

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 179
*DWELLING AND SETTING – 54 DYER’S PASS
ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 21/01/15

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.

54 Dyers Pass Road has historical and social significance as one of the first homes on the Cashmere Hills, and for its association with accountant and businessman George Way, lawyer and politician Justice Sir Alexander Herdman, lawyer William Hamilton, and prominent motor dealership proprietor and racing car driver Raymond Archibald.

At the turn of the century Christchurch's wealthy began to appreciate the expansive views and healthy environment that the Port Hills could provide. Consequently their homes began to creep up the lower slopes from the late 1890s. In Cashmere the trickle turned into a flood once an electric tram service was established up Dyer's Pass Road after 1905.

The fourth house to be constructed on the Cashmere Hills, Ora-iti (as it was first known) was built for accountant George Way (1852-1932) in 1898-1899. Way arrived in New Zealand in 1878 and married Emma Kate Harman (daughter of prominent businessman R J S Harman) in 1880. The couple lived in Merivale before they moved to the Dyer's Pass Road address. From 1913 George Way was the manager of Jameson, Anderson and Co, importers and commission agents. He was an active member of the Anglican Church and was heavily involved in the building of St Augustine's in Cashmere. The Ways had five children (two girls and three boys), but lost one son in the South African War and the other two in the Great War.

In 1909 the Ways left for a tour of the Continent and the Old Country, and let Ora-iti to George Booth of engineering firm Booth MacDonald until late 1910. The couple offered the Cashmere property for sale or rent in late 1917 and the following year shifted to Sumner and let the house to Alexander Herdman.

Justice Sir Alexander Herdman (1869-1953) was a lawyer, politician and judge. He entered parliament in 1902 in opposition to Seddon's Liberal administration, and became a leading figure in the 1912 Reform government and the wartime coalition which followed it. An authoritarian figure with a concern for the maintenance of public order, Herdman played a central role in the suppression of the 1912 Waihi Miners' Strike, the 1913 Waterfront Strike and of anti-war dissent - including the arrest of Tuhoe prophet Rua Kenana in 1916. From the time he entered parliament, he was concerned with the reform of the public service, and his enduring political achievement is considered to be the creation of the role of public service commissioner. Considered a lawyer of average ability, Herdman controversially appointed himself to the Supreme Court in 1918. He served first in Christchurch (which is when he rented Ora-iti), before transferring to Auckland where he remained for the rest of his career. He was knighted after serving briefly as acting Chief Justice in 1929.

After Herdman left for Auckland in c1921, the post office directories indicate that the Way's returned to live in Cashmere until 1925. Other evidence suggests however that Ora-iti was leased to lawyer William Milne Hamilton (1861-1933), a partner in the firm of Raymond, Stringer, Hamilton and Donnelly (now Raymond Stringer), from 1922, and that the Way's retired to a house in Winchester Street, Merivale. Hamilton eventually purchased Ora-iti from George Way in 1925. The Hamilton family retained the property until 1954 when it was sold to Raymond Archibald.

Squadron Leader Raymond (Ray) Jack Nelson Archibald (1922-2010) DFC served with distinction as a fighter pilot with the RNZAF in the Pacific during WWII. After the war he returned to the garage and motor dealership (Archibald Motors) started by his father in 1918. Between the 1940s and the 1960s Archibald was prominent in motor racing, and was New Zealand Saloon Champion in 1962 and 1963.

54 Dyer's Pass Road was sold to its present owner in 1983. It sustained moderate damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010-2011. Its chimneys were subsequently removed and replaced with replicas.

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.

54 Dyer's Pass Road has cultural significance as a demonstration of the comfortable way of life enjoyed by Christchurch's elite in the early twentieth 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.

54 Dyer's Pass Road has architectural and aesthetic significance as an 'Old English'-style house designed by the well-known Christchurch architectural firm of Collins and Harman.

After serving his articles with William Armson, John James Collins (1855-1933) bought the practice after the former's death in 1883 and took Richard Dacre Harman (1859-1927) into partnership four years later. Richard Harman was Emma Way's brother. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Armson, Collins and Harman was one of Canterbury's leading architectural practices, designing many prominent commercial, educational and domestic buildings across the province. In 1928 the firm's name was simplified to Collins and Harman. The firm continued until 1993 as Collins Architects. At the time of its closure, it was one of the two oldest architectural firms in New Zealand.

54 Dyer's Pass Road is a large timber return-plan slate-roofed villa with elements of the Domestic Revival-derived 'Old English' style which was becoming popular in Christchurch in this period. A number of the larger houses designed by Collins and Harman - such as Te Koraha in Merivale (now Rangi Ruru School) and Meadowbank at Irwell - adopted elements of the 'Old English' idiom. Typical elements incorporated in Ora-iti include a half-timbered effect, a partly jettied first floor and a picturesque variety of roof forms. The top sashes of the double-hung windows are glazed with smaller panes.

In the mid-1980s the house underwent considerable alteration by architect David Allen. A two-storey addition with a conservatory was made at the south western corner, and the interior was augmented with features salvaged from a convent demolition in Timaru. The building sustained moderate damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010-2011, and its chimneys were taken down. They have subsequently been replaced with light-weight replicas.

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.

54 Dyer's Pass Road has technological and craftsmanship significance for its unusual cladding. Houses of this period were usually clad in weatherboard. If an architect wanted to achieve a half-timbered effect, this was commonly an overlay. The builders of some 'Old English'-style houses (particularly those built in brick) strove for authenticity by plastering the first floor. Ora-iti is however clad entirely in plaster. A 1919 advertisement for the house (Press 14/05/1919) describes the house as 'smoothcast on expanded metal sheets'. As the substrate in this period was commonly timber laths, the metal sheets appear to have been a new technology in 1899. A similar technique was later employed in the cladding of Government House (1910) in Wellington.

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.

54 Dyer's Pass Road has contextual significance for its contribution to the established residential character of Dyer's Pass Road, in particular, and Cashmere in general. The setting of the house is its immediate land parcel, a large rectangular section. The house is surrounded by mature trees (some listed) that largely conceal it from view. The property boundary on the short road frontage is marked by a low random-rubble stone wall and wrought iron entrance gates.

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.

54 Dyer's Pass Road and its 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

54 Dyer's Pass Road and its setting has overall heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. The house has historical and social significance as one of the first homes on the Cashmere Hills, and for its association with accountant and businessman George Way, lawyer and politician Justice Sir Alexander Herdman, lawyer William Hamilton, and prominent motor dealership proprietor and racing car driver Raymond Archibald. The house has cultural significance as a demonstration of the comfortable way of life enjoyed by Christchurch's elite in the early twentieth century. The house has architectural and aesthetic significance as an 'Old English'-style home designed by the well-known Christchurch architectural firm of Collins and Harman. The house has technological and craftsmanship significance for its unusual monolithic plaster cladding. The house has contextual significance for its contribution to the established residential character of Dyer's Pass Road, in particular, and Cashmere in general. The house and its 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:

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

G R MacDonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies, Canterbury Museum.

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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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