Fern Grove, Lower Hutt

New Zealand Times 27 June 1881 Severe Earthquake

At the Lower Hutt, our reporter, who was occupying a bedroom on the upper floor of Fraser's Hotel, describes the shock as extremely severe. The whole house, for about half a minute, was in violent oscillation, as if the foundations of the building had been displaced. The exact time of the occurrence was 5.20 a.m. – the direction appearing to be from east to west. Singular to say, not a bottle or glass were disturbed in the bar by the action of the quake, although a quantity of water in a small tub was spilt over the floor. At McIntosh's hotel a few bottles and small ornaments on the side shelves were thrown down and broken.

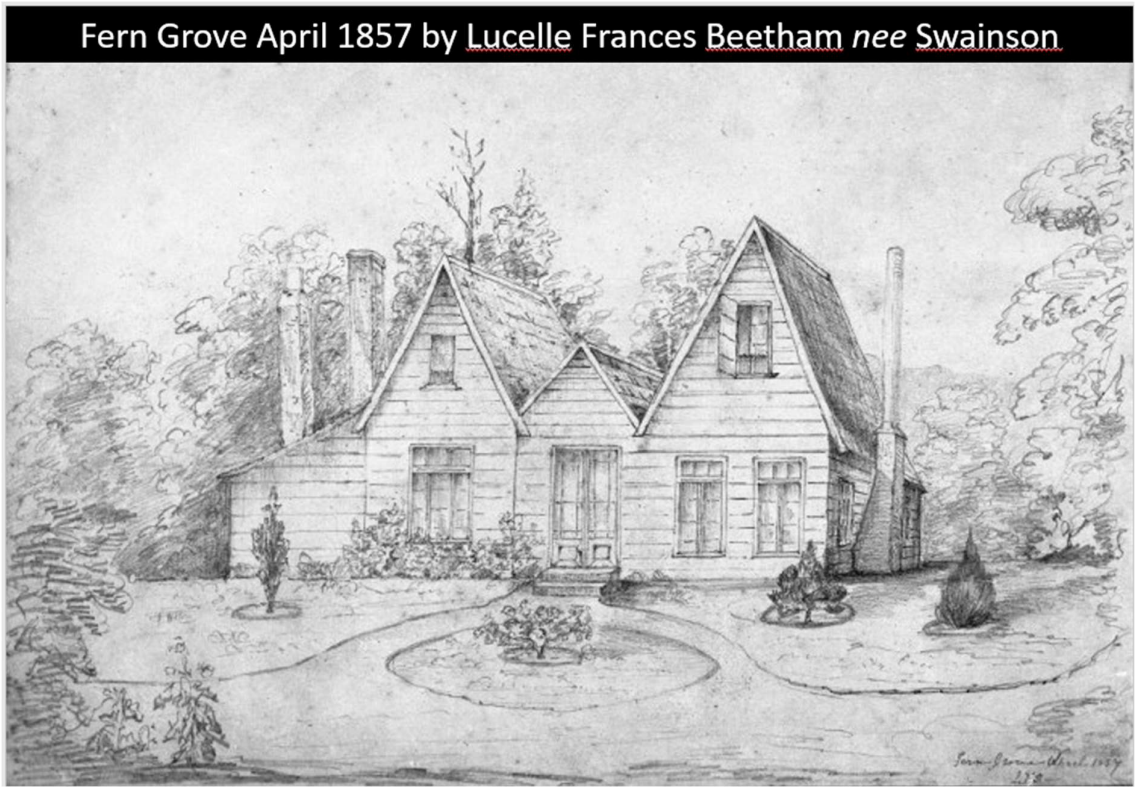
The shock was felt more seriously at Fern Grove, the private residence of Mr Edward Riddiford, situated a few hundred yards on the main road from Fraser's. There the disturbance seemed to have centred itself, as the four brick chimneys fell with a crash, the top portion of one breaking through the corrugated iron roof of the kitchen, a small detached building, tearing the iron and wood work in pieces and causing much destruction to the crockeryware and cooking utensils therein.

