



Figure 20. Interior of the Memorial gateway structure. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 21. Detail of the memorial gateway commemorative elements. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Recent school buildings (Figure 9: Numbers 6–10)

Various purpose-built school buildings were constructed on the site from the 2000s. Key additions include the following.

Classrooms and multimedia room (Figure 9: Number 7) is a new flat roofed two-storey school building located in the southwest corner of the site was constructed in 2010. The building overlooks Fawkner Park to the west. Constructed in brick and weatherboard at ground floor level, the building has an overhanging second storey supported by steel universal columns and has a glazed curtain wall to the west.

Located in the northwest portion of the site is a three storey, flat roofed building clad with corrugated sheet metal (Figure 9: Number 8) that was constructed in 2015–16. It is set back from Fawkner Park behind the open playground area behind a contemporary black palisade fence. The building has a rectangular footprint and is mirrored about the north-south axis. It features semi-enclosed stairwells to the east and west.

The Learning Centre and entrance wing (Figure 9: Number 10) is a three-storey, flat-roofed modular building located towards the northeast of the site including a new main entrance and classrooms was designed by B2 Architecture and built in 2019–20. It is set back from Punt Road behind the carpark drop off zone and abuts the remaining portion of the 1948–50 school building to the south. With an irregular footprint, the building is clad with black panels, features extensive areas of floor to ceiling glazing and is painted black with accents of orange. It incorporates a new covered entrance to the school that is constructed to match the 1950 wing.

Various contemporary sports and playground elements and surfaces are featured throughout the site.

INTEGRITY

South Yarra Primary School at 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, has variable integrity across the site, however, elements of its construction dating to 1877, 1906–07, 1923–24 and 1948–50 remain as legible evidence of the site’s incremental development.

The 1906–07 red brick infants’ school building (Figure 9: Number 1) designed by J B Cohen has high integrity. The original built form, roofline, face brick surfaces, pattern of fenestration and decorative detailing are intact. The remaining portion of the 1923–24 extension (Figure 9: Number 3) to the east of the 1906 infants’ school retains its original skillion roofed form, however fenestrations, as well as rear rooms, have been altered.

The c1906 former caretaker’s building (Figure 9: Number 2) has been altered but the original built form, proportions and roof cladding of the building remains intact. The primary, south façade has had significant alterations, however the former verandah composition remains legible despite being infilled. External changes are likely reversible.

The remaining portion of the 1948–50 main school building (comprising the side (south) elevation and front (east) elevation up to the flagpole) (Figure 9: Number 5) designed by Percy E Everett is legible as a postwar school building and is largely intact. The remaining portion retains the original form, rendered walls, original openings and key Moderne stylistic elements including the vertical massing, porthole windows and flagpole. The curved entrance portico of the adjoining new building (2019–20) is misleading as it reads as a continuation of the 1948–50 main school building. Window frames have been replaced but the earlier window configuration has been retained.

The primary façade of the former caretaker’s cottage has been altered but the built form and the composition of the former verandah remains legible.

The 1924 brick memorial gateway (Figure 9: Number 4) is highly intact to its original construction. The associated brick fence posts near the gateway have fair integrity with some evidence that some posts have been repaired.

Overall, the complex has a fair integrity, retaining a collection of intact and highly legible fabric across the site which render visible the key development periods and styles.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The construction of primary schools and the provision of educational services and facilities is an important aspect of the City of Melbourne. Primary schools are cornerstones within communities welcoming students and families from the local area. Their growth and development reflect the demographics and patterns of change within the communities they serve.

The subject site currently comprises the 1906–07 infants’ school with 1923–24 extension, the c1906 caretaker’s building (altered) and the 1948–50 main school building, demonstrating the choice of styles that were favoured by the department.

Designs of state schools were typically undertaken by the architects within the Public Works Department. Stylistic choices, and preferences, were generally directed by the chief architect at the time. During the 1870s and 1880s, Public Works Department architects commonly used red brick construction with Gothic Revival detailing. Early infants’ schools (built mainly in the 1900s) designed by the department under the supervision of the district architect J B Cohen adopted symmetrical gable roofs and Marseille tile cladding, broadly influenced by the Queen Anne style architecture. J B Cohen designed the first detached infants’ school in 1901, which became a prototype of the Federation period

infants' schools. Later infants' schools built in the 1910s were designed by the then Department's Chief Architect George William Watson, developing on from Cohen's models.

Under Percy Everett, chief architect of the Public Works Department 1935–53, the Moderne style was favoured for school buildings. Key characteristics and details of the Moderne style included flat roofs, asymmetrical facades, use of casement, corner, ribbon and round porthole windows and vertical massing countered by a horizontal emphasis.

As an inner-city municipality, the City of Melbourne housed many early schools, some of which have since closed and been re-purposed. The former primary schools in the City of Melbourne commonly feature polychrome brickwork, gable ends and towers, as well as other decorative elements influenced by the Gothic Revival or Tudor Revival style. The examples include: Kathleen Syme Education Centre (Former Primary School No 112), 251 Faraday Street, Carlton, built in 1876–77 (VHR H1625; HO57); Former Primary School No 2365, 224 Queensberry Street, Carlton, built in 1881 (VHR H970; HO93); Former Yarra Park Primary School No 1406, 2–40 Webb Lane, East Melbourne, built in 1874 and 1877 (VHR H768; HO173); and West Melbourne Primary School No 1689, Eades Place, West Melbourne, built in 1875–76 (HO464).

Elements of the South Yarra Primary School are comparable to the following examples within and outside the City of Melbourne. Examples are within the City of Melbourne unless otherwise noted. The following provides some comparison in terms of the establishment date, long-term use, scale or stylistic features.

Government primary schools

Kensington Primary School No 2374, McCracken Street, Kensington (HO957, City of Moonee Valley)

Kensington State School No 2374 was built by the Education Department in 1881, with additions in 1883, 1886, and 1892. Two pavilion classrooms were added in 1912, and the school was remodelled in 1922. The main school building is red brick.



Figure 22. Kensington Primary School No. 2374, McCracken Street, Kensington. built in 1880–81. (Source: CoMMaps)

Errol Street Primary School No 1402, Errol Street, North Melbourne (HO295)

The existing brick single-storey building was designed by Wharton & Vickers and constructed in 1874 and was the prototype for five other schools. It was later remodelled, and major alterations were made. A detached pavilion-style classroom was added in c1912–15. Errol Street was also significant as a teacher training school.



Figure 23. Errol Street Primary School, North Melbourne, built in 1874. (Source: CoMMaps)

Rathdowne Street Primary School No 2695, 201–231 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, 1884 (VHR H1624; HO106)

The Rathdowne Street Primary School is a double-storey brick building constructed in 1884 with a hipped roof central pavilion buttressed either end by slightly projecting gables. Like many other state schools of the period it was built in the Gothic Revival style. Detailing included polychromatic brick and limestone panels, and basalt. Changes included those to windows, a probable change in roof cladding from slate to the existing terracotta tiles and internal changes.



Figure 24. Primary School No. 2695, 201–231 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, built in 1884. (Source: Victorian Heritage Database)

Infants' schools in government primary schools

Ascot Vale Primary School No 2608, 15–27 Bank Street, Ascot Vale (HO162, City of Moonee Valley)

The Ascot Vale Primary School comprises the original school built in 1885 (extended in 1888 and 1902, and altered in 1914–15) and the 1901–02 former infants' school, situated at the rear of the main school. The infant block is relatively symmetrical in plan and has a dominant hip and gable roof, which is clad in slate tiles and has original roof vents. The external walls of the building have face red brick, with a band of cream brick at sill level. Elsewhere cream brick is used above the heads of doors. Other original details include two brick chimneys with cement rendered detailing, louvred vents at the peak of the gable ends, small decorative brackets at the gable ends, and metal wall vents.



Figure 25. 15–27 Bank Street, Ascot Vale, built in 1901–02. (Source: Hermes)

Infant Building, Moonee Ponds West Primary School, 132 Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds (VHR H1321; HO142, City of Moonee Valley)

The Moonee Ponds West Primary School opened on 14 February 1888. In 1911 two blocks adjoining the school were acquired as the site for a new, detached infant school building. As a result of the Fink Commission (1899) which had recommended the construction of independent infant schools in Victoria, 53 infant buildings were constructed between 1901 and 1939. The Moonee Ponds West example is in the pavilion style, an Edwardian design adopted by the Public Works Department for infant buildings constructed between 1907 and 1915. Designed by Public Works Department architect George William Watson, the Moonee Ponds West infants school building opened in June 1913.



Figure 26. 123 Eglinton Street, Moonee Ponds, built in 1911. (Source: Hermes)

Former Infants School, 2–4 Park Street, Malvern (HO477, City of Stonnington)

The former Infants School, Park Street, Malvern, was designed by the Public Works Department under Chief Architect, George William Watson, and completed in July 1914. It is an Edwardian single-storey school building with red-brick walls and a picturesque combination of jerkin head and hipped roofs clad in Marseille pattern terracotta tiles. The building presents an asymmetrical facade to Park Street with a pair of entrances and former cloakroom sitting in front of a large hall. The dominant element in the composition is the hall roof with its distinctive octagonal domed ventilators.



Figure 27. 2–4 Park Street, Malvern, built in 1914. (Source: Hermes)

Percy Everett designs for school buildings

Within the City of Melbourne architect Percy Everett designed buildings for the food trade school, William Angliss College (HO684). However, this example of Everett’s work is less directly comparable with the subject site than examples of primary school buildings designed by him outside the City of Melbourne. Examples of Everett’s school designs outside the City of Melbourne are provided below.

Coburg North Primary School No. 4523 (HO394, City of Moreland)

Coburg North primary school comprises three main buildings of which one building was designed by architect Percy Everett and built in 1937. The interwar cream brick building has an L-shaped footprint with an angled entrance. A flat roof is concealed behind a parapet and Moderne style detailing is evident. The building demonstrates Everett’s adherence to modernism combined with the neo-classical formality and decoration in the pre-cast panels (Hermes).



Figure 28. Coburg North Primary School No. 4523, built 1937. (Source: Hermes)

Drouin Primary School No 1924, 153-161 Princes Way, Drouin (VHR H1627; HO1, Shire of Baw Baw)

Constructed in 1936 in the Moderne style, the Drouin Primary School is a single storey building with stylistic features including a central rectangular mass, curved porches and wings. Flat roofs, horizontal glazing bars and strips of windows and doors emphasise the horizontal character of the primary façade.



Figure 29. Drouin Primary School, built 1936. (Source: Hermes)

Historically, South Yarra Primary School appears to be the oldest continually operating school (public or private) in the City of Melbourne on a single site, albeit within an array of buildings representing different historical periods of the site's development. It is also the oldest surviving school in the City of Melbourne, however its surviving built fabric does not represent the earliest phase of the school's development. The school's siting on the eastern edge of Fawkner Park is distinctive, as is the school's long-term use of the park as an extension of its otherwise restricted grounds.

Other examples of government primary schools currently operating and listed on the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay are not directly comparable to the South Yarra Primary School at 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, in terms of stylistic features or construction date of the main building. When compared to the Kensington Primary School No 2374, North Melbourne Primary School No 1402; and Primary School No 2695, the South Yarra Primary School is distinct from these three examples as while they retain their 1870s–1880s centrepiece main school buildings, South Yarra retains only the bluestone foundations of its 1877 building and features a number of later development layers. The subject site is stylistically distinct from the comparative examples which have main buildings constructed in the 1870s and 1880s in Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival styles.

In contrast, the South Yarra Primary School is historically layered, presenting a visual cross-section of its many development periods. It has no clear comparators within the City of Melbourne in this regard, but schools that have a complex of buildings from different periods are commonly observed in more suburban areas.

In terms of individual buildings, the 1906 infants school building is largely intact and representative of infants school building construction in the Queen Anne style by the Public Works Department. The Federation period infants school buildings outside the City of Melbourne listed above were designed by the Public Works Department's architects J B Cohen and George William Watson. The 1906 South Yarra infants school building compares favourably with these. The subject building and the example at the Ascot Vale Primary School represents earlier version of infants school designs by J B Cohen, which feature decorative gable ends and polychrome brickwork. Unlike the subject example, later iterations of

the infants schools designed by George William Watson are typically characterised by the jerkin-head gables and octagonal ventilation towers. The 1906 infants school at the subject site is the only example in the City of Melbourne.

The remaining portion of the main school building (1948–50) is likely the only postwar primary school building within the City of Melbourne designed by architect Percy Everett. While only the side (south) elevation and front (east) elevation up to the flagpole remains, the 1948–50 South Yarra Primary School main school building clearly presents as Percy Everett’s work. South Yarra Primary School main school building is distinct as a later example of Everett’s work towards the end of his tenure as chief architect of the Public Works Department, and in its unusual integration of the earlier 1877 bluestone foundations.

Outside of the City of Melbourne, the main school building compares directly with other examples of Everett’s school designs listed above. The Drouin Primary School building is intact, more highly refined and has a higher degree of Moderne style detailing than the South Yarra Primary School. The subject site, however, has comparable details such as a vertical massing tower supporting a flag pole, flat roofs, rendered walls and art deco style lettering. Coburg North Primary School No 4523 is comparable in terms of the functionalist rectangular form, however, it differs in terms of material finish and detailing. Both buildings are constructed earlier than South Yarra Primary School but are broadly comparable as examples of Everett’s school designs.

South Yarra Primary School is characterised by its assortment of buildings across the site that reflect key periods of government primary school development in the City of Melbourne. The site is confined to a small land parcel, and the incremental growth of the school within these spatial constraints has resulted in a complex historical layering of fabric. Despite numerous changes to the built fabric of the school elements of many of the different eras of the site’s development have been consciously retained, creating a stylistically diverse built environment that physically evidences the full range of its historical development.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

CRITERION G

- ✓ Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).
-

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual Heritage place.

Recommended for addition to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register as an Aboriginal Historical Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

Melbourne Planning Scheme

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS | No |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS | No |
| TREE CONTROLS | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4) | Yes – Memorial gateway and posts |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER | No |
| PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE | Yes |

Other

Research undertaken in preparing this citation indicated the place’s association with Aboriginal people. A large gum tree that pre-dated European settlement stood in the rear school yard. The tree was known to have been an Aboriginal camping and meeting place and a corroboree site. Despite efforts to preserve the tree, it died in 1951 and was removed. A piece of wood was taken from the tree and turned into a partly polished billet with an interpretive inscription. It is recommended that this place is nominated for addition to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register as an Aboriginal Historical Place.

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 C

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: South Yarra Primary School

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~HO1408



What is significant?

South Yarra Primary School at 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, built in 1877, 1906, 1923–24, 1948–50, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to) the:

- original external form, materials and details of the 1906–07 red brick infants school building (Figure 1: Number 1) and the 1953 school bell hung at the rear of the building
- remaining side (south) elevation and front (east) elevation up to the flagpole of the 1948–50 main school building (Figure 1: Number 5), including its form, fenestrations, flagpole, and Moderne style lettering reading ‘South Yarra Primary School’ on the front (east) of the building under the flagpole.
- remaining bluestone foundations of the 1877 school building (Figure 1: part of Number 5)
- 1924 war memorial gateway and honour roll, and brick fence posts (Figure 1: Number 4)
- form, remaining fabric and composition of the 1906 former caretaker’s cottage (Figure 1: Number 2).

The 1923–24 skillion roof extension to the east of the infants school building (Figure 1: Number 3) is of historical interest however its form has been compromised by incremental change.

More recent alterations and additions, including contemporary buildings dating from c2009 to 2020 (Figure 1: numbers 6–10), fencing, paved areas, play equipment and furniture are not significant in their own right but contribute to the ongoing use of the site as a primary school.



Legend

| | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Infants’ school (1906–07, 1923) | 6 | Contemporary building (c2009) |
| 2 | Former caretaker’s cottage (1906–07) | 7 | Classrooms and multimedia room (2010) |
| 3 | Hat and cloakroom extension (1923) | 8 | New building (2015–16) |
| 4 | Memorial gateway and fence (1924) | 9 | Contemporary building (2017) |
| 5 | Main school building (originally built 1887 and rebuilt and renovated 1948–50) | 10 | Learning Centre and entrance wing (2019–20) |

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, showing the key buildings and later structures. Purpose-built school buildings shaded in pink (Numbers 6–10) are additions constructed from the 2000s onwards that are not significant. (Source: Nearmap 2020 with GML overlay)

How is it significant?

South Yarra Primary School at 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The site of the South Yarra Primary School at 585–601 Punt Road, South Yarra, has historical significance as a place where Aboriginal people camped in the c1850s and 1860s; this was most likely a use that had been ongoing for a long period of time prior to British colonisation. A mature River Red Gum in the school yard, which no longer survives, marked the site of the camping place. This tree was revered for many years by the school community on account of its historical connection. When the tree died, a piece of wood was retained by the school as a souvenir (Criterion A)

South Yarra Primary School, established as a Presbyterian school in 1854, taken over by the Education Department as a State School in 1873, and added to in 1877, 1906, 1923–24 and 1948–50, is historically significant as the oldest school operating on the same site in the City of Melbourne. The school's history follows its development as an early denominational school (attached to a church) in 1854, its incorporation under the Common School system from 1862, and its adoption as a State School in 1873. Its close proximity to the surviving South Yarra Presbyterian Church (1865), with which it was associated historically, enhances its historical significance. The introduction of free, compulsory and secular education in Victoria in 1873, increased the demand for government school buildings and sparked the need for producing attractive and functional standard school designs. The South Yarra Primary School is an example of one of these designs. Since then, the school building has undergone a number of changes, with significant additions in 1906, 1923–24 and 1948–50, which reflect key periods of development of the school to accommodate the changing needs of the contemporaneous school community. (Criterion A)

Elements of the South Yarra Primary School have representative significance as they are typologically representative of key periods of state school design since the introduction of government schools. These periods and elements include: the late nineteenth century (remaining bluestone foundations of the 1877 school building); early part of the twentieth century (the 1906–07 infants school and 1906 caretaker's cottage; interwar period (the 1924 memorial gateway including the honour roll and fenceposts); and postwar period (the remaining portion of the 1948–50 main school building and 1953 school bell hung at the rear of the infants school building). The elements demonstrate spatial arrangements and typical stylistic aspects of such building typologies. The side (south) elevation and front (east) elevation (up to the flagpole) of the postwar building designed by the Public Works Department (Figure 1: Number 5) represent the remaining portion of the main school building (1948–50), which was possibly the only postwar primary school building in the City of Melbourne. It demonstrates chief architect of the Public Works Department 1934–53, Percy Everett's, tendency to favour the Moderne style in public buildings, including schools. The red brick infants' school building (Figure 1: Number 1) is notable for its intactness, and is a strong example of a Federation-era infants school building design by the Public Works Department district architect J B Cohen. (Criterion D)

The South Yarra Primary School is socially significant to the City of Melbourne. It has had a long and continuing role as a government school in the City of Melbourne since 1854. The Church has been a focus for the local community, and has been part of the lives of generations of school children. The 1924 memorial gateway and honour roll (Figure 1: Number 4) is socially significant as a visual tangible link to previous generations of students who lost their lives in World War I. (Criterion G)

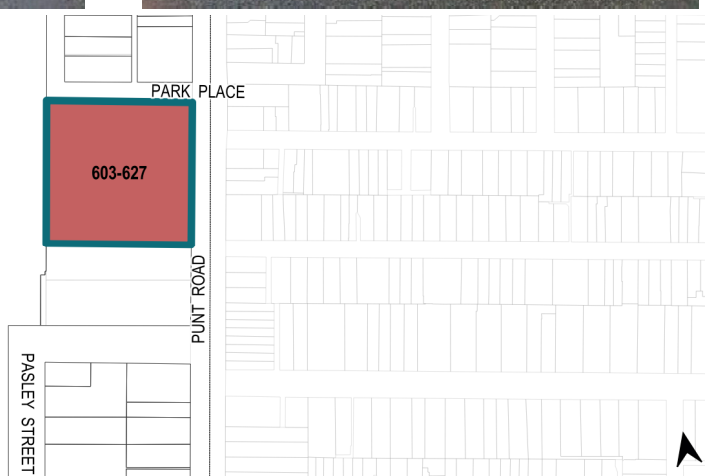
Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex

STREET ADDRESS: 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra

PROPERTY ID: 107804



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| SURVEY DATE: | March 2021 | SURVEY BY: | GML Heritage |
| PLACE TYPE: | Individual Heritage Place | EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY: | HO6 South Yarra Precinct |
| PROPOSED CATEGORY: | Significant | FORMER GRADE: | B |
| DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: | Lloyd Tayler | BUILDER: | William Ireland |
| DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: | Victorian Period (1851–1901) | DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: | 1866, 1873, 1874, 1884, 1925 |

THEMES

| ABORIGINAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations. | N/A |
| HISTORICAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
| 9 Religion and spirituality | 9.2 Establishing places of worship |

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, comprises five buildings: the 1866 bluestone church (with 1920 addition), the 1873 manse (with c1890 alteration and additions), the 1874 vestry and former school building, the 1884 Sunday school building, and the 1925 caretaker’s cottage. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex is an important example of a local Presbyterian church built as part of the early suburban development of Melbourne and has served the Presbyterian congregation on the site since 1854 for over 150 years. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex is also an important representation of Gothic Revival style architecture used in the church and its auxiliary buildings.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Presbyterianism in Melbourne

Presbyterianism was introduced to the Port Phillip District by members of the Established Church of Scotland. A relatively large proportion of early settlers in Victoria were Scots which resulted in a strong representation of Presbyterians. Many settled in western Victoria, however the Presbyterian Scots in Melbourne assumed a socially elite status unparalleled among the other Australian colonies (McCalman 2008).

