

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN – SCHEDULED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 154
*FORMER ST MARY’S CONVENT CHAPEL AND SETTING – 866
COLOMBO STREET, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL 2018

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.

The former St Mary's Convent Chapel has high historical and social significance for its association with the Sisters of Mercy in Christchurch and its former role in the order's daily life for some 80 years. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Christchurch and opened a school on this site in 1894. The first of a new group of stone buildings commissioned by the order, the Chapel was built in 1910-11 to the design of architects S and A Luttrell. The order had previously commissioned the Luttrells to design a new convent but decided instead to prioritise the construction of a convent chapel. The chapel, which was initially connected to the original timber convent, was soon followed by a new school building in 1913, also designed by the Luttrells. A new convent designed by J S Guthrie was erected between the chapel and school building in 1919. St Mary's Convent closed in 1993 and, apart from the chapel, the site was cleared for residential redevelopment in 1994.

In 1994 the chapel was purchased by the Christchurch City Council and subsequently repurposed as the Rose Historic Chapel, a wedding and concert venue managed by a Trust. It reopened in 2000. The chapel was extensively damaged in the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes and was reopened in 2018 following an extensive programme of work to repair, restore and strengthen the building.

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.

The former St Mary's Convent Chapel has high cultural and spiritual significance as the spiritual focus of St Mary's Convent for some eighty years. As the only remaining component of St Mary's Convent, the chapel memorialises the Sisters of Mercy, their distinctive way of life at the site for a century, and the school that they ran. The chapel also has cultural and spiritual significance for former pupils of the school and is held in high regard by members of the Rose Historic Chapel Trust who oversee its use and maintenance. Its purchase by the City Council in order to save this historic heritage element of the former school and convent is evidence of the regard in which heritage was held in the culture of the City at that time. Its repair and restoration following earthquake damage is further evidence of the value of the building to the city.

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 former St Mary's Convent Chapel has high architectural and aesthetic significance for its demonstration of the persistence of the Gothic Revival style for religious buildings into the 20th century. The chapel is a small oblong building with a gabled porch that aligns with the gable of the principal part of the building. The building has a single span slate pitched roof which is repeated over the porch and it is faced with Hoon Hay and Oamaru stone. It has carefully aligned gothic detailing in Oamaru stone and quoined detail on the corners of the 'buttress-like' elements on the principal and side facades. The main feature of the principal façade is the Rose window form which the chapel takes its current name.

Internally the building has simple restrained plaster detail, engaged columns, pilasters and corbels with decorative capitals on which rest detailed timber knee braces. The ceiling is of timber with detailed beams and trusses. A significant feature of the building is the outstanding collection of stained-glass windows, of which a large number were created in the workshop of noted craftsman John Hardman and Co. of Birmingham between 1910 and 1916.

The chapel also has architectural significance as one of a number of Catholic buildings designed by the prominent architectural practice of Alfred (1865-1924) and Sidney (1872-1932) Luttrell during the 1910s. The Luttrells became the unofficial diocesan architects in the early 20th century, designing Catholic churches at New Brighton, Sumner and Hokitika, as well as a convent chapel for the Sisters of Mercy in Hokitika and another for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd at the Mount Magdala Institute in Halswell (St John of God). Almost all of

these buildings were in the Gothic Revival style, with varying degrees of influence of the Perpendicular Gothic style in their design.

The programme of work to repair the building following the earthquakes was extensive and included collapsed gable walls being rebuilt with salvaged and new stone, the roof and foundations were strengthened and all the stained-glass windows had to be re-constructed and re-installed. The original chapel spiral staircase was destroyed in the earthquakes but was replaced with the salvaged staircase from the demolished Regents Theatre. The replacement staircase was designed by the same architect and made at the same iron works as the original staircase.

The whole interior of the building has heritage significance including the layout and spaces, structure and linings, fixtures, hardware, materials and finishes. An overview of the interior heritage fabric is included at the end of this document.

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.

The former St Mary's Convent Chapel has high craftsmanship significance for its collection of stained glass by John Hardman and Son of Birmingham, one of which was donated by Sidney Luttrell to the convent (St Cecilia). The Luttrells also selected Hardman windows for Our Lady Star of the Sea in Sumner and St James Riccarton. It also has high craftsmanship significance for the interior detail, including the timbered roofing detail and marble altar. The central rose window on the principal façade is a particularly notable piece of both stained glass and stone mason craftsmanship. The building has technological significance for what it may reveal about construction technology for the period as well as post-earthquake repair and strengthening programmes in the 2020s. Historic and contemporary craft skills are evident in the replacement staircase retrieved from the Regent Theatre which was repaired using wrought iron elements from the original chapel staircase, the stained glass windows, including the central rose window, which were repaired and restored by local stained glass restoration expert Graham Stewart and the quality of the restored stonework.

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 former St Mary's Convent Chapel has contextual significance as an example of the work of the Luttrell Brothers, many of whose buildings were demolished following the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes. Although the building lost much of its original context with the demolition of the convent and 1913 school building in 1994, an area of garden with original statuary was retained. The original brick boundary wall was demolished post-quake, before being reconstructed in 2018 as part of the repair and restoration of the site. The wall is a notable feature as it serves as a reminder of the cloistered life of the order. The chapel also retains its relationship with the modern buildings of St Mary's Church and School, which are

on the same block but address Manchester Street. The former St Mary's Convent Chapel also has contextual significance in relation to the Luttrells' St James' Anglican Church in Riccarton Road and the former Sisters of the Good Shepherd at the Mount Magdala Institute in Halswell (St John of God) chapel.

