

EASTERN PLAIN HERITAGE SURVEY

FORMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AND CEMETERY

Item No. MB 005

LOCATION

Address	North Monarto
Owner(s)	[REDACTED]
Certificate of Title	4187/983
Section	448
Hundred	Monarto

State Heritage Status	Registered (File No. 10982)
Other Assessments	None known

Film No.	2 (September 1995)	Map No. 6727 - IV
Photographer	B. Harry	MONARTO



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DESCRIPTION

A rendered stone church now converted into a residence, in an isolated location.

HISTORY

A group of some half dozen families associated with the Moutarker Presbyterian Church moved to the Monarto area between 1868 and 1870. Their Minister, Reverend Alexander Law, visited them at intervals and held services in their homes. The desire arose to have a church of their own and a committee was formed. Reverend Law gave them the site on part section 448, Hundred of Monarto, owned by him. In 1873 they opened their new church. Reverend Law travelled from Mount Barker once a month to conduct services. The local elders conducted services on the intervening Sundays. An average of between 20 and 30 people attended the services. In 1877 Reverend Law withdrew from Mount Barker and devoted himself fully to Monarto. A porch was added and the building renovated in 1898. A new porch was added in 1923 and the church was closed in 1958.

There are 9 unmarked graves in the Monarto Presbyterian cemetery. The first person buried there was John Law who died in 1878 at the age of 4 years. Also buried there were Reverend Alexander Law together with his wife and their children, Miss Anders and the twin infants of Mr and Mrs G Patterson. The cemetery was not a registered burial ground.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

An example of the importance of religion and the Presbyterian influence in the early development of the Monarto district.

Note: Despite being presently entered in the State Heritage Register, it is recommended that this place be removed from the Register as it is only of local heritage value.

RELEVANT CRITERIA

- a) It displays historical and social themes that are of importance to the area.
 - b) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
 - c) It is associated with a notable local personality and event.
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References

Abbott, L. "Beneath the Hill : Tales of Tepko" (Lucy Abbott, Callington, 1985) page 46

"Monarto 1847 - 1986" (Murray Bridge, 1986, Published to commemorate the "Back to Monarto" 15/3/86 in conjunction with the S.A. Jubilee 150 celebrations). Pages 28, 32 and 33

Monarto Presbyterian Church "Monarto Presbyterian Church Jubilee Celebrations, April 8 & 9, 1923, A Souvenir" (The Church, Monarto, 1923)

Jensen, E & R "Colonial Architecture in South Australia" (Rigby, Adelaide, 1989) page 517

Site Surveyor Bruce Harry and Paul Kloeden
Date(s) of Survey September 1995 & January 1996

Register Research Programme 1981/82

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONARTO

The Presbyterian Church on pt. section 448 was the second church erected in the Monarto district. Built in 1872, it was preceded by the Methodist Church, built on part section 224 in 1871. Its existence can be linked with a number of settler families who left Mt. Barker in 1868 -1870 to settle in the area, then known as "The Scrub" because of the dense mallee and peppermint trees which originally vegetated the land.

The first families associated with the Church were Elder, Hutton, Marshall, Willis, Law and Patterson.

Originally proclaimed a District in 1847, Monarto was named after a lubra in the local Aboriginal tribe. The first settler, William Gileson had arrived prior to the proclamation date in 1845. After extensive clearing, the land was used for cereal growing and dairying. Presbyterian families held church services in their homes, visited every quarter by the Reverend Alexander Law from Mt. Barker. This arrangement led to the formation of a committee to organize the building of a suitable Church. Built as part of a local collective effort, the Church was opened free of debt on the 11th April, 1873. The Rev. Law donated the land upon which the Church now stands, part of Section 448. Members of the congregation donated their labour, free of charge, and the only costs involved were for materials and skilled workmanship. The masonry work was carried out by Mr. Webber of St. Ives, and the roofing work done by Mr. Chapman of Callington. James Milne of Mt. Barker provided the inside furnishings. The total cost of the Church amounted to one hundred pounds.

