

## Innovation in Christchurch Church Architecture

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**ABSTRACT:** Several church buildings erected in Christchurch in the 1960s signalled significant departures in the city's established traditions of church architecture. They included three Roman Catholic parish churches – St Matthew's Bryndwr, Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn, and St Anne's, Woolston. This paper focuses on the most innovative and striking of these three churches, Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn. It sets the building in the broader context of post-war church architecture in Christchurch. Innovation in Christchurch church architecture had begun in the 1950s with a number of brick churches, but significant departures from established church building forms did not occur until the 1960s. Our Lady of Victories reflected with particular drama the impact on church architecture of the changes in Roman Catholic liturgy associated with the Second Vatican Council. The paper describes the process through which the radically new design emerged, paying particular attention to the interaction between the architect, C.R. Thomas, and the new Roman Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, Brian Ashby. The paper also sets the design of the church in the context of New Zealand, and international, architectural trends in the late 1950s and 1960s.

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### **Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn: Introduction**

For a half-century in which public religious observance in New Zealand declined, the second half of the twentieth century saw a remarkable number of new churches built in Christchurch. When I set about compiling a list of post-war churches in the city (with a view to the City Council's eventually listing some of them in its district scheme) I expected to end up with a list of ten or a dozen buildings. I am at 48, and still counting. Not all these churches are buildings of architectural note; but the best of them illustrate a remarkably large number of developments in New Zealand architecture over 50 years.

Before I embarked on this present exercise I

had already begun a file headed "Brick churches of the 1950s." Most new church buildings in Christchurch of that decade remained traditional in form. An example was the Church of St Nicholas, Spreydon, (Hollis and Leonard, 1958-59) which looked unusually modern when it was built, but did not depart from the traditional form for churches – rectangular, with a spire or tower to one side or at the front of the main body of the building.

But the extensive use of brick (which I had noticed in a casual way) was something of a departure in Christchurch, though not a complete departure. Benjamin Mountfort, for example, had used brick for his 1882-1885 Church of the Good Shepherd, Phillipstown. But in no previous decade had as many brick

churches been built as in the 1950s. I suspect the influence of Scandinavian and Dutch architecture in Christchurch in that decade is part of the explanation for the number of brick churches built in the city in the 15 years after the end of World War II.

Some of these were fine buildings, and some rang in minor changes in the built form of churches. They included St Stephen's, Shirley, (1950, Paul Pascoe); the Evangelical Church, Moorhouse Avenue, (Melville Lawry and Don Donnithorne, 1953); the St Martin's Presbyterian Church (Ernst Plischke, 1953-56); St Stephen's, Bryndwr, (CB Wells, 1959); and St Chad's, North Linwood, (Paul Pascoe, 1959-60).

The main focus of this paper is a Catholic

church, Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn, and it is pertinent to note that the two major Catholic churches built in Christchurch in the 1950s fitted into this city-wide pattern. Both Paul Pascoe's St Peter's, Beckenham (1955) and Manson, Seward and Stanton's St Mary's, Manchester Street (1957) were conventional in form (rectangular with towers to one side) and built of brick.

It is pertinent also to note that in the 1950s architects throughout New Zealand continued to design churches of conventional or traditional form, while making small innovations or departures. Such notable New Zealand churches of the decade as St Mary's, Taihape, (Ernst Plischke, 1951), St James, Lower Hutt, (Structon Group, 1953), the Mt Albert Baptist Church (Clifford and Sanderson, 1953), the Arthur's Pass Chapel, (Paul Pacoe, 1956), the Dilworth School Chapel, Auckland, (Abbott, Hole and Annabell, 1959), St Matthew's, Masterton, (King and Dawson, 1959-60) and All Saints, Ponsonby, (R.H. Toy, 1959-60) all conform to this general characterisation.

### Church architecture in the 1960s

The 1960s, by contrast with the preceding decade, saw significant departures in church

architecture. Peter Shaw correctly identified one of the main developments prompting these departures – the changes in Roman Catholic liturgy associated with the Second Vatican Council, especially "the increasing democratisation of the relationship between congregation and clergy."<sup>1</sup> John Scott's Futuna Chapel is emblematic of this, but it is far from the only church that broke traditional architectural moulds. The argument of this paper is that one Christchurch church, Our Lady of Victories, Sockburn, deserves as much attention as a building emblematic of changes in church architecture in the 1960s as the Futuna Chapel.

