
East Kew Uniting Church and former Citizens Hall



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Location

142 and 142A Normanby Street KEW EAST, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO385

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 17, 2021

What is Significant?

East Kew Uniting Church, also known as the Finlay McQueen Memorial Presbyterian Church at 142 Normanby Street East Kew; built in 1938 is significant. The former East Kew Citizen's Hall of 1922, at 142A Normanby Street is also significant.

How is it significant?

East Kew Uniting Church is of local historic, architectural, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

East Kew Uniting Church is historically significant as one of three suburban churches in the suburb, including St Anne's Catholic Church and St Paul's Anglican Church, both in Windella Avenue. East Kew Uniting Church is part of the development of Kew East and its community facilities in the Inter-war period, particularly following the electric tram connection to the city. East Kew Uniting Church of 1938 and the adjacent Kew East Citizens Hall of 1922 used as a church between 1922 and 1938 are historically significant as part of the denominational expansion in the newly developing suburbs.

Historically, the naming of the church memorialises in its original name, the Rev. Finlay McQueen, the first minister of East Kew Uniting Church between 1926 and 1930. The McQueen family is further associated with East Kew Uniting Church through Malcolm McQueen who succeeded his father as minister between 1930 and 1945. Like many churches, East Kew Uniting Church is historically significant for its memorial windows that commemorate war sacrifice by families of the congregation. Windows at East Kew Uniting Church commemorate James and Alexander Johnstone of the AIF, John T Murray, also of the AIF and Lindsay C Murray of the RAAF, as well as many other founding families of this church. The East Kew community hall is historically significant as the location of the first Presbyterian Church in East Kew. (Criterion A)

East Kew Uniting Church is representative of a group of suburban Inter-war churches that derive from the Gothic Revival tradition, and as a work by noted church architects Scarborough and Love. Although not their most ambitious work, East Kew Uniting Church is a well planned Gothic Revival example. It is significant for its unusual 'U' shaped plan around a central courtyard which was originally master planned to be completed in stages, and where the original concept (apart from the corner tower) survives. (Criterion D)

East Kew Uniting Church is aesthetically significant for its harmonious composition comprising a grouping of buildings and functions around a courtyard. The use of salmon brickwork in matching colour and the tiled roof are aesthetically significant despite the different eras in which the building wings were constructed. The church is significant for its Gothic Revival elements of pitched gable roof, buttresses and arch headed windows with brickwork details articulated in its nave, porch, narthex and vestry. The Gothic Revival window with stone tracery and leaded glass is notable, and other lancet-shaped memorial windows in leaded glass complement the main window. The Sunday School, completed in 1953, and the meeting rooms complement the church in style and materials and are also part of its aesthetic significance. (Criterion E)

East Kew Uniting Church is of local significance for its connection to the Uniting Church community. The church and church hall and meeting rooms remain in occupation by the Uniting Church, which collectively demonstrate the ongoing ecclesiastical use and evolution of the site over the past 80 years. (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 5: Kew East and Mont Albert, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1922, 1938, 1952, 1959,
Architect/Designer	Scarborough, Robertson & Love,
Hermes Number	208310
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The buildings comprising East Kew Uniting Church are arranged in a courtyard formation around three sides of the site. To the rear of the site is a paved carpark and an open garden fronts Normanby Road between the church and the meeting rooms. A small side garden lends some space and presence to the church that forms one side of the larger 'U' shaped building. A unified design has been achieved throughout successive alterations and extensions to the site by different architects. Salmon-coloured brickwork has been used throughout, and the gable roofed forms with blended brown tiles roofs link the building complex together visually. The layout of the buildings today differs only slightly from the original masterplan for the church complex.

The 1922 hall, formerly the East Kew Citizens Hall is adjacent to the church complex at 142a Normanby Road and is a gable roofed structure in red brick with rendered lintels and sills. The frontage has engaged piers and a pair of timber framed sash windows either side of a central entry. The doors have been replaced with modern glazed doors, but otherwise the hall is highly representative of its Inter-war era. The only noticeable changes, in comparison with a 1925 photo held by the Church, is the replacement of the corrugated metal roof cladding and the removal of the metal tube vents along the roof ridge.

The church, by architects Scarborough and Love, is in a conservative Gothic revival style with little of the Northern Italian/Byzantine/Romanesque style for which the firm is associated at other churches like Scotch College Chapel and Paton Memorial Church. East Kew Uniting Church uses some simplified Gothic Revival elements. Buttresses are used as defining elements of the composition especially where the narthex joins the nave. Entry is through a side porch beneath a flattened arch with modelled brick reveals. Details of the porch are provided by projecting brickwork to the gable and a brick on edge parapet capping. The main window is of Gothic revival design with stone tracery and leaded glass. A simple brick moulding with carved bosses surrounds the window.

The Sunday School hall that forms the rear wing of the complex is designed in a complementary manner and has a matching tiled roof that connects with that of the church. The entry porch to this wing repeats the brick details of the church. The third side of the courtyard to the north is partly two storey and is again complementary in form and materials. At the rear there is a semi-octagonal two storey section and a prominent intersecting gable. There is a pair of recessed entries and part of the rear elevation has engaged piers. The courtyard has three columnar cypresses and some shrubbery within a largely paved surface.

The interior contains part of a pulpit made by Malcolm McQueen for the church during his ministry. Following renovations to the interior this was retained and incorporated into the new pulpit. The interior combines elements of the original design with a modern timber screen to the sanctuary. This screen is used as a simple backdrop to great effect with seasonal decorations. The ceiling features arched roof trusses in a dark stained timber and plain plastered wall above a clinker brick dado to the lower part of the wall. Several lancet windows with decorative leaded and coloured glass contribute to the traditional atmosphere of the church interior. The Sunday School hall features a large open space, a stage, timber floor and face brick interior walls (www.eastkew.unitingchurch.org.au).

Community connections

East Kew Uniting Church describes itself as a sustainable, active and open-minded congregation committed to worship and outreach within the local community. The 50th anniversary of the founding of the church was celebrated in 1975. The hall is used for other classes and community activities. The church is used each Sunday for worship.

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/>