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Name: St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery
Status: Provisionally Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 12018
Municipality: Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council

Location Addresses

1 SALLY PEAK RD, BUCKLAND 7190 TAS
SALLY PEAK RD, BUCKLAND 7190 TAS

Title References

241553/1
241556/1

Property Id

5977988
5977902



Stained glass window
DPIPWE, 2010



St John the Baptist,
Buckland
DPIPWE, 2018



Former Schoolhouse,
now demolished
TAHO



Church & Cemetery
DPIPWE, 2014

Setting: St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery is situated in the south eastern Tasmanian town of Buckland, on Sally Peak Road, adjacent to the Tasman Highway. The church, cemetery and earlier burial ground are located on the western side of the township, and are surrounded by mature non-native plantings. The c.1846 Church Rectory survives to the south of the Church along Sally Peak Road, and is separately entered in the Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR #1499).

Description: St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery at Buckland comprises a Victorian-era Gothic Revival church with cemetery surrounding the building and an earlier burial ground on a separate title across Sally Peak Road. A collection of associated items provenanced to the main church building also forms part of this registration. Also included within the registration is the site of the former school-house, believed to have been located north of the church, on now vacant land fronting Sally Peak Road.

c.1846 St John the Baptist Anglican Church: This is a highly intact Victorian-era Gothic Revival sandstone church with a prominent steeply pitched gabled roof, stone buttresses, and lancet windows with intricate stained glass. The separate articulation of the nave, chancel, vestry and porch; the substantial steeply pitched roof; and some fidelity in Gothic detailing were in contrast to a picturesque use of Gothic elements in churches constructed in the colony previously and indicate an early realization of the Gothic Revival in Tasmania. (Ratcliff, 2015 p.2165). The building sits on dressed sandstone foundations and comprises a rectangular nave, chancel with entrance porch, and vestry on the southern side of the chancel. The roof was replaced in 1930 and is clad in 'fibrolite' imitation tiles (*Mercury*, 27 October 1930 p.3) whilst the western elevation contains a belfry in stone with gabled capping. The interior of the church is largely original and retains a high degree of integrity. It retains its sanitary dado, polychromatic paint scheme and original encaustic floor tiles attributed to Minton & Co. of Staffordshire in the chancel (Oakman, 2014 p.19). Exposed timber roof framing dominates the ceiling, whilst a hand-stenciled motif has been applied atop the main window with 'Ye Are My Friends If Ye Do Whatsoever I Command You'. A substantial timber Gothic-style door with ornate hinges forms the main entrance.

The church's stained glass windows are arguably some of the finest in the state. Of particular note on the eastern elevation is a triple window behind the altar depicting the life of St John and the crucifixion of Jesus, executed by Irish glass artist, Michael O'Connor, London, c.1848. This is said to be a rare depiction of the beheading of St John (www.stainedglassaustralia.wordpress.com). The smaller stained glass windows in the nave are two lights wide, dating from 1850 to 1919 and create a harmonious 19th century tribute to earlier medieval examples (Ratcliff, 2015 p.2165).

c.1846 St John the Baptist Anglican Cemetery: This cemetery adjacent to the Church is comprised of two portions: the older section next to the church building is surrounded by a dressed and capped

sandstone boundary fence, whilst the newer unfenced section is located to the east. A crematorium wall is located in the centre of the northern section of the cemetery adjacent to the church. The cemetery contains some fine and very notable examples of colonial-era stone carving.

c.1840s Early burial ground: An earlier burial ground with some headstones survive on a separate title across Sally Peak Road and is surrounded by mature exotic and native plantings. Some fine examples of colonial stonemasonry survive on this site.

The exact number of burials in the entire cemetery is unknown, however the first burial, in August 1846, was that of infant William Lazenby who died aged five days old (pers. comm., Martin Ferris, 2020). There were two deaths recorded at the Prossers Plains (later Buckland) Probation Station (Tuffin, 2006 p.25). It is possible these two prisoners were buried in either the early burial ground or the cemetery surrounding the church, although it is difficult to confirm this.

Associated items: A number of items provenanced to the church building are considered of heritage significance, providing an understanding of the evolution of worship in a rural community, and the meaning of such places to the region. This registration includes the following elements: INSERT ONCE FACULTY IS AVAILABLE.

