

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
*ILAM –77, 77A, 77B, 87, 89, 90, 106, 129 ILAM ROAD; 9,
9A MAIDSTONE ROAD; 68, 74 WAIMAIRI ROAD; 2
HOMESTEAD LANE; 12 SISKA PLACE, CHRISTCHURCH***

The Ilam grounds were developed from the 1850s and have a 20th century association with Edgar Stead (1881-1949). Ilam's plantings of rhododendrons and azaleas are known internationally.

After fire destroyed the original Ilam homestead in August 1910 Edgar Stead built a new home to the design of local architect J S Guthrie. Ilam became renowned for its azalea and rhododendron gardens, in which grew imported specimens as well as those hybridised by Stead. After Edgar Stead died in 1949 the property was sold to Canterbury College with the proviso that the gardens would be maintained in perpetuity. At first the house was the home of the university's rector before becoming the venue for the University Staff Club in 1971.

This heritage place includes two individually scheduled items, the former dwelling and the gardens surrounding the house.

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 301**

***FORMER DWELLING AND SETTING, ILAM –77, 77A, 77B,
87, 89, 90, 106, 129 ILAM ROAD; 9, 9A MAIDSTONE ROAD;
68, 74 WAIMAIRI ROAD; 2 HOMESTEAD LANE; 12 SISKA
PLACE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M. VAIRPIOVA 22.12.2014

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 former dwelling, Ilam and its setting has high historical significance for its association with Edgar Stead and the University of Canterbury. The Ilam estate was first settled in 1851 by John Watts Russell and his wife Elizabeth, who named it after the Watts Russell family seat Ilam Hall in Staffordshire. Ilam became an important social centre for early Christchurch. After a trip to England the new house was built in 1858, and subsequently enlarged. Watts Russell died in 1875, the estate was subdivided in 1880 and the homestead block subsequently passed through a number of hands until fire destroyed the Watts Russells' house in August 1910.

Edgar Stead bought Ilam in c1914, and had the present homestead built to the design of local architect John Guthrie soon after. Son and heir of George Stead of Strowan, one of the wealthiest men in Canterbury, Edgar trained as an electrical engineer. After the death of his father in 1908, however, Stead had the financial means to pursue his interests. A distinguished amateur horticulturalist and ornithologist, Edgar Stead was an internationally renowned breeder of rhododendrons and azaleas, and he developed the Ilam gardens into a showplace. Stead's marriage to Irene Phillips in August 1915 may have been the catalyst for building the house but there is some confusion as to the age of the house in light of sources that state Stead did not purchase the property until 1918.

After Stead's death in 1949, Ilam was sold to the University of Canterbury, who built part of their new suburban campus on the property. The house was initially home to the Rector (Vice Chancellor) of the University, starting with Dr Henry Hulme in early 1950. Hulme's daughter Juliet was a protagonist in the Parker-Hulme murder of 1954. As a consequence, scenes of the 1994 Peter Jackson film *Heavenly Creatures* were shot there. Later Ilam was used for the storage of books until 1970 when it was converted to become the University Staff Club, opening in 1971. It is also now used as a reception venue. It was damaged by the 2010-2012 earthquakes and has now been strengthened to 100% NBS.

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 former dwelling, Ilam has cultural significance as an example of a large 20th century residence, reflecting in particular the botanical interests of Edgar Stead, and for its association with the University of Canterbury, specifically the way of life of its mid-20th century rectors and of the collegiality of its staff after 1971. The dwelling and its grounds are held in high esteem by the University and Edgar Stead's contribution to New Zealand ornithology is acknowledged by the naming of the Edgar Stead Hall of Birds at Canterbury Museum.

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 dwelling, Ilam has high architectural significance as a Domestic Revival house designed in the mid-1910s by well-known Christchurch architect John Steele Guthrie. Guthrie

began to practise on his own account in 1908. Guthrie quickly established himself as an innovative architect of domestic buildings, introducing Christchurch to the Californian Bungalow and Georgian Revival styles with Los Angeles (1909) and Long Cottage (1917). Guthrie was particularly active in the period between 1919 and 1929, when he was in partnership with his brother Maurice.

At Ilam Guthrie employed the traditional 'Old English' vocabulary of brick ground floor, roughcast first floor and slate roof, but the half timbering of earlier examples of the style, such as Mona Vale and Elizabeth House, has gone and the influence of the California bungalow can be seen in the eaves treatment and fenestration. The columned porte cochere on the eastern elevation is a notable feature, one which connects the house to its spacious garden setting. The building was altered extensively internally when converted in to the staff club, and many original internal features were removed however the staircase and panelling, remain.

