

Heritage Citation



St John's Presbyterian Church

Key details

Addresses	At 23 King Street, Annerley, Queensland 4051
Type of place	Church
Period	Interwar 1919-1939, Victorian 1860-1890
Style	Carpenter Gothic
Lot plan	L83_RP37417; L82_RP37417; L81_RP37417; L85_RP37417; L84_RP37417
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — May 2003
People/associations	George Trotter - Second Church (Architect)

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (G) Social; (H) Historical association

Presbyterians have gathered in buildings on this site since 1885. They built their first church in 1886 at a cost of £150 and their second church in 1929 at a cost of £3,500. Brisbane architect, George Trotter, who was also a member of the congregation, designed the second church. Both buildings are still used by the Annerley Presbyterian Church today and provide excellent examples of Victorian and Federation Carpenter Gothic timber-framed ecclesiastical buildings.

History

A period of economic boom for Brisbane, the mid 1880s was also a time of resurgence for the Presbyterian Church in Queensland. The first Presbyterian church had been erected by its congregation in 1850, and more churches were established in Brisbane and country towns throughout the next two decades. From the mid 1870s however, the growth of the Presbyterian community slowed dramatically throughout Queensland, and in 1881 the Convenor of the Church Extension Committee, the Reverend Colin McCulloch, observed that "our Church is not extending, but rather the reverse".

Perhaps due to the economic revival of the mid-1880s and accompanying influx of population, the church began to again expand in country and metropolitan centres. The new Brisbane suburb of Thompson Estate was one such area in which Presbyterians sought to arrange their worship locally. A Sunday School began operations at the home of local resident John Galbraith early in 1885. Later that year a meeting of resident Presbyterians decided to procure a site for a Presbyterian church in the suburb. Reverend D.F. Mitchell of nearby Park Church purchased the land on behalf of the parish.

It was originally proposed that 'gratuitous labour' might erect the church, however tenders were finally called and Mr Kraus' offer of £150 was accepted. The size of the church was settled after a great deal of discussion amongst the parishioners, and it was to measure 30 feet by 25 feet. Very short of funds, the Thompson Estate Church Committee asked the Committee of Park Church for the pulpit from their old Grey Street church. By April 1886, the building of the church was well under way, however financial difficulties led to the decision that the construction of the church door be delayed 'till required'. The church was finally opened on 16 May 1886. The church building and land remained in the ownership of Reverend Mitchell until September 1889 when it was agreed that the congregation should take possession.

The church continued to serve the congregation until after World War I. Early in 1922 the Reverend A. Duff suggested that a building fund be established for a new church, and the idea flourished. Reverend Duff organised a lecture on 'Scottish Jacobite Songs', with the songs performed by two parishioners. An entrance fee was charged and the lecture was so popular that it was repeated, netting the first £25 for the building fund. Funds continued to be raised until 1929, at which time the congregation decided to proceed with the erection of a new church.

The architect employed was George Trotter, a member of the congregation, and Mr Kirby was the builder with the whole scheme costing £3,500. The members of the congregation gave many gifts, ranging from the pulpit to door mats. In 1929, the new church was completed, and the old church reused as a parish hall. Both buildings

remain in use on the site.

Description

This Federation Carpenter Gothic style church, which is positioned slightly off centre on the site, shares the site with a church hall (the former 1880s timber framed church) positioned close to the northern boundary, a small detached garage on the south east corner of the site and a tennis court located immediately behind the church.

The asymmetrical fronted building is rectangular in form with an entry porch attached to the north eastern end and vestry wings projecting approximately 2 metres beyond both sides at the western end.

The church is timber framed, supported on concrete piers and sheeted externally with weatherboards up to door head height and with stucco render above extending up to the eaves. Gable ends to the main building and entry porch are sheeted with timber shingles. Timber dentils line the transition between stucco and shingles.

The weatherboard sheeting is extended down four boards below floor level, providing a skirt to the floor framing and increasing the height of weatherboarding to improve proportioning of weatherboards to stucco.

The eaves overhang is lined with tongue and groove boarding fixed to the top of exposed rafters. Eaves ventilation to the roof is provided by a continuous gauze vent extending along both sides of the building.

A stucco render has been applied to the external concrete piers with vertical timber battening providing an enclosure between the piers.

The steeply pitched roof, slightly splayed out at the eaves, is sheeted with terracotta tiles and is surmounted by a small steeple at the eastern end. The steeple, containing louvre ventilation is sheeted with shingles and is capped with a finial.

Windows are generally lead lighted double casements capped with a gothic type arch containing coloured glass. The windows at the eastern end are extended vertically to form lancets.

Access to the entry porch is either by way of an L-shaped set of concrete steps extending from the street alignment or by way of a concrete ramp.

The main entrance doors are constructed of framed tongue and groove, vertical joint boarding.

The simple timber framed gable roof garage is of complementary design to the church, with weatherboard sheeted walls rising from base walls of rendered concrete. The roof is sheeted with terra cotta tiles.

1880s Church Hall

The church hall is a simple Victorian Carpenter Gothic style building. This timber framed weatherboard sheeted hall, which was originally rectilinear in plan form, has been widened by the addition on the northern side, extending the building closer to the alignment.

The building is supported on concrete piers with vertical timber battening enclosing the space between piers across the front.

The steeply pitched gabled roof is sheeted with corrugated iron and is terminated at the eastern and western ends with timber finials. The gable end overhangs have exposed rafters and are unlined. Roof ventilation is

provided by fixed timber louvres in the apex of the eastern and western gables.

Windows along the southern side wall are timber framed vertical pairs of hoppers with clear glass, the upper hoppers having a triangulated head. Elsewhere the windows are timber framed casements of either 3, 4 or 6 panes. Doors are generally framed tongue and groove vertical joint boarding.

Main entry to the hall is through a small protruding porch at the eastern end which is accessed by a small flight of timber steps on the northern side. Disabled access is provided by way of a concrete ramp on the southern side of the building. The building is supported on concrete piers. Vertical timber battening encloses the space between piers across the front.

Toilet facilities have been provided at the western end of the building. These are constructed of concrete masonry and aluminium framed sliding glass windows. Screening to the entries has been provided by vertical timber battening.

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 place that provides evidence about the development of the area from the late nineteenth century, particularly its connection with the development of Thompson Estate.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as the 1880s church is a surviving example of a small, timber-framed 1880s church built in the Victorian Carpenter Gothic style and the 1920s church is an example of a medium sized timber-framed church built in the 1920s in the Federation Carpenter Gothic style.

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 the precinct provides evidence of the development of the local Presbyterian community from 1886, when the first church was opened, and the continued commitment of parishioners in the years leading up to 1929 when the second church was built; and as a site of Presbyterian worship for more than 120 years.

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 the 1920s church is an example of the work of notable architect George Trotter.

References

1. Bardon, R. 1949, *The Centenary History of The Presbyterian Church of Queensland*, Brisbane
2. *St John's Presbyterian Church, Thompson Estate, Brisbane. Jubilee Souvenir 1885 - 1935*

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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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