

**HERITAGE DESIGNATION REPORT
CHRIST CHURCH, 30 CHURCH STREET, GANANOQUE, ONTARIO**

Author: Edgar Tumak, 2009, revised 2020



Figure 1: Christ Church, Gananoque, viewed from the east, with the nave on the south/left and the parish hall on the north/right (photo E. Tumak, Oct. 2009).

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR DESIGNATION

Christ Church, Gananoque (30 Church Street), constructed 1857-58, with tower and spire added in 1880 to the original design, is proposed for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act for historical, architectural and contextual criteria.

Built for, and still of, the Anglican Diocese of Ontario, the structure illustrates the rise of the Church of England (as the Anglican Church was then known) and, as a result of its location in an enclave of the local elite, Christ

Church was well integrated with leading municipal figures. The parish has also had notable involvement with prominent Anglican endeavours, such as the Women's Auxiliary, the Anglican Young People's Association, various on-going Scouting activities, and Camp Hyanto—a leading Anglican youth outreach facility in Eastern Ontario.

The design is attributed to the first rector, Rev. John Carroll, and is a leading example of the early Gothic Revival style in Gananoque. Its form reflects the liturgical design principles of the mid-19th century Ecclesiological movement that transformed church construction in Britain and its colonies. Constructed predominantly with local sandstone for the walls and wood for the roof structures, there have been few alterations to the church proper and tower. A distinctive feature is the near complete use of triangular-topped windows. Only the most sacred window, above the altar, features the more traditional, but more complicated, curved-pointed arch.

The soaring, shingle-clad spire is prominent from the nearby thoroughfare, King Street West, as well as other vantage points in town. Additionally, the building is in keeping with the scale and elaboration of the surrounding buildings—many constructed as mansions in the 19th and early-20th centuries.

The designation covers the exterior of the church—including all windows and the 1910 bell, but does not include the recent non-traditional shingling on the nave, or the adjoining parish hall.

HISTORY

Trends

Constructed 1857-58, with the tower added ca. 1880 to the original designs, during the incumbency of Rev. John Carroll (1854-81), Christ Church was built to serve the needs of the growing Anglican community in Gananoque. Gananoque experienced significant growth at the time—both in population and industrial activity.

According to the 1851 census, Gananoque had a population of 768 in 1849, the settlement was incorporated as a village in 1863, and by 1871 the population was 2020.¹

The mid-19th century was also a time of great growth in the Church of England throughout the British Empire and United States of America (after the American Revolution known as the Episcopal Church). This growth was manifested in massive new church construction, a rise in faithful adherents, and notable liturgical development stemming from the Ecclesiological movement (also called the Oxford and/or Tractarian movements). Christ Church reflects these global developments, and also the consolidation of this area of the town immediately west of the Gananoque River, as an enclave of the local financial elite (notably land holders and industrialists) as still demonstrated by the many extant mansions in the immediate vicinity.

Although the Church of England was often considered the establishment church in many communities, it was not always the first to be present either as a parish or as a structure, or to have the greatest number of adherents. This was the case in Gananoque where the Methodists, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians all preceded the Church of England, in terms of establishment of a congregation, construction of a dedicated place of worship, and numbers of members: as late as 1890 there were 1058 Methodists, 904 Catholics, 797 Presbyterians, and 691 Church of England.²

The Methodists (later United Church), Catholics and Presbyterians eventually all congregated on Stone Street. The Methodists built their first church in 1836, and the current structure dates from 1871 and 1896, with much restoration work after a 1979 fire. Originally it was Wesleyan Methodist and after Church Union in 1925 became Grace United Church. The Roman Catholic parish and first place of worship on King Street East dates from 1846-47, and the current St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church dates from 1889-91. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church also on Stone Street is the oldest of the stone churches in Gananoque built in 1854-55 (spire added 1875, enlarged 1886-87 and 1955).³

Gananoque did not have a resident Church of England priest until 1854 (Rev. Carroll, 1854-81—his only parish). Prior to Christ Church services were held in the Oddfellows Building, Stone Street, and later in what is described as “an old dilapidated building used for a school house and for all public purposes;” on King Street East.⁴ Of the leading early, mainstream churches in Gananoque, Christ Church was the only church built on the west side of the Gananoque River.

