



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11.1 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

Queen's Methodist Church demonstrates a bold simplicity and a restrained use of religious symbols and decorative motifs combined with a flat two dimensional quality, unusual in church design at the turn-of-the-century. (Criterion 1.1)

Queen's Methodist Church is an important building in the local streetscape, and is regarded by the community as a Boulder landmark. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

The construction and size of *Queen's Methodist Church* is closely associated with the rapid population growth in the eastern goldfields, at the turn of the century. The name of the church reflects the respect felt by the community for the British monarchy in Australia at the time. The site has some historic value as a place of continuous religious worship since 1897 to the mid 1970s. (Criterion 2.2)

Queen's Methodist Church is the only known work by Hine in the goldfields, and is a significant example of the several churches he designed in Western Australia, between 1895 and 1915. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Queen's Methodist Church has social significance as an important focus for religious and social life in Boulder. For many years the church was renowned as a centre of musical culture in the eastern goldfields. (Criterion 4.1)

The church is held in high regard by the community. It is listed in the town planning scheme as a place of heritage value, and was the subject of a retention petition of some four hundred signatures in 1993. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

Constructed of Coolgardie brick, *Queen's Methodist Church* was the first brick church in Boulder, and is the only known work undertaken by Hine and Selby in the eastern goldfields. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

12.3 CONDITION

Neglect and vandalism over a long period of time had left the church in a poor state of repair. However, the deterioration was mainly confined to the interior, and the basic structure is in reasonable condition. Recent work on the place under the supervision of Hocking Planning and Architecture, has reversed much of the damage to the roof, ceiling and associated areas. The building has been made secure, preparatory to conversion for residential uses.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Queen's Methodist Church remained unused for nearly twenty years, following its deconsecration. The original religious functions of the building are still evident, and the building could be used as a place of religious worship, although this is unlikely. The integrity of the building has been eroded, but is still reasonable. While the proposed use of the place as a series of residences does not reflect the ecclesiastical nature of the building, the conversion does permit a minor degree of public use. *Queen's Methodist Church* has a reasonable degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

In 1961, the interior of *Queen's Methodist Church* was extensively modified; however, these modifications are not irreversible and the church exterior and interior are still largely intact. Recent restoration (1995) has removed the 1960s additions and reinstated the roof lantern. While some structural and internal alterations will occur as part of the conversion of the place to residential functions, overall *Queen's Methodist Church* retains a reasonable degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The first church at 38 Piesse Street, Boulder was a corrugated iron structure, built in 1897 and named *Queen's Methodist Church*. The name of the church was chosen to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the reign of Queen Victoria.³² However, within a few years it was recognised that a more substantial church building was required to accommodate the rapidly growing Methodist population in Boulder. In September 1903, the Methodist

³² National Trust of Australia (WA), *Queens Church Boulder*, assessment exposition, August 1982.
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Church (WA) accepted the tender of £2,939 from Ellis, Pitman and Tottendell for a brick church to seat 750 people.³³ The *Kalgoorlie Miner* noted that in the new church 'space has been allowed for seating accommodation for 750 people', and the *Western Argus* described the church as having '...the largest ground floor area of any Methodist Church in the State.'³⁴

A public ceremony to unveil the memorial tablets (in lieu of the usual foundation stone laying), took place on 28 October 1903.³⁵ The tablets can be seen high up on the frontage of the church, facing Piesse Street. Mr I. W. Goss and Cr Fred Mitchell, two of the oldest members of the Boulder Church, were entrusted with the duty of unveiling the tablets. The Mayor of Kalgoorlie (Mr N. Keenan) and the Mayor of Boulder (Mr W. T. Rabbish) were among the guests and speakers at the unveiling.³⁶

The official opening of the *Queen's Methodist Church* took place on 6 March 1904. As described in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, the opening commenced with a morning service and was followed by celebrations and services throughout the day. 'Special features of the service were the splendid choral music and orchestral accompaniments. There were about 100 well trained singers on the platform..³⁷

Queen's Methodist Church was designed by James Hine, a partner in the Perth architectural firm Hine and Selby. Hine and Selby designed a range of domestic and commercial buildings in Perth, as well as several non-conformist churches. The firm's work was not restricted to any one denomination and buildings include the *Congregational Church* in Subiaco (1905), additions to the *Methodist Church* in Maylands (1905), and *St Andrews (Presbyterian) Church* (1906) in St. Georges Terrace, Perth as well as alterations to *Charles Street Methodist Church* in Charles Street, West Perth (1897).³⁸ However, *Queen's Methodist Church* is their only known work in the goldfields.

Built of Coolgardie bricks, *Queen's Methodist Church* was the first brick church in Boulder.³⁹ The appearance of *Queen's Methodist Church* is unusual in comparison to the more traditional form of parish churches at the time. While most churches were built in a Gothic Revival style, characterised by vigorous three-dimensional modelling of forms and details, the massing and form and, in particular, the facade of *Queen's Methodist Church* is strikingly different in its two dimensional bold simplicity. The overall image was more like a local hall than a church. This design was not typical of the church designs of Hine and Selby, although some of this bold simplicity is also evident in the unusual proportions of *St Andrew's Church, Perth*.

For many years the *Queen's Methodist Church* was noted as the centre of music culture in the Eastern Goldfields. An article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* recording the celebrations of the diamond jubilee of *Queen's Methodist Church* in 1963

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 September 1903, p. 4; *The Western Argus*, 8 March 1904, p. 15.

³⁵ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 September 1903, p. 4.

³⁶ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 29 October 1903, p. 4.

³⁷ *The Western Argus*, 8 March 1904, p. 15.

