

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

2021 District Plan Item No. HH015

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Anglican Church of St Simon & St Jude / Ashley Community Church

ADDRESS 39 Canterbury Street, Ashley

PHOTOGRAPH



(WDC)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. H053 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 5433 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Part RS 2777

VALUATION NUMBER 2144003300

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1870-71

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Benjamin Mountfort, architect; G & E Price, builders

STYLE Colonial Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey church with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Gabled vestry on north elevation and entrance porch on south. Triple lancet window with Perpendicular tracery lights sanctuary at east end. Baptistery at west end has a cross-gabled roof and is lit by narrow cusped lancet arched windows. String course below windows, diagonal timber braces buttress the nave walls. Stained glass windows in sanctuary and at west end, nave windows are square-headed.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Concrete foundations, timber frame and weatherboard cladding, corrugated metal roofing.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Baptistery/nave and entrance porch additions (BW Mountfort, architect; Messrs Burnett & Rule, contractors, 1884). Shingle roof replaced with corrugated iron (post-1920). Nave windows removed and later replaced (c.1966/1973). Concrete foundations installed (1973). External protective glazing installed over stained glass windows (2006). Buttress repairs and new internal doors (2007).

SETTING

The church is located on the north side of Canterbury Street, just west of its intersection with Auckland Street. A sign and entrance gates mark the entry to the site, which is bordered by mature trees. The extent of setting is the land parcel on which the church is located.

HISTORY

The settlement of Ashley was surveyed in 1870 by Charles Pemberton, who also gifted a site for an Anglican church. The foundation stone of the Church of St Simon and St Jude was laid on 28 October 1870 and the church was consecrated on 29 June 1871 by Bishop Harper. Hawkins states that the church was the first to be built in the new parish of Fernside, whose chief benefactors were the Browns of Mount Thomas Station. Priests from Woodend and Rangiora also supplied the church, including CH Gosset from 1887-91 out of the Woodend parish. The church was part of the Leithfield parish until 1921 when it became the separate parish of Ashley. That parish was absorbed by Tuahiwi in 1928, which was in turn absorbed by Rangiora in 1931. From 1941 until 1946 St Simon and St Jude's Church was part of a short-lived separate parish of Woodend. The church was closed in 1966 and was up for sale for removal until it was saved by local residents. The church reopened for interdenominational use in 1973 and was the subject of a conservation plan in February 1999. It remains a community church.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashley Community Church has historical and social significance for its association with the Anglican congregation of Ashley for almost 100 years and, more recently, the local people who saved the church from demolition and continue to use and maintain it today.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashley Community Church has high cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Christian worship and for the esteem in which it is held by the members of the community who prevented its removal and continue to maintain the building. The church also has commemorative value for the memorials housed within it, including the 1905 Charlotte Simpkinson memorial window (see below).

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashley Community Church has high architectural significance as the work of the preeminent Canterbury architect, Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98). Mountfort trained and practised in London before emigrating to New Zealand with his family in 1850; a colonist on one of the 'First Four Ships'. He designed churches for the Anglican diocese throughout his career and was also responsible for the Canterbury Provincial Council buildings (1858-65), and early buildings for Canterbury Museum (1869 +) and Canterbury University College (1877/1882, Christchurch Arts Centre). Mountfort was an ardent proponent of the Gothic Revival style and 'by the 1880s he was recognised as New Zealand's foremost church architect' (Lochhead, NZDB entry – see below). He was a member of the Anglican church, a leader in the profession, and is credited with playing a key role in establishing the architectural character of Christchurch. Mountfort also designed the Fernside parsonage (1876), which was later demolished. The baptistery of the Ashley Community Church is unique amongst Mountfort's oeuvre and while credit for its design is typically given to his son Cyril, it was Mountfort senior who called tenders for the additions in July 1884.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashley Community Church has technological and craftsmanship significance for its mid-Victorian construction and detailing, including the stained-glass window (*The Parable of the Good Samaritan*) by Clayton & Bell of London (1905). Messrs Price were Kaiapoi builders.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashley Community Church has contextual significance as a local historic feature within Ashley village.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the church pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological value relating to the structure's construction and early use.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Anglican Church of St Simon & St Jude / Ashley Community Church has high overall heritage significance to Ashley and Waimakariri district as a whole. The church has historic and social significance for its association with almost a century of Anglican worship and the efforts made by local people to save the building from removal. Ashley Community Church has high cultural and spiritual significance for its religious use, community esteem and commemorative purpose and high architectural significance as the work of leading New Zealand architect Benjamin Mountfort. Ashley Community Church has technical and craftsmanship significance for its construction and detailing, including the 1905 Simpkinson memorial window. Ashley Community Church has contextual significance as a local historic feature and its site has potential archaeological significance in view of the structure's pre-1900 date of construction.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Press* 26 August 1870, p. 1; 29 October 1870, p. 3; 28 June 1871, p. 1; 3 July 1871, p. 3; 15 July 1884, p. 3; 23 October 1937, p. 21.
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REPORT COMPLETED

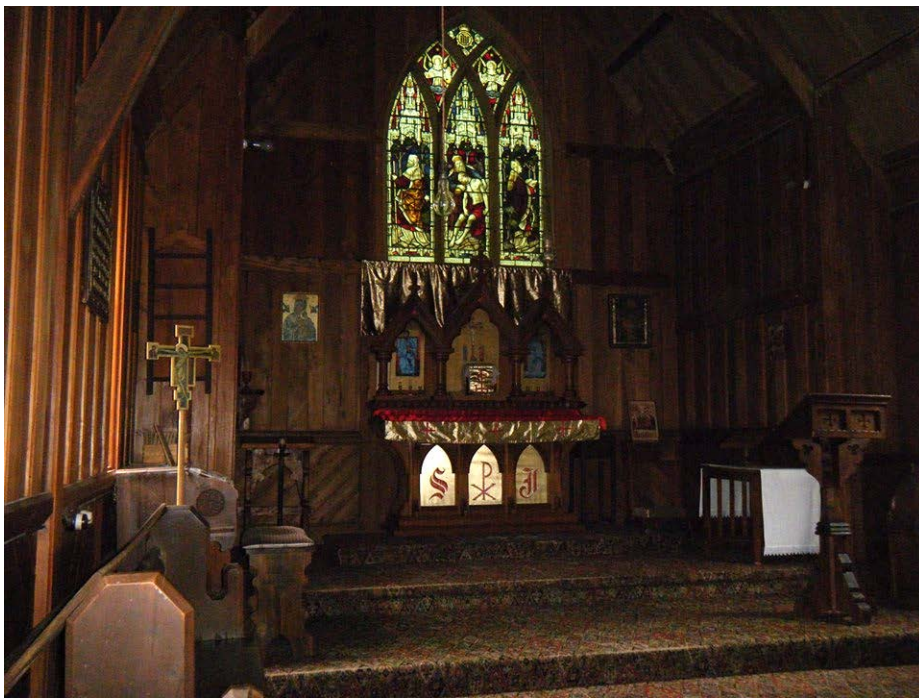
2 April 2019

AUTHOR

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Extent of setting, former Anglican Church of St Simon & St Jude, 39 Canterbury Street, Ashley.



Sanctuary. www.