

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: ST MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Stirling and Bell Streets BALMORAL

STUDY NUMBER: 157

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Balmoral

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 388J; Vicroads 227T3; located at the eastern corner of Stirling and Bell Streets, in the centre of the township of Balmoral.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



St. Mary's Anglican Church, Balmoral

Image Date: 09/01/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the building and all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Built of locally pressed red bricks and render, St Mary's is a simple design in the Gothic revival style, of three bays with a narthex or porch and a chancel. Buttresses divide the bays, and a simple foundation stone stating "St Mary's AD 1894" is placed in the footings of the buttress nearest the porch. The main roof of corrugated iron, painted silver, is pitched at 60°, as is the chancel roof but that of the porch is a skillion roof. Both the doors of the porch have paired ledge and braced leaves with substantial ironmongery. The porch has three small lancet windows, similar to the side windows. Three patent metal ventilators straddle the ridge line with a smaller one on the ridge line of the chancel. Arches, window reveals and sill, coping stones and other details, such as the finial crosses on the gables are render painted white. The interior and its fittings and furnishings are also typical of the style. The walls are plain plaster, the ceiling has simple exposed trusses and timber lining boards. The chancel is divided from the nave by a low communion rail. Its window, which dominates the interior, is composed of three lancets with stained glass, depicting St Peter, Christ and St Andrew. The side windows are leadlight in a diaper pattern with multi-coloured borders.

The sanctuary contains a finely carved lectern in the form of an eagle, dedicated to the memory of General Sir Neville Smyth, VC, KCB. A large brass plaque on the west wall is also dedicated to Sir Neville Smyth, who lived at Kongbool Station. Other plaques on the walls include dedications to Charles Henry Armytage, owner of Fulham Station, who died 26 April 1876, Private Charles Vincent, a First World War casualty, and William Reginald Hayman: "... Chief promoter of this Church, for over 40 years a resident of this neighbourhood, thrice Shire President, founder of the local P and A Society and Show, and in innumerable ways an enlightened and energetic friend of the district..."

In the porch a framed silver trowel commemorates the start of construction of St Mary's, with the laying of the foundation stone by Mrs. R H Armytage in September 1894.

There is a Sunday School linked to and immediately south-east of the church. Built in the 1960s, it follows the materials, form and detailing of the church closely.

The grounds of St Mary's contains several items of heritage interest. The church is approached through ornate gate posts, although the original fence has been replaced by wire mesh. Two mature Cupressus sempervirens stricta specimens stand adjacent to the gate and are identified by a small brass plaque which states "These pencil pines were planted in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee" A third pine is located at the north west corner, the three being the survivors of a row marking the Stirling Street boundary of the church. There are also conventional ornamentals. Near the porch stands an ornate cast iron street lamp, now electrified, which was one of four kerosene street lamps which lit nineteenth century Balmoral.

HISTORY:

At first the Balmoral congregation was serviced by a minister based at Sandford, south of Casterton, then, from 1861, by a minister based at Lake Wallace or Edenhope. The first minister, the Rev William Copeland drowned and 'was succeeded by Rev R Collins who, by 1880, was preaching regularly at Harrow and Balmoral as well as in the western Wimmera. In 1895 a parsonage was built at Harrow which was used by ministers serving Balmoral until 1948. With the extension of the parish to include Toolondo and Cavendish, it was decided that Balmoral would be more central. For some years a house in Bell Street, near Mather's Creek, was used as a vicarage until the present house was completed in 1968. This has since been closed and the parish is served from Coleraine.

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The Church of England community in early Balmoral used the Presbyterian Church for services until St Mary's was constructed in 1894. Mrs. G Armytage laid the foundation stone of the new building in September 1894 and she and her husband gave the three large windows depicting Christ, St Peter and St Andrew. The simple Gothic style of the church is conservative and modest. The interior of the church is also conservative with traditional furniture and furnishings including important memorials and dedications.

Prior to the construction of the Sunday School Hall, Anglican Children attended Sunday School in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hall. An exchange of land with the Mechanic's Hall took place in the mid 1960s to allow St. Mary's rectory to be built on the former tennis courts in 1968. This rectory was sold when the parish was closed in 1994 (Pers. comm, 2004) Having swapped land with the adjacent Mechanics Institute, a new Sunday school, sympathetic to the existing church, was built in the 1960s, connected to the church on the south-east side. A street lamp, formerly lit by kerosene and now the only one surviving in the town, was relocated and electrified to light the front door of the church. A row of Cupressus sempervirens, Italian cypress was planted along the Stirling Street boundary of which several mature specimens survive. There is a plaque between the two largest specimens near the entrance gate. Elsewhere in the garden there are substantial fruit trees and shrubs.

The church had an association with Lord Baden Powell, whose cousin was Lady Mary Smyth, of Kongbool. Lady Smyth was an ambulance driver in World War 1, and subsequently took great responsibility for first aid classes and health care in the Balmoral district. Baden Powell visited Kongbool several times in the 1940s, and took an active interest in the local scout troop.

Ministers of the Balmoral-Harrow Parish:

1858-62 William Copeland
1863-81 R R Collins
1882-84 R Greer
1884-89 John F May
1889-94 J Kirkland
1894-97 J B Johnstone
1897-1912 R J Carr
1912-20 W J Powney
1920-24 A G T Kewley
1924-25 J S Farrer
1925-27 F S Legg
1927-28 John Hall
1928-29 Walter J Tame
1930-35 V W N Lines
1935-37 W E McIver
1937-38 J Henry Duffy
1938-42 C C Eperson
1943-44 Lindsay M Howell
1944-48 E K Robins
1948-50 W V Giles
1951-54 H Price
1955-59 W J Mitchell
1960-63 J A Lewys-Davies
1964-64 A E Biggs
1964-69 B A C Harding

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1969-73 R Bruce Mitchell

1974- D Alexander Paterson

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.6 Worshipping

8.6.1 Worshipping together

8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions

8.6.4 Making places for worship

CONDITION:

The exterior and the interior of the church are in excellent condition, the grounds are also in very good condition.

INTEGRITY:

Excellent degree of integrity externally and internally.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is Significant?

St. Mary's Anglican Church, located on the eastern corner of Bell and Stirling Streets in the township of Balmoral is a modest but fine example of the Victorian Gothic Revival style. The building is of simple design, constructed of locally made pressed red brick and render. The church has three bays with a chancel and porch, the buttresses dividing the bays. A large stained glass window dominates the interior of the church, depicting St. Peter, St. Andrew and Christ. The Armytage family from nearby Fulham Station donated this window, and Mrs. Armytage also laid the foundation stone of the church. Furniture, furnishings and memorials commemorate other local families. The relatively late date of construction indicates a stronger presence of Anglicans in the area at the time. Until St. Mary's was constructed in 1894, Anglican services were held in the Presbyterian Church, serviced by ministers who were based at other towns, such as Sandford or Edenhope. In 1895, a parsonage was built at Harrow, which was used by ministers serving Balmoral until 1948. With the extension of the parish to include Toolondo and Cavendish, it was decided that Balmoral would be more central. For some years a house in Bell Street, near Mather's Creek, was used as a vicarage until the present vicarage was completed in 1968. This has since been closed and the parish is served from Coleraine. A sympathetically constructed Sunday school is located on the south east side of the church. The church is approached through ornate gateposts, although the original fence has been replaced by wire mesh. Two mature Cupressus sempervirens (Pencil pine or Italian Cypress) specimens stand adjacent to the gate and are identified by a small brass plaque which states they were planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A third pine is located at the north west corner, the three being the survivors of a row marking the Stirling Street boundary of the church. There are also conventional ornamentals. Near the porch stands an ornate cast iron street lamp, now electrified, which was one of four kerosene street lamps which lit nineteenth century Balmoral. The church building, its interiors and grounds retain a very high degree of integrity and are in excellent condition.

How is it significant?

St. Mary's Anglican Church is of social, architectural and historical significance to the township of Balmoral and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

St. Mary's Anglican Church is of architectural significance as an example of the Gothic revival style in its application to places of worship and for expressing particular religious values. This is demonstrated by the range and quality of its interiors, including the altar, the main window, lectern, and several memorials and

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plaques. It is also a useful comparison with the churches of other denominations in Balmoral. St. Mary's Church is of historical significance as the last substantial church to be built in the Balmoral district illustrating the growth of the Anglican faith in the township towards the turn of the century and its consolidation immediately afterwards. The donation of land, materials and furnishings represents the affluence and generosity of the many important early settlers who belonged to the congregation, including the Armytage family from Fulham and the various owners of Kongbool. The grounds are historically significant for the commemorative planting of Cupressus sempervirens (Pencil pine or Italian Cypress) and the complex as a whole is historically significant as the expression of the role and position of the Anglican Church and its congregation in the community for over one hundred years.

COMPARISON:

159 St Patrick's Catholic Church, Coleraine Road, Balmoral

158 St Andrews Uniting Church and Hall, Coleraine Road, Balmoral

ASSESSED BY: tfh & mgt

ASSESSMENT DATE: 9/01/2002

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Lyll Harris with the Balmoral Historical Society	Welcome Back to Balmoral	1975	26
Miles Lewis ed.,	Victorian Churches, Their origins, their story and their architecture	1991	20-5