

# EBENEZER MISSION



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2008



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1 ebenezer mission antwerp  
ruined church front view



ebenezer mission antwerp  
cemetery next to church



ebenezer mission antwerp  
mission buildings



ebenezer mission antwerp  
mission house front



ebenezer mission antwerp  
ruined church rear view

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## Location

EBENEZER MISSION ROAD DIMBOOLA, HINDMARSH SHIRE

## Municipality

HINDMARSH SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0288

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO7

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 4, 1999

The Ebenezer mission site and its complex of buildings, footings and cemetery are of great social, historical, archaeological and architectural significance to the state of Victoria and are of particular social and historical importance to Victorian aborigines. The Ebenezer mission, built on the site of a pre-contact aboriginal ceremonial ground, was the first of the missions founded in Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth century to gain a secure and lasting relationship with the native people. Established by Moravian missionaries in 1859, it is the earliest known example of a mission of the village green plan type in Victoria, with the church and missionaries' buildings at the head and the aborigines' dwellings along the other three sides of an open quadrangle.

The site is significant for its historical and pre-historical associations with aborigines in the region and aboriginal people throughout Victoria, and as one of the two most extensive and original nineteenth century missions for aborigines surviving in Victoria. Its significance is enhanced by the survival of numerous pre-and post-contact aboriginal sites, such as scarred trees, burial grounds and occupation sites, in the surrounding area. The Ebenezer mission site is also significant for its historical and social associations with the region, and for its associations with the Moravian missionaries, particularly FA Hagenauer, one of the most prominent missionaries of the late nineteenth century in Victoria. Hagenauer, newly arrived in Australia when he founded Ebenezer mission with FW Spieseke, was subsequently associated with Ramahyuck and Lake Tyers Missions and was secretary to the central board for the protection of aborigines from 1889-1906. The limestone church, exhibiting an idiosyncratic mixture of Norman Romanesque and classical detailing, is the most dominant building on the site architecturally and visually and is significant for its associations with the site.

It was constructed by the missionaries using aboriginal labour and local materials, and was designed by FW Spieseke, one of Ebenezer mission's founders. It is the oldest surviving mission church in Victoria and a distinctive though ruinous example of its type. The kitchen, dormitory and toilet block are significant to the extent that they demonstrate the way of life on the mission and because they were built by missionaries and aborigines out of local materials. They also demonstrate typical nineteenth century building types. The kitchen and dormitory are the oldest surviving buildings on the site, both dating from around 1869-70, and are the oldest surviving mission buildings in Victoria. The footings of the mission house are significant as the remains of the earliest known mission building in Victoria and as an aid to the interpretation of the site and its layout.

Archaeological elements outside the site, such as the footings of the schoolroom and of a limestone cottage and the remains of the mill by the river, are also significant for their association with the site and to the extent that they demonstrate the layout of the mission.

The cemetery, the oldest surviving mission cemetery in Victoria, is of significance for its vital association with the site, containing as it does the graves of missionaries and their families and of aborigines. It is the only mission cemetery in Victoria to maintain the context of an adjacent church and other nearby nineteenth century mission buildings, and is one of only two mission cemeteries to contain marked aboriginal graves. It is of particular significance to the aboriginal community because of the large number of aborigines known to have been buried there. It is also believed to be the largest Moravian cemetery in Victoria and is of significance to the international Moravian community

[Source: Ebenezer Mission Architectural Survey (1990), Bryce Raworth.]

## **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 **notify** 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](#).

Construction dates	1860,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Often said to be in ANTWERP, EBENEZER,
Hermes Number	22
Property Number	

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## History

Associated People: Tenant SPIESKE AND HAGENAUER; Assoc.People LUTHERAN MISSIONARIES & VICTORIAN ABORIGINES

## Extent of Registration

*Shire of Dimboola*. No.288. Ebenezer Mission, Antwerp.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3649]

*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/>*