

Trinity Lutheran Church
53 Victoria St., Doncaster.

On 21 April 1892, the Trinity Lutheran Church at Doncaster, designed by the important Victorian architect, JAB Koch, was dedicated. This was the second Lutheran Church built for the Waldau German Lutheran farming community at Doncaster. It replaced an earlier 1858 timber church.⁴⁰⁰

The first church(on the site of the present musuem complex) was designed by Friedrich Straube, donor of the land. The former church was sold to Carl Aumann for use as a barn.⁴⁰¹

The Waldau settlement at Doncaster was one of a number of German communities established in Victoria in the 1850s. Other major settlements were at Westgarthtown(now Thomastown), Germantown(Grovedale near Geelong), Hawthorn, Harkaway near Berwick, and in the Western District. An important task of such communities was the building of a Lutheran church, school and cemetery.⁴⁰²

The opening service of the 1892 Doncaster Church was attended by members of other German communities at Melbourne, Harkaway and Scoresby. The new brick building was constructed at a cost of 1300 pounds on a half acre allotment in Victoria Street(then Bismark Street). The land had been purchased from the Aumann estate.⁴⁰³

Lutheran Church and other records confirm that the chosen architect was the distinguished German Lutheran, JAB Koch. The builder was GW Freeman.⁴⁰⁴ The building has the distinction of being the only church designed by this notable architect.

John AB Koch(1845-1928) was born in Hamburn, the son of Johann Christian Koch, a joiner. The Koch family migrated to Melbourne in 1855. Koch designed over 60 buildings in Richmond, where he was appointed city architect in 1887, and at Hawthorn, where he lived from 1896. Earlier, in 1873, Koch was appointed architect to the City of Melbourne. During that time, he was responsible for the design of the German Club(1885) in Alfred Place and work on the Women's and Melbourne Hospitals.

⁴⁰⁰ Haacke and Postlethwaite, p. 13.

⁴⁰¹ Haacke and Postlethwaite, p. 13.

⁴⁰² Robert Wuchatsch, *Westgarthtown, The German Settlement at Thomastown*, pp. 46, 52, 53, 54.

⁴⁰³ Haacke and Postlethwaite, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁴ Haacke and Postlethwaite; *BEMJ*, 19 Dec. 1891; *ABCN*, 9 Jan. 1892; *Victorian Churches*, ed. Miles Lewis, p. 68; National Trust File No. 5956.

Koch used the Gothic style in his church work. He only designed the Lutheran Church and Manse at Doncaster but also the Parsonage (1890) next door to the East Melbourne Lutheran Church of which he was a member. An important member of Melbourne's German community, Koch was mayor of Richmond and President of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1903-1904. He ceased practice in 1913 to concentrate on his hobbies of carpentry, cabinetmaking and inventing. Koch died at Hawthorn and is buried in the Boroondara Cemetery.⁴⁰⁵

A hall was built behind the church in 1932 for use as a Sunday School and meeting place for church groups. It was designed by the architect, PW Murfett. In 1956, extensive alterations were made to the sanctuary of the church comprising relocation of the organ to the choir gallery, and modification and relocation of the pulpit against the south wall. Most of the original furniture was repolished. Following these renovations, the church was rededicated on 26 May 1957⁴⁰⁶

A new larger hall and kindergarten was completed in 1976 designed by the architect, V. Ziersch, and built with a high proportion of voluntary labour under the supervision of the builder, G. Orgell.⁴⁰⁷

Of State historical significance as a rare church design by the great domestic, commercial and public building architect, JAB Koch. One of the few remaining 19th century buildings in Doncaster and of importance for its associations with the local German farming community. It is one of three historic places (church, manse and cemetery) associated with that community.

Trinity Lutheran Church Manse
53 Victoria Street, Doncaster.

Lutheran Church records confirm that the brick Lutheran Church Manse at Doncaster was completed and dedicated on Whit Monday, 31 May 1909. It was designed by the architect, JAB Koch, and built at a cost of about 750 pounds. It stands next to the Trinity Lutheran Church, also designed by Koch⁴⁰⁸

The site was donated in 1907 by Miss Mary Fromhold, a member of the congregation and of the local German farming community. The notable architect, Koch, was commissioned to draw up the plans for the residence and to call tenders for its construction. The dedication ceremony was held in the church, followed by a celebratory function in the Doncaster Athenaeum Hall.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁵ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, pp. 632-633.

⁴⁰⁶ Haacke and Postlethwaite, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁰⁷ Haacke and Postlethwaite, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁰⁸ Haacke and Postlethwaite, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁰⁹ Haacke and Postlethwaite, pp. 27-28.