



KAPONGA

Heritage Inventory



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Prepared by

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Amended and reprinted in June 2003

Cover: St John's Methodist Church, Kaponga
Photographed by Bronwyn Allerby, 1999

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Heritage Inventory

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to identify buildings and objects that have cultural heritage value to Kaponga. This document is an information resource recognising and providing information on the identified buildings and objects.

Methodology

The Kaponga Heritage Working Party was established to help prepare an initial list for consideration and to provide detailed local knowledge.

The Kaponga Heritage Working Party was made up of:

Clive Burrows
Tom Thompson
Morris Kissick
Norm Watts

Others who assisted were:

1. Chris Cochran, Conservation Architect of Wellington who provided specialist advice (including completion of the evaluations) and inspiration throughout the process.
2. Bronwyn Allerby, Policy Planner at South Taranaki District Council, who began the process for Kaponga, Manaia, Opunake, Outer Hawera, Patea, Waverley, and continued with the Eltham process.
3. Tracey Coles, Policy Planner at South Taranaki District Council, who continued with the process to its completion; and
4. Carolyn Vercoe, a student from Waikato University who carried out research during the 1998-99 summer holiday period.

An initial list of buildings and objects was prepared for this Inventory. Research was then carried out by the Kaponga Heritage Working Party. The list was progressively reduced as evaluation established whether or not the building/object met the criteria for inclusion. This is explained in the following section *Criteria for Selection and Assessment*.

This inventory was amended and reprinted in June 2003 as a result of the review of the set of heritage inventories. New information and amendments may have been made to existing entries, and new buildings and objects may have been added to this document.

Study Area

The study area includes the township of Kaponga and also includes the item on Manaia Road situated outside of the township.

Criterion for Selection and Assessment

Account has been taken whilst compiling the inventory, of the need to be as representative as possible of all aspects of the history of the area, of all buildings and object types, and of all periods from first settlement up to the present day.

The Historic Places Act 1993, section 23, lists 13 criteria for the assessment of historic places, and although these are not individually listed here, they are all (in slightly modified form) included in the criteria listed below.

Buildings and objects of cultural heritage value have been selected for inclusion (with expert assistance from Chris Cochran, Conservation Architect) in the inventory on the basis of the following criteria:

Historic

Whether the building reflects aspects of New Zealand or local history, and in respect to local history, whether it illustrates any of the themes of the development of the town, such as settlement history, farming, transport, trade, civic, cultural and social life.

Whether the building is associated with events, people or ideas of importance in national or local history.

Whether the building has potential for public education.

Architectural

Whether the building has architectural or artistic value, or is representative of a particular style of architecture or period.

Whether the style of the building contributes to the general character and sense of place of the town of Kaponga.

Technical

Whether the building has technical value for its structure, or for the choice or use of materials, or is representative of a particular building technique.

Symbolic

Whether the building is held in high public esteem, or has symbolic, commemorative or spiritual value.

Rarity

Whether the building has rarity value as a particular building type, or for its age or style.

Townscape

Whether the building has townscape value, not for its intrinsic architectural value but for the part it plays in defining a space or street, in providing visual interest, or for its role as a landmark.

Group Value

Whether the building is part of a group of buildings that, taken together, have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, proximity or use.

Rather than simply listing whether a building has any value under each of these headings, an attempt has been made to quantify that value. The criteria have been weighted, with maximum values for each site as shown below:

Historic Value	out of 5
Architectural Value	out of 4
Technical Value	out of 2
Symbolic Value	out of 3
Rarity	out of 2
Townscape Value	out of 2
Group Value	out of 2
Overall Cultural Heritage Value	out of 20

There is no cut-off design and building date for buildings included in the inventory. Modern buildings can contribute to townscape values and sense of place, and they are identified in the inventory for these formal qualities, as well as for architectural or technical excellence, rather than for historic value, this being difficult to assess from a close time perspective.

Note that the land on which a building stands is taken as being integral with the building. This is particularly important where a garden setting, fences, gates, graves or other associated structures contribute to the heritage values.

Site Assessment

All buildings were inspected from the outside or from current photographs. Interiors were inspected where possible on the site visits and these interior qualities were taken into account in assessing historical, technical and architectural values as appropriate. It is possible that important interiors exist in buildings that were unable to be inspected inside.

