



# Register Record

Register Number: 3119

Site Reference: P4318

**Name:** Linwood House

**Other Names:**

Name	Year From	Year To
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**Location:** 30 Linwood Avenue, Linwood, CHRISTCHURCH

**Legal Description:** Lot 2 DP 19899 (CT CB10A/1035), Canterbury Land District

**Local Authority:** Christchurch City

**Summary:** Dorset medical doctor Joseph Brittan (1805-67), his second wife Sophia, and a young family of four from his first marriage arrived at Lyttelton aboard the Canterbury Association ship 'William Hyde' in 1852. Sophia was the sister of Joseph's first, deceased, wife; the scandal encouraged the family to emigrate. Joseph's brother William Guise had arrived with the Canterbury Pilgrims the previous year and was a prominent figure in the new colony. Joseph was also to become a significant figure in early Canterbury. A land speculator and small farmer, he became part owner and editor of the Canterbury Standard newspaper in 1854, and served in the Canterbury Provincial Council 1855-7 and 1861-2. In 1863 he became resident magistrate for Christchurch and Kaiapoi, but resigned the following year because of ill health. Although apparently an able politician, Joseph was described as having a sarcastic, irritable manner - perhaps as a consequence of his poor health - and was thus generally unpopular.

Soon after arrival Joseph purchased the 50 acres of rural section 300 in Avonside. The adjacent rural section 301 was also leased and later purchased, to total some 110 acres. At the edge of his section near the River Avon, Joseph set aside ten acres for a house, gardens and orchard. While this property was being developed, the family resided in a leased property in Hereford Street.

In 1857 a substantial eight room brick dwelling, Linwood House, was completed on the Avonside property. The house, which took its name from a village in Hampshire, was designed by Joseph's nephew, architect and surveyor Charles Fooks (1829-1907). Dorset born Fooks arrived in Canterbury with his wife in 1851, and after a period spent in the survey office, went farming. By 1861 however he was in financial difficulties, and returned to his profession. In the late 1870s Fooks settled in Ashburton, where he served as borough engineer for the remainder of his career.

The drowning of his second son, Arthur, in the Avon on New Year's Day 1862 devastated Joseph Brittan, and Linwood House was offered for sale. Nothing came of this at the time however. Joseph died in 1867, and Sophia inherited the estate and its substantial debts.

Nineteen-year-old daughter (Elizabeth) Mary (1845-1940) married budding politician William Rolleston (1831-1903) in 1865, and immediately moved to Wellington where William was to serve as Under Secretary of Native Affairs. Following Joseph's death, William was elected Superintendent of the Province of Canterbury, and the couple returned to Christchurch with their then two children to live at Linwood. Rent paid to Sophia helped service a mortgage on the property. As residence of the Superintendent, Linwood played host to numerous official engagements. However with the Rollestons', their (ultimately) nine children, Sophia, and Mary's brother Francis (Frank) in residence, both finances and space were tight. Like her husband, Sophia also suffered perpetual ill health, although she lingered until 1877. Disabled eldest son, Joseph, was left a small stipend, but Linwood and its farm were left to her favourite, Frank. This meant however that the Rollestons' significant financial contribution to maintaining the property in the Brittan family went largely unrecognised. William was apparently quite upset at the outcome, and after the Rolleston's moved out, contact with Frank effectively ceased.



Until Arthur's death, Frank had had very little interest in the farm. He preferred instead a sporting life, and was a keen horse racer and hunter. The first steeplechase in Canterbury was run at Linwood. With Arthur's demise however, responsibility for the farm was thrust upon him. Although he improved the value of the property, Frank remained a reluctant manager - coming into conflict with William over his decisions. Somewhat inevitably therefore, Linwood was subdivided for housing in 1878, when the 217 sections fetched Frank the considerable sum of £18, 432. A second period of subdivision took place in 1886, when the sections fetched a lesser price due to the depression. In 1889 Linwood House itself was sold for £2, 060, to hotelier Edward Hiorns, his wife Amelia and their six children.

Hiorns (1838-1912) was an English plumber and tinsmith who emigrated to Canterbury in 1862 and set up in business in Papanui. Laying down the tools of his trade in 1872, he bought the Central Hotel in Gloucester Street and became a successful hotelier. In 1875 Hiorns ran unsuccessfully for the City Council, but was eventually elected - after the winter distribution of soup to the poor - to the South-East Ward in 1881. The seat was resigned in 1883 when Hiorns revisited England. On his return he leased the Masonic Hotel in Colombo Street, which he partly rebuilt in 1887. The freehold was purchased in 1892. In his capacity as Masonic Grand Master of New Zealand, Hiorns again visited England in 1897 for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

An addition was made for Hiorns to the rear (south) and east side of Linwood House by architect John Whitelaw in 1889. This included a drawing room, billiards room and a study. Whitelaw (1837-1904), who arrived in Christchurch in 1863, was a builder by trade. In 1869 he suffered a serious accident while flax-milling. In 1872 he became Clerk of Works in the Engineers Department of the Provincial Government, and after abolition, held an equivalent position in its central government successor. Whitelaw gave up his position in 1878 to practise as an architect, contractor and valuer. He was prominent in the Sydenham Borough, where he served as a councillor.

In 1898 Hiorns leased Linwood for five years to Sir John Denniston (1845-1919), and possibly moved to Sydney. Denniston was a judge of the Supreme Court in Christchurch. His family were apparently lively, and his homes renown for their hospitality. Denniston's brougham and coachman became a familiar sight in the district. Following the expiry of the lease, subdivision took place in 1903 and 1905. Linwood was then reputedly leased to Alexander Boyle, a founder of stock and station agents Pyne and Co, and later chair of the board of Pyne, Gould and Guinness.

