

Heritage Citation



Station United Protestant Church (former)

Key details

Also known as	St Luke's Church of England
Addresses	At 30 Beaton Street, Coopers Plains, Queensland 4108
Type of place	Church, Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Queenslander
Lot plan	L12_RP38036
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — January 2011

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (G) Social

Volunteer labour from the Coopers Plains farming community built the United Protestant Church Hall in 1928 on land donated to the community. The site chosen was close to Coopers Plains Station and it soon became known as the 'Station United Protestant Church'. The local Methodists and Anglicans also used the church. In 1959, it was renamed St. Luke's Anglican Church. In 1986, it became St Mary & St Joseph's Coptic Orthodox Church.

History

The site of this church was first sold as freehold land on 18 March 1863. Joseph Dickinson (sometimes spelt as Dickenson), of Brisbane, paid ?37.10.0 for 37 acres and 2 roods of undeveloped land at Coopers Plains, described as Portion 183. Joseph died on 10 July 1870 and the land passed to his widow Jessie. She subdivided the large block for a land sale that commenced in 1891. At that time, the local area was known as Orange Grove.

On 1 December 1904, William Edwards, a ganger, of Coopers Plains purchased resubdivisions 12-18 and resubdivisions 27-32 of Subdivision 3 of Portion 183. William died on 7 January 1918. The Public Curator of Queensland handled his estate and on 9 October 1919 the land was granted to William's widow Agnes Sarah Edwards. Her daughter, Eva Florence Edwards obtained a small part of this block on 31 August 1927. She gained resubdivisions 12-14 and 31 & 32 of Subdivision 3 of Portion 183, being 2 roods and 28.1 perches of land that bordered the railway line.

A United Protestant Sunday School was established in the Coopers Plains Progress Association Hall in Rockwood Avenue around 1926. The United Protestant Church minister was Mr. McKechnie. His wife Elizabeth and daughter Lillian plus Mrs Annie Tuckett and the wife Mr Edward Tuckett were the Sunday School teachers. By the 1920's, Coopers Plains was a semi-rural, outer Brisbane suburb that contained dairy and poultry farms and market gardens. Much of this produce was taken by train to the main Roma Street Markets that were located in the City. It was a period of relative prosperity that engendered a community spirit. This was reflected in the construction of community facilities:

The civic pride of the residents in their districts was demonstrated by the number of progress associations and other public or semi-public bodies... Small but serviceable public halls studded the district, and these were the centre of social activity...¹

In 1928, the rural community of Coopers Plains constructed the United Protestant Church Hall in Beaton Street. It is assumed that Eva Edwards donated the 36.4 perches of land that made up the church site. The site was chosen as it was within walking distance of the Coopers Plains Railway Station (opened 1885). Thus it became known as the 'Station United Protestant Church'. To signify its status as a community asset, a Board of Trustees was formed. Edward Tuckett, Hugh Gibson, John Metcalf, John Henry Breedon and George Herbert Nalder became the trustees of the church site on 15 October 1928.

Voluntary labour built the church hall. Its flooring was laid with alternate boards of Moreton Bay Ash and Red

Stringy bark timber. After the floorboards were polished, they “produced a contrasting pattern of dark red and yellow colours”². The Sunday School and weekly church services were conducted in this Hall. The United Protestant Church Hall was equipped with a piano. Soon after the building’s construction, Evie Tuckett, Evie Mitchell Mrs. Buch and her son Doug took turns at playing the piano for Sunday services.

Reverend George McKechnie conducted the services. The McKechnie family would drive “across from Sunnybank to Coopers Plains each Sunday in a horse drawn sulky.”³ During the 1930s, Mr. Johnson from Fairfield and then Mr. McDonald from West End replaced McKechnie as church minister. Mr. Davidson and Mr. Rackley were the Sunday School attendants. Rackley and his wife travelled by train from their home at Moorooka each Sunday to conduct the Sunday School classes. The Sunday School Prize Night and the Anniversary Celebration were the major social occasions for the local congregation. At these special events, the children wore their best clothes and a local choir plus soloists (trained by Mr & Mrs Cunningham of Wynnum) would perform.

Later, the church hall was also used for local Methodist Church services. In Coopers Plains, the Methodists formed youth groups. Sid Mann and Thelma Johnson established branches of the Methodist Girl Comrades and the boys’ Order of Knights.

As one Board of Trustee member died he was replaced with another man. John Breedon died on 5 June 1932. He was replaced by Edward James Hodge and Albert Ernest Trapnell. When Trapnell died on 9 January 1944, a complete revamp of the Board of Trustees occurred. On 26 May 1949, Edward Tuckett, Charles James Swan, Colin Todd, John Ehlers and John Metcalf were appointed the trustees of the United Protestant Church Hall property.

By the end of World War II in 1945, the church building’s condition was deteriorating and it was condemned. On 11 April 1950, the Anglican Church acquired the hall for just £25. The church remained in a poor state until 1959, when the Anglican Parochial district of Sunnybank was formed with Dr. Keith Raynor appointed Vicar. The building was renamed St Luke’s Anglican Church in that year.

The old church hall required restoration. It was restumped and extended three times (1962, 1969, 1974) to suit the needs of the expanding Anglican congregation. St Luke’s Church continued to serve the Anglican worshippers in Coopers Plains from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. In 1986, a new Anglican church was completed in Sunnybank.

As a result, St Luke’s Church was sold to the Egyptian Coptic Church on 19 March 1986. The building is now St Mary & St Joseph’s Coptic Orthodox Church, which is part of the diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions.

Description

This modest timber Church has a timber floor supported on concrete stumps, weatherboard external cladding and a gabled corrugated steel roof. Windows are timber hoppers and recent alterations to the front include a gabled porte-cochere, paved driveway and steel fence. Interior linings and coved ceiling are fibre-cement sheeting with coverstrips. Pews are arranged with a central aisle and the walls and sanctuary screen are adorned with icons.

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 semi-public hall, built with local volunteer labour and indicating the civic pride of the Coopers plains farming district.

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 a church built in 1928 for the United Protestant Church and used by the Methodists, the Anglicans and, from the 1980s, the Coptic Orthodox Church in Coopers Plains.

References

1. Fry, M., (editor), *Coopers Plains State School Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, (Brisbane: Coopers Plains State School P & C, 1981)
2. Coopers Plains Local Historical Society, *A Closer Look at Coopers Plains*, (Brisbane, Coopers Plains Historical Society, 1993), p. 51
3. Coopers Plains Local Historical Society, *A Closer look at Coopers Plains*, (Brisbane, Coopers Plains Historical Society, 1993), p. 49
4. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs for 1946, 2001 and 2005
5. Brisbane City Council, post-1946 Building Cards

6. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map No. 2943, 9 May 1970
 7. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, Applications/Site History
 8. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of Title and other records
 9. John Oxley Library, *Picture Queensland* photographic collection
 10. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949
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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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