In 1839 a Church of Scotland Congregation led by the Reverend James Forbes received a land grant in Collins Street, Melbourne. Scots Church, their first building, was opened there in 1841 (Lewis 1991:9). In June 1844 the presbytery of Melbourne was first constituted and Forbes was elected moderator.

Following the Great Disruption within the Church of Scotland in 1843 whereby a portion of the clergy broke away from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland, there was a major split in the Victorian Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Synod of Australia chose to maintain connection with the Established Church of Scotland, and ministers who supported the Free Church founded separate branches associated with the Free Church (Lewis 1991:9). Reverend Forbes sympathised with the Free Church movement. Forbes was deposed as Minister of the Scots Church by the Presbytery of Melbourne, which maintained connection with the Church of Scotland, for his support of the Free Church. He then formed the Knox Church congregation in Swanston Street, taking most of the Scots Church congregation with him. The Knox Church was associated with the Free Church of Australia Felix, which was constituted in 1847. Worship was undertaken in temporary accommodation until the construction of the John Knox Church in 1848. Due to safety concerns, a new church designed by Charles Webb was built on the site in 1863 (Church of Christ, VHD). Forbes valued education highly founding the Scots School (1838), the John Knox School (1848) and the Melbourne Academy (later Scotch College, Eastern Hill) (1851) (Chambers 2008).

By the later 1840s, the three major Presbyterian denominations, namely the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Free Church, and the United Presbyterians, were associated with prominent churches (Chambers 2008).

In 1850 the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Victoria was formed led by Relief Church minister, The Reverend AM Ramsay, who had arrived in the colony in 1847. By 1850, the synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Victoria comprised three congregations. With the assistance of ministers brought over from Scotland, the denomination grew and at least a dozen congregations were founded in the 1850s and sixteen United Presbyterian buildings were listed in the return of churches and chapels by 1857 in Victoria (Lewis 1991:9). In 1851 St Enoch's Church in Collins Street was opened for Ramsay's United Presbyterians congregation (Bradshaw 1976).

In 1859 most of the Presbyterian factions united to form the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Chambers 2008). The Presbyterian Church of Victoria operated out of various assembly halls on Collins Street (Chambers 2008). Some Free Presbyterians, including the congregation associated with Scots Church, continued to worship separately (Church of Christ, VHD).

The Presbyterian union was formed in 1870, with the integration of the United Presbyterian Synod. By this time the Presbyterian Church of Victoria had amassed 256 church buildings across Victoria (Lewis 1991:9).

Presbyterian congregations that were favoured by fashionable society in Melbourne in the late nineteenth century included Chalmers Church on Eastern Hill, led by Dr Adam Cairns, and Scots Church in Collins Street, led by the Reverend Peter Menzies and the Reverend Charles Strong. At this time, the

Scots Church had a progressive and theologically liberal reputation compared to the Chalmers Church which was orthodox and staid (Chambers 2008).

The John Knox congregation was dissolved in 1879 and the Church of Christ purchased the Swanston Street church building in 1881 (Church of Christ, VHD).

In the twentieth century the decline in power and influence of Scottish pastoral families saw a decline in of social status of Presbyterianism. At the same time, there was a more general decline in the other Protestant denominations. However, the Scots Church and adjoining assembly hall remained central to Presbyterian life and major institutions such as schools persisted (Chambers 2008).

In 1901 the Presbyterian Church of Australia was formed as the Presbyterian Church of Victoria joined with the other states. In 1913 the Free Church minority joined other Free Presbyterians and formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Australia (Lewis 1991:9–10).

In 1977 a majority of Presbyterians along with Methodists and Congregationalists amalgamated to form the Uniting Church in Australia. Only a sector of the Presbyterians remained distinct and continue as the Presbyterian Church of Australia (McCalman 2008; Lewis 1991:10).

Presbyterian church architecture

Scottish Presbyterianism did not have a rich architectural tradition. It had inherited pre-Reformation churches in Scotland which were typically remodelled and altars, fonts and pulpits were removed. The main feature of Presbyterian worship was the sermon, thus Presbyterians built high central pulpits on the southern wall. In Australia, colonial conditions modified the austerity of Presbyterianism; during the 1870s and 1880s building ~~boom~~ boom increasing wealth among Presbyterians and competition with other denominations encouraged the construction of grand churches, and introduction of organs, hymn-singing and choirs. However, congregations associated with the Free Church resisted these more elaborate trends (Lewis 1991: 9-10).

Early Presbyterian church architecture in Melbourne was generally of the Gothic tradition, or broadly adhered to key elements of the Gothic style. The first building in Melbourne, Scots Church, designed by architect Samuel Jackson, is in a style that can be considered the Gothic style. The first Free Presbyterian Church, John Knox Church, in Swanston Street, built in 1847–8 was designed in the Gothic style by Charles Webb with an elaborate stuccoed Gothic façade. The United Presbyterian Church, St Enoch's in Collins Street, was constructed in 1850–51 from bluestone, an uncommon material at the time, to the design of Newsom & Blackburn (Lewis 1991:21). Elements of Classicism were also explored in subsequent church designs such as at the Scots Church, Heidelberg (1845); the church in Napier Street, Fitzroy; and Scots Church, Campbellfield (Lewis 1991:21). Other Presbyterian Churches in the City of Melbourne are all reflective of Gothic, or Gothic Revival design and include: Presbyterian Church, Punt Road, South Yarra (1866); The Scots Church in Collins Street, Melbourne (rebuilt 1873–74); the Cairns Memorial Church, corner of Powlett and Hotham Streets, East Melbourne (1883–84 and 1886–87); the Union Memorial Church, corner of Curzon and Elm Streets, North Melbourne (1879); and the College Church, corner of Royal Parade and The Avenue, Parkville (1898).

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Bunurong people. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, occupies Crown Allotment 6 in the Parish of Melbourne South. The Crown reserve was granted in 1854 to the Presbyterian Church, which was variously referred to as the Free Church and the Gaelic Church.

A congregation of the Free Church was established in 1854 at the corner of Malvern Road and Orrong Road, and relocated to the present site in Punt Road the same year. A newspaper article records that

Church services were first held in a barn on the property of Mr. Langmuir, of "Auldbar," at the intersection of Malvern and Orrong roads. This continued until it was decided to make "the village of Prahran itself, not the outskirts, the chief place of service," so the present site in Punt Road, South Yarra was granted by the Government, and a tent erected there. A prefabricated wooden church and manse were ordered from England and eventually these arrived and were erected. In September, 1859, the congregation passed a resolution naming the church, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church. It was a storm which led to the building of the present church. One Sunday in 1862, the congregation was alarmed to see the building sway under the force of the wind. The service was stopped by Rev. G. Mackle, who asked the congregation to retire. After a close examination of the church, it was decided to build a new one (Age, 13 March 1954:21).

The reserve originally incorporated the land today occupied by the South Yarra State School No 583 (today at 585–601 Punt Road). In 1854, the Victorian Government offered the main Christian denominations a Crown reserve on the west side of Punt Road. The Free Church took up this offer on 28 August 1854 and built a church that also initially served as a denominational school (Lewis 2018). A denominational school was established in a separate building on an adjacent site to the south, which became the South Yarra National School in 1858 (and was also known as the South Melbourne National School) (Blake 1973: 302).

In 1859, the Synod of Victoria (representing the Established Church of Scotland), the Free Synod of Victoria (representing the Free Church of Scotland), and the United Presbyterian Synod of Victoria and the United Presbyterian Synod of Australia (representing the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland) formed the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (SYPC 1905:7). Following this union, the land was permanently granted to the Presbyterian Church in 1860 ('Melbourne City Imperial Measure M14 5514', VPRS 16171).

The foundation stone of the subject bluestone church was laid on 14 November 1865, next to an earlier prefabricated church, which had stood on the site from 1854 (*Banner*, 15 September 1854:16). The building of a new church was designed by architect Lloyd Tayler and managed by contractor William Ireland (*Age*, 15 November 1865:6). A contemporary newspaper account reported:

The church, when erected, will measure 125 feet in length by 70 feet in breadth, and will be capable of affording accommodation for 800. It will consist of nave and aisles, the former being separated from the latter by piers of bluestone. The style will be early Gothic, and the materials bluestone with freestone facings, and the cost of the whole is estimated at £6,000 (Age, 15 November 1865:6).

The new church was opened on 3 June 1866. The finished church was smaller than described in the article above, measuring 77 feet in length by 58.6 feet in width internally and accommodating 700 people. Built of bluestone, the freestone quarried from the Barabool Hills was used in the external dressing (*Age*, 29 December 1866:6). The total cost was about £7000. The original design incorporated a 175-foot-high tower and spire (Figure 1), which was excluded from the actual building due to the increased construction cost.

According to the *Age's* 1866 report, the interior of the church comprised a nave and two aisles separated by piers and arches. The shaft of each pier was constructed with two stones only and had a moulded base and cap. Barabool Hills freestone was used for the arches between the piers. The roof was of open timber construction with moulded beams (Figure 2). The interior furnishings were constructed from cedar and a stained-glass window depicting the burning bush was provided on the west elevation (SYPC 1905:21; *Age*, 29 December 1866:6; OHTA 2019).

The plainly treated east elevation (Figure 3) was intended as a temporary treatment, with plans for further extension with the tower and spire (SYPC 1905:21; *Age*, 29 December 1866:6; OHTA 2019).

However, the plan to build this tower was never realised. Instead, in 1920, a bluestone entrance porch was added to the eastern elevation at a cost of £273 (MBAI).

The church organ was built by George Fincham in 1887 and refurbished by the same firm in 1907 and 1954. According to the Organ Historical Trust of Australia:

[in 1887] It had two manuals, 16 speaking stops, three couplers and tubular-pneumatic action. The casework design appears to have been copied from an organ built by Fincham's rival Alfred Fuller, most likely the instrument in Cairns Memorial Presbyterian Church, East Melbourne, with identical case posts and finials and tower corbels and similar case decoration, although with a panelled screen in the centre. The instrument was opened on Thursday 2 June [1887]...

In 1907, the organ was rebuilt and enlarged by Geo. Fincham & Son. The Swell Open Diapason was completed through the addition of a bottom octave, the Great Mixture and Trumpet were revoiced and transferred to the Swell, and a Loud Gamba 8ft and Clarinet 8ft took their place. A Voix Celeste 8ft was added to the Swell together with a tremulant, a Bourdon to the Pedal Organ, and Swell to Great Sub and Super couplers were introduced.

In 1954, the action was converted to electro-pneumatic and a new detached stopkey console provided, the work carried out by Geo. Fincham & Sons Pty Ltd. No tonal alterations took place. The organ survives in this state today (OHTA 2019).

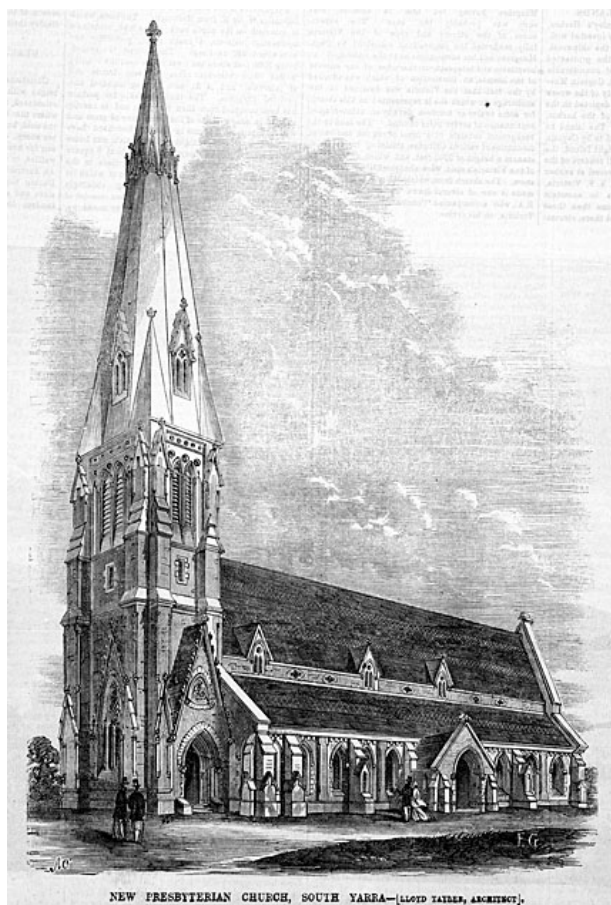


Figure 1. Lloyd Tayler's initial design with tower and spire on the east, 1865. (Source: *Australian News for Home Readers*, 23 December 1865, via OHTA 2019)



Figure 2. A 1905 view of the 1865 church interior. Note the space comprising central nave and two isles separated by piers and arches. (Source: South Yarra Presbyterian Church 1905:10)

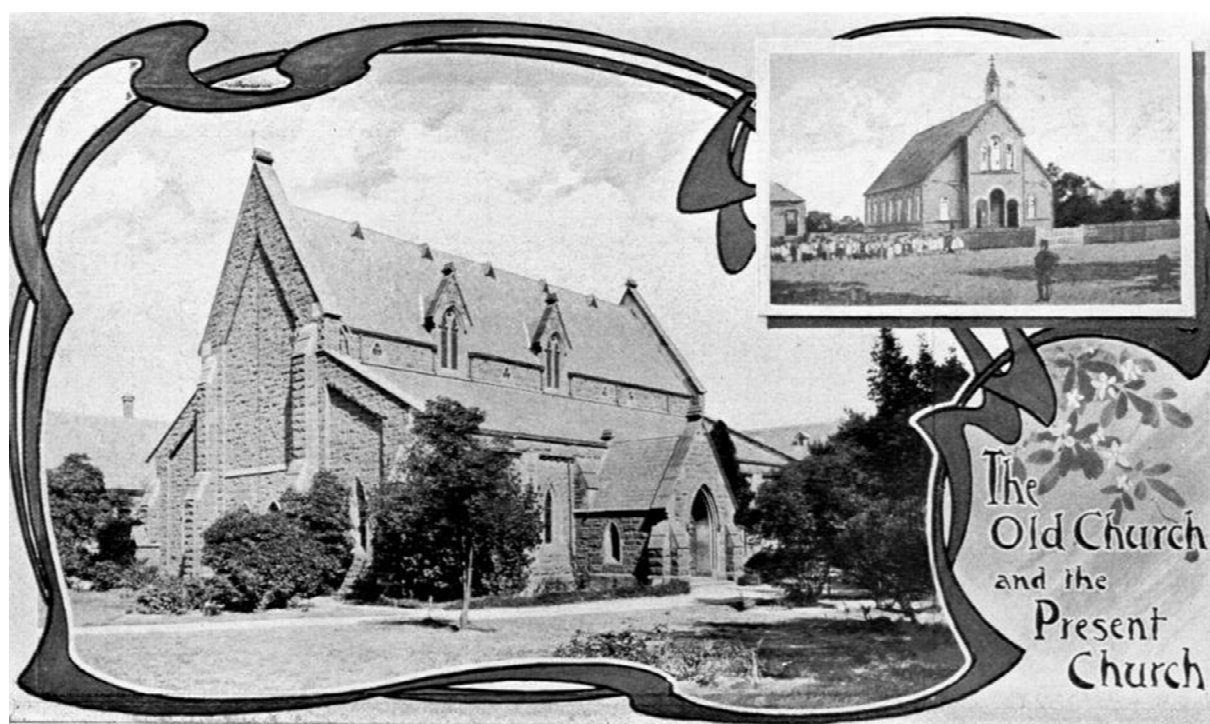


Figure 3. A 1905 exterior view of the 1866 church. Note the plain east elevation before the addition of the 1920 porch. (Source: South Yarra Presbyterian Church 1905:6)

The site also comprises a nineteenth-century manse (Figure 4). The first manse built on the land was a prefabricated wooden building imported from England. In 1873, part of the present manse was built in front of the earlier timber dwelling. The wooden section was removed c1890, when brick and stone additions were made to the 1873 building. Adjoining brick garages were erected in 1936 (MBAI). The building served as manse until 1940, when a new two-storey brick manse was built closer to Punt Road.

A second manse, built in 1940, was demolished in 2019 to make way for a new assembly hall (Nearmap; CoMMaps).

A bluestone wing was added to the main church to serve as a vestry and Sunday school in 1874 (SYPC 1905:25; 42). This building is extant between the 1866 church and a brick Sunday school building that was built adjacent to Fawkner Park. The Sunday school was opened in April 1884 (*Argus*, 8 June 1885:3; SYPC 1905:42). The new Sunday school had a central hall (Figure 5), with classrooms at one side, library and office in front, and an infant room. The old vestry and Sunday school wing also continued to house classrooms in the early twentieth century (SYPC 1905:29, 42).

In 1896, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex comprising the 1866 main church (incorporating the unlabelled 1874 wing that housed vestry and former Sunday school), 1884 new Sunday school and 1873 manse (with c1890 additions) was depicted on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works detailed plan. At that time, two gateways were located on Punt Road, and gravelled paths had been laid out (Figure 6).

In 1925, a caretaker's cottage was erected at a cost of £763 (MBAI).

From 1992 to 1993, alterations and refurbishments were carried out for the Sunday school building and facilities (noted as 'church hall' in the building application index), and the caretaker's cottage was also extended. The total value of the work was \$219,500 (MBAI).

Most Presbyterian churches in Victoria joined with the Methodists and Congregationalists in 1977 with the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church was one of a small group of churches in Victoria that remained associated with the Presbyterian Church. The church building is still being used for church services.

At present, the former Sunday school building, the former manse and the caretaker's cottage are leased to Christ Church Grammar School for use as a kindergarten (CoMMaps).

