

Saint Anne's Chapel, Fredericton, New Brunswick: A Living Exhibit of Material Culture

PETER MALMBERG

Editor's Note: A review of Christ Church Anglican Cathedral in Fredericton, New Brunswick (*Material History Bulletin*, No. 26, pp. 46-52) invited communications on similar living exhibits. The following presents a house of worship from the same diocese, Saint Anne's Chapel, the former Christ Church parish church. The structure under discussion replaced an earlier building and was in turn superseded by another. Much of what was said for the larger Christ Church Cathedral applies to this small but exquisite building. The photographs tell the story.

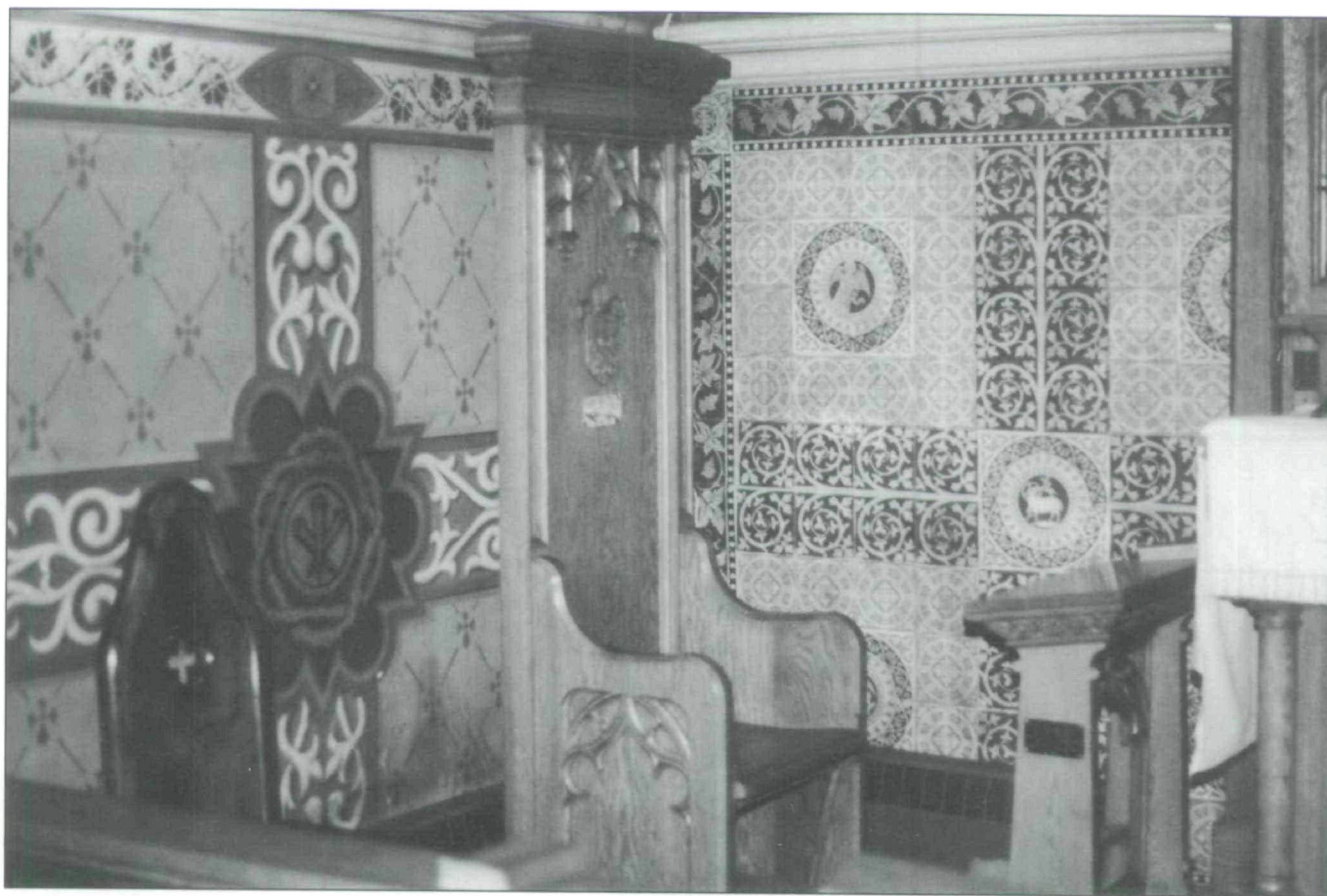
The parish of Christ Church, established in 1786, is one of the oldest in the Anglican Diocese of Fredericton. The second church built to serve this parish was a Gothic Revival structure now known as Saint Anne's Chapel. The chapel was constructed between 1846

