

NELSON

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Reference Only



MAIL PHOTO / MARION VAN DIJK

Bev Hodgkinson with a photograph taken in 1912 of Catherine and Herbert Close and baby Cyril in front of Pitfure House.

Old house affected by plan

The preservation of a 124-year-old house at Wakefield hinges on the subdivision of its estate, a resource consent hearing was told this week.

A syndicate of local farmers which owns Pitfure House and its 126ha property on Edward St wants to subdivide the house and gardens from the rest of the property.

Consultant Mike Cotton said the syndicate intended to sell the house to a Palmerston North couple, who planned to restore it.

It eventually aimed to subdivide the rest of the property into two 50ha farm blocks, two 15ha lifestyle blocks and a 50-lot residential subdivision, he said.

Syndicate member John Hodgkinson said the syndicate wanted to see Pitfure House preserved, but was not interested in carrying out the work itself.

"It will end up as a hay shed in time to come if it is not sold to someone who wants to restore it," he said.

Mr Cotton said the house was not registered with the Historic Places Trust, probably because it had been used as a family home by the previ-

ous owners, the Close family, until 1996.

However, both the trust and the Waimea South Historical Society supported the house's preservation, he said.

Historical society secretary Marion Stringer said there were few houses in Wakefield as old as Pitfure House and it was well worth restoring.

Council staff recommended granting a resource consent as long as the house site was enlarged to include more grounds and some sort of covenant was placed on the house.

They also said that since the subdivision of the property, now zoned rural, would extend Wakefield's residential zone, the syndicate should pay to upgrade a nearby stretch of Edward St to residential standard.

Mr Cotton said it would cost a lot to carry out such an upgrade. If that was a consent condition the syndicate would probably flag the proposal and the opportunity to restore Pitfure House would then be lost.

The council's environment and planning committee reserved its decision.