

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 112
*DWELLING AND SETTING - 72 CHANCELLOR STREET,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: B. SMYTH, 2012

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 Workers' Dwelling Act dwelling has historical and social significance as one of seven houses built on the east side of Chancellor Street in 1914 as part of the Chancellor Street Settlement under the Workers' Dwellings Act 1905. The act and its successors established the first programme of public housing provision in New Zealand by central government. By June 1913 51 workers' dwellings were occupied in Christchurch and the land for the Chancellor Street Settlement had been acquired. At the same time all seven sections had been taken up and house designs approved. In 1914 the occupations of the first purchasers of the Chancellor Street Settlement dwellings were: a driver, fitter, joiner, gardener, biograph-operator, houses-enumerator, and a brass-finisher. The land had previously been owned by the Anglican Church Property Trustees, who named the street after the title given to the church's legal adviser.

New Zealand Premier 'King' Dick Seddon's Liberal Government (1893-1906) wanted architectural variety, rather than uniformity, in the design of the workers' dwellings. Local architects submitted entries to design competitions held throughout New Zealand and the dwellings were built by local contractors. Despite the intentions of the scheme it was not very successful. The houses that were built passed fairly quickly into private ownership as the Reform Government privatised the workers' dwellings and used the 1906 State Advances Act to encourage home ownership over rental housing.

In 1926, the dwelling at 72 Chancellor Street was sold to James Duncan, joiner, and was transferred upon his death in 1951 to James Gibson, a railway employee and his wife Hannah. The dwelling remained in the Gibson family's ownership until 1988 after which time the property changed hands frequently and quickly. The dwelling continues to be used as a private residence.

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.

72 Chancellor Street has cultural significance for its association with the foundation of New Zealand's social welfare system and the policies and practices of Richard Seddon's Liberal Government, which earned New Zealand the reputation as being the 'social laboratory of the world'. Workers' dwellings, female suffrage, old age pensions, labour arbitration and land tenure reform were all part of the modernisation of the state by Seddon's government as the country moved towards Dominion status in 1907. The Workers' Dwellings Act instituted a building programme that was to become the precursor of the State Housing scheme of the first Labour Government in the 1930s.

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 Workers' Dwelling at 72 Chancellor St has architectural significance as one of Christchurch's earlier state houses. Care was taken to differentiate the houses built under the Workers' Dwelling Acts from each other, so as to avoid any air of mass-produced worker housing. The designer of this model of Workers' Dwelling is currently unknown. This dwelling is a bay villa with the influence of the California bungalow becoming evident in the panelled entrance door with glass insert and decorative scalloped treatment of the veranda frieze. The roof cladding was replaced with long-run corrugated steel in 2012.

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.

72 Chancellor Street has technological and craftsmanship significance as a demonstration of the construction methods and architectural detailing applied to a Workers' Dwelling in the early 1910s. It also has the potential to provide information on timber construction, materials, fixtures and fittings that were used in the early Edwardian period in New Zealand. It has some craftsmanship value for decorative detail employed on the veranda and timber detail internally.

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 Workers' Dwelling and its setting has contextual significance in association with the six other houses in Chancellor Street constructed under the Workers' Dwelling Act; particularly those at 66 and 70 which are also listed heritage items. The group share a similar scale, style, form, detailing and materials. Elsewhere in the city workers' dwellings were also built at the Walker (Mandeville Street, Riccarton), Camelot (Longfellow & Seddon Streets, Sydenham) and Hulbert (Linwood) Settlements. Houses from all three settlements are still extant; those of the contemporary Hulbert Settlement resemble those of the Chancellor Settlement most closely. All of Christchurch's Worker's Dwelling Act houses relate to those constructed across the country under the scheme. The Chancellor Street houses also form part of New Zealand's heritage of state housing generally. The setting is the original 1914 rectangular land parcel with a small garden between the house and the roadway and a larger open space at the rear.

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 Workers' Dwelling and its setting has archaeological value because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred before 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Workers' Dwelling Act dwelling at 72 Chancellor Street and its setting has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. It has historical and social significance as a dwelling built under the auspices of the Workers' Dwellings Act 1905. The dwelling has cultural significance as it demonstrates the social democratic policies and practices of the Liberal Government. The former Workers' Dwelling has architectural significance for its transitional villa design and individualised appearance in relation to its neighbours. 72 Chancellor Street has technological and craftsmanship significance as a demonstration of the construction methods and architectural detailing applied to a Workers' Dwelling in the early 1910s. The former Workers' Dwelling and its setting has contextual

significance in relation to the other Workers' Dwelling Act houses in Chancellor Street and elsewhere in Christchurch. The former Workers' Dwelling and its setting has archaeological value because it has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred before 1900.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage files, *72 Chancellor Street, former Workers' Dwelling Act dwelling*

John Wilson et al *Contextual Historical Overview of Christchurch City* (Christchurch 2005)

<http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/ChristchurchCityContextualHistoryOverviewFull-docs.pdf>

Auckland Star 12 June 1913, p. 11.

Christchurch Libraries Street Names

WORKERS' DWELLINGS ACT: YEARLY STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HON. THE MINISTER OF LABOUR *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives* 1914 Session I, H-11b <http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz>

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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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