



DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 434
FORMER DWELLING AND SETTING, STROWAN – 347
PAPANUI ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 18/12/2014

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.

Strowan and its setting has high historical and social significance for its association with a number of notable early owners and with St Andrew's College. The oldest portion of the building was built in 1856 by Sir Thomas Tancred. Tancred had arrived in Canterbury from England in 1853, along with his younger brother Henry. Tancred Street in Linwood is named for Henry who was elected to the Canterbury Provincial Council. As well as taking up pastoral runs in Canterbury, Sir Thomas built himself a townhouse in the borough of St Albans. In 1858 he returned to England and leased the town section to Thomas Duncan, the Crown Solicitor, who, in 1865, purchased the property. Duncan named the property Strowan after his brother-in-law's place in Scotland.

Following Duncan's death in 1884 his executors sold the property to George Gatonby Stead in 1890. It was Stead who landscaped the property and significantly extended the house. Stead was a prominent city businessman and racehorse owner and he and his wife Lucie were well-known figures in the social life of the city. In 1918 Stead's executors sold Strowan and its grounds to the St Andrew's Presbyterian College Board of Governors for the establishment of a Presbyterian school. St Andrew's School for boys had been established in December 1916 and in the following year had an initial roll of 19 boys and four teachers on St Andrew's Church property at Hospital Corner. St Andrew's was one of nine Presbyterian schools established in New Zealand between 1914-19.

Originally a boys' school, St Andrew's became co-educational in 1991. The school, which teaches pupils from early childhood through to Year 13, has educated many well-known Cantabrians. Strowan was damaged in the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes but has since been repaired.

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.

Strowan has high cultural significance as an expression of a particular way of life of Canterbury's pastoralists and businessmen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building also has cultural and spiritual significance for its association with St Andrew's College since 1918 and, by extension St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The house is held in high esteem by past and present pupils and staff.

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.

Strowan has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of a 19th century gentleman's residence that, like many large colonial houses has been altered and extended as needs and uses changed. The house began in 1856 as a simple one-and-a-half storey weatherboard house with wide verandas and a steep shingled gable roof with dormers. When George Stead purchased the property in 1890 he employed architect Frederick Strouts (1834-1919) to enlarge the house. Strouts had previously designed Robert Rhodes' neighbouring property, Elmwood, when it was rebuilt in 1884.

Strouts is best known for designing Ivey Hall at Lincoln University. Rather than rebuilding Strowan, Strouts and Stead opted to incorporate the older house into the new design. 'In 1901 Strouts carried out what was probably his last notable work: substantial additions to those he had previously undertaken in 1890 at Strowan. It remains an impressive demonstration of his ability to translate into timber construction those medieval and Gothic forms with which he had been familiar in England' (DNZB entry). The finished house was a picturesque ensemble of Carpenter Gothic, Stick Style and Queen Anne elements. The building is entered through a grand hallway with timber panelling and staircase. From here a series of reception rooms could be accessed: a drawing room, dining room, morning room and billiards room. These rooms retain original features including plaster ceilings and stained glass windows. Strouts' additions created a T shaped building with the earlier house forming the downward stroke for the T. Further additions were made during the 20th century to

enlarge the building and make it suitable for institutional use. It was damaged in the 2010 - 2011 earthquakes but has now been fully restored.

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.

Strowan has high technological and craftsmanship significance for the evidence it can provide of construction and craft methodologies and techniques employed in the mid to late Victorian era. The craftsmanship significance of the building is evident in its interior timberwork, plaster ceilings and stained glass windows. The glass in the main entry was designed by W B Simpson of St Martins Lane, London. The carvings in the dining room of native flora and fauna are by W S Smythe, a wood carver of some note who exhibited with the Canterbury Society of Arts and advertised lessons in wood carving around the turn of the 20th century. The Carpenter Gothic detailing and slatework on the exterior of the building are also of note.

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.

Strowan and its setting has high contextual significance due to its prominent location on Papanui Road and the retention of historic features of the property, including Strowan Stream, the driveway and mature trees. The School Chapel was demolished in 2014 after it was damaged in the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes but Strowan is still part of a substantial collection of educational buildings that have grown up around the former dwelling since 1918.

Strowan also has contextual significance in relation to other large gentleman's residences built in the Merivale/St Albans area during this period. These early houses including, Te Wepu at 122 Papanui Road and Acland House at 85 Papanui Road, sat on large blocks of land with gardens fronting Papanui Road. As part of St Andrew's College, Strowan also has contextual significance in relation to other schools in the immediate vicinity which also retain large early dwellings as a central part of the original school settings; for example Rangi Ruru and St Margaret's Colleges .

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.

Strowan and its setting 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. The original 1856 building remains on the site, integrated into the Stead's turn-of-the-century homestead. Archaeological evidence of earlier buildings associated with the homestead may have survived, including an ancillary building on the site contemporary with the Tancred

house and outbuildings associated with Stead's tenure, including a large barn and stables that were built around the back of the house.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Strowan and its setting has high significance to the Christchurch District, including Banks Peninsula. It has high historical significance as the former home of three prominent figures in 19th century Christchurch and for its long association with St Andrew's College. Strowan has high cultural significance as an expression of a particular way of life of Canterbury's pastoralists and businessmen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and for its association with St Andrew's College since 1918. It has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an early colonial homestead to which substantial additions were made to the design of Frederick Strouts and for its careful design aesthetics and attention to interior detail. Strowan has high technological and craftsmanship significance for the evidence it can provide of construction and craft methodologies and techniques employed in the mid to late Victorian era. It has high contextual significance and landmark value within the setting of St Andrews School as well as its relationship to other early large homes in the area. It has archaeological significance in view of the mid-19th century development of the site.

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Gordon Ogilvie *High Flies the Cross* (school history, Christchurch, 1992)

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<http://knoxcentre.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/PCANZ-history-and-ethos-2012.pdf>

'Strowan – Thomas Smith Duncan (1824-81)' *Peeling Back the Past*

<http://www.peelingbackhistory.co.nz/strowan-thomas-smith-duncan-1821-1884/>

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