[In 2022 a fire destroyed the roof of the former Sunday school building and vestry wing.](#)

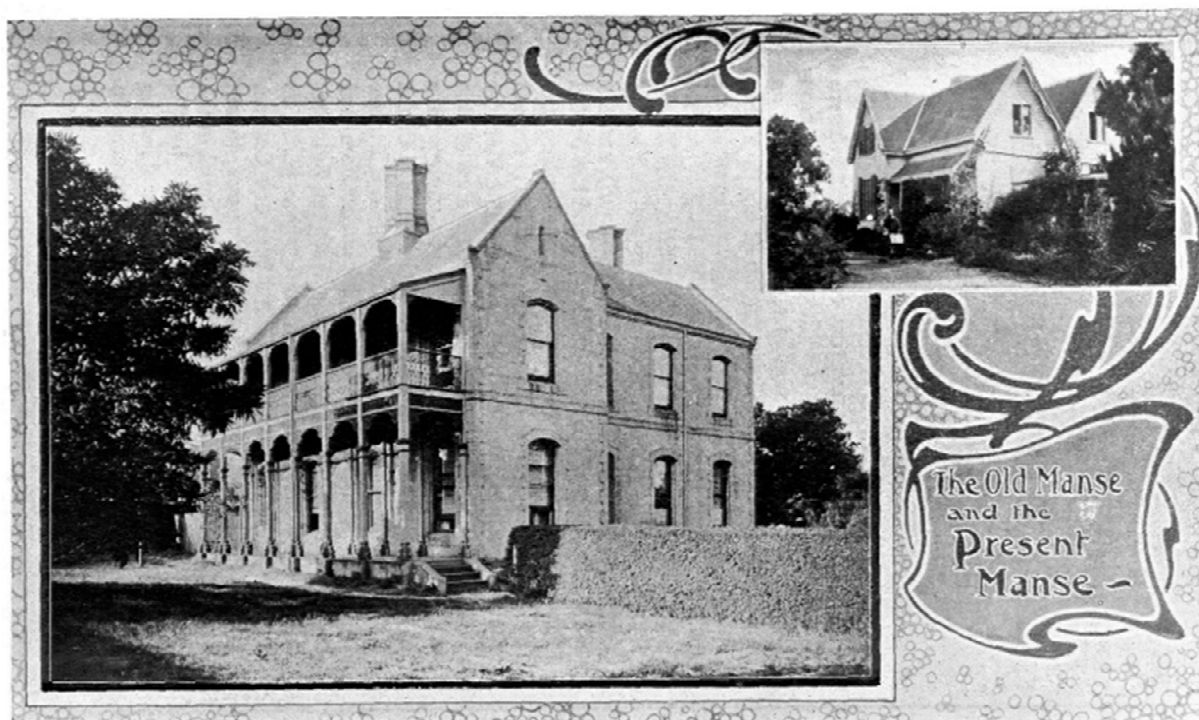


Figure 4. A 1905 view of the 1873 manse with additions from c1890. (Source: South Yarra Presbyterian Church 1905:8)

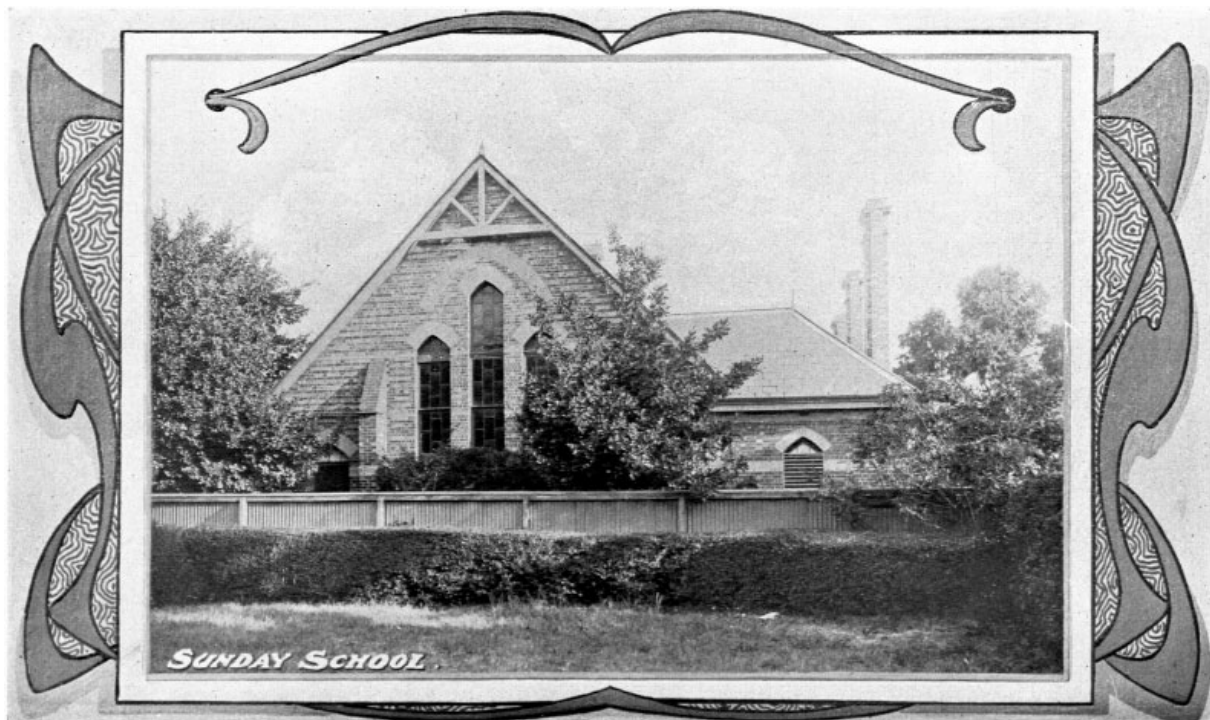


Figure 5. A 1905 view of the Sunday school building built in 1884, viewed from the north. (Source: South Yarra Presbyterian Church 1905:15)

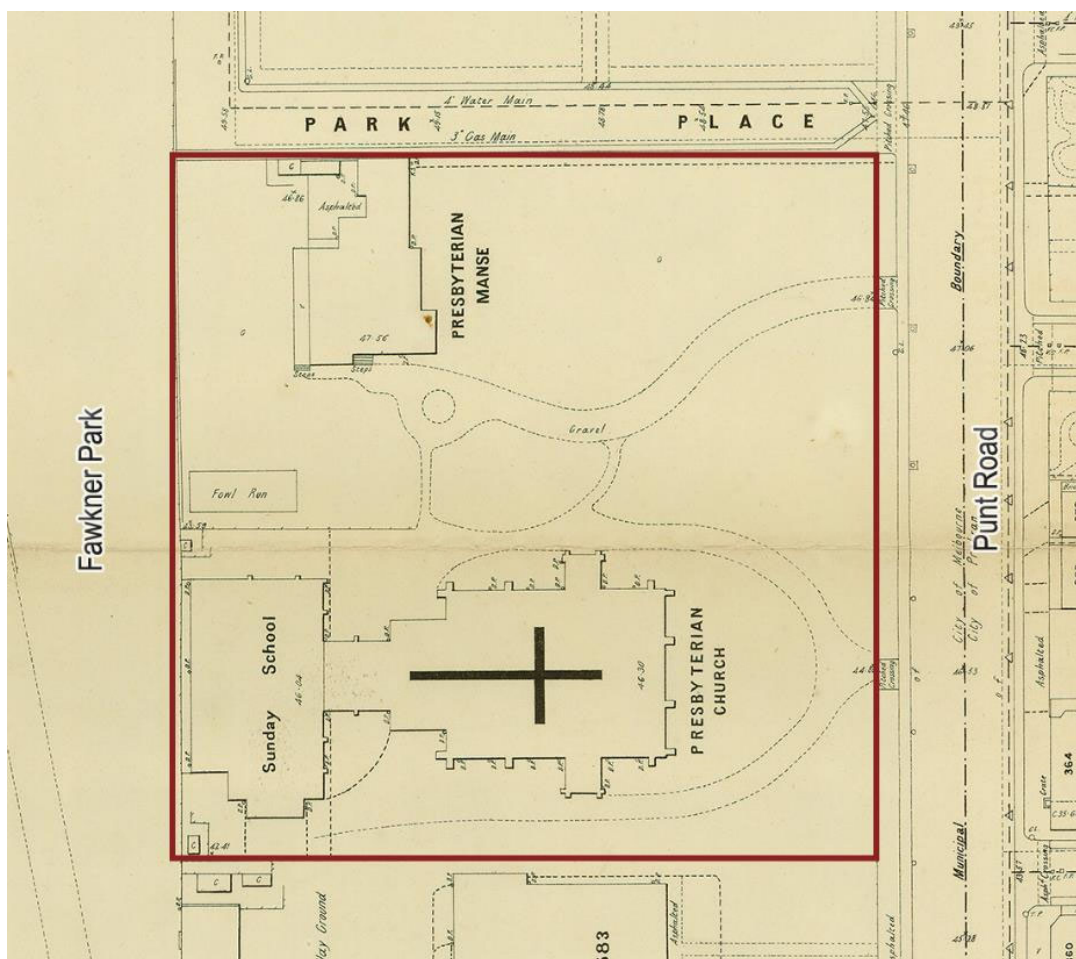


Figure 6. An extract from the MMBW detail plan no 901 and 904, dated 1896, showing the South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex. (Source: State Library Victoria)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Presbyterian Church complex has been continually used as a place of worship since 1854, serving the local Presbyterian congregation on site for over 150 years. Retaining an affiliation following the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church demonstrates the dominance of the early Scots Presbyterian immigrants in the local area and their continued influence. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church is important to the Presbyterian community of South Yarra as a place of worship, family gatherings and important occasions such as christenings, wedding and funerals for over 150 years. The congregation of the Presbyterian Church forms a specific community who use and visit the place regularly and have continuously since its establishment; this suggests that there would be community attachment that spans multiple generations.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, is located on the west side of Punt Road between Toorak Road and Pasley Street North. The complex comprises five buildings of interest: the 1866 bluestone church with 1920 porch, 1873 manse (with c1890 alterations and additions), 1874 vestry and former school building, 1884 school building, and 1925 caretaker's cottage, shown in Figure 7. The site has a generous setback from Punt Road that is currently occupied by an asphalted parking space. The main entrance is on Punt Road.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Presbyterian Church (1866) | 4 | Former Sunday school (1884) |
| 2 | Former manse (1873 and c1890) | 5 | Porch (1920) |
| 3 | Vestry and school wing (1874) | 6 | Former Caretaker's cottage (1925) |

Figure 7. Aerial photograph of 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, showing the key buildings. (Source: Nearmap 2021 with GML overlay)

Presbyterian church, 1866 and 1920 (Figure 7: Number 1 and Number 5)

Designed by architect Lloyd Tayler, the 1866 Gothic Revival style church building is of bluestone construction with decorative sandstone (Barrabool Hills freestone) dressing. The church has a rectangular form with projecting porches. The east-facing porch with a pointed arched doorway is an addition from 1920 (Figure 8). Behind this porch, the east elevation retains its plain treatment with two buttresses as a result of the unrealised second-stage plan for addition of a tower and spire. Original porches survive on the north and south elevations. The church comprises a nave with clerestory and two isles, separated by piers and arches. The nave features a high-pitched gable roof with two dormer windows and four openings on clerestory level on each side. Most openings have pointed arches with sandstone quoins, except for the rectangular window on the 1920 porch. The west elevation is finished with sandstone cladding, and retains the original stained-glass window depicting the burning bush.

Vestry and school wing, 1874 (Figure 7: Number 3)

An 1874 wing that originally consisted of a vestry and school rooms (Figure 9) adjoins the 1866 church to the west. Built of bluestone, this wing has a T-shaped plan with a slated transverse gable roof. The overall Gothic style design and detailing of this portion matches the original design of the 1866 church. The pointed arched openings and the triangular highlight of this wing have cement rendered quoining.

[Due to the fire damage in May 2022, the roof was removed but the perimeter walls of the 1874 vestry and school wing largely remain in-situ.](#)

Former Sunday ~~School~~school, 1884 (Figure 7: Number 4)

The 1884 former Sunday school building (Figure 9) is located near the southwest corner of the site, at the rear of the 1874 wing. The building is of polychrome face brick construction with a bluestone foundation. It has a composite roof form consisting of a main gable form to the east, and hip and skillion forms to the west. Three tall brick chimneys rise from the corrugated sheet metal-clad skillion roof near the western elevation (Figure 10). Other original decorative detailing includes narrow pointed arched window openings, timber-framed windows, timber fretwork to gable ends, and buttresses with cement detailing.

[Due to the fire damage in May 2022, the roof was removed but the perimeter walls and chimneys of the 1884 former Sunday school building largely remain in-situ.](#)

Former manse, 1873 and c1890 (Figure 7: Number 2)

Built in 1873 and with alterations and additions dating to c1890, the double-storey former manse (Figure 11) with slated gable roofs is located near the northwest corner of the site. The building was designed in domestic Gothic style rather than the Italianate style that was more common at the time of its construction. The key decorative elements of the building include oblique chimneys with decorative moulding, ruled render finish (now overpainted), segmental arched window and door openings with quoining, timber-framed windows and timber door, timber verandah with decorative ironwork and base (Figure 12). The single-storey wing with face brick wall and chimney appears to be an original or early portion of the building. Brick garages built in 1936 adjoin the former manse to the north.

Former caretaker's cottage, 1925 (Figure 7: Number 6)

The 1925 caretaker's cottage (Figure 13) is a single-storey building with a gabled roof with a projecting gabled wing and front porch. The former cottage has a rough cast render finish and face brick base. The original chimney has the same rendered finish. Original detailing displays some influence of domestic

Gothic style, including the timber fretwork to the front porch and narrow pointed arched windows on the projecting wing. The timber-framed windows and timber columns to the front porch are also intact. The cottage was extended to the rear in 1992. The addition is not visible from the public domain.

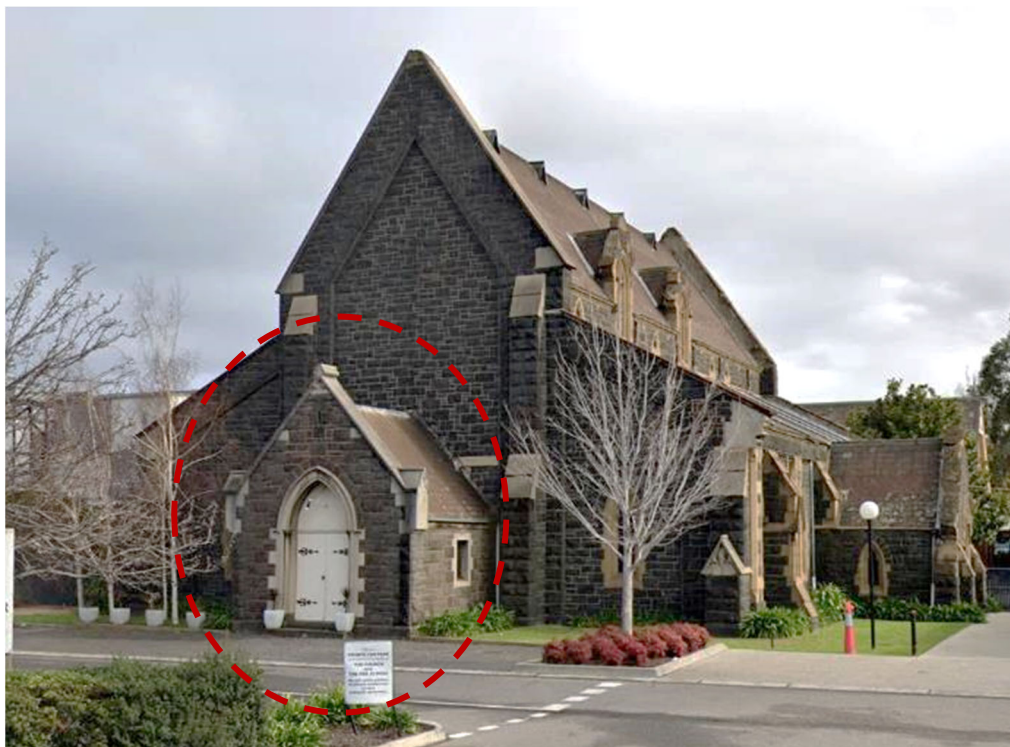


Figure 8. The 1866 bluestone church with high-pitched central gable (Figure 7: Number 1). The east-facing porch (outlined in red, Figure 7: Number 5) was added in 1920. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

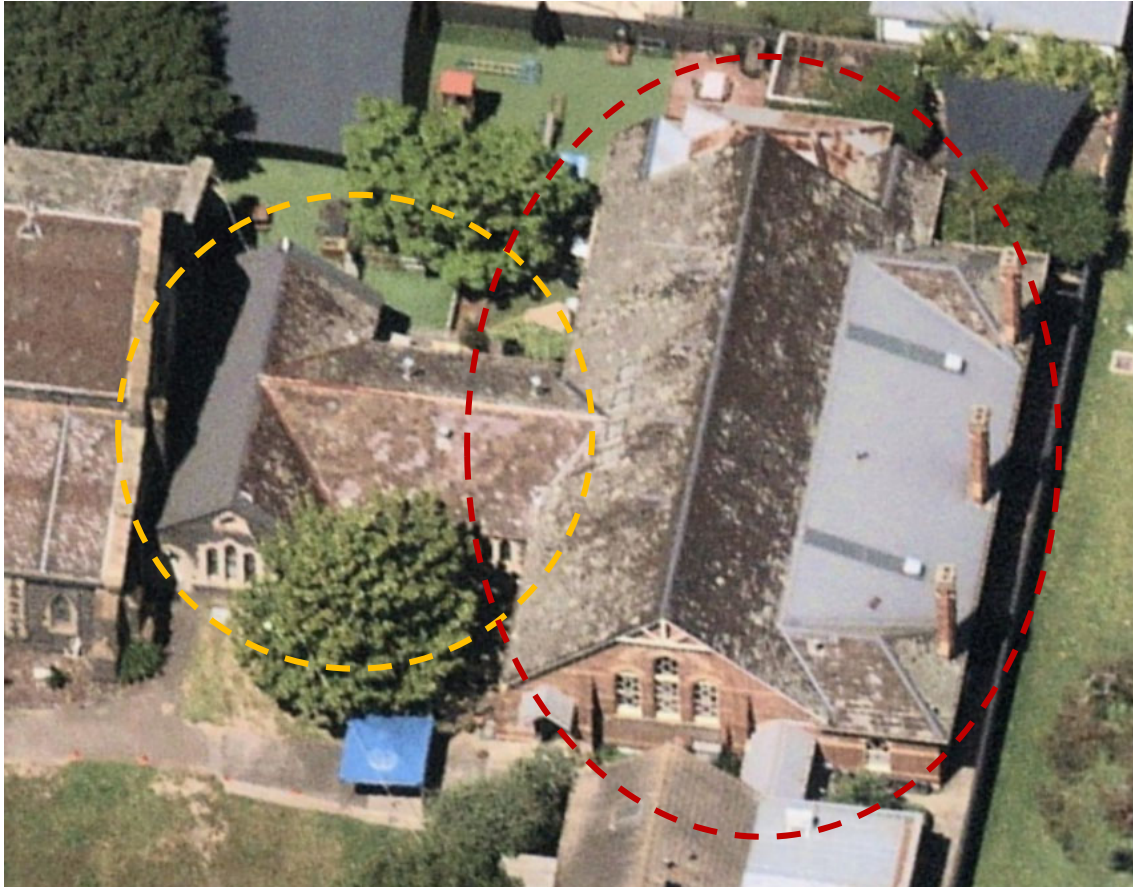


Figure 9. Bird's-eye view ([looking south](#)) of the 1874 vestry and school wing built of bluestone (outlined in yellow, Figure 7: Number 3) and the 1884 Sunday school building built of brick (outlined in red, Figure 7: Number 4). [Note the roofs have since been removed from the two buildings after the fire event in May 2022](#) (Source: Nearmap 2020)



Figure 10. View of the 1884 Sunday school building from Fawkner Park [after the fire event in May 2022](#) (Figure 7: Number 4). Note the original elements including the chimneys and pointed arched openings [remain](#). (Source: [N Schmeder 2023](#) [City of Melbourne 2023](#) [GML Heritage 2021](#))



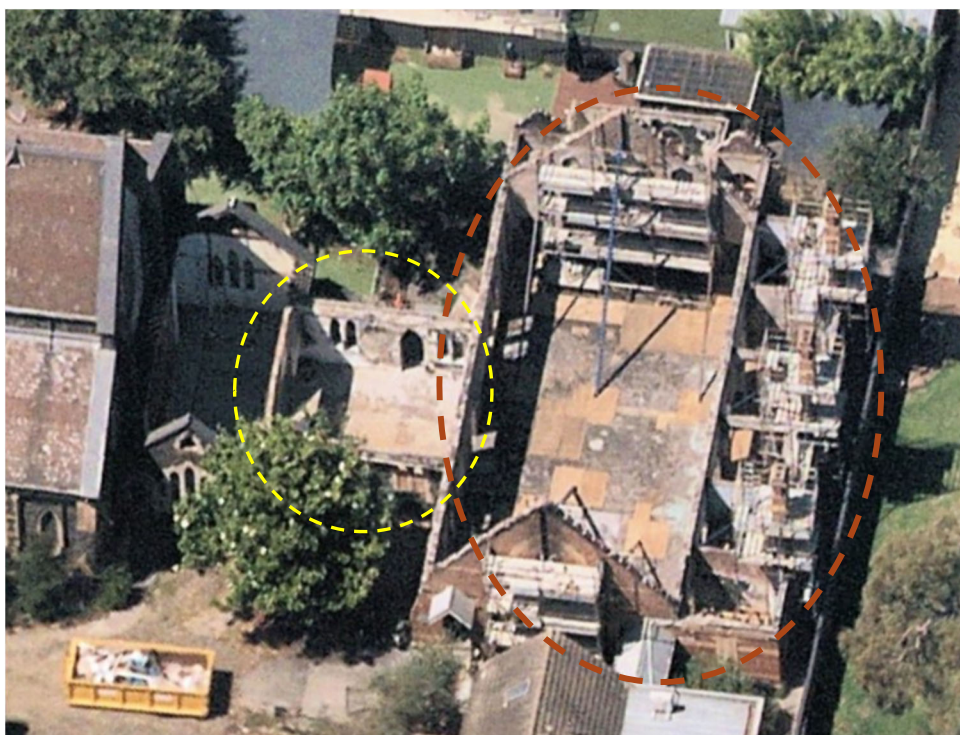
Figure 11. View of the former manse, built in 1873 and added to c1890 (Figure 7: Number 2). (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 12. View of the former manse (Figure 7: Number 2) from Park Place. Note the timber verandah with decorative ironwork and base (outlined in yellow). (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 13. Former caretaker's cottage (Figure 7: Number 6) built in 1925. Note the decorative timberwork to the front porch and the pointed arched windows on the projecting wing on the right-hand side. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



[Figure 14. Bird's-eye view \(looking south\) of the 1874 vestry and school wing built of bluestone \(outlined in yellow, Figure 7: Number 3\) and the 1884 Sunday school building built of brick \(outlined in red, Figure 7: Number 4\), after the fire event in May 2022 \(see Figure 14\). Note the removal of the roofs, with the perimeter walls largely remaining in-situ. \(Source: Nearmap 2023\)](#)

INTEGRITY

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, is highly intact externally with few changes to the original or early structures. All structures of interest largely retain their original materials, roofing and built form.