Landscape setting: The church is currently accessed from Sally Peak Road by a circular loop driveway, although a 1946 aerial photograph confirms this is not original. The church grounds contain a number of mature exotic trees including a pinetum of mature pine trees, an arbutus and red holly (Oakman, 2014 p.14). The cemetery on the separate title across the road also contains mature trees, both native and exotic.

Site of c.1846 School-house: Historic images suggest a stone building, now demolished, was located north-east of the main church building. The building was a ruin in the early 20th century and a 1946 aerial photograph confirms it was no longer standing by that time. The site of the school may contain sub-surface footings, features and artefact deposits that have the potential to provide information regarding the relationship between the church and the school, the role religious education played in the life of Buckland, and evidence of the daily life of those associated with St John the Baptist not captured in the documentary record.

History:

For thousands of years the area now known as Buckland was traversed by bands within the Oyster Bay tribe during seasonal patterns of movement in search of food (Ryan, 1986 pp.16-17). Prior to European occupation, the region had been managed by the Tasmanian Aborigines using traditional land management practices, including low density burning. Europeans in the early colonial era viewed the resulting landscapes as well suited to stock raising and cropping.

Early European tracks into the Prossers Plains area were cut by ex-convict Henry Rice in 1818, and then shortly afterwards surveyed by Assistant Surveyor Scott in 1821 (Lester, 1994 p.10). Large estates were developed by local settlers, and a watch house erected. In concert with other aspirational rural communities, plans were initiated to erect a church in Prossers Plains, now known as Buckland. As part of a plan to spread the faith amongst the convict colony, Anglican Bishop Nixon dispatched Archdeacon Marriott to Britain to recruit clergy, and in 1846 a young 24 year old minister Rev. Frederick Holdship Cox (1821-1906) arrived in Hobart.

Sent to the Prossers Plains area, Cox set about designing a place of worship, and a residence for himself (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cox-frederick-holdship-1930>). He clearly had little faith in local architects, so sought inspiration from the Ecclesiological (formerly the Cambridge Camden) Society which had a passion for ecclesiastically accurate church design and services. One such plan was for St John the Baptist Church in Cookham Dean, Berkshire, on which St John the Baptist Buckland is said to be based. Churches like the Cookham Dean church heralded the early development of the Gothic Revival movement in England. Despite marrying the daughter of a local landowner, Cox's relationship with locals was fraught. He bemoaned: 'the difficulty in getting work done, and that masons thought it was *utterly impossible* to cut the mouldings and mullions in the windows in stone every one trying to persuade him to have them in wood!' (Courier, 20 September 1848 p.4). To fellow ecclesiastical architecture enthusiasts he declared that colonial architects and builders were virtually hopeless:

'I have employed no architect, for architects here are anything but ecclesiastical; nor contractor, for contractors here, or at least church contractors, are proverbially untrustworthy ... I have been not only secretary and treasurer, and actually master of all employed, but architect and clerk of works'.

Cox concluded by proudly proclaiming his work was to be the most 'church-like church' in the colony (*The Ecclesiologist*, Volume 1 p.87). His criticisms did not go unnoticed in Van Diemen's Land. One correspondent to a local newspaper wryly noted they had 'never met a more precious specimen of a parson's stupidity' and that the undermining of local architects and builders was nothing more than 'twaddle' (*Colonial Times*, 3 October 1848 p.3). The construction of the church was not without further problems: a contest over funds used to erect the building divided the community, and two locals on opposing sides ended up in the Supreme Court on assault charges. Furthermore a labourer, Miles Morgan, who was transported in 1822 per *Caledonia* (2), was charged with theft of tools from the construction site. Although found not guilty, court reporting notes he was at the church site to provide an inscription on a tombstone. Proceedings provide an insight into others working on the project: James Weeks was foreman of works, William Lamont one of the stone cutters and Mr Deakin the blacksmith on site (*Colonial Times*, 27 April 1847 p.4).

