

District Plan – Listed Heritage Place
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 62
DWELLING AND SETTING, SPRING GROVE – 12 BLAKES
ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH



PHOTOGRAPH : CCC HERITAGE FILES, PRE FEBRUARY 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 Spring Grove property has high historical and social significance for its associations with farmer and politician Edwin Blake; with farmer and proprietor of the nearby Kaputone Wool Scouring Co, William Nicholls, who built the present house, and with Canterbury Frozen Meat and their successor companies, who owned the house for over 80 years. The house is significant as a large home of a local businessman at the turn-of-the century and for its on-going connection with the stock processing industry, particularly important to the development of Belfast.

The dwelling was constructed c1896 for William Nicholls, whose wife purchased the property from William Blake. Blake was involved in politics being elected to the Avon Roads Board in

1886 and the Avon seat a year later. Blakes Road is named after him. Nicholls, the owner of Kaputone Wool Scouring Company, removed the existing dwelling from the property and built a new homestead, the current dwelling. In 1903 the Kaputone Wool Scouring Company, which had grown up around the frozen meat industry in Belfast, employed 70 workers. Nicholls moved away from the property to Mona Vale in 1917 and his son Aubrey remained at Spring Grove, breeding race horses, until 1922. After William Nicholls died Aubrey sold Spring Grove to the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company to be used as accommodation for its senior managers.

At the turn of the 20th century Belfast was an important industrial area for Canterbury and rich land for agricultural purposes. A catalyst for the development of the town was the establishment of the Frozen Meat Company in 1881. A number of industries arose in conjunction with this in the 1880s, such as fellmongery, wool scouring and fiddle-string works. In later years the company leased the property. Taking their lead from the NZ Provision and Produce Co and the Kaputone Wool Works, the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company, formed November 1882, opened the Belfast Freezing Works on Factory Road in February 1883. William Nicholls initially took on supervision of their fellmongery. This was the first freezing works in Canterbury and only the second in New Zealand after the Burnside Works in Dunedin (the historic first shipment of frozen meat from NZ to the UK had taken place in early 1882). The Belfast Works became PPCS in 2002 and Silver Fern Farms in 2008. In later years the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company leased the dwelling.

The property has recently been subdivided and now belongs to the same company as the surrounding land which has been zoned for residential development. The dwelling suffered damage in the Canterbury earthquakes, but repair is proposed.

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.

12 Blakes Road and its setting has high cultural and spiritual significance as does the wider area of Belfast. Ngāi Tahu have identified an area, which includes Spring Grove, as Silent file 015 (Belfast) in the Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan 2013. The dwelling itself also has cultural significance for its ability to demonstrate the taste and lifestyle of a late 19th, early 20th century businessman.

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.

Spring Grove has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of a substantial late Victorian 'Queen Anne' villa, employing arts and crafts detailing and Victorian decorative embellishment. The dwelling is a two storey timber building constructed of kauri, with a double height verandah along the north east and north western sides, with cast iron balustrades on the upper level and detailed cast iron work below the roof. The western end of the verandah on the north western side has been enclosed on the first floor. The roof is metal and is a mix of gable and hipped forms with one gable end having fretted bargeboards with decorative 'Stick' style board below. There is a turret above the verandah on the northern corner. The windows are a mix of double hung sashes and timber casements. The

dwelling has a single storey element on the north western side and a lean-to extension on the south western side.

Internally the dwelling has many areas with tongue, groove and reeded sarking on the walls and floors are a mix of kauri and rimu. There is a kauri staircase in the main hallway. All the fireplaces on the ground floor have been replaced and they have all been removed on the first floor except for one. Renovations were undertaken in 1996 under the architect Chris Prebble, including the lean-to containing the bathroom and alterations to the family room to incorporate French doors.

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.

Spring Grove has technological and craftsmanship significance for the richness of its timber, cast iron, glass and plaster embellishment, both inside and out and for what it may reveal about nineteenth century construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings.

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.

Spring Grove and its setting has high contextual significance and consists of the immediate land parcel, and land proposed for reserve to the north to Kaputohe Stream and to the west to Blakes Road. Spring Grove was located in extensive grounds containing listed trees, historic farm and other ancillary buildings, and the Kaputohe Stream - from which the property derived its name. The property has now been subdivided and the surrounding land is zoned residential with part of the former setting of Spring Grove being intended to create the Spring Grove reserve. The dwelling still retains contextual significance sitting within an area of listed trees and open space, with associated outbuildings. The dwelling and its immediate setting currently remain within their original dual contexts: the rural and the industrial, although now subdivided off from the historic farm. However, this will change with the development of the rural land around now zoned residential and the construction of the Northern Arterial route to the west.

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.

12 Blakes Road and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Spring Grove dwelling at 12 Blakes Road Belfast has high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. It has high historical and social significance for its associations with farmer and politician Edwin Blake; with farmer and proprietor of the nearby Kaputone Wool Scouring Co, William Nicholls, who built the present house; and with Canterbury Frozen Meat and their successor companies, who owned the house for over 80 years. The house is significant as a large, home of a local businessman at the turn-of-the century, expressing William Nicholl's prosperity, and for its on-going connection with the stock processing industry, particularly important to the development of Belfast. Spring Grove has high cultural and spiritual significance to Ngāi Tahu who have identified an area, which includes Spring Grove, as Silent file 015 (Belfast) in the Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan. The dwelling itself also has cultural significance for its ability to demonstrate the taste and lifestyle of a late 19th, early 20th century businessman. Spring Grove has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an excellent example of a substantial late Victorian 'Queen Anne' villa, employing arts and crafts detailing and Victorian decorative embellishment. Spring Grove has technological and craftsmanship significance for the richness of its timber, cast iron, glass and plaster embellishment, both inside and out and for what it may reveal about nineteenth century construction methodologies, materials, fixtures and fittings. The dwelling has high contextual significance sitting within an area of listed trees and open space, with associated outbuildings. The dwelling and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred before 1900.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Spring Grove, 8 Blakes Road*
Christchurch City Council, *Christchurch City Plan – Listed Heritage Item and Setting. Heritage Assessment – Statement of Significance – Spring Grove – 8 Blakes Road - 2010*

REPORT DATED: 5.3.2015

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.

PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CCC HERITAGE FILES.