Naming of Buildings/Objects in Inventory

The various buildings and objects included in the inventory are referenced according to information supplied by the Kaponga Heritage Working Party members. It is accepted that entries in the inventory may also be known by other names or used for uses different from what the name indicates.

Limits to the Study

The inventory does not include a formal assessment of condition. However, if a building is in very good or very poor condition, this is noted in the description. Similarly, no account is taken of compliance with the Building Act 1991 or the ability of a building to resist earthquake forces.

Sites of significance to Tangata Whenua, whether of archaeological or traditional value, or waahi tapu, are not included in this study.

Sources

Copies of architectural drawings, newspaper articles, certificates of title, historical notes, and other resources have been used in preparing the inventory. This resource can be added to as further information comes to light. Sources are listed on each register sheet in this document.

Continual Updating of the Inventory

The inventory includes buildings and objects that are assessed today to be of significant cultural value to the town. Assessment will change with time as the criteria assume different values in the community, as the town changes, and as new buildings and objects are created. The inventory may be updated from time to time to include new information that comes to light.



Hebron (Kaponga Maternity Home), 3 & 9 Alamein Street **1917**

Use	Hebron House	Historic Value	2 out of 5
Materials	Timber, corrugated iron roof	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Not registered	Technical Value	1 out of 2
Valuation No	12190-151-00	Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Legal Description	Lots 4-7 DP 3494	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	- out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	5 out of 20
Reference	A1		

Description

Hebron House is a single storey building constructed of timber with a corrugated iron roof.

History

Hebron House was built in 1917 as a private hospital. It was built for Mrs H Sparks, wife of the foreman of the Kaponga Town Board. Mrs Sparks attended to the removal of children's tonsils.

Subsequent doctors who owned the building provided a range of medical services from general surgery through to maternity cases. Many and varied were the cases that were treated in the operating theatre, from the removal of teeth to major surgery. In 1945 the building was converted for use as a maternity unit.

From 1963 onwards the Kaponga community fought many attempts to close the Kaponga Maternity Hospital. Finally the battle was lost in 1986 and the facility closed its doors. In 1988 the old hospital was sold to the Alpha Foundation who set up an Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Unit for 15 to 25 year olds. The unit operated under the Alpha Foundation until 1989, when 'The Hebron House Trust' was formed to own and operate the facility. In November 1998, Hebron House went into recess and it faces an uncertain future.

In 2000, Hebron House was sold to the Choice Taranaki Charitable Trust, which is running a live-in rehabilitation unit for juvenile offenders.

Architect

Not known.

Builder

Not known.

Statement of Significance

Hebron House has important social value to the people of Kaponga, as it operated as a hospital for nearly seven years between 1917 and 1986, serving the local community in providing first general health care and later maternity care. Its medical usefulness continued in recent times as an Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Unit. The value of the facility to the people of the district was illustrated by a long campaign to keep it open as a Maternity Hospital.

The building has no particular architectural value, although it has technical design value as a purpose-built hospital from the pre-1920 period.

Sources

Tom Thompson, Kaponga Heritage Working Party
Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

Date

January 2000
Information added in November 2002.



St Mark's Anglican Church, 36 Egmont Street

1901

Use	Church	Historic Value	3 out of 5
Materials	Timber, corrugated iron roof, tiles on roof of bell tower	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Category II Register Number 2721	Technical Value	1 out of 2
Valuation No	12190-050-00	Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Legal Description	Pt Sec 3 Town of Kaponga	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	1 out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	8 out of 20
Reference	E1		

Description

St Mark's Anglican Church is a timber building with a corrugated iron roof. The roof of the bell tower roof is covered with tiles/shingles.

History

Clergy and lay people visited Kaponga from both Hawera and Eltham in the early days of the settlement of Kaponga. In 1887, Rev Robert Young was sent to Kaponga to investigate the establishment of a church. As a result of this visit, the people of Kaponga purchased a section (the site of the present Fire Station in Victoria Street) on which to build a church. A little later it was found that the section had been vested in a Methodist Trust. After the legal position was clarified, the Anglican community of Kaponga established their own place of worship and left the land and buildings on Victoria Street to be used by the Methodists.

Services were then held in the Athenaeum Hall until 1901 when St Mark's Anglican Church was built on its present site. The two sections were purchased for a total of £65.

In 1909 Kaponga was integrated into the Parochial District of Opunake, an association which still exists.

