

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
FORMER RNZAF BASE WIGRAM – 69 CORSAIR DRIVE, 75
& 95 SIOUX AVENUE, 32R BENNINGTON WAY, 14 & 20E
HENRY WIGRAM DRIVE, 235 MAIN SOUTH ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH**

The former RNZAF Base Wigram is considered to be the historic home of military and land-based aviation in New Zealand. From its establishment in 1917 until its closure nearly eighty years later, Wigram was the primary military pilot training school in this country. The forerunner of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF), the Permanent Air Force (PAF), was also established at Wigram in 1923. These two features saw Wigram acknowledged as the historic and spiritual home of the RNZAF. Although the base closed in 1995 and has since been extensively developed for housing by Ngai Tahu, the area of the former base still contains significant buildings and structures that link to key events, accomplishments, phases and personalities in this country's aviation history.

Flight training began at the then Sockburn Aerodrome under the auspices of the Canterbury Aviation Company in 1917. Promoted by businessman and politician Sir Henry Wigram, the company trained 182 pilots for service in WWI. Later Sir Henry's tenacity and generosity saw the government establish the PAF at the site. The **Former Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks (1917)** are the oldest aviation-related buildings in New Zealand, and represent these early phases of military aviation.

In the two decades after WWI, the public watched with great excitement as brave aviation pioneers chalked up aviation milestones and the world became a smaller place. In 1928 Fokker monoplane the *Southern Cross* touched down at Wigram, signalling the first successful trans-Tasman flight. The **Kingsford Smith Landing Site** commemorates this key event, but also the other achievements of this heroic era.

After many years of relative neglect, the changing geo-political situation of the early 1930s saw the government invest significant funds into a newly re-christened RNZAF. The first significant structures to emerge from this early phase of rearmament were **Hangars 4 and 5 (1934-1936)**. In terms of scale, form and technology, these buildings were far in advance of anything the air force had possessed to this time.

Although much was achieved in this period, the 1936 Cochrane Report underlined on-going vulnerabilities and made recommendations for further urgent improvements. As a consequence, the RNZAF's rearmament programme went into overdrive. The **No. 1 Officers' Mess (1939-1940)** and the **Instructional Building – Control Tower (1938-1939)** represent this phase, and are central in commemorating the long-term role of Wigram in RNZAF training, the RNZAF in WWII, and the central place of Wigram in the history and culture of the RNZAF generally.

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN –SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 631
*FORMER CANTERBURY AVIATION COMPANY BARRACKS -
235 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : M.VAIR-PIOVA, 13/01/2015

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 Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has high historical and social significance as the oldest surviving aviation-related building in New Zealand, for its connection with the origins of military and land-based aviation in this country, and for its connection with aviation's early milestones and personalities.

Christchurch businessman and politician Sir Henry Wigram first recognized the potential benefits of aviation as early as 1908, and championed the cause for the rest of his life. Early in WWI, Wigram began campaigning for a separate New Zealand flying corp. The government was unresponsive but opened the door to private initiatives. Wigram subsequently set up and supported the Canterbury Aviation Company, dedicated to the patriotic duty of flying officer training at its purpose-built Sockburn Aerodrome. Between June 1917 and the end of the war 182 pilots graduated from the school, of whom 156 saw service with the Royal Flying Corp and its successor the Royal Air Force. This number included several who served with distinction, including Captain Rhodes-Moorhouse, the first ever air Victoria Cross winner. After the war demand for pilot training fell away, but the school struggled on for another four years. During this time company personnel were responsible for a number of New Zealand aviation firsts, including the first Cook Strait flight and the first scheduled airmail and passenger service. In 1923 Sir Henry persuaded the government to take over the company and its assets by generously subscribing a third of the

purchase price. The government renamed the Sockburn Aerodrome in Wigram's honour and established the Permanent Air Force (the forerunner of the RNZAF) there.

The first six cells of the Barracks were built in mid 1917 to house the first intake of pilot trainees. The block was then doubled in size with the addition of a further six cells later the same year. It continued to house RNZAF Base Wigram personnel until at least the late 1970s. In 1980 or 1981 it was relocated for the first time, into #7 Hangar. It has subsequently been relocated a number of times, and is presently at the north end of #2 Hangar.

