

Summerhill Road Methodist Church Complex (former), 29 Summerhill Road, Glen Iris Statement of Significance, January 2020

Heritage Place: *Summerhill Road Methodist Church complex (former)*
29 Summerhill Road, Glen Iris

PS ref no: HO906



What is significant?

The former Summerhill Road Methodist Church Complex at 29 Summerhill Road, Glen Iris, is significant to the City of Boroondara. The post-war church built in 1963, to designs by architect Alexander Harris and Associates, is a notable example within the municipality of the experimental pursuit of ecclesiastical architecture of the period and is significant.

The former Timber Chapel, former Sunday School Hall and low stone retaining wall along the front of the site contribute to the significance of the place.

The addition to the rear of the former Timber Chapel is not significant.

How is it significant?

The former Summerhill Road Methodist Church complex is of local historical, architectural, aesthetic, social and associative significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The former Summerhill Road Methodist Church complex is of local historical significance. Established in 1924, the site demonstrates the growth and development of the Church across the twentieth century, from the original timber chapel and Sunday school, expansion in the 1950s and the construction of a new church in 1963. The site is also of social significance for its connection to the local Christian community and has been in continued ecclesiastical use since 1924. (Criteria A & G)

The Church complex, including the former Timber Chapel, former Sunday School Hall and post-war church demonstrate characteristics of an evolving religious community in both the pre and post-war periods and is represented in the array of built forms across the site. (Criterion D)

The A-frame post-war Church is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara. The evocative and striking form of the church and the geometric menorah shaped stained glass are notable features, while the scale of the church and flat-roofed foyer structure together with the buttress-like brick projections ground the building in its domestic setting. (Criterion E)

The Church complex is also associated with noted architects Samuel Charles Brittingham and Alexander Harris. (Criterion H)

Previously chief architect of the Public Works Department (PWD) from 1916-1922, Brittingham was best known for his time in PWD, where he practised Gothic revival styles in the State Schools Division. Along with the former South Camberwell Methodist Church, the former Summerhill Road Methodist Church represents one of the few known examples of Brittingham's private practice work, and notably the smallest.

Alexander Harris and Associates were a noted architectural practice of the 1950s and 60s producing a large number of ecclesiastical works for a range of religious denominations. The former Summerhill Road Methodist Church represents a good example of his approach to design and the integration of a community building into a suburban context.

Primary source

City of Boroondara Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 7: Glen Iris (Context Pty Ltd, January 2020)

This document is an incorporated document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*