



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Report for a Historic Place **Sanigar, MATAMATA (List No. 1783, Category 1)**



Cowshed and 'whare', Sanigar, looking southwest
(Martin Jones, HNZPT, 29 Nov 2023)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to support the inclusion of Sanigar in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero as a Category 1 historic place.

Summary

Situated on the fertile Matamata Plains, Sanigar is directly associated with the transformation of New Zealand's rural landscape in the twentieth century, and its conversion to intensive wool, meat and dairy production for export - the latter considered among the most significant developments in this country's history. Medium-size farms such as Sanigar, created in 1904, were established under the First Liberal Government's policies to expand agricultural production by converting large colonial-era estates and other land for more intensive rural settlement and use. Subdivided from the immense Matamata Estate, the site encompasses several components that reflect the nature and evolution of such farms, including a timber-built woolshed, a cowshed and a corrugated iron-clad 'whare' for workers' accommodation. These elements - in conjunction with associated equipment, chattels and in-ground features - are of special significance for their ability to provide insights into matters such as dairying and wool processing; vernacular approaches to farm building construction; and changes to farming activity and requirements over time. The whare and extensive graffiti in the woolshed linked with whānau-based shearing gangs can be considered particularly notable for their capacity to advance knowledge about the experiences and contributions of Māori communities in agricultural work, especially in the mid-twentieth century.

The land occupied by Sanigar lies within the rohe of Ngāti Hauā. The Matamata area was resource-rich for traditional communities as well as being cultivable and enjoying proximity to bush and forest. In the early 1800s, Matamata pā to the west of Turangaomoana formed the principal settlement of Te Waharoa (?-1838), an important Ngāti Hauā rangatira. His son, the notable leader Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpī (?-1866), subsequently established kāinga that produced European crops for the colonial capital at Auckland in the 1840s. Following the Waikato War (1863-4), Josiah Clifton Firth (1826-1897), a major Auckland businessman, leased extensive tracts from Tāmihana ultimately creating the largest private agricultural estate in the Waikato. Comprising over 55,000 acres, the Matamata Estate employed both Māori and Pākehā labour, and became a showpiece of rural technology. In the early 1900s, the First Liberal Government compulsorily acquired this estate for subdivision into mostly medium-sized private farms, forming part of the government's wider policies to transform the

economy by expanding and intensifying agricultural production for export. In 1904, a 467-acre holding was leased in perpetuity to Harry and Effie Harding as one of 117 farms balloted or allocated from the estate at this time.

The Hardings established Sanigar farm, a mixed holding comprising fields, a homestead and necessary outbuildings for meat, dairy and wool production. By 1950, New Zealand had the fifth highest average per capita income internationally, based predominantly on its exports of such produce within the British imperial network. The earliest likely outbuilding - a one-and-a-half storey weatherboard structure of balloon-frame construction - is believed to have been used as stabling when horsepower was essential for breaking in the land. This was extended and converted to a woolshed before 1920, possibly during or shortly after the First World War (1914-18), when all New Zealand wool was commandeered for the British war effort. A single-storey cowshed with vertical-plank cladding was also built in the early 1900s, where machine milking of a 100-strong herd and milk separation took place. Nearby dairy factories were referred to in 1921 as among the largest in the world. During this period, the Ngāti Hauā community at nearby Waharoa sought to expand its own agriculture but was impacted by lack of finance.

In 1930, the Hardings sold Sanigar to Samuel and Margaret Huston, who initially undertook similar production but ceased dairying within a decade. Possibly during the Second World War (1939-45), an enlarged store for pressing and keeping wool bales was added to the woolshed. In the 1950s and 1960s, New Zealand farmers enjoyed considerable prosperity particularly during a wool boom caused by American demand during the Korean War (1950-3). Coinciding with a period when labour for shearing was correspondingly in short supply, two small structures were erected for accommodating farmworkers, who by this time were mostly Māori neighbours from Waharoa. The surviving whare at Sanigar, built before 1952, formed single-room accommodation with corrugated iron walls, a metal chimney and internal matchlining. Shearing formed an important source of income for rural Māori, with whānau-based shearing gangs involving men, women and children playing an important role in this industry's development in New Zealand.

Wool production and wider family farming at Sanigar ceased in 1984, when much of the broader property was leased out for dairy support. The farm outbuildings remain in family ownership.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

Name of Place

Name

Sanigar

Other Names

Sanigar Farm

Location Information

Address

901 Tower Road

Turangaomoana

MATAMATA

Additional Location Information

NZTM Easting: 1848410.5

NZTM Northing: 5818576.6²

Local Authority

Matamata-Piako District Council

Legal Description

Lot 2 DP 430406 (RT 518454), South Auckland Land District

Extent of List Entry

Extent includes part of the land described as Lot 2 DP 430406 (RT 518454), South Auckland Land District, and the buildings known as Sanigar thereon, and the following chattels: grain and fertiliser drill, wool table, wool press, wool scales and bale stencils. The extent excludes modern fencing, concrete electricity pylons and current trees or plantings. (Refer to map in Appendix 1 of the List entry report for further information).

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

² Approximate centre of cowshed building.

Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of land and buildings fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

Existing Heritage Recognition

Local Authority and Regional Authority Plan Scheduling

Not scheduled in Matamata-Piako District Plan, Operative, 25 July 2005

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Historical Information

Early history

Turangaomoana is situated in the Matamata plains, immediately beside the Waihou river to the west of the Kaimai ranges. The fertile, low-lying area has been associated with many iwi and hapū, including Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Hinerangi and Waikato Tainui.³ For Māori communities this landscape was resource-rich, encompassing swamps for eel and waterfowl as well as being cultivable and enjoying proximity to bush and forest resources.⁴ Numerous pā were created overlooking the Waihou.⁵

During the early nineteenth century, Matamata pā to the west of Turangaomoana formed the principal settlement of Te Waharoa (?-1838), an important Ngāti Hauā rangatira.⁶ Te

³ Te Puni Kōkiri, 'Te Kāhui Māngai: Ngāti Hauā', n.d. <https://www.tkm.govt.nz/iwi/ngati-haua/> [accessed 19 Dec 2023]; Tumuaki and Ngāti Hauā and the Trustees of the Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust and The Crown, 'Ngāti Hauā Deed of Settlement of Non-Raupatu Historical Claims', Jul 2013; Tumuaki and Ngāti Hauā and the Trustees of the Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust and The Crown, 'Deed of Settlement: Attachments', May 2013, p.2; Te Puni Kōkiri, 'Te Kāhui Māngai: Ngāti Hinerangi', n.d. <https://www.tkm.govt.nz/iwi/ngati-hinerangi/>, [accessed 19 Dec 2023]; Morehu McDonald, 'Ngāti Hinerangi Grievances Relating to the Building of the Kaimai Tunnel and Deviation', Wai 1226, Aug 2006; Te Puni Kōkiri, 'Te Kāhui Māngai: Waikato-Tainui', n.d. <https://www.tkm.govt.nz/iwi/waikato/> [accessed 19 Dec 2023]; 'Area of Interest for Waikato-Tainui remaining claims mandate, February 2020', <https://www.tkm.govt.nz/rohe/AOI-Waikato-Tainui.png> [accessed 19 Dec 2023].

⁴ Tumuaki and Ngāti Hauā and the Trustees of the Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust and The Crown, 2013, p.10; Morehu McDonald, *Ngāti Hinerangi Grievances Relating to the Building of the Kaimai Tunnel and Deviation: A Research Report Commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal for the Wai 1226 Claim*, Wai 215 #1, Aug 2006, pp.58-9; *Matamata Record*, 10 Mar 1924, p.8; *New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 15 Feb 1882, p. 5; *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 12 Jun 1936, p.4.

⁵ New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) site records, T14/8, T14/9, T14/78, T14/111, T14/131, T14/132, T14/133.

⁶ Evelyn Stokes, 'Te Waharoa', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t81/te-waharoa> [accessed 19 Dec 2023]; Basil Keane, 'Musket wars - Waikato', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Jun 2012, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/musket-wars/page-4> [accessed 2 Nov 2023]; NZAA site record, T14/1; F. L. Phillips, *Nga Tohu a Tainui: Landmarks of Tainui: Historic Places of the Tainui People*, Vol. 1, Otorohanga, 1989, pp.163-9.

Waharoa's son Tarapīpipi (?-1866), later christened Wiremu Tāmihana, was educated at a nearby Anglican mission station, briefly established in 1835-6.⁷ Succeeding to Te Waharoa's leadership, Tāmihana founded Christian-influenced settlements at Te Tāpiri (1838) and later Pēria (1846), where whānau-based cultivation included European crops traded to the new colonial capital at Auckland.⁸ As concerns about Pākehā encroachment on Māori-held lands increased in the 1850s, Tāmihana played a key role in the emerging Kīngitanga movement, anointing Pōtatau Te Wherowhero as the movement's first leader or kīngi.⁹ Following British military invasion of the Waikato in 1863-4, Ngāti Hauā suffered raupatu (confiscation) of various lands by the Crown, although whenua in the Matamata area - including Turangaomoana - was initially retained.¹⁰ Tāmihana died at Turangaomoana in 1866.¹¹



Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi Te Waharoa, Jan 1863
(Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 661-006)

From 1865, Josiah Clifton Firth (1826-1897), an Auckland businessman and industrialist, began leasing substantial tracts of land from Tāmihana.¹² By the late nineteenth century,

⁷ Evelyn Stokes, 'Te Waharoa, Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990, updated Feb 2006, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t82/te-waharoa-wiremu-tamihana-tarapipipi> [accessed 3 Nov 2023].

⁸ Stokes, 'Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi', 2006; NZAA site record, T14/80; Nancy Swarbrick, 'Waikato places - Matamata', first published May 2010, updated Jun 2015, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-15> [accessed 2 Nov 2023]; T.E. McMillan (ed.), *Centennial History of Matamata Plains*, Matamata, 1951, pp.51-2.

⁹ Stokes, 'Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi', 2006; *Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014*, s.8(1).

¹⁰ *Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014*, s.8(3); NZ Map 471, Sir George Grey Special Collections, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/zoomify/19520/confiscated-land-areas> [accessed 2 Nov 2023].

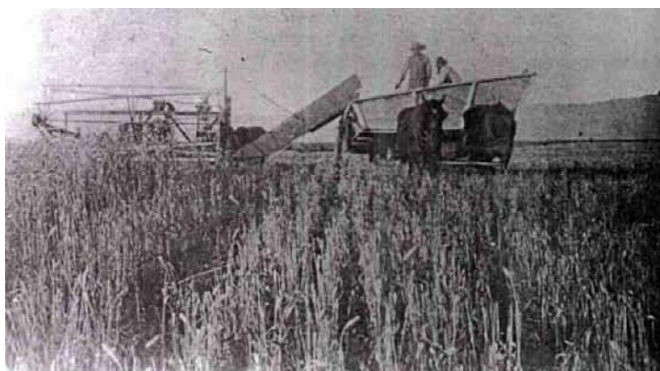
¹¹ Stokes, 'Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi', 2006.

¹² D. B. Waterson, 'Firth, Josiah Clifton', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990, *Te Ara - the*

private interests had acquired major areas of Ngāti Hauā whenua.¹³ Firth obtained freehold title to over 55,000 acres, the largest private estate in the Waikato, developing it as an immense farm to support and expand his other business interests.¹⁴ Known as the Matamata Estate, this enterprise included the land later occupied by Sanigar.

Matamata Estate

Firth's activities transformed the landscape into a prototype of high farming.¹⁵ Banks and ditches created an extensive complex of large fields in which to initially grow wheat, and subsequently also fatten sheep and cattle on a mixed farm model. Dairy farming was undertaken. A large farmstead near present-day Matamata was connected by a wide access route - now known as Tower Road - to a wharf at Stanley Landing on the Waihou for transporting produce and stock.¹⁶ Modern agricultural machinery, experimental scientific methods and other up-to-date approaches were adopted. According to historian D. B. Waterson, 'from telephones to windmills, beehives to a dairy factory, Matamata was the New Zealand showpiece of modern rural technology'.¹⁷



Harvesting the Matamata Estate, 1880s

(Isthmus Group Landscape Architects, 'Firth Tower and Stanley Landing: Historical Reserves Management Plan', Matamata-Piako, n.d., p.17)

Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1f7/firth-josiah-clifton> [accessed 19 Dec 2023]; D. B. Waterson, 'The Matamata Estate, 1904-1959: Land transfers and subdivision in the Waikato', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Apr 1969, Vol.3, No.1, pp.32-4.

¹³ *Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act* 2014, s.8(5).

¹⁴ *Bay of Plenty Times*, 16 Sep 1879, p.2; *NZH*, 3 Jan 1883, p.4; 10 Oct 1883, p.6; *Thames Advertiser*, 19 Jun 1879, p.2; 20 May 1882, p.2; *Waikato Times*, 15 Jun 1880, p.2.

¹⁵ R. C. J. Stone, *Makers of Fortune: A Colonial Business Community and its Fall*, Auckland, 1973, p.144.

¹⁶ Waterson, 1990; Plan, 'Under the Public Works Act – Assets Realisation Board v Minister for Lands (Matamata estate)', R25991510, Archives New Zealand, Auckland: attached to claim by Assets Realisation Board, 30 Jun 1903; 'Surveyor's Field Book – C Otway – Matamata Estate', 1904, R25557242, Archives New Zealand, Auckland; Isthmus Group Landscape Architects, 'Firth Tower and Stanley Landing: Historical Reserves Management Plan', Matamata-Piako, n.d., pp.23-4.

¹⁷ Waterson, 1990. See also *NZH*, 10 Oct 1883, p.6.