and 1847 to serve the poorer west end of the city.¹ Derived from mediaeval parish chapel designs, it was, "the first ecclesiastical building erected in the British provinces on which ancient architecture has been attempted to be honestly carried out."² Few obvious alterations have since been made. Still used as a house of worship, Saint Anne's can thus be considered a "living exhibit."

Saint Anne's Chapel has been maintained as carefully as possible. A former rector, Canon Gordon Smith, is probably the person most deserving of being called a curator of this exhibit. He believes the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer fits comfortably into the setting of Saint Anne's.³

The present-day congregation wanted to preserve the old church when the new larger one was built in the early 1960s. They did not want a new suburban site even though that was where most of them lived. Most of the

Fig. 1
The bishop's throne, the prayer stand and a glimpse of the elaborate wall tiles of the east end.



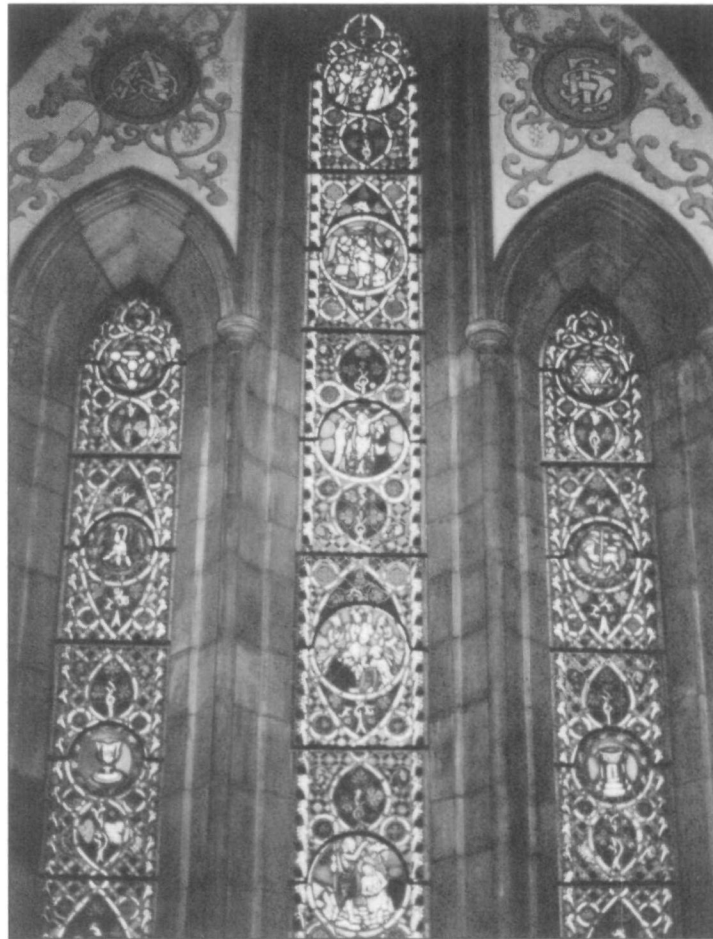


Fig. 2
*The east window. Note
 Christ's Baptism and
 Crucifixion in the
 middle lancet.*

parishioners wanted to ensure continuity with the past by having the new modern-style building linked to their beloved old church by an unobtrusive enclosed corridor. The older building was kept in limited use.⁴ Canon Smith believes the people felt so strongly about preserving the chapel that only its destruction by fire would have led to the selection of an entirely new site. Events certainly changed from a century earlier when a member of the congregation took the rector Canon Roberts to court for placing a cross on the altar!⁵

