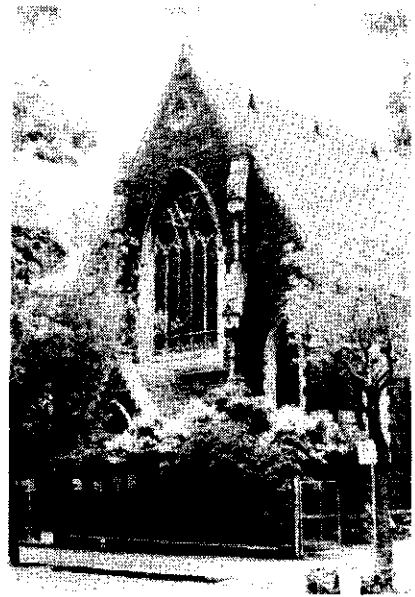


NAME: Uniting Church
ADDRESS: Napier Street
CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1871
ARCHITECT: George Browne
BUILDER: James Sumner and Co.
FIRST OWNER: Prebyterian Church
FIRST OCC./USE: Ditto/Church
PRESENT OWNER: Uniting Church in Australia
PRESENT OCC./USE: Ditto/Church
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Bluestone, freestone dressings, slate roof



INTACTNESS/CONDITION: Intact externally; internal modifications
AREA/STREETScape: Part of recommended streetscape A15.

IMPORTANCE:

This church, constructed in 1871-72, is the only known ecclesiastical design by the architect, George Browne. It provides a significant example of an intact English Gothic Church building, with the original coloured glass, (by Urie and Ferguson) external and internal finishes surviving. The simple gable facade is decorated by unusual attached paired columns at the top of the gable, and banded shafts with set backs dividing the upper and lower columns flanking the central window. The intact cast iron fencing on a bluestone plinth compliments the building.

This building provides a focal point to an important, treed, streetscape along Napier Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this building be added to the Historic Buildings Register as an intact example of an English Gothic Church building. It is also recommended that the Church be added to the Register of the National Estate and be specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE:

This building was constructed as the Presbyterian Church in 1871-72 to the design of architect, George Browne¹, and built by James Sumner and Co., for a cost of £2,700 (including fittings)². It was described in the *Illustrated Australian News* of May, 1872, as follows³:

1. *Argus* 1.9.1871, p.2. Tenders wanted, erection of new Presbyterian Church, Fitzroy. George Browne, architect.
2. *Illustrated Australian News* 21.5.1872, p.15.
3. *Ibid.*

".....the foundation stone was laid by Sir James McCulloch on the 13th of November, 1871... The complete design has only been carried out so far as regards the nave, the transepts being in futuro. The nave is 65 feet long by 40 feet 6 inches wide and the walls are 25 feet high. The roof which is opened to the ridge is stained and varnished, and a new mode of ventilation has been introduced in the form of Gothic perforations from the eaves to the beam filling. The principals of the roof are supported by hammer beams resting on ornamental corbels and columns.....The building is composed of bluestone with white dressings of freestone and tracery round the windows. The main entrance is opened by a well treated porch, the floor of which is laid with Minton's tiles. The internal fittings of the Church, together with the pulpit, are executed in French-polished cedar. At the rear are erected vestries and class-rooms, with the usual out buildings. The front elevation is treated with ornamental buttresses terminating with small spires and wrought iron vanes. The main window of the front gable is large and of open tracery as are also the smaller windows.All the windows have been glazed in most elaborate designs with embossed, stained and ornamental glass, and were made by Messrs. Urie and Ferguson, of this city. The grounds are enclosed with iron palisading."

The building survives intact today apart from some internal arrangement. The cedar ceiling and panelling survive as does the original hammer beam roof truss system. No original drawings survive, but it appears that the original proposal for transepts "in futuro" was never realised.

This is the only ecclesiastic building by George Browne that has been identified. Browne was also responsible for "Rupertswood", Sunbury (1874) and the former Academy of Music, 17 Lydiard Street, Ballarat (1874). It provides a significant example of an intact English transitional Gothic Church building with intact coloured stained glass and original finishes, both internally and externally. The fine cast iron fencing on a bluestone plinth compliments the building.