

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 416**

***FORMER MIDLAND CLUB AND SETTING –
176 OXFORD TERRACE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 4/12/2014

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 former Midland Club has historical and social significance as it was built to house one of the city's gentlemen's clubs. Originating in the 18th and 19th centuries in England, and transferred to New Zealand with the colonists, gentlemen's clubs provided a venue for relaxed conviviality amongst members away from their families and sometimes accommodation as well. Christchurch had several such clubs, the most well known and long-established of which were the Christchurch Club in Latimer Square and the Canterbury Club in Cambridge Terrace. Historically a number of Christchurch's men's social clubs were situated on the banks of the Avon between Cashel and Armagh Streets, including the Officers', Midland, Workingmen's and the Returned Services Association. The Midland Club was particularly involved in the development of cricket in the city and one of its members,

Daniel Reese (1879-1953), went on to become a New Zealand representative and noted cricket administrator.

The Midland Club, originally known as Tattersall's Club, was founded in 1880 and chartered in 1885. In the late 19th century Tattersall's Clubs also existed in other parts of New Zealand and in Australia, their common purpose being to decide disputed wagers arising from horse racing bets. The name comes from an 18th century English firm of horse auctioneers. Christchurch's Tattersall's Club changed its name to the Union Club in 1891, which was rekindled as the Commercial Club in 1896. The latter moved into purpose-built premises in Worcester Street near the Clarendon Hotel in June 1900, having previously occupied rooms in High Street. By this time the rules of the club forbade gambling and the club was a non-residential social entity. By January 1901 the club had changed its name once more to the Federal Club. The name was changed again to the Midland Club when the institution moved into its new rooms in 1934. At this time the membership included the Prime Minister, George Forbes, who welcomed the Duke of Gloucester to the building during a royal visit in early 1935.

Due to declining membership the club was wound up and its premises sold in 1991. The building was subsequently redeveloped for commercial and residential use. It housed Café Roma, a popular central city café prior to the earthquakes. The building suffered damage in the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, including the loss of its chimneys and the partial loss of its parapet, which was later removed for reasons of safety and cracking to the street elevation.

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 former Midland Club has cultural significance for its association with the way of life of its former members who would meet, dine and play sport together.

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 Midland Club has architectural significance as an example of an interwar Renaissance palazzo designed by the firm of Collins and West. Originally founded by William Armson in 1870, the firm was one of the city's leading architectural practises. It went through a number of different titles but always maintained a close association with the Collins family. By the 1930s the firm's principal designer was John Goddard Collins.

The Renaissance palazzo had been established as the style for gentlemen's club by Charles Barry in England in the 1830s; Collins and West's building continues the tradition in a pared-back 1930s interpretation, adapted to suit an irregular site with a chamfered corner. The double-height oriel windows that project out over the rusticated ground floor are a notable feature. The interior retains many of its original features, including panelling, fireplaces and leadlight windows, a fine staircase and a period lift. Other notable interwar classical buildings in the vicinity include the Harley Buildings on Cambridge Terrace and the Public Trust Office on Oxford Terrace.

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 former Midland Club has some technological significance as a ferro-concrete structure that demonstrates the impact of new building standards after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake and the increasing use of concrete in construction from the 1930s. The building has some craftsmanship significance for the quality of its interior detailing, which demonstrates the carpentry skills of the day.

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 former Midland Club has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the inner-city streetscape in close proximity to the River Avon, the former Municipal Chambers, and the Scott statue. Both the scale of the building and its location in an area of high pedestrian traffic adjacent to a well-used open space gives the building some landmark significance.

The building is located on a small triangular site fronting Oxford Terrace. The setting of the building consists of its footprint and a section of Club Lane, a right-of-way which passes down the southern side of the building. The building was originally surrounded by structures of a similar or smaller scale; today however the immediate environs of the building consists in the main of large modern buildings and vacant sites.

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 Midland Club and its setting 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. There were earlier buildings on and immediately adjacent to this site from the 1850s, as can be seen in the 1862 and 1877 central city maps.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Midland Club and its setting has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The building has historical and social significance as the former home of the Midland Club and cultural significance for its association with a way of life predicated upon male social and sporting activity. The former Midland Club has architectural significance for its association with the architectural practice of Collins and West and contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the streetscape of Oxford Terrace and

the inner city. The building has archaeological significance for the documented earlier buildings on the site.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage File Former Midland Club: 176-178 Oxford Terrace

'Visit to City Clubs' *Press* 22 January 1935, p. 11.

http://stalbanscricket.co.nz/A%20FLASH/history/centennial_formative_years.html

Historic place # 3123 – Heritage NZ List

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3123>

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/mens-clubs/page-2>

Press 12 August 1896, p. 3.

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