The 1866 Gothic style church including the 1920 porch (Figure 7: Number 1 and Number 5) retains decorative details such as the buttresses, stained-glass window on the west elevation, and decorative sandstone dressing and quoining. The pattern of openings, including the pointed arched windows and doors, as well as timber-framed windows and timber doors, are also intact.

Despite later refurbishments, the 1874 vestry and school wing (Figure 7: Number 3) and the 1884 Sunday school building (Figure 7: Number 4) appear highly intact externally, retaining original built form and stylistic elements. [The integrity of the remaining fabric of the 1874 vestry and school wing and the 1884 Sunday school building was not severely diminished by the change's resultant of the fire damage.](#) ~~as-~~ The buildings can be ~~reconstructed~~ ~~stored~~ based on the photographic evidence.

The 1873 manse with 1890 addition (Figure 7: Number 2) is highly intact to its nineteenth-century design. The addition of garages (1936) slightly diminishes the building's visibility from Park Place but does not adversely impact the overall integrity.

The original portion of the 1925 caretaker's cottage (Figure 7: Number 6) is also highly intact. The rear addition is concealed behind the main roof form and does not impact the legibility of the building.

Overall, the complex has high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Melbourne's churches played an influential role in colonial society and helped shape the urban landscape. It was the practice of early government surveyors to reserve a place on high ground for churches, and on other occasions denominations sought a grant elsewhere, mainly to secure physical prominence in new towns and suburbs (Lewis 1991:6). The principal Christian churches established during the colonial period included those of the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations (Context 2012:77). In the 1850s and 1860s, Melbourne saw intensive church development, mirroring the wider development of the suburban areas that followed population growth. The majority of churches during this period were built of stone in the Gothic Revival style (Context 2012:17).

Gothic Revival architecture emerged in England in the early nineteenth century as the result of the liturgical revival promoted in the Anglican Church by the ecclesiological movement. It reached the colonies by the 1840s, a time when Greek Revivalism was the strongest architectural influence. The enthusiastic take-up of Gothic Revival style was supported by immigrant architects from Britain and Ireland who arrived in the colonies fully trained (Lewis 1991:20), notably William Wardell who had trained under the pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect and critic Augustus Pugin.

In the City of Melbourne, the South Yarra Presbyterian church is one of several examples of the mid-Victorian period bluestone churches built in the Gothic style that has wider openings. These churches are characterised by the use of clerestory and triforium, curvilinear pointed arches, and display of stained glass. In larger scale examples, the broach spire and pinnacles at each corner of the square are also commonly seen.

The following examples in South Yarra and the broader City of Melbourne are comparable with 431–439 Punt Road, South Yarra, being of a similar scale, style and/or construction date.

Former Catholic Apostolic Church (now Romanian Orthodox), 59 Queensberry Street, Carlton (HO90)

A bluestone church built in 1854–65 and altered in 1871 and 1887 to a design by Leonard Terry. The church comprises a spacious chancel with clerestory and aisles. The nave features a tracery window (Lewis 1991:50). Next to the church is a separate bluestone building (likely a manse).



Figure 15. 53–63 Queensberry Street, Carlton, built c1854–65 and altered in 1871 and 1887 to a design by Leonard Terry. (Source: National Trust 1989, via Victorian Heritage Database)

Former Wesleyan Church, 431–439 Punt Road, South Yarra (assessed as an individual heritage place in this Review)

The former Wesleyan Church built in 1864 to a design by Couch & Wilson is of bluestone construction and has a plain rectangular form, as commonly used in churches from the mid-Victorian period. The building features a slated gabled roof and buttresses with cement dressing. Wide pointed arches are evidence of the influence of the Perpendicular Gothic style.



Figure 16. 431–439 Punt Road, built in 1864. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Lutheran Church, 22–36 Parliament Place and 65–75 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne (VHR H0015; HO167)

A bluestone church built in 1874 to a design by Charles Blachmann. The church features clerestoried nave, aisles, apsidal chancel, and stained glass designed by Ferguson & Urie. The complex also comprises a bluestone hall and a double-storey rendered brick manse. The church services continue to be conducted in German (VHD).



Figure 17. 22–36 Parliament Place and 65–75 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne, built in 1874. (Source: National Trust 2015, via Victorian Heritage Database)

The subject building and the above small-scale churches from the 1860s–70s were erected for non-mainstream denominations (Catholic Apostolic and Lutheran) or as part of the suburban expansion of major denominations (Presbyterian and Methodist) that had already established elaborate, larger churches in central Melbourne. The influence of the Gothic Revival architecture is evident in the subject building at 603–627 Punt Road and all examples above. Built of bluestone, these churches share some architectural similarities including the use of contrasting dressings, side pointed arches, tracery stained-glass windows and symmetrical composition with central gabled roof.

The former Catholic Apostolic Church (now Romanian Orthodox) at 53–63 Queensberry Street, Carlton (HO90), one of only two Catholic Apostolic churches in Australia, shares above mentioned architectural similarities with the subject building. However, the former Catholic Apostolic Church has more traditional planning with transepts that reflect Catholic liturgical practice.

The former Wesleyan Church at 431–439 Punt Road, South Yarra (Contributory to HO6, recommended as individually significant in this study), is closely comparable not only architecturally but also for its historical context. Erected in the mid-1860s on land granted by the government in the then emerging suburb of South Yarra, the Wesleyan church and the subject complex represent the historical pattern of early suburban development in the wider Melbourne area. While both churches are important evidence of this early phase of development, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex is distinguished from the former Wesleyan Church, which ~~has~~ ~~has~~ been converted for residential use, ~~and~~ ~~and~~ is less intact as a church complex than the subject site because early auxiliary buildings, including the Sunday school and manse, have been demolished.

The State-listed Lutheran Church at 22–36 Parliament Place and 65–75 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne (VHR H0015; HO167), comprises the 1874 church, 1864 hall (originally a weekly and Sunday school) and 1890 manse. The German Lutheran congregation has occupied the site from 1853 and built the first church in 1854 (replaced by the 1874 church). The subject complex compares well to the East Melbourne Lutheran Church complex in terms of the scale and detailing of the Gothic Revival

church and the retention of the highly intact early auxiliary buildings. Like the former manse on the subject site, the Lutheran manse also displays domestic Gothic style elements, including gable roofs and decorative pointed arch verandah ironwork.

Overall, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road provides important tangible evidence of the mid-Victorian Gothic Revival churches that were built as part of the early suburban expansion in Melbourne. It is an important example of a church complex that retains early Sunday school buildings, manse and caretaker's cottage.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

CRITERION G

- ✓ Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).
-

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

Melbourne Planning Scheme

| | |
|---|----|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS | No |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS | No |
| TREE CONTROLS | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4) | No |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER | No |
| PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE | No |

Other

N/A

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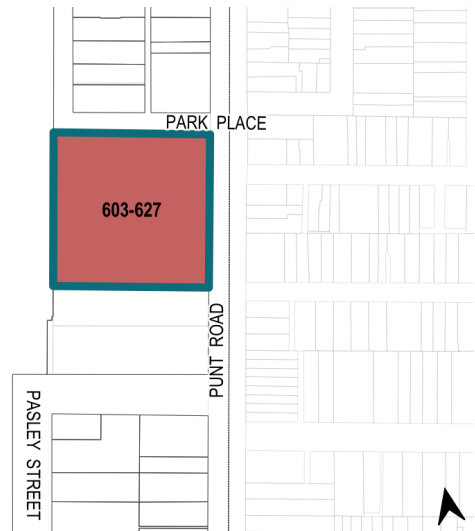
PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 B

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: South Yarra
Presbyterian Church complex

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1409](#)



What is significant?

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, established in 1854 and built in stages from 1866 to 1925, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to) the:

- 1866 church (Figure 1: Number 1) and its original external form with slated gable roof, bluestone construction with sandstone (Barrabool Hills freestone) dressing and Gothic Revival style detailing; its high level of integrity to its original design; pattern and size of original fenestration and other decorative details; and the 1920 porch ([Significant](#)) (Figure 1: Number 5)
- 1874 vestry and school wing's original T-shaped form ~~with slate roof~~, bluestone construction and cement moulding; its high level of integrity to its original design; pattern and size of original fenestration and other Gothic Revival style decorative details [The roof of the building was destroyed in a fire. The remaining fabric has high integrity \(Significant\)](#) (Figure 1: Number 3)
- 1884 Sunday school's original external form, polychrome face brickwork and bluestone foundation; its high level of integrity to its original design; pattern and size of original fenestration and other decorative details [The roof of the building was destroyed in a fire. The remaining fabric has high integrity \(Significant\)](#) (Figure 1: Number 4)
- 1873 manse's original external form with additions from c1890, ruled render finish over masonry (now overpainted) and detailing; its high level of integrity to its original design; pattern and size of original fenestration and other decorative details influenced by domestic Gothic style ([Significant](#)) (Figure 1: Number 2)
- 1925 caretaker's cottage's original external form with a gable roof and a projecting gabled wing, rough cast render finish and face brick base; its high level of integrity to its original design; pattern and size of original fenestration and other decorative details influenced by domestic Gothic style ([Contributory](#)) (Figure 1: Number 6).

More recent alterations and additions, including rear extension to the caretaker's cottage from 1992 and refurbishment from 1992 and 1993, are not significant.



Legend

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Presbyterian Church (1866) <u>–Significant</u> | 4 | Former Sunday school (1884) <u>–Significant</u> |
| 2 | Former manse (1873 and c1890) <u>–Significant</u> | 5 | Porch (1920) <u>–Significant</u> |
| 3 | Vestry and school wing (1874) <u>–Significant</u> | 6 | Former Caretaker’s cottage (1925) <u>–Contributory</u> |

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, showing the key elements that contribute to the significance. (Source: Nearmap 2021 with GML overlay)

How is it significant?

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church at 603–627 Punt Road, South Yarra, established in 1854, is historically significant as an example of a local Presbyterian church built as part of the early suburban development of Melbourne. It is significant as it occupies one of the four Crown reserves granted for use in the mid–1850s by four major Christian denominations along the same section of Punt Road.

Replacing an earlier 1854 timber church building, the 1866 church building (Figure 1: Number 1) stands as a key element in the extensive complex of buildings on the site that was developed through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex provides important tangible evidence of this early phase of suburban expansion within the City of Melbourne outside of the central city. (Criterion A)

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex is of representative significance to the City of Melbourne, for its representation of an early church complex comprising an 1866 church building and other buildings associated with the operation of the church, developed between 1874 and 1925. These buildings are also significant for their designs influenced by the Gothic Revival style. Designed by prominent Melbourne architect Lloyd Tayler, the subject church (Figure 1: Number 1) retains key stylistic elements that exemplify Gothic Revival style churches, including the use of bluestone with contrasting dressings and detailing, slated high-pitched gable roof, dormer windows and openings on the clerestory level, buttresses, tracery stained-glass, and pointed arched windows and doors. The adjoining 1874 vestry and school wing (Figure 1: Number 3) matches the bluestone construction of the church and contrasting quoining detailing. The 1884 Sunday school building (Figure 1: Number 4) features elements of the Gothic Revival style including narrow pointed arched windows ~~and timber fretwork to the gable ends~~. [In 2022 a fire destroyed the roof of the former Sunday school building and vestry wing. The remaining fabric has high integrity](#) The two residential buildings (Figure 1: Number 2 and Number 6) represent domestic versions of Gothic Revival architecture, through their decorative timberwork, gabled roofs (both), quoining to the openings (manse) and narrow pointed arched windows (caretaker's cottage). (Criterion D)

The South Yarra Presbyterian Church complex is socially significant to the City of Melbourne. Serving the Presbyterian congregation on the site since 1854, and retaining that affiliation following the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, the South Yarra Presbyterian Church demonstrates the dominance of the early Scots Presbyterian immigrants in the local area and their continued influence. The South Yarra Presbyterian Church is important to the Presbyterian community of South Yarra as a place of family gatherings and important occasions such as christenings, wedding and funerals for over 150 years. (Criterion G)

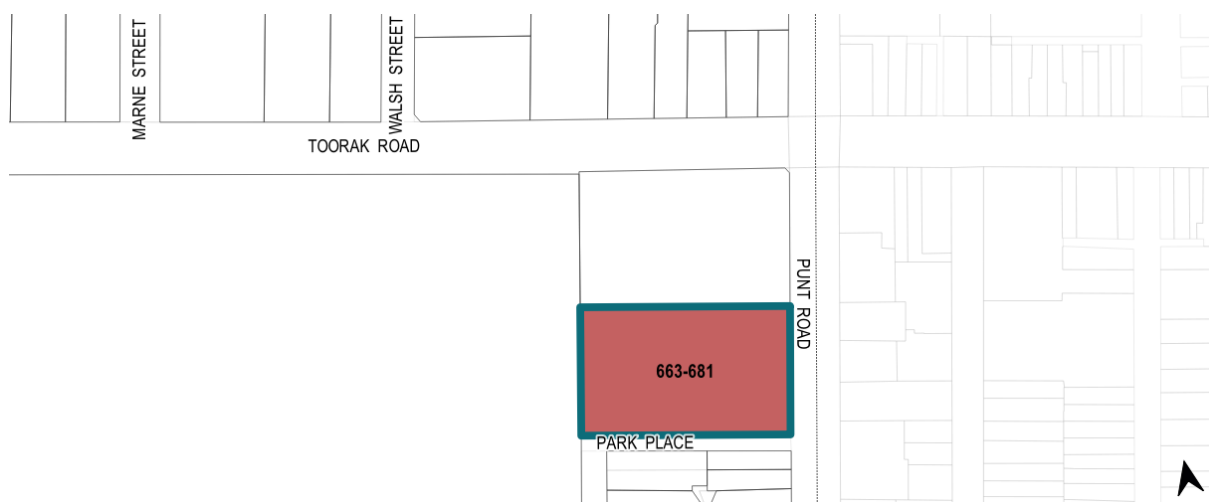
Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building

STREET ADDRESS: 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra

PROPERTY ID: 107812



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| SURVEY DATE: | February 2021 | SURVEY BY: | GML Heritage |
| PLACE TYPE: | Individual Heritage Place | EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY: | HO6 South Yarra Precinct |
| PROPOSED CATEGORY: | Significant | FORMER GRADE: | Ungraded |
| DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: | Charles Webb (Vicarage); Clements Langford (Memorial Hall); Yuncken Freeman Brothers (second-storey classrooms) | BUILDER: | Clements Langford Pty Ltd (Memorial Hall and school building) |
| DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: | Victorian Period (1851–1901) Interwar Period (c1919–c1940) | DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: | 1860 (Vicarage) 1924, 1953 (Memorial Hall and school building) |

THEMES

| ABORIGINAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations. | N/A |
| HISTORICAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
| 8 Education | 8.2 Private schools |
| 9 Religion and spirituality | 9.2 Establishing places of worship |
| 17 Memorials and commemoration | 17.4 War memorials |

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, comprises the Christ Church vicarage (1860), and Memorial Hall and school building (1924) that form part of a two-acre Crown reserve that was granted to the Church of England in 1854. The site adjoins the 1856 Christ Church at 683–701 Punt Road (VHR H0635; HO401). Education had been provided at the site since 1854 when a schoolhouse was erected as the first building on the Crown reserve. The Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building, built in 1924, provided a space for the use of the parish community and for Christ Church Grammar School, which had been founded at the site in 1898. The Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building demonstrates the site’s continued educational use since 1854. The 1860 vicarage has been maintained in use by the church since its completion. The buildings and their broader setting continue to be used by the church and associated groups within the local parish.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Private schools in Melbourne

Education in Melbourne's early settlement period was provided by government-aided institutions, by private (independent) schools established by the various Christian denominations, or at home by private tutors or governesses. Following separation of Victoria from the Colony of New South Wales in 1851, a dual system of education was established in Victoria. The Denominational Schools Board (DSB) was responsible for administering private schools while the National Schools Board was responsible for public schools. In 1862 these two boards were abolished and replaced with the Board of Education, which funded both private and public schools. In addition to the private and public schools, a third category of educational institution was introduced in 1854, called 'public grammar schools'; the University of Melbourne was established that year and these schools would prepare boys for university entrance (Hooper 2008).

Since the opening of Christ Church at the corner of Toorak Road and Punt Road (683–701 Punt Road, South Yarra), Christ Church quickly became a fashionable parish to attend, due to its proximity to the mansion houses of many wealthy and influential residents. Prior to the completion of St John's Anglican Church in Toorak in 1862, which was close to the governor's residence, Toorak House, Christ Church was the preferred church for vice-regal attendance. The social prominence of Christ Church was re-established in 1876, as its location near the newly completed Government House made it the preferred place of worship for resident governors and governors-general, their families, as well as aides and members of their households (Slater 1987:7). The completion of Government House in 1876 coincided with the construction of a parish hall at Christ Church.

From the earliest period of settlement in Melbourne, the provision of education was a concern of the churches. With a limited number of schools that were fully funded by the government, many churches took on the responsibility of providing an elementary school, with church-run schools generally educating children within the doctrine of a particular denomination. Often a rudimentary church hall served as both a day school and a Sunday school, as well as a local meeting room for the church community.

