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## PROPOSED SOLDIER'S COTTAGES PRECINCT

### 1 Introduction

It is proposed to consider for listing on the Hamilton City Council's District plan an area in Hamilton East, which has five Californian Bungalow Cottages built on an original militia town acre. The proposed precinct comprises 55, 57, 59, 61 and 63 Cook Street. Attached are inventory entries on each of the five houses.

### 2 Assessment criteria

The assessment of the affected buildings will be assessed according to the criteria and rankings of the District Plan, Appendix 2.4-III Categories for Management. These are as follows:

#### 2.1 Geographic Significance

Geographic extent of a heritage precinct's significance. For this purpose, four categories have been identified:

- 1: Heritage precinct whose value is derived from their national significance
- 2: Heritage precincts which is significant to the region
- 3: Heritage precincts which has significance in terms of their relevance to the City
- 4: Heritage precincts which have local / neighbourhood significance.

#### 2.2 Heritage features/characteristics

- a Social/historical
- b Traditional/cultural
- c Technological
- d Setting/aesthetic/landscape
- e Architectural
- f Consistency

### 3 Assessment

#### 3.1 Geographic significance

The area has some but limited local/neighbourhood significance.

## **3.2 Heritage features/characteristics**

### *3.2.1 Social/historical*

The proposed precinct of Californian Bungalow Cottages has historical significance as the five houses occupy militia allotment 41 first owned by Francis Callaghan, in 1866. It is presumed that Callaghan was a low ranking member of the militia, as higher ranking members obtained greater areas of land than the standard one acre. The allotment was one acre occupying half a street block in length running from the intersection of Nixon and Firth Streets, and west along Cook Street towards Wellington Street.

The group of cottages is commonly referred to as "Soldier's Cottages". It has been assumed that the houses were constructed by discharged soldiers following the end of World War I as the houses were constructed over a seven year period between 1922 to 1935. However, it appears that only 59 Cook Street was built by a returned from World War, Frederick Charles Coombe.

The inter-war period was one of three major periods of housing construction of Hamilton east when most of the Californian Bungalow houses were constructed.

Some residents consider that the group should be listed on the District Plan.

### *3.2.2 Traditional/cultural*

The design and popularity of the Californian Bungalow reflected the economic and architectural influence of the West Coast of the United States on New Zealand as well as the relative cheapness of constructing the Bungalow compared with the more ornate and expensive housing popular before World War I. The flexibility of planning and design is reflected in the Soldier's Cottages in Cook Street showing that even modest cottages could still exhibit the fundamental characteristics of the style yet having different floor plans and elevations.

### *3.2.3 Technological*

While the style often included stone, render, and shingles the Soldier's Cottages use only standard materials readily available. These included timber framing, timber weatherboards, both rusticated and shiplap, timber joinery and corrugated steel roofing. Most of the houses have brick chimneys.

### *3.2.4 Setting/aesthetic/landscape*

Although each of the cottages has a different floor plan, external elevational treatment and entry location, the compactness and consistency of having the gable face the street contributes to a homogeneity of the group. The similar size of the cottages, proximity to the street boundary and being an unbroken group from the corner create a minor landmark grouping the immediate locality

Each of the houses has timber picket or picket with trellis fencing, and a driveway on the north side contributing to the sense of homogeneity of landscape.

### *3.2.4 Architectural*

The cottages are simple houses with a small floor area but, which nevertheless have the essential stylistic characteristics of the Californian Bungalow style. Each cottage has a completely different street elevation although they have a similar roof pitch, gable or gables facing the street and are all weatherboarded.

55 has a symmetrical front elevation with gabled porch and three light casement windows either side. 57 is also symmetrical with two light projecting casements with toplights and no door. The gable has flat sheet and timber battens, accenting this part of the elevation. 59 is asymmetrical and had an open front corner entry with triple light casement with toplights central to the remaining solid wall. The gable has bell casting with brackets, as an accent to the elevation. 61 is asymmetrical with overlapping gables and entry from the corner of the front projecting gable and, like 59 has a triple light casement central to the remaining solid wall. The gable has bell-casting but without brackets. 63 has overlapping gables but with hooded triple light casement window and toplights to the front projecting gable and flat roofed bay window on the recessed main house. This house has bell-casting to the gable with brackets and vents at the apex.

### *3.2.5 Consistency*

The group of five houses has a high level of consistency in a number of areas. These include:

- scale of house;
- style;
- roof pitch;
- external wall and roofing materials;
- gable facing the street;
- location compared to the street boundary;
- driveway to the rear on one side;
- timber street fencing;
- approximate age;
- being an unbroken group.

