

GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL
HISTORIC HERITAGE ITEM RECORD FORM

HERITAGE ITEM NAME former Pukerau Presbyterian Church

ADDRESS 23 Landslip Valley Road, Pukerau

PHOTOGRAPH



(October 2021)

DISTRICT PLAN ITEM NO. n / a **HNZ LIST NO. & CATEGORY** n / a
(at time of assessment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION Lot 2 Block VI DP 182

GDC FILE NUMBER 3231287

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1894-95

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER/
BUILDER** WA McCaw, architect; David Cunningham, builder

STYLE Gothic Revival

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Single-storey building with rectangular footprint and gabled roof forms. Entrance porch at east end has concrete steps leading to double doors. Porch and nave are buttressed and lit by lancet-arched windows. Roof vents on gable ridge, casement and fanlight type windows in vestry extension at west end.

MATERIALS/STRUCTURE

Timber, cement plaster, corrugated metal.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

Building stuccoed, steeple removed, entrance porch erected and vestry extended (c.1960).

SETTING

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church stands on the west side of Landslip Valley Road, north of the railway line and the road's intersection with SH 1. The building is set back from the road but can be glimpsed from the gravel driveway that provides access to the site. The building is set against a backdrop of mature trees along the west, south and east boundaries of the property. The scheduled setting is limited to the immediate setting of the former church, rather than the land parcel as a whole.

HISTORY

Land at Pukerau was set aside for a church reserve when Sections 31 & 32 of Block VI Waikaka District, a portion of the Merino Downs Estate, were subdivided in 1887; the lot was located directly north of the Pukerau Railway Station. The local Presbyterian congregation met in the Athenaeum Hall before a church was erected over the summer of 1894-95. The timber structure featured buttresses, lancet windows and a bell steeple above the main entrance. A manse had already been built by this time; it was a square plan villa with a centre-gutter hip roof and two corbelled chimneys. Robert Gardner (1878-1936) was Home Missioner for the district when the church was built. The Rev Will conducted the first services in the church on 10 March 1895. A new manse was later built on Waipahi Highway in the 1940s and the church was stuccoed and extended in c.1960. On 3 April 2022 the church was decommissioned; it is currently listed for sale.

HISTORIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has historic and social significance for its association with the local Presbyterian congregation and, more generally, the development of the Presbyterian church in Southland.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has cultural and spiritual significance as a former place of Christian worship and community.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has architectural significance as a late Victorian Gothic Revival style church that was designed by William McCaw of Invercargill. In addition to running his own practice, McCaw (1863-1935) was appointed architect to the Southland Education Board in 1893 and instituted technical classes on behalf of the board in 1901. He was awarded £50 upon his retirement from that role in 1913 and was a stalwart member of the Presbyterian church.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has craftsmanship value for the evidence it can provide of late 19th century construction methods and materials. David Cunningham was a local builder who also built the Waikoikoi bridge in 1890. Cunningham lent his organ for use at the evening soiree held in the Athenaeum on the day the church opened; he also appears to have been the local undertaker around the turn of the 20th century, an occupation commonly followed by carpenters and cabinetmakers.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has contextual significance as a local historic feature.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

As the church pre-dates 1900, its site has potential archaeological values relating to the early development of the church property.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has overall heritage significance to Pukerau and to the district of Gore as a whole. The building has historical and social significance for its association with the local Presbyterian congregation and cultural and spiritual significance given its former ecclesiastical purpose. The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has

architectural significance for its Gothic Revival styling by Invercargill architect WA McCaw and craftsmanship value for the evidence it can provide of late Victorian building materials and methods. The former Pukerau Presbyterian Church has contextual significance as a local historic feature; its site has potential archaeological value.

REFERENCES

- *Mataura Ensign* 15 April 1887, p. 4; 17 April 1888, p. 5; 20 April 1888, p. 6; 17 August 1894, p. 5; 12 October 1894, p. 5; 30 November 1894, p. 3; 7 January 1897, p. 2; 28 March 1899, p. 3; 22 April 1899, p. 3; 19 October 1899, p. 2; 24 March 1900, p. 4; 20 August 1901, p. 2; 14 March 1903, p. 6; 7 April 1903, p. 2; 9 May 1911, p. 1; 5 April 1913, p. 9; 21 December 1918, p. 4.
- *Southland Times* 25 July 1892, p. 2.
- *Otago Daily Times* 3 June 1890, p. 4; 10 April 2022 (available online).
- *Otago Witness* 22 October 1891, p. 41; 21 March 1895, p. 23.
- *Clutha Leader* 21 June 1889, p. 6; 11 January 1895, p. 5.
- <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/archives/Page164.htm>
- <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc04Cycl-t1-body1-d5-d51-d41.html#name-429740-mention>
- <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/2474>
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REPORT COMPLETED

13 May 2022

AUTHOR

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Extent of scheduling, limited to immediate setting, former Pukerau Presbyterian Church, 23 Landslip Valley Road, Pukerau.



Church as built, 1895. Presbyterian Archives.