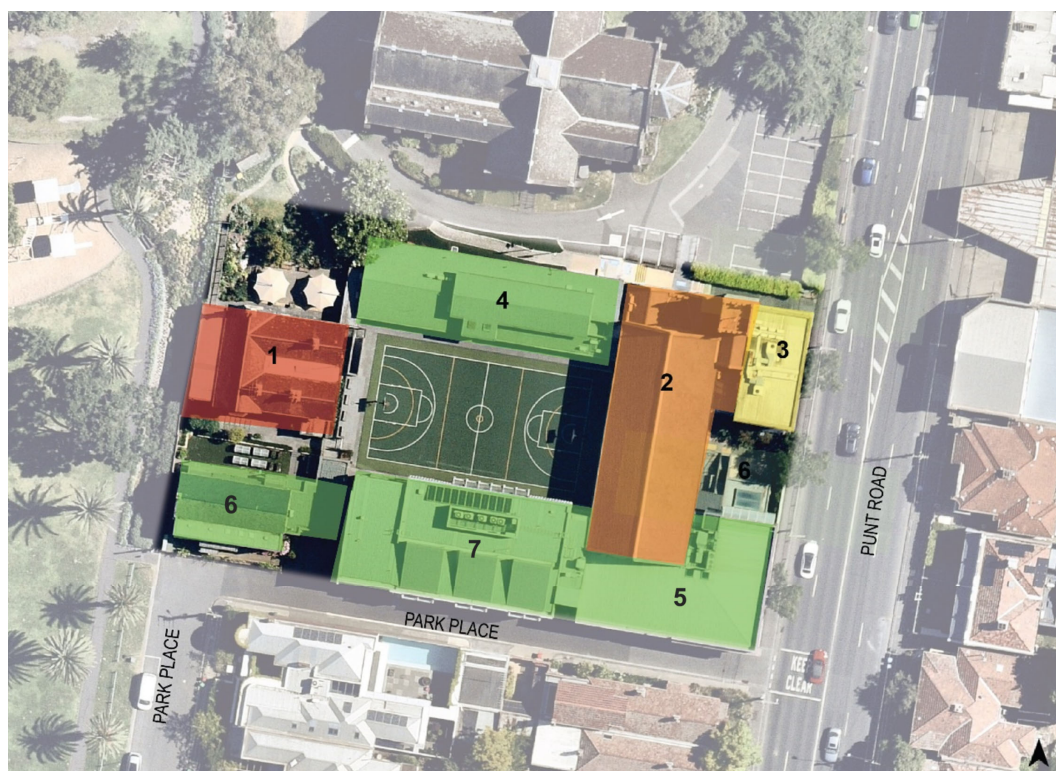
Church-run schools that were established prior to the *Education Act* of 1872 were eligible for government funding. The major Christian denominations each aspired to a church-run 'grammar' school (for boys), and it was proposed in the 1850s that these should be situated within a mile of the central city (Lewis 1995). In East Melbourne the Presbyterians established Scotch College in 1850 and the Catholics established St Patrick's College in 1854. The Anglicans and the Wesleyans sought land outside the city centre, on what was then considered the outskirts of the settlement in South Yarra. In South Yarra, a school run by the Scottish (Presbyterian) Free Church at 603–627 Punt Road opened in 1854. An Anglican school at Christ Church was also in operation in 1854 prior to the foundation stone of the church building being laid in 1855. A site was surveyed on St Kilda Road for a Church of England grammar school in 1855 and Melbourne Grammar School was opened there in 1858. Further southeast along St Kilda, a Wesleyan grammar school, known as Wesley College, was established by the Methodist Church in 1866.

Following the 1872 *Education Act*, which marked the end of government funding to church schools, they were largely abandoned with the exception of Catholic schools, which were largely staffed by religious orders. Christ Church, South Yarra, was an exception to the rule, with the attached Anglican school operating after the 1872 *Education Act* and continuing to grow and develop up until the present day.

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Bunurong people. The church complex adjoins Fawkner Park on the west, which was documented as a place that Aboriginal people occupied in the 1850s and 1860s and held corroborees—for at least a decade after the establishment of the church in 1856. The vicarage, built in 1859, looked out over Fawkner Park before the park was formerly laid out.

The site at 663–681 Punt Road comprises an 1860 vicarage, 1924 Memorial Hall and school building with 1953 additions, and later structures including the 1963 school wing with 2003 additions, 2018 classrooms and a modern vicarage (Figure 1). The site adjoins the 1856 Christ Church at 683–701 Punt Road (VHR H0635; HO401).



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Vicarage (1860) | 5 | McLardy Music School (1990) |
| 2 | Memorial Hall and school building (1924) | 6 | New vicarage (c2000s) |
| 3 | East wing (1924) with first floor additions (1953) | 7 | Beryl Gregory Resource Centre (2018) |
| 4 | Anne Wardley Wing (1963, 2003) | | |

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, showing the key buildings and later structures. The green overlay denotes structures substantially modified or constructed from 1990. (Source: Nearthmap 2022 with GML overlay)

The subject site sits within a two-acre Crown reserve granted to the Church of England on 1 December 1854 (Parish plan 1922). Conditions attached to the Crown reserve required that the parish use the land for buildings that related to religious use, which could include a church, chapel, school, or residence for clergy (Slater 1987:7). In 1854, five denominations were each offered a two-acre Crown reserve along this section of Punt Road. Of these denominations, the Anglican church was allocated the most elevated and prominent site, located at the corner of Toorak Road and Punt Road (Figure 2), reflecting the significant influence of the Anglican Church in Victoria at that time.

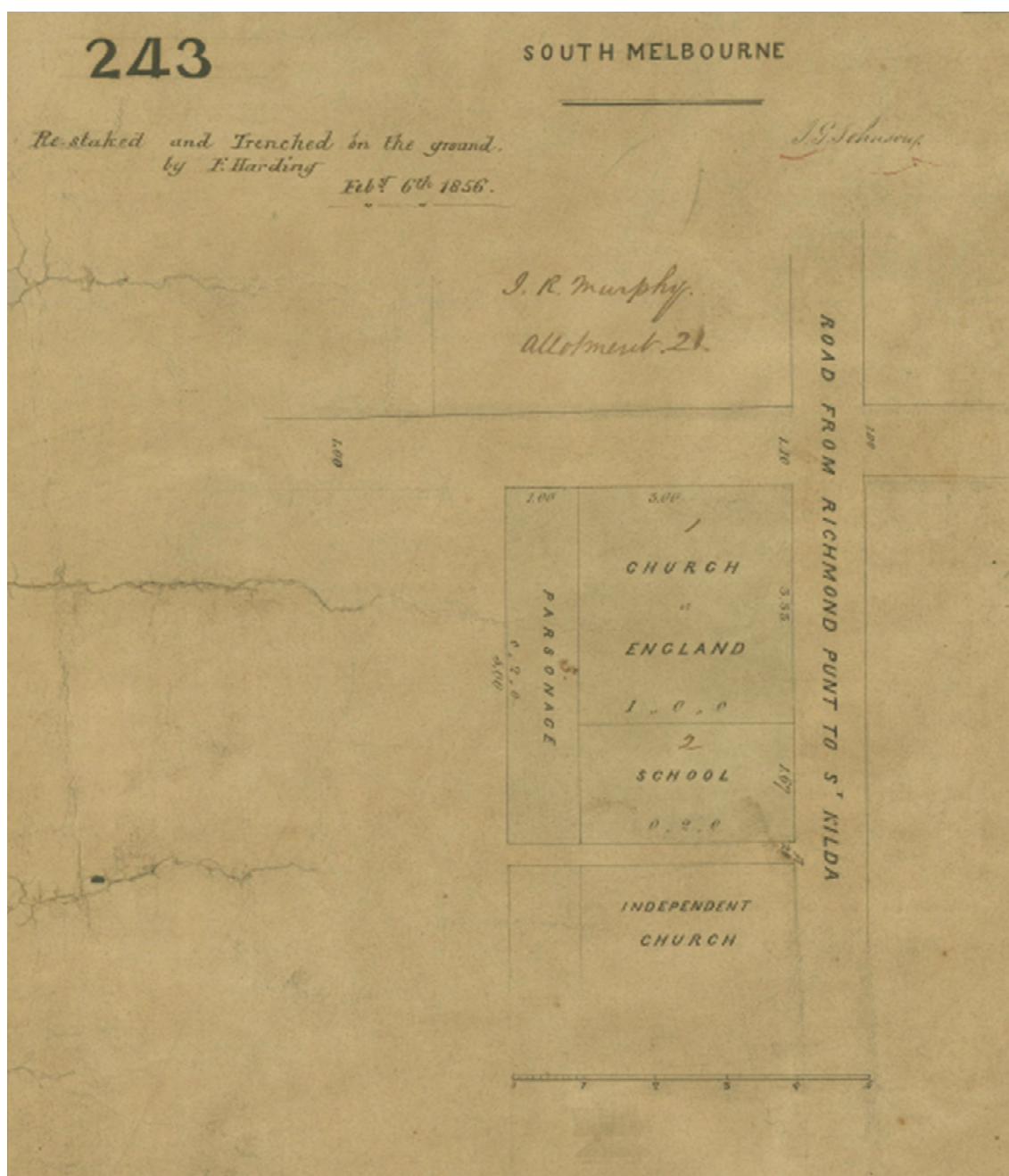


Figure 2. 'Plan for a site for the Church of England at South Melbourne', 1856. (Public Records Office Victoria, Historic Plan Collection, Melbourne South Church of England Reserve, VPRS 8168 P0005, item 243)

On the higher ground at the northern end of the church reserve, Christ Church (today at 683–701 Punt Road) was completed in 1857. Following the initial grant of land, plans for a church were put on hold due to the costs, and the congregation instead went ahead with the construction of a simple schoolhouse (since demolished) (Cuthbert 1996:11). In 1855 the Church of England congregation held services in the Presbyterian iron schoolhouse on the site of the South Yarra Primary School at 585–599 Punt Road (*Age*, 7 December 1855:5). Construction of Christ Church commenced in 1856, to a design prepared by architects Webb and Taylor (Charles Webb and Thomas Taylor); building work was undertaken by E J Young. The church was open for worship by 1857. This church building is registered on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0635).

A vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) was completed by 1860 to a design by Charles Webb (Figure 3) at a cost of £4000 (*Argus* 26 April 1860:8; *Age* 24 April 1916: 6). The construction of the vicarage, which was built close to the church reserve's western boundary with Fawkner Park, was partly funded by William Guinness, the first vicar of Christ Church (Slater 1987:8). The front verandah of the vicarage had not been erected at that time (Figure 3).

The parish community was not obliged to raise funds for a residence for its clergy. As Miles Lewis has pointed out, Anglicans in Victoria were not used to raising funds for their buildings as they were accustomed to these being provided by the state, as was the case in England (Lewis 1991:6).



Figure 3. A view of the church and vicarage in 1859, viewed from the west and taken from within Fawkner Park. The front verandah of the vicarage had not been erected at that time. (Source: Johnstone c1859, State Library Victoria, Accession No. H27163)

Despite the extensive development of the church reserve from the 1860s to the 1890s, the 1860 vicarage is the only building from the nineteenth century remaining on the site at 663–681 Punt Road.

By 1864, two small buildings existed to the east side of the vicarage (Cox 1864). These were likely the c1854 schoolhouse and a newer school building, which was built soon after the erection of the vicarage (*Prahran Chronicle*, 29 April 1916: 4). Guinness opened a denominational school on the site in 1862, but it closed the following year (Blake 1973: 303). The two school buildings are not extant today. A parish hall, which was also used for Sunday school (and probably also for a day school), was erected in 1876 (since demolished) (Christ Church 1956: 12).

Horace Finn Tucker, who was the vicar at Christ Church from 1880 until 1908, was a progressive churchman who oversaw extensive developments over the following decade, including the development of the following:

- a new church sanctuary in 1881
- the addition of a large spire to the church in 1886
- the addition of a south aisle in 1886 and a north aisle in 1889 (Slater 1987:7)
- a verger's cottage and additions for the Sunday school, designed by Reed Henderson & Smart in 1884 (*Argus* 28 July 1884: 2)
- the gardens of the vicarage developed in the 1880s (Christ Church 1956: 14)

- a building for the athletics and gymnastics club, erected on the southern boundary of the church reserve and opened by the Governor Lord Hopetoun in 1890 (Christ Church 1956: 18; news ref 1890). This was rebuilt in brick in 1906 (Lewis 2011)
- a cabman's shelter erected to a design by local resident architect Frank Stapley outside the church reserve on Punt Road in 1901 (Christ Church 1956: 18; Lewis).

These were since demolished except for the vicarage garden and the cabman's shelter, which has been relocated to the church grounds.

Tucker led an active parish that ran a large range of church groups and activities. Concerned about the high urban unemployment during the 1890s depression, Tucker became an advocate of co-operative 'village settlements'. He wrote several important works during that period, including the utopian novel, *The New Arcadia* (1894), which centred around the co-operative rural settlement ideals, and a book of poetry, *After Many Days* (1905). He was an enthusiast for physical exercise and also supported a strong music program in the parish. His son, Gerard Kennedy Tucker, who was born at the Christ Church vicarage, became the founder of the Brotherhood of St Laurence (Carter 1990).

By 1895, the church reserve contained the church and the 1860 vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1), as well as a large Sunday School building (the parish hall) with smaller ancillary school building, an athletics club, and a caretaker's (or verger's) cottage, all of which have been since demolished (Figure 4).

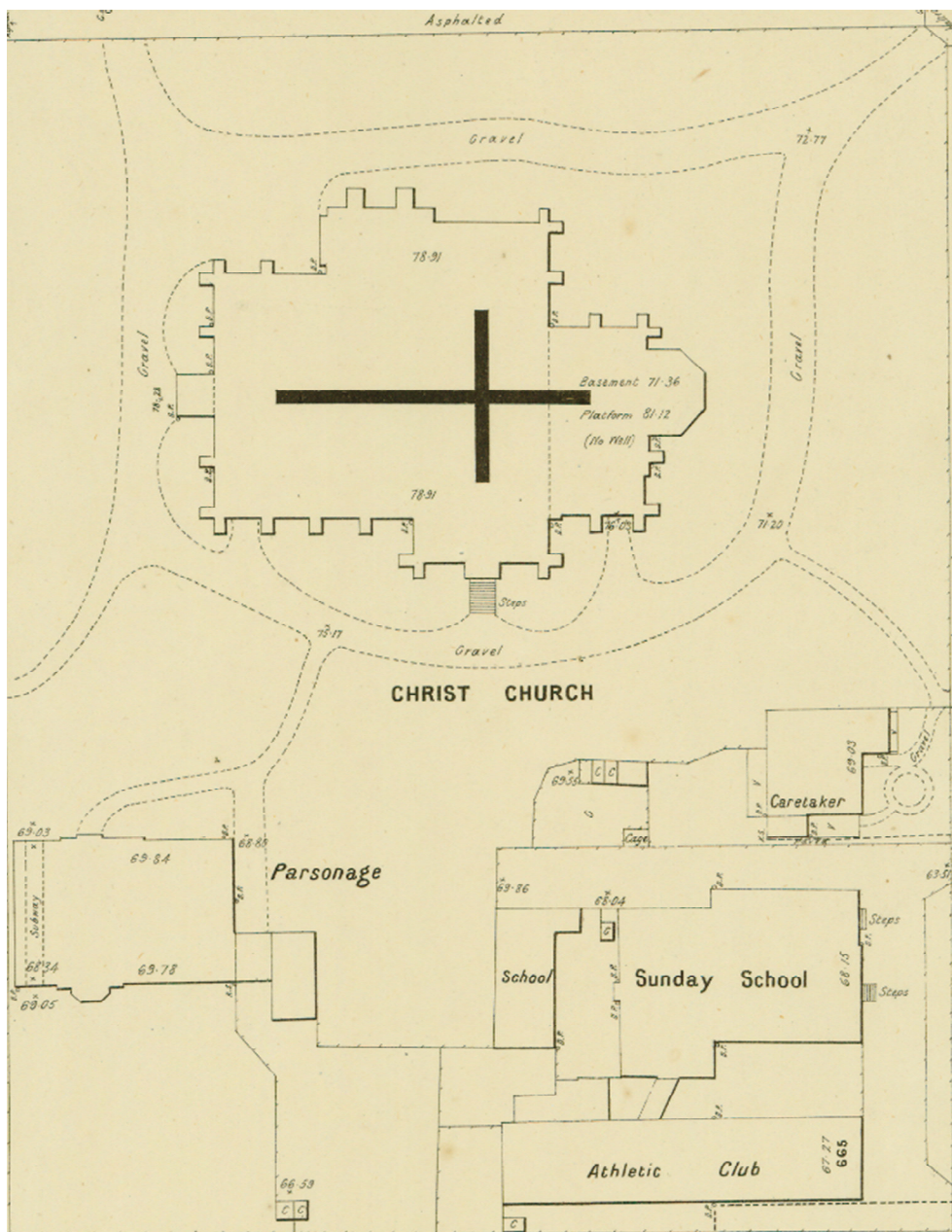


Figure 4. The MMBW detail plan no 891 shows the Christ Church site as it appeared in 1895. The clergyman's residence, here marked as a parsonage, is visible to the west of the site. The area currently occupied by the Christ Church Grammar School is occupied at this time by school buildings, a caretaker's cottage and an athletic club. (Source: State Library Victoria)

Although a day school and Sunday school had operated at Christ Church as early as 1854, it was not until 1898 that the present Christ Church Grammar School was established, initially as a boys' school. Tucker, who a supporter of the parish's strong music program, was integral in establishing the Christ Church Grammar School. Following a traditional English parish model, the intention was that the pupils would form the church's choir. The school fees of boys who performed choir duty were paid by the church, thus creating what may be considered as one of the first music scholarships in Victoria (CCGS 2021).

Under the leadership of headmistress Elsie Esdaile in 1921, the first female student was admitted; by 1922 the school was opened to the admission of girls (CCGS 2021).

A new parish hall and school building (Figure 1: Number 2) was erected in 1924 in place of the pre-existing parish hall and school. The foundations of the 1876 hall were retained as were sections of some of the existing walls. Named Memorial Hall, the new hall was dedicated to the memory of the men from the parish who had died serving in World War I. The new complex was opened by the Governor-General Lord Forster on 29 March 1924 (Order of Service, 1924).

The Memorial Hall included a dance hall, supper rooms, and meeting rooms, as well as new classrooms to accommodate the growing Christ Church Grammar School. The building was designed by Clements Langford and was constructed by Langford's company (Figure 5) at a cost of £14,000 (*Argus* 22 March 1924:32; 9 September 1924:9; 10 September 1924:21). The new building, with its square tower, castellations and other Gothic Revival elements, referenced traditional English church styles and in particular echoed Webb and Taylor's design for the nearby Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, built in 1858. Earlier plan for a combined new hall and school building at Christ Church had been prepared by North and Williams by 1916, but these plans—somewhat more elaborate than what was built in 1924—were presumably abandoned (*Building* 12 June 1916). It is not known whether North and Williams had any role in the scaled-down design of 1924, but the fine detailing of the building suggests that an architect was involved.

The construction of the Memorial Hall also used bluestone, bricks and timber salvaged from the former parish hall and schoolhouse (Christ Church 1956: 12). The verger's (caretaker's) cottage is likely to have been demolished in 1924 to make way for the new building.



Figure 5. A photograph of the Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building taken shortly after its completion in 1924. The building included a dance hall, supper rooms, meeting rooms and classrooms. The projecting room to the east (at the left of the image) was a single-storey structure at this time. (Source: *Argus*, 9 September 1924:9)

In 1953 Yuncken Freeman Brothers called for tenders for the construction of two new classrooms (Figure 1: Number 3) at Christ Church Grammar School (*Age*, 17 October 1953:22). It appears that these two new classrooms formed a second level to the projecting east wing (Figure 5). The former gabled roof was replaced with a flat roof and the addition was finished in a similar rendered treatment and quoining to the exterior.

In 1968 a new brick school building (Figure 1: Number 4) was erected at a cost of \$40,000 (MBAI 40171). It is likely that this is the wing extending to the west of the Memorial Hall. A second storey to this building is likely to have been constructed 2003 (CCGS 2021).

Various minor alterations have been undertaken on buildings at the site since the 1960s (MBAI).

In 1990, a new school building named the McLardy Music School (Figure 1: Number 5) was built directly to the south of the Memorial Hall Building (CCGS 2021). In 2018, the school celebrated its 120th anniversary with the opening of a large, new classroom complex on the southern boundary of the site, designed by Sally Draper Architects and named in honour of a long-serving headmistress, Beryl Gregory OAM (CCGS 2021). It appears that the McLardy Music School building was significantly upgraded during the construction of the Beryl Gregory Resource Centre (Figure 1: Number 7).

A new vicarage (Figure 1: Number 6) was erected in the southwest corner of the site, likely during the 2000s, on land that appears to have been part of the garden of the original vicarage.