Even at this relatively late date in New Zealand's architectural development, influences from overseas were critical to explaining this change. In 1960 an influential book, Peter Hammond's *Liturgy and Architecture*, appeared in Britain. The book had a decisive impact in New Zealand, perhaps especially in Christchurch.<sup>2</sup>

In 1961, Ernst Plischke wrote in the winter edition of the periodical *Comment* an article on

"The Building of Churches" which explored the links between liturgical renewal and architectural innovation. The article was written as comment on Hammond's book.<sup>3</sup> In 1960 a group of Christchurch architects and clergymen who had read *Liturgy and Architecture* formed a New Churches Research Group, based on an English precedent. A symposium was held in Timaru and the conclusion reached that the modern liturgical renewal movement, originating in European Catholic communities, was "beginning to have an influence in these parts."<sup>4</sup>

In March 1963 an architect member of this group, George Lucking, wrote an article for a supplement in the *Press* on church architecture.<sup>5</sup> Lucking was scathing in his criticism of contemporary church architecture in New Zealand (as scathing as Plischke had been in *Comment* about the ubiquitous A-frame church of the 1950s):

<sup>3</sup> Plischke "The Building of Churches" pp 25-31.

<sup>4</sup> Moore "The New Churches Research Group" pp 31-33. I have yet to investigate the composition and activities of this group. It appears to have had a membership of 30-odd architects and clergymen, representing five separate denominations.

<sup>5</sup> Lucking "Churches – revised versions" p 5.

<sup>1</sup> Shaw *New Zealand Architecture* p 177.

<sup>2</sup> Hammond *Liturgy and Architecture*

Alas, little contemporary church building is really modern as opposed to gimmick modern. And what is perhaps more unfortunate, much that is just a slavish copying of past styles devoid now of meaning or reason.

He considered that too many new churches were using

adventitious religious symbolism ... with trite repetitions of what are popularly regarded as religious forms – all applied in much the same way as decoration to a cake.

The best modern buildings, Lucking argued, arose out of a profound understanding of what took place inside the building. Lucking's article is important as an indication that other local architects, besides C.R. Thomas, were thinking along the lines that were to inspire and inform the design of Our Lady of Victories.

In the early 1960s, too, there were two exhibitions in Christchurch that indicated an interest in the community in new architectural forms. In September 1962 a display of photomurals of "visionary" architecture, assembled originally for showing in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was brought to Christchurch by the School of Art. The *Press* noted that the exhibition presented a

range of novel architectural forms – cones, pyramids, bowls, mushrooms and spirals along them.<sup>6</sup> This was followed in July 1963 by a display on church architecture from the seventeenth century to the present in the Trinity Congregational Church.<sup>7</sup>

Reference has already been made to the liturgical movement overseas as a major influence on church design in New Zealand. The common thread in this movement, which was concerned with the place and purpose of public worship in the life of the church, was that the people were no longer the passive spectators of public religious observances but were active participants, with the clergy, in them.<sup>8</sup> The liturgical movement was a pan-denominational movement, but in no other denomination were these ideas more revolutionary than in the Catholic Church. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that three of the most unusual and innovative

<sup>6</sup> "Exhibition on Visionary Architecture to Open Soon" p 10.

<sup>7</sup> "Display of Church Architecture" p 13. Reference was made in the *Press* news item on this exhibition to a new Congregational church for Spreydon "which will have a revolutionary roof design." This church was not built and I have yet to track down an image of it and to establish who was its architect.

<sup>8</sup> Lucking "Churches – revised versions" p 5.

church designs in Christchurch in the 1960s were for Catholic churches.

In 1961, Plischke had written that modern church architecture "attempts to supersede the nave by new conceptions of the interior space and to gain fresh sculptural qualities in the exterior."<sup>9</sup> Two years later, Lucking wrote that new plan shapes were being adopted by the designers of churches "to assist the element of participation, to bring the altar nearer the people."<sup>10</sup> The two quotes apply with almost uncanny exactitude to the church which C.R. Thomas was shortly to design for the Catholic parish of Sockburn.

