HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name: Armadale Baptist Church and Hall
Address: 88 Kooyong Road ARMADALE
Significance Level: A2

Place Type: Church
Citation Date: 2010
Assessment by: Context P/L

Recommended Heritage Protection: VHR - HI - PS Yes
Designer / Architect: Smith, Sydney
Architectural Style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Romanesque

History and Historical Context
The Origins of the Baptist Church in Armadale

In April 1897, a meeting of Baptists in the Armadale-Toorak district was held. The meeting passed a motion stating that "the meeting considers it desirable to establish a church in the Armadale-Toorak district”. A further meeting was held on 25 November 1897 at which a motion was passed "that measures be taken to form a Baptist Church". A site had apparently already been selected, because a second motion noted that the site recommended in Boundary Road (now Kooyong Road) be purchased. The site was purchased soon afterwards for £800 (the National Trust (Vic) gives the date of purchase as 12 November 1897). Sydney Smith & Ogg were invited to submit designs for the church building and later authorised to call for tenders. Arthur Parker was the winning contractor, the cost of the building’s construction was £1,494, with an additional £350 set aside for seats and hymnbooks. £1,000 of the cost of the building’s construction was borrowed from the Baptist Fund. The foundation stone of the church was laid on 20 July 1898. The major benefactor of the development was W.G. Stephens (who had a store in Lonsdale Street that was bought out by Myer). The first service was held on 18 January 1899. In the interim services were held in the Armadale hall.

Sydney Smith & Ogg

Sydney Smith & Ogg were prominent architects in late 19th century and early 20th century Victoria, whose designs were prolific across Melbourne. They were well-known for the design of many commercial and office buildings, hotels, breweries and several branches of the State Savings Bank. Sydney Smith & Ogg came into being in 1889, when Sydney W. Smith took Charles A. Ogg into partnership. The firm had originally been established by Sydney Smith’s father in 1852, and Smith carried on the family business after his death in 1881. Prior to partnering with Smith, Ogg had worked for five years at Reed Henderson & Smart. In 1921, the firm became Sydney Smith Ogg & Serpell after C.E. Serpell joined as partner.

Church additions

Even prior to the completion of the Church it was evident that the building would not be sufficiently large to accommodate the congregation attending services at the Armadale hall. As a result, it was decided to extend the church and plans were amended accordingly.

In March 1899, shortly after the opening of the church, W. G. Stephens offered to donate a piece of land with a 48 foot frontage, adjoining the church property as a site for a Sunday School. The church accepted the offer and a Sunday School hall was erected the same year. Like the Church, the Hall was designed by architects Sydney Smith & Ogg, while Stephen Armstrong was the builder. By 1901, the growth in the congregation meant that it was necessary to enlarge the Sunday School hall by 75% and a Kinder Room was erected at the rear of the church. The success of the hall means that it was regularly occupied, but it was also fairly large. The church decided that a smaller hall was required to serve as a suitable space for prayer meetings. This resulted in the 1903 construction of 'Gordon Hall', which could accommodate 50-60 people, at the rear of the main Hall.

In 1904 a Fincham & Son organ, originally made in 1877 for the Baptist church in Albert Street, East Melbourne, was transferred to the Kooyong Road church. At the time of its transfer an extended console was provided, incorporating the original fittings of 1877, and the case was widened. Further improvements to the church were made in 1910 when electricity was substituted for gas. In 1912, the organ which had originally been blown by 'man power' was also converted to run on electricity.

In 1923 an additional hall was erected for use of the Primary Department of the Sunday School, referred to as 'The Little Palace Beautiful'. It is located partially at the rear of the church, and is continuous with the Kinder Room. The same year the original picket fence was removed from the church and replaced with stone kerbing, paid for by Mrs W. W. Stephens. Other minor alterations during the period 1934-36 are referred to in the Jubilee history of the church, but no further details are given.

In 1988 further renovations to the Church were undertaken and a link between the church and the Sunday School was constructed. The work was designed by Kenneth Edmonds & Assoc. Sketch plans are available from the
Stonnington Local History Service, MB9913.

Sources
Australasian Builder and Contractor's News, 26 October 1889, p. 394.

The Argus, 15 December 1933.

Interview with Harold Hodge, lifetime congregation member, conducted by Jenny Walker 5 October 2010.

National Trust Memo dated 13/8/87. File, B5705.

Stonnington Local History Service. MB 9913.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

Themes from Stonnington Thematic Environmental History:

10.2 Worshipping

10.2.1 Founding churches

Description

Physical Description

The Armadale Baptist Church and Hall, 88 Kooyong Road, Armadale, is a dense complex of a red brick church and hall linked by a modern atrium and portico, with auxiliary buildings behind the church. As the site is small, both buildings sit very near the street front.

The two main buildings were designed by the same firm of architects - Sydney Smith & Ogg - and erected in 1898 and 1899. As such, they can be seen as variations on the theme of Federation-era Romanesque Revival, the Hall being the more adventurous in design of the two.

Church

The church is roughly T-shaped in plan, with a long chancel at the rear. It is constructed of red brick in a Flemish bond with cement-render dressings. Narrow buttresses mark the corners of each articulated mass. There are inset bands of diaper patterns executed in black headers. This, and the black-and-white tile chequerboard pattern in a trefoil frame in the apex of the gables, shows the influence of English Victorian architect William Butterfield. The parapeted gables, which are a defining feature of the facade are edged in delicate render mouldings and each feature a trefoil window beneath a semicircular label mould.

