

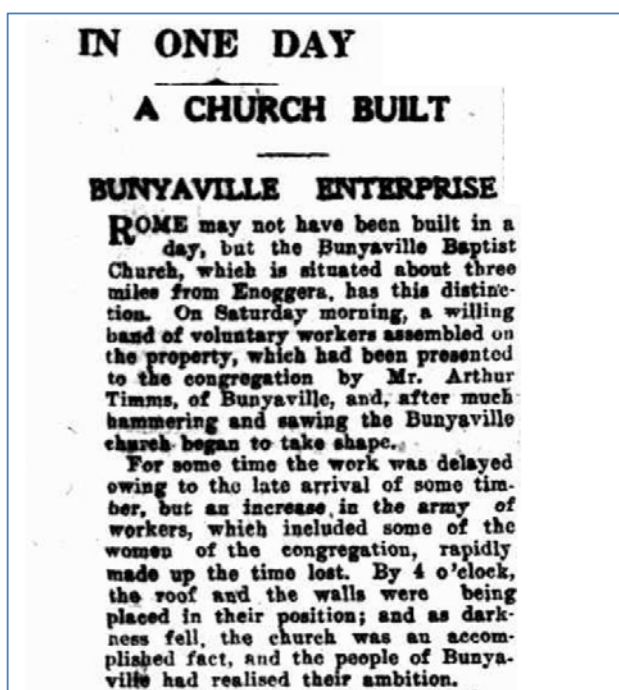
## Well-seasoned Church Buildings Re-purposed

Two Baptist church buildings with nine decades of use (and more) at their old locations have recently been moved to begin a new stage of life. Both served the needs of their devoted congregations very well over their lifetimes, but that is about where their similarities end.

One was small and located in the hilly area of north-west Brisbane; the other was within sight of the Bay but had an earlier move and was enlarged and modernised in the process. One was replaced by a new style church but then the congregation moved to another location and after flourishing for some years finally faded away; the other grew, developed outstations and finally became a large regional church with several outstations before re-locating once again.

### Bunyaville

The small church was at Queen's Road in what is now Everton Hills but was then known as Bunyaville. It was a plant from the Newmarket (now Grange) church and was erected on donated land in one day, 4 June 1932. Officially opened on July 2 by the President of the Baptist Union, it was only 20' x 15' in size, seating 40 people, and followed the typical pattern of a simple church building—weather board walls with a fairly steep corrugated iron roof, and on the front a small porch with matching pitch of roof. However, it was a suitable home for services and Sunday school and there were many weddings and other events held in the structure over the years.



Sunday Mail 5 June 1932

In 1946, an ex-Army hut was added (since disappeared) and then in 1965 a new church, more than twice the size, was erected to the left of the original chapel. This one was constructed according to the new Home Mission design by architect, Ray Smith, which had been adopted only a few years earlier. The old building was then used for Sunday school and other miscellaneous purposes.



**Bunyaville Baptist Church – left 1965, right 1932 (Photo: D Parker)**

Constituted as a church in 1956 under the Home Mission, there was only ever a small membership, but during these years, several pastors faithfully served the church, and there were flourishing worship services, supported by Brigades, Christian Endeavour and women’s ministries. In the 1970s, it worked in association with the newly formed Ferny Grove Baptist Church and became known as South Pine Baptist Church.

Although there were some visionary plans for ministry in this Hills area which was growing rapidly at the time, it was clear by the 1980s that there was no future for the existing arrangement. Various efforts were made to serve the district, but eventually, a new work was commenced on Plucks Road, about 3 kms west, which became known as The Hills Christian Family. This church had a positive ministry on this site for about 25 years, with its greatest strength in the 1980s, but it eventually sold up and in 2012 moved to commercial premises in Blackwood Road, Mitchelton. It then declined seriously which led to amalgamation with Keperra Baptist Church in 2018.