Both Māori and Pākehā workers were employed on this enterprise. The former included local, rangatira-led groups contracted to create roads, operate machinery and collect ‘rushes’ for thatching haystacks.¹⁸ After Firth became unable to repay mortgages on the estate during a nationwide economic depression in 1887, the Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) took ownership. A subsequent manager of the farm, John McCaw, continued earlier practices, contracting Māori for ploughing, harvesting and shearing.¹⁹ Throughout this period and subsequently, Ngāti Hauā occupied traditional lands in the Waharoa area, immediately outside the estate.



Ngāti Hauā group at Te Wai o Turongo, Waharoa, c.1880-7

(1/1-001906-G, ATL)

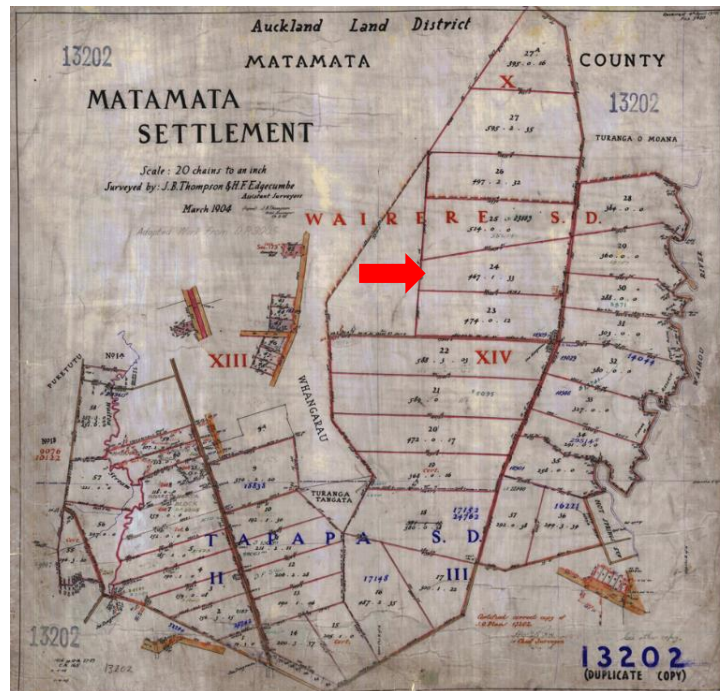
In 1895, the First Liberal Government (1890-1920) intervened to save the BNZ from collapse and the bank’s farming assets were transferred to a specially-created Assets Realisation Board.²⁰ Seven years later, the government compulsorily purchased the estate as part of nationwide attempts to bring more rural land into production. This policy followed the

¹⁸ *NZH*, 21 Feb 1884, p. 6; 29 Apr 1884, p.3; *Otago Witness*, 15 Mar 1884, p.7.

¹⁹ Joan C. Stanley, 'McCaw, John', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1996, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m2/mccaw-john> [accessed 27 Oct 2023]. McCaw lived at the Firth Estate farmstead.

²⁰ Waterson, 1969, pp.34-6. The farm assets were ‘valued at £195,1788.11.4 in 1896 (land £147,233, livestock and implements £38,731) and supported 35,000 sheep, 3,500 cattle, a herd of cows and several bulls. 20,000 acres were in pasture and the estate was divided into sixty-five huge paddocks.’

development of improved fertilisers, refrigeration for dairy and meat exports, and rising commodity prices.²¹ In addition to 2.3 million acres of Māori-owned land, the government acquired some 223 colonial estates between 1891 and 1912 - encompassing a further 1.3 million acres - for more intensively-settled farms, mostly of medium size (320-1000 acres).²² Matamata was the largest estate in the region south of Auckland to be broken up for farms under a lease-in-perpetuity system (999 years) introduced by the 1892 Land Act.²³



Matamata Settlement, March 1904, showing Section 24 arrowed
(SO 13202, South Auckland Land District)

In 1904, 117 farms were divided from the estate and made available to applicants.²⁴ After interviews in Auckland one of these holdings, a 467-acre site occupying Section 24, was allocated to Henry (Harry) and Effie Harding and their young family.²⁵ From farming families

²¹ Waterson, 1969, pp.36.

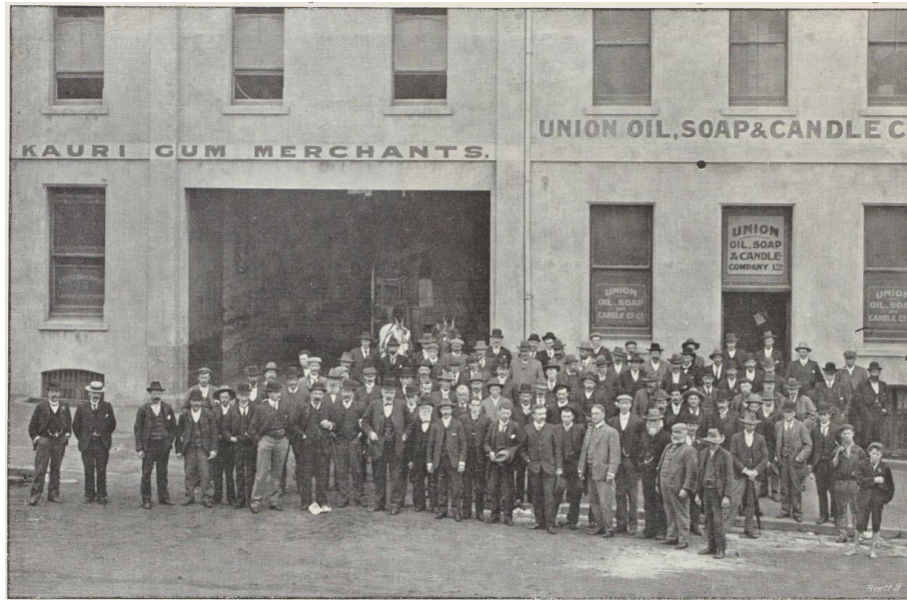
²² Jim McAloon, 'Land ownership', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/mi/land-ownership/print> [accessed 8 Nov 2023]; Hugh Stringleman and Robert Peden, 'Sheep farming - The refrigerated meat trade', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/sheep-farming/page-5> [accessed 8 Nov 2023]. According to historian Tom Brooking, the Liberal government's 'typology of worth' put family farmers of British origin in pride of place, believing that they would create not only a stronger economy but a more stable social order: Tom Brooking, 'Busting Up' The Greatest Estate of All: Liberal Māori Land Policy, 1891-1911', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 26, 1 (1992), pp.78-98.

²³ Waterson, 1969, p.32.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.37. The holdings varied in size between 47 and 984 acres.

²⁵ *AJHR* 1904, Session I, C-4, 'Matamata Estate', p.6. After marrying in 1893, Harry and Effie Harding had children Gladys, Sydney and Irene in 1895, 1897 and 1898 respectively. Another daughter, Alma Harding, was born in 1907: Births, Deaths and Marriages Online, Te Tari Taiwhenua / Internal Affairs, [Search \(dia.govt.nz\)](http://www.dia.govt.nz) [accessed 8 Nov 2023].

in rural Wairarapa and Manawatū, the couple qualified for the lease due to their prior experience of agricultural work, and by not holding other land.²⁶ Taking possession in mid-1904, they named their new holding Sanigar - after a place in Gloucestershire, England, where Harry's grandparents had farmed.²⁷



Applicants for farms on the Matamata Estate, 1904, Auckland: the group likely includes Harry Harding
(*New Zealand Graphic and Ladies' Journal*, 18 Jun 1904, p.33, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections NZG-19040618-0033-01)

Creation and early use of Sanigar (1904-30)

Over the next two decades, the Hardings were to create an established family farm comprising a network of fields, a homestead and necessary outbuildings. Under the terms of their lease, they (and all other selectees at Matamata) were required to live continuously on the land and undertake substantial improvements, including cultivation, fencing and building construction. Other requirements encompassed applying bonedust and superphosphate fertiliser, and keeping at least half of each farm in permanent pasture.²⁸ As well as helping transform the landscape into a network of more intensively used farms, such conditions

²⁶ *AJHR* 1904, Session I, C-4, 'Matamata Estate', pp.6, 19; *Putaruru Press*, 29 Feb 1940, p.7; *NZH*, 3 Jun 1935, p.12; *Auckland Star (AS)*, 10 Apr 1937, p.13. Harry's father, J. H. Harding, was said to have introduced the first threshing machine to the Wairarapa.

²⁷ RT SA128/47, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). In 1861, Stephen and Jane Harding farmed a 220-acre holding at Sanigar, near Berkeley, Gloucestershire, where their son John Henry Harding - Harry's father - also lived immediately before emigrating to New Zealand: England Census, 1861, Parish of Berkeley, Tything of Hinton, p.18, Ref. RG9/1749; *The Farmer's Magazine*, Vol.18, Jul-Dec 1860, p.459. The Gloucestershire farm employed four labourers, one of whom evidently lived with the household in addition to a house servant.

²⁸ RT SA128/47, South Auckland Land District, LINZ.

contributed to the country's 'grasslands revolution' which sustained New Zealand as a major exporter of farm produce within the British imperial network.²⁹ By 1950, New Zealand had the fifth highest average per capita income in the world, based predominantly on its dairy, meat and wool exports.³⁰ The development of large-scale 'protein farming', in particular, has been considered one of the most significant transformations in New Zealand history.³¹ In this, a new class of small to medium farmers - such as those at Sanigar - played an unusually important role.³²

Sanigar occupied land defined initially as second and third class quality. It was allocated for a general farm rather than the dairy holdings specified for most neighbouring properties.³³ Subdivided from part of an earlier estate field, it is likely to have been at least partly broken in and cleared for pastoral or agricultural use prior to the early 1900s. Aspects of the farm layout were influenced by pre-existing estate features, including the orientation of some boundaries and access via Tower Road.³⁴

New buildings, probably including an initial farmhouse, were centrally erected within the farm. These lay at the junction of better-quality land occupying the eastern part of the holding and less fertile terrain to the west. Cultivation and higher-quality grazing probably focussed on newly-established fields in the front part of the holding, nearest Tower Road. Other grazing took place in more open, lower-lying land to the rear.

The earliest outbuilding is believed to be a timber-built stables, constructed in a paddock immediately to the rear of the house that became known as the 'courtyard'.³⁵ Designed as a

²⁹ Tom Brooking and Vaughan Wood, 'The Grasslands Revolution Reconsidered', in Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking, *Making a New Land: Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2013, pp.193-208. By the 1970s, over half of the country's surface area had been converted to grassland: *ibid.*, p.195.

³⁰ Robert Peden, 'Farming in the economy - Times of change, 1920 to 1950', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farming-in-the-economy/page-6> [accessed 13 Jan 2024]. See also Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2003, p.436.

³¹ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders, From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, pp.53, 68.

³² *ibid.*, 58-9.

³³ Plan, pre-June 1903, 'Under the Public Works Act – Assets Realisation Board v Minister for Lands (Matamata estate)', R25991510, Archives New Zealand, Auckland; *NZH*, 11 Jun 1904, p.6.

³⁴ Plan, pre-June 1903, 'Under the Public Works Act – Assets Realisation Board v Minister for Lands (Matamata estate)', R25991510, Archives New Zealand, Auckland; 'Surveyor's Field Book', 1904, folios 7-8, R25552752, Archives New Zealand, Auckland. Section 24 occupied the southern part of a larger field, No.28, prior to the early 1900s which was defined by an old bank on its south side, a fence to the east and land noted as being in a 'State of Nature' to the north. Tower Road was at this time gated through every enclosure it passed. Tower Road was evidently formalised as a public road in the 1902 subdivision: Isthmus Group Landscape Architects, 'Firth Tower and Stanley Landing Historic Reserves Management Plan', unpublished report for Matamata-Piako District Council, n.d., pp.23-4; DP 3005, South Auckland Land District, LINZ.

³⁵ Sue and Garth Huston, email to Martin Jones, HNZPT, 14 Sep 2021.

one-and-a-half storey, weatherboarded structure, this was of good-quality, balloon-frame construction. It appears to have contained divisions on the ground floor, and a storage loft above. The latter was covered by a relatively steep-pitched roof - which may have originally been shingled.

Farm work, including conversion of the land for intensive production, required considerable input from horsepower. The Hardings owned horses, harness, wagons and three drays as well as stock in mid-1904.³⁶ They subsequently also exhibited draught animals in agricultural shows.³⁷ Horses were additionally important for local transport and recreation, helping to forge social bonds in what was a new farming community. By the 1920s, the Hardings were involved in both the Matamata Hunt and Matamata Racing Club.³⁸



Gathering of the Waikato Hunt Club, Turangaomoana, 1914, showing the importance of horses in local community events

(*Auckland Weekly News*, 2 Jul 1914, p.53)

Farming at Sanigar appears to have been diverse from the outset. Both cattle and Merino sheep were likely being kept by 1906, the latter presumably for their wool.³⁹ First prize for a sample of local chaff awarded to Harry Harding a few years later may indicate at least some grain production. Root crops such as turnips, field carrots and mangolds were also grown.⁴⁰ Milk production occurred, with Shorthorn dairy cattle being displayed at shows and sold from as early as 1911.⁴¹ In 1922, Matamata was described as 'the centre of one of the finest and

³⁶ RT SA 128/47, South Auckland Land District, LINZ; *AJHR* 1904, Session I, C-4, 'Matamata Estate', p.6. At this time, the Hardings drove by wagon and dray to their new holding from Taihape with all their belongings, a journey that is said to have taken a month: *Putaruru Press*, 29 Feb 1940, p.7.