Charles Webb, architect

Charles Webb (1821–1898) designed some of Melbourne’s most prominent nineteenth-century buildings. Born in Suffolk, England, Webb completed his articles in London and arrived in Melbourne in 1848, joining elder brother James (1808–1870). The brothers set up a joint architecture and survey practice, undertaking numerous commissions for houses, stores, warehouses and churches, including the first iteration of St Paul’s Anglican Church (1850–52, demolished). From 1854 to 1858 Webb partnered with Thomas Taylor (c1820–1872), completing Christ Church, South Yarra; St Andrew’s Church, Brighton; and Melbourne Church of England Boys’ Grammar School, South Yarra (all built in 1856). Webb continued in sole practice from 1858, and in 1888 was joined by two of his sons, Charles Hayward Webb (1856–1943) and Alfred William Webb (1859–1934). Webb designed many prominent buildings in the Italianate or Renaissance Revival style, including the Royal Arcade, Melbourne (1869), the South Melbourne Town Hall (1878) and the Grand Hotel (now Windsor Hotel) (1883–84). Webb also designed many churches in the Gothic Revival style, including the Church of Christ in Swanston Street, Melbourne (1863) (Willis 2012:757).

Clements Langford, builder

Clements Langford (1853–1930) was born in Hampshire, England, the son of a brewer. Arriving in Tasmania in 1864, the family later moved to Melbourne the same year. The following year, Langford was apprenticed to the notable builder David Mitchell, father of Dame Nellie Melba. In 1874 Langford won first prize for architectural drawing at the Richmond School of Design (Richmond 2005). Langford became increasingly prosperous through the 1870s, and by the 1880s owned property in Richmond and Sorrento.

After a brief partnership with Robert Hutchison in the 1880s, Langford continued under his own name from 1886 onwards. The company employed 300 people by 1909 and was responsible for large-scale projects around the city. The company was incorporated as Clements Langford Pty Ltd in 1923, and by 1930 had expanded to include shop and office fitters, plumbers, painters and decorators with timber working and joiners’ shops. Langford was also the director of companies that supplied building materials including cement, brick and timber. Notable buildings constructed by the company include the Myer Emporium (314–336 Bourke Street and 275–321 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne), Comedy Theatre (228–240 Exhibition Street, Melbourne), Herald and Weekly Times Building (46–74 Flinders Street and 2–8 Exhibition Street, Melbourne) and the Bryant and May factory (560 Church Street, Richmond) (Richmond 2005). Langford worked extensively with leading architects and was known to have had design input into many sites, such as the work undertaken at St Stephen’s Church of England in

Richmond (Richmond 2005). The most enduring work undertaken by Langford was the construction of the St Paul's Cathedral spires in the 1920s.

Langford was a committed Anglican, becoming a long-time parishioner of St Stephen's (350–362 Church Street, Richmond) before being made a lay canon of St Paul's Cathedral (Flinders Street, Melbourne). In his professional life, Langford was president (1913–14) and treasurer of the Melbourne Master Builders' Association, as well as being president of the Master Builders' Federation of Victoria (Richmond 2005).

Horace Finn Tucker, Anglican minister and writer

Horace Finn Tucker (1849–1911) was born in Cambridge, England, in 1849, the third child of an Anglican clergyman. His father was appointed the Australian agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the family arrived in Sydney in 1861. Tucker was educated at the Moore Theological College in NSW and was made a deacon of the Church of England in 1873. He was later ordained as a minister in 1874 (Carter 1990). In 1873 Tucker married Caroline Brodribb, the daughter of prominent pastoralist and politician William Brodribb. Following his ordination, Tucker was posted to various Anglican parishes in central Victoria. His ministry gained attention from Bishop Moorhouse, who promoted him to the prosperous Christ Church parish in South Yarra in 1880 (Carter 1990). Here, Tucker was integral in establishing the Christ Church Grammar School in 1898 (Carter 1990).

Concerned with spreading his ministry to the poor in his parish, Tucker was responsible for the establishment of three mission churches attached to Christ Church. During the financial depression of the 1890s, Tucker and fellow clergyman Charles Strong promoted resettlement schemes that placed unemployed people in country areas. Between 1892 and 1894 approximately 200 families were placed in 'Tucker village settlements' in Gippsland, central Victoria and the Wimmera. These ambitious schemes ultimately proved unsustainable through lack of finance and mismanagement, however the government recognised Tucker and Strong's efforts with the *Settlement of Lands Act* (1893) that provided for similar settlements in the future. Tucker published a utopian novel *The New Arcadia* in 1894, which was based on the ideals he had promoted through the Tucker village settlements. Later publications included *After Many Days* (1905) and a book on Christian saints titled *Lights for Lesser Days* (1909). Tucker also widely published articles on social issues (Carter 1990).

Tucker was elected a canon of St Paul's Cathedral in 1894. After his retirement from Christ Church in 1908, he continued his parish work in Melbourne's outer suburbs (Carter 1990). His son Gerard Kennedy Tucker, who was born at the Christ Church vicarage in 1885, went on to establish the Brotherhood of St Laurence (Carter 1990).

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Christ Church Grammar has been continually used as a school in the City of Melbourne since 1898, serving its pupils past and present, parents, families, teachers benefactors and administrators on site for over 120 years. Community connections are demonstrated in this longstanding use and the school retains a visible and active presence in the community. It continues to foster connections with alumni, their families, and the community more generally. The 1924 Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building have strong links with the Christ Church congregation and the students, alumni and families associated with the Christ Church Grammar School.

Christ Church has been an integral part of daily life for the members of the local parish from the 1850s, as the primary place of Anglican worship. The Memorial Hall linked with the church has been, and continues to be, a place for many community activities and functions, as well as significant events such

as christenings, weddings and funerals. Built as as a memorial to local men from the parish who served in World War I, the Memorial Hall is a tangible link to previous generations who lost their lives for their descendants, school students and staff, and other community members more broadly.

SITE DESCRIPTION

663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, is bounded by Punt Road to the east, Park Place to the South, Fawkner Park to the west, and the Christ Church and gardens (683–701 Punt Road) to the north. The site is divided from the church and gardens by a private driveway. The site comprises a 1860 vicarage, a 1934 Memorial Hall and school building with additions from 1953, and later buildings developed from 1968 to 2018 for the Christ Church Grammar School.

Vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1)

The original vicarage is a double-storey building located on the western boundary of the site close to the boundary with Fawkner Park. The building is constructed of bluestone with cream brick detailing in a Gothic Revival style. The building has a squarish footprint and has a U-shape roofline made up of three gable planes. It has a skillion verandah section to the west. A north–south gable plane runs parallel with the principal façade, with two east–west planes located on the rear of the building. The main sections of roof are clad in slate, while the verandah roof is clad in corrugated sheet metal. Multiple original oblique rendered chimneys are still evident.

The elevation facing Fawkner Park to the west features a two-storey verandah (Figure 6). The ground floor of the verandah features cream brick piers, while the upper floor has simple timber posts and balustrading. The verandah has been infilled on both levels with non-original glazing. Low garden beds have been planted in front of this elevation, and the upper floor of the verandah is accessed by a walkway from the north.



Figure 6. The principal (western) elevation of the vicarage with verandah. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

The original detailing of the building is more evident on the northern elevation. Located on the ground floor is a recessed porch. It has a depressed arched entry with a cream brick surround. A projecting stone string course wraps around the building at window height on the ground floor and forms a point above the entryway (Figure 7). To the side of the entryway is a projecting chimney stack with cream brick quoining, that steps inwards as it ascends the building (Figure 8). The ground floor has multiple windows, each of which have stone sills and cream brick surrounds.

Set above the porch opening on the first floor is a window with decorative arched head. Other large window openings are present, each with stone sills and cream brick surrounds. The comparative height of these windows to the windows of the ground floor indicate that the first floor contained the primary rooms of the dwelling (Figure 9). The openings retain their timber frames, however, appear to have modern glazing. The sill height of one upper floor window has been raised.

The rear (eastern) elevation (Figure 10) overlooking the basketball court continues the cream brick quoining detail and stone stringcourse. This elevation is dominated by the two gable roof forms, with centred window openings on both floors. Between the gables, a window with an arched head is located centrally, midway between the ground and first floors, with the stringcourse wrapping around the top. A small rectangular window is located above.

The southern elevation is not visible from the public domain, however a double-storey canted bay window is evident. A small section of garden is still evident to the south of the Vicarage.



Figure 7.- The recessed porch entry of the vicarage on the ground floor of the northern elevation. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 8.- The chimney stack with quoining on the northern elevation of the vicarage. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 9. A view of the northern elevation of the Vicarage. The height of the first floor against the ground floor is evident. Note the bricked up window to the left. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 10. The rear (eastern) elevation of the Vicarage. The canted bay window on the southern elevation is evident, circled in red. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Memorial Hall and school building (Figure 1: Number 2 and Number 3)

The Memorial Hall and school building is located towards the southeast corner of the site, close to Punt Road.

The main hall section of the building (Figure 1: Number 2) is rectangular in shape running on a north–south axis with gable roof. A projecting wing to the east creates an overall L-shape floor plan. The northern elevation is the primary façade and includes a square clock tower to the west. The building is characterised by its use of rough concrete render, smooth render parapet capping and detailing and dark concrete tiled roof. The corners of the building and window openings all feature quoining executed in smooth render. The building exhibits elements of the Gothic Revival style.

The northern façade is asymmetrically arranged. The main parapeted gable end of the hall has a large, Gothic-style window. Set above the window is a row of three small blind arches. At the ground floor, two gabled wings project forwards, each with similar blind arches to their gable ends. Both wings feature large window openings. Between these two projecting wings is a porch with a Gothic-style entry arch with- castellations above (Figure 11). All gables are topped with fleur-de-lis finials. The square tower has small windows set at ground level, with a larger window opening at the first floor. Above the first floor, a pointed arch window is set on all four sides of the tower. The top of the tower is has a parapet wall with castellated detailing. Gothic-style pinnacles extend from each corner. A clock is set on the north face of the parapet wall of the tower. A flagpole is centrally located on the top of the tower.

To the east of the main built form of the hall is a flat-roofed two-storey east wing (Figure 1: Number 3). The ground floor has large rectangular window openings, whereas the first floor, added in 1953, has small, high set windows (Figure 11). Windows appear to have painted timber frames.



Figure 11. The northern elevation of the Christ Church Hall building. The large gable of the hall is evident with Gothic-style window, with two gabled projecting wings visible at ground floor. The central porch with arched entry is also visible. Note the tower and double-storey wing built in two stages to the east (at the left of the image). (Source: GML Heritage 2020)

The eastern and western façades of the hall building feature rhythmically placed openings. The frames to the upper windows have been replaced with aluminium frames. The western façade has a series of doorways to the ground floor, with new smooth render quoining (Figure 12).



Figure 12. The western façade of the Memorial Hall building, showing how ground floor openings have been altered to accommodate doors. Modern school buildings can be seen either side of the hall in this image. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Recent buildings (Figure 1: Numbers 4–7)

New purpose-built school buildings have been erected to the west and south of the Memorial Hall. These buildings are easily distinguishable from the early fabric of the site. These buildings form a quadrangle space with the hall and vicarage around a multi-use sporting court.

The Anne Wardley Wing (Figure 1: Number 4) is a two-storey wing of classrooms, built in 1968 and added to in 2003. This wing projects westwards from the front of the hall building, terminating slightly to the east of the vicarage. The building is constructed in concrete block and has a corrugated sheet metal roof.

To the south of the building, a large modern wing of classrooms has been erected in 1990 and 2018. The McLardy Music School (Figure 1: Number 5) is rectangular in form, with elevations to Punt Road and Park Place having no setback from the streets. The building is clad in metal panelling. The Beryl Gregory Resource Centre (Figure 1: Number 7) projects eastwards from the music school building and terminates slightly east of a modern vicarage. This building is also rectangular in form, with no setback from the Park Place frontage of the property. To Park Place, the building features roughly textured rendering that references the materiality of the Memorial Hall. The elevation facing the quadrangle has precast concrete panels that feature an articulated pattern of crosses. These crosses are similar to the form of the cross evident in the school's crest.

A modern vicarage (Figure 1: Number 6) has been erected in the southwestern corner of the site, fronting Park Place. This building comprises two storeys and is constructed in red face brick with what appears to be a slate roof. The building is rectangular, with a gable roof over the majority of the structure. The front entry way projects from the façade and is treated in render. A cantilevered hood sits above the front door. A garage is evident to the east of the building.

INTEGRITY

The 1860 vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) has a high level of intactness to its original design. The building retains its square, double-storey form, and gabled roof. The materiality of the building, including bluestone, cream brick, slate and timber window frames, has remained intact. Key design features such as the cream brick detailing, porch opening, front verandah, canted bay window and chimneys are all still evident. Window openings appear to be original. Although the verandah has been infilled, the building is still legible, and these changes appear to be largely reversible.

The 1924 Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building (Figure 1: Number 2) exhibits a moderately high level of intactness to its original design. The building largely retains its original form and materiality, expressed in rough cast render with contrasting smooth render detailing. The building also maintains its Gothic Revival detailing, evident in windows, archways, castellated detailing and pinnacles on the square tower. The building largely retains its original openings, and the replacement of window frames does not diminish the legibility of the building. The roof, which appears to have been replaced in concrete tiles, similarly does not diminish the legibility of the building. The 1953 first-floor additions (Figure 1: Number 3) to the small east wing of the hall does not significantly diminish the integrity of the design and evidences its early development through use of the school.

The construction of more recent school buildings around the quadrangle are readily distinguished from the historical fabric, and do not diminish the legibility of the site as a historical school.

The 1860 vicarage and 1924 Memorial Hall and school building have medium to high integrity, while the complex overall has medium integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Melbourne's churches played an influential role in colonial society and helped shape the urban landscape. It was the practice of early government surveyors to reserve a place on high ground for churches, and on other occasions denominations sought a grant elsewhere, mainly to secure physical prominence in new towns and suburbs (Lewis 1991:6). The principal Christian churches established during the colonial period included those of the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations (Context 2012:77). In the 1850s and 1860s, Melbourne saw intensive church development, mirroring the wider development of the suburban areas that followed population growth. The majority of churches during this period were built of stone in the Gothic Revival style (Context 2012:17).

Gothic Revival architecture had emerged in England in the early nineteenth century as the result of the liturgical revival promoted in the Anglican Church by the ecclesiological movement. It reached the colonies by the 1840s, a time when Greek Revivalism was the strongest architectural influence. The enthusiastic take-up of Gothic Revival style in Victoria was supported by immigrant architects from Britain and Ireland who arrived in the colonies fully trained (Lewis 1991:20), notably William Wardell who had trained under the eminent Augustus Pugin.

Churches were mostly built on land that had been granted by the government for church purposes, and these reserves came with stipulations that the land would be used to accommodate a church, a clergyman's residence, or a school. In many cases, all three would eventually be built. Over time, some churches built more substantial church halls, which were usually privately funded to and often complemented the church buildings in terms of style.

The Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building exhibit the key characteristics of buildings associated with churches but both are finer and more elaborate examples of their type. The 1860 vicarage was built for the resident vicar of Christ Church. The 1924 Memorial Hall built as a

memorial to local men from the parish who served in World War I, served as both a parish school, parish hall and a meeting place for the church community. The attached classrooms were built for the parish school. A day school had been provided on the site at various times since 1854, with a permanent 'grammar school' established in 1898. Sunday school was also provided on the site, probably since the 1850s. The continued operation of a church-run school on the site from 1898 until the present day is rare for an Anglican parish church and is more comparable with Catholic parish churches in Victoria.

The site is comparable to following examples of church complexes in the City of Melbourne that include buildings for education and residences for clergy.

St Peter's Eastern Hill Precinct, 453–479 Albert Street and 13–19 Gisborne Street, East Melbourne (VHR H0009; HO142)

St Peter's, Eastern Hill, is the oldest surviving Anglican church in Victoria and occupies a position close to Parliament House. The foundation stone was laid in 1846, with later alterations and additions carried out by Charles Vickers in 1854; in 1876 by Leonard Terry in 1876; and by Walter Butler in 1897. Originally known as the Melbourne Diocesan School, St Peter's School was opened on the site in 1849. A new schoolhouse and vicarage were built in 1886 to designs of William Pitt. A building comprising a hall and two classrooms was designed by Alexander North and built in 1913 as an extension to the school. The school closed in 1935.



Figure 13. View of the St Peter's Eastern Hill Precinct looking west, showing the 1913 hall and classrooms (outlined in red) and the 1886 schoolhouse and vicarage (outlined in orange). (Source: Nearmap 2021)

Lutheran Trinity Church, 65–75 Cathedral Place, East Melbourne (VHR H0015; HO167)

The Trinity Lutheran Church bluestone hall was built as an extension to the original church at the site in 1864, for use as a day school and Sunday school. The hall became a freestanding building when the original church was demolished in 1874. The vicarage was designed by J B Koch and built in 1890. Both sit within the grounds of the Lutheran Trinity Church; the site is no longer used as a school.



Figure 14. Lutheran Trinity Church Hall, built in 1864 (left), and vicarage, built in 1890 (right). (Source: CoMMaps)

Wesley Church Complex, 118–148 Lonsdale Street and 117–147 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (VHR H0012; HO712)

The manse and schoolhouse are both located within the larger Wesley Church complex. Both buildings were designed by Joseph Reed and completed in 1859. Both are built in bluestone, and complement the church building itself.

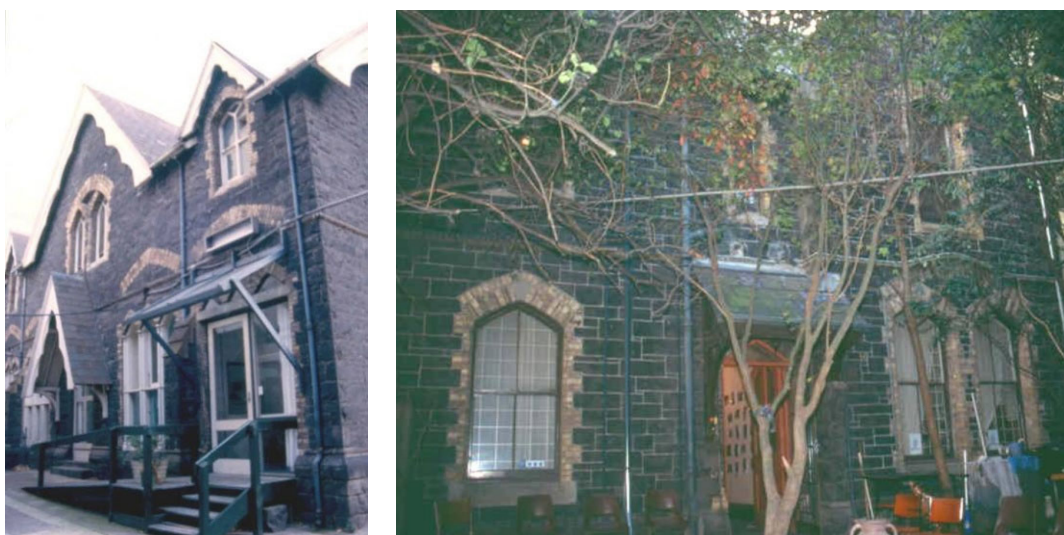


Figure 15. Wesley Church schoolhouse (left) and manse (right), both built in 1859. (Source: Victorian Heritage Database)

St Mary's Church of England , 147–177 Howard Street, 408–434 Queensberry Street and 204–208 Chetwynd Street, North Melbourne (VHR H0010; HO296)

This 1914 hall and 1917 vicarage were built within the grounds of an earlier church complex established by 1853 when the first iron building was erected as a combined church and school building. A separate building was built in 1918 to accommodate the Kindergarten Mission School, continuing provision of education on the site.



Figure 16. St Mary's Church of England hall (left), built in 1914, and vicarage (right), built in 1917. (Source: CoMMaps)

Former Presbyterian Union Memorial Church Complex, 49–61 Curzon Street, 2–22 Elm Street, 579–589 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne (VHR H0007; HO292)

This site includes a church hall, built in 1879 in the Gothic Revival style, and a manse, built in 1868. The hall was built with bluestone and other materials that came from a previous church that had existed on the site. The hall was likely used to conduct classes in, replacing an earlier iron school room.



Figure 17. Former Presbyterian Union Memorial Church Complex (North Melbourne) showing hall, built in 1879 (left) and manse, built in 1868 (right). (Source: CoMMaps; Victorian Heritage Database)

As an intact pair of early church-related buildings, the 1860 Christ Church vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) and 1924 Memorial Hall and school building with 1953 additions (Figure 1: Number 2) compare well with the above examples developed as part of a larger religious complex. The pair exhibits finer detailing than some of the examples registered on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

As seen in the above examples, provision of schoolrooms or a separate school building and a parish hall is commonly observed in large church complexes in the City of Melbourne. Often the early halls in such complexes served multiple purposes, as a parish hall and day or Sunday school. In terms of its use, being a hybrid of a hall and school, the 1924 Christ Church Memorial Hall and school is closely comparable to the 1913 hall and schoolrooms building at St Peter's, which was built as an extension to the Anglican parish school.

