

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

2021 District Plan Item No. HH101
HERITAGE ITEM NAME St Brigid's Catholic Church
ADDRESS 232 Loburn Whiterock Road, Loburn
PHOTOGRAPH



(www)

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

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Part RS 17168 [incl RS 17168X]

VALUATION NUMBER 2149007300

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1874-75

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** Benjamin Mountfort, architect

STYLE Colonial Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Apsidal sanctuary at north end; gabled sacristy and open-framed entrance porch on eastern elevation. Diamond-pattern lancet arched windows set within rectangular frames, paired on side elevations and tripled at south end. Exposed rafters and vertical battens.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

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

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

'Improvements' (1904). Exterior walls clad in stucco (date unknown).

SETTING

The church stands on the east side of Loburn Whiterock Road, north of its intersection with Hodgsons Road and south of its intersection with Pound Road. The building is set back from the road boundary on a site that slopes away from the road towards the Makariki River. The church is largely screened from the road by vegetation and forms the backdrop to a historic cemetery. The extent of setting is limited to the north-western portion of the land parcel on which the church is located, notwithstanding the potential archaeological values of the property as a whole; it includes the historic portion of the churchyard.

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. A church at Loburn was opened on 30 May 1875 by the Rev Father Chervier (1833-1901), a pioneering Catholic priest who was born in France and ordained as a Marist priest in 1857. Fr Chervier is credited with the erection of eleven Catholic churches in Canterbury during his tenure, including those at Rangiora, Ashburton, Leeston, Southbridge, and Darfield. Use of the Loburn church waned after the 1960s but was revived in the late 20th century. St Brigid's is now part of the Waimakariri St Peter Chanel Catholic Parish and mass is conducted at the church once or twice a year.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Brigid's Catholic Church has historical and social significance for its association with the Catholic congregation of Loburn since 1875 and the priests who have served the district over the years, including pioneer priest Father Chervier. The Loburn church was the third Catholic church built in North Canterbury and the second in Waimakariri district; it is the oldest to survive.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Brigid's Catholic Church has cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Catholic worship and fellowship. The church also has a commemorative function; the south-east sanctuary window commemorates Ellen and Michael Fitzgibbon, local farmers who died in 1903 and 1915 respectively. The window was gifted by their children.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

St Brigid's Catholic Church has architectural significance as a Colonial Gothic Revival style building believed to have been designed by acclaimed Christchurch architect Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98). Mountfort trained and practised in London before emigrating to New Zealand with his family in 1850; a colonist on one of the 'First Four Ships'. He designed churches throughout his career and was also responsible for the Canterbury Provincial Council buildings (1858-65), and early buildings for Canterbury Museum (1869 -) and Canterbury University College (1877/1882, Christchurch Arts Centre). Mountfort was an ardent proponent of the Gothic Revival style and 'by the 1880s [he] was recognised as New Zealand's foremost church architect' (Lochhead, NZDB entry – see below). Although better known for his work for the Anglican church, Mountfort also designed a number of Catholic churches during his career.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

St Brigid's Catholic Church has technological and craftsmanship value for its Victorian timber construction and detailing. The stained glass sanctuary windows in the sanctuary are attributed to Bradley Brothers of Christchurch and are believed to post-date 1915. The exterior of the church has been stuccoed.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

St Brigid's Catholic Church has contextual value as a local historic feature, which can be glimpsed from the roadway, and in relation to the churchyard in which it is located. The church is said to be one of the few in the diocese that has its own cemetery, which is thought to account for its survival until the present day.

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

St Brigid's Catholic Church has overall heritage significance to Loburn and Waimakariri district as a whole. The building has historic and social significance for its association with the Catholic congregation of Loburn since 1875 and cultural and spiritual significance for its religious use and commemorative features. St Brigid's Catholic Church has architectural significance as a Colonial Gothic Revival style church believed to have been designed by acclaimed Christchurch architect Benjamin Mountfort and technological and craftsmanship value for its Victorian construction and detailing. St Brigid's Catholic Church has contextual significance as a historic feature on the Loburn Whiterock Road and the church property has potential archaeological value in view of the age of the building.

HERITAGE CATEGORY

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- *Lyttelton Times* 2 July 1874, p. 4.
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- DN Hawkins *Beyond the Waimakariri* Christchurch, 2001; available online.
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REPORT COMPLETED

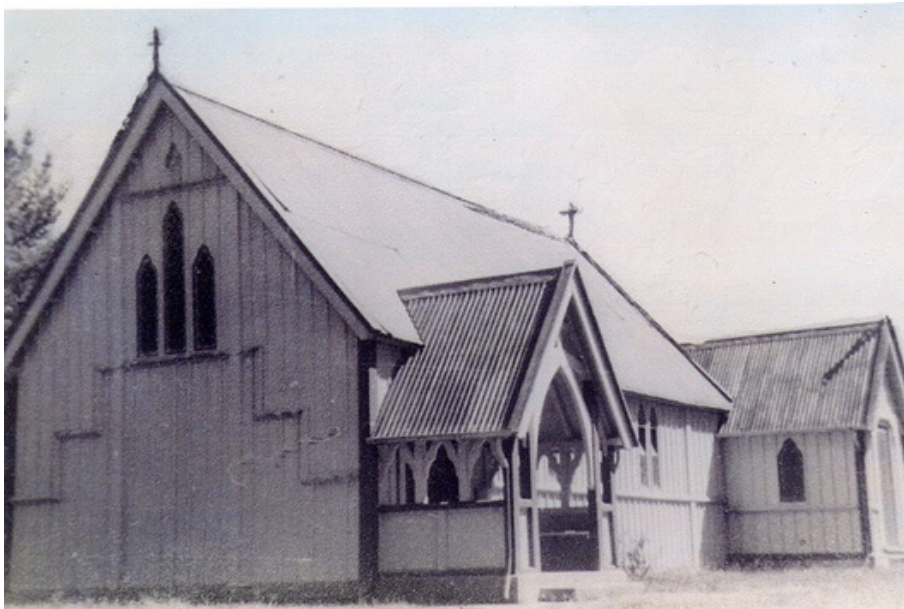
7 July 2019

AUTHOR

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of setting, limited to north-western portion of the site and including the historic churchyard, 232 Loburn Whiterock Road, Loburn.



The church before it was stuccoed.