Our Lady of Victories was the most innovative church building of the 1960s in Christchurch. But it is important not give an impression that it was the only Christchurch church of the decade to break new ground. Two other Catholic churches were of unusual form – St Matthew's, Bryndwr, designed by the Wellington firm McKeefry and Brenton, the foundation stone of which was laid in the same year as that of Our Lady of Victories, and St Anne's, Woolston, designed by RL

<sup>9</sup> Plischke "The Building of Churches" p 30.

<sup>10</sup> Lucking "Churches – revised versions" p 5.

Kennedy. The foundation stone for St Anne's was laid in 1969. But neither the Bryndwr nor the Woolston churches made the same architectural or liturgical innovations as Our Lady of Victories. At St Anne's, the roof form attempted, but failed, to achieve the drama and symbolic meaning achieved by Thomas with the roof form of Our Lady of Victories.<sup>11</sup>

Among the other buildings which a comprehensive study of innovation in Christchurch's church architecture in the 1960s would need to examine in detail are three by Warren and Mahoney – the Chapel at Christchurch College (1966-67), the Johns Road Crematorium Chapel (1962-63) and St Augustine's, Cashmere Hills (1968-70).

Of all these six buildings which illustrate with particular force that the designers of Christchurch churches began, in the 1960s, to look beyond the conventions of New Zealand church architecture, Our Lady of Victories stands out as of particular significance. It was described in the *Press*, when it was opened in

<sup>11</sup> The next task in this ongoing study of Christchurch's post-war churches is to trace the design history of these two churches in the Minutes of the Sites and Building Committee of the Christchurch Diocese.

March 1968 as "unusual."<sup>12</sup> A month later, when Michael Fowler wrote an article for the *Press* giving his impressions of Christchurch architecture, a picture of Our Lady of Victories illustrated the article. The building was described by Fowler as "extraordinary."<sup>13</sup>

Our Lady of Victories has been given awards by the Institute of Architects. It received a Canterbury Branch award in 1968, then a national medal in 1970. (In 1970, too, the top of the tower was on that year's Christmas stamp.) The church received a Canterbury Branch enduring award in 2004 and a national enduring award the following year.

### **The Bishop Intervenes**

The genesis of the design of Our Lady of Victories is both an intriguing story and an illuminating study of how and why such a radical new design appeared rather suddenly in Christchurch.

In 1963 Charles R Thomas, a young architect who had just gone into independent practice after having worked with George Griffiths and Hall and McKenzie, was approached by a

<sup>12</sup> "Unusual Church Opened, Blessed"

<sup>13</sup> Fowler "Wellington Architect Assesses The Christchurch Scene" p 15.

local businessman, Leo Steel, who knew Thomas and was on the Building Committee of the Sockburn Parish. Steel asked Thomas if he was interested in designing the new church which the parish was planning to build. Thomas prepared a design which had a rectangular floor plan and a gabled roof. Though there were germs of the final design – at the crest, the roofs on each side turned up to create a slot in which there were to be skylights and the vertical member of a prominent cross on top of the building, viewed from the front, descended into the body of the church – the design was relatively conventional.<sup>14</sup> This design was accepted by the Parish Building Committee.

Then the intervention of Bishop Brian Ashby led to the design being transformed by Thomas. Ashby became Bishop of Christchurch in July 1964. Through the rest of 1964 and 1965 he attended the later sessions of the Second Vatican Council. Almost immediately on becoming Bishop, Ashby established a Diocesan Sites and Buildings Committee. The first item on the agenda when this Committee first met in September 1964 was the proposed new church at Sockburn.

<sup>14</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/1; Thomas, Pers Comm.

Thomas and representatives of the parish presented the design that Thomas had prepared. The Bishop studied the plan, then asked Thomas would the design be different if he was given a free hand? Thomas replied that it would, and that the design would reflect more strongly the changes in the Roman Catholic liturgy, especially the different relationship between the congregation and the priest in public worship, which Vatican II was then in process of codifying.<sup>15</sup>