### *3.2.6 Summary of significance*

The proposed precinct is an intact grouping of consistently styled Californian Bungalow cottages built in a seven year period between 1922 and 1935 on original militia town acre 41 first owned by Francis Callaghan. Despite the name, research has discovered that only one cottage was built by a returned soldier at the end of World War I. The group has a high level of homogeneity of form, materials, and landscaping despite different interpretations of the style. The group has some local public esteem.

**4.0 Recommendation for listing**

The grouping has limited heritage values, with evidence gathered to date comprising an historical association with militia town acre 41 formerly owned by Francis Callahagn and a consistency in urban design, style and approximate age of cottage. 59 Cook Street was built by a returned soldier from World War I, possibly giving the precinct its name. On the basis of the current level of research and assessment, that there is insufficient heritage values to recommend the precinct for listing on the District Plan.

## APPENDIX A

### Background to the Californian Bungalow Style

#### The Bungalow style in America

The term 'bungalow' is an Anglicisation of the Hindu word 'bangla' which refers to the north Indian single-storey thatched houses with surrounding verandah. In the twentieth century architectural world, the term refers to an American style originating in California whose immediate predecessors were Queen Anne cottages of the late nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. Japanese architecture, the Stick Style and the Arts and Crafts movement also influenced the development of the Californian Bungalow style.

The philosophy behind the style was expressed by Gustav Stickley in the 1909 edition of his magazine "Craftsman Homes", when he stated that the bungalow was

*"a house reduced to its simplest form [which] never fails to harmonise with its surroundings, because of its low broad proportions and absolute lack of ornamentation give it a character so natural and unaffected that it seems to sing into and blend with any landscape". It could "be built of any local material and with the aid of such help as local workmen can afford, so it is never expensive unless elaborated out of all kinship with its real character of a primitive dwelling. It is beautiful, because it is planned and built to meet needs in the simplest and most direct way."*<sup>2</sup>

Stickley's ideas gained great popularity and firmly established the bungalow movement in the early twentieth century so that by the beginning of World War One the bungalow was the most common house style of the American West Coast<sup>3</sup>.

The style became widespread throughout America when the Sears Roebuck company included plans in its mail-order catalogues. Prefabricated, kit set houses, including joinery, were sold by the company as well as other building-supply companies. Unique designs of the Californian bungalow style were also popular, with the Pasadena architectural firm of Greene and Greene designing many significant examples. The 1911 publication "Bungalows: Their Design, Construction and furnishing, with suggestions also for Camps, Summer Homes and Cottages of Similar Character" by Henry H Saylor further promoted the bungalow style and, even by this time, he identified ten types of bungalow in the United States. (Duplicated below)

The use of natural materials were typical of the Californian Bungalow with cobblestones for foundations and chimneys popular, while walls usually had brown stained shingles as the main or decorative cladding. Roofs were either of shingles where wall cladding was timber, or of clay tiles where the wall cladding was stucco. Wide, low overhanging eaves with exposed rafters are, perhaps, the most easily recognisable characteristic of the style.

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<sup>1</sup> J C Poppeliers, S A Chambers, N B Schwartz, "What style is it?, a guide to American architecture", Historic American Buildings Survey, National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Preservation Press, 1983, page 76

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> William Toomath, "Built in New Zealand, the Houses We Live In"

Interior planning and spatial proportions also followed a standard pattern. Informal arrangements of rooms were encouraged with front doors opening directly into living rooms and dining rooms were either part of the living room or were immediately adjacent to them. Often there were no halls or parlours<sup>4</sup>. Clinker brick or cobble stoned fireplaces were central features of the living room, while most ceilings had exposed beams. All woodwork was stained a natural stain.

The Victorian high and vertically proportioned spaces were replaced with lower, broader spaces that were easier to heat and were cheaper to construct.

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### **The bungalow style in Australia**

The close economic and climatic links between California and Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the bungalow style imported and embraced Australia-wide. Examples of the style in Australia between 1890 and 1915 were transitional between the highly decorative Queen Anne and the commonly recognisable twentieth century California bungalow styles. Often incorporating bay windows, the transitional style also included wide verandahs supported on large timber or masonry posts and expansive and prominent roofs. The use of shingles was ubiquitous.

From 1908 the architectural press in Australia printed articles on the bungalow. The California styled bungalows were influenced greatly by imported American architectural literature and just prior to the outbreak of World War One, the California Redwood Association built an exhibition house in Rosebury, a new Sydney suburb.

The Californian characteristics of low pitched gabled roofs with overhanging eaves, expressed rafters, bracketed posts and brick, stucco or timber weatherboard walls were popular in the Australian examples. Corrugated iron, Marseille tiles, bituminous felt and asbestos cement shingles replaced the shingled roofing common in California.