In 1908 Linwood was leased to Mrs David McKee. The Rev. David McKee had been the highly esteemed minister of the Presbyterian church in Rutland Square, Dublin, when in 1879 his health broke down and he emigrated to New Zealand with his family. 'Called' to become the first minister of the newly established Knox Church on North Belt (Bealey Avenue) in 1880, McKee died suddenly later the same year after just ten months in the colony. Left without a provider, McKee's mother, wife and nine young children were apparently treated generously by the Knox congregation. The fate of the family in the intervening 28 years is unknown, but following the lease of Linwood, Mrs McKee established Avonside College, a private school for young ladies. Classes were conducted in detached buildings, but the family shared the house with boarders. In 1911 the school shifted to Rhodes St in Merivale, and the Hiorns' returned to live briefly at Linwood House. Amelia died there in December 1911, and Edward in July 1912.

Following Edward Hiorns' death the property was divided in two, with the house sold to lawyer Francis Cowlshaw in 1916 for £1, 592. Cowlshaw was a son of early Canterbury lawyer and politician W. P. Cowlshaw. He was educated initially at Christs College, then at Rugby and Oxford, and served his articles in the Inner Temple before returning to Christchurch. The family gave their name to Cowlshaw Street in Avonside, near Linwood House. Cowlshaw sold the property to Mrs Ethel Pyne in 1920.



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Ethel Pyne was the widow of Frederick Pyne, a successful businessman who started stock and station agents Pyne and Co. with Alexander Boyle in 1888 (see above). Immediately after purchasing Linwood House, Mrs Pyne had noted Christchurch architectural practice Luttrell Brothers make a £700 addition to the east side of the building. As a 1912 survey plan shows a similar outline to the post 1920 house, it is likely that the Luttrell addition was an upper floor on an earlier (perhaps 1889) single storey service wing. This would also explain the differing fenestration, with sash windows on the ground floor and casement windows on the first floor. Despite its mixed origins, this addition is generally more sympathetic to the architecture of the original Linwood House than is that of John Whitelaw. It is unclear if a single-storey laundry extending from the east elevation was built at this time or slightly later. It had however been constructed by 1927.

In partnership in Launceston, Tasmania, since 1897, brothers Sidney (1872-1932) and Alfred (1865-1924) Luttrell left for Christchurch in 1902 in order to further their careers. Rapidly establishing what was to become one of New Zealand's foremost Edwardian architectural practises, the Luttrells became known particularly for their commercial work. Their chief contribution to New Zealand's architecture is regarded as the introduction of the 'Chicago skyscraper' style with the New Zealand Express Company buildings in Christchurch (1905-7, Cat. I), and Dunedin (1908-10, Cat. I). The firm also designed many buildings for the racing fraternity, and were the unofficial architects of the Roman Catholic Church in Canterbury during the 1910s.

After further subdivision in 1927 and 1932, Mrs Pyne sold Linwood House to Miss Florence Simpson in 1932. Subdividing again in 1935, Simpson later sold the house to solicitor Gordon Branthwaite in 1945. It would appear that Branthwaite himself never occupied the house. By 1948 there were six residents, and the building was probably divided into flats. The rear of the section was subdivided in 1958. Branthwaite died in 1972, and his widow Ida Branthwaite sold Linwood House and its remaining land to Advance Buildings of Nelson, a company in which the Branthwaite's daughter was a partner. A small toilet and kitchen addition appears to have been made at this time, but has since been demolished. Despite this addition however, the City Council noted in 1973 that facilities were insufficient for the number of units in the building. By 1984 the dwelling was in poor condition, and was described by John Wilson as the 'city's worst example of a house which should be preserved being left to decay'.

In 1988 demolition contractor Paddy Snowdon and his wife Jackie bought the house, at which time it was divided into seven flats. Minor alterations were completed in 1991 to ensure that the building met fire regulations. Other renovations have since been carried out to return the house to an acceptable state. Today Linwood House is let as a boarding house with communal facilities, but is well maintained by owners who appreciate its architectural and historical significance.

<b>Registration Status:</b>	Registration Removed
<b>Registration Type:</b>	Historic Place Category 2
<b>Register Number:</b>	3119
<b>Date Registered:</b>	24 June 2005
<b>Extent of Registration:</b>	Registration includes the house its fittings and fixtures, and the land on CT CB10A/1035.
<b>Chattels:</b>	
<b>District Plan Listing:</b>	



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District Plan Christchurch City District Plan Operative (in part) 21 November 2005. Item listed in Appendix 1: List of Protected Buildings, Places and Objects

Protection Mechanism:	Protection Mechanism	Reference	Effective Date
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Other Information:	A fully referenced version of this report is available from the NZHPT Southern Region Office.		
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## General Nature of Wahi Tapu:

Section 23 Assessment:	Section 23(1)	Architectural
	Section 23(1)	Historical
	Section 23(2)	b
	Section 23(2)	g
	Section 23(2)	j

Section 23(2) Detail:	(b) the former home of nationally significant political figure William Rolleston during his term as Superintendent of the Province of Canterbury.
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g) It is an unusual example of the construction of a Georgian/Regency style villa in New Zealand. The only other comparable house in Canterbury is Blythcliffe (also 1857, Cat. I) in Akaroa, a timber dwelling designed by Samuel Farr.

(j) Linwood House is one of the earliest substantial houses in Christchurch, and indeed one of few homes of the 1850s remaining in the city. Its importance is heightened by the fact that it has continuously functioned as a residence (albeit as flats in recent times) since 1857.

## Statement of Wahi Tapu: