

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 77 Bell Street PENS HurST

**STUDY NUMBER:** 241

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** Penshurst

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 6      **SECTION:** 9      **PARISH:** PARISH OF YALIMBA

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 475J C11; VicRoads 233 P11; located on the south side of Bell Street about in the centre of the township.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Wesleyan Methodist Church (Former), 77 Bell St, Penshurst

**Image Date:** 22/04/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the building and all of the land, excluding the interiors

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The former Wesleyan Methodist Church is a small stone hall building. The style is a naïve mixture of Gothic and Classical elements, such as the bellcote above the front gable and the three round arched windows along each side. The glazing, or at least the glass, appears to have been altered in the twentieth century. The walls are laid in 12" courses of rockface bluestone with pointing. The roof is corrugated iron. The front porch has been altered superficially in the building's conversion to a residence.

## **HISTORY:**

The land on which the former Wesleyan Methodist Church stands was purchased from the Crown on 21st December 1858 by a W Curry (Department of Lands and Survey, 1957). Nothing is known at this stage about W. Curry. The church was built in 1860 because tenders were called in the Warrnambool Examiner "for the erection of a Wesleyan Church, Penshurst. Plans and specifications at the Wesleyan minister's residency. Belfast" (Tonkin, 30). It may be that the documentation was prepared by the local Belfast (now Port Fairy) architect, John Mason who had designed the Methodist and Presbyterian churches there.

Blaimires & Smith (72) states that "The Penshurst Church was built during the Ministry of the Rev. H. Baker. The place had been previously visited by the Rev. E. B. Burns, from Belfast." The first resident minister was Rev. J. W. Tuckfield. It became a separate congregation in 1871 with Rev. T. Adamson as its Superintendent. The congregation "has long been in an easy position, thanks to the steady and generous help of Silas Harding and Co." They were presumably benefactors who may have helped pay for the construction of the church. Mr. Silas Harding is described as holding 32,421 acres near Penshurst in 1888 (V&IM, 57).

The church became redundant with the creation of the Uniting Church of Australia in 1977 and has since been converted into a residence.

The large garden to the west of the church was occupied for much of the 20th century by a timber hall. The building was originally the South Kolor state school and was moved onto the site in Bell Street when the school became obsolete. Following the closure of the church, the hall was removed to a nearby farm.

The Wesleyan Methodists introduced Methodism into the Port Phillip District in 1838. Joseph Townsend introduced a division of Methodism, the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1850. This body was formed by Methodists secessionists in large industrial cities in northern England as a protest against the clericalism of Wesleyan Methodism Jabez Bunting. However, Methodism continued to be fractious in the turbulent years of early Victoria. Being non-hierarchical and at some distance from large centres of population, small groups of Methodists were generally able to come together, form a congregation (or assembly) and build a church (or chapel) without having to refer their actions back to a higher authority.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.6 Worshipping

8.6.1 Worshipping together

8.6.4 Making places for worship

## **CONDITION:**

The building is in good condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

High degree of integrity on exterior of building. Interiors not inspected/

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

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## What is Significant?

The former Wesleyan Methodist Church is a small bluestone building in the picturesque gothic style, located on the south side of Bell Street, in the centre of the township of Penshurst. The former church has been converted into a residence, and although the interiors have not been inspected, it is presumed that they are much altered. The former Church was built in 1860, possibly by John Mason, architect, of Belfast (Port Fairy), who designed the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches there. The first resident minister was Rev. J. W. Tuckfield. It became a separate congregation in 1871 with Rev. T Adamson as its Superintendent. The church became redundant with the creation of the Uniting Church of Australia in 1977 and has since been converted into a residence. The former church is in good condition, and the exterior retains a high degree of integrity (interiors have not been inspected).

## How is it Significant?

The former Wesleyan Methodist Church is of architectural and historical significance to the township of Penshurst and the Southern Grampians Shire.

## Why is it Significant?

The former Wesleyan Methodist Church is of historical significance as the focus for the Wesleyan Methodist denomination in the area for over 100 years. The church is of architectural significance for its naïve mixture of Gothic and Classical elements, such as the bellcote above the front gable and the three round arched windows along each side. It is of further architectural significance for the potential link to the architect, John Mason of Belfast (Port Fairy).

## COMPARISON:

187 Uniting Church and Sunday School, Hamilton- Port Fairy Road, Byaduk  
166 Muddy Creek Memorial Church, Church Road, Yulecart  
066 Zion Lutheran Church, Old Crusher Road, Byaduk

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

14-Dec-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Include in VHR**  **Include in RNE**  **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

**No Recommendations for Inclusions**

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Penshurst, Parishes of Boram Boram and Yalimba, County of Villiers	1957	
Ray Tonkin	Tender and Other Notices from the Warnambool Examiner	1973	30
Surveyor General's Office Melbourne	Suburban and Country Lands and the Thownship of Penshurst near Mount Rouse in the Parishes of Yalimba and BoramBoram, County of Villiers	1855	
W L Blamires and John B Smith	The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria	1886	271-3