

## Congregational Church

45 Cambridge Terrace



Image: *Charles Collins, 2015*

### Summary of heritage significance

- The Congregational Church on Cambridge Terrace is a good representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> C church. The style is a truncated Gothic with few external embellishments, and was designed to suit a non-conformist congregation which had little taste for ostentatious buildings with grandiose trappings.
- This building is of townscape value, it is a distinctive red-brick building that occupies a prominent street corner in an area of mixed commercial buildings.
- This building is locally important for the contributions that it makes to the religious and social heritage of the central city. It is an unusual design by a prominent Wellington architect, retains a great deal of authenticity, and contributes significantly to the Cambridge Terrace streetscape.

District Plan:	Map 16, reference 54
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 3745
Heritage Area:	N/A
HPT Listed:	N/A
Archaeological Site:	NZAA Central City R27/270
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	Built: 1916
Architect / Builder:	Architect: William Fielding
Former uses:	Religion – Church
Current uses:	Religion – Church
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not Earthquake Prone – SR 187936

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## **1.0 Outline History**

### **1.1 History<sup>1</sup>**

The Congregational Church has a long association with Wellington. The Congregational Church commenced services in 1842 in Wellington, and had its roots in the Reformation in England. The original Courtenay Place Congregational Church was formed in 1877, with a membership of eighteen. The Church originally met in a building on the site of the present Paramount Theatre, which had been purchased by Mr Joseph Burne, the superintendant of the Woodward Street Sunday school in 1875. In March 1876, a ten metre addition was given by Burne for a “meeting house and school house and a place for Divine Worship according to the tenets of the Independent Denomination.” The church experienced various, mainly financial, difficulties until the Education Board rented their premises from 1880 to 1888 when the Clyde Quay School was opened. The Courtenay Place site was sold in 1912 for £7,500, and an option on the new site, known as Ritson’s Corner, was purchased from A.M. Lewis.

The foundation stone for the Cambridge Terrace Congregational Church was laid on 7 October 1916 by the Hon. George Fowlds. Architect William Fielding designed the building in a truncated Edwardian Gothic. The construction of the building took seven months and the church opened on the 26 May 1917.

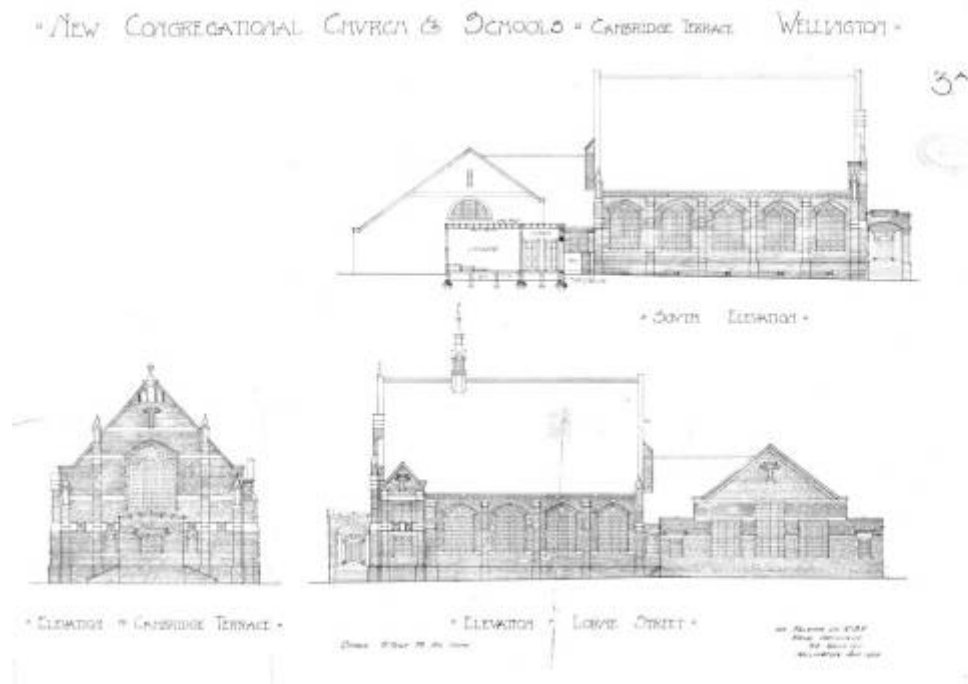
The Congregational Church in Cambridge Terrace represents the history of the non-conformist tradition in Wellington. This is not a mainstream tradition and the church, though sited on a prominent corner, does not enjoy the status of other central city church sites, such as St Mary of the Angels, St Peters, St Johns, or the Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals near the Parliamentary precinct in Thorndon. The church has however provided a permanent shelter for a congregation that had previously had rather mixed fortunes.

One interesting feature of the church is the church organ; this was originally installed in the Kentish Town Congregational Church in London about 1880-1884. This building suffered during the World War II and was demolished; the organ was purchased by the Wellington Congregational Church and installed in 1961.

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<sup>1</sup> History adapted from Wellington City Council, “45 Cambridge Terrace,” *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), CAMB3.