Events

No specific events of note are yet known to be associated with Christ Church, Gananoque.

¹ History of Christ Church, n.p., n.d., in the Town of Gananoque heritage research file; Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: a Study in Rural History*, chapter 6, “Gananoque 1849-71,” (McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1984 and 1999), p. 284; and *Historical Atlas of the Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Ontario: Illustrated from actual surveys under the direction of H.F. Walling* (originally published by Putnam and Walling Publishers, Kingston, 1861-62; reprint Mika Publishing, Belleville, 1973), p. 23. The latter reference shows a drawing of Christ Church with the tower in keeping with its current appearance. There are references to the tower being completed in 1870, but the majority give 1880.

² Gananoque Historical Society Newsletter, Special Ed., 1990, p. 8.

³ Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*, p. 287, 299-304; and Freeman Britton, *Souvenir of Gananoque and Thousand Islands: with a short sketch of first owners, early settlement and other historical notes of the town* (published by the *The Gananoque Reporter*, n.d.), n.p.

⁴ Christ Church minute book, 1857 in History of Christ Church, n.p., n.d., in the Town of Gananoque heritage research file; and H. Wm. Hawke, *Historic Gananoque* (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1974), p. 50.

Persons/Institutions

Notable early parishioners of Christ Church included much of the McDonald,⁵ Britton and Beaumont families, and Frederick J. Skinner.⁶ All these families (and other families) are honoured in memorial windows.

Figures 2 – 3: below left – John McDonald residence (constructed 1831), since 1911 Gananoque Town Hall, 30 King St. E., viewed from the northwest. The Band Stand in the foreground of 1921, was designed by then Gananoque Band member William Rees, and built by the Mitchell and Wilson Company, Gananoque (photo E. Tumak, Jan. 2008; and below right – 279 King St. W., Gananoque, viewed from the northwest (photo E. Tumak, Jan., 2008). This was originally the residence of Samuel McCammon. constructed 1872.



The McDonald clan were the heirs of Joel Stone through marriage, Joel being a Loyalist and first settler in the area. The McDonalds were the local gentry for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and built examples of this ‘gentry’ status include Gananoque Town Hall—

constructed as the John McDonald residence in 1831 and given to the Town in 1911 (Figure 2), and the ostentatious 1872 residence of Samuel McCammon—who married a McDonald (Figure 3, at 279 Kings St. W., now the Victoria Rose).

The clan is honoured in Christ Church by the Joel Stone window—considered the oldest memorial window, even though Stone later became a Methodist in recognition of his second wife’s strongly held faith (Figure 4), and the McDonald’s proper by another memorial window in the nave.



The Brittons had a long association with the parish and held various prominent positions in Gananoque: Port of Gananoque customs collectors; owner/editors of *The Gananoque Reporter*, merchants and industrialists for lumber, steel, and metal components, athletes, and World War participants. Family memorial windows consist of two in the nave and one in the tower of ca. 1912-13, 1919, and 1960. The 1919 window was created by the McCausland Co.—Canada’s best known stained glass firm (Figure 5). The Beaumont family gave the land on which Christ Church sits and also have a memorial window created by the McCausland Co. (Figure 6).

Figure 4: Joel Stone window, manufacturer F.X. Zettler, Munich, n.d. (Christ Church, Gananoque, power point file, n.d.).

⁵ Later in the 19th century some of the family starting spelling their name Macdonald.

⁶ History of Christ Church, n.p., n.d., in the Town of Gananoque heritage research file; Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*, p. 284 and 286; Edgar Tumak, Heritage Designation Report, 95 King Street West, Gananoque; and Christ Church, Gananoque, Stained Glass Windows, power point file, n.d. in the Town of Gananoque heritage research file.