³⁷ *Waikato Argus*, 29 Mar 1912, p.2.

³⁸ *Matamata Record*, 18 Jun 1925, p.5; *NZH*, 24 Dec 1927, p.5.

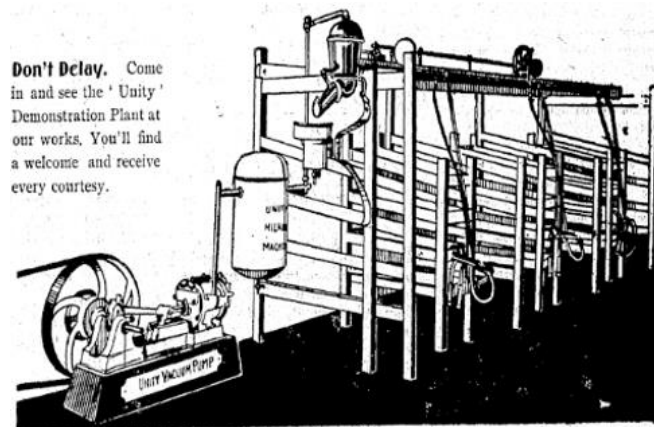
³⁹ *Waikato Times*, 22 Mar 1906, p.3; 27 Sep 1906, p.3. Five three-year old heifers and fifteen yearlings were also offered for sale in early 1907: *ibid.*, 16 Jan 1907, p.3.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 18 Jan 1906, p.2; *Te Aroha News*, 4 Apr 1911, p.2; *Waikato Times*, 11 Mar 1915, p.4; 22 Mar 1917, p.5. At least limited keeping of Berkshire pigs appears likely by 1915: *Waikato Times*, 7 Jul 1915, p.8.

⁴¹ *NZH*, 3 Apr 1911, p.9; *Waikato Argus*, 29 Mar 1912, p.2; *Waikato Times*, 7 Jul 1915, p.8; *NZH*, 22 Mar 1918, p.7.

largest dairying districts in the Province...[with] two of the largest dairy factories in the world.⁴² One of the latter, the Glaxo factory, opened in 1917.⁴³ Historically, Waikato farming has played an important role in the development of dairying in New Zealand, being considered ideal in its climate and landscape for pasturing cows.⁴⁴

A long, single-storey cowshed in the same paddock as the stables was likely built during this period. Of framed timber construction with vertical planking walls, the building was roofed with corrugated iron produced in Auckland between the late nineteenth century and the mid- to late 1920s. It also utilised electricity, reticulation of which was reported to be immediately imminent throughout the Matamata district in 1922, including for milking sheds.⁴⁵ By 1920, approximately half of New Zealand's cows were machine milked.⁴⁶



Advertisement for four-cow Unity Milking Plant, 1923

(*Hauraki Plains Gazette*, 13 Jun 1923, p.4)

In January 1926, Harry Harding advertised for an employee to machine milk a 'small herd'.⁴⁷ His equipment included a four-cow Unity Milking Plant, Massport engine and milk cans, catering to a 100-strong group of Shorthorn, Holstein and Jersey-cross cows.⁴⁸ The building

⁴² *NZH*, 7 Feb 1922, p.10.

⁴³ *AS*, 25 Apr 1917, p.4. The other major enterprise was a Dried Skim Milk Factory, and there were also three butter factories and a cheese factory within 5 kilometres of the township by 1929: *Waikato Times*, 16 Feb 1922, p.4; *NZH*, 6 Jul 1929, p.14.

⁴⁴ Nancy Swarbrick, 'Waikato region - Farming', 31 May 2010, updated 1 Jul 2015, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/waikato-region/page-8> [accessed 10 Jan 2024].

⁴⁵ *NZH*, 7 Feb 1922, p.10.

⁴⁶ Robert Peden, 'Farm buildings - Milking sheds', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-buildings/page-3> [accessed 17 Nov 2023].

⁴⁷ *NZH*, 22 Jan 1926, p.1.

⁴⁸ *Matamata Record*, 15 Jul 1926, p.8. By comparison, in 1928 'most dairy farms were either 55 acres (22 hectares) carrying 20–25 cows, or 100 acres (40 hectares) carrying 39–45 cows': James Watson, 'Farm mechanisation - Consequences of farm mechanisation', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-mechanisation/page->

incorporated a separating room and engine room as well as a main space. In addition to being mechanised, it was hygienically equipped with a concrete floor and water from an adjacent well for cleaning purposes. Hygiene standards in New Zealand dairying are considered to have improved by about 1920 due to regular monitoring by government inspectors.⁴⁹

Initial labour on the farm may have been predominantly provided by family members. Eldest son Sydney was injured while assisting seed-drilling for turnips aged six or seven, and Effie Harding is said to have helped break in the farm and bring it to a high state of fertility.⁵⁰ Extended family assistance was also available after Harry Harding's father and several brothers progressively arrived to take up other farms in the area, impressed by the easily worked nature of the land.⁵¹ Dairy farming was especially labour-intensive until the advent of mechanisation.⁵²

The extent to which local Māori may have been engaged for work at Sanigar during this period is currently unclear. In the early 1900s, the Ngāti Hauā community at Waharoa continued to cultivate crops such as wheat and oats on its own land, and some undertook dairying.⁵³ Heightened Māori concern about the ongoing loss of traditional lands in the region stimulated an increase in agricultural production on retained territory. In early 1909, a hui at Waharoa expressed a general desire 'to go in for farming and cultivation of the land, and to endeavour, if possible, to prohibit the sale of any further areas'.⁵⁴ In 1908-9, Ngāti Hauā cleared a large amount of ground to expand its commercial farming activities, although development was constrained due to a lack of finance.⁵⁵ More generally, rural Māori relied

⁶ [accessed 22 Nov 2023]. In general, the quality of dairy herds was raised through the steady replacement of shorthorn cattle by Ayrshire, Jersey, Holstein and Friesian breeds: Swarbrick, 2010, updated 2015.

⁴⁹ Hugh Stringleman and Frank Scrimgeour, 'Dairying and dairy products - Dairy sheds', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/dairying-and-dairy-products/page-5> [accessed 22 Nov 2023].

⁵⁰ *Putaruru Press*, 29 Feb 1940, p.7; *Waikato Times*, 18 Jan 1906, p.2.

⁵¹ *Matamata Record*, 7 Jan 1935, p.4; *Waikato Times*, 1 Jun 1935, p.7; *Wanganui Chronicle*, 6 Dec 1947, p.4.

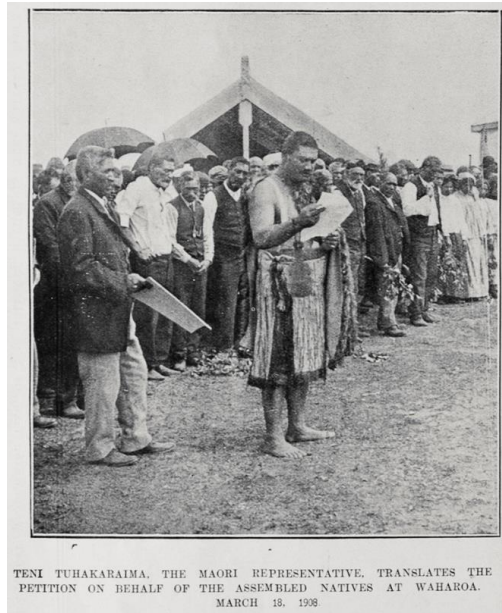
⁵² Dairying 'required more labour and capital than sheep and beef farming': Hugh Stringleman and Frank Scrimgeour, 'Dairying and dairy products - On the farm', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/dairying-and-dairy-products/page-8> [accessed 22 Nov 2023].

⁵³ *Waikato Independent*, 11 July 1907, p.6; *Waikato Times*, 15 Nov 1906, p.2.

⁵⁴ *Waikato Argus*, 2 Mar 1909, p.2.

⁵⁵ *Waikato Argus*, 10 Apr 1909, p.2; Ngāti Hauā and The Trustees of the Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust and The Crown, 'Deed of Settlement of Non-Raupatu Historical Claims', 18 Jul 2013, p.26. The Ngāti Hauā deed of settlement notes that 'in the first decades of the twentieth century Ngāti Hauā's ability to farm their own land was constrained by a lack of access to development finance. Banks were reluctant to lend money on multiply-owned land and, because most Maori-owned lands were not held under the Land Transfer Act 1885, the Crown did not provide Maori with the same level of financial assistance for the development of their lands that it offered Pakeha farmers under the Advances to Settlers scheme'.

considerably on seasonal employment on European-run farms, especially before more loan funding became accessible from the 1930s.⁵⁶ Ngāti Hauā and other iwi within Kīngitanga raised issues linked with Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi to the Crown through this period, including presenting a petition to the Governor-General, Lord Plunket, at Waharoa in 1908.⁵⁷



Presentation of petition to the Governor-General, Lord Plunket, Waharoa, 1908
(*Auckland Weekly News*, 26 Mar 1908, p.6)

According to historian D. B. Waterson, 'with rapidly rising prices, new techniques of grassland farming, better communications, milking machines, motor transport, equable climatic conditions and new factories, the farmers on the South Auckland Lands for Settlement farming estates became ardent supporters of the freehold and consequently of the rising rural Reform Party of W. F. Massey'.⁵⁸ On the former Matamata Estate, the peak period of transfer from lease-in-perpetuity to private purchase by lessees occurred in 1916-19, stimulated by impacts of the First World War (1914-18) on the price of primary produce.⁵⁹ In September 1918, the Hardings bought the freehold title to Sanigar.⁶⁰ Probably subsequently,

⁵⁶ Michael King, *Maori: A Photographic and Social History*, Auckland, 1983, p.213.

⁵⁷ *Waikato Argus*, 19 Mar 1908, p.2. Ngāti Hauā leaders Tupu and later Tana Taingakawa - sons of Wiremu Tamihana Tarapīpipi - also respectively travelled to Europe in 1914 and 1924, in attempts to discuss matters directly with the British king: *Otago Witness*, 26 Aug 1914, p.45; *Kawhia Settler and Raglan Advertiser*, 27 Jun 1924, p.2; *Matamata Record*, 1 Jul 1929, p.5; Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, 2001, pp.227-8. Tupe Kaingakawa's visit in 1914 was undertaken with the Kīngitanga leader, King Mahuta, and the secretary and translator was Hori Paora (George Paul).

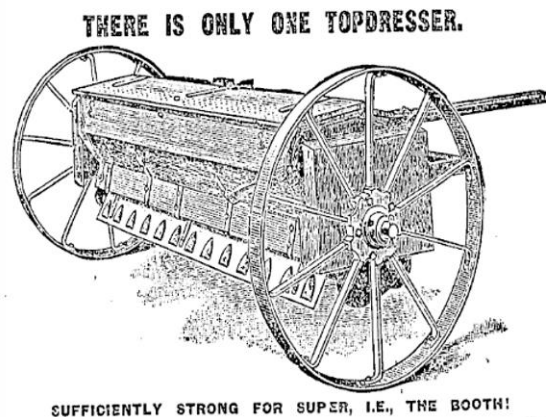
⁵⁸ Waterson, 1969, pp.41-2.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp.42-3.

⁶⁰ RT SA282/202, South Auckland Land District, LINZ.

a house of California Bungalow design replaced or was converted from an earlier farmhouse.⁶¹

During the war and after, Harry Harding supported patriotic causes including donating surplus wool to the British Seamen's fund.⁶² From 1919, he also joined the committee of the Matamata Agricultural and Pastoral Association.⁶³ The grasslands revolution in New Zealand was assisted both by faster-growing varieties of plants and increasing reliance on superphosphate.⁶⁴ By 1928, some sixty percent of grass in Matamata county was treated with the latter.⁶⁵ Having decided to cease dairying in 1926, Harding offered his mechanical, Booth MacDonald topdresser for sale.⁶⁶



Booth MacDonald topdresser, advertised as 'sufficiently strong' for superphosphate use, 1926
(*Waikato Times*, 8 May 1926, p.5)

In the late 1920s, greater focus may have been placed at Sanigar on meat and wool production, the latter by now involving Romney rather than Merino sheep. At some point

⁶¹ In plan, the new residence was arranged symmetrically around a central hallway. This might indicate redevelopment of an earlier villa of this layout, although it is also typical of one of the two classic 1920s New Zealand bungalow plans identified by architectural historian, Jeremy Ashford. The current residence consists of a single storey structure with a dominant gabled roof, weatherboard cladding and square bay window, with other bungalow features such as plain architraves, beam and panel ceilings, and typical bungalow doors surviving internally: see Jeremy Ashford, *The Bungalow in New Zealand*, Auckland 1994, pp.55, 62; Jeremy Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940*, Auckland, 1986, p.215.

⁶² *King Country Chronicle*, 5 Nov 1918, p.2; *Matamata Record*, 21 Nov 1918, p.2. He also welcomed returning servicemen, raised funds for the Red Cross, and was on a committee forwarding a proposal to erect a library memorial for those who had fallen: *Matamata Record*, 24 Jan 1918, p.2; 26 September 1918, p.3; 9 Apr 1919, p.1; 16 Oct 1919, p.2.

⁶³ *Matamata Record*, 7 Aug 1919, p.2; 16 Sep 1920, p.2; 21 Sep 1925, p.5. In the late 1920s, Harding also became a committee member of the Matamata Branch of the New Zealand Farmers' Union: *ibid.*, 26 May 1927, p.5; *NZH*, 12 May 1928, p.8.

