

Heritage Citation



Joyful News Mission Hall (former)

Key details

Also known as	Joyful News Wesleyan Methodist Church
Addresses	At 136 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006
Type of place	Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Arts and Crafts
Lot plan	L8_RP9727
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 30 October 2000 Date of Information — September 2006

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (E) Aesthetic; (G) Social

Built with limited funds for the Joyful News Mission in 1932, this was the second hall to be built on this site after the previous one was destroyed by fire in 1931. From 1932 until 1983, the building was used by the Mission as a base from which to preach the gospel, provide spiritual guidance and to assist people in need, particularly through the distribution of clothing and food parcels. Since 1983 the building has been used as a church by the Wesleyan Methodist faith community and is now the only remaining timber church in Fortitude Valley.

History

The first Joyful News Mission Hall was built on this site in 1915. On 3 October 1914 tenders were called for "the erection of a hall (wood) for the Joyful News Mission, Brunswick Street" to the designs of Edward M. Myers, architect. This building however was virtually destroyed by fire on 27 November 1931. According to the *Brisbane Courier* the following day, the fire caused approximately £4000 damage, reducing the building to a ruin within a quarter of an hour.

The fire came at a particularly bad time for the church, when the entire nation was gripped by the effects of the Great Depression. Those hardest hit by the depression often sought solace in the church. Thus the Joyful News congregation was anxious to rebuild as soon and as inexpensively as possible. Plans were immediately put into place to build a humble timber hall and approximately 40 workers volunteered to undertake the building work to minimise the cost. This reduced the church's debt from £600 to just £173. In the meantime regular services were held in the Masonic Temple opposite and the Christmas Service took place in the Diamantina Hospital. The new church was opened for service in 1932.

As well as providing spiritual comfort during the difficult depression years, the Joyful News Mission provided families in need with food parcels and clothing. Between 1931 and 1946, the Mission handed out 24,834 items of clothing, and assisted 5,351 needy families.

Although rapid suburbanisation in the early twentieth century had caused the residential population of Fortitude Valley to decline by the 1930s, there was still a considerable residential population in this and surrounding suburbs. Private car ownership was still very low in the 1930s, so those who attended church in the Valley either walked from their nearby homes, or caught public transport.

The Joyful News Mission was founded in 1896 by Mr H.M. Todd as an independent and undenominational religious association. Its aims were to preach the Gospel, give spiritual help and advice and to assist the poor and needy. Branches were established in Fortitude Valley, Breakfast Creek and Spring Hill. The Valley Branch commemorated 50 years of service in 1946.

In 1983 the Joyful News Mission ceased to operate from this building, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church purchased the property. In the early 1990s the church became known as the Tongan Wesleyan Methodist, reflecting the growing numbers of Tongan people in Brisbane. The building continues to provide a place of

worship and fellowship for families from scattered parts of Brisbane.

This is the only remaining timber church in Fortitude Valley. The only other church built in Fortitude Valley during the 1930s was the Glad Tidings Tabernacle, a much more substantial masonry building. The other remaining Valley churches were built during the 1870s and 1880s and are also substantial masonry buildings.

Description

The building is single storied, of timber construction, with a timber floor on brick piers. The symmetrical front facade has a central entry protected by a decorative gabled porch on timber posts. Large square headed windows flank the front porch, and the gable roof has the upper section boxed out and supported on brackets. The roof is sheeted with corrugated galvanised iron with three ridge ventilators.

Side windows are square headed with fanlights, and external walls are sheeted with weatherboards.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as a building that reflects the residential nature of Fortitude Valley in the 1930s and for its important role during the depression as a base for the charitable work conducted by the Joyful News Mission.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as the only remaining timber church in Fortitude Valley.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

for its contribution to the streetscape of Brunswick Street.

Social

CRITERION G

The place has a strong or special association with the life or work of a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

as it has played an important part in the lives of successive generations of people who have worshipped there and who have been involved with the Mission.

References

1. *Brisbane Courier*, 3 October 1914
2. *Brisbane Courier*, 28 November, 1931
3. *Brisbane Courier*, 19 December, 1931
4. *Joyful News Mission Pamphlet Commemorating Fifty Years Service to the People of the Valley 1896-1946*, 1946, The Mission, Brisbane

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Note: This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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