## 1.2 Timeline of modifications



- 1916 Lorne Street and Cambridge Terrace [45 Cambridge Terrace], church and school (00053:188:10350)
- 1923 45 Cambridge Terrace, additions to school (00055:22:A2085)
- 1984 45 Cambridge Terrace, alterations to church (00058:0:C64926)
- 1999 45 Cambridge Terrace, earthquake strengthening (00078:346:53274)

## 1.3 Occupation history

The Congregational Union of NZ

## 1.4 Architect

### Fielding, William

William Fielding<sup>2</sup> (circa 1875 – 1946) was born in Lancashire, England and worked as an architect in Manchester where he was made a junior partner. He married Lily Midgley in 1900 and the family, with daughter May (born in 1904), emigrated to New Zealand in 1908. The family established themselves in Hataitai and son Robert was born in 1921.<sup>3</sup>

William Fielding established an architectural practice in 1911 and his work includes:-

- Congregational Church, Cambridge Terrace (1916)
- Mutual Building; former Plumbers Building (1923 & 1933) 124 Wakefield Street
- Evening Post Building, Willis Street (1927)
- Wellington Trades Hall 124-128 Vivian Street (1927)
- Methodist Church, Hataitai (1928)

<sup>2</sup> Wellington City Council Heritage Building Inventory 2001 – Appendix III Wellington Architects

<sup>3</sup> Hataitai Local History website accessed July 2012 <http://www.heritagehelp.co.nz/locals.html> Note: the website references *Evening Post* articles of 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 1946 (possibly Mr Fielding's obituary).

He designed several blocks of flats, including:

- 93 Brougham Street, Mt Victoria (1935)
- Lampard Flats, 2840286 Cuba Street (1935)
- 2 Hawker Street, Mt Victoria (1941)

He was also, for a time, the chair of the Wellington branch of the NZIA.

## **2.0 Physical description**

### **2.1 Architecture<sup>4</sup>**

The architectural style of the Cambridge Terrace Congregational Church is a truncated form of Edwardian Gothic, known in Australia as Federation Gothic. The Gothic element has been considerably underplayed, most noticeably in the lack of “verticality” in the building. The roof pitch is relatively low while the arched windows hint at the pointed but are actually more segmental in style. The buttresses on the Cambridge Terrace façade are capped with modest, squared off pinnacles and have none of the “soaring” qualities associated with true Gothic churches. Another small pinnacle rises above the main roof like a scaled down steeple.

In plan, the building is a wide rectangle, capped by a parapeted gable, with its apex and main lines in plaster. The main façade is basically symmetrical, dominated by a large arched window ribbed into five parts, with a simplified form of bar tracery under the spandrel. The four windows on each adjoining façade are similar although on a smaller scale. There is a parapeted brick portico on the main façade, with doors on both sides, and a matching fence along the Lorne Street boundary. At the rear of the church a Sunday school annex, similar in style though plainer and lower, forms a return gable.

### **2.2 Materials**

The church is constructed of monochromatic double cavity brickwork, with facings in plaster, and a distinctive ‘diamond’ tile roof.

### **2.3 Setting**

This Church has restrained streetscape appeal because the Gothic elements of the Church have been downplayed. It is a solid, unpretentious, workmanlike design, suited to a non-conforming congregation which had little taste for ostentatious buildings with grandiose trappings. The Church is sited away from the more prestigious locations of the mainstream churches, and the building does not have high public recognition. It is a building of some architectural interest, occupying a prominent corner in an area of mixed commercial buildings.

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<sup>4</sup> Wellington City Council, “45 Cambridge Terrace”

## Sources

Wellington City Council. *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001.

Wellington City Council Heritage Building Inventory 2001 – Appendix III Wellington Architects

Hataitai Local History website. Accessed July 2012

<http://www.heritagehelp.co.nz/locals.html> Note: the website references *Evening Post* articles of 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July 1946 (possibly Mr Fielding's obituary).

## Wellington City Archive

00053:188:10350

00055:22:A2085

00058:0:C64926

00078:346:53274

## Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

### **Cultural heritage values**

#### **Aesthetic Value:**

**Architectural:** *Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?*

The Congregational Church on Cambridge Terrace is a good representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> C church. The style is a truncated Gothic with few external embellishments, and was designed to suit a non-conformist congregation which had little taste for ostentatious buildings with grandiose trappings.

**Townscape:** *Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?*

This building is of townscape value, it is a distinctive red-brick building that occupies a prominent street corner in an area of mixed commercial buildings.

**Group:** *Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?*

#### **Historic Value:**

**Association:** *Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?*

**Association:** *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

The Cambridge Terrace Congregational Church is associated with the fortunes of a small, non-conforming congregation that established itself in the city during the 1870s. The church is sited away from the more prestigious locations of mainstream churches in Wellington, and the building does not have high public recognition.

#### **Scientific Value:**

**Archaeological:** *Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?*

NZAA Central City R27/270 archaeological area

**Educational:** *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

**Technological:** *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

#### **Social Value:**

**Public esteem:** *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

**Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual:** *Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?*

The church remains in active use. It has strong spiritual and commemorative associations for the generations of parishioners who have worshipped there.

***Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:***

*Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?*

*Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?*

The building has had few intrusive, modern, alterations and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of an ever-changing Cambridge Terrace.

***Sentiment/Connection:*** *Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?*

The building has been a place of worship since 1916 and continues to be associated with the key events in the life of members of the congregation including the births, marriages, deaths of individuals, their friends and family.

**Level of cultural heritage significance**

***Rare:*** *Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?*

***Representative:*** *Is the item a good example of the class it represents?*

The church is a restrained example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> C Gothic church designed for a non-conformist congregation. It is a good representative example of the work of architect William Fielding

***Authentic:*** *Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?*

This building has authenticity as it has had few significant modifications carried out and retains a great amount of original material.

***Local/Regional/National/International***

*Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?*

This building is locally important for the contributions that it makes to the religious and social heritage of the central city. It is an unusual design by a prominent Wellington architect, retains a great deal of authenticity, and contributes to the Cambridge Terrace streetscape.



### 3.0 Appendix

#### Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

#### Background research

*Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:*

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*