



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

St. Columba's Church Hall is a fine example of Federation Carpenter Gothic constructed in timber and corrugated iron sheeting, and *St. Columba's Church* of Federation Gothic style constructed in local limestone and slate. The landmark value of the place is enhanced by the aesthetic juxtaposition of the lightweight construction of the Hall in contrast against the heavy masonry Church. (Criteria 1.1, 1.3)

St. Columba's Church and Hall, in its location at the intersection of Venn and Keane Streets, contributes to the streetscape of both streets, and is a landmark in the suburb. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

St. Columba's Church and Hall has historic value because the Hall served as both the first place of worship in the district, and as the original Cottesloe School. (Criterion 2.2)

The place has been closely associated with the religious life of the residents of Peppermint Grove and neighbouring districts, and members of its congregation have played a vital part in the development of education in the area. (Criterion 2.2)

St. Columba's Church Hall is a significant example of the Federation Carpenter Gothic style in a suburban setting. (Criterion 2.4)

St. Columba's Church is an interesting and impressive variant of the Federation Gothic style, with a Norman style tower which cantilevers the main structure. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

St. Columba's Church and Hall is valued by the community of Peppermint Grove and neighbouring districts for its place in the development of the

district, particularly as the Hall was the first place of worship in the district and was used for the classes of the first school in Cottesloe. (Criterion 4.1)

The Church has continued to serve as a place of worship for the community, and the Hall is used for a variety of purposes, by the wider community. (Criterion 4.1)

Prominently sited at the intersection of Keane and Venn Streets, *St. Columba's Church and Hall* contributes to the community's sense of place, both as a landmark and as a place of worship. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

St. Columba's Church Hall is a rare surviving example of a Federation Carpenter Gothic church hall in the metropolitan area of Perth. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

St. Columba's Church Hall is representative of the Federation Carpenter Gothic style in simple weatherboard interpretation. *St. Columba's Church* is representative of the Federation Gothic style, exhibiting all the major characteristics of the style. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

Apart from the effects of rising damp that are evident in the south-west corner of the church interior, *St. Columba's Church and Hall* is in good condition. A programme of maintenance is in place.

12.4 INTEGRITY

St. Columba's Church and Hall continues to be used as a place of worship and for Church and related community activities. *St. Columba's Church and Hall* retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

In both the Hall and the Church, a high percentage of the original fabric is in place. Maintenance and repair of *St. Columba's Church Hall* has not reduced the authenticity of the place.

St. Columba's Church and Hall retains a high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

St. Columba's Church and Hall comprises *St. Columba's Church Hall* (1896) and *St. Columba's Church* (1909).

Peppermint Grove, only 256 acres in area, is the smallest local government area in Australia. It is comprised of Swan Location 84, awarded by the Crown to John Butler in July 1832.¹ The land remained in the Butler family until it was sold by Butler's son-in-law, Horace Samson, in March 1887, to a syndicate of Perth men, George Leake, Charles Crossland, and Alexander Forrest for £3,750.² In the period between the purchase of the land and the final registration to the partners, in October 1891, the land was surveyed into building lots by a surveyor at Crossland's office, D'Arcy Irvine. The first sale of allotments was begun on 23 December 1891, the date of the new title.³ Most of the first buyers were speculators, and it was not until 1894 that building began in earnest.

The gold discoveries led to a boom in Western Australia, and the population increased rapidly in the next decade. The railway between Perth and Fremantle, with Bullen's Siding on the site of what was later Cottesloe Station, provided ready transport to Perth or Fremantle, and Peppermint Grove developed as one of Perth's first dormitory suburbs. Those who made their permanent homes in Peppermint Grove in the period 1894 to 1914 were, for the most part, 'the gold boom entrepreneurs and the most successful colonists.'⁴ By 1911, the population of Peppermint Grove was 1 043; it rose to 1 110 in 1921, to 1 428 in 1933, and to 1 587 by 1976, and it remains around 1 500.⁵

The early Peppermint Grove families were preponderantly English and Scottish.⁶ The prevalence of Presbyterians within the population of Peppermint Grove was striking: 17% of church adherents, although they were only 7% of the total population of Western Australia at the time.⁷ The number of Presbyterians in urban areas of Perth and Fremantle increased six and a half times in the 1890s to 1901.⁸

In late 1893, F. A. Moseley, one of the first people to build a permanent home in Cottesloe and an Elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth, began to hold 'cottage services' in his home on the corner of Rosendo Street and Avonmore Terrace, Cottesloe on Sunday evenings.⁹ At that time there were only six families permanently resident in the area, three near the river and

¹ Pascoe, R. *Peppermint Grove; Western Australia's Capital Suburb* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983) p. 14.

