

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

name: Vectis Zion Lutheran Church
Address: 121 Vectis Station Road QUANTONG
Place Type: Church
Citation Date: 2022



Vectis Lutheran Church

**Recommended
Heritage Protection** **VHR -**

 HI -

 PS
 Yes

Integrity

External condition – sound. Much of the rear part of the Church has been repointed. Church as stands illustrates function within community.

History and Historical Context

The first Lutheran family to select land in the Wimmera is believed to be father and son, Christian and Carl Muller who arrived from Germantown, then known as Grovedale, in 1869.[1] Other Lutheran families soon followed their lead and took up land in Vectis in 1873 when the area was thrown open to closer settlement. Many of the early Lutheran settlers came from the Western District (Hamilton region) and South Australia where either all of the good land had been taken for farming, or was too costly to purchase.

The availability of good land available in the Wimmera soon spread through word of mouth and the Lutheran

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publication, "*Der Australische Christenbote*" (The Australian Christian Messenger). For example, in the May issue of 1870, the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Victoria, Pastor Herlitz, printed reports for the 1868 and 1869 seasons.[2] The influx of Lutheran settlers to the Wimmera resulted in a significant decrease in church congregations in the Western District in areas such as Tarrington and Hamilton. In his history of the Lutheran Church of Australia, E.W. Wiebusch notes that:

... many of the original settlers held a deep concern for all things spiritual and were mindful of their spiritual needs. They still possessed a readiness to build churches as soon as possible and to establish schools for the instruction of the young, thereby indicating their own concern for their own spiritual well-being as well as for their children.[3]

The first pastor to visit the Wimmera and cater for the new settlers' spiritual needs was Rev. C.W. Schurmann of the Synod of South Australia who held a service at Wonwondah in September 1871.[4] During his visit, he also officiated at the wedding of Gottfried Stossel and Maria Lehrack at the bride's parent's home in Drung Drung, and baptised four children – two at both Drung Drung and Bungalally.[5] Baptismal records show that he made other trips to the Wimmera in February and May, 1873.

In April 1874, Rev. Schurmann attended the opening of St. Paul's Church in Natimuk and installation of Pastor C. Schoknecht. The arrival of Pastor Schoknecht relieved Rev. Schurmann of the necessity to travel to the Wimmera, though the Pastor himself had a large parish to serve with congregations at Natimuk, Vectis, Bungally/Drung Drung, Marmar Gully (now known as Murtoa) and Dimboola.

The original Zion Lutheran Church at Vectis consisted of a weatherboard building dedicated on 7 November 1875, built by Carl and Christian Koenig.[6a] In 1907, a new brick Church was built on land donated by W. Schulz and materials donated by church members. The Church was designed by architect, Mr J.G. Jowett and built by Mr H. Denning of Dimboola at a cost of £728, the whole of which was donated by church members.[6b]

The laying of the foundation stone was celebrated on 19 June 1907, under which copies of a German newspaper and the *Horsham Times* were placed. The official church opening took place on 20 November 1907, commencing with a farewell service in the adjoining former church led by Pastor J.F. Noack, who had replaced Past Schoknecht after 32 years of service. After a short address and reading, Pastor Noack, along with other clergyman, led the congregation in procession to the new Church where the door was formally opened by Rev. Harms of Minyip.[7] In their report on the opening, the *Horsham Times* described the Church building as follows:

The church, which is a commanding structure of 50 ft 6in x 26ft, inside measurement, 19 ft from floor to ceiling, with attached vestry 14 ft x 9 ft, and choir gallery, has a seating capacity of 200. The front is beautifully finished in Flemish bond tuck-pointed. The ceiling is steel-lined, with a deep daintily coloured beige. Windows, lead light, with murrinaso [sic] glass, ample provision having been made for both exit and ventilation. The interior is beautifully finished, furnishing and colouring harmonising nicely. The pulpit and altar, which were designed by Mr T. Semmens, foreman of Mr H. Denning, of Beulah, the contractor, are quite works of art reflecting the greatest credit on Mr Semmens. The style is principally old English and being oak grained in Mr J. Davis's [sic] best style, they constitute very handsome furnishings indeed. A very fine scroll bearing the words "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God", has been painted in delicate tint on the wall behind and over the altar.[8]

