

THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF CHRISTCHURCH

3. McLeans Mansion



CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL
TOWN PLANNING DIVISION



Preface

Christchurch has a charm that depends to a large extent on features built or planned by man. The quiet dignity of the city owes much to its early buildings. It is still possible to trace the history of Christchurch in the many fine examples of colonial architecture that remain. Action by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (Canterbury Regional Committee) and other public interest groups has saved several important city buildings including the Provincial Government Buildings, Trinity Church, the Theatre Royal and the old university (now the Christchurch Arts Centre).

As the city grows and changes, there is a danger that historically or environmentally valuable buildings may be thoughtlessly or needlessly destroyed. The Christchurch City Council District Planning Scheme lists 134 historic buildings and objects, and provides opportunities and incentives for their retention. Although the scheme encourages preservation, in the end only the determination of the community can effectively protect or revitalise buildings it considers important.

One of the major aims of the present series of booklets is the identification and description of the city's most valuable historic buildings, in the hope that greater public awareness of their importance will increase their chances of survival. Even if preservation should prove impossible in some cases, this series will gather information, illustrations and analyses of each building to provide a published record of the city's rich architectural heritage.

If these booklets encourage you to think about the historic significance of this city's architecture, and help you to recognise the special value of Christchurch's historic buildings, then they will have served their purpose.

McLeans Mansion

Introduction

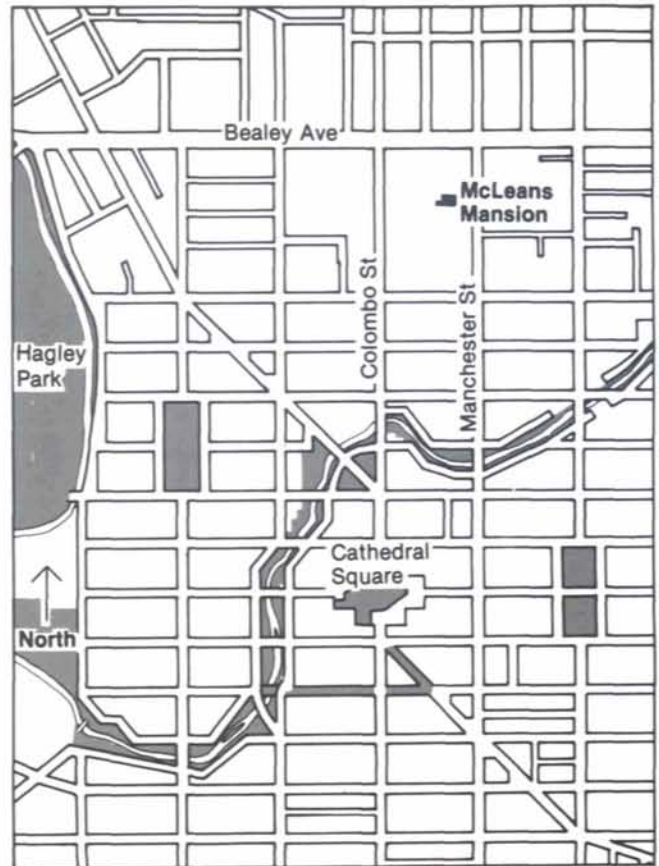
McLeans Mansion stands at 387 Manchester Street. It is an oddity today in a street dominated by commercial properties and modest residential houses. There is no mistaking that it belongs to a different time. The circumstances leading to its construction and its subsequent unique use as a rest home are unusual within the history of Canterbury.

The Mansion was a departure from the accustomed work of the architects, England Brothers, and it was an unusual design among Christchurch's large homes — when built it was reputed to be the largest wooden residence in New Zealand.

The most remarkable thing about the Mansion is surely that it was built for a 78 year-old bachelor and that it was used as a private residence for only 13 years. Allan McLean was one of the major runholders, and one of the wealthiest men in Canterbury in his day. As a monument to his achievements the Mansion was far removed from his humble beginnings as the son of a farmer-fisherman on an island off the western coast of Scotland. McLean was born on 24 May, 1822 on the Isle of Coll. He was raised in a rudimentary stone cottage and spent his youth on the treeless desolate island. It is remarkable that he went on to build two large wooden houses in Canterbury, to decorate them in the finest manner, and to set them off by gardens, orchards and lawns of equally impressive scale.

He never married, yet on his death in 1907 he ensured that others less fortunate in life received the benefits of his wealth, his foresight and his mansion. The McLean Institute which he created was ahead of its time in many ways and continues to implement McLeans' philanthropy in its present Fendalton Road premises.

McLeans Mansion is a remarkable building — it reflects the craft and skills of the times, and it is a remnant of the wishes of a wealthy runholder as interpreted so boldly by a prominent architect.



The McLean family

The McLean family had its base on the Isle of Coll, one of the Western Isles of Scotland. They were major land owners with lands on the Isles of Tiree and Mull as well as on the mainland at Morvern and Ardnamurchan. Their livelihood was drawn from the combination of cattle grazing and the



production of potash from the burning of kelp or other seaweed. Later, the old subsistence order broke down under an increasing population following the control of smallpox and cholera, and the introduction of the potato. The family turned to fishing to supplement their livelihood.

The McLean stronghold of Lagmhor (or Laggamore as on old maps) no longer exists. However, it was known to consist of three to five croft cottages under the cliff of an old raised beach. Above it was an area of arable land where oats and barley would have been sown and the cattle grazed. Mudflats leading out to Friesland Bay gave access to fishing areas.

The houses were known as a "tigh dubh" (Pronounced "tee doo") or black house. Usually they were single storey, low, stone cottages with few, if any, windows. The heavy thatch or turf roof was usually supported by very rough wooden beams, often in the form of uncut limbs of trees and driftwood.

Allan McLean's father, Alexander, was a farmer, a fisherman and a cooper by trade. In 1810 he married Mary, also a McLean — she was the daughter of the factor of the Laird of Coll. Alexander died as a result of a fishing accident in 1836 and Mary attempted to maintain the farm at Lagmhor as well as raise five children.¹ However after disease had attacked the crops and caused poverty and suffering on Coll, she decided to emigrate to Australia in 1840. The family were part of a stream of emigrants from the Inner Hebrides who chose Australia as their new home.

The McLean brothers found employment as shepherds on various Australian runs. From their earnings they were able to purchase the licence of two Western Victorian runs,

¹ There were nine children born to Mary and Alexander but the fate of Donald, Sibella, Alexander jnr. and Malcolm is unrecorded. The surviving children were Mary (b. 1812), John (b. 1819), Allan (b. 1822), Robertson (b. 1.25) and Alexandrina (b. 1832).

"Kentbush" and "Lake Moniboeng", in 1848. These runs ran along the coast between Portland and the South Australian border. The McLeans held the runs until 1851 when gold was discovered in Victoria. The family then moved to Ballarat and Bendigo where they prospered as carriers, merchants and gold buyers.² A friend, Allen R. Macdonald, who had owned "Glenaulin", a run adjoining "Lake Moniboeng" had been selling cattle in Canterbury, New Zealand and the McLeans came to know of its potential through him. In October 1852, John McLean and Macdonald became joint owners of land on the banks of the Waimakariri River near present day McLeans Island.

Allan McLean and Macdonald sailed for New Zealand on the barque "Tory", arriving in Lyttelton on 12th December, 1852.³ On a subsequent trip the rest of the family followed with foundation stock of 500 ewes, cattle and some horses.

Macdonald took the western portion of the run naming it "Tresillian" while the McLean brothers John, Allan and Robertson farmed in partnership the eastern 10,000 acres as "Ashfield" — it was also known as the "Waimakariri Station". They sold this run with 3000 sheep for £4000 in 1873, two years after their mother died there.

On 3 October 1853, Allan and Robertson took up "Acheron Bank" which lay on the south side of Lake Coleridge. This run was kept for a year then sold as bare land.

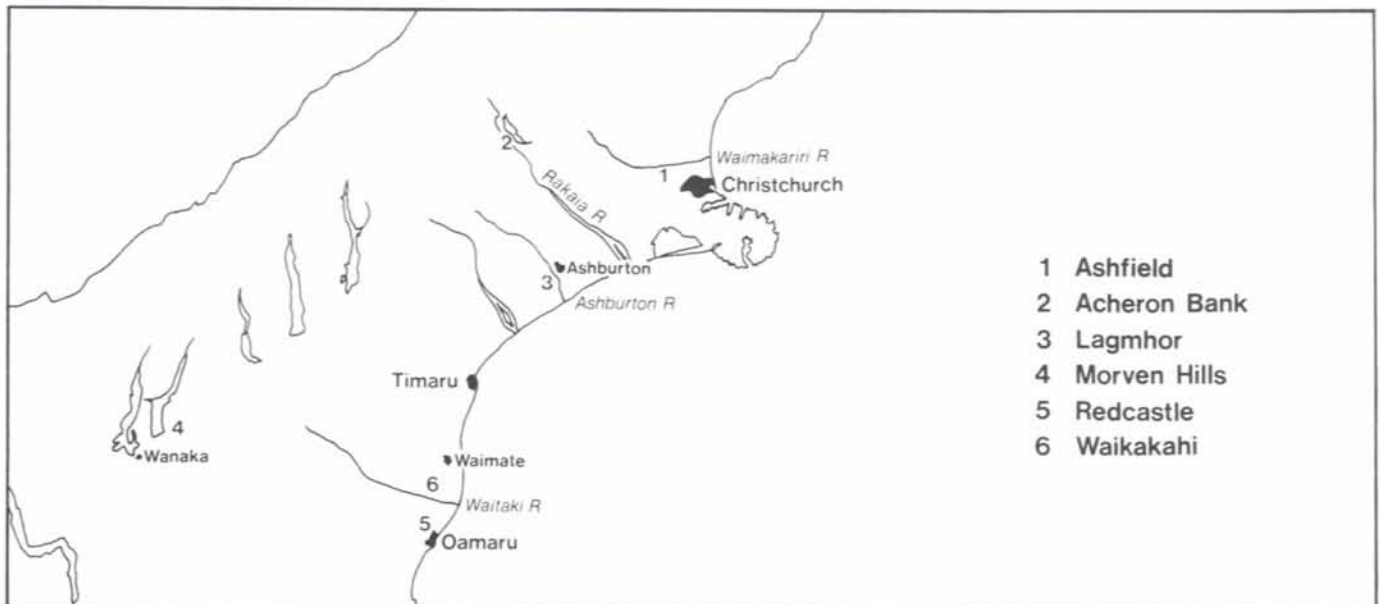
In 1855 the brothers applied for the licence of a 48,000 acre run on the south bank of the Ashburton River which they

named "Lagmhor". Robertson, the youngest brother, was made manager. He eventually returned to Scotland where he died in Edinburgh on 15 February, 1871 aged 45 years.

The McLeans extended their land holdings further by the purchase of the lease of "Morven Hills" at the head of the Waitaki River. This enormous run of about 370,000 acres was, at that time, the largest in New Zealand. It was sold in 1880 when John McLean became concerned about the large number of rabbits. The name "Morven Hills" comes from the range on the Scottish mainland that faces the Isle of Mull. An outstation, "Tarras", was named after the country to the south of Mull.

"Waikakahi", near Waimate, was bought by the McLean brothers from W. H. Harris in 1866. They took their sister Alexandrina's husband, George Buckley, in partnership and together they succeeded in freeholding most of the run. "Waikakahi" was another large property covering 47,836 acres between the Waitaki and Waihao Rivers and running inland some miles from the coast to Elephant Hill.

In 1875 John and Allan McLean bought out Buckley's share in "Waikakahi". The brothers dissolved their partnership in 1880 and John offered Allan a choice of all the McLean runs or "Waikakahi". Allan chose "Waikakahi" and continued to freehold the whole run. John eventually retired to "Redcastle" near Oamaru where he died on 15 July, 1902. It is now the site of St. Kevins College which still uses some of the original buildings.



- 1 Ashfield
- 2 Acheron Bank
- 3 Lagmhor
- 4 Morven Hills
- 5 Redcastle
- 6 Waikakahi

Allan McLean and Waikakahi

It was apparent that Allan McLean planned to live out his days at "Waikakahi". He built a twenty-one room homestead and developed an outstanding formal English-style garden setting to set it off. As a man of means McLean spared no expense: nine men cared for ten acres of garden; there were five acres of orchards; oranges, grapes and lemons grew in a conservatory; about thirty acres were planted in a plantation of trees ordered from all over the world; peacocks strutted on the lawns and around a large ornamental lake.

The homestead, built around 1874, was known as "The Valley" — it still stands today among a part of the original large grounds. Although smaller than the mansions built by the great landowners of the period it is nevertheless a large house. Its features included peaked gables, a large verandah, the spacious lounge, a long billiards room, china-blue scroll-pattern wall paper, the long glass doors opening out onto the verandah, the still-intact servant's area, and the four spacious upstairs bedrooms — the master bedroom measured 24 feet by 19 feet.

Allan McLean



² While at work in the goldfields a Chinaman, Fan So, warned John McLean of a plot to murder him and steal his gold. Fan So became a life-long friend of the family and accompanied them to New Zealand. He spent the last years of his life with John McLean at Redcastle. He

died in 1885 and was buried in the Oamaru Cemetery. There is no evidence today of the headstone that John had erected in his memory.

³ "Lyttelton Times", 18th December, 1852, p.6.

McLean lived at "Waikakahi" in great style: he entertained in lavish fashion and became a local identity through his dress (the bright McLean tartan set him off from others as did his wearing of a plum coloured suit, bow tie and white socks), and through travelling the district in a white wagonette nicknamed "The Yankee Express". This may have made him an eccentric but his generosity was unquestioned as was his concern for the poor. This was demonstrated amply in the meals freely made available to swaggers and the 16 bunk building he had built for them.

The station was run on an impressively large scale. Fences made of nine six or eight gauge wires covering 400 miles were erected — some still stand. English grasses brought in from Hawkes Bay were used to grass down the 3000-4000 acres let on contract to croppers each year. There were about 50,000 sheep producing 1200 bales of Lincoln wool annually and 35 or 40 four-horse teams could be at work on one block. To run the station more effectively outstations were built at the Waihao Bridge and Merino Downs.