Architecturally, when compared against the above examples, the Christ Church Memorial Hall at the subject site is highlighted as a larger and more elaborately styled example of a church hall building and is notable for its relatively late construction in the interwar era. Within the City of Melbourne, the subject hall is an important example of a hall built as a memorial to local men from the parish who served in World War I. Stylistically, the Gothic Revival style 1924 building is comparable to all other church halls designed in Gothic Revival style, except for the examples at St Peter's in Eastern Hill and St Mary's in North Melbourne, which exhibit red brick construction with elements of the Arts and Crafts style.

In terms of the materiality, the 1924 building (and its 1953 additions) finished in roughcast render is distinguished from the Lutheran Trinity Church Hall, constructed in bluestone, and the St Mary's Hall, constructed in red brick.

Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building most closely resembles the example at the Former Presbyterian Union Memorial Church in North Melbourne. The North Melbourne example exhibits use of rendered walls and Gothic-style elements, however, is a far smaller and earlier example. The subject site has a more elaborate design scheme, with front projecting wings and a large tower.

The 1860 vicarage stands apart from examples at St Peter's, Eastern Hill, St Mary's Vicarage, North Melbourne, and the former Presbyterian Union Memorial Church Manse, North Melbourne, due to its use of bluestone and incorporation of elements of Gothic Revival style. Although the Lutheran Trinity Church vicarage exhibits elements of Gothic Revival style, its use of render and its later build date distinguishes it from the subject site, which is an older example built of bluestone. The Wesley Church manse is most directly comparable to the Christ Church Vicarage, being of a similar age, and constructed in bluestone with cream brick detailing. Like the subject site, the building features elements of the Gothic Revival style, slate gable roofs, cream brick window surrounds and prominent, tapering chimneys. Unlike the subject site, though, the Wesley Church Manse has been significantly altered, it is no longer in use as part of a church complex and its setting and significance has been considerably impacted by the construction of a multistorey building in its immediate vicinity. The subject site is, in comparison, a largely intact building that continues to be used by the church for which it was built.

Overall, the Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building are characterised by their intactness and complementary Gothic Revival elements that link them to the church building they are associated with. The relatively large size of the Memorial Hall, and its purpose as a war memorial, sets it apart from most other examples. Both subject buildings are greatly enhanced by their picturesque garden setting, and the adjoining parkland setting of Fawkner Park. The subject site is unusual in Victoria for its continuing educational use from the nineteenth century (by a parish day school from the 1850s and by the Christ Church Grammar School from its foundation in 1898).

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

CRITERION G

- ✓ Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).
-

CRITERION H

- ✓ Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

Melbourne Planning Scheme

| | |
|---|----|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS | No |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS | No |
| TREE CONTROLS | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4) | No |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER | No |
| PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE | No |

Other

N/A

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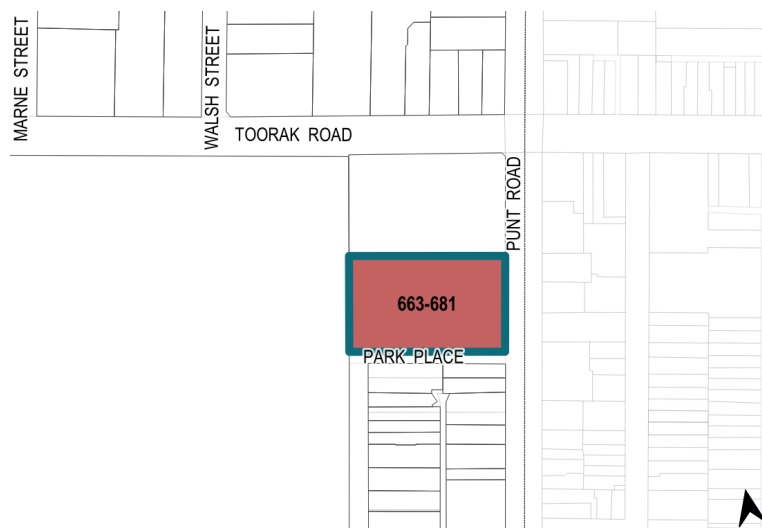
PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1410](#)



What is significant?

Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building at 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, are significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to) the:

- 1924 Memorial Hall and school building and 1953 additions (Figure 1: Number 2 and Number 3) and its built form and scale including the tower; materiality (including the exterior concrete render and the concrete tile roof); original pattern and size of fenestration; and decorative elements (including tower pinnacles, Gothic style tracery, gable end details, finials, quoining and clock mounted on the tower)
- the 1860 vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) and its original form and scale (including the building's U-shaped roof); materiality (including bluestone, cream brick, concrete render and slate); pattern and size of original fenestration; two-storey verandah on the principal façade overlooking Fawkner Park; decorative details (including bay window, arched entry way, chimney breasts, chimneys and quoining)
- the site's garden setting.

More recent alterations and additions, including school buildings to the south and west of the 1924 building (Figure 1: Numbers 4–7), are not significant. The new vicarage (Figure 1: Number 6) in the

southwest corner of the site is not significant. Later alterations to the 1860 vicarage, including infill glazing to the verandah, are not significant.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Vicarage (1860) | 5 | McLardy Music School (1990) |
| 2 | Memorial Hall and school building (1924) | 6 | New vicarage (c2000s) |
| 3 | East wing (1924) with first floor additions (1953) | 7 | Beryl Gregory Resource Centre (2018) |
| 4 | Anne Wardley Wing (1963, 2003) | | |

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, showing the key buildings and later structures. Green denotes structures substantially modified or constructed from 1990 that are not significant. (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

How is it significant?

Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building at 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, are of local historical, representative, social and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building at 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, are historically significant as part of a complex of church buildings used for Anglican Church purposes since 1854. The 1860 vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) has been maintained in use by the church for 160 years since its completion. The Christ Church reserve (the subject site and 683–701 Punt Road), developed from 1854, represents the strength and importance of the Anglican Church in South Yarra. The affluence of the local parish community led itself to the development of a substantial church and ancillary church buildings on the site, which were funded in part by private bequests. Christ Church Grammar School, formally established in 1898, continued on from the earlier provision of education at the site, and demonstrates the importance of the Church of England in South Yarra. (Criterion A)

The Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building (Figure 1: Number 2 and Number 3) is of local historical significance for its use as a parish hall since 1924, and its demonstration of the site's continued educational use to the present day. Education had been provided at the site since 1854 when a schoolhouse was erected. In 1898, Christ Church Grammar School was established, primarily as a school for choirboys, and was closely connected with the music program of Christ Church. Following the first official admission of girls in 1922, the Memorial Hall and school building was erected in 1924. The new building used much of the building materials of the demolished 1876 parish hall, which was also used as a Sunday and day school. The 1924 Memorial Hall (Figure 1: Number 2) accommodated many of the groups and activities associated with the parish community, including dances, charity events and Sunday school. The Memorial Hall is also significant as a war memorial built to honour the local men from the parish who served in World War I. The school wing (originally a single-storey) was added in 1953 with two classrooms on the upper floor (Figure 1: Number 3). The site has since been added to further and continues to be used for the purpose of Christ Church Grammar School. Christ Church Grammar School is notable as the only surviving example of an Anglican parish school in Victoria. (Criterion A)

The Christ Church vicarage, and Memorial Hall and school building (Figure 1: Number 2 and Number 3) at 663–681 Punt Road, South Yarra, are of representative significance for their ability to demonstrate the key characteristics of church complexes in the City of Melbourne. The Memorial Hall and school building and the vicarage represent development in response to the stipulations of the church reserve and remain as legible elements of the wider church complex. Further, the Memorial Hall and school building and the vicarage's use of Gothic Revival style elements, which had been especially popular in church building in Victoria during the second half of the nineteenth century, is consistent with church complexes that often applied the same architectural detailing to ancillary buildings. (Criterion D)

The 1924 Christ Church Memorial Hall and school building is socially significant to the City of Melbourne. They hold a close association with the Christ Church congregation and the students and alumni community of Christ Church Grammar School. Christ Church has been an integral part of daily life for the members of the local parish from the 1850s, as the primary place of Anglican worship. The Memorial Hall has been and continues to be a place for many community activities and functions, as well as significant events such as christenings, weddings and funerals. The Memorial Hall is also important to the alumni and veteran community and to the families of local men from the parish who served during World War I. (Criterion G)

The site and the 1860 vicarage (Figure 1: Number 1) is of associative significance for its connection to the Anglican pastor and writer Horace Finn Tucker (1849–1911), who was vicar at Christ Church from 1880 until 1909 and lived at the vicarage during this period. Tucker, was integral to establishment of the Christ Church Grammar School in 1898 and as a supporter of the parish's strong music program, created what may be considered as one of the first music scholarships in Victoria. Tucker later played an influential role in developing a scheme for village settlements in the early 1890s and this work occurred during the period he was vicar at Christ Church. During this time, he also wrote the utopian novel, *The New Arcadia* (1894), which examined the ideals of co-operative rural settlement. Tucker wrote several other important works during his time at Christ Church, including a book of poetry, *After Many Days* (1905). (Criterion H)

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: South Yarra Telephone Exchange

STREET ADDRESS: 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra

PROPERTY ID: 107816



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| SURVEY DATE: | January 2021 | SURVEY BY: | GML Heritage |
| PLACE TYPE: | Individual Heritage Place | EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY: | No |
| PROPOSED CATEGORY: | Significant | FORMER GRADE: | Ungraded |
| DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: | Commonwealth Department of Works - John McMahon Keane | BUILDER: | H G White Pty Ltd |
| DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: | Postwar Period (1945–1975) | DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: | 1950 |

THEMES

| ABORIGINAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
|---|------------------------|
| Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations. | N/A |
| HISTORICAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
| 7 Transport, communication and essential services | 7.5 Telecommunications |

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange was built in 1950 for the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department. It was designed by John McMahon Keane of the Commonwealth Department of Works and exhibits characteristics associated with postwar Modernist style and government designed infrastructure buildings. The four-storey brick building was purpose built as an automatic telephone exchange to service residents in South Yarra, Toorak, Kooyong, Glen Iris, Hartwell, Burwood, Jordanville, Tally Ho and Wantirna. It was one of the earliest government buildings to be constructed in Melbourne after World War II.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Telecommunications in Melbourne

Communications in Melbourne in the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth century, were facilitated by the post office. Melbourne's first post office was a bark hut on Collins Street that was replaced with the General Post Office when it opened on Bourke Street in 1867. Until the introduction of telephones in Australia, letters and telegraphs were the primary mode of communication.

In 1879 Australia's first commercial telephone service was installed, connecting the Robison Brothers engineering company's Flinders Street offices to its foundry in South Melbourne (Healy 2008). The first purpose-built telephone exchange opened the following year on Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

From 1901, telecommunications in Australia were administered by the Postmaster-General's Department, an administrative division of the newly established Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Department of Works designed all telecommunications infrastructure.

In the postwar era telephone services underwent significant expansion. Modern technology and growing demand for telephone services drove the development of new telephone exchange buildings in the city and suburbs. By the late 1960s, satellite and microwave technologies had integrated Melbourne's telephones with a global communications system (Healy 2008).

Through the *Telecommunications Act* 1975 the Postmaster-General's Department was abolished, and the government established a statutory authority, the Australian Telecommunications Commission (Telecom). All Australian telephone services were subsequently privatised through the 1980s, and Telecom acquired many telephone exchange buildings, including the South Yarra telephone exchange in 1986 (CT: V6991 F011). Other key developments in telecommunications from the 1980s included the establishment of cellular mobile networks and later, the use of telephone infrastructure to connect computer users to broadband internet services (Healy 2008).

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Bunurong people. The land comprising the subject site originally formed part of Crown Allotment 21, which was first purchased by J R Murphy in 1849 (City of Melbourne 1922).

The subject site was once part of a large estate known as 'Rhianva' (addressed as 741 Punt Road) comprising gardens, a coach house and a 14-roomed mansion (Figure 1) (*Herald*, 30 April 1940:4). Rhianva was built for David Rosenthal c1881–84 (S&Mc 1881; 1884).

The Victorian Government leased Rhianva as accommodation for Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, during his royal visit in 1867–68 (*Herald*, 30 April 1940:4). In preparation for his stay, Rhianva was redecorated and refurnished (*Herald*, 30 April 1940:4).

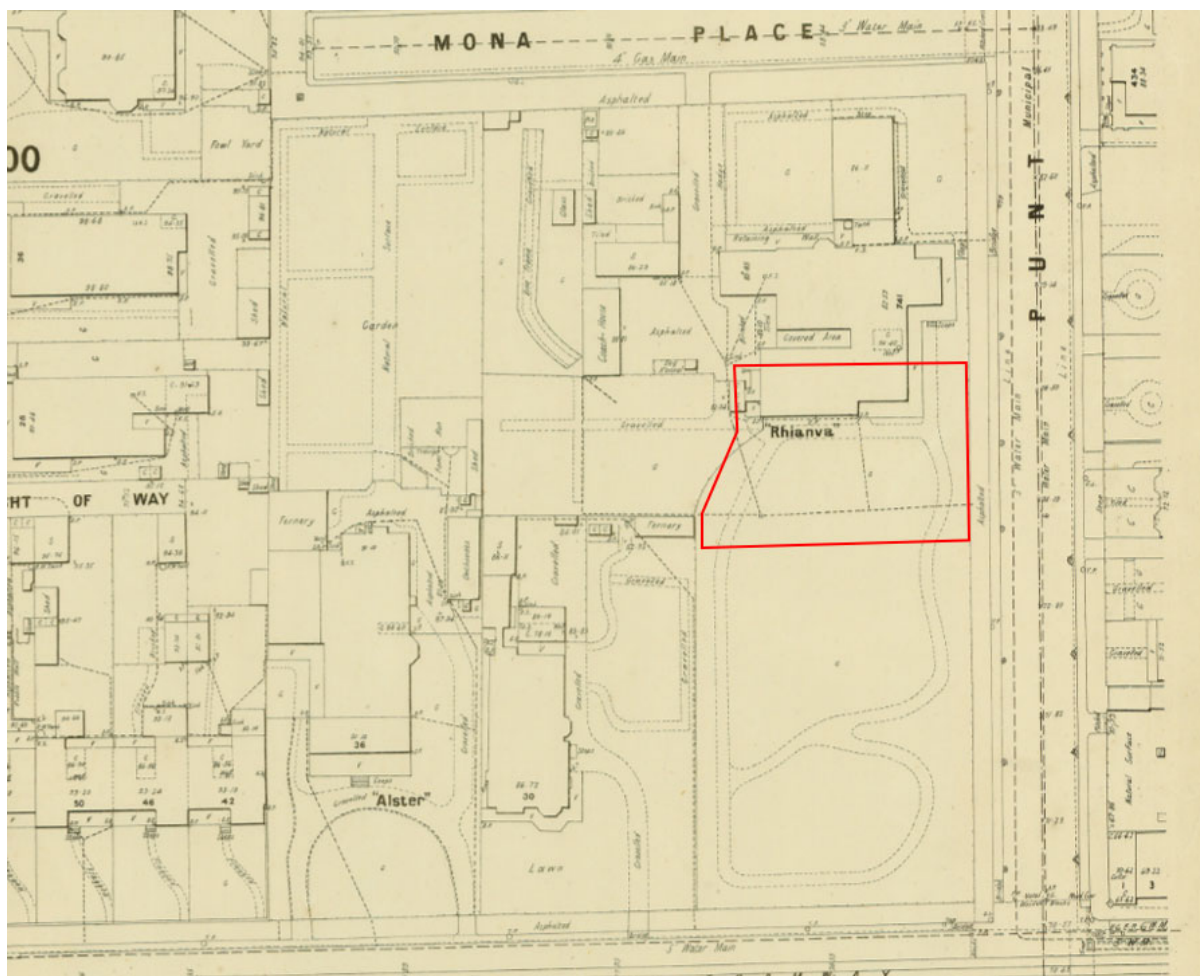


Figure 1. Extract from Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan no. 900, showing the subject site in 1896 (outlined in red). (Source: State Library Victoria)

The Rhianva mansion was demolished in 1940 and the estate subdivided into five allotments that were sold by auction in June that year (*Herald*, 8 May 1940:22; *Age*, 10 June 1940:12; *Argus*, 10 June 1940:6). Four of the five allotments sold for a combined sum of £8475 (*Argus*, 10 June 1940:6; *Age*, 10 June 1940:12).

The subject site remained unbuilt upon through the 1940s. A shortage of construction materials and skilled labour workforce during World War II effectively halted development within Melbourne over this period. Wartime restrictions were also placed on telecommunications, with limits imposed on the provision of telephone services in Victoria in 1942. After the war ended in 1945 telephone services were slowly resumed to pre-war levels. New telecommunications systems had also evolved including mobile radio-telephone service (1950) and Telex (teleprinter exchange) service (1954). In response to the need to modernise telecommunications infrastructure to serve increased demand and accommodate new technological advancements, the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department built many telephone exchanges in the postwar years across Melbourne, and Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:14).

Plans for a new telephone exchange at South Yarra were in train by January 1945 when a contract was let for the provision of a switchboard for an automatic telephone exchange in South Yarra (CAG, 4 January 1945:22). In 1946 the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department began the process of acquiring the subject site, addressed as 4 Punt Road, for a new exchange.

The department planned to build a four-storey automatic telephone exchange to relieve pressure on the manually operated Windsor Exchange (*Argus*, 22 February 1946:24). Councillor Kerr, chairman of the Melbourne City Council traffic and building regulations committee, along with two members for the Albert Ward, objected to the proposed works on the basis that the site was in a residential area (*Argus*, 22 February 1946:24). An earlier manual exchange had been established at the South Yarra Post Office in 1907, but this had become inadequate for local demand.

Although the South Yarra Exchange had been given high priority among a number of proposed Commonwealth works, there were delays in construction, in part owing to the shortage of fabricated steel. In 1949, the Postmaster-General's Department arranged with the Victorian Department of Works and Housing for considerable quantities of steel to be obtained from Britain for the construction of the South Yarra Exchange (*Advocate*, 29 September 1949:13).

Commonwealth Department of Works Melbourne architect John McMahon Keane prepared plans for the South Yarra Telephone Exchange c1947–49 (CDWH construction plans 1947–1949). Construction of the building was undertaken by H G White Pty Ltd and completed in 1950 (Figure 2) (*Age*, 21 October 1950:33). The technical equipment required to service 10,000 phone lines was installed on the lower two floors of the building (*Age*, 28 March 1953:4). The telephone exchange provided employment for women (as telephonists) and also employed a large number of telephone technicians and linemen. South Yarra residents were gradually disconnected from the Windsor manual exchange and transferred to the South Yarra exchange. The South Yarra exchange was the main exchange for Toorak, Kooyong, Glen Iris, Hartwell, Burwood, Jordanville, Tally Ho and Wantirna (*Age*, 28 March 1953:4).

Other telephone exchanges built in the early postwar period include the Russell Street Exchange in the city (1948); the St Kilda Telephone Exchange (1949) and the Strathmore Telephone Exchange (1952) (Heritage Alliance 2008:14)



Figure 2. South Yarra Telephone Exchange, c1957–70. (Source: National Archives of Australia, Item barcode: 9723726)

By the late 1960s, satellite and microwave technologies had integrated Melbourne's telephones with a global communications system (Healy 2008). This shift in technology did not result in any changes to the external appearance of the building. The only significant documented changes include a cantilever canopy and metal handrails installed at the entrance after c1970.

Through the *Telecommunications Act (Cth) 1975* the Postmaster-General's Department was abolished, and the government established a statutory authority, the Australian Telecommunications Commission (Telecom). With the privatisation of all telephone services in Australia, South Yarra telephone exchange building was acquired by Telecom in the 1980s. By the late 1980s the South Yarra Exchange was handling the bulk of telephone betting calls in Melbourne (*Age*, 2 August 1988:52).