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 Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has high cultural significance for its connection with the genesis of the RNZAF, and as a memorial to New Zealand pilots who served in WWI. This significance was recognized in 1982, when the simple timber structure was relocated rather than demolished.

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 Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has architectural significance as the earliest surviving example of a building designed specifically for the purposes of an aviation related activity. The narrow weatherboard building consists of a row of match-lined cells opening onto a verandah.

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 Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has technological and craftsmanship significance for the capacity it has to illustrate common building techniques and use of materials in the WWI period.

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 Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks have some contextual value as the building remains however on the broader Canterbury Aviation Company site, and in association with other buildings that date from the former airfield's later phases of military aviation. However this is limited on their immediate site outside a hanger at Wigram and they have been relocated on a number of occasions.

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 setting and wider site are of archaeological significance as they may have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site including that which occurred prior to 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has overall high significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. It has high historical and social significance as the oldest surviving aviation-related building in New Zealand, for its connection with the origins of military and land-based aviation in this country, and for its connection with aviation's early milestones and personalities, such as Sir Henry Wigram. The Barracks has high cultural significance for its connection with the genesis of the RNZAF, and as a memorial to New Zealand pilots who served in WWI. The former Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks has architectural significance as the earliest surviving example of a building designed specifically for the purposes of an aviation related activity. The Barracks has technological and craftsmanship significance for the capacity it has to illustrate common building techniques and use of materials in the WWI period. The former Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks was constructed post-1900, and has been relocated on a number of occasions, however the setting and wider site may have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site including that which occurred prior to 1900.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage File: Former Canterbury Aviation Company Barracks, Wigram

REPORT DATED: 22/08/14

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 632
*KINGSFORD SMITH LANDING SITE - 32R BENNINGTON WAY,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : G. WRIGHT, 24 AUGUST 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 Kingsford Smith Landing Site has high historical and social significance dating from 11 September 1928, when pioneering Australian aviator Charles Kingsford Smith (later Sir Charles) and his aircrew of three completed the first successful trans-Tasman flight in the Fokker monoplane *Southern Cross*. The flight from Sydney to Wigram Aerodrome in Christchurch took 14 hours 20 minutes. The flight captured the public's imagination, and large crowds turned out to welcome the airmen. This heightened interest boosted aero clubs and small air transport companies, led to the formation of an Aerodrome Services Division in the Public Works Department, and ultimately initiated commercial trans-Tasman aviation. The historic event is commemorated at Wigram by the Kingsford Smith Landing Site, a location on the former airfield marked by a plaque set into the ground. The first plaque on the site was laid by aviation promoter Sir Henry Wigram soon after the event. In 1982 this stone plaque was removed to storage and replaced with a metal version. This plaque is presently located in a commemorative park created within the Wigram Skies residential subdivision.

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 Kingsford Smith Landing Site has cultural significance as a place which commemorates the first trans-Tasman flight, an aviation landmark and one of the watershed events of inter-war New Zealand.

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 Kingsford Smith Landing Site has some aesthetic value as the site has been recently landscaped into a commemorative park in order to provide prominence to the historic site.

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 Kingsford Smith Landing Site has intangible technological significance for its association with the *Southern Cross*, an aircraft that represented the rapid progress that aviation technology had made since WWI.

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 Kingsford Smith Landing Site has some contextual value in relation to its site, a section of former New Zealand Airforce airfield recently landscaped into a commemorative park, and in relation to the nearby buildings and structures of the former RNZAF Base Wigram. These structures include at least one building (the former Canterbury Aviation School barracks block) that existed at the time of the *Southern Cross* landing in 1928. The site was originally part of the airfield an open space but is now in the centre of a suburban estate development.

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.

