

Victorian Heritage Database place details - 12/12/2019 WINTERGARDEN



Location:

51 MCKILLOP STREET GEELONG, Greater Geelong City

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H1173

Listing Authority: VHR

Extent of Registration:

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 1173:

Wintergarden, Former Congregational Chapel and Prefabricated Iron Building, 51 McKillop Street, Geelong, City of Greater Geelong.

Extent:

To the extent of:

1. All of the building known as Wintergarden, the former Congregational Chapel and the prefabricated iron building marked as B-1 on Plan 604435 endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.
2. All of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 10051 Folio 923 marked L-1 on Plan 604435 endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.

Statement of Significance:

The Congregational Church was established in Geelong in 1850 and in 1853 a new building was planned for McKillop Street to unite two congregations. The church was built in 1853-54 to a design by architect Benjamin Backhouse. The prefabricated iron building attached to the rear of the former Congregational Church was fabricated by Charles D Young and Co of Edinburgh. It was originally erected in 1863 on the Artillery Reserve in Ryrie Street. It was re-erected in its present position in 1879 as the Gun Room behind the Orderly Room for the Royal Victorian Volunteer Artillery Corps when the Congregational Chapel was converted for use as a Drill Hall.

The former chapel has architectural significance as one of the earliest surviving works of the architect Benjamin Backhouse. The design of the church in the style of a meeting house with gallery reflects its relationship with the nonconformist religions of England who had developed their own distinctive architectural style during the eighteenth century. Although the building is in the Classical style, the facade features unusual proportions and detail. The building has had a succession of occupants and a changing sequence of usage through the years, but its original use as a place of worship can still be discerned.

The former chapel, an important example of a Congregational Church, is historically significant for its associations with the Congregational denomination. Established in England during the Puritan movement of dissent from the Church of England, the Congregational denomination was introduced to the colony of Victoria by early settlers such as John Pascoe Fawkner and John Gardiner. The McKillop Street chapel was built to unite two congregations and reflects the autonomy and factionalism which characterised nineteenth century Congregationalism.

The prefabricated iron building attached to the rear of the former Congregational Church, demonstrates technical accomplishment in the history of construction. The development of the galvanising process in the 1840s, the fabrication of rolled sections of wrought iron from about 1850, and the use of grooved or fluted rollers to improve the production of corrugated iron in 1844, enabled the construction of this prefabricated iron building. The building demonstrates the innovative solutions provided by this technology to cope with the building shortages caused by the gold rushes in Australia and California in the early 1850s.

The prefabricated building at the rear of the former Congregational Church is a rare example of a prefabricated iron military building, and one of two known works of Charles D Young of Edinburgh extant in Victoria. Although only part of the building survives, it is one of only a small number of prefabricated iron buildings of this manufacturer remaining in the world.

[The information below is from the Geelong Region Historic Buildings and Objects Study]

The former Congregational Chapel was erected in 1853-54 for the McKillop Street independent congregation to designs by pioneer Geelong architect Benjamin Backhouse. This stucco masonry structure was designed as a preaching hall with a classically derived facade of most unusual proportions and detail and surmounted by a restrained central pediment and parapet entablature. The building is one of the earliest surviving works of Backhouse and has important links with the history of the Congregational Church of Victoria. The chapel is now used as a dry cleaning works.

Heritage Study	
Year Construction Started	1853
Architect / Designer	Backhouse, Benjamin
Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) Free Classical
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place
Municipality	["GREATER GEELONG CITY"]
Other names	CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
History	