

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Peel Forest Station/Estate homestead

ADDRESS 1 Brake Road, Peel Forest

PHOTOGRAPH



(HNZPT)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No. HHI160 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 314 / 1
(at time of assessment) Former No. 56

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Pt RS 3311

VALUATION NUMBER 2464004800

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION c.1860 + later 19th / early 20th century additions [?]

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Unknown

STYLE Colonial vernacular / English Domestic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two-storey building with irregular rectangular footprint and multiple gabled roof forms. Additive floor plan and elevations featuring multi-pane casement and double-hung sash windows. Square and faceted bay windows. Lean-to verandas and corbelled chimneys.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timber framing and cladding (board and batten and weatherboard), corrugated iron roofing.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Multiple additions (later 19th / early 20th centuries?).

SETTING

The homestead is set back from the road within a mature garden setting. Access is via a long drive from the intersection of Brake and Dennistoun Roads. A number of outbuildings are located to the north of the homestead. Kowhai Stream is to the west of the property and the village of Peel Forest is to the east. While the homestead cannot be seen from the roadway, the tree-lined avenue planting along Dennistoun Road serves to highlight the presence of a large, well-established rural property. The extent of setting is limited to the immediate garden setting of the homestead, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the land parcel as a whole.

HISTORY

Francis Jollie (1815-70) built the first stage of the Peel Forest Station homestead in c.1860. Jollie had arrived in New Zealand in early 1842 and initially settled in Nelson. There he farmed, was briefly the editor of the *Nelson Examiner* and, in 1848, became the Resident Agent for the New Zealand Company. After an unsuccessful campaign to become Nelson Provincial Council's first superintendent, Jollie left Nelson in 1853 and, in the same year, took up a run at Peel Forest. The first stage of the homestead was built by Jollie after his May 1859 marriage to Jane Cooper (c.1812-72), who was a widow with grown children whom he had met on the voyage back to New Zealand after a visit to England. Francis Jollie entered national politics in 1861 and was a minister in Stafford's short-lived government of 1866. After Jollie's death in 1870 the station passed to his step-son Edward Cooper, who let the homestead to Sir Thomas Tancred and then Arthur Hawdon. Both of these men were retired squatters. Cooper sold the station, by then, according to Acland, comprising about 7,000 acres of freehold and 12,000 acres of leasehold land, to Messrs Smith, Dennistoun & Co in 1878. About 13,000 sheep were then being run on the property according to Acland. George Dennistoun (c.1848-1921) was the managing partner and the only one to live on the station. By 1903 he was the sole partner and after Dennistoun went to England in 1914 the station was left in the hands of its overseers. Sales in 1904 and 1913 had reduced the estate to about 2,300 acres and, after the second sale, a new woolshed was built near the homestead. Dennistoun's younger son Commander George Dennistoun took over the estate after the death of his father. In 1923 a memorial window was installed in St Stephen's Anglican Church at Peel Forest, dedicated to George senior and his elder son James (1883-1916), who was a noted climber and died during World War I. The Dennistoun family still held the estate at mid-century. Since 1992 the property has been run as a deer stud farm. The homestead will feature in a tour of South Canterbury homesteads and gardens in November 2018.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Estate homestead has historical and social significance for its association with Francis Jollie and his family during the 1860s and, after 1878, the Dennistoun family. The homestead is also associated with the development of pastoralism in the South Canterbury high country. The additive nature of the building reveals the changing needs, taste and social life of its residents.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Estate homestead has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of the Jollie and Dennistoun families.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Estate homestead has architectural significance as a colonial vernacular dwelling that was sympathetically enlarged over several decades. Carpenter's Gothic Revival and English Domestic Revival style sections illustrate the later 19th and early 20th century evolution of the homestead. The designers are currently unknown.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Estate homestead has technological and craftsmanship significance for its timber construction and detailing. There are no builders or contractors currently known to be associated with the original construction or later additions to the building.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Estate homestead has contextual value as a historic feature within its mature garden setting. Dennistoun Bush, which is part of the Peel Forest Park Scenic Reserve, is to the north of the homestead site and was named for George Dennistoun senior.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the oldest sections of the house pre-date 1900 the building's site has potential archaeological value relating to the structure's construction and the colonial development of the property.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Peel Forest Station/Estate homestead has overall heritage significance to Peel Forest and Timaru district as a whole. The homestead has historical and social significance for its association with the Jollie and Dennistoun families and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former residents. The Peel Forest Station homestead has architectural significance as a colonial vernacular dwelling with later English Domestic Revival style additions and technical and craftsmanship significance for its timber construction and detailing. The Peel Forest Station homestead has contextual value as a local historic feature and its setting has potential archaeological value in view of the dwelling's pre-1900 origins.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 3 December 1870, p. 2; 26 March 1873, p. 2; 10 July 1874, p. 4; 24 January 1920, p. 10; 19 March 2012 (available online).
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- *Press* 3 December 1870, p. 2; 9 December 1870, p. 3; 2 August 1930, p. 13; 27 January 1934, p. 18.
- *Lyttelton Times* 9 April 1859, p. 3; 21 December 1872, p. 2.
- *Sun* 29 April 1918, p. 2.
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- *Ashburton Guardian* 30 April 1904, p. 4; 10 May 1921, p. 3.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/314>
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-AclEarl-t1-body-d6-d4.html>
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- <http://peelforestestate.co.nz>
- https://sites.google.com/site/marapito/jollie_10
- <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~nzbound/genealogy/clontarf.htm>



Extent of setting, 1 Brake Road, Peel Forest.



Land parcel with homestead marked by star.



'A familiar landmark in the Rangitata district: Peel Forest built in 1858 [sic]', *Auckland Weekly News* 31 May 1939, p. 47. AWNS19390531-47-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.