



**DISTRICT PLAN – LISTED HERITAGE PLACE
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
HERITAGE ITEM NUMBER 683**

***TE WHARE KARAKIA O ŌNUKU AND SETTING – 392 ONUKU
ROAD, , AKAROA***



PHOTOGRAPH : ROSEMARY BAIRD, 2013

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical and social values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular person, group, organisation, institution, event, phase or activity; the continuity and/or change of a phase or activity; social, historical, traditional, economic, political or other patterns.

The church at Ōnuku Marae was opened in 1878 and has high historical and social significance as an example of an early Maori and Pakeha non-denominational church and as part of a site which has high significance to South Island Maori and also for its links with important Ōnuku Maori Chief Wiremu Naera Teao. Ōnuku Marae was the first of the three locations in the South Island where Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed by two local chiefs, Iwikau and John Love (Hone) Tikao. It is also the site where in 1998 the then Prime Minister Jenny Shipley presented the Crown Apology to Ngāi Tahu as the final stage in the settlement of Te Kereme, the Ngāi Tahu Claim.

Maori were living at Ōnuku before the first European settlers arrived in the area. In 1856 172.5 hectares were surveyed as Maori reserve. Over the next few decades Pakeha settlers began to move into the area and by the 1880s and 1890s there were more than 100 living in Ōnuku Valley. Ōnuku was the most important Maori kainga on the Akaroa side of the harbour and Maori and Pakeha have lived alongside each other in the area for over 150 years. Significantly the church was built for both Maori and Pakeha with the foundation stone being laid on 22 November 1876. The church was built to accommodate 60 people and represented a mix of Maori and European cultures, with the opening ceremony being non-denominational. Current research to date suggests that it was the first non-denominational church opened in New Zealand.

The establishment of the church is linked to Ōnuku Maori Chief, Wiremu Naera Teao, known as Little William. He was Ngāi Tahu and grandchild to the late celebrated chief Manai, of Akaroa; the first chief who claimed nearly the whole of the Peninsula. Little William was taken to the North Island as a prisoner by Te Rauparaha. He returned to Akaroa in 1856 and remained there until his death in 1891. He acted as a Native Assessor.

By 1939-40 the church was in disrepair and a project was undertaken to restore it and decorate the porch with traditional carved panels for the Akaroa Centenary memorial to early Maori. The interior was refurbished and the church was reopened by the then Bishop of Aotearoa, Bishop Frederick Bennett and over 1000 people attend the service. There were regular services until 1963 when the reduced number of people living in the bay meant it was only used to weddings, funerals and baptisms. A new fence was erected around the church in 1976, and in 1997 the poupou Tumuki was placed at the side of the church. Tumuki was a koha from Te Wai Pounamu Old Girls Association and was carved by Pere Tainui. (*From Christchurch City Libraries Tī Kōuka Whenua.*)

It is the only remaining Maori church on Banks Peninsula.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural and spiritual values that demonstrate or are associated with the distinctive characteristics of a way of life, philosophy, tradition, religion, or other belief, including: the symbolic or commemorative value of the place; significance to Tangata Whenua; and/or associations with an identifiable group and esteemed by this group for its cultural values.

The church has high cultural and spiritual significance through its strong connections to early Maori Christianity, the fact that it was built as a non-denominational church and that it was intended for use by both Maori and Pakeha. From the late 1820s Maori began to make Christianity their own and by the mid-1840s a large proportion of Maori regularly attended services. The church was an important site for Maori cultural and spiritual rituals of deaths and marriage. Its significance was reflected in the decision to refurbish it in 1939 when it was restored in time for an Akaroa Centenary service in 1940.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural and aesthetic values that demonstrate or are associated with: a particular style, period or designer, design values, form, scale, colour, texture and material of the place.

Ōnuku Church is a small timber building with a steeply pitched shingle roof that has a small bell turret and surmounting crosses. It has architectural and aesthetic significance through its use of simple, vernacular materials with the addition of traditional Maori carved panels. A

Rotorua Maori carved altar table was donated by Sir Heaton Rhodes in 1941. The church retains a simple timber interior.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND CRAFTSMANSHIP SIGNIFICANCE

Technological and craftsmanship values that demonstrate or are associated with: the nature and use of materials, finishes and/or technological or constructional methods which were innovative, or of notable quality for the period.

The church has technological and craftsmanship significance demonstrated through the Maori carving work associated with the church and through its ability to demonstrate timber construction techniques from the 1870s. The carved altar table and baptismal font, along with the tukutuku work and the poupou Tumuki a koha from Te Wai Pounamu Old Girls Association carved by Pere Tainui, demonstrate the Maori craftsmanship associated with the church.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Contextual values that demonstrate or are associated with: a relationship to the environment (constructed and natural), a landscape, setting, group, precinct or streetscape; a degree of consistency in terms of type, scale, form, materials, texture, colour, style and/or detail; recognised landmarks and landscape which are recognised and contribute to the unique identity of the environment.

The setting of Te Whare Karakia o Ōnuku consists of the immediate land parcel. Ōnuku Church has high contextual significance as an important part of the historic settlement of Ōnuku, where the takiwā of Ōnuku Rūnanga is centred. The church is situated near the shoreline at the base of Ōteaheke with the historic Maori cemetery on a ridge behind the church. The wharekai, opened in 1990, and wharenui, opened in 1997, are on the other side of the road from the church. The church sits within an area created by a small picket fence, erected in 1976 and in 1997 the poupou Tumuki was placed at the side of the church. Tumuki was a koha from Te Wai Pounamu Old Girls Association and was carved by Pere Tainui and is a key element in the setting of the church.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeological or scientific values that demonstrate or are associated with: the potential to provide information through physical or scientific evidence an understanding about social historical, cultural, spiritual, technological or other values of past events, activities, structures or people.

The site on which the church is built has been settled by Maori since the early 1800s. Ōnuku Church and its setting have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

Te Whare Karakia o Ōnuku and its setting are of overall significance to Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula. The church at Ōnuku Marae was opened in 1878 and has high historical and social significance as an example of an early Maori and Pakeha non-denominational church and as part of a site which has high significance to South Island Maori and also for its links with important Ōnuku Maori Chief Wiremu Naera Teao. The

church has high cultural and spiritual significance through its strong connections to early Maori Christianity, the fact that it was built as a non-denominational church and that it was intended for use by both Maori and Pakeha. It has architectural and aesthetic significance through its use of simple, vernacular materials with the addition of traditional Maori carved panels. The church has technological and craftsmanship significance demonstrated through the Maori carving work associated with the church and through its ability to demonstrate timber construction techniques from the 1870s. Ōnuku Church has high contextual significance as an important part of the historic settlement of Ōnuku, where the takiwā of Ōnuku Rūnanga is centred. The site on which the church is built has been settled by Maori since the early 1800s. Ōnuku Church and its setting have archaeological significance because they have the potential to provide archaeological evidence relating to past building construction methods and materials, and human activity on the site, including that which occurred prior to 1900.

REFERENCES:

Christchurch City Council, *Heritage File, Ōnuku Church, 392 Ōnuku Road, The Kaik*
Baird, Rosemary, *Background Information Listed Heritage Place, 'The Kaik', Ōnuku Church, Ōnuku* - 2014

REPORT DATED: 08/08/2014

PLEASE NOTE THIS ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF WRITING. DUE TO THE ONGOING NATURE OF HERITAGE RESEARCH, FUTURE REASSESSMENT OF THIS HERITAGE ITEM MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFLECT ANY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.

PLEASE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CCC HERITAGE FILES.