

7 Ashburton Courthouse

The Ashburton Courthouse could be described as a modest Art Deco Building.

Its understated design marks a transitional period between the highly decorated neo-classical styling that preceded it and the later utilitarian simplicity of the post-war modernist period.

It opened in 1938, built to replace an earlier 1879 courthouse on another site. It was designed by the Government Architect of the time, John Mair.

8 Art Gallery and Museum



A vibrant and growing arts and cultural heritage destination, with a learning centre, and family history and general research rooms.

The Museum houses community and council archives as well as a diverse range of exhibits.

The Art Gallery has a large permanent collection and a wonderfully curated range of visiting exhibitions. Open daily from 10am – 4pm, entry is free though a koha is appreciated.

9 Billy Thomas Homes, Wills Street



124, 128, and 130 Wills Street are also classic designs by Billy Thomas

10 Ashburton Domain

The original 100 acre domain site was planned when the township was first set out in 1864. The early purpose was to create a space for gardens and recreation.

The 1870s oval featured a cricket pavilion and band rotunda and a place for special public events.



By the turn of the century, established sports grounds, a running track and bowling green had been established. Tennis, hockey and field sports soon followed. By then the Domain featured many fine specimen trees from around the world, along with attractive flower beds.

Water, diverted from Wakanui Creek, created the stream, a large lake and an island. Swimming baths opened in 1889, and in winter it was used as an ice skating rink.

The West Street gate commemorates the coronation of King Edward VII in 1903 and the plaques tell the domain's history.

11 Overhead Bridge

In 1917 a new Railway Station was commissioned to replace the original 1874 buildings. Built some 15 metres north-east of the original station, the new station was designed by New Zealand Railway architect George Troup. At the same time, a 1911 timber footbridge was shifted from Cameron Street to Aitken Street and a new “nicely graded ramp bridge” was constructed between the bisected sections of Wills Street to serve the new station, approximately 200 metres to the south. The new footbridge was of a bowstring truss design, common for the time, and constructed from old railway iron and jarrah wood with a 25 metre span and 50 metre ramps at each end sloping downwards towards the two sections of Wills Street. There was originally a third ramp which has since been removed.



12

Clock Tower

This interpretation panel will tell you about the former post office clock face which is now housed in our more modern town clock structure.



13 John Grigg Statue

John Grigg of Longbeach was a pioneering farmer often referred to as the ‘founding father’ of Mid Canterbury. His courage, imagination and influence were felt in many spheres.

Claimed to be sculptor Charles Kidson's best public statue, the memorial was designed by Samuel Hurst Seager and completed in 1905.



The monument is in two parts: a full-length standing portrait of the pioneer farmer, with relief carvings of farming activities on the pedestal. Grigg is shown informally as if walking around his property, holding a coat over his arm.

14 Baring Square Methodist Church

Baring Square Methodist Church, opened April 1925, is built of triple red brick. Following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, this building was closed for twelve years. Demolish or repair was the question.



Now fully restored and strengthened, this multi-functional centre opened again in February 2023. The interior still has its period vaulted beamed ceiling, stained glass windows, restored pipe organ, and fine plasterwork. The Chapel holds 240 people. The modern wing is a contemporary addition to the historic church. Overlooking the open gardens of Baring Square East, the complex is in striking contrast to the new Ashburton District Council Civic Centre and Library sharing this street.

