

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 216  
*FORMER DWELLING AND SETTING, ROLLESTON HOUSE – 2  
GLOUCESTER STREET, CHRISTCHURCH***



**PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 16/12/2014**

**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.*

Rolleston House has historical significance as a former inner-city townhouse and for its association with Canterbury College. It was built, on part of the parcel of land between Gloucester and Worcester Streets known as Raven's Paddock, in c.1893 for Arthur Bennett, manager of the New Zealand Shipping Company, and his wife Jessie. In 1916 or 1917 the house was purchased by Sir John Denniston (1845-1919), a judge of the Supreme Court. After Denniston's death in 1919, the property was sold to Canterbury College, who utilised it as one of a number of buildings that constituted Rolleston House. Rolleston House was the first hostel for male students established by Canterbury College in 1918. It was run by a committee of students approved by the College and served as a model for Auckland University College when it was considering how to address the need to provide suitable lodgings for students in the mid-1920s.

When Canterbury University shifted to Ilam in the mid-1970s, Rolleston House closed. The property was bought by Christ's College in 1975. Christ's College retained the name of the building, because it was relevant to the house's address and William Rolleston, the 4th (and last) Superintendent of the Canterbury Province who held that office until the abolition of the provinces on 31 October 1876 and also a Member of the House of Representatives. He was at times an examiner of the sixth form in Latin and Greek, and a Fellow of Christ's College from 1860-1903. 2 Gloucester Street has continuously served Christ's College as a dayboy house since 1983.

## **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.*

Rolleston House has cultural significance as a university hostel and Christ's College house. As a university hostel from 1920 until 1975, Rolleston House is associated with the academic and social life of Canterbury College, later the University of Canterbury, and valued by its alumni. Similarly the building has cultural value to past and present Christ's College pupils affiliated with Rolleston House. The building also has commemorative value as it is named for William Rolleston, as is the neighbouring avenue, and thus it also has a cultural connection with the statue of Rolleston that stands outside Canterbury Museum. It is also a tangible reminder of a particular way of life associated with the culture of education and boarding establishments.

## **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.*

Rolleston House has architectural significance as a typical late Victorian townhouse, with English Domestic Revival detailing, particularly in its half-timbering and treatment of the gable ends. Although the house has been altered on a number of occasions, principally by Sir Miles Warren as the Christ's College honorary architect, it retains a good level of integrity. The architect/designer of the building has not yet been identified.

## **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.*

Rolleston House has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal about nineteenth century construction techniques and craftsmanship significance that would typically be expected of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century house of timber construction.

## **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.*

Rolleston House has high contextual significance for its siting at the intersection of Rolleston Avenue and Gloucester Street within a sector of the central city that retains a number of Victorian townhouses. The building is specifically associated with 5 Worcester Boulevard, which was also part of Rolleston House and is now owned by the City Council and leased as a YHA hostel known as Rolleston House, the Christchurch Arts Centre, formerly Canterbury College, and Christ's College.

### **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.*

Rolleston House 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 from before 1900. No buildings are shown on the property in Thomas Lambert's 1877 map of Christchurch, which suggests that the townhouse built by Bennett was the first major structure on the site.

### **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

Rolleston House has heritage significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. It has historical and social significance as one of the buildings that comprised Canterbury College's first male hostel and, more recently, as one of Christ College's dayboy houses. Rolleston House has cultural significance for the esteem in which it is held by alumni of the hostel and Christ's College and is also a tangible reminder of a particular way of life associated with the culture of education and boarding establishments. It has architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of the English Domestic Revival style. Rolleston House has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal about nineteenth century construction techniques and craftsmanship significance that would typically be expected of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century house of timber construction. The building has high contextual significance in relation to its immediate inner city site and to both the Arts Centre and Christ's College and, more generally, as a central city gentleman's residence. Rolleston House 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 from before 1900.

### **REFERENCES:**

CCC Heritage files – Rolleston House

Don Hamilton & Rodney Wells *The Buildings of Christ's College 1850-1990* (Christchurch, 1991)

Historic place # 3729 – Heritage New Zealand List

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3729>

'About Rolleston House' Christ's College

<http://christcollege.com/about-college/houses/rolleston/about>

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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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