

## St Dominic's Centre – 35 Campbell Road, Feilding



**Architect:** Unknown

**Construction date:** circa 1880

**Visible materials:** Timber cladding & joinery, corrugated steel roofing

**Architectural style:** Victorian Italianate

**Use/building type:** Residential

**Date and Compiler:** Ian Bowman, 2014

**Heritage New Zealand listing:**

**Proposed category:** B

### PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

The house was built for Charles Bull circa 1880 and his family lived in it until 1935. Bull was one of the earliest settlers in the Aorangi area, which was organized through the Emigrants' and Colonists' Aid Corporation. Settlement was encouraged with the opening up of the railway between Palmerston North and Feilding. Bull developed a 400 hectare farm much of which was purchased by the crown under the terms of the Land for Settlements Act 1892. However, Bull retained his home and its immediate surroundings, Section 14. He died in 1925.

Subsequent owners have included a plumber, M Kyle and, from 1953 until 1989, it was used as St Dominic's school for the deaf. Since 1991, it has been used as a residential recovery centre for mental health.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The two storeyed house is designed in the Victorian Italianate style. The Italianate style was influenced by the picturesque movement and was popular from the early 1850s in New Zealand. The Italianate style was first made popular particularly for large English residential buildings from the early 1800s with Cronhill, the first building in the style, designed by architect, John Nash. Sir Charles Barry was

another significant architect who championed the style. Pattern books were influential in the spread of the style with Englishman Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica*, style books by Andrew Jackson Downing, and American Calvert Vaux's *Villas and Cottages*. Prince Albert also encouraged the style when he assisted in Thomas Cubitt's design for his house on the Isle of Wight, Osborne. Many of the larger houses in the style were designed with arcaded porticos, which were quickly adapted into the ubiquitous verandah in Australasia. The development of the bay villa style in New Zealand was largely a modest interpretation by speculative builders of the Italianate style but which combined the Queen Anne flying gable bays.

The evolution of timber residential styles in the States included the Eastlake style which was based on an exuberant use of jig-saw and turned patterned timber decoration on Queen Anne, Italianate, Stick, and other late nineteenth century 'eclectic' styles. Various timber companies in New Zealand published catalogues showing a wide range of these highly decorative timber elements which could decorate windows, verandahs, gables and roofs.

Typical Italianate style buildings used classical details such as hipped roofs usually at a low pitch, towers, bay windows that were usually faceted, grouped openings, modillions under eaves, pilasters, colonnaded loggia, segmented or round arched openings, rusticated weatherboards, and asymmetry of building forms.

Photographs of the house in the 1880s show a simple rectangular two storey hipped and gabled roofed house with entry portico facing south east and a single storey hipped roof extension to the north west. The current bay window with six tall windows is also visible. By 1910 a photo shows the portico having been replaced with a new entrance facing south west with balustrading above and a symmetrical hipped and gabled roof extension, understood to be a billiard room, further to the south east.

Today the billiard room has had further modifications, with a faceted extension, which was used as a chapel when the house was a school for the deaf. Additions made by the school or later include those on the north west corner and along the north east side and are both single and two storeyed.

The house is joined to the remainder of the complex by a covered walkway.

The house is constructed with a timber frame and has rusticated weatherboards and timber joinery. Original windows are double hung sash. Roofing is corrugated steel. Decorative elements include simple gable screens, modillions under eaves, and turned balustrading above the entry. Upper windows and those on the ground floor north west extension are segmental arches.

The house is set back from the road boundary with the entry denoted by a low concrete block wall with tall trees either side framing a view of the house. The house is one of a number of buildings within the campus, which has extensive lawns and some large trees and small shrubs along road edges and the site boundaries. Beyond the campus is open farmland.

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

## REVIEW OF REPORT

Based on a review of the report and viewing of Council files, the assessment undertaken in 2014 for this building is still applicable as at April 2021.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

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

The house has **high architectural** and **representative** values as an example of the Victorian Italianate style in the Manawatu that is consistent with most of the primary characteristics of the style including low pitched hipped roofs, bay windows, grouped openings, modillions under eaves, pilasters, (originally) a loggia, segmented arched openings, rusticated weatherboards, and asymmetry of building forms.

There are few of this style of house in the Manawatu, therefore, the house has **high rarity** values.

The house has **low to moderate** levels of **authenticity**, with extensive additions to the north-west, north-east and south-east and a walkway connecting the house to other buildings on the campus.

The house has **moderate associative** values with the Charles Bull family, who built the house and lived in it for over 50 years. As an early settler and successful farmer, the house is also associated **moderately** with the **pattern** of growth and development of the Manawatu and Rangitikei regions based largely on the success of sheep and cattle farming which continues today. The house has had an **association**, which housed St Dominic's school for the deaf for 36 years.

The house also has **moderate pattern** values as one of a number of large rural houses scattered throughout the Manawatu built between the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries indicating the successful and profitable ownership and management of expansive farms, many of which have continued to be owned by the same families over many years.

Given the style and associations with the development of cattle farming in the region, the house has **moderate educational** values in the architectural and economic history of the Manawatu.

## SOURCES

Former NZHPT Manawatu Branch Committee file