

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name St Andrew's Uniting Church
Address 80 High Street AXEDALE **Grading** 2008 Local
Building Type Church
Assessment by Context Pty Ltd



Recommended Heritage Protection VHR No HI No PS Yes

Architectural Style Victorian Period (1851-1901)

Maker / Builder Unknown

Integrity

High

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

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*.^[1]

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The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral runs. Most of the area around the town of Axedale and the numerous small towns in its vicinity was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. A portion of Campaspe Plains was licensed to A. Jennings and George Playne in 1840 and the 67,000 acre station became known as Axedale. In the coming decade the holders of the license changed a number of times. By the time the leasehold over the land was cancelled in 1865, the run had greatly reduced in size.[2]

Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. The discovery of gold at Bendigo and the surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.[3]

The Strathfieldsaye Road District was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on the 12th August 1861, and encompassed within it the parishes of Axedale, Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock, Mandurang, Sedgwick and Lyell.[4] The process of election of the board was punctuated by rivalries between Catholic and Protestant faiths, a characteristic of the district which infiltrates much of its history. Strathfieldsaye met the criterion prescribed to become a Shire in 1863, a transition that was officially proclaimed on the 17th September of that year.[5]

In 1864, Strathfieldsaye Shire was divided into three wards; Mandurang, Strathfieldsaye and Axedale.[6]

History of Axedale

The plan of the township of Axedale, with its characteristic crescent ends, was laid out circa 1856. Axedale was included in the district of Mandurang and under the control of the Strathfieldsaye Roads Board. Patrick Drake had built the Campaspe Hotel in 1855, and by 1865, the district had developed to the extent that it was able to support a further six hotels.[7] Goldfields were typically rough and lawless places, and hotels were big business in their midst. Patterns of settlement continued to reflect the status of Axedale as a centre of support for surrounding farm lands and mining pursuits, and by the 1860s, there were some 500 residents.[8]

Axedale was proclaimed a district on the 20th August 1861, and then a Shire on the 25th September 1866.[9] Much of the population of Axedale was of Irish origin, and tensions between Catholics and Protestants were articulated through the establishment and development of separate facilities for both religions. Facilities in the town were established to cater for, or became associated with, either the Catholic or Protestant communities, so much so that Axedale duplicated its cemeteries, hotels and schools in order to cater for both sectors.[10]

Religious facilities were first established in Axedale with the opening of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Axedale in 1862. The Catholics also ran a school from the Church, catering for the children of settlers that continued to arrive in the area. By the end of the 1860s, pressure from the Common School Committee led to their acquisition of Crown Land, which was gazetted as the site for the Axedale Common School in 1869. The school opened in 1871.[11] Alongside the establishment of religious and educational facilities was the construction of the Axedale Police Station, which opened in 1866.

The rich soils of the Campaspe River allowed for the continuation of farming as a mainstay for the area. Alongside the maintenance of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, residents of Axedale developed other industries. Napthali Ingham established a bluestone quarry on his land in the 1860s, and a further quarry was opened in by Riley, Brazier and Nelson in 1905.[12] Vineyards and orchards were important developments in the district.

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Development of the district and its industries were further enhanced with the construction of the railway from Bendigo to Heathcote, which opened in 1884. The railway was vital means of connecting a number of small towns in the district. The station at Axedale was opened on the 1st October 1888, and continued to be serviced until its closure during the Second World War.[13]

In the 1930s, construction of a weir at the Campaspe River was commenced, though work was suspended at the height of the depression.[14] Proximity to Lake Eppalock, constructed in 1960-65, also proved a source of employment for the town. [15]

The Shire of Strathfieldsaye became part of the City of Greater Bendigo in 1994.

History of St Andrew's Church, 80 High Street, Axedale

Construction of St. Andrew's Church commenced in 1868 and opened in 1869. Construction was undertaken by Mr. David Mill who had arrived in the area in 1863.[16] The church was built with bluestone donated by Nathaniel Ingham, who owned a nearby quarry.[17] The Church was situated on Crown Allotments 4A and 4B, which had been set aside for use by the Church in the initial survey of the town of Axedale.[18]

The final cost of the structure, including building costs and furnishings came to a total £305.8.0, and was built to accommodate one hundred and fifty three people. Originally connected with the Charge of Heathcote, Rev David Renton held fortnightly services at St. Andrew's until the 1880s. After this time, a student teacher took over services at Axedale, making a trip from Barnadown on horseback for that purpose.[19]

St. Andrews was closed in 1929. Mr Cochrane was instrumental in restarting services in 1931, and he utilised the presence of visiting ministers from the churches of St. John's and St Andrew's.[20]

Some repairs and renovations were undertaken at St. Andrew's Church after 1947, some with the help of funds donated by the parish. A porch was erected in 1962 with the help of funds supplied from the Axedale Ladies Guild.[21] This porch was constructed using bluestone from John Randell's old Kimbolton homestead.[22]

Title over the land was granted to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria on the 28th April 1966.[23] The title only covered allotment 4A, while parish plans of the town of Axedale indicate the land set aside for the Church originally covered 4A and the adjacent lot 4B.

