

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE**  
**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
***SIGN OF THE KIWI - 1700, 2057, 2057R SUMMIT ROAD,***  
***GOVERNORS BAY***

The Sign of the Kiwi was constructed in 1916-1917 as one of a number of rest houses planned for the Summit Road scheme of Henry Ell. The great pre-occupation of Harry Ell, a politician and tenacious social and environmental campaigner, was the promotion of a summit road from Godley Head to Akaroa, providing public access to all parts of the Port Hills. Resthouses would be distributed along the route, offering refreshments and simple accommodation. The Summit Road Association was founded by Ell to foster the objective in 1909, and although the ambitious project was incomplete at the time of his death in 1935, he had seen a substantial portion of his scheme to fruition, including the establishment of four resthouses, of which this is one.

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 176  
*SIGN OF THE KIWI AND SETTING - 1700, 2057, 2057R  
SUMMIT ROAD, GOVERNORS BAY***



**PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL 2013**

### **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.*

The Sign of the Kiwi has high historical and social significance as part of the Summit Road scheme, for its association with Henry Eil - politician and social and environmental campaigner - and as evidence of the emergence of new habits of leisure in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Sign of the Kiwi was constructed in 1916-1917 as one of a number of resthouses planned for the Summit Road scheme of Henry Eil. The great pre-occupation of Harry Eil - politician and tenacious social and environmental campaigner - was the promotion of a summit road from Godley Head to Akaroa, providing public access to all parts of the Port Hills. Resthouses would be distributed along the route, offering refreshments and simple accommodation. The Summit Road Association was founded by Eil to foster the objective in 1909, and although the ambitious project was incomplete at the time of his death in 1935, he had seen a substantial portion of his scheme to fruition, including the establishment of four resthouses.

The Sign of the Kiwi was a tribute to Ell's persistence, having been built with the donated assistance of many firms and individuals. From 1920-1926 he and his wife lived at the property, with Ell acting as caretaker and Mrs Ell running the tea rooms. Economic depression, war and further social change eventually rendered most of Ell's resthouses redundant. The Sign of the Kiwi closed in 1945 and was converted in 1953 to a caretaker's (later ranger's) residence with a small shop. In 1984 John and Lindsey Sigglekow and family moved in, with John serving as ranger and Lindsey taking over the shop. The Sigglekows' relocated to a new purpose-built ranger's residence at the rear in 1991, and the Sign of the Kiwi was restored and reopened as a tearooms in 1996. Lindsey Sigglekow continued to run the business until 2009. The former resthouse remained a popular destination until it sustained damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010-2011.

### **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.*

The Sign of the Kiwi has high cultural significance as evidence of new modes of leisure and recreation emerging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 'healthy body healthy mind' credo entered into popular culture at this time, and in association with the establishment of regular holidays, saw larger sectors of the population pursuing fresh air, exercise and new horizons.

### **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.*

The Sign of the Kiwi has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an exemplary Arts and Crafts bungalow, a design of well known exponent of the style Samuel Hurst Seager, of (at the time) the firm Hurst Seager and McLeod.

Samuel Hurst Seager came to New Zealand with his parents in 1870, and took over the family construction business following the death of his father in 1874. After working for leading architect Benjamin Mountfort and studying architecture at Canterbury College and in London, he established his career in Christchurch with his prize-winning entry for the new municipal building in 1885. Seager was an innovative designer, at the forefront of architectural and planning theory and practice in New Zealand in the decades either side of 1900. He believed particularly in the potential of good design to change and improve society, and wrote prolifically on town planning, architecture and the built environment. Although he designed houses of many styles and sizes, including some of the city's most notable turn-of-the-century mansions, he is remembered particularly for introducing the radical informality of the bungalow style to New Zealand with his house for John Macmillan-Brown in Cashmere in 1898. Influenced by the new Garden City concept, Seager's The Spur development took his ideals a step further and introduced the country's first informal bungalow landscape. This manifested two strands of his philosophy – his search for an indigenous architectural expression, and his desire to promote new ways of living through architecture.

Two decades on from The Spur development, the Sign of the Kiwi also expresses the development of Seager's philosophy, including truth to materials, appropriateness to landscape and handicraft. The simple low volcanic stone building blends into its hill-side surroundings, with the stones being used in their natural forms and reshaped as little as possible. Organic materials are used throughout with minimal modification, although there

are artistic touches with inscribed beams and leaded windows. Inside, the stone walls were unlined; ceilings were dark-battened white plaster. The chunky Arts and Crafts-style tearoom furniture was also Seager's design, although none remains extant. The two other Seager-designed resthouses, the Signs of the Bellbird and the Packhorse, whilst products of the same design philosophy, were much more prosaic structures.