Figures 5 – 6, *Christ Church memorial windows: left – Russel Hubert Britton window, honouring Lt. Col. Russel Britton who fell in action at Vimy Ridge, 1919, by McCausland Ltd., 1919; right – Beaumont window by McCausland Ltd., 1947(Christ Church, Gananoque, power point file, n.d.).*

Figures 7 – 8: *below left – 95 King Street West, Gananoque, front (north/King St. elevation), viewed from the northwest, constructed 1905 for F.J. Skinner, architect F.T. Lent, builder Mitchell and Wilson (photo: Sleepy Hollow Bed & Breakfast website, 2008); below right – Skinner window, Christ Church, manufacturer, McCausland Co., 1936 (Christ Church, Gananoque, power point file, n.d.).*



Later, on the roster of notable parish families was Frederick J. Skinner. He became one of Gananoque’s most prominent industrialists, a provincial politician and resided in a nearby mansion.

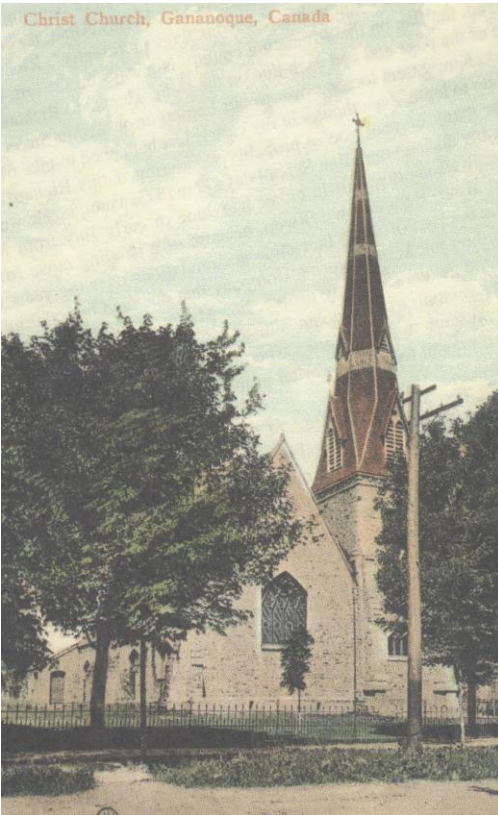
His residence illustrates the domestic architecture of a wealthy industrialist at a highpoint in the industrial mechanisation and growth of the municipality (Figure 7), and reflects a consolidation of the social position of a new industrial and manufacturing elite in Gananoque, vis-à-vis the declining influence of the traditional landed elite that dominated Gananoque for much of the 19th century—most notably the McDonald clan.⁷ The Skinner memorial window is also by McCausland (Figure 8).

Institutions that have had a notable involvement with community endeavours through Christ Church, include the Women’s Auxiliary (1913 – on-going under different names), the Anglican Young People’s Association (1915, since disbanded), and various Scouts and Cubs groups since 1912. Members of Christ Church have also played a prominent role with the Camp Hyanto, Lyndhurst, Ontario, a leading Anglican outreach and youth centre in Eastern Ontario. Established in 1947, the first doctor, nurse and spiritual director were parishioners, the first cabin was constructed in honour of a parishioner, and the maintenance of the nurse’s cabin continued to be the responsibility of Christ Church for many years.⁸

⁷ Tumak, 95 King Street West, Gananoque; and Christ Church, Gananoque, Stained Glass Windows, power point file.

⁸ History of Christ Church, Town of Gananoque heritage research file.

