

St Matthew's Memorial Cairn, 206 King Street South

Inventory Number: 52; Property ID 21192; TRIM Reference 21191#002#0006

Draft Report by Phillip Cleaver 16 August 2007, updated December 2009, updated July 2012 (Cochran & Murray), Final Report November 2012

Hastings CBD Heritage Inventory Project



ST. MATTHEW'S MEMORIAL CAIRN



Photo: R. Murray, 2012

LOCATION:

Street and Number: 206 King Street South

City / Town: Hastings

Location Information: Corner of King Street South and Lyndon Road West

Region: Hawke's Bay

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Legal Description: Lot 1 DP 415252

Certificates of Title (includes registry): 458556, Hawke's Bay Registry

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Historic value:

The Cairn within the grounds of St Matthew's Church (the oldest Anglican congregation in Hastings) commemorates parishioners who died in the First and Second World Wars.

Social value:

The Cairn reflects upon the strong sense of community of the parish.

Aesthetic value:

The Cairn has some aesthetic value in its simple form and straightforward use of contrasting materials.

HISTORY:

The Memorial Cairn, within the grounds of St Matthew's Church, commemorates parishioners who died in the First and Second World Wars.

St Matthew's is the oldest Anglican congregation in Hastings. The first Hastings Anglican Church was built in 1877 on the corner of King and Heretaunga Street.¹ A new church was erected on the present site in 1886.² This building was substantially extended and refurbished around 1915, creating the structure that stands today.³ In 1895, when Hastings parish became separate from the parish of Havelock North, St Matthew's became the parish church.⁴ Many leading sheep-farming and business families were among those who attended the church: the Russells, the Williams, the Wellwoods, the Beibys, the Roaches, and the Maddisons.⁵

Following the end of the First World War, parishioners of St Matthew's Church decided to erect a memorial for members of the congregation who had died in the conflict.⁶ A fund was established to cover costs and it was agreed that a cairn would be the most suitable form of monument. One William Rush prepared a plan of the proposed Cairn, to be built from stone donated by the Hastings Borough Council. Upon completion, some parishioners claimed that the plan had not been followed accurately and that the structure was too large. The Cairn was unveiled on 11 November 1922 (Armistice Day). The names of parishioners who died in the Second World War were later added to the monument.

Parish memorials are not unusual, although distinctive freestanding monuments like the Memorial Cairn are not particularly common. The Cairn shows that there is a strong sense of community within St Matthew's Church. Each ANZAC Day, wreaths and poppies are placed on the Cairn. The Lawn of Remembrance also lies adjacent to the Cairn, with the ashes of some parishioners buried in the lawn. The Cairn also reflects on the financial position of the parishioners, who could afford to pay for such a monument.

¹ Betty Carding, *Hang on a Minute: A History of St Matthew's Parish, Hastings, Hawke's Bay, 1895-1995*, Wanganui, 1995, p 1.

² M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 55.

³ Hastings District Council information file.

⁴ *St Matthew's Parish, Hastings: 75th Anniversary Jubilee Celebrations*, 1970.

⁵ M.B. Boyd, *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 56.

⁶ Betty Carding, *Hang on a Minute: A History of St Matthew's Parish, Hastings, Hawke's Bay, 1895-1995*, Wanganui, 1995, pp 20-21.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Architect: William Rush

Builder: Unknown

Date of construction: c.1922

Construction details: Sedimentary stone, lime and cement mortar, polished granite commemorative slabs, honed granite cross

Description: St Matthew's Cairn has a prominent corner site, and although today mature trees and plantings partly mask it from view in the wider streetscape it would have initially had a strong presence. The memorial takes the form of a tall and sturdy ellipsoidal cairn, built of interesting rough sedimentary rocks assembled with lime mortar. There are two memorial plaques, of polished black granite, commemorating the fallen of two world wars, set into the north-west and north-east aspects of the monument, and the whole assembly is capped with a stout cross, of honed granite.

The monument is a fine piece of vernacular design. It has a strong and rugged aesthetic, enhanced by the selection of contrasting materials and textures. It has weathered to a fairly uniform grey.

The Cairn shows some evidence of repairs over the years, including areas of cement mortar.

ELEMENTS OF IMPORTANCE:

Element	Significance
Cairn, plaques and cross	Architectural, aesthetic

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES:

Boyd, M.B., *City of the Plains: A History of Hastings*, Wellington, 1984, p 55.

Carding, Betty, *Hang on a Minute: A History of St Matthew's Parish, Hastings, Hawke's Bay, 1895-1995*, Wanganui, 1995.

Hastings District Council file information.

St Matthew's Parish, Hastings: 75th Anniversary Jubilee Celebrations, 1970.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

NZHPT Register: Not registered

District Plan: The St Matthew's Cairn is not specifically listed in the Hastings District Plan, however the St Matthew's Church is. It is not located within in the Central Character Precinct.

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OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS:



Plaque on St Matthew's Memorial Cairn (Photo: S. Akers, 2009)



ANZAC Day – a wreath and poppies adorn the Cairn (S. Hilton, 2012)

ARCHIVE PLAN(S):

Hastings District Council does not hold plans for this entry.