

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
HIGHGATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**



Google Streetview, September 2020.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Heritage Schedule Site Number	BX023
Address	580 Highgate, Māori Hill, Dunedin
Other Building Name	Māori Hill Presbyterian Church
Located within a Heritage Precinct	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description	N/A
Heritage Covenant	No
Building Use at Time of Record	Church
Condition of Property	Understood to have a low seismic rating

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Meets criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
✓	Excluded elements	Hall and extension to the northwest dating from 1997

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Highgate Presbyterian Church has heritage significance to Dunedin. The Inter-War Gothic style building was erected to the design of DG Mowat in 1920-22 and has historic and social significance for its association with the interwar growth and development of the Presbyterian church in Dunedin. The Highgate Presbyterian Church has spiritual and cultural significance as a place of worship and community between 1922 and 2016. It also has design significance as an Inter-War Gothic style building that retains a high level of exterior authenticity and integrity and is a local landmark on the Māori Hill skyline.

Highgate Presbyterian Church is comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type and period. When compared with other scheduled buildings, the church meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Interwar (1914-1939)
Style	Inter-War Gothic
Era/Date of Construction	1920-22
Architect/Designer/Builder	DG Mowat, architect; William McLellan, builder
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Presbyterian church
Primary Construction Materials	Concrete, face brick, render, steel-framed windows, slate
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Buttresses, gablet style roof vents, lancet windows, rose window

