

TIMARU DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME St Mary's Anglican Church

ADDRESS 22A Church Street, Timaru

PHOTOGRAPH



(Dr A McEwan, 9 July 2018)

FORMER DISTRICT PLAN ITEM No. No. 50 **HNZ LIST No. & CATEGORY** 328 / 1
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 1 DP 81293, Part Lot 323 DP 1, Part Lot 1 DP 8897, Part Lot 1 DP 1739

VALUATION NUMBER 2500055100

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1880-86 + 1907-09

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** WB Armson & Collins and Harman, architects; Messrs McGill, Clayton & Wilson (1880-86) & Samuel McBride, contractors (1907-9)

STYLE Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Gothic Revival style church with L-shaped footprint and gabled roof forms. Crenelated entrance tower in Perpendicular Gothic style on north side, apsidal choir room to the south. Spirelet on principal ridgelines, octagonal clerestory windows, buttresses, quoins & rose window at west end.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timaru bluestone (basalt) and Oamaru stone, timber, Welsh slate.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Tower and chancel completed (1907-10). West door entrance porch added (1961). Stained glass windows installed (various dates).

SETTING

The church stands on a large corner site bounded by Church Street to the north-west and Perth Street to the east. St Mary's Church Hall (1929) is located to the south-west on Church Street, separated from the church by a right of way. The South Canterbury Museum is located to the south along Perth Street and the Wrecks Monument (heritage item # 49) and former Timaru Chief Post Office site is on the other side of Perth Street. The extent of setting

encompasses the multiple land parcels on which the church is located, partly in view of the potential archaeological values of the site.

HISTORY

Prior to Timaru's establishment as a town, Bishop Harper visited South Canterbury from Christchurch and conducted services in several homesteads and, in 1858, at Timaru. In 1859, the Anglican Church posted George Foster to Timaru with responsibility for all of South Canterbury. The following year the foundation stone of the first St Mary's Church was laid. It was dedicated on 28 April 1861 and the church was enlarged in 1868. In 1875 Archdeacon HW Harper (a son of the bishop) took up his position as vicar of St Mary's, a post he held until 1911. The replacement in stone of the original St Mary's was designed by the noted Christchurch architect WB Armson towards the end of his career. The foundation stone was laid in September 1880, and the nave and side aisles finally completed to Armson's design and the church consecrated on 26 August 1886. Part of the old church was connected to the new in order to create a temporary chancel and vestry, pending completion of the building when finances allowed. It has been reported that Armson's successors Collins and Harman modified his design but the account of the laying of the foundation stone in 1880 mentions a tower to be built at the north-east corner of the church. Between 1907 and 1909 the chancel was built along with a Lady chapel, the octagonal choir room and the tower; a second foundation stone having been laid on 14 July 1907. The church reopened on 6 May 1909. Over the years a number of notable memorial windows were installed in St Mary's, including a World War II window funded by the town of Worthing in Sussex, England, in appreciation of the food parcels sent from Timaru during the war. Besides the church, the parish built a two-storey brick vicarage on Theodosia Street, behind which, in 1903, was a wooden Sunday school room which could seat around 500 people. A larger Sunday school was erected on a nearby site in 1929; the earlier hall subsequently being demolished. A Conservation Plan for the church was prepared in 2000; the building was closed between 2012 and 2015, due to concerns about seismic performance, and it closed once again in January 2018 for strengthening and conservation. Services are currently being held in the adjacent hall until the refurbishment has been completed.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church has high historical and social significance as a place of Anglican worship and communion since 1886 and as a demonstration of the congregation's sustained commitment to the staged construction of the church, over almost 30 years, as funds permitted.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church 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 1886 and for its continued use as a place of remembrance and commemoration. The church's World War I Shrine of Remembrance was dedicated on 1 December 1921. The memorial chapel of St Michael and All Angels was dedicated on 28 June 1953 in memory of the South Canterbury servicemen who died serving in World War II.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church has high architectural significance as the last and most important ecclesiastical work by leading New Zealand architect William Armson (1834-83). Armson modelled his design on St Luke's Anglican Church in Oamaru, for which he had acted as supervising architect in 1865. He died before the church could be completed; the work being taken over in 1883 by the successors to his practice, JJ Collins (1855-1933) and RSD Harman (1859-1927). The firm also designed a number of houses for members of Canterbury's rural elite in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including 'Blue Cliffs' for RH Rhodes in 1889, AEG Rhodes' town house 'Te Koraha' (1883-1903), and 'Meadowbank' homestead for George Rhodes in 1891. The 1903 *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* noted of the practice's houses that

