

**TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** former Mt Peel Station Musterers' Hut [Peter's Hut]  
**ADDRESS** Ben McLeod Station, Forest Creek / Rangitata Gorge Road, Peel Forest

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(HNZPT)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** No. 53      **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 7182 / 1  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Run 241

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2464001000

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** c.1865?

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Alexander McLeod, shepherd/builder?

**STYLE** Vernacular cottage

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Single-storey dwelling with rectangular footprint and gabled roof. Lean-to at west end opposite external chimneybreast at east. Central entry on northern elevation flanked by multi-pane windows.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Double-skin random rubble Greywacke stone walls, timber framing and corrugated iron.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Lean-to addition (?).

**SETTING**

The hut is located overlooking the south bank of Forest Creek, a tributary of the Rangitata River, west of Butler's Creek. The extent of setting is limited to the immediate environs of the hut, rather than the land parcel as a whole, notwithstanding the potential for archaeological evidence across the whole 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. The first dwellings on the Mount Peel homestead site were built in 1856/1858 to accommodate Tripp, Acland and their workers. Huts at sites remote from the homestead were built to house shepherds who managed stock in the absence of fences. Early head shepherds on the property included Alexander McLeod, whose abode was given as 'Forest Creek, Rangitata' in April 1866. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the station consisted of 5,000 acres of freehold and 100,000 acres of leasehold land and was carrying about 45,00 sheep. The leasehold of Run 241, on which the musterers' hut is located, was taken up Messrs McInnes and South in 1912 and became the Ben McLeod Station. In c.1919 the lease was bought by the Barker family, who held it through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century the hut was still in use by the station's musterers.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has high historical significance for its association with one of Canterbury's early colonial sheep runs. The hut also has an indirect association with Samuel Butler, who built a hut at the confluence of Forest Creek and Butlers Creek in c.1860, before taking up the Mesopotamia run. One of the windows in the former Mount Peel musterer's hut is said to have come from Butler's V-hut.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of the shepherds who worked on the Mount Peel and Ben McLeod sheep stations.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has architectural significance as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular hut. Alexander 'Sandy' McLeod was the shepherd at Forest Creek in the mid-1860s, mustering Mount Peel and Ben McLeod, and he is thought to have built the hut.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has high technological and craftsmanship significance for its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century construction and detailing. Using stone sourced at the site, the hut retains a high level of authenticity.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has contextual significance as a historic feature within the Timaru high country. There are a large number of Department of Conservation huts in the neighbouring Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Park, but the former Mount Peel musterers' hut remains in private ownership and use.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the hut 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**

The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has high overall heritage significance to the South Canterbury high country and Timaru district as a whole. The hut has high historical

significance for its association with the early development of the Mount Peel Station and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of the shepherds who lived and worked on it. The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has architectural significance as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular structure and high technical and craftsmanship significance for the quality and authenticity of its stone construction. The former Mount Peel Station musterers' hut has contextual significance as a historic feature in the high country landscape and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of the hut's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date of construction.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

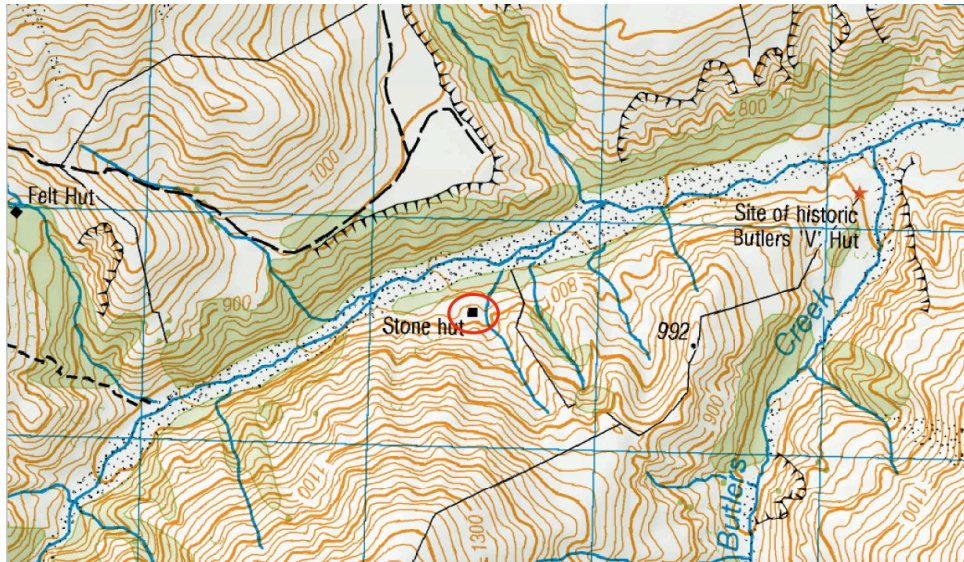
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## REFERENCES

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- *North Canterbury Gazette* 30 June 1933, p. 11.
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- 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.
- HW Harper *Letters from New Zealand, 1857-1911* London, 1911.
- LGD Acland *The Early Canterbury Runs* Christchurch, 1946.
- See also 'Holnicote', Mount Peel Station homestead research file (heritage item #54).



Aerial view of hut.



Hut site marked on NZ Topo map.



Land parcel as a whole with approximate location of the stone hut marked by star.



Detail of SO 4938, dated 22 June 1912, showing 'Peter's Hut' (stone hut) to the west of Butler's Creek. LINZ.