

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

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**2021 District Plan Item No.** HH027  
**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** 'Springbank', former R Chapman homestead  
**ADDRESS** 1035 Oxford Road, Swannanoa  
**PHOTOGRAPH**



(www)

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

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Lot 2 DP 325406

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2170000130

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1870

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Alexander Lean, architect

**STYLE** Domestic Gothic Revival

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Two-storey dwelling with irregular rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Principal, north-east facing elevation features a central tower with pyramidal roof. Straight return veranda has timber posts and diagonal braces creating a lancet arch effect. Tower shelters the main entrance door, having side- and fanlights, and features an arcaded first floor with circular motif beneath the eaves. Window hood over first floor window beside the tower. Double-hung sash windows.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Timber framing and weatherboards, brick and corrugated metal roofing.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Removal of north wing (date unknown). Partial enclosure of first floor balcony and modification of tower fenestration (date unknown).

**SETTING**

'Springbank' stands on the south side of Oxford Road, the driveway to the property being immediately adjacent to its intersection with Boundary Road. The dwelling is set back some distance from the roadway and is screened from view. The extent of scheduling is limited to the immediate garden setting of the house, rather than the land parcel as a whole and notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the property.

## **HISTORY**

Robert Chapman (1818-82) took up the Springbank run in October 1851, first as manager for William Kaye and then as runholder. Born at Ilkley in Yorkshire, England, he had worked for Kaye on one of his stations in Australia before coming to New Zealand. Chapman married Sarah Brough (c.1822-1908) in Lyttelton in late 1851 and the couple had seven children. The Springbank run was originally around 9,300 hectares, of which Chapman freeholded 6,070. After Robert Chapman's death his wife moved to Rangiora and the farm was divided amongst the couple's five sons, four of whom developed new estates and the fifth, Edward, taking over the homestead block. Edward Chapman (1856-93), who had three children with his wife Lily (nee Gray), died in 1893 and the estate was run by his trustees until 1912 when it was subdivided into eleven lots and sold. George Rutherford purchased the homestead block following his retirement from 'Dalethorpe' in the Selwyn district; it has passed through other hands since. The house has been used as a bed and breakfast hotel and wedding venue in recent times and remains in private ownership.

## **HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Springbank' has high historic significance for its association with Robert and Sarah Chapman and their family and, more generally, the colonial settlement and farming history of North Canterbury. The Springbank run was one of the earliest runs to be taken up in North Canterbury and it allowed Robert and Sarah Chapman and their heirs to prosper.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Springbank' has cultural value as it demonstrates the way of life of its early owner-occupiers.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

'Springbank' has high architectural significance as a Domestic Gothic Revival style homestead designed by Christchurch colonial architect Alexander Lean. Lean (1824-93) served his articles with LN Cottingham in London (1845-49) and immigrated to New Zealand with his wife Clara (nee Haines) in 1851. The couple had 13 children, eight of whom survived infancy. Alexander Lean built a home he called 'Riverlaw' on the Heathcote River in 1852 and also took up sheep farming on the Lyndhurst run on the south bank of the Rakaia River. He eventually held a run of over 30,000 hectares and had moved to his Mount Hutt property by 1860. Bankrupted in 1865 the Leans moved back to Christchurch where Alexander commenced his private architectural practice in 1868, the same year in which he designed the Supreme Court (1868-74, demolished). Lean was a co-founder of the Canterbury Association of Architects, established the city's first orchestral society, and also became well-known for his military pursuits, becoming commander of the Canterbury Volunteer District in 1882. He retired with the rank of colonel in early 1891. Less successful in his architecture than his contemporaries, Messrs Mountfort, Armson and Farr, Lean had a typical colonial portfolio career. He is also credited with designing additions to the Christchurch Club in 1875 and designed houses around Canterbury; 'Springbank' is currently his only known building to have survived.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

'Springbank' has technological and craftsmanship significance for the evidence it provides of mid-Victorian construction methods and materials.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

'Springbank' has contextual value for the contribution it makes to the historic character of its rural property. It is associated with two other notable Chapman family houses in the district, Sarah Chapman's 'Oakleigh' in Rangiora and the former AT Chapman homestead 'Northwood' at Swannanoa. The house is also associated with St James' on the Cust Anglican Church (H005, 1865+) which was endowed by the Chapman family.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the dwelling pre-dates 1900, and the Springbank run was developed from 1851, its site has potential archaeological significance. It appears that the original Chapman dwelling adjoined the 1870 homestead on its northern elevation.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

'Springbank', the former Chapman homestead, has high overall heritage significance to Swannanoa and the Waimakariri district as a whole. The homestead has high historic significance for its association with Robert and Sarah Chapman and the colonial settlement of North Canterbury and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early owners and occupants. 'Springbank' has high architectural significance as possibly the only extant example of the work of Christchurch colonial architect Alexander Lean and technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its mid-Victorian timber construction and detailing. 'Springbank' has contextual value as a local historic feature within its mature garden setting; its site has potential archaeological significance given the development of the property since the early 1850s.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