Canon Smith stressed that after the new Christ Church was built in the early 1960s the congregation continued to make the effort to keep using Saint Anne's Chapel as an integral part of the parish. The chapel is still used for a variety of different religious purposes. Mid-week communion services, communions celebrating saints' days, Evensong, some baptisms, marriages and funerals are regularly held there all year round. Most of these services have lower attendance than the main Sunday services. The present congregation

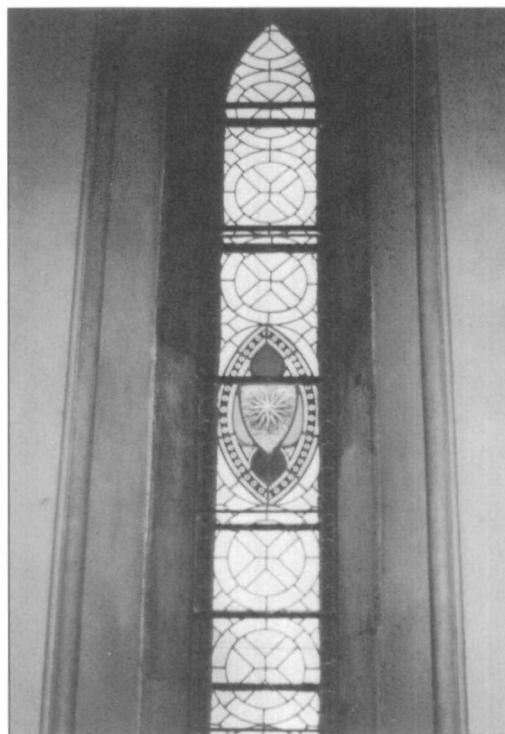
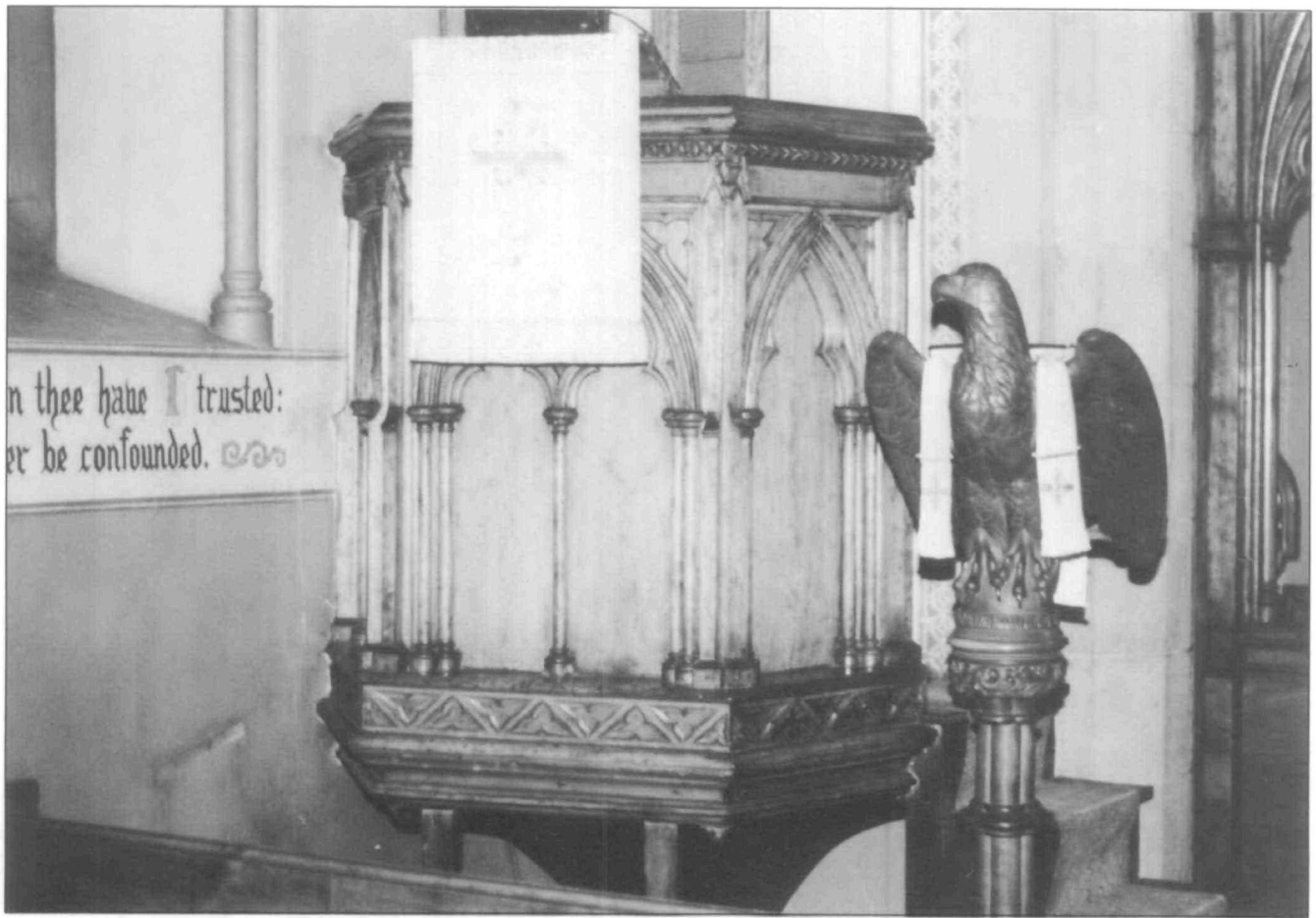