At that point, Ashby turned the sheet over and suggested Thomas sketch what he envisaged. Thomas immediately sketched a building, the floor plan and roof form of which were more or less what was later built. He was able to respond in this way to Ashby's suggestion because, in his own words, like any architect, and a young architect in particular, he had developed two designs in his head – one that would satisfy the client (the Parish Building Committee) and could be built within budget, and a second that was his ideal design. So when he was asked to sketch the design he would have developed if given a free hand, it was not a case of sudden

inspiration, but a matter of putting down on paper something he had been thinking about beforehand. As a practising, liberal Catholic himself, Thomas was well aware that in the new thinking in the Church, the mass was a participatory event, not a performance by a priest on a stage for a congregation that was a passive audience.<sup>16</sup>

Ashby liked the concept which Thomas presented in this initial sketch and asked Thomas to develop it further. By November 1964, having established with local engineer E.G.S. Powell that the roof form could be built as two hyperbolic paraboloids, Thomas had completed a model and final sketch plans which were approved by the Bishop and his advisers. Perspective drawings and the interior layout were finished by February 1965.<sup>17</sup>

The parish had a budget for the building of £32,000. Thomas told Ashby his new design could not be realised for that amount (in the end the building cost £56,000). Ashby promised the parish the balance would be made up from diocesan funds. Ashby had two

motives for assisting the parish. The first was to give "built expression" to the new thinking in the Catholic Church about its liturgy. Ashby was also conscious that the site of the new church, on what was then the main route into Christchurch from the south, was a prominent one. An innovative design on that site would be a proclamation to the city of the vitality of and the strength of new thinking within the Catholic Church.<sup>18</sup> (A predecessor, Bishop Grimes, had given Christchurch one of its landmark buildings, Petre's Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, from a similar desire to proclaim the presence and strength of the Catholic Church in the city.)

Thomas' church, it should be noted, fulfilled the second as well as the first of the Bishop's wishes. When the building was given an enduring architecture award in 2005, the citation spoke of its "big scale urban gestures of axis and landmark."<sup>19</sup> In 1990, in similar vein, Terence Hodgson had described the church as a "beacon of faith and inventive architecture" in a residential suburb.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>19</sup> "Our Lady of Victories" p 78.

<sup>20</sup> Hodgson *Looking* p 81.

<sup>15</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/3; Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>17</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* pp 7/2-7/3.

### The Architecture of Our Lady of Victories

The significant changes which Thomas made to his design, on the Bishop's prompting, were a diamond-shaped (as opposed to rectangular) floor plan and a dramatically expressive rather than conventionally gabled roof form.

Thomas used a diamond or lozenge-shaped floor plan because he saw it as the best way to give effect to the changes in the liturgy then being endorsed by Vatican II. He was able to place the entire congregation close to the altar and in eye contact with the priest celebrating mass. There were no altar rails. (The small area of seating behind the sanctuary was for week-day masses, to maintain a sense of intimacy with the much smaller week-day congregations.)

There was an approximate precedent for Thomas' use of a diamond shape for the floor plan in John Scott's *Our Lady of Lourdes*, Havelock North (1959-60). Though the floor plan of *Our Lady of Lourdes* is square, Scott placed the internal axis of the church on one of the diagonals of the square, creating a similar configuration of seats and altar to that of *Our Lady of Victories*.

Thomas deliberately placed the baptistry at the entrance to the church, in a direct visual line with the altar, in order to associate becoming a participating member of the church, as the body of believers, with entering the church, as a building, for mass. This unusual placement of the baptistry was debated through 1965-1966. The location of the tabernacle – in a side chapel or on the wall to the rear of the sanctuary – also became a matter of debate. Ashby (who kept a close watch on every detail of the design) found only one of Thomas' suggestions too radical. Thomas wanted to place the sacristy at the entrance to the church, so that the robed priest would approach the altar to celebrate the mass through the body of the congregation rather than suddenly materialise at the front of the church. But Ashby refused to allow this. (The architect was ahead of his Bishop in this detail; it became increasingly usual in later years for sacristies to be located near the entrances of Catholic churches.)<sup>21</sup>

But Thomas' floor plan and placement of different activities were otherwise accepted without demur, an indication of the extent to

<sup>21</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/2; Thomas 17 October 2005.

which, as Vatican II proceeded, "every parish in every diocese ... [was] in a process of incorporating and implementing the spirit of Vatican II into their structures and into their life of faith."<sup>22</sup>

