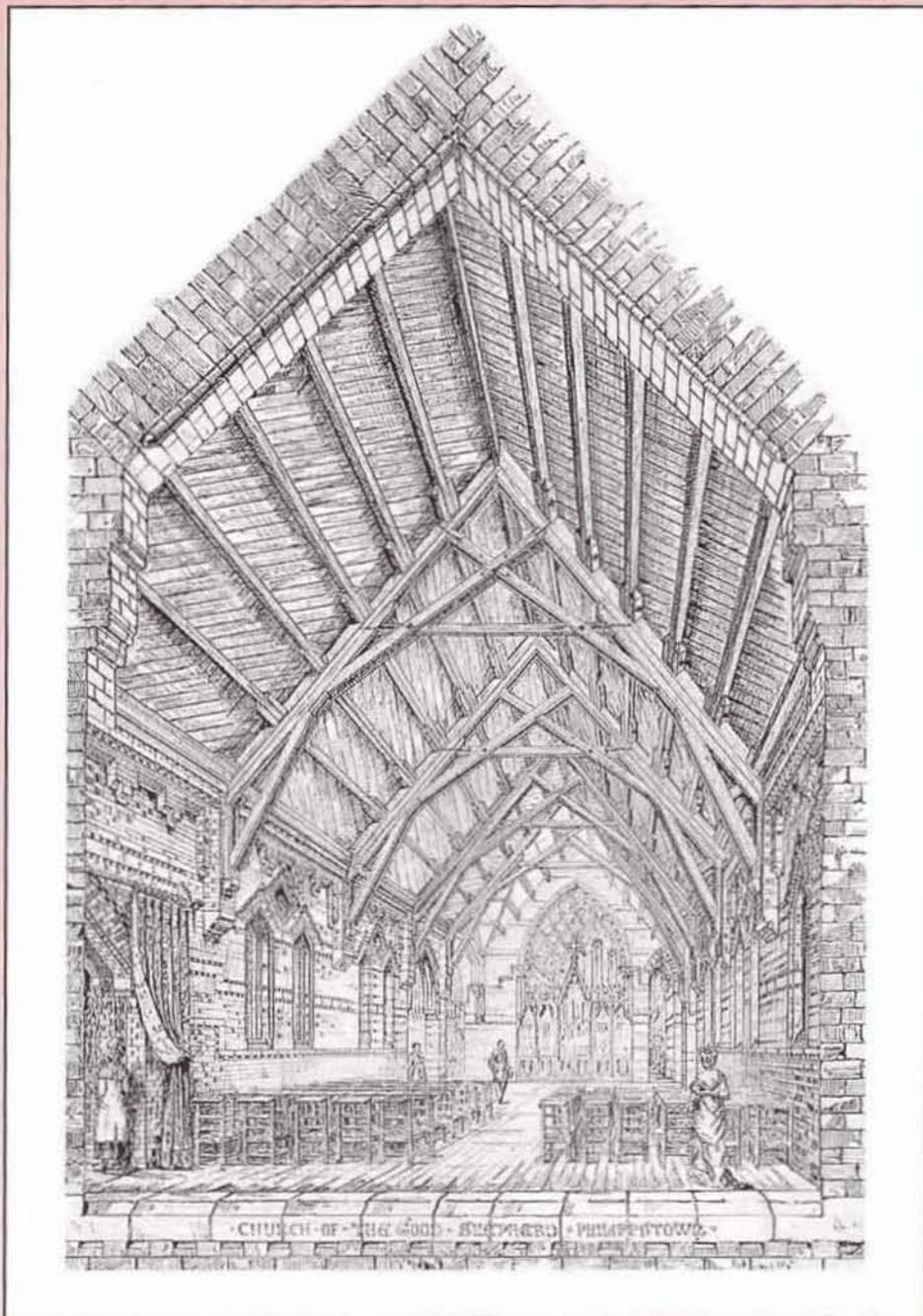


# *B.W. Mountfort*

*and the Gothic Revival in Canterbury:  
A Centennial Exhibition*



17 September - 22 November 1998

Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, New Zealand

# DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

On 15 March 1998, the centenary of Mountfort's death, a plaque was unveiled in the Great Hall at the Arts Centre. It reads:

**Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort**  
1825-1898  
"the Architect of Canterbury"  
(Henry Sewell, 1853)

Mountfort's impact on Canterbury has endured - literally and metaphorically - more resolutely than the legacy of any other colonial personality.

The architectural character of Christchurch's key nineteenth century buildings is unique in this country, and those buildings that were not designed by Mountfort still acknowledge his influence as a devoted and remarkably talented disciple of the Gothic Revival. His buildings are the pre-eminent element of Victorian Christchurch, and have continued to influence local architects until the recent past.

Our Gallery's tribute to the centennial celebrations acknowledges not only his contribution to the architectural heritage of this city, but more broadly, his contribution nationally - he is arguably New Zealand's most significant colonial architect.

Our guest curator, Dr Ian Lochhead, Senior Lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury, has supplied an overview of Mountfort's career through his building plans and many designs for interior detailings, several of the realised decorative items themselves, a selection of fascinating archival photographs and books from Mountfort's own professional library. The exhibition also includes designs executed prior to his arrival in New Zealand, and these place him in context with his British contemporaries. Additionally, Dr Lochhead's admiration for Mountfort has been manifested by his generous support of this exhibition on many other fronts.

Somewhat immodestly, I believe this installation is the highlight of a year in which Christchurch has paid tribute to the Mountfort legacy. Other earlier events have included a photographic display of Mountfort's work and its broad influence, and the Mountfort centennial lecture series, while later this year, in October, Heritage Week will also focus on his legacy.



B. W. Mountfort. Photo: Canterbury Museum

I would like to thank colleagues at the Auckland Art Gallery for allowing us to borrow *Nor'wester in the cemetery* by our Cantabrian icon, William A Sutton. His work is one of the few depictions of Mountfort's long-demolished funerary chapel. Happily, its stained glass windows are now safely in our own collection and will be displayed alongside this famous 1950 oil on canvas for the duration of the exhibition.

I have made specific mention of the Auckland Art Gallery, but many other supportive organisations and individuals have loaned designs, drawings, books, photographs and decorative items. Without such generosity in lending works, exhibitions remain merely a concept, and rarely become a reality. Equally importantly, I thank The Community Trust, whose generous funding through the Mountfort Centennial Committee allowed major conservation of many of the drawings on view.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the McDougall team, whose efforts and design skills have made Mountfort live again.

I thank you all.

**P Anthony Preston**  
Director

Front cover:  
*Church of the*  
*Good Shepherd,*  
*Phillipstown,*  
*1884.*  
(Cat 109)

# B. W. Mountfort

## INTRODUCTION

In December 1849, the Canterbury Association asked the distinguished Gothic Revival architect, William Butterfield (1814 - 1900), to provide a model design for a church and school for use in the Association's New Zealand settlement. By the time the first contingent of 'Canterbury Pilgrims' arrived in Lyttelton on 16 December 1850, the Gothic architectural character of Christchurch and Canterbury had been decided. Another leading Gothic Revivalist, George Gilbert Scott (1811-78), designed a timber church for the fledgling colony c.1850-51 and just over a decade later produced plans for Christ Church Cathedral, the building project that embodied the highest hopes and ideals of the Canterbury Association. Of these designs only the cathedral was built, although fifty years elapsed between the laying of the foundation stone and the completion of the building.

Canterbury was not to rely on designs shipped out from England. One of the first Canterbury settlers ashore was Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort (1825-98), a young architect who had recently completed his training with another leading Gothic Revivalist, Richard Cromwell Carpenter (1812-55). Included in Mountfort's luggage were books by the most influential Gothic Revival architect in England, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-52), among them *The True Principles of Christian or Pointed Architecture* (1841), a book Mountfort acquired at the age of sixteen. Mountfort seems to have been the semi-official architect of Canterbury; in 1853 the Association's agent in Canterbury, Henry Sewell, identified Mountfort as 'the Architect of Canterbury', a role he was to fulfil in all but official designation over the next four decades.

The privileged status given to the Gothic style in Canterbury is demonstrated by the outrage expressed by *The Press* on 17 March 1865 over the construction of Leonard Terry's classical design for the Christchurch branch of the Bank of New Zealand. In most colonial cities the construction of such a building would have been welcomed as a sign of prosperity and progress; in Christchurch it was seen as an affront to the dignity of the as yet unbuilt cathedral and a repudiation of the artistic advances of the Gothic Revival. As *The Press* explained, the revival had led to 'a larger advance in the knowledge of, and love for beauty in architecture, than at any other period in any country in the world'. The reaction to the Bank of New Zealand reflected the ideological divide in Victorian society that found

architectural expression in the 'battle of the styles'. Classicism was the style of commercialism, progressivism and paganism; Gothic the architecture of Christianity, education, conservatism and traditionalism. The Canterbury Association's decision to establish a New Zealand colony in which social cohesion would be ensured through the presence of a complete diocesan establishment, from bishop to parochial clergy, and in which key educational institutions would play a prominent role, was intended to counter the forces of rampant capitalism and democratisation that many believed would undermine if not destroy English society. An idealised vision of the Middle Ages, of a cohesive society imbued with Christian values and linked by bonds of deference and interdependence, provided the model for social reform in England as well as for the Canterbury Association's utopian settlement in the new world. Gothic Revival architecture gave this social vision a three-dimensional reality.

