

Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Taranaki Jockey Club Sand Roll

Address

Pukekura Raceway, 1 Rogan Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

This sand roll is the last vestige of a stables complex constructed for the Taranaki Jockey Club in 1912-13. The building was designed by noted New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger, who served as the jockey club's architect from 1909 until 1917 and designed a number of buildings for the club; of which this is the sole survivor. The sand roll is an attractive building situated amongst mature trees and is still used for its original purpose. It is the only known building of this type and age to survive in New Plymouth, and is the oldest extant structure associated with the New Plymouth Racecourse/Pukekura Raceway.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 1 DP 9521

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1912-13

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals Frank Messenger (architect), W. J. Cleland (builder)

History

The first horse racing conducted on this site was the Taranaki Anniversary Races held on 30 and 31 March 1854.¹ Whilst racing continued annually, it would be almost 20 years before the Taranaki Jockey Club was established on 20 April 1873.² Prominent New Plymouth citizen and owner of the Taranaki Brewery, James Paul, was elected the Club's first Chairman; a position he would hold for some years.³ The first structures erected on the course during the late 1870s were mostly temporary, and it wasn't until the mid-1880s that the first substantial grandstand was constructed.⁴

Noted New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger was appointed architect to Taranaki Jockey Club in April 1909 and was the Club's first permanent architect.⁵ Prior to Messenger's appointment, it seems the club took an ad-hoc approach to design work, employing architects for specific projects. This approach drew some criticism in 1900-01, when the club overlooked local architects, and employed Wanganui-based Alfred Atkins to design the new main grandstand.⁶

Francis John Messenger was born on 4 July 1865, the second son of William and Arabella. Frank was educated in New Plymouth, and trained with local architect Henry J. T Edmonds, before moving to Melbourne, where he worked for Oakden and Kemp for ten years.⁷ In 1891, Messenger married his second cousin Lucy Messenger, before returning to New Plymouth in 1893; he commenced practice in New Plymouth the following year.⁸ Frank Messenger and Horace Victor Griffiths entered into partnership in 1917, with William Taylor joining in 1920.⁹ This partnership ceased in 1930, with Messenger and Taylor forming a new partnership; Leonard Wolfe later joined in a partnership that would last up until Messenger's death on 11 October 1945.¹⁰

Messenger's second major commission for the club was the development of a new stables complex in 1912-13. The original plans are held by Puke Ariki, and reveal the complex was an 'L' shape,

¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 22 March 1854, page 1

² *Taranaki Herald*, 23 April 1873, page 2

³ *Taranaki Herald*, 23 April 1873, page 2

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 11 April 1888, page 2

⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 April 1909, page 3

⁶ *Taranaki Herald*, 26 March 1901, page 2

⁷ Pritchard, Ian. *Frank Messenger, Architect: The work of a New Plymouth architect*. New Plymouth: Ian Pritchard, 1994.

⁸ Ibid.

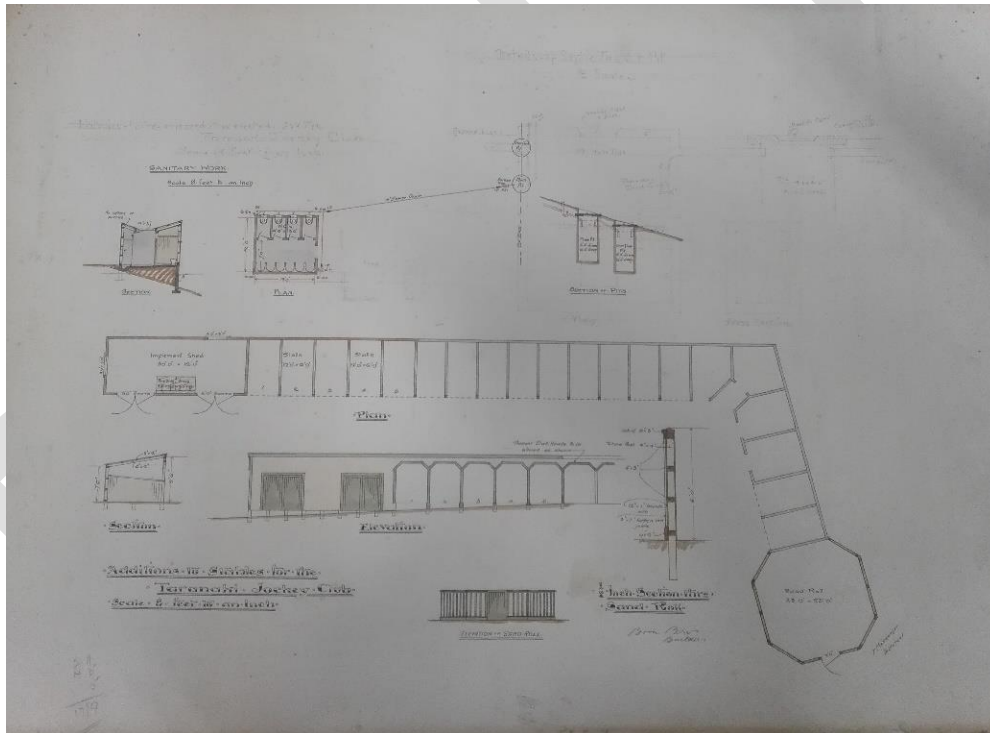
⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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incorporating store rooms, a number of loose boxes, and a sand roll.¹¹ Messenger advertised for tenders for the construction of the stables in October 1912.¹² Tenders were received from W. J. Cleland £148.10s, Coleman & Son £154, Boon Bros £169, and Grayling & Co £165.10.¹³ Cleland was the successful tenderer, and construction was under-way by December.¹⁴ However, it seems the sand roll and some of the stalls were not completed until 1913, with the Taranaki Herald reporting in November 1913 that a new sand roll had been constructed during that year.¹⁵

