

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 692**

***ST ANDREW’S CHURCH AND SETTING  
– 30, 32 UPPER CHURCH ROAD, LITTLE RIVER***



**PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON DAISLEY, 2013**

**HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.*

St Andrew's Anglican Church and setting which includes the associated graveyard, located in Little River, was opened in January 1879 and has historical and social significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century church that has remained in used as a church ever since. The church is built on land that belonged to William Wilson, who was the first mayor of Christchurch. Wilson never used the land at Little River and in 1877 he granted part of his land to the Church Property Trustees, although the transferral was delayed until permission was granted by Parliament. Little River had become a parochial district in 1875, having belonged to the Anglican parish of Governor's Bay since 1866 with services held in the house of a local miller, William Coop, the Maori Church, or the local school. As soon as Little River was elevated to a parochial district discussions were begun on where to build a permanent church. The building was designed by Gothic Revival architect Benjamin Mountfort and built by Noah Walters. Reverend Purchas was appointed as the first resident vicar of Little River in 1892 and two years later he oversaw alterations to the church which involved extending it by five metres and adding buttresses to the northern elevation. Alterations have been made to the building throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as the new hall extension in 1990, but it still retains much of its original form.

**CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.*

St Andrew's Church has cultural and spiritual significance as an Anglican Church that has been in use for over a century and has housed many important religious and social ceremonies for the Little River community in that time. The associated graveyard reflects the cultural traditions of burial practice over time and is still an open cemetery. The church and cemetery have strong community connections and associations to the way of life and settlement of the area.

### **ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.*

The church has architectural and aesthetic significance as a timber Gothic Revival church designed by Benjamin Mountfort in the 1870s. Mountfort trained as an architect in England under Richard Carpenter, an important member of the Gothic Revival movement. Mountfort immigrated to New Zealand in 1850 and became New Zealand's pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect. He has been credited with defining Christchurch's Gothic Revival character with a group of major buildings including the Canterbury Museum, the Provincial Council Buildings and Canterbury College (later the Arts Centre) and a number of early timber churches for the Anglican diocese.

The church is constructed of board and batten, with a pitched metal roof and features a string course running the length of the building. There are lancet windows in all the elevations, double in the north and south elevations and triple at the gable ends. The gable ends also feature exposed rafters and shingle decoration. There is a porch on the south side with a pitched roof and decorative brackets. The eastern end of the building is an extension with a small vestry on the southern side. The belfry was removed in the 1940s and the bell was placed in a frame on the ground. In recent years a small belfry has been constructed in the grounds, reflecting the design of the porch. In 1990 a new hall was added to the western end of the building, in a design which incorporates the features of the original building and still allows the original building to be easily legible. The associated St Andrew's Church graveyard includes some early and monumental Victorian graves.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE**

*Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.*

St Andrew's Church has technological and craftsmanship significance through its ability to demonstrate construction techniques from the 1870s, especially of the board and batten method, which was used prior to the adoption of machine manufactured timber boards. The St Andrew's Church graveyard has technological and craftsmanship significance as many of the graves display the skills of craftspeople. This includes monumental Victorian graves that reflect social attitudes to death and fashion in funerary ornamentation.

### **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.*

The church and its setting have contextual significance as an important site dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that sits on a hill above the township within a rural setting. St Andrew's Church is located at the northern end of Little River and the setting includes the adjacent St Andrew's Church graveyard which has also been in use since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This end of Little River was historically the site of the former school and a former cheese factory and currently houses the vicarage large areas of open paddock

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE**

*Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.*

The church and its setting have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

### **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

St Andrew's Church and its setting has heritage significance to Banks Peninsula and Christchurch. It has historical and social significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century, colonial church, designed by Benjamin Mountfort, which has been in continual use for over a century. It has cultural and spiritual significance as an Anglican Church and graveyard that has been in use for over a century. The church has housed many important religious and social ceremonies for the Little River community in that time and the graveyard is an important reflection of a community's cultural burial practices over a century and a half. The building has architectural and aesthetic significance as a rural church designed by New Zealand's foremost Gothic Revival architect, which still retains much of its original form and fabric. The building and graveyard has technological and craftsmanship significance through its ability to demonstrate construction and monumental masonry techniques from the 1870s. The church and its setting have contextual significance as an important site dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that sits on a hill above Little River within a rural setting not untypical for early churches in New Zealand rural communities. The church and its setting have archaeological significance in view of the date at which development first occurred on this site.

### **REFERENCES:**

Christchurch City Council Heritage files *32 Upper Church Road, St Andrew's Church (Anglican)*  
Daisley, Simon, *Background Information Listed Heritage Place, St Andrew's Church (Anglican) – 32 Upper Church Road, 2013*

**REPORT DATED: 20 MARCH, 2015**

PLEASE NOTE THIS ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF WRITING. DUE TO THE ONGOING NATURE OF HERITAGE RESEARCH, FUTURE REASSESSMENT OF THIS HERITAGE ITEM MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFLECT ANY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.

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