However the setting and wider site are of archaeological significance for the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site including that

which occurred prior to 1900. The area has been recently redeveloped for subdivision and housing.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Kingsford Smith Landing Site has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The Kingsford Smith Landing Site has high historical and social significance dating from 11 September 1928, when pioneering Australian aviator Charles Kingsford Smith (later Sir Charles) and his aircrew of three completed the first successful trans-Tasman flight in the Fokker monoplane *Southern Cross*. The flight from Sydney to Wigram Aerodrome in Christchurch took 14 hours 20 minutes. It has cultural significance as a place which commemorates the first trans-Tasman flight, an aviation landmark and one of the watershed events of inter-war New Zealand. The site has intangible technological significance for its association with the rapid evolution of aviation technology and associated accomplishments that characterised the first half of the twentieth century. However the setting and wider site are of archaeological significance for the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site including that which occurred prior to 1900. The area has been recently redeveloped for subdivision and housing.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage File: Kingsford Smith Landing Site – Wigram

REPORT DATED: 25/08/14

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1306
*FORMER RNZAF STATION WIGRAM HANGAR 4 AND
SETTING -75 & 95 SIOUX AVENUE, 69 CORSAIR DRIVE,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8/01/2015

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.

Hangar 4 and the adjacent Hangar 5 and setting have high historical and social significance as the first product of the rapid initial expansion of the RNZAF in the mid 1930s, and as a key functional component in the operation of RNZAF Station/Base Wigram, the primary training establishment and 'home' of the RNZAF, for sixty years.

For the first decade after its establishment in 1923, the New Zealand Permanent Air Force (PAF) was severely under-resourced. In 1933 however, the government decided that it would be wise to augment the capacity of the service. The following year new aircraft were ordered, additional personnel drafted and the PAF was renamed the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF). In order to accommodate these new men and machines, a building programme was initiated.

The first structures of this so-called rearmament programme were Hangars 4 and 5 at Wigram Aerodrome (renamed RNZAF Station Wigram in 1937). These hangars, the first significant new buildings at Wigram for more than a decade, had priority over other buildings because of the imminent arrival of the new Vickers aircraft. No. 4 Hangar was commenced in late 1934 and completed in early 1936. No. 5 Hangar was commenced in early 1935 and completed soon after No. 4. Further hangars were added to the station in the late 1930s and early 1940s, reaching a total of seven by the end of WWII.

For sixty years Hangars 4 and 5 accommodated RNZAF aircraft. For most of this time, Wigram was the principle training base of the RNZAF, with all airmen passing through its gates at some point in their careers. In 1995 however the base was closed as part of a defence review, with Ngai Tahu subsequently taking ownership. The hangars have been used for a variety of purposes in the intervening years, including aviation-related businesses (until the airfield closed in 2009), machinery storage and distribution, and vehicle certification.

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.

Hangar 4 and the adjacent Hangar 5 have cultural significance as a pair of buildings that (in association with the neighbouring former Instructional Building) represent flight training and operations at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the original home of military aviation in New Zealand. The hangars are therefore a prominent symbol of the former base, and a memorial to the generations of New Zealand air force personnel who passed through their doors. As WWII-era buildings, they have a particular role in commemorating the air force personnel who served and died in that conflict.

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.

Hangar 4 and the adjacent Hangar 5 have high architectural and aesthetic significance as architecturally innovative structures, the first major new buildings to be constructed at Wigram Aerodrome since the early 1920s, the first hangars in New Zealand to be constructed in permanent materials, the largest hangars to be built in New Zealand to that time, and the first of many buildings on the station to be designed in the fashionable Moderne style over the decade to 1945. As such they form part of an important chronologically and stylistically homogenous architectural group.

The hangars were designed by the Public Works Department and built by well-known Christchurch contractor the late Charles Luney between 1934 and 1936. Their scale, design, and technology were a radical departure from anything seen before at Wigram, or indeed elsewhere in the country. The large buildings were distinguished particularly by the lengthy span of the front portal and cantilevered tilting doors, which were designed to facilitate ease of aircraft access. Stylistically the hangars are utilitarian, but adopt a Moderne (or pared-back, geometric Art Deco) architectural vocabulary. The most obvious expressions of this style are the stepped pylons that frame the front elevations, and the stepped side elevations. Although influenced by contemporary structures in the UK and the US, no hangar building in these countries is believed to be quite like the Wigram structures, which are considered to be a notable local innovation. A similar but smaller hangar was also built to the same design at RNZAF Station Hobsonville at this time. The next phase of air force rearmament from 1937 saw the basic design repeated in additional hangars at Wigram (presently Nos. 2 and 3) and Hobsonville. Hangars 4 and 5 remain in near original condition and have undergone little alteration.

