

UNITING CHURCH COMPLEX



506-508 Napier Street, White Hills Uniting Church & Hall



506-508 Napier Street, White Hills Uniting Church & Hall, vestry & possible early Methodist Church c1864 behind the later church



506-508 Napier Street, Uniting (former) Methodist Church with contemporary porch built in front



White Hills Uniting Church showing ceremony to start work on the main church building. The vestry is seen with the flag in front where the new brick church was built. The building on the left was moved to the White Hills Reading Rooms. The building in the

Location

506-508 NAPIER STREET, WHITE HILLS, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 27, 2023

What is significant?

The Uniting Church Complex at 506-508 Napier Street White Hills comprising two halls and a church on the site developed between 1860 and 1903, is significant. The rear of the site facing Dundas Street is not significant and has been excluded from the mapped extent.

How is it significant?

The Uniting Church complex is of local historic, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The Uniting Church complex at 506-508 Napier Street White Hills is significant as a site of the early Methodist churches that established in 1853 in the White Hills area. The site represents the evolution of the Methodist (Wesleyan) Church in White Hills from the 1860s to the present time, represented in several buildings including the 1860s vestry, c.1870 church, 1903 hall and 1953 kindergarten. The 1903 hall is significant as it commemorates the Jubilee (50 years) of the Methodist Church in White Hills. (Criterion A)

The church built c.1870 is a representative example of a Gothic Revival church with plain red brick masonry and cement render dressings. It is significant for its architectural characteristics comprising the steeply pointed gable roof, unpainted masonry walls, lancet windows wall buttresses, parapet walls, triple lancet windows and simple brickwork detail at the apex of the gable. The rear vestry is significant as part of an earlier church with its chimney, masonry walls and pointed arch headed windows. The modern porch and ramp at the front of the church are not significant. (Criterion D)

The 1903 timber hall is an excellent example of the Gothic revival style expressed in the Edwardian period, blending aesthetic characteristics of timber friezes, decorative weatherboard claddings, barge boards and finials. The roof ventilators are distinctive in their metalwork and of high quality. The other church hall is a representative example of a timber hall of a relatively common type. (Criteria D & E)

The Uniting Church complex including the church and two halls provides social connections within the White Hills community, having been used and in continuing to be used by a range of social, religious and recreational groups. (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Bendigo - Eaglehawk & Bendigo Heritage Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1993; Greater Bendigo - White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2016, Context P/L, 2015;
Construction dates	1870, 1903,
Architect/Designer	Beebe, John,
Other Names	Former Wesleyan Methodist Church,
Hermes Number	41708

Physical Description 1

The Uniting Church complex at 506-508 Napier Street is situated on a large site with three buildings comprising different periods of development. The earliest building on the site is the small brick structure located behind the church. It has a chimney and a pair of arch headed windows. The low pitch gable roof is clad in corrugated iron and is finished with a parapet wall and is used as the vestry.

The church built in front of the vestry c.1870 demonstrates the architectural characteristics of the Gothic Revival style in the steeply pointed gable roof, lancet windows set between the wall buttresses and parapet walls. The front elevation has triple lancet windows between a pair of buttresses and a brickwork cross at the top of the gable. A modern porch and ramp has been constructed at the front of the church.

The 1913 weatherboard clad timber hall is decorated with a small porch (partially infilled) at the front, the use of diagonal weatherboard cladding to the gable end and a turned finial at the roof apex. The timber frieze to the porch is notable as an attractive feature, along with the front triple window with diamond pattern lead lighting. The gable roof is decorated by a row of three square roof ventilators of particularly finely detailed metalwork. Windows have top light opening sashes with fixed panels beneath and are evenly located along the side elevations. There is a small skillion-roofed extension at the rear of the hall. The design is very similar to Arnold Street Uniting church hall of 1915, designed by John Beebe, brother of architect William Beebe. It is highly likely from the features including the porch and tri-partite windows, that John Beebe is also the designer of the White Hills hall.

The small timber hall built in the 1940s as a kindergarten is a plainer version of this building typology and has a modern brick annexe built to one side. It has roof ventilators of a more standard design, weatherboard cladding and double hung sash windows.

The site is gravelled and at the front of the site a low red brick fence of Post-war origin has been constructed. The once larger site contains contemporary aged care homes.

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/>