

## Heritage Item 5

### St John's Church (Anglican)



#### Location

<b>Address:</b>	8 Lime Avenue, Barrhill Village
<b>Co-ordinates:</b>	Northing 5725414 , Easting 2417496
<b>Legal Description:</b>	Lot 7 DP 144 Blk V Corwar SD
<b>Owner:</b>	Church Property Trustees

#### Purpose

<b>Current Use:</b>	Church
<b>Original/Past Uses:</b>	Church

#### Heritage Significance and Category

<b>Heritage Significance:</b>	Physical; Historic; Cultural		
<b>Heritage NZ:</b>	Historic Place Category 2	<b>List #</b> 1765	<b>Date Listed:</b> 23 June 1983
<b>Ashburton DC:</b>	Category A		

#### Site Assessment

<b>Assessed by:</b>	Arlene Baird, Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd.
<b>Date Assessed:</b>	20 November 2014

Detail	
<b>Description:</b>	<p>This village Church was built in 1877 and is constructed of 12 inch thick concrete walls, a solid concrete floor, kauri roof beams and a corrugated iron roof. The building has a very steeply pitched roof giving it a tall slender appearance. The roof is hipped on the eastern end of the building and gabled on the western end. There is a small timber bell tower on the apex of the western end of the roof and a small cross on the apex of the eastern end. The main entrance to the Church is on the northern elevation, through a decorative open porch with arched entrance way and steeply pitched roof. There is a second closed entranceway on the southern elevation.</p> <p>On each elevation there are tall narrow lancet windows, each with moulded concrete surrounds, some with mesh over the outside to protect the stained glass. One of the windows is a First World War memorial dedicated to the memory of William Francis Irwin of the RNZAF. On the western elevation there are two long lancet windows with an unusual triangular window above (in the traditional location of a rose window).</p> <p>Internally the Church has exposed kauri roof trusses and white painted walls. The windows allow a considerable amount of light into the space, coloured by the three stained glass windows on the eastern elevation and the stained glass triangular window on the western elevation.</p>
<b>History:</b>	<p>John Cathcart Wason was born in Barrhill, Ayrshire, Scotland in 1848 and immigrated to New Zealand in 1868 aged 20. In February 1869 Wason bought the Lendon Run of 20,000 acres (1250 of freehold) on the south bank of the Rakaia River and renamed it Corwar after his family's property in Scotland. He wanted to create a model estate and planted oaks, limes, walnuts and poplars to create a British appearance. He created a mid-sized freehold estate with a large mansion overlooking the river complete with gate lodge (Heritage Item 8, Corwar Lodge). Part of this estate was a model village, named Barrhill after his home town in Scotland, which was to mimic the British ideal of a squire in his manor house with the workers housed nearby.</p> <p>St John's Church, built in 1877 formed the centre of this community. Prior to its construction, religious services are believed to have been held in Wason's woolshed. The Church, along with the school (Heritage Item 6) and schoolhouse (Heritage Item 7), are good early examples of the use of concrete. At its peak Barrhill comprised of the Church, school, schoolhouse, a bakery, blacksmith, post office, boiling works (for mutton), store, inn and about 15 cottages. The 1877 village plan featured 28 sections marked around a central market square. The Church was constructed in conjunction with other local landowners and the first service was conducted by the Reverend W E Paige of Ashburton on 8 July, 1877.</p> <p>Wason planted sycamores, birches, poplars and oaks in an unusual shape within Barrhill – possibly to convey some religious symbolism. Four outer avenues (of four different tree types) form a square which is bisected by two avenues forming a cross. It was not until an aerial photo was taken in 1975 that locals realised the central oak trees were planted in the shape of three interlocking circles suggesting the symbol of the Trinity, with St John's church as the focal point.</p> <p>When the railway bypassed Barrhill in the 1890s, the village started to decline and Wason sold up in 1900 and moved back to Scotland. His mansion burned down shortly after that. Over time most of the original buildings in the village have been lost, with just the three concrete buildings remaining in Barrhill and the gate house slightly further along the road. The school closed in 1938 due to a dwindling number of pupils. The Church, school and schoolhouse are now owned by Ashburton District Council and looked after by the Barrhill Village Preservation Society.</p>

Detail	
	<p>St John's Church is still in use and therefore stands as the only building of Wason's model village which has been in continual use for its original purpose. The lych gate was built for the centennial of the church (in 1977) as a tribute to Wason and other pioneers.</p> <p>The building is also of importance due to its links with John Cathcart Wason. He was said to be an unusually large man (over 6 feet 6 inches (1.98 m) tall), he is noted both as an innovative farmer and for having passed his time in the British House of Commons by knitting.</p>
<b>Notable Feature:</b>	Concrete construction; steeply pitched roof; kauri roof beams; lancet windows; triangular window on western elevation; lych gate.
<b>Condition:</b>	The Church appears to be in relatively good condition. There are some cracks noticeable in the concrete construction, one in particular running along the ground in the open porch on the northern elevation, which appears to lead into the building. The roof is in very good condition. The paintwork around the window frames, fascia boards and porch is all in well-kept tidy condition. The paintwork on the bell tower appears to be worn a little.
<b>Setting:</b>	The Church is located in a very peaceful setting in the centre of the original village surrounded by a circle of mature oak trees. The lawns are well kept and there is colourful planting of rhododendrons and other shrubs. The setting is of high historical significance as being the core part of John Cathcart Wason's model village. Also of group value due to its proximity to and links with the original school and schoolhouse.



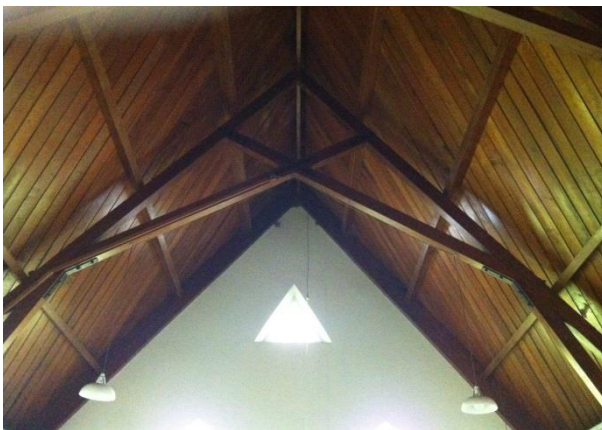












John Cathcart Wason, circa 1878