



Heritage Buildings Report

Site ID

Building/Site Name

Overdale

Address

1/130-6/130 Carrington Street, New Plymouth



Statement of Significance

'Overdale' has considerable heritage significance for its almost fifty-year association with prominent New Plymouth businessman, borough councillor and mayor, Richard Cock Jnr. Richard Cock was a key pioneer in the Taranaki butter industry and held senior positions in a number of important local organisations. The building is a relatively intact example of the architect-designed suburban villas constructed for wealthy clients in New Plymouth's outer suburbs during the late nineteenth century and was well-known as a venue for social gatherings and fundraising events.



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Legal Information and Heritage Status

Legal Description Lot 1 DP 9183

District Plan Item/ Map No.

Heritage New Zealand List Not listed

Construction Information

Date of Construction 1889

Principal Materials Wooden framing, weatherboard, corrugated steel

Construction Professionals James Sanderson (architect), George Cliff (builder)

History

This large single-story villa was constructed in 1889 as the family residence of prominent New Plymouth businessman, city councillor and one-term mayor Richard Cock Jnr, and his wife Alice. Richard Cock Jnr was the son of early settler and New Plymouth's first signal master Richard Cock Snr and his wife Eleanor Julian. He was born at New Plymouth in 1851 and was one of eleven children. He began his formal education at age eleven, attending Mr Crompton's School on the corner of Dawson and Fulford Streets¹ In 1864 he joined the 43rd Regiment, and was involved in events at Tataraimaka during the Second Taranaki War.² Cock left the militia and for fifteen years worked for chemist, and later wine and spirit merchant, Dr Humphries.³ In 1875 he opened his own shop on Brougham Street, and a year later married Alice Taylor.⁴ In 1880 opened a second premises called the 'West End Store', in Devon Street West (present 229 Devon Street West).⁵ Mr Cock's main business was the export of butter, but he was also involved in general retailing.

Cock was heavily involved in both the commercial and civic spheres of New Plymouth. He was a successful pioneer in the butter industry, being a director of the Ridd Company in New Zealand and Australia, one of the first directors of the Moturoa Freezing Works, and a key person involved in the foundation of the Crown Dairy Company; at one point the largest exporter of butter in New Zealand.⁶ Cock was also at various points both a member and chairman of the Taranaki Harbour Board; a founding member and later director of the New Plymouth Sash and Door Company; chairman of the Loan and Mortgage Company; chairman of the Taranaki Hospital Board; president of the New Plymouth Savings Bank (now TSB); was several times chairman of the Recreation Grounds Board (Pukekura Park); a founder and president of the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce; a steward of the Taranaki Jockey Club, and co-founder of New Plymouth's first Bowling Club on Brougham Street.⁷ Richard Cock was a New Plymouth Borough Councillor for ten years, and from 1903 until 1906 served as New Plymouth Mayor.⁸

In 1882 Richard Cock purchased part of New Plymouth's original Town Belt from Henry Young.⁹ This property was bounded by present Carrington Street (then known as Victoria Road) in the east, and

¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 May 1936, page 5

² *Taranaki Herald*, 19 November 1894, page 2

³ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 May 1936, page 5

⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 19 November 1894, page 2

⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 17 December 1880, page 3

⁶ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 May 1936, page 5

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand



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by the Huatoki Stream in the west; the top end of Mill Road was yet to be formed. Cock wasn't to build on the section until 1889, when in May of that year, well-known New Plymouth architect James Sanderson advertised for tenders for "the erection of villa residence for Mr R. Cock".¹⁰ It was later reported in the Taranaki Herald that local builder George Cliff's tender of £770 was accepted for its construction.¹¹ It is unclear exactly when the villa was completed, but likely by late 1889 or early 1890. The first mention of the name 'Overdale' being used in connection with the house is in December 1890, when Mrs Cock advertised for a General Servant at 'Overdale'.¹²



