

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1368
*FORMER COLONIAL MOTOR COMPANY GARAGE AND
SETTING- 186 TUAM STREET/201 ST ASAPH STREET,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL MARCH 2024

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage has high historical and social significance for its 85 year association with car repair and retail, and with the Colonial Motor Company and its local Ford agency - known variously as Ford Motors Canterbury, Hutchinson Motors and Team Hutchinson Ford.

The Colonial Motor Company (CMC) has its origins in the Wellington coach-building works of William Black, which began in 1859. Black's works were taken over by Rouse and Hurrell in 1881 and formed into a limited company in 1902. Rouse and Hurrell took up the Ford Motor Car Agency in 1908 and renamed their business The Colonial Motor Company in 1911. The firm subsequently acquired or initiated many of the country's Ford dealerships and began assembling cars in 1922.

The first Ford agency in Christchurch was opened by Henry Ranger in Chester Street in 1910. When Ranger retired, the agency was sold to Robert Jay and Robert Wright, who formed the Canterbury Motor Company in c1920 and relocated to 94 Tuam Street in c1921. In 1925 the CMC purchased the agency from Jay and Wright, renamed it Ford Motors Canterbury, and shifted the business to leased premises at 162-166 Tuam Street.

In September 1929 the CMC purchased the former premises of timber and hardware merchants Williams, Stephens and Co at 186 Tuam Street. This two-acre property between Tuam and St Asaph Streets already contained substantial buildings and offered scope for expansion. During 1930-1931 the existing buildings were modified and new buildings constructed to accommodate the CMC operation. The single largest component of the project was a new garage fronting onto St Asaph Street for the workshop and Used Car Division.

The business offered a very comprehensive range of services from their new site including new and used car, truck and tractor sales; petrol, parts and repairs.

In 1934 Ormond (Orm) Hutchinson, the former CMC Timaru branch manager, took over as manager in Christchurch. When the Ford Motor Company decided to take over assembly and distribution of new vehicles from CMC in 1936, the dealerships had to drop 'Ford' from their names. Ford Motors Canterbury became Hutchinson Motors, later renamed Team Hutchinson Ford in 1985. The Hutchinson family remain involved with the company.

The post war boom saw space in Tuam Street at a premium. In 1952 the company expanded onto the site immediately to the west (later sold to the Christchurch City Council for a car park), and in 1954 began purchasing land on the Main South Road at Sockburn, where its tractor and truck operations were moved in the late 1950s. This became a separate dealership in 1965. To further ease congestion, branches were also opened at Sydenham and Papanui in the late 1960s. The company however continues to trade from its original Tuam Street site, with the workshop operating in the same space it has occupied for nearing 100 years. The buildings sustained damage in the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes, and the remaining portions of the old brick former Williams, Stephens and Co premises were subsequently demolished. As part of the post-earthquake re-development of the Central City the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan included the East and South Frames which included placing a laneway (greenway) through the centre of several central city blocks. A laneway was placed through the middle of the Team Hutchison Ford block. This resulted in alterations to the rear section of the workshop building to link it across the laneway with new buildings on the north side of the laneway, The laneway is enhanced by interpretation panels which relate the history and use of the site. The site continues to be occupied by Team Hutchison Ford.

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage has cultural significance for its association through the course of the twentieth century with the distribution and maintenance of the private motor vehicle - which has revolutionized personal mobility, and in so doing changed the face of society and the physical environment.

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage has architectural and aesthetic significance as a Moderne industrial building by well-known Christchurch architect Cecil Wood.

In 1929 the Colonial Motor Company purchased a large Tuam Street site to relocate their Christchurch Ford agency, Ford Motors Canterbury. The following year Christchurch architect Cecil Wood was commissioned to alter the site's existing buildings and construct an expansive garage fronting St Asaph Street. The three-bay garage, to house the firm's workshop and used car division, was built of reinforced concrete with a corrugated iron-clad timber truss roof with ventilators. Each bay had a large partly-glazed timber sliding door. The parapet (in which the Ford logo is cast) steps up over the central door in order to give it emphasis. The eastern bay, which contained the used cars, has large display windows. Woods also added an oiling and washing bay, and a service station on the Tuam Street frontage. The works were completed in 1931.

