

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

---

**2021 District Plan Item No.** HH031  
**HERITAGE ITEM NAME** St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry  
**ADDRESS** 1750 Cust Road, Cust

**PHOTOGRAPH**



(Dr A McEwan, 10 July 2019)

**DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO.** H005      **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** 3077 / 2  
(at time of assessment)

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** Part RS 5777

**VALUATION NUMBER** 2158008600

**DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1865 / 1878 / 1882

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/  
BUILDER** Messrs Bury & Mountfort, architects; John Waller, builder (church); BW Mountfort, architect (belfry)

**STYLE** Gothic Revival - Early English and Venetian (belfry)

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Single-storey church with irregular rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Cusped lancet arched windows, with pair and trefoil set in east end. Vertical battens, entrance porch on south elevation and vestry on north. Hall has a rectangular footprint, gabled roof and lean-to on north elevation. Paired cusped lancet arched windows. Belfry has a rectangular footprint and gabled roof with cresting. Venetian Gothic constructional polychromy with corbelled eaves and door set within lancet arch. Timber louvres have zig-zag lower edge.

**MATERIALS/STRUCTURE**

Timber frame and weatherboard cladding, corrugated metal roofing (church & hall). Brick, Mt Somers stone & timber (belfry).

**ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS**

Chancel and vestry additions to church (BW Mountfort, architect & A Bennett, builder, 1874-75). Church reroofed with corrugated iron (1884). Church entrance porch renewed (c.1977).

**SETTING**

The church, Sunday School and bell tower are located on the north side of Cust Road, west of Mill Road. The northern boundary of the property was once formed by the Rangiora-Oxford railway line. The freestanding bell tower and the Sunday School hall are located to the west

of the church. The churchyard is independent of the church and is located in Tippings Road. The former St James' on the Cust Anglican Church parsonage (H003) is west of the church. The extent of setting is the land parcel on which all three historic structures are located.

## **HISTORY**

The Church of St James' on the Cust was erected in 1865, on land gifted by Messrs Walker & Searles, and consecrated by Bishop Harper on 29 September 1866. Initially the vicar lived in 'The Priory' (H006) on the Oxford Road, which was built at the same time as the church in Cust. A new parsonage was built at the western extreme of the church property in Cust in 1876 (H003). The church was presented with a bell made by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London by Sir Edward Cust in 1868; it was housed in a timber belfry (BW Mountfort, architect, 1871) until that structure failed and it was then hung in a brick bell tower erected in 1882. Robert Chapman of 'Springbank' contributed £50 towards the cost of the belfry; his widow Sarah later memorialised her husband by giving the stained-glass window set installed in the east wall in 1895. In 1878 a Sunday School was erected on the church site; at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was attended by 40 children under the guidance of five teachers. Today St James' Church is part of the Anglican Parish of Oxford-Cust and services are held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. A plaque recognising the churchyard as a burial place before the Tippings Road cemetery opened was unveiled on 10 March 2019.

## **HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have historical and social significance for their association with the Anglican community of Cust and as expressions of the congregation's growth and development since 1865.

## **CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church has cultural significance as a place of Anglican worship and fellowship and for the commemorative purpose of a number of its fittings and furnishings within it, including the commemorative stained-glass windows gifted by Sarah Chapman and Mabel Beere. The Sunday School and belfry have cultural value as demonstrations of the way of life of the congregation which was called to church by the bell in the belfry and attended to their children's religious education in the Sunday School.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church has architectural significance as the work of short-lived architectural partnership Bury & Mountfort (July 1864 - March 1866). Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98), who was responsible for enlarging St James' in 1874-75, 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 and vicarages for the Anglican diocese throughout his career and was also responsible for the Canterbury Provincial Council buildings (1858-65), and early buildings for Canterbury Museum (from 1869) and Canterbury University College (1877/1882, Christchurch Arts Centre). Mountfort was an ardent proponent of the Gothic Revival style and 'by the 1880s was recognised as New Zealand's foremost church architect' (Lochhead, NZDB entry – see below). He was a member of the Anglican church, a leader in the profession, and is credited with playing a key role in establishing the architectural character of Christchurch. Maxwell Bury (1825-1912) is best known for his design of the Nelson Provincial Council buildings (1859, demolished) and the clocktower block of the University of Otago (1877). Bury had trained in England and first settled in Nelson, where none of his buildings survive. He was also an active member of the Anglican church and later designed the Chapel of the Holy Evangelists for the Bishop of Nelson (1876). St Patrick's Catholic Church in Akaroa (1864) is the only other Bury & Mountfort designed church to have survived. The designer/architect of the Sunday School is currently unconfirmed, but BW Mountfort's longstanding association with the Cust church and the Anglican diocese of Canterbury makes him the most likely candidate. Mountfort certainly designed both the original timber belfry and the brick tower that replaced it in 1882. The