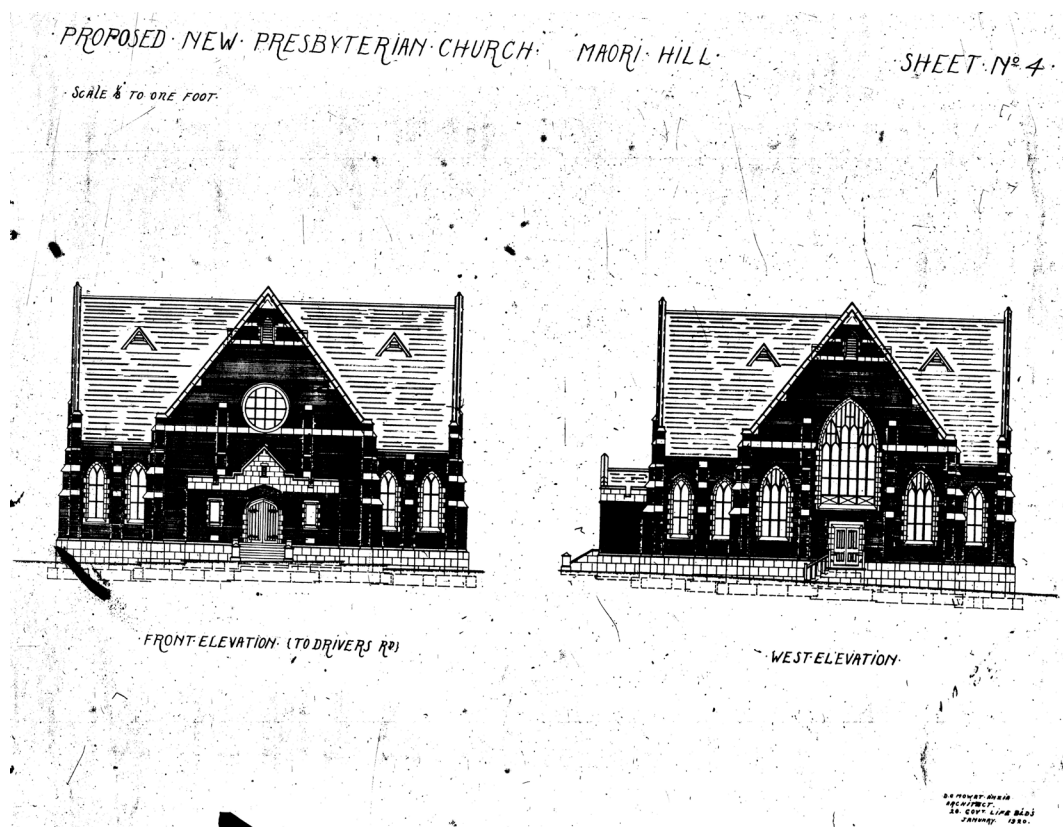
Previous site development

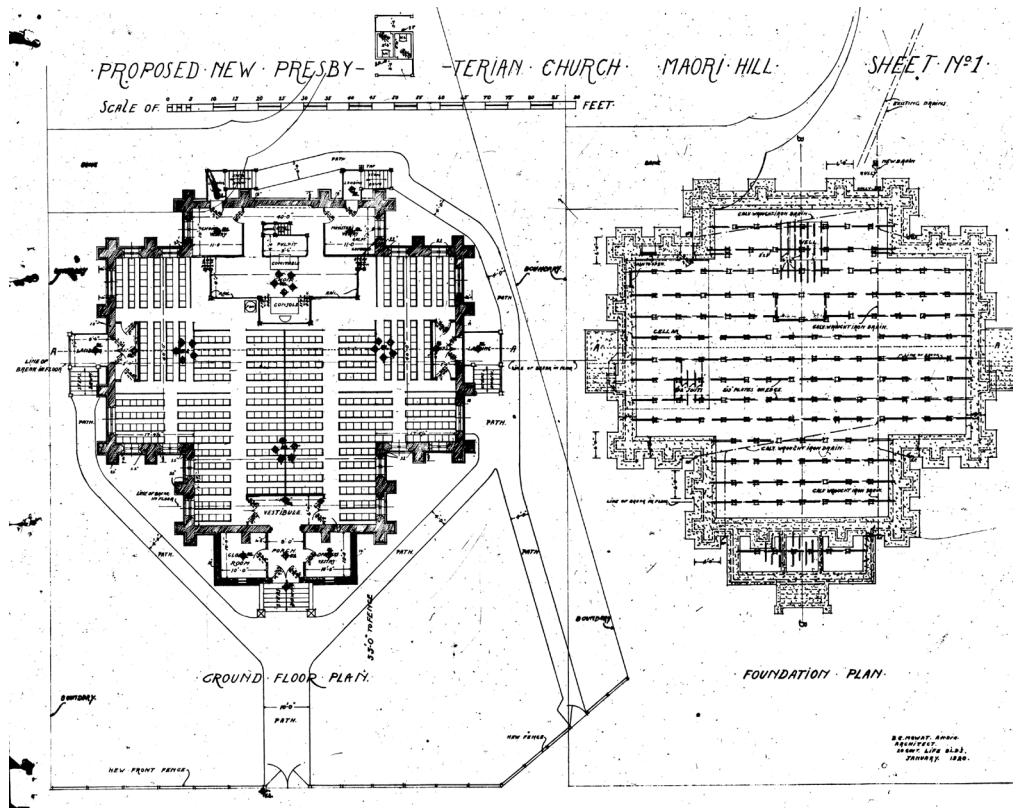
The Highgate Presbyterian Church was founded in 1904 as a mission station of Knox Church; the first church opened in Sim Street in March 1905. In 1906, members of the congregation approached the Dunedin Presbytery to request that the church be made a separate charge. The Rev William McDonald was inducted as the first minister of the church in May 1907; he was succeeded by the Rev HH Barton in 1911. The current church site was purchased in 1917 and the house then standing on it was temporarily used as a children's home during the flu epidemic.

Building design and construction

The foundation stone of the new church was laid on 16 September 1920 by the Rev Henry Barton. Prominently sited at the intersection of Highgate and Drivers Road the church was intended to be built in stages, with only the auditorium and tower at first. The church was officially opened on 9 March 1922, without the tower as planned.

Designed in a conventional Inter-War Gothic style, the church has a Greek cross plan form with gabled roofs and a single-storey entrance porch on the main, north-east elevation. Gabled vents with cusped bargeboards are set high on the roof and there is a rose window in the façade where the tower was to have been. The building is like but can be distinguished from contemporary Presbyterian churches in Otago and Southland, the differences perhaps due to the use of a number of architectural firms rather than a single practice.





As can be seen from these drawings the tower was not a feature of the plans lodged with DCC in 1920.

Later history and development

Drawings for internal alterations and a new porch on the east elevation were prepared by Fraser, Oakley & Pinfold, architects, in 1967. Mason & Wales Architects designed the hall and offices addition made to the east side of the church in c.1997; this finally realised a project that was first approved in the mid-1970s. The Roslyn and Māori Hill churches merged in 2005 and the three churches that now make up the Highgate parish currently meet in the Māori Hill Coronation Public Hall and the Māori Hill Community Centre. Efforts to highlight the building's heritage values have been ongoing since the church closed in 2016 and demolition was mooted. The property was subdivided to its current extent in 2009.

