

ST BARNABAS CHURCH – 2501 Rangiwahia Road, Rangiwahia



Architect: Frederick de Jersey Clere

Construction date: 1903

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

The church was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and dedicated on 2nd April 1903². It is still in use as one of a number of churches served by the Anglican Church in Oroua. Paperspast notes a number of weddings were held in the church from 1906 to 1915³. The church was consecrated on 4th/5th December of 1903.

¹ Former NZHPT Manawatu Branch Committee files

² Maclean, S. *Architect of the Angels The Churches of Frederick de Jersey Clere*, Steele Roberts, 2003, page 90

³ <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=q&hs=1&r=1&results=1&t=0&txq=st+barnabas+rangiwahia&x=-307&y=-230&pbq=&dafdq=&dafmq=&dafyq=&datdq=&datmq=&datyq=&tyq=&o=10&sf=&ssnip=&e=-----10--1----0-->

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 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.

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

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 small 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 Barnabas has the steeply pitched roofs, plain bargeboards, and corrugated steel roofing of the style but external rusticated weatherboards. The church comprises a gabled nave aligned north-east and south-west with a bellcote on the south western end of the main roof. Extending from this end of the church and aligned with but lower than the nave is the small gabled entry porch with double doors facing the road. It is probable that the entry is a later addition. A small gabled vestry extends from the south west corner of the nave.

Based on a drawing of the interior, the simple nave has a match lined dado, horizontal match lined walls and vertical match lined ceiling with exposed knee braced trusses on the interior⁵. There are diamond and painted glass leaded windows.

The church is located to the south of the small settlement of Rangiwahia and is set within a large grassed section, some distance from the main road. An angled picket fence, gates and signboard at the road boundary mark the entrance to the church grounds. The grounds have large trees at the entry, north and south of the section.

No plans of the building have been sighted and the interior could not be 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 lancet shaped windows. The church uses typical materials for the style – timber framing and cladding and corrugated steel roofing.

The church has **low rarity** 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.

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

The exterior appears to have **moderate authenticity** with the only probable alteration being the entry porch.

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 likely to be associated with the Vicars and parishioners over its 112 year history.

The church is likely to have held many **events**, including services, including weddings, baptisms and funeral, 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*