

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

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**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** Anglican Church of St Thomas

**ADDRESS** 6 Church Street, Woodbury

**PHOTOGRAPH**



**District Plan Item No.** New      **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** n / a

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Lot 67 DP 112

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2466004800

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1925-26 + 1937-38

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Cecil Wood, architect; Keir & Thompson (1925-26)  
and Cooling & Scott, contractors (1938)

**STYLE** Arts & Crafts Gothic Revival

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Gothic Revival style church with rectangular footprint and bellcast gabled roof. Norman tower over chancel; lancet windows, buttresses, gabled entrance porch. Hip-roofed vestry and gabled sanctuary. Small cross-gables over windows from first church installed on either side of the nave. Timber board and batten gable end. Stained glass windows. Riverstone boundary wall and timber entrance gates.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Field stones and boulders, Oamaru stone, cement, timber, Welsh slate.

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Installation of memorial plaques and stained-glass windows (various).

**SETTING**

The church stands on a corner site bounded by Church Street to the south and Burdon Road to the east. Hedging, stone walling and entrance gates delineate the road frontages of the property. The principal access is from Church Street and the church is aligned on an east-west axis. The extent of scheduling is the land parcel on which the church is located.

## **HISTORY**

The settlement of Woodbury was originally known as Waihi Bush. It began as a milling camp in the mid-1860s and later evolved into a small rural service centre. The settlement was surveyed in 1876 and a timber Anglican church on land gifted by Messrs Flatman and Taylor was opened two years later. The Church of St Thomas was consecrated in March 1879. The Tripp family of Orari Gorge Station was closely involved with St Thomas's from the time of the first church's construction. A new chancel, sanctuary and vestry were added to the timber church in 1925-26, the tower over the crossing having been gifted by the Tripp family in memory of Charles and Ellen Tripp. The new structure was dedicated on 29 June 1926. A new nave was erected, after the removal of the remaining 1878 structure, in 1937-38. It was erected in memory of Charles and Ellen's children Eleanor Howard Tripp and her brother Charles Howard Tripp. The completed building was consecrated by Bishop West-Watson on 2 April 1938. Today the church is part of the Geraldine parish and hosts services twice a month in addition to being available for local funerals and weddings.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has historical and social significance for its association with Anglican worship and fellowship in the district since 1878. The staged replacement of the original colonial church in permanent materials in the mid-1920s and later 1930s reflects the fortunes of the local congregation and the patronage of prominent families within the district, especially the Tripp family of Orari Gorge.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has cultural significance as a place of community identity and historic continuity. Both stages of the church were built to memorialise members of the Tripp family and there are a number of memorial plaques within the church dedicated to other family members, including two sons of John and Mary Tripp, both of whom died serving in World War II. The church is valued as a historic feature within the village.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has architectural significance for its Arts and Crafts style design by preeminent Christchurch architect Cecil Wood (1878-1947). Wood trained in the office of Frederick Strouts and attended classes at Canterbury University College. After working in London and practising for a time in partnership with Samuel Hurst Seager, he established his own practice in 1909. Wood also designed Racecourse Hill homestead (1912), the Hare Memorial Library (1916) and Memorial Dining Hall (1923-25) at Christ's College, the Geraldine War Memorial (1922) and the Dobson Memorial in Arthur's Pass (1935-7). St Paul's Anglican Church at Tai Tapu (1930-1) is another notable example of Wood's ecclesiastical architecture.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its stone construction, ornamental detailing and stained-glass windows. Rangiora contractors Keir and Thompson had previously erected Wood's All Saints' Church at Waiau. Local contractor Herbert Cooling also supplied the design and erected the EH Tripp Memorial Library (1936) at Woodbury. The church's stained-glass windows are particularly notable. A window depicting St Thomas, which is attributed to English Arts and Crafts designer Joseph Nuttgens, was installed in 1927 in memory of local MP FR Flatman (1843-1911). Three lights in the sanctuary are the work of leading English Arts and Crafts glass maker Veronica Whall. These were also installed in 1927. There is another Whall window in the nave and three stained glass windows from the first church were also incorporated into this section of the building.

## CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has contextual significance as a local historic feature and for its association with the Tripps' Orari Gorge Station (see heritage items # 60 & 61) and the Eleanor Howard Tripp Memorial Library (1936) to the south of the church along Burdon Road.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the church post-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological significance arising from the use and development of the site since 1878.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Anglican Church of St Thomas has overall significance to Woodbury and Timaru district as a whole. The church has historical and social significance for its association with the Anglican worship in the district since 1878 and generations of the Tripp family. The Anglican Church of St Thomas has cultural significance as a place of worship and for its memorial function and architectural and aesthetic significance for its Arts and Crafts design by leading Christchurch architect Cecil Wood. The Anglican Church of St Thomas has technological and craftsmanship significance for the quality of its construction and detailing and contextual significance as a local historic feature and for its relationship with the Eleanor Howard Tripp Memorial Library. Although the structure post-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological significance in relation to the colonial development of the church property.

## HERITAGE CATEGORY

**B**

## REFERENCES

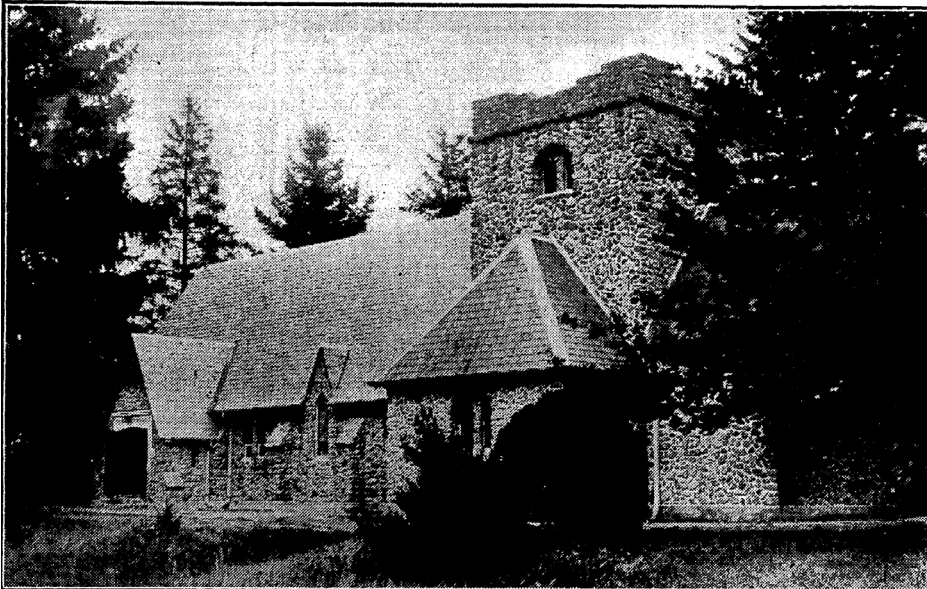
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- *Press* 25 March 1938, p. 12; 26 March 1938, p. 29; 4 April 1938, p. 14.
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- F Ciaran 'Stained Glass in Canterbury New Zealand, 1860-1988' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1992.
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Extent of scheduling, 6 Church Street, Woodbury.



Church before erection of 1937-38 stone nave. 4-6769, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.



The completed church. *Press* 26 March 1938, p. 29. PapersPast.



Interior view looking towards Whall window in the sanctuary.