Overdale circa early 1900s, Puke Ariki, LN1869, A.2c.19

In 1894, the Taranaki Herald published a column detailing the life of Richard Cock Jnr, and included a rich description of "Overdale". On entering the property "the visitor passes through a literal parterre and then comes to as pretty a lawn as was ever seen".¹³ Overlooking the lawn is "a structure in the Neapolitan Villa style, with summer houses and ferneries as outposts, gives one an idea of Utopia".¹⁴ At the bottom of the garden was an artificial pond, and above, an orchard with "plums, peaches, apricots, apples, guavas, citrons, lemons, cherries, oranges and other fruit..." behind the villa were "exceptionally well-built stables" and a dairy.¹⁵ Water for the garden was obtained from the Huatoki, being pumped over a distance of about three hundred yards.¹⁶ The 'pride of Mr Cock' was a flagstaff from the original Mt Eliot signal station, manned by his father, which he purchased at auction following demolition of the signal station, and had erected in a conspicuous spot in his garden.¹⁷

The property and its extensive gardens quickly became known for its social functions, and these events frequently received favourable reports in the local press. The first reported mention of such a function occurred in August 1891, when Mr and Mrs Cock held a social function for about fifty guests, where "dancing and other indoor amusements were kept up with unabated vigor till an advanced hour

¹⁰ *Taranaki Herald*, 16 May 1889, p.3

¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 5 June 1889, p.2

¹² *Taranaki Herald*, 6 December 1890, page 3

¹³ *Taranaki Herald*, 19 November 1894, page 2

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

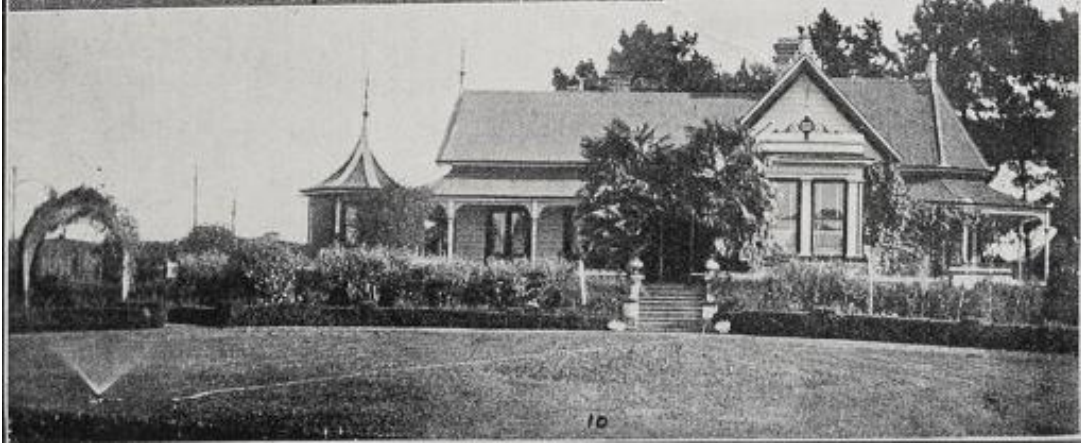
¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

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in the morning”.¹⁸ Richard’s business interests also brought him into contact with a range of prominent business and political persons who would visit the property when in New Plymouth; one such visitor in August 1893 was the wife of the late Premier John Seddon, who had died in office several months earlier.¹⁹ The garden also played host to a number of recitals and concerts associated with fundraising initiatives. In 1901, a concert was held to raise funds for the New Plymouth Museum, and in 1916, a patriotic band recital was held by the Citizens Band to raise funds for troops fighting overseas.²⁰



Overdale circa 1914, Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News 26 February 1914

With Mrs and Mrs Cock getting older, and New Plymouth experiencing rapid growth, the decision was made in 1920 to subdivide the property into 41 suburban building lots, and to also form the upper portion of Mill Road.²¹ This subdivision drastically reduced the size of the Overdale garden from over seventy acres, to just over two acres. During the 1920s, the present block of Vogeltown shops were beginning to take shape. The first of these shops constructed was 134 Carrington Street, designed by noted New Plymouth architect Frank Messenger for Mr Cock in 1920.²² Several other shops were added during the 1920s, with the most recent block of shops constructed in the 1960s.