A memorial stone, described in the Diamond Jubilee programme as "just a good stone without any lettering" was located between the door and the South east corner of the Church. This is no longer in evidence. In September 1873, a Sabbath School was formed and the first communion services were held in January 1874, with 14 members participating. As a result of a petition to the Presbytery of South Australia, in 1876, the Church at Monarto was constituted a district charge and the Reverend Alexander Law, assisted by Elders Patterson and Hutton, were appointed to form the first session. Names appearing on the petition included members of the Patterson, Wilson, Johns, Hutton, Willis, Law and Marshall families.

The Reverend Law left Mt. Barker on 6/2/1877 to take up full time duties at Monarto. The first christening held in the Church was on 12/10/1877, when Hugh Ross Patterson was baptized. According to press reports, (Advertiser 19/6/37 and 20/7/36) the Law family lived in Summerfield

Component

Comment

Grading

E VG AG FP NA

Environment

9. Continuity: Situated at the top of a gently sloping hill, light scrub with a few small trees adjacent.

10. Local Character: High ground position, broad open paddocks with little or no vegetation, isolated position reflects settlement pattern of Monarto.

11. Landmark: Seen from a distance.

Integrity

12. Alterations: Porch added (1894 and/or 1923), outside stucco rendered, floor concreted, fittings removed, windows removed, external alterations not intrusive.

13. Condition: Some cracks in walls, plaster in poor condition, timber platform rotten, gutters and downpipes partially mission.

14. Compatibility: Vacant at present

Supplementary Information

Adaptation: The successful adaptation of this building would depend upon the specific proposal. The simple rectangular form should be maintained along with its relative isolation. Additional structures should be light in design, sympathetic in materials and colour and physically removed from the Church. Natural vegetation should be used for screening.

Interpretation: The Church's interpretative role is limited to a passive one relating to the physical nature of Monarto. The isolation would make active interpretation of the religion difficult.

Current Situation: The building was purchased by Grove Pastoral Company from the State Government and have subsequently put it back on the market. Local Presbyterians have expressed concern to the Minister - their local Member - about the building and the graves at the rear of the property.

Evaluated By Ivar Nelsen Iris Iwanicki Date
Consultant Architect Register Historian

Reviewed By Ivar Nelsen Date

South Australian Heritage Committee Categorization Date

from 1876 until 1907, when they moved to Monarto. The Reverend Law had four daughters named Elizabeth, Marian, Jessie and Margaret, and a son, John. Elizabeth, born in Hutt Street, Adelaide, in 1863 was the sole organist at Monarto for 61 years, beginning her career at the tender age of 10 at Mt. Barker. She died in 1937. The three surviving sisters were engaged in the dairy and share-farming business. Marian, born in 1866, died in 1936. In the obituary which appeared in the Advertiser, it is mentioned that "at first the family lived at Prospect Hill but later moved to a homestead called Alloa Park, close to the Church. "There Miss Law and her sisters became widely known for the hospitality extended to visitors on each anniversary of the Church". (SAA SRG 123, CTqs, Vol. 1, p.32).

There is some discrepancy over the date when the portico, dedicated to the memory of two Elders, Thomas Hutton and George Patterson, was added to the front of the Church. It is recorded that in 1898 a porch and renovations to the Church were carried out. Half the cost of the exercise was defrayed by the congregation, the remainder by outside friends. However, a member of the congregation remembers having worked on the porch addition in 1920. In 1902, the Reverend Law tendered his resignation but was present to celebrate his ministerial Jubilee on Feb. 11, 1911. A large gathering of people, with representatives of the Presbytery of Onkaparinga, gathered for the occasion. "At the afternoon meeting, the Rev. Law was congratulated and presented with a purse of sovereigns. When returning thanks he invited all present to take tea at Alloa Park, where more than 100 guests were cordially entertained at tea by Mr. Law's daughters". The Rev. Law died at the age of 92 and memorial tablets to him and Mrs. Law were placed in the Church. The Law family are buried near the Church, excepting the two last surviving sisters, who were buried in Murray Bridge cemetery. On the 8th and 9th of April, 1923, Jubilee celebrations for the Church were held, the last major event recorded in the history of the Church. Today, the Church and grave site stand as testaments to the early settlers and their way of life. The Church was linked with the Murray Bridge charge after the Reverend Law's resignation and later acquired by the State Government for the proposed Monarto city development.