Fig. 3
One of the narrow slit-like nave windows with its simple but colourful piece of stained glass.



▲
Fig. 4
*Butternut pulpit and
 the eagle lectern with
 white Easter hangings.*

Fig. 5
*A butternut pew end
 showing the symbol of
 the Holy Trinity.*



numbers more than 600 and the chapel holds 175, making it impossible to use the building for anything other than "minor" services.⁶

Nevertheless Saint Anne's Chapel serves as an enduring tribute to its builders and to the members of the congregation who valued its beauty and preserved its expression of Christian faith.

Fig. 6
One of the elaborate floor tiles in the choir showing a pelican mother shedding her blood for her young. This represents the Christian emphasis on personal sacrifice.

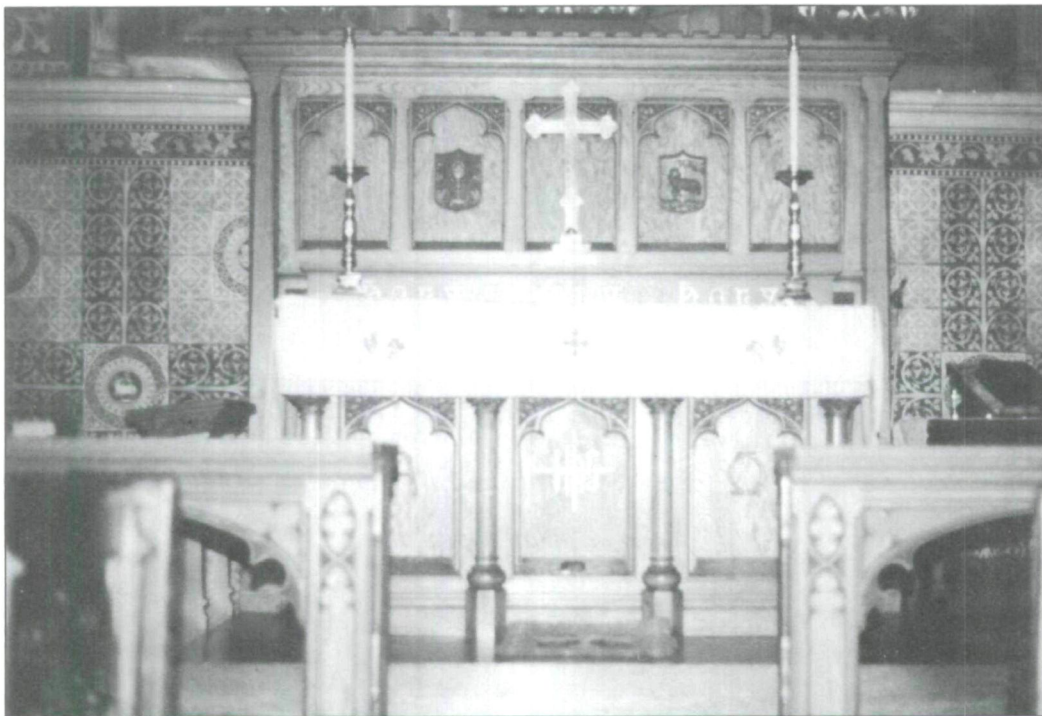


Fig. 7
The altar, the reredos behind the altar and the hand-carved native butternut communion rail.



Fig. 8
The elaborate design of this brass collection plate reflects the high quality of the chapel's furnishings.

Fig. 9

Interior showing the open-beam roof's rafters, the biblical verse over the nave arch, the elaborately decorated east end and (near the bottom) the hand-carved rood screen and pulpit.

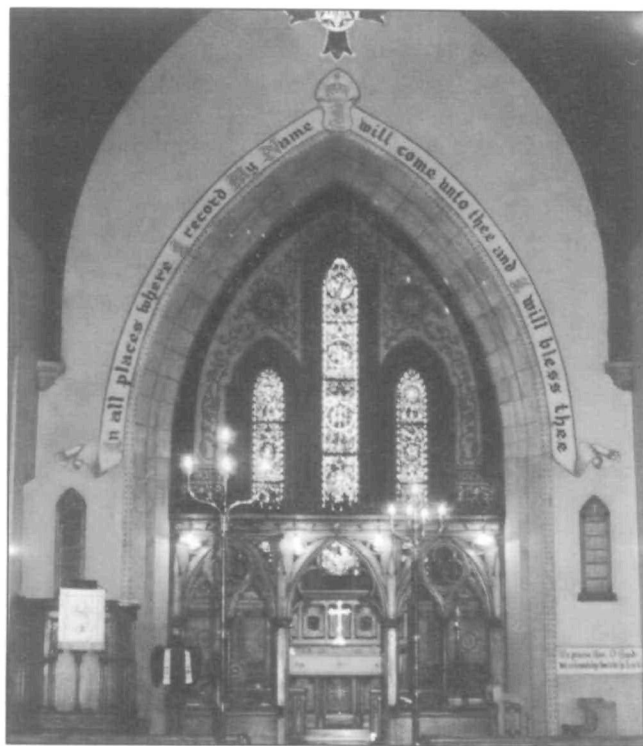


Fig. 10

West side showing the lancet windows and the bellcote.

