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Name: St Alban's Anglican Church & Cemetery
Status: Provisionally Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 10517
Municipality: Tasman Council

Location Addresses

496 NUBEENA RD, KOONYA 7182 TAS

Title References

177832/2

Property Id

6001098



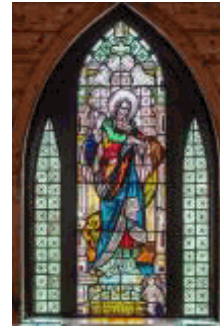
St Alban's church, cemetery and landscape
P Rigozzi



St Alban's Eastern view
P Rigozzi



St Alban's interior
P Rigozzi



1926 commemorative window
P Rigozzi



Chubb family graves 2018
P Rigozzi



Consecration of the cemetery by the bishop 1904
Ethel Chubb



Harvest Festival at St Alban's c1905
Marie Copping



St Alban's c1904 from Stratford Toney
Ethel Chubb

Setting: St Alban's Church is situated at the end of Henry Street at the eastern boundary of the small rural town of Koonya on the Tasman Peninsula. Set back 100 metres from the main road, the church is part of a group of three weatherboard buildings of similar age and construction; the other two being the former Rectory, and farm cottage, known as Stratford Toney (not registered). The surrounding landscape is of a pastoral character - a mixture of open paddocks with pockets of native vegetation and European plantings. The main town of Koonya is about 300 metres west of the church, having grown around a cluster of convict-period buildings relating to the former Cascades Probation Station (THR# 11209).

Description: St Alban's Church is a simple timber-framed Gothic style building on dressed sandstone foundations, with weatherboard walls and a corrugated iron roof. The nave is rectangular, oriented east-west, with a small open belfry (a 1990s addition made to house a bell donated by a parishioner) over the western end of the gabled roof. A small sanctuary at the eastern end of the building and a matching entrance porch at the western end repeat the form of the nave at a reduced scale, giving the building a symmetrical appearance. The four side windows and western entrance doorway have pointed arches. At the eastern end of the sanctuary is a stained glass window of tripartite lancets. The interior of the church is lined with natural-finished Baltic pine and has a number of memorial plaques around the walls. On either side of the sanctuary arch are wooden memorial plaques for men lost in World War I. There are two rows of simply-constructed pews on either side of a central aisle. A prominent stone font and lectern stand to the left of the altar rail.

A brick wall, columbarium along the road, belfry and an open deck at the western end of the church date from the 1990s (Sainsbury 2004, p18, 20).

A small cemetery is situated close to the church on the northern, eastern and western sides. It contains a variety of monument forms and styles dating from the Federation period to the present and contains a number of graves of early free settlers in the district. According to local anecdotal accounts, there are also a number of unmarked graves to the south-west of the church, some of which may be of convicts.

Associated Items: A number of items historically associated to the church are considered of heritage significance, providing an understanding of the evolution of worship in a rural community, and the meaning such places had to the region. This registration includes the following items:

- The stained glass sanctuary window installed in 1926, in memory of the Rev J H Wills – a rector of St Alban's who was tragically hit by a motor vehicle on the Port Arthur road in 1925. The tripartite window features a depiction of St Simeon and was made by AR Worrall of Sydney. The 1926 window appears to have been fitted in the existing window frame, which matches the nave windows (*Mercury* 24 June 1926 p3).
- The carved plaque for Theodore Chubb and a matching plaque to the left of the sanctuary for Tasman Paul was undertaken by London-born, Peninsula resident, artist and modeler George Garnet, whose work is represented in the Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery collections (pers. comm. P Rigozzi July 2018).
- The pews, altar, altar cross, sanctuary rail and two folding clergy chairs with cane seats, remain in the church. These items are shown in early photos of the church c1923 (pers. comm. P Rigozzi, July 2018).

