

PLACE	WONTHAGGI BAPTIST CHURCH COMPLEX		Other names	Congregational Church (until c.1912)		
Address	2 Broome Crescent WONTHAGGI					
Study No	542	HO No	HO162	HPD No	212	Allotment No -
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County Mornington

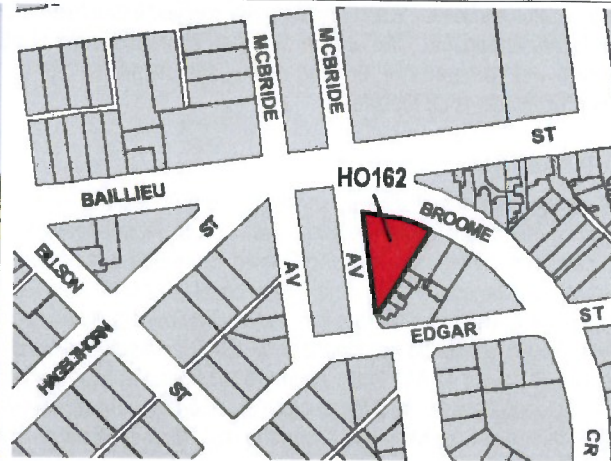


Image Date	3 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole allotment			
Designer/architect	Unknown	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902-1918)			
Builder/maker	Osmen & Leary	Commenced	1911	Completed	1911	
Her Act Category	Heritage place	Historic Theme/s	15.1 Religion			
Her Item Group	Religion	Assessed by	F Woodhouse	Date	20/08/04	
Her Item Category	Church	Reviewed by	S Reeves	Date	07/07/09	
Usage (2009)	Church etc	Condition	Good	Intactness	Fair (additions)	
Significance	Local	Recommendation	Include in VHR <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in RNE <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in HO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Statement of Significance

The Baptist Church Complex, at 2 Broome Crescent, Wonthaggi, is of local historic and aesthetic significance.

The complex is of historic significance as the first denominational church built in Wonthaggi, and is demonstrative of the importance of worship to residents of a new township. Originally erected by the Congregationalists and later transferred to the Baptists, the buildings within the complex provide evidence of the burgeoning population in the early years of the town's settlement, expanding from a small recycled church (now used as a Sunday School) to a larger building that was successively extended in three phases between 1912 and 1914.

It is of aesthetic significance as a largely intact example of an early twentieth century church building.

Assessment Against Criteria

AHC A4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community;

AHC G1 Importance as a place highly valued by the community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational or social associations.

(Italicised text from Allom Lovell & Associates, Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 (2004), with revisions indicated in bold text and new information, contributed by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, indicated in plain text.)

Physical Description

The Wonthaggi Baptist Church complex comprises three main buildings: a church, children's ministry centre and church hall, which are set within open and grassed grounds. The church is simple and undecorated in style. It is of timber-framed construction and clad with modern synthetic weatherboarding, with a pitched, corrugated sheet steel clad roof. It comprises a porch, nave, sanctuary and vestry. Original timber entry doors remain, though the original window joinery has been replaced. The children's ministry building (originally the first Wonthaggi Baptist Church) is of similar style and construction to the existing church, though comprises only a porch and nave. Early photographs suggest it has been extended in length, with an additional window added to each side of the longer elevations. The original weatherboard cladding has also been replaced with synthetic boarding. The church hall is a modern weatherboard clad building, with a shallow pitched corrugated steel clad roof. It is of similar scale and appearance to the other two buildings on the site.

Historical Notes

Wonthaggi was established as a mining town in 1909 to supply the Victorian Railways with black coal, and thus make Victoria independent of the privately owned New South Wales coalfields, the previous source of coal for the railways. The decision to proceed with mining coal from the Powlett Coalfields was prompted by the coal miners in New South Wales strike in 1909. When established, the coal was worked by the State Coal Mine from the Dudley and Kirrak Basins. The township of Wonthaggi is located on a ridge between the two basins. Initially, the miners lived in a tent city; by 1910, the Government had laid out a model township. By 1921, Wonthaggi had a population of 5,000, making it one of the largest towns in Gippsland at the time. Wonthaggi's population peaked at around 12,000 in the mid-1920s, when the mine was at its operational peak. The township was divided into commercial and residential areas. Its infrastructure provided for housing, water, churches, schools and other social facilities. Since its closure in 1968, the State Coal Mine has become a major tourist attraction in the area.

The Baptist Church was the first religious denomination to be established with a minister and a church in the newly created township of Wonthaggi. The first Baptist church in Wonthaggi was a building transported by bullocks to the town from Jumbunna. The first minister was Reverend J R McCue, who remained in Wonthaggi for about 18 months. Allotment 1 in Section 24 of the Township of Wonthaggi on the corner of McBride Avenue and Broome Crescent was granted to the Baptist Church in the 1910s. The old Jumbunna church was moved to this site, where a new larger church building was soon erected. Early ministers include the Reverends Ding, Tudball, Mursell and E R Thorne.

The current church building was originally built for the local Congregationalists, but was transferred to the Baptists within only a few years. It is presumably the same 'Congregational Church, Wonthaggi', for which a tender was accepted in January 1911 by contractors Osmen & Leary of Collingwood. As the town's population increased, various additions were promptly made to the church, including a projecting front porch (1912), a small vestry (1913) and then a new sanctuary with a larger vestry to the rear (1914). By that time, the building had already been transferred to the Baptists.

Recommended Management

Investigate original paint colour when routine maintenance required.

References

Author	Title	Year
<i>Department of Land & Survey</i>	<i>Plan of Township of Wonthaggi, parish of Wonthaggi, County of Mornington</i>	
<i>John M Coghlan</i>	<i>The State Coal Mine and Wonthaggi, 1909-1968</i>	1979
<i>Joseph White</i>	<i>One Hundred Years of History</i>	1974
<i>Russell Moore</i>	<i>Personal communication</i>	2004
<i>T J Gannon (ed)</i>	<i>Wonthaggi and District: Past and Present</i>	1934
<i>Building (journal)</i>	12 January 1911, p 50 (tenders accepted)	1911

Special Note

On this page, italicised text is quoted directly from Allom Lovell & Associates, *Bass Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2 (2004)*, with minor revisions indicated in **bold** text and any new information, contributed by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, indicated in plain text.