



# REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

## 11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* is aesthetically pleasing in its use of local stone, brickwork and timber detailing. The buildings have stylistic regard for each other and exhibit a high degree of creativity in their relationship. *Congregational Hall* has a rugged exterior mass that is sculpturally dynamic. (Criterion 1.1)

*Congregational Hall* displays a sophisticated use of local stone. The combination of brick and limestone forms a decorative element which is echoed, in reverse, in *Congregational Church* which has brick work with stucco banding and quoins. (Criterion 1.2)

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* is a landmark in the area. The tower of *Congregational Hall* is visible for some distance along Stirling Highway when approaching from the east and *Congregational Church* is visible from the west. The construction of new buildings, set back from the street line, reinforces this aspect. (Criterion 1.3)

The relationship of *Congregational Hall* to *Congregational Church* shows sensitivity to the stylistic individuality of the buildings while maintaining a close visual harmony. This cross-referencing creates a unified pair of structures which are stylistically dissimilar but compatible. (Criteria 1.3, 1.4)

### 11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* illustrates the architectural diversity in Western Australia following the gold boom years. (Criterion 2.1)

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* illustrates the role played by the Congregational church in the provision of places of worship for the suburb of Claremont. (Criterion 2.1)

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* is linked with the development and growth of Claremont as a prestigious and wealthy suburb in the 1980s and early years of the twentieth century. (Criterion 2.2)

*Congregational Hall* has a close association with architect H. S. Trigg, grandson of the founder of the Congregational Church in Western Australia.

*Congregational Church* has a close association with the architect Edgar Jerome Henderson. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

-----

#### **11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE**

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* contributes to the sense of place of the community as a former place of worship and as a reminder of the past development of the suburb of Claremont. (Criterion 4.2)

#### **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

##### **12. 1. RARITY**

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* depicts a type of social activity and a style of religious worship no longer common in Claremont. (Criterion 5.2)

##### **12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Congregational Hall* displays the principle characteristics of the Federation Romanesque style of architecture. *Congregational Church* displays the principle characteristics of the Federation Gothic style of architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

The erection of two substantial buildings, within a comparatively new suburb, is representative of the importance of religious observance in the social and cultural fabric of gold-boom society. (Criterion 6.2)

##### **12. 3 CONDITION**

Recent restoration has ensured that there are no major problems with the structures. A regular program of maintenance is in place.

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* is in very good condition.

##### **12. 4 INTEGRITY**

*Congregational Hall* is no longer used as a church hall. It is now converted for offices and is, generally, inaccessible to the public. The division of the space within the building by partitioning reinforces this, although the partitioning could be removed.

The original intention of *Congregational Church* as a place of Christian worship is no longer current, as the place is used as a secular wedding venue. However, the current usage is compatible with the most celebratory of Christian rites of passage.

Recent restoration of *Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* is generally sympathetic to the original design intent. The partitioning in *Congregational Hall* is able to be removed if necessary.

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* has a moderate degree of integrity.

##### **12. 5 AUTHENTICITY**

The change of use of the places from Church usage to that of office accommodation and a commercial function venue have necessitated some renovation and extensions of the original fabric. Alterations to the window

fittings of *Congregational Hall* and the doors of both buildings are cosmetic and have not greatly diminished the authenticity of the fabric, and could be reversed if required. The exteriors of the buildings are essentially intact. The extensions to *Congregational Hall* do not significantly alter the authenticity of the original fabric.

*Congregational Hall & Congregational Church* have a high degree of authenticity.

## 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

In 1830, John Butler selected land in the Swan River Colony, including much of what subsequently became Peppermint Grove and Claremont.<sup>1</sup> He developed a farm there, and the area became known as Butler's Swamp.<sup>2</sup> Initially the development of Claremont was from the farming activities undertaken by Butler and the fact that the area was a half-way point between Perth and Fremantle.

After the arrival of convicts, in 1850, the construction of a road between the port at Fremantle and the settlement at Perth was begun. By 1860, the road was in use by horse-drawn buggies, and drays transporting various goods, and in 1862 it was gazetted a public highway.<sup>3</sup>

The Freshwater Bay Convict Hiring Depot was established, in 1853, beside the track, on the site of Claremont Park.<sup>4</sup> These buildings were timber and canvas, and comprised a barrack hut for the convicts, three portable houses, a cook house and oven.<sup>5</sup> A stone barracks, built from stone quarried at Point Resolution, to accommodate forty convicts was completed in 1862, and for the warders a small two-roomed cottage; they remained in use for convicts until 1875.<sup>6</sup> From 1880 to 1893 the buildings were leased by the Church of England and used as a Chapel and a Sunday School.<sup>7</sup> Following the completion of *Christ Church* in 1893 the Church of England ceased using the former convict buildings. Prior to the building of *Congregational Hall*, in 1896, the Congregationalists used the former barracks as a meeting hall.<sup>8</sup>

