

NAME: Willunga Uniting Church and Cemetery, 33 St Andrews Terrace, WILLUNGA

PLACE NO.: Local, HID 5512

CURRENT USE:

Church, church offices & cemetery

FORMER USE:

Church, schoolhouse & cemetery

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION:

Church constructed in 1895-6, school hall constructed in 1906. Cemetery dates from 1840s.

LOCATION:

137 (33) St Andrews Terrace, WILLUNGA

LAND DESCRIPTION:

CT 5697/85 Section 258, Hundred of Willunga

OWNER:

The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust SA

REGISTER STATUS:

Local, HID 5512



(top left) c.1895 former Willunga Wesleyan Church; (top right) c.1906 Willunga Wesleyan schoolhouse; (bottom) Willunga Wesleyan Cemetery (c.1840 onwards) (GGA, 2021)

NAME: Willunga Uniting Church and Cemetery, 33 St Andrews Terrace, WILLUNGA

PLACE NO.: Local, HID 5512

DESCRIPTION:

C.1895 Victorian Gothic church building constructed of bluestone and sandstone with painted brick quoins, dressings and surrounds, rendered cement dressings, string courses and bosses with point timber doors with ornate cast iron fittings. Gable pitched roof with corrugated steel sheeting.

C.1906 schoolhouse constructed of bluestone with brick quoins, surrounds, string courses and dressings. C.1844 insert from 1844 chapel. Gable pitched roof with corrugated steel sheeting. Timber louvred ventilator to primary elevation with mid-20th century timber-framed entrance shelter.

Cemetery with various masonry gravestones and memorials dating from mid-19th century. Mid-19th century timber post fencing to St Andrews Terrace frontage. C.2000s brick and rendered masonry administrative offices adjoining 1906 schoolhouse.

It is recommended that the c.1895 former Willunga Wesleyan Church & associated Cemetery be retained on the SA Heritage Register as a Local Heritage place.

It is also recommended that the c.1906 former Willunga Wesleyan schoolhouse be included in the scope of the existing Local Heritage listing pertaining to this site.

A delineation of significant historic fabric is provided in the Extent of Listing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

The former Willunga Wesleyan Church complex (now Willunga Uniting Church), comprising the c.1895 Willunga Wesleyan Church, the c.1906 Willunga Wesleyan schoolhouse and associated cemetery, was the earliest country circuit for the South Australian Wesleyan Church, one of the Colony's largest ecclesiastical organisations. Dating from 1844, the Willunga Wesleyan Church complex has had a long association with the Willunga district since its earliest developments, being both a place of worship and burial place for generations of local residents.

Reconstructed from the materials of the earlier c.1857 church, the c.1895 Willunga Wesleyan Church is of added significance as the design of architect F. W. Dancker, a leading Adelaide practitioner prominently associated with the Wesleyan Church in the late 19th century. The retention of a stone plaque dating to the original 1844 church building, now part of the c.1906 schoolhouse, is also of significance

The Willunga Wesleyan cemetery dates from the site's earliest developments (c.1844) with numerous early slate gravestones dating from this period onwards. Many early gravestones were carved by local craftsman George Sara. Surviving mid-19th century timber fencing to the cemetery's St Andrews Terrace frontage is also of historical significance.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (As defined in Section 67(1) of the PDI Act 2016):

- a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area, being a prominent local church complex for the Willunga district and administering to the religious needs of a large number of local citizens since 1844.
 - b) it represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic to the local area, being the local Wesleyan Church complex (currently Uniting Church) for the Willunga district since 1844; ministering to the religious needs of local residents since the mid-19th century.
 - c) it has played an important part in the lives of local residents, being a place of worship and burial place of generations of Willunga residents dating from 1844 onwards.
 - d) it displays aesthetic merit, design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area; the c.1895 former Willunga Wesleyan Church being constructed from recycled building materials of the earlier c.1857 church and being the design of architect F. W. Dancker, a prominent Adelaide practitioner with a notable association with the Wesleyan Church in South Australia.
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RELEVANT HISTORIC THEMES:**Theme 3: Society, Religion and Education in the Southern Vales**

3.5 Religious life

Theme 2: Regional Life in the Southern Vales2.7 Remembering past generations and the fallen

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Willunga's Wesleyan Church was the first country circuit for the South Australian Wesleyan Church and has a long association with the district's earliest developments. The first Wesleyan Chapel was recorded as having been opened in 1844.

The 'Willunga Now and Then' history website records that a second, larger church was built alongside the 1844 building in 1848, later becoming the Sunday School Hall 'now in use.'

Current research indicates that the current Sunday School Hall building was built in 1906; photography dating to 1909 illustrates a small building adjoining the 1906 schoolhouse identified by State Library SA records as 'stables' which may relate to either the 1844 or 1848 building. Documentation dating to 1847 indicates further funds were given in April 1847 to assist in the completion of the Willunga chapel and schoolhouse (likely in relation the 1848 building), with additional funds towards the establishment of a day school (Wesleyan Methodists, 1847, p.2). The chapel was noted as having been completed and paid for by November (*Local Intelligence*, 1847, p.2). No other information clarifying this history has been identified.

The associated cemetery is believed to have been established around the same time as the 1844 chapel; the oldest gravestones have been recorded as those of John Hill (May 1844) and Samson Bastian (15th November 1846). Other early graves include those of the families of Rev. C. H. Goldsmith, R. C. Flockhart and John Harcourt (*Our Townships, Farms, and Homesteads*, 1892,

p.5) dating from the mid-19th century onwards. Many of the earlier slate gravestones were carved by local craftsman George Sara.

Early timber fencing, once encompassing the entire church and cemetery site, dates from the mid-19th century. A surviving portion of this fencing remains to the cemetery's St Andrews Terrace frontage.

A new, significantly larger church was erected in 1857, designed in the pointed Gothic style by architect George Abbott. Described as the most elegant example of church architecture "out of Adelaide and its suburbs" (New Wesleyan Church, 1857, p.3), the new building had a capacity for 400 people with a further planned yet ultimately unrealised gallery. Surmounted with a new bell turret, total costs for the structure were recorded as being approximately £2,300.

By 1895 the 1857 church was considered unsafe and a decision was made by the Trustees to demolish the church and rebuild a new structure from existing building materials. The new church was designed by Adelaide architect F. W. Dancker with contractors Messrs. Lipson & Richards. The foundation stone was laid 14th Dec 1895 by M. P. Mr. A. McDonald. F. W. Dancker is responsible for several important late 19th century Wesleyan churches in South Australia, including the c.1881 Payneham Wesley Church (now Payneham Road Uniting Church), the c.1891 Malvern Wesleyan Church (now Malvern Uniting Church) and the c.1899 East Adelaide Wesleyan Church (now Spicer Memorial Uniting Church).

The bell from the earlier church's bell-tower was retained and hung in a nearby tree, where it remains today. The bell and associated gum tree were registered as Local Heritage items (HID 5510) on 2nd December 2004.

The 1844 chapel (or 1848 building) was used as a schoolroom until it was deemed unsafe and was abandoned by 1904. A new lecture hall of 23 feet by 43 feet was drafted with six classrooms planned for later construction; explaining the brick quoins and slate lintels evident on the current schoolhouse's north and south elevations. The foundation stone was laid by superintendent Mr J. Jenkin on June 4th, 1906. The contractors for the building were Messrs. Richards Bros. of Willunga, project costs totalling £191 excluding building materials. (*News of the Churches*, 1906, p.12). A stone plaque incorporated into the primary elevation is understood to have been salvaged from the original 1844 church, which is recorded to have featured a plaque bearing the same inscription (*Our Townships, Farms, and Homesteads*, 1892, p.5).

The construction of the 'Bethany Hall' administrative offices adjoining the 1906 schoolhouse is understood to have taken place in the mid-2000s.

EXTENT OF LISTING:

The form and materials of the c.1895 former Willunga Wesleyan Church, including all external materials and detailing. External concrete steps and handrails to church entrance are not included in listing.

The form and materials of the c.1906 former Willunga Wesleyan Church schoolhouse, including all external materials and detailing. External concrete ramp and mid-20th century timber-framed entrance shelter are not included in the listing.

The form, layout and materials of the former Willunga Wesleyan cemetery, including all early slate gravestones, memorials and associated fittings and infrastructure. All sited gravestones should

remain in situ where possible. Mid-19th century timber fencing to the St Andrews Terrace frontage is also included in the listing. Gravestones dating after 1950 are not included in the current listing.

The c.2000s Bethany Hall construction works, including all associated materials, additions and alterations, are not included in the listing.