ARCHITECTURE

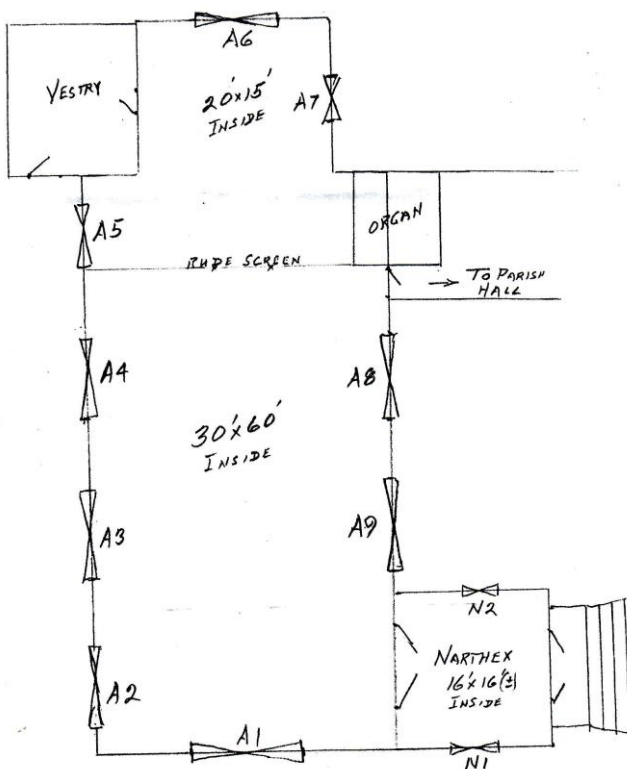


Design

Christ Church is an animated, picturesque composition with an asymmetrical corner entrance tower capped by a tall, slender spire. The spire is clad with traditional cedar shingles and ornamented with dormers. Between the tower and the spire is a stringcourse surmounted by decorative, small corbels at the base of the spire.

Figures 9 – 10: left – Christ Church viewed from the southeast (postcard, ca. 1910, from Newsletter of the Gananoque Historical Society, issue no. 48, Sept.

2007, cover page; right – tower and main entrance viewed from the northeast (photo E. Tumak Oct. 2009).



Figures 11 – 12: left – Christ Church, sketch plan, Registry of Stained Glass Windows in Canada, n.d.; right – buttress and foundation line viewed from the southeast (photo E. Tumak, July 2009).

The original shingle pattern had three bands of lighter-coloured shingles laid in a diamond pattern, as demonstrated in an 1861 line drawing and postcard of 1910 (Figure 9). The louvre faces of

the spire dormers were the same light colour as the bands.⁹

The main entrance is through the tower, facing the side/north, not Church Street (Figure 10). In plan Christ

⁹ Historical Atlas of the Counties of Leeds and Grenville, p. 23; Britton, *Souvenir of Gananoque and the Thousand Islands*, n.d., n.p.

Church is a single-cell nave, with a narrower and lower chancel (Figure 11), and is constructed primarily of sandstone with a soft honey-colour, however, there is a limestone course at the top of the foundation line (Figure 12). The roof structure is wood but the reddish shingles, designed to look like tile, is a relatively recent modification (Figure 13), originally these were cedar shingle.



Figures 13 – 14: left, altar window on the west elevation; right view of the nave from the southeast (photos E. Tumak, July 2009).

The building is distinguished by a near complete use of triangular-topped windows (one is even a complete triangle;

Figure 14), whereas a traditional curved, pointed arch was reserved only for the altar window – the most sacred window (Figure 15).

Triangular openings are very unusual for institutional buildings in the Gothic Revival style. They are more associated with vernacular interpretations of Gothic Revival architecture in domestic architecture, as demonstrated by the original rectory (Figure 16). The distinctiveness of these triangulated tops was incorporated in the later additions of the 1880 tower, and 1901 parish hall (Figures 1, 10 and 17).