³⁸ Masters research, Ian Kelly, 1992; Considine and Griffiths Pty. Ltd., 'Former Charles Street Mission Methodist Chapel and Methodist Church Conservation Plan', (1995).

³⁹ National Trust of Australia (WA), Queens Church Boulder, assessment exposition, August 1982.

described the church as, 'a centre of great activity, ..known for its hymn - singing congregations.'⁴⁰ The article noted 'the significant contribution this church has made to the life of the. The diamond jubilee festivities were reported to be '...a worthy tribute to Queen's renowned musical past.'⁴¹

In 1961, the interior layout of *Queen's Methodist Church* was altered. Rather than use one large open space, the congregation required separate spaces to accommodate church services, a hall, small class rooms and a kitchen. These interior alterations were designed by Perth architect K. Broadhurst and a quote of £4,500 from builder T. D. Scott was accepted. When the alterations were completed, the old 'tin church' which had been used as a hall and Sunday School was dismantled.⁴²

Queen's Methodist Church was closed, in December 1975, as a part of the rationalisation of church properties following the amalgamation of the non-Conformist Churches to form the Uniting Church. In December 1978, the property was bought by a local politician, Mr Graeme Campbell (Labour MHR for Kalgoorlie), to save the church from demolition. Eight years later (1986), the building was advertised for sale at the price of \$30,000, and eventually sold to Ms N. Hall.⁴³ Due to a number of factors, little work was done on the place to maintain it. In 1991, an article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* stated '...the building's oregon pine ceiling was being destroyed by rain and pigeon droppings and its interior walls were covered in graffiti.'⁴⁴

In 1993, a petition of some 400 signatures was presented to the City Council, and a copy forwarded to the Minister for Heritage, requesting that the place be repaired and upgraded 'for the protection of the residents and the beautification of our city.'⁴⁵

In 1994, *Queen's Methodist Church* was sold to M. D. Glendinning and Tanvier Pty. Ltd. for \$80,000, who proposed to convert the place to residential use. The scheme involved the restoration of the church, the restoration of its fabric and conversion to eight residential units within the church, with an additional six units at the rear. Some work has been done on the place, preparatory to this taking place.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Queen's Methodist Church is located on Piesse Street, Boulder. 'It rests on 2000 square metres of land and has no graveyard.'⁴⁶ The church is a prominent building in an otherwise low scale streetscape: the two storey gabled facade, with projecting religious motif, provides a distinctive skyline feature. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported the church as having a 'satisfying harmonious front, rising high up to a cross, strongly buttressed walls with high windows heavily leaded in a chaste and attractive design...'⁴⁷

⁴⁰ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 16 November 1963, p. 3.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴² National Trust of Australia (WA), Queens Church Boulder, assessment exposition, August 1982.

⁴³ *West Australian*, 1 September 1986, p. 70.

⁴⁴ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24 July 1991, p. 2. The reference to the oregon pine ceiling is incorrect; the ceiling is lined with jarrah boarding.

⁴⁵ Petition addressed to City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, 9 August, 1993.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 16 November 1993, p. 3.

The building is rectangular in plan, '96 (ft)x 46 (ft) in the clear' and symmetrical along its long axis.⁴⁸ It has load bearing brick walls, a rendered dado plinth, and a corrugated iron roof, concealed from the street by a gabled parapet. The front and side walls are articulated into rectangular vertical bays, while the front wall is divided by horizontal stucco bands, which express window and door openings.

The church is characterised by its eclectic combination of romanesque and gothic elements. While the stepped buttresses and gabled portico over the two front doors reflect some gothic attributes, the over all design symmetry, structural expression of the load bearing walls, and gabled parapet with semicircular arched motif, reflect a more romanesque flavour.

In 1961, the church interior was altered. The sloping floor of the church was levelled, then raised in the back half and lowered at the front, with steps installed between the two levels. A full height stud wall was constructed to divide the community space at the rear of the church from the religious activities at the front. In the community area half height stud partitioning divided the north eastern area into five small rooms. The sill height of windows along this wall was lowered to allow more light into these new rooms. A new exit door was built into the western wall.

The original planning of the interior can still be identified; however, the alterations have greatly diminished the original character of the interior space. In 1986, the *West Australian* reported the high curved jarrah ceilings as a feature of the church, even though the full height partition disrupted the space. The article also noted that the church altar and pews were removed after the church was closed.⁴⁹

After *Queen's Methodist Church* passed into private ownership, little or no maintenance was carried out. Generally the walls remained intact, however the mortar has deteriorated in sections of the exterior brickwork, and in some instances bricks have been dislodged. Birds nested in the walls and in the roof cavity. Corrugated iron sheeting had come loose and some sheets have blown off, allowing water penetration to deteriorate the timber lined ceiling.

Vandals desecrated the interior walls with graffiti, and the plasterboard stud walls were smashed. Most of the stained-glass windows were broken, although some of the windows retain segments of the stained glass, and it would be possible to recreate the design and colours from these remains.

In 1995, work was undertaken on *Queen's Methodist Church* including: replacement of the roof and repair the lantern; brickwork repaired to height of four metres; cleaning of the interior of place and cleaning and repair of the ceiling; removal of the 1960s floor and securing of the site.⁵⁰ Work is continuing, under the supervision of Hocking Planning and Architecture, to prepare the place for residential purposes.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust of Australia (WA) Assessment Exposition, August 1982.

⁴⁸ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 30 September 1903, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *West Australian*, 1 September 1986, p. 70.

⁵⁰ Memo, 14 March 1995, HCWA file 0210, also other correspondence on the same file.