Since 1989 the church has been integrated into the All Saints Eltham.

Architect

Mr Swan, Acting Diocesan Architect

Builder

Mr Robertson, local tradesman

Statement of Significance

St Mark's Church has served the Anglican community of Kaponga and district for almost 100 years, with weddings, christenings and funerals, as well as regular church services, being held over this time. The building has very strong religious and social value for this reason.

While the original form and detail for the church is intact, the addition of a porch on the front in a modern idiom has detracted from the characteristic country church image of steep-pitched gable roof and open bell turret. The social importance of the building is reflected in its prominent site in the main street of the town, where it is seen as one of an important group of heritage buildings that includes the Sunday School Hall and St John's Church.

Sources

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

Date

January 2000



St Mark's Anglican Church Sunday School Hall, 36 Egmont Street 1911

Use	Hall	Historic Value	1 out of 5
Materials	Timber, corrugated iron roof	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
		Technical Value	1 out of 2
NZHPT Registered	Category II Register Number 2722	Symbolic Value	- out of 3
Valuation No	12190-050-00	Rarity	- out of 2
Legal Description	Pt Sec 3 Town of Kaponga	Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	1 out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	5 out of 20
Reference	E2		

Description

The Anglican Church Sunday School Hall is a timber building with a corrugated iron roof. The windows are pointed in the gothic style, the front three being seven-paned, and the side windows are double-hung windows with six panes. There is a modern concrete fence on the street frontage of the hall.

History

The Anglican Church Sunday School was at first held in a room at the Kaponga School. It was transferred to the Athenaeum Hall prior to the Parish Hall being built in 1911 and opened in July of that year.

The concrete front fence was donated by the late Miss Doris Swadling in memory of her parents, Mr and Mrs William Swadling who were staunch supporters of the church.

Architect

Mr Colin Walker, church warden

Builder

Mr Colin Walker, local builder

Statement of Significance

The social and religious significance of St Mark's Sunday School Hall is closely related to that of the parent church which it sits alongside. It is an ambitious building, reflecting the importance accorded to Sunday School teaching at the time.

The hall has remained relatively unaltered through nearly 90 years, its plain form enlivened by the gables of the main roof and the front porch, these being reflected in the pointed gothic openings of the windows. It shares a prominent site in the main street of the town with St Mark's Church, giving the hall modest townscape and group values.

Sources

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

Date

January 2000



Kaponga Centennial Memorial Plunket Rooms, 46 Egmont Street 1945

Use	Empty	Historic Value	2 out of 5
Materials		Architectural Value	2 out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Not registered	Technical Value	1 out of 2
Valuation No	12190-138-00	Symbolic Value	2 out of 3
Legal Description	Pt Sec 24 Town of Kaponga	Rarity	1 out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall	
		Cultural Heritage Value	9 out of 20
Reference	E3		

Description

Council records describe the building as being constructed of "Spanish style purpose" with concrete foundations, corrugated iron roofing and fibrous plaster linings. The style is however, more accurately known as Moderne, in fashion in New Zealand in the late 1930s. It appears to have had no alterations in its 60 year life, with panelled doors and door hardware for example still in place, making it an unusually authentic building of the period. Even the window box, appears to be original.

History

Council records state that the Kaponga Centennial Memorial Plunket Rooms building was established in 1945 as a war memorial whilst a local publication states that the building was built in 1940 for the Plunket Society as a New Zealand Centennial project by the local council of the day.

The Kaponga Plunket Society was established in 1925 to help young women with babies in the district, through the early stages of motherhood.

Architect

Not known.

Builder

Not known.

Statement of Significance

Despite present uncertainty about the date of construction (its firmly inscribed name Centennial Memorial suggests 1940), this is a special little building in Kaponga. It is a good example of the Moderne style with its horizontal banding and parapet, its strict geometric shapes, and nautical influence in the porthole. It is in extremely authentic condition for a building of its age. Its architectural interest is complemented by its historical purpose as Plunket rooms, and its commemorative role in marking the centenary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Sources

Council records

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

Date

June 2003



Front entrance to building

REMOVED



St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 17 Lorne Street **1910**

Use	Kaponga Scout Group Hall	Historic Value	1 out of 5
Materials	Timber, corrugated iron roof	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Not registered	Technical Value	1 out of 2
Valuation No	12190-115-00	Symbolic Value	- out of 3
Legal Description	Lot 4 DP 2290	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	4 out of 20
Reference	L1		

Description

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, no a scout hall, is a simple gable-roofed structure, rectangular in plan with a small entrance porch facing the street. It has gothic lancet windows, corrugated iron roofing and weatherboard wall cladding.

