Auckland Council District Plan (North Shore Section)
Proposed Plan Change 38

Proposed New Item

Appendix 11A: Schedule of Buildings, Objects and Places of Heritage Significance

Name: St George’s Presbyterian Church
Address: 2 The Terrace Takapuna [corner Anzac Avenue and The Terrace]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>DP Map</th>
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<tr>
<td>546</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>26 26A</td>
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Material 1: Condition: Cultural Heritage:
Material 2: Integrity: Streetscape:

Construction Dates
From: 4 April 1964 foundation stone laid To: 20 February 1965 dedication

Alteration Dates:
Legal Description: Pt Lot 1 DP 2753 & Pt Allot 79 Parish of Takapuna
Zoning: Residential 4A

Architect/Designer/Contractor:
Thorpe Cutter Pickmere and Douglas

Architectural Style:
Post War modern
Significant Elements:
St George's has a square floor plan with a virtually windowless red brick podium, which is topped with a folded plate roof [described at the time as a hyper-paraboloid roof], which appears to float above it. The roof design provides a flexible floor plate without columns and four large triangular glazed walls, the west wall contains multicolored glass, the north wall the Cross of St Andrew and the south wall the Cross of St George. To the east, a porte-cochere faces The Terrace and above this a series of stained glass panels designed by Auckland artist Pat Hanly depicting the figure of Christ surrounded by biblical verse and Christian symbols.

Part of the original plan was the Peter Beere Lounge and the Lex Kernohan Hall. These were constructed at a later date.

Extent of Listing:
Entire exterior of St George's Church Complex (Includes the Peter Beere Lounge and Lex Kernohan Hall)

History:
In the early days Takapuna's Presbyterians were served by visiting ministers from Devonport, the first closely settled part of the North Shore.¹ Records prior to 1896 are sparse but by September of that year services were being held in Lake Hall and a committee formed the following year. A Sunday School was established soon after and, by the turn of the century, a two acre site had been secured for the construction of a church, the foundation stone for which was laid on 26 April, 1902.² Opened three months later, the first St George's Church seated a congregation of 200 and had a schoolroom for 100 scholars.³

When the Auckland Harbour Bridge was opened, in May 1959, it became apparent that a new St George’s Church would be needed to cater for its membership which had increased from 246, in 1952, to 390 in 1964.⁴

A new building to accommodate a congregation of 350 was designed by the well known architectural firm of Thorpe Cutter, Pickmere and Douglas, whose ecclesiastical works include: Anglican Church, Tokoroa (1953); St Mary’s Church, Northcote (1963); and the Roman Catholic Churches in Howick (1963) and Vermont

It was Kenneth Douglas who initially offered the services of his firm which, after consideration by the building committee and others, were accepted. Having seen the sketch plans, the then minister, Lex Kernohan, said “I like it very much, but now I have to convince session”. It seems that session were quite happy with the contemporary church design which formed the centre-piece of a three stage building plan, later involving the Peter Beere Lounge (1973) and the Lex Kernohan Hall (1980).

On 4 April, 1964, the foundation stone for the new church was laid by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Rev. J.S. Murray, and, by August of that year, a new spire had been hoisted into place over the partially completed building. Prior to the opening and dedication, on 20 February 1965, the church was visually enhanced by the addition of memorial windows. The East window, designed by artist Patrick Hanly in consultation with architect, K. Douglas, and the Building Committee, was erected as a memorial to the late Rev. Professor S. F. Hunter, a scholar of Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek and former member of St Georges. The window, depicting the figure of Christ surrounded by traditional Christian Symbols, was presented to the church by Rev. Hunter’s daughters, Dr. Margaret Gatman and Mrs. M. D. Oliver.

A very large congregation attended the official opening and dedication by the minister of the Church and Moderator of the Presbytery of Auckland, the Rev. A. Kernohan, M.A., B.D. The sermon was preached by Rev. A.M.L. MacFarlan, headmaster of St Kentigern College and the windows dedicated by the Rev. H.O. Beaumont. Altogether the structure, with its aluminum sheathed hyper-parabaloid roof, cost around £32,000.

Following the opening of the new church, the older building served as the Church Hall until its demolition in 1974. In 1980, the Kernohan Hall was opened.

The architectural firm of Thorpe Cutter, Pickmere and Douglas are nationally recognised as one of the main hospital designing firms with their most notable being the new National Women’s Hospital at Greenlane, opened in 1964. Other structures of interest designed by the firm include: The glass and steel fronted A.M.P. Building, Auckland; the Northcote War Memorial Library; the Auckland Observatory in One Tree Hill Domain and the Television Studios in Avalon, Lower Hutt.

**Statement of Significance**

The Church is an important part of the local context and together with the adjoining manse is an integral part of Presbyterian worship in Takapuna.

**Architecture:**

The church is significant for its design by congregation member Ken Douglas of Auckland architects Thorpe Cutter, Pickmere and Douglas. Other churches designed...
by this firm include the Anglican Church Tokoroa [1952], Roman Catholic Church Howick [1962] and Vermont Street Ponsonby [1964] and St Mary's Church Onewa Road [1963].

It is also significant because its design marks a Post War departure from the traditional planning and layout of churches. Individual denominations favoured particular designs ranging from the Latin cross plan with naves, transcepts and apses to simple halls with stages but this period redesigned seating and altar arrangements to enable congregations to play a more active role in the service, rather than as observers as they had been with traditional design.

At the time of its construction the Rev. A. Kernohan said “The square design was chosen...instead of the traditional ‘channel’ type of church so it would be a symbol of family life and members of the congregation would be able to keep in touch more easily with the minister during services...”\(^{14}\)

The church is physically linked to the adjoining lounge, hall and church offices, which would have been traditionally housed in separate buildings, usually located close by

**History:**
The church has significant associations with the Takapuna community, past congregations and ministers and the Peter Beere Lounge and Lex Kernohan Hall are named after two of them. It is the second church to be built here as and was the first building in a three stage building project which included the lounge and hall.

It is part of the post war, post bridge development of Takapuna where a major church rebuilding programme was undertaken by various churches who found their existing facilities too small to cope with expanding congregations including the Methodist Church, Lake Road [1959], St Joseph’s Catholic Church Taharoto Road [1960s] and St Peter’s Anglican Church Killarney Street [1962].

The Church represents various themes and sub-themes in the development of Takapuna including Land and People (The People of the North Shore); Religion (Presbyterian Church), Community Organizations and Facilities and Remembering the Past and Preserving it for the Future.

**Context:**
The Church is a landmark building on the western corner of the of the Anzac Street / The Terrace intersection (roundabout), on the edge of the Takapuna commercial area and abutting Shore City. It is surrounded by large mature trees mainly pohutukawa, which although they screen the building to some extent they provide a complimentary setting.