² *ibid.*, p. 18.

³ *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 51, 148.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 112.

⁸ Stannage, C. T. *The People of Perth : A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth City Council & University of Western Australia Press, 1979) p. 305.

⁹ Moseley, F. A. *St. Columba's Presbyterian Church 1898-1908 : A Retrospect* p. 2

three near the beach. Among those who attended Moseley's services were workmen employed in building in the area, and who were temporarily camped in the area. A Sunday School was begun at Moseley's house on 15 March 1896, with eleven children; within a month the number had doubled.¹⁰ A site at the corner of Pearse and Broome Streets, Cottesloe was secured as a grant for ecclesiastical purposes.¹¹ A more central site at the corner of Keane and Venn Streets, Peppermint Grove was subsequently presented to the church by Alexander Forrest.¹²

The Rev. Robert Hanlin, of Scots Church, Fremantle, was the visiting minister for the small congregation. He recognised the need for a school in the area, when he found that a number of children were living there without access to any schooling. In April 1896, Rev. Hanlin presented a petition to the Secretary for Education, signed by the parents of twenty-two children. He promised that the Presbyterians would build a hall on their site at the corner of Keane and Venn Streets for the purpose of a school, if the Education Department paid rent for the use of the building and paid the salary of a school teacher.¹³

On 23 August 1896, *St. Columba's Church Hall* was opened as a mission-hall in connection with Scots Church, Fremantle. As a mission from Scots Church, Fremantle, the congregation of St. Columba's had been provided with visiting ministers, and also with a loan to assist them to build the Hall. The special opening service, conducted by Rev. Hanlin, was held at 4.15 pm.¹⁴ It was followed a few days later by a social meeting in celebration of the event.¹⁵ Thereafter Sunday afternoon services were held regularly, conducted by visiting ministers, with Sunday School preceding the services.

The Hall was the first place of worship in the district until St. Luke's Anglican Church was completed in 1897, the Anglicans met in the Hall for their services after the Presbyterians had completed their afternoon services.¹⁶ On 5 October 1896, Cottesloe School opened in the hall with an enrolment of thirty children.¹⁷ The population of the area was increasing rapidly, so plans were made for the erection of a new, permanent school; work commenced in 1897, and the new school, on the Perth-Fremantle Road, opened on 18 April 1898, with an enrolment of two hundred and eight children.¹⁸

Early in 1898, evening services replaced the afternoon religious services, and by May 1898 there was an average attendance of about fifty people.¹⁹ In June 1898, Rev. Alexander McCarlie became the resident minister. On 3 July 1898, morning and evening services were conducted for the first time.²⁰ Shortly afterwards, the Presbytery converted St. Columba's Mission, Cottesloe into an

10 ibid.

11 ibid.

12 ibid.

13 ibid., p. 3.

14 *The West Australian* 22 August 1896, p. 4.

15 Moseley, p. 3.

16 Pascoe, p. 47.

17 Lang, J. *Cottesloe School : 80 Years 1897- 1977* (Perth ,1978).

18 ibid.

19 Minute Book of Kirk Session 1898-1934, St. Columba's Church p. 2 .

20 ibid., p. 4.

independent charge and an Interim Session was appointed, with Rev. Hanlin as Moderator, and Messrs. F. A. Moseley and C. B. Kidson, and Lieutenant Colonel Angelo as Elders.²¹ These Elders, with two additional Elders, Peter Hay and Dr. Macaulay, were inducted on 1 January 1899, with F. A. Moseley as Session Clerk, a position he held until his death in 1919.²² The congregation had elected a Committee of Management, consisting of Messrs. Henry Scott, R. McCubben, J. McCubben, J. Fordyce, J. Murrie, T. Campbell, and James McBean.²³ F. A. Moseley was Registrar of the Supreme Court from 1889, and one of the earliest permanent residents of Cottesloe. He served on Committees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, was one of the founders of Scotch College, and President of the Deaf and Dumb Institute.²⁴ McBean and Fordyce were among the earliest permanent residents of Peppermint Grove.

