

Kaingahou

642 Pioneer Highway, Palmerston North

NZHPT Registration Number:	1265
NZHPT Registration Type:	Historic Place – Category II
NZHPT Registration Date:	25/11/82
City/District Council:	Palmerston North City Council
District Plan Status:	Category 1



Brief History

Bishop Ditlev Gothard Monrad, a former Prime Minister of Denmark, settled with a small group of family and friends on land at Karere in 1866. He returned to Denmark in 1869 but members of his family remained in Manawatu. Ditlev Gothard Monrad, his grandson, built Kaingahou (new home) in 1903-1904 for his retirement from the family farm. Monrad purchased the section, which was originally part of the Scandinavian small farm settlement scheme of the 1870s from his mother-in-law, Laura Ronberg.

The builder was local master builder Abraham du Fresne, a Dane of French Huguenot ancestry who was part of the local Scandinavian community. It has been speculated that Monrad, having a keen interest in architecture, designed the house himself or in conjunction with du Fresne.

An unusual feature of the construction for a home of this period is the continuous concrete ring foundation, probably used due to the swampy nature of the site.

Also unusual for a house of its time in New Zealand, the main living rooms are built to catch the sun, and the lounge opens directly into the dining room. The latter has been claimed to be a Scandinavian style. Opening on to the veranda are tall double-hung sash windows with sills only 20cm from the floor. They can be pushed up to make an opening of 1.8m, which allows entry into the rooms.

The house has five fireplaces all with carved rimu surrounds and patterned tile decoration. There have been only minor changes to the floor plan though the kitchen and bathroom have been modernised.

The turret and flagpole, formerly used to fly the Danish flag on special occasions, also reflects the Scandinavian influence. One of the main features of the road frontage is the long picket fence (53m) and the elaborate main gates, which have received good maintenance.



Ditlev Monrad died of tuberculosis in 1908 and his widow, Kamma, sold the property to George Kendall in 1913. Kendall died in 1930, and his oldest, unmarried daughter remained in the house until 1973. Some three acres of the originally 4 ¼ acre section were sold for state housing development in 1957. During the following decade the house changed hands several times and was purchased in 1983 by Bodil and Gunner Petersen, also Danish.

Eager to ensure the character of the historic house was preserved into the future, the Petersens negotiated with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 1992 for a Covenant to be placed on the house. This was the first Covenant to be placed on a heritage site in Palmerston North and prevents alteration of some of the house's most historically significant features whilst allowing alteration of the interior with the consent of the Trust. The house was again sold in 2002 to K A Lynch and W J Drake and the new owners had the interior altered slightly to accommodate a bed and breakfast suite. The house has since been purchased by new owners.

Principal Sources:

Ian Matheson City Archives, file no.175/370.

Petersen, B & G, *Kaingahou*, Palmerston North, Manawatu Branch Committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 2001.

Pilkington, D, *Palmerston North City Heritage Trail*, Palmerston North, Palmerston North City Council, 1993.

Palmerston North City Library Photograph Collection: Bur 111-113,127,179-189.