'[t]hese are amongst the finest family residences in New Zealand, and in point of design and architecture they are unsurpassed in the colony.' Collins' most well-known ecclesiastical work is the Nurses' Memorial Chapel at Christchurch Hospital (1925-27). Local architect Walter Panton was engaged by the church building committee in c.1908 to supervise the stages designed by Collins and Harman.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church has high technological and craftsmanship significance as a composite late-Victorian and Edwardian bluestone and Oamaru stone building. The interior is notable for woodwork was carved by noted Canterbury craftsman Frederick Gurnsey and Fiona Ciaran has catalogued the stained-glass windows installed in the church from c.1891 in her PhD dissertation. One window, the *Benedicte Canticle* (1953) was partly based on drawings by South Canterbury artists Esther Hope.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church has high contextual significance as a landmark historic feature and for its relationship with the St Mary's Church Hall and other heritage churches in Timaru, including the former Methodist (heritage item # 51) and Presbyterian (heritage item # 38) churches that are located to the south-west and north-west of St Mary's. The church's elevated site and proximity to the South Canterbury Museum and the Wrecks Monument also enhances its contextual significance within the town centre.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the church pre-dates 1900 its site has potential archaeological significance relating to the building's construction and use. The church was built on the site of the first St Mary's (1860-61).

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

St Mary's Anglican Church has high overall heritage significance to Timaru and Timaru district as a whole. The church has high historical and social significance for its association with local Anglicans for over 130 years and cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Christian worship and fellowship. St Mary's Anglican Church has high architectural significance as a Gothic Revival style building designed by William Armson and the successors to his leading architectural practice and high technological and craftsmanship significance for its masonry construction using locally quarried basalt and Oamaru limestone. St Mary's Anglican Church has high contextual significance as a local landmark and in relation to other historic churches in the central city. The site of St Mary's Anglican Church has potential archaeological significance in view of its pre-1900 date of construction.

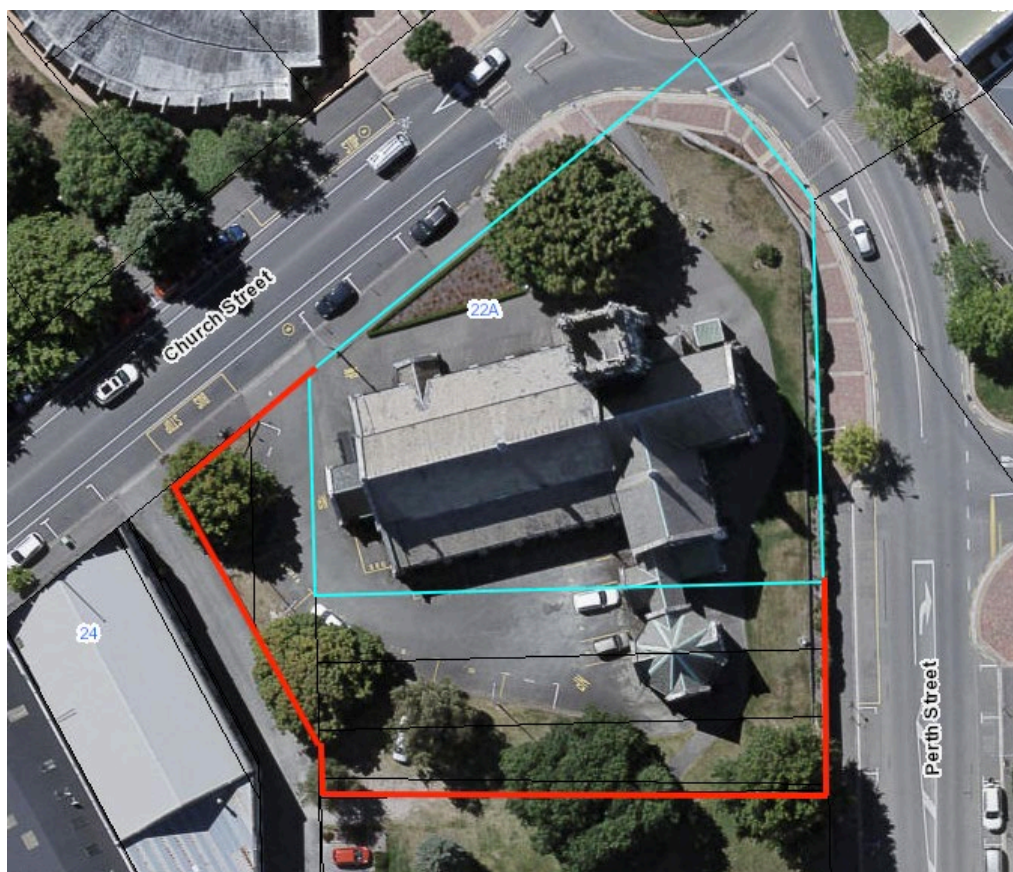
HERITAGE CATEGORY

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Extent of setting, 22A Church Street, Timaru.