

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 743  
*DWELLING AND SETTING, BETCHWORTH - 6 AUBREY  
STREET SOUTH, AKAROA***



**PHOTOGRAPH, CLARE KELLY: MARCH 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.*

Betchworth has historical and social significance for its connection with Akaroa's French heritage through first owner blacksmith Emile Edmund (Edmund) Le Prou (1832-1905) and second owner farmer Etienne Lelievre, and for its connection with Irish labourer Patrick McGuire (1837-1912). The house also has significance as an example of a typically modest colonial home which was extended as and when required.

Normandy-born Edmund Le Prou arrived in Akaroa in c1857 and worked as a blacksmith in Rue Lavaud until departing for Marton about 1890. He married Madeline Gerzeau (d1881) in 1862 and had a family of twelve. When Akaroa Rural Section 39 was subdivided in 1876, Le Prou purchased two sections – including the one on which he built his home, Betchworth. The older, two storey section of the house was reputedly constructed further up Aylmer's Valley Rd during the 1860s, and shifted onto its present site after 1876. Although the majority of the Le Prou family left Akaroa in 1890, Edmund did not return to settle his affairs and sell his properties until 1903. 6 Aubrey St was sold to Elizabeth, second wife of Etienne Lelievre. Akaroa-born Etienne, son of French immigrants, was a wealthy sheep farmer and prominent Akaroa citizen. He and Elizabeth lived at nearby Oinako (99 Beach Rd). The Lelievre family held Betchworth until 1941. The tenants during some of this time (and possibly also during the later part of Le Prou ownership) were Patrick McGuire, his wife Bridget (d1924) and their nine children. This Irish couple arrived in New Zealand in 1876 and

settled in Akaroa, where Patrick worked building roads. Turn of the century images show a number of out-buildings associated with Betchworth; these may have been additional accommodation for the large families who lived in the small house. From 1941 to the present day there were a number of changes in ownership. A long time owner during this period was Patricia J Davis who owned the property from 1969 to 1996.

## **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.*

Betchworth has cultural significance as an illustration of the lifestyle of a colonial family in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has cultural significance for its reflection of the early French settlement of Akaroa and the habit in which colonial homes were retained but simply added to accommodate changing societal needs and family accommodation.

## **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.*

Betchworth has architectural and aesthetic significance as a modest, unadorned 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial cottage. The two storey section exhibits the narrow casement windows typical of colonial dwellings of the period to 1875. The single storey portion with its gabled roof and verandah, single double hung window and front door is likely to date from the period 1875-1900.

## **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.*

Betchworth is of technological and craftsmanship significance for its ability to provide information about construction methodologies and materials from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century timber. It is of timber frame and weather board clad construction and is likely to have been built for locally milled timber given the number of mills operating at this time on the peninsula.

## **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.*

Betchworth and its setting are of contextual significance for its location and setting. The dwelling is located on the road frontage in a small garden setting at the end of Aubrey Street South, a narrow unsealed close with grass berms that extends north from the Gardens of Tane. However, photographs of the early twentieth century show only two other houses in the street. As the majority of houses in the street today date from the second half of the twentieth century, this suggests that the property may have continued to have a rural aspect and sea views until after the Lelievre family sold it in the 1940s. The 1900s images also

show a large building immediately to the north; this may have been a farm shed or stable associated with Oinako.

## **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.*

Betchworth 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, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900.

## **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

Betchworth and its setting are of overall heritage significance to the Christchurch District including Banks Peninsula for its connection with Akaroa's unique French heritage through the original owner and builder, blacksmith Emile Edmund Le Prou, and second owner Etienne Lelievre. The dwelling has historical and social significance as a typically modest nineteenth century dwelling owned and/or occupied by a number of early colonial immigrants. It has cultural significance for its reflection of the early French settlement of Akaroa and the habit in which colonial homes were retained but simply added to to accommodate changing societal needs and family accommodation. Betchworth has architectural and aesthetic significance as a simple nineteenth century colonial dwelling extended as and when circumstances necessitated. It is one of a number of similar form timber cottages in Akaroa, which together create a coherent nineteenth century townscape. Betchworth has technological and craftsmanship significance for its evidence of construction methodologies and materials from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century timber. The house and setting have contextual significance in relation to its setting in Aubrey Street South and with the nearby Lelievre home, Oinako. Betchworth 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, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900.

## **REFERENCES:**

CCC Heritage File 6 *Aubrey St (Betchworth)*

**REPORT DATED: 27 FEBRUARY 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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