



### Wesleyan Minister's Residence 1 Little Ryrie Street

#### History

This building is described in Brownhill's *History of Geelong & Corio Bay* as 'the second parsonage in connection with Yarra Street Wesleyan Church'. It was occupied by ministers serving South Geelong and other areas.<sup>1</sup>

The Geelong Wesleyan Circuit had commenced services in a temporary chapel during 1842 on land purchased by the minister, the Rev. Hurst, in Yarra Street.<sup>2</sup> Why the La Trobe Street reserve was rejected in favour of Yarra Street is unknown.

The 1854 Geelong plan shows a brick building on the site of 1 Little Ryrie, depicted as a square, in a fenced yard with 'Wesleyan Church' written across the land. To the

north was the Presbyterian Church and, to the south, the Public Schools Reserve. Another early plan<sup>3</sup> shows the allotment divided into three: the 'chapel' at the La Trobe Terrace corner, a 'dwelling', next east, and then a 'school.' Cox's c1864 plan of the site was unchanged from the 1854 plan.

The Yarra Street Church Property Schedule (Geelong Circuit)<sup>4</sup> of 1861 noted the church (1846), the minister's residence (1848), Sexton's residence, school master's house, the school and infants school: all on the Yarra Street two-acre grant. As well there was the La Trobe Terrace site, also 2 acres, but containing only the minister's residence. No date was given for its erection, but improvements were made in 1857: it had eight rooms, just as it had in the 1920s<sup>5</sup>. Ratebooks of the 1850s list the Rev. Daniel as occupier of what was an eight room

- 1 Brownhill, p.170
- 2 Benson, p.438
- 3 TO Index Plan 17, Corio Parish
- 4 held by Uniting Church
- 5 RB1920,274

City of Geelong Urban Conservation Study  
Significant Sites

brick house<sup>1</sup>; George Daniel being, later, a prominent member of the Wesleyan Church on a national basis.<sup>2</sup> Most of the two-acre Wesleyan grant was sold as 14 allotments in 1872, but the parsonage and some other Little Ryrie Street lots were withdrawn from sale until eleven years later, when J.H. Down, a former licensee of the Eureka Hotel, bought the house for £720 and occupied it for a time.<sup>3</sup> Rate books of the 1870s-80s confirm the continuing Wesleyan ownership, with the Revs. J Royce and Richard Fitcher being among the occupiers<sup>4</sup>. The Rev. Barnard Butchers was among the last Wesleyans to occupy the residence.<sup>5</sup>

During the Down's family ownership, tenants were Charles Sommers, auctioneer, and Rhoda Miller<sup>6</sup>. Later owner-occupiers of 1 Little Ryrie Street were Lettitia and Phillip Trickett (1920-30s) and 3 Little Ryrie Street, Clifton Keats (owner).<sup>7</sup> Bertie McKinnon, a blind maker, lived at 1 Little Ryrie for over 20 years; the tenants in 3 were more varied, including Ivan Niddrie (painter), Arthur Godfrey, John Jennings and Mrs. Annie McAsey.<sup>8</sup>

An 1879 panorama taken from the adjacent school tower shows the house much as it is today with the exception of a chimney on the south wall and a timber picket fence, interspersed with stout posts, along the frontage<sup>9</sup>. The La Trobe Terrace corner is vacant, with landscaping, but the balance of the reserve appears to have been built up by that date.

**Description**

Potentially pre-1854 in part, much of the appearance of this stuccoed brick house was probably created in the renovations of 1857.<sup>10</sup> Later descriptions are for a brick house of seven rooms, kitchen, wash house and paddock<sup>11</sup>. The Water Board plan (c1914-17) shows a similar outline to recent plans (c1966), indicating little accommodation change since. Extensive stabling and outbuildings are also shown (since demolished).

Possibly verandahed on three sides pre 1857, the house has a projecting room bay on the south-east corner, with new windows in place of a chimney shaft shown there in 1879. The concave verandah is elegantly supported on slender (duplex) timber posts, each ornamented with cast-iron brackets with a saltire-cross infill above the capitals. The chimney top is corbelled, with a terra-cotta pot, and the window sashes multi-paned. Other details include the quarry-tiled verandah floor. The sympathetic square-top picket fence probably dates from c1915-25.

**External Integrity**

Chimney removed and new windows installed on south wall; fence replaced in a visually sympathetic manner and signs added.

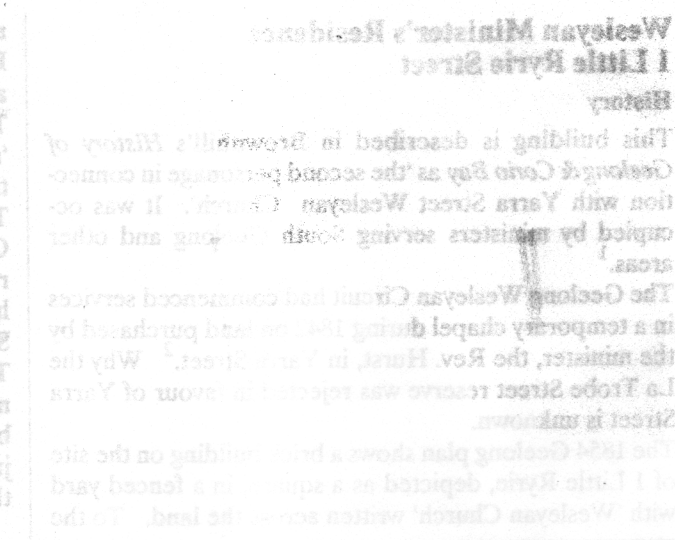
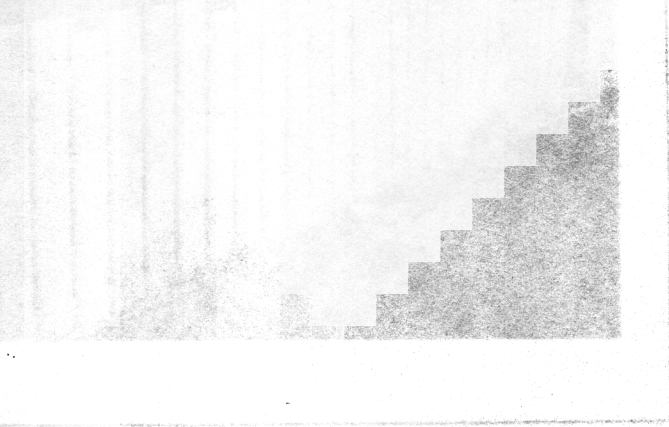
**Streetscape**

The earliest and most significant part of a small but valuable 19th century residential precinct, (6.1).

**Significance**

Historically, probably Geelong's oldest Wesleyan ministers residence and the only indication that this two-acre grant was once intended for church use. It is also among the city's oldest houses.

Architecturally, indicative of its two early construction periods, the house has valuable verandah detailing and represents well a house type now uncommon in Geelong city, (medium sized, brick detached villa, single-storey of the 1850s or earlier); one comparison being the Willis house at 242 Ryrie Street (1850).



1 RB1857-8, 33  
2 see Benson, p.307f  
3 Brownhill, loc. cit.; RB1890,350  
4 RB1876,303; RB1880,319  
5 GD1882  
6 RB1895-6,464; RB1900,268  
7 RB1930, 356-7  
8 D1920-50; RB1930, 357  
9 GHRC collection  
10 RB1857-8, 33: 8 rooms, brick  
11 RB1876,303