The crossing is marked by an octagonal fleche with a bell-shaped lead roof. The roof is covered with Marseille tiles with terracotta cresting.

The main bulk of the church is roughly two storeys in height, but there is a single-storey projecting gabled bay at the centre of the facade flanked by skillion roofs. The step-wise ascent of this highly modelled facade lends it visual interest, as well as making it more sympathetic in scale to the low-rise residential street around it.

All of the windows are also in a semicircular arch, with a wide rendered band and a label mould around them. At the ground floor level of the facade there are narrow paired windows in this form as well.
At the rear of the church is a Kinder Hall and the 'Little Palace Beautiful' of 1923 (which are joined together). Both are of matching red brick with cement dressings and a transverse gable roof.

**Hall**

The Parish Hall, or School Hall, is much simpler in its massing. It has a massive parapeted gable from and is also constructed in red brick (Flemish bond) with cement-render dressings. The roof is clad in Marseille tiles with circular metal ventilators on either side of the ridgeline. The corners are articulated with simple buttresses, and the window bays on the south side elevation are divided by buttresses. Like the church, all openings have semicircular arches outlined by wide render bands and label moulds.

The facade has a large central arched window, at first floor level, above a bulging band of render suggestive of a balcony. It is supported by a fluted corbel at the centre of four highlight windows. A pair of ledged timber doors is below. The doorway and the highlights are flanked by two groups of five Romanesque colonettes, with exaggeratedly narrow shafts. The colonettes appear to pass through the lintel above the doorway and terminate below the balconette. At either side of the capitals is an Art Nouveau style waratah flower in cement relief. At the apex of the facade gable is a panel of zigzag motifs, suggestive of the Norman style.

The north side elevation unusually highly articulated for a hall, with a row of seven gabled 'chapels' situated just below the eaves. They each have one arched window beneath a band and label mould. Unfortunately, these chapel-like forms have been largely concealed by the modern link between the church and hall.

The rear of the hall terminates in a skillion roof section, while the gable roof terminates in weatherboard cladding, this appears to relate to the 1901 extension. The very rear of the hall has a flat roof and is called 'Gordon Hall' (1903). Its otherwise identical in external expression. Inside, the hall has a barrel-arched ceiling of stained linking boards. The lining boards to the walls have been painted.

**Link**

The link constructed between the two buildings in the late 1980s copied and cannibalised elements of the original buildings. The front is a parapeted gable with low corner buttresses and a semicircular arched doorway. There is a triangular window in the gable, which sits uncomfortably with round-headed windows of the rest of the complex. On the north side of the entrance gable, the church has been extended by one bay and the small paired windows reproduced. The bosses at the bottom of the label moulds to these windows and the entrance door were taken from elsewhere and glued on (now coming loose). Inside, the link is constructed of metal and glass and is self-supporting.

**Previous Statement Significance**

Quoted from the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) *Victorian Churches: Their origins, their story & their architecture*, 1991:

A church built in 1898 to the design of Sydney Smith in a very advanced style derived essentially from the Romanesque and characterised by the contrast of cement dressings against pressed red brick, though here also with dark brick diapering and chequerboard gables. The interior space is centralised, with ramped floor and fine timber furnishings, and now includes a Fincham organ, originally made for the Baptist Church in East Melbourne. 8. Joinery, furniture & Fittings 9. Organ: Fincham 1877

**Occupancy**

First Owner - Baptist Church
Statement of Significance

Updated by Context Pty Ltd 2010

What is significant?
The Armadale Baptist Church of 1898, to the extent of the original fabric, the Hall of 1899 with extensions in 1901 and 1903 ('Gordon Hall'), and the Kinder Room (1901)and Little Palace Beautiful (1923) behind the church.

The 1980s building linking the church and hall, and the c1950s-60s kitchen on the north side of Gordon Hall are not significant.

How is it significant?
The buildings are of local historical, social and architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?
Socially and historically, as a place that has had strong and enduring association with the Armadale Baptist community through its continuous use for over 110 years (Criteria G & H)

Historically, for its associations with local businessman W.G. Stephens who was the major benefactors for construction of the church and hall. Stephens owned a department store in central Melbourne, later bought out by Myer's. (Criterion H)

Architecturally, as a fine design of prominent architectural firm Sydney Smith & Ogg. The church is in a very advanced style derived essentially from the Romanesque and characterised by the contrast of cement dressings against pressed red brick, though here also with dark brick diapering and chequerboard gables. The facade of the Hall features an interesting combination of Romanesque elements with Art Nouveau ornament. Unusually, the church and hall were built in very short succession and by the same architectural practice. The interior features a Fincham organ, originally made for the Baptist Church in East Melbourne. (Criterion E)

Recommendations 2010

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<td>Internal Alteration Controls</td>
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<td>Tree Controls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fences &amp; Outbuildings</td>
<td>Yes Gordon Hall, Kinder Room, Little Palace Beautiful</td>
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<td>Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted</td>
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Other Recommendations

Statutory recommendation: Extend the Heritage Overlay (HO66) to cover the entire site of the church and hall at 88 Kooyong Road, Armadale. This includes the following allotments: Lot 1 TP901850, Lot 25 LP1098, and Lot 26 LP1098.
This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.