

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: ST MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Hamilton Highway TARRINGTON

STUDY NUMBER: 382

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

**OTHER NAME/S
OF PLACE:** HOCHKIRK

PRECINCT: Tarrington

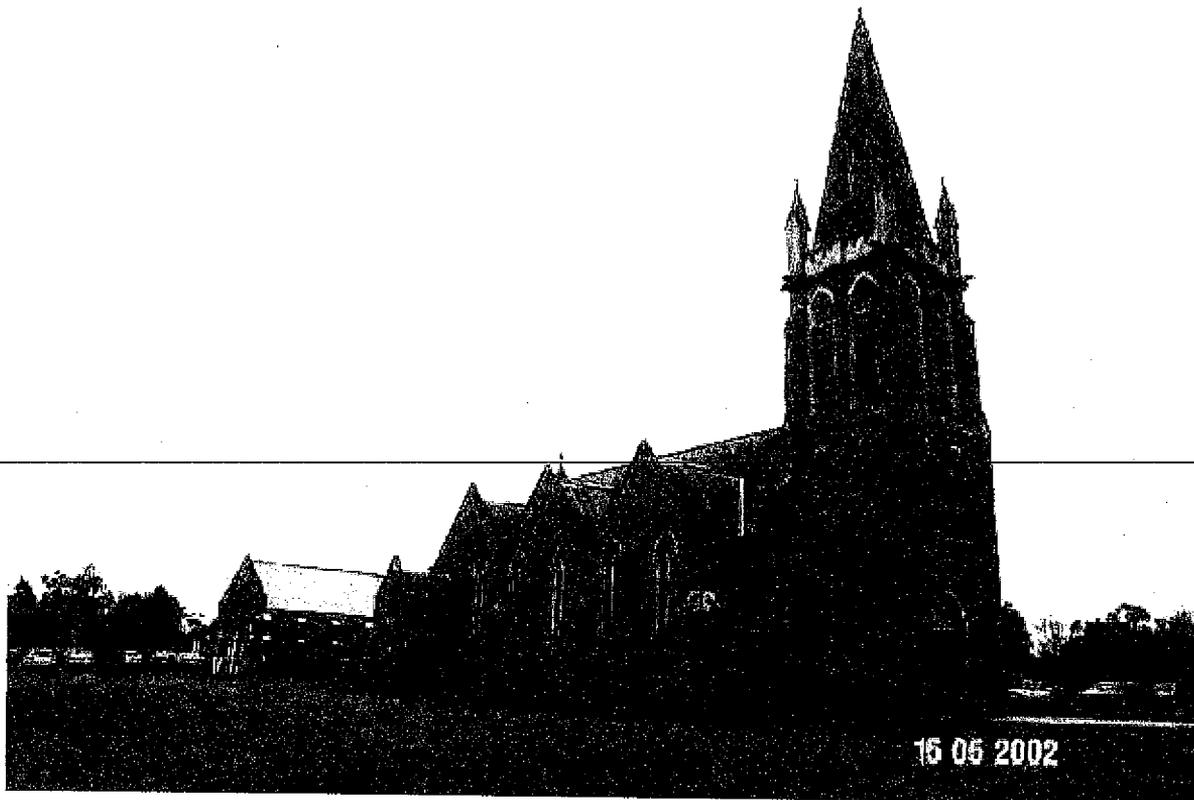
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 2 **SECTION:** XVI **PARISH:** PARISH OF HAMILTON SOUTH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 474J 82, 83, 84 & 85; VicRoads 73C6; located on the south side of the Hamilton Highway

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: State



St. Michael's Lutheran Church Complex, Hamilton Highway Tarrington.

Image Date: 15/05/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the church, including the exterior and interiors, the organ and other contents, the manse to the extent of the exterior, the church hall to the extent of its exterior, the school to the extent of its exterior, and all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The St Michael's Lutheran Church Complex consists of the church, the hall, the school (built in several phases), a memorial cairn, a teacher's residence and the manse.