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.

Hangar 4 and the adjacent Hangar 5 are of high technological significance as they were technologically innovative for the period, illustrating the rapid advance of building technology in the interwar years. The hangars, the largest in New Zealand to that time, employed reinforced concrete extensively and were the first hangars in the country to be constructed in this medium. Steel was also used extensively, with a complex truss roof developed to bridge the enormous 180 ft portal. To facilitate aircraft access, cantilevered tilting doors were developed for the hangars. These were previously unknown technology in this country in any context.

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.

Hangar 4 and its setting has high contextual significance on its site and in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Base Wigram, particularly the adjacent Hangar 5. The setting of the building includes the immediate land parcel, a large rectangular site which includes Hangar 5 and much of the former apron in front of the buildings as well as including the setting of the Instructional Building to the north. The large building is clearly visible from Corsair Drive, Sioux Avenue and Mustang Avenue, and therefore retains landmark significance. To the south is the identical Hangar 5. To the north are the former Instructional Building and Hangars 2 and 3. These hangars are of the same basic design as Hangars 4 and 5. Together all of these buildings form a chronologically, architecturally and functionally homogenous group, and thus constitute an important heritage group.

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.

Hangar 4 and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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

Hangar 4 and its setting is of high heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. The building and the adjacent Hangar 5 have high historical and social significance as the first products of the rapid initial expansion of the RNZAF in the mid 1930s, and as a key functional component in the operation of RNZAF Station/Base Wigram, the primary training establishment and 'home' of the RNZAF, for sixty years. The buildings have cultural significance as a pair of structures that represent flight training and operations at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the original home of military aviation in New Zealand. They

are a prominent symbol of the former base, and are the tangible reminders of the generations of New Zealand air force personnel who passed through their doors. The buildings have high architectural and aesthetic significance as architecturally innovative structures, the first major new buildings to be constructed at Wigram Aerodrome since the early 1920s, the first hangars in New Zealand to be constructed in permanent materials, the largest hangars to be built in New Zealand to that time, and the first of many buildings on the station to be designed in the fashionable Moderne style over the decade to 1945. As such they form part of an important chronologically and stylistically homogenous architectural group. The buildings are of high technological significance as they were technologically innovative for their period, illustrating the rapid advance of building technology in the interwar years. The extensive use of steel and reinforced concrete, and the novel cantilevered doors are noteworthy. Hangar 4 has high contextual significance on its site and within its setting, a parcel which preserves important views and includes the identical Hangar 5 and the former apron. The hangar also has high contextual significance in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Station Wigram - particularly the former hangars and the former Instructional Building to the north, with which it forms an important heritage precinct. Hangar 4 has landmark significance. Hangar 4 and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage Files

Heritage Management Services *Hangars 4 & 5 Conservation Plan*

REPORT DATED: 04/12/2014

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN –SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 629
*FORMER RNZAF STATION WIGRAM HANGAR 5 AND
SETTING -75 & 95 SIOUX AVENUE, 69 CORSAIR DRIVE,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : M.VAIR-PIOVA, 08/01/2015

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.

Hangar 5 and the adjacent Hangar 4 have high historical and social significance as the first product of the rapid initial expansion of the RNZAF in the mid 1930s, and as a key functional component in the operation of RNZAF Station/Base Wigram, the primary training establishment and 'home' of the RNZAF, for sixty years.

For the first decade after its establishment in 1923, the New Zealand Permanent Air Force (PAF) was severely under-resourced. In 1933 however, the government decided that it would be wise to augment the capacity of the service. The following year new aircraft were ordered, additional personnel drafted and the PAF was renamed the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF). In order to accommodate these new men and machines, a building programme was initiated.

The first structures of this so-called rearmament programme were Hangars 4 and 5 at Wigram Aerodrome (renamed RNZAF Station Wigram in 1937). These hangars, the first significant new buildings at Wigram for more than a decade, had priority over other buildings because of the imminent arrival of the new Vickers aircraft. No. 4 Hangar was commenced in late 1934 and completed in early 1936. No. 5 Hangar was commenced in early 1935 and completed soon after No. 4. Further hangars were added to the station in the late 1930s and early 1940s, reaching a total of seven by the end of WWII.

