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## Heritage Overlay Numbers

## Heritage Listing

Golden Plains Shire

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church is located at 143 Clyde Hill Road Russell's Bridge on allotment 1 TP810567 Parish of Wabdallah. The township takes its name from George Russell, pastoral pioneer and manager of the influential Clyde Company. The settlement is situated within a curve of the Moorabool River and stands on land originally occupied as the Wabdallah run, a small portion of the Clyde Company's vast pastoral holdings. A permanent crossing over the Moorabool River and the sale of the freehold land became the impetus for the development of the Russell's Bridge township. The Free Presbyterians, the small Gaelic-speaking branch of the denomination were present in Russell's Bridge from the beginning, with the Government Gazette advertising the first trustees 'of the ground set apart' for the Free Presbyterian Church in 1858. The first trustees included the Rev. Robert Flemming, Peter Cameron, Robert Longmoore and John Gillespie. A small timber church was constructed in a simple restrained Gothic Revival style in the early 1860s, by brothers William and Robert Sutherland, also responsible for the construction of the nearby Sutherland's Creek Presbyterian Church. The foundation stone was laid at both churches by Robert Grey. A Sunday school was established in 1880. Presbyterian services were held at the church until its closure at the turn of the 21st century. The church was sold in 2002 and the present owners occupy the building as a private residence. The church has been much altered since its sale, with removal of the rear lancet windows on both side elevations to accommodate the addition of a projecting wing and French doors opening onto a timber skillion verandah. The cultural heritage significance and integrity of the original fabric of the church has been compromised by extensive contemporary additions and extensions. However, the church is in good condition and the surviving fabric retains a fair degree of intactness.

How is it Significant?

The former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church is of historical and social significance to the Golden Plains Shire.

Why is it Significant?

The former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church is of historical significance as a surviving example of a church that serviced generations of a small rural congregation for over 140 years.

The former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church has social significance as a representation of the collective aspirations of the local congregation to establish a place of worship, which has served as an important community building throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Golden Plains - Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Phase 2, Heritage Matters P/L, 2009;
Hermes Number	43448
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church is located at the corner of Russell's Bridge Road and Clyde Hill Road, on land that originally comprised approximately 3 acres, but was reduced following the sale of 2 acres to the Education Department in 1878. The original timber church was designed in a simple restrained Gothic Revival style, with four bays with single lancet casement windows, a front porch and a vestry at the rear. The church has been much altered since its sale in 2002. The removal of the rear lancet windows on both side elevations to accommodate the addition of a projecting wing and French doors opening onto a timber skillion verandah. The front porch survives, as does its double timber doors. It is now flanked by two lancet windows possibly those removed from the side elevations. The fretwork and timber finials above the porch and the apex of the gable have been retained. There are no significant plantings in the former church grounds.

## Historical Australian Themes

The Australian Heritage Commission devised the Australian Historic Themes in 2001. The following themes have influenced the historical development of the former Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church.

8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.6 Worshipping

8.6.1 Worshipping together

8.6.2 Maintaining religious traditions and ceremonies

8.6.4 Making places for worship

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## Physical Description 2

Extent of registration: to the extent of allotment 1 TP810567 Parish of Wabdallah and the surviving 1860s timber church, excluding the interiors and excluding the contemporary extensions and additions.

## Integrity

The cultural heritage significance and integrity of the original fabric of the church has been compromised by extensive contemporary additions and extensions. However, the church is in good condition and the surviving fabric retains a fair degree of intactness.

*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/>*