

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: John Knox Presbyterian Church

Project File No: 1180

Address: 60 Victoria Street North Geelong 3215

Approx. Date: 1905, c.1910, 1925, 1929

Integrity: Moderate-High

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 11a.02

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This site, presently the manse of the John Knox Presbyterian Church, at 60 Victoria Street, North Geelong, is located on part of Crown Allotment 59, on the 1917 map of the Parish of Moorpanyal. Adjoining the manse at 31 Balmoral Crescent, are the church and hall. Part of the land is on Lot 115 of subdivision plan 2987. The land has a frontage of 132 ft. 3 ins. to Balmoral Crescent, and variable depth - 185 ft. on the north side, and 199 ft. 4 ins. on the south side.

The 5-roomed weatherboard house at this location was built in 1905 at 127 Melbourne Road, north of the intersection with Liverpool Street, the first recorded owner being Frederick Greenwood, gentleman of Northcote, who bought the land from Lloyd Hooper, grocer of Geelong West. In 1908, the house was sold to Henry Samuel Olle, a railway employee, and his wife Susan. In December 1909, the Presbytery of Geelong canvassed opinions regarding a suggested redistribution of local Presbyterian Churches to cater for the growing suburbanisation of Geelong. It was suggested that a church and manse be built at Geelong West, with a branch church at North Geelong. The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church purchased the Melbourne Road house, with accompanying stables and land, from Henry and Susan Olle between 1915 and 1920. On 5 February 1924, Rev. James Smith was appointed minister at North Geelong, on the condition that he be

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

provided with the use of the manse.

The church building, constructed of weatherboard, with an iron roof, was built before 1910, being at that time the North Geelong Congregational Church, situated on the corner of Melbourne Road and what was then known as Shannon Street (now Vautier Street). At a meeting on 4 November 1918, the Presbyterian congregation at North Geelong agreed to purchase the church building, furniture included, from the Congregational Church for the sum of 250 pounds (of which 200 pds was raised by loans on debentures, paid for by members of the congregation and friends). Fencing and the purchase of an organ would increase the final cost to 300 pounds. The building was to be moved within a month, but the work was not completed until 6 February, 1919. The church's new site, measuring 105 ft. by 110 ft., was on land originally owned by W. Walker (part Crown Allotment no. 60 of the 1917 Moorpanyal Parish map) at the corner of Melbourne Road and Liverpool Street.

On 1 December 1925, Rev. H.H. Childs reported to Presbytery that a new Sunday School building(the present hall) had been erected at North Geelong, next to the church, costing about 500 pounds. 110 pds. had been raised locally and Presbytery agreed to a loan of 100 pds from its funds, and an application had been made for a grant of 50 pds through Presbytery to the church's Jubilee Fund.

The next incumbent at the manse was "evangelist", Robert Robertson, who was appointed in 1927. On 5 November 1928, the decision was taken by the Trustees to purchase land at the corner of Victoria Street and Balmoral Crescent from the Estate of West Geelong grocer, Lloyd Hooper, and move the church buildings and manse to the new site, to be known as John Knox Presbyterian. The decision to relocate was taken because the Geelong City Council had excised 34 ft. from the existing church site in order to widen the Melbourne Road. The total cost of removal was over 1235 pounds, met by a loan from Presbytery, which was defrayed over time out of a "compensation" payment of 1,063/15/- from City Council, and from local funds. The debt on the Church buildings was 1,300 Pounds at the beginning of 1934, but was reduced to just 500 pounds by the beginning of 1944. The Hall was not paid for in full until 1939. Brown and Barlow were contracted to move the buildings to their new site in 1929. All 3 buildings were renovated, sewerage installed, and a temporary manse rented during the transit period, before Robert Robertson resumed residency in 1930.

In March 1935, Rev. R. Vernon Merritt lived in the manse at 60 Victoria Street, and the North Geelong and Lara Charges were amalgamated. North Geelong was now the main church of a parish covering Little River, Lara, Corio, North Shore and North Geelong. With Merritt's departure for Tasmania in mid 1936, Rev Cecil Y. Reid took over the parish and manse, and it was possibly during this time when a tennis court was constructed to the south of the church in Balmoral Crescent. In 1944 Rev. Frank Reid replaced James G. Scarf, who had succeeded Cecil Reid in 1941, and Reid remained in the parish until 1952, when Rev. A. Jeff Morison arrived. The North Geelong - Lara parish was split in two in 1955, the North Geelong minister from this time being responsible for North Geelong, North Shore and Little River. Later ministers at John Knox included Rev. H.A. Robinson (1968), Rev. J.A. Lewis (1972) and Rev. Stanley Briton Halford (1975-1978). Rev. Halford's ministry was extended at the instance of the local congregation in 1975, when they determined to stand aside from the new Uniting Church and remain "Continuing Presbyterian". A new kitchen was added to the rear of the hall in the late 1960s or early 1970s, and a kindergarten was built by Jeff Tamplin on the bay side of the tennis courts, to a design drawn up by architectural student, David Reid. The tennis courts were removed in the 1980s.

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Description

The John Knox Presbyterian Church complex at 60 Victoria Street, North Geelong, comprises a timber Church building, a timber Church hall building, and a timber Church manse at the rear (north). The complex is set on a corner allotment and the front of the Church building is largely characterised by concrete paving, with an introduced wire mesh fence (approximately 1800 mm high) along the Victoria Street boundary. There is a concrete footpath and perimeter garden beds between the Church and hall buildings.

Church Building

The single storey, horizontal timber weatherboard, Federation Carpenter Gothic styled Church building is characterised by a simple gable roof form that traverses the site, together with a minor porch gable that projects towards the street frontage. These roof forms are clad in red-painted galvanised corrugated steel. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves. Some round galvanised steel ventilation stacks adorn the roofline.