In 1995 Telecom merged with the Overseas Telecommunications Corporation to become the public company Telstra Corporation Ltd. Telstra shares were first listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 1997 (Telstra n.d.).

Telstra Corporation continues to occupy the whole of the building.

Commonwealth Department of Works

The Commonwealth Department of Works, established in 1901, was responsible for public works within the Commonwealth's jurisdiction in the newly federated nation. Although the agency has operated under various different names—for example, it was known as the Department of Works & Housing in 1945, then the Department of Works from 1952 until 1978—it is commonly referred to as the Commonwealth Department of Works to distinguish it from state-based agencies. The department was responsible for the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of Commonwealth buildings and other engineering works. It was located in Melbourne until 1929, when it was transferred to Canberra. A period of intensive works was carried out by the Department of Works during and immediately after World War II, when the department managed the building of essential infrastructure as well as significant postwar planning (Smith 2006). By the early 1970s, the activities of the Department of Works were slowly declining. Its functions were transferred to the Department of Housing and Construction in 1978; then the Department of Transport and Construction in 1982; and from 1987 it was known as Australian Construction Services. The vestiges of the Department of Works were sold to an engineering firm in 1997 (Willis 2012:164–165).

John McMahon Keane

John McMahon Keane (1911–1988) was born in Geelong. He was listed as an architect by 1934 and based in Melbourne where he was admitted to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. In 1948 he was appointed an Architect Grade 3 for the Department of Works and Housing in the Commonwealth Public Service (CAG 1948, Part 3: 3750), and designed several Commonwealth buildings. Keane died in 1988.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange at 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, is a four-storey purpose-built brick building constructed in 1950

The subject site is located on a large allotment comprising two land parcels. It is located on the west side of Punt Road between Domain Road (to the south) and Mona Place (to the north). The building is sited centrally on the allotment.

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange building has a boxy form consisting of a three-storey parapeted main façade, an inset fourth storey with a deep eave overhang and five-storey tower to its northeast corner that provides access to an accessible roof area and screened plant. It is constructed of cream

brick with dark brown brick foundations and has crisply articulated painted cement render banding, window mouldings, parapet capping and a tower ventilation grill. Uniformly spaced and sized modular windows provide a repetitive rhythm across the north, east and south elevations.

The principal façade fronts Punt Road to the east. At ground floor level there are four regularly spaced window openings with a door, the building's main entry, to the northern end. The ground floor windows are enclosed by metal mesh screens that sit flush with the wall plane. A similarly detailed highlight window is located over the door. The entry door has stepped cream brick surrounds arranged in a decorative pattern of alternating soldier and header courses (Figure 3). A cantilevered canopy protects the entry and metal street numbers (737–745) located on the cream brickwork to the south of the door (Figure 3).

Beneath the windowsills a narrow cement render band extends the length of the façade. This band demarcates the change from the dark brick foundations to the cream brickwork to the upper section of the façade. A thick cement render band with narrow moulded edges forms a continuous horizontal line above the window openings.

The detailing of the first and second floor levels of the east façade are nearly identical. On each level six vertically proportioned rectangular windows punctuate the façade. Protruding perimeter frames surround the openings (Figure 4). The windows to the second floor have metal frames dividing the glazing into eight panes. On the first floor, only the northernmost opening has an eight paned window like the upper floor, with other window openings fitted with louvered grills and partially enclosed.

The third floor level has a smaller footprint that is set back from the principal façade. It has a flat roof with deep eaves that give the roof a floating appearance from street view.

The tower to the northeast is setback behind the main façade of the building. A large ventilation grill with horizontal cement render detailing is located at the top of the tower. To its north face, the tower has a centrally placed narrow window that extends from ground level to the parapet capping of the tower. The verticality of the window is emphasised by two projecting vertical blade-like mullions that separate the three sections of the window. The vertical sections of glazing are divided into equal rectangular sections by shallow metal glazing bars (Figure 5). The roof of the tower is accessible and has a simple pipe balustrade above the painted cement parapet capping. It is accessed from the third floor level roof terrace via a ladder. Plant and aerials are located on the tower roof.

There are seven large window openings on each floor on the southern elevation. These openings are wide, almost square in shape, and have metal frames dividing the glazing into twelve panes. Steel mesh screens are affixed to the windows on this elevation. The northern elevation has the same pattern of fenestration and window surrounds as the southern elevation.

On either side of the building there is a concrete driveway. A concrete path leads to the entrance which has stairs and simple metal standalone handrails. Along the Punt Road boundary, between the southern driveway and the entrance there is a low dark brown brick wall that forms an enclosed garden bed to this section of the building. On the other side of the entrance path, before the northernmost driveway, is a small garden bed with a moulded cement kerb.



Figure 3. Punt Road façade, entrance to South Yarra Telephone Exchange. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

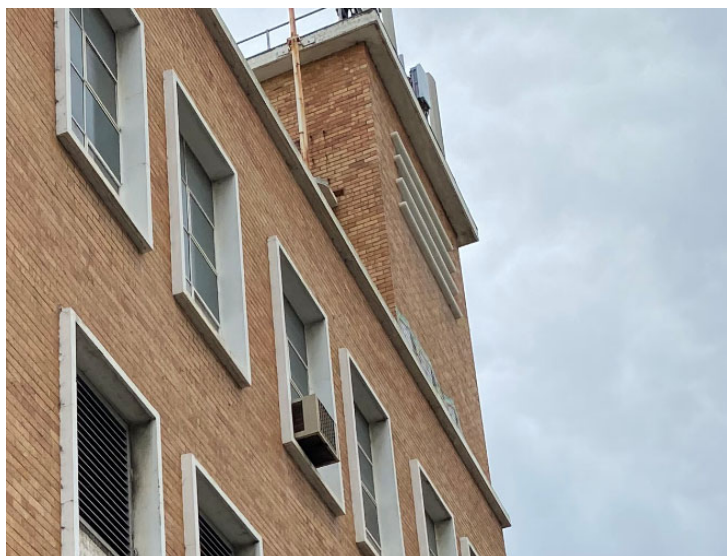


Figure 4. Punt Road façade, detail showing the second floor, tower and moulded grill. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

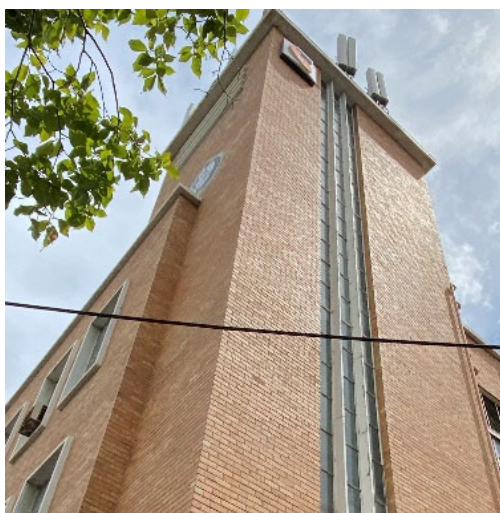


Figure 5. Detail showing the glazed detailing on the eastern elevation. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

INTEGRITY

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange at 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, is highly intact to its construction in 1950 with very few changes visible. The building retains the original built form, roofline, bichromatic face brick surfaces and pattern of fenestration, including the tower grill with moulded cement hoods. It retains the original metal-framed windows with projecting perimeter surrounds, the rendered cement bands, stepped brickwork and vertical stairwell glazing.

The 1970 addition of the cantilever canopy and handrails has not diminished the legibility of the original design and has had a negligible impact on the original fabric.

The building remains clearly legible as an example of postwar Modernist style and as an example of a Commonwealth-designed purpose-built telephone exchange building. The building has a high level of integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The shortage of construction materials and skilled labour restricted building activity in Victoria during World War II but Melbourne's building industry revived in the immediate postwar period. The increased building activity of the late 1940s and early 1950s coincided with an increased acceptance and application of Modernist architecture in the Australian design context (Apperly Irving Reynolds 1989:217). Such buildings were influenced by the Modernist architecture that developed in Europe following World War I in which the functionality of a building was a core design concern. By the mid-1930s this focus on functionalism had become linked with an aesthetic imperative to strip away purposeless ornamentation. Characteristics included simple prismatic geometric forms, compositional interplay between horizontal and vertical elements, extensive areas of plain smooth wall surfaces, simple material contrasts and pared back detailing with little to no ornamentation.

Modern architecture's principles of 'rational' and 'functional' design were well suited to government buildings dedicated telecommunications infrastructure in postwar Australia. This was an architecture that was well aligned with the technological advancements and aspirations of the era. As a result, Modern architecture was broadly adopted by the Commonwealth Department of Works in its designs for infrastructural buildings. Within the City of Melbourne there are several Commonwealth-designed telephone exchange buildings built in the late 1940s and early 1950s that evidence the uniform application of Modernist architectural expression in this building typology.

The comparative examples provided below are all Commonwealth Department of Works designed telephone exchanges built in the postwar period. One example has been drawn from outside the City of Melbourne to illustrate the uniform approach to this building typology by the Commonwealth Department of Works.

Former Russell Street Telephone Exchange & Post Office, 114–120 Russell Street, Melbourne (HO1374)

The former Russell Street Telephone Exchange & Post Office is architecturally unique as a multi-storey building displaying the influence of European Modernism, particularly the Amsterdam School. The interlocking, unadorned rectangular masses executed in cream-brick, the projecting strip windows on the first and second floors (through which the exchange machinery was visible), are typical modernist motifs. Historically, the Exchange is the first large building constructed in the central city after World War II, and evidences the influence of the solid, masonry architectural traditions typical pre-World War I (Context and GJM 2020:1153–1170).



Figure 6. 114–120 Russell Street, built in 1948–154. (Source: Context 2020)

St Kilda Telephone Exchange, 62–78 Inkerman Street, St Kilda (HO160, City of Port Phillip)

A large Modernist public building of four storeys in cream brick with a dark brown brick plinth to sill height. The built form massing is characteristic of the Modernist style and shows the influence of interwar European Modernist architecture. The main section of the building is punctuated by banks of steel framed windows and is defined by a parapet capping. It has a recessed upper level with deep eaves. A tower one storey higher than the main building is located to the southwest corner of the building. This element has a vertical emphasis that contrasts with the horizontal composition of the main windows. This verticality is heightened by the narrow vertical strip windows to its south and west faces. The building has a high level of integrity (Hermes record for ‘Telephone Exchange’, Place ID 200448).



Figure 7. 62–78 Inkerman Street, built in c1949. (Source: Context 2020)

Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange 376–382 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (HO1335)

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange is a substantial, refined and highly intact example of a lightweight aluminium curtain wall Postwar Modernist multi-storey building. The principal façade to Flinders Lane exhibits an unusual asymmetrical combination of a solid modernist form of light-coloured face brick, with an offset projecting curtain wall which extends from the first to the fifth floors. The building has light-coloured face brick wall planes punctuated by vertically proportioned window openings with projecting perimeter frames (Context and GJM 2020:703–722).



Figure 8. 376–382 Flinders Lane, built in 1956. (Source: Context and GJM 2020)

Lonsdale Exchange Building, 447–453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (HO1361)

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is a substantial, disciplined, refined and highly intact example of a Postwar Modernist multi-storey building incorporating features of Brutalism, such as large areas of solid masonry walling and limited glazing. These characteristics are overlaid with the repetitive modularity of postwar Modernism. In the subject building, this external expression of its utilitarian interior functions contributes to its rigid, minimalist design aesthetic (Context and GJM 2020:885–910)



Figure 9. Lonsdale Exchange Building, 447–453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, built 1969. (Source: Context 2020)

As a highly specific building typology, postwar telephone exchange buildings are not yet represented in the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay. Examples of postwar telephone exchanges in the City of Melbourne, also designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, include the former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114–120 Russell Street; the former Batman Exchange at 376–382 Flinders Lane; and the Lonsdale Exchange at 447–453 Lonsdale Street.

The subject building is directly comparable to the Former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building (City of Melbourne) and the St Kilda Telephone Exchange (City of Port Phillip) in terms of style, use, and typology. The three buildings were designed and built within a directly comparative time frame. This is reflected in their similar designs. The subject building shares stylistic and compositional similarities with these examples. All three buildings evidence a Modernist architecture that is clearly influenced by the functionalist emphasis of interwar Modernist architecture in Europe. They have solid prismatic forms and asymmetrical façade arrangements displaying a pronounced interplay of horizontal and vertical elements. The buildings are all constructed of cream brick with prominent projecting window surrounds, parapet capping, overhanging eaves and crisp minimal detailing.

The Russell Street exchange is larger and features more elaborate detailing, including its clock and granite columns. Its scale and more decorative design reflects its original dual role as an exchange and postal building. The St Kilda Telephone Exchange is more directly comparable to the subject building formally and functionally. Like the South Yarra Telephone Exchange, the St Kilda exchange building incorporates a corner tower that contrasts with the horizontality of the regular banks of windows, dark brown band of the foundation, contrasting banding and parapet capping and deep eaves of the recessed upper level third floor level. Both the St Kilda Telephone Exchange and the subject site maintain their original function and legibility as buildings providing telecommunication services. They are distinguished from the Russell Street Exchange on the basis that they retain their original use and have higher levels of integrity.

The two exchange buildings at 376–382 Flinders Street, Melbourne, and 447–453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, are built later and reference later variants of Modernist architecture. The curtain wall façade of 376–382 Flinders Street telephone exchange exemplifies the shift towards the use of this façade technology by the mid–1950s. It exhibits similar modular windows with projecting surrounds on the sixth and seventh floors. The Lonsdale Street Exchange, built slightly later again, exhibits elements associated with Brutalism. Like the subject building, the Flinders and Lonsdale Street exchanges are highly intact and have high integrity.

Like the examples above, the subject building is a fine example of a purpose-built telephone exchange building constructed in the postwar period by the Commonwealth Government. In comparison to the examples provided, the South Yarra Telephone Exchange is distinguished as a highly intact early example of this typology built in a suburban location. As an example of this typology, the subject building demonstrates an architectural design that, like its closest comparative examples, exhibits the influence of interwar European Modernism. With its functionalist emphasis, this earlier variant of Modernism was a suitable prototype for this urban and modern but utilitarian building typology in postwar Australia. The subject site displays the hall marks of this style including simple solid massing, uncompromisingly geometric forms, a contrast between horizontal and vertical elements, large expanses of brickwork, repetitive fenestration arrangements and a relative lack of ornamental detail.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

Melbourne Planning Scheme

| | |
|---|--|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS | Yes – Contrasted banding, projecting window surrounds and mullions |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS | No |
| TREE CONTROLS | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4) | No |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER | No |
| PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE | No |

Other

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: South Yarra
Telephone Exchange

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1411](#)



What is significant?

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange at 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, built in 1950 for the Postmaster-General's Department is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to) the:

- building's original 1950 external form, materials and detailing
- building's high level of integrity to its original design, including the composition of the primary; street-facing elevation
- pattern and size of original window and door openings
- other original detailing including bichromatic brickwork, cement banding, projecting window surrounds and mullions, tower grill detailing and metal building numbers next to the entrance.

The original dark brown brick garden wall on the Punt Road façade also contributes to the significance of the place. Plant and aerials located on the roof are not significant.

How is it significant?

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange at 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange at 737–743 Punt Road, South Yarra, is of local historical significance to the City of Melbourne as an example of a telephone exchange built to serve the needs of local residents. Built in 1950 to a design by John McMahon Keane of the Commonwealth Works Department, the exchange building demonstrates the increased demand for automated telecommunication infrastructure in suburban Melbourne from the 1940s and into the postwar period, reflecting the growing number of telephone subscribers. The subject building is significant as an early postwar Commonwealth Department of Works designed purpose-built telephone exchange building. The

subject site was acquired by the Postmaster-General's Department for the purpose of an automatic telephone exchange in 1946. (Criterion A)

The South Yarra Telephone Exchange is significant as a highly intact example of a Commonwealth Department of Works designed telecommunications building. It reflects the application of Modernist design principles of rationality and functionality for Government Infrastructure in the early postwar era. The building's solid massing, geometric form, interplay between horizontal and vertical elements, use of simple, contrasting materials and pared back detailing also reflect Modernist design principles. The main section of the building is characterised by its bichromatic brickwork, painted cement render banding, mullion and grill details and horizontal array of regular sized openings. Key elements also include the five-storey tower to the northeast corner of the building and the floating horizontal plane created by the deep eaves of the inset fourth-floor level of the building. The Commonwealth Department of Works was responsible for a number of high quality major public buildings during the postwar period, particularly for telecommunication infrastructure. The South Yarra exchange demonstrates a commitment by the Commonwealth Department of Works to high quality architectural design for major public building and the expansion of this specific typology after World War II. (Criterion D)

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: Kia Ora
STREET ADDRESS: 447–453 St Kilda Road, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID: 108633



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------|
| SURVEY DATE: | January 2021 | SURVEY BY: | GML Heritage |
| PLACE TYPE: | Individual Heritage Place | EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY: | No |
| PROPOSED CATEGORY: | Significant | FORMER GRADE: | C |
| DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: | Lewis Levy | BUILDER: | Not known |
| DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: | Interwar Period (c1919–c1940) | DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: | 1936–37 |

THEMES

| ABORIGINAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations. | N/A |
| HISTORICAL THEMES: | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES: |
| 6 Shaping a residential area | 6.3 Flats, maisonettes, duplexes |

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 447–453 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

Designed by architect Lewis Levy, Kia Ora was built in 1936–37 for Kia-Ora Investments Pty Ltd. The interwar Moderne complex of low-rise flats overlooking St Kilda Road is a notable example of interwar flat developments in the municipality. The highly refined detailing reflects the prestige of the St Kilda Road address at the time. Embracing Moderne design aesthetics, Kia Ora is distinguished for its plan (U-shaped plan, with a central garden) and high level of decorative detailing. Its contrasting materiality with two-colour brick and cream render is also visually distinct.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Flats in Melbourne

The first purpose-built block of flats in Melbourne, Melbourne Mansions, was constructed in Collins Street in 1906. From the 1910s, medium-density housing such as bachelor flats, maisonettes and cooperative developments were popular in Melbourne. Several blocks were constructed prior to World War I, including Fawkner Mansions in South Yarra; Whitehall in Bank Place, Melbourne; and Cliveden Mansions in East Melbourne (O’Hanlon 2008).

During the interwar period, the blocks of flats constructed were mostly along St Kilda Road and Queens Road, as well as in South Yarra, Toorak, East Melbourne, Hawthorn, St Kilda and Parkville. Blocks of flats were mostly low rise, with two or three storeys, and were typically let, making them a form of investment in the aftermath of the economic downturn (O’Hanlon 2008). While flats were favoured by single people or young couples, they also became fashionable for the middle-income families in Toorak and South Yarra (Context 2009:145). Some examples in Marne Street and Toorak Road West, South Yarra, were spacious and designed for families. The economic downturn made it unfeasible for many to run a grand home on a large estate, and by the 1930s many large older residences in Melbourne had been divided into flats.

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Bunurong people. The land at 447–453 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, is located on Crown Allotments 11 and 12, Parish of Melbourne South, which were purchased by C Watson in 1865 (Figure 1).

From the late 1830s the area bounded by St Kilda Road, High Street and Punt Road was used for grazing. In 1862 the Victorian Government decided to establish a public park (to become Fawkner Park) of about 100 acres between Toorak and Commercial Roads with the intention of selling the strips of land fronting Toorak Road as building allotments. However, surrounding local councils, led by City of Melbourne town clerk Edmund Fitzgibbon, strongly objected to this alienation of land by the Victorian Government, and considerable dispute ensued. The resolution was that strips of land along the eastern side of St Kilda Road and the western side of Punt Road could be sold for private building purposes. A condition was that on individual sites of not less than three-quarters of an acre, only large villas were to be erected. In February 1864, an area of 102.5 acres was gazetted as permanently reserved parkland, creating Fawkner Park. The strip of land along the eastern side of St Kilda Road, between Toorak Road and Moubray Street, was subdivided and sold in 38 lots in November and December 1865 (Gould 1985:5).

In 1896, a plan shows the subject site to contain fencing and fowl houses without residential development (Figure 2). The fowl houses on Crown Allotment 11 appear to be connected to the adjoining villa named Avonhurst. Crown Allotment 12 was used by neighbours for cattle grazing (*Herald*, 3 August 1935:1).