Cecil Wood (1878–1947) was one of New Zealand's leading inter-war architects. He was articled to Frederick Strouts at 16 and later worked for Clarkson and Ballantyne, and in partnership with Samuel Hurst Seager. As a sole practitioner, Wood's works included the Public Trust offices at Christchurch and Dunedin, State Insurance, Bishopscourt; the Hereford Street Post Office and churches at Waiau, Woodbury, Fendalton, Tai Tapu, Cashmere, and

Woodend. He was noted for his domestic architecture, and designed many larger homes across Canterbury. Research to date suggests that Wood's design for the Colonial Motor Company was influenced by a visit to the United States in the late 1920s.

A major upgrade by Warren and Mahoney in 1978 and another in 1995 altered the Tuam Street appearance of the premises beyond recognition, but the St Asaph Street garage remained substantially as built. Much of the complex sustained damage in the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes, and the remaining portions of the old brick former Williams, Stephens and Co buildings were subsequently demolished. The Wood garage was largely undamaged however it required alterations to accommodate the new laneway through the site.

The rear section of the St Asaph Street workshop was redesigned to accommodate the laneway with the partial demolition of the rear of the workshop building as well as modifications to the heritage roof and trusses. A section of the north facing end of the workshop building across three bays was removed. The roof trusses of the north section of the eastern bay remain across the laneway to allow the original form of the building to still be read. A new wall on the south side of the laneway was constructed. The workshop building was structurally upgraded and new buildings have been constructed over the laneway and are connected at roof level creating a canopy which sits over the laneway. An opening has been created in the east wall of the workshop building, in line with the laneway, allowing public access between the components of the Team Hutchison Ford site. These upgrades and alterations have allowed the continued use of the building and the site by Team Hutchison Ford.

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage has technological and craftsmanship significance for its extensive use of reinforced concrete, and for its cantilevered roof construction - which was at this date new to New Zealand.

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage has contextual significance as a key surviving part of a southern central city industrial landscape. Historically much of the city's heavy industry was concentrated in the vicinity. The heritage-scheduled early twentieth century Duncan's and Buchanan's foundry buildings area short distance away on St Asaph Street. The setting of the garage consists of its immediate parcel, a large rectangular city plot. The building occupies the southern half of the site, with the northern half containing other later structures and an asphalted car sales lot. The post-earthquake Environment Canterbury building is on the adjacent site to the east.

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 Colonial Motor Company Garage 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. The setting sits within the wider vicinity of the Ōtakaro-Avon River, an

important mahinga kai area to tangata whenua and the site has been in use for industry since the 1870s.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Colonial Motor Company Garage and its setting are of overall high heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. The garage has high historical and social significance for its decades long association with car repair and retail, and with the Colonial Motor Company and its local Ford agency - known variously as Ford Motors Canterbury, Hutchinson Motors and Team Hutchinson Ford. The garage has cultural significance for its association through the course of the twentieth century with the distribution of the private motor vehicle, which has revolutionized society. The garage has architectural and aesthetic significance as a Moderne industrial building by prominent Christchurch architect Cecil Wood. The garage has technological and craftsmanship significance for its extensive use of reinforced concrete, and for its then-novel cantilevered roof construction. The garage has contextual significance as a key surviving part of this southern central city industrial landscape which includes the heritage-scheduled early twentieth century Duncan's and Buchanan's foundry buildings. The garage 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:

R. Helms *The Architecture of Cecil Wood* University of Canterbury Art History PhD. Thesis, 1996.

Colonial Motor Company website

Team Hutchinson Ford website

Christchurch City Council Heritage File 182-186 Tuam Street

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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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