The diamond-shaped floor plan was unusual, but the dramatic roof was a more conspicuous demonstration that changes were afoot in the Catholic Church. Structurally, the roof rises in two sections from opposite corners of the diamond of the floor plan towards straight concrete beams which rise from the other two corners of the diamond. The lines of the beams converge over the exact centre of the diamond, but the placement of the tower to the rear of this central point means the church does not appear exactly symmetrical, although each side is identical.<sup>23</sup> Thomas conceived the form of the roof as a representation of two cupped hands brought together to give shelter, but parted by the central skylight set between the straight beams to let the light of God's love shine through onto the assembled congregation.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Fr Kevin Burns cited, *Grofski Sockburn Pathways* p 1/3.

<sup>23</sup> "Unusual Church Opened, Blessed"

<sup>24</sup> *Grofski Sockburn Pathways* p 7/4; Thomas 17 October 2005.

He was successful in creating a roof form of dramatic force and emotional impact. The citation for the building's 2005 enduring architecture award speaks of "the balance between the compression of the parabolic roof and the release of the light that cuts through it."<sup>25</sup>

By the mid 1960s, there were many overseas examples of churches given dramatic, and symbolic, roof forms – most famously Le Corbusier's Pilgrimage Chapel of Notre Dame-du-haut, Ronchamp (1950-1951). Locally, the hyperbolic paraboloid had been used at least twice by Christchurch architects prior to 1964. Paul Pascoe used it for the Graham house (1958) at New Brighton and Peter Beaven for the (scandalously demolished) Brevet Club (1958) at Christchurch Airport. For both the house and club, the architects, as Justine Clark and Paul Walker have observed, used "innovative structural forms to expressive ends."<sup>26</sup>

These Christchurch buildings are examples of a general development in architecture in many countries in the late 1950s and early

1960s – the "engineering of excitement," a phrase coined by an Australian critic Robin Boyd and applied by Clark and Walker to Pascoe's Graham house and Beaven's Brevet Club. The phrase applies equally well to Our Lady of Victories. It too exhibits the exploitation of the symbolic and expressive potential of architectural form which was missing from International Modernism at its purest. In the case of the Graham house, the "exotic and innovative" form of the hyperbolic paraboloid was used for "sheer structural bravada ... the pleasure of the technical for its own sake."<sup>27</sup> In the case of Our Lady of Victories (and of the Brevet Club) the form was adopted with conscious (and clearly explained by the architect at the time) symbolic intent.

The roof of Our Lady of Victories was designed at a time when other architects had already used expressive forms to give buildings symbolic meanings. But Thomas developed the hyperbolic paraboloid form for the roof of Our Lady of Victories in an endeavour to convey an impression, based on a personal conception, of hands cupped to protect but parted to admit the light of God's

love. He did not consciously imitate any overseas or New Zealand precedents in developing a roof form that gave expression to this individual vision.

In the original design Thomas prepared for the Parish Building Committee, there was a rather slight, free-standing bell-tower or campanile to one side of the building. When he was given a free hand to redesign the church, Thomas integrated this vertical element into the main structure and placed it immediately over the altar, slightly to the rear (as noted) of the building's central point. There is again a parallel with John Scott's Our Lady of Lourdes, Havelock North. There Scott placed a spire of abstract rather than conventional form, which directed light downwards, over an altar that was at the focal point of a floor plan that gathered the congregation around the altar.<sup>28</sup>

At Our Lady of Victories, the tower at the peak of the roof takes the form of three panels which symbolise the Trinity. The two panels representing the Father and the Son are connected on the exterior by the cross; the third panel, representing the Holy Spirit,

<sup>25</sup> "Our Lady of Victories" p 78.

<sup>26</sup> Clark and Walker *Looking for the Local* pp 52-53.

<sup>27</sup> Clark and Walker *Looking for the Local* p 53.

<sup>28</sup> Clark and Walker *Looking for the Local* p 122.

descends into the body of the church and terminates above the altar. The crucifix on this panel (designed and made by the architect) is an empty cross. The disintegration of the cross, and Christ's triumph over death, are expressed in brightly coloured and faceted glass.<sup>29</sup>

The departure from figurative representation (the plaster saints and representations of Christ on the cross of almost every Catholic church in New Zealand up to the convening of Vatican II) was also evident in the non-figurative stations of the cross. Thomas remembers that Ashby accepted this departure from traditional Catholic practice without demur, as one would expect from a Bishop who was at the time attending sessions of the Vatican Council.<sup>30</sup> (There is a contrast here with Paul Pascoe's St Peter's, Beckenham, of less than a decade earlier, where a large figure of St Peter dominates the front of the church.)

