

**CHRISTCHURCH CITY PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE ITEM AND SETTING
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 203**

***DWELLING AND SETTING, ENGLEFIELD - 230
FITZGERALD AVENUE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTO 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.

Englefield is of high historical and social significance for its role in the early European settlement of Canterbury, and for its associations with W. G. Brittan, a notable early colonist involved in the establishment and administration of the Canterbury Settlement, and with local notary and politician E. C. J. Stevens.

Englefield was built on a 50 acre block at the corner of then East Town belt, later Fitzgerald Avenue by William Guise Brittan (1809 – 1876) in 1855-1856. Brittan, his wife Louisa and their four young children arrived in 1850 on board one of the first four Canterbury Association ships, the Sir George Seymour. Brittan was a major figure in founding the Canterbury Settlement, and was the first to register his name as a buyer in January 1850. He held a number of prominent positions in the early settlement including Commissioner of Crown Lands, chairman of the Colonists' Society, supervisor of the allocation of Orders of Choice - the process by which colonists selected their land purchases - and treasurer of the Waste

Lands Board. Brittan was also known for his philanthropy and gave land for the Papanui Anglican Church. In August 1864 he sold Englefield for subdivision. A mix of small cottages and larger homes were subsequently built in a series of small streets around his former homestead.

Member of the Legislative Council Edward Cephas John Stevens and his family owned the property from 1869 until WWI. President of the Christchurch Rowing Club, Stevens was responsible for the arrangement of the popular regattas which took place each year on the stretch of the Avon alongside Englefield. Stevens laid out a four-hole golf course on the property, establishing this sport for the first time in Canterbury. J. G. Collins, of noted architectural practice Collins and Harman, owned the property from 1922 to 1927 and made additions to the house and subdivided the property further. Between 1972 and 2009, Englefield was owned by Frances and Rex Ryman, who did much to recover and protect the history of the property. The current owners purchased the property from the Ryman's however the house suffered substantial damage in the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, and has since been unoccupied.

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.

Englefield is of high cultural significance for its location adjacent to the mahinga kai area of the Otakaro-Avon, as a house designed to reflect the aspirations and changes of early citizens and as colonial life progressed with a strong belief in the future of the province. Originally set on 50 acres the house reflecting the need for small land holdings as a means of self-sufficiency and has been in continuous use as a residence for 150 years.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

Englefield is of high architectural and aesthetic significance as an important example of an early colonial dwelling. It is likely that Guise Brittan's brother-in-law, Charles Fooks, an architect and surveyor who had travelled with him to Canterbury, was responsible for the initial design. Fooks also designed Linwood House (1857), now demolished) for Guise Brittan's brother Joseph, and his own home at River Road (now also demolished). Built in a domestic Gothic Revival style, Englefield been altered by successive owners. The greatest number of changes appear to have made during the tenure of notable architect J. G. Collins (1922-1927). These included a brick lean-to replacement of the original conservatory, the partial bricking-in of the main west entry and the replacement of the original timber buttresses to the barrel vaulted living area in brick. Stucco was also possibly applied to the house at this time. Fretted barge boards, cross gabling and half-timbering detail in the bell cast gables remain, although some of the more decorative elements of the house, such as the detail of the west entry porch and the open timber buttresses have been removed. These changes have however not detracted from the overall reading of the initial architectural intent. The house has suffered severe damage as consequence of the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, including chimney collapse but the majority of the building remains extant albeit in fragile condition at this time.

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.

Englefield is of technological and craftsmanship significance for the capacity it has to illustrate the availability of materials and the adaptation of construction techniques in the early colonial context. A wide range of materials and building methods have been employed in the construction of the house and its subsequent alterations. Materials used include timber, brick, a form of cob, hand drawn glass and slate. Unusual internal decorative elements include the cast metal decorative cornice elements in the dining room.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural) setting, a group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detailing in relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), setting, a group, precinct or streetscape; a physical or visible landmark; a contribution to the character of the environment (constructed and natural) setting, a group, precinct or streetscape.

Englefield has high contextual significance on its site, in its setting, as a city landmark and as part of a wider group. The setting of the house is its immediate land parcel, a large rectangular block containing many mature plantings, including a large *Cordyline australis* (Cabbage tree) and some outbuildings. The house is centrally located on the parcel. Whilst the setting is sufficient to enable appreciation of the house, the original setting has been extensively subdivided over time. The house has, for example, lost its physical connection with the Avon - although a small memorial reserve (The William Guise Brittan Memorial Garden) at the corner of Avonside Drive and Fitzgerald Avenue has been created to restore this link. The house none-the-less remains a landmark on Fitzgerald Avenue because of its visibility and distinctive appearance. Surrounding streets were cut from the original Englefield property. The (modern) lane immediately to the rear of the house is named after for Guise Brittan's wife – Louisa (Chandler). The houses in the immediate area document the evolution of domestic architecture in Christchurch over more than a century, and include a number of modest nineteenth century dwellings that provide a contrast with the grander Englefield.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological values that demonstrate or are associated with: potential to provide archaeological information through physical evidence; an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values or past events, activities, people or phases.

Englefield 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 pre-1900.

The Avon – Ōtākaro was highly regarded as a mahinga kai by Maori. Habitation in the area was not permanent however, as it was linked to a region-wide seasonal migration for food gathering. Construction of Englefield commenced in 1855, although planting and farm

activities had begun as early as 1851. Extensive subdivision and roading development may limit the potential for any surviving archaeological evidence.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Englefield is of high overall heritage significance to the Christchurch District, including Banks Peninsula. It is of high historical and social significance as one of the earliest remaining dwellings in the city, and for its association with William Guise Brittan, a notable early colonist involved in the establishment and the administration of the Canterbury Settlement, and with politician and local notary E. C. J. Stevens. It is of high cultural significance for its long history of use as a residence, and for its connection to the early sporting and recreational activities of European settlers. Englefield is of high architectural and aesthetic significance as an important example of an early colonial dwelling. Englefield is of technological and craftsmanship significance for the evidence it provides of 1850s colonial craftsmanship, skills, construction materials, technology and methods. Englefield is of archaeological significance for its location within a mahinga kai area associated with the Avon River, and for the potential it has to provide evidence of early European activity in the area.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage files: 230 Fitzgerald Avenue – *Englefield*

Christchurch City Plan – Listed Heritage Item and Setting - Heritage Assessment – Statement of Significance – Englefield, 230 Fitzgerald Avenue (2011)

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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.

PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CCC HERITAGE FILES.