1ST DANDENONG SCOUT GROUP ARMYTAGE OWN SCOUT HALL



1st Dandenong Scout 2023 1 Front



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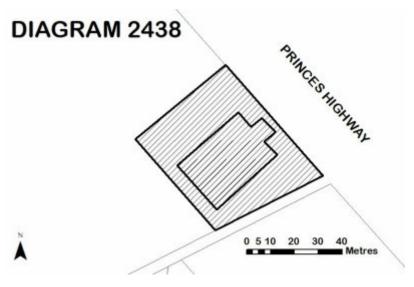


DIAGRAM 2438 20 April 2023

Location

61A PRINCES HIGHWAY DANDENONG, GREATER DANDENONG CITY

Municipality

GREATER DANDENONG CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2438

VHR Registration

April 20, 2023

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 21, 2023

What is significant?

The 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall commissioned by Ada Armytage, designed by architect Ivan Dimant and completed in 1930.

How is it significant?

The 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the VHR:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it significant?

The 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall is historically significant for its capacity to demonstrate the history and values of the Scouting movement in the early twentieth century. Its 'castle' facade symbolises patriotic allegiance to Britain and the Medieval code of chivalry founder Baden-Powell sought to instil in boy scouts. Built for one of the largest youth movements in Australia, the Hall evokes a sense of adventure and discovery and invites young people to join the activities. The official opening of the Hall was postponed until 1935 when Lord and Lady Baden-Powell visited Dandenong as part of their participation in the World Scout Jamboree in nearby Frankston. [Criterion A]

The 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall is historically significant as a fine and notable example of a Scout Hall. Its architecturally ambitious picturesque Medieval-style facade sets it apart from other Scout Halls in the State. From the early 1910s Scout Halls developed as a utilitarian class of building which provided functional and robust spaces for groups of boys engaged in adventure activities. The Dandenong Scout Hall is unusually generous in its size and provision of multiple rooms, and particularly notable for its striking presence as a castle. At its opening in 1930 the building was described as the finest Scout Hall in Victoria and may be regarded similarly today. [Criterion D]

The 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall is historically significant for its association with Ada Elizabeth Armytage (1858–1939) who commissioned the building. A prominent and influential philanthropist, Ada Armytage was a member of the wealthy Armytage family who owned Como House (VHR H0205) and was well-known for her support of the Scouting movement. Benefactress of the 1st Dandenong Scout Troop, she funded the new hall at the unheard of sum of £3400, and the words FIRST DANDENONG – ARMYTAGE OWN – SCOUT HALL are prominently set into the facade. Armytage's commission is significant at a time when there were only seven registered women architects in Victoria. It speaks to the capacity of wealthy women of status to shape the built environment from a position of social influence from outside the architectural profession. The Scout Hall is stylistically similar to the Armytage family's Portsea residence Delgany (VHR H2058). [Criterion H]

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must <u>notify</u> the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions here.

Specific Exemptions:

Specific Exemptions

Exempt works and activities

The below permit exemptions are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall, subject to the conditions and guidelines below:

- 1. All works to the interior of the 2006 annex building and walkway adjoining the 1930 hall.
- 2. Demolition of the 2006 annex building and walkway adjoining the 1930 hall.

Conditions for permit exemptions

- 1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
- 2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
- 3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic).
- 4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
- 5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic), all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic)).

Permit exemption guidelines

- 1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
- 2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic), unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic), the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
- 3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (Vic), prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
- 4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural

- Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
- 5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic), and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
- 6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.
- 7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
- 8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

Theme

8. Building community life 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates 1929,

Architect/Designer Ivan Dimant,

Heritage Act

Categories

Registered place,

Other Names SCOUT HALL DANDENONG, FIRST DANDENONG SCOUT HALL, CASTLE

SCOUT HALL, CASTLE, CASTLE BUILDING,

Hermes Number 201973

Property Number

History

The Scouting Movement England

In 1907, Major-General Robert Baden-Powell, who had served with the British Army in India and Africa, led a camp for boys on Brownsea Island off the English coast. Here Baden-Powell taught camping and survival skills to around twenty young men, testing his vision for a Boy Scout movement. In 1908 Baden-Powell's? *Scouting for Boys*? was published fortnightly and instantly became a best seller. Inspired by this publication, boys formed their own patrols, went on adventures and honed their outdoor skills. A movement began to spread around the English-speaking world. The spontaneous adoption of Baden-Powell's Scouting ethos predated the start of the organised Boy Scout movement. This means it can be difficult to establish with certainty the 'first' scout and 'first' troop.