REFERENCES:

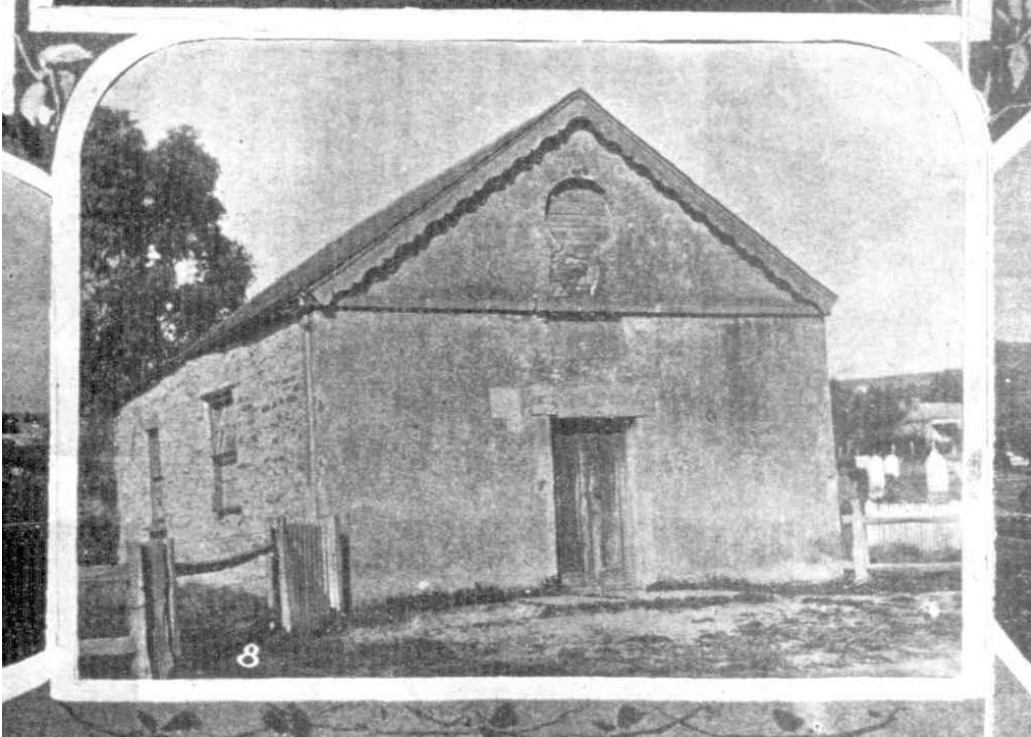
Willunga Wesleyan Church, South Australian Register, Fri 13 Dec 1895, p.6.
News of the Churches, Australian Christian Commonwealth, Fri 26 Jun 1906, p.12.
New Wesleyan Chapel, Willunga, South Australian Register, Thu 12 Feb 1857, p.3.
Views of the Southern District, Adelaide Observer, Sat 29 Oct 1904, p.26.
Our Townships, Farms and Homesteads, South Australian Register, Wed 16 Mar 1892, p.5.
Local Intelligence, South Australian Register, Wed 17 Nov 1847, p.2.
Wesleyan Methodists, Adelaide Observer, Sat 10 Apr 1847, p.2.
 'Willunga Now and Then: Wesleyan Church',
https://willunga.nowandthen.net.au/Wesleyan_Church, accessed 16/09/2021

SITE MAPPING:

