

Victorian Heritage Database Report

# St. Matthews Uniting Church, 9-13 Scallan Street, STAWELL

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**Location:**

9-13 Scallan Street STAWELL, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Recommended for Heritage Register

**Heritage Overlay Number:** HO16

**Listing Authority:** Northern Grampians Shire

**Statement of Significance:**

St. Matthew's Uniting Church, 9-13 Scallan Street, Stawell, makes a highly significant contribution to the visual and architectural amenity of the local area. The Victorian Free Decorated Gothic styled Church building was constructed in 1868 to a design by Robert Alexander Love, architect of Pleasant Creek and Sandhurst. Apart from the rear Community Centre addition, the building is externally largely intact, and is identified by its landmark tower and spire, stained glass window by Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Co. of Melbourne, distinctive pipe organ by J.E. Dodd of Adelaide, and many other original features.

St. Matthew's Uniting Church is architecturally and aesthetically significant at a STATE level. It demonstrates many original qualities of a Free Decorated Gothic style. These qualities include the unpainted locally-made brick wall construction, granite base, Portland cement dressings and particularly the parapeted steeply pitched gable roof form and the imposing centrally placed octagonal tower and spire. Other intact qualities include the slate roof cladding, ventilation dormers in the tower and spire and along the gable ridgeline, pointed double timber doors with incised decorative Gothic relief, Free Decorated tracery window adorned with leadlighting, memorial tablet with the inscription "St. Matthew's A.D. 1868", blind oculi in tower, pointed ventilator, lancet windows, projecting brick buttresses, pointed windows, with smaller pointed clerestorey windows in the upper reaches of the walls. (all containing diamond lights and variously coloured borders), rectangular apse, decorative features (drip moulds and quoinwork about the window and door openings, projecting buttress pediments, copings, bosses and the circular turrets that crown the recessed buttresses on the main facade). The interior of the building also contributes to the architectural and aesthetic significance of the place. The significant internal features include the open timber scissor roof trusses, plastered imitation stonework wall finish, timber wainscot dados surmounted by Gothic mouldings, timber screen, stained glass war memorial window by Messrs Brooks, Robinson and Co. of Melbourne, pipe organ by J.E. Dodd of Adelaide, pointed stained glass window by Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Co. of Melbourne, timber choir stalls and a central timber platform pulpit decorated with Gothic panel enrichments and the Kauri timber seating.

St. Matthew's Uniting Church is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the development of the Presbyterian Church in Stawell, particularly from 1868. The Church also has associations with Robert Alexander Love, architect of Bendigo and temporarily of Pleasant Creek, together with Thomas Moriarty (bricklayer and stonemason), R.M. Hassell (carpenter), and H. Williams (plasterer and slater).

St. Matthew's Uniting Church is scientifically significant at a STATE level. The original pipe organ by J.E. Dodd of Adelaide, stained glass war memorial window by Brooks, Robinson and Co. of Melbourne, and the stained glass window by Messrs Fergusson, Urie and Co. of Melbourne illustrate rare and intact artistic displays and technology.

St. Matthew's Uniting Church is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is recognised and valued by the Stawell community for religious reasons.

Overall, St. Matthew's Uniting Church is of STATE significance.

**Description**

The St. Matthew's Uniting Church site at 9-13 Scallan Street, Stawell, makes a significant contribution to the

local streetscape and is visually connected to the Baptist Church and St. Peter's Lutheran Church that are also situated in Scallan Street. The site is identified by a large brick church with a landmark tower and spire. The Church grounds form a large open carpark with some plantings to one side. The front is bound by an introduced brick fence with flanking entrance piers crowned with lamps, neighbouring brick Sunday School hall, together with substantial lawn areas and mature trees.

The unpainted locally-made brick, Victorian Free Decorated Gothic styled Uniting Church building is especially characterised by a parapeted steeply pitched gable roof form and an imposing, centrally placed octagonal tower and spire. The 40 foot high roof form is clad in early slate, with ventilation dormers adorning the ridgeline of the church gable. The tower is also constructed of unpainted brick, while the steeple is rendered in Portland cement. The base of the tower forms a square and is flanked by projecting brick buttresses on the main elevation which terminate as four turrets where the tower changes form to an octagon on which is surmounted the steeple, the whole being 133 feet in height. The three dimensional form of the tower is defined by the projecting minor gable end. At the base of the square portion of the tower is the early pointed double timber doors with incised decorative Gothic relief. Above the door is a Free Decorated tracery window adorned with leadlighting. A tablet with the inscription "St. Matthew's A.D. 1868" surmounts the window. The tower's octagonal base has a blind oculi (initially built to accommodate a clock face) and pointed gable ventilator with additional, much smaller dormer ventilators located on the spire.

The symmetrical composition of the main elevation is identified by the flanking lancet windows that are located over two levels that light the stair rooms either side of the tower. These flanking rooms are terminated at the corners by angled buttresses.

The side elevations of the building are characterised by eleven projecting brick buttresses that diminish as they rise. Between the buttresses are pointed windows, with smaller pointed clerestorey windows in the upper reaches of the walls. These double rows of windows contain diamond lights within, with variously coloured borders.

The rear of the building is identified by the central unpainted brick, rectangular apse adorned with angled buttresses. The community centre building has been added.

Other early external decorative features of the design include the Portland cement dressings and enrichments, as identified in the drip moulds and quoinwork about the window and door openings, projecting buttress pediments, copies, bosses and in the circular turrets that crown the recessed buttress.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	112678
Property number	

*This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online*