

DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
CANTERBURY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BUILDINGS – 280
DURHAM STREET NORTH, CHRISTCHURCH

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, and New Zealand as the only purpose-built Provincial Council buildings that are still extant. The principal buildings were built in stages between 1858 and 1865 to the design of leading architect Benjamin Mountfort, to whom credit is often given for creating Christchurch's defining architectural character as a Gothic Revival city.

This heritage place includes three scheduled items: the Provincial Council Buildings themselves, the former Land Transfer Office and the Courtyard and Grounds of the buildings. The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings are situated on the west bank of the River Avon, in close proximity to the city's legal centre and Victoria Square. The buildings and their setting have high historical, cultural, architectural, technological and contextual significance.

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have long been held in public esteem and were protected by legal statute in 1928. The stone sections of the buildings were substantially damaged in the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes, especially the stone debating chamber which was considered to have the finest Gothic Revival interior in New Zealand. Until decisions can be made on their future, the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have been made safe and damaged material has been removed from the site and put into storage.

DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 172
CANTERBURY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BUILDINGS – 280
DURHAM STREET NORTH, CHRISTCHURCH



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 11/12/2014

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.

Canterbury's Provincial Council Buildings have high social and historical significance as the only extant purpose-built provincial council buildings in the country. They housed the early provincial government and later government departments linking the province of Canterbury to national politics and eventually central government. They were built in three stages between 1857 and 1865 as the seat of provincial government in Canterbury. New Zealand's provincial government system was established in 1852, with the first elections held in 1853. Until its abolition in 1876 the system effectively gave each of the provinces a high degree of political and administrative autonomy, while central government was largely concerned with foreign policy and so-called 'native affairs'.

Following the elections in Canterbury on 17 August 1853, James Edward Fitzgerald was elected the first Superintendent of Canterbury on a ballot of 54-45. The first meeting of the Provincial Council was held in a small timber house in Chester Street West, the office of the *Guardian* newspaper on 27 September 1853. In November 1854 the Council made the decision to build a permanent home and tenders were called for. In March 1855 approval was given for Mountfort's first design. While only a fragment of the original design was erected, its features are recognisable in the extant built form. Tenders were called for the first part of the Provincial Council buildings in 1857 and on 6 January 1858 the foundation stone

was laid on the site bounded by Gloucester, Armagh and Durham Streets which saw the beginnings of the permanent home of Provincial Government.

This first section in timber was L-shaped in plan and relatively plain in style and it contained the Timber Council Chamber which formed the heart of the complex. This section of the building was first used in September 1859. By 1861 the membership of the Provincial Council was increased from 26 to 35. Canterbury's economy was also rapidly on the rise and the Provincial Council had both the money and the incentive to build a further addition to their chambers in stone rather than timber. The Stone Chamber was built in 1864-1865 and by this date there had been a significant increase in population and a corresponding growth in the number of elected representatives. The four superintendents of the Provincial Council were James Edward Fitzgerald who was the first superintendent 1853-57, William Sefton Moorhouse who served two terms, 1857-63 and 1866-68; Samuel Bealey who served from 1863-66 and William Rolleston who held office from 1868-76. Their names are immortalised in the street names of the four avenues that border the central city area - the initial grid pattern layout of the 1849-50 Edward Jollie survey plan for Christchurch. Three of the superintendents are also immortalised in public statues – Rolleston and Fitzgerald along Rolleston Avenue and Moorhouse within the Rolleston Avenue frontage of the Botanic Gardens.

Following the demise of the provincial government system in 1876 the buildings passed into central government ownership and were used by various government departments. In 1928, under the Canterbury Provincial Vesting Act, the sections and containing the Timber Council Chamber and stone sections were returned to local control to be managed by a Board and maintained as a memorial of the foundation of the Province of Canterbury. This was the first time that the New Zealand Government had passed legislation to protect an historic building. It was not until 1971, however, that the remaining timber buildings were brought under the control of the local Board. In 1988 the 1928 Vesting Act was amended to vest the buildings in the Canterbury Regional Council and in 1993 management of the Buildings passed to the Christchurch City Council.

