

DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
ST MARY’S CHURCH – 329 HALSWELL ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH

St Mary’s Church, lychgate and graveyard are located on a major arterial route south of the city and contains three scheduled items. St Mary’s Church was built in 1863 to the design of leading Gothic Revival architect Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98). The church is regarded as the culmination of Mountfort’s early ecclesiastical work in Canterbury and it embodies the close relationship between the Anglican Church and the Canterbury Association in the formative years of the new settlement. Later additions to the church, as well as the lychgate, were designed by R W England (1890-91). The church was repaired and partially rebuilt, after fire destroyed the transepts and sanctuary, to designs by Don Donnithorne in 1968-69. The first interment in the graveyard took place in February 1867.

The elevated ground behind the church on which the graveyard is located is thought to have been a viewing platform used by Maori travelling between Banks Peninsula and Tuahiwi. This heritage place embodies historical, cultural, architectural, contextual, craftsmanship and archaeological values. Today St Mary’s is part of the Anglican Parish of Halswell Prebbleton. Services are held on Sundays and during the week and the graveyard is open to parishioners and people whose descendants are interred there.

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 232
*ST MARY’S CHURCH AND SETTING – 329 HALSWELL ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8.1.2015

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 Mary's Church has high historical and social significance as one of the earliest churches built on the Canterbury Plains, as one of the oldest Anglican churches remaining in Canterbury, and as a reflection of the central role of the Anglican Church in the early history of the province. A site for a church at the planned settlement of Halswell was set aside by the Canterbury Association in the 1850s. It was not until May 1862, however, following a directive from Bishop Harper, the efforts of parish vicar Rev Croasdaile Bowen, and with a growing local population, that tenders for a church were called. St Mary's was opened on 4th November 1863 by Bishop Harper and consecrated in 1871. The church was part of the parish of St Peter's Anglican Church at Riccarton, whose first church (1857-60) was also designed by the architect of St Mary's, Benjamin Mountfort.

The new church received one of four altar sets originally sent out from England by the Canterbury Association. St Mary's became the centre of a new Halswell parish in 1898. The

first vicar Henry Williams also served as chaplain of Sunnyside Asylum. The church was badly damaged by fire in 1967, and subsequently partly rebuilt in modern form. The first burials in the cemetery at the rear of the church took place in 1867. Today it contains the remains of a number of significant Canterbury personages, including Sir John Cracroft Wilson and Henry (Harry) Ell.

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 Mary's Church has high cultural and spiritual significance as a centre of Anglican worship for the Halswell community for over 150 years. The church is held in high esteem by its congregation, such that they decided to partially restore the old building in 1968 rather than rebuild it in its entirety. As an early colonial church, St Mary's commemorates the Anglican spiritual and cultural origins of the Canterbury settlement and the expansion of the Church into Christchurch's hinterland from the 1860s. The church also contains specific memorials including the 'The Ascending Christ' stained glass windows above the altar, which were donated by Eileen Fairbairn, in memory of her parents Ada and Andrew Fairbairn, in 1957.

The land on which St Mary's is located also has cultural significance to mana whenua, given that the rise on which the church's graveyard is located is thought to have been a 'viewing platform' used by Maori travelling between Banks' Peninsula and Tuahiwi.

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.

St Mary's Church has high architectural significance as an important early ecclesiastical work by prominent Canterbury Gothic Revival architect Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98). Mountfort trained in England and arrived in Canterbury aboard the *Charlotte Jane* in December 1850. He was to become one of New Zealand's leading proponents of the Gothic Revival style and made a major contribution to the architectural development and character of colonial Christchurch. At the time he designed St Mary's, Mountfort was in partnership with Isaac Luck (1857 until July 1864). Architectural historian Ian Lochhead has judged that the buildings produced by the partnership were designed by Mountfort and that after 1861, when he formed another partnership with auctioneer Charles Clark, Luck is likely to have been even less involved in the firm.

Over the course of his career in New Zealand Mountfort executed a large number of ecclesiastical and secular commissions, including the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings and Canterbury Museum.