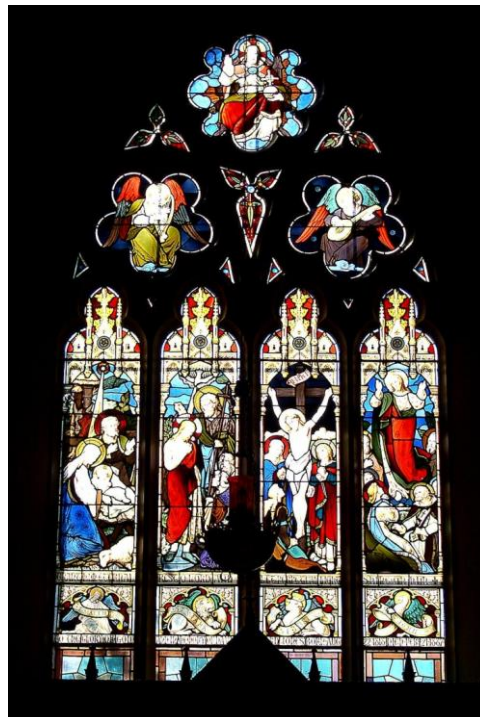


Figure 15: above left, triangular window on the west elevation of the tower (photo E. Tumak, July 2009); right – altar window (Christ Church, Gananoque, power point file, n.d.).



Figures 16 – 17: left – 1st Christ Church rectory, 40 Princess St., viewed from the northeast, built after the first phase of the church, enlarged at rear, late 1910s (photo E. Tumak, July 2009); right – Christ Church Parish Hall, east/Church St. elevation (photo E. Tumak, Jan., 2008).

This distinctive fenestration does not diminish the coherence of Christ Church with the Ecclesiological movement, but rather adds to its significance because of the otherwise strict adherence to the Ecclesiological movement precepts. Further, the altar window with its traditional curved arch, serves as a notable variation, because the surround for the window is recessed from the depth of the rest of the wall (Figure 18).



Figure 18: left – Christ Church viewed from the west (photo E. Tumak, Jan., 2008).

The shallow play of planes seen in the altar window is often associated with earlier prevailing architecture styles in Britain such as Palladian and subsequent Neo-classical architecture (particularly that of John Soane) of the 18th and early-19th centuries. A similar device is used for the curved, pointed arch of the main entrance—albeit deeper with a splay, which is surmounted by a triangular relieving arch. While offering visual delight with the play of planes, such recesses also used less stone—a concept that was a cornerstone of the original Gothic style where wall mass and economy could be achieved by pointed arches and buttresses.

Style

Christ Church Gananoque can be considered an excellent and early example of Ecclesiological design precepts in Canada, even though the triangular-topped windows were a more parochial interpretation of the exacting design precepts of the Ecclesiological movement that started to infuse Gothic Revival design in Britain around 1840.

The Ecclesiological movement combined an interest in the Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages with a revival of medieval liturgical practices within the Church of England to replace some of the simplified practices that had been in effect since the Reformation. The movement emerged in the Cambridge University community, initially called the Cambridge Camden Society, and which then spread to Oxford University. It resulted in strong pressures on church-builders to model their designs closely on Early Gothic parish churches. This ‘parish church revival,’ had a profound influence on the design of churches and, ultimately, on all kinds of Gothic Revival buildings in Canada, other British colonies and the United States. One development that had considerable impact on religious architecture was the placement of the service within a chancel that was physically separated from the nave and often hidden from view by a choir screen.¹⁰ This can be seen in Christ Church Gananoque with its deep chancel and altar screen.

¹⁰ Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. I (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 279.

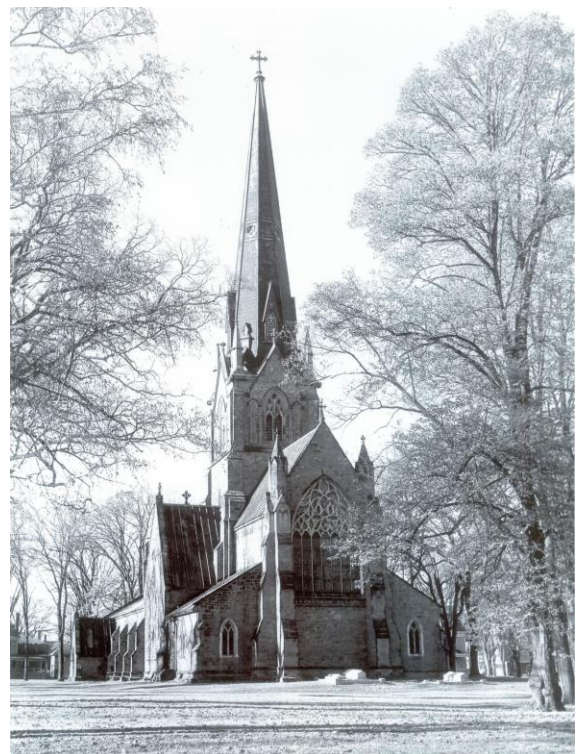
In 1847 the Society began publication of a periodical called *The Ecclesiologist*. The editors stated their interests in the first issue:

