



Architect Joseph Lowe Shaw worked in Dunedin in the last decades of the nineteenth century. He is known as the designer of the much admired two-storeyed house at 521 George Street, but little recognised for his other significant work in the city.¹ He is possibly better known in Victoria, Australia, where he also practiced.²

Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1820 or 1821, the son of Mary Ann Shaw, née Lowe, and John Shaw, a medical practitioner.³ Little is known about Shaw's early life. His two older brothers, William and Forster Shaw, were both doctors who migrated to Victoria in the 1840s.⁴ Joseph arrived in Melbourne aboard the *Asia* in 1850.⁵ He settled at Geelong, where for two years he worked in partnership with H.M. Garrard as a surveyor, engineer, and architect.⁶ The two men were responsible for a number of significant early survey maps.

From 1856 to 1857 Shaw worked in partnership with R.A. Dowden in the architectural firm Shaw and Dowden. The pair's work in Geelong included the Colonial Bank, St Augustine's

¹ Fowler, Michael, *The New Zealand House*, Lansdowne, 1983, p.157; Knight, Hardwicke, and Niel Wales. *Buildings of Dunedin*. Dunedin: McIndoe, 1988, pp.225-226; Galer, Lois, *Historic Buildings of Otago and Southland*, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 1989, p?. There are only about 20 category one listed houses in Dunedin and as this is one of them.

² Certainly more of Shaw's buildings in Victoria are listed as historic places, with registration descriptions describing as 'distinguished', 'noted', 'pioneer' architect. See Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic>

³ New Zealand death registration for Joseph Lowe Shaw. 1906/7149.

⁴ Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/>; *The Colonist* (Sydney), 1 July 1840, p.2; *Hawkes Bay Herald*, 17 February 1890, p?

⁵ *Argus* (Melbourne), 29 March 1850, p.3.

⁶ Huddle, Lorraine. *Architects in Geelong in the 1840s and 1850s*. Research report, University of Melbourne, 1979, p?

Orphanage, and James Simson's residence Eumeralla. They were also responsible for the Woolbrook homestead at Teesdale.⁷ In 1859 Shaw designed Morongo, a grand bluestone homestead, for John Calvert. For his brother William he designed Allington (1872), a two-storied residence in Newtown noted for its striking polychromatic brickwork.⁸ Churches by Shaw included St Peter's Anglican Church at Geelong, and Presbyterian churches at Batesford, Shelford, Inverleigh, and Darlington.⁹

Around 1852 Shaw married Euphemia Jane Clibborn. She died in 1860 and the following year Shaw married Juliet Georgiana Wherland. The couple had a son, Francis.¹⁰ Shaw moved with his family to Dunedin in 1876, where one of his first architectural works was the Supreme Court Hotel (more recently the Grand Star Restaurant) in Stuart Street.¹¹ He was the architect of the extensive rebuilding of Chingford, then P.C. Neill's house, in 1877.¹² This house was demolished in 1968 and only the stables, designed by Mason and Wales in 1880, survive. In 1878 Shaw designed Edward Hulme Hart's residence in Wardlaw Street, a timber house with distinctive fretted bargeboards and other features in the style of Chingford.¹³ Other houses by Shaw included the house in George Street built for Robert Wilson (1881), a homestead for J.M. Ritchie at Cannington Station (1884), and Robert Chapman's large wooden house at Newington, Maori Hill (1887).¹⁴

Shaw was the architect of buildings for Donaghy's rope and twine factory in South Dunedin, including the surviving rope walk of 1878.¹⁵ He also designed the National Hotel in Great King Street (1882) and the National Bank at Tapanui (1888).¹⁶ He was architect to the Benevolent Institution, for which his designs included the Old Men's Home (1885).¹⁷ Juliet Shaw was treasurer to the committee of the Female Refuge, and in 1888 a new refuge in Forth Street was completed to Shaw's design.¹⁸

An Anglican, Shaw served on Diocesan Synod. His works associated with the Church included schoolhouses for St John's and St Matthew's churches (1883 and 1885), and the supervision of the removal of the old St Peter's church building at Caversham, and its re-erection as St Mary's, Mornington, in 1883.¹⁹

⁷ Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/>

⁸ Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/>

⁹ Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/>

¹⁰ Victorian death registration for Euphemia Jane Shaw, 1860; Victorian marriage registration for Juliet Georgiana Wherland and Joseph Lowe Shaw, 1861; Will and probate file for Juliet Georgiana Shaw. Archives New Zealand DAAC.9005.D249.398/8494.

¹¹ *Otago Daily Times*, 2 October 1876, p.1; 19 October 1876, p.3; 31 March 1877, p.1.

¹² *Otago Daily Times*, 12 June 1877, p.4; 10 September 1877, p.4.

¹³ *Otago Daily Times*, 17 May 1878, 3.

¹⁴ *Otago Daily Times*, 25 March 1881, p.4; 26 May 1884, p.1; 13 December 1886, p.3.

¹⁵ *Otago Daily Times*, 22 February 1878, p.3; 27 February 1878, p.3; 21 March 1878, p.3.

¹⁶ *Otago Daily Times*, 8 June 1882, p.4; 7 September 1882, p.3; 7 August 1883, p. 4, 9 March 1885, p.4; 5 December 1887, p.3.

¹⁷ *Otago Daily Times*, 30 July 1884, p.4; 9 December 1884, p.3; 9 February 1885, p.1, 27 March 1885, p.2; 26 May 1885, p.1; 19 June 1885, p.4.

¹⁸ *Otago Daily Times*, 21 December 1887, p.3; 25 June 1888, p.4.

¹⁹ *Otago Daily Times*, 7 August 1883, p.4; 9 March 1885, p.4; 1 August 1885, p.4; Knight, *Church Building in Otago* (1993), p.54.

Shaw served as Chairman of the Maori Hill Licensing Committee, and as a Maori Hill Borough councillor.²⁰ His later works included the wooden council chambers built in 1894.²¹

Joseph Lowe Shaw died at his home, Como, in Drivers Road, Maori Hill, on 23 September 1906, at the age of 85.²² He was survived by his wife and his son. Shaw's remains are buried at the Northern Cemetery along with those of Julia Shaw, who died in 1920.

David Murray
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Compiled from newspaper and other sources
[footnotes for archived records only]

²⁰ *Otago Daily Times*, 9 September 1880, p.2; 16 November 1881, p.2; 22 February 1882, p. 3; 5 June 1883, p.3; 10 September 1892, p.5.

²¹ *Otago Daily Times*, 19 June 1893, p.3; 23 February 1894, p.3; 18 May 1894, p.2; 22 September 1894, p.5.

²² *Otago Witness*, 26 September 1906, p.46; New Zealand death registration for Joseph Lowe Shaw. 1906/7149; Dunedin City Council Cemeteries Database, http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/facilities/cemeteries/cemeteries_search