History

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church opened on Sunday 10 July 1910. The occasion was celebrated with two services and anthems were performed by the Kaponga and Awatuna choirs. The Rev J R Shore from Hawera officiated.

The church was built on a quarter acre section in Kuri Road (now Lorne Street). The section was purchased on 8 March 1910 for £40 from Mr George Death, a Livery Stable keeper originally from Eltham. A later newspaper report indicated that the total cost of the church site, building and furniture was £534.

By 1912 a new Home Missioner Mr C A Stewart was appointed. His ministry thrived until an argument arose over renting the manse paddock. It appeared the cow paddock was rented out by the church and the income put into the church' coffers. Mr Stewart felt that the income should be his as he was occupying the manse. The case nearly went to the Presbytery but the church relented and agreed to Mr Stewart's request. Later he changed his mind and said the church could keep the rent of 2/- per week.

In 1917 the Kaponga Home Mission Station, established in 1909, closed and the area became part of the Opunake Parish. From this point onwards, it appears the church gradually declined.

The building was sold to the Kaponga Masonic Lodge around 1979 to clear the remaining debt. The activities of the Kaponga Masonic Lodge ceased in Kaponga in 1988 and the building was sold for a nominal figure of \$1,500 to the Guides and Scouts organisations who used the building over the next ten years.

In 2001, the Guides and Scouts Association sold the building to a private owner. The building was then moved to Martinborough leaving the section empty.

Architect

Mr Gilman, Hawera

Builder

Mr McAneny, Hawera

Statement of Significance

St Andrew's Church served the Presbyterian community of Kaponga from 1911; later it served as the Masonic Lodge, and today it houses the Kaponga Scout Group, an interesting mix of uses that reflects changing social patterns in the town of Kaponga. It is a simple gable-roofed structure, enlivened by gothic lancet windows. Despite the changes of use, the building remains authentic in its exterior form. The building has modest technical value as a structure from the first decade of the 20th century still in reasonably authentic condition.

Sources

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*
R Watkins, Guides Taranaki

Date

January 2000

Information added in November 2002.



Power Station (3 Victoria Street) & Dam (1505 Manaia Road)		1915	
Use	Not known	Historic Value	2 out of 5
Materials		Architectural Value	- out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Not registered	Technical Value	2 out of 2
Valuation No	12121-113-00 (Dam) 12190-076-00 (Power Station)	Symbolic Value	- out of 3
Legal Description	Lot 1 DP 8895 (Dam) Pt Sec 61 Blk XI Kaupokonui SD (Power Station)	Rarity	1 out of 2
Reference	M1/V3	Townscape Value	- out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	5 out of 20

Description

Some of the remains of the power supply system include:

The old Mangatoki Dairy Factory and a concrete surge chamber on Victoria Street, Kaponga on the south side of the Kaupokonui River bridge; and

The remains of the Hydro Dam for the AC electricity generation plants on the property of Mr A J Hardcastle, Upper Egmont Street, Kaponga (west side of the street). However part of the dam was blasted away following severe flooding in the district, and only the abutments remain.

History

Work on the hydro scheme to use water taken from the Kaupokonui River 16 chains above the Eltham Road commenced in January 1915. A 18 chain long pipeline was constructed to a powerhouse.

The fee for using the water, which was returned to the river further down, was to be "one peppercorn per annum if demanded," ie a genuine peppercorn rental. Electricity was first made available to the town on 29 May 1916. Following this development, farms and residences adjacent to the town area petitioned the Town Board for supply, and consequently, with the financial assistance of the Kaponga Dairy Co, a second powerhouse was built in 1925 on the east side of the river just below the present dairy factory.

Kaponga was one of the first places in New Zealand to have electric motors and water heating on country reticulation.

In the years to follow, Kaponga continued to extend its reticulation and by the end of 1933, the whole rural area was completed. The generating plant was closed down in July 1944 when an agreement was reached with the Taranaki Electric Power Board to provide supplementary power to Kaponga. On 1 June 1963, the undertaking was sold to them for £46,000, bringing to an end a sizeable activity for a town as small as Kaponga. The provision of the generating plant was a tribute to the forward thinking of Kaponga's early administrators.