The present church erected in 1927 is the focus of the complex. It is built of pressed red bricks with unpainted render details in a late but conservative version of the Gothic revival style. Its complicated plan and forms include a nave under the main roof separated by columns and arches from the side aisles, which are roofed by three gables on each side. There is a square chancel and additional rooms used as vestries and porches, again with separate roofs. The chancel roof is hipped but includes a gablet with a circular window. The gablet and the main gable terminate with crosses. The most dominating element of the exterior is the tower and spire over the main entrance. The first storey of the tower has pairs of narrow openings. Each face of the second storey has pairs of large arched and louvred openings. A solid rendered parapet with turrets at each corner surmounts this level. The spire is square in section and is surmounted by a small iron cross. The tower and spire create an important landmark.

Internally, at the northern end of the nave, there is a choir with a projecting polygonal bay and the organ. A glazed timber screen divides the entrance area from the main area. The floor is sloped and there is a central aisle. The walls are plastered and painted white with details such as sills, arches and columns painted light grey. The windows are paired under the side gables and divided into two lights each with a trefoil in the smaller arch and a sexfoil in the main arch. The windows are glazed with leadlight and stained glass. The roof of the nave is supported by hammer beam trusses and is lined with stained boards. The roofs of the aisles reflect the three side gables of the exterior and are lined with stained boards.

A large pointed arch separates the nave from the chancel. Above the arch there is a painted banner which reads "Glory to God in the Highest" in shaded lettering against a blue background edged with brown and red details. The pulpit below is elevated on a pedestal and reached by a short flight of steps. It is hexagonal in plan and carved from blackwood in the Gothic style. The panels are divided by colonettes and each has a trefoil arch. The main altar is elaborate, tripartite and also in the Gothic style. There are recessed panels below the table, a central tabernacle (of wood), a plain cross on a pedestal and without the figure of Christ, and, on either side, a stained glass lancet window. One depicts Christ as a shepherd, the other shows Christ knocking at a door. These and the cross are surmounted by gables and pinnacles decorated with crockets. The rear rooms are simply decorated and retain much original furniture. Doors lead to the yard behind the church.

The original organ from St Michael's is now housed at the Museum of German Heritage, Tanunda in South Australia. The present organ is by George Fincham & Sons and dates from 1927. It was rebuilt in 1958 by Hill, Norman & Beard. The organ was again conserved in 2003 by Ken Falconer.

To the north of the main school building there is a separate classroom. The foundation stone reads "Ev. Luth. St Michaelis Schule 15th October 1913" in chased and gilded lettering. The structure is a simple rectangle in plan, built in the collegiate Gothic style with angled buttresses at each corner. There is chimneybreast with a tall brick stack on one of the longer sides and large timber windows at either end. The roof is gabled with a projecting timber top section in the gable supported on small brackets. Most interesting is the form of construction, which is of concrete blocks. These are said to have been made from gravel from Lake Linlithgow and are similar to those used in several residential buildings in the district. The interior of this building has been altered and modernised.

The hall is built of reddish brick in a simple Gothic revival style with buttresses and lancet windows. It is seven bays long divided along the north wall by buttresses and buttresses also support the eastern end wall, which has three windows and two doors. The south wall is plain cream brick and the hall has been extended substantially on this side in different coloured brick. The steeply pitched roof of the hall is corrugated iron.

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There is a memorial cairn on the site of the original bluestone church. It incorporates the Gothic cross which surmounted the front gable, a block of stone with a quatrefoil in which the date 1863 is carved and a bronze plaque below. The plaque reads "This cairn featuring relics of the bluestone church built in 1863 and destroyed by fire in 1944 was erected to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the dedication of this building and the 130th anniversary of the of St Michael's Lutheran Church in Tarrington. January 2 1983. The memorial stands on a bluetone platform.

The present manse is built of pressed red bricks with stucco and render details painted in cream. It faces north and has an asymmetrical bungalow form and plan typical of the Interwar period, with one dominating half-timbered gable at the front and a similar transverse gable as the main roof. Both incorporate the L-shaped verandah and are supported by tapered stucco piers on red brick pedestals. There are subsidiary gables in the north-east and south-west corners and a small porch under the main roof in the north-east corner. The roof is corrugated iron. The timber windows are tripled double-hung sashes. The main entrance is on the west elevation at a point closest to the rear of the church. The service rooms are located at the rear.

