

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Hall-McCaul House

Address

181 Kairau Road East, Brixton



Statement of Significance

This house has heritage significance for its association with early Huirangi settler families the Hall's and the McCaul's. The rear section was purpose-built as a rural maternity hospital and is a very rare surviving example of its type. The building is an uncommon example of an authentic Georgian style box cottage in New Plymouth District and despite some modification, still retains a relatively high degree of external integrity which contributes positively to the historic character and rural aesthetic of the area.



Heritage Buildings Report

Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 9 DP 424270

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1882

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Ben Hall (builder)

History

This one-and-a-half story cottage was constructed by Benjamin Hall as his family home in 1882. Benjamin Hall married Fanny Isabella Bennett in 1873 at Binbrook, Lincoln, England. They emigrated to New Zealand aboard the *Clarence*, arriving in the Hawkes Bay on 05 January 1875.¹ They resided in Auckland for a time, before relocating to Taranaki, where in August 1882, Benjamin purchased the southern portion of Section 122, and the northern portion of Section 121, Waitara West District; the sections were sold as part of the deceased estate of William Halse Esq.² The original portion of the cottage is thought to have been constructed soon after the purchase of the section.

Fanny was a midwife, and attended to expectant mothers across the district. The rear portion of the cottage was constructed later as a maternity room where babies could be born under Fanny's care.³ Tragically, Benjamin died of pneumonia at the house on 30 August 1889 aged just 38 and is buried at Huirangi Cemetery.⁴ The death of Benjamin left Fanny to look after their nine children on her own.⁵ Ownership of the property was transferred to Fanny, and she and her children continued to farm the property.⁶ In 1896 the farm was enlarged through the purchase of the remainder of Section 122 from P? Sole.⁷

The property was leased to 'Johnstone' in August 1910, and boring rights, presumably for oil, were granted to Watkins and Fox in December 1911.⁸ In August 1912 the lease was transferred from Johnstone to Walter McCaul Snr, who eventually purchased the property in November 1918.⁹ Walter Snr resided on the property with his wife Martha and their children.¹⁰ In 1920, following the death

¹ Wilson, Peter Thomas. *Even the dogs have forgotten to bark: the events and people of Lepperton, Sentry Hill and Waiongona* (New Plymouth: P.T. & L.M. Wilson, 2012).

² Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

³ Wilson, Peter Thomas. *Even the dogs have forgotten to bark: the events and people of Lepperton, Sentry Hill and Waiongona* (New Plymouth: P.T. & L.M. Wilson, 2012).

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 31 August 1889, p.2

⁵ Wilson, Peter Thomas. *Even the dogs have forgotten to bark: the events and people of Lepperton, Sentry Hill and Waiongona* (New Plymouth: P.T. & L.M. Wilson, 2012).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Wilson, Peter Thomas. *Even the dogs have forgotten to bark: the events and people of Lepperton, Sentry Hill and Waiongona* (New Plymouth: P.T. & L.M. Wilson, 2012).



Heritage Buildings Report

Walter Snr, Walter Jnr and his wife Annie took over the farm.¹¹ Walter Jnr's son Walter (known as Lex), and his wife Edna, took over the farm following his return from the Second World War.¹² Later, Lex's son Ian and his wife took over management of the farm.¹³ In the 1930s the property was purchased by Owen and Rachael Hoskin, who farmed the property until the 1960s.¹⁴

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

Description

This building is located on the south-western side of Kairau Road East, in a rural setting east of New Plymouth. Despite being set back from the front boundary by about sixty metres, the building is still clearly visible from the road, and contributes positively to the rural aesthetic of the area. The original Waitara-New Plymouth line, opened in 1876, passes to the south-east of the original property.

The building is a simple one and a half storey, rectangular Georgian Box style cottage with a rear lean-to. The main front gable is moderately pitched, the roof sheathed in corrugated steel, and the cladding is plain horizontal weatherboard. The symmetrically composed front elevation faces south-east, and features a central front door, flanked by two simple casement windows that are replacements for the original twelve-light double-hung sashes. A bullnose post and rail veranda with decorative wooden fretwork runs the length of the frontage. The veranda is not present in a circa 1880s photo of the cottage, and may have been added in the 1900s.

The side elevations of the main gable each feature two windows; one on each floor. Originally these were twelve-light double hung sashes, but expect for the first-floor windows, have been replaced. Beneath a section of the main gable is a stone room used for skimming milk. The rear lean-to was added later and housed a maternity room used by Fanny when delivering babies; this is the only known surviving maternity hospital of this age and type in New Plymouth District, and a rarity nationally.

Assessment:

Historical	This house has heritage significance for its association with early Huirangi settler families the Hall's and the McCaul's. Many early settler children were also born at the cottage during its period of operation as a maternity hospital under Fanny Hall.	✓
Importance to Community	Many descendants of the Hall and McCaul families still live in the area and the house is highly valued by them.	✓
Architecture & Construction	A good example of a Georgian Box style cottage with later veranda and rear lean-to.	✓
Setting and Context	The cottage can be seen from the nearby road and railway line and contributes positively to the historic character and rural aesthetic of the area.	✓
Archaeology	As the building was constructed circa 1882, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900	✓

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.



Heritage Buildings Report

human activity and has the potential to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.

Representativeness, rarity and integrity

This building is an uncommon example of an authentic Georgian style box cottage in New Plymouth District, and a very rare surviving example of a rural maternity hospital of a type once common across New Zealand.

✓✓

Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)

✓

DRAFT