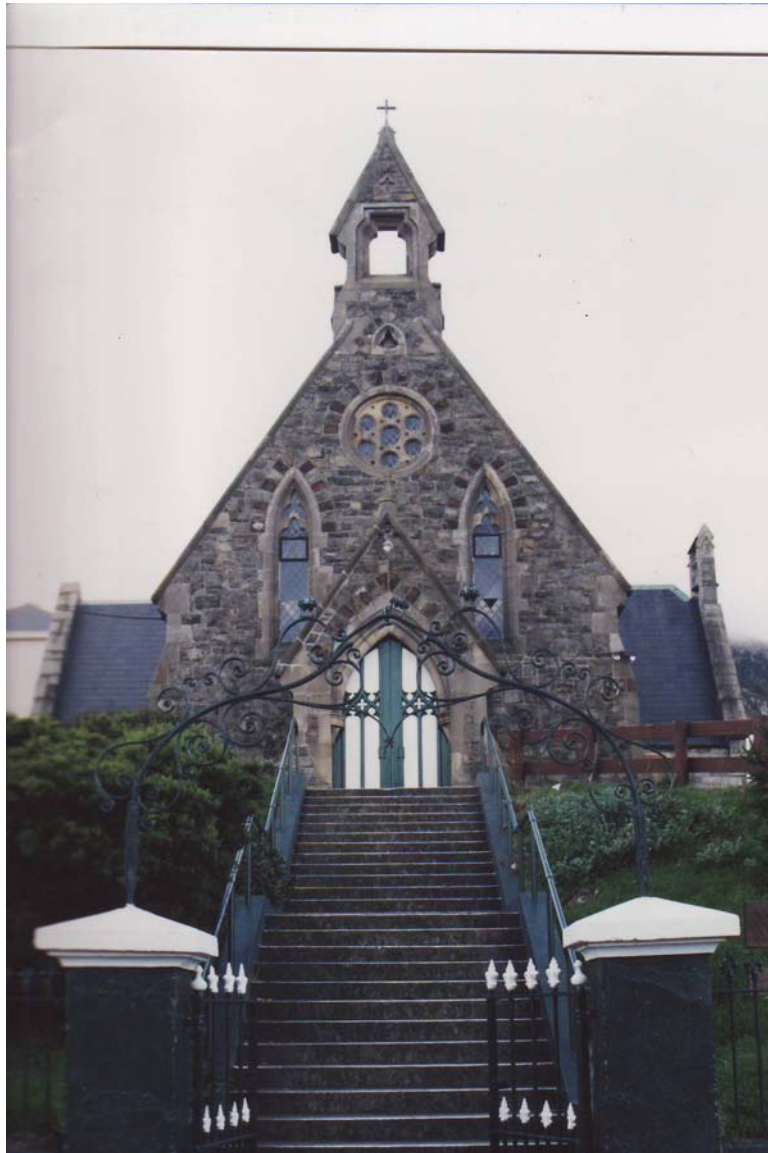


**HERITAGE STATEMENT**  
**18 WINCHESTER STREET, LYTTELTON, ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH**  
**(ROMAN CATHOLIC)**



**PHOTOGRAPH 2007 – COURTESY OF L.ROSSIE**

**STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Lyttelton, constructed c.1865, is recognised in Appendix IV of the Banks Peninsula District Plan as a Protected Building, and is registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as a Category II Historic Place.

Lyttelton was selected as a colony by the Anglican Canterbury Association that was chaired by Lord Lyttelton, and the Holy Trinity Anglican Church is located opposite St Joseph's at 17 Winchester Street.

The name Lyttelton was officially adopted in 1857 and the main nine streets were planned and drawn up in England. These early streets were based upon an English grid pattern and were named after Anglican Bishopricks, Winchester being one of these. Therefore Lyttelton's physical layout as a planned settlement also has an inherent religious association. Although some of Lyttelton's earlier churches were constructed in the lower part of the township, such as the timber Methodist Church, they were relocated to a more elevated position either in Winchester Street or in close proximity to Winchester Street. Because all the township's churches are in this area, it forms an important ecclesiastical precinct, and this location has been interpreted as reflecting a higher spiritual location in comparison to the industrial areas below (Burgess, 2009).

St Joseph's has social, historical and cultural value as it was the first Catholic Church built in Lyttelton, and one of the oldest Roman Catholic churches in the diocese. In 1860 Frederick Weld, who was to become a Premier of New Zealand, donated a quarter acre section in Lyttelton specifically for the construction of a Catholic church or chapel. He also sought and appointed its first priest, Father Seon, along with Father Chataigner as his assistant. Although the congregation at the time of these appointments totalled five persons, a few months afterwards the ship 'William Miles' arrived with 44 Catholic passengers. Father Chataigner then moved in to the position of parish priest for both Christchurch and Lyttelton and began collecting money for the establishment of a permanent church in Lyttelton.

St Joseph's Catholic Church has architectural and aesthetic value. Built c.1865, St Joseph's was designed by Christchurch architects Mountfort and Bury, though it is said to be more Bury's design than Mountfort's (New Zealand Historic Places Trust Buildings Field Record Form, No: 1819). Although Benjamin Mountfort is New Zealand's pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect and was identified by Henry Sewell (the Canterbury Association's agent) as 'the Architect of Canterbury', Maxwell Bury was also a notable architect and few examples of his work remain. Their architectural partnership formed in 1864.

It is not surprising that St Joseph's is executed in the Gothic style as this was regarded as the architecture of Christianity at the time of construction. The England brothers, Robert and Kelinge, were the carpenters not only for St Joseph's but also for St John's Presbyterian Church at 44 Winchester Street. The interior decoration is important because it is consistent with Mountfort's ideal that ecclesiastical furnishings were part of the total design of Gothic Revival architecture (Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1998).

There have been various additions and alterations to St Joseph's since its construction. For example, in 1878 the St. Joseph's schoolroom was built to the left of the church and a brick school-room was built behind the church in 1921, this was replaced in 1983 by the present school. In 1941 the church was extended and the interior altered in the 1960s to meet the requirements of Vatican II.

The technological and craftsmanship value is related to the stone material from which St Joseph's is constructed. The stone used is quarried from sites on Sumner Road, Lyttelton, as well as a Governor's Bay quarry.

St Joseph's contextual value is highly important because it is one of the three stone churches located in the ecclesiastical precinct along Winchester Street.

Archaeological significance is possible on this site as pre-1900 human activity is known to have been present and active. Therefore, the site has potential to hold archaeological evidence.

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