Church Building at home and in the Colonies: Church Restoration in England and abroad: the theory and practice of Ecclesiastical Architecture: the investigation of Church Antiquities: the connection of Architecture and Ritual: the science of Symbolism: the principles of Church Arrangements: Church Musick and all the Decorative Arts which can be made subservient to Religion: the exposing and denouncing of glaring cases of Church Desecration: Criticisms upon Designs for and upon New Churches.¹¹

Due to the close association of architectural concepts with liturgical practise, the revival of Gothic Revival design principles that were considered appropriate and archaeologically correct were of tantamount importance for clerics. Accordingly, many clerics became very familiar with architectural design and construction—even becoming the principal or co-designers.

The first cleric that incorporated the precepts of the Ecclesiological movement in what became Canada was The Right Reverend John Medley (1804-92), first Bishop of New Brunswick, 1845. A product of the Ecclesiological movement, Medley had served for some time as rector of St. Thomas, Exeter. He studied architecture at Oxford, and founded the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, a provincial organization that corresponded with the Cambridge Camden Society. In 1841 Medley published *Elementary Remarks on Church Architecture*, which *The Ecclesiologist* was able to ‘safely recommend’ to its readers. He had a fine library of architectural books, many of which remain in the Diocesan Archives in Fredericton.¹²

In his new seat in Fredericton, Medley sought to create a ‘correct type of a church’ with Christ Church Cathedral and the smaller St. Anne’s Chapel. The architect for the two structures was Frank Wills (1822-57) who accompanied Medley from Exeter. St. Anne’s Chapel (1846-47; Figure 19) is considered the first religious building in the British provinces erected to Ecclesiological standards, followed by the cathedral in Fredericton (Figure 20; 1845-53, with a commanding wood spire of 178 feet).¹³



Figures 19 – 20: left – St. Anne’s Chapel, Fredericton (photo: mid-19th century, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-54); and right – Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton (photo: National Film Board, 82-2490/IX)

¹¹ Ibid., 280.

¹² Ibid.

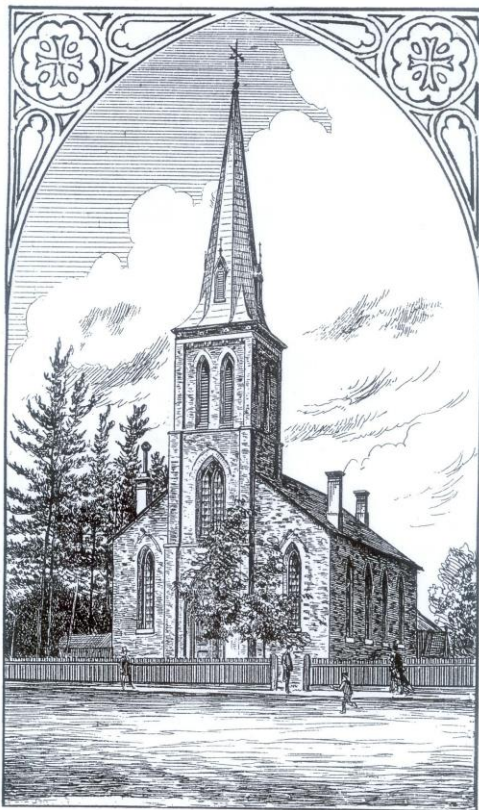
¹³ Ibid.

36554). Both images from, H. Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, vol. I (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 281 and 284.