In 1912, members of the congregation planted two hundred gum trees to improve the appearance of the church ground and afford shelter.[9]

In early March 1953, a new church hall was built in seven weeks from funds raised by the Vectis Zion Lutheran congregation. Members of the building committee were: Messrs W. Koenig (Chairman), W. Maroske (Secretary), G. Schultz, E. John, H. Lindner and R. Rudolph.[10] The building, measuring 60ft x 30ft was erected by

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voluntary labour of members of the congregation under the supervision of Mr A. Davie of Horsham. Free labour kept the cost of the hall to a little over £2,000.[11] The church hall was officially opened on 23 June 1953, with a service held in the hall led by Rev. W. Hoopmann.

The Vectis Zion Church has seen more than a century of church services, celebrations, baptisms, anniversaries, weddings, funerals and the comings and goings of generations of the faithful. However, significant damage was inflicted on the building when it was vandalised in May 2013, including the smashing of several stained glass windows.[12] The damage was repaired by the congregation and weekly Sunday services continue to be held in the Church.

Outside the church, but within the church grounds, a plaque has been erected to acknowledge the former Vectis Lutheran School no. 898, which operated between 1879-1890 and 1909-1975.

[1] Wiebusch, E.W. (ed.) (1972) *Yearbook of the Lutheran Church of Australia*. Adelaide: The Lutheran Publishing House, p. 30.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 31.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 33.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 35.

[5] *Ibid*.

[6a] 'Vectis Church buildings – 100th Anniversary' by John Noack, 17 Nov. 2008, on <https://www.wendishheritage.org.au/vectis-church-buildings-100th-anniversary/>, accessed on 23 May 2022.

[6b] *Horsham Times* (1907) New Church at Vectis. 25 June, p. 3.

[7] *Horsham Times* (1907) Vectis Lutheran Church. 22 November, p. 3.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] *Horsham Times* (1912) District News. 3 September, p. 6.

[10] *Horsham Times* (1953) Church hall built by volunteers. 26 June, p. 5.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] Lockwood, K. (2013) Editorial: Quiet strength of the Vectis faithful. *Wimmera Mail-Times*. 14 May 2013, p. 12.

Description

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Physical Description

Simple Gothic Revival chapel form church, with a steep gable roof form, face red brick walls, brick buttresses, pointed arch head windows with leaded/ coloured glass and hipped roof vestry to rear. Some glass has been replaced (due to the 2013 damage to the place). Window sills and heads are dressed with cement stucco. Face bricks are most probably local in origin – similar in colour/ texture to several buildings of similar era in the Vectis/ Natimuk locale. It is tuckpointed to the front façade. Windows incorporate a fixed open hopper section for ventilation and are detailed with diamond lead bars, with coloured glass surrounds. The roof ridge is finished with three capped roof vents. A painted sign on the front façade reads in German: 'Ev = Luth Zions = Kirche'.

The interior features a gallery to the rear, clad in pressed metal sheeting at ground floor level. Walls are plastered, ceiling and ceiling vents are of pressed metal. Timber pews and other liturgical furniture remain.

The surrounding site contains remnant sugar gums, pollarded in the manner typical to the region.

The 1953 Sunday School hall building is similar in scale and footprint to the church building and is located to the south of the church. The building is utilitarian in design; with a CGI hipped roof and CGI clad walls. A basic ?mid 20thC shelter shed is also located to the rear of the site. These later buildings support the heritage setting of the church, but are not central to the understanding of the site as a place of Lutheran worship because they do not reflect the establishment of the Lutheran church in the region (core heritage value).

Marker stone also located adjacent the church, memorialising "Vectis Lutheran School 898: 1879 – 1890 & 1909 – 1975"

Physical Condition

The 1907 Church is in fair condition – given the reactive nature of local soils. Wall cracking is evident to all facades, typically from eave to window head and then sill to footing – cracks are in the order of 2-10mm wide. Steel tie rods and rail lines have been fitted to the building at some time. Several leaded glass windows have become dislodged within openings, with flashings compromised as a result. Glazing remains intact, apart from one rear window. Perimeter of building is paved, assisting in limiting structural movement and any rising damp issues. Timber entry doors and rear doors are simple in profile and are in average condition.

