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# Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Hall (now Deepdene Uniting Church)



Former Frank Payton Memorial Church and Hall, 958A Burke Road Deepdene



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## Location

958A Burke Road DEEPDENE, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO884

## Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 26, 2022

### What is significant?

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Hall at 958A Burke Road, Deepdene, is significant. Significant elements of the site include the:

- Former Frank Paton Memorial Church, built 1941 by A. A. Meyer to designs by architects Scarborough, Robertson and Love, front fence to the Burke Road frontage and early garden setting including slat-glazed tile paths;
- Church hall, built in 1923 to designs by Henry Hardie Kemp, including rear wing (hipped roof) constructed c1923-26 as an original or early part of the hall building;
- The 1950s/60s red brick additions to the north and rear (east) of the main hall building are not significant and do not contribute to the significance of the site.

### **How is it significant?**

The site is of local historic, architectural (representative), aesthetic, social and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Uniting Church (1941), church hall (1923) are historically significant as an important example of a Nonconformist church site developed in the City of Boroondara during the interwar era, notable for its large land size and range of facilities, serving the local community for almost 100 years. The church, opened in 1941 at Deepdene, reflects the need to meet suburban growth in that locality as significant development in the outlying areas of Boroondara, such as Balwyn and East Kew, in the interwar period saw demands for new Presbyterian churches. (Criterion A)

The church hall is historically significant having served the community for almost 100 years for various church functions and activities, including Scottish country dancing, and as a meeting place of the 2nd Deepdene Girl Guides. Shortly following its construction in 1923 it was used by many local church groups, including the Presbyterian Girls' Association, the Boys' Club, and the Young Men's class. It was also used by Presbyterian Deepdene Dramatic Club and a men's gymnastics club. It also housed the well-attended Sunday School, which had an attendance of 124 students in 1924. (Criterion A)

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church is a fine example of the work of architectural practice Scarborough, Robertson and Love, as a substantial church designed in the Romanesque Revival style. It demonstrates key design elements of this style, including its picturesque massing, broadly pitched roof, polygonal apse, and entrance porch with ornate door portal, as well as characteristic decorative details including a corbel table and dentillation, wheel window and triangular parapet. (Criterion D)

The church hall is a fine example of the work of Henry Hardie Kemp, as a modest hall designed in the Queen Anne style. It incorporates typical design elements of the style, including the steeply pitched roof, exposed rafters and beams, moulded timber joinery and wide overhanging eaves. While the hall has had later additions, they do not disrupt appreciation of its two main elevations (west and south) and have been designed sympathetically to the original architectural style and materials of the building. (Criterion D)

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church is notable as a Presbyterian church constructed before 1945 designed in the Romanesque Revival style. This style of architecture, which dominated Catholic church architecture in the interwar period, was selected for this commission as a matter of practicality: it was thought to be the most appropriate style for the slope of the site, whereas the use of Gothic Revival architecture would have made the roof appear too high and prominent. Its highly decorative freestone door portal with intricately carved lintel, tympanum, moulded arches and voussoirs, creates an interesting contrast with the general simplicity of the building's monumental massing. Other key details include the visual interest provided through circular terracotta vents punctuating the high-quality brickwork, as well as the articulated brickwork to vertical piers, the corbel table, shallowly expressed bracketed eaves and understated buttressing to the quasi-tower. Its aesthetic quality is enhanced by its prominent siting, the retention of its original rustic fence of stone with dressed bluestone capping, and garden setting, which incorporates many native plantings and original variegated salt-glaze tile paths and edging. (Criterion E)

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Hall are significant for its strong and ongoing associations with the Deepdene and Balwyn community. They played an ongoing role in both the spiritual and social life of the local community since 1916, when the first timber church building was erected on the site. The hall has served the community for almost 100 years for various church functions and activities, including Scottish country dancing, and as a meeting place of the 2nd Deepdene Girl Guides. There have been long and close ties between the church and the neighbouring Deepdene State School, demonstrated by the pedestrian gateway in the boundary fence between the two properties. (Criterion G)

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Hall are significant for their association with Reverend Frank Paton, who had been appointed minister to the Deepdene Presbyterian Church in 1925. Paton laid the commemorative stone tablet for the 1923 church hall and the 1941 church was named in his honour. Paton was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria and served as the church's Foreign Mission Secretary from 1907 to 1935. He retired as minister at Deepdene in 1936 and died in 1938. (Criterion H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Balwyn Heritage Study Peer Review Stage 2, Context, 2020;
Construction dates	1922, 1941,
Architect/Designer	Scarborough, Robertson & Love,
Hermes Number	207080
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Church Hall, 958A Burke Road, Deepdene, occupy a deep allotment on the eastern side of Burke Road, a major arterial road running north-south, just north of its intersection with Whitehorse Road. Moving from the west to east, the site can be seen to comprise four elements: the church building (1941), with oatmeal brick walls and a broad, low-pitched gabled roof, fronting Burke Road at the western end of the allotment; to its rear sits the large red-brick hall (1923), with a steeply-pitched gabled roof; adjoining the hall, at its east, is a flat-roofed, red-brick structure (1950s) and small asphalted carpark; at the eastern end of the allotment are a pair of tennis courts (c1926-31) enclosed with a high cyclone fence.

At the front (western) edge of the allotment, the church has a shallow setback behind a low, original, rustic fence of stone with dressed bluestone capping, and forms part of a significant vista when travelling south down Burke Road, with the adjacent red brick Deepdene Primary School (1922) to its north. These views are enhanced by the steep fall of the land to the east, and gentle slope to the north. At the northern boundary is a utilitarian timber-paling fence, while the rear (east) property line abuts parklands associated with the Anniversary Outer Circle Trail. A long concrete drive (a former laneway) extends down the southern edge of the church, terminating at the western edge of the tennis courts, where a bluestone lane continues.

### The church (1941)

The substantial, late interwar-era church, designed in an austere Romanesque Revival style by architects Scarborough, Robertson and Love, has oatmeal brick walls and a low-pitched gabled roof of brown terracotta tiles. A band of dentillation sits beneath the eaves, with arched corbel tables above each window.

The building comprises carefully articulated forms including a polygonal apse, broad nave with a prominent clerestory, and side aisles incorporating a partially closed loggia. At the north end of the building, a quasi-tower, used as an organ chamber, is placed over a vestry and linked to the main entrance by a cloister.

At the south (front) end of the building, a highly decorative freestone door portal, with intricately carved lintel, tympanum, moulded arches and vousoirs marks the principal entrance to the church, and contrasts with the general simplicity of the building's monumental massing. Overall ornamentation is restrained, with visual interest provided through circular terracotta vents punctuating the high-quality brickwork, as well as the articulated brickwork to vertical piers, the corbel table, shallow dentillated eaves and understated buttressing to the quasi-tower.

The tall nave and apse are lit with large semi-circular arched multi-paned windows of yellow glass. A wheel window marks the southern elevation, and this end of the building is punctuated with a stylised chunky Maltese-style cross atop a characteristic parapet rising to a triangular summit and decorated with a corbel table.

The church building sits within a picturesque garden setting, incorporating many native plantings and original variegated salt-glazed tile paths and edging.

### The hall (1923)

The large hall to the rear of the church, designed in the Arts and Crafts style by architect Henry Hardie Kemp, has red brick walls and a steeply-pitched dominant gabled roof of terracotta tiles. The building comprises a main

gabled structure with an enclosed porch projecting to the east toward the church, which originally served as the principal entrance to the building. It has prominent eaves resting on exposed rafters and these are supported on decorative pierced timber brackets at the gable ends. Decoration to the gable ends incorporates half-timbered detailing resting on exposed purlins. Windows are timber-framed, and generally comprise multi-paned sashes within a main round-arched frame. Each arch is expressed in brick. Buttresses are used as defining elements of the composition dividing window bays and marking corners.

A rear wing to the east elevation of the hall building is an original part of the 1923 hall, or at least one that was constructed by 1926 (MMBW 1926). It is constructed of the same red face brick and terracotta tiled roof, hipped to the rear elevation of the hall building. It also replicates details of the hall building, including the same type of decorative expressed rafters with lambs tongue profile and multi-paned windows. While the main part of the 1923 Hall (beneath a gabled roof) has actual buttresses, the rear wing (hipped roof) echoes this element with abstracted buttresses seen on its south elevation, using raking bands of brickwork. These abstracted buttresses divided window bays on the east elevation of the rear wing. Overall it is a structure of high quality workmanship, designed with care like the rest of the Hall. This is in contrast with the utilitarian, flat-roofed addition built c1950s-60s at the rear of this wing. Constructed in sympathetic red brick with similar detailing and built into the sloping landscape, these additions step down considerably from the main hall building and hence have little visual impact on the building. At the north of the hall is a double-storey addition (1964), also of red brick and sympathetic overall appearance.

At the rear of the site two (now clay) tennis courts laid out in c1926-31 remained at the time of the study.

The Former Frank Paton Memorial Church and Hall site has a high degree of integrity. The church building exhibits a high level of intactness, retaining key original elements of the place including its picturesque, asymmetrical massing, broad roof form, original pattern of fenestration and understated detailing in shallowly expressed brickwork patterns and motifs. The integrity of the place as a whole is enhanced by the retention of the church hall and tennis courts. While the church hall has later additions, they do not disrupt appreciation of its two main elevations (west and south) and have been designed sympathetically to the original architectural style and materials of the building.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*