In 1899, a Ladies Guild was formed, with the first aim being to raise funds for the church for the 'lengthening by twenty feet and otherwise improving the church hall.'²⁵ The debt to Scots Church was repaid, and an American organ purchased. By April 1900, construction of the Manse had begun on an adjoining piece of land purchased for the purpose by the congregation, and the extensions to the hall had been completed.²⁶

Within a few years of the construction of the Hall, the congregation began planning a new church. On 15 December 1907, a congregational meeting was called for 26 December, 'to consider a proposal for the erection of a new church on the site reserved therefor at the corner of Keane and Venn Streets.'²⁷ The Ladies Guild held a sale of work prior to Christmas, which provided the nucleus of a building fund.²⁸ Donations from members of the congregation soon raised the fund to £116 and it was stated that the new church 'should be a credit at once to the communion to which we belong and to the community it is to serve.'²⁹ On 15 May 1909, it was decided to call a congregational meeting for the 16 June, 'to make arrangements for proceeding with the erection of the new church.'³⁰

St. Columba's Church was built in 1909 with Louis Bowser Cumpston as the architect.³¹ A resident of Peppermint Grove, Cumpston had arrived in Perth in 1891. He was the architect of *Ocean Beach Hotel* Cottesloe and, with William Wolf, won the design competition for the Kalgoorlie Town Hall, although the competition design was not built.

21 ibid.

22 Moseley, p. 4.

23 ibid.

24 Erickson, R. Compiler *Dictionary of Western Australians, 1829-1914* p. 1161.

25 Moseley, p. 4.

26 ibid.

27 Minute Book of Kirk Session 1898-1934 *St. Columba's Church*, Kirk Session Minutes 15 December

1907. p. 70.

28 Moseley, p. 4.

29 ibid.

30 Minute Book of Kirk Session 1898-1934 *St. Columba's Church*, Kirk Session Minutes 15 May 1909, p. 81.

31 Pascoe, p. 47.

The original design of *St. Columba's Church and Hall* allowed for an addition to the church over the site of the hall. The intention was to relocate the hall elsewhere, but the move was deferred as the cost of £25 was considered to be beyond the church's finances at that time; subsequently, the continued lack of funds and opposition within the congregation to the moving of the hall resulted in it remaining in its original position and no extension being made to the stone church.³²

The foundation stone of *St. Columba's Church* was laid by F. A. Moseley, on 20 November 1909, 'To the Glory of God.' The opening services of the Church were held on 20 March 1910, with the Rev. David Ross MA., of St. Kilda, Melbourne conducting the morning service at 11 am., and the Rev. Alexander McCarlie the evening service at 7.30 pm., with a special collection for the building fund.³³ Addresses were delivered by the Chairman, the Right Reverend, the Moderator, Reverends Ross, James, Wilson Macaulay, and Messrs. F. A. Moseley and T. Nankivell. Musical items were rendered and later refreshments were served in the hall.³⁴ A social gathering in connection with the opening was held in *St. Columba's Church and Hall* on 21 March 1910 at 8 pm.³⁵

St. Columba's Church is built of local Cottesloe limestone, quarried between Eric Street and Hawkestone Streets, and fired in kilns in the vicinity of Nailsworth Street.³⁶ The original oak pews bear brass holders for the names of the members of the congregation. Members of the congregation made gifts of the font, pulpit, communion table and lectern at various times since the construction of the church. There are two stained glass windows in the church: the first, depicting the Lord Jesus Christ welcoming the little children, was a gift from the children of the Sunday School ; and the other, depicting the 'Light of the World', was given by F. A. Moseley's family following his death on 21 November 1919. An oriel window depicts the Burning Bush of Moses, a symbol dear to Presbyterians, with the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove and a heart in the central panel, a crown and a cross are depicted in one side panel and on the other side, an anchor. (Probably a reference to Hebrews 6, verse 19). Memorial plaques and tablets on interior walls commemorate past members of the congregation, including F. A. Moseley, founder of the church and members of his family. There are two Rolls of Honour with the names of the members of the congregation who served and those who died in the First and Second World Wars. A plaque below the 1939 - 1945 Roll of Honour 'In memory of all personnel on land, sea or air who gave their lives in the Normandy Campaign, D Day June 6th - August 26th 1944. Lest we forget,' was unveiled by His Excellency the Governor, on 6 June 1990.³⁷

Since the opening of the church in 1910, the church hall has been principally used as a meeting place for Kirk Sessions, for the Sunday School, for meetings of the Ladies Guild, and for various social occasions including presentations

³² Hill, R. 'St. Columba's History' in *Pre-Scribe* January-February 1991, Vol. 1, No. 5.