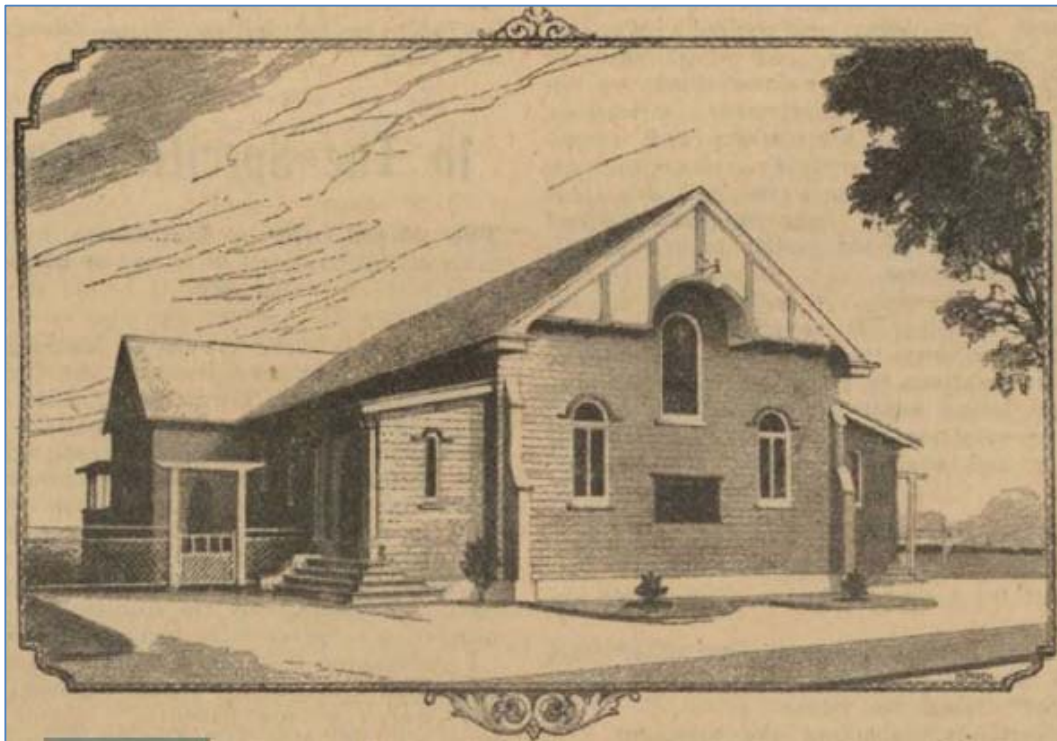
Fifty years after construction in 1982, the old Bunyaville buildings and land were sold to the Wesleyan Church, which developed into a very large and thriving church on an expanded site adjacent to the original location. Recent renovations, especially to the driveway, have led to the relocation of the 1931 Baptist building to another site on the property. It is planned to modify it to become a prayer chapel. The 1965 building has been demolished.

## Wynnum

The other recently relocated church was at Bay Street, Wynnum Central, on the corner of Clare Street, where it had sat since 1931. It was an impressive wooden building and had served as the home of the flourishing Wynnum Baptist Church. However, it was not quite as simple as that – the building had been moved from Edith Street (about opposite the Red Cross) where it was first constructed in 1912 (making the building now 111 years old). The official opening was on 21 December 1912.

Baptist work at Wynnum was originated in 1910 by the Petrie Terrace Church led by Rev TU Symonds under the authority of the Queensland Baptist Home Mission. After some years meeting in various rented locations, land was secured in Edith Street, and a building erected in 1912. The church was constituted two years later and gained its independence from the Home Mission in 1918. Later a Sunday School hall was added to the rear of the original building.

As the work grew, especially under the inspiring leadership of Rev Gray Parker (1920-1935), a better site was required. (In 1930, the Young People's group in the church was reported to have presented Mr Parker with a Morris car for his church work, including maintenance!) So in February 1930 the Edith Street building was moved in two stages to donated land at the Bay Street location and modified. One report said that 'all Wynnum assembled in the main street the other day to witness' the event! The building was officially re-opened on 26 April 1930



**Photo of renovated building at Bay Terrace (*The Australian Baptist* 3 June 1930)**

The *Australian Baptist* described the completed project like this:

The finished church building, with its attached Sunday School hall, equipped with Bible-class room, kindergarten and young beginners' section, occupies a central corner on Bay Terrace. The pastor's new vestry, panelled in mission finish and tastefully furnished with wardrobe, wash basin etc is one of the best equipped in the Union. The church furnishings, which included pulpit, organ panelling, choir screen, Communion table and chairs, of Siberian oak, all in Gothic tracery design, with palm stands etc to match, have been donated by members and friends of the church. With its cloistered approaches to broad concrete steps, surmounted by Gothic pillared porches on either side of sweeping unfenced lawns, and an imposing gable with leaded lights, the erection forms one of the most attractive buildings in the district. (AB 3/6/30)

This set the scene for steady growth of the church under effective pastors, especially Rev EE Edwards (1946-1969). At various times there were outstations at Lindum, and also at Wynnum West and Manly-Lota (these two later merged to form the current Eastside Community Church).

In 1975 the growth of the work at Wynnum required a new building. So a modern brick building was erected at the back of the old property facing Akonna Street. But further growth of the church (reaching more than 200 members) and congestion in the heart of busy Wynnum Central business district called for yet another move. So on 5 March 2006, a modern new complex including an 500-seat auditorium was opened about 4.5 kms away to the west at Kianawah Road, Wynnum West, and less than a kilometre from the site of the former Lindum Baptist Church.



**Former Wynnum Baptist Church in a dilapidated state (2021) (Photo: D Parker)**

The old Bay Street buildings were used for various purposes but often lay abandoned, awaiting redevelopment. According to local reports, there were plans to move the old wooden building out of the district, but after protests by local people, the current plan is to place it on council owned land in the Wynnum district.

**END**