

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Blackett's Lighthouse  
**ADDRESS** Coastal / railway Reserve, near east end of Benvenue Avenue, Timaru

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(HNZPT)

**FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No.** No. 11      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 2044 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Pt Opukuorakaitauheke Maori Reserve 884 Block

**VALUATION NUMBER** n / a

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1877-78

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** John Blackett, marine engineer

**STYLE** Maritime vernacular

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Three-level tapering lighthouse with rectangular footprint and lantern roof. Pedimented door and windows, braced balcony at third floor has X-shaped balustrading.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Timber framing and weatherboards; copper lantern.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Decommissioned (1970). Relocated (1980 & 2010).

**SETTING**

Blackett's lighthouse stands on a coastal / railway reserve above the Benvenue Cliffs and close to the eastern terminus of Benvenue Avenue in the suburb of Maori Hill. The Caroline Bay Trust Aoraki Centre and Tennis South Canterbury courts are to the south-west of the lighthouse site, with Caroline Bay and the Port of Timaru along the coastline to the south. The extent of setting is limited to the immediate setting of the lighthouse, rather than the land parcel as a whole. This is consistent with the Heritage NZPT list entry's map of extent.

## **HISTORY**

A lighthouse was erected in Le Cren's Terrace (7 The Terrace) by the Marine Department in 1877-78. On the same site was a flagstaff and a contemporary cottage for the keeper, the latter was replaced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The light was the port's principal navigation beacon when it was built, having replaced two earlier 'lighthouses'. After some delay the light was first lit on 1 July 1878. Originally the light was powered by kerosene; later gas (1890) and electricity (1920) did the job. The lighthouse functioned until August 1970, after which it was decommissioned and new lights were erected above Dashing Rocks. The former lighthouse was then gifted by the harbour board to the city council and relocated to Maori Park where it became the rear leading beacon for entry in to the port. The lighthouse was moved again in 2010 to accommodate development at the park. It now stands on the coastal reserve, east of the railway reserve that runs along the coastline. The lighthouse no longer provides a maritime function.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has historic significance for its association with the development of the port of Timaru and, more generally, the 1870s 'boom' in lighthouse construction around New Zealand. The structure's relocation on two occasions demonstrates a common pattern with New Zealand's historic lighthouses.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has cultural value as a place of community identity and historic continuity.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has aesthetic significance as a mid-Victorian lighthouse designed by John Blackett (1818-93), who was born and trained as an engineer in England. Blackett emigrated to New Zealand with his wife in 1851 and after a period farming in Taranaki he was appointed provincial engineer of Nelson in 1859. In 1870 Blackett was appointed acting chief engineer for New Zealand. During his tenure (1871-89) as the government's marine engineer Blackett was responsible for erecting 14 lighthouses around New Zealand. At the same time, he was also assistant engineer in chief, engineer in charge of the North Island, and, finally, engineer in chief for New Zealand (1884-89).

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has technological significance as a demonstration of mid-Victorian maritime technology and construction.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has contextual value as a historic feature above the Benvenue Cliffs. It provides the terminal vista looking east along Benvenue Avenue.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the lighthouse has only been in its present location since 2010, any potential archaeological values of the site would likely relate to its earlier use and development, including the mid-1870s construction of the adjacent railway line.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Blackett's lighthouse has overall heritage significance to Timaru and the district as a whole. The lighthouse has historical significance for its association with the development of the port of Timaru and cultural value as a place of community identity. Blackett's lighthouse has

