

LEINSTER HOUSE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

City Plan Criteria (City Plan Volume 2, 4.3.1)

1. HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

For its historic value or significance in terms of a notable figure, event, phase or activity, and whether it is an important reflection of social patterns of its time.

Leinster House was built in 1900 to a design by the Christchurch architect James Glanville, on a section at the corner of Papanui and Leinster Roads. The section had originally been part of RS 133, a 50 acre section that had been purchased by John Birch in 1851. Birch was an English emigrant from London who had arrived in December 1850 on board the Cressy – the last ship to arrive of the first four Canterbury Association ships. The arrival of these four Canterbury Association ships marked the beginning of official European settlement of Canterbury. Birch, who had arrived in Canterbury in poor health, was editor of the Lyttelton Times after James Edward Fitzgerald (1818-1896). He was also manager of the paper until his death in 1857.

St Albans was originally divided into 50 and 100 acre lots. These lots were made available for purchase at the newly completed Land Office (where the former Municipal Chambers now stand in Oxford Terrace), on the 18th and 19th of February 1851. The early settlers could, for the sum of £150, purchase one rural 50 acre block and one quarter acre town section. The first three lots sold included the purchase of 100 acres by the widow Charlotte Jackson who named her farm “Merevale” after the parish her brother-in-law Thomas Jackson was Vicar of. The west side of St Albans later took on the name Merivale for the suburb.

The rest of the Rural sections in this area sold quickly and it would appear that Birch was the fourth buyer of land in the area with his purchase of RS133. After purchasing RS133 he subdivided the land into smaller lots of six to eight acres and sold them.

This type of subdivision was common in the area at the time and many medium sized sections became established nurseries within a few years of settlement, while others remained as dairy farms. With the rapid growth of the city, dairying became an uneconomic activity in the area and the land was used largely for horticultural activity –with the Papanui/ Merivale area continuing to specialise in nurseries into the twentieth century.

William Wilson, later the first Mayor of Christchurch in 1868, had purchased 11 acres of RS133 between Aikman’s Road and Leinster Road and in 1858 established the first nursery there, which he ran until 1865. From 1864 to 1868, the east end of RS133, and part of the land that became the Leinster House site, was run as a nursery by Charles Purdie.

By 1898 the land had been further subdivided, and a section of almost 4 acres encompassing the corner of Papanui and Leinster Roads, and extending down Leinster Road was owned by James Brighwell Banks. Banks subdivided the section into 13 residential lots of just under ¼ acre in 1898.

Andrew Fuller Carey, described on the Certificate of Title as a Draper, purchased two sections of Banks' subdivision on the corner of Papanui and Leinster Roads in 1899, which made up almost half an acre. A condition of the land transfer was that Banks was not liable for fencing costs as this section was only bounded by gorse at the time.

It was on this section that Carey built the dwelling we now know as Leinster House. Tenders were called for the construction of a "Two Storey residence cnr Papanui Road and Leinster Street [sic]" in *The Press* in April 1899. As well as being a draper, Carey played a part in local politics, as Councillor on the St Albans Borough Council from 1900-03, and following amalgamation as a member of the Christchurch City Council. After a 22 year gap Carey returned for a further term as a councillor from 1927-1929.

Within the first generation of settlement in the area many large houses such as Amwell (c1870), Te Wepu (1882), Te Koroha (1884), Rangi Ruru (now the Charlotte Jane) (1891), Hambledon (1866), Strowan (1890) and Acland House (1893), which all still remain today, were built. Papanui Road was popular at this time as it was the main thoroughfare to the north.

Leinster House dates from a slightly later period than these homesteads and farm-houses, and is significant as an early townhouse residence in this area. Of a smaller scale in terms of the building and the site than the larger homesteads on extensive grounds mentioned above, Leinster House is similar to the early substantial homes built on quarter acre town sections in the central city.

