

# FORMER EAGLEHAWK EAST METHODIST CHURCH



FORMER EAGLEHAWK  
EAST METHODIST  
CHURCH SOHE 2008



1 former eaglehawk east  
methodist church eaglehawk  
front elevation jul1984

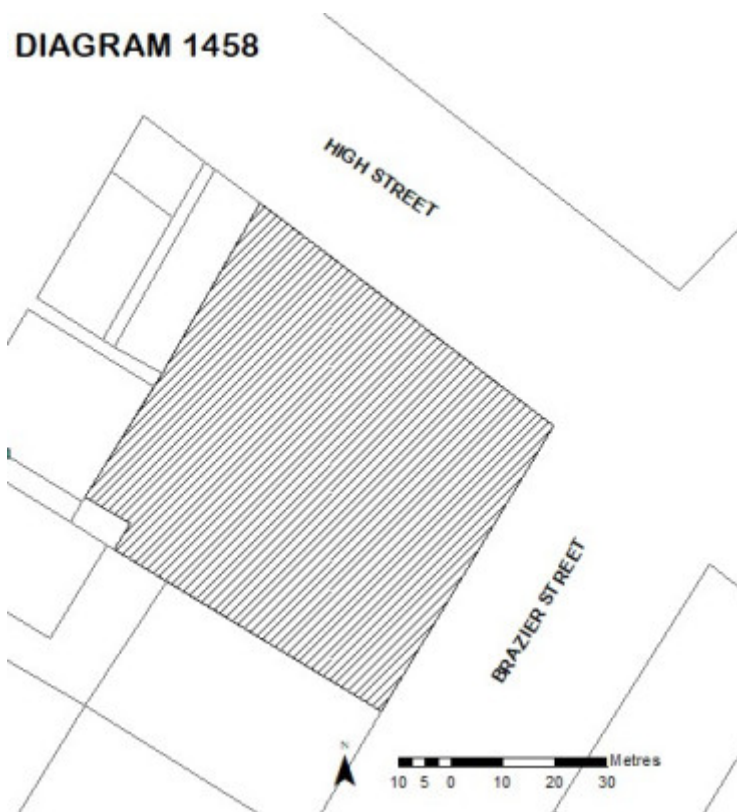


Diagram 1458

## Location

88-94 HIGH STREET EAGLEHAWK, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1458

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO365

## VHR Registration

March 14, 1984

## Amendment to Registration

August 22, 2024

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 23, 2025

# What is significant?

The Former Eaglehawk East Primitive Methodist Church was constructed in 1865 to a design by George Reilly Cox. The building is constructed of brick on a bluestone plinth and is designed as a hall with a simple Classical Temple rendered portico and gabled corrugated iron roof concealed behind parapets.

# How is it significant?

The Former Eaglehawk East Methodist Church is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

### Criterion D

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

# Why is it significant?

The Former Eaglehawk East Methodist Church is architecturally significant as one of the few surviving designs of architect George Reilly Cox. The application of a stripped back classical temple facade as opposed to the dominant ecclesiastical Gothic mode of the time was appropriate to the non-conformist views of the Primitive Methodist Church. The facade evokes the traditional portico or temple front with the use of four engaged columns of the Roman Doric order, in hexastyle form. The columns are unevenly spaced in antis between two outer pilasters that articulate the corners of the building. As a substantial Primitive Methodist Church of 1865, the association with the Classical tradition reflects the strength of the non-conformist religious view in the central goldfields region of Victoria in the nineteenth century.  
(Criterion D)

## 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](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Former Eaglehawk East Methodist Church subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

#### 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 Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act 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, 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 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, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, 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 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 or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

#### Conditions

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) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
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, 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).

#### Exempt works and activities

1. Landscape/ outdoor areas:
  1. Installation, repair and replacement of shade sail fabric and supporting structures in the same locations
  2. Replacement of playground equipment and outdoor furniture in the same general location.
  3. Removal, replacement or pruning of all trees and shrubs.
  4. Removal, replacement and installation of new ground surfacing treatments (for example, asphalt, safety matting) provided it is not within five metres of the significant building.

