

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name Wesleyan Church (former)
Address 1 McClellans Crescent ARGYLE **Grading** 2008 Local
Building Type Church
Assessment by Context Pty Ltd



Recommended VHR No HI No PS Yes
Heritage Protection

Architectural Style Victorian Period (1851-1901)

Maker / Builder No information held

Integrity

Altered

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of McIvor

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. Much of the former Shire of McIvor 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. Campaspe Plains was subdivided in 1852, and John Hunter Paterson established Derrinal Station on a portion of the land. His license was transferred to William Speed in 1853, and then Alfred Leonard Wilton in 1865. The license was eventually forfeited in 1880.[2]

The discovery of gold at Bendigo and 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]

Development of the McIvor district was led by Heathcote, where facilities emerged in conjunction with an increasing population brought on by the gold rushes. The town site of Heathcote was surveyed by Phillip Chauncey and first land sale at Heathcote held on the 24th January 1854.[4] The Heathcote and Waranga District Road Board was formed in 1861, and became the Shire of McIvor in 1864, encompassing a number of the small towns in the district.

Religious and educational facilities were established early in the development of the Shire, initially at Heathcote, then gradually spreading to other small towns in the district. Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. Pre-emption rights allowed squatters to purchase up to 640 acres of their pastoral leases and many took advantage of the opportunity to establish smaller holdings. Grazing, agriculture, dairying and viticulture were mainstays for the region. Alongside agriculture, the timber industry was of vital importance to the district and a number of sawmills were established. Gold and alluvial mining continued in the district for a number of years after the height of the gold rushes.

Construction of the railway from Wandong to Bendigo took place in three stages and was officially opened in October 1888. The railway encouraged further development of the region and provided an easy means of transportation of both goods and people to and from the district. The development of the Eppalock weir in the 1930s and its incorporation into Eppalock Reservoir in 1960-65 provided local farmers with an accessible water source for their crops. [5]

In 1994 the Shire of McIvor was amalgamated with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

History of Argyle

Argyle developed very much as a southern extension to the township of Heathcote, and was known as South Heathcote for a number of years. First land sales in the township were clustered around High Street, the road extending to Heathcote in the north, and which continued south as the Northern Highway, in 1861. Sporadic land sales occurred prior to the turn of the century, but it was not until the inter war years that development away from High Street took place.

History of former Wesleyan Church, 1 McClellans Crescent, Argyle

The Wesleyan Church at Argyle was erected in April 1865.[6] Argyle had initially been part of the Kilmore Wesleyan Circuit[7] and Rev. J. Mewton was the Superintendent of the area. In 1861 he was holding services in Kilmore, Mickleham, Merring, Donnybrook, Lancefield, Broadford, Spring Hill, Seymour, Tallarook, Heathcote, Tooborac, Redcastle and Wild Duck[8], but it is not known if he also visited Argyle.

The Wesleyan and Methodist Churches merged around 1898, and it is reported that the churches at Heathcote, Baynton, Argyle Hill, Kyneton Road and Tooborac were all under the charge of Rev. J Westcott. By 1901, the Heathcote

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Methodist Circuit included churches at Heathcote, Argyle Hill, Costerfield, Tooborac, Pyalong, and Meadow Valley.[9]

The Argyle Methodist church closed on 7 December 1969, the same year that the Uniting and Methodist churches amalgamated.[10] In October 1977 the Argyle Methodist Church was sold at auction[11], and is now owned privately and is currently being used as a residence.

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

[2] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[3] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[4] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 21.

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

[6] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 147.

[7] Ebsworth, Rev. Walter (1973), *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, The Polding Press, Melbourne. p. 467.

[8] Ebsworth, (1973) p. 467.

[9] Randell (1985), p. 147.

[10] Randell (1985), p. 144.

[11] Randell (1985), p. 144

Secondary sources

Ebsworth, Rev. Walter (1973), *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, The Polding Press, Melbourne.

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

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

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8 Building community life

8.1 Maintaining a spiritual life

Description

Physical Description

The former Wesleyan Church is designed in the Primitive Gothic style and built in 1865. 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

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of the gable end, as is the case for Argyle. 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. The Argyle 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 Argyle church is constructed of bricks. The uneven form of the bricks, evident underneath the paint, tends to support the evidence of a relatively early date of construction prior to the ready availability of machine made bricks.

Changes to the church involve painting, the loss of the moulding around the oculus, and the original windows. The roof and bargeboards have also been replaced.

The interior has not been investigated.

Physical Condition

Fair

Conservation Policy

The following works are recommended to conserve the building:

Replacement of windows to match detailing of the original frames.

Connection of the eaves gutters to the tanks or a suitable stormwater system as the bricks may be prone to serious problems if drainage around the building is poor.

Removal of paint from the brickwork is not recommended unless it is done with steam by an experienced firm.

Painting of exterior timber.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The former Wesleyan Church including the 1865 fabric is significant. This is predominantly the brick structure and some of the windows. The roof cladding, barges and later alterations to the windows are not significant.

How is it significant?

The former Wesleyan church at Argyle has local historic, aesthetic and social significance.

Why is it significant?

The church at 1 McClellans Crescent, Argyle is of historical significance for its association with the early Wesleyan movement, in particular the Rev.J. Mewton and later the Rev. J. Westcott, both of whom were active across a wide area from Kilmore to Heathcote. The building predates the merger of the Wesleyans and Methodists that took place in 1898. The historical association spans the history of the Methodist church up until the formation of the Uniting Church in 1969.

Criterion A

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The church is of aesthetic significance for its demonstration of the principal elements of the Primitive Gothic style, including the gable roof, porch, pointed arch windows and use of early bricks. *Criterion D*

The church is of social significance for the Argyle community as a place of continuous worship for just over 100 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*

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

No

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 the church at 1 Mc Clellans Crescent, Argyle be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown below. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the

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'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'