

**Archaeological assessment of Willowridge (Three
Parks) Sections, Wanaka
Parts of Sections 10, Block IV, Parts of Sections
14,15,16 Block III**

**Jill Hamel,
September 2006**

Introduction

This assessment was carried out for Willowridge Developments Ltd, as owner of about 110 hectares around the former Wanaka airport between SH 89, Riverbank Road and Ballantyne Road (Fig.1). The owner is seeking to change the zoning from Rural General to provide for a variety of activities. This assessment will be part of section 32 report prepared by Mitchell Partnerships, Dunedin, and funded by the land owner.

Title history.

The land on the Wanaka Flats was part of Run 240 known as Criffel Run, taken up in 1858 by C Maude and J Britten, more as an investment than for active farming. It became part of Wilkin and Thomson's extensive land holding in the 1860s and was managed from a farmstead at Albertown (then known as Newcastle). Run 240 eventually became Wanaka Station, and was managed from a homestead on the western side of the present town as pastoral lease. The area, now described as the Three Parks land, was surveyed into its present sections in 1885 by E W Wilmot.

Early titles show that the Turnbull family of Patearoa were the first to acquire the freehold. Robert McGregor Turnbull was the 1860s runholder of Linnburn station. His brother, Charles, wrote as "Old Identity" for the newspapers. The two brothers appear on the titles as tenants in common in 1890 for 509 acres, and including Sections 9 and 11, down on the corner of Studholme Road and Cardrona Valley Road. (Section 11 was held on the same title as the bulk of the Three Parks land to the mid-20th century.)

At the start of the 20th century Three Parks land was held under three groupings of the sections, some of which extended beyond the boundaries of Three Parks. The main grouping comprised Sections Parts 14,15,16 and ?Lot 1, about 450 acres (Fig.2). The freehold of the whole of Sections 14, 15 and 16 were acquired by Montagu Turnbull (law clerk of Dunedin and probably Robert's son) from the warrant system in 1907.

Section Part 10 of 60 acres in the north east corner of the Three Parks land was held

under a separate title, but the freehold was also acquired by Montagu Turnbull in 1907. The Turnbells transferred Sections Parts 10, 14,15,16, as well as Sec 11 just south of Wanaka, to the Sargood family in 1912, when Percy Sargood took up the lease of Wanaka Station (McLintock 1966). The Three Parks land was registered in the name of Lucy Constance Sargood, his wife. Sargood was a merchant, entrepreneur and benefactor. "An enthusiastic advocate of irrigation in Central Otago, he applied to the Lake County Council for a lease of the Cardrona Nursery to show the value of an irrigation programme, but his application was rejected. In 1913 he planted 8,000 fruit trees to establish the Wanaka Orchards, which demonstrated that the country, when irrigated, was ideally suited for fruit growing" (McLintock 1966). Most of his plantings were to the south around Orchard Road.

Sargood died in 1940 and the sections were bought by the McPherson family. Again the titles were held in the name of a wife, Gulielma Constance McPherson, wife of Stewart Dalrymple McPherson, a company director of Dunedin. A lease to Avalon Farms shows up in 1963, and probably the whole 600 acres of dry flats was under an extensive grazing regime of local farmers during the last half of the twentieth century.

There is a third title for the 3 acres of Section 50, tucked into a slight bend of Riverbank Road (Fig.2). The section does not get into the title system until 1959, when the McPherson family must have noticed that it was not under a formal title and registered it. There is likely to be some reason why Wilmot surveyed it off in 1885, such as somebody occupying a cottage there under a goldfields residence license which was never formalised.

The title history, therefore, poses only one question. Is there any trace of 19th century occupation on Section 50?

Archaeological inspection

A brief inspection was carried out on 23 August. The ground is very flat and for the most part carries only sparse pasture. Where the road to the old airport enters near the slight bend on Riverbank Road, a wind break of *Pinus radiata* has been planted along the top edge of a low terrace. The old Section 50 neatly encompassed the point at which the low gravel terrace meets Riverbank Road. The slope of the terrace faces slightly east of north, an ideal site for a hut (GPS2206203 5604572). There were enough traces to indicate that there had been some sort of building on the site - a scoop into the gravel edge of the terrace for a building platform, the stumps of two old pine trees, an elderberry bush and a short section of an old bored fence post. About 50 m west along the terrace rubbish had been pushed into a hollow in the windbreak (GPS 2206203 5604572), which included heavy corrugated iron that would typically have come off a nineteenth-century hut. It was mixed with modern material. The title evidence, combined with these traces, are sufficient to indicate that there was a hut of some sort beside the pine stumps, but it could have been of any date between the 1870s and 1930s. It was probably cleared away when the road was formed through to the old Wanaka airport buildings.