For sixty years Hangars 4 and 5 accommodated RNZAF aircraft. For most of this time, Wigram was the principle training base of the RNZAF, with all airmen passing through its gates at some point in their careers. In 1995 however the base was closed as part of a defence review, with Ngai Tahu subsequently taking ownership. The hangars have been used for a variety of purposes in the intervening years, including aviation-related businesses (until the airfield closed in 2009), machinery storage and distribution, and vehicle certification.

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.

Hangar 5 and the adjacent Hangar 4 have cultural significance as a pair of buildings that (in association with the neighbouring former Instructional Building) represent flight training and operations at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the original home of military aviation in New Zealand. The hangars are therefore a prominent symbol of the former base, and a memorial to the generations of New Zealand air force personnel who passed through their doors. As WWII-era buildings, they have a particular role in commemorating the air force personnel who served and died in that conflict.

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.

Hangar 5 and the adjacent Hangar 4 have high architectural and aesthetic significance as architecturally innovative structures, the first major new buildings to be constructed at Wigram Aerodrome since the early 1920s, the first hangars in New Zealand to be constructed in permanent materials, the largest hangars to be built in New Zealand to that time, and the first of many buildings on the station to be designed in the fashionable Moderne style over the decade to 1945. As such they form part of an important chronologically and stylistically homogenous architectural group.

The hangars were designed by the Public Works Department and built by well-known Christchurch contractor the late Charles Luney between 1934 and 1936. Their scale, design, and technology were a radical departure from anything seen before at Wigram, or indeed elsewhere in the country. The large buildings were distinguished particularly by the lengthy span of the front portal and cantilevered tilting doors, which were designed to facilitate ease of aircraft access. Stylistically the hangars are utilitarian, but adopt a Moderne (or pared-back, geometric Art Deco) architectural vocabulary. The most obvious expressions of this style are the stepped pylons that frame the front elevations, and the stepped side elevations. Although influenced by contemporary structures in the UK and the US, no hangar building in these countries is believed to be quite like the Wigram structures, which are considered to be a notable local innovation. A similar but smaller hangar was also built to the same design at RNZAF Station Hobsonville at this time. The next phase of air force rearmament from 1937 saw the basic design repeated in additional hangars at Wigram (presently Nos. 2 and 3) and Hobsonville. Hangars 4 and 5 have remain in near original condition having had little alteration.

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.

Hangar 5 and the adjacent Hangar 4 are of high technological significance as they were technologically innovative for the period, illustrating the rapid advance of building technology in the interwar years. The hangars, the largest in New Zealand to that time, employed reinforced concrete extensively and were the first hangars in the country to be constructed in this medium. Steel was also used extensively, with a complex truss roof developed to bridge the enormous 180 ft portal. To facilitate aircraft access, cantilevered tilting doors were developed for the hangars. These were previously unknown technology in this country in any context.

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.

Hangar 5 and its setting has high contextual significance on its site and in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Base Wigram, particularly the adjacent Hangar 4. The setting of the building includes the immediate land parcel, a large rectangular site which includes Hangar 4 and much of the former apron in front of the buildings as well as including the setting of the Instructional Building to the north. The large building is clearly visible from Corsair Drive, Sioux Avenue and Mustang Avenue, and therefore retains landmark significance. To the immediate north is the identical Hangar 4. Beyond this are the former Instructional Building and Hangars 2 and 3. These hangars are of the same basic design as Hangars 4 and 5. Together all of these buildings form a chronologically, architecturally and functionally homogenous group, and thus constitute an important heritage group.

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.