From 1993 until the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquakes the buildings functioned as offices for a variety of tenants. The Timber and Stone chambers were opened to the public and hired for uses such as meetings, seminars, concerts, lectures and weddings. An Interpretation Centre was opened in the North West area of the Durham Street timber section and the Bellamy's wing which during the 1990s was strengthened and restored. The buildings were extensively damaged in the 2010 \-2011 earthquakes. The stone chamber and the Armagh Street stone tower collapsed; The Durham Street stone tower was severely damaged and has been deconstructed; the Bellamy's wing suffered considerable damage and partial deconstruction has been undertaken to stabilise the structure and make it weather proof. The timber chamber was damaged by a section of the stone Chamber coming through the roof but it in general and the Durham and Armagh Street timber sections have suffered less damage. All materials deconstructed and salvaged, including the furniture that has been retrieved from the stone chamber, have been placed in storage. Repair strategies are currently being considered.

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.

For early Ngāi Tahu the site of the Provincial Buildings has high cultural and spiritual significance as it formed part of Puāri Pa which stretched from the banks of Ōtākaro (Avon River) at Victoria (Market) Square out to Bealey Avenue. It was high ground above a loop in the Ōtākaro (Avon River) loop in the river that provided an important mahinga kai. The place name Puari is an enduring marker on the landscape which provides one of the keys to understanding heritage places of significance to Tangata Whenua in the region. Later Ngāi Tahu had used the area for the seasonal gathering of food and Market/Victoria Square became a trading place with early Europeans.

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings has high cultural significance as a manifestation of the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, in which members of the public and the media had access to the debating chamber. The Timber Chamber was the physical seat of Provincial Government from 1859. The Stone Chamber was the physical seat of Provincial Government from 1865 until the demise of the system in 1876. Following this it was used for many and varied uses that formed part of or shaped particular cultural practices in the community. It was used by the Arbitration Court and as the meeting place of the Anglican Synod. In the 1960s the Stone Chamber was used for the Te Waipounamu Māori Land Court Hearings. It was the first home of the Court Theatre and was also used for many social occasions such as balls and formal gatherings.

The buildings have long been held in high esteem by the people of Canterbury, as an expression of and focus for provincial identity, and are of high cultural and spiritual significance within the region as a memorial to the Foundation of the Canterbury. Their cultural significance to Canterbury was such that the first New Zealand Act of Parliament concerned with the preservation of built heritage was passed in 1928 in relation to these buildings. They are the tangible reminder of colonial confidence in the future of the province and indicative of the culture of the time to provide regional governance.

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 Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high architectural and aesthetic significance, notwithstanding the scale of damage caused by the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes. They were developed in three stages (1857-59, 1859-60 and 1864-65), each of which expresses the growing size, wealth and ambition of both the province and its provincial council. The Provincial Council buildings were designed by the pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect B W Mountfort who was in partnership with Isaac Luck until 1864 when he entered into a partnership with Maxwell Bury the architect of the Nelson Provincial Council Buildings. This partnership dissolved in 1866 either partners involvement in the buildings' designs is not clear. The timber section on Durham Street and the timber council chamber, modelled on fourteenth and fifteenth century English manorial halls, formed the first part of the complex. This section of the building was first used in September 1859. By the time it opened, however, tenders for an extension had already been called for. Mountfort continued as the architect and this extension increased the western frontage along Durham Street and added a north wing that fronted onto Armagh Street. This was more elaborately detailed than the first, featuring foliated windows and a tower in the centre of the north wing. The corridors are essentially a lean-to attached to the main body of the building with an exterior of cross-braced timber, the corridors evoke earlier traditions of institutional buildings. The corridors link all the first and second sections of the timber buildings. They form the circulation route around the buildings and the central courtyard providing a cloistered effect with repetitive

timber arches with a lean-to timber roof above. To the east the corridors contain small paired pointed fenestration and the floor is of tooled flagstones. These flagstones replace the original flooring which was of timber slabs. These sections remain post-quake relatively intact.

