

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart / Sacred Heart Basilica

ADDRESS 7 Craigie Avenue (19 Wellington Street), Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 11 July 2018)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. 19 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 325 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 2 DP 45190

VALUATION NUMBER 2499108500AA

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1909-11

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** FW Petre, architect; B Moriarty, superintendent of works

STYLE French Renaissance

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Basilica type church with cruciform footprint and gabled roof forms. Symmetrical façade has pedimented entrance porch approached by concrete steps and flanked by four-storey towers with cupola roofs. Oamaru stone with brick infill walls. Ionic columns support entrance porch; arched door and window heads have keystones. Rusticated pilasters, quoins, central dome with clerestory windows. Gabled transepts and semi-circular apse. Dentil mouldings beneath eaves.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Brick and Oamaru stone, ferro-concrete, Marseilles tile and copper.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Installation of stained-glass windows and memorial plaques (various dates). Restoration (1994-97, commemorative stone laid 18 May 1997). Conservation plaque laid (23 December 2001). Small hip-roofed toilet block added to north side (date unknown).

SETTING

The church stands on the west side of Craigie Avenue, south of its intersection with Napier Street and opposite the western terminus of Heaton Street. A gabled shelter to the south of the church entry houses a statue of the crucified Christ. The extent of setting is limited to the

immediate setting of the church, notwithstanding the potential archaeological of the property as a whole, but also includes the full extent of the historic fencing along the Craigie Avenue road frontage.

HISTORY

Father Chervier, who was based in Christchurch at the time, first celebrated mass in Timaru's courthouse in January 1867. The pioneer Catholic priest in Timaru, Father Chataigner, took up residence in the town two years later. Soon afterwards the church bought an extensive area of land on the West Town Belt (later Craigie Avenue). A small wooden church, designed by Canterbury's pre-eminent early architect, Benjamin Mountfort, was opened on 25 October 1874; it was enlarged three years later. By the early years of the 20th century the church property also featured a concrete presbytery, brick convent, brick house in which the Marist brothers resided, and boys' and girls' schools. Chataigner's successor, Father Goutenoir, was also French but by the end of the 19th century the parish had been served by Irish as well as French Marist priests. Father John Tubman (1858-1923) from Ireland served the Timaru parish between 1891 and 1920; he was hailed as the driving force behind the erection of a new church in the early 20th century. In 1903 the timber church was described as 'somewhat antiquated'. It burned down in early April 1910, by which time the foundation stone of an impressive new basilica-style church had already been laid by Bishop Grimes (6 February 1910). The new church was opened on 1 October 1911 by Archbishop Redwood. In 2011 the parishes of Sacred Heart and St Thomas's in Timaru north merged to form the Holy Family Parish. Although it did not sustain any damage in the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes, the Church of the Sacred Heart launched a fundraising campaign to strengthen the building in June 2018.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has historical and social significance as a place of Catholic worship and communion since 1911 and for its association with Dean John Tubman and those who helped him to fund and build the church.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has cultural and spiritual significance as a demonstration of the way of life of the clergy and congregation who have worshipped in the church since 1911 and for its continued use as a place of remembrance and commemoration. A number of memorials are housed within the church, including a window (*The Coronation of St Mary BV*), which is dedicated to Dean Tubman.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high architectural significance as the last major ecclesiastical work of leading New Zealand architect FW Petre. Frank Petre (1847-1918) designed numerous churches and other buildings for the Catholic church during his career, including St Joseph's Cathedral in Dunedin (1878) and the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch (1901-5). He was known as 'Lord Concrete', in reference to both his aristocratic family background and pioneering work with concrete construction. The classical basilica-type church that became Petre's signature Catholic church can also be seen in Oamaru (St Patrick's, 1893-94 +) and Waimate (St Patrick's, 1909).

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high technological and craftsmanship significance as a brick, stone and concrete building, with the latter material filling the void between the outer and inner layers of masonry. FW Petre had a background in engineering that is evident in his pioneering use of concrete. Bart Moriarty oversaw the construction of the church using day labour. In June 1911 he entered in to a partnership with Timaru

architect Thomas Lusk. Fiona Ciaran has catalogued the stained-glass windows installed in the church in her PhD dissertation.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high contextual significance as a notable landmark to the west of Timaru's town centre and for its relationship with other heritage churches in Timaru. The church is the premier feature of a large precinct of Catholic buildings bounded by Craigie Avenue and Wellington Street.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the church post-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological values relating to the earlier use and development of the property. The former site of the Roberts/Hargreaves house, which was erected in 1875 and later used as the church's presbytery (1895-1977), the property has been owned by the Catholic church since 1895.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The church has historical and social significance for its association with local Catholics for over a century and cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Christian worship and fellowship. The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high architectural significance as a major example of the work of preeminent New Zealand architect FW Petre and high technological and craftsmanship significance for its composite masonry and concrete construction, as well as the quality of its architectural detailing. The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has high contextual significance as a local landmark and in relation to other historic churches in the central city. The site of the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart has potential archaeological values in view of its pre-1900 development as a residential property and by the church.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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REFERENCES

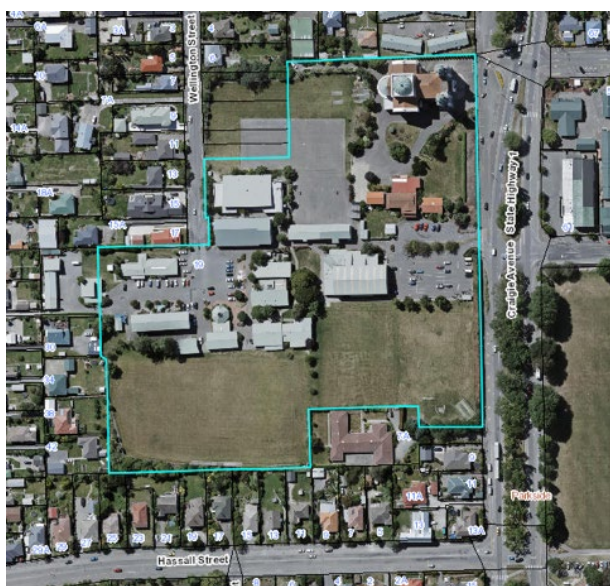
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| AUTHOR | Dr Ann McEwan |
| PEER REVIEWED | XX |
| REVIEWER | XX |



Extent of setting, limited to immediate setting of the church but including the fencing along the road frontage, 7 Craigie Avenue, Timaru.



Land parcel as a whole, with church at upper right corner.