HISTORY:

Pastor C W Schurmann arrived in the Hamilton district in 1854 and an Evangelical Lutheran congregation was established at "South" Hamilton, about a mile east of the township. The first building was a pug and timber framed church with a thatched roof. This would have been similar to the first residences built by Lutherans, some of which still survive. Michael Deutscher had purchased the land, allotment 3 of section 1 of the Parish of South Hamilton comprising some 81 acres, in 1854 and ten acres was subdivided from it for the purpose. In 1855 Oscar Muller was called to become the first teacher using the primitive church, built a year before, as a classroom. More land in the Parishes of Yatmerone and Boram Boram, closer to Peshurst, was made available for purchase and many recently arrived Lutheran settlers bought blocks there. This became the district of Gnardenthal, which Pastor Schurmann would visit on a regular basis, and which was to become the congregation at Tabor. The first services were held in the homes of Andreas Urban and Johann Burger at Gnardenthal.

The first primitive church was replaced by a more substantial building in 1858. It was very simple and Gothic in style. "For more than fifty years this building served as a church and school" (Tarrington Centenary). A bluestone parsonage was built beside it soon afterwards. Completed in 1859 as a house of six rooms, it was added to later with a weatherboard section. Both the first churches and the original manse have been demolished.

The first stone church soon became inadequate for the flourishing congregation and a new bluestone church was built in 1863. It too was in the Gothic style, was four bays long and was surmounted by a timber belfry. Old photographs show that it had two different porches, one with a perpendicular gable and the other with a larger transverse gable, which was probably the later version. A gallery was added later to accommodate even more members of the congregation. This church was burnt in the disastrous 1944 bush fire, which destroyed much of Tarrington. Stone from its ruins were used to build a memorial in 1983 to mark its 120th anniversary and the 130th anniversary of the complex. By 1865 Hochkirk was described officially as "a German settlement, and postal village" and that "there are no hotels in the village, and the population of the district is about 1000 persons, who are engaged in cultivating the fine country on which they are settled" (Bailliere's, 184). The present red brick church was built in 1927 and replaced the earlier stone church. The manse was also replaced during the Interwar period with a large red brick bungalow.

The school has also passed through many stages. One of the more interesting structures is a purpose built classroom built in 1913. It uses pressed cement blocks for the construction of the walls. The same technique is used in several other buildings in and around Tarrington about the same time. Other wise the classroom is conventional in its planning and provision of light, for example, by large windows facing south. Another cream

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brick wing, incorporating offices, classrooms and other facilities was built in front after the Second World War. Built in the Moderne or International style, it is unusual for its curved plan and split skillion roof. This has been altered recently by the addition of a porch linking it to the adjacent brick hall.

As with the three other Lutheran schools at Tabor, Warrayure and Lake Linlithgow the teaching of German language, history and culture during the First World War provoked antagonism and prejudice amongst the general population. There were calls to close the schools but an examination by an Education Department Inspector in 1916 found no disloyalty (Garden, 191). The campaign against the schools continued for some time after the end of the war. Under pressure from the state government and the local council, Hochkirk changed its name to Tarrington. This was based on the name of the house of Stephen Henty, some distance to the south of the town, which itself was named after the town in England where the Henty family had come from.

Lutherans in south-eastern Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were seriously divided by doctrinal differences (Phillips in Lewis, 14-5). The personality of leaders seems to have influenced allegiances as well. There was a schism in 1846. The congregations in the Hamilton district continued to look to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Australia led by Pastor Fritzsche Lobethal. Pastor Schurmann had died at Bethany in the Barossa Valley attending a Synod in 1893. The other Lutherans in Victoria were further divided but came together as the General Synod of 1876 only to split in 1884. The Lutheran Church Federation was formed in 1920 but still did not include the Hamilton congregations. It was not until 1966 that the two streams came together as the Lutheran Church of Australia.

The St Michael's congregation must be seen in association not only with the original Evangelical Lutheran congregation at South Hamilton and the Tabor, Gnadenhal, Purdeet and Lake Linlithgow districts but also the congregations at Warrayure, Byaduk. These relationships were always cordial and supportive. In the early twentieth century there was a direct connection with Lutherans who had migrated even further north into the new wheat belt of the Wimmera.

More difficult was the relationship with the utopian settlement nearby at Herrnhut established on a mixture of Moravian and communist principles by Friedrich Johann Krumnow in the mid-1850s. Their differences were not just philosophical and doctrinal but also moral. "In Pastor Schurmann's eyes, the immoral actions of Krumnow and his communards defiled the good name of all the other Germans in the area" (Metcalf and Huf, 36-7). Most importantly, the 'prophetess', Maria Heller who had spent some time at Herrnhut, went across to the Tabor congregation, although eventually expelled from the Lutheran church (Metcalf and Huf, 82). Others also crossed over sapping the settlement of its younger members (Metcalf and Huf, 117).