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## REFERENCES

- *Press* 1 January 1870, p. 4; 16 September 1873, p. 3; 18 March 1889, p. 6; 24 April 1893, p. 3; 31 October 2017 (available online).
- *Lyttelton Times* 16 December 1857, p. 4; 18 December 1867, p. 3; 12 February 1892, p. 4; 21 November 1893, p. 2.
- *Timaru Herald* 8 October 1878, p. 1.
- Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, Canterbury Museum; available online.
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- I Lochhead *A Dream of Spires – Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* Christchurch, 1999.
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/216/lean-alexander>
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REPORT COMPLETED

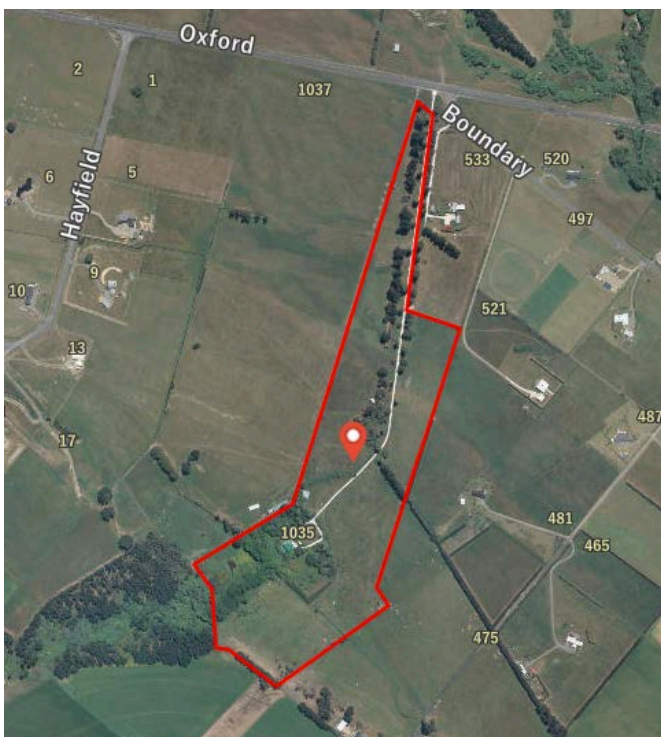
1 August 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of scheduling, limited to the immediate garden setting, 'Springbank', 1035 Oxford Road, Swannanoa.

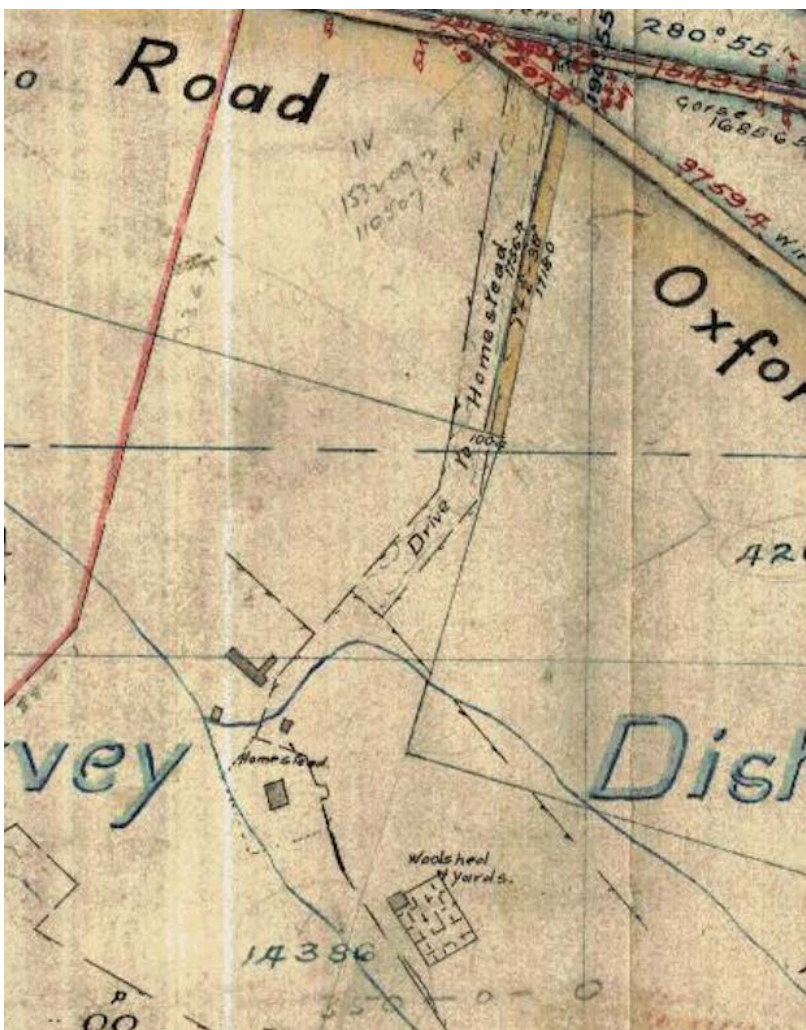


Land parcel as a whole.





Undated photograph of 'Springbank'. University of Canterbury.



Detail of DP 3396, dated April 1912, showing homestead and outbuildings. QuickMap.