

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 532
FORMER DWELLINGS AND SETTING, SANTA BARBARA
– 169 VICTORIA 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.

This former dwelling has historical and social significance as it was built in c.1938 for Henry Hobson (c.1895-1964), a pastry cook, who lived there until his death in 1964. Hobson survived his service in World War I and married Ida Trigance in 1924. The building was designed and built as two flats, one on each floor, and functioned in this way until 1977 when it was converted in to offices. It remains in commercial use and was not adversely affected by the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes.

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.

Santa Barbara has some cultural significance for its association with the arrival of mansion flats in the city between the world wars and the new way of life this offered for some central city residents.

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.

Santa Barbara has architectural and aesthetic significance for its association with its architect, Henry Francis Willis (1892-1972), a mid-20th century architect who had read architecture at St John's College, Cambridge and worked for Christchurch City Council before establishing his own practice in 1928. Willis also designed the Repertory Theatre (formerly Radiant Hall, 1929, demolished), New Regent Street (1930-32) and specialised in cinema design.

The building has an irregularly shaped footprint and is two storeyed with a flat roof. In keeping with its Streamline Moderne style, rounded forms, such as external and internal walls and internal fittings such as fireplaces, are juxtaposed with rectilinear elements. The steel frame windows are large and the porthole windows and first floor balcony suggest a nautical character. These design elements are also characteristic of Streamline Moderne architecture, which is related to the contemporary Art Deco style and also shows some influence of the Bauhaus movement in architecture. The name of the dwelling 'Santa Barbara' is spelt out in Art Deco lettering on the front of the building. The original design included two garages and a porte cochere large enough to serve as a carport.

In 1994 the entrance porch was enclosed, and the ground floor door replaced by a floor to ceiling display window. Some interior features have been removed to accommodate alterations and have been stored on site.

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.

Santa Barbara has technological and craftsmanship significance for its construction, exterior detailing and interior features and fittings. The building is reported to be one of the first cavity concrete walled buildings in New Zealand. The materials and construction method evidence the response to new national building standards for earthquake safety introduced after the 1931 Napier earthquake. This is reflected in the dwelling's construction in concrete and steel, and its lack of extraneous ornamentation. Glass bricks are used as a feature for creating diffused light and retaining privacy for the entrance and stairwell areas. Inside the building, terrazzo fireplace surrounds and built in furniture reflects the technology and craftsmanship skills of the period, which are no longer common today.

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.

Santa Barbara has contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the diverse streetscape of the north end of Victoria Street where it meets Bealey Avenue. While it has been in commercial use for almost 40 years, Santa Barbara still projects a residential appearance which has more in common with the houses and apartments in the nearby streets of Dublin and Dorset and of Park Terrace. In relation to Willis' other residential work, Santa Barbara demonstrates the progression of the architect's residential design approach and the building may also be compared, in terms of materials and style, to Victoria Mansions, on the corner of Victoria, Salisbury and Montreal Streets, and the Bealey Avenue Maisonettes.

The setting of the former dwelling consists of a rectangular parcel of land, all of which has been asphalted for car parking. The building is set back from the street, which reflects its former residential use.

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.

Santa Barbara and its setting has archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to construction methods and materials, and other human activity, including that which occurred before 1900. Victoria Street was a major thoroughfare and a centre of commercial and other activity in the early colonial period and the northern section of the road, just south of its intersection with Bealey Avenue, was already built up by 1877.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former dwelling known as Santa Barbara and its setting has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The building has historical and cultural significance for its construction as a late 1930s small-scale apartment building in central Christchurch, illustrating a form of urban living that became increasingly attractive in the interwar period. The building has architectural significance for its Streamline Moderne style and as an example of the work of Christchurch architect Francis Willis. Santa Barbara has technological significance for its concrete cavity wall construction and the quality of its architectural detailing, especially on the interior of the building. The former dwelling has contextual significance as a landmark on Victoria Street and in relation to other central city apartments and townhouses that were built in the 1930s. It has potential archaeological significance in view of the pre-1877 development of Victoria Street.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage Files, 169 Victoria Street

Historic Place # 4975 – Heritage NZ List
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/4975>

The Press 19 May 1979.

Amanda Ross 'H Francis Willis – a Christchurch architect in the 1930s' BA Hons research paper, University of Canterbury, 1998.

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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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