



**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 286
COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND SETTING – 225 HIGH
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.

The building has historical and social significance as it was designed for R W Black, draper, and George Bonnington, chemist and druggist. Bonnington was the inventor of Bonnington's Irish Moss and had arrived in Christchurch from Nelson in 1872 and initially opened a shop in Colombo Street. The building was constructed in 1883 to the design of local architect T S Lambert. B R Best was the contractor for Black's larger portion and William Prudhoe built Bonnington's share in the property. Both men had a 30-year lease on the site from Elizabeth and Amelia Watson. Bonnington's occupied the southeast third which was known as Bonnington's and R W Black the remaining two-thirds to the northeast which was known as Criterion House. In the same year both firms moved into building R W Black entered into a partnership with Robert Beattie. Black and Bettie traded until c1908. George Bonnington died in 1901 and the business was continued by his son Leonard, who moved the business into

new premises at the corner of High and Cashel Streets in 1911, ahead of the lease expiring (now demolished). The former Bonnington's section of the building has had a variety of commercial tenants since 1908/1911, including being partly occupied for a time by Strange's department store, which was next door (demolished).

Bonnington's Irish Moss, which was a mixture of boiled Carrageen moss imported from Ireland and other extracts, including liquorice and camphor, to create a remedy for coughs and colds is still made today. By the late 20th century the company's former building was in a poor state of repair, however. In 2006 it was purchased by KPI Rothschild Property Group who restored and renovated the building creating a row of boutique-style shops with modern office suites above. The building was damaged by the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes but was repaired and strengthened shortly after.

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 building has cultural significance as a distinctive part of late 19th and early 20th century city life, which has been immortalised since 1959 by a replica of Bonnington's first chemist shop in the Canterbury Museum's colonial street.

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 significance for its association with Thomas Stoddart Lambert (1840-1915). Lambert trained in Edinburgh and London and worked for a time in Frederick Strout's office in Christchurch, where he resided from 1874-1893. He then went on to practice in Dunedin and later, Wellington. Lambert was very active in Christchurch and Canterbury through the 1870s and 1880s, and his better known works include the United Services Hotel of 1883 in Cathedral Square (demolished 1990), the Christchurch Synagogue of 1880, (demolished 1887) and Highlight House 1890 (demolished post-quake).

The building is a three-storey commercial classical style building with a rectangular footprint and hipped roofs. The façade is four bays wide, with a double-height pilaster separating the southern end bay from the other three. In this way the façade has a unified appearance but makes the distinction between the two business premises into which it was originally divided. The first floor consists of arched windows in pairs, with one group of four lighting the Bonnington's section. The second floor has paired segmentally arched windows. The elaborate cornice with a pediment above each bay has been removed, as has the bullnose veranda. The early 2000s refurbishment of the building involved cleaning the Oamaru stone façade, earthquake strengthening and the repair of original interior features including pressed metal ceilings and decorative plasterwork.

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 building has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal of 19th century masonry construction methodologies, materials, decorative elements, fixtures and fittings. It has craftsmanship significance for its classical detailing in Oamaru stone.

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 building has high contextual significance as a late 19th century commercial building that contributes to the historic character of High Street. Two other Lambert-designed buildings are still extant within the area, the Tuam Street Hall (1883) and the Canterbury Farmer's Association Building, later part of Cashel Chambers (1882, façade only).

The setting consists of the footprint of the listed building, to the rear of which is a service area.

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 building has archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900. The central city maps of 1862 and 1877 show that there were structures on and immediately adjacent to this property before the Bonnington's building was erected, including the city's first and second Town Halls.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The building has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula as a nineteenth century commercial building and for its connection with the chemist Bonnington. The building has historical and social significance as it was built for R W Black's drapery and Bonnington's Chemist, the manufacturer of the well-known Bonnington's Irish Moss cough remedy. The building has architectural and aesthetic significance through its classical design by the architect T S Lambert to accommodate two separate businesses. The building has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal of 19th century masonry construction methodologies, materials, decorative elements, fixtures and fittings. It has high contextual significance as a late 19th century commercial classical building in an area of the city that had a number of Victorian and Edwardian buildings but has lost many following the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. The building has archaeological significance in view of its age and the historic development of this part of the city centre since the mid-19th century.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage files – 225 High Street

Joan Woodward 'Bonnington's Irish Moss: Old Christchurch product' *The Press* 19 April 1993.

'Revamp retains historic features' *The Press* 14 October 2008.

RMA 92019680 – Report/Decision on RC Application, 10 April 2012.

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/interactive/28217/advertisement-for-bonningtons-irish-moss>

<http://lostchristchurch.org.nz/bonningtons-chemist>

<https://rednicnz.wordpress.com/2015/01/18/black-beattie-criterion/>

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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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