

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Church at Taulaga Village – Swains Island

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Olosega Island aka Swains Island

City or town: Taulaga Village State: AS County: Swains Island

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B X C X D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Church at Taulaga Village – Swains
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Swains Is., AS

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐☐

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Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility: CHURCH

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/

Gothic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD and GLASS (pebbled)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Swains Island is a low-lying coral atoll located 360km (220mi) north of American Samoa. It is a coral atoll with a fringing reef and interior landlocked freshwater lagoon. Atolls generally are comprised of islets typically forming a ring that develop atop carbonate platforms grown on sinking volcanic foundations (Dickinson 2009). The fluctuations of sea level during the Mid to Late Holocene played a major role in their formation. Human occupation of most atolls was delayed until average high tide levels fell below the mid-Holocene low-tide level (Dickinson 2000). Most weren't habitable in the Pacific until a relatively very recent time in the past, from about 1600-900 BP.

Atoll ecosystems are generally depauperate, with nutrient-poor soils that cannot support many traditional Polynesian cultivars, and their extremely low elevations make them very susceptible to storm surge during tropical storms (Alkire 1978). During the initial decades of Pacific archaeology, most researchers considered atolls to be of fairly little value to the discipline. The low island environments have often been thought inimical to the preservation of archaeological remains because these are frequently subjected to tropical storms or tsunamis (Dickinson 2003).

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Small isolated islands do not possess the abundant biotic diversity and resources that larger islands contain (Giovas 2006). The inhabitants of these islands are dependent upon regular interaction with other groups (Fitzpatrick and Anderson 2008; Spriggs 2008; Williamson and Sabath 1982, 1984). Additionally, these islands are often subjected to less precipitation and uncertain weather patterns. Such conditions necessitate the need for potential alleviation of these natural conditions, and a greater reliance on marine resources. Spriggs (2008) suggests that it was because of this need that groups in the atoll environments of Micronesia maintained a well-developed ocean-going vessel tradition until after European contact.

The work of Janet Davidson and others has demonstrated that surface and especially subsurface archaeological remains are present on atolls, and many cultural deposits have shown to be several meters deep (Craib 1980, 1984; Davidson 1967, 1968, 1971; Davidson and Leach 1996; Leach and Ward 1980; Sinoto and McCoy 1974). While islands with small land areas that are geographically isolated tend to maintain limited populations, archaeological remains have been recorded for most habitable atolls.

Narrative Description

The historic church at Taulaga Village on Swains Island is the most prominent extant building in the village, standing on piers on the southern side of the village *malae*, it is taller than any building in the village. It is a single story building with a smaller vestibule attached at the front. It is painted white with gray trim. The building is oriented on an east west axis with the front to the west and toward the ocean.

The larger structure and the vestibule both have gabled roofs. The gable in front has what was likely a single rectangular wooden slat ventilation portal, but it is now closed off with three wide wooden boards positioned vertically. The gable in the back has a rectangular wooden slat ventilation portal. The slats are arranged horizontally.

The church has a total of thirteen (13) windows, eleven (11) are visible from the exterior and two (2) are interior windows above a doorway. The exterior windows are as follows:

There are four (4) square windows with a pointed arch above them, two are on the south side of the building and two are on the north side. The upper arched portion of the window is divided from the lower square portion by the upper wooden framing of the square window. The square portion of the window has a wooden storm shutter hinged from the top. Inspection of the interior of the building revealed that there is no glass in the lower square of the windows. The arched portion of the window is divided into two triangular and one diamond shaped panes of glass.

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The glass is pebbled. The triangular glass is green in color and the diamond shape is red in color.

There are three (3) rectangular windows with a rounded arch above them. One of the rectangular windows is on the front of the vestibule portion of the building (west side). The rectangular portion of the window is covered by white canvas and has no glass, the rounded arch above it is made of clear glass with a pebbled texture. There is a shed style corrugated tin awning above this window. The other two windows are on the back of the church on the east side; they are directly side-by-side. The rectangular portion of the window to the south is boarded up with wood and the window next to it is boarded with a combination of wood and canvas. The rounded arch portion of these windows has green glass with a pebbled texture. There is a shed style corrugated tin awning above these windows.

The remaining four windows are rounded arch windows above four doorways, two on the south side and two on the north side. These rounded arch windows have single panes of green pebbled glass.

The church has four solid wood free-swinging doors, two on the north side, and two on the south side. One on each side is toward the eastern end of the building and opens just before the altar on the interior of the building. The other two are entrances on the north and south sides of the vestibule. There are concrete steps leading up to each doorway. One set of steps was repaired in 1987 and 1989 based on dates drawn in the concrete. Beside each door way is a small wooden door stop devise that can be turned and adjusted to hold the doors open (see photos x and x).

This was likely done for ventilation purposes on hot days. The doors have small, almost decorative, awnings above them

Another feature of the building are small rectangular ventilation vents with screen wire on the south, east, and north sides of the building. On each side they are to the east of the doors. The vent on the north side has grey trim while the one on the south side has trim except the bottom portion of the trim is missing. While on the east side one is on the wall to the south it has grey trim and the other on the wall to the south its trim is missing.

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The building is supported by a total of 24 wooden piers there are three (3) rows running east west of five (5) posts under the main portion of the building two of the rows of posts support the outer edge of the building while the third row runs under the center of the building. The vestibule portion of the building has three (3) rows of three (3) posts arranged in the same pattern.

The interior of the building has an alter with a railing with two small entrances with swinging gates, a pulpit, and a table in front of the alter. The railing separates the alter from the rest of the church, the pulpit is in the center of the alter; the table in front is also center. The alter area is decorated with cloth and a velvet paintings of the various Christian religious scenes. There is an American Flag to the right. The table in front of the alter is also decorated with cloth and artificial flowers and has an old bible on it. The church still contains wooden pews.

A photograph of the alter was taken in 1886. It shows that the general design is the same, i.e. an alter with railing, a centered pulpit on the alter and a table and chair in front of the alter, but it also shows that since that time the alter has been rebuilt with some design changes to the alter, as well as to the building itself. For example, the wood in the railing is now vertical rather than arranged horizontally. The table and chair are not the same as the ones shown in 1886. Also, the entrance gates to the alter were solid with vertical boards of wood, while the current gates have spaces between the vertical wooden bars. In addition, the windows at the back of the alter have been moved inward, and windows that were once on either side of the alter have been removed. Furthermore, none of the windows shown have the round arch or point arch design element. Finally, the 1886 photograph is rather Spartan; it shows that the alter lacked any decoration.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

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☒

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☒

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

☒

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐

B. Removed from its original location

☐

C. A birthplace or grave

☐

D. A cemetery

☐

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐

F. A commemorative property

☐

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

1886 - 2008

Significant Dates

1886

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

EUROPEAN

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The historic church at Taulaga is the most prominent extant building in the village, standing on piers on the southern side of the village malae; it is taller than any building in the village. It is a single story building with a smaller vestibule attached at the front. It is painted white with gray trim. The building is oriented on an east west axis with the front to the west and toward the ocean. The larger structure and the vestibule both have gabled roofs. The gable in front has what was likely a single rectangular wooden slat ventilation portal, but it is now closed off with three wide

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wooden boards positioned vertically. The gable in the back has a rectangular wooden slat ventilation portal. The slats are arranged horizontally.

The church has a total of 13 windows, 11 are visible from the exterior and 2 are interior windows above a doorway. The exterior windows are as follows:

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There are 3 rectangular windows with a rounded arch above them. One of the rectangular windows is on the front of the vestibule portion of the building (west side). The rectangular portion of the window is covered by white canvas and has no glass; the rounded arch above it is made of clear glass with a pebbled texture. There is a shed style corrugated tin awning above this window. The other two windows are on the back of the church on the east side; they are directly side by side. The rectangular portion of the window to the south is boarded up with wood and the window next to it is boarded with a combination of wood and canvas. The rounded arch portion of these windows has green glass with a pebbled texture. There is a shed style corrugated tin awning above these windows.

