

ST MICHAEL'S AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH – 1601 Makino Road, Stanway



Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere

Construction date: 1895

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: Category 2

Proposed ranking: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Outline history

In 1895 Mr Thomas Marshall of Stanway donated an acre of land from his farm for the construction of a church. Frederick de Jersey Clere was requested to design the church for the site and it was first used on 3 June 1895. The builder for the church was Mr Lawrence, with the estimates for the cost of construction being £124. The furniture was made by an expert local cabinetmaker, Mr F S Ellern who also donated the Baptistry Font and gates. Bishop Wallis, Archdeacon Towgood and Rev A S Innes Jones officiated at the Consecration service on May 2, 1895. Rev Mr Hermon, a past curate of the district donated the Lectern, members of the Kiwitea church donated the alms dish, while the Communion Vessels were a gift from St Michael and All Angels of Little Bedy in Dorset, the home town of the Bishops wife, Mrs Wallis.

It is noted that after only one month of its construction, the building was debt free.

In 1898 Mr Marshall donated a further acre from his farm for use as a burial ground. In the same year a stained glass window was donated by Mr & Mrs H Redmayne in memory of their four year old son.

This was installed over the altar. In the 1950s a font was donated to the church in memory of Bill Shannon who had been killed in World War II serving with the RAF.

In the following twenty or thirty years, weekly Sunday evening services were held. Regular services are now held on the second Sunday of the month. A Jubilee celebrating 125 years of worship at the church was to be held in May 2020, but was postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Plaques have been installed in the church in memory of Mr and Mrs Marshall and a lay reader, George Corrie Wheeler. At the 125 celebrations in 2021, a plaque was installed for Hugh and Helen Winder in thanksgiving for their ongoing service to the church.

Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere¹

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 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.

¹ Maclean, Susan. 'Clere, Frederick de Jersey 1856 - 1952'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 7 April 2006 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

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.

In the press accounts of the opening, the church is described as 24 feet by 16 feet, a chancel of 10 feet diameter, with a porch, baptistery and vestry. "The walls are high and the roof at an acute angle, the windows are of cathedral glass, so that though small, the building has the usual architectural appearance of an Anglican Church".

The author of this account confirms that, though in miniature, the layout of the church follows suitable architectural precedence where the nave and chancel are seen as physically and visually separate spaces and in turn separate from the vestry and entrance porch. Each of these spaces is clearly articulated on the exterior and, based on photos, also on the interior.

The exterior cladding of the church is timber board and batten, with timber joinery and bellcote. The roofing is corrugated steel with guttering supported on timber brackets. Windows, apart from the triple windows of the chancel, are trefoil within square headed openings.

From accounts, the interior has timber lining with braced scissor trusses.

The small scale, single or double cell, simple gabled churches with bellcote were a feature of the early Anglo-Saxon churches that the Carpenter Gothic style was based on, while the lean-to roofs appear to be a New Zealand vernacular form. Consistent with the style, the church has a steeply pitched roof, a tall rectangular form, and the trefoil window design. The early English church forms were recommended by the Ecclesiologists for new settlements in Australasia and Africa.

The use of clearly expressed timber framing and cladding and handmade details all follow the general philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement. While the palette of forms and materials of Clere's small

country churches are similar, the design of each is unique for each site, also following the Arts and Crafts precepts.

The church is located on its own in a large area of open grassland with small pockets of trees marking boundaries. In its location and design, the church appears very much as an English rural church, probably fulfilling the expectations of the original parishioners.

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 **high local** significance for **architectural, representivity, rarity, authenticity, group, associative, pattern** and **educational** heritage values.

The church has **high 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 trefoil windows. The church uses typical materials for the style – timber framing, board and batten cladding 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 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 throughout its history.

The church has held many **events**, including services, including 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** and **educative** 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 church is listed with Heritage New Zealand category 2.

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*