Recommendations

The only indication of anything of archaeological interest was the possible site of a small hut where the old airport road meets Riverbank Road. Since there can be no certainty that the hut was built before 1900, the site is not protected under the Historic Places Act. The draft development plan by Boffa Miskell June 2005 shows this area as plantings to screen houses from the road and southerly winds. This faint trace of history could easily be left as it is in a corner of road reserve. Further local inquiry may turn up a name of a resident.

References

McLintock, A. H. (ed). 1966. Sargood, Sir Percy Rolfe. From *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 9-Jun-2006.
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/1966/S/SargoodSirPercyRolfe/en>.

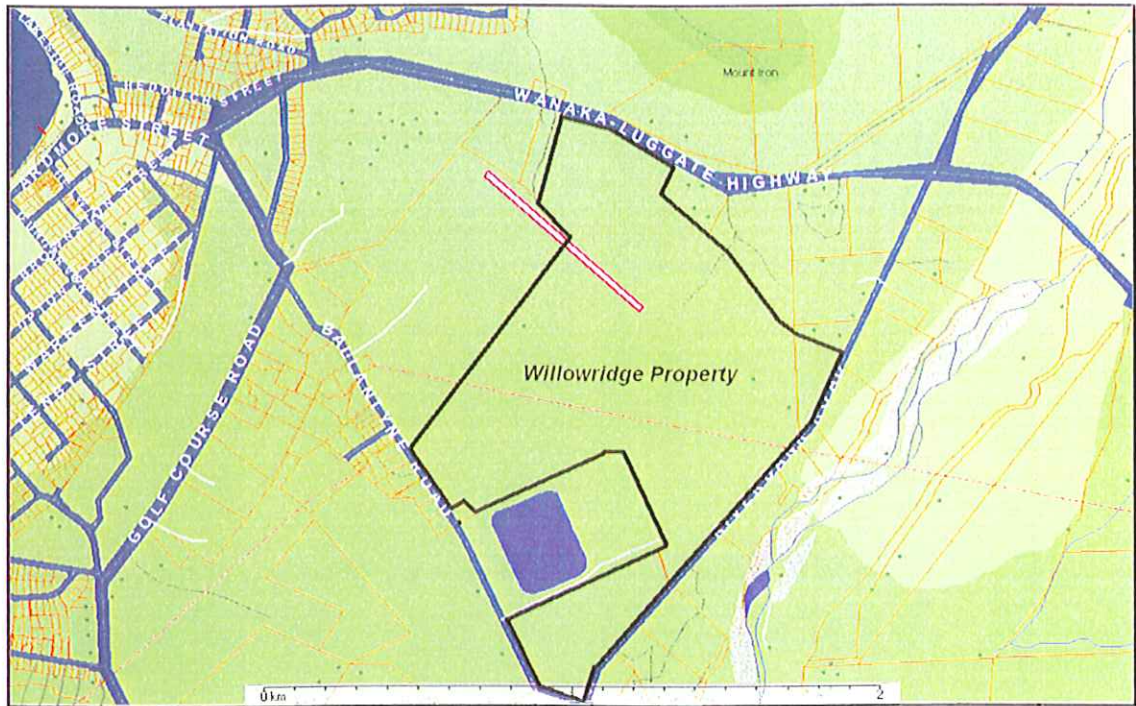


Figure 1. Location of the Willowridge Properties between Ballantyne and Riverbank Roads. Map supplied by Mitchell Partnerships.

References
 Prior O/T. 148/4, 151/85, 41C/32 and
 412/67
 Transfer No. 312520
 N/C. Order No. -



Land and Deeds 69

No. 3A/340

**PART - CANCELLED
 REGISTER
 NOT
 TO BE CONVERTED**

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TO BE CONVERTED

This Certificate dated the 7th day of April one thousand nine hundred and sixty seven under the seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of O T A G O

WITNESSETH that ROLFE BARGOOD MILLS of Auckland, Company Director

is seized of an estate in fee-simple (subject to such reservations, restrictions, encumbrances, liens, and interests as are notified by memorial underwritten or endorsed hereon) in the land hereinafter described, delineated with bold black lines on the plan hereon, be the several admeasurements a little more or less, that is to say: All the parcels of land containing together 596 Acres 1 Rood 17.3 Perches more or less being Section 861R and part Sections 13, 14, 15 and 16 Block III and Sections 50 and 862R and part Section 10 Block IV LOWER WANAKA DISTRICT. Part being more particularly described as Lot 1 Deposited Plan 11284

Interests at date of issue:-

Subject as to Section 50 Block IV herein to the Reservations and Conditions imposed by Section 59 of the Land Act 1948

272433 Lease to Angus Carlin Gordon. From 13.5.1963 until 31.3.1971 - 2938.2964 at 2.46pm.

Vide [Signature]
 D.L.R.



314516 Transfer being surrender of Lease 272433 as to Lot 1 D.P. 11284 and as to the part Section 16 to the west of the said Lot 1 (total area 72 acres 20.4 perches) and reduction of the annual rent to £80 Angus Carlin Gordon to Rolfe Bargood Mills - 26.5.1967 at 2.35 pm

[Signature]
 A.L.R.

