

CHURCH OF ST SAVIOUR – 2864 Kimbolton Road, Kimbolton



Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere

Construction date: 1898

Visible materials: Timber cladding & joinery, corrugated steel roofing

Architectural style: Victorian Carpenter Gothic

Use/building type: Church

Date and Compiler: Ian Bowman, 2015

Heritage New Zealand listing:

Proposed category: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY¹

Outline history

In June 1897 Frederick de Jersey Clere was requested for plans for a church at Kimbolton (then known as Fowlers) in time for the AGM which was to be held in 10 days time. Clere succeeded in designing the church and sending the plans in time and estimated that it would cost approximately £250, which was their budget. The church was dedicated on the 14th of April 1898 and cost £283, plus £25 for the land, with Clere's charges totalling £11/-/5. The church roof was 9m high and the steeple 15.2m which

¹ Maclean, S. *Architect of the Angels The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere*, Steele Roberts, 2003, pages 171-72

made it the tallest building in the town. A bell was purchased in 1900 and the church hall built in 1904. The building was constructed in native tōtara, rimu, kahikatea and matai and is still in sound condition.

The builder was Mr William Banks, a member of the committee and Vestry². The church was consecrated by Bishop Wallis in the name of St. Saviour on the 27th October 1898. The name was chosen by Mr Hodge a member of the committee in memory of his father who was Vicar at St Saviour at Retford, England and who was drowned when returning to England from a visit to New Zealand.

Paperspast lists many weddings and funerals held at the church as well as flower shows in the hall³.

Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere⁴

Frederick de Jersey Clere was born at Walsden, Lancashire, England, on 7 January 1856, the second son of Ellen Vaughan and her husband, Henry Clere, an Anglican clergyman. Frederick was educated at St John's School, Clapton, and then at the age of 16 articled to the architect Edmund Evan Scott of Brighton. From 1875 to 1877 he was chief assistant in the London office of Robert Jewell Withers.

Clere emigrated with his family to New Zealand in 1877, arriving at Wellington on the Hurunui on 12 December. After working briefly in Wellington, he practised in Feilding from 1879 to 1883 and in Wanganui from 1883 to 1886. He married Mary Goodbehere at Feilding on 18 April 1883; they were to have three daughters and two sons. In 1886 Clere and his family moved to Wellington, where he was a partner in a succession of architectural firms.

The scope of Frederick Clere's work illustrates his versatility. From 1883 to 1888 he was architect to the Wanganui Education Board. He designed large country homes, such as Overton near Marton, and many houses in Wellington. His surviving commercial buildings include Wellington's AMP building and two harbour board buildings on Queen's Wharf, Wellington. Clere's early houses and his commercial and public buildings were generally conservative in design. His building techniques, however, were more innovative, particularly in their attempt to minimise earthquake and fire damage.

Clere is chiefly known, however, for the more than 100 churches he designed as architect to the Wellington Anglican diocese from 1883. Until 1904 these were of timber and were mostly in country districts; they are exemplified by St John's in Feilding. For urban churches on a larger scale Clere made increasing use of brick, as at All Saints' in Palmerston North, and ferro-concrete, notably for St Mary's in Karori, St Matthew's in Hastings, St Mary of the Angels in Wellington, and St Andrew's in New Plymouth. Almost without exception Clere's churches were an economical and unostentatious adaptation of the contemporary Gothic Revival style, expressed particularly by the pointed arch and a variety of roof-truss constructions and forms of tower or belfry. About 85 of these churches still stand.

Clere was elected an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1882 and a fellow in 1886; he was honorary New Zealand secretary for many years. He resigned from the institute only in 1948

² Former NZHPT Manawatu Branch Committee files

³ <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=q&hs=1&r=1&results=1&t=0&txq=st+saviour+kimbolton&x=42&y=4&pbq=&dafdq=&dafmq=&dafyq=&datdq=&datmq=&datyq=&tyq=&o=10&sf=&ssnip=&e=-----10-1---0st+saviour+kimbolton-->

⁴ Maclean, Susan. 'Clere, Frederick de Jersey 1856 - 1952'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 April 2006 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

at the age of 92. Clere also served as president of the Wellington District Branch of the Association of Architects, and was a foundation member, treasurer and later a fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. He published a number of articles, on art and architecture.