"The Valley", Waikakahi

Plans for a new home

McLean successfully farmed "Waikakahi" for thirty-two years. He was quite settled at "The Valley". However, toward the end of the century, the Liberal Government was actively encouraging the break-up of the country's large estates for closer settlement by small farmers. McLean was visited by the then Minister of Lands, another Scot, John McKenzie in 1898 and after some dispute the sale of "Waikakahi" to the Government, for £ 323,090, was announced.⁴

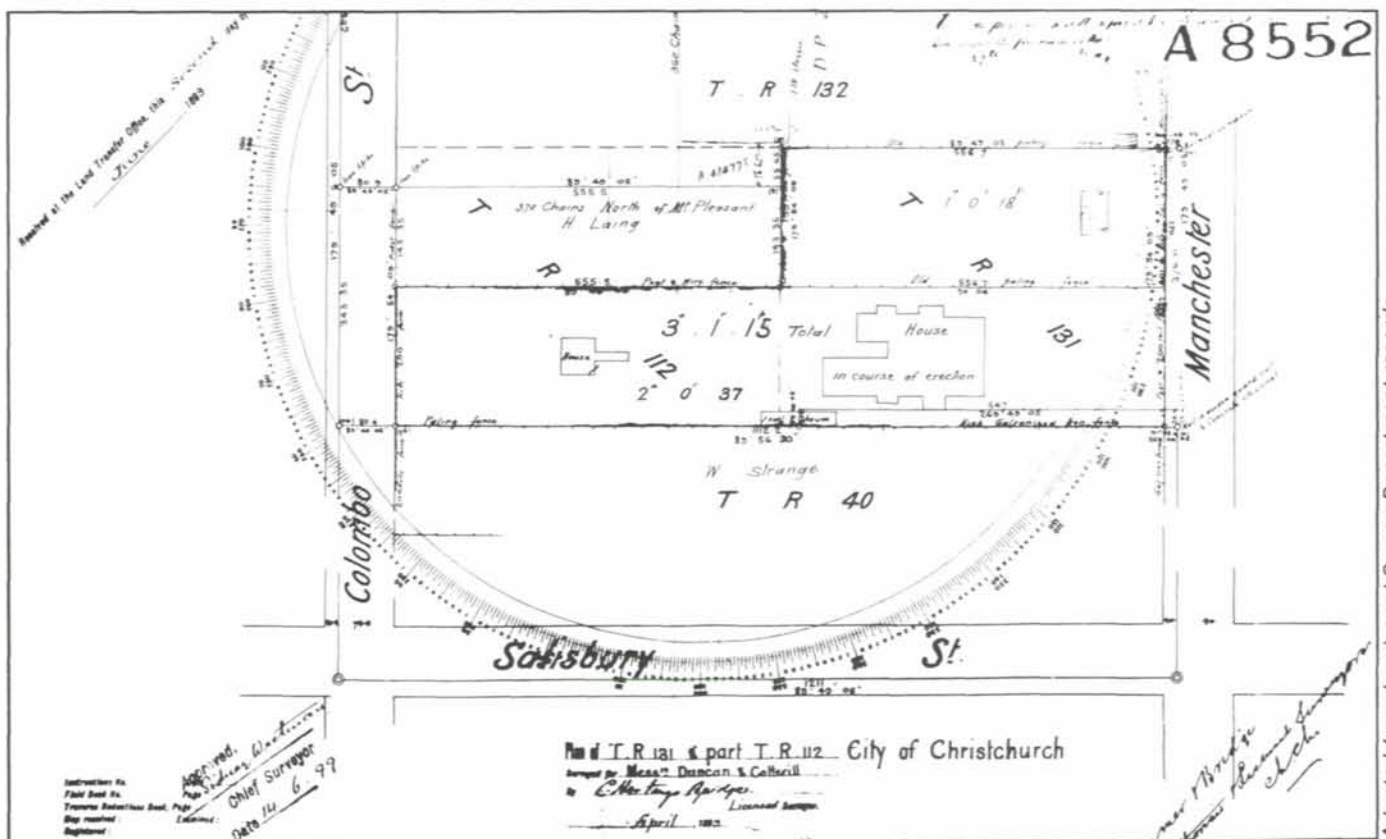
The estate was subdivided and a ballot held in March 1899 at the Waimate Courthouse for 154 freehold farms between 10 and 1473 acres, 14 grazing runs, and 140 farms on lease-in-perpetuity. At a clearing sale of stock 76,931 sheep, 40 draught horses and 82 hacks were offered for sale.

Allan McLean moved to Christchurch to a house which had been built on TR 112 on Colombo Street opposite the present Christchurch Women's Hospital. Allan had bought this land from his brother John in 1895 together with TR 131 (fronting Manchester Street) and Part TR 40.⁵ This house to

which Allan McLean retired he called "Holly Lea".⁶ It was on the balance of the land that Allan proposed to build his permanent Christchurch home.

Legend has it that McLean, then aged nearly eighty, walked in to the offices of England Brothers Architects and told the clerk he wanted the plan of a house. He was offered the blueprint of a conventional four-roomed cottage popular at the time. McLean retorted abruptly — "Not four rooms, but FORTY!" He was then ushered in to the office of R. W. England.

This was the unusual manner in which McLeans Mansion was conceived and financed. The house McLean desired appropriately reflected his individualism, as well as his wealth. It can be presumed that in this house McLean sought some recompense for the loss he felt at the forced sale of "The Valley" which until then had been the culmination of a life of thrift and hard work.



Adapted from Lands and Survey Department records.

⁴ "Waikakahi" was the first property sold to the Crown under the Public Lands Act.

⁵ This land had been owned by John McLean since 1873, the year "Ashfield" had been sold. In this house their sister Mary died on 8th

July 1875. Mary McLean, the mother, died at "Ashfield" on 12 July, 1871. See "The Press" 30/5/81.

⁶ Holly is the badge-plant of the clan McLean and the tree is a symbol of domestic harmony.

The architect

Robert West England jnr. was born in 1863 at Lyttelton. His father, R. W. England, was a timber merchant. He received his early education in Christchurch but chose to go to England to study as an architect. He commenced practice in Christchurch when only about twenty-three and in 1906 took a younger brother, Eddie into partnership with him. He was responsible for a wide range of commercial and industrial buildings as well as residential dwellings.

His obituary in "The Press"⁷ stated that amongst the partnership's work was the laying out of the Canterbury Agricultural and Pastoral Association's show grounds at Addington, Dalgety & Company's buildings in Cathedral Square, Ridley's Buildings and Bowron Brothers Buildings. The Kaiapoi Woollen Mills warehouse and factory in Manchester Street (1910) are also the England Brothers' design as are the present A. J. White Building (1904), the Cashel Street facade of the D.I.C. Building (1908), the former Bonningston's building (1911) on the corner of Cashel and High Street and several churches: Knox Church, Bealey Avenue; St Albans Methodist Church; and the Ashburton Presbyterian Church.

Amongst the more notable residential designs the England Brothers were responsible for were R. E. McDougall's house, (1906), McDougall Avenue;⁸ Riccarton House for the Deans family in Riccarton Bush, and several North Canterbury sheep station homesteads. The England Brothers became

known for their rather rambling, romantic, timber-beamed houses in a variety of styles. The houses reflect an amalgam of influences from the San Francisco Bay tradition, and the English arts and crafts movement.