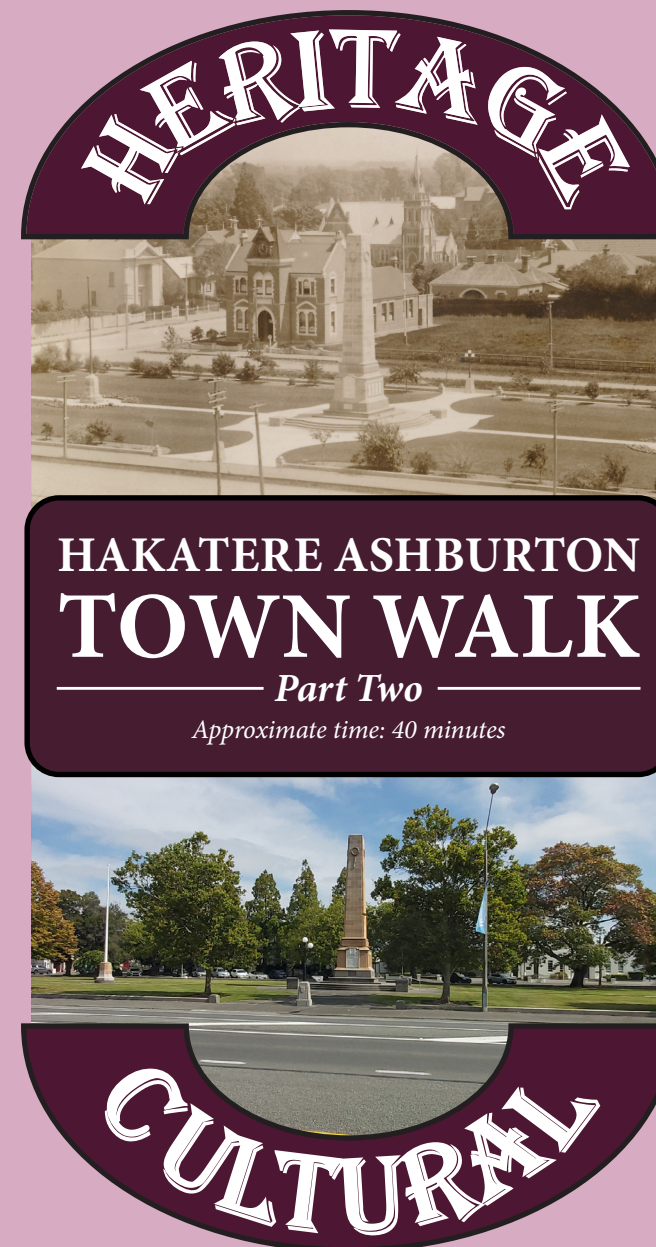
15 Former Ashburton Plunket Rooms

In 1937 a model of this building was a prominent part of the New Zealand Government's exhibition at the Canadian National Exhibition. Apparently it attracted its full share of interest from visitors and helped stimulate interest in the Canadian Mothercraft Society. The Plunket Rooms were designed by local architect E M Gabites, and constructed in 1932, and extended in 1998. The foundation stone was laid by Sir Truby King, founder of the Plunket Society.



*We have come to the end of this walk.
Thank you for your interest.*

We thank the Ashburton Museum and Historical Society for sourcing the included historic photographs.



HAKATERE ASHBURTON TOWN WALK Part Two

Approximate time: 40 minutes



Created by Historic Places
Mid Canterbury &
Funded by Ashburton
District Council

HISTORIC
PLACES
MID CANTERBURY
The Voice of Heritage

Ashburton
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Part Two of the Ashburton Town Walk begins on the West side of the Railway Line at Baring Square West.

1 Lone Pine – In South East corner of Square

This 'Lone Pine' represents Mid Canterbury's direct link with the 1915 battlefields of Gallipoli.

It was relocated to this site in August 1988 as an established specimen, having first replaced an earlier tree planted further south on West Street's railway reserve, opposite the Ashburton RSA Club rooms.

The R.S.A.'s move to new premises on Cox Street occasioned the transplanting to this more suitable spot.

Of equal significance is the stone marker on which rests the original 1957 plaque. This stone was obtained from Gallipoli by the RSA through the efforts of a Wellington representative and carried freight-free from Turkey to Ashburton.

(The flags of New Zealand and Turkey were both used for the unveiling ceremony)

2 War Memorials – Baring Square West

Central to this square is the 50ft (15.25m) obelisk of (Australian) Hawkesbury sandstone with a core of reinforced concrete, standing on a platform of Timaru bluestone.