Notable people/Themes

Presbyterian Church in Dunedin

The history of the Presbyterian Church in Dunedin is outlined in Section 3.1 of the *Dunedin Contextual Thematic History*, it has been reproduced below.

The Free Church of Scotland: Otago was established as a Free Church settlement and the character of the early settlement was uniquely shaped around the theology and social views of its adherents. The Free Church of Scotland was a breakaway from the Presbyterian Church which was formed in 1843. One third of the Church of Scotland's congregations joined the new church with ministers losing much

of their income as a result. The disagreement that resulted in this schism centred around the freedom of congregations to appoint ministers of their choice. It was perceived that the Church of Scotland was an 'established' church subject to political and legislative interference. Somewhat confusingly, other 'Free Church' Presbyterian denominations emerged with little connection to the first. These included the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1893) and the United Free Church of Scotland (1900). The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was formed in 1901 following the amalgamation of the Synod of Otago and Southland with the northern Presbyterian Church denominations.¹

Henry Havelock Barton

The Very Rev Henry Havelock Barton (1880-1966) was born and educated in Dunedin and trained at Knox Theological College in the early 1900s. He also had an MA in English and French and spent 58 out of his 61 years in the ministry in Otago / Southland. Barton was dedicated to both parish work and the church's overseas missions and in his role as secretary to the General Assembly's Foreign Missions Committee he visited missions in China, India, and Vanuatu in the 1920s. In 1935 Barton was Moderator of the General Assembly; his last charge was at Weston, near Oamaru, from 1936 until his retirement in 1946.



*The Rev HH Barton laying the foundation stone in 1920.
Otago Witness 28 September 1920, p. 32 (supplement).*

David Mowat

David Gourlay Mowat (1880-1952) was born in Dunedin and worked for Edmund Anscombe before studying at the Architectural Association in London. He established his own practice in Dunedin in 1914 and designed a wide range of building types including churches (Church of Christ, St Andrews Street, 1926), commercial buildings, war memorials and houses. Mowat relocated to Wellington in c.1943.

¹ *Dunedin Contextual Thematic History*, Page 56

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Highgate Presbyterian Church has historic and social significance for its association with a congregation that was formed in 1904 and worshipped in the current church for 94 years.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The Highgate Presbyterian Church has been associated with the religious practice and culture of the local Presbyterian community in Dunedin since 1922. The building is also valued by members of the community who appreciate the building's historic and landmark importance, being visible on the Māori Hill skyline.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. The building has design significance for its Inter-War Gothic design by DG Mowat and its landmark quality within the suburb of Māori Hill. The exterior presentation of the building retains a good degree of architectural integrity.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

Otago Daily Times 8 August 1919, p. 2; 22 March 1919, p. 6; 20 September 1920, p. 2; 10 March 1922, p. 7; also, 13 October 2016; 15 March, 25 May, 14 July & 3 November 2019; 10 & 19 March 2022 (available online).

Evening Star 10 May 1907, p. 8; 20 November 1909, p. 1; 16 March 1920, p. 1.

Otago Witness 7 March 1906, p. 51.

<https://www.southernpresbyterians.nz/church/Highgate-Presbyterian-Church>

<https://adventure.nunn.nz/2020/01/08/fight-for-highgate-church/>

Presbyterian Research Centre; <https://prc.recollect.co.nz>

Rev HH Barton:

<https://ywilkieblog.wordpress.com/category/westcoast/westport-presbyterian-church/>

<https://ywilkieblog.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/45/>

Press 27 June 1966, p. 7.

DG Mowat:

H Knight & N Wales *Buildings of Dunedin – An Illustrated Architectural Guide to New Zealand's Victorian City*
John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1988, p. 195.

<https://builtindunedin.com/tag/d-g-mowat/>

Date Assessment Completed	14 December 2022	Author	AM
Date Peer Reviewed	5 January 2023	Reviewer	HP
Date Peer Reviewed	21 June 2024	Reviewer	MM
Date Confirmed Complete	2 August 2024		



The church interior in 1955.