

Ohariu Valley Hall

550 Ohariu Valley Road



Summary of heritage significance

- The Ohariu Valley Community Hall is typical of many such halls around New Zealand. The building is representative as a good example of its type, a straightforward architectural design that was built specifically for the purpose.
- The building has hosted the area's social and official occasions for 100 years, and is known to everyone who has lived in the valley. It has significant social value for the important community function it has served.
- The hall stands out in this context, a landmark along the Ohariu Valley Road, in much the same way as the Holy Trinity Church further up the valley.

District Plan:	Map 25, reference 443
Legal Description:	Pt Section 17 Ohariu District Blk I Port Nicholson
Heritage Area:	-
HPT Listed:	-
Archaeological Site:	Risk Unknown. Hall constructed 1905, pre 1900 human activity on site likely
Other Names:	-
Key physical dates:	Built 1905
Architect / Builder:	Unknown/ Skinner and Wackrow
Former uses:	Community Hall
Current uses:	Community Hall
Earthquake Prone Status:	Posted (SR 255036)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2012



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History¹

There are few rural settlements remaining in the Wellington area that have had as long and interesting history as the Ohariu district. Along with the historic church just along the road, the Ohariu Valley Community Hall stands out as an important building, and is one of the oldest rural community buildings anywhere in Wellington.

Ohariu was settled by a few New Zealand Company settlers in the 1840s but it was not until the Ohariu Road was completed in 1858 that settlement began in earnest. The area benefited from further improvements in access in the mid-1860s but, despite this and its close proximity to Wellington, it has not grown beyond a modestly populated rural area.

By the early 1900s Ohariu required a new meeting and social venue and its community turned to MP William Field for support and ideas.² Field, who was also a lawyer, suggested the formation of a private company to raise the capital and build the hall. It was proposed that 72 shares at £5 each be allocated to 25 shareholders. The shareholders included some of the valley's prominent settlers as well as some well-known outsiders such as Field and Alexander Turnbull, bibliophile and founder of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The opening capital was some way short of the anticipated figure but the Ohariu Valley Hall Company was formed on 12 October 1905. By the time the land for the hall was bought from W. Beech, most of the money had still not been raised so money had to be borrowed. Local resident, Thomas Bryant, came to the rescue with a loan of £350 and work began. The builders were Skinner and Wackrow and the hall opened on 25 April 1906. A ball was held to mark the occasion. The private company was debt free by 1918 but (deliberately) no dividend was ever paid to the shareholders.

The hall was in regular use from the beginning. Anniversary balls were significant events but there were also birthday parties, wedding receptions and dances. Scout meetings and socials were held there during the 1930s and 40s. From 1933 a social committee organised many of the activities. A new committee formed in 1946 to run the hall addressed a problem with deferred maintenance. This committee duly raised funds and obtained a grant, which was put towards extending the 'Ladies Room', painting the interior and overhauling the piano. Despite this temporary deferral, hall records indicate that the building has generally always been well cared for. The building was even used as a temporary classroom in the early 1970s.

Perhaps the single most significant event hosted at the hall was early in its life, when Premier Joseph Ward and other parliamentarians attended a farewell function for MP William Field in 1908. The hall remains in regular use as a community facility today.

¹ History adapted from Wellington City Council, "Ohariu Valley Road Ohariu Valley Community Hall," *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. (Wellington City Council, 2001), OHAR2.

² The following information was derived from Golder D. 1972, *Ohariu School and District, 1872-1972*, Ohariu School Centenary Committee pp.36-38, unless otherwise stated.



Certificate of Incorporation of the Ohariu Valley Hall Company Limited, accessed 30 October 2012, <http://www.stampboards.com/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=12708>

1.2 Timeline of modifications

1905 Building construction

The hall appears to have had few alterations made except for an extension to the ladies room and some painting of the interiors.

1.3 Occupation history

The Ohariu Valley Hall Company Limited

1.4 Architect

Unknown

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

In functional arrangement and design, the Ohariu Valley Community Hall is typical of many such halls built throughout the country. It consists of one large hall space, with a skillion roof, fronted by a small lean-to porch at the road front and supported by a complex of lean-tos and other small additions at the rear that contain kitchen and toilet facilities.

The roof is gabled at the front, with a lightly detailed collar tie and finial arrangement, and hipped at the back to join to the lean-to structures; it is sheathed in corrugated iron. Joinery is timber, with double-hung windows to the hall and small casements elsewhere, and basic doors sheathed in vertical tongue and groove.

2.2 Materials

The building is timber framed, sheathed in rusticated weatherboards to the front and rear and horizontal corrugated iron to the sides (except for the small infill room at the northwest corner which is clad in Fibrolite).

2.3 Setting

The Ohariu Valley Community Hall is set in a relatively authentic rural landscape; set on a rising slope slightly above the road, it is surrounded by and seen against a backdrop of open grazing and windbreak trees, much as it ever has been. Some farm buildings and trees are visible further down the road. The hall stands out in this context, a landmark along the Ohariu Valley Road, in much the same way as the Holy Trinity Church further up the valley.

The wider setting of Ohariu Valley is a rolling rural landscape, and although more intensively occupied in the years since the hall was built, retains a level of authenticity that contributes a strong sense of history to the hall.

3.0 Sources

Certificate of Incorporation of the Ohariu Valley Hall Company Limited, accessed 30 October 2012, <http://www.stampboards.com/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=12708>

Golder, D. *Ohariu School centenary, 1872-1972*. Ohariu School Centenary Committee, 1972.

“Ohariu Valley Road, Ohariu Valley Community Hall.” *Wellington Heritage Building Inventory 2001: Non-Residential Buildings*. Wellington City Council, 2001. OHAR2.

Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: *Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?*

The Ohariu Valley Community Hall is typical of many such halls around New Zealand. The building is representative as a good example of its type, a straightforward architectural design that was built specifically for the purpose. The retention of its original materials give this building architectural value.

Townscape: *Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?*

The Ohariu Valley Community Hall is a local landmark that is set in a rural landscape along the Ohariu Valley Road.

Group: *Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?*

The hall can be seen as part of a group of religious sites and community buildings that are located on the Ohariu Valley Road.

Historic Value:

Association: *Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?*

Association: *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

The building has served as the community hall for the small, rural settlement of Ohariu Valley for over 100 years.

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: *Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?*

Risk Unknown – The Ohariu Valley has been inhabited since before the turn of the century, it is likely that there are archaeological materials at the site.

Educational: *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

The Ohariu Valley community hall is held in high public esteem due to the important community functions that it has served.

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:
Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?
Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?

The building has been used as a community venue for over 100 years, and has had few intrusive modern alterations or additions. It contributes to the sense of identity, sense of place and continuity for the Ohariu Valley community and landscape.

Sentiment/Connection: Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?

The building has hosted the area's social and official occasions for 100 years, and is known to everyone who has lived in the valley. It has significant social value for the important community function it has served

Level of cultural heritage significance
Rare: Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?

Representative: Is the item a good example of the class it represents?

The building has representative value as a very good example of a building type, the community hall; it is straightforward in its architectural design, without pretension and fit for its purpose.

Authentic: Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?

The building has remained in reasonably authentic form since it was constructed with the majority of its original fabric being retained.

Local/Regional/National/International
Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

The building is of local importance, particularly to the people who live in Ohariu Valley due to the long role that it has played in the community.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- *Additional plans, such as those for alterations*
- *Chunks of text from other sources such as Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- *Additional images*