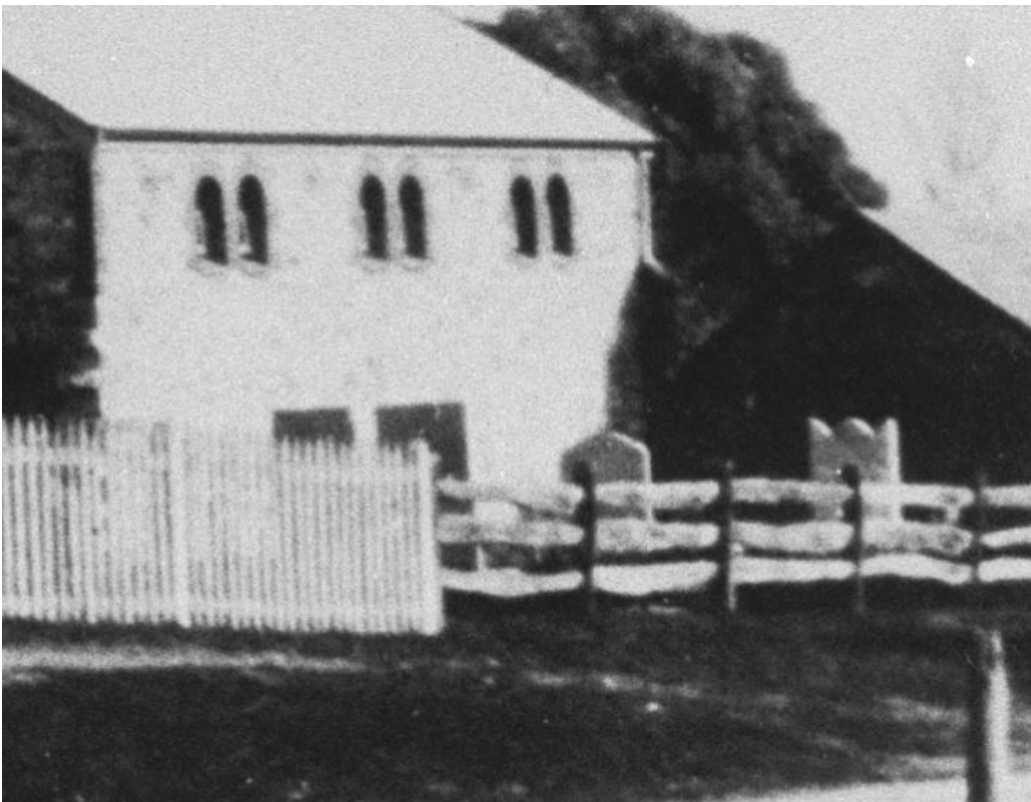


Site of 33 St Andrews Terrace, Willunga; (1) c.1895 church; (2) c.1906 classroom; cemetery located to the immediate south of church and classroom. (Planning SA SAPPa)

HISTORICAL IMAGES:



'Old Wesleyan Chapel – 1844' (demolished) (Views of the Southern Vales, Adelaide Observer, Sat 29 Oct 1904, p.26).



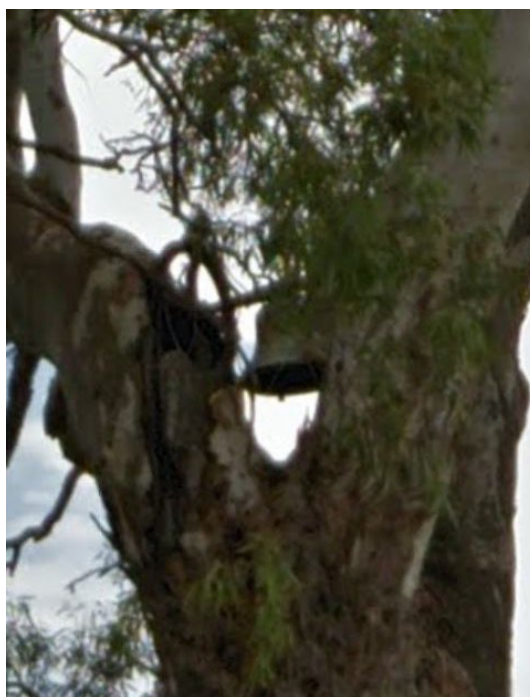
C.1909 photograph, small building to the right identified by SLSA documentation as 'stables'; this building is possibly the 1848 building mentioned within the 'Willunga Now and Then' history. Building now demolished (SLSA B 55417/45).



C.1890 photograph of the Willunga Wesleyan Chapel, designed by architect George Abbott and erected in 1857 (demolished) (SLSA B 24123)



C.1909 photograph of the new Willunga Wesleyan Chapel, designed by architect F. W. Dancker in 1895. Note 1906 adjoining schoolroom (SLSA B 55417/45).



(left) C.1890 photograph of the 1857 Willunga Wesleyan Chapel belltower (SLSA B 24123); (right), the 1857 bell and bell fittings installed in a nearby tree on the reserve across from the Willunga Uniting Church at Lot 186 St Andrews Street, Willunga. Both the bell and associated gum tree are now Local Heritage items (HID 5510)



Early photograph of the Willunga Wesleyan Church schoolhouse, likely shortly after completion in c.1906. Note the elaborate timber gable has now been removed, the original stairs have been removed with the installation of a concrete ramp and timber-framed shelter to main entrance. (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/willunganowandthen/11960241934/>, accessed 16/9/2021).