As is the case with all utopias, the reality was very different from the vision. Canterbury was no more immune from Victorian social and commercial imperatives than the rest of colonial New Zealand but the vision persisted in the architecture of Benjamin Mountfort. It underpinned the design of his modest timber churches for country parishes and was given unequivocal expression in his large-scale designs: the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, the Canterbury Museum and Canterbury College. On becoming Supervising Architect of Christ Church Cathedral in 1873, he faithfully realised the designs of the original architect, now Sir George Gilbert Scott, but he also added embellishments of his own. As a result, the building that has become the symbol of Christchurch is, in a real sense, a synthesis of the contributions of both architects.

The life of a colonial architect was not an easy one; many found it necessary to move from one centre to the next as economic bust followed boom periods. Mountfort was remarkable among his contemporaries in his commitment to Canterbury; he weathered the difficult years of the 1850s, during which experience of local materials and climatic conditions was often dearly bought and economic uncertainty made work scarce, to become New Zealand's pre-eminent Gothic Revivalist and one of the colony's foremost architects. As the founding president of New Zealand's first professional architectural association, the Canterbury Association of Architects, established in 1872, he was a recognised authority in his field.

In assessing the quality of Mountfort's buildings, no allowances need to be made for the fact that they

were constructed in a colonial environment. The limited material resources available to architects in nineteenth-century New Zealand and different social and economic conditions ensured that Mountfort's buildings cannot be mistaken for those of his English contemporaries. Mountfort confronted the constraints of the colonial environment by creating buildings that interpreted the principles of High Victorian Gothic in new ways: he employed timber where his British contemporaries would have used stone, brick or iron; he built in clearly differentiated stages that recall the working methods of medieval masons rather than those of nineteenth-century architects; he interrogated the past for models that served the peculiar needs of the new world rather than adopting ready-made solutions from the old.

From the beginning of his career to its end, Mountfort's buildings exhibit a recognisable character: robustness of form combined with a rejection of symmetry; meticulous attention to detail linked to a firm grasp of the overall concept; a devotion to the Gothic Revival design principles of truth to materials and honesty in construction; a desire to achieve variety within an overall stylistic unity. Added to these characteristics is the ability to surprise and delight with unexpected innovations.

This exhibition presents a view of Mountfort's architectural career as seen through plans, drawings, photographs of buildings, furniture and other decorative designs he produced for those buildings and through a selection of the books that influenced him. Mountfort held strong views on the role of architectural drawings. They were, first and foremost, the medium for conveying the architect's ideas to the builders and craftsmen who gave his designs physical form. As a result many are utilitarian in appearance, their survival ensured not because of inherent artistic interest but because, as contract drawings signed by the builder, they were legally binding documents. They also reveal that paper was expensive during the nineteenth century and reproductive processes unknown; copies were made by hand. Changes to drawings were often added at the last minute, sometimes on patches that obscured parts of the original design. Calculations, minute explanatory sketches and written annotations all add to the interest of the drawings.

Drawings for competitions were a special case; Mountfort insisted that only pen and ink should be used in perspective views and that coloured wash was only admissible to show essential detail. In Mountfort's opinion 'the meretricious allurements of the artist' had no place in architectural drawings. Nevertheless many

of his drawings have considerable visual appeal, ingeniously combining a multiplicity of details on a single sheet with a deceptive simplicity of means. Occasionally they offer views of buildings with apparent disregard for the strictures against artistic aids that he usually observed.

In the limited space of a gallery interior it is impossible to show more than fragments of an architect's career; the real works of art are tantalisingly absent. Wherever possible drawings have been assembled in groups in order to convey the three-dimensional quality of the buildings represented. In addition, by including decorative arts in the exhibition at least some feel for the physical presence of the objects can be conveyed. Mountfort's designs for ecclesiastical and secular furnishings also reveal his commitment to the Gothic Revival concept of total design, in which the architect orchestrates every component of a building's exterior and interior appearance. The Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber is an outstanding example of this approach and was recently described as 'one of the most serious and convincing Gothic Revival interiors... comparable in *gravitas* and in splendour of decoration and craftsmanship to major interiors in Britain by George Edmund Street, William Burges and George Gilbert Scott'.

Compared to the life of buildings, exhibitions have but a fleeting existence. This exhibition commemorates the centennial of Benjamin Mountfort's death but it also celebrates the continued presence of the architect's buildings in Christchurch, in Canterbury and further afield. Many of these are now well into their second century but if they are to continue to enrich our lives and those of our children it is essential that they are valued and cared for. Even now buildings featured in this exhibition face uncertain futures. No other nineteenth-century architect contributed more to the unique architectural character of Victorian Christchurch than Benjamin Mountfort. Although this is the first exhibition devoted to Mountfort's works, the buildings themselves have been on show for more than a century. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that a century hence the objects in this remarkable outdoor exhibition are still intact.

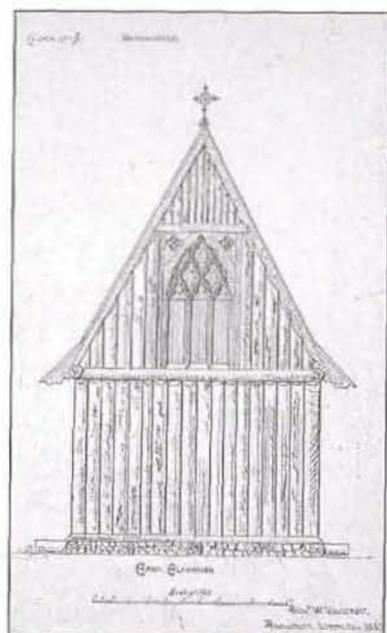
**Ian Lochhead**

## Early Designs

In the two years before Mountfort emigrated to New Zealand in 1850 he designed several buildings although, as far as we know, only one was built. The surviving designs reveal his admiration for A.W.N. Pugin (1812-52), the leading Gothic Revival architect of his generation. Mountfort's *Design for a Street Front* (cat. 1) is a reworking of designs published in Pugin's *Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture* (1843) but his influence is particularly evident in the prominent chancels, steeply pitched roofs and slender spires of Mountfort's churches (cat. 2-5 & 6-8). The influence of the Cambridge Camden Society, which sought to revive the ritualistic worship and the architectural forms of the medieval church, is also evident in these designs. The drawing for the small parish church at Ogle Hay (cat. 9), probably made for a competition, is similar to contemporary designs for country churches by one of Mountfort's best known English contemporaries, G.E. Street (1824-81). The design for a stained glass window (cat. 11), the earliest evidence of Mountfort's work in this medium, was made for Croft School, Herefordshire, the only building he executed in England. Associated with this design is the sketch for a tower for Croft Church (cat. 10), an unrealised proposal intended to restore the medieval building to its original form.

- 1 **Design for a Street Front, 1848**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Elevation  
Pen and ink on paper, 346 x 225  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1848  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 2 **Design for a Brick Church, 1848**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 67, ground plan  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 345 x 510  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1848  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 3 **Design for a Brick Church, 1848**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 68, west elevation and transverse section through nave and porch looking east  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 345 x 508  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1848  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 4 **Design for a Brick Church, 1848**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 69, east elevation and transverse section through chancel and sacristy looking east  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 345 x 470  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1848  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 5 **Design for a Brick Church, 1848**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 71, longitudinal section through nave and chancel looking north  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 335 x 507  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1848  
Collection: Canterbury Museum

- 6 **Design for Church of St Jude, Birmingham, 1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 1, ground plan  
Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 373 x 526  
Signed: Benjn Mountfort, Architect, London, 1849  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 7 **Design for Church of St Jude, Birmingham, 1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
No. 2, elevation of west end  
Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 515 x 365  
Signed: Benjn Mountfort, Architect, London, 1849  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 8 **Design for Church of St Jude, Birmingham, 1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Section through nave and chancel  
Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 367 x 522  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, London, 1849  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 9 **Proposed New Church at Ogle Hay, Staffordshire, c.1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Plan and south elevation  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 610 x 474  
Inscribed: Nisi Dominus Edificaverit Domus  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 10 **Design for Tower, Croft Church, 1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Ground plan and elevation  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 470 x 322  
Signed: B W Mountfort, Archt, London, 1849  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 11 **School at Croft, 1849**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Window in boys' school, interior elevation  
Pen and ink and watercolour on paper, 404 x 306  
Signed: B W Mountfort, Archt.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum



Cat. 19  
Photo:  
Lloyd Park

# Churches for the Canterbury Settlement: 1850 - 1861

To ensure that churches in its ideal Anglican settlement in New Zealand were built according to approved principles, the Canterbury Association commissioned model designs from leading Gothic Revival architects in Britain. William Butterfield offered an economical solution by providing space for worship and accommodation for clergy in the one building (cat. 12-13). Medieval timber churches were the basis for George Gilbert Scott's design for a church that could be built using the limited material resources available in a colonial settlement (cat. 14).

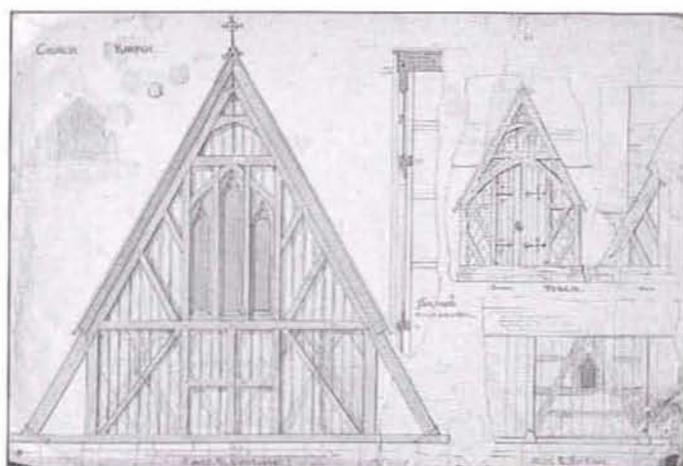
Mountfort must have known both these unbuilt designs and his own churches reveal similar ingenuity and originality. His first New Zealand church, Holy Trinity, Lyttelton (cat. 15-16), was an ambitious, timber-framed structure with brick infill, but only four bays of the nave were built. Mountfort's lack of experience with local materials caused structural problems and the building was demolished in 1857.

