

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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result of the continued growth in the numbers of pupils again putting pressure on accommodation, the Church Trustees began fundraising to enlarge the Sunday School in 1901-02, to make it suitable for both the Shenton Wesleyan Sabbath School and the Church. Electric light was installed in the school in June 1902.

The decision to rebuild was formerly taken early in 1903, and the prominent Geelong architects Laird and Barlow were engaged to prepare plans that were completed by 15 May 1903. The side walls of the existing Sunday School were to be removed, and new walls erected 10 ft further out, creating two additional spaces, each 40 ft x 10 ft on either side of the room. Also four classrooms were to be added to the rear of the school, totalling 40 ft x 12 ft., and an entrance porch with small bell tower at the front entrance completed the changes. Voluntary labour was utilised to carry out the construction work, under the supervision of F.W. Ackland. Painting and glazing cost 84 pounds, 16 shillings. Ed Blakiston installed the electric light after work hours. School classes and church services were conducted in the new orderly rooms of the Geelong Artillery Staff during the period of alterations. The new building, capable of seating 459 people, was opened on 16 August 1903, and the first school session held on the following Sunday. In 1905 an unused church building at Gheringhap was purchased and placed on the south-west corner of the property. It was used as a meeting room for the Band of Hope and Society classes. When a new parsonage was built to the west of the church in 1908, the Infant School and the Band of Hope Room were moved to the south-east corner of the Church Reserve. The caretakers cottage was removed at that time, as were outside toilets in the north-west corner of the property.

A new brick church was built in the south-east corner of the site in 1937, occupying the space previously taken by the Infant School room and the Band of Hope Room. The church was designed by Geelong architect, Frederick Charles Purnell who called tenders on 27 January 1937. The successful tenderer was Ernest E. Beech, the work to cost £2,700. A foundation stone was laid by Rev. G.A. Judkins on 3 April 1937, and the church was opened in November of that year, the first Minister being Rev. T.F. Stanley. The Infant Schoolroom and Band of Hope Room were relocated behind the Parsonage, and a toilet block added. Also a small 17.2 square metre kitchen was added to the north-west corner of the main Sunday School building, which now became the Church Hall. In order to fit the new church onto the site, it had been necessary to relocate the small bell tower around to the east side wall of the Hall, creating a new entrance.

When the Uniting Church was established in c. 1975, Shenton Church became redundant as the congregation now worshipped at the former St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The Directorate of Education leased three of the buildings for use by Geelong High School for many years (two as classrooms, and the Hall for Drama and Dance classes), until the Uniting Church finally offered the property for public sale, with tenders closing on 21 May 1993. The High School, having already identified a permanent Performing Arts Complex as a priority need, persuaded the Ministry of Education to purchase Lot 2 of the proposed subdivision (i.e. the whole site excluding the parsonage), for a cost of less than \$250,000. As part of the purchase contract, the former Infant Schoolroom was demolished. The Geelong architects McGlashan Everist were engaged in 1994 to develop a concept plan for the site, which involved removing the kitchen, toilets and a fence, relocating the former Band of Hope classroom, rotating the Hall from its north-south axis to an east-west axis, enabling the bell tower to be re-positioned at the front of the building. Repairs, weatherproofing and repainting were also undertaken. The work was subcontracted under the supervision of former schoolteacher, Michael Metzger, who also did much of the paint work himself. A former Harbour Trust room, more recently used as a multi-purpose building at North Geelong Primary School, was bought in 1999-2000 and added to the rear of the Church Hall.

Frederick Charles Purnell was born in Geelong in 1868, the son of William Purnell and his

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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wife, Margaret, nee Lamb. He was educated at Geelong College before studying architecture and joining his father and brother as an architectural draftsman. He travelled extensively during his architectural studies, and was a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects. In 1899 he enlisted in the Geelong militia battery of the Garrison Artillery. During the First World War he commanded the A.I.F. Camp at Geelong Racecourse, was promoted through the ranks to that of Lieutenant-Colonel by 1917, and served in France in the initial tank service until January 1919. After the war, Frederick became the first Secretary of the Geelong and District Branch of the Town Planning Association which formed in 1924. This organisation was responsible for tree plantations along the Melbourne Road for 15 miles. Purnell was very active in arousing public interest in this venture, and in organizing volunteer helpers. His other interests included playing an active role in the Geelong College Old Collegians' Association, of which he became President, and participation in the Old Collegians Choir, which he organized in 1921. Married with three sons, Frederick Purnell died on 10 February 1953.

### Description

The former Shenton Methodist Church and Church Hall at 379 Ryrie Street, Geelong, are located on a prominent corner site at the intersection of Ryrie and Garden Streets. The Church is situated nearest the corner and has modest front setbacks, while the timber hall is located at the rear (north) of the Church.

#### Church Building

The unpainted brick, interwar Gothic Revival styled former Church building is characterised by steeply pitched gable roof forms that project towards the street frontages, together with a curved apse that projects towards the Garden Street frontage and a porch on the Ryrie Street facade. There is also a projecting side entrance to the north of the main building. The steeply pitched roof forms are clad in tiles and there are narrow eaves.

