

Historic Opotiki



... port and portal
of the Eastern Bay of Plenty



23 St John's Church

102 St John Street
The Presbyterian Church commenced in Opotiki in 1872 when Rev. Martin started a school. The first Presbyterian Church opened in 1878 and from this base other churches were established in Taneatua, Whakatane and Kutarere. St John's Church opened in 1907 and is the second Presbyterian Church in Opotiki. It has also served the surrounding district and monthly services were held in Opouriao and Whakatane.



24 Whakatōhea Trust Board

122-124 St John Street
On this site was built Opotiki's first Town Hall c1878. It was purchased by the Masonic Lodge in 1896 and in 1907 the Loan and Mercantile Co. bought the property setting up their business and warehouse. In April 1928 it burnt down, with the wool store burning for 3 days. A replacement building was erected with more permanent materials. It is now owned and occupied by the Whakatōhea Trust Board who use it as their base for business enterprises, community activities, training classes and managing iwi affairs.



25 Former Masonic Lodge

126 St John Street
The Opotiki section of the Masonic Lodge formed in 1881, under the Grand Lodge of England. Meetings were held in any of the three hotels or the Settler's Hall (adjacent to the Royal Hotel). This building was purpose built for the Masonic Lodge in 1907, designed by T.H. White, a Masonic member, and was used for this purpose until 1981.



26 Young's Butchery

16 Elliott Street
Three generations on, the sawdust may have disappeared from the butchery floor, but your meat is still wrapped in the traditional brown paper. Previously owned by Edward Durand, the shop was bought in 1908 by Arthur Young, who had rented another butcher's shop in Church Street for several years. Pictured here is the shop c1908-10, with the current owner's grandfather, Arthur (centre), his daughter Elsie, staff member C Butts (left) and the local 'paper boy'. Arthur Young lived in the house to the left of the shop. The Youngs celebrated 100 years at the premises in 2008. The slaughterhouse that supplied the butchery was on the family farm in Tablelands Road, established by George Young when he came to Opotiki in the 1870s. Arthur's brother, Ebenezer, was the slaughterman and also helped out in the shop.



19 Shalfoon's Building 1914

100 Church Street
On this large corner site Anthony Shalfoon, the elder brother of George, built his drapery and jeweller's store in 1914. Through the years a number of tenants have leased parts of the building including; Nancy Parkinson's hairdressing salon, Pott and Hodgson solicitors, Albert Mokomoko's fish and chip shop, "Simmy" Simpson dentist, Sam Hei lawyer, the Newell brothers ice-cream factory and many others. It remained in the Shalfoon family until 1964 when Antony's son Raymond sold the business and left Opotiki.

20 Platt Bros

25 King Street
Built for long-term resident and businessman Matthew J. Platt and his brother William, probably in 1904, but soon after they had sold their Church Street property to H.T. Torrens (Power Board). Platt Bros operated as a draper while local people recall a wide range of commodities could be bought, including groceries, general hardware and sweets. G. L. Day purchased the site in 1951 selling Norton motorbikes and a range of furniture.



21 Former Māori Mission Hall

102 King Street
The hall was built for the Opotiki Gospel Temperance and Mutual Aid Society prior to 1896. Their meetings discussed local issues such as drunkenness, particularly people in charge of horses and the sale of liquor especially on Sundays. It is a good example of early design. It was used as storage for goods from businesses affected by the fires of 1913. The Māori Mission occupied the building in 1977.



22 Drill Hall

59 St John Street
Drill Halls were a common feature throughout New Zealand towns and were a requirement under the Defense Act 1909. This hall was built in 1913 and was a training base for local soldiers going to World War I. It was also the enlisting site for military service in World War II. The hall was used for school classes in the 1920s and 30s and until recently a range of community events, including fairs, and groups such as the Scouts, karate and dancing lessons etc.



15 Salvation Army Barracks / Opotiki Heritage Art Centre

13 King Street
Introduced to New Zealand by 1882, the Salvation Army opened its 99th Corps to Opotiki in 1896, with the official opening of the hall in 1899. Major Edward Saunders, a pioneer for the Salvation Army in Australia, designed this purpose built church. Established in 1865 by the Methodist Minister William Booth, the Salvation Army ministers Christian beliefs and assists those in need through support services. The Corps was closed in 1972 and the hall was purchased by the Opotiki Arts Society who recently finished renovating the exterior.



16 Former Car Showroom

16 King Street
George and Andrew Anderson developed this site as a car showroom and workshop for their new business. It was built during the 1920s, soon after the Rostgard's building was completed and because of their similar arched cornice, it is believed to have been designed by the same person, H.L.D. West. The dilapidated state of this building reveals the general economic decline of Opotiki, and while other places have recently been renovated, 16 King Street remains in its present condition.



17 Rostgard's Building

99 Church Street
Built as a retail and commercial building for Hans Rostgard in 1914, the Baroque influenced architecture is one of the most ornate structures in Opotiki. Originally from Denmark, Rostgard's first business was in Coromandel (1896), opening a store in Opotiki in 1908. The Rostgard name is emblazoned on two sides of the corner

building with a coat of arms centrepiece, the ram being a symbol of the Danish textile industry and the dolphin perhaps symbolizing the shipping and trading industry.



18 Fraser Cameron Ltd

97 Church Street
This property, now the Bernina shop, was built about 1928 for the Opotiki County engineer, Mr Mar. The shopfront features outstanding leadlight top lights with coloured glass. A brass plaque in the window marks the level of the disastrous 1964 flood.

The neighbouring Spanish Mission style Superette was designed by the same architect.



11 Courthouse

119 Church Street
The first courthouse was built on this site in 1870 and it was here that confiscated land from Te Whakatōhea was transferred to the Crown. This was further distributed to the militia according to rank, therefore all volunteers and soldiers received allotments. For many years it also acted as a Native Land Court, hearing claims against unjustified confiscation from iwi throughout the eastern Bay of Plenty, including Ngāti Awa, Te Whanau a Apanui, Tuhoe and Te Whakatōhea. It was part of a number of government buildings along Church Street including a Post Office and Police Station, of which this courthouse was the only one replaced on this site in 1911.



12 Ladies' Restroom

Church Street
In general, County Councils provided public facilities for men as part of their local authority's obligations. However, it was not until pressure from organisations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union that appropriate conveniences were provided for women. Built in an art deco style these purpose designed facilities included a Plunket Rooms and were opened in 1937.



13 Patterson's Building / Billiard Hall

104 Church Street
South of Church Street a number of local industries operated as support for the commercial sector. Several timbers shops were built on this site between 1865-1913. A number of fires in the early part of the 20th century had destroyed sections of the township, therefore, the Opotiki Borough Council made it a requirement that new buildings were made of brick or concrete. Patterson's, a reinforced concrete and steel building was commissioned in 1922. Over the years many different small businesses have operated out of this building including, hairdressers, milliners, shoe and bookshops.



14 Royal Hotel

102 Church Street
Occupying a prominent position on the main street, the Royal Hotel was first run by John 'Big Jack' Parkinson (c1880), son of John P. Parkinson, a local entrepreneur. Another son, Arthur Parkinson, owned the Masonic Hotel (1874). Thomas Henry White, who also designed St John's Church and the Masonic Lodge, remodelled the hotel in 1909. Council and Masonic Lodge members favoured the hotel for their meetings, while as a venue it has also played a wider role in the social life of the Opotiki community. It is also believed that White constructed the very first reinforced concrete building in the southern hemisphere, adjacent to the Ngaruawahia Flour Mill, near Hamilton.

...port and portal of the Eastern Bay of Plenty

Although some of the buildings illustrated are open to the public some are private. Please respect privacy at places not open to the public and view from the footpath only.



COVER PHOTO
Top: Cattle Race, Opotiki Wharf K Pfeiffer 2007
Bottom: Intersection of Church and Elliott Streets K Pfeiffer 2007

This brochure has been produced by the members of the Bay of Plenty Branch Committee of NZ Historic Place Trust in order to increase appreciation for the protection of the heritage of early Opotiki. The committee is grateful for the financial assistance of the NZHPT and Environment Bay of Plenty's Environmental Enhancement Fund.

Photos K. Pfeiffer and Opotiki Museum

Pākowhai was the original name of the Māori settlement where the township of Opotiki is today. Opotiki is a shortened version of Ō Pōtiki-Mai-Tawhiti, 'the two pets from afar'. Tarawa was accompanied from Hawaiiki by his two pet fish which he placed in a spring above Waiotahi beach. Oral traditions tell of many migrations to this area, such as the ocean-going canoes of Mataatua and Nukutere. Their descendants are the iwi (tribe) Te Whakatōhea, 'to be stubborn', named in honour of the ancestress Muriwai who saved the Mataatua canoe.

The Opotiki area was rich in resources, with extensive alluvial plains for lowland cultivations, and an abundance of forest, marine and freshwater assets. The two rivers, Otara and Waioeka, provided transport and communication inland, and the natural harbour at Pākowhai assured access to the coastline. First European contact was with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1840 and the Roman Catholic mission in 1841. European trade and settlement followed very quickly and were welcomed by Te Whakatōhea, who in the 1850s employed shipwrights and had 19 trading vessels exporting wheat, maize and flax to Auckland and Sydney.

In the 1860s, as a result of the New Zealand Land Wars in other areas of the country and the controversial death of Rev. Carl Völkner, the eastern Bay of Plenty was placed under martial law. A military force landed at Opotiki on 9 September 1865, confiscating Te Whakatōhea land and property. Soldiers were allocated town lots and farms and land became available for new settlers. The harbour continued as a prominent port, servicing the eastern portion of the Bay of Plenty.

Agriculture brought prosperity to the emerging town of Opotiki with exports of sheep and dairy products. However, this came to an end in the early 20th century for several reasons: the silting up of the port, the advent of the railway, reduced shipping services, and the development of the roadways.

In 1882 Opotiki (population approx. 800) operated as a Town District within the Whakatane County Council. The Borough of Opotiki came into being on 1 August 1911. In 1973 the Opotiki County Council and the Opotiki Borough Council amalgamated as the Opotiki County Council. The name changed to the Opotiki District Council in 1989. The 2006 census showed over 8,000 people, with nearly equal representation of Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori).



1 Opotiki Hotel 130 Church Street

The first hotel on this site was opened in 1884. It burnt down and was replaced with this example of late Victorian architecture, imported by sea from the Coromandel Peninsula in 1904. A number of prominent local people have been associated with this hotel, including one proprietor D.C. Hawkins, whose daughter Yvonne married the

bandleader Epi Shalfoon, son of George Shalfoon who owned the store across the road.

2 Torrens' Building /Power Board 128 Church Street

Carpenters' workshops occupied this site before H. T. Torrens opened his shop in 1912. Electricity had been available in Opotiki since 1914. However it was not until the Bay of Plenty Electric Power Board (formed in 1925) purchased the building and converted it to offices in 1926 that efforts to provide electricity to the public were made. 'Switching on day' was set for September 1928. It was proudly noted in 1935 that "the board held the New Zealand record for having the highest percentage of electrical ranges per consumer". The Power Board relocated to Whakatane in 1968.



3 Hiona St Stephen's 126 Church Street

Built to replace an earlier CMS church (1840), Hiona, 'Zion', was dedicated in 1864. This church is an iconic feature of Opotiki as it is where Rev. Carl Völkner was killed by Kereopa in March 1865. There is much controversy about this event because of differing political and religious interpretations. Rev. Völkner was accused of spying for the government by the Hauhau, a Māori religious faction. The manner of his death instigated a military response which led to the confiscation of Te Whakatōhea land and

property. A number of Te Whakatōhea leaders were unjustly accused and condemned to death. For over a hundred years their descendants sought justice. Finally in 1989 the government issued a pardon, and their remains were returned from Mt Eden Prison to their marae.

4 Bridgers' Building 122 Church Street

This central site was first developed in the 1860s. A drapery and millinery store was purchased by the Bridger family in 1895. It was rebuilt c 1916 as a department store with a floor area of 1579 sq m. The building, in Edwardian baroque style with ornate decorative details, is still an impressive sight. The Bridgers described their business in 1919 as "The leading house of the Bay of Plenty" offering drapery, clothing, millinery, boots and shoes, crockery and general household furnishings. In 1920 the Farmers' Union Trading Company purchased the store. Farmers sold the property in 1989.



5 Masonic Hotel 121 Church Street

The first Masonic Hotel built in 1872 held a prominent position in the emerging township of Opotiki. Fire destroyed the wooden portion of the building in 1918. The present Edwardian Baroque façade was part of the substantial rebuilding of 1919. The proprietor at this time

advertised the new hotel as rebuilt in concrete with electric lighting and hot and cold baths. Noted Māori opera singer, Te Rangi Pai of Maungaroa, Te Kaha, would sing from the balcony to an admiring crowd below.

6 Masonic Stables/Opotiki Museum 123 Church Street

This building was originally stables for the Masonic Hotel. The existing façade was designed as a continuation of the hotel frontage. It was bought by New Zealand Railways and Road Services to use as a depot for their vehicles from 1937 to 1984. NZR acquired the Royal Mail Service and other independent passenger and freight services between Whakatane, Rotorua and Gisborne. Since 1985 it has been under restoration by the Opotiki Heritage and Agricultural Society and it was reopened as the Opotiki Museum in 2005.



7 De Luxe Theatre 127 Church Street

The De Luxe Theatre, one of five which opened in the 1910s and 1920s, is an example of early provincial cinema architecture. The building was commissioned by the Shalfoon cousins. The De Luxe also hosted stage shows. Opening day featured the silent film 'The White Sister' (1926), with the Melody

Boys band led by Epi Shalfoon. The first talking film to be shown was Al Jolson's 'The Jazz Singer' (1927). In 1981 the Opotiki Community Theatre Trust bought the De Luxe, restoring the building and reviving performances with the annual Silent Film Festival (September).

