



**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 328
*DWELLING AND SETTING – 61 LEINSTER ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: CCC HERITAGE FILES, PRE 2011

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 dwelling at 61 Leinster Road has historical and social significance as an example of the large and well-appointed villas being developed by Christchurch's professional class across the popular new suburb of Merivale at the turn of the twentieth century. It also has historical significance for its association with former senior British civil servant Michael Bernacchi.

The house was built in 1907 for Herbert William Candy (1878-1937) and his wife Gertrude (1878-1960). The couple married in 1901 and had six children. At the time he built the house, Herbert was an agent for Government Life Insurance. In 1914 he successfully sued Briscoe and Co for breach of warranty on the pressed metal ceilings they had installed in his home. The Candy's sold the house in 1916. In 1919 it was purchased by North Canterbury farmer Owen Tibbott Evans, who used it as his town residence until losing it in a mortgagee sale in 1941.

Between 1966 and 1983 the property was the home of Michael Louis Bernacchi and his wife Elaine. Michael Bernacchi (1911-1983) was the eldest son of Louis Charles Bernacchi, the famous British-Australian physicist, astronomer and heroic-era polar explorer. Michael himself served on Her Majesty's [British] Overseas Civil Service, and was Resident Commissioner of the British Protectorate of the Gilbert and Ellis Islands (now Kiribati) between 1952 and 1961. The Antarctic collection at the Canterbury Museum was given a significant boost when Michael Bernacchi donated many of his father's effects to the institution.

The present owners of 61 Leinster Road have lived there since 1989. The house sustained moderate damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010-2011.

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 dwelling is of cultural significance as it reflects the suburban development of the Merivale area at the turn of the 20th century and as a demonstration of the way of life of its former residents

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 dwelling has architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of an Arts and Crafts influenced, single storey brick bay villa. The dwelling has a hipped roof of Marseilles tiles. The plain, return veranda is terminated by faceted bays. Other features include sash windows with leaded top lights, stone lintels and stone banding, and bracketed eaves. The house had large and decorative chimneys, but these were taken down following the Canterbury Earthquakes. Elaborate pressed metal ceilings were extensively used in the house, with each room featuring a different design. All original fireplaces have been removed. An addition using sympathetic materials was undertaken in 1996 and internal alterations, to convert a kitchen to a bathroom, completed the following year, both designed by Courtenay Architects.

The house sustained some damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes, but considering its mode of construction, performed well. The foundations settled slightly along the eastern elevation and the three chimneys have been taken down to roof level. It is intended that the foundations will be levelled and the chimneys reconstructed.

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 dwelling has technological and craftsmanship significance by virtue of its brick construction and stone string course detailing. Bay villas were much less commonly constructed in brick than weatherboard in most parts of the New Zealand including Christchurch, so this is also an example of this relatively unusual construction.

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.

61 Leinster Road and its setting have contextual significance for its contribution to the historic residential character of Leinster Road within the suburb of Merivale. The dwelling is located on a long rectangular land parcel with a deep setback from the road. The setting consists of

the immediate land parcel and includes mixed native and exotic planting, grassed areas and a shared vehicular and pedestrian entry. A well vegetated boundary and timber fence limits views of the property from Leinster Road.

The dwelling is one of two bay villas of similar style in this block of Leinster Road. The other, a weatherboard corner bay villa built in c.1900 at 41 Leinster Road, was the neighbouring property in 1912. Within the wider context of the dwelling, there are a number of relatively large weatherboard dwellings of the period in nearby Heaton Street. The listed Elmwood Normal School War Memorial is also located in Leinster Road.

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 dwelling may have archaeological value because of the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900. The current dwelling post-dates 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

61 Leinster Road and its setting has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The dwelling has historical and social significance as an example of a typical style of housing in the Merivale area at the turn of the 20th century and for its association with former senior British civil servant Michael Bernacchi. The residence is of cultural significance as it reflects way of life of its residents when the suburban development of the Merivale area was occurring in the early 1900s. The dwelling has architectural and aesthetic significance as an Edwardian bay villa. The bay villa's relatively uncommon brick construction and exterior detailing give it technological and craftsmanship significance. 61 Leinster Road and its setting have contextual significance as one of two return bay villas of similar style and age in close proximity to one another on Leinster Road.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage files *61 Leinster Road*
Salmond, J. (1986) *Old New Zealand Houses: 1800-1940*, pp 116-118
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3718>

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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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