The primitive construction of the church at Hemingford (Governor's Bay) (cat. 17-20) provides a link with the Anglo Saxon church at Greenstead in Essex, which has walls of vertical oak logs. The plan (cat. 17) shows Mountfort's expectation that the tiny building would eventually grow into a much larger stone church.

St Bartholomew's, Kaiapoi (cat. 21-23), the oldest surviving church in Canterbury, shows Mountfort's continuing search for solutions to the problem of building churches in wood. To secure the building against high winds, Mountfort experimented with the system of A-frame construction advocated by the Bishop of New Zealand, G.A. Selwyn, but the details of the design are Mountfort's own. Equally individual was the timber belfry for St Michael and All Angels, seen in a preliminary design (cat. 24) and as actually built (cat. 25).

Timber Gothic churches may have seemed incongruous in the Canterbury landscape of the 1850's, but a century later they had become an essential part of the region's identity, Mountfort's Barbadoes Street Cemetery Chapel of 1862 appearing as the central motif of W.A. Sutton's *Nor'wester in the cemetery* (cat.VII).

- 12 **Plans of Chapel & House attached, c.1850**  
*William Butterfield*  
South and west elevations and ground plan  
Pen and wash on tracing paper, 514 x 630  
Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 13 **Plans of Chapel & House attached, c.1850**  
*William Butterfield*  
Longitudinal sections and transverse sections  
Pen and wash on tracing paper, 527 x 750  
Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 14 **Church for the Canterbury Settlement, c.1850**  
*George Gilbert Scott*  
Longitudinal section, south elevation, plan and sections of nave and chancel  
Pen and wash on paper, 531 x 746  
Signed: Geo: Gilbert Scott Archt.,  
20 Spring Gardens, London  
Collection: Canterbury Museum



Cat. 21 Photo: Lloyd Park

- 15 **Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Plan  
Pen and ink on vellum, 110 x 206  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, Isaac Luck, Builder  
Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 16 **Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
South-west perspective  
Pencil on paper, 602 x 652  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 17 **Church of S..., Hemingford, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Plan showing the church completed  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 290 x 452  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, Lyttelton, 1852  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 18 **Church of S..., Hemingford, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
North and west elevations  
Pen and ink on paper, 292 x 458  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 19 **Church of S..., Hemingford, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
East elevation  
Pen and ink on paper, 450 x 285  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 20 **Church of S..., Hemingford, 1852**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
Transverse section  
Pen and ink and wash on paper, 448 x 285  
Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect  
Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 21 **St Bartholomew's Church, Kaiapoi, 1854**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
East elevation, side elevation, section part of east wall, front and side of porch  
Pen and ink, pencil and wash on paper, 368 x 545  
Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Dec 27 18[54?]  
Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

22 **St Bartholomew's Church, Kaiapoi, 1854**  
*B. W. Mountfort*  
 Transverse section looking east and longitudinal section  
 Pencil, pen and ink and wash on paper, 343 x 499  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

23 **St Bartholomew's Church, Kaiapoi, 1854**  
*B. W. Mountfort*  
 Interior perspective looking east  
 Pencil on paper, 340 x 253  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

24 **Belfry for Church of St Michael and All Angels, 1861**  
*B. W. Mountfort*  
 Sketch design, perspective  
 Pencil and watercolour on paper, 376 x 250  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection

25 **Belfry for Church of St Michael and All Angels, 1861**  
*B. W. Mountfort*  
 Perspective  
 Pencil and watercolour on paper, 354 x 257  
 Collection: Church of St Michael and All Angels  
 (on loan to Robert McDougall Art Gallery)

26 **Design for Small Cottage at Hemingford for Christopher A. Calvert Esq. c.1852**  
*B. W. Mountfort*  
 Plan, north and west elevations, longitudinal and transverse sections  
 Pen and ink on paper, 242 x 347  
 Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, Lyttelton, 1852  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

27 **Episcopal Residence, Christchurch, 1857**  
*Mountfort & Luck*  
 No. 1, plan  
 Pencil and wash on paper, 323 x 530  
 Signed: Mountfort and Luck, Architects, Christchurch  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

28 **Episcopal Residence, Christchurch, 1857**  
*Mountfort & Luck*  
 No. 5, road front & river front  
 Pencil and wash on paper, 533 x 660  
 Signed: Mountfort & Luck, Architects, Christchurch  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

29 **Episcopal Residence, Christchurch, 1857**  
*Mountfort & Luck*  
 No. 6, garden front & office front  
 Pencil and wash on paper, 506 x 318  
 Signed: Mountfort & Luck, Architects, Christchurch  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

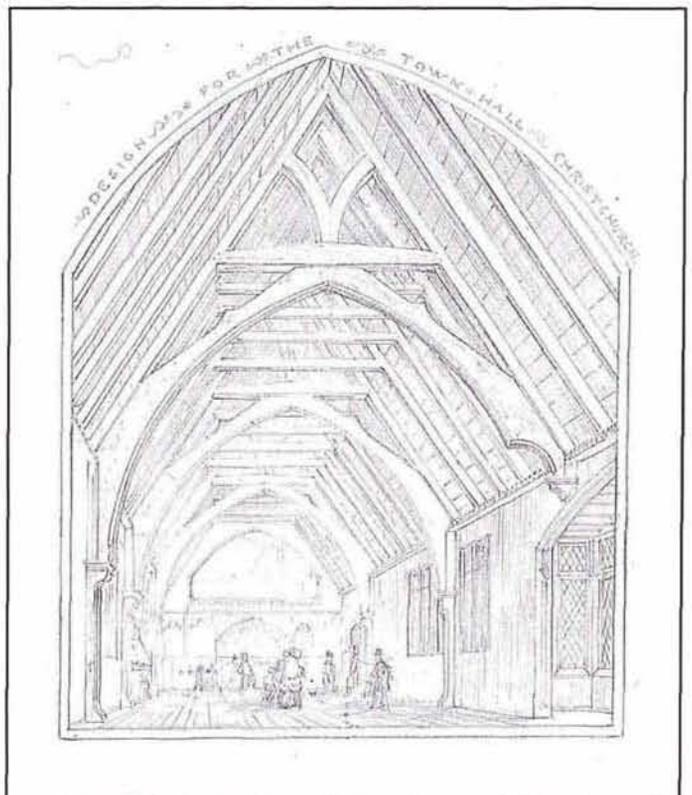
30 **Residence for the Bishop of Christchurch, 1857**  
*Mountfort & Luck*  
 Nos. 1-8, working drawings  
 Pen and ink, pencil and wash on paper, bound with linen, 300 x 510  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, I. Luck, Architects, June 1857  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

## Domestic and Public Buildings: 1852 - 1862

Mountfort's cottage at Governor's Bay for Christopher Calvert (cat. 26) shows a comparable architectural primitivism to his Hemingford Church design (cat. 17-20) and must date from the same time. The arrival of the first Bishop of Christchurch, H.J.C. Harper, in 1856 provided the stimulus for the design for an Episcopal Residence (cat. 27-29). Its irregular plan, vertical board and batten cladding and steeply pitched roofs are features shared with other projects of this period, including Mountfort's first design for the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings (cat. 35). These features derive from the design principles of Pugin and the ecclesiologists. As built, Bishops Court was a much more modest structure, closer in scale to a country parsonage than a bishop's palace. A rare set of working drawings for this building survive (cat. 30) although the house itself was destroyed by fire in 1924.

The first Christchurch Town Hall in High Street (cat. 31) was described upon completion as 'the handsomest wooden building on the plains' and contemporaries drew parallels between the hall and 'the architecture of our English forefathers, when they lived in wooden buildings'. More utilitarian but still undeniably Gothic in character was Mountfort & Luck's schematic plan for Christchurch Hospital; the city's first hospital did not follow the advanced planning the architects advocated but when it was extended in 1872 the pavilion system of wards was finally adopted.

The Christchurch Club provided residential accommodation for country members and a focus for political and social life in the provincial capital. Its Italianate architectural character, presumably chosen to emphasise links with similar institutions in Britain, was radically different from that of any other building by Mountfort (cat. 33). Also unusual is the proposal for Refreshment Rooms (cat. 34), an extension to Thomas Gee's premises on the corner of Colombo and Gloucester Streets. Commercial buildings were comparatively rare among Mountfort's works but the decision to use brick at a time when timber buildings were the norm in Christchurch is also unexpected.



Cat. 31 Photo: Lloyd Park

- 31 **Town Hall, Christchurch, 1857**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Interior perspective looking south  
 Pencil on paper, 299 x 250  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Architect, 1857  
 Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
- 32 **Hospital, Christchurch, 1859**  
**Mountfort & Luck**  
 Plan of ward and explanation of pavilion system  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 546 x 378  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, I. Luck, Architects, Christchurch, 1859  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 33 **Christchurch Club, Christchurch, 1859**  
**Mountfort & Luck**  
 North-west perspective  
 Pencil on paper, 243 (diameter)  
 Collection: Christchurch Club
- 34 **Refreshment Rooms, Christchurch, 1862**  
**Mountfort & Luck**  
 Plan, elevation and section  
 Pen and ink and watercolour on paper, 318 x 442  
 Signed: Mountfort & Luck, Architects, Chchurch, April 2, 1862  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

## Canterbury Provincial Government Buildings

The commission to design the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, the seat of the Canterbury Provincial Government, was the most important of Mountfort's early career and it established him as New Zealand's leading nineteenth-century architect. His preliminary design of 1855 (cat. 35) employed a medieval collegiate plan adapted to timber construction but with a stone 'safe' in the centre of the courtyard.