8 Shalfoon Bros 1899 129 Church Street

Emigrating from the Lebanon in 1895, George Shalfoon hawked goods all over New Zealand until he settled in Opotiki in 1896. He was joined by his two brothers Anthony and Stephen and their cousin Elias Francis. Together they purchased this house in 1899, extending it to accommodate their growing retail business selling groceries, hardware, furniture, drapery and jewellery. Stephen had his Master's ticket and shipped trade goods along the coast while offering customers free trips. For over a hundred years a member of the family continued to run this store, until it finally closed in 2002.



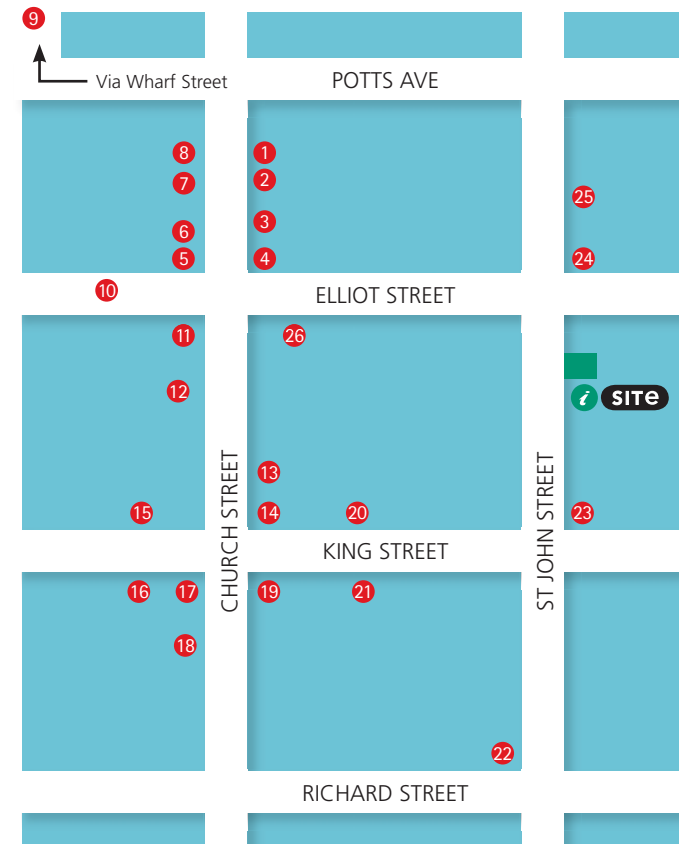
9 Wharf Wharf Street

Opotiki's early history is a story of dependence upon the sea. Transportation of all goods and travel of people relied upon relatively good weather and a reliable ship service. On scheduled arrival and departure times, the wharf was a hub of activity with the loading of livestock and agricultural products for Auckland and the unloading of goods and people for the commercial heart of Opotiki. At this time the Waioeka River, and therefore the wharf, was closer to Potts Avenue and Wharf Street than it is now.



10 War Memorial Elliott Street

A Corinthian column of white marble on top of a supporting plinth and stepped base, this monument is more elaborate than the standard obelisk. Built to commemorate the fallen soldiers of World War I and dedicated in 1923, their names are inscribed on a bronze plaque placed on the base. Another plaque was added after WW II. For over 80 years it has been the centrepiece for Anzac celebrations.



- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Opotiki Hotel | 15. Salvation Army Barracks /Opotiki Heritage Art Centre |
| 2. Torrens' Building/ Power Board | 16. Former Car Showroom |
| 3. Hiona St Stephen's | 17. Rostgard's Building |
| 4. Bridgers' Building | 18. Fraser Cameron Ltd |
| 5. Masonic Hotel | 19. Shalfoon's Building 1914 |
| 6. Masonic Stables/ Opotiki Museum | 20. Platt Bros |
| 7. De Luxe Theatre | 21. Former Māori Mission Hall |
| 8. Shalfoon Bros 1899 | 22. Drill Hall |
| 9. Wharf | 23. St John's Church |
| 10. War Memorial | 24. Whakatōhea Trust Board |
| 11. Courthouse | 25. Former Masonic Lodge |
| 12. Ladies' Restroom | 26. Young's Butchery |
| 13. Patterson's Building | |
| 14. Royal Hotel | |

- Registered as Category I
- Registered as Category II

Join Us Today . . .
and help keep New Zealand's Heritage alive!



New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga

