

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 584
*CHRISTCHURCH CLUB AND SETTING – 154 WORCESTER
STREET, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 10/12/2014

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 Christchurch Club has high historical and social significance as one of the oldest former gentlemen's clubs in the country. The club was established in 1856 by a group of Canterbury landholders, who required accommodation during their visits to town. A site for the club house was purchased in 1858, plans were drawn up in 1859 by well known Canterbury architect Benjamin Mountfort, a member of the club, and the building was erected from 1860-1862. The Club, formerly restricted to male members, was the centre of social and political life for some of the most powerful and influential members of Canterbury society. Early members included J.B.A. Acland (1823-1904), the owner of Mount Peel Station; Sir Charles Bowen (1836-1917), resident magistrate and politician who introduced the 1877 Education Act, Sir Julius von Haast (1822-1887), explorer, geologist and driving force behind the development of the Canterbury Museum and Sir John Hall (1824-1907), run holder, politician and premier. The club opened its membership to women in 1998 however it was not without dissent from a number of the male members some of whom resigned in protest. The building was severely damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 and has been partly deconstructed, with further deconstruction anticipated. Plans are underway

to construct new buildings on the site linking to the Mountfort tower and entrance block sections which, along with the caretaker's house, are the significant remaining elements of the club building.

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 Christchurch Club has high cultural significance as a private club that has operated on this site for nearly 150 years. The Club is significant as an example of the transplanting of British institutions to New Zealand. It reflects a continuation of the British model of gentlemen's clubs, a practice established by the upper classes in England during the 18th century and popularised by upper middle class gentlemen during the 19th century.

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 remaining part of the Christchurch Club building has high architectural and aesthetic significance as a 19th century, Italianate style, timber building designed by well known Canterbury architect, Benjamin Mountfort. Mountfort was New Zealand's pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect, who designed a number of churches and major public buildings in the Canterbury colony, including the Canterbury Museum, the Provincial Council Chambers and early Canterbury College buildings (Arts Centre). The Christchurch Club was a two storey timber building with a single storey addition to the south, and a three storey entrance tower on the northern elevation. Mountfort designed the Club based on the Italian villa style, a notable departure from the Gothic Revival style which he chiefly employed. The style was a less formal variation of the Italian palazzo style of the Travellers Club (1829) and the Reform Club (1837) of London, which members of the Club sought to emulate. Following the Canterbury earthquakes, the building was partly deconstructed with further deconstruction to follow, meaning that the two storey entrance block and three storey tower will remain on the site, along with the caretaker's house. New buildings are being designed by noted Christchurch firm Warren and Mahoney, to enable the Club to once more occupy the 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.

The remaining part of the Christchurch Club has high technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of an early colonial timber building constructed in 1862 and for what it may reveal of materials and techniques used in construction during this time period. Some interior decorative detail still remains and may provide evidence of cabinetry and timber work skills. The exterior Italianate detailing is notable as an instance of the translation of a masonry style into timber.

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 Club has contextual significance for its corner location and tower, which combine to give it landmark significance, and for its relationship to the open space of the heritage listed Latimer Square. The setting of the Christchurch Club consists of the immediate land parcel and is notable for its corner site and the retention of the holly hedge around the north and east boundaries of the site, an unusual feature in central Christchurch. The Christchurch Club also relates contextually to the Canterbury Club which was established in the 1870s by gentlemen of a mercantile character as an alternative to the Christchurch Club. This building, on the corner of Worcester Street and Cambridge Terrace is also a timber Italianate styled building, in keeping with the tradition established in Britain for gentlemen's clubs.

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 Christchurch Club is of archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Christchurch Club is of overall high significance to Christchurch including Banks Peninsula as one of the oldest former gentlemen's clubs in the country. The Club has high historical and social significance as a private club that has operated on this site for nearly 150 years and one which attracted membership of many notable early run holders and politician's. The building was severely damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 and has been partly deconstructed. The Christchurch Club has high cultural significance as a reflection of the continuation of the British model of gentlemen's clubs, a practice established by the upper classes in England during the 18th century and popularised by upper middle class gentlemen during the 19th century. The remaining part of the Christchurch Club building has high architectural and aesthetic significance as a 19th century, Italianate style, timber building designed by well-known Victorian Canterbury architect, Benjamin Mountfort. The remaining part of the building has high technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of an early colonial timber building constructed in 1862. The Club has contextual significance for its corner location and tower, which combine to give it landmark significance, and for its relationship to the open space of the heritage listed Latimer Square. The Christchurch Club is of archaeological significance because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Christchurch Club – 154 Worcester Street*

Christchurch City Council, *Christchurch City Plan – Listed Heritage Item and Setting. Heritage Assessment – Statement of Significance. Christchurch Club – 154 Worcester Street* - 2011

[HTTP://WWW.HERITAGE.ORG.NZ/THE-LIST/DETAILS/292](http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/292)

REPORT DATED: 13/11/2014

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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