Construction began in 1858 but only the southern section of the original design was built in a modified form. The north wing, added in 1859-60, was larger in scale and incorporated a polychromatic stone tower. The stone Council Chamber and Refreshment Rooms, built in 1864-5, introduced dramatic contrasts of scale and materials not anticipated in the original design. Contemporaries read these changes as a reflection of the progress of Canterbury but for Mountfort the building's organic growth would also have seemed akin to the gradual stylistic evolution of medieval buildings.

Few plans for the early stages of construction survive (cat. 36) and the set of presentation drawings of the stone Council Chamber and Refreshment Rooms were probably made after the building's completion (cat. 37-42). They demonstrate Mountfort's ability to create a dramatic sequence of changing elevations by allowing the arrangement of the internal spaces to dictate the treatment of the exterior. In November 1865 *The Press* observed that 'these buildings exemplify the perfect manner in which the pointed style adapts itself to all our requirements when treated as it should be, not as a mere dead mask, but as a real living development for our every-day wants.'

In the stone Council Chamber Mountfort's generous use of colour, broad palette of materials and meticulous attention to detail produced the most complete High Victorian interior in New Zealand. The impressive quality of the interior transcends its colonial origins and testifies to the wealth and optimism that existed in Canterbury in the 1860s.

- 35 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1855**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Preliminary design, aerial perspective  
 Pencil on paper, 490 x 660  
 Signed: Benjn W Mountfort, Architect, Stowefleet, Canterbury, 1855  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 36 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1855**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Design for Council Chamber & Government Offices; Detail of Entrance Door & Front of Strangers' Gallery, Council Chamber  
 Pencil and wash on paper laid down on cardboard, 275 x 364  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Arch, Stowefleet, Canterbury, 1855  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 37 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Council Chamber, plan  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 495 x 735  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 38 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Council Chamber, south elevation and section on line C—D looking south  
 Pen and ink on paper, 492 x 732  
 Collection: Christchurch City Council
- 39 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Council Chamber, section E—F looking north and section G—H looking south  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 495 x 735  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 40 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Refreshment Rooms, east elevation  
 Pen and ink on paper, 485 x 730  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 41 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Refreshment Rooms, south elevation  
 Pen and ink on paper, 482 x 735  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

- 42 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Refreshment Rooms, north and west elevations and section B-B  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 735 x 483  
 Collection : Canterbury Museum
- 43 **Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch, 1864**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Refreshment Rooms, south-east perspective  
 Pencil and water colour on paper, 435 x 540  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

## Christchurch Supreme Court

The 1864 Supreme Court design (cat. 44-45) was contemporaneous with the stone Provincial Council Chamber. Although signed 'Mountfort and Bury', Maxwell Bury (1825-1912) had secured the commission prior to the establishment of the partnership and the underlying symmetry of the design is utterly different from Mountfort's distinctive compositions. A second Supreme Court design (cat. 46-47), again produced under the name of the partnership but dating from after Bury's departure for England in March 1866, reveals Mountfort's characteristic asymmetrical approach. Both designs were set aside in favour of Alexander Lean's prosaic Supreme Court, built in 1868 and demolished in 1980.

- 44 **The Supreme Court, Christchurch, 1864**  
*Mountfort & Bury*  
 Plan and elevations  
 Pencil, pen and wash on paper, 310 x 463  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort & Maxwell Bury, Ch.Ch.  
 July 1864  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 45 **The Supreme Court, Christchurch, 1864**  
*Mountfort & Bury*  
 Section through court room  
 Pen and wash on paper, 592 x 923  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 46 **The Supreme Court, Christchurch, 1867**  
*Mountfort & Bury*  
 Ground plan and elevation of tower  
 Pen and wash on cartridge paper, 656 x 953  
 Signed: Bury and Mountfort, Architects and Surveyors  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 47 **The Supreme Court, Christchurch, 1867**  
*Mountfort & Bury*  
 Perspective  
 Pencil and watercolour on paper, 464 x 590  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Architect etc., Christchurch  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

## Christ Church Cathedral

Christ Church Cathedral was intended as the spiritual, symbolic and geographical centre of Christchurch and was the most prestigious building project in nineteenth-century Canterbury. Gilbert Scott's unique design for a cathedral with a stone exterior and internal structure of timber (cat. 48-49) reflected the limited resources available in colonial Canterbury and addressed the threat of earthquakes but the Cathedral Commission insisted on a revised stone design. They were equally intransigent in their opposition to the appointment of Mountfort as supervising architect, despite Scott's approval of his qualifications. Construction began under the supervision of Robert Speechly in 1864 but proceeded no further than the foundations.

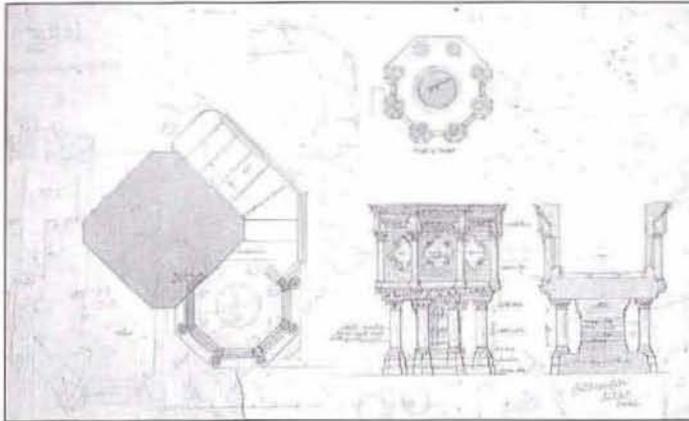
Mountfort was finally appointed supervising architect in 1873 when construction resumed. Although he remained faithful to Scott's plans, Mountfort introduced many small changes, the most significant being the redesign of the tower (cat. 50) and the addition of a north porch (cat. 51). He was responsible for the programme of stained glass windows (cat. 52) and the furnishing of the interior, designing the Selwyn Memorial Pulpit (cat. 56) and the Bishop's Throne (cat. 54). All these designs respect Scott's original idea and some are even based on works by Scott himself. The interior walls were enriched by encaustic tile panels designed by Mountfort (cat. 55), creating a link with the interior of the Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber (cat. 39).

A series of designs for a memorial to Bishop Harper occupied Mountfort between 1894 and 1897, the initial plans for a Memorial Chapel (cat. 57-58) or Gate (cat. 59-60) eventually being superseded by the cenotaph (cat. 61) bearing an effigy of Harper carved by J.F. Williamson.

Over twenty years earlier Mountfort had designed the crozier presented to Bishop Harper on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Canterbury (cat. 53). Made by the Christchurch silversmith, John Brunette (1837-1912), it had a shaft of native timber and was embellished with local jasper and pounamu mounted in oxidised silver settings, with the crook terminated by a *fleur-de-lis* of pounamu.

Mountfort may not have designed Christ Church Cathedral but throughout the building his contributions were unmistakable. Even his temporary wooden chancel was admired, a visitor from Tasmania describing it as being 'so beautiful in all its parts and furniture that one is sorry to think it will be all pulled down when the design is completed'. It was demolished when the transepts and chancel were commenced in 1900.

- 48 **Design for Cathedral Church, Christchurch, New Zealand, c.1862**  
*George Gilbert Scott*  
 Drawing No. 3, longitudinal section looking north  
 Pen and wash on paper with pencil additions, 640 x 876  
 Signed: George Gilbert Scott Archt., London, England  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 49 **Design for Cathedral Church, Christchurch, New Zealand, c.1873**  
*George Gilbert Scott*  
 Half section thro nave looking west, half elevation of west end  
 Pencil and wash on paper, 1300 x 1105  
 Signed: Sir G. G. Scott R.A., Archt, London, England  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives



Cat. 56 Photo: Lloyd Park

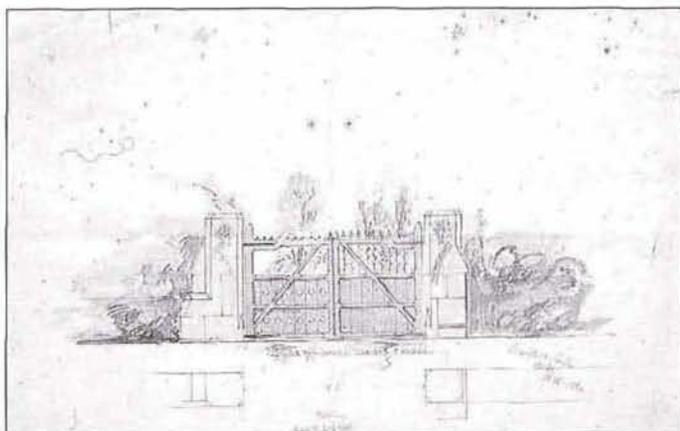
- 50 **Christchurch Cathedral, c. 1879**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 West elevation of tower and nave  
 Pen and pencil on paper, 733 x 500  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 51 **Christchurch Cathedral, c. 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 North elevation showing completed design  
 Pen and ink on paper laid down on green-painted board,  
 690 x 890  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 52 **Christchurch Cathedral: Rose Window,  
 The Lamb of God and the Hierarchy of Angels, 1880**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Pen and ink, pencil and watercolour on paper, 490 x 610  
 Inscribed: Subjects in outer cinquefoils; Cherubim;  
 Seraphim; Virgins; Archangels; Virtues; Powers;  
 Dominions; Principalities; Honours  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 53 **Crozier for Bishop Harper, 1875**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Elevation, sections and details  
 Pencil on tracing paper, laid down on cartridge paper,  
 467 x 308  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 54 **Christ Church Cathedral: Bishop's Throne and  
 Prayer Desk, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Plan, section, front and side elevations  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 482 x 650  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 55 **Christ Church Cathedral: Encaustic Tile Panel, c.1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Pencil and watercolour on paper, 387 x 562  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 56 **Christ Church Cathedral:  
 Selwyn Memorial Pulpit, 1883**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Pen and ink, pencil and wash on paper, 380 x 608  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, 1883  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 57 **Christ Church Cathedral:  
 Harper Memorial Chapel, 1894**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Exterior perspective  
 Pen and brown ink on paper, 360 x 252  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Architect  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 58 **Christ Church Cathedral:  
 Harper Memorial Chapel, 1894**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Ground plan, interior of cenotaph, elevation towards  
 aisle, outside elevation  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 315 x 504  
 Dated: July '94  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 59 **Christ Church Cathedral: Harper Memorial Gate, 1894**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Perspective  
 Pen and ink on paper, 266 x 365  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 60 **Christ Church Cathedral: Boundary Fence, c.1894**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Section and perspective  
 Pen and ink and pencil on paper, 442 x 316  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 61 **Christ Church Cathedral:  
 Harper Memorial Cenotaph, 1897**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Plan, elevations and details  
 Pen and ink, pencil and watercolour on paper, 315 x 504  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives

## Wooden Parish Churches

From 1870 onwards Mountfort designed over twenty-five small timber churches. Many were for country parishes in Canterbury but he received commissions from throughout New Zealand. Even when designing these modest buildings he had to revise his plans to match the limited funds available to parishes. Inessential features such as towers were sometimes omitted when churches were built (cat. 62) and Mountfort compromised by replacing vertical board and batten cladding with less expensive horizontal weatherboards (cat. 64-66). All Saints, Sherwood, was reduced in size by the removal of one bay of the nave and the elaborate double belcote was also simplified (cat. 67). In 1884 All Saints was moved to Methven to replace an earlier church destroyed by nor'west gales.

Mountfort's small timber churches have long been recognised as among his most significant achievements. Samuel Hurst Seager described them in 1900 as 'notable examples of simple, honest construction, leading to the most pleasing results... each has some special feature making it distinctive; yet in all there is an expression of individual feeling, giving them - simple and inexpensive though they are - a high place among our architectural works.'

- 62 **Church for Little River, 1877**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Ground plan, north, east & west elevations and section  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 398 x 455  
 Signed B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch, March 1877  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 63 **Church for Little River, 1877**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 South elevation and detail of side windows  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 332 x 532  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch (stamp)  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 64 **Church at Sherwood, 1879**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 No. III, North, west and east elevations  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 454 x 607  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Christchurch & Ashburton, Jan /79  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 65 **Church at Sherwood, 1879**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 No. IV, full size details of windows and capping  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 383 x 559  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Christchurch & Ashburton, Jan/79  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 66 **Church at Sherwood, 1879**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 North and west elevations  
 Pen and ink on paper, 379 x 559  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch, May /79  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 67 **Church at Sherwood, 1879**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Detail of bell turret; front and side elevations and section  
 Pen and ink and wash on linen, 388 x 492  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Christchurch, 1879  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives



Cat. 68 Photo: Lloyd Park

## School Buildings

High among the priorities of the Canterbury Association was education and in May 1853 Mountfort was discussing plans for Christ's College with the Association's agent in Canterbury, Henry Sewell. Sewell recorded that 'I have told Mr Mountfort to give me his estimate &c. *including the Chapel*, so that we may start a College not a seminary. Mr Mountfort himself seemed rather ashamed of the idea of a College without a Chapel.' Mountfort and Luck designed the first timber buildings for the college in 1857 but the chapel, designed by Robert Speechly, was not built until 1867. After considerable debate Mountfort designed substantial additions for the chapel in 1882 (cat. 69-71) but only the chancel and transepts were completed to a revised design in 1884. The organ chamber, also designed by Mountfort, was added in 1888.

Although he completed several buildings at Christ's College, Mountfort's imposing entrance tower of c.1893 (cat. 72) proved too ambitious for the College's resources. A comparison of the modest wooden gates of 1860 (cat. 68) and the dramatic Gothic tower of the 1890s reveals the extraordinary architectural progress of Christchurch over a thirty-year period.

Unlike Christ's College, Christchurch East School accommodated both girls and boys, although as the preliminary plans reveal, the sexes were completely segregated (cat. 73-74). The division between boys' and girls' schools was made even clearer in the final plan (cat. 75). On the exterior Mountfort employed a robust 'childproof' cladding of vertical boards with triangular-section battens, but the treatment of the interior reveals a remarkable concern for detail with, for example, the profiles of timber mouldings drawn in full size on the plans (cat. 76-77). The architect even designed desks and benches for the pupils, with sizes graduated to accommodate the needs of children of different ages (cat. 78).

- 68 **Christ's College, Design for Gates, 1860**  
**Mountfort & Luck**  
 Elevation  
 Pencil and wash on paper, 303 x 481  
 Signed: Mountfort and Luck, Arch., ChCh, 1860  
 Collection: Christ's College
- 69 **Christ's College Chapel Additions, 1882**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 North elevation and ground plan  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 490 x 630  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch 1882  
 Collection: Christ's College
- 70 **Christ's College Chapel Additions, 1882**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 West elevation of antechapel, east elevation, section through antechapel, longitudinal section looking south  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 516 x 686  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Archt., Christchurch 1882  
 Collection: Christ's College
- 71 **Christ's College Chapel Additions, 1882**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 East elevation, north elevation  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 453 x 670  
 Collection: Christ's College



Cat. 73 Photo: Lloyd Park

- 72 **Christ's College, Entrance Tower, c.1893**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Perspective  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 388 x 563  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 73 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1873**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Preliminary design, perspective  
 Pen and ink on paper 480 x 437  
 Signed: B W Mountfort Archt., Nov 10 1873  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 74 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1873**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Preliminary design, ground plan  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 476 x 491  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Archt., Nov 10, 1873  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 75 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1874**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Ground plan  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 453 x 656  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 76 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1874**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Transverse section line G-H & longitudinal section line K-L  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 333 x 506  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 77 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1874**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Detail of back school room window  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 505 x 720  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

- 78 **District Schools for Christchurch East, 1874**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Desks and benches; side & front elevations and section  
 Pen and ink, pencil and wash on paper, 346 x 512  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

## Canterbury Museum

Early street plans of Christchurch show the site for the museum at the western end of Worcester Street but it was twenty years before the first stage of the Canterbury Museum's building was completed. Mountfort's design, with its stone exterior and internal timber frame (cat. 79), can be compared with Scott's first design for Christ Church Cathedral (cat. 48-49), which probably inspired it. Additions to the south of the original building in 1872 proved inadequate to meet the continual demand for extra exhibition space but the ambitious plans of the museum's director, Julius von Haast, were halted in 1874 when the Provincial Government withdrew funding that had already been approved (cat. 80).

Revised plans, incorporating many of the features used in the final design, were prepared in 1875 (cat. 81). With the completion of the east and south wings in 1877 (cat. 84-85) the Museum had virtually quadrupled in size in only seven years. Mountfort's top-lit, timber-framed galleries (cat. 82-83) created an ideal environment in which to display the spectacular natural history collections von Haast had assembled and the Museum became one of the showplaces of colonial Christchurch. According to the Governor, Lord Normanby, speaking at the official opening of the Museum in September 1878, there were 'few cities even in the Old Country which can boast of a museum which is superior to this'.

Mountfort's contemporaries would have recognised the similarities between the east façade of the Canterbury Museum and Deane and Woodward's Oxford University Museum (1855-60), one of the most celebrated Gothic Revival public buildings in Victorian Britain and an appropriate model for its colonial counterpart.

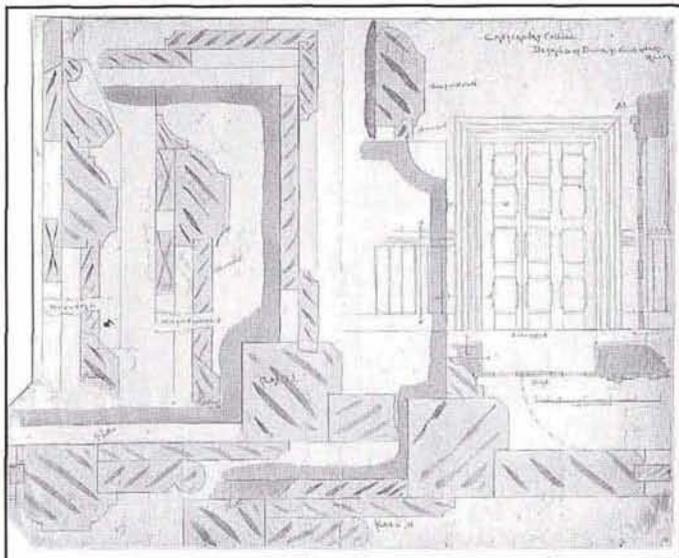
- 79 **Canterbury Museum, 1869**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Transverse section & longitudinal section  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 470 x 695  
 Signed: B W Mountfort  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 80 **Canterbury Museum, c.1874**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 South-east view showing additions  
 Pen on paper, 393 x 563  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 81 **Canterbury Museum, 1875**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 West elevation  
 Pen and ink and wash on linen, 404 x 711  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

- 82 **Canterbury Museum, 1875**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Longitudinal and transverse sections  
 Pen and ink and wash on linen, 494 x 674  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 83 **Canterbury Museum, 1875**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 No. 6, details of roof over large room  
 Pen and ink and wash on linen, 410 x 654  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 84 **Canterbury Museum, c 1875**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Additions to museum [east elevation]  
 Pen and ink on paper, 348 x 530  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 85 **Canterbury Museum, 1875**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 South elevation  
 Pen and ink on paper, 348 x 512  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

## Canterbury College

Located directly opposite the Canterbury Museum, Canterbury College was seen as the final stage in fulfilling the Canterbury Association's commitment to education. Mountfort's success in the competition to design the college buildings in 1873 led to a succession of commissions from the Board of Governors over the next twenty years.