History:

The Tasman Peninsula

From 1830 to 1877 the Tasman Peninsula served as the primary site of secondary punishment for Van Diemen's Land, offering natural resources and geographical isolation suitable for the containment of prisoners. Port Arthur Penal Settlement was established in 1830. During the 1840s and 1850s, a number of Probation Stations operated on the Peninsula, including the Cascades Probation Station at present day Koonya, the remains of which are located adjacent to St Alban's. During this time, entry to the Tasman Peninsula was forbidden without official permission from the Colonial Government (Hallam 2005, pp. 352-3; Tuffin 2005, pp. 285-6).

Closure and sale

Following its closure as a probation station in 1855, the Cascades Probation Station was run as a convict farm for some years before being abandoned. By the early 1880s the buildings were in a very poor state of repair and the decision was made to sell the site. The state-wide disbursement of public land and assets around former convict stations had an influence on the spread of populations and development of landscapes in Tasmania in the post-convict period, particularly on the Tasman Peninsula with its high density of convict sites. The built and natural landscapes of Koonya demonstrate the influence of the former convict landscape on the development of the town within the former probation station site (Hallam 2005, pp. 352-3).

Henry Chesterman and the development of Koonya

In 1882 the entire Cascades complex was purchased by Henry Chesterman, along with a substantial parcel of land. Chesterman planted an orchard and employed workers felling trees, splitting palings and demolishing buildings for the sale of materials in Hobart. The buildings in serviceable condition were used for residential and farm purposes. Chesterman retained the name Cascades (*Tasmanian Mail* 28 June 1884).

By 1900, despite the depression of the 1890s, Koonya had grown considerably and had most of the pre-requisites for a successful community – a jetty, shop, post office and telegraph, community hall, schoolroom and sale yards (Sainsbury 2004, pp. 3-4).

Early Church Services

During the 1880s, Anglican services were held in the schoolroom at Cascades, albeit infrequently at times due to a lack of clergy. In September 1887, the *Mercury* reported that the name of the local post office had been changed to Koonya and that a service had been held at Cascades for the first time in 'upwards of 12 months' (*Mercury* 6 Sept 1887 p3). A further service was held two weeks later and it was hoped that a full-time minister could be appointed to the Peninsula before long (*Mercury* 23 Sept 1887 p. 3).

Planning and Fundraising

Planning and fundraising for construction of a church began in 1894 with the formation of a building committee. At the first meeting, it was noted that the land for the church and cemetery, together with 'valuable building materials', had been donated by J R McClymont, the then owner of Cascades. However, the transfer of the land was not recorded until 1902, by which time Cascades was in the ownership of Edward Brown (Sainsbury 2004, p. 2).

Funds for the construction of the church were raised locally, with a Ladies' Sub-Committee being set up to raise funds 'from appropriate teas etc'. The sum of 15 pounds was promised by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, to be paid on completion of the building. Construction was contracted to Mr C Tatnell for the sum of 90 pounds. The sandstone for the foundations was donated by Edward Brown and most likely came from one of the former Cascades Probation Station buildings. The foundation stone was laid in December 1902 by Brown's daughter Cissie, who in 1905 married Mr E H Fazackerly at the first wedding in the church (Sainsbury 2004, pp. 3-4).

The church at Port Arthur (THR#6) had been destroyed by fire in 1884 leaving the Tasman Peninsula without a formal place of worship until St Alban's was constructed (*Tasmanian News* 31 Dec 1884 p2). On 6 March 1904, the church and cemetery was opened and dedicated to St Alban by the Right Reverend J E Mercer, Bishop of Tasmania. In the same year, a decision was made to build a rectory adjacent to the church on land donated by Mr and Mrs E Brown, which was also the site of the chaplain's house from the former

Cascades station. The rectory was used for the district clergy for many years and later as a private residence (Sainsbury 2004, pp. 3-4).

Alexander North (1858-1945)

It is of some interest that architect Alexander North, renowned in Tasmania for his church architecture, built himself a small retreat at Koonya around this time, and he was a founding member of the building committee. North was also for some time Warden of the Koonya Church during the period when services were held at Cascades. At the second meeting of the committee, a 'plan of proposed church together with estimates for same' was approved by the committee (Sainsbury 2004, p. 2). No mention was made of the origin of the plan and it is unclear what input, if any, North had into its design. Despite being well-proportioned with natural timber interior and simple lines, St Alban's bears little resemblance to churches known to have been designed by North (Maidment, ADB).

