

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 193
*EDMONDS FACTORY GARDEN – 357, 365 FERRY ROAD, 72
RYAN STREET, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 2015

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has high historical and social significance for its association with businessman Thomas Edmonds, his well-known company and philanthropic values. Thomas Edmonds began manufacturing baking powder in Woolston in the 1880s. In the 1890s he established premises on Aldwins Road in Linwood. In 1923 Edmonds built a new model factory on the site fronting Ferry Road. Influenced by Garden City ideals, an extensive garden was established around the new factory. This was to serve both as an advertisement for the company, and as an amenity for staff. The garden was extended in successive stages from the 1920s until the 1970s and, with the factory itself, became an important part of the company identity and a city landmark. Many people would visit the gardens, and they were a popular venue for wedding photographs. They were also featured on the covers of the Edmonds' Cookbook, which is New Zealand's bestselling book with over 3 million copies sold to date.

Thomas Edmonds also contributed to the beautification of the wider city environment by providing funds for the Radiant Hall (Repertory Theatre, demolished), the Thomas Edmonds Band Rotunda, and other civic amenities. The Edmonds factory was demolished in 1990, and much of the garden cleared. The western portion, which had been developed since the 1930s, was purchased by the Christchurch City Council and reopened as the Edmonds Factory Garden in 1992. The garden is cared for jointly by the Council and a friends group. Within the garden, the Irene Ballantyne Rose Garden is a memorial to Thomas and Jane Edmonds' daughter who was married to Ken Ballantyne. The rose garden is planted in roses in the Edmonds' baking powder and cornflour packaging colours: cream, gold and rusty red. The Edmonds Factory Garden was amongst the earliest factory gardens in the country and throughout its history in association with the factory was among the most important and influential.

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has high cultural significance for its association with a quintessential aspect of New Zealanders' way of life – the Edmonds Cookbook. The distinctive Edmonds sunburst logo and 'Sure to Rise' motto are nationally recognised and the factory and its garden became part of this national identity after featuring on the cover of the company's popular recipe book from the 1950s. Although the factory and much of its garden has been gone for twenty years, the Edmonds brand and recipe book remain kiwi icons. Consequently the Edmonds Gardens have cultural value as an important component of the iconic Edmonds brand, and serve to commemorate Edmonds and his well-known company.

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has architectural and aesthetic significance as a mid-20th century factory garden. During the interwar period factory gardens were regarded as an important contributor to a company's image, and were the subject of vigorous competition for gardening prizes. The decision to develop gardens around the Edmonds factory was influenced by Garden City ideals and British company developments such as those at Port Sunlight (Lever Bros.) and Bournville (Cadbury). The initial layout was planned and executed in 1923 by first head gardener Rupert (Rube) Overend, and reflected landscape conventions of the time, with formal beds and massed planting of annuals. In 1935 the neo-classical garden was designed by local garden architect Edgar Taylor, who had also designed the Sanitarium gardens in Harewood in 1931. At a later date a "rainbow border" was developed in the perimeter beds around Taylor's garden, and a raised semicircular bed in the lawn had the firm's sunray motif bedded out in French marigolds. In 1933, Edmonds' prizewinning garden was described as 'a very attractive factory building surrounded by a garden that is a blaze of colour and with grass that is almost faultless' (*The Press*, 2014).

The gardens reached their fullest and most manicured state under Malcolm Gilpin in the 1930s and 1940s. Later landscaping was more naturalistic, but the gardens retained their essential appearance until the majority of the company's gardeners were laid off in 1982.

Although the Edmonds Factory Garden is but a portion of the former factory garden, they are managed to reflect the qualities that made the prize-winning grounds a national landmark and an important contributor to Christchurch's Garden City image for 60 years. Extensive factory gardens were previously cultivated by several companies in the city, including Yates and Sanitarium, but are rare today.

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has craftsmanship significance for the nature and use of landscape plants and materials which created a highly influential factory garden for the period. The garden also shows the evolution of gardening taste and style as the gardens transitioned from a manicured and structured finish to a more naturalistic one.

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has contextual significance as it still retains a frontage to the busy arterial route of Ferry Road. The garden was originally created to complement and highlight the stripped classicism of the company's new building on its very prominent site at the corner of Aldwins and Ferry Roads. With the demolition of the landmark factory and clearance of the corner site, the rectangular remnant that today forms the Edmonds Factory Garden has been deprived of some of its context. The garden is surrounded by commercial development and urban redevelopment and in this context is an important oasis of tranquillity and reminder of the past.

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 Edmonds Factory Garden has archaeological significance because of 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 Edmonds Factory Garden has overall heritage significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The Edmonds Factory Garden has high historical and social significance for its association with businessman Thomas Edmonds, his well-known company and philanthropic values. The Edmonds Factory Garden has high cultural significance due to the

iconic status of the Edmonds brand and its former factory. The Edmonds Factory Garden has architectural and aesthetic significance as a remnant of a prize-winning mid-century factory garden which was an important contributor to Christchurch's Garden City identity. The Edmonds Factory Garden has craftsmanship significance for the nature and use of materials and contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the streetscape of Ferry Road. The Edmonds Factory Garden has archaeological significance because of 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 files 365 Ferry Road, Edmonds Factory Garden
'Edmonds factory gardens still charms' *Press* 16 November 2014
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<http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/Publications/ChristchurchCityCouncil/ArchitecturalHeritage/LegacyofThomasEdmonds/LegacyofThomasEdmonds.pdf>
<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/edmonds-cookbook>

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