

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
169 FORBURY ROAD - FORMER BRINSLEY RESIDENCE



Photo: Ray White Real Estate, accessed 19 February 2024

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX093
Address:	169 Forbury Road
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Residential
Condition of Property:	Not known to be at risk because of condition

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Does not meet criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope of the c1931 dwelling.
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
	Excluded elements	L shaped garage to the east of the dwelling

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Brinsley Residence, at 169 Forbury Road, has historic and design significance as an opulent residence of outstanding quality built for William Brinsley, designed by Dunedin architectural partnership Miller and White in 1931. It is associated with four notable Dunedin families; Brinsley, Speight, Falconer, and Farry, who have resided in the home. The quality of its design and construction demonstrates the style and taste of the wealthy families who settled in St Clair in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The former Brinsley Residence is of outstanding architectural quality and retains a high level of authenticity and integrity.

The former Brinsley Residence is easily comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type. When compared with other scheduled buildings, it meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Interwar (1914-1939)
Style	Interwar English Revival
Era/Date of Construction	1931
Architect/Designer/Builder	Miller and White W C Craig (builder)
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Former Brinsley Residence Former Farry Residence
Primary Construction Materials	Brick, stucco, Oamaru stone, slate roofing, copper flashings, steel framed windows, stained and leadlight glazing.
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Period details including decorative brick facings, stucco finish, dormers, gabled entry porch, prominent chimneys, carved stone ornamentation, half timbering.

Previous site development

The larger block from which this section was subdivided was originally owned by William Ings, after whom Ings Avenue was named. It was subdivided in 1896. No buildings are shown on the subdivision plan. It was further subdivided in 1930, again with no structures shown on the section. William Richard Brinsley bought the section in 1931.

Design and construction

When the house was built it was described as 'perhaps the most expensive and most up-to-date residence that has been erected in Dunedin in recent years.' The house was designed by architectural partnership Miller and White for W R Brinsley. The builder was W C Craig (who beat out twenty-three other tenders).

The house contained twelve rooms over two floors, set on a large section with frontages to both Forbury Road and Ings Avenue. The house was built of clinker brick with timber and plaster finishes with a slate roof. It was designed in English Revival style. The house has leadlight windows, with a feature window designed by John Brock in the hall. The entrance porch facing Ings Avenue was built of brick with Oamaru stone decorations. The interior was notable for its quality and included oak panelling and beams, a stone fireplace with an inglenook, a billiard room with a greenstone mantelpiece, an oak stair, sunroom, gas central heating, a tennis court, formal garden all surrounded by an open brick-work fence.¹

Brinsley sold the property to Norman Charles Speight and wife Winifred Speight in 1946. The Speights sold to Edward Falconer in 1952. Alexander Emslie bought the property in 1974. Malcom Farry purchased it in 1984. Farry owned the property until 2020.

Notable people/Themes

W R Brinsley

William Richard Brinsley was the managing director of Brinsley and Co from the mid-1920s.

Brinsley and Co were ironfounders and range [stove] manufacturers. The company was established by William's father Richard Brinsley and Philip Bett in 1895 to challenge Henry Shacklock's hold on market for coal ranges. Brinsley and Co built a 2,400 square foot factory on Cumberland Street. The company held the patent for the well-known and successful 'Champion' ranges. William Richard Brinsley became managing director of the company on Richard's death in 1924.

Around 1930 Radiation Ltd, a UK based manufacture purchased a majority shareholding in the firm. William was the major shareholder, building his Forbury Road house after the purchase. William died in 1959, with the family ownership continuing until around 1964.² In its heyday the company employed 350 staff and occupied 4 acres of floor space in buildings.³

Miller and White

James Hodge White and Leslie Douglas Coombs (1885-1952) were in partnership between 1922 and 1927.

¹ *Evening Star*, 21 April 1931, Page 2

² <http://www.cemeteries.org.nz/stories/brinsleyrichard.pdf> accessed 19 February 2024.

³ <http://www.cemeteries.org.nz/stories/brinsleyrichard.pdf>

James Hodge White (1895-1952) was educated in Dunedin and Hobart. He entered the office of Salmond and Vanes as a cadet before joining Mason and Wales. After military service in World War One he studied at the Architectural Association in London, gaining a RIBA degree. He worked in several London firms and travelled to America before returning to Dunedin.⁴ He was in partnership with Leslie Douglas Coombs between 1922 and 1927.⁵ Coombs and Whites' early commissions included the Nees Warehouse (1922), and the Southland and Milton War Memorials (1923), and the Otago Boys' High School Memorial Gateway (1923).

White went on to establish the firm of Miller & White in 1927 with Eric S C Miller. Miller & White took over the Dunedin practice of Edmund Anscombe, who left the city in 1928. After Eric Miller died in 1948, Ian Gilman Dunn became partner.⁶ The practice were architects to the University of Otago, and responsible for some substantial Dunedin buildings. White designed the Regent Theatre, the Willi Fels Wing of the Otago Museum, and Allbell Chambers as well as city residences and commercial buildings.⁷

Norman and Winifred Speight

Norman Speight (1899-1979) was son of brewer and businessman Charles Speight (1865-1928) the grandson of Speight's Brewery founder James Speight (1865-1928).⁸ Norman was a surgeon at Dunedin Hospital. He served as a Colonel in World War Two and was awarded the CBE and a Military Cross in recognition of distinguished services in the South Pacific in the New Zealand Medical Corps.⁹

Edward Falconer and Mary Bertha Rawlinson.