Additions and ongoing use

St Alban's Church forms part of the Anglican Parish of Sorell and Tasman Peninsula. With its small population, the Tasman Peninsula has had difficulty sustaining a full-time rector, and at times there have been problems finding available clergy. During the years of World War II, with many of the clergy serving as chaplains to the armed forces, services at many regional churches, including Koonya, were run by students who travelled by bus from Christ College. In more recent times, the church has often relied on lay readers from the local community. The Catholic community of Tasman Peninsula has never had its own building, and in 1979 it was agreed that St Alban's could be used for twice-monthly Catholic services; an arrangement that remains active (Sainsbury 2004 p. 18; pers. comm. P Rigozzi July 2018).

In 1996, the largest funeral ever held at the church (and anecdotally the largest ever on the Tasman Peninsula) was attended by around 1000 mourners following the tragic event at Port Arthur in which 35 people were killed by a lone gunman. The funeral was for Elizabeth Howard and Nicole Burgess; cousins and daughters of local Koonya families. The service was attended primarily by locals and became an impromptu focus for community grief and unity. At that time, and in the years since, St Alban's has provided a place for private reflection on the lasting impact of this event on the Tasman community (pers. comm. P Rigozzi July 2018).

Comparative Analysis

A number of timber Gothic style churches are represented in the Tasmanian Heritage Register, among which are St Stephen's Anglican Church at Penguin (THR#720); St Olave's Anglican Church at Stony Rise (THR#1358); Turner's Marsh Catholic Chapel and Cemetery (THR#8349); St Fursaeus' Catholic Church and Former Convent at Zeehan (THR#10750); Parattah Uniting Church (THR#10455); and St Davids at Port Arthur (THR#6). Of these examples, the majority are of a larger scale, as would be expected with larger populations, and most have a higher level of applied decoration.

Unlike many other small rural settlements and towns across Tasmania that have multiple church buildings, the Tasman Peninsula has two timber church buildings, St Davids at Port Arthur and St Alban's, Koonya. St Alban's, Parattah Uniting Church and St Davids are at the simpler end of the scale, being representative of the many small churches that were built by relatively poor communities and small congregations in sparsely populated areas. On the Tasman Peninsula alone, similar churches are known to have existed at Taranna, Saltwater River, Koonya Back Road, Stormlea and Nubeena.

Compared to Parattah Uniting Church with its rectangular double-hung sash windows, St Alban's with its pointed-arch windows and doorway is arguably a more typical representative of the Gothic style, although it does not have the high level of external fretwork and applied decoration that is common in many of these churches. Both churches have had later additions – Parattah having a post-World War II skillion addition and St Alban's having a 1990s timber deck at the rear entrance and belfry. However, in both cases the original design of the building is easily identified. The cemetery at St Alban's is a strong visual element that makes the layered history of the place readily accessible.

REFERENCES

- Hallam, M. 'Tasman Peninsula', A Alexander (ed) (2205) in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, University of Tasmania, Hobart pp. 352-3.
- Harman, M. 'Dog-Line at Eaglehawk Neck' in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/D/Dog-line%20at%20Eaglehawk%20Neck.htm accessed 11 Dec 2018.
- Maidment, J. 'North, Alexander (1858-1945)' in Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/north-alexander-7859>, accessed 11 Dec 2018.
- Ethel Chubb, Koonya, 1900-1930, Photograph album with captions. Scanned copies of originals held by T and R Kingston, Newman's Creek Tasmania.
- Marie Copping, Koonya, circa 1970-1980, diary of recollections containing historic photographs.
- Sainsbury, Kate (2004) *Commemoration of the Centenary of St Alban's Church, Koonya*, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.
- Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office, 'Minutes Book of Church Building Committee, Vestry Meetings and Annual Meeting of Parishioners at Koonya', NS373/1/41.
- Tuffin, R. 'Port Arthur Penal Settlement' A Alexander (ed) (2205) in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, University of Tasmania, Hobart p. 285-6.

