

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

2021 District Plan Item No. HH071
HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Thomas Ayers jnr house
ADDRESS 128 Main North Road, Woodend
PHOTOGRAPH



(www)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. H087 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 3799 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Pt RS 685

VALUATION NUMBER 2161100700

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION c.1877?

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Thomas & Thomas Ayers, designer/builders

STYLE Colonial vernacular villa

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

One-and-a-half-storey dwelling with irregular rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Principal, west-facing elevation has straight veranda carried on timber posts with decorative brackets; terminated by gabled bay with flared bay window. Double-hung sash windows. Lean-to and hip roofed extension at rear (east elevation).

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick, cement plaster, timber and corrugated metal roofing.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

North-east addition (c.1911). Slate roof replaced by corrugated metal; bay window replaced by three-sash casement type (1950s?). Exterior painted (1970s). Bay window reinstated on façade (post-1993).

SETTING

The dwelling stands on the east side of Main North Road, just north of its intersection with Chinnerys Road. The house is set back from the roadway but plainly visible behind a low picket fence. Two brick outbuildings are at the rear of the house. The extent of scheduling is limited to the immediate setting of the house, rather than the land parcel as a whole and notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the entire property.

HISTORY

Thomas and Elizabeth Ayers from Turvey, Bedfordshire in England emigrated to New Zealand with their four eldest children in 1858. They settled at Woodend, joining Elizabeth's brothers James and George Gibbs, who were already resident there. Once established at Woodend Thomas (c.1817-86) resumed his trade as a bricklayer; he trained and was later joined in business by his sons. After eldest son Samuel's (1846-1939) marriage to Sarah Ann Judson in 1875 he set up business on his own account in Rangiora. As both Thomas and his son Thomas were married to women called Elizabeth the history of the house in Main North Road is not entirely clear. It would appear however that Thomas senior and Thomas junior both built houses on Rural Section 685 at Woodend (128 and 132 Main North Road); the southern house dating to c.1877, the year Thomas junior (1854-1917) married Elizabeth Stephens (aka Stevens). The Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biography entry for Thomas Ayers junior accords with this reading of the evidence and is consistent with the addition made to the house in c.1911. The Ayers family were active members of the Methodist church and Thomas and Elizabeth Ayers senior's home was the venue for the first Methodist services at Woodend. Both Elizabeth Ayers senior (nee Gibbs, 1818-1900) and her daughter-in-law Elizabeth Ayers junior signed the suffrage petition in 1893. The latter died in 1928 and was survived by seven of her nine children. Elizabeth had sold her Woodend home a year before her death. The property has since passed through a number of hands and was known for many years as the 'Woodend orchard house' because of the apple trees planted on the property in the mid-20th century. The house remains in private residential use.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has historical significance for its association with Thomas and Elizabeth Ayers junior, their family and, more generally, the colonial development of Woodend.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early owner/occupiers.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has architectural significance as a colonial vernacular villa that is presumed to have been designed by Thomas and Thomas Ayers. The form of the gabled bay at the front of the house suggests a Domestic Gothic Revival style influence on the house's design. The modern bay window is sympathetic to house's original fenestration.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has technological and craftsmanship significance for its double brick construction by Thomas and Thomas Ayers. Thomas Ayers senior and his sons made a notable contribution to the North Canterbury construction industry in the second half of the 19th century.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of Woodend and in relation to other buildings built by the Ayers family, including Ohoka homestead (H040) and the former Samuel Ayers house in Rangiora (H047).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the house pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the colonial development and use of the property.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has overall significance to Woodend and the Waimakariri district as a whole. The dwelling has historical significance for its association with Thomas and Elizabeth Ayers junior, their family and descendants and cultural value as a demonstration of the way of life of its early residents. The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has architectural significance as a colonial vernacular villa designed by its builders and technological and craftsmanship significance for its brick construction and detailing. The former Thomas Ayers jnr house has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the historic character of Woodend and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of the dwelling's age.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Press* 13 February 1917, p. 1; 17 December 1923, p. 3; 29 January 1927, p. 23; 28 January 1928, p. 2; 11 September 1936, p. 18; 25 February 1939, p. 15; 27 February 1939, p. 3.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 2 March 1939, p. 5.
- *Star* 20 July 1886, p. 2; 23 June 1915, p. 6; 9 January 1917, p. 5.
- *Lyttelton Times* 9 December 1870, p. 2; 18 June 1875, p. 2; 13 December 1898, p. 1; 24 July 1900, p. 3; 16 June 1917, p. 11.
- *Sun* 9 January 1917, p. 4.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3799>
- <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/suffragist/elizabeth-ayers>
- DN Hawkins *Beyond the Waimakariri: a regional history*, Christchurch, 201; available online.
- GR Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, Canterbury Museum; available online.
- Archives New Zealand.

REPORT COMPLETED

15 March 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of scheduling, limited to house site, former Ayers villa, 128 Main North Road, Woodend.



Brick house at Woodend
built by Thomas Ayers and Sons
lived in by Thomas Ayers, brother of Samuel

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/suffragist/elizabeth-ayers>