³³ *The West Australian* 19 March 1910, p. 9. advertising the event.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Hill.

³⁷ *ibid.*

by visiting speakers. In the 1920s, a kindergarten school, called 'Yoorala' was opened in the hall by Leila Black, daughter of Edwin Alexander Black, State Commissioner of Taxation (1919-1936), a prominent member of the congregation of *St. Columba's Church*.³⁸ It began with an enrolment of ten children; when the school numbers increased it moved to the Black's old home, 'Yamba', in Venn Street, next door to the *St. Columba's Church*.³⁹ In the 1970s the Little Theatre Group used the hall for some time, including public presentations of various productions.⁴⁰ Current usage is mostly by the church congregation as noted. The Perth Liberal Ladies use the hall for their gatherings several times a year.

In 1962-1963, *St. Columba's Church Hall* was extended. The original plans for this addition designed by J. B. and M. E. Thomson, and built by J. E. Davidson, specified that the addition should include 'outside cladding to be fibro weatherboard and to be painted as shown for exposed woodwork'.⁴¹ On 20 February 1978, application was made to the Shire of Peppermint Grove for permission for an addition of a timber frame toilet block, 17 metres square, at the rear of the existing timber framed church hall; permission was granted, but the addition was not constructed.⁴²

St. Columba's Church became the garrison church for the Normandy Veterans in 1990. Previously they had met for an annual service on 6 June in the Gallipoli Room, at the R. S. L. in Perth. Their chaplain, Mr. Ron Hill, was a member of the congregation at *St. Columba's*, and the suggestion for *St. Columba's Church* to assume this role was agreed to by the minister and the congregation.⁴³ Since the dedication by the Rev. Bruce Fraser on 6 June 1990, the Normandy Veterans have met for a memorial service there each year. At the service in 1995, a Representative of the French Government presented about seventy Western Australian veterans of the Normandy landings with special medals.⁴⁴

The congregation of *St. Columba's Church*, from its beginnings in the home of F. A. Moseley in 1893, included members from all levels of the social strata, in keeping with the egalitarian precepts of the Presbyterian Church. In its early years a number of the Elders were people of standing in the wider community. They sought to serve not only their own church community, but also the wider community of the surrounding districts and of Western Australia, particularly in education and in their concerns for the social welfare of their fellow Western Australians. *St. Columba's Church* has served as the Presbyterian church for the residents of Peppermint Grove, Cottesloe and Mosman Park. The Kirk records indicate that of those admitted to membership of the church, many came from the districts neighbouring

38 Black, Leila Oral history interview conducted by J. Donald and S. Masterson in 1987, in Batty

Library. OH. 1690 ts.

39 *ibid.*

40 Minute Book of Kirk Session 1972-1986 *St. Columba's Church*

41 File for *St. Columba's Manse*, Venn Street, Peppermint Grove. Planning Department, Shire of Peppermint Grove.

42 *ibid*

43 Mr. Ron Hill, telephone conversation, 2 July 1995.

44 *The West Australian* 7 June 1995 p. 1.

Peppermint Grove, and from that area of Peppermint Grove which was principally occupied by people who were trades people in 1890-1910.⁴⁵

St. Columba's Church remains in use as a Presbyterian church, whose congregation is drawn from the immediate locality, neighbouring districts and other Perth suburbs.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

St. Columba's Church and Hall is comprised of a Church and Hall. The buildings are constructed to the building line at the corner of Keane and Venn Streets.

Hall

St. Columba's Church Hall is a single-storey building in the Federation Carpenter Gothic style.⁴⁶ It is modest in size and rectangular in plan, traditionally orientated east-west, with a south aisle and rear additions to accommodate a growing congregation. The Hall is of simple construction - timber framed with weatherboard cladding and exposed corner battens. The building is covered with a high pitched gabled roof clad in corrugated iron. The roof ridge features metal vents.

The south aisle was added in 1900. The addition is raised on timber stumps and is constructed to match the original building but is covered with a lean-to roof.

A porch breaks the simplicity of the facade. Covered with a gabled roof, the entrance features decorative timber fret work, a simple cross window in the gable end, and a square framed doorway with a relatively new, simple timber and glass panelled door.