A photograph album belonging to Ethel Chubb is a valuable resource for historic images from the early days of St Alban's. Ethel was the daughter of Frederick and Elizabeth Chubb who built Stratford Toney, a weatherboard cottage on a small holding close to the church. Elizabeth Chubb was a driving force on the Ladies' Committee.

A diary of personal recollections, newspaper clippings and photographs put together in the 1970s by local shopkeeper Marie Copping documents the history of St Albans.

Statement of Significance:
(non-statutory summary)

St Alban's Church and Cemetery demonstrates the importance of religious practice to the development of small, relatively isolated rural communities in Tasmania in the nineteenth century. St Alban's demonstrates the development of the Tasman Peninsula post-convict era, and the construction of community buildings as a focus for small settlements. St Alban's is a modest but highly intact weatherboard Gothic style church built in the Federation period. Constructed from locally milled hardwood, imported Baltic pine and materials salvaged from the remains of the nearby penal settlement, it is a good example of the simple, low-cost places of worship that were built by small, isolated and relatively poor rural communities with funds raised by the community.

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

St Alban's Church and Cemetery at Koonya demonstrates the importance of religious practice to the development of small rural communities in Tasmania following the cessation of convict transportation, and the construction of community buildings as a focus for small settlements. The state-wide disbursement of public land and assets around former convict stations had an influence on the spread of settlement in Tasmania in the post-convict period, particularly on the Tasman Peninsula due to the density of convict sites. Post-1880 development of the Tasman Peninsula demonstrates the tendency for communities of free settlers to develop around former penal settlements, using the pastures, roads, buildings, and building materials produced by the convict system as a first foothold. Memorials in the cemetery demonstrate the impact on this small community of events that have had a profound influence on the Tasmanian psyche, notably the Port Arthur Massacre.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

St Alban's Anglican Church is a modest weatherboard Gothic style church built in the Federation period. Utilising locally milled hardwood, imported Baltic pine and materials salvaged from the remains of the nearby penal settlement, it is a good example of the simple, low-cost places of worship that were built by small, isolated and relatively poor rural communities through funds raised by the community. St Albans Anglican Church and Cemetery and the surrounding area has maintained an integrity of curtilage and setting in the rural landscape of Koonya. The interior of St Albans has high integrity, its fittings, including memorial plaques and stained glass windows, and furniture changing little since it opened in 1902, demonstrating community memorialisation in an isolated rural setting.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

No Data Recorded

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

No Data Recorded

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

No Data Recorded

PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.

Note

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for 'St Albans Anglican Church & Cemetery', #10517 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of FR 177832/2 the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line and described below.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise described, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).

Koonya Beach

Parks & Wildlife parcel

FR 177832/1

FR 36999/1

FR 163092/1

Lot 1
1.084 ha

FR 36999/4

FR 177832/2

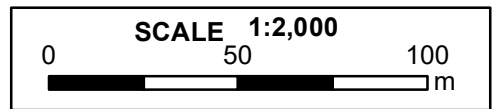
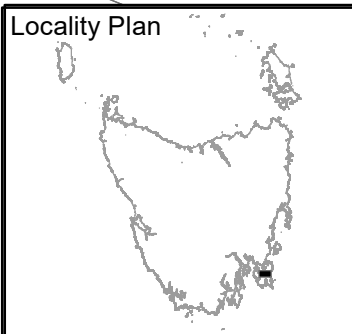
Road parcel

Nubeena Road

FR 211610/3

FR 163092/1

Locality Plan



TASMAP: TARANNA - 5623 **GRID:** MGA94 / ZONE 55 **DATUM:** AHD **CONTOUR INTERVAL:** N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	10517	AW	A.ROBERTS	9.7.21



**St Albans Anglican Church
& Cemetery**
496 Nubeena Road, Koonya

CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General:
Date Registered: 9.7.21

CPR
11073