The St Michael's congregation and school were also sapped by the emigration of many families to the Wimmera when land there was opened up for selection in the 1870s. However, family relationships continued over the decades and were important for both those who stayed and those who went. Children were sent from the Wimmera to school at Tarrington and at Tabor, boarding with their immediate families. The school now accommodates all the Lutheran students of the district following the rationalisation of the schools at Tabor and Warrayure and their consolidation with St Michael's. It now has about 85 students enrolled. The community of Tarrington and the congregation of St Michael's successfully celebrated their 150th anniversary in October 2003 which was recognised by the Southern Grampians Shire as the Community Event of the Year.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 6 Educating

6.2 Establishing schools

6.5 Educating people in remote places

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.6 Worshipping

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- 8.6.1 Worshipping together
- 8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

CONDITION:

Excellent

INTEGRITY:

The church has an excellent degree of integrity externally and internally including its fittings; the manse has an excellent degree of integrity externally; the hall has a fair degree of integrity externally and a poor degree of integrity internally; the school has a mixed degree of integrity externally and internally as to its various parts.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

St. Michael's Lutheran Church complex is located on the south side of the Hamilton Highway in the centre of the Tarrington township. The existing church, built in 1927 is the fourth. The first, built about 1854, was a pug and timber framed church with a thatched roof, the second was a bluestone church, built in 1858 and the third, also bluestone, built in 1863, which was burnt down in 1944. The churches were also used as the school. The architects and builders are not known for any of the churches. The complex now consists of the fourth church, the hall, the school (built in several phases), a memorial cairn, a teacher's residence and the second manse. The present red brick church is in a late but conservative version of the Gothic revival style. The tower and spire over the main entrance dominate the exterior and act as a landmark. The reddish brick hall is also in a simple Gothic revival style with buttresses and lancet windows but is now much altered. A memorial cairn on the site of the third church incorporates the Gothic cross which surmounted the gable and a block of stone with a quatrefoil in which the date 1863 is carved. The present manse, a bungalow in form, was built in the Interwar period. It is pressed red bricks with stucco and render details painted in cream. To the north of the main school building there is a separate classroom built in 1913. The structure is a simple rectangle in plan, built in the collegiate Gothic style. Most interesting is the form of construction, which is of concrete blocks. ~~These are said to have been made from gravel from Lake Linlithgow and are similar to those used in several residential buildings in the district.~~ A substantial new cream brick wing was built in the Moderne style after the Second World War. The whole of the complex is in good condition and retains a fair degree of integrity. The fourth church is significantly unaltered.

How is it significant?

St. Michael's Lutheran Church is of historic, architectural and cultural significance to the community of Tarrington and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

St. Michael's Lutheran Church complex is historically significant as the continuing spiritual, educational and social focus of one of the several branches of German Lutheran settlement in the Shire. It is architecturally significant because the sequence of churches, through the consistent use of a Gothic revival style reflects the spiritual values as much as the means of the congregation. Similarly, the school reflects the congregation's efforts to maintain its cultural as well as spiritual identity. The St Michael's congregation must be seen in association not only with the original Evangelical Lutheran congregation at South Hamilton and the Tabor, Gnadenthal, Purdeet and Lake Linlithgow districts but also the congregations at Warrayure, Byaduk. The church is of specific architectural significance as an unusually grand example of the Interwar Gothic revival style used in a Lutheran Church. The Fincham organ is also significant.

COMPARISON:

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391 Trinity Lutheran Church, Glenelg Highway, Warrayure
002 St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bunbury Street, Cavendish
388 Bethlehem Lutheran Church Complex, Tabor Road, Tabor
066 Zion Lutheran Church Complex, Lutheran Church Road, Byaduk
239 Herrnhutt Ruins, Day's Lane, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

15-May-02

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 |
|-------------------------------------|---|------|-------|
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| Garden, Don | Hamilton A Western District History | 1984 | var. |
| Miles Lewis ed., | Victorian Churches, Their origins, their story and their architecture | 1991 | 14-16 |
| William J Metcalf and Elizabeth Huf | Herrnhut, Australia's First Utopian Commune | 2002 | var. |