

**Item name:** Thalaba Baptist Community Church

**Location:**

Dungog

**Address:**

**Planning:** Hunter & Central Coast

**Suburb/nearest town:** Thalaba 2420

**Local govt area:** Dungog

**Parish:**

**State:** NSW

**County:**

**Other/former names:**

**Area/group/complex:**

**Group ID:**

**Aboriginal area:**

**Curtilage/boundary:**

**Item type:** Complex / Group

**Group:** Religion

**Category:** Church

**Owner:** Religious Organisation

**Admin codes:**

**Code 2:**

**Code 3:**

**Current use:** Church and Graveyard

**Former uses:** Church and Graveyard

**Assessed significance:** Local

**Endorsed significance:**

**Statement of significance:** The Thalaba Community Baptist Church is a record of the growth and prominence of the Baptist Church in the Dungog region. The place records the foundation of the Baptist Church in this area from the donation of the site and the building of the first church in 1881. The Church records the continued prominence of the Thalaba Baptist community with the building of a new church in 1913 which is the existing building on the site. After the building of the Dungog Baptist Church, the Thalaba Baptist Church retained its importance in the Baptist community as the parent Church and in the 1980s, the Dungog District had the largest community of Baptists in NSW. The land was donated by Mr E.Marsh and this family is associated with the foundation of the Thalaba Baptist Church and are recorded in the family gravesites in the cemetery from the 1860s and prior to the establishment of the church on the site. The cemetery records the Baptist community and families in the district from the foundation of the Thalaba Baptist community in the 1860s to the present day.

The Church is a vernacular style building with little external decoration and simple features such as carved timber gables, exposed eaves and lancet windows within a rectangular frame. The Thalaba Community Church and cemetery are valued by the local Baptist Community as a historical site recording the forming of the Baptist Church in the Dungog area. The site has been used by the community from 1881 until the present day.

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**Historical notes of provenance:** Thalaba Church is located on an original land grant to Major Benjamin Sullivan and the name is likely to have derived from the poem by Robert Southerly, "Thalaba the Destroyer." A Sunday School was founded in the area by Henry Brewer as early as 1868 and early services were conducted in farm buildings known as Majors Creek Baptist Church. These may have been organised by Rev Ingram.

Henry Brewer's son, Isaac Brewer was an itinerant Pastor both in Thalaba and in the wider area beyond Thalaba. In 1881 the Thalaba Baptist Church was built for 60 pounds by Mr Robson of Dungog to the size of 36' by 22'. It was also known as the "Church in the Wilderness" due to its isolation from shops, post offices, or houses.

The growth of the Baptist community from 1868 with 40 members by 1879 and the Thalaba United Christian Association encouraged the building of a permanent church and in 1881 Mr E. Marsh donated the land for the church.

The existing building reportedly dates from 1913 (Garland, Glen W., Thalaba Baptist Church 1869-1994) and was extended in 1950. Dungog Baptist Church was built in 1917, though due to the prominence of the community, the Thalaba church was the parent church of the Baptist community. This continued and in the 1980s with the Thalaba and Dungog region having the highest proportion of Baptists than any area of NSW.

The cemetery contains graves that date from 1862 recording the Marsh family. It is possible the site may have been a family plot before its donation to the Baptist Church.

<b>Themes:</b>	<b>National theme</b>	<b>State theme</b>	<b>Local theme</b>
	9. Phases of Life	Birth and Death	
	8. Culture	Religion	

**Designer:**

**Builder:**

**Year started:**

**Year completed:** 1913

**Circa:** Yes

**Physical description:** Timber framed building clad with weatherboards and zincume roof with exposed eaves and colorbond quad gutters. The front elevation has rebated timber weatherboards and the side elevations are clad with fibre cement boards. The rear sections are clad with fibre cement and lapped timber boards. The Church is supported on brick and the rear addition on timber piers. Windows are rectangular timber frames with lancet shape inside frame. Recent frosted glass installed. The gable at each end of the nave and sanctuary has carved timber decoration and a finial and a timber vent on the western entrance porch. The porch is asymmetrically placed.

Internal access not gained and exterior only assessed.

The cemetery is located adjacent to the church and includes carved sandstone headstones and more recent granite tablets.

The Churchyard is fenced with a galvanised steel fence and is a grass area with mature eucalypt trees.

Adjoining cemetery with varied headstones including carved stone and later granite tablets.

**Physical condition level:**

**Physical condition:** Good condition and well maintained.

**Archaeological potential level:**

**Archaeological potential Detail:**

**Modification dates:** Extension to Church in 1950.

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**Recommended management:**

**Management:** Management category Management name

**Further comments:**

**Criteria a):** The Thalaba Community Baptist Church is a record of the growth and prominence of the Baptist Church in the Dungog region. The place records the foundation of the Baptist Church in this area from the donation of the site and the building of the first church in 1881. The Church is a record of the continued prominence of the Thalaba Church with the building of a new church in 1913 which is the existing building on the site. After the building of the Dungog Baptist Church, the Thalaba Baptist Church retained its importance in the Baptist community as the parent Church. The Dungog District had the largest community of Baptists in NSW in the 1980s.

The cemetery records the Baptist community and families in the district from the foundation of the Thalaba Baptist community in the 1860s to the present day.

**Criteria b):** The land was donated by Mr E.Marsh and this family is associated with the foundation of the Thalaba Baptist Church and there are family burials in the cemetery.

**[Historical association significance]**

**Criteria c):** The Church is a vernacular style building with little decoration and simple features such as carved timber gables, exposed eaves and simple lancet windows within a rectangular frame.

**[Aesthetic/Technical significance]**

**Criteria d):** The Thalaba Community Church and cemetery are valued by the local Baptist Community as a historical site recording the forming of the Baptist Church in the Dungog area. The site has been used by the community from 1881 until the present day.

**Criteria e):** **[Research significance]**

**Criteria f):** The cemetery associated with the church is the only such Baptist cemetery in NSW. (Garland)

**[Rarity]**

**Criteria g):** The church is representative of a vernacular style ecclesiastical building with simple external features and little decoration.

**[Representative]**

**Intactness/Integrity:** The alteration of external cladding and additions have altered the Church to an extent, though the church form is still evident and this later work could be reversed.

References:	Author	Title	Year
		The Baptist Recorder, February 1989	1989
		The Baptist Recorder April 1993	1993
		The Baptist Recorder February 1991	1991
	Glenn W Garland	Thalaba Baptist Church 1869-1994	1994
		Maitland Mercury 30 April 1881	1881
		Sydney Gazette 2 May 1833	1833
		Australian Cemeteries Index, Thalaba Community Cemetery, h	
	Dr Michael Williams	Rsearch notes	

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<b>Studies:</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Carste Studio	Dungog Heritage Study Review	18	2013

<b>Parcels:</b>	<b>Parcel code</b>	<b>Lot number</b>	<b>Section number</b>	<b>Plan code</b>	<b>Plan number</b>
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**Latitude:**

**Longitude:**

**Location validity:**

**Spatial accuracy:**

**Map name:**

**Map scale:**

**AMG zone:**

**Easting:**

**Northing:**

**Listing: Name**

**Title**  
Heritage study

**Number**

**ListingDate**

**Data entry:** Data first entered: 15/04/2013

Data updated: 19/11/2013

Status: Partial

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