⁶⁴ Hugh Stringleman and Frank Scrimgeour, 'Dairying and dairy products - On the farm', 2008; Brooking and Wood, 2013.

⁶⁵ *Taranaki Daily News*, 28 Jun 1928, p.6.

⁶⁶ *Matamata Record*, 15 Jul 1926, p.8.

during the Hardings' tenure, probably before 1920, the initial stables was expanded in size and altered to a woolshed for more efficiently shearing sheep and sorting wool.⁶⁷ Conversion may have occurred in the period 1916-20, when the Crown became the sole buyer and seller of wool in New Zealand, and Britain guaranteed to buy all such produce at a relatively high fixed price for military purposes, including uniforms.⁶⁸ By 1930, Sanigar had at least 750 Romney Cross ewes in lamb to Southdown rams, as well as some 100 head of beef cattle⁶⁹

During economic headwinds linked with the Great Depression, the Hardings unsuccessfully attempted to sell Sanigar to the government for yet more intensive settlement. At this time, the holding and neighbouring land were said to be 'practically all in grass and in a condition to allow of milking to be pursued by settlers the first season'.⁷⁰ Deciding to retire, the Hardings were farewelled at the Turangaomoana Hall in mid-1930.⁷¹ By this time, they were one of few families on the former Matamata Estate that had remained on their initial farm.⁷²

Later use of Sanigar (1930-present)

Sanigar was subsequently owned and farmed by Samuel and Margaret Huston, who moved there from Taranaki.⁷³ A feature of second-generation settlers on the former Matamata Estate was the number that had relocated from Taranaki, an older-established dairying area, reflecting a broader trend in early twentieth-century Waikato.⁷⁴ In 1934, farms in the eastern Waikato 'not only produced more butterfat per acre and per cow than any other area in New Zealand, but also carried more cows to the acre at a lower cost than in other parts of the country.'⁷⁵ The Hustons resumed dairying at Sanigar with Jersey and Jersey-cross cows.⁷⁶

⁶⁷ Several sheets of corrugated iron on the south lean-to of the woolshed are of British-made Redcliffe brand, which ceased being manufactured in 1920: see Dirk H. R. Spenneman, *Redcliffe Crown Corrugated Iron in Australasia: Its History, Marketing and Distribution 1875-1921*, Albury, Dec 2015, p.21. In 1930, the building was referred to as a woolshed with electric-powered shearing, indicating use for this purpose while Sanigar was still owned by the Hardings: Elwyn Huston diary, 1930, 11 Aug 1930, Huston family archive.

⁶⁸ Bill Carter and John MacGibbon, *Wool: A History of New Zealand's Wool Industry*, Wellington, 2003, pp.46-56.

⁶⁹ *Waikato Times*, 23 Jul 1930, p.12; *AS*, 31 Jul 1930, p.4.

⁷⁰ *Matamata Record*, 3 Apr 1930, p.4.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 21 Jul 1930, p.1. Friends were also entertained with cards and music at Sanigar: *ibid.*, 31 Jul 1930, p.1.

⁷² 'Barely twenty per cent of the original families remained on their selections in 1921 and by 1955 the figure was a mere eight per cent': Waterson, 1969, p.45.

⁷³ *Patea Mail*, 30 Jul 1930, p.2; *Matamata Record*, 7 Aug 1930, p.5. Formal transfer of the land occurred in 1931: RT SA282/202.

⁷⁴ Waterson, 1969, p.45; Ron Lambert, 'Taranaki region - Farming', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/taranaki-region/page-9> [accessed 24 Nov 2023].

⁷⁵ Waterson, 1969, p.47. By 1937, within a 6½-mile radius of Matamata Post Office there were four dairy factories whose combined annual production was worth over £1 million: *Souvenir: Come to Matamata Week, 1937*, Matamata, 1937, p.8.

⁷⁶ *Matamata Record*, 4 Jun 1931, p.8; *Waikato Times*, 2 Jul 1932, p.10.

Beef and sheep farming were also retained.⁷⁷ Enclosures in the 'courtyard' held cows and sheep respectively for milking and shearing. Between 1920 and 1950, dairy, meat and wool products continued to consistently generate more than 90 per cent of the country's export income.⁷⁸



View of woolshed and enclosures, with cowshed roof in foreground, 1930s, looking southeast
(Huston family archive)



Samuel Huston and flock of sheep, with woolshed in background, circa 1930s, looking southwest
(Huston family archive)

⁷⁷ *Waipa Post*, 2 Jul 1932, p.1; *Matamata Record*, 30 May 1935, p.8.

⁷⁸ Peden, 'Farming in the economy - Times of change, 1920 to 1950', 24 Nov 2008.

While retaining strong connections with Taranaki, the Hustons engaged in local community activities. Samuel Huston became an elder of Matamata Presbyterian Church and the family hosted bible class evenings at their residence.⁷⁹ Farm practices linked with Christian faith included not working on Sundays.⁸⁰ Samuel Huston was also an advocate of temperance.⁸¹

Changes during the Second World War (1939-45) included disposal of the dairy herd.⁸² Two or three cows were retained for household use, milked by hand inside the cowshed.⁸³ When son Elwyn Huston married Gwyneth Joll in 1944, a cottage to accommodate the new couple was erected on the farm.⁸⁴ Elwyn was an accomplished worker, capable of shearing 300 sheep per day.



Shearing gang at Sanigar including Elwyn and Lindsay Huston, circa 1930s
(Huston family archive)

⁷⁹ *Matamata Record*, 16 Apr 1931, p.5; 21 Nov 1932, p.2.

⁸⁰ Sue Huston, pers. comm. to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 7 Nov 2023.

⁸¹ *Patea Mail*, 30 Jul 1930, p.2; *Matamata Record*, 1 May 1939, p.2.

⁸² Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023. This may have occurred in 1940, or in 1941: *Waikato Times*, 6 May 1941, p.10. Initial attempts to sell the herd took place as early as 1937: *ibid.*, 27 Oct 1937, p.14.

⁸³ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023. Elwyn Huston records three Jersey cows in diary entries at the end of both February and April 1963: Elwyn Huston diary, 1963, Huston family archive.

⁸⁴ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023; Retrolens, SN229-RN503-PN94, 10 Jun 1948.



Wool bales at Sanigar, circa 1930s-40s

(Huston family archive)

Other accommodation was erected for seasonal shearing gangs and other farmworkers, probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s - and certainly by 1952.⁸⁵ The post-war period was especially profitable for farmers, and competition for workers likely high due to low unemployment.⁸⁶ The new quarters included a small, one-room residence of corrugated iron construction, a short distance from the cowshed. An adjacent building was perhaps similarly utilised until removal in 1962.⁸⁷ Both were referred to as 'whare', like other on-farm workers' accommodation in the North Island.⁸⁸

From at least the early 1950s, many of the workers at Sanigar were Māori neighbours from the Waharoa community. Farm diaries record the extent to which they worked with Huston family members on general tasks including hedge-planting, topdressing and ensilage-making, as well as endeavours such as shearing, wool pressing and baling.⁸⁹ Māori played an especially important role in the development of contract shearing in New Zealand, often working in extended family groups that included women and children - differing from all-

⁸⁵ Retrolens, SN229-RN503-PN94, 10 Jun 1948; Retrolens, SN827-RN2234-PN1, 20 Oct 1953.

⁸⁶ Robert Peden, 'Farming in the economy - The golden years, 1950s to 1980s', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farming-in-the-economy/page-7> [accessed 11 Jan 2024]; John E. Martin, *Glimpses of the Past: The First Fifty Years of the Department of Labour*, Wellington, 1991, p.2.

⁸⁷ This was relocated to a position next to the main house and office, perhaps for alternative use: Elwyn Huston diary, 1962, 30 Nov and 5, 7, 8 and 10 Dec 1962, Huston family archive.

⁸⁸ Geoffrey G. Thornton, *The New Zealand Heritage of Farm Buildings*, Auckland, 1986, p.176; Robert Peden, 'Farm buildings - Farm housing', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-buildings/page-4> [accessed 7 Jan 2024]

⁸⁹ Elwyn Huston diary, 1958, 20-21 Feb 1958, 9-10 Jul 1958; 1962, 11-20 July, 12-15 Dec 1962; 1963; 25 March 1963.

male approaches promoted in colonial European society.⁹⁰ A wool boom caused by American military demand during the Korean War of 1950-3 generated both an increasing number of sheep in New Zealand and exacerbated a pre-existing shortage of shearers.⁹¹ The 1950s and 1960s have been considered watershed decades for Māori employment, as large numbers from rural communities moved to New Zealand's cities for work in the mainstream market economy. Those remaining often found advantage in waged employment on European farms.⁹² Shearing, in particular, has been seen as a key industry for Māori, both in the twentieth century and earlier.⁹³ It became especially important for the Waharoa community after the Second World War, with many younger members learning skills by working alongside kaumātua, including at Sanigar.⁹⁴



Sanigar after the construction of whare, 1952
(Retrolens, 26 Sep 1952, SN525-RN1575-PN55)⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Carl Walrond, 'Rural workers', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/rural-workers/print> [accessed 22 Nov 2023]; Hazel Riseborough, *Shear Hard Work: A History of New Zealand Shearing*, Auckland, 2010, pp.32, 89.

⁹¹ Riseborough, 2010, pp.47, 71; Carter and MacGibbon, 2003, pp.116-17, 155-6.

⁹² Andrew Coleman, Sylvia Dixon, and David C Maré, 'Māori economic development – Glimpses from statistical sources', Motu Working Paper 05–13 Motu Economic and Public Policy Research, Sep 2005, p.19; King, 1983, p.250. Living standards for many rural Māori nevertheless remained lower than for other sectors in society, with a long-term crisis in Māori rural housing: Ann Pomeroy, 'Insights from past and present social science literature on the (unequal) development of New Zealand's rural communities', *New Zealand Geographer*, Vol. 75, Issue 3, Dec 2019, pp.204-15. Traditionally, accommodation for Māori shearers had similarly been poor: Tom Murray, Kerry Tayloe, Joe Tepania and Nora Rameka, 'Towards a History of Māori and Trade Unions', in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds), *Culture and the Labour Movement: Essays in New Zealand Labour History*, Palmerston North, 1991, p.53.

⁹³ Murray et al, 1991, p.51.

⁹⁴ Mokoro Gillett, Chair, Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, pers. comm. to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 26 Jan 2024. Mr Gillett undertook shearing at Sanigar with his cousins in the 1970s, it being the first shed he worked in as a sixteen year old. The labour at this time was mostly male, with younger shearers working alongside their fathers and grandfathers.

⁹⁵ Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ CC-BY 3.0.



Garth Huston and Jackie Paul, stacking hay with an elevator, Sanigar, 1960
(Huston family archive)



Jackie Paul, making silage at Sanigar, 1967
(Huston family archive)

The single-room whare remained in regular use until at least the 1960s, possibly in conjunction with a small enclosure or garden.⁹⁶ Occupants included John (Johnny) Wharawhara, who was permanently employed on the farm for lengthy periods, and his family.⁹⁷ Jackie Paul was similarly a long-term employee. Although often basic, on-farm accommodation enabled whānau to remain together during the busy shearing season.⁹⁸ Members of the local Māori community also assisted with droving sheep to the farm from the East Coast and Taumaranui for fattening, and from the farm to Waharoa train station for market; and collected firewood and puha from the farm. As a Justice of the Peace, Elwyn Huston provided assistance with land issues and other legal matters.⁹⁹

A large store and loading porch were added to the woolshed before 1966, when wool prices suddenly fell.¹⁰⁰ A third generation of the family became involved, with Elwyn and Gwyneth's son Garth gradually taking over the farm with his wife Sue. Although rural Māori labour became especially vulnerable to unemployment as general economic growth slowed from the middle of the decade, Māori workers continued to be engaged at Sanigar.¹⁰¹ Garth Huston regularly contributed sheep or mutton for tangi and other events.¹⁰²



Elwyn and Sue Huston in front of woolshed, docking sheep, 1970s
(Huston family archive)

⁹⁶ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023; Retrolens, SN1848-RN4098-PN18, 13 Apr 1966.

⁹⁷ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023.

⁹⁸ Riseborough, 2010, p.4.

⁹⁹ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Retrolens, SN1848-RN4098-PN18, 13 Apr 1966; Brian Easton, 'Economic history - External diversification after 1966', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/economic-history/page-10> [accessed 13 Jan 2024].

¹⁰¹ Coleman et al, 2005, p.22; Sue Huston, 14 Feb 2024.

¹⁰² Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023.



Woolshed, showing south lean-to and loading porch, circa late 1970s, looking northwest (left), and Garth Huston, 2000s (right)
(Huston family archive)

During his tenure, Garth undertook contour-fencing to preserve wetland areas and utilised organic manures where possible. He also installed an improved water supply with new pumps and pump shed, and re-grassed pastures.¹⁰³ Initially, seasonal shearing continued. In 1984, however, sheep farming at Sanigar ceased after Britain's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) affected exports, and government subsidies were removed.¹⁰⁴

Most of the farm was subsequently leased out for cropping, although the family retained paddocks around the homestead. Increasingly, the earlier farm buildings were employed for storage.¹⁰⁵ These remain in family ownership. Much of the rest of farm is currently (2024) leased out for dairy support, continuing Sanigar's extensive connections with the practice and evolution of New Zealand farming.

New Zealand remains the world's third largest wool producer; and dairying forms this country's largest export goods sector.¹⁰⁶

Associated List Entries

N/A

¹⁰³ Sue Huston, 14 Feb 2024.