The third stage also designed by Mountfort was of masonry construction and involved the construction of the stone chamber, now largely destroyed and the Bellamy's wing which was built as the refreshment area for the provincial councillors and contained the living quarters for the housekeeper. It was named for the social and dining facilities at Westminster Parliament, England emphasising the desire for the close links with the British Parliament on which the Provincial Council had modelled itself. The first Bellamy's at the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings was a small timber building built in 1858-59 to the east of the Timber Chamber. It was removed in 1864 to allow for the erection of the stone Bellamy's. The staircase and tower that provide entry to the rear of the Timber Chamber and press gallery and access to Bellamy's were relocated to the northeast side of the courtyard where they remain today adjacent to the former Magistrates/Children's and Young Persons Court. Bellamy's is designed in a domestic Gothic style and presents a complex series of asymmetrical forms of three levels built into the slope of the site connecting to the east façade of the Timber Chamber and connected by the original corridor on the north face of the Timber Chamber, which serviced the access to the tower stairs, and the timber Bellamy's. Bellamy's consists of two large rooms for the purposes of the provincial councillors – one on the first floor with an external balcony and a ground floor dining room. The upper room intended as a smoking room with an external balcony. The upper floors also contained the Superintendent's office and housekeeper's quarters. The north face opens out onto the inner courtyard.

From the exterior the Stone Chamber presented a massive block of dark grey stone, solidly buttressed. Its original masonry polychromy had diminished through the patina of age. It was constructed from a variety of stone but principally basalt and trachyte from Halswell and Hoon Hay, volcanic rock from Governors Bay and limestone from Weka Pass. The principal entrance which remains in part was contained within a grand towering steeply pitched gable which leads into a surprisingly low-ceilinged vestibule. This in turn led in to the large stone chamber with its ridge and furrow ceiling, stained glass windows and carved decorative elements including highly decorative encaustic wall tiling. Little remains post-quake and the Chamber exists only from the bottom of the windowsills on the eastern façade and lower than this on the western façade. The chamber contained furniture designed by Mountfort. Despite the catastrophic collapse, a large percentage of this has been retrieved and is currently being restored.

Although each stage can be viewed as a distinct entity the Gothic Revival asymmetry has enabled the complex to form an harmonious whole and the stone and timber sections of the complex articulate the different functional components of the building, which is unified by its Gothic Revival style. Inspired by Barry and Pugin's new Parliament Buildings on the banks of the River Thames in London (1840-70), the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings embodied the translation of not only an architectural style to a far-distant part of the British empire, but also the principles of autonomy and parliamentary democracy that Canterbury's Anglican establishment were keen to foster and support.

Despite the considerable earthquake damage the buildings have high architectural and aesthetic significance as the finest secular Gothic Revival complex in New Zealand and the premier work of New Zealand's foremost practitioner of the style, architect Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98). The culmination of the complex is the Stone Chamber, the provincial council's second purpose-built debating chamber, the interior, now destroyed by the 2010-

2011 earthquakes, was widely regarded as one of the finest Gothic Revival interiors in the world. Mountfort's buildings firmly established Gothic Revival as the style for public architecture in 19th century Christchurch, thus giving the city a distinct identity that it retains to this day. Many of the Gothic Revival buildings that followed in Christchurch were designed by Mountfort.

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 Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high technological and craftsmanship significance for what they may reveal about 19th century colonial construction, materials, fixtures and fittings. Despite damage the early timber sections of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings with their corridors of flagstone flooring (originally this timber) provide technical and craftsmanship detail on the early colonial, albeit limited availability of finance, material and professional skills. The first timber section tells of the limited use of materials and skills available to provide an early interpretation of Victorian Gothic stylistic conventions in the vernacular. The second stage demonstrates the growing confidence in a short time frame of the success of the young colony. The use of double height fenestration and generally more decorative elements with square bay windows over two storeys with foliated detail on window heads, references to French architecture with mansard roofs on the Durham/Armagh Street corner and at the east end of the Armagh Street wing.