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The church has four solid wood free swinging doors two on the north side and two on the south side. One on each side is toward the eastern end of the building and opens just before the altar on the interior of the building. The other two are entrances on the north and south sides of the vestibule. There are concrete steps leading up to each doorway. One set of steps was repaired in 1987 and 1989 based on the dates drawn in the concrete. Beside each door way is a small wooden door stop device that can be turned and adjusted to hold the doors open. This was likely

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The building is supported by a total of 24 wooden piers there are 3 rows running east west of 5 posts under the main portion of the building two of the rows of posts support the outer edge of the building while the third row runs under the center of the building. The vestibule portion of the building has 3 rows of 3 posts arranged in the same pattern.

The interior of the building has an altar with a railing with two small entrances with swinging gates, a pulpit, and a table in front of the altar. The railing separates the altar from the rest of the church, the pulpit is in the center of the altar; the table in front is also center. The altar area is decorated with cloth and velvet paintings of the various Christian religious scenes. There is an American Flag to the right. The table in the front of the altar is also decorated with cloth and artificial flowers and has an old bible on it. The church still contains wooden pews.

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Photo 1: Interior of Taulaga church showing the appearance of the alter area in 1886.



Photo 2: Alter in Taulaga church with cloth set aside to show alter design elements -2013.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Taulaga Village is the site where the residents of Swains Island established houses, a church, and support infrastructure for the copra plantation business, including a large copra drying shed named the Jubilee, a concrete water tank, and a rail system to transport the copra to the shore to load onto ships. The village follows a classic Samoan and Tokelau design in that it has a central malae (an open ceremonial space) with buildings arranged along the periphery of the malae. It is not known if the village was occupied prehistorically prior to the copra enterprise. These properties are a historic church dating from sometime around 1886, the remains of two traditional style fale house foundations (early context above), and a concrete water tank. The historic church at Taulaga is the most prominent extant building in the village, standing on piers on the southern side of the village malae; it is taller than any building in the village. It is a single story building with a smaller vestibule attached at the front. It is painted white with gray trim. The building is oriented on an east west axis with the front to the west and toward the ocean.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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1984. Small population instability and island settlement patterns. *Human Ecology* 12(1): 21–34.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Name of repository: _____

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____ <1 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 490335.61 | Longitude: 877787776.05 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the property correspond to the envelope of the building.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were chosen because the property is a building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David J. Herdrich and Tish Peau
organization: American Samoa Historic Preservation Office
street & number: American Samoa Government
city or town: Pago Pago state: AS zip code: 96799
e-mail david.herdrich@go.as.gov
telephone: (684) 699-2316
date: September 30, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Figure 1: Map of Swains in reference to American Samoa