¹⁰⁴ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023; Peden, 'Farming in the economy - The golden years, 1950s to 1980s', 24 Nov 2008; Robert Peden, 'Farming in the economy - A sunset industry? 1984 to the present', 24 Nov 2008, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farming-in-the-economy/page-8> [accessed 11 Jan 2024].

¹⁰⁵ Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023.

¹⁰⁶ New Zealand Wool Testing Authority, 'About the New Zealand Wool Industry', [NZ Wool Testing Industry | New Zealand Wool Testing Authority \(nzta.co.nz\)](https://www.nzta.co.nz/) [accessed 11 Jan 2024]. The latter states: 'New Zealand is the third largest wool producer in the world, behind Australia and China'.

Physical Information

Current Description

(all images Martin Jones, HNZPT, 22 Sep 2022 and 29 Nov 2023)

Context

Sanigar is located in the eastern part of the Waikato, within the Matamata Plains. It lies in a rural landscape to the north of Matamata, a town servicing the local farming area, and to the east of the smaller township at Waharoa. The area mostly consists of farmland, incorporating fields, occasional homesteads and other rural structures. Sanigar is situated immediately to the west of Tower Road, a thoroughfare connecting Matamata and Te Aroha.

A short distance to the east of Tower Road is the Waihou River, a waterway of spiritual and other importance to tangata whenua.¹⁰⁷ Recorded archaeological sites beside the Waihou include several pā.¹⁰⁸ Other notable recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape to the west and south of Sanigar, around Waharoa and Matamata, include Te Waharoa's Matamata Pā (T14/1), the site of Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi's settlement at Te Tāpiri (T14/2), and the site of Tāmihana's whare at Pēria (T14/80). Other features of cultural significance in the broader locality include the waterfall Te Wairere, to the east of the Waihou, and Te Ara o Te Wairere, an ancestral ara or pathway connecting the Waikato and Tauranga Moana.¹⁰⁹

Surviving remnants of the mid- to late nineteenth-century Matamata Estate in the landscape immediately around Sanigar include Tower Road, initially created to connect the estate with navigable access on the Waihou at nearby Stanley Landing. Other associated remains beside Tower Road encompass a concrete tower that formed part of the main Matamata Estate homestead (1880-2; List No. 754, Category 1 historic place), and the former McCaw Homestead (1902-3; List No. 4340, Category 2 historic place), built next to the tower for the subsequent manager of the estate. These two structures form a centrepiece of the Firth

¹⁰⁷ Bay of Plenty Regional Council, 'Bay of Plenty Regional Council – Statutory Acknowledgements Addendum', s.17 Ngāti Hinerangi Statutory Acknowledgements, p.619, URL: <https://atlas.boprc.govt.nz/api/v1/edms/document/A4037778/content>

¹⁰⁸ NZAA site records, T14/8, T14/9, T14/78, T14/111, T14/131, T14/132, T14/133.

¹⁰⁹ Tumuaki and Ngāti Hauā and the Trustees of the Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust and The Crown, 'Ngāti Hauā Deed of Settlement Schedule: Documents', n.d., pp.46-8, URL: <https://ngatihauaiwitrust.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Ngati-Haua-Iwi-Trust-Deed-of-Settlement-Documents.pdf>; Bay of Plenty Regional Council, n.d., p.619; Sharnae Hope, 'An iwi blossoms', Stuff, 25 May 2019, URL: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/112531642/an-iwi-blossoms--ngti-hinerangi-take-back-their-mana-after-signing-a-deed-of-settlement> [accessed 14 Jan 2024]; Nancy Swarbrick, 'Waikato places - Matamata', first published May 2010, updated Jun 2015, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-15> [accessed 2 Nov 2023].

Tower Museum, advertised as one of New Zealand's largest farming museums.¹¹⁰ The Museum also incorporates an *in situ* stables that may have formed part of the estate or later farming activity, as well as several historic structures relocated from Matamata and elsewhere in the area.¹¹¹ The latter include a jail building (List No. 4219, Category 2 historic place), a post office (List No. 4220, Category 2 historic place), a school building (List No. 4221, Category 2 historic place) and a Methodist church (List No. 4222, Category 2 historic place).

A monument to Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi at the Museum, and the nearby site of Stanley Landing have been formally recognised by Matamata-Piako District Council, the former as a wāhi tapu.¹¹²

The site

The site lies in the central part of the Sanigar farm property. The farm encompasses some 86 hectares (212 acres) and remains in agricultural use. The site incorporates several farm outbuildings in a part of the property known as the 'courtyard', as well as directly adjoining land that formerly included sheep pens and other enclosures directly connected with building usage. The site is located to the west of a California Bungalow-style farmhouse that has been extensively added to in recent times, and a 1940s cottage which has also been increased in size and modernised.

The site incorporates part of two grassed paddocks, accessed by a track leading from Tower Road. The land is relatively flat and lies within the western limit of higher quality ground occupying the eastern part of the farm. Immediately to the west of the site is a short scarp, defining the junction with lower, more uneven ground of lesser quality in the western part of the farm. Shelter trees along this scarp are excluded from the extent. Outside the site to the east is an access track or race for the current farm, and to the south is an orchard. Two water bores also lie outside the site extent boundary.

The paddocks contain three buildings. Near the south end of the larger, southern field is a timber-built woolshed (and former stables). In the north part of the same paddock, along its western side, is a cowshed - also of timber construction - associated with the remnants of a

¹¹⁰ Firth Tower Museum website, [Home \(firhtower.co.nz\)](http://Home(firhtower.co.nz)) [accessed 1 Nov 2023].

¹¹¹ Isthmus Group Landscape Architects, 'Firth Tower and Stanley Landing: Historical Reserves Management Plan', Matamata-Piako, n.d., pp.26-8.

¹¹² Matamata-Piako District Plan, Operative, 2005 (as at 31 Jan 2023), Schedule 1: Heritage sites, Ref. No. 68; Schedule 2: Heritage – waahi tapu, Ref. No. 62.

capped well. In the north paddock, separated by a post and wire fence and a line of concrete electricity pylons (both excluded from the extent) as well as an east-west access route or race, is a small single-room dwelling or 'whare' of corrugated iron construction.

These elements are described sequentially from south to north.

Woolshed (c.1904)



Woolshed (including former stables), looking southeast

The woolshed is a rectangular building of timber construction, with overall measurements of 13.5 m E-W x 7.8 m N-S. It incorporates evidence of at least four major phases of construction, indicating conversion from what may have been stabling accommodation to a woolshed, and later improved capacity for storage and loading. Its archaeological fabric retains extensive information about processes linked with wool production, and the people who undertook this work. There is direct evidence of use by both owners and employees, including whānau-based shearing and rousie gangs from nearby Waharoa.

Examination of the fabric indicates initial construction as a one-and-a half storey weatherboarded building, measuring some 8.5 m E-W x 3.65 m N-S. Believed to have been used for stabling and a hay loft, this element is of balloon-frame construction with a relatively steep-pitched, gabled roof currently clad with corrugated iron. Its upper storey contains a doorway in its west gable end, and remnants of an external staircase. The lower

storey retains a wide central doorway on its north elevation with small flanking windows. Internally, the structure has tongued and grooved upper floorboards whose joists are supported by a longitudinal bearer and two large posts with bolsters in the underlying room. Horizontal mortices in both posts suggest that the ground floor was divided into several spaces by railed partitions.

This building was converted into a woolshed, with the addition of a wide lean-to for shearing and wool sorting on its southern side. The ground floor of the initial structure was modified to incorporate pens for overnighting sheep before being shorn.¹¹³ Surviving elements linked with this use include a slatted floor to reduce fleeces being soiled or discoloured during overnighting, and smaller railed and gated pens at the west end that led into catching pens in the added lean-to. Although now open-sided, the 8.5 m E-W x 4.07 m N-S timber-built lean-to structure was once weatherboarded with a wide entrance towards its east end. Its corrugated iron roof retains several sheets with Redcliffe trademarks. Redcliffe brand iron ceased manufacture in 1920, suggesting likely construction before this date.¹¹⁴



Internal pens at west end of initial structure after conversion to a woolshed, looking east (left) and door from internal pen to catching pen in south lean-to, looking northeast (right)

Internally, catching pens at the west end of the lean-to lie next to what was a two-stand shearing board.¹¹⁵ Associated equipment includes mechanical fixtures produced by Wolseley of Birmingham, England - a notable manufacturer of sheep-shearing machinery.¹¹⁶ An open

¹¹³ Robert Peden, 'Farm buildings - Woolsheds', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/farm-buildings/page-2> [accessed 9 Jan 2024].

¹¹⁴ Spenneman, 2015, p.21.

¹¹⁵ Sue Huston, pers. comm. to Martin Jones, HNZPT, 29 Nov 2023; Mokoro Gillett, email to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 24 Jan 2024.

¹¹⁶ Carter and MacGibbon, 2003, pp.30-1.

space to the east of the shearing area functioned as a wool room for sorting and classing fleeces, and retains a large wool table for this purpose. Overlooking this area, a large opening in the west wall of the initial loft was likely created to hoist and store wool at this upper level after the lean-to was added.



Catching pen in south lean-to, with door



Wolseley equipment next to shearing board

Attached to the east of the initial structure and south lean-to is a later weatherboarded extension, added for pressing, baling and storing wool. Erected on raised concrete block footings, this is accessed internally via steps from the wool room. Incorporating a single room measuring 5 m E-W x 7.85 m N-S, this was erected as a relatively tall structure that evidently replaced an earlier lean-to of lower dimensions. An internal board on the east wall holds metal stencils. Other chattels include a wool press and a weighing machine. Corrugated iron sheets on the addition's monopitch roof are re-used and encompass several brands, including Bristol Crown and an unusual example bearing a Sunflower trademark manufactured in Liverpool.¹¹⁷ This may indicate construction during the Second World War, when materials were scarce.



Bristol Crown (left) and Sunflower (right) corrugated iron trademarks

The most recent addition is a 2.7 m wide, open porch at the south end of the pressing and storage room, which facilitated the loading and export of bales. Its gabled roof is clad with

¹¹⁷ Bristol Crown was advertised in New Zealand in the late 1920s: Spenneman, 2015, p.53. Another sheet is of Southern Cross brand, also manufactured until the same decade (see information on cowshed). Sheets could have been re-used from the earlier wool store at this end of the woolshed, known from photographic evidence to exist in the 1930s.

iron bearing the trademark 'S.C.W. MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN'. The Steel Company of Wales operated between 1947 and 1967.¹¹⁸ The loading porch is known from documentary sources to have been erected before April 1966.

The building interior, especially on the ground floor, contains extensive graffiti linked with use, including workers' names and dates. The recording of names, dates and shearing tallies in woolsheds was a widespread and longstanding practice.¹¹⁹ Early identifiable names are in the wool room and date to the 1930s. They include McLean, 1935 and H. H. Herbert, 1939, likely representing friends and neighbours of the Huston family prior to the Second World War.¹²⁰ Subsequent names in both this area and the wool store include whānau of Māori employees on the farm during the post-war period. Members of the Tuhakaraina, Kaukau, Paul, Wilson and possibly Wharawhara families are represented. Encompassing both male and female names, this can be seen to reflect whānau-based approaches to shearing and rousie work within Māori communities.

Other lettering includes 'H.R.H. Tamata' next to the shearing board. H.R.H. was the farm identifier stencilled on wool bales (after first owner Henry Richard Harding). At least one Pacific Island worker may also have been involved in repeat visits during the mid-1960s. Male and female members of the Huston family who owned and ran the farm are additionally represented. As well as stencilled numbering that may represent tallies, numbers chalked on the internal face of successive weatherboards on the north wall of the wool store appear to represent a game, perhaps reflecting the presence of children.



H.R.H. Tamata

¹¹⁸ Stephen Parry, 'History of the Steel Industry in the Port Talbot area 1900-1988', PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2011, pp.128, 187.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Riseborough, 2010, pp.36, 67; and Annette O'Sullivan, 'Wool Bale Stencils: A Design History of New Zealand Branding and Visual Identity 1850-2019', PhD thesis, Massey University, 2019, p.30.

¹²⁰ The McLean family were fellow-farmers on Tower Road and the Herberts were friends from the Hustons' previous farming activities in Taranaki: Sue Huston, 7 Nov 2023. Members of the Herbert family continued to visit Sanigar until at least the late 1950s: Elwyn Huston diary, 1958, 2 Jan 1958, Huston family archive.



Butch Tuhakaraina 1955-1960



Marcey Kaukau 1967 Waharoa



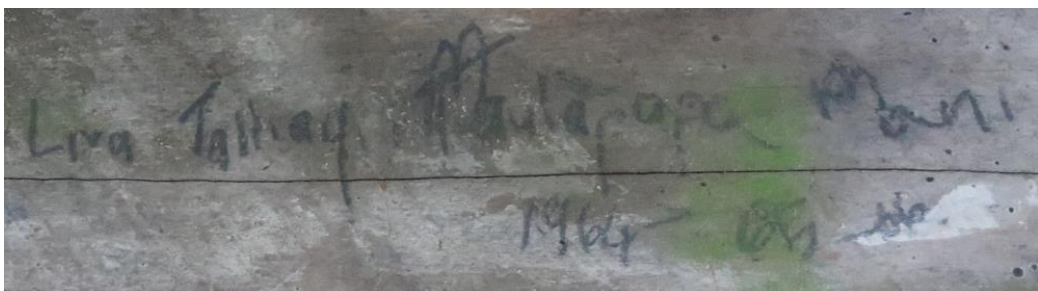
Mana T T Wil[s]on 1 51



Tui K[au]K[au]



Mahia May Paul 1966[?]



