

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 349
*FORMER DWELLING AND SETTING - 2 MAIN ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 10/01/2015

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 former dwelling, known as Cob Cottage, and its setting has historical and social significance as an example of the scale, variety of material types and simplicity of the lives of some of Canterbury's earliest European settlers. The cottage was originally built in 1862 by Captain James Penfold who, although he owned land in the area, did not own the land on which the cottage was built. The land appears to have been owned by an absentee landlord. Penfold initially captained a small boat which traded between Australia and New Zealand before working for the railways for thirty-five years. He was involved with bringing the first sleepers from Pigeon Bay for the construction of the Ferrymead-Christchurch railway line. He was also involved with the construction of the Lyttelton Tunnel (1860-67). The Penfold family lived in the cottage until 1878, at the latest, before relocating to Southbridge, following the opening of the Southbridge branch line. The cottage was then lived in by immigrant families until 1908 after which it began to deteriorate to a ruin. Between 1940 and 1944 the cottage was largely rebuilt by Ernest Parish with the assistance of the Mt Pleasant Burgesses' Association and the Mt Pleasant Boating Club, who leased the site. The reconstructed

cottage was officially opened on Anniversary Day, 16 December 1944, with a crowd of 7,000 in attendance. In 1946, following its reconstruction, the owners Scott Brothers Ltd. gave the property and 8903 square metres of land to the Christchurch City Council 'for the health, amusement and instruction of the Public'. This area is now known as Scott Park. Four years after the completion of the restoration, the cottage was partly destroyed by fire, with the loss of many rare historical records. Parish once again rebuilt the cottage – some original sod courses remain at the lower levels. The cottage was damaged in the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquake cycle and has been stabilised and secured only.

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 has cultural significance as the tangible reminder of early colonial life and as a memorial to the early pioneers of Canterbury. The method of construction, scale of the building and simplicity of its design stand as a reminder of the early domestic accommodation of Canterbury's first European settlers. The esteem in which the building is held by the community is attested to by the various public restoration projects that have been undertaken.

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 has architectural and aesthetic significance as a rare Christchurch example of an earth building, a method of construction once used quite extensively in Canterbury and Marlborough. The design is typical of 19th century workers cottages, a symmetrical single storeyed structure with a single gabled roof. The original sod cottage consisted of two rooms with a loft. A wooden lean-to at the rear of the building originally enlarged the cottage. By the 1940s all that remained of the original sod cottage was the fireplace surround and some sods in the back wall. The earth cottage was largely rebuilt, with a single interior space, between 1940-44 by Ernest Parish. When the cottage was rebuilt during the 1940s Parish could not find suitable sods, so he reconstructed the building in cob. Diamond pane windows, reportedly taken from the 1850s Lyttelton cottage of John Robert Godley in 1900, were put into the reconstructed cottage and the cottage was roofed in thatch. Following a fire in 1948 Parish undertook major repairs to the building. In 1963/64 the roof was recovered in shingles. In 1983 and 1997/98 major restoration work was carried out on the cottage by the Council whi included repairs to the chimney and replacement of the windows.

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 has technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of cob construction, with some original sod sections concealed under the cement/ whitewash

finishes that were applied to the interior and exterior walls. The original sod cottage had well-defined courses of earth blocks some of which were 3ft in depth.

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 has contextual significance as it sits in its original position near the mouth of the Heathcote River. The setting consists of the listed building which sits on the estuary side of Main Road at the base of St Andrew's Hill. The cottage sits very close to Main Road and slightly below the level of the roadway which has been widened and elevated over recent years. The setting consists of a strip of land that runs parallel to Main Road containing some shrubbery and lawn. The setting sits within Scott Park which incorporates the Mount Pleasant Bowling Club and areas associated with the Mount Pleasant Yacht Club. The cottage has landmark significance due to its proximity to the main road between Sumner and the city. The scale, materials and apparent age of the building, contribute to its landmark status.

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 has archaeological significance because it has 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.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former dwelling and its setting has overall heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. It has historic significance as an example of the scale and simplicity of early European settlers homes built in Christchurch. The cottage was built in 1862 by Capt. James Penfold using a means of construction that allowed use of natural available materials - sod blocks. Until 1908 the cottage continued to function as a residential property. The Cob Cottage has cultural significance as the tangible reminder of early colonial life and as a memorial to the early pioneers of Canterbury. The cultural significance of the property to Christchurch is attested to by the efforts of the community to ensure its survival and through the work of Ernest Parish who twice rebuilt the cottage. The Cob Cottage has cultural significance as the tangible reminder of early colonial life and as a memorial to the early pioneers of Canterbury. The Cob Cottage has architectural and aesthetic significance as a rare Christchurch example of an earth building, a method of construction once used quite extensively in Canterbury and Marlborough. Some original sod courses remain at the lower levels. The design is typical of 19th century workers cottages, a symmetrical single storeyed structure with a single gabled roof. The cottage was damaged in the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquake cycle and has been stabilised and secured only.

The Cob Cottage has technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of cob construction, with some original sod sections concealed under the cement/ whitewash finishes that were applied to the interior and exterior walls. The cob cottage has contextual significance as it sits in its original position near the mouth of the Heathcote River. The setting consists of the listed building which sits on the estuary side of Main Road at the base of St Andrew's Hill. The cob cottage has archaeological significance because it has 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.

REFERENCES:

Espie, J. (1996) *Conservation Plan for the Sod Cottage in Scott Park, Sumner Road, Ferrymead, Christchurch*. For the Parks Unit, Christchurch City Council. New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Registration Report. Cob Cottage, Ferrymead.

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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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