An early feature of the design is the narrow round-arched timber framed double hung windows (including the small window in the gable porch). Another early feature is the timber framed doorway.

Church Hall

The single storey, horizontal timber weatherboard, interwar Hall Bungalow styled building is characterised by a gable roof form that traverses the site, together with a minor gable porch that projects towards the street frontage. These roof forms are clad in red-painted galvanised corrugated steel. An early galvanised steel ventilation stack adorns the roofline. Wide overhangs with exposed timber rafters are features of the eaves.

Other early features of the design include the timber framed double hung windows, timber framed doorway under the projecting porch gable, and the timber gable ventilator.

Church Manse

Behind the Church and hall buildings is an early timber residence that overlooks Corio Bay. The single storey, horizontal weatherboard, Late Victorian styled house is characterised by a hipped roof form, together with a skillion verandah that projects towards the Bay. There are also an introduced c.1950s fibro cement addition to the south, and an introduced c.1920s gabled addition projecting towards Victoria Street. The roof forms are clad in introduced corrugated Colorbond. There are two early unpainted brick chimneys with concrete bands and cappings, which possibly date from the early 20th century (c.1900-1920), suggesting the this Victorian styled building was relocated to this site during that period. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves.

The early front section of the house (that overlooks the Bay) has a symmetrical composition accentuated by the early central doorway (with early sidelights and highlights) and the flanking timber framed double hung tripartite windows. The timber framed double hung windows of the central section at the rear also appear to be early. However, the timber verandah columns and cast iron valance have been introduced, as has the timber framed and aluminium framed windows on the side additions.

There is also an early skillion timber shed between the Church hall and the house.

Statement of Cultural Significance

The John Knox Presbyterian Church complex at 60 Victoria Street, North Geelong, has significance for its associations with the Presbyterian Church in North Geelong from 1918, when the Church building was situated on the corner of Melbourne Road and Vautier Street (and had been constructed as the Congregational Church before 1910). The

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Church complex also has significance as examples of the Federation Carpenter Gothic style and interwar Hall Bungalow style (Church and hall buildings respectively), and as an altered example of the Late Victorian style (manse). These buildings appear to be in good-fair condition when viewed from the street.

The John Knox Presbyterian Church building at 60 Victoria Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities of the Federation Carpenter Gothic style. These qualities include the simple gable roof form that traverses the site, together with the minor porch gable that projects towards the street frontage. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding, galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, narrow eaves, ventilation stacks, narrow round-arched timber framed double hung windows (including the small window in the gable porch) and the timber framed doorway. The neighbouring interwar hall building also contributes to the architectural significance of the place.

The John Knox Presbyterian Church manse at 60 Victoria Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although altered, it still demonstrates some original design qualities of a Late Victorian style. These qualities include hipped roof form, together with the skillion verandah that projects towards the Bay. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, horizontal weatherboard wall cladding, corrugated profile to the roof cladding, two unpainted brick chimneys with concrete bands and cappings, narrow eaves, symmetrical central front composition accentuated by the central doorway (with sidelights and highlights) and the flanking timber framed double hung tripartite windows, and the other timber framed double hung windows at the rear.

The John Knox Presbyterian Church complex at 60 Victoria Street is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the development of the Presbyterian Church in North Geelong from 1918 when the Church building was situated at the corner of Melbourne Road and Vautier Street (then known as Shannon Street). It had been built before 1910 for the Congregation Church who sold it to the Presbyterian Church and relocated to its Melbourne Road site in 1919. The Church hall has long associations with the North Geelong Presbyterian Church, being constructed on the former Church site in Melbourne Road in 1925. The manse has associations with the Presbyterian Church from between 1915-1920, when the building was a private residence at 127 Melbourne Road. All three buildings were relocated to their current site in 1929, as a result of the widening of the Melbourne Road. The church complex then became known as the John Knox Presbyterian Church.

The John Knox Presbyterian Church complex at 60 Victoria Street is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is recognised and highly valued by some sections of the North Geelong community for religious reasons.

Overall, the John Knox Presbyterian Church complex at 60 Victoria Street is of LOCAL significance.

References

- Electoral Roll (Div. Corio; Sub-div. Geelong North) 1984, Geelong Historical Records Centre.
- Sands & McDougall's Directory of Geelong, 1972, Geelong Historical Records Centre.
- Sands & McDougall's "Invicta" Geelong Directory, 1968, Geelong Historical Records Centre.
- Geelong City Council Rate Books (Villamanta Ward), 1905-1960, Geelong Historical Records Centre.
- Town Plan of Geelong 1881, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Trustee Records 1879-1977, Item 13, North Geelong, Geelong Historical Records Centre, Record no.319.

Anderson, D.S. & Smith, E.H., Faith through the years 1934-1984, Geelong Historical Records Centre.

Presbytery of Geelong - Reports and Submissions Item 10: Redistribution of Geelong Churches 1910-1911, Geelong Historical records Centre, Record no.229.

Presbytery of Geelong - Inwards & Outwards Correspondence, Item 110 - North Geelong 1975, Geelong Historical Records Centre, Record no.230.

Oral information supplied by former parishioner, Alison Reid.

Letters & other archival documents of the Presbytery of Geelong, Presbyterian Church Archives, 156 Collins St., Melbourne.

Presbytery of Geelong Minutes 1918-1928, Presbyterian Church Archives, 156 Collins St., Melbourne.

Notice of sale, St. Helen's Estate, 15 October, 1910, Geelong Historical Records Centre.