The verticality of the design is accentuated by the early, diagonally-oriented, unpainted brick piers that punctuate the main gables and building corners. The gable ends are also denoted by the projecting brick courses near the rooflines. Both the apse and Ryrie Street entrance porch and side (Garden Street) entrance have battlemented parapets that enhance the picturesqueness of the design.

Other early features of the design include the pointed lancet windows in the gable ends, and the small pointed windows in the space and entrances. These windows also feature early diamond leadlights.

The cantilevering verandah over the Ryrie Street entrance appear to have been introduced.

#### Hall Building

The former Shenton Methodist Church Hall has a frontage to Garden Street. The single storey, horizontal weatherboard, Victorian and Federation Carpenter Gothic styled building is characterised by a dominant broken back gable roof form, together with a rear gable roof that traverses the site (this rear roof form comprises the former multi-purpose building from North Geelong Primary School). These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated steel. The main building has early timber framed, multi-paned pointed windows and the walls are decorated by early timber shingling.

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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An early feature of the design is the projecting gable porch surmounted by a small early timber framed bellcote.

Another early feature is the timber gable infill to the porch gable end.

### Statement of Cultural Significance

The former Shenton Methodist Church and Hall buildings at 379 Ryrie Street, Geelong have significance as a legacy of the development of the Methodist Church in the area in the early 20th century, and as important examples of the interwar Gothic and Federation Carpenter Gothic architectural styles respectively. With the hall built originally in 1863 (and altered and extended in 1868 and 1903) and the Church in 1937, both buildings appear to be in good condition when viewed from the street.

The former Shenton Methodist Church building at 379 Ryrie Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities of an interwar Gothic style. These qualities include the steeply pitched gable roof forms that project towards the street frontages, curved apse that projects towards the Garden Street frontage, porch on the Ryrie Street facade, projecting side entrance to the north of the main building, tiled roof cladding, narrow eaves and the unpainted brick wall construction. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the diagonally-oriented, unpainted brick piers that punctuate the main gables and building corners, projecting brick courses near the rooflines of the gable ends, battlemented parapets to the apse and projecting porches, pointed windows and the diamond leadlights.

The former Shenton Hall at 379 Ryrie Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although altered and extended with the incorporation of the former North Geelong multi-purpose building at the rear, the hall still demonstrates original design qualities of a Victorian and Federation Carpenter Gothic style. These qualities include the dominant broken back gable roof form, horizontal weatherboard wall cladding, galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding and the front projecting gable porch surmounted by the small timber framed bellcote. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the timber framed, multi-paned pointed windows, timber shingling, timber porch gable infill and the rear gable form and construction of the former North Geelong Primary School multi-purpose building.

The former Shenton Methodist Church and Hall at 379 Ryrie Street are historically significant at a LOCAL level. They are associated with and are a legacy of the development of the Methodist Church in the local area from 1863 until c.1975. The Church building also has associations with the Geelong architect, Frederick Purnell.

The former Shenton Methodist Church and Hall at 379 Ryrie Street are socially significant at a LOCAL level. Although no longer functioning as church buildings, they are still recognised by some sections of the Geelong community for their past religious purposes. They are now also recognised and valued for educational reasons, being associated with the Geelong High School.

Overall, the former Shenton Methodist Church and Hall at 379 Ryrie Street are of LOCAL significance.

### References

Town Plan of Geelong 1881, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

'Corian', In old Geelong - an attempt to recapture the past before we forget, from the Geelong Times, 1921-22, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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**Site Name:** Former Shenton Methodist Church & Timber Hall

**Project File No:** 1144

**Address:** 379 Ryrie Street Geelong 3220

**Approx. Date:** 1863, 1903, 1937

**Integrity:** Moderate-High

**Significance Level:** C( Local)

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**Photograph No:** 03.16 & 03.17

**Survey Date:** March 2002

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### History

The former Shenton Methodist Church and Timber Hall at 379 Ryrie Street, Geelong, (corner of Ryrie and Garden Streets) is located on Wesleyan Reserve (Lot 2, PS318614, Crown Allotment 18, Section 63, of the Geelong Town Plan of 1881.

The first of the present day buildings erected on this site was the timber hall. It was opened on 21 December 1863 as a timber Sunday School building measuring 60 ft. by 20 ft. and covered by a shingle roof. Internally, the unlined walls were exposed weatherboards. In 1866, the building was lined internally by the teachers. Soon proving too small to accommodate the growing number of pupils, the building was enlarged in 1868 by the addition of two wings, each measuring 20 ft. by 10 ft. The lining of these additions was again undertaken at night by the teachers to save expense. Gas replaced kerosene lamps in October 1871, and in July 1881, galvanised iron was put over the shingles on the roof.

Church Services were conducted in this building from October 1884. By 1890, the school had again become overcrowded. A weatherboard Infant School was subsequently built to a design by the Geelong architect A.J. Derrick at a cost of £90. It was located to the west of the Sunday School building, and to the south of the then caretaker's cottage. As a

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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Rowe, D., Architecture of Geelong, 1860-1900, B. Arch. Thesis, Deakin University, 1991.

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Copy of purchase and planning documents 1993-94, courtesy Geelong High School Library.

Oral information supplied by J. Watt, former Assistant Principal, Geelong High School.

Purnell, L.A., The Purnell Family History, 1990, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