Thomas carried over from the original design the placement of the stations of the cross and the setting of slivers of red glass in the short

walls that defined the side alcoves. The vine linking the stations of the cross (one of the few figurative or representative elements in the building) was also carried over from the original design. The vine, of coloured glass, was illuminated from outside the church and was conceived as a visual representation of Christ's saying "I am the vine and you are the branches."

Many of the innovations made by Thomas when he was a young architect designing a Catholic church while the Second Vatican Council was still sitting, appeared slightly later in other churches, of many denominations, throughout New Zealand of the later 1960s and early 1970s. By the mid 1970s, the traditional floor plan for churches, of serried rows of seating facing a performance area well to the front of a rectangular space, had been largely superseded by plans which ensured there was "a close visual and aural link between various members of the congregation."<sup>31</sup>

### **The Later History of the Church**

The floor plan, absence of figurative

representation, and other aspects of the design of Our Lady of Victories quickly became the new conventions of church architecture in New Zealand. Despite the church's groundbreaking significance, some revolutionary features of Thomas' design of Our Lady of Victories were diluted by later changes, made by more traditional parish priests. Plaster statues sneaked back in. Sand-blasted figurative stations of the cross were installed. The font was removed from its position at the entrance to the church and the doors, which had been separated by clear glass in a central panel between them, were brought together. This destroyed the uninterrupted sight line from outside the church past the font to the altar. This sight line had been intended by the architect to emphasise the open relationship between the worshipping congregation and the community outside.<sup>32</sup>

A parish priest sympathetic to the quality and symbolism of the building is reversing the changes to restore the building to its form and configuration of 1968. The changes should help Our Lady of Victories gain the recognition it deserves. It has been largely ignored in the literature, despite winning

<sup>29</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/4; Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>31</sup> "Evolving Church Design" pp 53-50; The copy of this article in the Christchurch City Council's files is not dated, but it is certainly post-1970.

<sup>32</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/4.



New Zealand Institute of Architects awards at the time it was built and many years later. It was pictured and discussed in Terence Hodgson's *Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand* but does not otherwise figure in any readily available histories of New Zealand architecture.<sup>33</sup> The neglect may be partly explained by the fact that it does not, as commentators have been at pains to record about RH Toy's All Saints, Ponsonby, (1959-1960), John Scott's Futuna Chapel, Karori, (1958-1961), and Paul Pascoe's Arthur's Pass Chapel (1956), exhibit any overt Māori or Pacific, or other vernacular, influences and so cannot easily be fitted into the framework of an architectural history which focuses narrowly on the emergence of an indigenous architecture.

### Two Footnotes

Two footnotes can be added to this account of the designing of Our Lady of Victories. The first is that it is the only church designed by Thomas to have been built. After the completion of Our Lady of Victories he was asked to design one more church, but it was not built. One possible explanation why

Thomas was not asked to follow up his significant achievement at Sockburn is that the design was simply too revolutionary. Cost is another. Thomas also suspects that he became off-side with powerful building interests with Catholic connections because of his insistence that all work go out to tender. His practice subsequently built a number of commercial and educational buildings, but Our Lady of Victories remains its only church.<sup>34</sup>

The second footnote is trivial but illuminating of the way in which accidental and unintended symbolic meanings are sometimes imposed on buildings. By the time Our Lady of Victories was opened in 1968, the parish priest was Fr Ron O'Gorman, who was a keen mountaineer and skier. It was suggested at the time of the opening "that the striking new building was Father Ron's personalised ski jump."<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately (for the good story), O'Gorman only became parish priest after the design of Our Lady of Victories had been fully developed.

<sup>33</sup> Hodgson *Looking* pp 81-82. The building is not mentioned by Shaw in *New Zealand Architecture* or by Mitchell and Chaplin in *The Elegant Shed*.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, Pers Comm.

<sup>35</sup> Grofski *Sockburn Pathways* p 7/1.

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