

Heritage Council Determination

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| Determination date | 2 April 2026 |
| Place/Object name | Former Wesleyan Church, Parsonage and Common School |
| Location | 44–46 James Street, Port Fairy, Moyne Shire, Eastern Maar Country |
| VHR number | H0884 |
| Category | Registered Place |
| Relevant legislative provision/s | Amendment to the Heritage Register, pursuant to section 62 of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> |

Determination of the Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **2 April 2026**, in accordance with Part 3 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the above place is to be amended in the Heritage Register.

The Heritage Council determined to make the following amendments to the Heritage Register:

- including additional land in the Heritage Register being all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 884 in accordance with section 49(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.
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Executive Director's Recommendation ('the Recommendation')

The State-level cultural heritage significance of the Former Wesleyan Methodist Church, Parsonage and Common School, located at 44–46 James Street, Port Fairy, Moyne Shire, Eastern Maar Country ('the Place') was recognised in 1991 by its inclusion in the (former) Register of Historic Buildings.

On **17 December 2025** the Executive Director made and accepted an application to amend the registration of the Place to ensure it is consistent with current practices under the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').

On **12 January 2026** the Executive Director made a recommendation to the Heritage Council ('the Recommendation') that the existing registration for the Place should be amended in the Heritage Register. The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on **16 January 2026**.

Section 44 submissions

During the 60-day public advertisement period no submissions were received pursuant to section 44 of the Act.

The Place

Description

Extracted verbatim from page 12 of the Executive Director's Recommendation:

The Former Wesleyan Church, Parsonage and Common School is architecturally significant as a particularly fine example of a nineteenth-century ecclesiastical complex. The design of the church is distinctive for its application of the neoclassical, Georgian architectural tradition in a colonial context. The church also features carvings by sculptor Walter McGill, including a bust of John Wesley to the upper front façade, a large scallop shell in the lunette over the door, and ornamented keystones to the front windows. The design of the common school is notable for its ornamentation, which was unusual for common schools which were typically plain in appearance.

Reasons for the amendment application

Additional land

The Executive Director recommended that the Heritage Council amend the registration of the Place to include additional land, having formed the view that:

- The State-level cultural heritage significance of the Place would be substantially less if the additional land or any part of the additional land which is or has been used in conjunction with the Place were developed [s.40(3A)(c)(i)]; and
- The additional land surrounds the Place and is important to the protection or conservation of the Place; or contributes to the understanding of the Place [s.40(3A)(c)(ii)].

The Executive Director noted that:

- The current registered extent:
 - cuts through the middle of the parsonage due to a mapping error at the time of the initial registration in 1991; and
 - excludes the rear lot fronting Grant Street which provided historic rear access to the Church and Common School.
- The land proposed for inclusion is currently and has been used in conjunction with the Place since 1847 which is over 170 years.

The Executive Director expressed the view that:

- If any of the additional land proposed for inclusion in the registration were developed, depending upon the nature of the proposal, there is potential for the development to impact upon the Place and substantially reduce its State-level cultural heritage significance.

- In the context of other nineteenth-century church complexes with registered land in the Heritage Register, the Place is an outlier because its current extent of registration does not cover all of the associated buildings that have historically supported the operation of the church.
- The proposed inclusion of additional land will ensure that the entire parsonage is included in the extent of the Registered Place and will be subject to a heritage approvals process to manage change.
- The proposed inclusion of the lot to the west, fronting Grant Street, will ensure that the entire allotment owned by the church in 1885 (when Grant Street was appropriated from a previously private subdivision) is protected through a heritage approvals process.

Heritage Council's findings

The Heritage Council's statutory remit is confined by the Act. When a Place or Object is included in the Heritage Register, the description, history, Statement of Significance and permit policy do not form statutory components of the Heritage Register.

The Heritage Council notes that the Executive Director may make non-statutory amendments as set out in the Recommendation. The Heritage Council raised several queries with the Executive Director at Heritage Council meeting HC292 with respect to (non-statutory) wording included in the Recommendation. The Heritage Council also suggested minor wording amendments to the Statement of Significance that were accepted by the Executive Director at Heritage Council meeting HC292. The Heritage Council records its support for additional wording to be included in the 'history' section of the registration for the Place relating to the impact of Wesleyan missions on the Eastern Maar Peoples, as suggested by the Executive Director at Heritage Council meeting HC292.

Additional Land

The extent of registration is provided as **Attachment 1** and includes all the place shown hatched on Diagram 884, encompassing all of Lot 1 and Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 333053 and Lot 1 on TP894066.

Permit exemptions

The Executive Director did not propose any specific permit exemptions for this place.

Conclusion

The Heritage Council determined, pursuant to Part 3 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the registration of the Former Wesleyan Church, Parsonage and Common School is to be amended in the Heritage Register.



Professor Philip Goad
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Attachment 1

Extent of Registration

All all place shown hatched on Diagram 884, encompassing all of Lot 1 and Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 333053 and Lot 1 on TP894066.

