

3. LEINSTER HOUSE

Officer responsible Community Advocate	Author Tony Gemmill, Community Advocate, DDI 941-6701, Neil Carrie, Senior Planner Urban Design and Heritage, DDI 941 8643
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The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on the recent (and past) interest shown by the community in the retention of Leinster House in Merivale, and to outline the current status of the building.

BACKGROUND

On Tuesday 2 September 2003 Ms Gina Williamson, Chairperson of the Merivale Precinct Society, and Trevor Lord of the Vintage Homes Group, presented submissions to the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board urging the retention of Leinster House in Merivale. The deputation had been prompted by a (then) recent advice of a resource consent application seeking consent for the removal of the building to a property at McLeans Island.

The Society had earlier (in 1998) reacted to a proposal for the demolition of the house, and had, on that occasion, obtained agreement from the owners for an alternative proposal for development on an adjacent site.

While the Board noted that the resource consent process would need to run its course it was agreed that the Community Advocate endeavour to facilitate a meeting between the building's owners, the Society, and the local Councillors Barbara Stewart and Ron Wright.

Such a meeting was hosted on Monday 15 September 2003 for the purpose of the Society (on behalf of the local community) to share their concerns regarding the proposed relocation, and to consider ways in which the community could have more input into the future of the house.

In the discussions on 15 September 2003 the Society illustrated the immediate response that had been received from the community, regarding the proposed relocation, by referring to a substantial series of written comments recently received. In further discussions the Society spoke of an option for community ownership by way of a trust arrangement, or similar.

At the conclusion of the meeting all parties agreed to meet in approximately two months time to review any progress being made in evaluating options for the retention of the building on its present site.

STATUS OF BUILDING

Leinster House is listed as a Group 4 heritage building in Appendix 1, Part 10 Volume 3 of the City Plan, chiefly on account of its noteworthy historical/social, architectural/aesthetic, group, landmark and craftsmanship significance. The house is also registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as a Category II Historic Place.

The dwelling was built on the prominent site at the corner of Leinster and Papanui Roads in c.1900 for A F Carey and was purchased in 1929 by Dr Stringer, who used it as both a house and surgery until his death in 1943. The garden was a showpiece during Dr Stringer's time, when the property extended to Papanui Road.

Although the original section was subsequently subdivided and shops built on the Papanui Road frontage, the house is still visible from Papanui Road and maintains a strong street presence on Leinster Road. Over time the house has been used as a nursing home and rental accommodation with more recent use as a restaurant and commercial offices.

Architecturally Leinster House is a good example of a turn of the century Victorian dwelling stylistically influenced by the American Stick and Queen Anne styles of domestic architecture and adapted to New Zealand materials and conditions by the architect James Glanville. Notable heritage features of the house include the striking octagonal corner turret and the double height veranda with decorative timberwork. Because of its distinctive architectural style, the house is unique within the wider group of important residential heritage buildings in the Leinster Road/Papanui Road area.

The current use, location, size and distinct and appealing style of Leinster House give it landmark significance within the Merivale streetscape, and special significance within the local community consciousness.



There has been no investigation at this time into the costs for maintenance, seismic or fire upgrades for the building. Seismic and fire upgrades would be necessary for any change of use, such as community purposes or any alterations which may be considered.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion.