

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Location

11-13 LYTTLETON STREET CASTLEMAINE, Mount Alexander Shire

Municipality

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0448

VHR Registration

May 16, 1979

Amendment to Registration

November 20, 1997

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 17, 1999

What is significant?

This complex contains three buildings, constructed for the Congregational, or Independent, church in Castlemaine. The earliest building was constructed in 1855 as a temporary church, Sunday and day school. Designed by architect and surveyor, Clement Wilks, the foundation stone was laid on 7th March 1855 and the building erected towards the rear of a site obtained in Lyttleton Street. In 1857, a manse was built at the front of the site and in 1861-2 the adjacent church was constructed to the design of Castlemaine architect, Edmund Spencer. The foundation stone of this substantial church was laid on 30th September 1861 and, when completed, it superseded the earlier church which was then used as a hall.

The first church building is constructed of unadorned brick and designed in a simple Georgian style. Step buttresses divide the nave into bays, each containing a round-headed paned window. A simple porch, forming the main entrance, is also flanked by stepped buttresses. A timber belfry was originally placed at the apex of the

roof.

The manse, built two years later, is a rendered building with slate roof and paned windows, including two polygonal bays facing Lyttleton Street. The house is orientated to the east side of the site with entry and a verandah, with simple timber valence, along this elevation.

The second church, built only six years later, is designed in a Gothic style. It is of deep cream brick with render contrasts and a slate roof. The symmetrical front facade is divided into three bays, with the central nave section featuring a triple lancet window of strongly coloured glass. Two flanking entrance bays contain doors with elaborate wrought iron strap work, and large pinnacles flank the entrance porches and the main facade itself. Paired lancet windows line the aisles and internally cast iron columns support the timber roof trusses. In 1885 the original lath and plaster ceiling was replaced with kauri pine lining boards, a choir gallery was erected and a pipe organ installed. This organ, previously installed at other locations, was sold and removed in 1978-9.

The church became redundant due to unification in the late 1970s and was subsequently purchased by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in 1984.

How is it significant?

The former Congregational Church complex is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The complex is of architectural significance as an illustrative collection of intact church buildings. The 1855 church is of note as an example of an early provincial, goldfields church, designed in a simple Georgian style. The Gothic design of the latter church is highly distinctive, incorporating exaggerated pinnacles, strongly coloured glass and wrought iron strap work. The contrasting styles of the two church buildings are illustrative of the increased wealth generated in provincial Victoria as a result of gold discoveries.

The former Congregational Church complex is of historical significance as a record of the establishment and growth of Congregationalism in a Victorian provincial centre. It is an intact church complex of the mid 19th century which reflects the prosperity engendered by the gold discoveries in Victoria from the 1850s.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]

Hermes Number 265

Property Number

History

This complex contains three buildings, constructed for the Congregational, or Independent, church in Castlemaine. The earliest building was constructed in 1855 as a temporary church, Sunday and day school. Designed by architect and surveyor, Clement Wilks, the foundation stone was laid on 7th March 1855 and the building erected towards the rear of a site obtained in Lyttleton Street. In 1857, a manse was built at the front of the site and in 1861-2 the adjacent church was constructed to the design of Castlemaine architect, Edmund Spencer. The foundation stone of this substantial church was laid on 30th September 1861 and, when completed, it superseded the earlier church which was then used as a hall.

The church became redundant due to unification in the late 1970s and was subsequently purchased by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in 1984.

The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2004. Sources were as follows:

M. Lewis. *Victorian Churches*. Melbourne 1991

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Q Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46a that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 448 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Presbyterian Church complex, 11-13 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine, Mt Alexander Shire Council.

EXTENT

1. All of the buildings known as the Presbyterian Church complex marked as follows on Diagram 602002 held by the Executive Director:

B-1 Church

B-2 Hall

B-3 Manse.

2. All of the land marked L-1 on Diagram 602002 held by the Executive Director being the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 1848, Folio 411.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G46 20 November 1997 p3200]

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 data owner.

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