Apart from his involvement in his profession, Clere served on the Wellington City Council, the Lower Hutt Borough Council, the Anglican diocesan and general synods, and the licensing bench. He was a life member of the Waiwhetu Lodge of Freemasons and of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, with whom he exhibited watercolours. Clere was awarded the King George V Silver Jubilee Medal in 1935.

Mary Clere died at Lower Hutt on 7 April 1904. On 17 October 1905, at St Paul's Cathedral Church, Wellington, Frederick Clere married Elizabeth (Bessie) Johnston Ingles; they were to have two daughters. He died at Wellington on 13 August 1952, at the age of 96; Bessie Clere had died in 1920. A devoted family man of deep personal integrity, he cared greatly for the reputation of his profession. In both his personal and professional lives he rejected affectation and excess. As an architect he is highly regarded for his success in marrying European styles to New Zealand conditions.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

This timber framed and clad church is designed in the Carpenter Gothic style, a vernacular 'builders' adaptation of Gothic architecture using the forms but few of the details of academic Gothic. The style was most commonly used for churches of modest scale and was popular with the Ecclesiological Society. These churches often had exposed timber framing on the exterior with board linings fixed on the inside, steeply pitched roofs of shingles, slate or corrugated steel, with wide, although usually not decorated, bargeboards. Planning was usually simple and windows were commonly simple lancets.

St Saviour has the steeply pitched roofs, plain bargeboards, and corrugated steel roofing of the style but enclosed framing with external rusticated weatherboards. External framing is expressed with timber buttresses either side, however.

The church comprises a gabled nave aligned east-west near the west gable with a fleche housing the bell. The entry is on the north west corner with a simple framed hood. A gabled vestry extends from the north east corner while the chancel is aligned with and projects to the east from the nave. A hall at right angles to the church is located near the south east corner of the chancel.

The dimensions of the nave are noted as being 45' x 19' while the chancel is 14' x 8' and the vestry 6' x 6'. The internal wall height is 12' and the height of the fleche tower is 20'. The church was designed to seat 100 people.

Based on drawings of the interior, the nave has a vertical match lined dado, diagonal match lined walls and vertical match lined ceiling with exposed knee braced trusses on the interior⁵. A knee braced scissor truss marks represents the chancel arch. There are coloured and painted glass leaded windows.

⁵ <http://www.oroua.org.nz/our-churches.html>

The church is located at the southern end of Kimbolton village with housing either side. The site is grassed and has some large trees on the southern boundary. The eastern boundary is near a steep slope leading down to extensive farmland.

No plans of the building have been sighted and the interior was not inspected.

REVIEW OF REPORT

Based on a review of the report and viewing of Council files, the assessment undertaken in 2015 for this building is still applicable as at April 2021.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

The church has **low** to **high local** significance for **physical, historic** and **cultural** heritage values.

The church has **moderate architectural** and **representivity** values as good examples of the Carpenter Gothic style with typical characteristics of steeply pitched roofs, no external decoration, simple planning, and Gothic sharp point windows, a trademark of F de J Clere's churches. The church uses typical materials for the style – timber framing, cladding and buttresses and corrugated steel roofing.

The church has **low rarity** values but **high group** values as one of the more than 100 churches designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere mainly in the lower half of the North Island between 1881 and 1933, 20 of which are located in the Manawatu/Rangitikei region.

The church has **high group** and **public esteem** values being one of a number of significant historic buildings in the small Kimbolton township, where heritage is noted in the Kimbolton Community Plan as being of importance to the local community.

The exterior appears to have **high authenticity** with little obvious external changes.

The church has **high associative** values with Frederick de Jersey Clere, one of New Zealand's most prolific and highly regarded church architects. Although not researched to any great degree, the church is also associated with Vicars and parishioners over its 117 year history.

The church is likely to have held many **events**, including services, weddings, baptisms and funerals, which would be significant locally to a **low** or **moderate** extent.

The design and construction of the church has **high pattern** values reflecting the history of the growth and development of the Anglican church in the Manawatu and lower North Island in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The numerous heritage values associated with the church indicate that it has **high educational** values.

SOURCES

Former NZHPT Manawatu Branch Committee files

Paperspast

On-line Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

Maclean, S. *Architect of the Angels The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere*