

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME St Stephen's Anglican Church & Belltower

ADDRESS 1200 Peel Forest Road, Peel Forest

PHOTOGRAPH



(HNZPT)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. No. 57 **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 1994 / 2
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 6 DP 92

VALUATION NUMBER 2464015600

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1885 (church) / 1915 (belltower)

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** William Marley, architect; Messrs Nelson & Coates,
builders (church)

STYLE Colonial Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof. Lean-to vestry at west end; triangular louvred vents in gable ends. Lancet arched windows in church and porch, square-headed in vestry. Gabled entrance porch on north elevation. Scalloped bargeboards, cross atop west gable end, string course below windows. Stained glass and diamond-pattern leadlight windows. Belltower has open trussed section over weatherboard base, inset with door. Timber buttresses and cross-gabled roof with scalloped bargeboards.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

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

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Belfry removed from church roof (1914); vestry added and additional lancet window installed above (1915). Dennistoun memorial window installed at east end (1923). Barker memorial window installed in west end (1977).

SETTING

The church is located near the centre of a rectangular land parcel on the east side of Peel Forest Road, north of its intersection with Dennistoun Road. Mature trees and lawn provide the immediate setting. The belltower is to the south of the church. The extent of setting is the land parcel as a whole, partly in view of the potential archaeological values of the site.

HISTORY

The first St Stephen's Church at Peel Forest was erected by John Acland in 1868. After this building, which was interdenominational in its use, was destroyed by a nor-west gale in May 1884 a new Anglican church was built on the same site. The building was opened by the Rev James Preston on 31 May 1885 and consecrated by Bishop Harper on 16 January 1887. The land on which the church stands was transferred to the Anglican Church Property Trustees by John Acland in April 1886. Two of Bishop Harper's daughters lived at Peel Forest, the Mrs's Tripp and Acland, and he was therefore a regular visitor to the settlement. Originally the church had a belfry, gifted by 'Waikonini' orchardist WE Barker, mounted upon the ridge at the west end. After it was blown down in October 1914 the church bell was hung in a freestanding tower erected beside the church in 1915. At the same time a vestry was added to the west end of the church. Memorial brass plaques were installed in the church in 1906 in memory of William Cunningham Smith and Frederick Newman. In 1923 the Dennistoun memorial window was installed in the sanctuary at the east end of the church. It commemorated both George (died 1921) Dennistoun and his son James (died 1916) and was gifted by Emily Dennistoun, the widow of George and the mother of James. The latter was the first man to climb Mitre Peak and his likeness was used for the face of the Archangel Michael. The St Francis window (1976) in the west end features New Zealand flora and fauna and was designed by Geraldine parishioner and art teacher Roy Entwistle. It was gifted in memory of William and Lucy Barker of 'Waikonini' by their daughter Olive and her family; the window was dedicated on 15 February 1977. St Stephen's is still part of the Geraldine parish and services are held on the second and fourth Sunday of every month.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Stephen's Anglican Church and Belltower have historical significance for their association with the Anglican congregation of Peel Forest and the families who supported the church, including the Aclands, Dennistouns and Barkers.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Stephen'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 Stephen's Anglican Church has architectural significance as a Colonial Gothic Revival style church designed by Canterbury pioneer builder and architect William Marley (1816-96). Marley also supervised the design of All Saint's Anglican Church at Burnham (1864), the second stage of Riccarton House in 1874, the Homebush Station woolshed (1878-79), and WE Barker's homestead 'Waikonini' at Peel Forest (1881, heritage item # 58). The designer of the bell tower is currently unknown but its design is sympathetic to the 1885 church.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

St Stephen's Anglican Church and Belltower have technological and craftsmanship significance for their timber construction and detailing, as well as the stained glass windows later installed in the church. Messrs Nelson and Coates were the Ashburton builders responsible for the church's construction in 1885. English Arts and Crafts stained glass artist Joseph Nuttgens (1892-1982) made the St Mary and Christ Child window in 1922 and Roy Miller of Miller Studios, Dunedin created the St Francis window in 1976. Both are one-off designs that combine local references with traditional Biblical figures and symbols.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Stephen's Anglican Church and Belltower have contextual significance as historic features and in relation to the Peel Forest store and Peel Forest Hall, with which the church forms a 'town centre' cluster.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

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

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

St Stephen's Anglican Church and Belltower have overall heritage significance to Peel Forest and Timaru district as a whole. The church and belltower have historical significance for their association with Anglican worship and fellowship and cultural and spiritual significance as a demonstration of the way of life of local settler families. St Stephen's Anglican Church has architectural significance as the work of pioneering architect William Marley and technical and craftsmanship significance for its timber construction and stained glass windows. St Stephen's Anglican Church and Belltower have contextual significance as historic features within the Peel Forest village and their site has potential archaeological value in view of the church's pre-1900 date of construction.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

- *Timaru Herald* 22 December 1865, p. 4; 17 April 1915, p. 11; 8 May 1916, p. 9.
- *Temuka Leader* 16 May 1884, p. 2; 19 February 1885, p. 2; 21 February 1885, p. 2; 13 June 1885, p. 2; 5 May 1906, p. 4; 15 October 1914, p. 4.
- *Press* 28 November 1877, p. 2; 22 October 1885, p. 2; 6 September 1932, p. 2.
- *Lyttelton Times* 24 January 1885, p. 7.
- *Poverty Bay Herald* 13 December 1935, p. 10.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/1994>
- F Ciaran 'Stained Glass in Canterbury New Zealand, 1860-1988' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1992.
- <http://don-donovan.blogspot.com/2009/08/country-churches-of-nz-98-st-stephens.html>
- <https://roymiller.co.nz/roy-millers-windows/ws07-canterbury-south/ws07-peel-forest-st-stephens-church/>



Extent of setting, 1200 Peel Forest Road, Peel Forest.



West end of church before vestry added, belltower removed etc (pre-1914). 4-6781, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.