Plans for a stone church at Halswell were submitted in 1861, but as this proved too expensive, the building was redesigned in timber with capacity for future expansion. The church adopts an Early English Gothic Revival style, is ecclesiologically correct in its expression of its component parts and features board and batten walls, paired lancet windows and slightly flared pitched roofs. A small rose window set in the west wall and a cusped triple lancet opposite emphasise the east-west axis of the church. The interior of the church has a central aisle and exposed roof trusses. The stringcourse that runs around the exterior of the building beneath the windows was a new detail that became 'a hallmark of

Mountfort's churches'. Lochhead considers that St Mary's marked a culmination of Mountfort's church work to date, featuring a new compositional clarity, simplicity of detail and design confidence that was to characterise his later work.

The organ chamber was added, new windows were installed and the roof resingled in 1891 by Christchurch architect Robert England. The church also has aesthetic significance for the three-light stained glass memorial window installed above the altar in 1957. It was made by Joseph Nuttgens (1892-1982) of High Wycombe, UK. Following a fire in 1967, in which the memorial window received some minor damage, the transept and chancel were rebuilt in sympathetic modern form by architect Don Donnithorne (1968-69). Donnithorne used Halswell stone to clad the exterior walls of the new chancel and, with the exception of the porch and belfry, the roof was reclad with decramastic tiles at the same time.

Internally the original form of the church is typical of small timber gothic inspired colonial churches with minimal detail but the form well expressed in timber. The church also contains specific memorials including the 'The Ascending Christ' stained glass windows above the altar, which were donated by Eileen Fairbairn, in memory of her parents Ada and Andrew Fairbairn, in 1957. Eileen Fairbairn was a retired geography teacher from Christchurch Girls' High School and is also known for gifting her Bealey Crag cottage to the school in 1977.

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 Mary's Church has technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of early colonial timber construction and for the information it can provide about building methodologies and techniques of the period. The builder was Joseph Rastrick (1808-74) and Sons, who were also responsible for building the first St Mary's Anglican Church in Merivale (1866) and after whom Rastrick Street in the same suburb was named.

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.

St Mary's Church has high contextual significance within Halswell and for its location on a major arterial route to the south of the city. It is the principal heritage feature within a precinct of church-related structures, which are immediately adjacent to Halswell Domain. The setting of the church consists of sweeping lawns, mature trees, a hall dating from 1958 and, at the rear, an extensive graveyard entered through a memorial lychgate. The lychgate was designed by R W England as part of the 1891 church renovation programme.

To the north of the church grounds is the open sweep of Halswell Domain with its stone war memorial; to the south, the former vicarage (R W England, c.1898-99), which is now a cafe. Over Halswell Road is the suburb's commercial area. Together the church, graveyard, lychgate, hall, former vicarage and established grounds form an important heritage precinct and a landmark grouping on Halswell Road.

St Mary's Church also has contextual significance within the oeuvre of Benjamin Mountfort and the building of colonial 19th century Anglican churches in Canterbury.

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.

St Mary's Church and its setting are of 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 predates 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

St Mary's Church and its setting has high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula as one of the earliest churches built on the Canterbury Plains and as one of the oldest Anglican churches remaining in Canterbury. St Mary's has high historical significance as one of the oldest surviving church buildings in Canterbury and as a reflection of the central role of the Anglican Church in the early history of the province. It has high cultural and spiritual significance as an esteemed centre of Anglican worship in Halswell for 151 years contains and for its specific memorials including the 'The Ascending Christ' stained glass windows above the altar. The church has high architectural significance given its design by pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect Benjamin Mountfort. St Mary's Anglican Church has technological and craftsmanship significance as an example of early colonial timber construction and for the information it can provide about building methodologies and techniques of the period. The church has high contextual significance as the focal point of a landmark heritage grouping, which includes an historic graveyard and lychgate. St Mary's Anglican Church and its setting has archaeological significance in view of the date at which the site was developed by the Anglican Church and the potential for archaeological evidence.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage Files – St Mary's Church Halswell

Ian Lochhead *A Dream of Spires: Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch, 1999)

Historic place # 3135 – Heritage New Zealand List
<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3135>

Press 25 June 1898, p. 10 – tenders for vicarage at Halswell [RW England]

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

'Church History – St Mary's Halswell'
<http://www.maryalls.church.org.nz/History/StMarys/>

Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District (Christchurch, 1903)

REPORT DATED: 3 DECEMBER 2014

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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**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1334
*ST MARY’S CHURCH LYCHGATE AND SETTING – 329
HALSWELL ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH***



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8.1.2015

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 Mary's Church Lychgate has historical and social significance for its association with St Mary's Church and Graveyard and its demonstration of historic funeral practises, whereby a lychgate was a structure erected to provide shelter to a coffin as it was taken on to a burial ground.