In Britain, Rev. FH Cox's father, also an Anglican minister, set about fundraising for his son's parish in the antipodes. At meetings of the Ecclesiological Society he shared coloured drawings of encaustic tiles he had commissioned (*Bucks Gazette*, 22 April 1848 p.3). A year later a lithograph of the exterior elevation was put

on display, as well as the working drawings of the interior of the church 'recently erected under the superintendence of his son, the Rev. FH Cox, a member of this Society' (*Oxford University, City and Country Herald*, 14 July 1849 p.3).

Finally, the following summer, the Church of St John the Baptist was consecrated and the adjacent school-house opened by the Bishop of Tasmania (*Launceston Examiner*, 12 January 1850 p.6). Press coverage noted the christening font which had been donated by the Archdeacon of Hobart Town. Communion plate of silver were designed by British architect William Butterfield and donated to St John the Baptist by Rev. FH Cox's former parishioners in England. The church was heralded as a new era in ecclesiastical architecture in the colony (*Courier*, 23 January 1850 p.2).

Travelling reporter TPH Jones visited Buckland some years later:

'The population of the township does not exceed 100. The church, dedicated to St John the Baptist, is a spacious Gothic building of stone, 37 years old, capable of seating 300. It has a nice chancel, and numerous stained windows commemorative chiefly of deceased persons ... the cushions and drapery are beautiful exhibitions of the art of needlework and artistic arrangement of colour, principally from the deft fingers of Mrs Fred Mace, of Brockley. For a remote country churchyard that of Buckland is singularly adorned in the matter of tombstones, mainly those of Spring Bay stone, sculptured by Mr Robinson, of the Public Works Department' (*Mercury*, 26 July 1884 p.2).

The needlework alluded to in this article was likely that of Emma Lyttleton Mace, nee Davies, who had married Frederick Davies in 1875. She was the daughter of Archdeacon Rowland Davies (TAHO, RGD37/1/35 #200). It is unclear if her handiwork has survived as part of the church furnishings.

St John the Baptist has undergone a series of repairs. In 1904 stained glass artist Walter Trowbridge, of Hobart, repaired the large stained-glass window 'to the complete satisfaction of all concerned. He also gave an evening's entertainment with one of his best phonographs, in aid of the church repairs, which was well attended' (*Mercury*, 31 March 1904 p.2). The following year the roof was replaced with new shingles (*Mercury*, 22 February 1905 p.7). By 1930 the roof had been repaired again, shingles replaced with asbestos sheet 'fibrolite' tiles (*Mercury*, 27 October 1930 p.3).

In 1938 Rev. Mervyn Maddock took over as clergyman for the district of Buckland, arriving with his wife Thelma and four small children, one of them being Beatrice (Bea) Maddock (1934-2016), who went on to become one of Australia's most acclaimed printmakers of the 20th century (QVMAG, 2011, p.40). The family lived at the nearby Rectory (THR #1499). Rev. Maddock took a keen interest in the history of Anglicanism across Tasmania, having served in some of the state's oldest churches. It is arguably partly due to his efforts that St John the Baptist became a tourist attraction. Merchandise depicting the church and its windows in particular has since been included on postcards, tea-towels, spoons and booklets. It is likely the Buckland church is the most depicted Tasmanian church, other than the famous Port Arthur church ruins. The remains of St John the Baptist school-house seem to have been demolished by 1946 (1946 aerial, Lands Tasmania).

Despite popular mythology in the 20th century, the stained glass windows of St John the Baptist are contemporary to the construction of the church. No evidence has been uncovered in British or Australian archives to support the widely reported error that they are medieval (www.stainedglassaustralia.wordpress.com).

References:

- <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cox-frederick-holdship-1930>
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Goad, P. & Willis, J. (eds) 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* Cambridge University Press.
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Launceston Examiner, 12 January 1850.
Martin Ferris, Maureen. Personal communication, 2020.
Oakman, W. 2014, *Preliminary Conservation Assessment and Asbestos Inspection, Church of St John the Baptist, Buckland, Tasmania*.
Oxford University, City and Country Herald, 14 July 1849.
QVMAG, 2011 *Bea Maddock, Catalogue Raisonne Volume 1: 1951-1983*.
Ratcliff, E. 2015 *A Far Microcosm: Building and Architecture in Van Diemen's Land and Tasmania 1803-1914*.
www.stainedglassaustralia.wordpress.com
Tasmanian Mail, 1 December 1926.
Weekly Courier, 10 October 1918 & 15 May 1929.

