HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	Bible Christian Church		
Address	Lyell Road REDESDALE	**Grading**	2008 Local
Building Type	Church		
Assessment by	Context Pty Ltd		

Recommended Heritage Protection	**VHR** No **HI** No **PS** -

Architectural Style Victorian Period (1851-1901)

Maker / Builder No information held

Integrity

Fair

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of Metcalfe

Note: The following history is a series of excerpts from *Twigg, K. and Jacobs, W (1994)* **Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study Volume 1 Environmental History**, *Ballarat.*

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of the land, Mitchell named the area Australia Felix.

Less than a year after Mitchell's return to Sydney with glowing reports of the stocking capabilities of the land in the south, the first overlanders arrived in the district and soon thereafter laid claim to the rich basaltic plains of the Campaspe and Coliban Rivers. The pastoral occupation of the Shire was completed by 1843 and the process of shaping the landscape to fit the demands of white settlement, gathered pace.

Over the next decade many of the earliest pastoral runs were subdivided; Bowman's Run, for instance, was split in two to form Stratford Lodge and Sutton Grange [1]. It was also a period of improvements around homesteads.

During the 1850s the pressure of supplying sufficient food to the newly discovered gold diggings and the growing demand for land by miners led to the survey and sale of large areas of land in proximity to the gold fields.[2] At the time of the first land sales in the 1850s there were no restrictions on the amount of land an individual could buy and most squatters managed to purchase between 3,000 and 6,000 acres of the old leasehold. However the land sales also attracted wealthy entrepreneurs and successful miners. At Stratford Lodge almost the entire leasehold was offered for sale and between 1856 and 1857, William Degraves, successful flour miller and William Williamson created something of a stir by buying between 12000 and 13000 acres each.

In September 1851 the Mount Alexander gold rush exploded after a small notice in the Argus announced a discovery in the Mount Alexander Ranges. Serle has suggested the Alexander rush set the standard for all subsequent rushes and argues that at no other gold field was gold spread so shallowly and liberally over such a large area.[3] The temporary nature of many early gold rush workings is witnessed by isolated ruins or a cluster of buildings which once formed a small settlement. By contrast the townships which survive from this period still retain the layout, the commercial street design and many of the residences and solid public buildings of their gold field origins.

By the late 1850s it was clear that road making was needed and it was agreed that the responsibility for works should be given to each local district. The Metcalfe Roads board was proclaimed on 14 August 1860 and wasted little time in seeking money for road construction. At its first meeting it was moved that the Board 'with as little delay as possible obtain a portion of the government grant for the present year.'[4] Rates were also levied on residents and by 1865 this must have amounted to over £1000 for this level had to be reached before a district could be proclaimed a Shire. The Shire was proclaimed in July 1865 and at this time its area was substantially increased by the voluntary addition of Elphingstone, West Faraday, Harcourt and Barkers Creek.

A seventeen mile branch line was opened to Redesdale in 1891 leaving the Melbourne-Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway at Redesdale Junction to the north of Kyneton, and then continuing through the stations of Green Hill, Edgecombe, East Metcalfe , Emberton and Barfold before terminating at Redesdale . The stations consisted of little more than a tin shed and a water tank but they rapidly became a focal point for the surrounding communities.

History of Redesdale

The first scattered buildings of the township of Redesdale grew up near Monro's Crossing (Campaspe River) on the Kyneton Heathcote Road, catering to miners en route to the Heathcote old fields. During the early 1860s telegraph coaches followed this route daily carrying mail between the gold fields and Kyneton. Nevertheless, Redesdale was scarcely considered a place of significance and when Mr Bain suggested making a road to Redesdale in 1860 there was much amusement with someone responding he might was well make a road to the moon.[5]

More extensive settlement of the area in the 1860s by the Catholic settlers prompted the survey of the Redesdale Township and the sale of the first township blocks in 1871. Building work was characterized by the use of bluestone and by 1870 the main road boasted a police station, hotel, a Catholic Church, a post office, a bakery, a drapery and butchery with slaughter yards out the back.

