

Heritage Citation



Torwood Methodist Church (former)

Key details

Addresses	At 12 Payne Street, Auchenflower, Queensland 4066
Type of place	Church
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Style	Carpenter Gothic
Lot plan	L1_RP181491
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2002 Date of Citation — April 2001
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Timber

This Former Methodist Church was constructed in 1891 in nearby Annie Street and was moved to its current location on Payne Street in 1914. The building continued to be used as a Methodist church until 1982, and has since been used as a base for a local artists' collective. The attractive building survives as a substantially intact example of a Carpenter Gothic timber and tin church and has considerable aesthetic appeal.

History

This Methodist church was originally constructed in Annie Street in 1891 and was moved in 1914 to its current location in nearby Payne Street. Annie Street was part of the old Torwood Estate (now part of the suburb of Auchenflower) subdivided in the 1880s.

The original location of the church in Annie street, and its subsequent one in Payne Street, place it in the centre of an area which had grown in population since the Torwood Estate was divided and sold in the mid 1880s. The large portions that had previously existed in the area were continually broken up and sold from this time for the purpose of constructing residential dwellings. The existence of a number of Methodist and other churches in the area are testament to the extent and density of population that rapidly developed in this part of Brisbane in the last part of the nineteenth century.

Methodists first arrived in the Pacific in 1796 as members of a London Missionary Society deputation. The first Methodist gathering was held in Sydney in 1812. Throughout colonial times the Methodist church relied heavily on itinerant ministers and Lay preachers, and this was a successful practice in frontier environments. One writer has seen this as making the Methodist Church "The Most Australian of Churches."

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of representatives from the various branches of the Methodist Church were active in Moreton Bay. Wesleyan Methodists held their first services here as early as 1847. Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians arrived in the colony in 1856 and 1866 respectively. The first Methodist church service in Brisbane was conducted in the home of Mr T.T. Makepeace at Mogill in 1856.

The church now in Payne Street was the first to be constructed in the Torwood locale and one of the original constituents of the Ithaca Methodist Circuit. This was amalgamated with other Methodist Churches in the area in 1906 and became the Brisbane - Paddington Methodist Circuit. This grouping contained seven churches, which, it was soon realised, was an unwieldy number. A resolution was passed by a special meeting of the Brisbane – Paddington Circuit held in January 1908 which stated that:

It is in the opinion of this meeting that in the interest of the work of God and of Methodism in our district and the more efficient working of our Churches, it is advisable to request Conference to divide the circuit.

Permission to break up the circuit was granted by April, and the Brisbane – Paddington circuit then constituted the Paddington, Latrobe Terrace, and Torwood churches only. The Torwood church was the smallest of the three with only 10 members at the time of the break up. By 1928, this had increased to about 50 and there was a slow but steady increase through to the amalgamation of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches that formed the Uniting Church in 1977.

According to historian John Pearn, the Torwood congregation voted in 1914 to move the church building to its present location on Payne Street. Two eminent members of the church, Norman Evans and Theophilus George Allen, acting as trustees, acquired land in Payne street on behalf of the church in February 1914. Post Office Directories confirm the appearance of the church in Payne street at this time. The reasons for this relocation are not known, and Circuit Minutes make no mention of it. The church was originally situated on Annie street, between Hope and Haig streets, so the move was a small one, shifting the building only one street to the south. Pearn also states that the large church hall that now accompanies the church was constructed in mid 1928. Though the minutes make no mention of this either, they do affirm the commitment of the church to Sunday School programmes, and it is likely that the hall was used for this purpose.

The amalgamation which formed the Uniting Church in 1977 saw the Payne Street church joined with the nearby Auchenflower Presbyterian Church. Joint services and Sunday Schools were held for a few years, but the Uniting Church eventually decided that two churches in Auchenflower were too many, and the old Methodist church was deconsecrated and sold in 1982.

In 1984, the church and adjoining hall were acquired by an artists' collective, the Queensland Spinners, Weavers and Dyers Group, who are the current occupier of the property.

Description

The former Methodist church and Hall form a small historic precinct unified by the established garden within the site surrounding the two buildings. Both buildings are timber with timber board cladding on short stumps and have corrugated metal roofs.

This former Methodist Church is an example of Federation Carpenter Gothic, characterised by its relatively modest size and simplicity of timber construction without loss of religious image. The church has a steep roof with a gable end to the front decorated with vertical slats.

The frontage has a symmetric form with an enclosed small vestibule projecting in the middle with a separate lower roof. A flight of stairs perpendicular to the front gives access to this vestibule. The windows are narrow and pointed, typical to that of the Gothic style.

The church is presently raised on concrete stumps with vertical battening in between. The mature trees, which surround the buildings, give it a shady and leafy aspect.

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 one of the first churches in the locality of Torwood (now part of Auchenflower).

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places
as a substantially intact example of a late nineteenth century Carpenter Gothic church.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history
as a church that served the spiritual needs of the Methodist community in the Auchenflower area for more than 90 years.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans

2. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificate of Titles
 3. Pearn, John. *Auchenflower, the Suburb and the Name* (Brisbane: Department of Child Health Publishing Unit , 1997)
 4. Queensland Post Office Directories
 5. Minute Book of Brisbane/Paddington Methodist Circuit, John Oxley Library Manuscript Collection
 6. Minute Book of the Ithaca Methodist Circuit January 1902-1927, John Oxley Library Manuscript Collection
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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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