Edward Charles Stuart Falconer was a Dunedin businessman and company director. He married Mary Bertha Rawlinson in 1935. Falconer was managing director J and A Wilkinson, Limited in the 1930s.¹⁰ He had a wide involvement in community activities,, being a tennis and squash player, sports administrator, singing in the Royal Dunedin Male Choir, as well as serving on its committee.¹¹ Falconer became a prominent racehorse owner-breeder, and member of the Dunedin Jockey Club.¹² His horse Baghdad Note won the 1970 Melbourne Cup.¹³ He was the chair of the directors of the Southern Cross Hotel (Dunedin) Ltd in the late 1960s.¹⁴

⁴ *Otago Witness* 17 May 1921 Page 47

⁵ Christine McCarthy, 'Good Architecture should not be a plaything': New Zealand architecture in the 1920s, *AHA: Architectural History Aotearoa* (2011) vol 8:1-19. P. 2.

⁶ ARC-0520 Dalziel Architects Records, <https://hocken.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/60881> accessed 9 February 2024.

⁷ Hardwicke Knight and Niel Wales, *Buildings of Dunedin: An Illustrated Architectural Guide to New Zealand's Victorian City*, John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1988, pp.192-193.

⁸ Donald Gordon. 'Speight, Charles', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s29/speight-charles> (accessed 20 February 2024)

⁹ [Norman Charles Speight \(1899-1979\) | WikiTree FREE Family Tree](#); *Evening Star* 15 February 1945 Page 4

¹⁰ *New Zealand Herald* 12 July 1937 Page 10

¹¹ *Otago Daily Times*, 28 May 1940, Page 9; *Otago Daily Times* 12 September 1940 Page 3

¹² *Evening Star*, 24 May 1947, Page 9; *Press* 28 July 1955 Page 4

¹³ *Press* 4 November 1970 Page 1

¹⁴ *Press* 17 August 1968 Page 18

Falconer was awarded an OBE for his services to the community in 1978.¹⁵

Rawlinson, who performed under her unmarried name) was one of the 'finest New Zealand singers and theatrical performers of her generation.'¹⁶ During the period the Falconers owned the house (1952-1974) Rawlinson was making her name as an opera singer of international standard. Appearing in a series of television music hall-programmes, she also acted in and produced shows for a wide variety of amateur musical and dramatic societies in Dunedin and further afield. In her later years she turned attention to teaching.

Farry Family

Malcolm and Lyn Farry and family lived in the house for over 30 years, buying it in 1984. Malcolm and Lyn were both involved in the community, particularly education, and the Catholic Church. As well as running his dental practice, Malcolm served two terms on the Dunedin City Council, chaired the fundraising committee to establish Orokonui Ecosanctuary, worked towards establishing the Forsyth Barr Stadium. Farry received a CNZM in 2013. Lyn was also widely involved in the community including Zonta and the Sophie Elliott Foundation.¹⁷

St Clair Development

St Clair developed around the subdivision of larger land holdings from the 1870s. Early suburban development was slow, speeding up after 1881 when the tram was introduced. St Clair and St Clair Park were notable for their large suburban homes owned by wealthy merchants and company directors, particularly on the raised site overlooking the beach. As early as 1880 the area attracted the well-off businessmen who built substantial homes on large sections.¹⁸

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The dwelling demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The former Brinsley Residence has historical significance for its association with four significant Dunedin families, including William Brinsley, for whom the house was built, managing director of Brinsley and Company, ironfounders and range manufacturers, Norman and Winifred Speight, Alexander Falconer and wife Mary Rawlinson who were well known in business and music circles, and the Farry family. All have made significant contributions to Dunedin. The house also has historical significance representing the settlement of St Clair by well-to-do families and individuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this house being one of the most opulent of those residences.

¹⁵ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/47551/supplement/6270/data.pdf> accessed 20 February 2024.

¹⁶ Adrienne Simpson. 'Rawlinson, Mary Bertha', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5r8/rawlinson-mary-bertha> (accessed 20 February 2024)

¹⁷ <https://dunedin.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/200012> accessed 21 February 2024;
<http://www.channel39.co.nz/news/house-suited-farry-family-well-35-years> accessed 21 February 2024.

¹⁸ Barbara A Newton, *Our St Clair, A Resident's History*, Kenmore Productions, Dunedin, 2003, p.45., p. 11.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

DESIGN

The dwelling demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The former Brinsley Residence has design significance as one of the city's most opulent residences designed by prominent architectural partnership Miller and White in 1931. Designed in English Revival style using high quality materials it was one of the most expensive residences built in the city at the time it was built. It has retained a high level of authenticity and integrity and is a very fine example of the English Revival style. It is notable for its quality and style representing the wealth and prosperity the Brinsley family.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

ARC-0520 Dalziel Architects Records, <https://hocken.recollect.co.nz/nodes/view/60881> accessed 9 February 2024.

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