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 former dwelling, Ilam has technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of an early 20th century house of brick masonry, timber and slate construction. It has the capacity to reveal technological information not only for its early 20th century materials and construction but for the engineering design for its 21st century seismic upgrade.

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 dwelling, Ilam has high contextual significance as it is located on a very large section addressing Ilam Road and is surrounded by the greater part of the extensive gardens, which Edgar Stead developed and made famous. To the south of the house runs Homestead Drive, over which are the Ilam Flats. To the north is the River Avon and, beyond the homestead property, the open space of Ilam Fields. Over Ilam Road is the Student's Association Building and the main campus of the University of Canterbury. Also to the east of Ilam Road is Okeover, the other homestead owned and occupied by the University, which also has an historical connection with the Ilam estate. The former Ilam Homestead can be glimpsed down its tree-lined drive from Ilam Road and its garden provides the backdrop for College House on Waimairi Road. It is one of a number of large residences in this part of the city; among them Riccarton House, Mona Vale, Daresbury, Okeover, and Middleton Grange.

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 dwelling, Ilam and its setting has archaeological significance because the place has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900. Colonial pastoral settlement of Ilam commenced in 1851 and the passage of the River Avon through the property raises the possibility of evidence of pre-colonial Maori activity in the area.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former dwelling, Ilam has overall high significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The former dwelling, Ilam has high historical significance for its association with distinguished ornithologist and horticulturalist Edgar Stead and the University of Canterbury and the institution of the Staff Club. The dwelling was initially home to the Rector (Vice Chancellor) of the University, starting with Dr Henry Hulme in early 1950. Hulme's daughter Juliet was a protagonist in the Parker-Hulme murder of 1954. The former dwelling, Ilam has cultural significance as an example of a large 20th century residence, reflecting in particular the botanical interests of Edgar Stead, and for its association with the University of Canterbury, specifically the way of life of its mid-20th century rectors and of the collegiality of its staff after 1971. Ilam has high architectural significance as the work of J S Guthrie in a simplified English Domestic Revival style. At Ilam Guthrie employed the traditional 'Old English' vocabulary of brick ground floor, roughcast first floor and has the influence of the California bungalow can be seen in the eaves treatment and fenestration. The former dwelling, Ilam has technological and craftsmanship significance which may reveal technological information, not only for its early 20th century materials and construction, but for the engineering design for its 21st century seismic upgrade. The former dwelling, Ilam has high contextual significance as it is located on a very large section addressing Ilam Road and is surrounded by the greater part of the extensive gardens, which Edgar Stead developed and made famous. The former dwelling, Ilam and its setting has archaeological significance because the place has the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900.

REFERENCES:

MacDonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biography H194: Leonard Harper; W252 John Watts Russell

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RMA 92017058 – dated 25/11/10

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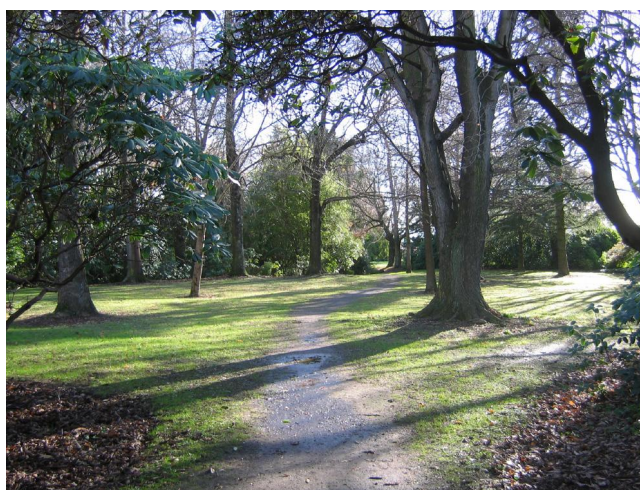
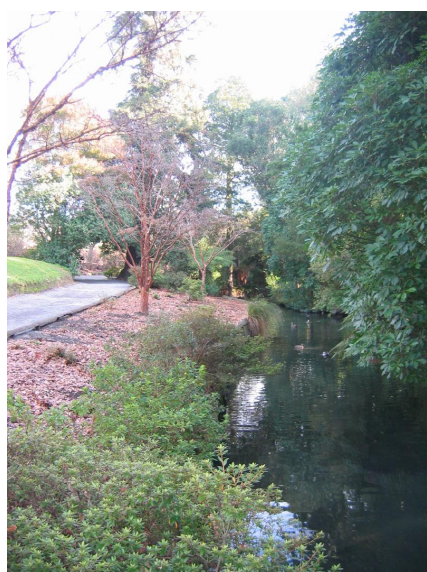
REPORT DATED: 13 JANUARY 2015

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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**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 302**

