
Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church complex



Carmel Welsh Church



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Carmel Welsh Church manse



Welsh Carmel Church -
Ballarat Heritage Review,
1998

Location

263-265 ALBERT STREET, SEBASTOPOL - PROPERTY NUMBER 2046650, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO208

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 5, 2024

What is significant?

The Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church Complex at 261-265 Albert Street dates from 1864 when the land was granted to a group of Welsh Presbyterians to erect a place of worship. The complex comprises the significant bluestone church (1865-6), plantings of *Quercus robur* (English Oak) on the north, east and southern boundaries of the complex (c1864 and c1910), a pair of *Sequoia giganteum* (Giant Redwood) which mark the traditional church entry (c1910); a row of 1 *Quercus robur* (English Oak) and 2 *Ulmus procera* (English Elms) on the southern side of the entry to the church; the brick manse, located at 261 Albert Street, dating from 1947, with its original brick fence, and the timber Sunday School hall, located at the rear of the church, which was relocated to the site in 1936 from Ballarat. The Church's current front fence, constructed of brick piers linked by mesh, and the brick entrance is contemporary to the 1960s with memorial plaques dates from 1964 is considered significant as a repository for memorial plaques rather than for the fabric itself. A large Besser-block hall, located to the north of the church is not considered significant, nor is the modern manse, located at the rear of the property.

How is it significant?

Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church complex is of social, historical and architectural significance to the community of Sebastopol and the City of Ballarat.

Why is it significant?

Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church complex is historically significant in that it represents a history of worship by the Welsh community at the site since at least 1864. Having been attracted to the area during the mining boom in the 1850s, the Welsh played a key role in the development of early Sebastopol through the technologies they imported to the local deep lead mining industry and the contribution they made to the spiritual and civic life of the town. Welsh culture in the area is still manifest, as demonstrated by the annual Eisteddfod and Welsh choirs. (Criterion A and G)

The church is historically significant as having been built to the design of the prominent architect and Anglican, Henry Richards Caselli. Caselli designed most of the Anglican buildings in and around Ballarat, as well as the Ballarat Town Hall and other important public buildings. (Criterion A and H)

The church is historically significant for its connection to Reverend W M Evans who is claimed to be the first Reverend to have preached a Welsh sermon in Australia and began to minister at the Church in 1864. Sir Robert Menzies (Prime Minister from 1933-1941) was said to have attended Sunday school in the hall to the east of the church at its original location. (Criterion H)

The church is architecturally significant as a fine example of a mid 19th century bluestone church in the Italian Renaissance style. Of particular note are the finely detailed timber windows which have double arches beneath a circular motif in the Italian Renaissance style, the finely worked bluestone which creates a deliberate interplay between shade and light, the large rectilinear finials and the large decorative wrought iron hinges on the doors. The church is a rare surviving example of a Welsh Presbyterian Church, one that the National Trust records as the only identified example in Victoria. (Criterion E & B)

The mature trees surrounding the church are socially significant in that they were planted by parishioners in the 1860s and then further plantings took place in the 1910s. The church is a representation of the collective aspirations of the local congregation to establish a place of worship, which has served as an important community building throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The front entrance established with the front fence in 1964 is a memorial to past parishioners as evidenced by the memorial plaques in the fence. (Criterion G)

Theme

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes 8. Building community life

Heritage Study/Consultant	Ballarat - Sebastopol Heritage Study (Stage 2), Context Pty Ltd, 2015;
Construction dates	1864,
Architect/Designer	Caselli, Henry R,
Hermes Number	120333
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Carmel Welsh Church of 1865-6 is a small basalt building with a slate roof, set well back from the footpath. To its rear is the current manse, a modern building, while the 1947 manse is situated on the north side of the site, near the street (at 261 Albert Street). Between it and the church is the 1970s hall built of cinder block. At the rear of the church is a timber hall, which was relocated to the site in 1936.

Church

The church is constructed of basalt worked in a variety of methods and with the utmost skill. The walls are coursed squared rubble, the buttresses are mostly smoothly dressed with small insets of rock-faced stone, the door and window reveals are also smoothly dressed with stop chamfering, while the projecting label moulds to these openings are also dressed stone. The combination of these textures provides additional modelling with light and dark areas.

The building combines Italian Renaissance elements with medieval buttresses. The narrow windows have arched heads and label moulds, while the timber tracery is in the Italian Renaissance form of double arches below a circular motif. Three of these windows surmount the central entrance. Above the tallest, middle window is a semi-circular louvered vent with its own label mould. The front arched doors are ledged and have large, decorative wrought-iron hinges. The chunky gable eaves are supported by large raking modillions, and the timber finial is unusually large and rectilinear.

The church is five bays long, divided by buttresses, with arched windows with voussoirs creating the arch and the same timber tracery as on the facade.

On the north side elevation, the 1928 porch has been added to the fourth bay from the front. It has a parapeted gable front, and was constructed of coursed squared basalt rubble, but it lacks the interplay between dressed and rock-faced stone of the rest of the church. Instead, there are voussoirs and a keystone above the arched entrance doors (ledged and framed with arched glazing at the top). The small window on the west elevation of the porch copies the double-arched tracery of the original windows. The roof of the porch is slate, and the rafter ends are exposed - a detail that was popular in the early 20th century.

The rear elevation of the church is very similar to the front (eaves, modillions, finial, and arched windows in the two side bays), but the central bay is blank apart from a semi-circular vent at the apex, and the three arched openings have simpler rock-faced voussoirs instead of dressed stone label moulds.

Inside, the walls are ruled render, emulating stone. It has hammer beam trusses supporting the roof, with lining boards in between. The lining boards are divided into panels with a flat star motif created by slim stop-chamfered timbers. Both the trusses and ceiling panels feature graining, which may be original.

Overall, the church is highly intact to its 1860s appearance, apart from the addition of the 1928 porch, and the replacement of the timber tracery in two of the side windows with stained glass.

Manse

The 1947 manse is a hipped-roof brick dwelling with a design typical for its era, but displaying careful and creative detailing. The walls are red brick with cream brick accents. There is a matching brick fence with steel gates at the front of the house. The cream bricks are used to great effect in 'speed whiskers' of varying lengths on the front fence and front porch.

The hipped roof is pyramidal with a slightly projecting front bay on the left-hand side. It is clad in terracotta tiles and accented by three exaggeratedly tall external chimneys. The red brick chimneys have cream brick strips at the top.

At the front, there are two banks of three windows wrapping around the corner, in a fashionable manner. These timber sashes are divided into two horizontal panes - another detail popular in the 1930s and '40s. The central front porch has a flat roof, cream brick piers and a solid brick balustrade. It has been in-filled - the only external alteration noted to the manse.

Trees

Mature trees planted throughout the site make an important contribution to the setting of the church. In particular, a pair of *Sequoia giganteum* (Giant Redwood) mark the entry to the church, and frame the facade. A row of (1) *Quercus robur* (English Oak) and (2) English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) line the driveway on the south side of the church, and other specimens are planted on the east and north boundaries of the site.

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/>