Christchurch architect R W England called tenders for the lychgate at St Mary's in April 1891. It was built at the same time as improvements were being undertaken at the church, also to

England's design. The lychgate was erected as a memorial to Charles Pitt Beadel (1842-91), who was a member of the Halswell Road Board from 1883 until 1890 and manager of Sir John Cracroft Wilson's Cashmere Estate. The lychgate was dedicated in September 1891, at which service Bishop Julius congratulated the parish on 'its possession of so useful and picturesque addition to the church'. Originally erected on the road frontage as an entry to the church grounds, the lychgate was relocated to its present site at the entrance to the graveyard in 1973, in response to a realignment of Halswell Road.

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 Mary's Anglican Church Lychgate has cultural and spiritual significance as a memorial structure that was intended to serve a religious purpose as part of the burial service.

The land on which St Mary's is located also has cultural significance to mana whenua, given that the rise on which the church's graveyard is located is thought to have been a viewing platform used by Maori travelling between Banks' Peninsula and Tuahiwi.

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.

St Mary's Church Lychgate has architectural and aesthetic significance for its association with prominent turn of the 20th century Christchurch architect R W England and its Gothic Revival design which complements that of the church. Robert West England (1863-1908) became an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1885, after being articled to J L Ball of Birmingham for three years. England established his practice upon his return to Christchurch in the following year. Some of England's best known works include the former Woolston cemetery chapel now located at the City Mission, the former R E McDougall house (Nurse Maude Hospital) and the Riccarton House 1900 extensions. In 1906 his brother Edward joined him in partnership. After Robert's death Edward ran the practice until 1941.

At the time of its dedication the lychgate was felt to add greatly to the appearance of St Mary's which was commonly considered to have the appearance of a 'pretty English village burial-ground'.

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 Mary's Church Lychgate has craftsmanship significance for its rimu timber construction on rubble stone foundations with Australian jarrah gates.

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.

St Mary's Church Lychgate has high contextual significance for the contribution it makes to the heritage group of St Mary's Anglican Church and Graveyard, and as the gateway to the graveyard. It also has significance within the oeuvre of R W England, an architect best known for his domestic work but who also undertook a considerable number of commissions for the Anglican Church and other denominations at the turn of the 20th century, including the design of St Mary's Vicarage in c. 1898-99. The Lychgate has further contextual significance within the cohort of other historic lychgates within the city for example St Michael and All Angels, Oxford Terrace, St Luke's Kilmore Street and the Anglian Church of Mary the Virgin in Addington (1921).

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.

St Mary's Anglican Church Lychgate and its setting are of 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 predates 1900. Although the Lychgate was relocated in 1973 its site has been in church use and occupation since 1863.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

St Mary's Church Lychgate and its setting has overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula for its long association with St Mary's Church and Graveyard. St Mary's Lychgate has historical significance for its association with one of the oldest surviving churches in Canterbury and its part in the 1891 refurbishment of the church and its grounds. The lychgate has cultural and spiritual significance as a memorial structure that was intended to be used as part of the Anglican burial service whereby a lychgate was a structure erected to provide shelter to a coffin as it was taken on to a burial ground. St Mary's Lychgate has architectural significance as the work of R W England in the Gothic Revival style and high contextual significance as the gateway to the graveyard, and as a picturesque feature of a landmark heritage grouping. St Mary's Anglican Church Lychgate and its setting has archaeological significance in view of the date at which the site was developed by the Anglican Church and the potential for archaeological evidence.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage Files – St Mary's Church Lychgate Halswell

Press 7 April 1891, p. 8 – tenders for lychgate at Halswell [RW England].