Liva Talliy Taulapapa Mani 1964- 65 - 66



Jane Huston



Children's game?

Cowshed (pre-1920s?)



Cowshed, looking northwest with whare in background

Situated approximately 50 m to the northwest of the woolshed, the cowshed is a single-storey building of rectangular plan. It measures 11.5 m N-S x 5.25 m E-W with an additional, low-roofed lean-to at its north end, 1.12 m N-S x 3.95 m E-W in size. The timber building is externally clad with vertical boards and has a corrugated iron roof. It incorporates numerous features that collectively reflect mechanised and hygienic approaches to farm-based milk

production that accompanied major expansion of New Zealand's dairy industry in the early twentieth century.

The frame of the structure consists of machine-sawn timbers and incorporates a collared roof. The shallow pitch of the roof suggests that this was clad with corrugated iron from the outset. The existing cladding consists of regular sheets uniformly stamped with the trademark Southern Cross Brand and the name S Parker, with the logo edged by a star each from the southern cross at the top, bottom and each end. Southern Cross was unusual as a New Zealand-manufactured corrugated iron, being created in Auckland by Samuel Parker using imported metal for a forty year period from the late 1880s onwards.¹²¹ In 1921, Parker's manufactory was reported to be the only one producing galvanised iron sheets in New Zealand, and one of only two in Australasia.¹²² Consistent use of this brand for the roof cladding suggests that the main structure was likely created sometime between 1904 and the late 1920s.



Cowshed interior with roof framing, looking north



'Southern Cross Brand' corrugated iron

Internally, the building contains evidence of two main spaces: a large area for milking cows, and a vat- or separating room in its northwest corner. The north lean-to appears to have accommodated an engine room. Main access from the exterior was evidently via a relatively wide doorway towards the north end of the building's east wall, indicated by surviving door framing. A separate external entrance to the separating room survives in the north wall. The two interior spaces were connected by an internal door, now represented by door hinges in the southwest corner of the separating room. Access to the lean-to may have been internal, from the main building interior space.

¹²¹ Nigel Isaacs, 'Nails in New Zealand 1770 to 1910', *Construction History* 24, 2009, p.90; *AS*, 8 Feb 1899, p.5; 29 Jan 1929, p.14; *Otago Daily Times*, 25 Aug 1941, p.10.

¹²² *AS*, 16 Sep 1921, p.8.



Main internal space, with separating room at right, looking south

Several concrete settings in the floor of the lean-to likely reflect the position of machinery. In 1926, Harry Harding's dairying equipment included a three and a half horsepower Massport engine as well as a milking plant.¹²³ Nearby settings at the north end of the main space may similarly indicate equipment linked with milking or related processes. These lie close to the main entrance and immediately to the east of the separating room.

The latter space was where cow's milk was separated into cream and skim milk. This procedure became increasingly widespread on farms after 1910, reducing the expense of transportation to factories as only cream was required for butter production.¹²⁴ The room was provided with electricity, as indicated by a fuse box on its west wall. Other surviving features in this space include a rectangular metal tank with tap, believed to have been for holding milk, and a built-in wooden workbench.¹²⁵

¹²³ *Matamata Record*, 15 Jul 1926, p.8.

¹²⁴ Robert Peden, 'Farming in the economy', 24 Nov 2008, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, [Farming in the economy \(teara.govt.nz\)](https://teara.govt.nz) [accessed 7 Jan 2024]; Hugh Stringleman and Frank Scrimgeour, 24 Nov 2008, 'Dairying and dairy products - Separators and milking machines', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/dairying-and-dairy-products/page-4> [accessed 7 Jan 2024]. By 1918, 24,700 farms (71%) supplied cream to dairy factories. Skim milk was generally fed to pigs on the farm.

¹²⁵ Interpretation of the tank's function is by Sue Huston, pers. comm. to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 11 Jan 2024.



Separating room, looking southwest



Metal tank in separating room, looking southwest

Both the separating room and main space have a concrete floor, promoted as important for maintaining good hygiene.¹²⁶ Water for cleaning floors and equipment was pumped to this part of the building from an adjacent well. Some connected equipment survives, including a pressure tank linked with a pump.¹²⁷ A secondary post at this end of the building contains engraved initials that include those of Elwyn William Huston, who worked on the farm from 1930, when dairying was re-introduced.



Pressure tank



Carved initials on central post, possibly 1930s

At its south end, the main space contains two bails, utilised for hand milking the small number of cows retained for home use after the farm ceased major dairy production a decade later. These are evidently of walk-through type, with evidence of corresponding openings in the east elevation.¹²⁸ The associated entrance to the bails may have been towards the west end of the south wall. Other apertures include a wide opening near the south end of the west elevation, indicating the building's later use for storing farm machinery

¹²⁶ Peden, 'Farm buildings - Milking sheds', 24 Nov 2008 [accessed 7 Jan 2024].

¹²⁷ Sue Huston, email to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 12 Jan 2024.

¹²⁸ Sue Huston, pers. comm to Alexandra Foster, HNZPT, 14 Feb 2024.

including a grain and fertiliser drill - perhaps after the 1930s. A small rectangular window opening survives in the north wall, above the adjacent lean-to roof.



Milking bails at south end of main space, looking east

A well, capped with concrete, that serviced the cowshed, lies some 2 m to the north of the building.¹²⁹

Whare (pre-1952)



Whare, looking northeast

¹²⁹ Sue Huston, 11 Jan 2024.



Whare, looking southwest

Located some 15 m north of the cowshed, the whare consists of a small, standalone building of vernacular construction. Enclosing a single room, it represents an example of basic workers' accommodation linked with Māori labour on post-war, European-style farms. Although of simple and basic construction, it contains a source of heat, electric lighting and a lined interior. It also retains evidence of internal redecoration subsequent to its initial creation.

Measuring some 3.73 m N-S x 2.52 m E-W, the building is erected of framed timber and corrugated iron. It has a door in its north wall and a small window in its east elevation. The west side of the structure contains a basic chimney of metal construction on concrete foundations. The roof is monopitch, sloping down from west to east.

The doorway is centrally positioned in the north elevation and incorporates a wooden door of ledged type with vertical boards. The east window contains a single light. The building's chimney is located towards the south end of the west elevation and is created predominantly of flat metal sheets. At least one of these is re-used, flattened corrugated iron bearing a 'Redcliffe Trademark' stamp similar to examples in the south lean-to of the woolshed. Aggregate in the concrete footings of the chimney includes bottle fragments, potentially linked with farm-based consumption as well as reflecting vernacular approaches to concrete mixing and construction.

The rest of the building is clad with vertical sheets of corrugated iron consistently bearing a trademark of distinctive design. The latter's motif bears four crowns in lozenge formation between what appear to be the words 'Kauri' and Crown'. This brand appears to be of unusual type. Its name may indicate specific production for the New Zealand market.



Bottle glass in chimney footings



External chimney



'Kauri Crown' corrugated iron

Internally, the single room is matchlined throughout with v-jointed, tongued and grooved boards. The latter are nailed vertically to the wall framing, and also internally line the sloping ceiling. Wallpaper remnants indicate later redecoration. Above the fireplace on the west wall is a simple, timber mantelpiece with chamfered corners, and a row of protruding nails has been added to the wall further north for use as pegs. A light switch, fuse board and wiring indicate electric lighting. Immediately outside the southeast corner of the building, a tall pole may have held an external light.



Matchlining and later wallpaper



Light switch



Artefacts beneath floor

Artefacts linked with food and other consumption survive beneath the room's tongued and grooved floorboards.

Comparative Analysis

Relatively few surveys have been undertaken of farm buildings in Aotearoa New Zealand. The most comprehensive account so far was produced by Geoffrey Thornton in 1986.¹³⁰ This examined a range of pre-1907, colonial-era structures, including stables, barns and animal husbandry buildings as well as woolsheds and workers' accommodation. Due to rapidly changing agricultural processes and priorities, farm structures have been especially vulnerable to deterioration and demolition since the 1980s.

Most woolsheds identified by Thornton are linked with large runs or estates, especially in the South Island and Hawke's Bay, in contrast with the more moderately sized farms which were created after the break-up of large estates in the Waikato and elsewhere.¹³¹ Cowsheds that are noted encompass some large buildings for overnight shelter following earlier English traditions as well as less substantial, practical structures for smaller herds including an early example at Bedford Road near Inglewood, Taranaki.¹³² As observed in Thornton's survey, 'dairy farms were small by comparison with sheep and beef cattle runs and their buildings did not produce the same enchantment, being nearly always modest and basic in design. They are usually ignored as part of our architectural record.'¹³³

Workers' accommodation singled out by Thornton is also generally associated with large stations and estates and often consists of dormitory style accommodation for men as well as housing for specialist staff such as cooks.¹³⁴ Although the survey notes that portable huts were sometimes created to provide accommodation in remote areas of large farms, no specific examples are identified. Temporary tents were often used as short-term accommodation, including by Māori families.¹³⁵ More generally, the experiences of Māori workers have been frequently under-represented in examinations of New Zealand's past.¹³⁶ This is perhaps especially true of the twentieth-century, rural Māori workforce.

Relatively few woolsheds, cowsheds or farmhand accommodation buildings have been identified through formal heritage recognition in the Waikato. Known surviving examples

¹³⁰ Geoffrey G. Thornton, *The New Zealand Heritage of Farm Buildings*, Auckland, 1986.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, pp.109-175.

¹³² *ibid.*, pp.199-207.

¹³³ *ibid.*, p.10.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp.175-195.

¹³⁵ King, 1983, p.149.

¹³⁶ See for example Murray et al, 1991, p.50.

that have been recognised through Council scheduling include the country's first herringbone cowshed at Gordonton; Swann Woolshed, Ruapuke; Blackrock Milking Shed, which is cut into a rockface; and Woolshed, Paeroa, a former Anglican church converted into a woolshed in 1953.¹³⁷ An *in situ* stables linked with the Matamata Estate or later farming activity survives at the Firth Tower Museum, as does a shearers' hut relocated to the latter from Henry Watson farm in Matamata in 2023-4, but otherwise few farm outbuildings of comparable type and date are known to have been identified in the immediate vicinity of Sanigar.¹³⁸

The relative paucity of comparable places that have been formally recognised in the Waikato is in spite of its important connections with New Zealand's agricultural development, and especially dairying, from the late nineteenth century onwards. In 1997, a regional heritage survey noted that 'in terms of the heritage of the Waikato area, nothing could be more significant than dairying', while also stating that 'there are apparently many significant farm buildings and structures around the Waikato, such as buildings demonstrating pioneer farming methods of international significance e.g. milking sheds, silos, saleyard buildings and other farm structures and complexes'.¹³⁹ The report additionally observed that 'The Waikato is studded with farm structures of great interest, such as barns, milking sheds, wells and so on'.¹⁴⁰ Workers' housing mentioned in the study is primarily linked with dairy factories and government institutions.¹⁴¹

Immediately outside the Waikato, a broadly comparable farming complex has been formally recognised at Devcich Farm, Kauaeranga, near Thames (List No. 9497, Category 1 historic place). Larger than Sanigar, this includes a woolshed, stables and portable bunkhouse as well as several other buildings and structures. Also retaining a very large number of chattels linked with varying aspects of use including shearing, the exceptionally well-preserved and diverse early twentieth-century complex was created by settlers from Dalmatia and displays numerous features demonstrating Croatian roots. It was considered to have special significance for the extent to which it can provide information about farming activities, gum-trading and the lives of Dalmatian migrants in rural New Zealand. In general, farm buildings

¹³⁷ These are respectively scheduled as: Waikato District Plan, Appendix C, Nos. 55A and 101B; and Hauraki District Plan, Schedule of Historic Heritage Inventory, IDs HAU276 and HAU216.

¹³⁸ In 2021, the long-term owners and occupants of Sanigar observed that 'no other old buildings like this remain in our area that we know of': Sue and Garth Huston, 14 Sep 2021. Information on the shearer's accommodation at Firth Tower Museum is from Royce Wiles, Secretary, Matamata Historical Society, submissions to HNZPT, 2 May 2024 and 6 May 2024.

¹³⁹ Dinah Holman, 'Waikato Heritage Study', prepared for Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council and Waipa District Council, Nov 1997, p.23.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.30.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp.4, 25, 31.

of twentieth-century origin have not so far formed a major focus for physical recording or related archaeological investigation in this country.¹⁴²

Collectively, the woolshed, cowshed and whare at Sanigar can be considered a noteworthy group of inter-related, twentieth-century buildings linked with wool production, dairy farming and associated workers' accommodation in the Waikato, particularly within the context of medium-scale, family-based farming on estates broken up by the First Liberal Government for intensive production. The woolshed and whare can be regarded as especially notable for their connections with the experiences and contributions of Māori workers, who themselves maintained a long tradition of agricultural production in the locality and formed a part of wider communities involved in sheep shearing and related work using whānau-based collaboration. The place can be regarded as having particular potential to provide information about these and other important aspects of New Zealand history, which have so far not been generally well examined or documented through physical investigation, broader survey or - in the Waikato - extensive formal heritage recognition.

Construction Professionals

N/A

Construction Materials

Woolshed: Timber with corrugated iron roof; concrete block footings for east addition

Cowshed: Timber with corrugated iron roof

Whare: Timber with corrugated iron walls, roof and chimney; mass concrete foundations for chimney

Key Physical Dates

- | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| c.1904 | Original construction – Woolshed (initially used as stables and hay loft) |
| pre-1920 | Modification – Woolshed: slatted floor and railed divisions for conversion to internal sheep pens |
| | Addition – Woolshed: south lean-to containing catching pens, shearing stands and wool room |

¹⁴² Limited examples include detailed recording of aspects of the Devcich Farm after its entry on the New Zealand Heritage List: Martin Jones, 'Dalmatian settlement and identity in New Zealand: the Devcich Farm, Kauaeranga Valley, near Thames', *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, Vol.30 (2012), pp.24-33. The lack of focus on twentieth-century farm buildings is in part due to a concentration on pre-1900 fabric within the archaeological authority process legislated under the *Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014*.