R. W. England Jnr died in 1908.



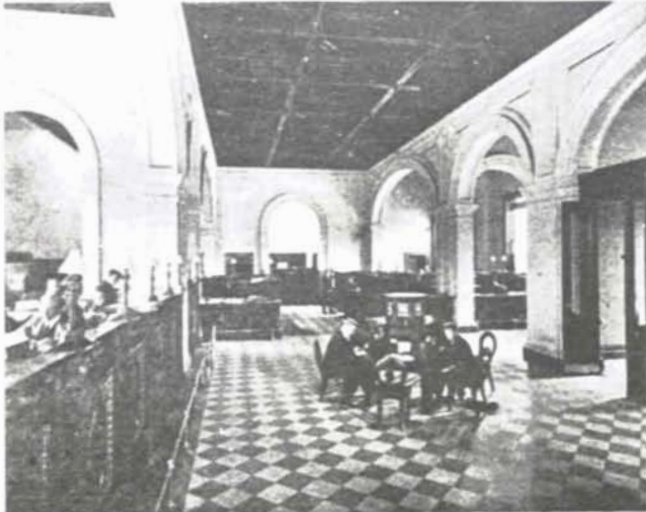
McDougall Art Gallery

R. W. England



Cameron and Kail

D.I.C. Cashel Street



Cameron and Kail

Additions to B.N.Z. Hereford Street



Cameron and Kail

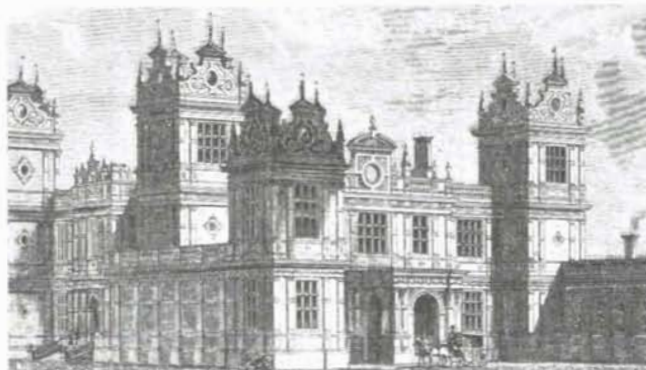
Residence, St Albans

The style of McLeans Mansion

The design of McLeans Mansion is derived from the Jacobean house style and it recalls Sir Joseph Paxton's Mentmore Towers (1852-4) in Buckinghamshire. It is probable that R. W. England, the architect, would have studied this building during his English training because Paxton was one of the most innovative architects of his age. His revolutionary use of glass and steel for the Crystal Palace, the building erected to house the Great Exhibition of

all Nations in 1851, had a long-lasting effect on the course of modern architecture.

McLeans Mansion is interesting in the way it combines Jacobean features with Victorian invention and adapts these styles to suit the New Zealand building materials.



Hitchcock

Mentmore Towers



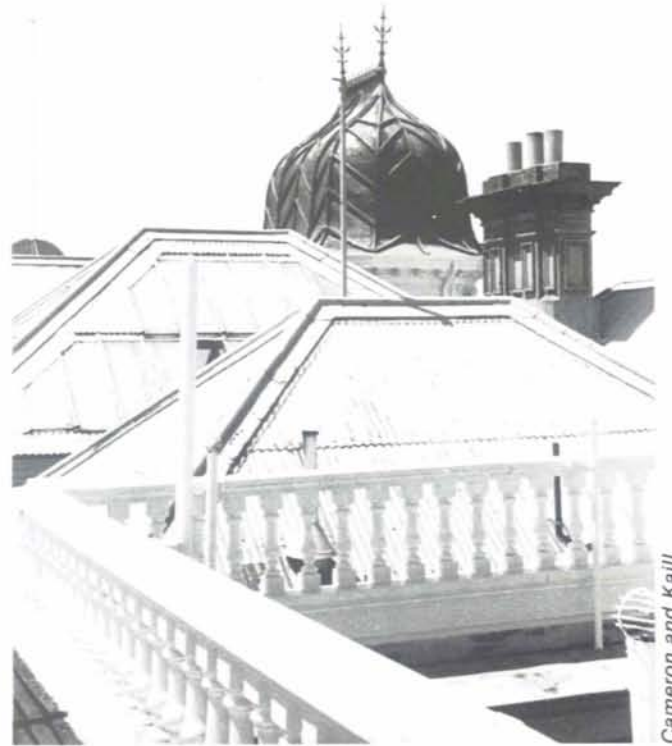
⁷ "The Press" 17 November, 1908.

⁸ Now the Nurse Maude Medical Hospital.

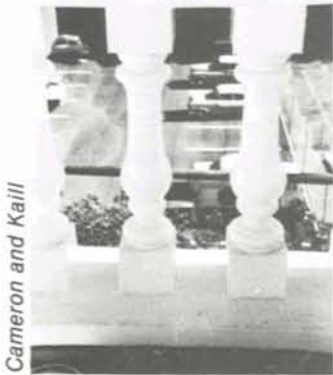
The Jacobean style began with the reign of James I, who was crowned in 1603, and it ended in 1635. It was not a new style, rather it adopted features of Elizabethan architecture which preceded it and consolidated these into a recognised vocabulary of plan shapes, silhouettes and details. For example, the Jacobean House was characterised by its massive proportions. It had a high solid base, tall towers at the corners and a symmetrical rectangular plan. McLeans Mansion fits this form almost exactly. Indeed the high solid walls of the building top a concrete foundation that was set a metre out of the ground.

This helped to give weight and substance to the house. Within the rectangular plan of the Jacobean house an H-shape was often created by recessing the facade and placing extruding towers on the corners. For McLeans Mansion this form has created an interesting visual effect with the addition of an extended front porch which is recessed in stages back to the towers. Glimpses of bay windows on either side of the building lead the eye back still further. The whole effect is very rhythmical.

The Jacobean house had a varied roof-line. It was usually crenellated and punctuated by towers, chimneys and gables. The roof-line of McLeans Mansion is true to this style although the roof is fringed with balustrading instead of crenellation. The most dominant feature is the twin ogival domes in the cyma-reversa style. The small Flemish gable situated between the two domes is unusual in that it has a non-functional window. Such a gable is to be found on both Mentmore Towers and Woollaton Hall (1580-88). During the Jacobean period Flemish, French and Italianate ornamentation was fashionable. This helps explain the diversity of styles used on McLeans Mansion. This mixture adds to the building's appeal. For example, there are French domes, a Flemish gable, Ionic and Corinthian columns on the porch, and Classical tympana above the interior doors.



Cameron and Kail



Cameron and Kail



Cameron and Kail

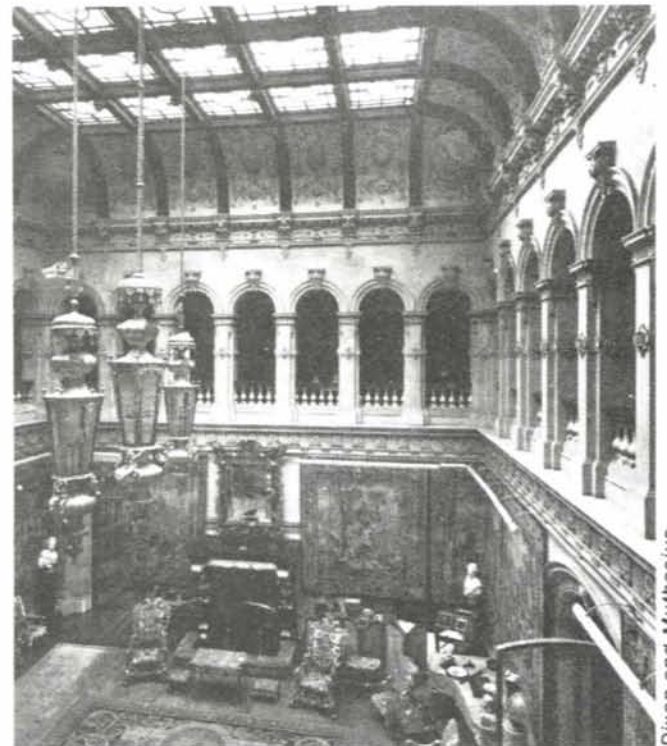


A further feature of the building is the massive glass skylight above the equally impressive central arcaded gallery. This glass ceiling undoubtedly stems from the influence of Sir Joseph Paxton's glass ceiling at Mentmore Towers; it successfully combines its utilitarian function with its decorative function. The arcaded gallery is also an echo from Mentmore Towers.



Arcaded gallery, McLeans Mansion

The Press



Arcaded gallery, Mentmore Towers

Dixon and Muthesius

Construction

McLeans Mansion was built by Rennie and Pearce Builders between April, 1899 when the architects had final plans draughted, and September, 1900 when the building was ready for occupation. A photograph in *The Weekly Press* of 19 December 1900 shows the newly painted building with obvious signs of construction still remaining at the base of the building.

The construction of the building was a major task. It was believed to be the biggest wooden residence built in New Zealand up to that time. With its floor area of 23,000 square feet accommodating 53 separate rooms including 19 bedrooms (six for servants), six bathrooms and nine toilets, McLeans Mansion was most imposing.

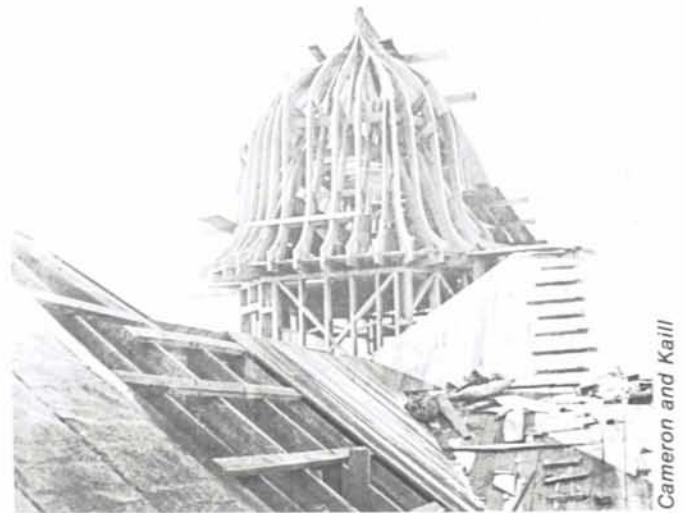
"McLeans Mansion is built on concrete foundations extending three feet out of the ground and on three feet by two feet concrete piles. The timber of the building is kauri. Wall framing (six inch by two inch studs) done in platform construction rests on the usual construction of six inch by four inch wall plates, twelve inch by two inch floor joists and six inch by four inch sleepers.



Weekly Press, 1900



Canterbury Museum

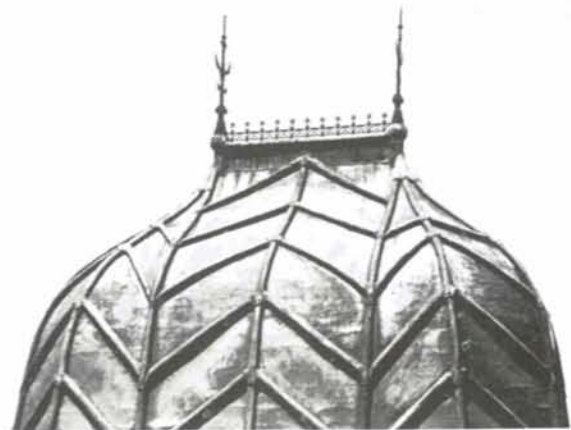


Cameron and Kail

Of interest . . . is the way in which the dwangs are placed between the studs. They are not horizontal as is normal practice, but are angled to create a wavy motion.



McDougall Art Gallery



Cameron and Kail

The domes are lead covered . . . Topping the domes are cast-iron crestings of French origin.

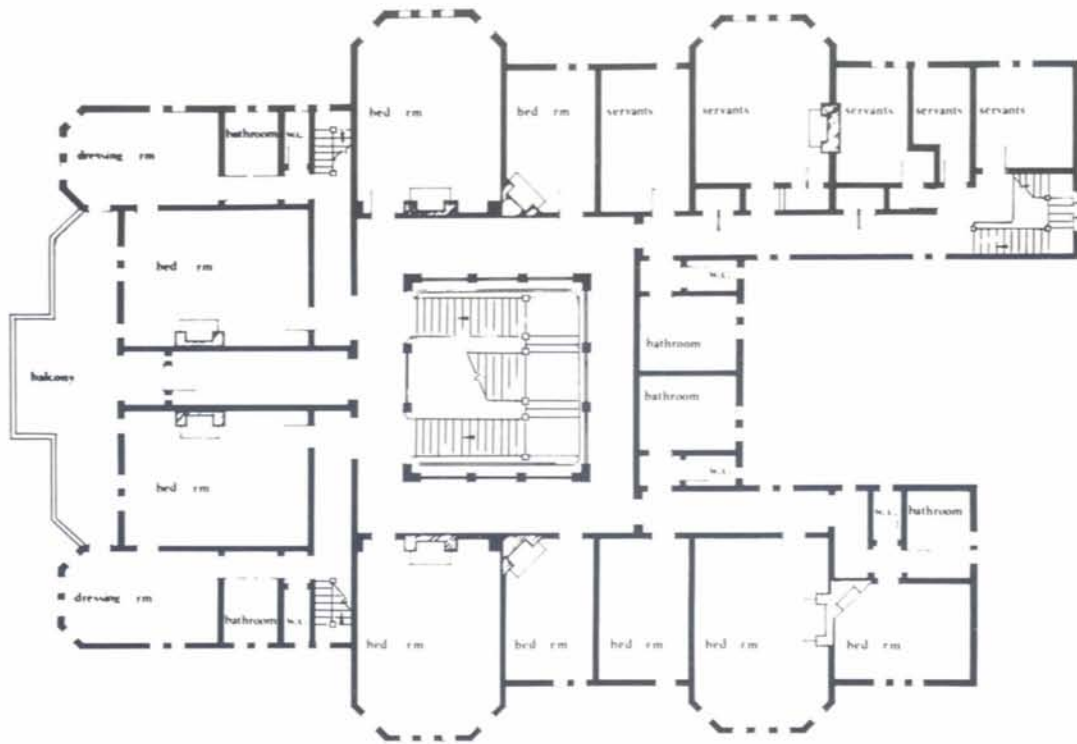
Roofing material for the remainder of the building is corrugated iron . . . Gutter heads are original and made of cast iron. Extra down-pipes were added at a later date (not known, although probably in 1915 when 'Holly Lea' was connected to the Christchurch City Water Supply).

. . . As can be seen by early photos all chimneys were built . . . the two chimneys in the front have been removed as far as roof level, because the bases remain inside the roof. In the North west corner, two thirds of the chimney has been removed at the same time, probably in the early 1920's."⁹

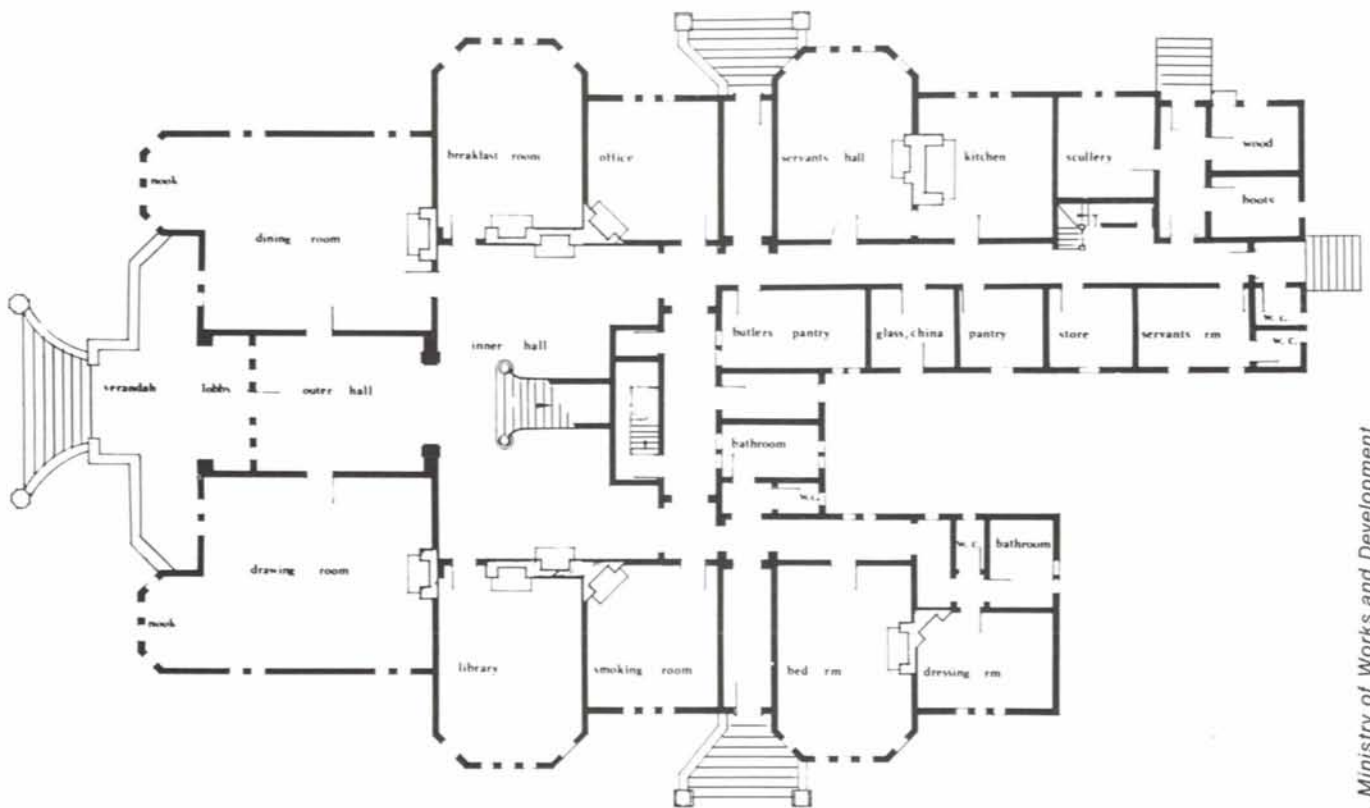


Cameron and Kail

⁹ Cameron & Kail (1970) pp. 11-13.



First floor plan



Ground floor plan

The builders

Rennie and Pearce were well-established builders in Christchurch at the time they built McLeans Mansion. They were a firm well-equipped to handle the large task as their construction record shows.

William Rennie,¹⁰ the senior partner, was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and served his apprenticeship there. He had a most varied career before emigrating to New Zealand in 1879. He experienced building in the United States, diamond mining in South Africa, and served as ship's carpenter on China's Yellow River and on ships voyaging to the West Indies, Brazil, and on return trips to Britain.

Herbert Pearce was born in Cornwall but moved to New Zealand when he was seven years old. He was brought up and educated in Canterbury. He was a civic-minded man

serving on several local bodies including the Domain Board, and was Mayor of Linwood Borough for a time (around 1902).

Rennie and Pearce established their business in 1888 and had premises at 142 High Street. They built several large buildings including Canterbury Hall.¹¹ This building contained over one million bricks and its main rafters weighed up to four tons over their 72 foot span. At the time of its construction it was one of the biggest halls in New Zealand. Rennie and Pearce also built Peacock's buildings in Gloucester Street; Quane and Co's Lichfield Street premises; Fishers Buildings; the Farmers Co-operative Insurance, Cashel Street; the Mission Hall in Durham Street and the Bank of Australasia building (1902). They are credited with building a large number of private residences throughout the city.



Herbert Pearce



Canterbury Hall

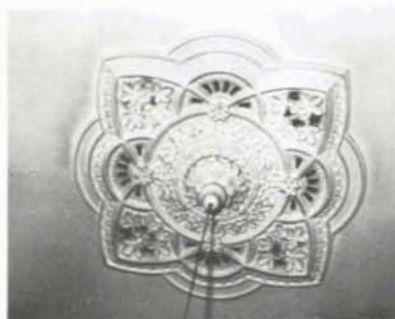
Interior decoration and furnishing



The Press

The interior detailing of the Mansion is straightforward compared to that in Jacobean houses where very elaborate carving on panels, mouldings, ceilings, pilasters and balustrades was favoured. It is, however, elaborate by New Zealand standards and well illustrates the skill of Christchurch craftsmen.

Most of the rooms have small plaster ceiling roses and simple mouldings around the walls. The two front rooms on the ground floor have detailed coffered ceilings with intricate centre pieces. These were highlighted with inlaid gold leaf. Perhaps one of the most striking features is the carved wooden tympanum which tops the door of each principal room. The staircase and arcaded gallery are impressive by New Zealand standards. Each baluster and newel post has been individually carved with thistles and flowers. The thistle, the emblem of Scotland, is a reminder of Allan McLean's homeland. The main newel posts of the staircase feature a display of rampant acanthus leaves and carved beading. They are topped with brass light fittings.



¹⁰ Biographical details from "The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand" (1903) v.3 pp.294-5 and 385-6.

¹¹ The former City Council offices, Manchester Street.

McLean wanted the best furnishings procurable to decorate his house. To ensure this he sent his housekeeper, Mrs Phillips and a representative from Messrs A. J. White Ltd, household furnishers, Christchurch, to Britain with instructions to buy there or from the continent, regardless of cost. Mrs Phillips was accompanied back to New Zealand by a Parisienne fabric expert who supervised the hanging of the exquisite wall fabrics.¹²

A description of the mansion in 1955 provides a clear picture of the furnishings then still in place and in use. Inside the front door were two Oriental stands. On these, carved dragons curled upward and bore large porcelain eyes. In the inner hall was a Swiss hallstand —

"... an enchanting wood carving of the traditional bear and her playful cub up a seven foot tree. Along one wall a mirrored mahogany stand displays a fine group of bronze and marble statuary. Nearby is the handsome grandfather clock ... and along the opposite wall stretches an outsize in high-backed winged settees upholstered in glowing burgundy. There is dramatic contrast here between the mirrored reflections of dark polished woods, the gleaming white ornamental ceiling and portico, and the time-defying Persian carpet ..."¹³

The drawing room adjacent to the outer hall was decorated with apricot cream satin brocade on the walls with buttoned braiding at the skirting boards.¹⁴ The hangings were of soft green brocade in a matching pattern, backed with cotton wool and lined with vieux-rose satin.

"The antique chairs, covered in regency brocade, are feather-light ... The retractable table is all ready to open up with its tealcloth in the recess. Bureau drawers contain elegant hand-fans, card scorers etc ... Several twin-light wall brackets supplement the ceiling lights. Paintings of Flemish and Scottish scenes hang in groups from brass rods. The green and chartreuse fitted carpet makes a perfect complement to its white and gold background. Round the white marble fireplace the ornate brass fender makes a glittering splash ..."¹⁵



Cameron and Kaiti



The Press



McDougall Art Gallery

Drawing room

¹² There has been some suggestion that the firm of W. Strange and Co. were responsible for the purchase and hanging of these fabrics. It has not been possible to confirm this suggestion and the traditional story of A. J. Whites' involvement must prevail. Samples of some of these fabrics are displayed in the Canterbury Museum's colonial village.

