

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

REGISTER ENTRY

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall **PLACE NO.:** 26593

ADDRESS: Kaurna Country
114 Harvey Road, Elizabeth Grove
CT 5644/720 A94 D6184
Hundred of Munno Para

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall, opened in 1956, has a strong association with postwar migration and demonstrates the important role the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) played in building communities in its planned developments in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. Elizabeth was developed from 1955 by the SAHT as the state's second largest city, after Adelaide, to support the industrialisation of South Australia and more than half of Elizabeth's population were migrants from Europe. The former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall was built to serve Elizabeth South, the first of ten neighbourhood units and was the first church to open. Following the SAHT's intention to establish a stable social unit, the former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall offered not only religious services and fellowship but was also a focal point for community-building activities.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall demonstrates the important role the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) played in building communities in its planned developments in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. The SAHT developed the Elizabeth new town from 1955 to support the industrialisation of the South Australian economy which was achieved in large part through the postwar settlement of migrants. The SAHT, as the de facto planner for metropolitan Adelaide and instrumental in the planned expansion of industrialising regional towns in South Australia, transposed the successful planning and

community-buildings ideas implemented and lessons learned from Elizabeth across the State.

Community and the establishment of a 'stable social unit' was essential to the SAHT's plan, and churches were encouraged to become established at Elizabeth before or soon after residents moved in. Opened in 1956 and associated with Elizabeth South, the first of ten neighbourhood units ultimately built in Elizabeth, the former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall was both the first church and the first community hall to open in the Elizabeth new town. As well as serving as a place of worship and religious fellowship, the former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall was a focal point for community activities during Elizabeth's establishment phase, including community meetings, social gatherings, film entertainment, and various indoor and outdoor sporting competitions. The former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall offered not only a place where new migrants could worship, but one where new migrants, including those who were non-churchgoers, could meet new people, form friendships and contribute to building a community.

SITE PLAN

Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall
114 Harvey Road, Elizabeth Grove

PLACE NO.: 26593



Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall (CT 5644/720 A94 D6184 Hundred of Munno Para)*

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Combined hall/chapel building completed in 1956 and hall completed c.1960s,
- Original exterior and interior materials and material finishes, including face brick, clear finished timber, coloured glass and terrazzo,
- Foundation stone.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Main entrance access ramp and rails,
- Security system,
- Exit signs, ceiling fans, fluorescent light fittings, data projector, screen and speakers,
- Trees and landscaping,
- Kitchen and toilet fitouts.

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LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

*Red outline is indicative of elements of significance, noting imperfect alignment of aerial imagery with parcel cadastre.

COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Description and notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Physical Description

The former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall is a single-storey, red brick, concrete blockwork, steel and reinforced concrete church complex. It comprises a chapel/hall with a high gable roof supported by a composite steel and timber structure; a narthex/vestry wing wrapped around the northern and western sides, with a reinforced concrete flat roof; a classroom and service wing to the south, with a skillion roof; and an activity hall and classroom to the east, with a clerestory roof. Additional exterior features include:

- firing-marked red brick base courses with upper string course in relief,
- corrugated steel sheet cladding to main and skillion roofs,
- open eaves to gable roof with matchboard soffit,
- brick front wall to hall/chapel and narthex/vestry with timber feature cross and marble foundation stone, both positioned asymmetrically,
- hall/chapel divided into 6 structural bays, with red brick piers relieved, including rebated front bay,
- window openings to all bays on southern side, with rendered spandrels below sills,
- clerestory windows in bays 2-6 along northern side above flat narthex/vestry roof,
- long window openings along northern side of narthex/vestry wing, with concrete blockwork walls below (now painted),
- main entrance on northern side of narthex/vestry wing, comprising double timber doors flanked by sidelights and transom window above, glazed with clear glass,
- aluminium frames to most window openings,
- rippled amber glass to hall/chapel and narthex/vestry wing windows,
- flat roof extended over main entrance, forming porch,
- brick wing wall on eastern side of entrance enclosing porch and supporting porch roof, with tubular steel column supporting other extremity,
- concrete porch steps, ramp and floor (ramp not significant fabric),
- stainless steel access railing to porch (not significant fabric),
- terrazzo doorstep,
- clerestory window in roof of classroom and service wing.

From west to east, the interior of the hall/chapel comprises a sanctuary (bay 1), a hall (bays 2-5) and a proscenium stage (bay 6). Additional internal features of the hall/chapel include:

- timber floor,
- exposed I-beam rafters and longitudinal timber spacing struts bolted to welded brackets on the rafters, with matchboard ceiling,
- glass pendant light fittings (2) and ceiling fans (not significant fabric),
- matchboard-lined chancel arch in an inverted v-shape, with velvet draw curtains,
- lacquered face brick sanctuary wall, with timber feature cross positioned centrally,
- sanctuary floor two steps above hall floor, with solid communion rails,
- single doorway in bay 2 and hollow-core plywood quadripartite folding doors in bays 3-5, dividing chapel/hall from narthex,
- timber footlight trough to stage, matchboard-lined stage fascia, and secret hopper door providing under-stage access,
- velvet draw curtains to proscenium.

The narthex/vestry wing comprises, from east to west, an anteroom associated with the hall/chapel stage, a long narthex, and two vestry rooms. Additional internal features of the narthex/vestry wing include:

- concrete slab floor to narthex and anteroom with vinyl tile covering,
- timber floor to vestries,
- inset doormat inside main entrance,
- fluorescent light fittings (not significant fabric),
- matchboard-lined partition wall to eastern end,
- hollow-core plywood doors to anteroom and vestries.

The classroom and service wing comprises a large classroom, a kitchen on the northern side and toilets on the eastern side. Additional internal features of the narthex/vestry wing include:

- face brick to some classroom walls,
- concrete slab floor to classroom with vinyl tile floor,
- blackboard in timber frame to classroom eastern wall,
- c.2000s partition wall extending kitchen (not significant fabric),
- c.2000s kitchen fitout (not significant fabric)
- c.2010s toilet fitout (not significant fabric).

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Combined hall/chapel building completed in 1956 and activity hall completed c.1960s,
- Narthex/vestry wing to the north-west and the classroom and service wing to the south,
- Original exterior and interior materials and material finishes, including face brick, clear finished timber, coloured glass and terrazzo,
- Foundation stone.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

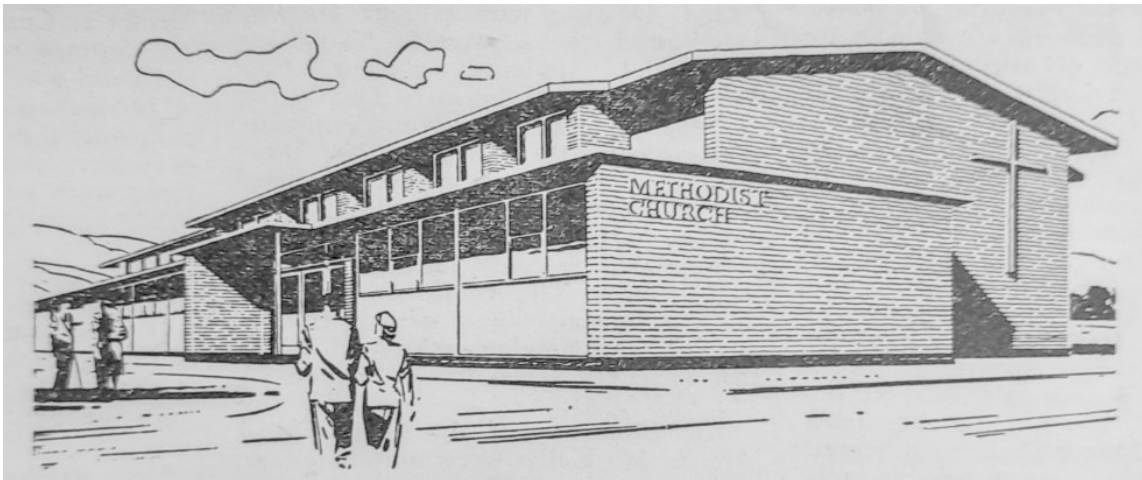
- Main entrance access ramp and rails,
- Security system,
- Exit signs, ceiling fans, fluorescent light fittings, data projector, screen and speakers,
- Trees and landscaping,
- Kitchen and toilet fitouts.

History of the Place

Please refer to the Assessment Report for the full history.

The Elizabeth new town was developed from 1955 by the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) as the state's second-largest city, to support the industrialisation of the South Australian economy. The creation of Elizabeth was achieved in large part through the settlement of European migrants, mainly from Britain and deliberately recruited by the SAHT.

In 1954, anxious to secure early footholds in the new town ahead of residential occupation, the South Australian Methodist Conference (the Conference) created a Commission tasked with establishing places of worship in Elizabeth.¹ The Commission applied for three sites to serve the first six neighbourhood units. The SAHT offered the Commission a block of approximately two acres at Elizabeth Grove, adjacent to the eastern boundary of Elizabeth South, which became the site of the Elizabeth South Methodist Hall. This strategic location on the boundary of two neighbourhood units enabled the church to serve both emerging communities. The Commission considered the site large enough to eventually accommodate a purpose-built church, parsonage, kindergarten, and tennis and basketball courts, besides the initial church hall. The purpose-built church and parsonage were never constructed.



Perspective drawing of the proposed Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall by architects Brown & Davies Pty Ltd

Source: *South Australian Methodist* 9 November 1956 p. 1

Adelaide architects Brown & Davies Pty Ltd designed a combined church and hall for the site, with a sanctuary at one end, a proscenium stage at the other,² and an open, multi-purpose flat timber floor in between. The building also featured classrooms, vestries and a kitchen.³

On 27 November 1955, South Australian Premier Thomas Playford laid the foundation stone of the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall. The *South Australian Methodist* newspaper encouraged a 'Pilgrimage of Methodists (and any other well-wishers)' to 'converge' on the site, resulting in a crowd of 5,000 witnessing the ceremony.⁴

The construction of the Elizabeth South Methodist Hall, prior to the existence of an Elizabeth congregation, was considered to be a 'unique' situation in the history of South Australian Methodism.⁵ When the church was blessed and officially named the following year on Saturday, 3 November 1956,⁶ the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall became the first church in Elizabeth and the first community hall.⁷ The total cost of the Elizabeth South Methodist Hall, including land, building and furnishings, was £12,600.⁸

After opening, the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall was used by some of the other religious denominations in Elizabeth, while waiting for their own churches to be built. Worship began with 6 pews donated from a country church, and a quantity of stackable, tubular steel chairs.⁹ Later in c.1959, a communion table was given by the Giles Corner Methodist Trust and in 1963, 22 pews were given by the Madge Memorial Methodist Church, Halifax Street, Adelaide.¹⁰



The new Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall, pictured around the time of its opening, c.1957

Source: Playford's Past

The Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall also served as a community centre for the broader neighbourhood, hosting community meetings, dinners and other events; fetes and markets; entertainment, including motion picture screenings; and indoor sporting competitions, such as basketball and volleyball.¹¹ The premises hosted numerous sporting clubs, including cricket, netball and tennis clubs.¹² The tennis club, operating out of the Church Hall and using the adjacent courts, was the first tennis club in Elizabeth.¹³ After 1977, it was known as Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church Tennis Club.

By 1969, an activity hall, incorporating Sunday School classrooms, built in two stages, was added to the rear of the church.¹⁴ At its peak during the 1960s, up to 600 children were reportedly enrolled in the Elizabeth South Methodist Sunday School.¹⁵

Some years after the occupation of the first houses in Elizabeth Grove in January 1957, the name of the church was changed to Elizabeth Grove Methodist Church to avoid confusion, since the church was built on the Elizabeth Grove side of Harvey Road.¹⁶ Later, following union in 1977, Elizabeth Grove Methodist Church became known as Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church.



Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall, 2024

Source: DEW Files, 28 June 2024

Chronology

Year	Event
1739	Methodist founder John Wesley establishes the first Methodist Society in England.
c.1795	Emergence of Methodism as a distinct denomination.
1870s	Four Methodist denominations exist in South Australia. Most South Australian communities possess at least one Methodist chapel.
1900	The Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist and Bible Christian branches of Methodism amalgamated to create the Methodist Church of Australasia.
1908	South Australian architect Gordon Craig Brown is born.
1920s	52 churches and 49 halls are built by Methodist congregations in South Australia.
1928	Gordon Brown is employed by South Australian architect Eric McMichael 'as a kind of trainee draftsman.'
1945	Gordon Brown enters private practice as Gordon C. Brown.
1946	Australia signs a migration agreement with the United Kingdom, enabling British citizens to migrate for free or with assisted passage.
1947	Non-British European refugees begin arriving in Australia under the Commonwealth Mass Resettlement Scheme for Displaced Persons.

- 1950s More than half of all South Australian children aged 5 to 14 attend a Protestant Sunday School.
- 1953 January, the end of post-Second World War building restrictions heralds the beginning of a postwar church-building boom in South Australia, driven by postwar migration and the baby boom.
The Commonwealth Mass Resettlement Scheme for Displaced Persons concludes.
- 1954 The South Australian Methodist Conference creates a Commission tasked with establishing places of worship at Elizabeth.
Formal discussions begin between the Australian Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches aimed at bringing about church union.
- 1955 The SAHT begins developing the Elizabeth new town on open farmland north of Adelaide.**
Gordon Brown enters a partnership with Donald (Don) Laurence Davies, resulting in the creation of Brown & Davies Pty Ltd.
16 November, Elizabeth is officially established.
17 November, the first houses in Elizabeth South are occupied.
27 November, South Australian Premier Thomas Playford lays the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall foundation stone. A crowd of 5,000 Methodists 'and other well-wishers' witness the ceremony.
- 1956** January, Elizabeth South Primary School opens.
3 November, the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall is blessed, opened and officially named.
12 January 1957, the first houses in Elizabeth Grove are occupied.
- 1959 A communion table is donated to the Elizabeth South Methodist Church by the Giles Corner Methodist Trust.
American Baptist evangelist Dr. Billy Graham visits Adelaide.
- c.1960s Elizabeth South Methodist Church becomes known as the Elizabeth Grove Methodist Church.**
- 1963 22 pews are donated to Elizabeth South Methodist Church by the Madge Memorial Methodist Church in Halifax Street, Adelaide.
- 1965 Twenty different religious organisations own more than forty sites across Elizabeth.
- c.1967 The postwar church-building boom ends in South Australia.
A downturn in migration slows the development of Elizabeth, leaving many houses vacant.

- 1968 Adult Methodist membership reaches its all-time peak in South Australia.
- 1969 October, the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Elizabeth formed the Elizabeth United Parish.
- 1977 Elizabeth Grove Methodist Church becomes Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church.**
- 2003 4 September, the former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall becomes a Local Heritage Place.**

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- Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here: a history of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia* (1986) Adelaide, SA: Lutheran Publishing House

Reports and Theses

- Louise Bird, 'Planning for Open Space in Postwar South Australia: open space benefits and local open space systems at Elizabeth, Noarlunga and Golden Grove,' PhD thesis, School of Art, Architecture and Design, University of South Australia (August 2016)
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Pamphlets

Raelene Walden, *Reflections Over the Past 50 Years* (2006) Elizabeth Grove SA: Raelene Walden

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Rev C. J. Davis, "A 'Canberra' in South Australia" in *South Australian Methodist* 18 November 1955 p. 1

"Ceremony of the Laying of the Foundations Stone of the Methodist Church Hall at Elizabeth" in *South Australian Methodist* 2 December 1955 p. 1

Rev A. C. Cowley, "Elizabeth Methodist Church Hall, Inspiring Dedication Ceremony" in *South Australian Methodist* 9 November 1956 p. 1

Websites

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<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/2107.0>

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1966
<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2106.01966>

'All Saints' Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church, Marion Road, North Plympton' Organ Historical Trust of Australia <https://www.ohta.org.au/organs/organs/PlymptonUC.html>

Archival

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SITE DETAILS

Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall

PLACE NO.: 26593

114 Harvey Road, Elizabeth Grove

FORMER NAME:	Elizabeth South Methodist Church Elizabeth Grove Methodist Church
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Single storey brick and reinforced concrete church complex
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1955 – c.1969
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 18 August 2022 Provisionally entered 12 December 2024
LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS:	LHP, listed 4 September 2003
CURRENT USE:	Uniting Church place of worship 1977 – present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Methodist place of worship 1956 – 1977
ARCHITECT:	Brown & Davies 1955 – 1956
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of Playford
LOCATION:	Street No.: 114 Street Name: Harvey Road Town/Suburb: Elizabeth Grove Post Code: 5112
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title CT 5644/720 A94 D6184 Reference: Hundred: Munno Para

PHOTOS

Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall

PLACE NO.: 26593

114 Harvey Road, Elizabeth Grove

All images in this section are from DEW Files and were taken on 28 June 2024, unless otherwise indicated.



Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall, northern side showing main entrance



Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall, southern side

Former Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall

PLACE NO.: 26593

114 Harvey Road, Elizabeth Grove



Interior, western end showing sanctuary



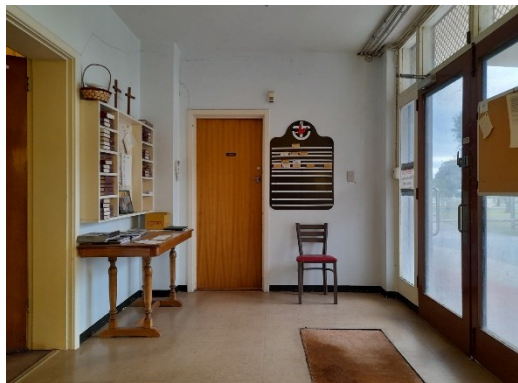
Interior, eastern end showing stage



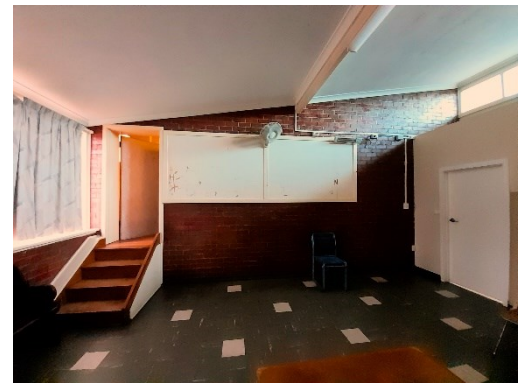
Rear view showing classroom and service wing



Interior showing narthex eastern end, with quadripartite folding doors between bays



Interior showing narthex western end



Interior showing classroom



Foundation stone



Northern side of c.1960s activity hall

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- ¹ Rev C. J. Davis, "A 'Canberra' in South Australia" in *South Australian Methodist* 18 November 1955 p. 1
- ² Danvers Architects, 'City of Elizabeth Heritage Survey' (1997) p. 84
- ³ Rev C. J. Davis, "A 'Canberra' in South Australia"
- ⁴ Rev C. J. Davis, "A 'Canberra' in South Australia"
- ⁵ Rev C. J. Davis, "A 'Canberra' in South Australia"
- ⁶ Danvers Architects, 'City of Elizabeth Heritage Survey' p. 84
- ⁷ Danvers Architects, 'City of Elizabeth Heritage Survey' p. 84; "Ceremony of the Laying of the Foundations Stone of the Methodist Church Hall at Elizabeth" in *South Australian Methodist* 2 December 1955 p. 1
- ⁸ Rev A. C. Cowley, "Elizabeth Methodist Church Hall, Inspiring Dedication Ceremony" in *South Australian Methodist* 9 November 1956 p. 1
- ⁹ Raelene Walden, *Reflections Over the Past 50 Years* (2006) Elizabeth Grove SA: Raelene Walden
- ¹⁰ Raelene Walden, *Reflections*; Giles Corner Methodist Church closed October 1959, Madge closed c.1960; 'All Saints' Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church, Marion Road, North Plympton' Organ Historical Trust of Australia <https://www.ohta.org.au/organs/organs/PlymptonUC.html>
- ¹¹ Raelene Walden, *Reflections*
- ¹² Raelene Walden, *Reflections*
- ¹³ Raelene Walden, Pers. Comm. 28 June 2024
- ¹⁴ Aerial photography via EnvMaps
- ¹⁵ Raelene Walden, *Reflections*
- ¹⁶ Raelene Walden, *Reflections*