Other Church of England cathedrals at Toronto and St. John's (Newfoundland) were also substantially underway by 1850, under the direction of English- or Scottish-born bishops, and architects.¹⁴ Constructed only a decade after these iconic structures of Canadian architectural history, Christ Church, Gananoque, stands as a significant, early example of the Ecclesiological movement in Canada.¹⁵

All the features seen in buildings of the early Gothic Revival—buttresses, pointed-arched windows with elaborate tracery, gables—are present in Christ Church, Gananoque, but they no longer appear to be incongruous, pasted-on ornament: in accord with the Ecclesiological movement they are integrated into the form and massing of the building, inseparable components of the larger whole. The result has nothing to do with a box-and-tower Georgian church in decorative Gothic garb; rather, it is an integrated revival of Gothic form and feeling that the Ecclesiological movement espoused.

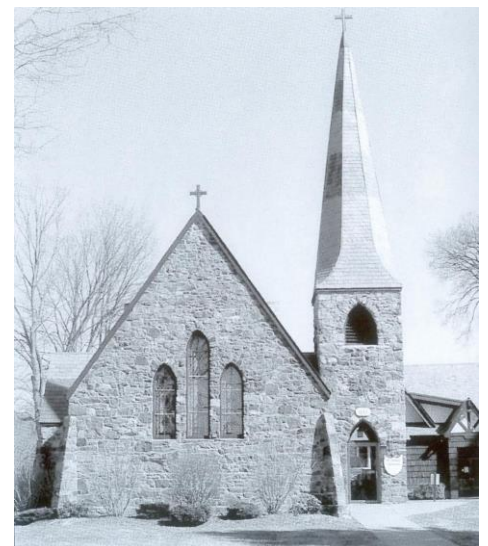
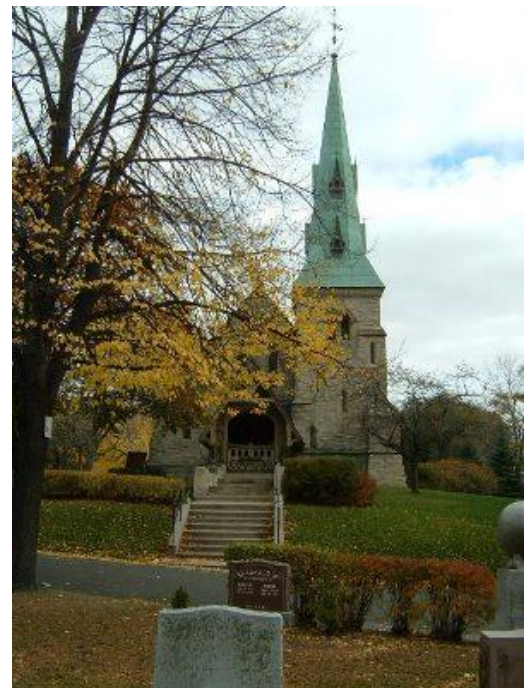
Figures 21 – 22: below left – St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Gananoque, original form viewed from the southwest (Historical Atlas of the Counties of Leeds and Grenville, (reprint Mika Publishing, Belleville, 1973), p. 23; below right – St. James-the-Less, Toronto, viewed from the west (Diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada, <http://www.stjamescathedral.on.ca/Cemetery/CemeteryHistory/tabid/101/Default.aspx>).



By contrast, in Gananoque the original portion of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, conforms to the older style of box-and-tower Georgian church (Figure 21), the Methodist/now Grace United church represents a later direction in the Gothic Revival style, and St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church is Romanesque Revival.

Additional design comparisons for Christ Church—both for age and design--include the Chapel of St. James-the-Less, Toronto (1857-61; Figure 22), designed by the firm of Cumberland and Storm, in the park-like St. James cemetery laid out in 1842 by John Howard, and

St. James Episcopal Church (1866-67), Lake George in the Adirondacks of New York State which, like Christ Church, Gananoque, is attributed to a non-professional, New York City raised and educated Reverend Robert Fulton Crary.