The main roof of the house and ceiling and wall of Mr Riddiford's private sitting-room also suffered considerably by the falling brickwork, a large gap in the ceiling and damaged lining boards showing at a glance the force of the fall.

Mr Riddiford was absent from home, and the occupants of the house at the time were Mrs Riddiford and family, the housekeeper, and two other female servants, and their alarm may be imagined. The night – or rather morning – being intensely dark, a cold, piercing wind blowing, with the atmosphere at freezing point, and heavy rain falling, added not a little to the discomfort of the occasion. It was not an enviable predicament to be in, for retiring to bed again was out of the question, and the chimneys having been destroyed no fire could be lit, daylight, therefore, was heartily welcomed. The whole building appears to have been much shaken, and considerable expense will have to be incurred to effect the necessary repairs.

Magnitude 6-7.5 Taranaki 26 Jun 1881

An annotated list of New Zealand Earthquakes 1460-1965 by G. A. EIBY New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics 1967 Vol 11 pages 630-647



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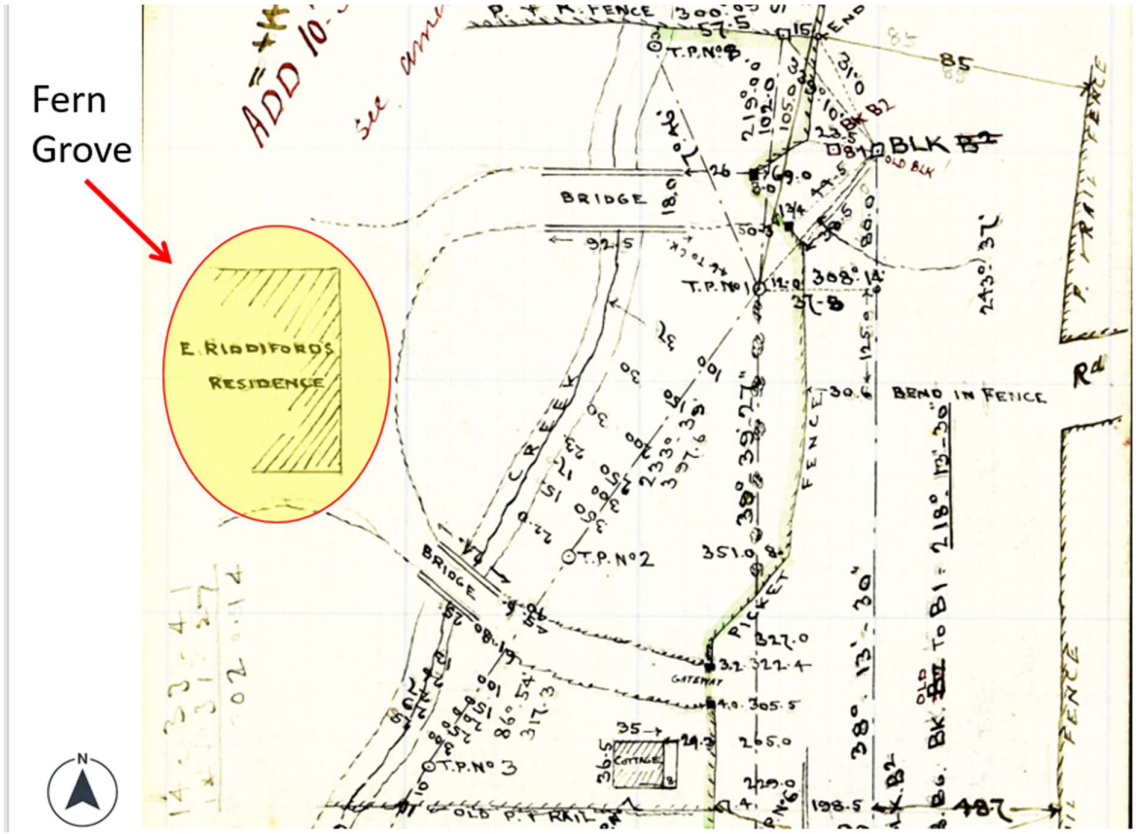
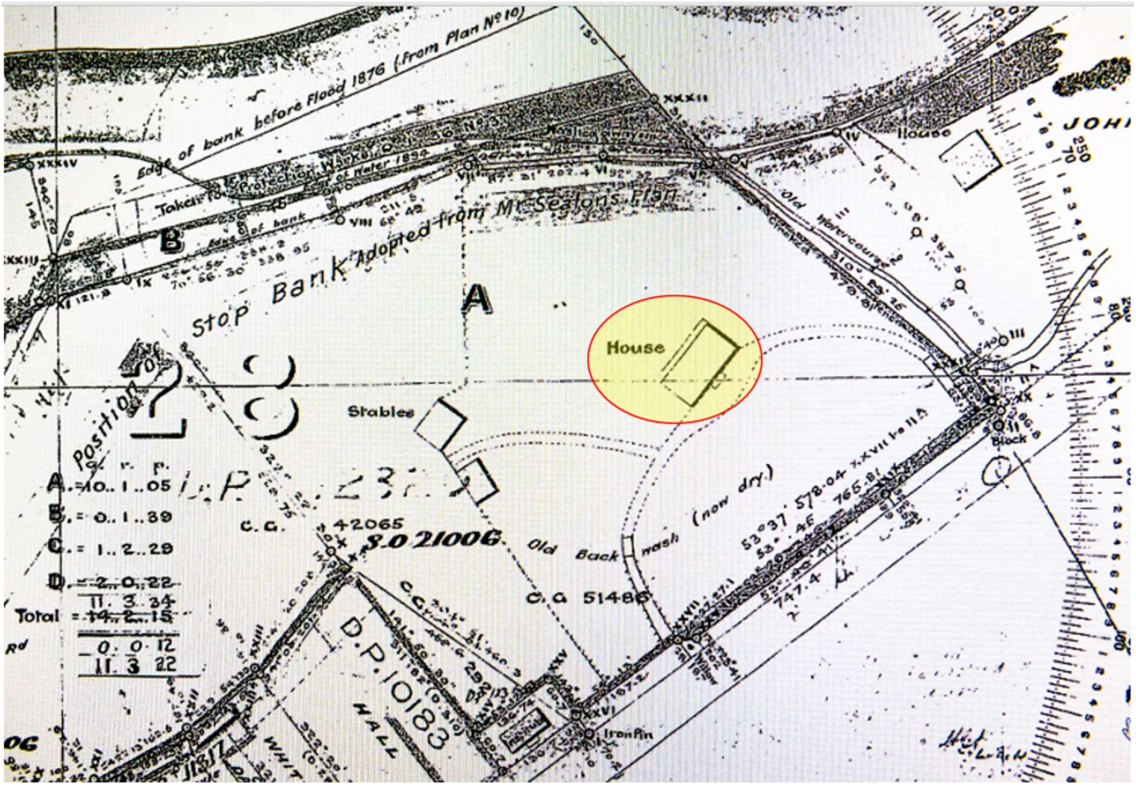