The construction of the Armagh Street Tower and additions to the Durham Street Tower using constructional polychromy were the first of this style in New Zealand. However while little now remains of these sections post-quake they have provided technical and craftsmanship detail.

The Timber Chamber has craftsmanship significance for the use of locally milled timber to provide interior decorative detail – of particular note in the slightly later addition of the oriel window to the south where there is considerable craftsmanship employed on the use of timber tracery and ceiling beams.

The stone sections of the buildings have craftsmanship significance for the wealth and quality of decorative detail that they continue to contain and including that which has been salvaged. Craftsmanship significance is evident in the remnants of the once highly crafted Stone Chamber such as the encaustic tiles which remain in the vestibule and lower sections of the Chamber's walls. Technological and craftsmanship significance remain in the decorative details stabilised at the southern end of the stone chamber including the fireplaces and surrounds and in part the press gallery. The remanent of the rubble filled masonry walls that have been stabilised are of considerable significance for what they reveal about 19th century masonry construction, materials and methodologies.

The masonry Bellamy's wing has technological and craftsmanship significance not only for what it may reveal about 19th century masonry construction including the large steel flitched timber beams that stretch the width of the lower room which suggest a 19th century understanding of the need for earthquake strengthening, but also for what it can reveal about late 20th century seismic engineering and strengthening methodologies. Bellamy's has craftsmanship significance for the large amount of decorative detail that remains intact post-quake expressed in stone and timber as well as the stained glass trefoil fenestration to the south in the corridor.

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 Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and setting have high contextual significance for their central location and large-scale coverage of a city block immediately bordering the River Avon. Multiple views of the complex are possible from Oxford Terrace, Gloucester, Durham and Armagh Streets, the River Avon and the cloistered courtyard at the centre of the complex.

The site for the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings was the highest point of land in the Central City and had originally been intended to be that of the Public Hospital. The site is adjacent and to the south west of Victoria (Market) Square, which at that date was the central area for the City predating the development of Cathedral Square. It also housed the Post Office, markets, Police Station, Women's Prison, immigration barracks and animal pound.

The buildings have contextual significance in relation to the historic open space of Victoria Square, the Armagh and Gloucester Street bridges, the law courts precinct to the north and the former Municipal Buildings to the south. Further afield the buildings have contextual significance in relation to the Jubilee Clocktower (1897) at the intersection of Victoria and Salisbury Streets, which was to have been part of the complex but owing to problems with its weight was eventually erected as a stand-alone memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have further contextual significance in relation to other key Gothic Revival buildings in the city, including Canterbury Museum (1869-77), the Christchurch Arts Centre (former Canterbury University College, 1876-1923) and what remains of the Christ Church Anglican Cathedral (1860-1904).

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 Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and its setting have high 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 that which occurred prior to 1900. The buildings' siting on the western bank of Te Papa Otakaro (River Avon) suggests the potential for finding evidence of pre-European activity in the area.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, and New Zealand as the only surviving purpose-built provincial buildings in New Zealand. The complex has high historical significance for its association with the politics, personalities and tangible legacy of Canterbury's provincial period. They housed the early provincial government and later government departments linking the

province of Canterbury to national politics and eventually central government. For early Ngāi Tahu the site of the Provincial Buildings has high cultural and spiritual significance as it formed part of Puāri Pa which stretched from the banks of Ōtākaro (Avon River). The buildings have cultural significance as an expression of 19th century political principles, for the high public esteem in which it is held and are of high cultural and spiritual significance within the region as a memorial to the Foundation of the Canterbury. Despite the considerable earthquake damage the buildings have high architectural and aesthetic significance as the finest secular Gothic Revival complex in New Zealand and the premier work of New Zealand's foremost practitioner of the style, architect Benjamin Mountfort. The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high technological and craftsmanship significance for what they may reveal about 19th century colonial construction, materials, fixtures and fittings. Despite damage the early timber sections of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings with their flagstone flooring provide technical and craftsmanship detail on the early colonial, albeit limited availability of finance, material and professional skills. The stone sections of the buildings have craftsmanship significance for the wealth and quality of decorative detail that they continue to contain and including that which has been salvaged. The buildings have high contextual significance in relation to the historic open space of Victoria Square, the Armagh and Gloucester Street bridges, the law courts precinct to the north and the former Municipal Buildings to the south and in relation to the River Avon and inner-city Christchurch, as well as to the city's tradition of 19th century Gothic Revival public architecture. The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have archaeological significance owing to their 19th century construction and location on the banks of the River Avon (Te Papa Otakaro). The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and its setting have high 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 that which occurred prior to 1900.

REFERENCES:

Historic place # 45 – Heritage New Zealand List

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/45>

Tau, Rawiri Te Maire, 'Puaari: Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings' report to Christchurch City Council, 1994.

Ian Lochhead *A Dream of Spires – Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch, 1999)

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings (Christchurch, 1990)

Thelma Strongman 'The Heritage Values of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and their Surrounds: Report prepared for the Parks and Properties Unit, Christchurch City Council' (Christchurch, 1994)

I Bowman, R Burgess, J May, Canterbury Provincial Council Chambers Conservation Plan (Christchurch, 2008)

REPORT DATED: 11 NOVEMBER 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.

DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1345
CANTERBURY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BUILDINGS FORMER
LAND TRANSFER OFFICE -
280 DURHAM STREET NORTH, CHRISTCHURCH



PHOTOGRAPH: RECENT DATE

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 Land Transfer Office, later Magistrate and Children's Courts at the Canterbury Provincial Buildings has historical significance for its association with the use of the property by various central government departments in the post-provincial council era (after 1876). The court was built as an adjunct to the law courts in 1915 (and extended in 1924) as a single storey stone addition to the north, which provided space for the Land Transfer office, later the Magistrates Court and administration area. The passing of the Child Welfare Act in 1925 provided for the establishment of Children's Courts and this area was then used for this purpose. After the Justice Department use ceased, the area has been extensively renovated

for restaurant uses since the 1990s. Given the considerable refurbishment for reuse over time, little internal fabric other than form, in particular the brick vaulted ceiling remains. The building has been extensively damaged as a result of the earthquakes and has been stabilised and braced. Repair strategies are currently being considered.

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.

For early Ngāi Tahu the site of the site has high cultural and spiritual significance as it formed part of Puāri Pa which stretched from the banks of Ōtākaro (Avon River) at Victoria (Market) Square out to Bealey Avenue. It was high ground above a loop in the Ōtākaro (Avon River) loop in the river that provided an important mahinga kai. The place name Puari is an enduring marker on the landscape which provides one of the keys to understanding heritage places of significance to Tangata Whenua in the region. Later Ngāi Tahu had used the area for the seasonal gathering of food and Market/Victoria Square became a trading place with former Land Transfer Office has cultural significance for its association with the Child Welfare Act of 1925, which established a separate court system for young people under 16 years of age and took the view that protection and guidance, rather than punishment, were what young people required from the legal system.

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 former Land Transfer Office has architectural significance for its Collegiate Gothic style which has some sympathy with Mountfort's Gothic Revival Provincial Council Buildings but is also quite distinct from them. It has a flat roof and is a symmetrical stone addition with steel windows. Its oblong shape has been integrated into the existing sections of the eastern end of the original provincial buildings. As such internally it has some unusual junctions and juxtaposition of areas. During alterations to this area in the late 1990s a section of a staircase thought to have been part of the 1860 stage two timber section of the buildings was revealed trapped within a wall cavity of the stair area. In 1860 a stone strong-room or document safe was built at the east end of the Armagh Street section. Initially a modest single storey structure, it was later extended to two storeys. When the extensions that eventually became the Children's Court were made this was incorporated into them. The safe area contained brick vaulting in the interior – this is still in existence today within the internal space. The constructional polychromy of the court's external walls has some consistency with the original buildings on the site, although the horizontality of the street frontage, which is emphasised by a flat roof, is at odds with the verticality of Mountfort's Gothic Revival forms.

