

Place name Christ Church	Survey Date: 31/07/2002
Other name Church of England Church	Id: 734
Street Tyers Street (& Stawell Street)	Last Update 9/03/2005
Locality Tarraville	Postcode 3971
Official Locality	Property No CA 3-6/1, 1a, 2.15
Local Government Area Wellington Shire	Property Info
Precinct: Not in precinct	
Easting	Northing
Map 8220	
Workshop number	Workshop votes
Field survey number	Community priority
Designer Designer: Pettit, John H W	Builder
Ownership	Built Date 1856 Change Date
Description Former Use: 1856 ; Religious ; ; Description: Date Started 1856; Date Finished ; Storeys 1; Desc ANGLICAN CHURCH; Walls TIMBER; Roof CORRUGATED IRON. Designed by John Pettit in conjunction with George Hastings; Style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Gothic Revival.	

Christ Church, Church of England, Tarraville, is a timber Church believed to have been built in 1856 and was designed by J H W Pettit and George Hastings. An attached miniature Campanile in open timber-work is the most distinctive feature. The rectangular body of the Church has an axially-located, open porch supported on timber posts at close centres and with a gable roof. Construction is with horizontal droplabs, Iron roof and decorative barge boards. (RNE 004796)

An exceptionally attractive and technically interesting church dating from the period when the Port Albert-Tarraville area was the node of settlement in Gippsland. It was built in 1855 to the design of J H Pettit, doyen of Gippsland architects, but much in the manner of the ecclesiologically inspired Selwyn churches designed by Frederick Thatcher in New Zealand. The characteristic aspect of the style is the exposed timber framing, which in this case is dressed and chamfered and slotted to take an infill of two inch (50mm) iron tongues for weatherproofing. The remarkably picturesque effect of the exterior is attributable to the exposed frame, the multi-columned porch and the pretty belltower. The building is well preserved, but the shingle roof has been covered with iron. (National Trust Register, B1985)

Condition and Integrity : Christ Church, Church of England, Tarraville, is in good condition and reasonably intact (RNE 004796)

Condition

Integrity

History Reserve Gazetted 29/5/1855

Christ Church, Tarraville was constructed in 1856 to the design of local architects and surveyors John H W Pettit and George Hastings, it has been in use as a parish church since that time. (Source: Report to Minister)

The Rev. W. Bean obtained both donations from public subscription and a Government grant of 456 pounds (from the Melbourne Diocese) for the erection of this timber church which had been reputedly planned in brick many years before, but the labour and materials shortages during the gold rush period had forced a more modest structure. This was Gippsland's first church when it opened on June 8th 1856 (1). Architects, J. W. Pettit and George Hastings executed the copious drawings for the church in August 1855 and S. Taylor was its builder (2).

The church was constructed from 228 x 50 mm. sawn timber members joined with mortise and tenon and waterproofed with an iron water bar at these joints. Horizontal slabs drop between the uprights formed with the cladding, whilst the roof was clad with split shingles which have since been covered with sheet iron. The church was painted externally and fenced in 1859. Softwood lining boards were fixed to the interior walls in 1868 at a cost of 17 pounds (3). The whole church was designed with elements from the Northern European Gothic era, adapted to timber construction to provide a picturesque building which differs in detail only from the original drawings; a

free standing belltower instead of the belly drawn at the roof apex and minor changes in the porch. Two subsequent churches at Port Albert were to adopt a simplified version of this church, although they were not designed by the same architect(s), H. Thomas and George Hastings being the architects (49) (4).

Internally the church has the old pews, oil lamps and brackets oil chandeliers and the minute detail of finish not associated with remote rural churches. A miniature quior, the free-standing porch within the body of the church and the fretted trefoil tracery of the window framing reinforce the feeling of the near total originality (point colours excluded) of the church. The broach spire of the belfry has been with replaced a pyramid shaped roof, but otherwise the exterior is intact.

The mature pines and boxthorn and hawthorn hedges which surround the building and the picket fence make this church perhaps the most evocative of the history of early settlement of any church in Victoria. It is the oldest timber church in the State (Butler 1982:75).

Heritage Protections Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
National Trust Register	B1985		Listed
Planning Scheme	HO36		Listed
Register of the National Estate	004796		Listed
Victorian Heritage Register	H999		Listed

National Estate

Research Required

Recommendations

Fieldwork priority?

Stage 1 Ranking Assessed & protected **Stage 2 priority** No Action: Already include

Final Ranking State significance **Final Recommendation** Amendment C26

Statement of significance Christ Church at Tarraville is an extraordinary example of a well resolved and particularly finely detailed Victorian Carpenter Gothic church. The building is of technical interest for its construction system which utilises heavy timber framing notched to accommodate infill planks laid horizontally and grooved at the edges to take iron tongues. The significance of the building is enhanced by its extraordinarily good condition and high degree of intactness.

The interior of the church is characterised by its sparse and plain appearance. It is simply finished with milled timber lining boards to walls and ceiling, the heavy timber framing is expressed on the interior in a similar manner to the exterior of the building. Walls and ceiling are painted matt white with a dark brown painted dado.

Christ Church, Tarraville is believed to be the first church constructed in the Gippsland region and is amongst the earliest surviving churches in the State.

Christ Church, Church of England, Tarraville, is an early timber church in the picturesque Gothic style, of singular architectural importance. The building is believed to be the first Church erected in Gippsland and the second oldest wooden Church in Victoria. Christ Church is a very important building in the early history of Gippsland. Extent examples of drop-slab construction are rare. The timber detailing of the porch and miniature Campanile is particularly fine and the Campanile is probably unique in the State. (RNE 004796)

(The Commission is in the process of developing and/or upgrading official statements for places listed prior to 1991. The above data was mainly provided by the nominator and has not yet been revised by the Commission.)

Extent of designation 1. The whole of the building k

Informant Owner Anglican Church ;

Notes

Follow up

Bibliography Butler, G. 1982. References.

1) Clark, The Church of Our Fathers (Melbourne 1934) p. 65f, drawings illustrated

2)

a) ibid

b) G.G. 3/6/56

c) G.G. 14/12/55

3)

a) G.G. 11/12/59, 25/3/59

b) Clark. Loc.cit

Butler, G, (1982), Port Albert Conservation Study (Place no. 52), South Gippsland Publishing Company, Foster, 75

Graeme Butler & Associates, (July 2002), Alberton - Port Albert Heritage Review (Wellington Heritage Study)