**Statement of
Significance:**
(non-statutory
summary)

St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery, Buckland mark the start of the 19th century Gothic Revival movement in Van Diemen's Land, and the role of the Ecclesiological Society in the development of church architecture in the colony. The site of the former school-house has the potential to provide information regarding the relationship between the church and the school, the role religious education played in the life of Buckland, and evidence of the daily life of those associated with St John the Baptist not captured in the documentary record. The main church building is representative of a class of place beyond the ordinary: that is, a fine Gothic Revival church built of sandstone, then the predominant building material in the burgeoning colony. The intricate stained-glass windows and carved headstones are particularly fine examples of British/Australian glass artistry and colonial stonemasonry. The church has meaning to the wider population of Tasmania as an historic church famous for its stained glass windows, sandstone construction, early cemetery and park-like surroundings. St John the Baptist has a special association with Rev. FH Cox (1821-1906), the original coordinator of its design, construction and contents. It also has particular aesthetic qualities that set it apart from other churches, inspiring drawings, paintings, photography and tourist souvenirs.

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 John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery Buckland, is significant as among the first Gothic Revival church buildings in Van Diemen's Land. The church shows key principles of ecclesiastical design as espoused by the Ecclesiological Society, based in Britain, and the Society's influential role in the global dissemination of the Gothic Revival. The church and its associated items, cemetery and earlier burial ground reflect the importance of worship and in particular, the role of established religion in developing social and spiritual connections in regional settlements across Tasmania. Erected in the 1840s, the Anglican Church's presence on the site is not just an historic record of Buckland's religious life, but also demonstrates, despite the geographical distance, the influence the Anglican Church in Britain had on the religious philosophy and built heritage of the Anglican church in Van Diemen's Land.

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.

The site of the former St John the Baptist School-house may contain sub-surface footings, features and artefact deposits that have the potential to provide information regarding the relationship between the church and the school, the role religious education played in the life of Buckland, and evidence of the daily life of those associated with St John the Baptist not captured in the documentary record. Prior to the establishment of the state Education Department in 1885, the Tasmanian education system was dominated by religious and independent schools whose archival records are patchy, emphasising the importance of relatively undisturbed sites like the St John the Baptist school-house.

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

St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Buckland is a fine, highly intact example of a colonial-era sandstone church and which marks the emergence of the Gothic Revival in Tasmanian architecture. The church has a highly intact exterior with Gothic Revival forms, elements and details, including the articulation of the liturgical components of the plan, steeply pitched roof, belfry and stonework. St John the Baptist is also an example of the tradition of siting ecclesiastical buildings in prominent, often elevated positions. The church interior is highly intact and notable due to its original pews, encaustic tiled floor and detailed stained-glass windows. The suite of associated items contained within St John the Baptist is a fine collection of ecclesiastical furniture and materials contained within a rural Tasmanian church.

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

Intricate stained glass windows and finely carved headstones are particular features of St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery, Buckland. They demonstrate a high level of skill and technique in their respective fields of 19th century colonial stonemasonry and British and colonial/Australian stained glass work.

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.

Anglican Minister Rev. Frederick Holdship Cox (1821-1906) has a strong association with St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Cemetery, and ecclesiastical collection, having contributed to its design, erection and contents. He is notable for being instrumental in the introduction of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical design to Van Diemen's Land and later became first Dean of St David's Cathedral in Hobart.

