
Uniting Church (former Wesleyan Church)



North and west elevations, addressing High and Camp streets respectively.



Rear (east) of the Uniting Church complex.



East elevation. The addition was built in 1986 following a fire.



Interwar Sunday School.

Location

10 Camp Street, KANGAROO FLAT VIC 3555 - Property No 197464

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO512

Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Uniting Church (former Wesleyan) complex at Kangaroo Flat comprises a substantial gabled bichrome brick Gothic Revival church (1871) and a brick Sunday School (1936). The buildings are located on elevated ground behind a small open landscaped park close to Kangaroo Flat's historic centre. The 1871 church, designed by Melbourne architects Crouch and Wilson, superseded an earlier (1858) church within the same allotment. The 1858 church then became a Sunday School, prior to its demolition in 1936 and replacement with the present Sunday School. Despite the unsympathetic modifications and additions to the east, the 1871 church remains a substantial and prominent structure with a strong Gothic Revival character. The gabled west facade of the 1871 church, facing High Street, is subdivided into three elements, having a central geometric arched west window and doors in each flanking bay, with three oculus windows outlined in cream brick. The main window has four lancets rising to support three quatrefoils with seven linking triangular lights. The side windows are all simple lancets with diamond-pattern lead pane joints, and heads expressed in cream brick. The plinth is of rough-cut sandstone and there is a decorated wrought iron cross at the gable apex. The steeply pitched roof has slate tile cladding. The lower gable edges are finished with two kneelers delineated in cream brick. The facade also has a pair of diagonal two-stage buttresses in red brick with cream brick off-sets, a treatment repeated on the six other buttresses to the side walls. The plan is a basic nave, and there is no chancel expressed externally.

How is it significant?

The Uniting Church is of local historical, social and aesthetic/architectural significance.

Why is it significant?

The 1871 Uniting Church (former Wesleyan Church) is historically significant (Criterion A) as the centre of Methodism at Kangaroo Flat since 1858, with the present church the focus of Methodism since 1871, initially as the Wesleyan Church and since 1977 as the Uniting Church. The Methodist sects were well represented in the former Marong Shire from the earliest years of European settlement, reflecting the presence of Cornish miners in the district. The presence of the Methodists, and this substantial 1871 church, also provides evidence of the diversity of religious communities on the broader goldfields. The 1936 Sunday School additionally is of significance, and provides evidence of the ongoing role and presence of the church in the local community into the first half of the twentieth century. Socially (Criterion G), the Uniting Church is significant as the focus of the Methodist community, initially the Wesleyan Church and later the Uniting Church, since 1871.

The Uniting Church is also of aesthetic/architectural significance (Criterion E). The building, although unsympathetically modified and extended, remains a substantial and prominent gabled bichrome brick Gothic Revival church. It is an example of the work of Crouch and Wilson, noted Melbourne architectural practice, which demonstrates the tri-partite facade treatment which was a characteristic of the firm's churches. Elements of note include the central geometric arched west window with four lancets rising to support three quatrefoils with linking triangular lights; three main gable oculus windows outlined in cream brick; side windows with simple lancets and diamond-pattern leadlights; picturesque steeply pitched roof; wall buttressing; and brick quoining. The church also has landmark qualities by virtue of its scale and presentation, as well as its location on a generous, informally landscaped and elevated site at the south of Kangaroo Flat's historic core. The 1936 Sunday School is also of note. While appropriately subservient to the church in scale and footprint, the smaller building has elements of interest including the distinctive cruciform pitched truss roof with two transverse wings to each side of the main gable; use of red brick with a rough cast gable end, and decorated panels in clinker brick; a central gable vent and a broad bracketed gable eave; and the Gothic influenced four-light timber-framed central fanlight window, flanked by a pair of two-stage buttresses.

