

## Heritage Buildings Report

**Site ID**

**Building/Site Name**

Wareham-Morris Homestead (Former)

**Address**

976 South Road, Oakura



### Statement of Significance

Constructed in 1883 for Tapuae settler George Wareham, this picturesque villa residence has been home to several significant local families including the Morris', Wood's and Henschman's. The building is highly valued by the community, especially by the descendants of Frederick and Emily Morris, some of whom still live in the area. The building was designed by capable local architect James Sanderson and is a good and representative example of the architect designed villas constructed on the outskirts of New Plymouth during the 1880s and 1890s. Its location opposite the former Pahitere Blockhouse, the first home of Frederick and Emily Morris, enables a greater appreciation of the historical context in which the building was constructed.



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## Legal Information and Heritage Status

**Legal Description** Lot 2 DP 488898

**District Plan Item/ Map No.**

**Heritage New Zealand List** Not listed

## Construction Information

**Date of Construction** 1883

**Principal Materials** Wooden framing, rusticated weatherboard, corrugated steel

**Construction Professionals** James Sanderson (architect)

## History

This single-story villa was constructed in 1883 as the family residence of George Wareham and his family. George William Wareham and his younger brother Thomas Wareham, departed Gravesend for New Zealand aboard the *Halcione* on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1883; the brothers arrived in Wellington several months later on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August; before making their way to New Plymouth.<sup>1</sup> Soon after arrival the brothers were engaged in clearing bush for a Mr Thomas Brown in South Taranaki, when a large Tawa tree fell and killed Thomas; George was present at the time although there was nothing he could do as it appeared Thomas died instantly.<sup>2</sup>

It seems George soon returned to New Plymouth, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1880 was joined by his sister and brother-in-law, Frederick and Emily (nee Wareham) Morris. The couple and their four children first arrived at Port Chalmers aboard the *Taranaki*, and then carried on to New Plymouth aboard the *Waitaki*.<sup>3</sup> They stayed at New Plymouth for a short time, before settling at Tapuae, between New Plymouth and Oakura, in 1880. Frederick purchased Section 4 of Oakura District, upon which the former Pahitere blockhouse stood, and is thought to have had the building shifted to its present position a short time later to become the family's first home.

George appears to have joined the Frederick and Emily at Tapuae during 1880, and by September of that year 'Wareham & Morris' were advertising for a farm hand at 'Tapuae Farm'.<sup>4</sup> It is possible a farm hand was required to assist whilst George visited the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81 during October and November, before returning to New Plymouth via Dunedin in early December.<sup>5</sup> In April 1881 the farm was considerably enlarged, with George and Frederick jointly purchasing a large tract of land bordered by the Tapuae Stream, and encompassing the north and west sides of the Koru Road intersection.<sup>6</sup>

George departed New Plymouth for England via Sydney, Honolulu San Francisco, in October 1881. It is unclear exactly when he arrived in England, but he married Jessie Deveroux Harry at Wandsworth, London, during mid-1882. The newly-married couple departed London for New Zealand aboard the *Lady Joycelyn* on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1882, arriving at Wellington on the 21<sup>st</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> *Evening Post*, 19 August 1879, page 2; *New Zealand Times*, 12 September 1879, page 7

<sup>2</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 29 December 1879, page 2

<sup>3</sup> Corbett, N. (1993). *Morris Family Tree: Tapuae 1880-1993*. Aries Print, New Plymouth

<sup>4</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 13 September 1880, page 3

<sup>5</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 October 1880, page 2; *Otago Daily Times*, 1 December 1880, page 2

