

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** 'Tighnafeile', former Matheson Residence

**ADDRESS** 62 & 62A Wai-iti Road, Timaru

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(www)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** New                      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** n / a  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Lots 1 & 2 DP 30367

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2495058001 & 2495058100

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1911-12

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Walter Panton & Son, architects; T Pringle, builder [?]

**STYLE** Jacobean Revival villa

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Two-storey building with rectangular footprint and hipped and gabled roof forms. Symmetrical north-facing facade has return veranda with gabled entry; twin Jacobean style gables frame first floor balcony. Casement and fanlight type windows. Multiple corbelled chimneys, west elevation also features a Jacobean gable. Veranda is terminated on west elevation by a boxed bay window. Exposed rafters, paired veranda posts, centre gutter roof. Ball atop gable ends, which are set with textured circular decorative motifs with keystones.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Brick, cement plaster, timber, slate.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Internal alterations (various).

**SETTING**

The property is located on the south side of Wai-Iti Road, between Wilson Street in the west and Le Cren Street in the east. The house is set back from the roadway and can be seen from the public domain beyond entrance gates and a formal garden. The Aigantighe Art Gallery is on the opposite side of Wai-Iti Road, slightly to the east. The extent of scheduling encompasses the two land parcels on which the house and garden are located, partly in order to manage the potential effects development would have on the house.

## **HISTORY**

'Tighnafeile' was built by John and Agnes Matheson of Simon's Pass Station near Lake Pukaki. The Mathesons had farmed in the Mackenzie Basin since c.1878 and built 'Tighnafeile' as a town house. The name of the house is Gaelic for 'House of Welcome'. After John Matheson's death in 1914 his widow Agnes continued to live in the house until her death in 1934. TJ Seay, of Mount Dalgety Station south of Burke's Pass, then owned the property, subdividing three residential lots off the Jackson Street frontage of the house site in 1938 (DP 11415). In the same year the house was for sale by tender; the sales advertisement noting that the house could be converted in to flats. By August 1941 the house was known as the 'Red Gables Guest House' and three years later it was on the market as a gentleman's residence or, once again, it 'could easily be converted in to flats'. The house was owned for a number of years by contractor Edwin Brookes and his wife Florence. In 1972 the house and garden plots were subdivided by Bernard and Sarah Stowell. More recently 'Tighnafeile' has been both a boutique guest house and a single-family home.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile' has historical significance for its association with the Matheson family and the development of suburban Timaru. The house represents the wealth and social standing of South Canterbury's runholders in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and a pattern of conversion of some of the town's large-scale upper-class homes to other uses in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile' has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of the Mathesons and later owners and the social life they enjoyed while in residence.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile' has architectural significance as the work of successful Timaru architect Walter Panton. Panton (1848-1931) was born and served a building apprenticeship in England. After a period in the United States he reportedly lived in Australia before commencing work as a builder and architect in Southland in c.1895. Having worked for a time in Dunedin Panton was practising in Timaru by 1905; his son Victor (c.1887-1946) joined him in practice in 1909. Walter Panton was accepted as a Licentiate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1911 and both father and son registered as architects in New Zealand in 1914. The firm was also responsible for the additions to the Empire Hotel on Church Street (1906); its most notable commission was arguably the Timaru Public Library and Borough Council offices (heritage item # 48).

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile' has technological and craftsmanship value for its brick and slate construction and plaster detailing. It may have been built by Thomas Pringle (1847-1923), who was a Scottish-born builder and contractor who spent some time in the United States before emigrating to New Zealand in 1878.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile' has contextual significance as a local landmark within the suburb of Maori Hill. The combination of large early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses, including 'Aigantighe' (c.1905, heritage item # 12) on the opposite side of Wai-Iti Road, and more modest, mid-century housing provides evidence of the development of this part of suburban Timaru.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the house post-dates 1900 any potential archaeological significance its site may have would likely relate to the colonial development of the Maori Hill area. The block of land

between Wilson Street, Wai-Iti Road, Le Cren and Cameron Streets was first subdivided in 1877.

### **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

'Tighnafeile', the former Matheson residence, has overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The house has historical significance for its association with John and Agnes Matheson and the suburban development of Timaru and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its former residents. 'Tighnafeile' has architectural significance as a Jacobean Revival style villa designed by successful Timaru architect Walter Panton and technical and craftsmanship value for its brick and slate construction and plaster detailing. 'Tighnafeile' has contextual significance as a local landmark and in relation to other notable early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses in the area. As 'Tighnafeile' post-dates 1900, and its site was likely vacant before the Matheson developed it, the property may have limited archaeological value.

### **HERITAGE CATEGORY**

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### **REFERENCES**

- *Timaru Herald* 18 February 1909, p. 7; 21 September 1911, p. 2; 13 September 1913, p. 3; 7 May 1914, p. 3; 22 October 2011 & 19 March 2013 (available online).
- *Press* 20 August 1934, p. 2; 7 May 1938, p. 3; 20 May 1938, p. 2; 26 November 1938, p. 25; 2 August 1941, p. 12; 30 September 1944, p. 9.
- *Evening Post* 30 May 1925, p. 11.
- *Temuka Leader* 31 March 1927, p. 3.
- *Lyttelton Times* 7 May 1914, p. 1.
- *Nelson Evening Mail* 15 May 1914, p. 4.
- *Gisborne Herald* 28 May 1948, p. 6.
- <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/Panton.htm>
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Extent of setting, 62 & 62A Wai-Iti Road, Timaru.