

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

2021 District Plan Item No. HH090
HERITAGE ITEM NAME St Matthew's Anglican Church & Jubilee Memorial Belltower
ADDRESS 1 Mairaki Road, Fernside

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 10 July 2019)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. H126 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Part RS 5927

VALUATION NUMBER 2159105401

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1874/1881 (church); 1890/1924 (belltower)

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Benjamin Mountfort, architect; M Allen & Son (1876) & Boyd & Keir (1881), builders – CS Ayers, designer (1924 belfry)

STYLE Colonial Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey church with rectangular footprint and gabled roof. Gabled vestry on north elevation has lean-to entry on west side. Apse with cross-gabled bay at east end has taller roof than nave. Entrance sheltered by gabled hood carried on braces. Narrow lancet arched windows, trefoil vents in gable ends. Stained glass windows. Belltower has flared concrete base with lancet arched entry and gabled roof.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Church: concrete foundations and apse, timber frame and cement board cladding, corrugated metal roofing. Belltower: concrete base with steel frame and cement board cladding.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Apse addition (1881). Lower part of belfry replaced (1924). Reclad (church early 1950s, belltower 1956).

SETTING

The church is located on the south side of Mairaki Road, immediately adjacent to its intersection with Lilly Road. Mairaki Road intersects with Mount Thomas Road and Priors Road just north of the Lilly Road intersection. The belltower is to the west of the church. The site is

planted with mature trees. The extent of setting is the land parcel on which the church and belltower are located.

HISTORY

The building committee tasked with erecting an Anglican church at Fernside convened in June 1873 and resolved to call tenders on the basis of the £100 that had already been collected and the additional 25% of the total funds raised that had been committed by JT (John Thomas) Brown of the Mt Thomas run. Christchurch diocesan architect BW Mountfort called tenders in August of the same year and the foundation stone was laid on 12 January 1874. The first stage of St Matthew's Anglican Church was consecrated by Bishop Harper on 20 July 1874; the Rev Canon Dudley, the vicar of St John's in Rangiora, was the first minister of the church. The apse was added to the church in 1881 in memory of Emily Brown, the wife of JT Brown. Other memorials were later installed in memory of Brown, Ann Mannering and Samuel Heywood. In 1890 a belltower was erected beside the church; this was partially rebuilt in concrete as a jubilee memorial in 1924. Since 1945 St Matthew's has been part of the Rangiora parish, having previously been connected to Ashley and Loburn, Ohoka and Cust. The church hosts weekly services for the congregations of St Matthew's and St Mary's Church, Southbrook.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church and Belltower have historical and social significance for their association with the Anglican congregation of Fernside and the families who supported the church, including the Browns, Mannerings and Heywoods.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church and Belltower have cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Anglican worship and the means by which to call the congregation together. The church also has commemorative value for the memorials housed within it.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church has 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.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church and Belltower have technological and craftsmanship significance for their construction and detailing, including the stained-glass windows later installed in the church. Messrs M Allen & Son were the Christchurch builders responsible for the first stage of the church's construction; Rangiora firm Boyd and Keir added the concrete apse in 1881. The English stained-glass windows in the church include *Faith* by leading Victorian stained-glass makers Lavers, Barraud & Westlake (Emily Brown memorial, 1882), the *Risen Christ's First Appearance* (Ann Mannering memorial, 1902), *Christ and the Woman of Samaria at the Well* (JT Brown memorial, c.1905), and the *Angel of the Nativity* (1929) by Arnold Robinson in memory of Herbert Brown (1860-1928). The reredos and altar installed in

1926 in memory of Samuel Heywood were made by Christchurch master carver Frederick Gurnsey.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church and Belltower have contextual significance as historic features in a rural setting north-west of the Fernside village centre. The location of the church property reflects the historic centre of the church community, which included the Browns of Mount Thomas who forded the Ashley River to attend services.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the church and belfry pre-date 1900 their site has potential archaeological value relating to the structures' construction and early use.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

St Matthew's Anglican Church & Jubilee Memorial Belltower have overall heritage significance to Fernside and Waimakariri district as a whole. The church and belltower have historic and social significance for their association with Anglican worship and the local families who endowed the church and cultural and spiritual significance for their religious use and commemorative purpose. St Matthew's Anglican Church has architectural significance as the work of leading New Zealand architect Benjamin Mountfort and technical and craftsmanship significance for its construction and detailing. St Matthew's Anglican Church and Belltower have contextual significance as historic features within a rural setting north-west of Fernside and their site has potential archaeological value in view of both structure's pre-1900 construction.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

B

REFERENCES

- *Press* 14 June 1873, p. 2; 14 August 1873, p. 1; 8 January 1874, p. 2; 14 January 1874, p. 3; 20 May 1924, p. 3; 7 July 1924, p. 4; 17 September 1924, p. 3; 22 September 1924, p. 3; 29 April 1925, p. 3; 20 February 1928, p. 4; 9 May 1928, p. 3; 6 April 1938, p. 2.
- *Star* 8 January 1874, p. 2; 29 April 1890, p. 3; 23 May 1898, p. 2.
- *Lyttelton Times* 11 June 1873, p. 2; 9 May 1889, p. 4.
- *Nelson Evening Mail* 15 October 1872, p. 3.
- F Ciaran 'Stained Glass in Canterbury New Zealand, 1860-1988' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1992.
- I Lochhead *A Dream of Spires – Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* Christchurch, 1999.
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m57/mountfort-benjamin-woolfield>
- <https://libraries.waimakariri.govt.nz/heritage/local-history/places-of-the-waimakariri/rangiora/history-of-the-churches-in-rangiora,-southbrook-and-fernside>
- <http://www.anglicanweb.org/files1/Fernside%20flyer.pdf>
- *St Matthew's Fernside – One Hundred Years, 1874-1974* Rangiora, 1974.
- M Stocker *Angels and Roses – the art of Frederick George Gurnsey* Christchurch, 1997.

REPORT COMPLETED

10 February 2019

AUTHOR

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of setting, St Matthew's Anglican Church & Jubilee Memorial Belltower, 1 Mairaki Road, Fernside.