

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 735
*FORMER HARBOUR BOARD OFFICES AND SETTING – 5
NORWICH QUAY, LYTTELTON***



PHOTOGRAPH : CLARE KELLY, 2014

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.

5 Norwich Quay was formerly one of the offices of the Lyttelton Harbour Board and it has historical and social significance as a building directly associated with the organisation that ran the South Island's largest port for over 100 years. When the provincial government was abolished at the end of 1876 a separate act of parliament established the Lyttelton Harbour Board. Initially the board divided its time between the building in Lyttelton that was to become the Lyttelton Post Office and the Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber in Christchurch, but in 1879 they established their main administrative office in Hereford Street in Christchurch, moving to Cathedral Square in 1885. At the same time, in 1880 the Board commissioned architect Frederick Strouts to design them a building for Lyttelton, on the corner of Oxford Street and Norwich Quay opposite the Post Office building. Prior to this time the site had

been used for a boathouse, warehouse and offices. The building was built by local Lyttelton firm Hollis and Williams in 1880 and the Harbour Board occupied it until 1962. During that time the ground floor had a reading room for visiting captains and the first floor contained the board room. In 1961 they built a new modernist high rise building on Norwich Quay, which they moved into in 1962. Continued debate was had as to whether to keep the administrative offices in Christchurch, now in Madras Street, and the operational centre in Lyttelton. In 1985 they decided to combine both functions and a new building was designed by Sir Miles Warren which was opened early 1987. The board ceased to exist in 1989.

In the meantime the former Harbour Board building was used first for storage by the railways, before being renovated in the mid-1980s for commercial use and being operated as a gift store and then a café. Most recently prior to the earthquakes the building was used as café with offices above.

As a result of the 2010-2011 earthquakes the upper floor was deconstructed making the two storey building single storey.

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.

5 Norwich Quay has cultural significance for its association with the former Harbour Board which ran Lyttelton Port for over 100 years. It is a tangible cultural link for its association with the seafaring population which is a significant cultural element of Lyttelton society and through the provision of a reading room for visiting captains.

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 building has architectural and aesthetic significance, despite being partially deconstructed following the Canterbury earthquakes, both as one of the few remaining commercial buildings of the late 19th century with characteristics of the Venetian Gothic style in Christchurch and as a building designed by Frederick Stouts. The former Harbour Board Offices were built when Lyttelton was experiencing an economic boom and the Lyttelton Police Station, Borough Council Chambers, Fire Station and Public Library were also constructed. All of these other buildings have been lost post the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-2011. The building was designed by architect Frederick Strouts, a noted Canterbury architect who also designed, among many other commissions, Ivey Hall now part of Lincoln University, Otahuna Lodge at Tai Tapu and the Rhodes Convalescent Home in Cashmere. The latter was demolished following the Canterbury earthquakes.

5 Norwich Quay was a prominent two storey building on the corner of Oxford Street and Norwich Quay. The building has characteristics of the Venetian Gothic style and is constructed of brick and Quail Island stone which provides an element of constructional polychromy particularly with groups of arched windows. The ground floor has classical arched windows while the first floor had windows with pointed gothic arches. The corner entrance is angled with a pediment displaying the Harbour Board emblem. It was extended by a single two storey bay to the east after 1912 and then extended again in the early 2000s with a one and two storey addition on the south side of the building which effectively double its floor space. This latter extension is modern in style and did not attempt to replicate the

existing design, unlike the extension in the early 20th century. Following the Canterbury earthquakes the original part of the building has been deconstructed to a single storey which has had a significant effect on its architectural and aesthetic heritage significance and value.

Christchurch had several buildings that were in the Venetian Gothic style, notably the Former Public Library, Former Girl's High School, Fisher Building, Bell's Arches and A J White's department store. These have all been lost following the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquakes.

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.

5 Norwich Quay has technological and craftsmanship significance for its ability to demonstrate construction and craftsman techniques using brick and stone from the late 19th century.

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.

5 Norwich Quay still retains contextual importance as a prominent corner building providing an entrance to the harbour in Lyttelton, although it is less imposing given the loss of the second storey. Although much of the surrounding context in Lyttelton has been lost, the British Hotel on the opposite north eastern corner of Oxford Street and Norwich Quay still remains, as does the partially deconstructed Lyttelton Times building next door.

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.

5 Norwich Quay and its setting 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.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

5 Norwich Quay has overall significance to Christchurch and Bank's Peninsula as a building directly associated with the Lyttelton Harbour Board, the organisation that ran the South Island's largest port for over 100 years. It has historical and social significance for its longevity of use by the Harbour Board from 1880 until 1962 and its associations with the trade and industry of the port. The building has cultural significance as a tangible cultural link for its association with the seafaring population which is a significant cultural element of Lyttelton society and through the provision of a reading room for visiting captains. The former Harbour Board Offices have architectural and aesthetic significance both as one of the few remaining commercial buildings of the late 19th century with characteristics of the Venetian Gothic style

in Christchurch and as a building designed by Frederick Stouts, despite being partially deconstructed following the Canterbury earthquakes. 5 Norwich Quay has technological and craftsmanship significance for its ability to demonstrate construction and craftsman techniques using brick and stone from the late 19th century. 5 Norwich Quay still retains contextual importance as a prominent corner building providing an entrance to the harbour in Lyttelton. The building and its setting 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.

REFERENCES:

Kelly, Clare, *Background Information Listed Heritage Place, Old Harbour Board Offices, Lyttelton* - 2014

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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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