Victoria

The start of Scouting in Victoria can be traced to events in 1906 and 1907. In 1906 eight-year-old Geoffrey Fethers' father travelled to England, met Baden-Powell, and brought home a uniform and early ideas about scouting to their home in Malvern. The following year, a student Roy McIndoe, received pamphlets from a friend in England about the Brownsea Island camp. Roy joined with his friends from the Malvern Primary School and formed patrols over the 1907-08 Christmas holidays. In 1908 they received the first copies of *Scouting for Boys*,

and their activities lead to the concurrent establishment of the 1st and 2nd Malvern Scout troops in 1908 – the first troops in Victoria.

By the end of 1908, there were 11 Scout troops in Victoria, including Malvern 1st, Malvern 2nd, Caulfield, Hawksburn, Carlton, Albert Park, Brighton, Ivanhoe, Camberwell, South Melbourne, Toorak and the YMCA which met near Princes Bridge. From 1909 all Scoutmasters convened regularly in central Melbourne and devised rules for the organisation as well as a uniform. Over the summer of 1909-10, the first combined camp was held at the Dandenong Police Paddocks (VHR H2348). In 1912 Baden-Powell visited Melbourne and gave lectures, and the movement spread rapidly. By the early 1930s there were approximately 22,000 boy scouts in Victoria.

Today in 2023 there are over 380 Scout Troops in Victoria, comprising 17,000 youth members and 5,000 adult volunteers. Troops meet in hundreds of different buildings across the state. Some are purpose-built Scout Halls, while other venues include adapted buildings and rented church halls. The Scout movement is one of the largest youth movements globally and has had a profound impact on adolescent boys and girls from 1908 to the present day.

Scout Halls The First Halls

There were no Scout Halls when the movement began. Troops initially met outdoors, in church halls or other venues. One of the first public reports of a purpose-built Scout Hall in Victoria appeared in the *Age* in February 1913. It stated that a 'Boy Scouts Drill Hall' had been built near the rail corridor in North Carlton to accommodate 50-60 the boys from the 2nd Carlton Troop (this hall is no longer extant). In December 1913, the new Preston Scout Hall opened with one commentator observing:

Not every troop can possess a hall of its own, but it is hoped that, before long, the example set by the Preston scouts will be followed in several districts where the scout movement is popular. Funds can be raised by holding concerts and so forth... obtain a gift of land from some friendly president, who recognises the value of scouting as a training for lads.

The earliest known surviving Scout Hall in Victoria is thought to be the 1st Mordialloc Scout Hall (1914) which is a simple gabled timber building, and also in a rail corridor. Like drill halls, early Scout Halls adopted unassuming utilitarian designs. The central feature was a large open space in which Scouts could assemble, drill and play games. Activities like ball games, could damage fixtures and fittings, so interior ornamentation and decorative elements were kept to a minimum.

Scout Hall Design

After World War I, the scouting movement became further established, and more troops established permanent places to meet. By 1930 the *Herald* reported that there were 28 Scout Halls in Melbourne and nine in regional Victoria. Function and practicality were paramount in Scout Hall design. Each required a space for a large troop of boys engaged in practical adventure-related games and activities, and smaller spaces for patrol work. The *Herald* report stated that a new Scout Hall could be built for £100 and summarised the typical design features:

- Ample room for activity with a high ceiling (a hall) with protected lights
- A separate room for a Rover den
- A separate room for patrol leader's room or court of honour room [senior Scout leaders' room].
- A separate room for the Scoutmaster
- As many small rooms for patrol work as possible
- A big open fireplace which made the hall 'look very Scoutlike'.

Scout Halls had relatively bare interiors. Colour and decoration typically took the form of movable honour boards, flags, maps, portraits of the king or queen and other scouting paraphernalia. Given the utilitarian design of Scout Halls, facades represented the principal opportunity for architects to convey a sense of a troop's character and pride. In 1925 the 1st Footscray Scout Troop purchased its hall, a former workshop, and an impressive new facade was added in 1929 containing a large, pressed cement fleur-de-lys the symbol of the Scouting movement (1st Footscray Scout Hall, VHR H1343).

Building design and construction approaches reflected the financial resources of each community. An enterprising parent group, religious community or wealthy patron could provide the funds to commission an architect. By contrast, a less wealthy community may opt for a cheaper building with fewer internal spaces. From the 1930s, the growing popularity of scouting meant that some troops were able to construct more considered architect-designed buildings. Examples of noteworthy designs include 1st Alphington (1931) and 1st Carlton

(1931). Also built during the 1930s were several Scout Halls in a distinctive rustic 'log cabin' style Woodend (1931), Wangaratta (1933), Pakenham (1937).

Scout Halls Named After Benefactors

Some Scout Halls were named after benefactors. The 1st City of Camberwell (Melba's Own) Scout Group was established in 1908 and Nellie Melba became its patron in 1912. It is unclear whether Melba's support funded a new Scout Hall, but it demonstrates the willingness of philanthropists to become patrons of scout troops. The 1st Canterbury Scouts (Lady Best's Own) was supported by Lady Maude Best, wife of Kooyong MP Sir Robert Best. Lady Best became involved in the fundraising for the Scout Hall built in 1923. In 1957 a modest 1930s building in Avoca Avenue, Elwood became 3rd St Kilda 'Danglow's Own War Memorial Scout Hall'. The Scout Hall is associated with the endeavours of Rabbi Danglow to encourage the assimilation of Jewish migrants into Australian society.

1st Dandenong Scout Troop and Miss Ada Armytage

The first scout group in the Dandenong area was formed by 1909, and the 1st Dandenong Scout Troop was active in 1911. By 1917 it was meeting at the Rechabite Hall. In the early years, large Scouting events were regularly held at the Dandenong Police Paddocks, such as a Scouting Field Day of 500 boys in 1910.

By 1928 the troop reformed as 1st Dandenong Armytage's Own, as a tribute to their patron Ada Armytage. Ada Elizabeth Armytage (1858–1939) was the daughter of the wealthy pastoralist Charles Henry Armytage who owned Como House (VHR H0205) during the period 1865-1959. The family was wealthy, travelled regularly to Europe and hosted many parties for Melbourne's social elite. During the First World War, Miss Armytage worked with the Red Cross in England and France and returned to Australia in the mid-1920s where she became a member of the exclusive Alexandra Club, Australian Women's National League and Country Women's Association. A patriotic and influential philanthropist, her two main passions were supporting returned wounded soldiers and the scouting movement. When not residing at Como House, Miss Armytage's country residence was Holm Park in Beaconsfield, near Dandenong. During the First World War, the family opened Holm Park for the use of invalided soldiers and set aside land for a camping permanent ground for scouts, as well as granting use of the lodge.

Armytage's Commission

Around 1929 Miss Armytage commissioned architect Ivan Dimant to design an impressive purpose-built scout hall on the eastern corner of what was known as Anzac Park (now Hemmings Park). The words 'FIRST DANDENONG – ARMYTAGE OWN – SCOUT HALL' appear prominently below the front crenulated parapets, ARMYTAGE OWN being set at the highest point of the central parapet between two turrets. The hall cost Ms Armytage the extravagant sum of £3400, an unheard of amount for the design and construction of a Scout Hall. After its opening in 1930, the local newspaper reported 'PALATIAL BUILDING OF HUGE DIMENSIONS. DANDENONG THE PROUD POSSESSOR'. It was claimed the building was the finest of Victoria's Scout Halls:

...much has been published concerning this hall which promised to be the finest Scout possession in the State, and it stands now in fulfilment of that claim.10

Despite the widespread public interest in the new hall, there were some in the Scouting community who viewed it as 'rather too grand' for a Scout Hall.

Although Armytage was not the architect, her commission speaks to the capacity of women of wealth and status to shape the built environment. At this time women experienced barriers to entering the architectural profession. In 1930 there were only seven women registered as architects in Victoria compared with 470 men (1%). The role of women as commissioners of buildings (as well as gardens and other places) is a growing area of interest among architectural historians. Commissioning and funding a building was restricted to the affluent, and Ada Armytage certainly had financial means and social connections. Armytage's commission also speaks to the role of personal wealth and social class in shaping Victoria's built environment. One may speculate that although not the architect, Armytage – as the commissioner holding the purse strings and a woman of influence – is likely to have exerted a degree of sway over Ivan Dimant's design.

The Dandenong Scout Hall is regarded as one of Dimant's most distinctive designs. He was well suited to this commission as he was practiced in designing large functional spaces with imposing public facades. Awarded the Military Cross (MC) in 1918, he was appointed head of the newly formed Architect's Department of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) a position he held until 1926. His buildings included the Carlton Tram Substation (VHR H2325) and the Preston Tramway Workshops (VHR H2031). The Scout Hall's Medieval-

inspired facade was bold and ambitious. It included turrets, battlements and Gothic arches at the entrance porch. The interior was unusually spacious being 50,000 square feet with 10,000 taken up by four cloak rooms and office accommodation at the front entrance. The floors were 'the best Victorian hard wood', the walls finished with a luxuriant Victorian timber dado, and fibre plaster was 'artistically affixed' to the ceiling. There was a gallery level to function as a supper area. The building was constructed from timber with steel columns, apart from the facade which was roughcast over brick.

An unusual commission

The Scout Hall has a distinctive picturesque castellated design which incorporates an eclectic mix of Gothic and Medieval elements. It is difficult to assign a stylistic label because it does not reflect a conventional architectural style. The design may be considered more of an architectural pastiche evocative of the adventurous and jolly world of scouting, rather than a scholarly exercise in Gothic, Gothic-revival, or Tudor architecture. During the 1930s, the use of Medieval and Gothic design vocabularies was not new or innovative and their use was waning. It is useful to note that the Interwar Old English style (c.1915-1940) was popular in this era. Of this style, architectural historian Richard Apperley writes 'in a society still having predominantly Anglo-Saxon origins, great virtue was seen in the image of an idealised English traditional culture'.