Prior to the opening of the railway, in 1881, local post for Freshwater Bay and Butler's Swamp was included in the exchange of mail by a postman from Fremantle and a postman from Perth, which took place at the half-way point. The site was originally marked by a large tuart tree - a prominent landmark in the area which was also used as a marker for pleasure jaunts from Perth in the late 1890s. Renamed Stirling Highway, the road was straightened, widened and bituminised in the late 1920s and early 1930s to cater for the increasing motor traffic. The construction of *Congregational Hall* so close to the tree, ensured that it had a prominent visual position.

Claremont, in the early 1880s, was a fragmented village settlement but in the 1890s large tracts of land in the Claremont area were sub-divided, bringing an influx of new residents. Jenny Gregory notes these sub-divisions attracted

---

1 Commemorative plaque erected by Claremont Town Council at Lake Claremont, formerly Butler's Swamp, (1979).

2 *ibid.*

3 Williams, A. E. *Nedlands: from Campsite to City* (City of Nedlands, 1984) p. 45.

4 *Claremont Heritage Trails* Page 12.

5 *ibid.*

6 *ibid.*

7 *Claremont Museum Press Release* July 1989.

8 *ibid.*

"...a different class of people"<sup>9</sup> from the small upper class who had chosen to buy land at head of Freshwater Bay in late 1870s and 1880s. By the time of the construction of *Congregational Hall*, Claremont had become a fashionable suburb.<sup>10</sup> Amenities available in Claremont were attractive and, combined with easy access to transport to the city via the train, as well as the social image of Claremont, attracted a growing number of civil servants and other prominent members of the community who could to commute readily to Perth. Considerable building activity was undertaken.<sup>11</sup> The new people wanted substantial buildings in which to worship.

The Trinity Church congregation was established by Henry Trigg, a practising Congregationalist from Gloucestershire, England who arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1829.

Trigg initially attended the first Anglican Church where he was a choirmaster. He later joined the Wesleyans, but from 1843 he held prayer meetings in the Congregational tradition in his own home. In subsequent years, a chapel and a substantial church in St. George's Terrace, *Trinity Church* (1893), was built.

The land for *Congregational Hall* was donated by Congregationalist, George Randell, MLC and a memorial stone laid by Mrs J. E. Richardson on 25 September 1895.<sup>12</sup> The plans and specifications were prepared by Henry Stirling Trigg (grandson of Henry Trigg and Perth's first Australian born architect)<sup>13</sup> Trigg was born in Perth in 1860 and worked in Sydney and Melbourne before returning to Perth in 1885. He designed the substantial *Trinity Church* (1893) in St. George's Terrace for the Congregational Church and also, in 1898, the *Leederville Congregational Church* in Cambridge Street.<sup>14</sup>

In 1906, the size of the congregation had grown to the extent that a Church could be built next door. *Congregational Church* was built, in 1906, to a design by E. J. Henderson, and expresses Art Nouveau influences in its stained glass windows.

Edgar Jerome Henderson was born in Melbourne, and practised in Victoria where he did some church work: *Sale Cathedral* (1885) and housing in Moonee Ponds and Essendon. By 1896, he had moved to Western Australia and was working on the *Convent School, Highgate* (1898) in a partnership style Jefferies & Henderson. By 1904, he is listed in his own practice and designing various commercial and residential buildings.

*Congregational Hall* continued in use as a place of worship until 1977, when the Congregational Church combined with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches to become the Uniting Church of Australia. *Congregational Hall* was then surplus to their needs and was sold.

*Congregational Hall* is currently used as offices for a resort chain.

---

<sup>9</sup> Gregory, J. "The Manufacture of Middle Class Suburbia: The promontory of Claremont, Nedlands, and Dalkeith within the city of Perth, Western Australia 1830s- 1930s.' (Doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, 1988), p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 134

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Stone at the front of the hall.

<sup>13</sup> Perth Heritage Trails: Central Perth Heritage Trail (HCWA) p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Kelly, I., 'The Development of Housing in Perth (1890-1915)', (Masters Thesis, Department of Architecture, University of Western Australia, 1991).

In the years after the sale of the properties, *Congregational Church* has been used for a series of commercial purposes. In 1994, *Congregational Church* is used as a secular wedding venue.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Congregational Hall* is situated near the brow of a hill on Stirling Highway in Claremont.

It is constructed in the Federation Romanesque style<sup>15</sup> with limestone load bearing walls with brick quoins. The walls are dressed limestone blocks. The brick quoins are both structural and decorative and break the visual solidity of the limestone.

The roof is steeply pitched and features a decorative timber gablet with three Romanesque arches above the entrance way. The gablet is asymmetrical and is truncated on the western side by a bell tower which features an decorative timber arcade creating a small belvedere under a pyramidal roof.

The entrance arch is broad and strongly modelled with the words 'Congregational Hall' in raised lettering in stucco over the arch. The arch is deeply recessed to form a porch.

*Congregational Hall* has a timber roof structure with original pine ceilings still intact. An interesting feature is a line of quatre-foil cut ventilation openings in the ridge of the roof.

*Congregational Hall* is no longer used as a church hall. The interior is used for offices and has been converted for this purpose by panels approximately two metres high within the original structure, and by the construction of a new double storey extension (1992) at the rear. The extension is built in limestone that features brick quoins which replicate those of the earlier building. Modern pine partitioning in the hall allows the roof structure to be seen, so retaining the openness of the hall and the feeling of space, but restricts the view of the entrance way. The entrance doors have been replaced by modern glass-filled doors.

Doors to the offices are of timber and are reproductions of the original. They feature six panels with a decorative rosette in the top two panels. The same doors are used in the adjacent *Congregational Church*.

The floors are polished timber boards, with a carpet runner between the office partitions.

Original windows on the southern elevation have been replaced by large multi-paned timber windows which are dissimilar in style from the original double hung sash windows. Replica sash windows, with multi-panes have been installed on the northern elevation. [this statement is awaiting verification from the owner]

The lighting is modern suspension gables interspersed with spotlights.

The changes were made in consultation with the Heritage Council of W. A.

The area between *Congregational Hall* and *Congregational Church* is paved in red brick.

---

<sup>15</sup> Apperly, p. 117.

The adjacent *Congregational Church* was built, in 1906, in the Federation Gothic style<sup>16</sup> and has some Art Nouveau influences in its stained glass windows. The building has a high pitched roof which visually extends the diagonal lines of *Congregational Hall* and holds the two buildings together as a group.<sup>17</sup>

*Congregational Church* is sited further back from the road, allowing a view of the tower of *Congregational Hall* to be seen from the south. The area in the front and to the southern side is lawn and garden. A mature tree is sited halfway along the southern boundary.

*Congregational Church* is of brick and stucco, over a limestone foundation, and features a shallow portico surmounted by a trefoil window. A decorative frieze, of quatre-foil design, creates an artificial gablet, mimicking the gable of *Congregational Hall*. The entrance is elevated and is reached by six shallow steps.

The building has an asbestos and weatherboard extension at on the eastern elevation, which houses the sanctuary and two anterooms - one to the north and one to the south. The southern room has access to the exterior. A modern brick exterior wall runs north-south from the southern extension to the boundary.

Internally, *Congregational Church* has exposed trusses and a boarded ceiling. The high volume of the space creates an impressive void which, although the building is not large, gives the impression of a large area. This feeling is increased by the dark timber of the roof trusses which contrasts with the white rendered walls and the simple Art Nouveau influenced stained glass windows. The trefoil window, facing west, is in warm tones, as are the southern windows. The windows to the north are in cool tones. Near the roof is a row of rounded clerestory windows.

The nave is separated from the aisles by narrow, rendered columns which feature a delicate 'gothic' tracery in stucco at the top where the arch begins. The sanctuary is described by a large semi-circular opening which spans the width of the nave. This is completely plain, with no decorative elements.

*Congregational Church* features modern pews which were made especially for the venue when it opened as a secular wedding venue. In accordance with its current usage as a secular venue, references to Christianity in the sanctuary area have been removed.

The floor is polished timber which is protected, in the aisles, by modern carpet runners. Modern glass doors have been hung on the hall side at the rear of the church.

At some point, the steps to *Congregational Church* have been tiled and the original doors replaced by glass. The anteroom on the north-eastern corner has been converted to a bathroom, and the ante room on the south-eastern corner is currently used as an office. Air conditioning has been placed above the sanctuary. Blade fans are suspended from the ceiling in the main body of the church.

### 13.3 REFERENCES

---

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 120-122.

<sup>17</sup> Molyneux, I. *Looking Around Perth* (Vanguard) p. 21.



National Trust Assessment Exposition.  
Australian Heritage Commission Data Sheet.