¹⁴ Ibid, p. 290.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Figure 23: above – St. James Episcopal Church, Lake George, Warren County, New York State, 1866-67 (photo: Jane Mackintosh, 2006, in Sally E. Svenson, *Adirondack Churches: A History of Design and Building* (Keeseville, New York: Adirondack Architectural Heritage, 2006), p. 70).

Architect/Designer, Builder

Designer

The design of Christ Church, Gananoque, is attributed to the first rector, Rev. John Carroll, as partially described above. The builder is not known.¹⁶

A native of Ireland and a graduate of Trinity College, Toronto, Rev. Carroll was licensed as a cleric, 8 October 1854, and appointed missionary for Leeds County with headquarters at Gananoque. He served as far east as Ballycanoe and west to Kingston Mills and north to the township boundary. He was the father of Dr. Jack Carroll of Brockville, and another son became a magistrate in Gananoque.

There is no knowledge about his design background, and Christ Church Gananoque is his only confirmed design, although the design and construction supervision of the first rectory for Christ Church, at 40 Princess Street, may also be his.

ENVIRONMENT

Compatibility with Heritage Environs

Christ Church, Gananoque, sits proudly among commanding residences along King St. W. and Church St., such as the former McCammon residence at 279 King St. W. (current Victoria Rose; Figure 3), 75 King St. W. (current Beaver Hall Bed and Breakfast), and no. 181 King St. W., and a commanding towered Italianate Style residence directly north of Church Church, and past rectories at 16 and 40 Princess Street (Figures 16 and 24 – 27).



Figures 24 – 25: left – Beaver Hall Bed and Breakfast, 75 King St. W., Gananoque (photo E. Tumak, Jan. 2008); right – 181 King St. W., Gananoque—the wing at the right/west is a later addition (photo E. Tumak, July 2009). Note both are constructed of sandstone.

¹⁶ History of Christ Church, Town of Gananoque heritage research file; and Hawke, *Historic Gananoque*, p. 50.



Figures 26 – 27: left 16 Princess St., Gananoque, second rectory of Christ Church; right Church St. mansion, immediately north of Christ Church, Gananoque (photos E. Tumak, Jan., 2008).



Figures 28-29: left, 33 King St. E.; and right – 21 King St. E. (photos E. Tumak, July 2009)

The sandstone exterior of Christ Church is well-represented in above-noted buildings along King St. W., when Christ Church was constructed, as well as numerous commercial

buildings on King St. E. such as no. 33 (former Beaver Hall Antiques and no. 21 King St. E.; Figures 28-29). Sandstone was a readily available, local material when Christ Church was built.

The site around Christ Church is in keeping with its mid-19th century origins as demonstrated by existing structures and lot divisions. The front/west and side elevations are as visible as originally intended, and the primary ground cover is a lawn.

Alterations of note to the site of Christ Church are the 1901 parish hall, the third rectory at 35 Princess Street located to the rear/west. Further, the previously noted references in the 1861-2, *Historical Atlas of the Counties of Leeds and Grenville* show a wood fence around the property, while the ca. 1900 photograph shows a low metal fence.



Figure 30: Christ Church, viewed from the west from Princess Street, with the most recent addition to Parish Hall in the foreground, and the third rectory to the right/south (photo E. Tumak, Jan. 2008).

However, none of these site modifications are inappropriate to church function or intrusive on the main prospects of Christ Church. The parish hall is significantly set back from Church Street and joined to the church only at the northwest corner (Figure 30). It makes no more impact to the streetscape of Princess Street, than any residence. The third/former rectory sits

similarly along Princess Street: it does not notably detract from the view of the west end of Christ Church, and maintains a consistent setback with the streetscape.

Community Context / Landmark Status

The building is prominent by virtue of its physical form and institutional status. The soaring, shingle-clad spire is prominent from the nearby thoroughfare of King Street West, as well as other vantage points in town. The building is in keeping with the scale and elaboration of the surrounding structures—many constructed as mansions in the 19th and early-20th centuries. However, Christ Church is immediately identifiable as a traditional, Christian place of religious worship—which elevates it in terms of structural hierarchy within the surrounding environs. Continuity of function as an Anglican church also adds to its landmark status.