Other buildings designed by Messenger during his tenure as the Clubs' architect include: stables and a steward's stand in 1909; renovations to the totalisator house in 1911; an outside grand stand and new totalisator house in 1913; and additions to the Ladies Room in the grandstand in 1915.¹⁶ It seems Messenger vacated the position in 1917 when Thomas Herbert Bates was appointed club architect. The sand roll is now the only surviving structure associated with Messenger's tenure as Club architect and is also the oldest surviving structure associated with the New Plymouth racecourse; after more than a century the sand roll is still used for its original purpose.



Stables for the Taranaki Jockey Club showing floor plan, section, elevations and detail, October 1912, Puke Ariki, ARC2014-021

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

¹¹ Taranaki Jockey Club [plans], Frank Messenger, 1909-13, ARC2014-021, Puke Ariki

¹² *Taranaki Herald*, 21 October 1912, page 7

¹³ Pritchard, Ian. *Frank Messenger, Architect: The work of a New Plymouth architect*. New Plymouth: Ian Pritchard, 1994.

¹⁴ *Taranaki Daily News*, 28 October 1912, page 4

¹⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 15 November 1913, page 8

¹⁶ Pritchard, Ian. *Frank Messenger, Architect: The work of a New Plymouth architect*. New Plymouth: Ian Pritchard, 1994.



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Description

Nestled into the side of a low bank behind the Member's Stand, the sand roll is a single-story, wooden-framed octagonal building, clad in vertical rough sawn timber, with a corrugated steel roof. It is sited on concrete foundations, although it is unclear if these are original, as it is possible the building may have been relocated to its present position at a later date.

The exposed rafters are associated with the emerging bungalow style and were used by Messenger on his first bungalows designed the following year (i.e. Denny-Brown Residence at 40 Fillis Street). The two wooden entrance gates are modern replacements attached to new wooden posts.

The internal roof structure is a particular feature of the building, and is described by Ian Pritchard, architect and Messenger's biographer, as a "an example of a straight forward structural solution providing elegance".¹⁷ The lower portion of the internal walls are clad in horizontal rimu boards, whilst the upper portion is open to provide ventilation. Some of the internal boarding has been replaced with modern plywood.



The exposed internal roof structure

¹⁷ Pritchard, Ian. *Frank Messenger, Architect: The work of a New Plymouth architect*. New Plymouth: Ian Pritchard, 1994, page 36



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Assessment:

Historical	This building has historic significance as the last vestige of a stables complex constructed for the Taranaki Jockey Club in 1912-13 and has been in constant use for more than a century. It is now the oldest surviving structure associated with the New Plymouth Racecourse/Pukekura Raceway, and the only surviving structure associated with architect Frank Messenger's tenure as club architect.	✓
Importance to Community	-	
Architecture & Construction	The sand roll demonstrates local architect Frank Messenger's ability to design a wide variety of buildings. Features such as exposed rafters are associated with the emerging bungalow style and would be incorporated into Messenger's first bungalows constructed the following year. With its exposed roof structure, this building provides rare insight into timber construction methods for octagonal buildings.	✓
Setting and Context	Nestled into the side of a small bank and surrounded by shrubs and arching tree ferns, the setting is picturesque. Located behind the Members' Stand, the sand roll is highly visible to members of the public on race days.	✓
Archaeology	-	
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	This sand roll is the only known building of this type and age to survive in New Plymouth. Although once part of a much larger stables complex and subject to some modification, the sand roll still largely retains its original fabric and form.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