<u>Details of System of Supply</u>		Area: Approximately 80 square miles Number of Consumers: 380 Number of Accounts: 470
<u>Reticulation</u>		Town supply one-mile square 230 volts DC Primary distribution 3300 volts 50 cycles 3 phase AC Secondary distribution 400/230 volts 50 cycles $\frac{3}{4}$ phase AC
<u>Generation</u>	No 1	1/60 hp Boving turbine direct coupled to a 45 KW DC generator
	No 2	1/140 hp Boving turbine direct coupled to a I20 KVA 3300 volt 50 cycle 3-phase alternator
<u>Bulk Supply</u>		From the Taranaki Electric Power Board consisting of I/200 KVA 50 cycle 3 phase 6600/3300 volt transformer and controlling switchgear

Architect

Not known.

Builder

Kaponga Town Board

Statement of Significance

This complex of the power station building and remains of the hydro dam on the Kaupokonui River has important historic value for the town and district of Kaponga, providing power from 1916 for the use of the Mangatoki Dairy Factory and domestic users. The station has technical interest not only for the unusual form and construction of the building, which has a barrel-vaulted roof in concrete, but for the design and layout of the generating plant. Such extensive remains of hydro-generating plants are not common in New Zealand, making the complex an important industrial site.

Sources

Tom Thompson, Kaponga Heritage Working Party

Date

January 2000

Minor amendment made November 2002.



Kaponga War Memorial Hall, 57 Victoria Street

1954-1956

Use	Community Hall	Historic Value	1 out of 5
Materials		Architectural Value	1 out of 4
		Technical Value	- out of 2
NZHPT Registered		Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Valuation No	12190-128-00	Rarity	- out of 2
Legal Description	Sec 28 Town of Kaponga Blk XI Kaupokonui SD	Townscape Value	- out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	3 out of 20
Reference	V1		

Description

The Kaponga War Memorial Hall building is 7,650 square feet in total: 4,000 square feet in the main hall, with a stage opening of 25 feet wide, 16 feet high and 19 feet deep. The roof of the main hall is known as a mansard roof and is supported by four white steel girders.

History

The Kaponga War Memorial Hall was built between 1954 and 1956 to replace the Athenaeum Hall built in 1895. On 28 July 1953, 70 Kaponga residents attended a public meeting to discuss plans for the new hall and a committee of 20 was elected to oversee the project.

A total of £15,500 was raised, an average of £11.27 per head of population, and £7,500 above the target figure of £8,000. Fundraising had centred on a Queen Carnival involving the whole district, which culminated in a crowning ceremony on 6 July 1953.

The foundations of the new building were laid on the old Town Hall site by Christmas 1954, and the building was finally completed for the official opening and concert on 12 May 1956. The total cost was £32,000, which was supplied by a War Memorial subsidy. A Grand Ball was held to celebrate the opening of the new hall. Since it was built, the hall has been used for many social functions.

The 2002 urban upgrade has provided some alterations to the front of this building.

Architect

Messrs Graeme Laurenson and Associates

Builder

Moore Construction, Eltham

Statement of Significance

The Kaponga War Memorial Hall is a relatively modern building, but it has significance as the social centre of the town since 1956. It was built at the initiative of local residents, who raised much of the funding for it, and it has been well used for social functions. It replaced the Athenaeum of 1895, continuing the long history of public use of the site. In commemorating those who served and died in the Second World War, it has important symbolic value to the community.

While there is little architectural merit in the hall, it is nevertheless a building that is typical of its time, with the attributes of function and economy prevailing over aesthetics.

Sources

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

Date

January 2000

Information added in November 2002.



Old Library & Central Information Centre, 57 Victoria Street c.1911

Use	Unoccupied	Historic Value	2 out of 5
Materials	Timber weatherboards, corrugated cladding and roof, corrugated iron side walls	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
NZHPT registered	Category II Register Number 835	Technical Value	- out of 2
Valuation No	12190-128-00	Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Legal Description	Sec 28 Town of Kaponga Blk XI Kaupokonui SD	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	- out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	5 out of 20
Reference	V2		

Description

The old Kaponga Library has a rusticated weatherboard façade, a timber floor, and its side walls and roof are clad with corrugated iron.