Interior is in good condition, with some wall cracking evident.

Sunday school hall and shelter shed are in average-to-good condition.

Pollarded sugar gums to perimeter of site are in fair condition.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. (The church is Gothic Revival in style, constructed of local face brick, with well-resolved proportions, feature buttresses and leaded windows of note, but is a simple chapel type in form, with few architectural embellishments – common in style for Lutheran churches of the period.)

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. (church reflects importance of Lutheran worship within agricultural life of initial (German) Lutheran settlers in the district; it was established in this location in 1875, with the current building constructed in 1907, and it continues to serve this purpose.)

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Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or groups of persons, of importance in our history. (illustrates the settlement and growth of the German Lutheran community in the Vectis region of Horsham Shire. German Lutherans were one of the predominant settlement groups in the Shire, farming, developing towns and holding positions of civic importance in the Shire during the early settlement period in the mid 19th Century. Church illustrates the migrant group's specific religious needs/ community focus)

Comparative Analysis

Vectis East Methodist Church, Three Mile Road, Vectis, Hermes no. 186228: Church Hall – 1880; Church – 1912 – similar restrained design, smaller buildings

St Paul's Lutheran Church, 92 Main St, Natimuk, Hermes no. 191713: Contemporary church – illustrates on-going Lutheran community, but not early establishment of the community.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 102-104 Baillie St, Horsham, Hermes no. 186085: 1950-70s church in Horsham – contemporary and compromised in part. Again, only illustrates on-going growth/ needs of Lutheran community.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The elements of heritage value of the 1907 Vectis Zion Lutheran Church, 121 Vectis Station Road, Quantong, include:

- . External form of the 1907 church building and vestry, CGI clad roof, face brick walling, leaded glass windows.
- . Perimeter sugar trees dating from 1912 also contribute to the heritage value of the place.

Adjacent Sunday school hall and shelter shed excluded. Memorial 'school' plaque and sign excluded.

How is it significant?

The 1907 Vectis Zion Lutheran Church is of historic, representative and social significance to Horsham Rural City.

Why is it significant?

The 1907 Vectis Zion Lutheran Church is:

. of local historical significance, illustrating the settlement and growth of the German Lutheran community in the Vectis region of Horsham Shire. German Lutherans were one of the predominant settlement groups in the Shire, farming, developing towns and holding positions of civic importance in the Shire during the early settlement period in the mid 19th Century. The 1907 Zion Lutheran Church and associated 1912 sugar gum plantings illustrate the Lutheran settlers' specific religious needs/ community focus. (Criterion A)

. of local representative significance, representing the architectural style of the Lutheran community during the period of settlement of the area. The church is Gothic Revival in style, constructed of local face brick, with well-resolved proportions, feature buttresses and leaded windows of note, but is a simple chapel type in form, with few architectural embellishments – common in style for Lutheran churches of the period. (Criterion D)

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. of local social significance, as the centre of the local Lutheran community since the first church was built in this location in 1875, with the current 1907 church building still in use. (Criterion G)

Recommendations 2022

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| External Paint Controls | Yes |
| Internal Alteration Controls | No |
| Tree Controls | Yes 1912 Sugar Gum perimeter plantings |
| Fences & Outbuildings | No |
| Prohibited uses may be permitted | No |
| Incorporated Plan | - |
| Aboriginal Heritage Place | No |

References

Literature title: Yearbook of the Lutheran Church of Australia

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author: Wiebusch, E.W. (ed.)

Literature publisher: Adelaide: The Lutheran Publishing House

Literature year: 1972

Literature title: Horsham Times Newspaper

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author:

Literature publisher:

Literature year:

Literature title: Mail-Times Newspaper

Literature type: General Reference

Literature author:

Literature publisher:

Literature year:

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.