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 Land Transfer Office has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal of 19th and early 20th century construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings. It has craftsmanship significance for its stone finish.

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 Land Transfer Office and setting have high contextual significance in relation to the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and the Justice precinct immediately to the north of the site. The buildings also have contextual significance in relation to the historic open space of Victoria Square, the Avon River and the Armagh Street bridge. The addition of the court to the Provincial Council Buildings further defined the Armagh Street wing of the latter and screened the grounds of the complex from the roadway.

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 former Land Transfer Office at the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings has 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, including that which occurred prior to 1900. The building's location on the western bank of Te Papa Otakaro (River Avon) suggests the potential for finding evidence of pre-European activity in the area.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Land Transfer Office has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, as a later addition to the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings. The building has historical and cultural significance for its former role as a Magistrate and later Children's Court and association with the Child Welfare Act of 1925. The former Land Transfer Office has architectural significance as an early 20th century response to the Gothic Revival styling of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings. It has technological and craftsmanship significance for what it may reveal of 19th and early 20th century construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings. It has craftsmanship significance for its stone finish. The former Land Transfer Office has high contextual significance for its direct relationship with the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and to the city's Justice and Law Courts precinct immediately adjacent to the North. The building has archaeological significance given the date at which the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings were developed and the siting of the complex on the west bank of Te Papa Otakaro (River Avon).

REFERENCES:

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings (Christchurch, 1990)

Thelma Strongman 'The Heritage Values of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and their Surrounds: Report prepared for the Parks and Properties Unit, Christchurch City Council' (Christchurch, 1994)

I Bowman, R Burgess, J May, Canterbury Provincial Council Chambers Conservation Plan (Christchurch, 2008)

REPORT DATED: 11 NOVEMBER 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.

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 638
*CANTERBURY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BUILDINGS
COURTYARD/GROUNDS – 280 DURHAM STREET NORTH,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: RECENT DATE

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 Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have historical significance as open spaces that both define and are defined by the buildings within this complex. The courtyard was part of the original Mountfort plan. The timber buildings sat on the south, west and north sides. After 1865 the east side of the four sided courtyard was completed with the construction of Bellamy's to the south section. A curved stone wall with staircase to the river bank level completes the area. The curved wall rises from the external service courtyard of the lower level of Bellamy's. The courtyard was originally laid in grass with paths around the edge and centre dividing it into two sections. Early photographs reveal

a water pump in the centre of the courtyard. The pump was later utilised to provide fire safety measures. Over time following the cessation of its use as Provincial Government buildings in 1876 the Courtyard format was lost – a surveyors standard chain test bay (c1904 and rebuilt c1968 and no longer extant) dissected the northern end and a 1917 addition, now removed, had been added to create further office space. The full restoration of the Courtyard followed the insertion in the south end of underground toilets. (These are accessed through the lower level of Bellamy's and form the new ablution block for that area.) The maples, thought to date from 1928 and a very earlier cabbage tree have remained as part of the landscape. A 'horse-tail' pump similar to the original was reinstated during the landscape restoration of the area undertaken at the end of the 1990s. While the courtyard form remains fully intact post the 2010-2011 earthquakes it has suffered considerable ground damage through slumping in the area where the underground toilets were inserted. Its restoration and repair will form part of the overall programme of earthquake repairs for the complex.

