

ROUND HOUSE & YORK TERRACE

(To the Editor)

Sir.—"Albuhera" seems a little astray in his remarks that T. G. Hirst paid the first donation to St Mary's Church. This building was erected in the middle 1840s; Mr and Mrs Hirst and their family arrived in the ship Gwallor in August 1852. Perhaps the writer could amplify this statement. Could he also give the year in which the houses were built—was it before or after the outbreak of the wars of the 1860s?

"BADAJOZ"

New Plymouth, December 5.

(To the Editor)

Sir.—Mr P. Connell's excellent thumbnail sketch of the Round House in last Saturday's Herald asks a question. And I can give more details. Mr Connell wondered at the change of the York Terrace name. This was an unofficial (or private) name, and so when the name York Crescent came into being in October, 1955, the one of the York Terrace went and was merged back to Pendarves Street.

Now the Round House. In reality it was an octagon with a central chimney. The sketch of Mrs Green's reproduced with Mr Connell's article greatly puzzled me. When this sketch was exhibited some two months ago in the Museum it was labelled Courtenay St. This must be incorrect. The Round House was on the west and the Square one (really oblong) on the east, the reverse of what Mr Connell and Mrs Green say.

So, if it is Courtenay St, then it must be the back view of the two houses. Otherwise it would be the Devon St view before the premises were moved to Courtenay St.

Originally the Round and Square houses had only a ground floor. That was all that came from England. The top floors were added some time after 1858. I do not know when the top storey was added to both places, if to both at the same time or if in Courtenay St, or before in Devon St. But I have a sort of recollection that Mr Skinner told me the tops were added when the houses were moved. The Round House had only two rooms on the ground floor, and the above were six bedrooms, the four being three-cornered and two rectangular. I have a photograph of the two single-storey buildings when in, and facing, the then Devon Line, of date 1858.

It is correct that Mr and Mrs Batten were in occupation—they being the grandparents of the aviatrix, Jean Batten—and it is said, but not confirmed, that Jean was born here.

I have quite a lot more about this truly quaint dwelling. What a great shame New Plymouth always rushes to demolish and regret after.

FRED B. BUTLER.

Sentry Hill, Dec. 5.