
Ashburton Uniting Church

Location

3-7 Ashburton Grove ASHBURTON, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO919

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Hermes Number 208926

Property Number

Physical Description 1

The complex comprises a 1935 interwar brick church hall with attached vestry and parlour extensions (1950), a 1939 brick kindergarten with post-war (1957) extension, a 1952 timber church hall, and a 1961 modern church, located around a central garden and lawn (Figure 12). The buildings are connected via covered walkways or landscaping. The dominant building on the streetscape is the 1961 church designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, with the Moderne Gothic facade of the 1935 church hall also fronting to Ashburn Grove. The timber hall and brick kindergarten are located at the rear of the site, semi-concealed from street view.

1935 Church Hall

The church hall (building A on Figure 12) is of clinker brick with arched windows and terracotta roofing tiles with a brick base course, in a streamline Moderne influenced Gothic Revival style. The

gabled street facade features decorative buttress-like piers and a porch over the entry. The Gothic archivolt is intact over the porch but the crenelated parapet has been removed and the original door replaced with a steel framed glazed doorway. A foundation stone was laid by E Alec Cato, son of FJ Cato, on October 1935 (Herald 2 October 1935:21). The Cato family owned the Cato & Moran grocery stores and a major Methodist benefactor in Melbourne. FJ (Frederick John) Cato was a devout Methodist and generous benefactor who had donated in excess of £250,000 to charities, hospitals and religious and educational institutions up to the time of his death in 1935 (Weekly Times 14 September 1935:32). Formerly a school teacher, FJ Cato made his fortune as co-founder of the retail grocery chain Moran & Cato, which became one of the largest retail organisations in Australia (Daily Advertiser 5 June 1935:4). FJ Cato was a committed Methodist who supported Wesley College as a Council member, and Methodist Ladies College with donations of scholarships and properties (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1979).

The church hall was recently gutted by fire, however the front section of the building comprising front facade, gabled roof, and window bays along the side of the building remained intact (Figure 15).

1939 Kindergarten

The kindergarten designed by RM & MH King to match the old church at the rear of the site (building B on Figure 12) is intact behind the church hall. The building is clinker brick with Gothic Revival windows. A cream brick, flat roofed post-war addition has been made to the kindergarten in the space between the kindergarten and hall.

1952 Church Hall

The post-war church hall (building D on Figure 12) is a simple -utilitarian design steel frame and timber weatherboard rectangular plan building with an aluminium-clad gable roof.

1961 Church

The 1961 church (building F on Figure 12) is a modern style church building, within the broader Late Twentieth-Century Ecclesiastical idiom, comprising a rectangular plan combining narthex, nave, sanctuary and choir, with a bell tower. The church has a copper-clad shallow pitched roof, supported on a steel frame with exposed beams within. The new church is connected to the old via a covered walkway and connects to the 1952 church hall via its vestry wing.

The nave is illuminated by three large rectangular steel framed windows on header brick panels along the west, a large window with cross on the south, and rectangular clerestory windows on the east. The choir is illuminated with three skylights above. The flat-roofed vestry and church parlour extends east and connects with the 1951 church hall.

The tower has been altered, with the removal of the original steel cross and the concealment of the concrete louvres in the bell tower by screens featuring crosses. The tower has been extended upwards with a cap to conceal telecommunications equipment, sympathetically to the original design. No other alterations to the church have been recorded. A foundation stone is located on the base of the tower.

A lawn with landscaping, paths and small tree plantings unites the various elements at the centre of the site. The central path and lawn were part of the 1961 landscape design. On the street front, the original lawn in the front setback for the church has been replaced with asphalt car parking.

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/>