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# UNITING CHURCH COMPLEX



West elevation, with timber addition at rear and bell tower to north of entry.



Looking south-east.

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## Location

32 HIGH STREET, MARONG - PROPERTY NUMBER 202244, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO564

## Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 1, 2023

### What is significant?

The Uniting Church (former Presbyterian) at 32 High Street, Marong, was built in 1914. The church is a small gabled Federation era Gothic Revival building constructed of white tuck-pointed red brick, with cement dressings and rendered courses. The timber Sunday school at the rear, originally built in 1939, was relocated to its present site in 1971. The two structures are joined by a brick linking element; a freestanding bell, cast in 1862 by John C Wilson's foundry, Glasgow, is mounted on a pipe column frame located to the north of the main church entrance.

The gabled roof to the church is clad in corrugated steel and has gablet vents and steel vents near the ridge. The gable ends have small lancet vents, while the front gable also has brick kneelers and pitched coping; the lancet windows also use squared lead lighting. The three nave bays are expressed by a pair of two-stepped buttresses on each side and diagonal buttresses at each corner. The parapet copings, buttresses, and lancet windows demonstrate the influence of the Gothic Revival. The entrance porch is also gabled and has a two-leafed door curving at the upper corners to fit the pointed entry arch. Above is a roundel showing the burning bush from Exodus. The timber hall at the rear has early windows but altered wall fabric, possibly modified at the time of its relocation from Woodstock on Loddon in 1972. The large allotment is generally open in character, with some scattered trees.

### **How is it significant?**

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

### **Why is it significant?**

The Uniting Church is historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with Presbyterianism in Marong dating back to at least 1862, when a timber church was constructed in the township. The bell (cast 1862) at the present church is assumed to a surviving element of this early church complex. The present building, constructed on a large site between Leslie and High streets, reflects the enduring nature of the Presbyterian faith in the Marong area, and the ongoing religious diversity of the goldfields communities. It has been the centre of Presbyterian worship at Marong since completion in 1914. The Sunday school addition at the rear, a timber former church built in 1939 and relocated from Woodstock on Loddon in 1972[i], also emphasises the continuing strength of the Presbyterian church in the area into the twentieth century. The relocation of the Sunday school additionally reflects the consolidation of Marong at a time when smaller outlying communities, such as Woodstock on Loddon, were in decline.

The Uniting Church is also of local social significance (Criterion G) through being the focus of Presbyterian services, and the Presbyterian community, in Marong since 1914.

In terms of the property's aesthetic/architectural significance (Criterion E), the Federation era Gothic Revival building is largely externally intact and demonstrates characteristics of church design seen in Central Victoria across denominations over a long period from the 1870s, including the use of white tuck-pointed red brick with cement dressings (Criterion D). Although a small building, it has a robust presence with its buttresses and forceful gables; the steeply pitched roof also has picturesque qualities. The roundel to the west gable, showing the burning bush from Exodus, is of note. The siting in an expansive open and informal landscape setting has parallels with many small rural churches in Victoria and throughout the goldfields. The church is also a prominent element of the High Street streetscape.

**[i] Changed from '1971', *Heritage Policy Citations Review, 2011. November 2011.***

## **Theme**

### **8. Building community life**

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|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Greater Bendigo - Heritage Policy Citations Review, Lovell Chen P/L, 2011; |
| Construction dates        | 1914,  |
| Architect/Designer        | Ride, John,  |
| Other Names               | Marong Presbyterian Church,  |
| Hermes Number             | 184932   |
| Property Number           |  |

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## **Physical Description 1**

The Uniting Church at 32 High Street is a small gabled Federation era Gothic Revival building constructed of white tuck-pointed red brick, with cement dressings. The main church building, oriented east-west, is located in the south-west corner of a large allotment that stretches between Leslie and High streets in the centre of Marong. The timber Sunday school at the rear, originally built in 1939 and relocated to its present site in 1971, is oriented north-south. The two structures are joined by a brick linking element, with a ramp and 8walkway to the south. A freestanding bell mounted on a pipe column frame is located to the north of the main church entrance.

The gabled roof is clad in corrugated galvanised steel and fitted with eight small gablet vents and six cylindrical steel vents nearer the ridge. The gable ends have small lancet vents, while the front gable also has four brick kneelers and pitched coping. There are two rendered courses: one at eave line and the other level with the window arch springers. The lancet windows are in two frames each: a rectangular casement and a pointed fan; the panes use squared lead lighting and the sills are simple blocks. The three nave bays are expressed by a pair of two-stepped buttresses on each side and diagonal buttresses at each corner. The buttress set-backs are all cement-rendered. The parapet copings, buttresses, and lancet windows demonstrate the influence of the Gothic Revival. The entrance porch is also gabled and has the foundation stone to its right side and a two-leafed door curving at the upper corners to fit the pointed entry arch. Above that is a roundel showing the burning bush from Exodus. The roundel, semicircular drip mould above that, the orb finials and the right-angled pediment all demonstrate free Classical affinities.

The timber hall at the rear has early windows but altered wall fabric, possibly modified at the time of its relocation from Woodstock on Loddon in 1972. The bell was cast in 1862 by John C Wilson's foundry, Glasgow. The fence<sup>9</sup> and toilet block to the south of the site are relatively recent additions.

The large allotment is generally open in character, with some scattered trees. Pedestrian 'desire' lines are evident across the site, running south-west to north-east, and east-west at the south of the site.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*