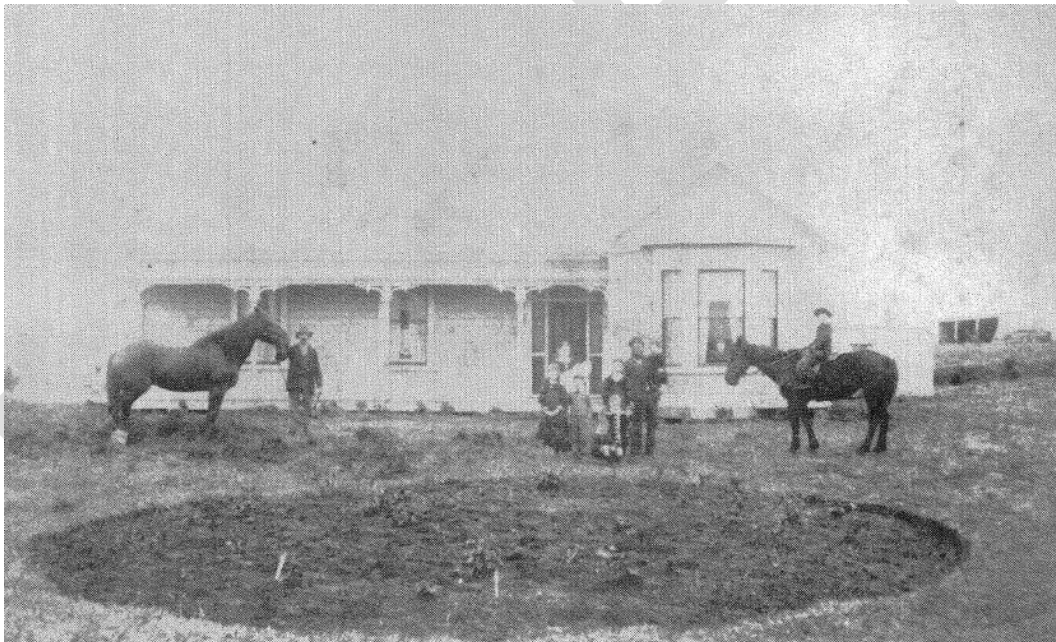
<sup>6</sup> Taranaki Land Deed Indexes (23516), c.1858 - c.1928, Archives New Zealand

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December, before sailing on to New Plymouth aboard the *Hawea* on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after returning to New Plymouth, George engaged capable local architect James Sanderson to design the couple's first home on part of Tapuae Farm opposite the Morris' cottage. Architect James Sanderson had practiced independently since the early-1880s and was one of the New Plymouth's foremost late-Nineteenth and early-Twentieth Century architects designing many commercial and residential buildings around New Plymouth. Tenders were advertised for the erection of a residence at Tapuae for Mr G. W. Wareham during January 1883, and the house was probably completed in the following months.<sup>8</sup> On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1883, presumably soon after moving into their new house, Jessie gave birth to the couple's first child, William Duvall Wareham.<sup>9</sup>

George and Frederick successfully farmed the Tapuae property together until mid-1888, when the partnership was dissolved, and Frederick purchased George's share of the farm.<sup>10</sup> The Wareham's relocated further south along the coast, residing in the house at present 1671 South Road from about 1891 until their departure for Woodville in 1907.<sup>11</sup> Frederick and his family shifted from the old blockhouse to this home sometime in the second half of 1888 following the Wareham's departure.



Circa 1888 view of house from Corbett, N. (1993). *Morris Family Tree: Tapuae 1880-1993*. Aries Print, New Plymouth. Source of original unknown.

Frederick Morris was deeply involved in the local community, being appointed chairman of the Oakura Road District in 1881, a member of the Omata Licensing Committee, chairman of the Oakura School Committee, and a member of the Taranaki County Council.<sup>12</sup> He constructed his own dairy factory on the farm, and processed the milk from both his own, and two other neighbouring farms.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Evening Post*, 17 November 1882, page 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 1 January 1883, page 4

<sup>8</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 20 January 1883, page 3

<sup>9</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 10 May 1883, page 2

<sup>10</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 23 July 1888, page 2

<sup>11</sup> Hamish Crimp, 'Ashdown Park', 1671 South Road (circa 1860s-70s)', Kete New Plymouth, <http://ketenewplymouth.peoplesnetworknz.info/en/site>; accessed 15 December 2018.

