



**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 497
*DWELLING AND SETTING – 13 SPENCER STREET,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 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 dwelling at 13 Spencer Street has historical and social significance as it reflects the development and social identity of the Addington area in the late 19th century. Land in Addington was originally sold in larger blocks as it was just outside the city boundary. With the advent of the railway in 1865 the land was subdivided into smaller sections and many labourers and tradespeople settled in the area. The opening of the Addington Railway Workshops in 1880 spurred residential growth in the area, which also featured large employers like Addington Prison (1870-75) and Wood's Mill (1890). Thomas Norris (died 1921), a bricklayer from Sussex, arrived in Christchurch in 1865. He purchased the Spencer Street property in 1880, dividing it between his two sons Edwin and George in 1886. Edwin

Norris, a blacksmith, lived at an adjacent property until 1921. His brother George, a bricklayer like his father, built 13 Spencer Street in c.1886 and remained there until 1899.

The cottage demonstrates the craft skills brought to New Zealand by English immigrants. The occupations of the subsequent owners reveal the social identity and demographics of Addington's early residents throughout the 20th century with the cottage having been home to a labourer, a driver, a machine operator and a seaman.

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 Spencer Street cottage has cultural significance because it demonstrates the way of life of the early residents of Addington and is associated with the development of Addington by tradesmen and labourers during the second half of the 19th century.

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 a representative example of a colonial vernacular dwelling designed and built by its owner/occupier. Although the style of the cottage is typical, the manner of construction is unique in Christchurch. The cottage is constructed of greywacke river stones laid in regular rows. The one-and-a-half storeyed cottage has a bull-nosed veranda, enclosed at the both ends and decorated with timber fretwork. The window and door openings in the symmetrical façade are embellished with plastered brick quoins. A two-storey addition was made to the rear of the building in the late 20th century. The interior of the building retains original features including fire surrounds and the original coal range.

Sited close to the cottage is an original washhouse constructed in a similar method to the dwelling. The washhouse sustained damage in the 2010/2011 Christchurch earthquakes. Repair and reinstatement work was significant and included a new floor slab and foundations and a new timber framed wall to support the stone veneer. The existing window, tub and door were reinstated while another window on the southeast side of the house was installed as a replica in keeping with the other original window. The original exterior stonework and quoining were reinstated as a veneer cladding and the existing roof and downpipes were also reinstated.

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 Spencer Street cottage has high technological and craftsmanship significance due to its unusual Sussex flat pebble method of construction. George Norris' craftsmanship skill is evident in the even rows of greywacke stone. Greywacke stone would have been a readily available and cheap material to a craftsman with the skills to lay it. Similar building techniques were used in England however timber was the preferred material in colonial

Christchurch due to its availability and cost. The Spencer Street cottage is the only known instance of this method of construction in Christchurch.

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 dwelling and its setting at 13 Spencer Street have contextual significance because its form, scale and style relates to other cottages in the area. The 13 Spencer Street dwelling stands out from its neighbours due to its unusual construction materials and its corner site give the building local landmark significance.

The setting consists of the listed building on a triangular corner site. The listed building sits at the front of the section and the setting includes a number of outbuildings including the old outhouse and the old stone washhouse that has plaster brick quoins in keeping with the façade of the main dwelling.

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 and its setting at 13 Spencer Street have archaeological significance because of the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The dwelling and its setting at 13 Spencer Street has overall heritage significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The cottage has historical and social significance as it was built in the mid-1880s by an English immigrant for his own use. The Spencer Street cottage has cultural significance because it represents the lifestyle of the early residents of Addington and demonstrates the development of the suburb by tradesmen and labourers during the second half of the 19th century. The dwelling has architectural and aesthetic significance as a representative example of a colonial vernacular dwelling. Although the style of the cottage is typical, the manner of construction using greywacke stone laid in regular rows is thought to be unique in Christchurch. The dwelling has high technological and craftsmanship significance due to its unusual Sussex flat pebble method of construction and remains as evidence of the craft skill brought to New Zealand by English immigrants during the 19th century. The dwelling and its setting has contextual significance because of the proximity of the cottage to the street and its prominent corner site, along with its cohesion in terms of style and form to other cottages in the area. The dwelling and its setting has archaeological significance in view of the date at which development first occurred on this property.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage files *13 Spencer Street*
McCarthy, J. 'Working-class charm.' *The Press* 27 January 2001
Historic place # 4914 – Heritage NZ List: <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/4914>
John Wilson et al *Contextual Historical Overview of Christchurch* (Christchurch, 2005)

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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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