- pre-1920s Original construction – Cowshed
- c. early 1940s Addition – Woolshed: east lean-to for wool pressing and bale storage
- pre-1952 Original construction - Whare
- pre-1966 Addition – Woolshed: open loading porch added to south end of east lean-to

Uses

- Agriculture - Woolshed/Shearing Shed
- Agriculture - Stables
- Agriculture - Milking shed/ cowshed
- Agriculture - Staff/ Workers' Quarters
- Utilities - Well

Chattels

This List entry includes chattels that contribute to the heritage significance of the place:

Grain and fertiliser drill



Located inside the cowshed, the Farmers Favorite Grain and Fertilizer Drill is American-made equipment manufactured by Bickford and Huffman, a division of the American Seeding Machine Company (ASMC). Based in Springfield, Ohio, the ASMC operated between 1903 and 1929, dating the machine to this period. Combined grain and fertiliser drills facilitated the more systematic and efficient planting of crops, including grass, encouraging improved yields and feed availability for dairy and dry-stock animals.¹⁴³ In 1908, Bickford and Huffman stated that they had been the inventors of the combined seed and fertiliser drill, and that

¹⁴³ Farmers’ Favorite grain and fertiliser drills had attachments that would allow grass seed to be sown for pasture: Bickford and Huffman Company, *Farmers’ Favorite Grain Drills*, Macedon, 1908, pp.4-5.

their drills had achieved popularity in the American ‘Great West’ and ‘many foreign countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand’.¹⁴⁴

Wool table



A large wooden table, measuring 2.35 x 1.55 m, situated in the wool room. The table has a slatted top. It was used by rousies for laying out, sorting and classing fleeces prior to pressing and baling.

Wool press



A large wool press survives in the pressing and storage room of the woolshed. This compressed shorn fleeces and is documented as having been used by both Māori workers and Huston family members.¹⁴⁵ Subsequent to pressing, fleeces were baled for transport. Stencilling lettering on one side of the press is faint but may include the manufacturer’s name and model number.

¹⁴⁴ Bickford and Huffman Company, *Farmers’ Favorite Grain Drills*, Macedon, 1908, p.2. Prior to the establishment of Sanigar farm, the Matamata Estate also had a strong pedigree of using the latest American technology for farm production.

¹⁴⁵ Elwyn Huston diary, 1962-3, 11 July 1962, Huston family archive.

Wool scales



An American-made Fairbanks scales of metal construction, with a weighing capacity of 1000 pounds, is situated in the pressing and storage room of the woolshed. It incorporates a cartouche with the company name, capacity and country of manufacture: 'FAIRBANKS CAP 1000 LBS. MADE IN U.S.A.' Scales were used to weigh filled wool bales so that quantities could be recorded and tallied before removal from the woolshed.¹⁴⁶

Bale stencils



Several metal stencils for labelling bales hang on nails attached to a timber board on the east wall of the woolshed's pressing and storage room. The stencils were used label wool bales before transportation from the farm. Letters identified the farm and description of wool. Numbers sequentially identified each individual bale.¹⁴⁷ Stencils were also informally used to record the names or initials of shearers, rousies and pressers – and sometimes tallies – inside the woolshed building.

¹⁴⁶ Peden, 'Farm Buildings -Woolsheds', 24 Nov 2008; [The Wool Scale – John Philip](#) [accessed 13 Jan 2024].

¹⁴⁷ O'Sullivan, 2019, pp.68-77

Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

Relevant documentary material available and accessed during the preparation of this report included land deeds and titles, survey maps and related information held by Land Information New Zealand. Archival material at Archives New Zealand connected with the Matamata Estate, including field survey notebooks, were viewed. The Huston family generously made farm diaries and photographs from the 1930s onwards available, and also provided oral recollections. Extensive contemporary newspaper information, including advertisements linked with Sanigar and earlier activities connected with the Matamata Estate, was accessed at [Papers Past \(natlib.govt.nz\)](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz). Historic twentieth-century aerial photographs of the farm from the 1940s onwards were sourced via [Retrolens - Historical Imagery Resource](#).

Waitangi Tribunal Reports, including the Ngāti Hauā and Ngāti Hinerangi Deeds of the Settlement, were invaluable for information about the Māori history of the area. Secondary accounts of the Matamata Estate and its subsequent transformation into smaller farms included an article by D.B. Waterson in 1969. Contextual information about the history of farming and farm buildings was accessed from a wide variety of sources, but most notably that written by Robert Peden, Hugh Stringleman and Frank Scrimgeour, and Carl Walrond on *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*; and by Geoffrey Thornton (1986). Specific publications linked with the wool industry included those by Carter and MacGibbon (2003), Hazel Riseborough (2010) and Annette O’Sullivan. For information about Māori rural workers, Michel King’s photographic and social survey of Māori life (1983) was also utilised.

The site was visited in September 2022 and November 2023, when all buildings including their interiors were viewed.

Further Reading

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3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT¹⁴⁸

Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess archaeological and historical significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Archaeological Significance or Value

Sanigar has high archaeological significance for its capacity to provide information about activities connected with important aspects of New Zealand's twentieth-century development, economy and everyday life for rural families and workers. It can supply particular knowledge about farm-based wool production and dairying, mainstays of the country's agricultural life and export market for much of this period. The place can provide specific insights about matters linked with shearing, wool sorting, pressing and baling; mechanised and hygienic approaches to milk production in the early twentieth century; and the evolution of vernacular structures to cope with changing farm requirements. It has particular capacity to supply knowledge about such activities on a family-run farm of typical scale to many created during the intensification of New Zealand agriculture in the early twentieth century. The place's archaeological significance is enhanced by the survival of associated equipment as well as chattels; and in-ground features such as an associated well and artefacts connected with the everyday use of the place.

Sanigar is additionally important for its ability to provide information about individuals and communities who laboured in and utilised the buildings. Extensive graffiti survives, especially in the woolshed, which provides knowledge about farming networks involving neighbours and friends in the 1930s, and later whānau-based approaches linked with shearing and rousie activities from at least the early 1950s. Also incorporating a significant example of small-scale workers' accommodation, Sanigar can provide knowledge about everyday working conditions, particularly for Māori rural communities in the 1950s and 1960s. The experiences of such communities have often previously been under-represented in historical enquiry about the past.

¹⁴⁸ For the relevant sections of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 see Appendix 2: Significance Assessment Information.

Historical Significance or Value

Sanigar is historically significant for its connections with the transformation of the rural landscape and economy in twentieth-century New Zealand. The country's shift in focus from extractive industries to farm-based produce for export within the British imperial network has been considered one of the most notable developments in New Zealand history. Sanigar has particularly close associations with the breaking up of large landed estates by the First Liberal Government (1891-1912), and the expansion and intensification of European-style farming through the creation family-run farms, mostly of medium size. It is directly connected with the subdivision of the Matamata Estate, an important example of a large colonial, agricultural holding in the Waikato and Hauraki.

Sanigar has historical value for its long and close associations with the production of meat, dairy and wool - items that consistently accounted for over 90 percent of New Zealand's annual exports during extended periods of the twentieth century. Fuelled by superphosphate fertiliser and related pastoral improvements, medium-size farm production - as at Sanigar - made an unusually important contribution to such exports by international standards. In its dairying activities, Sanigar is also specifically linked with the importance of the Matamata area to New Zealand's twentieth-century pastoral development. In the 1920s, when dairying was being undertaken at Sanigar, Matamata contained what were considered some of the largest dairy factories in the world, serviced by surrounding farms. The place has associations with the relocation of farmers from earlier dairying districts in Taranaki to Matamata, a wider feature of European settlement in Waikato and Hauraki during the early twentieth century. Its historical significance is enhanced through remaining part of a working farm.

Sanigar is additionally important for its associations with rural Māori communities, and notably employment opportunities for Māori workers after the Second World War. The 1950s and 1960s have been considered key decades in twentieth-century Māori history, when rural communities experienced an exodus to New Zealand's cities and remaining individuals often took up work on European farms. Shearing formed a particularly important industry for Māori. Sanigar is historically significant both for its direct associations with whānau-based shearing activity, and the employment of Māori labour for general farmwork. These formed part of a longer tradition of Māori engagement with European-style agriculture in the Matamata area, which included kāinga-grown crops for the Auckland market in the 1840s and the involvement of local Māori communities in farming on the Matamata Estate.

Section 66 (3) Assessment

This place was assessed against the Section 66(3) criteria and found to qualify under the following criteria a, b, c and k. The assessment concludes that this place should be listed as a Category 1 historic place.

- (a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

In its creation and evolution, Sanigar reflects the emergence and development of small and medium-sized farms that fuelled the country's agricultural and pastoral economy for much of the twentieth century. Its surviving outbuildings and associated features demonstrate the scale and a range of activities undertaken on these holdings, particularly those connected with dairy and wool production. These include farm-based milk separation and machine milking; hygienic requirements in early twentieth-century cowsheds; and a range of processes linked with shearing and rousie duties. Small and medium size farms played an unusually prominent role in the production of meat, dairy and wool in New Zealand - assisting the country to achieve the world's fifth-highest per capita income by 1950. In the date and means of its creation as a farmholding, Sanigar has strong and specific connections to policies promoted by the First Liberal Government, and especially those connected with the breaking up of large colonial-era estates.

As well as reflecting family-based enterprise, Sanigar also demonstrates the contributions of rural Māori communities in farming activity and development. Graffiti in the woolshed directly reflects the activities of Māori shearing and rousie gangs, who played an important role in the evolution of New Zealand shearing and differed from other traditions by frequently incorporating both male and female whānau-based labour. Sanigar also retains an identified example of accommodation for Māori shearers and farmworkers, which reflects day to day conditions for such employees. This and the other surviving structures on the site demonstrate vernacular approaches to farm-building construction and use that were created and developed outside of formal architectural practice.

(b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history

Sanigar has connections with events of significance in New Zealand history, notably global conflicts that stimulated wool purchase and price. Conversion and extensions to the woolshed at Sanigar likely occurred during or in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, when New Zealand wool was commandeered for British military use and prices fixed at a comparatively advantageous rate. The farm owner at this time, Harry Harding, was involved in patriotic events linked with this war, including donating surplus wool to the British Seamen's fund. Construction of the workers' accommodation or whare at Sanigar similarly appears to have coincided with the Korean War, when American military demand for wool caused prices to boom and also exacerbate a pre-existing shortage of shearing labour, itself caused by the Second World War.

(c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history

Sanigar has special significance for the extent to which it can provide additional knowledge about New Zealand's farming history. This is due to the range and authenticity of fabric that survives in the form of buildings, associated equipment, graffiti, chattels, in-ground features and artefacts; the extent of associated documentary and oral history about the place that would assist interpretation; and the relative lack of archaeological enquiry relating to twentieth-century farm buildings of this type and meaning. Its potential is also enhanced by the importance of the history involved.

Specific knowledge that future investigation can provide includes information about processes and activities linked with dairying and wool production; worker accommodation and shearing gang composition; and evolving farming priorities and practices through the early and mid-twentieth century. The whare and extensive graffiti in the woolshed linked with whānau-based shearing gangs can be considered particularly significant for their capacity to advance knowledge about the experiences and contributions of Māori communities in agricultural work, especially in the mid-twentieth century. The cowshed similarly has high significance for being able to provide evidence about early twentieth-century dairying in the Waikato, a region that played a major role in this industry's development at this time.

The place can also provide extensive additional evidence about vernacular approaches to farm building design, construction and use, as well as expand knowledge about the nature and origins of vernacular materials. Regarding the latter, the place incorporates an unusual variety of trademarked corrugated iron, including numerous sheets from what may have been the only manufactory in 1920s New Zealand, as well as other brands that appear uncommon or unusual. Further investigation of these sheets can provide information about the manufacture, distribution and use of such brands. Corrugated iron formed an important material in vernacular construction, particularly in rural areas where the ease of transport of this material was an advantage.¹⁴⁹

(k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

The place forms part of a wider area within the immediately surrounding Matamata Plains associated with notable developments in New Zealand agricultural production. The area incorporates recorded archaeological components linked with Ngāti Hauā's adoption of European crops to supplement traditional gardening in the vicinity of Matamata. It also encompasses surviving places linked with later creation and use of the Matamata Estate, including the Firth Tower, McCaw Homestead, Stanley Landing and position of Tower Road. Some of these structures are situated in the Firth Tower Museum, advertised as one of the largest agricultural museums in the country. Sanigar articulates ongoing developments in agriculture and rural life into the early and mid-twentieth centuries linked with the intensification of agriculture and rural settlement. All of these aspects have close and significant connections with the history of Māori communities in the area and their contribution to the area's agricultural development.

Summary of Significance or Values

Sanigar has special significance for the for the extent to which it can provide knowledge about New Zealand's twentieth-century farming history. Incorporating a wide range of fabric including buildings of differing use along with associated equipment, chattels, in-ground features and artefacts, the place can supply additional information about numerous of matters of value, including dairying and wool production; worker accommodation and shearing gang composition; and vernacular farm-building design, construction, materials and use. It can also advance knowledge about the experiences

¹⁴⁹ Thornton, 1986, p.19.

and contributions of Māori communities in agricultural work. Its value is enhanced by factors that include the current under-investigation of such matters and the importance of the history involved.