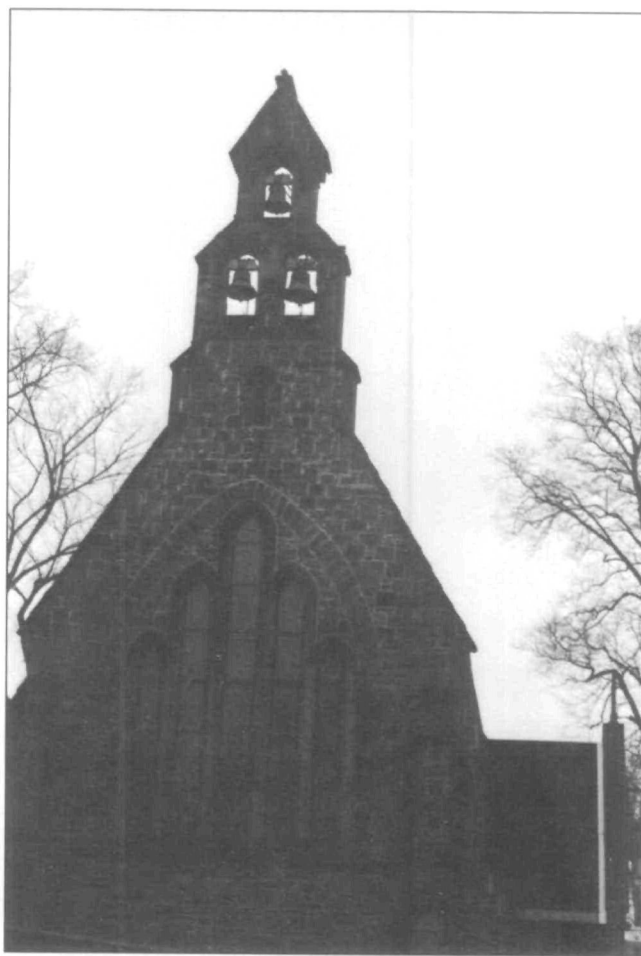
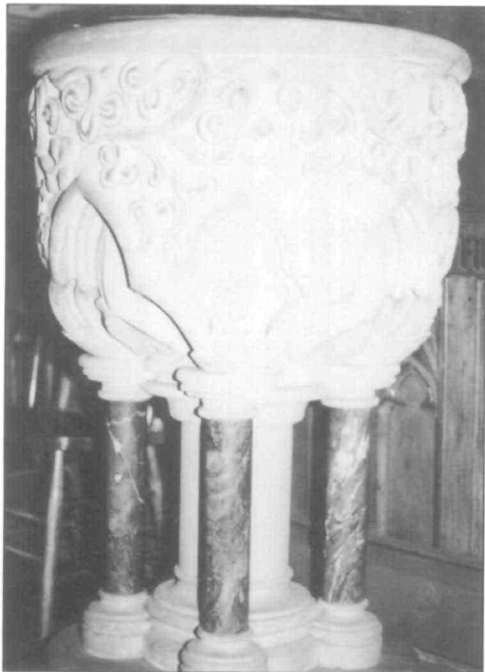


Fig. 11

The elaborately carved baptismal font, shipped from England in 1849.