The decision to construct a castellated facade was likely conceived collaboratively by Ivan Dimant, Ada Armytage and the Dandenong Scout leaders. Reportedly based on a water colour painting of an old English lodge, the design had many levels of symbolism. In Australia, the adoption of Medieval and Gothic design idioms was symbolic of allegiance to England and evoked a prosperous past. Within the scouting community, this symbolism ran deeper. In his founding text, *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell devoted a chapter to the 'Chivalry of the Knights' and encouraged young scouts to read the tales of King Arthur for inspiration:

One aim of the boy scouts is to revive amongst, if possible, some of the rules of the knights of old, which did so much for the moral tone of our race... Chivalry—that is, the order of the knights—was started in England some 1500 years ago by King Arthur... You patrol leaders and scouts are therefore very like the knights and their retainers... A knight (or Scout) is at all times a gentleman... A gentleman is anyone who carries out the rules of chivalry of the knights.

Armytage's Scout Hall also exhibits a strikingly stylistic similarity to her family's mansion Delgany at Portsea (VHR H2058). Designed for Harold Armytage (Ada's brother) by Harold Desbrowe Annear in 1925, Delgany is a large limestone 'castle' with prominent parapets and towers incorporating an eclectic mix of Gothic and Medieval elements. This link is pertinent, but evidence has yet to be found that Armytage instructed Dimant to draw upon the design of Delgany for her Scout Hall.

For Ada Armytage as the Scout Hall's commissioner, the letters on the facade ARMYTAGE OWN allowed her beneficence and philanthropy to be recorded publicly and permanently. The Scout Hall's design may be read as a patriotic tribute to Britain, a reference to the Armytage family, a monument to her own philanthropy and a reminder for young boys of the knight's code of chivalry. Its larger than life presence in the main street no doubt also evoked a sense of fantasy and adventure in the minds of potential young recruits. In January 1935 (almost five years after its opening) the foundation stone was laid by Ada Armytage during the World Scout Jamboree which was held in Frankston. Lord and Lady Baden-Powell stayed with Ada Armytage at Holm Park during their visit. The *Australian Women's Weekly* reported that Miss Armytage was the 'Fairy Godmother to Scouts'. She died in 1939.

2006 Annex and Hall Refurbishment

By the mid-1980s the Scout Hall had become 'far too large for economical use by any one group or district'. The 1st Dandenong Scout Group ceased around 1999 but had left these premises before then.20 In 2005 the City of Greater Dandenong started to re-develop the Scout Hall into a performance venue with focus on music and youth. Williams Ross Architects designed a new one storey Modernist annex to the hall with ramp entry linked to the north-west side with an open roofed deck, faced with a timber screen. The hall was also refurbished, including the addition of a new corrugated metal roof and corrugated Colorbond wall cladding over the original timber exterior. The new complex 'The Castle' was opened August 2006 and became a performance venue. It has been a popular live music venue and attracted local musical acts and performers from Melbourne.

There is a consensus amongst heritage professionals that the 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall is perhaps the finest scout hall in Victoria because of its unusually striking and evocative facade, within a class which is known for its utilitarian design.21 In 2007 William Ross Architects received the Best Building Conversion Award in the Architectural Excellence in the South East Awards for the sympathetic addition to the

original hall.

Selected bibliography

Armytage Collection, University of Melbourne Archives.

Graeme Butler & Associates (for City of Greater Dandenong) VHR Nomination, 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall, 2018.

Milne, AR & CB Heyward, *Those Boy Scouts: A Story of Scouting in Victoria*, Victorian Scout Archives (in association with Hudson Publishing), Melbourne, 1987.

Michael Rosenthal, 'Knights and Retainers: The Earliest Version of Baden-Powell's Boy Scout Scheme', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 15, Issue 4, Oct 1, 1980, pp. 603-17.

Community Contacts

The Executive Director thanks Mr Peter Datson, State Commissioner – Heritage, Scout Heritage Victoria, for the provision of information about this place during its assessment. In an email to the Executive Director on 10 January 2023, Mr Datson indicated support for the inclusion of the 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall in the VHR.

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2438

Category: Registered Place

Name: 1st Dandenong Scout Group Armytage Own Scout Hall

Location: 61A Princes Highway, Dandenong

Municipality: Greater Dandenong

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2438 encompassing part of Lot 1 on Title Plan 241987 following the north east and south east property boundaries (Princes Highway and right of way), extending 5 metres from the rear wall of the Scout Hall and 15 metres from the north west wall of the main Scout Hall.

Dated 20 April 2023 STEVEN AVERY Executive Director

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/