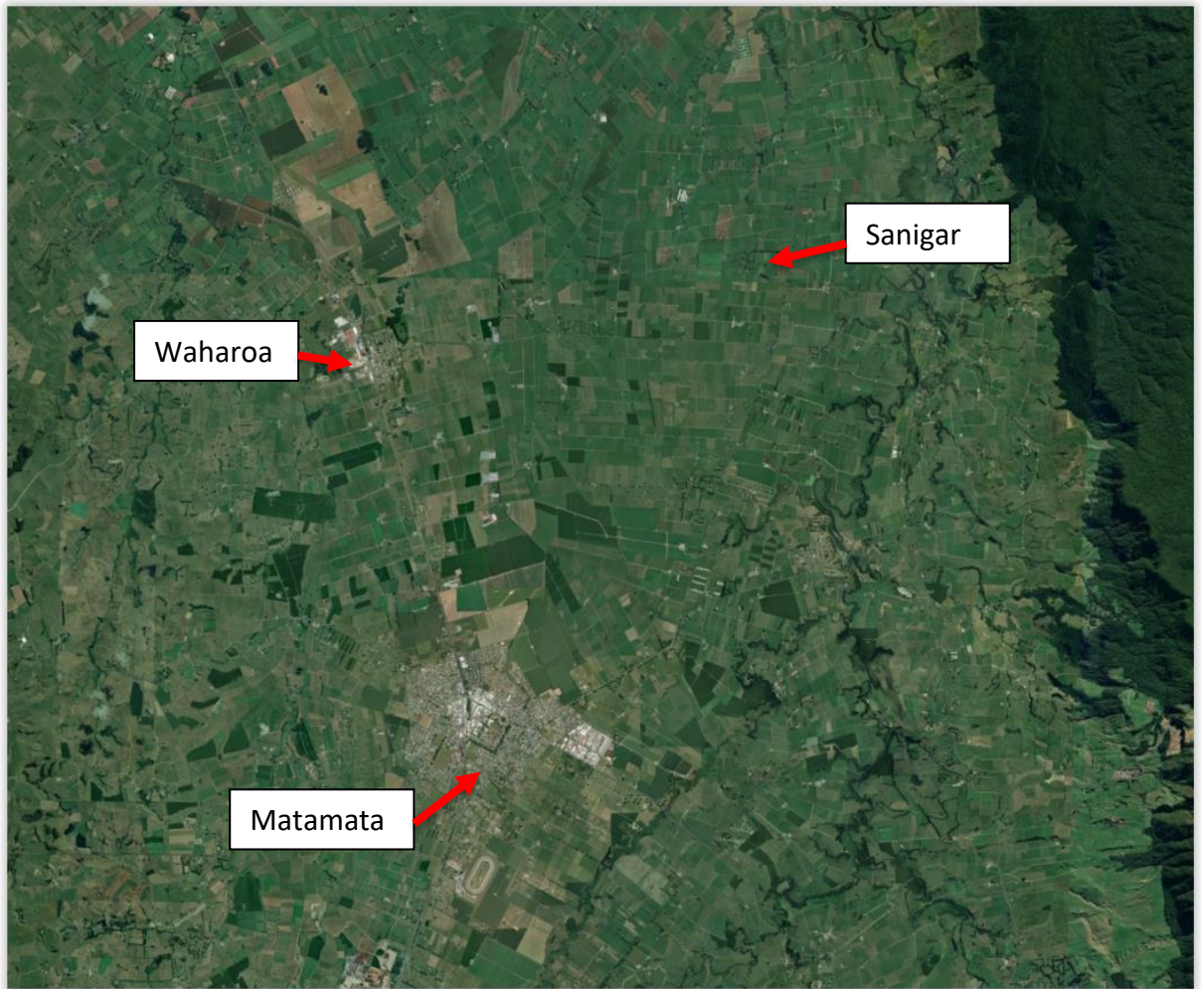
Sanigar is historically significant for its connections with the transformation of the rural landscape and economy in twentieth-century New Zealand. It is especially linked with the breaking up of large, landed estates by the First Liberal Government (1891-1912), and the intensification of European-style farming through the creation family-run farms, mostly of medium size, for producing meat, dairy and wool exports. Sanigar is also historically important for its connections with and ability to reflect the contributions and experiences of rural Māori workers, especially during the 1950s and 1960s - decades of key significance in twentieth-century Māori history. The place forms part of a wider area with capacity to articulate evolving developments in New Zealand agriculture, including the contributions of Māori communities.

4. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps



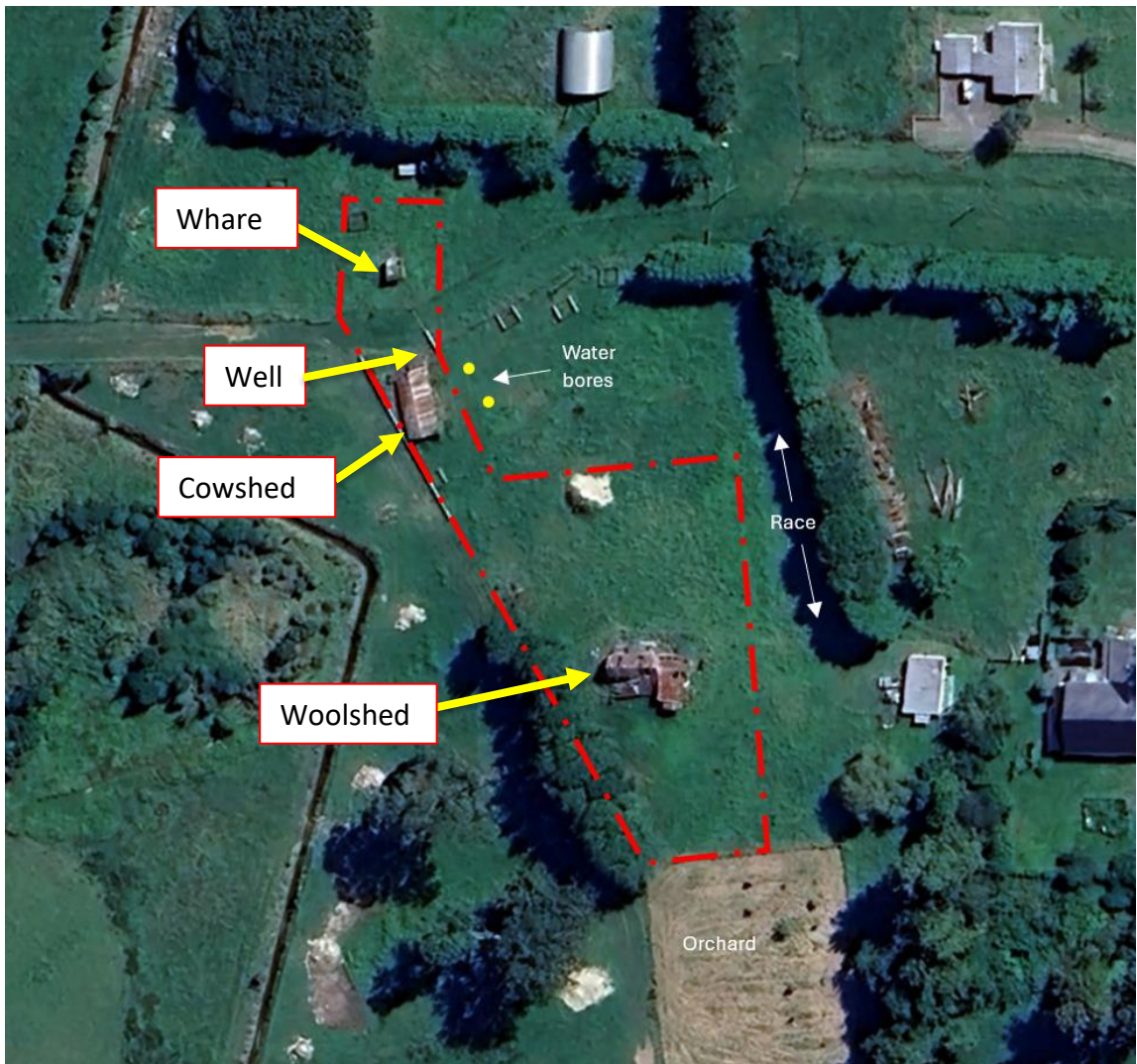


Aerial photograph showing the location of Sanigar in relation to Matamata and Waharoa (Google Earth)



Aerial photograph showing the location of farm buildings at Sanigar (large arrow) in relation to Tower Road, Turangaomoana (Google Earth)

Map of Extent



Extent indicated by dash dot red line (Google Earth, with QuickMap overlay)

Extent includes part of the land described as Lot 2 DP 430406 (RT 518454), South Auckland Land District, and the buildings known as Sanigar thereon, and the following chattels: grain and fertiliser drill, wool table, wool press, wool scales and bale stencils. The extent excludes modern fencing, concrete electricity pylons and current trees or plantings.



**RECORD OF TITLE
UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 2017
FREEHOLD
Search Copy**



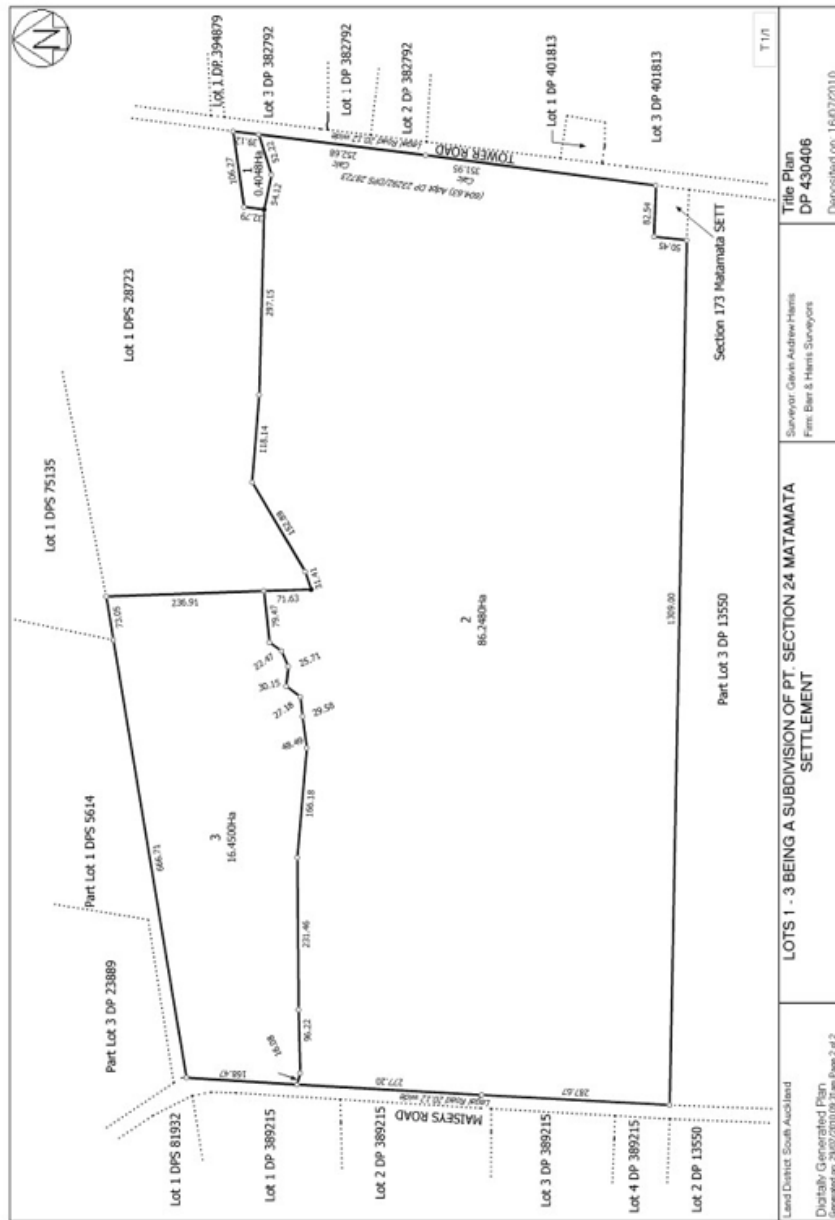

R. W. Muir
Registrar-General
of Land

Identifier 518454
Land Registration District South Auckland
Date Issued 16 July 2010

Prior References
SA26B/1140

Estate Fee Simple
Area 86.2480 hectares more or less
Legal Description Lot 2 Deposited Plan 430406
Registered Owners
E.W. Huston Limited

Interests
Land Covenant in Easement Instrument 9668814.2 - 3.4.2014 at 4:00 pm



Appendix 2: Significance Assessment Information

Part 4 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (Section 65(6))

Under Section 65(6) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, an entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero relating to a historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- a) Situated in or on that place; and
- b) Considered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- c) Proposed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero.

Significance or value (Section 66(1))

Under Section 66(1) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

Category of historic place (Section 66(3))

Under Section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may assign Category 1 status or Category 2 status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history
- b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history
- c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history
- d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua
- e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place
- f) The potential of the place for public education
- g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place
- h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

- i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement
- j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places
- k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for the purpose of assigning Category 1 or Category 2 status to a historic place, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3)

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for entering historic places or historic areas of interest to Māori, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, or wāhi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3) or (5) or in regulations made under subsection (4).

NOTE: Category 1 historic places are 'places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.' Category 2 historic places are 'places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.'