The eastern elevation of the nave consists of a timber framed double-light lancet window while a south aisle consists of two, timber framed single-light lancets, a double-light lancet, a double-hung sash window to the street facade, and two timber panelled doors. Each lancet is divided into four panes by slim glazing bars. The top pane of some of the lancets have been overpainted.

The interior is austere with the exception of the wide timber boarded ceiling. The walls, originally lined with sheet metal, are now clad with asbestos-fibre lining above dado height and timber lined below dado, with the exception of the partitions in the aisle which are clad in fibro-cement.⁴⁷ The floors are timber throughout but covered with linoleum in the aisle. The hall retains what is believed to be the original timber stage. It has been dated back to 1898.

The current office was the former vestry. The walls are covered with pressed metal. The aisle now accommodates a kitchen at the eastern end, a central activity area and an office (vestry) at the western end. The aisle opening to the hall is wide with a bulk head over.

⁴⁵ Minute Book of Kirk Session, *St. Columba's Church, 1898-1934* and Pascoe, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture, Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (Angus & Robertson Publishers, North Ryde 1989) pp. 94-97.

⁴⁷ The date the sheet metal was covered is unknown.

Evidence of a previous window at the rear of the Hall is evident on the exterior wall.⁴⁸ In 1962-63, a brick addition was made to the old vestry to accommodate toilets. The hall was entirely reclad in corrugated iron⁴⁹ and the hall was repainted within the last five years. The building is well maintained and in good condition.

Church

The church is constructed to the building line at the intersection of Venn and Keane Streets in the Federation Gothic style, an adaptation of Early English Gothic.⁵⁰ The church stands in a lawned setting with a paved forecourt.

The building is orientated north-south and has a landmark tower with crenellations at the north-east corner. The current vestry is located in a ground floor room in the tower. The design of the tower included a spire that was not built.⁵¹

The church is built of local stone in random coursed rockfaced stone. It has a high pitched roof, with stone gables, which is covered in slate tiles.

The walls feature heavily recessed lancet windows and the walls, and corners of the building, are strengthened by simple, stepped buttresses; however, the corner buttresses corbel out at the top to support the gable ends.

The roof lacks ornamentation other than metal gable roof vents, a stone pinnacle on the north-west corner and the detail at the base of the cement coping at the gable ends, which finish at the gutter level with an ornate pediment. A stone cross is missing from the front apex but the base of the cross is extant.⁵²

The lancets are defined by rendered sills and crowned with hood moulds. The north end of the church features a triple lancet window. The windows are leaded and stained.

The main exterior feature of the building is its main entrance which has an arched hood-moulding over a square headed doorway. The moulded door jambs are Norman in design.

The interior walls of the church are rendered and the floors are timber throughout. The nave is wide and lofty. The roof shape is reflected in the interior. Exposed jarrah roof trusses are supported on carved timber brackets and stone corbels. The ceiling is lined with jarrah timber laid in a herring bone pattern. The interior wall of the sanctuary is clad with pressed metal. The exterior wall is clad with weatherboards, as the intention at the time of construction of the church was that at a later date the hall would be moved and the new stone church extended.

The church narthex is enclosed by timber lined panelling and the lectern is constructed of carved timber.

⁴⁸ The reason for the removal of the window and the date the work was carried out is unknown.

⁴⁹ The date the building was reclad is unknown.

⁵⁰ Apperly, Irving, Reynolds, pp. 78-81.

⁵¹ James, Ruth Marchant *Heritage of Pines: A History of the Town of Cottesloe, Western Australia* (Cottesloe Council, 1977) p. 57.

⁵² See photograph taken 6 September 1982, by Frank Slee, in Pascoe, p. 41.

Access between the church and hall is via a single door to the west of the lectern. The building also contains a number of original jarrah fixtures and fittings including the pulpit, font, pews, and other seating which were donated by the congregation.

The condition of the building is protected by a program of maintenance. During the early 1990s, external window protection was fitted to two lancets, one either side of the nave, in the form of wire mesh. Rising damp is evident in the south-west corner of the church interior. In 1995, in an attempt to arrest the problem of water penetration to the south-west corner of the church, the stone on the eastern section of the outer wall was covered with a sealant.

13.3 REFERENCES

Hill, R. 'St. Columba's History' in *Pre-Scribe* January-February 1991, Vol. 1, No. 5.

Lang, J. *Cottesloe School : 80 Years 1897- 1977* (Perth ,1978).

Moseley, F. A. *St. Columba's Presbyterian Church 1898-1908 :A Retrospect* (Perth, no date, circa 1910)