In this way it is an important reminder of the changes in the development of Merivale from larger rural sections with architecturally designed homesteads to smaller sections with relatively modest single or double storey houses, which grew along Papanui Road to the north towards Leinster Road, close to the main shopping areas in the district. There were three distinct shopping areas in the district - a small shopping area developed around the Borough Council offices on the Office/Papanui Road corner and another in the area that comprises the Merivale shopping precinct today. Two early villas along this stretch of Papanui Road survived until the late 1990s leaving Leinster House as the only section and house remaining in this area now dominated by commercial buildings that illustrates this transitional stage of the suburbs development.

Carey did not remain in the house for long, and sold the property to Mary Argyle Wachemann, wife of John Frederick Wachemann a grain merchant in 1905. The property was transferred to Adam William Steele, gentleman in 1908, and then to Horace Edward Button, a Dentist in 1919.

In 1930 Leinster House was purchased by Dr Stringer, who used it as both a house and surgery until his death in 1943. The garden was a showpiece during this time, when the property still extended to Papanui Road (This was the main entrance and the property was known then as 235 Papanui Road). Dr. Stringer's garden was noted for its trees, shrubs, rockery and magnificent fernery that had an extensive watering system. Dr Stringer played an important part in the Merivale community during the 14 years he operated his practice from the house. Because of his profession he would

have been well known and respected, and his house, surgery and extensive gardens reflected his esteemed position in the local community at this time.

In 1944 Nanette O'Connell purchased the house and used it as a nursing home until 1951 when she sold it to Bruce Alexander, a trainee manager. Alexander subdivided the part of the section fronting Papanui Road, where the present block of shops were built. Also in 1951 part of the section was taken for roading purposes on the Leinster Road frontage. These changes reduced the original section and the visibility of the house from Papanui Road. Alexander died in 1966 and the property was transmitted to his widow Elizabeth. She died in October 1970, and the property was transmitted to her executors. The house went on to be used as a nursing home, flats, bed-sits, a restaurant and commercial offices from the 1970s.

The property has been owned by Tuscany Limited since 1996 to the present and has continued to be used as a restaurant and commercial offices.

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The changing patterns of land use and subdivision along Papanui Road from the 50 acre farming block and associated large homestead of the 1880s to the villas on a ¼ acre block is still evidenced by many heritage properties in the Merivale area. Leinster House is of particular importance as it is an example of a townhouse of lesser substance than the earlier farming homesteads, but as a townhouse of a greater prominence, on a larger lot size than many villas of this period in the St Albans and Merivale areas. The owners were representative of citizens with strong community, and social interests and the financial means to provide residences of consequence.

Leinster House has been assessed as being of notable historical and social significance.

2. CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

For its contribution to the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, religion or other belief and/or the esteem in which it is held by a particular group or community, including whether it is of special significance to the Tangata Whenua.

The property has a degree of cultural significance in that it is a tangible reminder of the large houses that formed a specific identity in terms of early European culture within this area. This is acknowledged in its social historical, landmark and, to a degree, the wider context of its group significance within the suburb.

The house is also related to the distinctive characteristics of the way of life of the long term resident Dr Stringer, who chose to reside in and operate his practice from the house which was centrally and prominently located within the community it served.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

There is some cultural significance associated with Leinster House which relates to the interests of the earlier owners in civic and educational services and the medical care provided to the community by Dr Stringer for an extended time.

Leinster House has been assessed as having minor cultural and spiritual significance.

3. ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

For its significance in terms of a design of a particular style, period or designer and whether it has significant artistic value;

Part of the architectural significance of Leinster House is connected with its historical and social significance, as an early architecturally designed townhouse in the suburb of Merivale, which had previously been dominated by large architecturally designed homesteads and farm houses. Although the house shares some elements of a number of the more substantial houses built along Papanui Road in the 1870s and 1880s, it dates from a later period and is stylistically different.

Leinster House is a very good example of a turn of the century Victorian dwelling stylistically influenced by the American ‘stick style’ and Queen Anne style of domestic architecture and adapted to New Zealand materials and conditions by the architect James Glanville (1841-1913).