### **The bungalow style in New Zealand**

The first houses designed in New Zealand which have some California bungalow attributes were houses designed by Auckland architect George Selwyn Goldsbro' and Christchurch architect Samuel Hurst Seager in the late 1890's.

Goldsbro' studied architecture and then practised in Auckland before travelling to Australia and working in Melbourne and Sydney in the 1880's. Although remembered for his commercial designs, Goldsbro' was the most prolific house designer in Auckland at the time.

Houses designed by Goldsbro', such as "Rothsay" and the Kidd House, reflect a simplification of the Queen Anne and Arts and Crafts styles but still including moderately pitched roofs, bay windows, double hung sash windows and decoration around chimneys, gables and verandahs. Expansive roof planes, exposed rafters, wide eaves and deep verandahs were indications of a nascent bungalow style, however these were also typical of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Samuel Hurst Seager was a Christchurch architect who trained at Canterbury College and then at London University College, the National Art Training School, the Architectural Association and the Royal Academy of Arts<sup>5</sup>. After further study in Europe he returned to New Zealand in the mid 1880's. He became known for his Queen Anne styled Christchurch municipal building design and his many domestic buildings in the same style.

As with Goldsbro's designs, Hurst Seager's foray into the bungalow style were largely through the Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne styles and owed more to the English style of summer resort bungalow than the Californian house. Hurst Seager's first attempt at establishing a New Zealand form of architecture resulted in a log cabin form of construction which has some elements of bungalow and Ashford suggests that this is New Zealand's first bungalow<sup>6</sup>. An expansive roof and exposed rafter ends are consistent with the bungalow style, but all other aspects of this house are derived from the Arts and Crafts movement. Other houses designed by Hurst Seager, which Ashford suggests are bungalows, have elements of bungalow characteristics - shingled gables, exposed eaves, casement windows, expansive split gabled roofs- owe more to the Arts and Crafts style rather than the bungalow.

The first authentic California bungalow was 'Los Angeles' in Christchurch the construction of which was supervised by local architect J S Guthrie. The design was brought back from California by the owner, Captain McDonald in 1910 and was completed in 1913<sup>7</sup>. The house is one and a half stories with large verandahs under a continuous roof, shingled gables, low pitched roof, exposed rafter and beams ends, stone verandah posts and chimneys, ship lap weatherboards, large 'eye-lid' dormer and casement windows.

Another development in the promotion of the Californian bungalow design was the publication of designs in newspapers, plans books and cottage bungalow designs from California published in Progress. This did not bring about the widespread use of the style, but lead to a transitional style between the Queen Anne style villa, the style most

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Lochhead, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 1900 - 1920, Department of Internal Affairs, page 463, 464

<sup>6</sup> Jeremy Ashford, The Bungalow in New Zealand, Viking, Penguin, 1994, page 13

<sup>7</sup> Toomath, op cit, page 161

in vogue at the time, towards the California bungalow. Architect and builder designs followed this transitional form of house style until the end of the first world war. By 1918 complete kit sets were imported directly from the West Coast of America and Canada<sup>8</sup>.

From the early 1920's until the depression, the Californian bungalow was the predominant house style. This came about through cheap government loans and ease of obtaining house designs.

There was a huge expansion of new suburbs in New Zealand following the end of World War One to answer a massive housing shortage. The government offered house loans and as well as completed buildings. The house design most often selected was the California bungalow such that almost all new suburbs of the inter-war years were bungalow suburbs.

Most Californian bungalows were, however, constructed by building speculators and designed by draftsmen. A number of plan books of Californian bungalows designs by architects and draftsmen were printed to assist builders and owners in the post-war years.

Apart from 'Los Angeles' very few of the New Zealand style designs followed exactly the Californian prototype. Full expression was given to the typical exterior characteristics of the Californian bungalow of low pitched multiple gables, overhanging eaves, exposed rafters and beams, splayed walls, expansive verandahs with various gable and posts and sharp pointed, elongated barge boards. However, leaded English-type fanlight casements, flat roofed faceted bow windows and bell cast gables on stub brackets were New Zealand adaptations to the original concept.

The interior planning of the New Zealand Californian bungalow usually maintained the central corridor of the villa instead of the moving from room to room. Typical interior design characteristics were derived from California and included low ceilings, boxed ceiling beams, timber panelling, large fire surrounds and dark stained varnished timber. Vertically proportioned 'upright' doors were common where, usually, three slim panels without bolection mouldings formed the lower two thirds of the door, with a single panel above.

The late 1930's saw the decline in popularity of the Californian bungalow with new choices in style initiated by the architectural profession who had never fully embraced the style. They, instead, championed the new Moderne, Art Deco, Spanish, English revival or Modern Movement styles.

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<sup>8</sup> Toomath, op cit, page 161