

The Church of St. James de Hatley

A witness to the development of the Anglican Mission in the 19th century

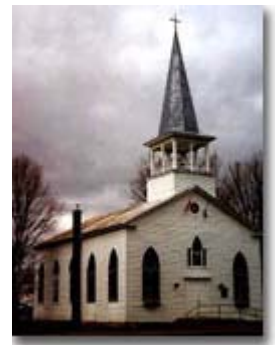


View of church and cemetery
Photo : CPRQ

The Anglo-American war of 1812 affected the established missionary networks between New England and southern Québec, and favoured the establishment of the Anglican Church in Baptist areas. In 1817, the Reverend Charles James Stewart gave orders for a church to be built two kilometres from Hatley. This was the first church on the site. It was known as 'Old North Church' and was used for worship until its demolition in 1928. The Church of St. James was erected in 1827, and was thus named in honour of its vicar who became the Anglican Bishop for the diocese of Québec in the following year.

The church was built in the centre of the village next to the burial ground and the 1830 school building. The carpenter Joël Shirliff Jr. was given the job of building the wooden church which was 12 metres by 18 metres. Like traditional Catholic churches it was based on a rectangular plan, but unlike them, the choir was included in the nave rather than being situated in a semicircular apse. This style had been introduced by Major Robe and Major Hall in the Anglican Cathedral of Québec (begun in 1804), and it then became popular in other ecclesiastical buildings whatever the denomination.

The Church of St. James brings together the simplicity of the mission churches, and the renewal of forms proposed by the British architects. The nave is covered with a gently sloping pitched roof which supports a bell-tower covered with a conical roof resting on a square base. The returns of the cornice on the guttered walls suggest the form of a pediment in the façade with an oculus allowing light to the roof timbers inside the church. The double-doors are surmounted by a Palladian window whose central part terminates curiously in a pointed arch. Ogival arches are also repeated in the windows along the nave with false tracery in the upper part. This strange combination of styles is typical of a vernacular architecture where the architectural features of the building are derived from various sources.



Exterior
Photo : CPRQ

The Church of St. James was consecrated in 1834 and it is the oldest Protestant church in the region known as Estrie. It was listed as an historical monument in 1989.

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Text translated by Rachel Tunnicliffe

Bibliography:

- Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke. *Les chemins de la mémoire*, t. II, Québec, Les Publications du Québec, 1991, p. 486-487.