

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME 'Holnicote', Mount Peel Station homestead
ADDRESS 775 Rangitata Gorge Road, Mount Peel, Peel Forest

PHOTOGRAPH



(TDC)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. No. 54 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 313 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 1 DP 42338

VALUATION NUMBER 2464002501

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1865-66

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Frederick Strouts, architect; Ben Ede, builder

STYLE Domestic Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Composite two- and one-and-a-half storey dwelling with irregular rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Gabled dormers and corbelled chimneys; limestone dressings around windows. Return verandas, with latticed posts, have cross-gabled sections with timber brackets and finials. Lancet arched vents in gable ends. Main roofs are slightly flared with timber brackets.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Stone foundations, brick walls with Mt Somers limestone dressings, timber detailing and slate roof.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Conservatory removed (1940s).

SETTING

The homestead is set within a mature garden and located at the western terminus of a long drive that comes off the west side of Rangitata Gorge Road, south of the bridge over Chapmans Creek. The Anglican Church of the Holy Innocents (1868-69, heritage item # 55) is located to the south of the homestead site. The extent of setting encompasses the garden setting of the homestead rather than the land parcel as a whole, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the entire property.

HISTORY

John Barton Arundel Acland (1823-1904) emigrated to New Zealand from England in early 1855 and within the year had taken up the Mount Peel, Mt Possession, Mt Somers and Orari Gorge runs. Initially in partnership with Charles Tripp, Acland, who had trained as a lawyer, retained the Mount Peel station when the partnership was dissolved in 1862. He was a member of parliament from 1865 until 1899 and a long standing chairman of the Mount Peel Road Board. Acland was also a lay member of the general synod of the Anglican church and he married Emily Harper, the eldest daughter of Bishop Harper, in 1860. The couple had ten children, three of whom died in infancy. The first dwellings on the homestead site were built in 1856/1858 to accommodate Tripp, Acland and their workers. Once John Acland was in sole possession of Mount Peel station, tenders for a brick homestead were called by Hawkes and Strouts of Christchurch in November 1864. John Acland named the homestead 'Holnicote' after the Acland family's ancestral estate in Somerset, England. The *Cyclopaedia* entry for Mount Peel records that the bricks were burnt on the property and the stone sourced from Mt Somers. At that time (c.1903) the station consisted of 5,000 acres of freehold and 100,000 acres of leasehold land and was carrying about 45,00 sheep. In 1904 John Acland was buried in the churchyard of the station church he built (Church of Holy Innocents, 1868-69). The Acland family, some of whom also developed distinguished off-farm careers, continue to own the property today.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has high historical significance for its association with John and Emily Acland, their family and descendants. One of Canterbury's early colonial sheep runs, Mount Peel station demonstrates the historical development and continuity of pastoralism in the region.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of generations of the Acland family in New Zealand.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has high architectural significance as an early residential work in the Domestic Gothic Revival style by Christchurch architect Frederick Strouts (1834-1919). Strouts trained in England and immigrated to New Zealand in 1859. He was in partnership with his brother-in-law James Hawkes until 1872 and his first known New Zealand house was 'Waitui' homestead for Angus Macdonald in 1861-62. The Aclands, Tripps and the Macdonald brothers were all known to one another as they pioneered pastoralism in South Canterbury; it therefore follows that Strouts would be engaged by Acland to design his house after he had done the same for Macdonald. Strouts went on to become one of Canterbury's leading architects in whose office a number of successful architects were trained. He also designed the first stage of Ivey Hall at Lincoln College (1878-80, H30/31), the Rhodes Convalescent Home in Christchurch (1885-87, demolished) and 'Otahuna' at Tai Tapu (1894-95) for Sir Robert Heaton Rhodes.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has high technological and craftsmanship significance for its mid-19th century brick construction and stone and timber detailing. Using materials sourced or made on site, in addition to imported slate and stone from Mount Somers, the builders achieved a high level of technical excellence on a remote site.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has contextual significance as the pivotal historic feature at Mount Peel Station and for its relationship with the Anglican Church of the Holy Innocents (heritage item # 55), which was also built by John and Emily Acland.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the homestead pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the structure's construction and the early colonial development of the wider property.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has high overall heritage significance to Mount Peel, Peel Forest and Timaru district as a whole. The homestead has high historical significance for its association with the Acland family since 1865 and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of all those who have lived and worked on the Mount Peel Station. 'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has high architectural significance as the work of leading 19th century Canterbury architect Frederick Strouts and high technical and craftsmanship significance for its brick construction and stone and timber detailing. 'Holnicote', the Mount Peel Station homestead, has contextual significance as the dominant historic feature at the Mount Peel Station and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of the homestead's mid-19th century date of construction.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 28 February 1876, p. 1; 28 June 1893, p. 2; 14 January 1909, p. 2.
- *Temuka Leader* 12 February 1880, p. 2; 1 December 1885, p. 2; 14 May 1896, p. 2; 14 March 1903, p. 2; 24 May 1904, p. 3; 22 February 1906, p. 2; 12 May 2007 (available online).
- *Press* 5 January 1866, p. 2; 26 April 1869, p. 2; 31 January 1871, p. 2; 22 March 1873, p. 2; 12 August 1933, p. 12.
- *Lyttelton Times* 11 November 1857, p. 5; 12 October 1859, p. 4; 22 April 1863, p. 6; 14 April 1864, p. 7; 30 July 1864, p. 1; 8 November 1864, p. 6; 4 May 1865, p. 6.
- *Marlborough Express* 22 September 1897, p. 4.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/313>
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/peel.htm>
- G Wilson 'Mount Peel Station 1856-1982: a historical study of the development of a high-country run in Canterbury, New Zealand' Lincoln College, University of Canterbury, 1982.
- GW Harte *Mount Peel is a Hundred – The Story of the first high country station in Canterbury* 1956.
- R Peden *Making Sheep Country – Mt Peel Station and the Transformation of the Tussocklands* Auckland, 2011.
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s49/strouts-frederick>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3a2/acland-hugh-thomas-dyke>
- HW Harper *Letters from New Zealand, 1857-1911* London, 1911.
- LGD Acland *The Early Canterbury Runs* Christchurch, 1946.



Extent of setting, limited to immediate garden environs, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values across the entire site, 775 Rangitata Gorge Road, Mount Peel, Peel Forest.



'Mt Peel Homestead, South Canterbury', undated. 1370-217-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.