¹³ Fraher, L. D. (1955)

¹⁴ Other reports describe the wall coverings as pearl-grey, pinky buff, and white and gold satin. It is likely that the light conditions at the time of viewing are responsible for these differing opinions.

¹⁵ Fraher, L. D. (1955)



Some of the original furniture from the Mansion

Cameron and Kall



Drawing room

McDougall Art Gallery

The centre-piece of the dining room was the table which seated fourteen on traditional English dark oak high-back chairs upholstered in leather.¹⁶ In this room all the finishing woodwork, mirror frames etc. were of oak.

"Stored in the matching oak sideboard is a fine collection of white table linen . . . woven with the crest of the McLeans. The original serviettes monogrammed "A. L." are still in use. Burgundy brocaded satin covers the walls down to fluted oak wainscoting. The magnificent drapes in a deeper shade are richly embroidered in gold. Reflected in the mirror surmounting the black marble fireplace is the gold and crystal chandelier . . . The cardinal and chartreuse carpet blends happily into its background."¹⁷

Another report refers to the original green and gold dinner service still in use in 1946 together with the massive solid silver turkey and trout dishes and covers.¹⁸

The hall was separated from the rose-carpeted stairway by heavy bold embossed curtains backed with rich ruby red velvet. These were tied back with heavy cords attached to hand-carved oak knobs fitted to the walls.¹⁹

Elsewhere in the mansion were other examples of McLean's wealth and his insistence on having the best available. In the silver room were ceiling-to-floor shelves filled with tureens, entree dishes, epergnes, teapots and cutlery. Two coke cylinders heated the water drawn from wells on the property and in the bathrooms the shower attachments gave knee-to-neck coverage with fine jets of water coming from perforated vertical brass tubes. Brass fittings were extensively used for taps. Even today some of the finest procelain baths and toilets are still in use. Extensive use was made of pot plants from the large conservatory adjoining the mansion to decorate the dressing rooms and downstairs formal rooms. Sheraton mahogany and walnut furniture complemented these settings.

High mirrors and long velvet drapes hung in the foyer and inner hall. Large Flemish, Victorian and Scottish paintings



and engravings hung from brass rods in the main rooms and the first-floor gallery.

When the mansion was sold to the Government in 1955 it took 29 truck-loads to remove the furniture. The McLean Institute kept some for use at "Quamby", which was then renamed "Holly Lea", the bulk was sold at auction, while a little was left in the house.



Dining room

McDougall Art Gallery

¹⁶ This table is now used as the Boardroom table by the McLean Institute.

¹⁷ Fraher, L. D. (1955)

¹⁸ "The Weekly News" 27/11/46 p.10

¹⁹ *ibid*

Other buildings on the Manchester Street site

On the northern side of the mansion a large glass conservatory measuring seventy feet by thirty-six feet was built. The concrete foundations still remain and today they form the borders of the rose garden. In 1913 the conservatory was sold to the Christchurch Domain Board and the Annie Townend estate financed its removal and re-erection in the Botanic Gardens.²⁰ The Townend Conservatory, as it became known, remained until 1954 when it was demolished because of deterioration of the kauri timbers. It was replaced by the hemi-spherical Cuningham House.

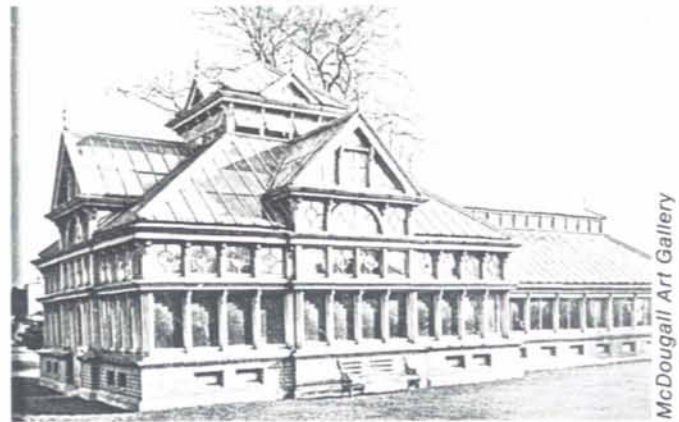
Other buildings on the site included the house Allan McLean first moved in to after leaving "Waikakahi." It was in this house that Mary McLean, the eldest sister of John and Allan, died on 8 July 1875.²¹ John Aitken, the first gardener employed by the McLean Institute, lived here. It was demolished, after the Government bought the land in 1956, to make way for new buildings for the Dental Nurses School.

Additional structures included a concrete storehouse, a water storage tank, and a water tower. The tower was raised forty-two feet above ground on a diagonally braced angle iron tankstand, with concrete pile foundations. The tank was made of kauri. This water system remained in use until the mansion was connected to the City water supply in 1915.



Members of the Aitken family outside the original "Holly Lea"

N.Z. Historic Places Trust



Townend conservatory

McDougall Art Gallery



The original "Holly Lea" looking west

McDougall Art Gallery

The McLean Institute²²

Allan McLean died in his mansion on 12 November 1907 aged 85 years.²³ In his long and very clearly expressed will he made generous provision for his relatives, his housekeeper and staff, and provided for the establishment of the McLean Institute.

Under the provisions of the will Mrs Emily Phillips, his long-serving housekeeper, was entitled to occupy the mansion for her lifetime and she received an allowance of £3,000 per annum. Mrs Phillips remained there with her staff until 1913 when she moved to "Te Kiteroa" near Waimate. Until recently that house was used by the Women's Division of Federated Farmers as a rest home.

McLean's will stated that his mansion was to be used "as a home for women of refinement and education in reduced or straitened circumstances . . ."²⁴ The administration of this home would be the chief task of the McLean Institute and he clearly spelled out the composition of the Institute's Board of Governors and details of terms of office etc. The Board had an interesting composition being a truly eucumenical body:

- The Bishop for the time being of the Church of England in the Diocese of Christchurch.

- The Bishop for the time being of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Christchurch.
- The Minister for the time being of St Andrews Presbyterian Church at Christchurch.
- The Minister for the time being of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Durham Street, Christchurch.
- The Mayor for the time being of the City of Christchurch.
- The Senior Stipendiary Magistrate for the time being of the City of Christchurch.
- The Chairman for the time being of the Selwyn County Council.
- The Chairman for the time being of the North Canterbury Hospital Board.
- The Chairman for the time being of Canterbury College.
- Two women to be appointed by the Board.
- Henry Cotterill.
- Boulton Merlin Molineaux.

²⁰ Herriott, E. M. (1919) Christchurch Domain Board Annual Report 1914.

²¹ "Lyttelton Times" 13/7/1875.

²² Detailed information on the history of the McLean Institute is available in Marshall, S. F. (1968).

²³ McLean was buried in a family plot (No. 711) in the Addington Cemetery, Selwyn Street. The plot is marked by a very tall granite column. On the column is recorded the deaths of all the McLean family who journeyed to New Zealand together with the family's coat of arms and the clan motto "Virtue Mine Honour".

²⁴ From McLean's will.



The McLean Institute

John McLean, George Buckley and Allan McLean at the family plot, 1871.

