eased. This problem was especially alleviated with the arrival of the railway in 1876.

In January 1874, at a time when Feilding consisted only of surveyors' tents, the first of the hundreds of E&CAC immigrants began arriving there to settle the Manchester Block. The 'New Zealand Mail' of 7 March 1874, in an extensive article on the new settlement, recorded that the town now

¹ This date was provided by the current owner.

consisted of an accommodation house under construction, a weatherboard store, and also a number of bark huts, tents and a bark barracks for the immigrants. In addition to these, "a temporary residence has been erected for Mr Halcombe". This then was the birth of 'The Pines'.

Edith Halcombe's picture shows a single-storey, hip roofed building attached to the back of the house and it seems likely that this was the 1874 temporary house. Plans dated December 1925 in the Manawatu District council's building permit files, show the outline of a timber roof or rooms protruding from the back of the main house. The room was in a similar position to the single storey part of the house as it was in 1878. Apparently the former kitchen, it was about to be dismantled and replaced.

Although the architect is unknown, the connection between A.W.F. Halcombe and his uncle, Sir William Fox, leads to a theory that Charles Tringham may have designed 'The Pines'. Tringham designed 'Westoe', at Kakariki, for Fox at about the same time and the two houses have similarities in style.

The Halcombes left Feilding in about 1881, however, they retained 'The Pines' until November 1886, despite often living elsewhere. A letter to Edith from her son J W F Halcombe, dated 13 October 1885, reveals that he was living there. He told her that 'The Pines' looked "simply beautiful" and that he thought there would be "a fair show of fruit this year". He also mentioned that the wisteria was on the verandah and that, as "Aunties boy" was ill, he and Cuff had to do all the work about the house.

The 'Feilding Star' of 18 November 1886, recorded that John Manson was about to take up permanent residence at 'The Pines'. The house was being prepared to receive him. Described as "a very large landed proprietor in various parts of the colony, (he had) lately purchased about a thousand acres adjoining the Borough of Feilding". Manson was a highly regarded, if "quiet and unassuming" Scotsman, who "took no part whatever in local affairs or general politics". He had apparently made his wealth in the drapery business on the gold fields of Victoria, Otago and Westland.

John Manson and his sister Isabella, who also lived at 'The Pines', were both unmarried. After John's death in 1890, Isabella remained on at the house that she had probably inherited. At the time of her death, she was also a wealthy landowner in her own right, as was another brother, Donald, of Edinckillie Park, in Rangitikei Line, Palmerston North. Isabella part-owned Edinckillie Park.

The Public Trustee sold 'The Pines' to Dr Daniel and Laura Johnston, following Isabella's death in April 1904. Dr Johnston, who had been practicing in Feilding since 1875, paid its rates in January 1905. He advised clients of his change of address in April 1905. In about 1911-12, Charles Featherston 'Smike' Johnston, who may have been a distant relative of Daniel Johnston, took over the house. A son of Sir Charles and Lady Johnston (née Featherston) of Wellington, 'Smike' Johnston was a keen farmer with significant land holdings at Makino and Kimbolton. A former rugby player of note and generally a 'thorough sportsman', he was also a keen devotee of horse-racing. During World War One he served in France, at which time he held a commission in the British Army. Two of his brothers, one a Brigadier-General, were killed in action in France. 'Smike' Johnston never married.

While in 'Smike' Johnston's ownership, the house underwent major renovations. Its building permit file includes the following:

- 1913 Additions including two water closets. Architect: C L Daniel, Feilding. Builder: T Collins.
- 1919 Brick washhouse. Brick coal shed and dairy. Bricklayers: Bending & Williams.
- 1919: Major alterations to house including removing old French windows and French doors, some of which were to be reused. Dormer window skylight on landing. Remove lavatory. Architect: R Thorrold-Jaggard, Palmerston North. (The entry in Thorrold-Jaggard's ledger for Contract 33, dates this job at March 1919 and the cost at £908.)
- 1925 Demolish timber building attached to house. Put two-storied brick building in its place (the new kitchen and the servants' quarters). Building consists of 2 bedrooms, bathroom and toilet upstairs and a kitchen and small sitting room downstairs. Install concrete water tank level with upstairs bathroom. Architect: Robin Hood, Palmerston North. Contractor: M P Carrington. £2,500.

After 'Smike' Johnston's death in 1939, the house was leased out by his estate until 1946. Tenants during that time included Gordon Elliot and his family. The new owners in 1946 were Dr Ross and Barbara Jones, despite the warnings of friends that the old house and its seven acres could prove an expensive liability. At this time the property was bounded by three streets, Kimbolton road, Warwick Street and Queen Street. The Makino Stream also flowed through it. Rather than a liability, however, the surplus land, once subdivided, proved a good investment.

The Jones' alterations over the years took the building to its present basic layout. These consisted of:

- 1948 Doctor's consulting rooms. Architect: L G West, Son & Callender, Palmerston North. This portion is now 6 Pines Court.
- 1967-8 Replaced 1925 brick kitchen and servants' quarters that had developed cracks, with new kitchen and upstairs rooms. This portion is now 72 Warwick Street. (This date is from Struan Jones as the item is undated on the permit files.)

The Jones' moved to a new home in 1972, although Dr Jones continued practising from the surgery until 1982-3. It was in about 1972 that the house was divided into two flats by Dr Jones and these were leased. The property was sold to M J Tunncliffe, of Fitzroy Finance Ltd, probably in the late 1970s, but certainly by 1983. Tunncliffe had the house and surgery placed into three separate titles. Since that time, 7 Pines Court has had a number of changes of ownership.

Two trees at 7 Pines Court have been listed in Appendix 1D of the Manawatu District Council's District Plan. These are a Titoki and a Chinese Hawthorn (although the latter has not been located). As of October 2022, the notable status of the Titoki is under review as part of a notable tree plan change. Three other trees associated with 'The Pines' are now listed under other addresses. These are a Sequoiadendron Giganteum or 'California Big Tree' that the Halcombes are said to have been planted, at 28 Kimbolton Road; a Tasmanian Blackwood at 2B Pines Court, and the larger of two Weeping Elms at 30 Kimbolton Road (not located).

Architect – Reginald Thorrold-Jaggard

Reginald Thorrold-Jaggard was born and educated in England. He received his articles there before emigrating to New Zealand in 1913. He settled in Palmerston North and soon met and married Lily

Daisy Collier who had been recruited in London by the local firm of Collinson and Cunningham as a dressmaker. Jaggard was initially in the employ of Oscar Jorgeson, a well known local architect, before setting up his own practice. In the ensuing years many local buildings and domestic dwellings were designed by Jaggard. Among those still standing are the former Hepworth Building (1917), King St Flats (1925), Square Edge (1945), Ward Brothers building (1936), Family Entertainment Centre, The Square (1935) and House, 314 Church St. The firm was carried on by his son Bill Thorrold-Jaggard who sold the business in 1962.

Ludolph Georg West (1846-1919) was born in Denmark and arrived in New Zealand in 1868 and shortly after arrival settled in Palmerston North. He married the daughter of a Johnsonville settler called Bannister. His first wife died in 1891 and he remarried in 1894. It was some years before West set up in practice as an architect but, in conjunction with his son Ernst Vilhem, he was responsible for a large number of Palmerston North's buildings. Among those still standing designed by the practice are the Former Club Hotel (1905), the Manawatu-Kilwinning Masonic Lodge (1908), the Old Soldiers Club (1917), the Church of Christ Scientist (1931) and Ward Brothers Building (1935). George West (he Anglicised his name) was Mayor from 1886-87, a borough Councillor and a prominent Freemason. His son Ernst was a borough Councillor 1921-25.

Architect² - Charles Tringham

Charles Tringham (1841-1916) was born in Hertfordshire, England and came to New Zealand in 1864 as a carpenter. For two years he was in partnership with a local builder, William Lawes but by 1867 he was advertising as an architect. He soon had contracts for houses, churches, hotels and commercial premises.

Early buildings designed included "Westoe" at Greatford, additions to William Clayton's former home for Queen Margaret College. He was listed as an architect in Wellington directories in 1869, 1872, 1877 and 1885-86 and was also active in the Manawatu, Wanganui, Rangitikei and the Wairarapa.

His practice appears to have been mainly domestic but included a number of churches, some hotels and commercial premises. As well as St Thomas's, he designed the Turongo Anglican Church at Moutoua in the mid 1860s, a Wesleyan church in Wanganui (1872), St Mark's Church, Wellington, (1876), All Saint's Foxton (1876). He also designed the New Zealand Shipping Company's Offices in Wellington and the original part of Oroua Wharo mansion near Takapau in 1879. No information is available regarding his education or training.

In 1885 he was appointed to the Committee of Aid and Advice for planning the New Zealand Industrial Exhibition and in 1895 he was President of Wellington Association of Architects. He owned land in Petone and was a shareholder in three Wellington goldmining companies.

He died in Featherston having retired from architecture to go sheep farming.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Of the small remaining exterior area of the original house, a combination of styles can be discerned. The upper level small paned casement windows suggest a Gothic style while the overall hipped roof

² Mew, G., Humphris, A., *Raupo to Deco, Wellington Styles and Architects 1840-1940*, Steele Roberts, 2014

form, ground floor double hung sash windows and symmetry of the east elevation suggest neo-Georgian. The tower with finial and brackets however, indicates a third style of architecture, Italianate. The modifications to the remainder of the house make it difficult to establish any original stylistic unity, if there ever was unity.

The modifications in the 1920's are also interesting in the elaborate English Domestic style, presumably by Robin Hood. The Georgian styled entrance was also presumably constructed at this time.

Based on an inspection of 1996 and a brief ground floor inspection of 2015, the interior layout of the house appears to have changed little except for the existing kitchen, which was once a corridor. The main entrance leads into the stair hall off which are the living room, open dining/kitchen, and 1920's enclosed verandah. The upper floor has a hall centred around the stair off which lead the bedrooms and bathrooms.

The living room, stair and entrance hall, dining area and main bedrooms appear to be from the period of original construction, while the bathrooms, and sun porch/bedroom appear to have been constructed in the 1920's. Original fabric from the original period appear to be the kauri flooring, stair, plastered ceiling to the entrance, and bay window.

The house is set back from the road with a wide driveway serving both houses. A garage has been built on the side boundary. The grounds are landscaped with mature trees and areas of lawn.

No plans of the building have been sighted and the other house was not inspected.

REVIEW OF REPORT

Based on a review of the report and viewing of Council files, the assessment undertaken in 2014 for this building is still applicable as at April 2021.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

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

The house has **moderate architectural** values as a substantial early Feilding house possibly designed by Charles Tringham. Modifications over time have changed its initial Italianate style to include Georgian, Italianate and English Domestic Revival.

The house has **low** levels of **authenticity** with many, significant changes over time.

The house has **moderate to high group** values as it is likely to be one of the largest surviving of the earliest houses constructed in Feilding.

The house has **high associative** values in its association with the Halcombe, Manson, Johnson and Jones families. The house is also associated with local architects L G West, C L Daniel, R Thorrold-Jaggard and Robin Hood.

The house has **high pattern** values as a substantial house built by a wealthy and successful businessmen intimately involved with the Manchester Block settlement.

Given the age and styles of the house, it has **moderate educational** values in the architectural and settlement history of the Manawatu.

SOURCES

Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Vol 1: 'The Hon Charles J Johnston', pp 252; 'Daniel Johnston' pp 1230; 'John Manson' pp 1242-3; Davies, D A & R E Clevely, *Pioneering to Prosperity 1874-1974: A Centennial History of the Manchester Block*, (Feilding, 1981) pp 19. Dept of Internal Affairs, *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume Two, 1870-1900*, (Wellington, 1993). Pp 184-6. Feilding Star: 'Mr Manson (moves to "The Pines")', 18/11/1886 2(5); 'Mr Halcombe left ...' 20/11/1886 2(4); 'Death of Mr John Manson', 7/8/1890 2(7); 'Coroner's Inquest', 9/8/1890 2(5); 'The Late John Manson', 12/8/1890 2(4); 'Land Sale at Palm Nth' 10/1/1893 2(7); 'Land Sale at Palm Nth' 12/1/1893 2(7); 'At "The Pines" yesterday ...(Isabella Manson)', 16/4/1904 2(4); 'Land Sale', 7/11/1904 2(7); 'Obituary (Donald Manson)', 2/1/1906 2(6). Feilding Star Scrapbook 1/3/1938-31/3/1939: 'Obituary, Mr C F Johnston' 7/1/1939. McCaw, 'Early Manawatu Land Settlement: Bunnythorpe to Palmerston North', series in the *Evening Standard*, 16/10/1971. *New Zealand Mail*: 'The Feilding Settlement', 7/3/1874 6(2-4) & 21(1). Saunders, B G R, *Manawatu's Old Buildings*, (Palmerston North, 1987) pp 10. Wise's *New Zealand Post Office Directories, 1912, & 1914*. Manawatu District Council: Building Consents Dept, Permit files; Archives, Feilding Borough Rate Books. Palmerston North Public Library: City Archives: R & W Thorrold-Jaggard Papers. Ledgers, Volume I, page 85.

NZ Historic Places Trust, Manawatu Committee: File on 'The Pines', including a brief hand-written history, mostly relating to the Halcombes' occupancy.
HPT Manawatu Committee No: 200054.

Interviews: Pat Ashton, Feilding (who also permitted access to Halcombe family papers, including letter dated 13/10/1885: J W F Halcombe to Pat's great grandmother, Edith Halcombe) (7/8/1996); Struan Jones, Feilding (8/8/1996); Dorothy Pilkington, Palmerston North (7/8/1996); Dr Dick Rawstron, Palmerston North (9/8/1996); Barbara Jones, Feilding (9/8/1996 & 11/8/1996).
Phone calls with current owner, Bruce Bruton, 2021 and 2022.

Legal Description: Flat 2 DP 55638 Having 1/3 Int in 1880 sq metres being Lot 1 DP 54457.
VNZ No: 14091/48200C
Certificates of Title: 24D/838 (Prior CsT include 24D/272).