History

On 6 June 1911 at a meeting of the Kaponga Town Board, it was decided to draw up plans and apply to the Minister of Internal Affairs for a grant to add municipal offices, a library, and cloakroom to the Athenaeum Hall. However, these plans never went ahead and in October of the same year, tenders were called for the library building. The lowest tender of £255 from Mr J Penny was accepted.

A stone set in the baseboard on the righthand end of the front façade reads 'In commemoration of the coronation of His Majesty King George V, 22 June 1911".

The building served the Kaponga community for many years as a Town Board Office, Library and Information Centre until the library moved premises. Since this time the building has had a number of users including the Chartered Accountancy firm P J Filbee, and more recently has become residential accommodation.

At present the old library building is empty, but is available to lease providing the quality of the building is maintained. The urban upgrade in Kaponga will provide this building with a new paint job.

Architect

Not known.

Builder

Mr J Penny

Statement of Significance

The old Library and Information Centre building stands on the edge of the footpath of Victoria Street, in front of but to one side of the Town Hall. It had a handsome Edwardian façade, with a bracketed cornice, and arched openings and keystones to the original door and window. However, the symmetry is upset today by a modern plate glass window on one side.

The building has served important social functions in the town as the library and later as an information centre. Various commercial and residential uses followed. The historic importance of the old Library is enhanced by the stone on the front façade commemorating the coronation of King George V.

Sources

Kaponga Town Board Meeting Minutes June 1911

Date

January 2000

Information added in November 2002.



St John's Methodist Church, 3 West Street

1911

Use	Church	Historic Value	1 out of 5
Materials	Timber, diamond-shaped shingles on roof, modern addition	Architectural Value	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered	Category II Register Number 2720	Technical Value	1 out of 2
Valuation No	12190-014-00	Symbolic Value	1 out of 3
Legal Description	Lot 2 DP 5543	Rarity	- out of 2
		Townscape Value	1 out of 2
		Group Value	1 out of 2
		Overall Cultural Heritage Value	6 out of 20
Reference	W1		

Description

St John's Methodist Church is a timber building with diamond shaped tiles on the roof. A modern foyer has been added to the north side of the building and the centre wall of the front façade features a round leadlight window depicting a yellow daisy-like flower. The building is one of a group of three church buildings situated on Egmont Street.

History

The first St John's Methodist Church was erected by voluntary labourers, and opened on 30 May 1889. In 1892, the church was lined and seating put in, at a cost of £30. The addition of the front porch cost £32. In 1910 a tender of £596.15.0 from Mr C Walker was accepted to build a new church and the old church was sold for demolition for £25. While the new church was being built, services were held in the Parish Hall.

The foundations for this church building were laid on 29 June 1911, and shortly afterwards a residence for the minister was built at 23 Egmont Street. It was used until 1935 and then sold. In 1927, the Awatuna Methodist church was bought. This building was then cut in half to move it to Kaponga where it was attached to the west end of the church at a cost of £300.

In 1935, when people were still suffering from the economic depression, the Kaponga Methodists could not afford a minister so they combined with the Eltham Methodists. The last minister in Kaponga was Rev John Nelson, (who is also remembered because he had a brother who was a dwarf, standing at only three feet tall.)

In 1976 the Kaponga and Eltham Methodists amalgamated with the Presbyterians of both towns to form a co-operating parish, with the minister residing in Eltham. The present Methodist church has been altered, and a foyer built on the north side. The Sunday School area and the foyer have now become a gathering place.

Architect

Not known.

Builder

Mr C Walker

Statement of Significance

St John's Church, built as the Methodist Church in Kaponga in 1911 (on a site first used by the congregation in 1889), has expanded its role over time to serve the Methodist and Presbyterian communities of both Kaponga and Eltham. It has strong religious and social value for this reason.

The building is architecturally plain, although its high gabled roof is embellished with a prominent round window with a hood mould, while the main door and lancet windows have gothic openings. A modern addition on the side, although different in architectural style, is relatively discreet in the front view of the church. St John's Church, along with St Mark's opposite, is one of a significant group of religious buildings in the main street of Kaponga.

Sources

Harding G J, Harding J P, Eliason W A, and Law D M (1982), *The Kaponga Story*

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