It was erected to honour those from the district who lost their lives in the Great War of 1914-18. The unveiling ceremony took place on 4th June 1928 when slipping the knot dropped the Union Jack from the front, and the flags of the Allied nations from the tablets bearing the 435 names of the fallen from Ashburton District.

After World War 2 the fallen from this conflict were added on the lower level of the memorial.

The two Oregon timber flagstaffs rise from bases of sandstone sourced from Australia's Gosford Quarries. Carved on them are the names of the theatres of war in which the NZ forces were engaged. On the northern side you will find the recently relocated Boer War Memorial.



3 Presbyterian Churches

In the early days of the Ashburton settlement there were few established church buildings. Meetings, often interdenominational, were held by visiting ministers in either the Library or Schoolhouse. The first Presbyterian Minister, Rev HB Burnett, arrived in 1875 to a huge parish stretching between the Rakaia and Rangitata rivers, and from the mountains to the sea.

The first St Andrew's church was designed by C G Ross, architect of Christchurch and built by Mr Kimble in 1876, a simple building of wood/concrete and plaster, seating about 250 people. As the town prospered and grew this church was by 1900 too small for the burgeoning congregation and the section next door was purchased. England Brothers of Christchurch designed the new brick church in the Gothic Revival style to seat a congregation of about 400.



4 Church of the Holy Name

Blue Plaque

Built in 1931, the Catholic Church of the Holy Name is an architectural masterpiece showcasing local bricks and workmanship. It is one of only five buildings/sites in the district to have a Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga Category 1 listing.

The architecture reflects the contemporary European ideas of the time. The main entrance features the high recessed arch with smaller arches outlining the doorway, the triple leadlight window above the Oamaru stone sculpture of Christ and adoring angels in the lunette (semicircle space).

The curved apse is one of the best examples of skilled bricklaying in New Zealand, each brick is very slightly curved and laid perfectly. The bricks, made locally by Crum Brothers, are five to six deep for the main body of the church.

As well as the extensive brickwork, other features include the arched windows, bell tower, plaster work ceilings, wood panelled walls, statues, fine pressed metal ceiling and semi dome above the chancel.

Designed by Henry St Aubyn Murray, the church cost 11,358 pounds to build. This made it the most expensive, imposing and up to date building in Ashburton in the early 1930s.

5 Catholic Presbytery



Holy Name Church (1931) and Presbytery (1907)
(Left to Right)

The presbytery cost 3772 pounds to build and was opened in 1907 by Bishop Grimes. A fundraising collection was taken up on opening day and raised the necessary money to cover the cost of the build.

Made from local bricks and timber with Marseilles terracotta tile, the presbytery features in Heritage NZ's schedule as a category II building.

6 Billy Thomas Homes – Cameron Street

Billy Thomas designed homes are as popular today as his architectural plans were through the 1920s to 1960s. Cameron and Wills streets feature several of his signature designs.

112 and 114
Cameron Street
are his classic Cape
Cod style. 123 and
125 Cameron Street
are also Thomas
Houses.



William Thomas was apprenticed in 1909 as a joiner to local timber merchant Tucker's Limited. Billy (as he was affectionally known) showed great talent and rose quickly in the business to become Head of Plans and Joinery by 1916. After having plans he had drawn up for a new fever ward at Ashburton Hospital rejected by the Minister in Charge of Hospitals 'because he wasn't a registered architect', Billy went to war. On his return in 1919 he went back to Tuckers but studied architecture by correspondence, graduated and become a member of ANZIA in 1924.

Greatly influenced by the revivalist American colonial form, the Cape Cod cottage, he built many such houses in and around Ashburton. However, Thomas was a prolific and diverse architect, designing a great many different residential styles as well as shops, commercial and public buildings, churches and halls.

Thomas was renowned for his meticulous plans—a real builders' architect, he often made scale models of his buildings to check for and prevent expensive errors in the build.