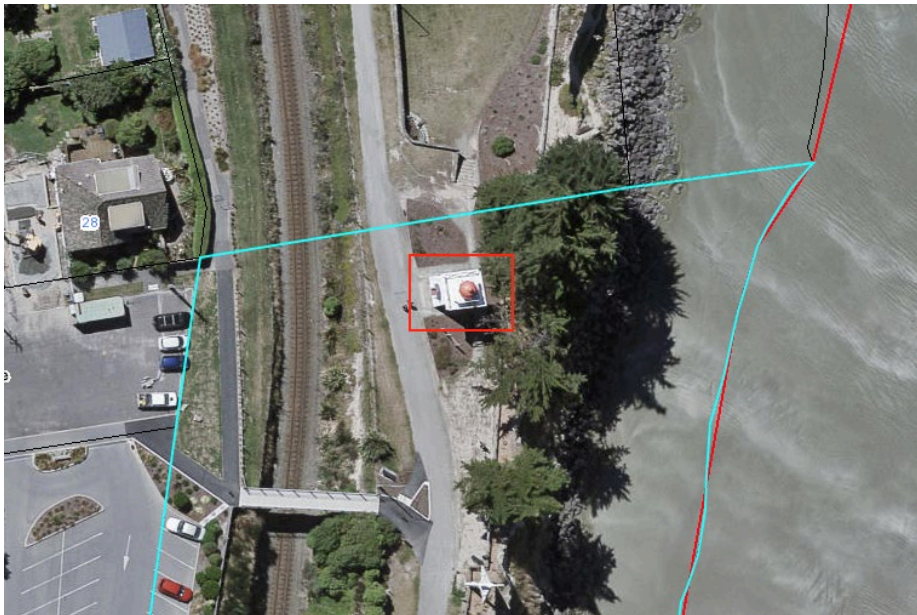
aesthetic significance for its design by maritime engineer John Blackett and technological significance for its mid-Victorian lighthouse technology. Blackett's lighthouse has contextual value as a historic coastal feature; any potential archaeological values would likely relate to the site's pre-1900 use and development.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

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## REFERENCES

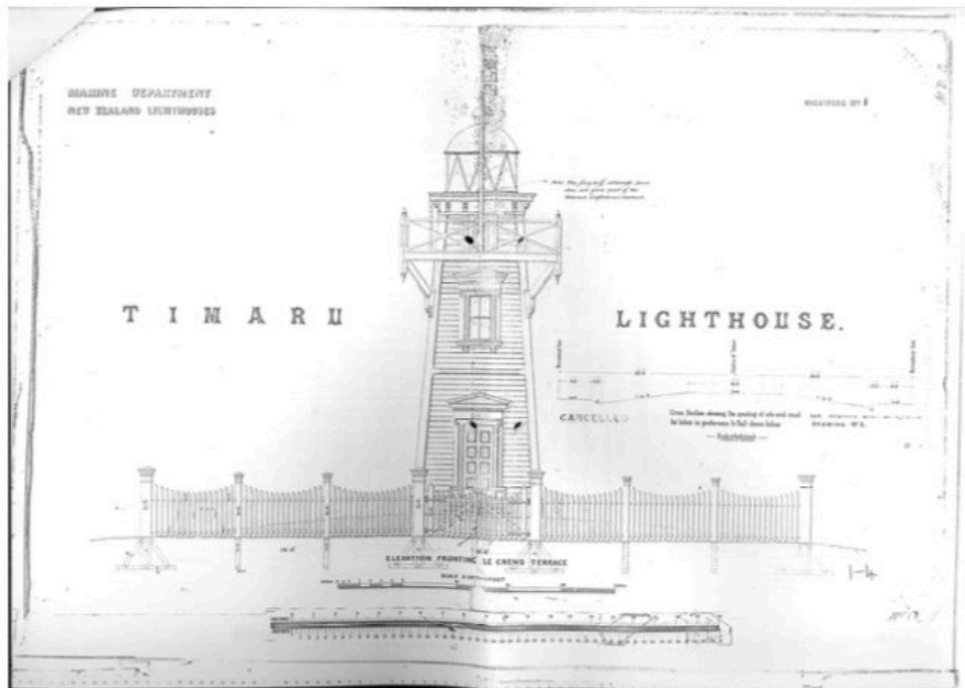
- *Timaru Herald* 8 May 1869, p. 5; 17 August 1877, p. 3; 5 September 1877, p. 2; 3 December 1877, p. 2; 4 December 1877, p. 3; 14 December 1877, p. 3; 30 April 1878, p. 3; 22 March 1882, p. 2; 3 April 1913, p. 6; 2 December 2010 (available online).
- *Press* 29 April 1878, p. 2; 30 June 1896, p. 4.
- *Star* 1 March 1876, p. 2.
- *Ashburton Guardian* 13 July 1896, p. 2.
- *Lyttelton Times* 28 February 1877, p. 1; 27 June 1903, p. 7.
- *West Coast Times* 4 May 1878, p. 2.
- *Marlborough Express* 18 March 1876, p. 5.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2044>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1b23/blackett-john>



Extent of setting, limited to immediate setting and consistent with HNZPT list entry, coastal / railway reserve, east end of Benvenue Avenue, Timaru.



Land parcel as a whole with lighthouse marked by star.



Drawing No. 1 Timaru [Blackett's] Lighthouse for its original position. [Note: this is one of a set of drawings held in NZHPT file 12016-004].

HNZPT list report.