

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 266	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 30/10/1996	Last Revision Date: 27/11/2009	
HCWA Number: 1063	Asset ID: MCH127083	

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	St Johns Uniting Church, Hall & Manse
Other Names:	Fmr St Johns Presbyterian Church, Hall & Manse
Type of Place:	Church/Manse
Address:	225-227 Lester Avenue
Suburb:	Geraldton

LOCATION

Map Reference: 15.15	GPS Northing: 6814429.00	GPS Easting: 266486.000
	GPS Easting: 0000	GPS Northing: 000



Photo Description:

8/03/2007

Rod Milne

View of the Church and Hall to rear.

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 22	Assess No.:	11616
Reserv No.:		Vol/Fol:	43/354
Dia/Plan:			

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	Church/Residence		
Current Use:	Community Centre/Bookshop/Op Shop		
Ownership:	Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (WA)		
Public Access:	Restricted	Occupied:	Occupied

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	Stone	Roof:	Metal Deck
Condition:	Good	Integrity:	
Original fabric:			
Modifications:			

The following "Physical Evidence" is taken from the Conservation Plan for the place completed by Considine and Griffiths Architects Pty Ltd.

"The complex on the freehold site in Lester Avenue now comprises the 1893-1894 Presbyterian Church, the 1916 manse, and the 1930 church hall to the east, with the 1971 hall and kitchen addition and its appurtenances to the north of the church hall. Other than the manse, these structures are all physically joined. The front boundary is open at the northern end and has a low stone and stucco capped wall in front of the church itself and the manse."

"St John's Church is built in a Victorian Free Gothic inspired style and has a simple auditory plan with an enclosed porch, oriented so that the west door faces onto Lester Avenue. The walls are of ashlar sandstone from White Peak, black tuck pointed, with two pinnacles atop buttressed corners on the west front, with stucco detail to the west elevation and buttresses to the north and south elevations. The steel framed lancet windows have red brick, tuck pointed quoins with rubbed brick edge detail and above each window was a run stucco hood mould (with floral boss at each end) and which was coloured and tuck pointed to mimic rubbed brick. The roof is steeply pitched with iron cladding and vents in place of the gablet vents. The east facade has a parapeted gable with high roundel window with a group of 4 lancet windows below. Lancet windows flank the porch. The porch has a parapeted gable with

buttresses and a central door. The front door has decorative iron hinges and is a replacement of an earlier door. The interior walls are made of plaster finished in lined ashlar with an Oregon beam construction roof over, lined with readeed Oregon T&G boards. The boards are set in a herringbone pattern, laid between rafters, with evidence of the earlier roof vents remaining in the pattern."

"The church hall is a simple space with a metal deck roof. The walls are now clad externally in metal cladding to the west wall and fibro and weatherboard to the remaining exposed elevations. The hall is set at right angles to the church and makes an awkward physical junction with it. The interior is lined with plasterboard down to a vertical jarrah, T&G boarded dado. The windows are double hung sashes. To the south is an ancillary room presently used as a kitchen. A door to the north leads to the 1971 extension of the hall comprising a large kitchen. The extension is now used as an opportunity shop and was recently extended by the addition of a shed for storing clothes."

The manse is rendered brick with a hipped, corrugated asbestos roof. A flat roof verandah extension runs across the front and connects with a garage built as a later addition. The verandah roof is supported on wrought iron columns and is quite incongruous in the context of the manse and church. The floor plan is typical, with rooms coming off a central hall. There is a large extension to the rear.

HISTORY

Construction Date:	1893	Source:	Conservation Plan
Architect:	Unknown		
Builder:	David Hepburn		

The first Presbyterian Service was held on 13 November, 1892 in the Masonic Hall, prior to which Presbyterians probably attended other established churches. (Considine & Griffiths Architects, "St. John's Church, Geraldton Conservation Plan", August 1995,p2). On 16 November, 1892 a meeting was held in the Courthouse to discuss the construction of a Presbyterian Church. The meeting was presided over by the Rev. Gustavus Varley, who had worked toward establishing churches in Victoria and South Australia, and now had the task of forming what was to be the fourth permanent congregation in Western Australia in Geraldton. (ibid, p2 & 3)

On 9 March 1893 Geraldton Town Lot 23 was formally granted to the Commissioners of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia, to be held in trust for ecclesiastical purposes.(ibid, p3). The foundation stone for St John's Presbyterian Church was laid on 26 July, 1893 by Mrs Hardy

representing Mrs. McKenzie Grant who was too ill to attend the ceremony. (ibid, p4). The church was built for £1,348 and 50 shillings by Carpenter and Contractor, David Hepburn. (ibid, p6). While the church was being constructed services continued to be held at the Masonic Hall . (ibid, p5). Although services in the completed church were advertised as early as January, 1894, the opening service was performed 28 March, 1894 by the Rev. G. Varley. (ibid, p5)

Quote: "Of gothic design, its exterior appearance is superior to any church in Geraldton. It is built of what is known as White Peak stone with moulded brick facings."

In 1916 a mortgage was taken out by the Commissioners of the Presbyterian Church in WA for £500 to Thomas Suttcliffe of Day Dawn for the construction of the adjacent manse. (ibid, p7) In 1930 a new kindergarten hall was built at the rear of the church and opened in June of that year by the Moderator General. (ibid, p7). In 1957 renovations and additions were undertaken on the Church and Manse. (ibid, p7). In 1970-71 further renovations of the church and enlargement of the hall were carried out under the direction of Carl Berringer. (ibid, p7). In 1974 the Geraldton Methodist and Presbyterian parishes formed a United Parish and combined their services. At first services were held at both St John's and the new Methodist Church in Shenton Street, however, it was not long until all services were held at the Methodist Church. (ibid, p8)

In 1975 the Town of Geraldton Council refused an application by the Parish to demolish St John's Church. (ibid, p8). In 1977 the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches combined to form the Uniting Church. (ibid, p9). Currently the Church is being used by the Fusion Youth Group as a youth centre. The church hall has been used as a soup kitchen and craft room and is now an op shop. The adjacent Manse has been used by the local Scripture Union Book Shop but currently houses a local community radio station.

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA:	406 Religion
AHC:	8.6.4 Making places for worship

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St John's Church has high significance as the oldest surviving church in Geraldton. It is of landmark quality, is a good example of the Victorian Free Gothic and representative of the growing strength of the Presbyterians in the last decade of the 19th Century.

RECOMMENDATION:

Action to implement the recommendations as per Considine and Griffiths

Architects Pty Ltd 1995 conservation plan.

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Management Category:	1
Level of Significance:	EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
Management Recommendation:	Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.

OTHER LISTINGS

Heritage Council of WA - Register, 06/09/1996 National Trust of WA - Classified, 03/11/1975
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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Considine & Griffiths, "St John's Church, Geraldton Conservation Plan", 1995. "Geraldton: a photographic history", Geraldton Regional Library, 2004. GHSPC.

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

30/10/1996

Suba, Callow & Grundy

View of the Church and adjacent Manse.