

Building:	Mount Pleasant Uniting Church Complex	Significance:	Brick Church: B Timber Hall: C
Address:	333A Canterbury Road, Forest Hill	Melway Map Ref:	62 E2

Building Type:	Church and hall	Construction Date:	1915-16
Architect:	Eggleston & Oakley	Builder:	Unknown



Intactness:

G[x] F[] P[]

Condition:

G[x] F[] P[]

Existing Heritage Listings:

Victorian Heritage Register	[]
Register of the National Estate	[]
National Trust	[]

Recommended Heritage Listings:

Victorian Heritage Register	[]
Register of the National Estate	[x]
Heritage Overlay Controls	[x]

History

In 1864, devout residents of the Nunawading district formed a committee with the intent of establishing a Wesleyan Methodist church in the area, and trustees were soon appointed to receive a grant of Crown land. The grant was facilitated by the local MP, Dr L L Smith, who owned a large property at Vermont. Smith secured a grant of two acres off Delaney's (now Canterbury) Road, in an area then known as Scotchman's Hill. Tenders were called early in 1865, and a new timber chapel was duly erected. The congregation increased steadily over the decades that followed. In 1882, a new transept was added to the rear of the chapel. There was also talk of erecting a new church, but the depression of the 1890s put an end to such grand plans.¹

Optimism returned in the early twentieth century, and a new weatherboard church hall was built in 1905. This optimism was boosted a few years later when J T Tweddle, a wealthy importer, joined the congregation, and immediately became active in church affairs, including the dormant proposal for a new building.² Tweddle was instrumental in many stages of the project, from its funding through to selecting interior finishes. The design of the church itself was even reputedly inspired by something that Tweddle had seen whilst overseas.

The actual architects were Eggleston and Oakley. This firm was founded in 1907, and they designed their first church, St Cuthbert's Church of England at Menzies Creek, in 1909.³ They went on to design many other churches in the 1910s and 1920s, although very few of their earlier examples have survived. They called tenders for the new church at Mount Pleasant in October 1915. The foundation stone was laid in early 1916, and the church was opened in April. On completion of the new building, the old timber church was sold for £40, and its new owner relocated it to his orchard in Mitcham for use as a packing shed.

Description

Church

The Mount Pleasant church is a clinker brick building on a cruciform plan, with small projecting porches at the junctions. It has a steeply gabled roof clad in terracotta tiles, with raking eaves and gables infilled in a shingle style. Window openings vary in size, but they all have round arched heads, with red brick voussoirs, and contain timber casement sashes with glazing bars. A particularly distinctive element is an oculus window, above French doors in the end walls of each transept. Stylistically, the church combines elements derived from the Colonial Revival style imported from America, which was popular in residential buildings in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Hall

The church hall, now used as a kindergarten, is a simple single-storey weatherboard building with a pitched roof clad in corrugated galvanised steel, with little ornamentation apart from scalloping along the weatherboards on the front facade. It has a smaller transept at the rear, and a projecting entry porch at the front. The windows are double-hung timber sashes.

Comparative Examples

Church

Methodist Church, Station Street, Ringwood (Eggleston & Oakley, 1917; demolished)
Wesleyan Methodist Church, Station Street, Box Hill (Eggleston & Oakley, 1926)

Hall

McKeon Hall, St Luke's Anglican Church complex, 551 Mitcham Road, Vermont
Timber Church, Christ Church Anglican Church, Whitehorse Road, Mitcham
Former Methodist Church, Mountview Uniting Church complex, 561 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham

Significance

The Mount Pleasant Uniting Church complex, comprising the brick church and the timber hall, has some historic interest. A Methodist congregation has been associated with the site since 1865, and its original building was the first church to be built in the former City of Nunawading. Although the present buildings date from the twentieth century, they still maintain associations with what is one of the oldest congregations in Whitehorse.

The brick church is of aesthetic significance. It is stylistically unusual, exhibiting characteristics more common to Colonial Revival domestic buildings. It is also an early example of the religious commissions of architects Eggleston and Oakley.

Source

Context Pty Ltd. *City of Nunawading Heritage Survey Project*. 1994. (Graded C+)

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- 1 G C Fendley. *A Centenary History of the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, Forest Hill: 1865-1965*. p 20.
 - 2 G C Fendley. *A Centenary History of the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, Forest Hill: 1865-1965*. pp 24-26.
 - 3 Alec Eggleston. 'Reminiscences of a Septuagenarian'. Unpublished typescript, 1952. Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.

