
Baptist Chapel



SL 281 - Former Welsh Baptist Chapel



SL 281a - Stawell Historical Society.



SL 281b - State Library of Victoria Picture Collection.

Location

17 SCALLAN STREET STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Recommended for VHR

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO17

Heritage Listing

Northern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 10, 2024

What is significant?

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How is it significant?

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Why is it significant?

The Welsh Baptist Church, 17 Scallan Street, Stawell, makes a significant contribution to the architectural and visual amenity of the local area. Constructed in 1869 to a design by the Pleasant Creek and Sandhurst architect,

R.A. Love, the building represents a rare surviving example of a Welsh Baptist Church, and the cavity brick wall construction is apparently the earliest in Victoria. Apart from an alteration at the rear (linking the more recent hall building), this Church building is largely intact.

The Welsh Baptist Church building is **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. It demonstrates unusual design qualities of a Victorian High Renaissance and Baroque Revival style. These qualities include the single storey height, and particularly the parapeted gable roof form, with the main Classical facade having a projecting centrepiece capped by a bracketed pediment carrying acroteria or statuary bases in a Roman manner. Other intact qualities include the cavity brick wall construction (but not the paintwork), front central round arched door opening with a plain recessed surround and panelled timber double doors, memorial tablet above the front doors, narrow rounded headed stained glass lancet windows, unusually treated masonry piers with staggered joints (rather than as keyed quoins) at the front, flat roofed semicircular apse and gabled vestry at the rear, Portland cement stringcourse at window sill level, parapet cappings, cornices and blockings (later overpainted), quarry faced stone base (later overpainted) and the Welsh slate roof. There is also interior fabric that contributes to the significance of the place, including the pulpit window by Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Lyon of Melbourne, flat plastered ceiling with large cornices, plastered walls and projecting dado mould, timber seating, pulpit and other furniture, and the roll of honour board. The large pine trees in the grounds also contribute to the significance of the place.

The Welsh Baptist Church is **historically** significant at a **LOCAL** level. It is associated with the development of the Welsh Baptist Church, its ministers and congregation from 1869, when the construction for the building commenced. This was five years after the site had been acquired in 1864. The Church also has associations with Robert Alexander Love, architect of Bendigo, Sandhurst and temporarily of Pleasant Creek, together with Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Lyon of Melbourne who manufactured the pulpit window, and W.J. Philpott and W.J. Rees who were responsible for the finishing and lettering of the cedar honour board respectively.

The Welsh Baptist Church is **scientifically** significant at a **STATE** level. It has the earliest known form of cavity brick wall construction in Victoria. The building is also distinguished by a stained glass window by the eminent Melbourne firm of Fergusson, Urie and Lyon.

The Welsh Baptist Church is **socially** significant at a **LOCAL** level. It is recognised and valued by the Stawell Baptist community for religious and cultural reasons.

Overall, the Welsh Baptist Church is of **STATE** significance.

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| Heritage Study/Consultant | Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004; |
| Hermes Number | 112679 |
| Property Number | |

Physical Description 1

The Welsh Baptist Church site at 15-17 Scallan Street, Stawell, makes a significant contribution to the local streetscape and is visually connected to St. Matthew's Uniting Church and St. Peter's Lutheran Church, which are also situated in Scallan Street. The site is identified by a painted brick church with a later brick hall to one side, and an open gravelled carpark on the side. Large pine trees and grassed areas form the predominant landscaping.

The single storey, cavity brick walled, eclectic Victorian High Renaissance and Baroque Revival styled Welsh Baptist Church building is characterised by a parapeted gable roof form, and particularly by the main Classical facade which has a projecting centrepiece capped by a bracketed pediment carrying acroteria or statuary bases in a Roman manner. The corners are unusually treated in masonry piers with staggered joints rather than as keyed quoins, and the higher mass of the entrance front composition is effectively repeated at the opposite end to give a strange double-ended effect. This rear elevation is also adorned with a flat roofed semicircular apse and gabled vestry, of similar design to the original composition of St. Matthew's Uniting Church in Scallan Street, also by R.A. Love.

The front facade has a central round arched door opening with a plain recessed surround and early panelled timber double doors. Above the doorway is a memorial tablet entitled: "A.D. 1869". Flanking the central bay are narrow rounded headed lancet stained glass windows. These windows are continued along the side elevations.

Other early decorative features of the design include the Portland cement stringcourse at window sill level, parapet cappings, cornices and blockings. These early features, and the brick wall construction, have been recently overpainted. The building rests on a quarry faced stone base (recently overpainted) and the roof is clad in Welsh slate.

Internally, the building is largely plain, and is especially distinguished by the pulpit window by Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Lyon of Melbourne. The chapel has a flat plastered ceiling with large cornices. The walls are plastered and there is a projecting dado mould. The timber seating, pulpit and other furniture - and the timber roll of honour board - are all early and significant components of the interior.

Comparative Information:

According to historian Dr. Carlotta Kellaway, the Baptist Church in Scallan Street, Stawell, represents one of only five extant Welsh churches in Victoria. The Welsh Baptist Church in Maldon, constructed in 1865 to a Victorian Primitive Gothic design, is another building in this rare group.

The Baptist Church in Stawell is also the best documented of a group of pioneering cavity brick walled buildings in Stawell. According to Dr. Miles Lewis, an eminent architectural historian, the cavity brick wall construction of the Stawell Baptist Church is apparently the first of its type in Victoria.

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/>