321234 Transfer of Lot 1 D.P. 11284 to Her Majesty the Queen for the purposes of a recreation reserve - 21.11.1967 at 9.20am

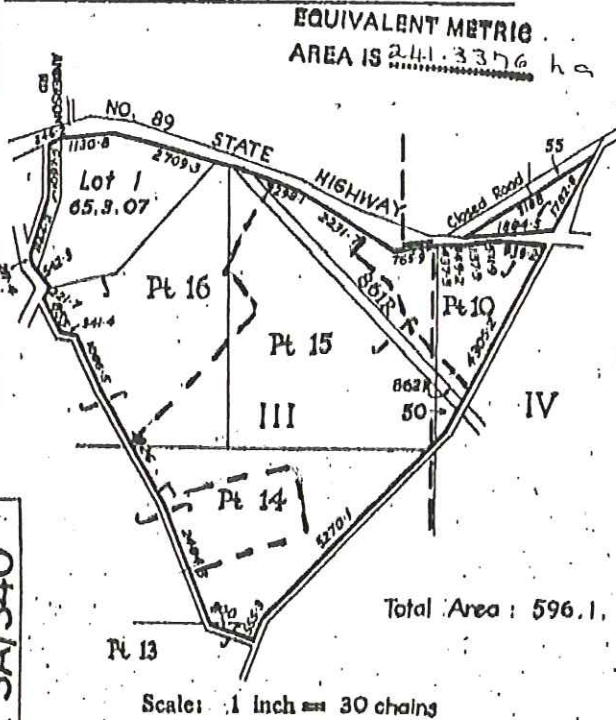
[Signature]
 A.L.R.

The duplicate title hereof is cancelled as to the land in D.P. 11284 pursuant to Section 100 (4) of the Reserves and Domains Act 1953.

[Signature]
 A.L.R.

322173 Transfer of Section 861R, part Sections 13, 14, 15, 16, Block III Section 50, 862R and part Section 17.3 10 Block IV to Angus Carlin Gordon - 11.12.1967 at 2.20pm. 3B/253

[Signature]
 D.L.R.



EQUIVALENT METRIC AREA IS 241.3376 ha

No. 3A/340

S.O. 955, 957, 10437, 12406, 12407, 13658.

OVER

80,000/1/65-0010 W

Register copy for L. & D. 69, 71, 72

Figure 2. Plan from title 3A/340, showing how old Sections Parts 14,15,16 and Lot 1 formed the basis of the twentieth century property, and the position of the small Section 50 on the eastern boundary at the bend of Willowbank Road. Dotted lines approximately outline the Willowridge property.

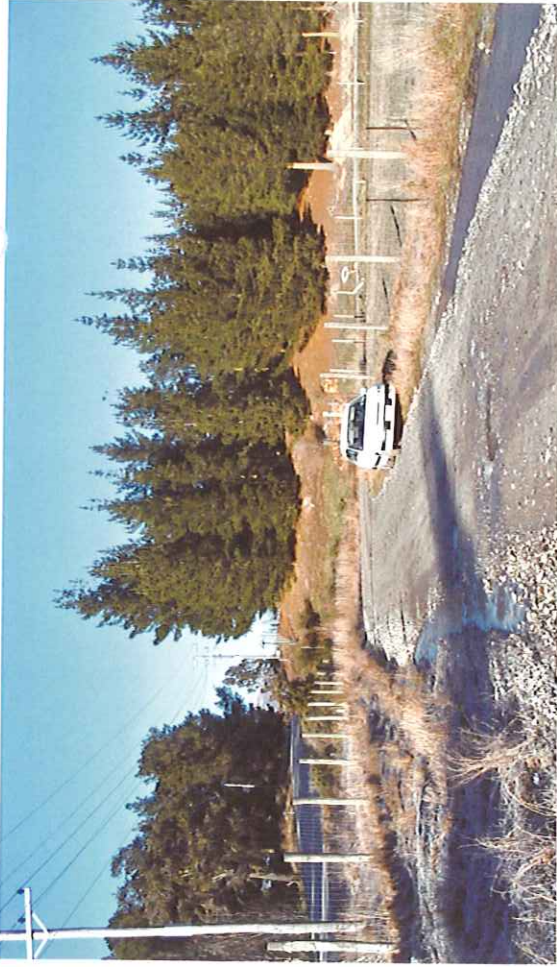


Figure 4. Willowridge Properties. Upper left: Looking south at the entrance to the old airport road. The possible site of a hut was on the bank below the trees, immediately to the left of the car. Lower left: Site of the hut at lower right foreground, beside the elderberry and stumps of pine trees. Upper and lower right: Typical landscapes on the Willowridge Property showing the lack of features.