Figure 2: Satellite View of Swains Island

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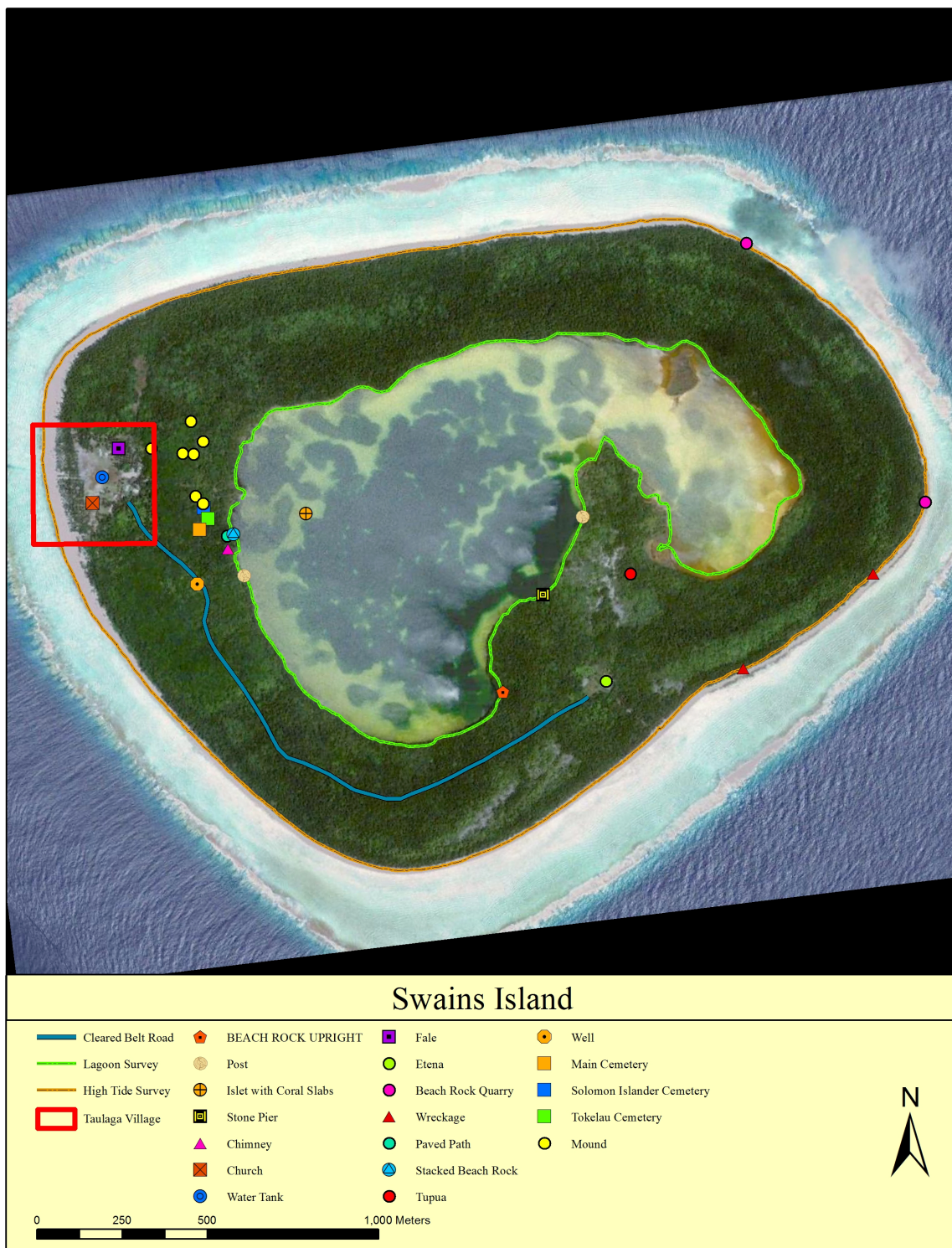


Figure 3: Church in Taulaga Village in reference to other archaeological sites on Swains Island

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Church at Taulaga Village

City or Vicinity: Swains Island

County: Swains Island

State: American Samoa

Photographer: Thomas Andrew

Date Photographed: 1886. <http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1238485>

Name of Property: Church at Taulaga Village

City or Vicinity: Swains Island

County: Swains Island

State: American Samoa

Photographer: David J. Herdrich

Date Photographed: August 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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Photo 3: North side of church at Taulaga 2013



Photo 4: West side of church at Taulaga

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Photo 5: South side of church at Taulaga



Photo 6: East side of church at Taulaga

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Photo 7: Interior of Taulaga church facing east showing alter and elements of the building.

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Photo 4	West side of church at Taulaga
Photo 5	South side of church at Taulaga
Photo 6	East side of church at Taulaga
Photo 7	Interior of Taulaga church facing east showing alter and elements of the building

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County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.