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 former St Mary's Convent Chapel has archaeological significance because it has 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

The former St Mary's Convent Chapel, including the whole interior and setting, has high heritage significance to Christchurch, including Banks' Peninsula. The chapel has historical and social significance for its association with the Sisters of Mercy and the convent and school that they established in 1894. The chapel has cultural and spiritual significance as a place of worship that was adaptively reused after community efforts to prevent its demolition. The former St Mary's Convent Chapel has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an example of the Luttrell Brothers' early 20th century Gothic Revival work for the Catholic Church and religious orders and is now one of the few convent chapels remaining extant post-quake. The chapel has contextual significance in relation to the portion of original grounds that remain, the nearby St Mary's Church and School, and other buildings associated with the Luttrells and the Sisters of Mercy. The building has high craftsmanship significance for its stained-glass windows, interior detail, masonry detail and for what it may reveal about construction technology for the period. It has archaeological significance in view of pre-1900 human use of the site, including Catholic activity on the site since 1894.

REFERENCES:

Louise Beaumont 'Rose Historic Chapel Reserve – Historical Investigation & Assessment' (for CCC, 2010)

Ann McEwan 'From cottages to skyscrapers: the architecture of AE & ES Luttrell in Tasmania and New Zealand' MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1988)

Historic place # 7239

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7239>

Fiona Ciarin 'Stained Glass in Canterbury, New Zealand – 1860 to 1988' (PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1992)

REPORT DATED: 16 NOVEMBER 2014 Updated: Jan 2022

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.

PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL HERITAGE FILES.

INTERIOR HERITAGE FABRIC OVERVIEW

Unless otherwise stated, the items listed below include all features noted e.g. 'doors' includes all doors in that space.

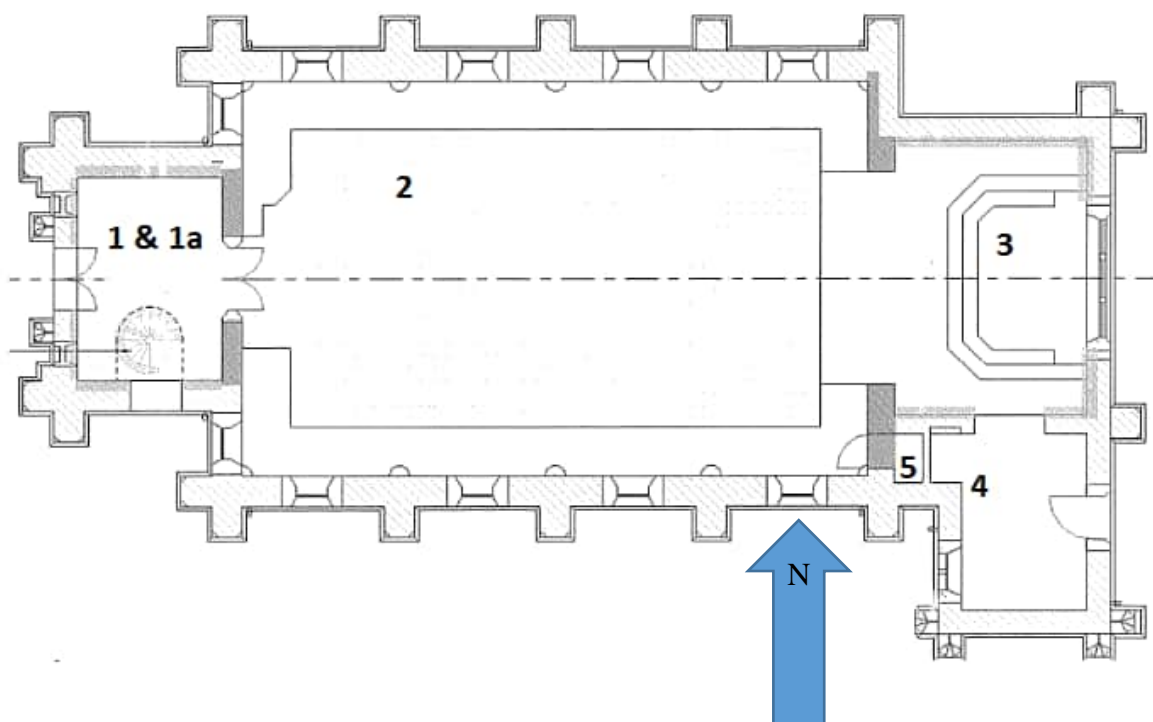
Compiled 2016

Location	Heritage Fabric
Building Structure	Roof structure Intermediate floor structure Wall structure Ground floor structure
1 (porch)	Form and space Semi-glazed tiled floor Painted plaster wall surface Panelled tongue and groove ceiling Paired doors to 2, architraves, holy water basin on architrave, hardware ¹ Exterior door: interior face, architraves and hardware
1a (choir loft)	Form and space Arched opening into nave Timber balustrade Timber floor
2 (nave)	Form and space Tiled floor Timber perimeter platform Painted plaster wall surfaces Paired doors to 1, architraves and hardware Plaster arch to 3 with columns, capitals, hood moulding Tongue and groove ceiling, hammer beam trusses (with carved bosses) on plaster corbels Door to 5, architraves and hardware

¹ Hardware includes such items as door handles, locks, push plates, key escutcheons, bolts, window latches or locks, stays, and or hinges

3 (sanctuary)	Form and space Marble paved floor Painted plaster walls, arched niche Tongue and groove ceiling, decorative trusses on plaster corbels Marble altar Door to 4, architraves and hardware Plaster arch to 2
4 (sacristy)	Tiled floor Painted plaster wall surfaces Timber ceiling Door to 3, architraves and hardware Built-in desk unit Opening to confessional
5 (confessional)	Painted plaster wall surfaces Opening to sacristy Door to 2, architraves, hardware

Plans



Source: Opus Detailed Engineering Evaluation for Christchurch City Council (2012)