

**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 345  
*CASHMERE HILLS Presbyterian CHURCH AND SETTING – 2  
MACMILLAN AVENUE, CHRISTCHURCH***



**PHOTOGRAPH: M.VAIR-PIOVA, 05/01/2015**

**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.*

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church, more commonly known as Cashmere Presbyterian Church, has high historical and social significance as a parish church that is associated with the development of the Presbyterian Church in Christchurch and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century growth of the suburb of Cashmere. Presbyterian services were first held in Christchurch in 1853 and in the 1906 census 23% of the population New Zealand reported adherence to the church.

By the early 1920s the call for a new parish church in Cashmere was prompted by the increasing settlement of the area, the subdivision of Macmillan Avenue having taken place in 1908. The church was commissioned in 1926 and opened in August 1929. It sustained some damage in the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes but has since been repaired.

**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.*

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church has high cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Presbyterian worship and community since 1929. The church's setting has cultural significance to tangata whenua as it is recorded that a Maori ara (path) from the base of Cashmere over the Port Hills to Governor's Bay and thence to Rapaki traversed what is today Dyers Pass Road.

## **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.*

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church has high architectural and aesthetic significance for its Arts and Crafts Gothic Revival styling and association with noted Canterbury architects Cecil Wood and RSD Harman with internal carving by noted carver Frederick Gurnsey. Born and educated in Christchurch, Cecil Wood (1878-1947) became Canterbury's leading inter-war architect, although his reputation extended nationwide. Wood is well known and acclaimed for his domestic architecture but he also made a distinguished contribution to the city's educational, public, commercial, and ecclesiastical architecture. Other churches designed by Wood include St Barnabas's Anglican Church (1925-26) on Fendalton Road and St Paul's Anglican Church at Tai Tapu (1930-31). Wood also designed the house 'Chellowdean' at 1 Macmillan Avenue, which was built in 1922.

In 1927 the project was taken over by Wood's partner RSD Harman, while Wood was overseas. Harman oversaw the construction of the church, producing the working drawings, and also designing woodwork for the interior and exterior. Harman is best known for his design of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Tekapo (1935).

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church is typical of the carefully crafted Arts and Craft style buildings of Wood's practice. It is a single storey stone church with steeply pitched slate gable roof. Two dormer windows are set upon the roof on each side of nave. The sanctuary and vestries have separate gable roofs. R J Seward extended the west end of the church and added the castellated bell tower in 1960-61. In 2009 a new link extension between church and hall was built and the work undertaken to designs by Wilkie and Bruce.

## **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.*

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church has technological and craftsmanship significance relating to the materials used in its construction and the quality of its architectural detailing. The outer walls of random rubble construction are made of Port Hills basalt, randomly interspersed with various coloured rocks, including red tuff from Tai Tapu. The interior uses Timaru basalt, Mt Somers sandstone, and Oamaru stone.

The craftsmanship significance of the church is enhanced by the fine arts carving of Frederick Gurnsey (1868-1953), which can often be found in churches designed by both

Wood and Harman throughout Canterbury. Gurnsey carved the communion table and pulpit. Gurnsey's was a well-known Christchurch artist with works such as the ChristChurch Anglican Cathedral reredos, and carvings and furnishings in the Cathedral's Chapel of St Michael and St George (1932–51). Other major works in Christchurch include carvings for the Bridge of Remembrance in Christchurch

## **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.*

The Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church and its setting has high contextual significance for its landmark presence on Dyers Pass Road and its relationship with the Village Green on the other side of Macmillan Avenue. The church forms a group with the parish hall and the parish office and community centre. The latter is a 1920s Domestic Revival former dwelling that may have been the church manse at one time.

Macmillan Avenue is notable as an early Cashmere subdivision of houses set in large well planted gardens. The houses are designed to accommodate the views of the city below and the surrounding landscape. The Arts and Crafts Presbyterian church is in keeping stylistically with the early 20th century houses in the area and with the loss of so many stone buildings in the city following the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes the landmark value of the church beyond its immediate setting has been increased.

## **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.*

The Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church and its setting has archaeological significance because of the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900. Originally an overland route for Maori travelling to Rapaki, Dyers Pass Road was used as a stock route through the latter half of the 19th century.

## **ASSESSMENT STATEMENT**

Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church and its setting has overall high significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The church and setting has high historical significance for its association with the Presbyterian Church and as a reflection of the development of Cashmere in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church and its setting has high cultural and spiritual significance as a place of Christian worship since 1929. The church has high architectural and aesthetic significance as an Arts and Crafts Gothic Revival style building associated with Cecil Wood and R S D Harman with internal carving by noted carver Frederick Gurnsey. It has craftsmanship and technological significance in both the exterior and interior of the church including the use of local stone and

Frederick Gurnsey's carved communion table and pulpit. Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church and its setting has high contextual significance given its prominent corner location, relation to Dyers Pass Road's Village Green and the scarcity of stone churches in the city since the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. The Church and its setting has archaeological significance because of the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

#### REFERENCES:

RMA 920520085 Approved resource consent dated 21 June 2012.

Gordon Ogilvie *The Port Hills of Christchurch* (Christchurch, 2009 edition)

Historic place # 1842 – Heritage NZ List

<http://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/1842>

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3g26/gurnsey-frederick-george>

Exhibition catalogue: 'Arts and Crafts churches of Canterbury: School of Fine Arts Gallery, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 12 to 30 August 1996 (Christchurch, 1996)

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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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