DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 76
CANTERBURY CLUB AND SETTING – 129 CAMBRIDGE TERRACE, CHRISTCHURCH

PHOTOGRAPH: M. VAIR-PIOVA, 9/12/2014

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 Canterbury Club is of high historical and social significance as it was established in 1872 as a club for gentlemen of a mercantile character, including lawyers, bankers, importers and accountants, from both the city and the broader Canterbury region and that it is still in use for the purpose for which it was built. The Club buildings, constructed in 1873-74, contribute to an understanding of the changing dynamics of private clubs for business professionals, from the mid 19th century through to the present day. With an original membership of 151 men, the Canterbury Club was an alternative to the Christchurch Club which had been established in 1856 for Canterbury landholders. The newly formed club purchased the property on the corner of Worcester Street and Cambridge Terrace. The Club initially commissioned William Armson, a Club member, to design a suitable building. Following Armson’s withdrawal due to ill health Frederick Strouts was commissioned instead, designing an Italianate styled building. Service buildings, including the caretaker’s flat, were constructed in a plainer...
colonial style to the rear of the building as part of Strout’s scheme for the Club. The service buildings were an integral part of the complex, being described in conjunction with the rest of his plans for the Club in The Press on 29 May 1873. Women were initially not allowed entry to the club but in 1894 members were allowed to invite women as guests to the dining room for afternoon tea on the first Tuesday of every month. They did not gain the right to be full members until 2002. The Club continues to own and occupy the site to this day and has continued to develop the site and club facilities.

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 Canterbury Club has high cultural significance as a private club that has operated on this site for nearly 140 years. As a club set up as an alternative to the more rural gentry based Christchurch Club the Canterbury Club reflects the stratified nature of colonial society. It also 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. The plainer colonial style of the service buildings reflects the Victorian practice of externalising the hierarchies of the buildings on the site and the associated status of the people who occupied those buildings.

The site may have significance to tangata whenua for its location close to the Avon River. The Avon River and its banks were used first by local Māori and later by the early Europeans, prior to 1900. The Avon River and its banks were used first by local Māori and later by the early Europeans, prior to 1900. Ōtākaro (Avon River) was highly regarded as a mahinga kai by Waitaha, Ngāti Māmo and Ngāi Tahu. Ōtākaro, meaning “the place of a game”, is so named after the children who played on the river’s banks as the food gathering work was being done. The Waitaha pā of Puari once nestled on its banks. In Tautahi’s time few Māori would have lived in the Ōtākaro area itself. Those that did were known to Māori living outside the region as Ō Roto Repo (swamp dwellers). Most people were seasonal visitors to Ōtākaro.

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 Club has high architectural and aesthetic significance as a purpose built set of buildings, continuously used by the same organisation for over 140 years, designed by well known architect Frederick Strouts and with additions by other notable Christchurch architectural firms.

The original building was designed by Frederick Strouts. A prolific architect, Strouts extant buildings include Ivey Hall, Lincoln, and Otahuna, Tai Tapu. He also helped establish the Canterbury Association of Architects. Some additions were made to the service areas of the club buildings around the turn of the century, with Collins and Harman designing substantial additions for the building in 1907. Other notable Christchurch architectural firms such as Wilkie and Bruce have been involved in designs for later additions and alterations of the Canterbury Club.
The use of the Colonial Italianate architectural style for the main timber building is representative of a style used for a number of 19th and 20th century gentleman's clubs in New Zealand (for example, Christchurch Club and the Gisborne Club). This is also related to a trend established in London in the early 20th century, consequently reflecting early New Zealand architects' awareness of British design. Buildings to the rear of the club are constructed in a plain colonial domestic style in comparison to the more elaborate and grand scale design of the main Club building. This may reflect the different uses and social standing between the main Club area and its members, and the service wing and associated servants.

Grand proportions are used in the design of the main building. These include the large entrance-way, internal doors and windows, and spacious rooms with high ceilings. The Club is characterised by its predominantly timber construction completed with a slate roof. Detailing in the joinery, such as in the oriel window on the north elevation, adds to the architectural significance of the building.