The first meeting of the Board was held in the Chamber of Commerce Building on 13 May 1908. It was disclosed at that meeting that McLean's estate as it came into the Trustees' hands for stamp duty amounted to about £596,000. The net sum available to the Institute following various payments was £200,000 including the value of his mansion and its lands. The Board immediately undertook to appoint a Secretary, to seek homes which could be used to accommodate beneficiaries and to establish an office. The first office was in the Royal Exchange Buildings, Cathedral Square.

The Institute was incorporated by Act of Parliament, the McLean Institute Act, 1909.

The first property acquired by the Institute as a home for beneficiaries was "Quamby", Mr T. G. Russell's home at 123 Fendalton Road. With the nine-bedroomed house came five acres of land at a cost of £5142. Miss M. L. Higgins was appointed first matron. Twelve additional bedrooms built in brick by Nightingale Brothers were added in July 1910.

The Board leased a number of properties from time to time to provide accommodation for its beneficiaries. These included "Avoca", 72 Bealey Avenue in 1910; "Ruahine" 405 Cambridge Terrace; "Curraghmore" Mile Road, Avonside.

Following Mrs Phillip's departure to Waimate early in 1913 the Board was able to put McLeans mansion to Allan McLean's intended purpose. The house then was in excellent condition and only slight modifications were necessary before the first ten residents moved in on 18 September 1913 with Miss C. F. Collins as Matron.

The mansion continued as a home for Institute beneficiaries for 38 years, before being sold to the Health Department for use as a nurses' hostel in 1955.



Weekly Press, 1913

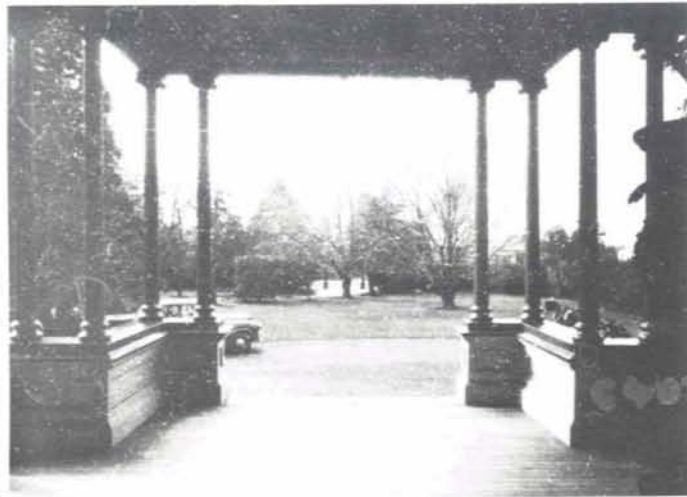
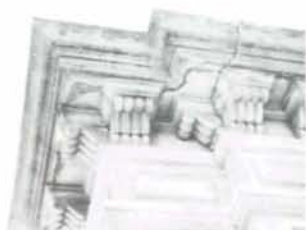
Highlights of the Mansion and Institute 1913–1983²⁵

February 1913	Proposals were made for the Mansion to be used as a Governor-General's South Island residence.	the founder's own home came the name 'Holly Lea' and many of the furnishings familiar to him in his lifetime. Let us forever honour him in an atmosphere of peace, tranquility, and gracious living.
March 1914	A fire at the Mansion on the north-west corner did minimal damage.	'Holly Lea' Manchester Street 1905 The McLean Institute 1908 'Holly Lea' Fendalton Road 1957"
April 1917	The large lawn at the Mansion was dug up and planted in potatoes as a war economy measure.	
26 July 1919	A copper beech tree planted as a Peace Memorial.	September 1957 Part TR 131 fronting Manchester Street was taken for state housing.
1922	The Annual Dinner in memory of McLean held for the first time at the Mansion. Previously it had been held at tea rooms, halls and the Art Gallery.	1958 on Part TR 131 and 112 a dental training school, orthodontic clinic and utility block designed by Warren and Mahoney were built.
20 July 1934	Another small fire occurred but caused little damage.	17 October 1958 The golden Jubilee of the Institute was celebrated at Waikakahi. To mark the occasion a row of red-berried hollies were planted on each side of the drive at "Holly Lea".
May 1936	The Mansion was connected to the City high pressure water supply. This offered greater fire protection.	October 1959 Part TR 40, previously the garden and orchard was sold to the Sisters of Mercy Trust Board.
December 1941	As a war precaution trenches were dug, the cellar sandbagged for use as an air-raid shelter, and the windows "blacked out".	1969–1970 Several alterations to the exterior elevations were made: an extra door added in the front and the porch glassed in; extra windows were added to the south walls in the kitchen area — the style of these is not that of the original. The Mansion was painted at a cost of \$18,000.
8 August 1949	The Governor-General and Lady Freyberg visited.	April 1971 Six chimneys were demolished down to roof level.
8 November 1951	Decision by the Board to build its own offices on Oxford Terrace. The building was designed by G. T. Lucas and built by D. G. Malcolm Limited. It was completed 19 March 1956.	1972 McLeans Mansion listed as a historic building in the District Planning Scheme.
1953	Concern at costs of maintaining the Mansion with only 17 residents. It cost £1250 to paint the building. New fireescapes added.	February 1977 Closure of the Mansion as a dental nurse's hostel.
July 1954	Preliminary enquiries made about selling McLeans Mansion.	June 1977 The Salvation Army leased the Mansion to accommodate 30 elderly women while its new "Resthaven" home was built in Colombo Street.
February 1955	An offer of £45,000 from the Government for the sale of the Mansion was accepted. Additional accommodation was built at "Quamby" to compensate. Alterations to the Mansion were made for its new role as a dental nurse's hostel: some walls were removed between the office and breakfast room, the kitchen and scullery; the former servants hall was extended into an adjoining passage; the heating system was changed from gas to electricity; a fire-alarm system was installed.	1980 St Vincent de Paul Society leased the Mansion until December 1982.
1956	A water sprinkler system was installed.	1982 The Mansion was painted at a cost of \$40,000.
17 June 1957	The official opening of the new accommodation wings and facilities at "Quamby". The name "Holly Lea" was officially transferred to Fendalton Road then. A plaque was unveiled. It reads: " 'Holly Lea' commemorates the fulfillment of the vision of Allan McLean who established and endowed The McLean Institute in memory of his mother. From	1982 The Canterbury Regional Committee, NZ Historic Places Trust initiated moves to retain the building as a combined office and reception venue. One proposal included restoring one room to its original condition. The Historic Places Trust classified the Mansion.
		1983 The Mansion remained empty with little prospect of it being put to use. The Canterbury Regional Committee, NZ Historic Places Trust continued its efforts to have the building retained and maintained. An open day was held to help finance the cost of refurbishing the Mansion.

Glossary

Arcade	— a range of arches carried on piers or columns either free-standing or attached to a wall.	Cyma-reversa	— a combination of convex and concave forms.
Balustrade	— short posts or pillars in a series supporting a rail or coping.	Facade	— face of a building; towards street or open space.
Coffered	— a deep panel in a ceiling.	Newel post	— the newel post is the principal post at the end of a flight of stairs.
Crenellation	— a parapet with alternating indentations and raised portions.	Pilaster	— a shallow pier or rectangular column projecting only slightly from a wall.
Cresting	— an ornamental finish along the top of a screen, wall or roof.	Tympanum	— the area between the lintel of a doorway and the arch above it.

²⁵ Highlights from Marshall, S. F. (1968) and newspaper articles.



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