Alterations were undertaken to the building in the 1950s when the bunkroom and scullery became the new kitchen, bathroom, laundry and hallway, while the kitchen became the bedroom and lounge. The porch was enclosed to create the shop, while the tearoom became the backshop, bedroom and hallway. A new ranger's residence was constructed adjacent to the building in 1991. Also in the 1990s, a new toilet and first aid block was constructed. In 1995 the shop counter was removed, replica entry doors were installed and a commercial kitchen was put in. A shop counter from the old Victoria Park Tearooms was installed and the building opened the following year, once again as tearooms. The Sign of the Kiwi was damaged in the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes. Repair and strengthening have not yet taken place.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

*Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.*

The Sign of the Kiwi has high craftsmanship significance for the quality of its execution - particularly its stone masonry. The building and its fixtures and fittings were originally designed as an entity, and although the original Arts and Crafts furnishings are no longer in situ, the simple integrity of both the interior and exterior of the building have been revealed by recent restoration

### **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.*

The Sign of the Kiwi has high contextual significance as one part of the legacy of Ell's Summit Road scheme, the surviving elements of which also include three other resthouses: the Signs of the Bellbird, Packhorse and Takahe, the Summit Road itself, and various reserves along its course. It is the only building on that stretch of the road over Dyer's Pass. The setting of the Sign of the Kiwi consists of an area of hillside at the intersection of Dyer's Pass and the Summit Roads, a part of the Coronation Hill Historic Reserve, and includes a stone sign pillar (currently disassembled), a stone pillar associated with the former tollgate that normally holds a lantern (which is currently off site for repair), a former tollgate wall, and stone retaining walls and steps. It is the only building on that stretch of the road over Dyer's Pass.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.*

The Sign of the Kiwi and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

## **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

The Sign of the Kiwi is of overall high heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. It has high historical and social significance as part of the Summit Road scheme, for its association with Henry Ell - politician and social and environmental campaigner - and as evidence of the emergence of new habits of leisure in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building has high cultural significance as evidence of new modes of leisure and recreation emerging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an exemplary Arts and Crafts bungalow, a design of well-known exponent of the style Samuel Hurst Seager. The building has high craftsmanship significance for the quality of its execution. The building has high contextual significance as one part of the legacy of Ell's Summit Road scheme, the surviving elements of which also include three other resthouses: the Signs of the Bellbird, Packhorse and Takahe, the Summit Road itself, and various reserves along its course. The building and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

## **REFERENCES:**

Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Sign of the Kiwi and Setting – 1735 Summit Road*

**REPORT DATED:** 17/03/2015

PLEASE NOTE THIS ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF WRITING. DUE TO THE ONGOING NATURE OF HERITAGE RESEARCH, FUTURE REASSESSMENT OF THIS HERITAGE ITEM MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFLECT ANY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.

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**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1346  
*SIGN OF THE KIWIS GROUNDS AND SETTING – 1700, 2057,  
2057R SUMMIT ROAD, GOVERNORS BAY***



**PHOTOGRAPH: M. VAIR-PIOVA 2015**

### **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.*

The grounds of the Sign of the Kiwi have high historical and social significance as part of the Summit Road scheme, the vision of politician and social and environmental campaigner Harry Ell.

The grounds consist of an area of hillside around the Sign of the Kiwi building at the intersection of Dyer's Pass and Summit Roads, and are part of the Coronation Hill Historic Reserve. They contain a number of historic elements including the stone threshold of a former toll gate and a wayside stone obelisk supporting a sign.

The tollgate was instigated by Harry Ell in 1917 or 1922 (dates differ) as a revenue-gathering exercise for his project. Heathcote County Council (in whose territory the Sign of the Kiwi was located) objected to what it regarded as an illegal toll and a decade of dispute followed. As a consequence the toll gate was removed in either 1927 or 1932 (dates also differ) and relocated further along the Summit Road at Marley's Hill in Halswell County, where it

operated until Ell's death in 1934 - the Halswell County Council having fewer issues with the levy. The stone gate threshold however remained in-situ at the Sign of the Kiwi.

### **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.*

The Sign of the Kiwi grounds have cultural significance as evidence of new modes of leisure and recreation emerging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 'healthy body healthy mind' credo entered into popular culture at this time, and in association with the establishment of regular holidays, saw larger sectors of the population pursuing fresh air, exercise and new horizons.

### **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.*

The Sign of the Kiwi grounds have architectural and aesthetic significance for their historic Arts and Crafts-inspired elements - particularly a stone toll gate threshold and a stone sign obelisk - that were designed to blend with Samuel Hurst Seager's Sign of the Kiwi building and the rural landscape that surrounds them. They are also significant for their association with designers John Barr and Edward England.

The stone sign obelisk and the (now removed) wooden toll gates were designed by architect Edward England. E H (Eddie) England joined his brother Robert in the firm of England Brothers, architects, in 1906. Robert died in 1908 but Eddie continued the practise into the 1930s. England Brothers designed a variety of building types, but were known particularly for their large Domestic Revival houses. The Sign of the Kiwi obelisk was constructed free of charge by mason Sydney Cooper and completed in 1917. It was originally surmounted by a large metal lamp designed by R. Herdman-Smith, and metal bracket supporting a wooden sign painted with a kiwi. The gas lamp was relocated to the tollgate pillar in 1925, and the obelisk capped in stone.

The rusticated stone tollgate threshold consists of a square pillar and a connected section of wall. The threshold was designed and constructed by the Hon. John Barr MLC in either 1917 or 1922 (dates differ). Sumner resident John Barr (1867-1930) a former stone mason, was a member of the Legislative Council from 1907 until his death, and served as mayor of Sumner Borough in the early 1920s. He was also responsible for the design and construction of the war memorial obelisks on the Sumner foreshore. In either 1927 or 1932 the wooden toll gates were removed and eventually replaced with a cattle stop. Herdman-Smith's lamp has been removed for repair.

In the 1990s and early 2000s the Sign of the Kiwi grounds underwent considerable alteration. A new free-standing ranger's residence was built at the rear of the building in 1991, and a new toilet block alongside in 1994. The steps and garden terraces were reconstructed in 2002. The toilet block and new landscape elements were sensitively designed and clad in volcanic stone in order to blend with their surroundings. The grounds sustained damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010-2011 and the stone obelisk was subsequently deconstructed. It is intended that it will be reconstructed and a new sign reinstated.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

*Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.*

The Sign of the Kiwi grounds have craftsmanship significance for their historic stone elements, the stone obelisk and tollgate threshold. These demonstrate construction techniques and materials from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in particular the stone masonry of John Barr and Sydney Cooper.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.*

The grounds of the Sign of the Kiwi have high contextual significance as part of the legacy of Harry Ell's Summit Road scheme, the surviving elements of which also include three other resthouses: the Signs of the Bellbird, Packhorse and Takahe, the Summit Road itself, and various reserves along its course.

The Sign of Kiwi grounds consist of an area of hillside in front of the Sign of the Kiwi building at the intersection of Dyer's Pass and the Summit Roads. They include the stone base of a former sign obelisk, a stone pillar and wall formerly associated with a tollgate, and stone retaining walls and steps. The Sign of the Kiwi grounds setting incorporates the grounds, the Sign of the Kiwi building, and an area of land at the rear.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.*

The grounds of the Sign of the Kiwi are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

## **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

The grounds of the Sign of the Kiwi and its setting are of high overall significance to Christchurch including Banks Peninsula. The Grounds have high historical and social significance as part of the Summit Road scheme, the vision of politician and social and environmental campaigner Harry Ell. The Grounds have cultural significance as evidence of new modes of leisure and recreation emerging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Grounds have craftsmanship significance for their historic stone elements, the stone obelisk and tollgate threshold. These demonstrate construction techniques and materials from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in particular the stone masonry of John Barr and Sydney Cooper. The Grounds have architectural and aesthetic significance for their historic Arts and Crafts-inspired elements - particularly a stone toll gate threshold and a stone sign obelisk - that were designed to blend with Samuel Hurst Seager's Sign of the Kiwi building and the rural landscape that surrounds them. They are also significant for their association with designers John Barr and Edward England. The Grounds have high contextual significance as part of



the legacy of Harry Ell's Summit Road scheme, the surviving elements of which also include three other resthouses: the Signs of the Bellbird, Packhorse and Takahe, the Summit Road itself, and various reserves along its course. The Grounds have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

**REFERENCES:**

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