The grounds beyond the courtyard were initially accessed from Oxford Terrace in 1863 via a swing bridge for pedestrians – this was removed in 1884. Gum trees lined the riverbank in the 1860s. Various plantings have been undertaken – the mature trees on the riverbank were planted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The current form of the landscaping of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings site has evolved as a result of extensive research and consultation through the 1990s. The whole site is currently fenced off as a result of the 2010/2011 earthquakes and a temporary hard surface to allow trade and machine access has been laid on the riverbank side.

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 Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high cultural significance as part of the landscaped setting for one of the city's most highly esteemed built heritage precincts. They are reflective of a particular medieval design philosophy of an internal or cloistered area for educational and monastic buildings that was revived in the era of Victorian Gothic Revival buildings. This philosophy was also employed in the designs for the former University of Canterbury campus now the Arts Centre of Christchurch. The riverbank landscaped area forms part of the wider reserve around the buildings and has cultural significance as significant public open space along the Avon River,

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 Courtyard has design and aesthetic significance as an integral element of Benjamin Mountfort's original design for the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, although it was never fully realised in accordance with his 1855 plan. The Courtyard and Grounds create a sense of enclosure on the complex's eastern, river frontage, in contrast to the north and west sides where the buildings are built right up to the footpath and consequently have a much more direct and urban presence within the streetscape. The Grounds have aesthetic

significance because they respond to the natural path of the River Avon through this part of the central city, in contrast with the rectilinear grid pattern of the streets that bound the other three sides of the block. A modest number of trees within the site enhances the domestic appearance of the Bellamy's wing and complement those on the opposite bank of the river. The riverbank landscaped area which was designed and replanted by the City Council following a 1994 landscape report forms part of the wider reserve around the buildings, The riverbank area included steps and punting platform at the river edge.

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 Courtyard and Grounds have technological and craftsmanship significance for what they can reveal of plantings overtime. Mature trees have been retained from earlier landscape schemes and the current layout reveals a simple landscaping and planting programme that complements the buildings. A scheme to plant native species around the west and north building perimeters has now become overgrown.

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 Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high contextual significance as integral elements of this historic precinct and in relation to the River Avon and Armagh and Gloucester Street bridges.

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 Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have 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 that which occurred prior to 1900. The site's location on the western bank of Te Papa Otakaro (River Avon) suggests the potential for finding evidence of pre-European activity in the area.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have overall high significance to Christchurch, including Banks' Peninsula as an integral part of the original design. They have historical significance for their development in tandem with the construction of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings. The current form of the

landscaping of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings site has evolved as a result of extensive research and consultation through the 1990s. The whole site is currently fenced off as a result of the 2010/2011 earthquakes and a temporary hard surface to allow trade and machine access has been laid on the riverbank side. Their cultural significance as reflective of a particular medieval design philosophy of an internal or cloistered area for educational and monastic buildings that was revived in the era of Victorian Gothic Revival buildings and for the high esteem in which this historic precinct is held. The Courtyard and Grounds have architectural and contextual significance for their design by Benjamin Mountfort and response to the organic form of the River Avon along the eastern boundary of the site. The design creates a sense of enclosure on the complex's eastern, river frontage, in contrast to the north and west sides where the buildings are built right up to the footpath and consequently have a much more direct and urban presence within the streetscape. The Courtyard and Grounds of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings have high contextual significance as integral elements of this historic precinct and in relation to the River Avon and Armagh and Gloucester Street bridges. The Courtyard and Grounds have archaeological significance in view of the location of the site beside Te Papa Otakaro and in view of the date of construction of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings.

REFERENCES:

Historic place # 45 – Heritage New Zealand List
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/45>

Ian Lochhead *A Dream of Spires – Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch, 1999)

The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings (Christchurch, 1990)

Thelma Strongman 'The Heritage Values of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and their Surrounds: Report prepared for the Parks and Properties Unit, Christchurch City Council' (Christchurch, 1994)

I Bowman, R Burgess, J May, Canterbury Provincial Council Chambers Conservation Plan (Christchurch, 2008)

REPORT DATED: 11 NOVEMBER 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.