Surveyor Field Book No.997 Page 16 (1883) - https://linz.recollect.co.nz/



Application Plan A/1678 – 1904 – Quickmap

Evening Post 17 Aug 1912 Auction and Property Sales
Messrs Harcourt and Company advertise a preliminary announcement of the sale of the whole of the household furniture and appointments contained in the residence of Mrs E. J. Riddiford, Fern Grove, Lower Hutt, to be sold on the premises on Tuesday, 1st October. The residence, which stands in its own grounds of 12 acres, has accommodation of 22 rooms and conveniences, with gardener's cottage, outbuildings, and motor garage. If not previously sold, the place is to be let at a reasonable rental.

Evening Post 23 Aug 1912 New Catholic Schools
An important educational work is likely to be undertaken for the whole of New Zealand by the Sisters of Notre Dame des Missions. They have purchased for the purpose of erecting a high and technical school the residential property of the late Mr E. J. Riddiford, on the Hutt-road, with about 500ft frontage to the main road – in all some twelve acres – for their work. The property was originally acquired in 1873 by the late Mr Henry Bunny, father of Mr E. P. Bunny, Mayor of Hutt. The house was subsequently enlarged, and was afterwards purchased by Mr Riddiford, who married Miss Bunny.

Evening Post 24 Aug 1912
The price paid by the Catholic authorities for the late Mr E. J. Riddiford's house and land at the Hutt for the Sisters of Notre Dame des Missions was £6,500.

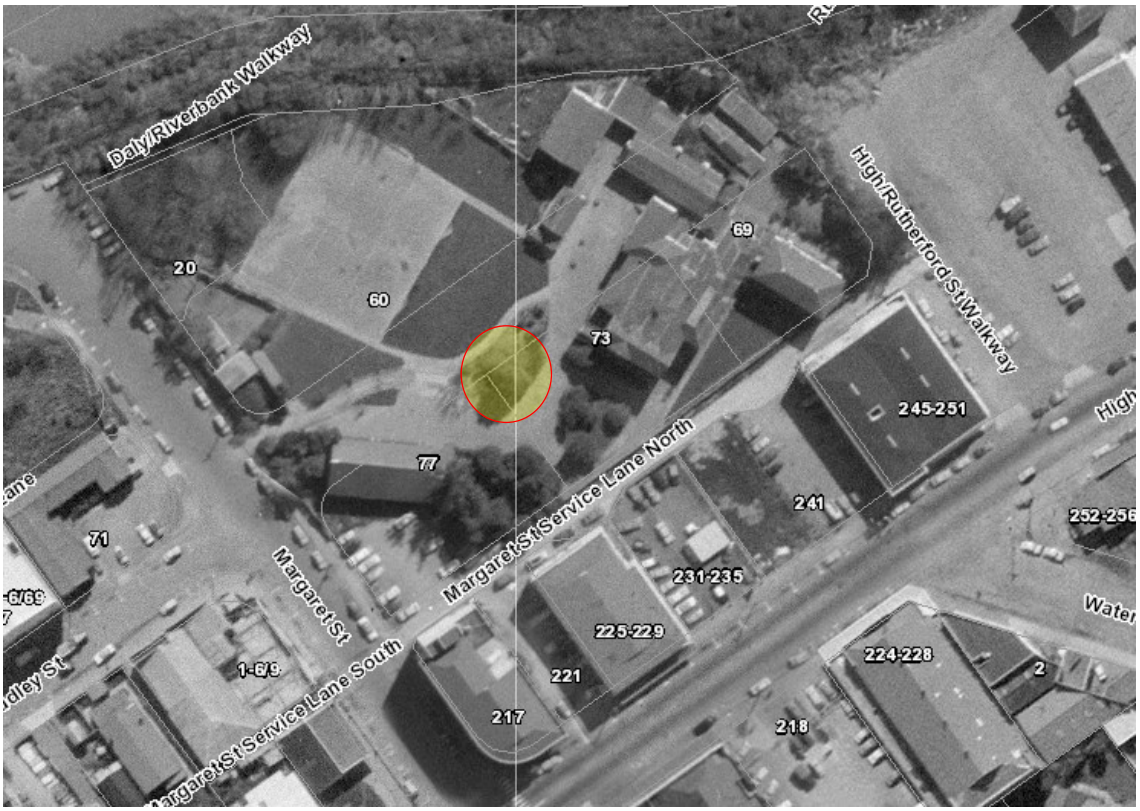
A NEW ROMAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL: A LOWER HUTT, WELLINGTON, RESIDENCE PURCHASED BY THE ORDER OF NOTRE DAME DES MISSIONS FOR A HIGH AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL

J. H. Daroux, Photo.

Auckland Weekly News 26 Sep 1912 - Auckland City Library AWNS-19120926-14-1

The pre-1941 tree in Rutherford Street that began its life close to Fern Grove and the Sacred Heart Convent
Google Maps 2018

Hutt City Aerials 1941



Hutt City Aerials 1958

Hutt City Aerials 1977

Hutt City Aerials 2017