

**WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM**

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**2021 District Plan Item No.** HH100  
**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus  
**ADDRESS** 98 Main Street, Oxford  
**PHOTOGRAPH**



(Dr A McEwan, 10 July 2019)

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

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Part RS 201

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2153238200

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1879

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** CG & CJ Chapman, architects; Boyd & Keir,  
contractors

**STYLE** Colonial Gothic Revival

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Lower sanctuary and short, cross-gabled sacristy at east end; roof extends to form entrance porch at west end of southern elevation. Lancet arched windows set with diamond pattern glass, trefoil motif in gable ends, arched opening in entrance porch.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Timber frame and stucco cladding, concrete foundations, corrugated metal.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Exterior walls clad in stucco (date unknown). Parking and paving developed at front of property near road boundary (c.2015).

**SETTING**

The church stands on the north side of Main Street, east of its intersection with Harewood Road and west of its intersection with Burnt Hill Road. The building is set back from the road behind a concrete and river stone fence; a hall (c.1980) stands behind the church. With the exception of the commercial property immediately to the west of the site, the wider setting is largely residential in character. The extent of setting is limited to the southern portion of the land parcel on which the church is located, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the property as a whole, and includes the boundary fence.

## **HISTORY**

The Catholic Parish of Rangiora, including Kaiapoi, Oxford and Loburn, was established in 1877, before which time North Canterbury Catholics were attended by priests travelling from Christchurch. Catholic mass was held in the Oxford Road Board office and the West Oxford Town Hall before a church was erected in 1879. A site in West Oxford had been given by Bartholomew McGrath but as it did not suit the Catholics of East Oxford another, more central, property was gifted by HB Johnstone of Christchurch and the church was built upon it. The church was consecrated by Bishop Redwood of Christchurch on 23 November 1879. The Oxford church is now part of the Waimakariri St Peter Chanel Catholic Parish and mass is conducted at 8.30am on Sundays.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has historical and social significance for its association with the Catholic congregation of Oxford since 1879 and the priests who have served the district from Rangiora over the years.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Catholic worship and fellowship.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has architectural significance as a Colonial Gothic Revival style building designed by Rangiora architects CG and CJ Chapman. The two men were cousins and also worked as commission agents and surveyors. Charles George Chapman (c.1838-82) was also an early teacher in the township and served as Rangiora's inaugural borough clerk from 1878 until his death four years later. The Chapmans also designed the Sunday School Hall of the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist in Rangiora (1879), St Alban's Anglican Church vicarage at Ohoka (H041, 1879-80) and the Union Bank of Australia (1882) in Rangiora.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has technological and craftsmanship value for its Victorian timber construction and detailing. Rangiora builders Messrs Boyd and Keir erected the timber and iron church, which was later stuccoed.

## **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has contextual significance as a historic feature in Oxford. The removal of trees from the roadside in the early 2010s increased the visibility of the church from the public domain.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As the church pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological value relating to the development of the property by the Catholic church.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has overall heritage significance to Oxford and Waimakariri district as a whole. The building has historic and social significance for its association with the Catholic congregation of Oxford since 1879 and cultural and spiritual significance for its religious use and purpose. The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has architectural significance as a Colonial Gothic Revival style church designed by Rangiora architects CG and CJ Chapman and technological and craftsmanship value for its

Victorian construction and detailing by Messrs Boyd and Keir, also of Rangiora. The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has contextual significance as a historic feature on Oxford's Main Street and the church property has potential archaeological value in view of the age of the building.

**HERITAGE CATEGORY**

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**REFERENCES**

- *Press* 14 December 1878, p. 8.
- *NZ Tablet* 22 August 1879, p. 14; 14 November 1879, p. 15.
- *Globe* 25 November 1879, p. 3.
- *Lyttelton Times* 26 August 1879, p. 6.
- <https://www.waimakariricatholic.org.nz/our-parish/sacred-heart/>
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc03Cycl-t1-body1-d4-d17-d1.html>
- DN Hawkins *Beyond the Waimakariri* Christchurch, 2001; available online.

**REPORT COMPLETED**

6 July 2019

**AUTHOR**

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Extent of setting, limited to southern portion of the land parcel and including the roadside boundary fence, 98 Main Street, Oxford.