<sup>12</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 3 August 1881, page 2

<sup>13</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 10 June 1935, page 2

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His first wife Emily died in 1915, and Frederick remarried a widow named Alice Mary Kidd (nee Swanson), in 1916. By this time, it seems the farm was largely managed by Frederick's sons, in particular William K. Morris, with Frederick and Mary subsequently living at both Hawera and New Plymouth.<sup>14</sup> Frederick died at his Courtenay Street residence in 1935, and is buried with Emily at Oakura Cemetery.<sup>15</sup> The Tapuae property was sold about 1939 to Mr Allie Wood, who retained ownership until 1952, when it was sold to Mr H. E. (Buck) Henschman.<sup>16</sup>

### Reference Sources

See footnotes.

### Description

The Wareham-Morris Homestead is located in a rural setting opposite the intersection of Koru and South Roads, between New Plymouth and Oakura. The highly intact former Pahitere Redoubt, and Pahitere Blockhouse (1864), are located opposite. The villa is set-back from the road boundary at the head of a large lawn surrounded by mature trees and shrubs. One tree of particular significance is a large Norfolk Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) on the road boundary, which is thought to have been planted about 1887 or 1888 by Frederick Morris.

The main form of the villa is a T-plan with wide rear lean-to and front veranda. The walls are clad in rusticated weatherboard, the roof is sheathed in corrugated steel, and two double brick chimneys finished with dentil courses rise from the roof. The villa largely retains its original wooden joinery, predominantly double-hung sashes, although it appears additional window and door openings have been created over the years.

The main front elevation faces south onto South Road and incorporates a projecting factory bay featuring a central double-hung sash flanked by two slender sashes. To the west of the bay, a post-and-beam veranda extends to the extreme eastern end of the front elevation and is decorated with simple replica brackets; replacements for the original fretwork and pendants.

The principal entrance to the front elevation is located beneath the veranda to the immediate west of the bay. The door is a four-panelled timber type flanked by narrow solid timber and glazed panels, with further glazed panels above. Further west, two standard double-hung sashes fitted with clear glass provide light and ventilation to the front living spaces. The eastern elevation incorporates two pairs of wooden French casements, with a more recent addition projecting eastward at the rear of the elevation.

### Assessment

<b>Historical</b>	This building has heritage significance for its long-standing association with prominent Omata families the Wareham's, Morris's and Henschman's, and is one of the earliest surviving villas in New Plymouth District.	✓
<b>Importance to Community</b>	The building is highly valued by the community, especially by the descendants of Benjamin and Emily Morris, some of whom still live in the area.	✓
<b>Architecture &amp; Construction</b>	A good example of an early villa residence designed by capable local architect James Sanderson.	✓

<sup>14</sup> Corbett, N. (1993). *Morris Family Tree: Tapuae 1880-1993*. Aries Print, New Plymouth

<sup>15</sup> *Taranaki Herald*, 10 June 1935, page 2

<sup>16</sup> Corbett, N. (1993). *Morris Family Tree: Tapuae 1880-1993*. Aries Print, New Plymouth



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<b>Setting and Context</b>	The building is visible from South Road and is situated amongst mature gardens and a large lawn. Its location opposite the former Pahitere Blockhouse, the first home of Frederick and Emily Morris, enables a greater appreciation of the historical context in which the building was constructed.	✓
<b>Archaeology</b>	As the building was constructed in 1883, 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.	✓
<b>Representativeness, rarity and integrity</b>	This building is a good example of the architect-designed villas constructed in suburban and rural areas surrounding New Plymouth during the 1880s and 1890s. The villa retains a relatively high degree of integrity, with few external changes made since its construction.	✓
<b>Meets threshold for listing</b> (three or more ticks, or two ticks in one criterion)		✓

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