
WELSH CHURCH AND HALL



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1 welsh church & hall la
trobe street melbourne front
view



h00536 welsh church and hall
latrobe street melbourne
inside church facing back

Location

320 LATROBE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0536

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO682

VHR Registration

July 14, 1982

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 23, 2000

What is significant?

The Welsh Church, Melbourne, was built in 1871 to a Gothic Revival design by the notable architectural firm Crouch and Wilson, who were probably the favoured architects for Methodist churches in Victoria. The contractor was Mr Ireland. The church was constructed of rendered brick on an axed bluestone base, with shallow relief towers [two octagonal relief buttresses] with pointed openings below the spire. The pointed, stained-glass windows were designed by the Melbourne manufacturers Ferguson, Urie and Lyon. Notable interior elements include the arrangement of pews from a circular to a straight pattern, and a raked floor, which is characteristic of Nonconformist churches.

The tradition of Welsh Calvinist Methodism began in Wales in 1735, with the revival led by Howell Harris, which predated the English Methodism of John Wesley by three years. Although they adopted some of Wesley's teachings, and were initially established within the Established Church of England, the Welsh Calvinist Methodists declared their independence (as Nonconformists) in 1811 due to doctrinal differences. A community of Welsh Calvinist Methodists was formed in Melbourne in the early 1850s; the early Welsh population was made up largely of (male) gold miners. A number of Welsh Calvinist Methodist communities were established on the goldfields where Welsh churches were also established, notably in Ballarat, Sebastopol and Maldon. Welsh miners had gathered for worship at the Collins Street Baptist Church in December 1852 and from 1853 at the Common School in Collins Street, but in 1854 a site in La Trobe Street was granted by the government for the designated purpose of a Welsh Calvinist Methodist Church. A small chapel was built on this site in 1856, with the words 'Welsh Chapel' written in gilt letters above the door. The Welsh language was an important element of church services, as was music and singing. Services were delivered in both Welsh and English.

The early churches built by the Welsh Calvinist Methodists, like the other Methodist (and Nonconformist) denominations, were relatively simple and unadorned. The Welsh Church in La Trobe Street, Melbourne, described in 1871 as a neat, unpretentious building, has nevertheless embraced a modest degree of gothic ornamentation that is characteristic of the Victorian era in which it was built.

St David's Hall, which comprises a hall and classrooms, occupies a site behind the church. Built partly using unemployed labourers, this opened in 1893 for use as a meeting room and for children's Sunday School lessons. It was designed by architect S.W.L. Powell and the building contractor was John Jones. St David's Hall was also connected with the development of a teaching hospital run by women for women and children. Pioneering woman doctor Dr Constance Stone, whose husband was a minister at the Welsh Church, commenced the campaign for the hospital in this hall in 1896.

How is it significant?

The Welsh Church and Hall, Melbourne, are of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Welsh Church, Melbourne, is of architectural significance as a fine example of the work of the architectural practice Crouch and Wilson. It is a notable example of Gothic Revival design, with elements including the octagonal relief buttresses and lancet windows. The Welsh Church is also significant for its stained-glass windows which were designed by the notable stained-glass window manufacturers, Ferguson, Urie and Lyon.

The Welsh Church and Hall, Melbourne, are of historical significance because of their long and important and association with Welsh cultural and religious traditions in Melbourne and Victoria. The site has been associated with the Welsh community in Melbourne since 1854, and continues to be used for this purpose. The church is probably the best example of only a few surviving Welsh churches that were established in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century, following the arrival of large numbers of gold-rush immigrants from Wales. It is one of the few churches in Australia where services continue to be given in the Welsh language. It is historically and architecturally significant for its arrangement of pews and the raked floor, which expresses the democratic values espoused by the Nonconformist churches.

The site is also historically significant for its association with efforts in the late 1890s to establish in Melbourne a hospital run by for women and children, and in this capacity for its association with the pioneering woman medical practitioner, Constance Stone.

[Online Data Upgrade Project - 2004]

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. **General Conditions:** 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. **Note:** All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. **Note:** A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. **General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. **Minor Works :** **Note:** Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Theme

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

Construction dates 1871,
Architect/Designer Crouch & Wilson,
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,
Hermes Number 770
Property Number

History

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

Age, 1 January 1872.

Argus, 1 January 1872.

[the above refs were contributed by Mr Evan Hughes, 10 Panoramic Road Nth Balwyn 3104]

Lewis, Miles. *Victorian Churches* (1991), pp. 11-12.

'£40,000 City Lease', undated news clipping from the Melbourne *Herald*, c.1920s. [HV file 'Welsh Church', part 2]

Illustrated Australia News, 1882 – sketch depicting oblique view of Melbourne, with Welsh Church visible.

Evans, Gareth David. *The history of the first century of the Melbourne Welsh Church, 1871-1971 : one hundred years of fellowship* (Welsh Church, Melbourne 1971?).

http://www.southernhealth.org.au/pr_stories/history/history_home.htm

<http://www.lamp.ac.uk/oz/hughes/welshvic.html>

Associated People: Assoc.People REV W M EVANS REV EGRYN JONES DR CONSTANCE STONE

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 536 - Welsh Church and Hall, 320 Latrobe Street, Melbourne.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. 71 14 July 1982 p. 2357]

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/>