5. Removal of the outdoor garden shed at rear of building.
2. Removal, maintenance, repair or replacement of property boundary fencing, gates and posts, in the same location, retaining a similar level of visual permeability and no higher than the existing.
3. Removal, maintenance, repair or regrading of the external accessibility ramp in the same location.

## Theme

### 4. Transforming and managing the land 8. Building community life

Construction dates	1865,
Architect/Designer	Cox, George Reilly,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	FORMER PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH,
Hermes Number	2511
Property Number	

## History

Eaglehawk is a hilly district, eight kilometres beyond central Bendigo, with many quartz lodes. Gold was discovered at Bendigo (Sandhurst) in October 1851, and the gold-bearing land extended several kilometres north-west of Bendigo beyond Eaglehawk. The Eaglehawk goldrush began in 1852 when Joseph Crook found a nugget while searching for stray horses. The community at Eaglehawk began to develop when in 1854 town lots were surveyed and sold along High Street. On 29 July 1862 the Borough of Eaglehawk formed and in 1865 a Town Hall opened. By 1871 the population of Eaglehawk was 6,590.

Primitive Methodism was a division of Methodism that promoted a return to Joseph Wesley's style of evangelism. In England, the largest populations were in the midlands and the north, but especially among miners. Primitive Methodist immigrants had arrived in Victoria in 1849 and began holding open air services on Flagstaff Hill, Melbourne. The Primitive Methodists were more prosperous in Victoria and Tasmania, growing to be the second largest group of Methodists in Victoria in the later nineteenth century.

Eaglehawk was at this time a place of industry and the resulting population growth stimulated the building of new churches, pubs, and homes. From the beginning of the Eaglehawk township, Methodism, both Primitive and Wesleyan, was practiced. As early as 1855 Primitive Methodism was practiced in a small slab church, from which the Eaglehawk East Methodist congregation grew. The large number of immigrant miners and the characterisation of Primitive Methodism as a 'lay movement' wherein the laity took it upon themselves to establish churches, Sunday schools and day schools probably accounts for the large number of Methodist chapels in the Bendigo area.

The former Eaglehawk East Methodist Church was built to a design by Melbourne-based architect George Reilly Cox in 1865 as the congregation had outgrown the old slab building. Methodism had no great architectural tradition when it was introduced in Australia, and John Wesley had instructed that 'preaching houses' were to be plain and unpretentious. This accounts for the simple nature of the Eaglehawk East Methodist Church, originally constructed as a Primitive Methodist chapel. The funds for the construction of the church were raised by the congregation themselves. The contractor was an N Williamson of Green Gully, and the cost was estimated at £1,100.

In 1873, Eaglehawk Primary was recognised as State School No.210, and 'new' buildings (alterations and additions to the old) were constructed. The design of the building was much criticised, so in 1881, the Methodist Church was leased to the Education Department until a new school was erected.

The East (formerly Primitive) Methodist Church and the West (formerly Wesleyan) Methodist Church remained virtually independent factions until 1977 when the Uniting Church was formed, and the two congregations were combined. In 1980, the East Methodist church was acquired by the Education Department for its present use and the sign on the back wall 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life' was retained. The toilets and kitchenette were added to the church annexe in 1988. More recent upgrades have also included the provision of a ramp for accessibility purposes near the southern end of the building.

### **Selected bibliography**

Ashgate Methodist Studies. *Methodism in Australia: A History*. Edited by Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey. New York: Routledge, 2016.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria). *Victorian Churches*. Edited by Miles Lewis. Melbourne: National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1991.

The Salvation Army. "History." The Salvation Army, Eaglehawk. Accessed 2 May 24.

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/eaglehawk/about-us/history/>.

Wallace, Ray, and Kevin Vallence. *Eaglehawk: Sketch book of a golden past*. Bendigo: Cambridge Press, 1983.

### **Extent of Registration**

Heritage Act 2017

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 modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H1458

Category: Registered Place

Place: Former Eaglehawk East Methodist Church

Location: 88–94 High Street, Eaglehawk

Municipality: Greater Bendigo City

All of the place show hatched on Diagram 1458 encompassing all of Lot 1 of Title Plan 132016.

Dated 22 August 2024

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/>*