By the time construction began in 1876 the conventional Gothic arches of the competition design (cat. 86) had been replaced by a much freer approach in which broad, segmental arches became the dominant motif (cat. 87-89). The college's distinctive architectural character distinguishes it from the neighbouring museum and by this stage in his career Mountfort no longer needed



Cat. 90 Photo: Lloyd Park

to employ specific historical motifs in order to design buildings that were Gothic in spirit. The drawings for doors and woodwork (cat. 90-91) reveal the attention Mountfort lavished on every detail of the design as well as the robust proportions characteristic of High Victorian Gothic architecture.

Mountfort's drawings for the College Hall, which occupies the key site on the corner of Worcester Street and Rolleston Avenue, reveal that revisions were made to the design at the last minute, the towers flanking the north gable (cat. 92) being deleted in the final elevation (cat. 95). The cross-section of the Hall (cat. 94) clearly reveals the asymmetry of the design, the internal buttresses of the west side contrasting with the flat plane of the east wall. Mountfort's inventive approach is also visible in the timber vault, which combines rounded arches, hammer beams and a ridge and furrow ceiling similar to that found in the Provincial Council Chamber, in a highly original synthesis (cat. 93 & 94).

- 86 **Canterbury College Competition Design, 1873**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 North or front elevation  
 Pen and ink on paper, 441 x 565  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 87 **Canterbury College, Completion of East Wing, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 North elevation  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 385 x 685  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 88 **Canterbury College, Completion of East Wing, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Cross-section and east elevation of clock tower  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 384 x 558  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 89 **Canterbury College, Completion of East Wing, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Back [south] elevation  
 Pen and ink on paper, 490 x 606  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 90 **Canterbury College, Completion of East Wing, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Details of door to Governors' Room  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper 532 x 662  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 91 **Canterbury College, Completion of East Wing, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Details of main doors  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 532 x 660  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural Drawings Collection
- 92 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Preliminary drawings, north elevation to Worcester Street and transverse section  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 339 x 508  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

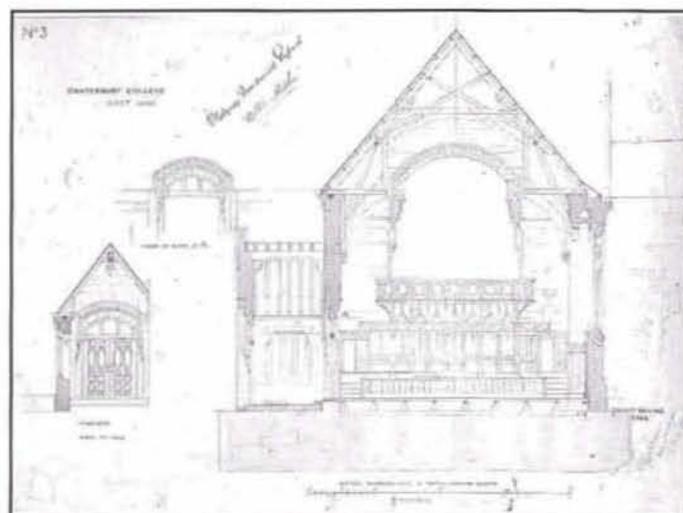
- 93 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Preliminary drawings, longitudinal section  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 343 x 505  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 94 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 West Wing No. 3. Section through hall & porch  
 looking south  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 480 x 660  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural  
 Drawings Collection
- 95 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 West Wing, No. 5. North elevation & interior of window  
 Pen and ink on paper and wash, 502 x 655  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural  
 Drawings Collection
- 96 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 West Wing, No. 8. Details of one bay of west wall of hall  
 Pen and ink and wash on paper, 667 x 502  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural  
 Drawings Collection
- 97 **Canterbury College Hall, 1881**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Elevation, section and detail of fireplace  
 Pen and ink, pencil and wash on paper, 557 x 762  
 Collection: University of Canterbury, Architectural  
 Drawings Collection

## Churches of Stone, Brick and Concrete

For Victorian architects, stone was the most prestigious building material but Mountfort was forced to wait for over twenty years before he had the opportunity to build a stone church in Canterbury. Even then this was not an Anglican church but Trinity Congregational Church, a commission won in a limited competition. The bold forms and Early French Gothic style of his design marked a new departure in Christchurch architecture (cat. 98). Mountfort's plan skilfully integrated a centralised space intended to focus attention on the pulpit with the underlying cruciform symbolism of his Anglican church designs (cat. 99).

At Holy Trinity, Avonside, Mountfort was finally able to design an Anglican church in stone; his perspective view (cat. 102) reveals a return to Puginian ideals of the 1840s but only the chancel and transepts were completed according to the architect's original design. The lavishly embellished chancel, in which every component was designed by the architect, was made possible through the generosity of a parishioner, Mrs Jane Palaret.

The demand for churches in permanent materials increased in the 1870s and Mountfort experimented with monolithic concrete at St Stephen's, Ashburton, (1876) and with a combination of concrete and timber at St John the Baptist, Rangiora (1875-82).



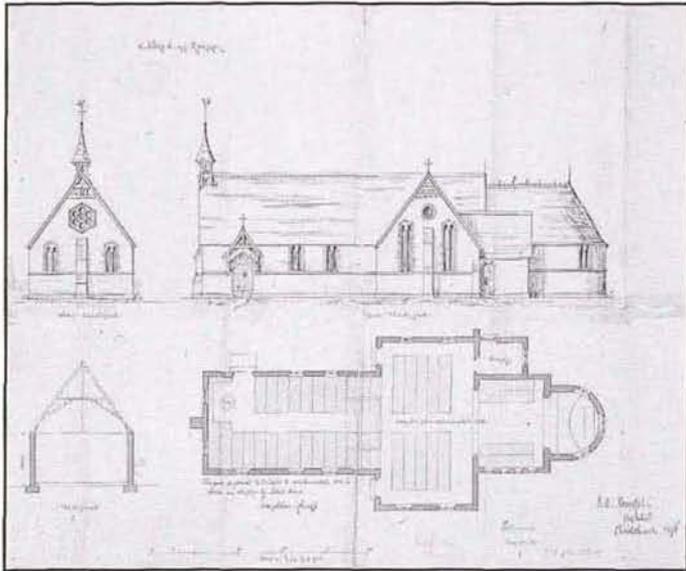
Cat. 94 Photo: Lloyd Park

St Mark's, Rakaia, was originally designed in concrete (cat. 103), but the cost proved prohibitive and the church was redesigned and built in timber. At St Mary's, Otaio, a small country church erected as a memorial to Mrs Ellen Meyer of Bluecliffs, the unexpected use of stone reveals the kind of modest masonry churches Mountfort might have built more often had adequate resources been available. The simplicity of the sketch plan (cat. 104) was further refined in the final drawings (cat. 105-106), the honest expression of materials found in Mountfort's timber churches being combined with the solidity and feeling of permanence associated with stone construction.

During the 1880s Mountfort experimented with brick, a material that combined the permanence of stone and the economy of timber. Only the nave of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown, (cat. 108-109) was built during Mountfort's lifetime, but it acted as a prototype for his largest and most spectacular church, the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier, (cat. 110-111). The destruction of Napier Cathedral in the 1931 earthquake leaves the Church of the Good Shepherd as a precious reminder of Mountfort's ability to exploit the intrinsic qualities of brick to create rich effects at minimal cost.

Mountfort's last church, St Michael's, Sandakan, in Sabah, Malaysia, was built for an Anglican missionary parish (cat. 112). Its heavy walls and deeply shaded windows are adaptations to the tropical environment. The church reveals Mountfort's ability to successfully adapt Gothic design principles to an environment that was as strange to him in the 1890s as Canterbury had been forty years earlier.