Notable heritage features of the house include the striking octagonal corner turret and the double height veranda with decorative fretted timberwork, skirted shingles on the upper balcony and many internal decorative features such as leaded windows, moulded plaster work and a balustraded staircase. In Dr Stringer’s time there were had five bedrooms upstairs and four large rooms downstairs including a large kitchen, waiting room and adjoining surgery.

The American –influenced style of Leinster House is one which Glanville clearly favoured for his domestic designs, and which he appears to have excelled at. Although many of the distinctive elements of his domestic designs such as corner turrets and decorative double height verandahs are perhaps ‘stock’ features of popular architecture at the time, he combined these features skilfully and with a sense of scale and proportion to create visually appealing and unique designs. Glanville’s designs for the alterations to Avebury House (1907) and two Latimer Square townhouses (now demolished) resemble most closely the style of Leinster House.

James Glanville was born in the parish of St Stephens, Launceston, Cornwall, England and came to New Zealand on the ship ‘Zelandia’ which arrived at Lyttelton in December 1871. He chose to live most of his New Zealand life at New Brighton, and was referred to in *The Press* as “one of the pioneers of the seaside borough”. Glanville took an interest in educational, church and municipal matters and was a member of New Brighton Borough Council for many years and was Mayor of New Brighton from 1908-1910.

Glanville practised architecture in Christchurch from 1884-c1907, and was also a building contractor and surveyor. As an architect, Glanville was “*widely known and greatly esteemed by members of that craft*”. The earliest reference to his practice address is at St. Asaph Street in 1883-4. By 1906 his office was at 9 Cathedral Square. There is also a reference to him having his office in Manchester Street. Glanville was responsible for a number of other domestic, commercial and ecclesiastical buildings in and around Christchurch and carried out many alterations and additions to other buildings during his career.

Given both Glanville’s and A F Carey’s involvement in local government it is possible that it was this connection that led him to design Leinster House for Carey. It may also have been the reason behind his commission for the original Avebury House in Richmond in c1885 for William Flesher, and the alterations in c1907 for James Flesher, who was also involved in municipal matters as a City Councillor and as Mayor. A number of Glanville’s other architectural commissions appear to have been brought about through his involvement in the Richmond and New Brighton communities, and with the Methodist church, such as the schoolroom for the Richmond Methodist Church in c.1885.

SUMMARY OF ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE

Leinster House is architecturally significant as an early Merivale townhouse, which illustrates a departure at the turn of the century from the large 1870s and 1880s homesteads along Papanui Road. The architectural style is eclectic with many distinctive elements such as a corner turret, generous double storeyed verandahs, decorative timber detailing, substantial brick chimneys, and steep roof pitches. The architecture was strongly influenced by the American ‘Stick’ style and reflects many architectural features of the earlier homesteads and larger houses. However, Leinster House is distinctive as these aesthetically appealing features were applied to the smaller scale of the townhouse. Leinster House is one of only a few surviving houses in a similar style, size and from the same period in Christchurch.

Leinster House is one of the few surviving works of James Glanville, a Christchurch architect of some note. It is a good example of his domestic work, and is one of only two of his known remaining substantial domestic works in this style.

Leinster House has been assessed as having notable architectural and artistic significance.

4. GROUP AND SETTING SIGNIFICANCE

For its degree of unity in terms of scale, form, materials, texture and colour in relationship to its setting and/or surrounding buildings

While Leinster House has no immediate contemporaneous neighbours, it must be viewed from the point of view of the original subdivision of the land that comprised 50 acre blocks. Today a number of these large houses are still extant, albeit now surrounded by the progression of time by ‘infill’ housing and commercial buildings.

It must also be considered in the wider context of the heritage fabric of the city in relation to extant domestic dwellings by Glanville, such as Avebury House.

The style, size, materials and status architecturally of Leinster House allows it to relate closely to the original grouping of large houses and gardens on Rural Sections of the 19th Century. In the immediate vicinity it relates architecturally to Fitzroy, the home of Robert McDougall, Strowan, now part of the St Andrew's complex and Acland House, a boarding establishment for Christchurch Girls' High. It also relates to the early extant 'big houses' such as Merevale, part of which still remains, Amwell, Te Wepu, Te Koroha, Rangi Ruru (now the Charlotte Jane) and Hambleton. These houses are all of a slightly earlier or similar age to Leinster House and share elements of its architectural style. However the individual contribution of Leinster House to the wider group of early dwellings in the area is unique in terms of its historical social and architectural and artistic significance as outlined above, and thus it is a vital component of the whole.

