

15 August 1970

The Town Clerk,
Hastings City Council,
HASTINGS.

Document returned to
Chris Johnson

Dear Sir,

Stoneycroft Pt Lot 6 D.P. 285. Area 10-1-20

I am writing as the owner of the property of Stoneycroft and should be grateful if you would respectfully present these submissions to your Council.

Stoneycroft, then we think comprising some forty acres, was purchased from the late Mr. J.N. Williams of Frimley about a hundred years ago. Unfortunately the original titles were lost in the 1931 earthquake and subsequent fire in Napier. The house seems to have been planned on the style of an English country vicarage by Mrs. Birch. Some years ago a nephew of the original owner, an elderly man of the same name, visited us and said that the late Mr. Guthrie Smith had helped to plant the trees. The original Mr. Birch owned Erewhon Station in what was then known as the Inland Patea district. At some time before the turn of the century the Birches appear to have moved to Erewhon and for a time the property was occupied by the Blythes; probably of the old firm of Blythes, Napier. The property was then purchased by Mr. Nathaniel Beamish, the grandfather of the late Mr. Noel Beamish of Awapai, Mr. Eric Beamish of Kohatunui and Mr. Harold Beamish of Whana Whana. Subsequently it passed to Miss Fanny Beamish who married a Dr. Barcroft. Probably Mrs. Barcroft sold some 20 acres during her occupancy. About 1924 Stoneycroft was bought by the late Mrs. Harrison, mother of Mr. Dick Harrison, M.P. for Hawkes Bay. During the second war when both Mrs. Harrison's sons were overseas with the fighting services the property was sold to a Mrs. Edmonds, now deceased. It was purchased by me in 1954.

In 1954 Stoneycroft lay in the Hawkes Bay County Council area.

My reason for buying this property may be stated as follows

Both my wife and I liked the house and thought it should be restored to a condition appropriate to the original intention of the first owner. The building is of heart totara which forms the framework and kauri which has been used for flooring and verandahs. The walls consist of nine inch heart kauri boards inside and outside. The late Mrs. Edmonds had repiled the building and it now rests on concrete piles. The house is in good order and is completely free from borer.

The trees are such as one could never hope to grow in a lifetime. We have carefully preserved what was possible.

I enjoy outside work and felt the land offered possibilities

for agricultural production which could be utilised for export earnings.

Both my wife and I considered Stoneycroft as a most desirable place to live.

When we purchased the property in 1954 it was rather derelict in the sense that there were a number of rotting out-buildings, the portion fronting Omaha Road was a mass of dead and fallen trees, there were old copses of stumps with pines and gums which needed removal and the pastures were run out.

To put the property into order and to bring the land into production has required a great deal of effort on the part of my wife and myself along with considerable expense.

Stoneycroft now comprises some twenty one acres. Some few years ago Sir James Wattie asked me to plant asparagus. This has been done by stages and some 16 acres are now in profitable production. I am informed by Sir James that 60% of my crop is exported. My aim is a production of 3 tons per acre and I take an academic, besides a practical interest in asparagus growing, doing most of the cultivation myself. The land is ideal for the this vegetable. Of the remainder of the property of some 5 acres about an acre is taken up by lawn and a rose garden round the house, about half an acre is simply grazed while the remainder we have put into parkland which I keep mown. About 1½ acres on the Fernhill side of the property adjoining Omaha Rd. is reserved for access to the motorway, which runs along my western boundary.

There was never any intention on our part to subdivide this property and the incorporation of about half of Stoneycroft into the area of Hastings City was rather a blow to me.

The house is shown in a book about New Zealand by the late Mr. Kenneth Melville as an example of early Colonial architecture and has historic value.

My wife and I have no dependants and some time ago we approached the New Zealand Historic ~~Places~~ Places Trust through the Hon. Duncan MacIntyre. The Chairman, Mr. Ormond Wilson and Professor Beaglehole visited us. The Trust is anxious to have this property and I should think the area of asparagus would easily pay for all the costs of maintenance along with a caretaker, should this be necessary. My own will will leave Stoneycroft to my wife at death, or if she dies before me, on my own death it will pass directly to the Trust. The house contains some choice furniture and pictures and these would be included in the gift. We feel the property would be an asset to the nation and particularly to the people of this area.

The rates paid to the Hawkes Bay County Council when the whole property lay in their area were some \$70 on top of which was land tax, which I think was \$26.

Following the inclusion of about half the land into the Hastings City area your Council kindly afforded me urban-rural rating for a few years and then changed this to a special rating for which I was grateful.

The assessment recently received is \$874.52 which is no doubt calculated on the value of the property which might be realised by subdivision for residential sections. I wondered if your Council had overlooked the previous arrangement because no notification of such a change in rating has been made to me.

I do not wish to avoid my responsibilities but under the plan we have to keep the property intact as a self supporting asset for The New Zealand Historic Places Trust it may be increasingly difficult financially to implement this wish on the part of my wife and myself.

Some 6 acres of the portion of Stoneycroft included in the Hastings City area forms part of the asparagus block and I have thought of making submissions that this be returned to the Hawkes Bay County. Such a transfer would not affect the Hastings City Plan unduly. However I have made no move in this respect.

These submissions are made in confidence. I trust your Council will see fit to ~~consider~~ ^{consider} them.

Yours faithfully,

D.A. Ballantyne

Enc. A recent letter from the Chairman of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust is appropriate to this communication. If your Council wished my wife and I could ask our Solicitors, Holderness, Tattersall and Dennehy to make available the relevant portions of our wills for perusal.

would you kindly let me have the enclosed letter from the chairman Historic Places Trust, back, at your convenience.

We should be pleased if your Council would care to inspect the property.