Hangar 5 and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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

Hangar 5 and its setting is of high overall heritage significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula. The building and the adjacent Hangar 4 have high historical and social significance as the first products of the rapid initial expansion of the RNZAF in the mid 1930s, and as a key functional component in the operation of RNZAF Station/Base Wigram, the primary training establishment and 'home' of the RNZAF, for sixty years. The buildings have cultural significance as a pair of structures that represent flight training and operations

at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the original home of military aviation in New Zealand. They are a prominent symbol of the former base, and are tangible reminders of the generations of New Zealand air force personnel who passed through their doors. The buildings have high architectural and aesthetic significance as architecturally innovative structures, the first major new buildings to be constructed at Wigram Aerodrome since the early 1920s, the first hangars in New Zealand to be constructed in permanent materials, the largest hangars to be built in New Zealand to that time, and the first of many buildings on the station to be designed in the fashionable Moderne style over the decade to 1945. As such they form part of an important chronologically and stylistically homogenous architectural group. The buildings are of high technological significance as they were technologically innovative for their period, illustrating the rapid advance of building technology in the interwar years. The extensive use of steel and reinforced concrete, and the novel cantilevered doors are noteworthy. Hangar 5 has high contextual significance on its site and within its setting, a parcel which preserves important views and includes the identical Hangar 4 and the former apron. The hangar has high contextual significance in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Station Wigram - particularly the adjacent Hangar 4, but also Hangars 2 and 3 and the former Instructional Building, with which it forms an important contiguous heritage group. Highly visible, Hangar 5 has landmark significance. Hangar 5 and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council Heritage Files
Heritage Management Services *Hangars 4 & 5 Conservation Plan*

REPORT DATED: 04/12/2014

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 628
*FORMER RNZAF STATION WIGRAM INSTRUCTIONAL
BUILDING/CONTROL TOWER AND SETTING - 69 CORSAIR
DRIVE, 75 & 95 SIOUX AVENUE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8/01/2015

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 Instructional/Control Tower Building has high historical and social significance as a product of the rapid expansion of the RNZAF in the late 1930s and early 1940s, for its close connection with the role of Wigram as the RNZAF's primary training facility, and for its central role in the control of flight on the Wigram air field for seventy years.

The mid 1930s were an era of escalating international tension. In light of this political uncertainty, the New Zealand government commissioned the Cochrane Report in 1936. The report recommended that significant funds be invested in developing a modern air force. This led to the foundation of the RNZAF as a separate force in 1937, and a period of rapid airfield expansion.

RNZAF Station Wigram was the historical home and training hub of the New Zealand Air Force and its precursors. Under the Cochrane Report expansion, the flight training role of Wigram was significantly boosted. The Instructional Building was planned to allow the realisation of this. The building was designed in 1937, commenced in 1938 and completed in December 1939. With the outbreak of war in late 1939, training at Wigram underwent another step change. Pilot training was augmented with the establishment of training for

other air force roles. During WWII, the majority of the nearly 13,000 personnel trained by the RNZAF passed through Wigram at some point. After the war, the Instructional/ Control Tower Building maintained a training function. In the 1960s air force training was concentrated in a specialist Training Group, later renamed Support Group. This was headquartered in the Instructional/ Control Tower Building until not long before the base closed in 1995.

In addition to its training functions, the Instructional/ Control Tower Building coordinated flight at Wigram from the outset. When the building first opened in 1939, flight observation and control functions were concentrated on the third floor, with a fire tender and armoury on the ground floor. Reflecting changing technologies, a first control cab was added to the roof in 1945. This was replaced in 1974. Although RNZAF Base Wigram closed in 1995, the airfield remained open for civilian purposes and air traffic control services were provided until 2009.

The Instructional Building also provided administrative space for other air force functions through its history. These included Station Head Quarters during the latter years of the war, and the Directorate of Manning and the Air Force Recruiting Office from the late 1980s. After the base closed in 1995, Ngai Tahu assumed ownership and leased the building to various flight-related businesses until the airfield closed in 2009. Since the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquakes, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu have occupied the building themselves.

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 Instructional/ Control Tower Building has high cultural significance as the centre of flight operations and a focus for flight training at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the home of military aviation in New Zealand. It therefore serves as a prominent symbol of the former base, and a memorial to the generations of New Zealand air force personnel who passed through its doors. As a WWII-era building, it has a particular role in commemorating the air force personnel who served and died in that conflict.

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 Instructional/Control Tower Building has high architectural and aesthetic significance as one of the more significant military structures designed by the Public Works Department as part of New Zealand's preparations for WWII. It is also significant in its own right as a noteworthy Moderne building; part of an important precinct of chronologically and stylistically homogenous military buildings at the former RNZAF Base Wigram.