Sources:

SAA Presbyterian Records SRG123
History of Monarto, 1847-1952
Interview with Mr. Patterson, 5/3/82.

Iris Iwanicki
Register Historian

II:JD
29/4/82

To: The South Australian Heritage Committee
From: Senior Historical Architect
Subject: PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND GRAVE SITE, MONARTO
Date: 29 April 1982

Summary

This report is prepared as a result of a request from Mr. Patterson of Murray Bridge to the Minister of Environment and Planning to assess the Presbyterian Church's Heritage significance. The church property is owned by Grove Pastoral Co. and is presently for sale. Concern has been expressed about the Church's possible future uses and about the graves on the property. The Lands Department has also enquired as to whether the Branch is interested in taking up the option for a Heritage Agreement which it allowed in the sale documents.

Historically, the Presbyterian Church is significant because it represents a pattern of regional settlement in which religion provided a much needed focal point for isolated families, who left established centres to settle in more remote areas. The Church reflects the importance of religion to early settlers and contributed to a cohesive and mutually supportive society living in a difficult environment. The Reverend Law and his family, associated with the founding and history of the Church, are buried at the rear of the Church.

Architecturally, the Presbyterian Church is an interesting example of the isolated country church. The simple form, accented by the applied decoration, are notable.

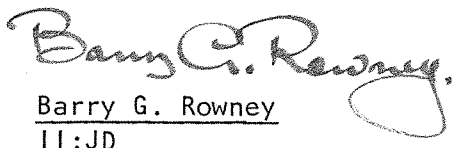
Environmentally, the Presbyterian Church is a familiar local landmark which is also an important part of the interesting settlement pattern which Monarto displays.

The Integrity of the Presbyterian Church has been compromised with the addition of the porch and the rendering of the external walls. While these are not original neither are they disruptive. The condition of the building, particularly internally, leaves much to be desired.

The building is not included on either the National Estate or the National Trust Register.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Presbyterian Church at Monarto not be included on the Register of State Heritage Items. However, the Law family grave is recommended as an item on the State Heritage Register, because of its significance with the settlement of the Monarto area by a group of Presbyterian families from Mt. Barker between 1868-1870.


Barry G. Rowney
11:JD

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Buildings and Structures					
	Item PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONARTO					
Age 1872	Theme	Office				
Period	Subject PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION - CHRISTIAN SETTLEMENT - PHYSICAL LAYOUT	Region Mt. Lofty Ranges & Eastern Plains				
Building Type Church	Style LATE VICTORIAN - FUNCTIONAL	Status				
<u>Qualitative Data</u>		<u>Grading</u>				
Component	Comment	E	VG	AG	FP	NA
<u>History</u>						
1. Context:	Associated with a group of families who settled in the area in 1868-1870 and reflects their religious and social organisation in a time when travel was limited to a district because of the demands of farming, and reliance upon horses.	*				
2. Person/Group:	Reverend Alexander Law, born in Auchterarden, Scotland, founded and ministered the Church for 33 years. Families associated with the Church included Hutton, Patterson, McDonald, Bahr, Stewart, Whittaker, Forbes, Hans, Anders, Thomson and Law.		*			
3. Event:	1877 Rev. Law became Minister 1923 Jubilee Celebrations held at Church.			*	*	
<u>Architecture</u>						
4. Architect/Builder:	Not readily available					*
5. Design:	Simple one room Church with porch added, gable roof with decorated bargeboard, outside walls stucco rendered with smooth bands at corners and openings.			*		
6. Construction:	Rubble stone walls rendered, corrugated iron gable roof.			*		
7. Interior:	Plastered walls and ceiling, concrete and tiled floor, timber platform at one end, fittings removed.			*		
8. Representation:	Common building form but unusual in its applied decoration.	*				



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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MONARTO

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