

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 463
FORMER BARON’S COURT /KILMEAD MOTOR HOUSE,
FORMER HOLY NAME SEMINARY CHAPEL AND
DORMITORY AND SETTING - 265 RICCARTON ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH**



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL HERITAGE FILES, APRIL 2024

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 Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have historical and social significance for their connection with New Zealand's second national Catholic seminary, and for their association with the (now largely destroyed by fire) dwelling and extensive landscaped grounds of (successively) early 20th century businessmen Thomas Kincaid and John Montgomery and their respective families.

Appendix M

The former motor house, chapel, dormitory, and their setting are all that remains of a large complex which once comprised a large dwelling and motor house (1909) with additions for the Catholic Church in the late 1940s and early 1960s. The former Kincaid family residence 'Baron's Court' (later known as Kilmead) and the first stage of seminary additions were largely destroyed by fires in 2019 and 2021, which also damaged the dormitory block and chapel.

The setting and motor house serve as a reminder of the former Kincaid / Montgomery residence. The historical and social values associated with that dwelling are no longer strongly evident in light of its almost complete destruction by fire.

The use of the property through the twentieth century reflects broad socio-economic trends. Large homes such as the original Baron's Court, which reflected a type of lifestyle in the Edwardian period, had by mid-century typically become both undesirable and uneconomic as single-family residences and were often converted to institutional or multi-residential use. By the end of the twentieth century however, institutional rationalisation and the need to meet new code requirements made many of these older homes functionally redundant for a second time.

Thomas Kincaid was the proprietor of Kincaid's, a large, socially progressive and very successful Christchurch grocery business with its premises in Colombo Street. In 1909 he commissioned leading architects Clarkson and Ballantyne to design him a house in the then well-to-do rural-residential area of Riccarton. Kincaid called his new home 'Baron's Court'. A motor house at the rear of the property was also built at this time.

The motor house remains as evidence of this historical phase of residential activity on the site. It has an historical context with the site and landscaped grounds and retains a relationship with the use of the demolished dwelling and later use of the property. It also shows evidence of the early history of private motor cars in Christchurch (the first motor car appeared in Christchurch in 1898), and the nature of their storage and maintenance by a wealthy landowner. There are two narrow garages, with mechanics pits and evidence of associated staff quarters. In its location and design the motor house reflects a transitional period in history, from horse powered transport to the widespread use of the motor vehicle.

After Kincaid's death, the property was sold in 1929 to another businessman, John Montgomery. Montgomery was the principal of J. Montgomery and Co, a seed merchandizing and exporting firm. He also served as chairman of directors of the Christchurch Press Company. Kincaid renamed the property 'Kilmead' after the family's village in Ireland; it remained in the Montgomery family until 1946, when it was sold to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Christchurch and converted for use as a seminary. The Holy Name Seminary opened on site the following year.

The site and remaining fire damaged dormitory and chapel are associated with the Holy Name Seminary and the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny convent. This was the second national seminary established by the church in New Zealand. The Holy Name Seminary originally offered secondary education to boys intending to enter the priesthood; this covered a gap in Catholic education that occurred when the major Holy Cross Seminary at Mosgiel stopped taking school-age students in 1932.

The need for a minor seminary had been identified at the 1936 Council of Australian and New Zealand Bishops and the order was received from Rome in 1939 to establish one. The Holy Name Seminary was established in the Christchurch diocese of Bishop Patrick Lyons as he was struggling to find priests (HNZPT website).

The Holy Name Seminary was staffed by priests from the Society of Jesus in Australia and the domestic needs of the seminary were tended to by five Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, who arrived from Ireland in 1948. It opened with 40 boys and its roll rose to between 70 and 90 pupils, although only about a third of these would go on to become priests.

In 1955 Holy Name began to shift from the education of secondary school boys to teaching tertiary level philosophy to budding clerics. This change was required because of overcrowding at Holy Cross; by 1959 Holy Name had phased out secondary level teaching altogether. As a result of this change the seminary was extended again in the early 1960s when a separate chapel and living quarters for over 100 students were built to the east of the 1950 addition. The extensions cost £200,000.

By the 1970s however the number of students at both seminaries had declined significantly - in 1975 there were only 22 students at Holy Name; by 1979 this number had dropped to just 13. Holy Name was assimilated into Holy Cross in 1979 and the Holy Name complex became a student hostel named Campion Hall. Campion Hall housed Teachers' College, Polytechnic and University of Canterbury students; 98 students were resident in 1981.

Patrick and Veronica Luisetti purchased the property from the Catholic Diocese in September 1981 and renamed the complex Antonio Hall. They lived in the original dwelling with the remaining buildings being used as a hostel and function centre. At the end of the twentieth century, the property changed hands again and the new owner began converting the former dormitory wing into motel units; this project was not completed. The early twentieth century portion of the complex sustained severe damage in the Canterbury Earthquake Sequences of 2010 and 2011. The whole complex was vacant when it suffered two fires in 2019 and 2021.

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 Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have cultural and spiritual significance.

The site is located in the vicinity of a Kā Ara Tupuna, a Ngāi Tahu traditional travel route identified as Ōtautahi to Taumutu (Kā Huru Manu, Ngāi Tahu atlas).

The chapel, dormitory and setting have cultural and spiritual value as the place where for over thirty years, many young men and their teachers followed the distinctive way of life of trainees for the Catholic priesthood. Students had three years of intensive training in scholastic philosophy and then transferred to Mosgiel for four years of theological studies in preparation for service as priests.

The large chapel (seating 300) was dedicated in 1963 and provided a spiritual focus for the religious community until 1978. The chapel was also used for musical performances (for example by the Canterbury University Chamber Orchestra in the early 1980s) and during the Luisetti's tenure it was a popular wedding venue.

The motor house reflects the way of life of a successful businessman in the early 20th Century who had the means to own a private motor vehicle during the early transitional stage from horse driven transport to the widespread use of the motor car.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting are of architectural and aesthetic significance. The chapel and dormitory are examples of the mid-twentieth century work of long-standing architectural practice Collins & Son.

After the Holy Name Seminary had taken over the property, additions were executed in two phases (1950 and 1963) by noted architect J. G. Collins of Collins and Son, the city's oldest architectural firm. The practice designed numerous buildings of a wide range of types and styles throughout Canterbury. The 1950 extension added a two-storey wing to the east side of the house and included a dining room, library, small chapel and dormitory, all since destroyed by fire. The much larger 1961-63 additions included lecture rooms, a common room, a larger chapel and a dormitory with individual accommodation for nearly 100 interns; only the chapel and dormitory remain. The structural engineers were Royds and Sutherland, and construction was by Fletcher Construction company.

The buildings were specifically designed to form a cohesive whole with the original Baron's Court dwelling. The cruciform chapel has a restrained classical exterior featuring an apsidal end with a large pedimented portico relief featuring the IHS Christogram – the symbol of the Society of Jesus - a hipped roof and arched windows. The interior is a modern interpretation of the idiom with exposed brick walls and a concrete truss ceiling. The chapel had a very fine interior with careful detailing in high quality materials (marble altar, mosaic ceiling tiles, parquet floor, pews) which resulted in a highly successful mid-century design. Key features such as some of the stained-glass windows, the brick exterior, the marble altar and intaglio remain.

The chapel and dormitory both sustained earthquake damage in the Canterbury Earthquakes and have also been damaged by fire and vandalism.

The south end wall of the chapel was destroyed in the fire – this included the choir gallery and organ loft. The south end of the roof and the side walls were also partly destroyed and damaged. The interior was also damaged at the southern end – particularly the roof trusses and cladding, and the mosaic ceiling finish. Fire and vandalism have damaged some of the stained-glass windows.

The dormitory was housed in a long two storied rectangular wing with small dormitory rooms accessed off a corridor. It contained 98 senior student's bedrooms with built in furniture, as well as staff rooms. This building has regular side elevations in a simple Modernist style with restrained detailing. The northern elevation featured an apsidal end; in tandem with the chapel's apsidal forms – this reflected a prominent feature of the former dwelling. Alterations to convert the block to motel units added modern joinery to the west façade and changed the interior layout. The southern-most roof structure and mid-block gable walls have been damaged by fire.

The motor house is a substantial free-standing building principally of one storey with a partial upper floor. Located at the end of the driveway from Riccarton Road, the motor house is constructed of timber weatherboards with a corrugated iron roof. It provided for vehicle storage and servicing and appears to have also provided spaces for staff. There is a mix of window and door styles related to the use, including a stable type door and multipaned windows. It features two sets of garage doors with multipaned windows. The building in its style and arrangement illustrates aspects of the transition from stables buildings to motor garages. The building is an early remaining example of provision for the storing and management of private motor vehicles.

The grounds have design value as the work of landscape designer Alfred Buxton. Thomas Kincaid had Buxton, who is considered the most significant landscape gardener in New Zealand in the first half of the twentieth century, design the grounds of his new home (1909, now destroyed by fire). The Kincaid garden was one of Buxton's earliest commissions. The garden was designed in the contemporary Japanese fashion integrating ponds with cascades, rustic oriental styled bridges, elm trees and Chinese Fan palms. After John Montgomery assumed ownership, Buxton returned in 1930 to further develop his design. Some of the Buxton scheme was destroyed by the mid-twentieth century alterations to the property, but features including mature trees, evidence of ponds and decorative balustrades remain.

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 Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have technological and craftsmanship significance for their construction, materials, finishes and fixtures which for the chapel in particular are of a notable quality and craftsmanship of the time.

The fire damaged chapel is of portal frame construction. The chapel and dormitory wing were constructed of reinforced precast concrete, raised in slabs weighing over five tons. The walls are reinforced concrete columns with brick infill. The pedimented portico on the northern elevation of the chapel, containing a tiled Christogram, is noteworthy. The interior featured a decorative Italian blue glass mosaic tiled ceiling, and a contemporary white Sicilian marble altar, approached via white marble steps in a complete circle. The 90,000 bricks were specially made and fired in Christchurch, and then sawn on the exposed surface. There are 16 stained glass windows made in Melbourne, each bearing a motif highlighting aspects of Christian doctrine. The floor of the sanctuary is a parquet floor of basketweave patterned red gum, and the chapel floor was parquet New Zealand beech blocks laid in herring-bone pattern over concrete in which are laid hot water pipes for heating. The pews are of Sapele mahogany.

The motor house is constructed of timber. It features timber wall and ceiling linings in some of the spaces and a concrete mechanics pit.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural) setting, a group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detailing in relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), setting, a group, precinct or streetscape; a physical or

visible landmark; a contribution to the character of the environment (constructed and natural) setting, a group, precinct or streetscape.

The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have contextual significance on account of the close relationship of the two brick buildings to one another in terms of materials, form and design, and for the extensive landscaped grounds all three buildings are located in.

The chapel and dormitory are closely related in terms of their design and materials. They are both clad in brick, and their rectangular form with rounded north facades mirror one another on the same axis.

The setting is of particular significance as (in part) a garden designed by noted landscape gardener Alfred Buxton, and as a large open space in the built-up suburb of Riccarton. The landscaped garden setting includes evidence of ponds and established trees, including two which are scheduled.

The motor house associated with the Kincaid's 'Baron's Court' house (lost to fire) and the property's gardens remain and serve as a marker of the residential use of the site prior to its development as a national Catholic seminary. The original axis of the driveway along the west side of the property leading to the motor house still remains evident. A concrete water tower is also located in the setting and is evident in aerial photographs from the 1950s. Next to this is a brick outbuilding with a slate roof.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological values that demonstrate or are associated with: potential to provide archaeological information through physical evidence; an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values or past events, activities, people or phases.

The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900. The site is located in the vicinity of a Kā Ara Tupuna, a Ngāi Tahu traditional travel route identified as Ōtautahi to Taumutu (Kā Huru Manu, Ngāi Tahu atlas). Evidence of the Buxton garden (1909) also remains.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have overall significance to the Christchurch district including Banks Peninsula.

The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have historical and social significance for their connection with New Zealand's second national Catholic seminary, and for their association with the dwelling (now demolished) and extensive landscaped grounds of successful early 20th century businessmen. The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have cultural and spiritual significance for their use as a place of Catholic vocational training and subsequent use for musical performances and, later, a wedding venue. The former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory are of architectural and aesthetic

significance as examples of the mid-twentieth century work of long-standing and accomplished Canterbury architectural practice Collins & Son, and for their contextual design relationship to the previous home on the site which was lost to fire. The motor house is of architectural and aesthetic significance as an early and intact example of the provision of buildings to house and service private motor vehicles. The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting have technological and craftsmanship significance for their construction, materials, finishes and fixtures, which for the chapel in particular are of a notable quality and craftsmanship of the time. The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and the and setting have contextual significance on account of the relationship of the two seminary buildings to one another in terms of materials, form and design, for the evidence the motor house provides of the evolution of the place over time, and for the extensive landscaped grounds all buildings are located within. The former Baron's Court/ Kilmead motor house and former Holy Name Seminary chapel and dormitory and setting are of archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to human activity on the site, possibly including that which occurred prior to 1900.

REFERENCES:

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Press 'Magnificent Chapel at Holy Name Seminary.', 12 February 1963, p.15; 'Campion Hall students upset', 12 June 1981, p.4; 'A delicate balance', 24 July 1981, p.4; 'Hostel Money to be spent on seminary,' 2 October 1981, p.4.

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