As a group Leinster House and the abovementioned houses are the tangible reminders of a particular phase in our urban development; of a particular era of social class distinction; and of particular importance to the city's cultural heritage landscape.

SUMMARY OF GROUP AND SETTING SIGNIFICANCE

The strong relationship in architectural style and features between Leinster House and a number of other earlier or larger homesteads or residences in the Merivale and Strowan areas provides a significant sense of architectural continuity to the area.

Leinster House has been assessed as having moderate group and setting significance.

5. LANDMARK SIGNIFICANCE

For its landmark significance in the community consciousness.

One of the last significant domestic residences of the period in the now largely commercial immediate area, Leinster House has considerable local landmark significance. Despite the fact that it is less visible now from its original Papanui Road vista, the building continues to dominate this corner of the suburb with its open vista from Leinster Road.

SUMMARY OF LANDMARK SIGNIFICANCE

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.

Leinster House has been assessed as having moderate landmark significance.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The heritage item and its relevance in respect of important physical evidence of pre 1900 human activities.

Given that evidence suggests Leinster House was the first dwelling on the site and dates from 1900, consideration must however be given to the fact that there is clear evidence of activity on this site pre 1900 as outlined in the social historical assessment in 2.1 of this report. As such an archaeological authority from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga as outlined in their Act would be required.

Consideration must also be given to any wahi tapu significance. While there is no evidence that early Maori settled on this site or immediate vicinity, there is evidence that this area was at times part of the trails used by early Maori when moving between Port Levy and Kaiapoi Pa. The Maori names given to some of the early houses such as Rangi Ruru, Te Wepu and Te Koroha demonstrate an understanding of this significance. Issues with respect to the Ngai Tahu Koiwi Policy and issues surrounding accidental discovery must be given consideration should there be any excavation of the site.

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The construction of Leinster House in 1899 on ½ acre of land formerly used for horticultural purposes would indicate that there may be archaeological remains which need to be addressed through the archaeological consent process

Leinster House has been assessed as having moderate archaeological significance

7. TECHNOLOGY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The heritage items importance for the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or constructional methods, which were innovative for the period or of noteworthy quality.

Leinster House is good example of a particular type of construction of the late Victorian period. It features considerable craftsmanship in the detailing such as large brick chimneys with decorative detailing, elegant fretwork on the verandah brackets, shingled detailing as a 'skirt' around the first floor balcony, leaded windows, internal plaster arches and decorative cornices, balastraded stair railings and decorative corbel mouldings. It is also a significant example of turn of the skill employed in turn-of-the-century construction of large timber domestic architecture.

SUMMARY OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Conspicuous architectural detailing internally and externally are a feature of Leinster House, requiring good craft skills.

Leinster House has been assessed as having notable craftsmanship significance.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Leinster House and site have a special and significant place within the history of the subdivision and residential development of the Merivale/ Papanui Road area, and provide tangible evidence of a particular transitional phase in this development.

The house and site are connected with a number of prominent figures in the history of Christchurch and their way of life.

Leinster House is and was historically a local landmark, both physically and in the community consciousness.

The house is an important and unique part of the group of architecturally designed dwellings in Merivale, and Papanui Road in particular.

Leinster House has a special architectural character due to its architect, architectural style and good quality craftsmanship, and is a fine, aesthetically pleasing example of a turn of the century townhouse.

Due to human activity being documented on the site of Leinster House at the turn of the century, and the possible connection with early Maori activity in the area, the property has the potential to hold archaeological evidence.

In conclusion, Leinster House is of notable historical and social, architectural and artistic, technological and craftsmanship significance, moderate group and setting, landmark and archaeological significance and minor cultural and spiritual significance.