During this period Redesdale established itself as a solid agricultural township. After the construction of a branch line railway in 1891 the township became an important railhead.

History of the Bible Christian Church, Redesdale

The Bible Christian congregation was founded by William O'Bryan from Cornwall in October 18151. It is said that this division of Methodism was originally introduced to South Australia by Cornish miners, and then introduced to Victoria, with the first Victorian conference of Bible Christians held in Gore Street in 1872.

It is thought that Redesdale's first Bible Christian Church was built across the road from the current site of the former Lyell Road church, with the church receiving strong support and attendance from miners in the Horse Shoe Bend or Lyal area.[6]

[1] Randell, J. O. (1982), *Pastoral settlement in northern Victoria, Vol. 2: The Campaspe District,* Chandos, Burwood, p.138.

[2] Powell, J.M. (1970) *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains* Melbourne, New York, Oxford University Press p. 67.

[3] Serle, Geoffery (1963), *The Golden Age: A history of the colony of Victoria 1851 - 1861,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 23.

[4] Metcalfe Roads Board Minutes, 10 September 1860.

[5] *Taradale Express*, 16 December 1871.

[6] Twigg, Karen and Jacobs, Wendy, *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study*, Ballarat, Victoria, p 84.

Primary Sources

Metcalfe Roads Board Minutes, 10 September 1860

Taradale Express, 16 December 1871

Secondary Souces

Powell, J.M. (1970) *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains* Melbourne, New York, Oxford University Press.

Randell, J. O. (1985), *McIvor, A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote,* Shire of McIvor, Heathcote, Victoria.

Randell, J. O. (1982), *Pastoral settlement in northern Victoria, Vol. 2: The Campaspe District,* Chandos, Burwood

Serle, Geoffery (1963), *The Golden Age: A history of the colony of Victoria 1851 - 1861,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study,* Ballarat, Victoria.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8.0 Building community life

8.1 Maintaining spiritual life

Description

Physical Description

The former Bible Christian, and later Presbyterian church at Redesdale is designed in the Primitive Gothic style and constructed in 1875. Elements of the style include the use of gable roofs and pointed arch windows. Often there is a small round window or oculus that becomes a feature of the gable end as is the case for this church. Variations to the style include whether a porch has been attached to the front or side of the main building and whether the entry is to the front or side of the porch. In this case the church has a small porch attached to the end with entry from the front.

Variations in building materials are evident across the Bendigo region and the Redesdale church is constructed of bluestone in a snecked, coursed and squared rubble.

There is a timber framed and weatherboarded room at the rear of the church with a brick chimney. The door to the church appears to be original; however the fanlight and other windows are not visible or missing and have been blocked in. Although it is now vacant, the church is in relatively good condition.

Physical Condition

Good

Conservation Policy

Guidelines (Specific)

None specified.

Comparative Analysis

The former Bible Christian Chapel is one of two Bible Christian chapels in the study area, the other being located in Pentlands Road, Mandurang. Architecturally there is a similarity with several Methodist churches including Mia Mia and Axedale.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The former Bible Christian church built in 1875 is significant.

How is it significant?

The former Bible Christian church is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The former Bible Christian church is of historic significance for its association with the Bible Christian movement whose origins were in Cornwall and Devon and subsequently brought to Australia by Cornish immigrants to South Australia. The church is tangible evidence of the presence of the Bible Christian movement that was later to become a part of the broader Methodist Church. *Criterion A*

The former Bible Christian church is of aesthetic significance for its demonstration of the Primitive Gothic style, including the pitched roof, pointed arch windows porch and oculus. The church demonstrates the use of local materials in the form of bluestone from the local area. *Criterion D*

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history,

Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Criterion D Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Criterion G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Recommendations 2008

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	Yes
Incorporated Plan	Yes
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the former Bible Christian church at Lyell Road, Redesdale be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'