

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 409  
*FORMER DWELLING AND SETTING – 14 OXFORD TERRACE,  
CHRISTCHURCH***



**PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 10/12/2014**

**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 former dwelling at 14 Oxford Terrace has high historical and social significance as the oldest remaining building in central Christchurch, and for its long associations with both a series of medical professionals and the Pegasus Press. Pioneering Lyttelton merchants Joseph Longden and Henry LeCren purchased the site in late 1851. The first part of the house had been constructed by the end of 1852, when the property was sold. In 1853, the house began its long association with the medical profession when it was sold to neighbour Dr Burrell Parkerson, who was later the first Surgeon General at Christchurch Hospital (1863). In 1857 Parkerson sold his Oxford Terrace home to Dr Fisher. Fisher was Christchurch coroner and surgeon to the asylum, police, gaol and immigration barracks. Whilst Fisher lived there, the house hosted the first meeting of the Canterbury Medical Association, New Zealand's first, in 1865. In 1866 Fisher sold the property to his partner Dr J W S Coward, who added the two-storey section at the rear in late 1869.

The building was leased to Dr Benjamin Moorhouse in 1886 and Moorhouse eventually bought it in 1903. The Barrett family then owned the house between 1908 and 1952, in which year it became the premises of publisher and printer Pegasus Press. The Pegasus Press

had been founded in 1948 by Albion Wright, and grew to become one of New Zealand's leading publishers, producing the works of Janet Frame and James Baxter, amongst many others. A new printery was built at the rear in 1966; the former dwelling housing editorial services. Pegasus Press vacated the building in 1987 and it was then moved westwards on the site, extended and refurbished to become the Pegasus Arms, a restaurant and bar that opened in 1990 and is still operating today.

## **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 building has cultural and spiritual significance as a tangible example of one of the oldest domestic buildings in the City. As the city grew the building ceased to be used as a domestic residence and became a commercial property which is reflective of cultural societal habits and changes of use - a not uncommon fate for early colonial inner city domestic buildings.

## **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 dwelling at 14 Oxford Terrace has architectural significance as the oldest surviving building in central Christchurch and the only known domestic work of architect William Crisp. The first stage of the house, built in 1852, was the single storey portion with casement windows. Examination of the building has suggested that this stage was itself actually constructed in three or four stages. Constructed right on the road frontage, the first portion of the dwelling arrived in Canterbury in prefabricated form.

The two-storeyed rear section was added in 1869 by architect William Fitzjohn Crisp, who also added the hipped-roofed porch and acorn-bracketed soffits to the original house at this time. This gave the building a distinctive Gothic Revival appearance. Crisp came to Canterbury in 1864 as assistant to Robert Speechly, the architect commissioned to supervise the construction of Christ Church Anglican Cathedral. After funds for the cathedral project dried up, the pair supervised the construction of other buildings for the diocese for the remainder of their four year contract. Crisp stayed on after Speechly departed in 1868 and subsequently received the prestigious commission for St Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church. 14 Oxford Terrace is, however, this is the only domestic commission attributed to the architect, who returned to England in 1871. The alterations carried out in the late 1980s, which doubled the 1869 wing in a similar style, were executed by Don Donnithorne. It has been altered in more recent times to house the Pegasus Arms and little of the original interior form remains.

## **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 dwelling at 14 Oxford Terrace has technological and craftsmanship significance as the oldest timber building remaining in the central city, which therefore illustrates techniques of construction employed in Christchurch's early colonial period. The earliest part

of the building has notable technological significance as it was prefabricated on the Manning system, made of framing panels slotted into the top and bottom plates.

## **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 dwelling and its setting at 14 Oxford Terrace is of contextual significance for its location on the road frontage of a small narrow plot, in the context of the Avon River. The setting consists of the footprint of the building, occupying approximately half of the site, and a small curtilage - most of which is at the rear. To the immediate west is a tall 1970s office block and a flagpole; to the east a courtyard area for the cafe/bar that presently occupies the building. Across Oxford Terrace is the Avon River and its banks, permitting the building to be viewed from a distance, and vesting it with some landmark significance. Whereas there were once a number of residential buildings in this part of the inner city, the neighbourhood now consists largely of modern commercial and industrial buildings. St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church (1870-72) and the Antigua Boatsheds (1882) are other listed items in the vicinity.

## **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 dwelling at 14 Oxford Terrace is of archaeological significance because it has 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. When the building was shifted to the west in 1988, an extensive archaeological investigation of the site was carried out. Victorian domestic objects were uncovered including a child's dress and shoe. The items are lodged in the Canterbury Museum collection.

## **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

The former dwelling and its setting at 14 Oxford Terrace has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula as the oldest surviving domestic building in the city centre. The building has high historical and social significance and for its association with a number of early medical practitioners and Pegasus Press. The former dwelling has architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of early colonial architecture and the work of architect William Crisp. The former dwelling at 14 Oxford Terrace has technological and craftsmanship significance as the oldest timber building remaining in the central city, which therefore illustrates techniques of construction employed in Christchurch's early colonial period. The former dwelling and its setting at 14 Oxford Terrace has contextual significance for its riverside location and its survival as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century residential building in a part of the city that is now largely commercial. The former dwelling and its setting has archaeological significance in view of the development of the property from the early 1850s.

**REFERENCES:**

CCC Heritage files – Pegasus Arms

Anne Marchant *The Pegasus Building: research report* (Christchurch, 1993)

*About 14 Oxford Terrace, Christchurch* (Christchurch, 1974)

Historic place # 1912 – Heritage NZ List

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/1912>

Peter Low *Printing by the Avon – Unreliable Reminiscences of the Pegasus Press, 1947-1987* (Christchurch, 1995)

**REPORT DATED: 20 JANUARY 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.