The former Instructional/ Control Tower Building was designed in 1937, commenced in 1938 and completed in 1939. It illustrates many of the common features of Moderne buildings, a variant of Art Deco architecture characterised by its stream-lined geometric form and decoration, and planar surfaces. The building has been altered on a number of occasions – most notably in 1945 when the first of a succession of Control Cabs was added to the roof, and in 1989 when the stepped third floor was extended out to provide additional office space. Many of these exterior alterations have been sympathetically executed however, such that

the building still retains its 1930s character. Interior-wise there have also been extensive alterations overtime as uses have changed. However sufficient form and features remain internally to understand how the building appeared originally. The metal-balustraded staircase is a particular feature.

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 Instructional/ Control Tower Building has high technological significance for its extensive use of reinforced concrete. This was characteristic of many of the late 1930s buildings on the base, which were designed to be both seismic and blast resistant. The Instructional Building also has craftsmanship significance for the quality of its design, decoration and finishes. The Labour administration of the late 1930s instituted a significant programme of public works, which included public buildings of a notably high quality.

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 Instructional/ Control Tower Building and its setting has high contextual significance on its site and in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Station Wigram. The setting of the building includes the immediate land parcel and is part of the broader setting of the two hangars to the south, hangars four and five. The setting includes some of the former parade ground to the west of the Instructional Building, and a portion of the former runway area to the east. This parcel and a reserve further to the east help preserve views of the building's principal facades from Corsair Drive. To the north and south are respectively hangars two and three, and four and five. These are contemporary with the Instructional Building, and constitute an important heritage precinct. A large building surrounded by extensive open space, the Instructional Building has landmark significance.

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 Instructional/Control Tower Building and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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 former Instructional Building is of high overall heritage significance to Christchurch, including Bank Peninsula. The building has high historical and social significance as a product of the rapid expansion of the RNZAF in the late 1930s and early 1940s, for its close connection with the role of Wigram as the RNZAF's primary training facility, and for its central role in the control of flight on the Wigram air field for seventy years. The building has high cultural significance as the centre of flight operations and a focus for flight training at the former RNZAF Station Wigram, the home of military aviation in New Zealand. It also serves to commemorate both the former base and the personnel who served there. The building has high architectural and aesthetic significance as one of the more significant military structures designed by the Public Works Department as part of New Zealand's preparations for WWII. It is also significant as a noteworthy Moderne building, part of an important precinct of chronologically and stylistically homogenous military buildings at the former RNZAF Station Wigram. The building has high technological and craftsmanship significance for its extensive use of reinforced concrete. This was characteristic of many of the late 1930s buildings on the base, which were designed to be both seismic and blast resistant. The building has craftsmanship significance for the quality of its design, decorative detail and finishes. The building has high contextual significance on its site, a parcel which preserves important sight lines and includes the former parade ground. The building and its setting has high contextual significance in relation to the other remaining WWII-era buildings at the former RNZAF Station Wigram - particularly the former hangars to the north and south, with which it forms an important heritage precinct. It has landmark significance. The former Instructional/Control Tower Building and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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.

REFERENCES:

Draft Conservation Plan and Condition Report: Former Wigram Control Tower (Heritage Management Services)

REPORT DATED: 28/08/2014

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN –SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 630
*FORMER RNZAF STATION WIGRAM NO. 1 OFFICERS’
MESS, BREVET GARDEN AND SETTING - 14, 20E HENRY
WIGRAM DRIVE, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH : M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8/01/2015

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess, Brevet Garden and setting, has high historical and social significance as the principal mess of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) for over fifty years.

The mid 1930s were an era of escalating international tension. In light of this political uncertainty, the New Zealand government commissioned the Cochrane Report in 1936. The report recommended that significant funds be invested in developing a modern air force. This led to the foundation of the RNZAF as a separate force in 1937, and a period of rapid airfield expansion. Construction of the No. 1 Officers' Mess at the then Wigram Aerodrome commenced in early 1939, and although the full complex was not completed until 1940, the building was partially occupied from just before the declaration of war in September 1939. The mess quartered single officers and served as the formal and informal gathering place of all officers at RNZAF Base Wigram for more than fifty years until its closure in 1995. The RNZAF regarded Wigram as its historical home, and the Wigram No. 1 Officers' Mess as its principal mess. This special status was maintained by the presence of the RNZAF Officer Training School, which ensured that all air force officers were members of the mess in the formative years of their careers.