Mr and Mrs Cock lived at Overdale until their deaths; Alice in 1934, and Richard in 1936. Upon Richards’s death, the Taranaki Herald honoured “one of the last and finest representatives of the old pioneering generation” with a half-page obituary detailing his life and acknowledging his immense contribution to the development of Taranaki.²³

Reference Sources

See footnotes.

¹⁸ *Taranaki Herald*, 22 August 1891, page 2

¹⁹ *Taranaki Herald*, 10 August 1893, page 2

²⁰ *Taranaki Daily News*, 4 December 1901; *Taranaki Daily News*, 6 September 1916, page 1

²¹ DP3938, Land Information New Zealand

²² NPBC Building Register Book 1902-22, Puke Ariki Archives (ARC2011-204)

²³ *Taranaki Herald*, 28 May 1936, page 5

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Description

As a villa residence with genteel aspirations, Overdale is probably best described as a vernacular colonial variation of the Queen Anne style. The building is essentially single story, although part of the original roof space has since been converted into living space. It was designed by a well-respected local architect as a fashionable suburban residence for a client of some importance in local political, social and business circles.

The basic form of the villa borrows from Sanderson's earlier 'Wareham Homestead' (1883), and 'Hylton Crest' (1886), although the layout is somewhat more complex and incorporates several projecting gables and a turret. The main structure consists of three gables of differing proportions; two following a north-south orientation, and another wider front gable on an east-west orientation. The western north-south gable extends beyond the east-west front gable and is finished with a square bay window fitted with two large six-light sashes, and two slender two-light sashes. Much of the original detailing, including simple pilasters, finial, the construction date, and other decorative carvings have been lost from the bay window.

An unusual east-west canted gable (that wouldn't look out of place in a chancel), is located at the western front corner of the building. At the eastern rear corner of the building there is a small east-west gable that probably housed a washhouse or similar. Originally the apexes of the gables were decorated with wood and wrought steel finials, although these have since been removed. The cladding is principally rusticated weatherboard, although small sections of the building are now clad in fibre-cement sheet.

Originally, an open, post and beam veranda with a curved corrugated steel roof and decorative cast iron fretwork wrapped around the much of the house. The fretwork has long since been removed, and a small section of the veranda near the original front door is the only part to remain open. The eastern side veranda is now enclosed, and the western veranda around the canted gable has been completely removed.

One of the most interesting features of the home is a small single-story octagonal turret with a pointed roof, located at the north-eastern corner of the building. Unusually, the turret is located on the outside edge of the veranda, rather than being incorporated into the building's main living space. Seven sides of the turret are glazed with slender double-hung sashes, and entry is gained through a door in the side closest to the veranda.

Whilst the loss of some of the original exterior decoration means the building doesn't quite exude the lavishness that it did when first constructed, it still retains a number of features which make this home unique. Subdivision of the original property, and the construction of shops on the eastern boundary means that it is difficult to view the building in its entirety; although the frontage can still be viewed from the Carrington Street entrance.



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Assessment:

Historical	This building has considerable heritage significance as the residence of prominent New Plymouth citizen Richard Cock Jnr for almost half a century. Richard Cock was a key pioneer in the development of the Taranaki dairy industry; arguably the most important contributor to the Taranaki economy for the last 130 years. Cock was also involved in the early development of the Taranaki oil industry, and strongly involved in local politics as a Borough Councillor and later Mayor of New Plymouth. The building was designed by capable local architect James Sanderson.	✓
Importance to Community	For almost fifty years Overdale was an important location for social gatherings, fundraising, and patriotic events.	✓
Architecture & Construction	This building is an excellent example of a vernacular colonial variation of the Queen Anne style.	✓
Setting and Context	Whilst Overdale is still visible from Carrington Street and thus continues to contribute to the historic character of the area, the construction of shops along much of the frontage somewhat diminishes its streetscape value.	✓
Archaeology	As the villa was constructed in 1889, the property likely has archaeological evidence relating to pre-1900 human activity and has the potential to reveal information about the past through archaeological investigation.	✓
Representativeness, rarity and integrity	This building is a representative example of the villa residences constructed on the outskirts of New Plymouth during the 1880s and 1890s for wealthy local citizens. Although it has lost some original exterior detailing, the building still largely retains its original form and a number of key architectural features.	✓
Meets threshold for listing (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