St Andrews celebrated their centenary on the 15th September 1968.

Title over the property was transferred to the Uniting Church of Australia in November of 1980.[24] The site is still operational as a church.

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, p. 1.

[2] Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p.

[3] Spreadborough & Anderson (1983), p. 31.

[4] Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria, pp. 11 - 12.

[5] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 18.

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- [6] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 107.
- [7] Whitworth, Robert P. (1879). *Bailliere's Victorian Gazeteer and Road Guide*, F. F. Bailliere, Melbourne, p. 17.
- [8] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale*, Axedale, Victoria, p. 8.
- [9] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.
- [10] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo, p. 10.
- [11] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 16.
- [12] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 21.
- [13] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 28.
- [14] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 115.
- [15] Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482
- [16] St Andrew's Centenary Booklet; information supplied by Mavis Mill, 2008
- [17] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 28.
- [18] Plan of the Parish of Axedale, undated.
- [19] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 11.
- [20] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 11.
- [21] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 11.
- [22] Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), p. 11.
- [23] Certificate of Title, Vol. 8712, Fol. 683.
- [24] Certificate of Title, Vol. 8712, Fol. 683.

Primary sources

Certificates of Title.

Plan of the Parish of Axedale, undated.

Whitworth, Robert P. (1879). *Bailliere's Victorian Gazeteer and Road Guide*, F. F. Bailliere, Melbourne.

Secondary sources

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Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo.

Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria.

Centenary and Back to Axedale Committee (1970), *Accent on Axedale*, Axedale, Victoria.

St Andrew's Centenary Booklet, Axedale, Victoria

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

Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale.

Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482

Information supplied by Mavis Mill, 2008

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8 Building Community Life

8.1 Maintaining spiritual life

Description

Physical Description

St Andrews Church is designed in the Primitive Gothic style and constructed in 1868. Elements of the style include the use of gable roofs and pointed arched windows. Often there is a small round window or oculus that becomes a feature of the gable end, as is the case for St Andrew's. Variations to the style include whether a porch has been attached to one end, and whether the entry is to the side or end of the porch. St Andrew's church adopts the more common form with a gable roofed porch attached to one end and the entry on the side. Variations in building materials are evident across the Bendigo region and the Axedale church is constructed of bluestone in a coursed and snecked rubble. Bluestone is very difficult to shape into dressings or mouldings and generally other types of stone or brick was used for this purpose. The stone used around window and door openings at St Andrew's has been painted. Other variations in the Primitive Gothic style include the treatment of the eaves. At St Andrew's the end walls form parapets which become horizontal at the junction of the roof and wall. The porch was added in matching style in 1962 and constructed of bluestone from a demolished building.

The interior has a timber lined ceiling with exposed scissor trussed roof structure and contains furniture including timber pews. The timber floor has been removed and concrete poured in its place.

Physical Condition

Good

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Comparative Analysis

There are a number of comparable churches in the locality including St Pauls, Axedale and the Uniting Church at Mia Mia.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

St Andrew's Uniting (former Presbyterian) church including all the 1868 fabric and the 1962 porch is significant.

How is it significant?

St Andrew's Uniting Church is locally significant to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

St Andrew's Uniting Church is of historical significance for its association with the early Scots Presbyterians in the district and in particular with the Rev. David Renton of the Charge of Heathcote. St Andrew's is tangible evidence of the presence of the Scottish Presbyterians as one of the dominant immigrant groups in the Axedale district. It is of historical significance as one of the three remaining churches in Axedale, demonstrating the former sectarian divide between Catholics and Protestants. *Criterion A*

St Andrew's is of aesthetic significance for its demonstration of the principal elements of the Primitive Gothic style, including the steeply gabled roof, porch, and pointed arch windows. St Andrew's demonstrates the use of local building materials in the form of bluestone quarried at Nathaniel Ingham's Axedale quarry. *Criterion E*

St Andrew's is of social significance for the Axedale community as a place of continuous worship for over 140 years. *Criterion G*

Assessment Against Criteria

HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. *Criterion D*

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

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

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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 the continuing and developing cultural traditions.
Criterion G

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

Recommendations 2008

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

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that St Andrew's Uniting (former Presbyterian) church be retained 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.'