An aircrew brevet is the winged badge worn on the left breast by qualified aircrew. A large stylised brevet garden was created along the principal elevation of the No. 1 Officers' Mess at the time of its construction.

The former mess building continues to function, much in the use it was originally built for, as a privately-owned accommodation provider and bar/function venue.

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess has high cultural and spiritual significance as the home of the RNZAF officer corps for more than fifty years. During this time, the building was central to the customs, practices and distinctive lifestyle of the group. Consequently it holds a high degree of intangible emotional and spiritual resonance. It also commemorates the generations of air force officers who passed through its doors, including many who served and died in conflict. The brevet garden has cultural significance as a stylised interpretation of the winged badge worn on the left breast by qualified aircrew.

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess has architectural and aesthetic significance as one of the significant structures built by the Public Works Department as part of New Zealand's preparations for WWII, as one of a number of similar mess buildings built across the then British Empire based on RAF models, and as a noteworthy Art Deco building in its own right. The building was designed by the Public Works Department in 1937-1938, based closely on RAF models in terms of form, function and style. The stripped Art Deco building consists of a single storey service block framed by two two-storey barracks wings. The central block has a rusticated entry crowned with a squat clocktower. Its Art Deco detail is noteworthy, but the impact of the composition was muted by the replacement of the original flat roof with a pitched tile roof in the 1950s. The interior of the building has been altered but its Art Deco character remains. The brevet garden has some aesthetic value for its design and interpretation based on the winged badge worn by qualified aircrew.

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess has technological and craftsmanship significance for its reinforced concrete construction and the quality of its finish. The building was reputedly designed with its use in wartime very much in the minds of its architects, and was therefore constructed of reinforced concrete to aid bomb resistance. As an officers' mess, serving the senior members of the air force, the building was also finished to a high specification. The joinery is of a particularly high quality, both in the public rooms and other areas such as the bedrooms.

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess, brevet garden and its setting is of high contextual significance on its site and in relation to the other remaining WWII era buildings at the former RNZAF Base Wigram. The setting of the building includes the immediate land parcel, a roughly rectangular plot at the corner of Henry Wigram Drive and Consul Place. The brevet garden divides the semi-circular mess drive from Henry Wigram Drive. The squash courts and garages, former elements of the heritage listing, were demolished in the 2000's. The site today consists largely of sealed carpark. The former base chapel was relocated to the east end of the mess building in the 2000s. Whilst considerably reduced in number in the twenty years since the closure of the base, there are still many WWII era buildings in the vicinity of the former No. 1 Officers' Mess. These include several dwellings in Henry Wigram Drive built to house senior base personnel.

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 No. 1 Officers' Mess and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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 former No. 1 Officers' Mess and brevet garden and setting is of high overall heritage significance to Christchurch, including Bank Peninsula. It has high historical and social significance as the principal mess of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) for over fifty years. The former No. 1 Officers' Mess and brevet garden has cultural and spiritual significance as the home of the RNZAF officer corps for this period. The brevet garden has cultural significance as a stylised interpretation of the winged badge worn on the left breast by qualified aircrew. It has high architectural and aesthetic significance as one of the significant structures built by the Public Works Department as part of New Zealand's preparations for WWII, as one of a number of similar mess buildings built across the then British Empire based on RAF models, and as a noteworthy Art Deco building in its own right. The brevet garden has some aesthetic value for its design and interpretation based on the winged badge worn by qualified aircrew. The former No. 1 Officers' Mess and brevet garden has technological and craftsmanship significance for its reinforced concrete construction and the quality of its finish. The former No. 1 Officers' Mess and brevet garden and setting has high contextual significance on its site and in relation to the other remaining WWII era buildings at the former RNZAF Base Wigram, particularly the nearby former homes of the senior officers. The former No. 1 Officers' Mess and its setting are of archaeological significance because they have 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.

REFERENCES:

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL HERITAGE FILE: No. 1 Officers' Mess – Wigram, 14 Henry Wigram Drive

REPORT DATED: 27/08/20

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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