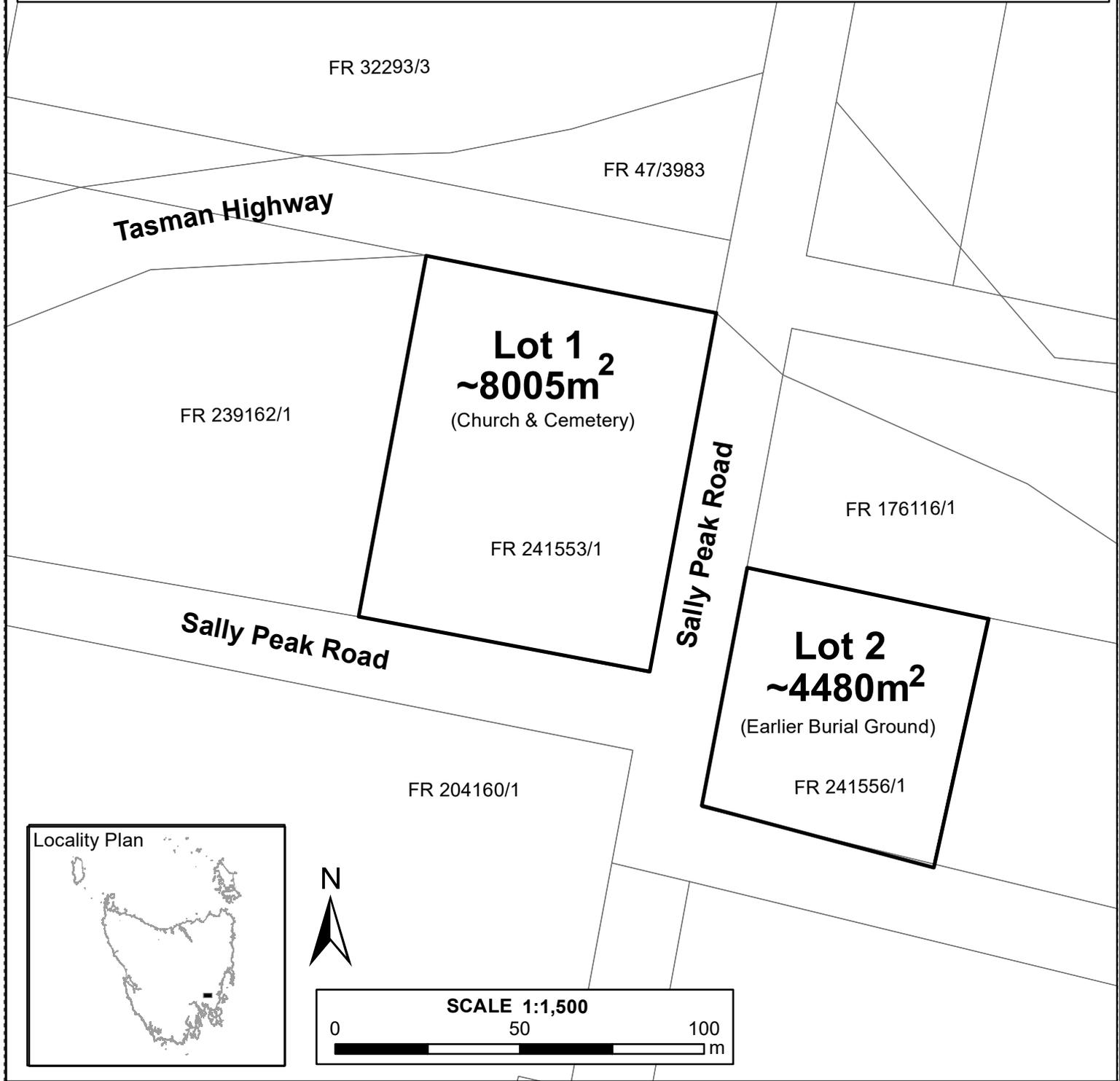
h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

St John the Baptist Anglican Church exhibits aesthetic significance which is beyond the ordinary having inspired artists and photographers for over a century and a half. The picturesque qualities of St John the Baptist Anglican Church and Cemetery have been captured in drawings, paintings, photography and tourist souvenirs, largely focusing on the combination of sandstone and stained glass, but also as an aesthetic reminder of 19th century churches in Britain.

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. Lots 1 & 2 represent the registered boundary for 'St John the Baptist Anglican Church & Cemetery', #12018 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole parcel of FR 241553/1, the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line and described below.
3. Lot 2 is the whole parcel of FR 241556/1, the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line and described below.
4. All boundaries are parcel boundaries, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).



TASMAP: BUCKLAND - 5428 **GRID:** MGA94 / ZONE 55 **DATUM:** AHD **CONTOUR INTERVAL:** N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	12018	AW	A.ROBERTS	30.6.21



**St John the Baptist
Anglican Church & Cemetery**
1 Sally Peak Road, Buckland

PREPARED BY
HERITAGE TASMANIA

CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General:

Date Registered: 7.7.21

**CPR
11069**