- 98 **Congregational Church, Christchurch, 1872**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 North-east perspective  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 470 x 372  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 99 **Congregational Church, Christchurch, 1872**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Ground and gallery plan  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 490 x 587  
 Signed: B.W. Mountfort, Archt., Christchurch, 1872  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum



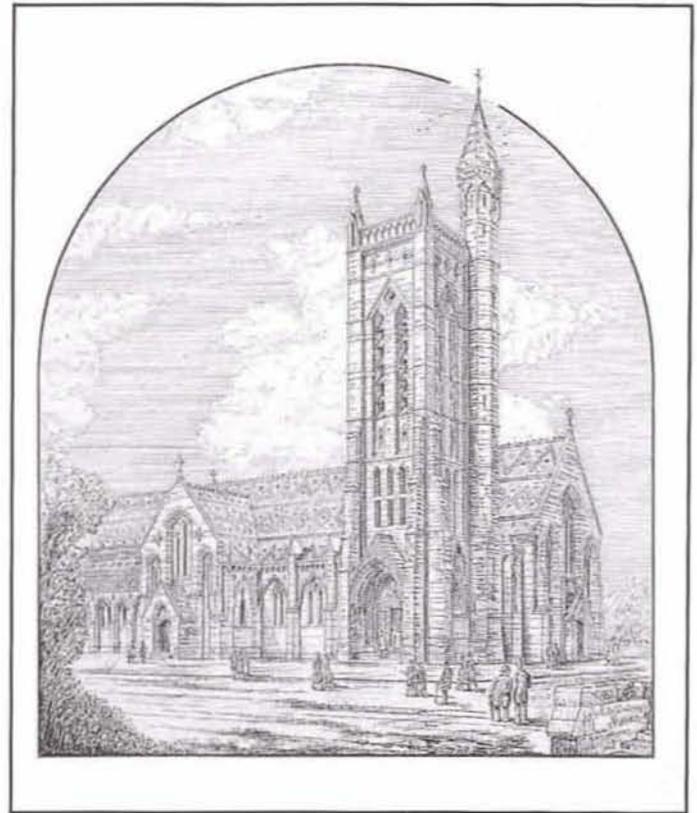
Cat. 103 Photo: Lloyd Park

- 100 **Congregational Church, Christchurch, 1872**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 East elevation  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 555 x 759  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 101 **Congregational Church, Christchurch, 1872**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Transverse section looking north and north elevation omitting porch  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 380 x 560  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 102 **Holy Trinity Church, Avonside, 1873**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Perspective  
 Pencil and watercolour on paper, 400 x 563  
 Collection: Holy Trinity Church  
 (on loan to Robert McDougall Art Gallery)
- 103 **Rakaia Church, 1876**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Plan, section and elevations  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 412 x 505  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch, 1876  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 104 **Church at Otaio - Bluecliffs, 1878**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Plan, section, north and west elevations  
 Pen, ink and wash on cartridge paper, 445 x 417  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch, 1878  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 105 **Church at Otaio - Bluecliffs, 1878**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 North and west elevations  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, correction patch over belfry, 489 x 610  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, Christchurch, 1878  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 106 **Church at Otaio - Bluecliffs, 1878**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Plan and transverse section  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 488 x 603  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 107 **Church at Otaio - Bluecliffs, 1878**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Reredos  
 Pen and ink and wash on cartridge paper, 235 x 403  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- 108 **Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown, 1884**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 South-west perspective  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper laid down on board, 475 x 674  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 109 **Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown, 1884**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Interior perspective looking east  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 530 x 393  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Architect, ChCh, 1884  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 110 **Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier, 1886**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 North-west perspective  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, laid down on backing sheet, 581 x 448  
 Signed: B W Mountfort, Archt., 1886  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 111 **Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier, 1886**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Interior perspective looking east  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 550 x 450  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- 112 **St Michael's Church, Sandakan, Sabah, c.1893**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Interior perspective of chancel  
 Pen and ink on cartridge paper, 592 x 450  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum

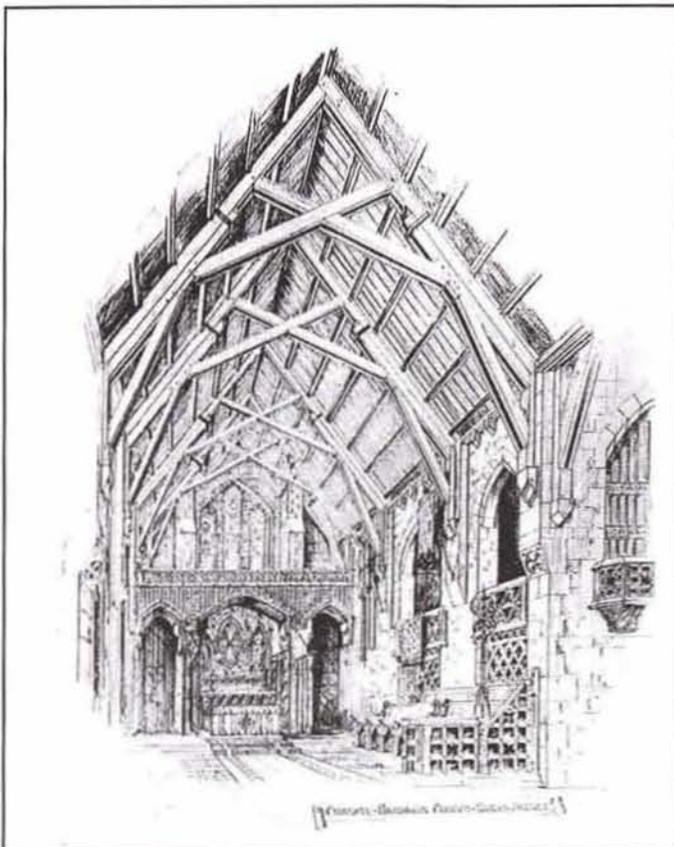
## Pictorial & Decorative Arts

- I **Time capsule from Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, 1852**  
 Collection: Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives
- II **Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, 14 December, 1852**  
*James Edward FitzGerald*  
 Watercolour on paper, 175 x 252  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- III **Town of Lyttelton from Quail Island, c.1854**  
*Edmund Norman*  
 Ink and pencil on paper, 255 x 356 Signed: E. N.  
 Collection: Canterbury Museum
- IV **Writing table for Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, 1865**  
*B.W. Mountfort*  
 Wood inlaid with leatherette, 760 x 1440 x 610  
 Collection: Christchurch City Council

- V **Barbadoes Street Cemetery Chapel: The Ascension, after 1864**  
*Attributed to James Powell & Sons, London*  
 Stained glass in timber frame, 2135 x 410  
 Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
- VI **Barbadoes Street Cemetery Chapel: The Risen Christ Walking on the Water, c.1868**  
*Attributed to Clayton & Bell, London*  
 Stained glass in timber frame, 2430 x 475  
 Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
- VII **Nor'wester in the cemetery, 1950**  
**W.A. Sutton**  
 Oil on canvas, 1520 x 1830  
 Collection: Auckland Art Gallery
- VIII **Crozier for Bishop Harper, 1875**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Made by John Brunette (1837-1912), Christchurch  
 Wood, silver, jasper, pounamu, 1650 high  
 Inscribed: Presented to the Most Reverend Henry John Chitty Harper DD first Bishop of Christchurch NZ by members of the Church in his Diocese for the use of himself and his successors in the See. Dec. 16 AD 1875  
 Collection: Christ Church Cathedral
- IX **Bishop's throne & prayer desk for Christ Church Cathedral, 1881**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Made by Andrew Swanston (1855-1917), Christchurch  
 Wood, 3395 x 1038 x 775 (throne), 858 x 1000 x 550 (desk)  
 Collection: Christ Church Cathedral
- X **Pair of Sacrament Standards for Holy Trinity, Avonside, 1876**  
**B.W. Mountfort**  
 Made by John Hardman & Co., Birmingham  
 Brass, 1840 high  
 Collection: Holy Trinity Church, Avonside



Cat. 110 Photo: Lloyd Park



Cat. 112 Photo: Canterbury Museum

## Books and Albums

- i ***The Builder: An Illustrated Weekly Magazine for the Architect, Engineer, Archaeologist, Constructor, Sanitary-reformer and Art-lover.* Volume VIII, no. 408, 30 November 1850**  
 Collection: National Library, Wellington
- ii ***Instrumenta Ecclesiastica.* Second series Ecclesiological, late Cambridge Camden Society**  
 London, John van Voorst, 1856  
 Collection: University of Canterbury Library
- iii ***Contrasts, or a Parallel Between the Architecture of the 15th and 19th Centuries***  
 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin  
 Salisbury, the author, second edition, 1841  
 Collection: University of Canterbury Library
- iv ***True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture***  
 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin  
 London, John Weale, 1841  
 Inscribed: B.W. Mountfort, 1841  
 Collection: R. G. Gummer, Papatoetoe
- v ***An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England***  
 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin  
 London, John Weale, 1843  
 Inscribed: B.W. Mountfort, London, 1843  
 Collection: R. G. Gummer, Papatoetoe



Cat. VIII Photo: Duncan Shaw Brown

- vi **Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume, compiled from Ancient Authorities and Examples**  
Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin  
London, Henry G. Bohn, second revised edition, 1846  
Collection: University of Canterbury Library
- vii **Floriated Ornament: a series of thirty-one designs**  
Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin  
London, Henry G. Bohn, 1849  
Collection: University of Canterbury Library
- viii **Designs for Country Churches**  
George Truefitt  
London, Joseph Masters, 1850  
Collection: University of Canterbury Library
- ix **Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages from the Seventh to the Seventeenth centuries**  
Henry Shaw  
London, 2 vols., 1843  
Collection: R. G. Gummer, Papatoetoe
- x **Glossary of Terms used in Grecian, Roman, Italian and Gothic Architecture**  
John Henry Parker  
Oxford, John Henry Parker, 2 vols., fourth edition, 1845  
Inscribed: William Brassington/ from/ B W Mountfort/  
New Council Chamber/ Christchurch, N. Zealand, June 26, 1865  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
- xi **Lyttelton Photograph Album**  
Collection: Christ's College
- xii **Acland Photograph Album**  
Collection: Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury

- 1825 13 March: Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort is born to Thomas Mountfort and Susanna Wale [Woolfield]. The Mountfort family is living at 9 Caroline Street, Birmingham.
- 1 September: Benjamin Mountfort is baptised at St Philip's Church, Birmingham.
- 1826 19 December: birth of Charles Wheeler Mountfort, the architect's brother.
- 1828 May: birth of Susanna Wale Mountfort, the architect's sister.
- 1833 Mountfort family now living at 30 Ann Street, Birmingham.
- 1834 13 March: death of Susanna Wale Mountfort, the architect's mother.
- 1835 Mountfort family living at 21 New Street, Birmingham.
- 1836 A.W.N. Pugin's *Contrasts: or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day*.
- 1837 King Edward VI Grammar School, designed by Charles Barry with assistance from A.W.N. Pugin, is completed in New Street, Birmingham, opposite Thomas Mountfort's shop and home.
- 1839 Cambridge Camden Society founded.
- 12 December: Thomas Mountfort marries Eleanor Graves.
- 1841 Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Chad, Birmingham, designed by A.W.N. Pugin, completed.
- Publication of Pugin's *True Principles of Christian or Pointed Architecture*. Benjamin Mountfort purchases a copy this year.
- First issue of the Cambridge Camden Society's journal, *The Ecclesiologist*, published.
- 1843 Pugin's *An Apology for the Revival of Christian or Pointed Architecture* published. Mountfort purchases a copy, inscribing it 'B.W. Mountfort, London, 1843'.
- 1844 Mountfort articulated to Richard Cromwell Carpenter (1812-55), a leading Gothic Revival architect.
- 1845 The Cambridge Camden Society changes its name to the Ecclesiological Society.
- 1846 Mountfort presents a paper, 'The Architectural Antiquities of Northamptonshire', to the London Architectural Society.
- 1848 'Mountfort, Benjamin, architect, 14 Sergeant's Inn, Fleet Street' listed in the *London Post Office Directory*.
- 27 March: first meeting of the Canterbury Association.
- 1849 Submits a design for St Jude's Church, Birmingham, but the church is built to the designs of C.W. Orford.
- 1850 20 August: marries Emily Elizabeth Newman at St Luke's Church, Chelsea.
- 7 & 8 September: the Canterbury Association's 'First Four Ships' depart for Lyttelton, New Zealand; Benjamin Mountfort, along with his wife Emily, brother Charles and sister Susanna, sail aboard the *Charlotte Jane* on 7 September.
- 30 November: Mountfort's Parish Schools at Croft, Herefordshire published in *The Builder*.
- 16 December: the *Charlotte Jane* arrives in Lyttelton. Benjamin Mountfort is one of the first 'Canterbury Pilgrims' to land.

- 1851 September: living in London Street, Lyttelton.
- 1852 24 April: John Robert Godley lays the foundation stone of Mountfort's first New Zealand Church, Holy Trinity, Lyttelton.
- 1853 6 January: Holy Trinity, Lyttelton dedicated. Mountfort becomes a founding member of the Lodge of Unanimity No. Three, Lyttelton.
- 1854 11 March: Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, damaged by nor'-west gales.
- 1855 10 March: James Edward FitzGerald, Superintendent of Canterbury, approves Mountfort's design for the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings in Christchurch.
- May: tenders called for St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Kaiapoi. The first service is held in the completed church on Christmas Day.
- 1856 18 September: Mountfort requested to visit Auckland to prepare designs for a new Government House.
- 23 December: Henry John Chitty Harper (1804?-93), first Bishop of Christchurch, arrives at Lyttelton.
- 1857 6 January: Mountfort submits his design for Government House, Auckland.
- January: Mountfort lists his address as Colombo Street, Christchurch.
- March-April: Holy Trinity, Lyttelton, demolished. Partnership formed with Isaac Luck.
- June: Mountfort & Luck appointed Architects to the Province of Canterbury.
- 1858 6 January: foundation stone of Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings laid by William Sefton Moorhouse.
- 1859 June: George Gilbert Scott approached to design Christchurch Cathedral.
- 29 September: Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber used for the first time.
- 1860 Mountfort builds his own house on Hereford Street, Christchurch, between FitzGerald Avenue and Stanmore Road around this time.
- 1861 Mountfort & Luck design the belfry for the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Christchurch.
- Mountfort joins Canterbury Rifle Volunteers.
- 1862 3 October: Mountfort & Luck's status as Provincial Architects changed to Consulting Architects to the Province of Canterbury.
- 1863 10 January: Mountfort and Luck write to the secretary of the Cathedral Commission offering their services as supervising architects for Christchurch Cathedral. Their offer is declined, prompting a public debate during which Christchurch architects support Mountfort's appointment.
- 1864 March: Robert Speechly (1840-1884) appointed supervising architect for Christchurch Cathedral.
- 23 April: the Provincial Government asks Mountfort to prepare plans for a stone Council Chamber and Refreshment Rooms.
- 29 May: Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Barbadoes Street, Christchurch, is opened. Completion and furnishing of the church, designed by Mountfort, is delayed until October.
- July: dissolves partnership with Isaac Luck and forms a new partnership with Maxwell Bury.
- 6 September: Robert Speechly arrives in Canterbury bringing Scott's revised design for Christchurch Cathedral.
- 26 October: Mountfort appointed to the rank of Ensign in the Canterbury Rifle Volunteers.
- 16 December: foundation stone of Christchurch Cathedral laid by Bishop Harper.
- 1865 5 May: Mountfort and Bury share the competition premium for the design of the Canterbury Museum with Robert Speechly.
- 21 November: opening of Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber and Refreshment Rooms.
- Foundations of the Cathedral completed but construction is halted because of lack of funds.
- 1866 9 March: Maxwell Bury departs for England, effectively ending his partnership with Mountfort.
- Mountfort appointed vestryman at Holy Trinity Church, Avonside.
- 1869 February: tenders called for the construction of the first stage of Canterbury Museum, designed by Mountfort. By September the building is substantially complete although it is not officially opened until 8 February 1870.
- 1870 Mountfort elected a member of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury.
- 1871 Canterbury Association of Architects founded. The membership consists of Frederick Strouts, C.E. Fooks, W.B. Armson and Mountfort, who is elected president.
- 1873 10 March: Mountfort's design for Trinity Congregational Church, Christchurch, selected in a limited competition with S.C. Farr, W.B. Armson and R.A. Lawson.
- 28 August: the Cathedral Commission appoints Mountfort supervising architect and work recommences on Christchurch Cathedral.
- 7 November: Mountfort appointed architect to Canterbury College.
- 1875 17 January: Trinity Congregational Church, Christchurch, opened.
- 4 August: Thomas Cane appointed Provincial Architect and Mountfort relinquishes his work for the Canterbury Provincial Government.
- 16 December: the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landing of the 'Canterbury Pilgrims' is commemorated with a service at St Michael's Church followed by a ceremony in the Cathedral precinct, during which the Cathedral Guild presents Bishop Harper with a pastoral staff and the Diocese presents him with a crozier, designed by Mountfort.
- 1876 Construction of St Stephen's Anglican Church, Ashburton, in concrete.
- November: Abolition of the Provinces Act becomes effective and the Canterbury Provincial Government ceases to exist.
- 1877 7 June: Clock Tower Block of Canterbury College opened.

- 1878 October: presents a paper, 'Some Old Precedents for Modern Church Building' to the annual meeting of the Cathedral Guild.
- 1880 Mountfort becomes a foundation member of the Canterbury Society of Arts.
- 1881 1 November, All Saints Day: the nave and tower of Christ Church Cathedral, along with Mountfort's temporary timber chancel, is consecrated.
- 1882 August: Canterbury College Hall completed.
- 1883 15 February: Mountfort departs from Lyttelton for Europe, travelling via Suez and landing at Naples on 9 April. Visits Pisa, Genoa, and Cannes then travels by rail to Paris. He arrives in London on 26 May. The trip is primarily concerned with visiting relatives and conducting research for his history of the Mountfort family.
- 1884 January: Mountfort returns to Christchurch.
- 1886 31 May: Mountfort requested to advise on the rebuilding of Christ Church, Nelson. After travelling to Nelson to inspect the building Mountfort presents his report to the building committee on 7 June.
- 3 August: a tender is accepted for enlarging and reconstructing Christ Church, Nelson.
- 29 September: the foundation stone for the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier, is laid.
- 1887 16 February: the reconstructed Christ Church is consecrated as Nelson Cathedral.
- October: construction of the first stage of St Mary's Pro-cathedral, Parnell, is commenced. The first section of the new church is opened on 7 June 1888.
- 1888 20 December: Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier, is consecrated.
- Mountfort is appointed to the Committee of Inquiry investigating the structural problems of R.A. Lawson's Seacliff Hospital.
- 1890 4 November: the Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery, designed by Mountfort for no fee, is opened.
- 1894 Mountfort designs the western porch of Christ Church Cathedral.
- 1897 24 July: Emily Mountfort dies and is buried in the churchyard at Holy Trinity, Avonside, on 28 July.
- 1898 January: work commences on the completion of St Mary's Pro-cathedral, Parnell. Four bays are added to the nave plus a clergy vestry, baptistery and north and south porches.
- 15 March: Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort dies at his home in Christchurch and is buried alongside his wife, Emily, in the churchyard at Holy Trinity, Avonside on 19 March.
- 20 March: services are held in Mountfort's memory at Christ Church Cathedral and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown.
- 25 August: consecration of St Mary's Pro-cathedral, Parnell: 'second to no building of the kind in the colony, and in point of design, completeness and beauty [it] reaches a high level mark not yet approached in the diocese'.
- 2 October: the new bell and belfry at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown, is dedicated to the memory of Benjamin Mountfort by the Bishop of Christchurch, the Right Reverend

Churchill Julius. A tribute by Sir John Hall and William Rolleston claims that, 'we shall never be without memorials of Mr Mountfort so long as we have the Cathedral, Christ's College, the Provincial Council Chambers, to say nothing of those other works throughout the length and breadth of the colony'.

- 1928 The Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings become the first building in New Zealand to be given statutory protection with the enactment of the Canterbury Provincial Buildings Vesting Act. Protection is extended with the passing of an amendment to the Act in 1937.

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