Theme

8. Building community life

HeritageStudy/Consultant	Greater Bendigo - Heritage Policy Citations Review, Lovell Chen P/L, 2011;
Construction dates	1871, 1936,
Architect/Designer	Crouch & Wilson,
Hermes Number	184794
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Uniting Church (former Wesleyan) complex comprises a substantial gabled bichrome brick Gothic Revival church (1871) and brick Sunday School (1936). The buildings are located to the west end of a deep site, on elevated ground behind a small open landscaped park close to Kangaroo Flat's historic centre. The main presentation is to the west (High Street), behind the deep setback.

The gabled west facade of the 1871 church, facing High Street, is subdivided into three elements, having a central geometric arched west window and doors in each flanking bay, with three oculus windows outlined in cream brick, one over each door, the other above the main window. The main window has four lancets rising to support three quatrefoils with seven linking triangular lights. The side windows are all simple lancets with diamond-pattern lead pane joints. Their heads are expressed in cream brick. The plinth is of rough-cut sandstone and there is a decorated wrought iron cross at the gable apex, set in a chamfered block-finial. The steeply pitched roof has slate tile cladding, capped with a notched ridge, and with three dormer vents on each side. The lower gable edges are finished with two kneelers delineated in cream brick. The facade also has a pair of diagonal two-stage buttresses in red brick with cream brick off-sets, and this treatment is repeated on the six other buttresses to the side walls, these being set at right angles. The breakfront around the main window is topped by a gable with two more kneelers projecting to each side and finishing a run of cream brick up each breakfront corner, each laid in three course sets of alternating length to produce quoin imagery. The plan is a basic nave, and there is no chancel expressed externally.

A larger addition has been made to the Church Street (east) side of the church, in the wake of the 1982 fire. This includes a broad porch to the north side that continues around to Church Street. The outer component has a large flat roof with timber fascia and metal decking, supported by blade piers in brick. It breaks open at the north-east corner to include an integral pergola with diagonal beams. On the Church Street side, this pier theme becomes a set of wing walls separating five (sashed) window bays. The porch entry is a floor-to-ceiling set of fixed glass panes with a main door. Immediately behind the flat roofed area is a lean-to pitched roof forming a gable-hip with the church's original east end gable. The lean-to east end roof is clad in Marseilles pattern tiles and standard tile ridge capping. A timber fascia set above a row of clerestory windows. The addition is not a sympathetic element and conceals the original gable end to which it is attached.

The inter war Sunday School to the immediate south of the church is directly linked to the flat roofed component of the 1980s addition, with metal-deck roofing running through and linking with its north porch wing. This obscures the Sunday School's east elevation, apart from the plain brick rear gable; the addition also internalises the south windows of the 1871 church.

The Sunday School is of red brick with a rough cast gable end, decorated panels in clinker brick, a central gable vent and a broad gable eave, supported by four diagonal timber brackets. It has a cruciform pitched truss roof clad in corrugated galvanised steel, with two transverse wings to each side of the main gable as it faces High Street. The corbelled side gables are plain brick panels, and the main (High Street) wall is dominated by a four-light timber-framed central fanlight window bisected with a brick pier. The fanlights have pent heads, carrying the Gothic influences further. This window is crowned by a Tudor-looking hood mould with label-stops, and flanked by a pair of two-stage buttresses with cement-rendered off-sets. The High Street wall has a thick, flush course line in rendered cement running across its front.

A toilet block is located to the west (front) of the Sunday School, with a flat roof clad in steel decking, red face brick walls and boxed eaves. A timber ramp has been added to the north-west corner of the Sunday School, and its framing supports a recent lean-to porch roof. The toilet entries are screened by crimped steel panels attached to a light steel frame. The steel ridge-vents above the hall are recent. These elements are also not sympathetic to the Sunday School and obscure views of its main facade.

The open space to the west of the deep site was landscaped as a small municipal park during the early 1990s, by arrangement with the former Rural City of Marong.⁹

The original fabric of the church appears to be in generally sound condition but shows evidence of structural movement. This is marked along the north side walls, where mortar courses have fallen out at various places. A conspicuous vertical crack has opened between the bricks alongside one of the side lancet windows and runs down to the base.

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.

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