
Former Wesley Church and Hall

Location

Grant Street,, COLAC VIC 3250 - Property No B7342

Municipality

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

Level of significance

Regional

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 30, 2007

The Grant Street Wesley Church of 1926 and Hall of 1925, designed by Alec S Eggleston, were built for the Methodist congregation of Colac in response to the growing population and increasing prosperity of Colac in the early twentieth century. It was largely funded by the local Methodist population, an indication of their commitment to the church, particularly during the period of depression in the 1930s. A parsonage planned at the same time as the church and hall was not built.

The Wesley Church and Hall are in an Arts and Crafts Gothic style, of red brick with rendered bands and terracotta tile roofs. The ridge crossing is crowned by a fleche. The church has a cruciform plan with arms of equal length and porches in the corners, resulting in a polygonal interior arranged as an amphitheatre. The interior has intersecting timber scissor trusses and a boarded ceiling; the walls are of unadorned brick and plaster. The joinery is of superb design and quality. It is made from matching fine quality Australian hardwoods by Thear and Sons of Geelong. It includes the screens, pulpit, railings, pews, choir stalls, organ casing, lectern, honour boards and doors. The light fittings, door furniture, other hardware and carpet are original. The west windows have fine stained glass work.

The hall complements the church: the half gabled end is decorated with vertical bands of timber and a cut-off hipped roof. On one side the roof extends to form a verandah supported by brick pillars. The interior had a large hall with stage (now removed) and several other large rooms used for Sunday School and Kindergarten classes. A vestry, which was part of the original plans, was built in 1970 to join the church to the hall.

How is it significant? The Wesley Church and Hall are significant for aesthetic/architectural, historic and social reasons at a Regional level.

Why is it significant? The Wesley Church and Hall complex is architecturally significant as a fine and unusually intact Arts and Crafts church interior. It is significant for its amphitheatre form, the co-ordinated design of church, hall and interiors. The complex is a fine example of the work of notable architect Alec S Eggleston prior to his long career with Eggleston Macdonald & Secomb.

Wesley Church and Hall are historically significant as the culmination of nearly 150 years of Methodism in the

Colac district and as a material reflection of the important role played by the Methodist church in this community and the social, economic and political role of religion in the shire. It is significant as a demonstration of the success of the local Methodist community to raise funds, which was especially difficult during the depression years of the 1930s.

The site is socially significant as the social centre for the local Methodist community for many years, at a time when there was little other entertainment available. It is significant as the last functioning church in the district that was originally a Methodist church, and so is held in special regard by those who still associate themselves more with the Methodist Church rather than the Uniting Church, which incorporated it in 1977.

Classified: 28/11/2005

Other Names Uniting Church,

Hermes Number 71674

Property Number

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>