**FORMER ILAM GARDENS –77, 77A, 77B, 89, 87, 90, 106,
129 ILAM ROAD; 9, 9A MAIDSTONE ROAD; 68, 74 WAIMAIRI
ROAD; 2 HOMESTEAD LANE; 12 SISKA PLACE,
CHRISTCHURCH**



PHOTOGRAPH: CCC heritage files January 2010

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 former Ilam Gardens have high historical significance for their association with previous owners of Ilam Homestead, particularly John and Elizabeth Watts Russell and Edgar Stead and as one of Canterbury's earliest, best known and most influential gardens. The 500-acre Ilam property was taken up in 1851 by John and Elizabeth Watts Russell, who rapidly established a ten-acre garden around their new homestead. As Ilam Homestead was an early social centre in colonial Canterbury, its gardens became well known and were frequently commented on. After World War I the garden won new fame when its mature trees provided the backdrop for renowned horticulturalist Edgar Stead's informal woodland garden. Stead was an internationally recognized breeder of rhododendrons and azaleas and Ilam Homestead was considered to have the best collection of these plants in the southern hemisphere.

The grounds at Ilam were opened biannually to the public until Stead's death in 1949. The gardens were, as a consequence of the public interest in visiting them, were subsequently acknowledged as having had a particular influence on the style of gardening in Canterbury.

The University of Canterbury maintains the tradition of opening them to the public when the rhododendrons and azaleas are in bloom.

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 former Ilam Gardens have cultural significance as evidence of the way of life and botanical interests of Edgar Stead and the culture of gardening and continuance in this period of the later Victorian interests by the Watts Russells in botanical specimens. They are held in high esteem by the University of Canterbury and internationally for the species the garden holds.

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 Ilam Gardens have high aesthetic significance as a well-known and much visited example of a landscaped garden with specific species and plantings in both a formal and informal woodland setting. The natural style was popular in the early 20th century, and as a consequence of his open days, Edgar Stead's Ilam exerted a particular influence on the development of Canterbury's gardens in this period. Stead's nursery and gardens played an important role in producing both native and exotic plants for the University of Canterbury's Ilam campus.

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 former Ilam Gardens have high technical and craftsmanship significance both for their design, which was determined by noted horticulturalist Edgar Stead, and for the technology of the plants it contains, many of which were bred on the site, either by Stead himself or the University of Canterbury staff.

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 Ilam Gardens have high contextual significance and cover an extensive plot on Ilam Road at the junction of the River Avon and Ilam Stream. The garden is of much the same extent as it was during the Stead period. In the centre of the garden is the Ilam homestead itself, built for Edgar Stead c1914. The Domestic Revival house and garden are thus contemporaneous, and form an appropriate context for each other. To the south of the house runs Homestead Drive, over which are the modern Ilam Flats. To the north is the River

Avon and the open space of Ilam Fields, which also provides an appropriately rural context for the garden. Over Ilam Road is the Student's Association Building and the main campus of the University of Canterbury. Also to the east side of Ilam Road is Okeover and its grounds, the other old homestead owned and used by the University. The Ilam Homestead Gardens, with their tree-lined drive off Ilam Road, are a landmark on the University of Canterbury campus and in western Christchurch generally.

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 Ilam Gardens have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past garden design, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900. There has been a garden on the site since the early 1850s and the path of the River Avon through the property also suggests the possibility of evidence of pre-colonial Maori activity in the area.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Ilam gardens have high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The gardens have high historical and social significance for their associations with John and Elizabeth Watts Russell, prominent colonists who originally established the gardens, and distinguished amateur horticulturalist Edgar Stead, who developed them into their present form. The gardens have further historical significance as one of Canterbury's oldest gardens and as a notable landscape feature within the University of Canterbury campus. The former Ilam Gardens have cultural significance as evidence of the way of life and botanical interests of Edgar Stead and the culture of gardening and continuance in this period of the later Victorian interests by the Watts Russells in botanical specimens. The former Ilam Gardens have high aesthetic significance as a well-known and much visited example of a landscaped garden with specific species and plantings in both a formal and informal woodland setting. They are of the type popular in the early years of the 20th century and as one of Canterbury's most influential gardens. The gardens have high craftsmanship and technological significance, in a botanical sense, for their internationally significant collection of azaleas and rhododendrons. The former Ilam Gardens have high contextual significance for their relationship to the homestead, and cover an extensive plot on Ilam Road at the junction of the River Avon and Ilam Stream. The former Ilam Gardens have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past garden design, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900.

REFERENCES:

Thelma Strongman *The Gardens of Canterbury: a history* (Wellington, 1984)

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'Restoring the Waterways within the University of Canterbury'
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REPORT DATED: 12 JANUARY 2015

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