latter has architectural significance for its Venetian Gothic styling, in contrast to the Early English Gothic Revival style of both the church and its 'matching' Sunday School hall.

#### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have technological and craftsmanship significance for their Victorian construction and detailing. The first stage of the church was built by Christchurch builder and timber merchant John Waller. Waller (c.1835-1907) also owned a sawmilling company on the West Coast in partnership with RW England, another leading member of the Canterbury construction industry. The church also houses stained glass windows dating to 1895 (sanctuary) and c.1921-22 (west end gable). The builders responsible for the Sunday School and belfry are currently unknown.

#### **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have high contextual significance as a group of landmark historic features in Cust and for the relationship they have with both the former St James' on the Cust Anglican Church parsonage (H003) and 'The Priory' on the Oxford Road (H006).

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

As all three structures pre-date 1900 the church property has potential archaeological significance relating to its colonial development and use. It is also noted that the church was a burial site in the later 1860s.

#### **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have overall heritage significance to Cust and Waimakariri district as a whole. The church group has historic and social significance for its association with the Anglican community of Cust and cultural significance as a place of Anglican worship and fellowship and as demonstration of the way of life of church members. St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have architectural significance as Gothic Revival style structures designed, in part at least, by Maxwell Bury and BW Mountfort, and technological and craftsmanship significance for their Victorian construction and detailing. St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, Sunday School & belfry have high contextual significance as landmark historic features at Cust and for their relationship with two former Anglican vicarages. The church property has potential archaeological significance in view of the site's pre-1900 development and use.

#### **HERITAGE CATEGORY**

B

#### **REFERENCES**

- *Press* 20 October 1868, p. 2; 1 November 1871, p. 2; 8 December 1871, p. 1; 16 May 1884, p. 4; 20 April 1885, p. 3.
- *Lyttelton Times* 8 June 1865, p. 1; 5 September 1865, p. 3; 24 September 1866, p. 4; 8 April 1875, p. 2; 11 March 1879, p. 6; 21 October 1881, p. 3; 14 May 1884, p. 7.
- *North Canterbury Gazette* 15 September 1936, p. 5.
- *Globe* 18 August 1877, p. 2; 28 November 1878, p. 2
- *The News* 18 June 2015, p. 11.
- <http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3077>
- <https://libraries.waimakariri.govt.nz/heritage/local-history/places-of-the-waimakariri/oxford-and-districts/history-of-churches-in-oxford,-carleton,-coopers-creek,-cust-and-horrelville>
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-ReeWasI-t1-body-d35.html>

- I Lochhead *A Dream of Spires – Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* Christchurch, 1999.
- A Marchant 'Maxwell Bury of 'Bury and Mountfort' *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* Vol. 19, 1998, pp. 3-15.
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m57/mountfort-benjamin-woolfield>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2b52/bury-maxwell>
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/10204/cust-belfry>
- <http://www.anglicanweb.org/oxford/files1/newsletter.pdf>
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District* Christchurch, 1903; available online.
- *Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Nelson, Marlborough & Westland Provincial Districts* Christchurch, 1906; available online.
- [http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/blain\\_directory/directory.pdf](http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/blain_directory/directory.pdf)
- F Ciaran 'Stained Glass in Canterbury, New Zealand, 1860 to 1988' PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1992.
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-AclEarl-t1-body-d3-d11.html>

**REPORT COMPLETED**

7 March 2019

**AUTHOR**

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services



Extent of setting, St James' on the Cust Anglican Church, with (from left to right) Sunday School, belfry and church, 1750 Cust Road, Cust.