The caretaker’s cottage, originally a three bay service wing built in 1873 to designs by Frederick Strouts, has been added to several times, both pre- and post-1907. Around 1900 another bay was added to the original three at the west end of the building, and two minor lean-to additions were again made prior to 1907. Furthermore, Armson, Collins and Harman additions made in 1907 included a ‘Men’s room’ and downstairs bedroom to the west end of the Caretaker’s flat, an additional storage building to the rear, and a single storey gabled building that housed two ‘Men’s rooms’ and a bathroom. At a later stage an entrance and reception room was provided in this section of the building for visiting ladies. A porch was added post-1907 to the west-end entrance of the service wing, possibly to enhance the ‘ladies entrance’.

Internal alterations have been made over the last 40 years to adapt the building for continued use into the 21st century. In 2005 the Club subdivided and sold a 1398sq metre section which contained the Squash Courts on its western boundary, using the proceeds of the sale to restore the listed Club buildings. In 2006 significant alterations were made to the club buildings by Wilkie and Bruce Architects. The service buildings at the rear of the building were demolished except for the caretakers flat, which was moved 2.5 metres to the west and reduced to its original simple box form. The caretaker’s flat has been restored and is now linked to the main building through the Wilkie and Bruce additions.

Following damage in the Canterbury earthquakes the brick chimneys were replaced above roof height with lightweight replicas and repairs were undertaken to the parapet, while internally re-levelling of the floors, re-lining the walls and the installation of gas fire was undertaken. Despite the series of alterations the building retains a high degree of its architectural and aesthetic significance.

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 Club including the now linked caretakers house, has technological and craftsmanship significance as a large 1870s timber building and cottage and for what they may reveal of construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings form that period. The profile of the weatherboard, with a hollow chamfer at the overlap, is uncommon for both
Christchurch and New Zealand architecture. These weatherboards also encase the chimney exteriors on the north elevation, leaving only the stacks to appear as brick.

**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 Club has contextual significance as a group of buildings that form part of a precinct of central city heritage buildings. The setting of 129 Cambridge Terrace consists of the immediate land parcel. The Club maintains a unity of scale with other heritage buildings along the Worcester Boulevard pedestrian precinct, including the listed; Harley Chambers and Worcester Chambers, as well as the Cambridge Terrace river precinct. A number of significant buildings and structures are situated within this locale; Canterbury Museum, the former Canterbury University College – now the Arts Centre of Christchurch – at the west end of Worcester Street/Boulevard, the Worcester Street bridge across the Avon River immediately to the north-east of the Club, the Municipal Chambers, just over the river, and the Christchurch Cathedral to the east. Even with several of these buildings being badly damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes, the importance of the relationships remain. The position of the Canterbury Club provides a visual link between the Canterbury Museum and the Christchurch Cathedral along Worcester Boulevard.

The Cambridge Terrace façade and return down Worcester Boulevard is planted to create a garden setting at the front of the building. The area to the south of the building is sealed and provides onsite car parking for the Club.

**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 Club and setting are of 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.

**ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

The Canterbury Club and its setting are of overall high significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. It retains a high degree of integrity and authenticity. The Canterbury Club is of high historical and social significance as it was established in 1872 as a club for gentlemen of a mercantile character, including lawyers, bankers, importers and accountants, from both the city and the broader Canterbury region and that it is still in use for the purpose for which it was built. The Canterbury Club has high cultural significance as a gentleman’s club that has operated on this site for nearly 140 years. The plainer colonial style of the service buildings reflects the Victorian practice of externalising the hierarchies of the buildings on the site and the associated status of the people who occupied those buildings. The Canterbury Club has high architectural and aesthetic significance as a purpose built set of buildings, continuously used by the same organisation for over 130 years, designed by
well known architect Frederick Strouts and with additions by other notable Christchurch architectural firms. The Canterbury Club including the now linked caretakers house, has technological and craftsmanship significance as a large 1870s timber building and cottage and for what they may reveal of construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings form that period. The Canterbury Club has contextual significance as a group of buildings that form part of a precinct of central city heritage buildings. The Canterbury Club and setting are of 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:

Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Canterbury Club – 129 Cambridge Terrace*
http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/TiKoukaWhenua/Otakaro

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.**

**PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CCC HERITAGE FILES.**