

From: Alexander.Turnbull-Library@dia.govt.nz  
Subject: **ATL - response to your question (Question # RTR1007085)**  
Date: 6 July 2011 10:07:03 AM NZST  
To: dirk\_alison@clear.net.nz



Dear Dirck

My apologies for the time this reply has taken (although we dealt with the more urgent aspects by telephone).

I have not been able to find out anything about an artist with the Initials M A D (or possibly M A P) working in Napier. You will probably understand that this is not really surprising, given the naive style of the painting, suggesting that this is the work of an amateur artist, able to get a good likeness of a building, but not really likely to exhibit with art societies or work professionally as an artist. I did find biographical details for a Mary Alexander Park (1850-1920) but she was living and painting in Dunedin and had studied art in Paris, so was not very likely to be the artist of this work. Her work is held by Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

I also found one digitised photograph 'View over Napier with St Paul's Presbyterian Church on right, negative number 1/2-035259. (There are other photographs of the church in our collections, but they have not been digitised. We have no drawings, paintings or plans of the building). The photograph I found clearly showed the same church as the one in the painting, complete with the darker 'outlining' style you can see in the painting. The photograph was dated ca 1880s, so could be 1870s or 1890s as well as 1880s, and might therefore be taken at much the same date as the painting (1898).

I understand that you have already approached the paintings conservator, Carolina Izzo. Judging by the scans you sent, I think the work is worth conserving, even though it is not one of New Zealand's great works of art, just because it provides a unique record of the appearance and colouring of the church at a precise date. Cost will be a factor, of course! I am sorry I was

not able to look at the work myself.

Regards

Marian

Marian Minson  
Curator, Drawings, Paintings and Prints  
Alexander Turnbull Library

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*Your original question follows:*

*Thursday, 23 June 2011  
SEE STAFF NOTE*

*Hello Marian*

*Just a few of the photos I took of the painting I rang you about.*

*Will be most interested to know if you have any comparative images to prove it's authenticity.*

*Also do you think they should consider having some conservation work done?*

*There's some significant damage and very dirty. It's 462 x 312 mm*

*If so, I could bring it into town if you could arrange for that conservator to meet me at your office to give me a quote.*

*Regards,*

*Dirk*