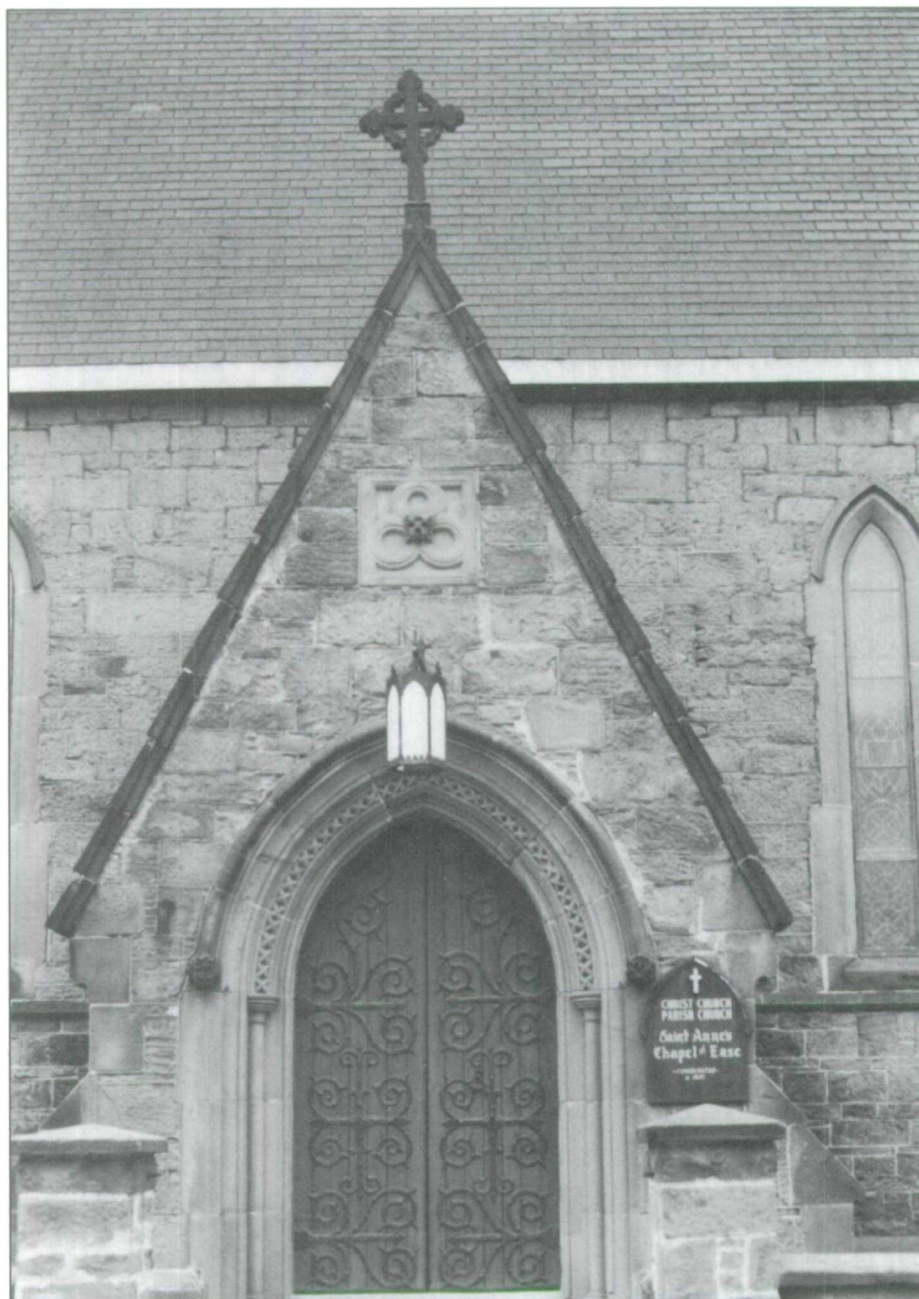


Fig. 12
The main Westmorland Street entrance showing the elaborate iron work on the double door and the Celtic cross over the vestibule.



Fig. 13
Captain John Pipon's elaborately carved marble memorial (1846) on the west wall below the great window and the bellcote whose ropes are in the foreground.



Fig. 14
The Gothic design of the old church (right) contrasts with the modern-style of the new one (below). Note the new church's "steeple."



NOTES

1. Alban F. Bate, *The Parish of Fredericton* (1936), p. 8.
2. See Frank Wills, *Ancient English Ecclesiastical Architecture and Its Principles Applied to the Wants of the Church at the Present Day*, cited in Phoebe Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1968), p. 110.
3. Interview with Canon Gordon Smith by Peter Malmberg, 1 March, 1989, p. 1.
4. Canon Smith, p. 2.
5. Robert Watson, *Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton: A History* (Fredericton Historical Research Project, 1984), p. 15.
6. Canon Smith, p. 3.