

Built Heritage Inventory

St Paul's Memorial Church



Location: Anaua Street, Whanganui

Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga

List Number: nil

Register Item Number:

79

Building Type:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreation
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Other

Significance:

- Archaeological
- Architectural
- Historic
- Scientific
- Technological
- Cultural

Thematic Context

- Early Settlement
- Residential
- Industry
- Agricultural
- Commerce
- Transport
- Civic/Admin
- Health
- Education
- Religion
- Recreation
- Community
- Memorials
- Military

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WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Physical Description: This small single storey church has a nave, a faceted chancel stepped in from the nave, and a three-storey bell tower to the south under which is the entry. The nave has a medium pitched gabled roof, while the chancel is hipped. The other wise solid bell tower has an open timber framed bellcote with a steep broach spire. At the corners of the solid section of the bell tower are simple pyramidal pinnacles. The interior has extensive painted and carved decorative elements and there is tukutuku panelling. The main items of furniture such as the pulpit, organ, lectern, choir stalls and altar also have matching decorative schema.

Other known names:

Current Use: Church

Former Uses:

Heritage Status: District Plan Class: Class A including interior

Architectural Style: Gothic revival **Date of Construction:** 1937

Materials: Cement rendered walls, timber joinery, aluminium tile roofing, shingle roofing to the spire

Registered owner:

Legal Description:

History: Pūtiki, the marae of Ngāti Tūpoho and Ngāti Tūmango, is situated on the east bank of the Whanganui River across from the Whanganui city centre is known as a place where all Whanganui tribes can link together. The traditional, finely carved meeting house, is one of a number of noteworthy meeting houses along the Whanganui River.

Noted carver, Hōri Pukehika, (1840? – 1932) a leader of Te Āti Haunui-a-Papārangi of the lower Whanganui River and one of the last of his people skilled in the old traditions, helped as a small boy carve the tekoteko on the meeting house on the marae, Te Paku-o-te-Rangi, which opened in 1877.

Associated with the marae in nearby Anaua Street is Saint Paul's Memorial Church Built in 1937, the church features some of New Zealand's finest modern Māori carving some of which uses pāua shell. The church includes a painted rib ceiling which, as with the interior's tukutuku panels, recalls Māori meeting houses, as well as, two beautiful etched-glass and two stained-glass windows.

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Architect/Designer:

History of changes:

Date Period: The church was built in 1937

Rarity / Special Features: While the exterior of the church is designed in a conventional neo-Gothic style, the interior is a rare cultural treasure with extensive carved, painted and woven surfaces that have created a richness of decoration and symbolism.

Representativeness: The church is one of a several highly significant decorated Maori churches. This church has a carved entry arch, dado rails, choir pews, chancel arch, and baptismal font with canopy, painted panelling on the ceiling and walls, carved and woven pulpit and lectern and communion table. There are two memorial stained glass windows with Maori references.

Diversity (Form and Features): The church has a traditional plan form with an entry under the tower leading to a nave and apsidal chancel, however the interior decorative elements show a rare and extremely high level of design and craftsmanship using traditional Maori carved, painted and woven elements.

Summary of Significance:

Archaeological Qualities

Not known.

Integrity: From a cursory visual inspection the building appears to be in a reasonable state of repair.

Context/Group Value: The building is associated with the nearby Putiki marae as well as other Maori churches throughout Wanganui and New Zealand.

Fragility / Vulnerability: As a timber building, it is vulnerable to fire.

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Architectural Qualities

The church has a common European church layout designed for a traditional processional entry from the exterior, but once having passed the entry doors, the interior design and decorated linings comes as a delightful and surprising contrast from what would usually be expected. The carved, painted and woven elements are what would normally be seen on and in a Meeting house, rather than in an Anglican church. This suggests an interpretation of the church as a Christian Maori Meeting house. The quality of the decorative work is extremely high as is the quality of the memorial stained glass windows, made by Whitefriars of England.

Historic Qualities

The building is associated with Sir Apirana Ngata who encouraged a revival of Maori arts and crafts and language throughout New Zealand. The decorative work in this church a direct result of his encouragement. The church is also associated with the Anglican church and its Maori wing, the local parishioners and clergyman who have served the church since 1937.

Scientific Qualities

The church can provide scientific interest in the use of materials, paints, toolwork and use of paua.

Technical Qualities

The church interior has a very high level of art and craftsmanship, which is widely recognised.

Cultural Qualities

As a church, the building is a focus of religious worship while also being associated with the Putiki Marae, a centre for local cultural activity. The church is associated with the renaissance of Maori arts and crafts as encouraged by Maori leader and MP Sir Apirana Ngata who considered retention of indigenous arts, crafts and language as essential to regain a sense of dignity, respect and a future for the Maori people.

Reference Source:

Associated Pictures:

Date of Survey: 2012

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