Press 29 September 1891, p. 6 – dedication of lychgate described.

Sarah Penney *Beyond the City – The Land and its People, Riccarton, Waimairi, Paparua* (Christchurch, 1977)

REPORT DATED: 3 DECEMBER 2014

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**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 1335
ST MARY’S CHURCH GRAVEYARD – 329 HALSWELL ROAD,
CHRISTCHURCH**



PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 8.1.2015

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 Mary's Church Graveyard and its setting has high historical significance as a burial place associated with the one of the oldest Anglican churches in Canterbury. St Mary's Anglican Church opened in November 1863 but the first interment in the adjacent graveyard that of Mary Rochfort, did not occur until 2 February 1867. The graveyard, along with the church, was consecrated in October 1871.

Among those interred in the graveyard are Sir John Cracroft Wilson of Cashmere Estate, members of the Birdling family, after whom Birdling's Flat is named, Harry Ell who developed the Summit Road, and the parents of Eileen Fairbairn, who gifted the memorial window above the altar in their memory (1957). A lawn cemetery opened in 1975 and in 1996 a

columbarium for the interment of ashes was erected in the graveyard. The graveyard is still in use today and eligible plot purchasers must be members of the church or the descendants of those already buried there. A tombstone transcript for St Mary's Graveyard is available at Christchurch City Libraries. It is also sometimes referred to as the Halswell Cemetery.

There has been a degree of damage to tombstones post the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010/11

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 Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard has high cultural and spiritual significance as a manifestation of the generational history and funerary practices of Halswell's Anglican community. It has particular cultural significance as an Anglican cemetery and is esteemed by past and present members of St Mary's congregation.

The land on which St Mary's is located also has cultural significance to mana whenua, given that the rise on which the graveyard is located is thought to have been a viewing platform used by Maori travelling between Banks' Peninsula and Tuahiwi.

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.

St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard has aesthetic significance for its layout and the form, scale, design, texture and material of the funerary monuments within it. The cemetery evokes a sense of age and history in the patina of the monuments and the mature trees within its grounds. It was noted in the early 1890s that St Mary's featured a 'pretty English village burial-ground'. The graves are generally typical of contemporary monumental masonry designs and motifs, with the exception of the grave of Harry Ell and his parents, which references the geology of the Port Hills.

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 Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard exhibits craftsmanship significance in its tombstones. The materials and methods used in the cemetery are representative of the period in which they were installed, and evidence past monumental masonry techniques, some of which are no longer practised. It also contains examples of the changes in burial practices to the more simple practice of lawn cemeteries and a columbarium and design and form of those practices.

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.

St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard has high contextual significance in relation to the heritage grouping of St Mary's Church and Lychgate and in the wider setting of the Halswell Domain. Entry is via the relocated lychgate, which is flanked by low stone walls built in 2006. A line of oaks is thought to mark the original boundary of the graveyard. While the graveyard is not visible from the road it borders Halswell Domain and is an integral feature of the grounds of St Mary's Church.

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.

St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard and its setting has archaeological significance because it has potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past human activity on the site prior to 1900, especially that which has occurred since 1867.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard and its setting has high overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula as a burial place associated with the one of the oldest Anglican churches in Canterbury. The graveyard has high historical and social significance for its association with St Mary's Church and its parishioners. St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard has high cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Anglican burial, which is located within a cultural landscape also valued by Maori for its association as a viewing platform used by early Maori travelling between Banks Peninsula and Tuahiwi. The graveyard has aesthetic significance for its design, layout and the form of its funerary monuments and craftsmanship significance for the execution of the monumental masonry. St Mary's Anglican Church Graveyard has high contextual significance as a defining feature within the grounds of St Mary's Church and archaeological significance in view of the date at which the site was first developed by the Anglican Church and the potential for archaeological evidence.

REFERENCES:

CCC Heritage Files – St Mary's Church Cemetery Halswell

'Parish Cemeteries – St Mary's Halswell'
<http://www.maryalls.church.org.nz/Cemeteries/>

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