

COTTAGE: No 4 Brown Street (Albuhera)

The small vertical board residence, 4 Brown Street, has, since 1950, been known as Albuhera Cottage.

The name was bestowed by the late owners Mr and Mrs W J Baldock who lived in the property from c1932 to the mid 1970's (?)

The history of the building is confused and some aspects appear to be supposition.

1. It has been widely believed that the house was built in c1863 as living quarters for the farriers of the 57th Regiment and named "Albuhera" after a battle in the Peninsula Wars in which the regiment obtained honours.
 - 1.1 The link with farriers was based on the finding of a shingle surface on part of the section of the sort "that would be found in horse corrals".
 - 1.2 The date of 1863 was based on a penny of that date found in the framing of the cottage.
 - 1.3 The link with the 57th Regiment was based on the finding of 57th Regiment buttons on the site.
2. , The cottage has been added to over the years as recorded by Mr Baldock.
 - 2.1 "Found that the cottage to be in 3 sections. Main room and small bedroom, original cottage; large bedroom and dinnette, second part; laundry bath(room) and W.C., third part."
 - 2.2 In c1891 timber and a door ex Marsland Hill barracks were used in repairs. The door (8ft x 4ft x 4 inches)

now forms the pantry floor.

3. The building does not appear to be on its original site and, at very least, has been moved through 90° to its present position (see 1880 map attached) to align with Brown Street (formed in c 1865).
4. As the military association cannot be confirmed from available data it is probably not historically ethical to stress this particular point, although military use of the section is certain and of the cottage is possible.
5. The cottage, in its original form, bears much more resemblance to those supplied by the Taranaki Provincial Government to new settlers in the town.
 - 5.1 The enclosed plan and photograph shows such cottages.
 - 5.2 As a relatively unaltered example of this type of lower socio-economic housing, 4 Brown Street, is an important survivor of 19th century New Plymouth as most such houses quickly became 'undesirable' as community living standards rose in the mid 20th century.
 - 5.3 The cottage, therefore, more accurately reflects the living conditions of the majority of 19th century New Plymouth residents.
6. The original portion of 4 Brown Street, undoubtedly dates from the mid decades of the 19th century (1850-1870) with subsequent additions probably made soon after or during that period.