

SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with s14(1)(a) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

NAME: Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church

PLACE NO.: 26594

ADDRESS: Karna Country

106 Goodman Road, Elizabeth South 5112

CT 5663/32 A7 D6033

Hundred of Munno Para

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church, opened in 1957, 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. Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was built at Elizabeth South, the first of ten neighbourhood units and was the third church to open. Following the SAHT's intention to establish a stable social unit, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church 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

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church 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 facilitated 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-building ideas implemented and lessons learned from Elizabeth across the State.

Community and the establishment of a 'stable social unit' was considered essential to the SAHT's plan, and churches were encouraged to establish facilities at Elizabeth before or soon after residents moved in. Built in 1957 and associated with Elizabeth South, the first of ten neighbourhood units built at Elizabeth, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was the third church to open and is the second-oldest remaining. As well as serving as a place of worship and religious fellowship, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was a focal point for community activities during Elizabeth's establishment phase, including community meetings, social gatherings, amateur theatre, organised sporting competitions, and kindergarden. Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church offered not only a place where new migrants could worship, but also one where new migrants, including those who were non-churchgoers, could meet new people, form friendships and contribute to building community.

SITE PLAN, PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION & ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with s14(2)(a) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church

PLACE NO.: 26594

106 Goodman Road, Elizabeth South



Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church (CT 5663/32 A752 D6033 Hundred of Munno Para)*

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



- Church building completed in 1957 and hall completed in 1958,
- Original exterior and interior materials and material finishes, including concrete blockwork walls; clear finished timber; and coloured glass.

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

- Air conditioning,
- Pendant light fittings in chapel,
- Kitchen fitout,
- Solar panels,
- Trees, landscaping and front fence.

LEGEND

N ↑

 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.

Summary of State Heritage Place: 26594

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Provisionally entered by the South Australian Heritage Council on 12 December 2024

Confirmed by the South Australian Heritage Council on 10 April 2025

Physical Description

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church is a single-storey church complex comprising a chapel, hall wing and semi-detached toilet block, all with load-bearing concrete blockwork walls. The chapel has a low gable roof with eaves, while the hall has a flat roof, also with eaves, both clad with corrugated steel sheeting.

Additional exterior features include:

- rectangular chapel, with long axis perpendicular to the street,
- wide, footing-to-eave opening forming front entrance, with glazed, timber-framed, double doors and side lights and stud infill wall above, with vertical tongue-and-groove board cladding,
- flat-roofed open porch over main entrance, supported by four tubular steel posts, paired,
- raised concrete slab to porch,
- structural blockwork piers dividing chapel side walls into seven bays,
- window openings in bays 2-5 down both sides of chapel,
- timber frames with clear and amber rippled glass to chapel window openings,
- double-door opening in bay 6 on southern side,
- freestanding chain-mesh fence structure protecting windows on southern side,
- square footprint to hall, positioned at northern corner of chapel,
- timber-framed window and door unit to front wall of hall, forming entrance,
- fibro-asbestos-lined studwork section to hall side wall, with two windows comprising a pair of stacked, timber-framed awning windows,
- timber-framed clerestory windows to hall rear wall, with alternating fixed and awning-opening frames,
- gable-roofed toilet block located behind chapel, attached to hall wing by a blockwork wall,
- two bronze plaques adjacent to front entrance,
- bronze plaque adjacent to hall entrance.

Additional interior features include:

- pine floor to hall,
- meranti tongue-and-groove board-lined studwork narthex with flat mezzanine ceiling,
- perforated Masonite to studwork entrance wall lining above narthex,
- concrete blockwork internal walls (painted),
- exposed timber trusses in chapel, with vertical, steel tie rods,
- hardwood floor to chapel (karri or similar),
- pine platform at front of chapel forming sanctuary,

- stamped sheet-metal reredos behind sanctuary, displaying an arrayed nailhead pattern,
- pendant light fittings in chapel (not significant fabric),
- kitchen located behind chapel, with access doors at both ends (kitchen fitout not significant fabric),
- exposed welded-steel web truss supporting hall roof rafters.

Elements of Significance:

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

- Air conditioning,
- Pendant light fittings in chapel,
- Kitchen fitout,
- Solar panels,
- Trees, landscaping and front fence.

HISTORY, CHRONOLOGY, SITE DETAILS & PHOTOGRAPHS

Entry in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with s14(1)(a) of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*

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.

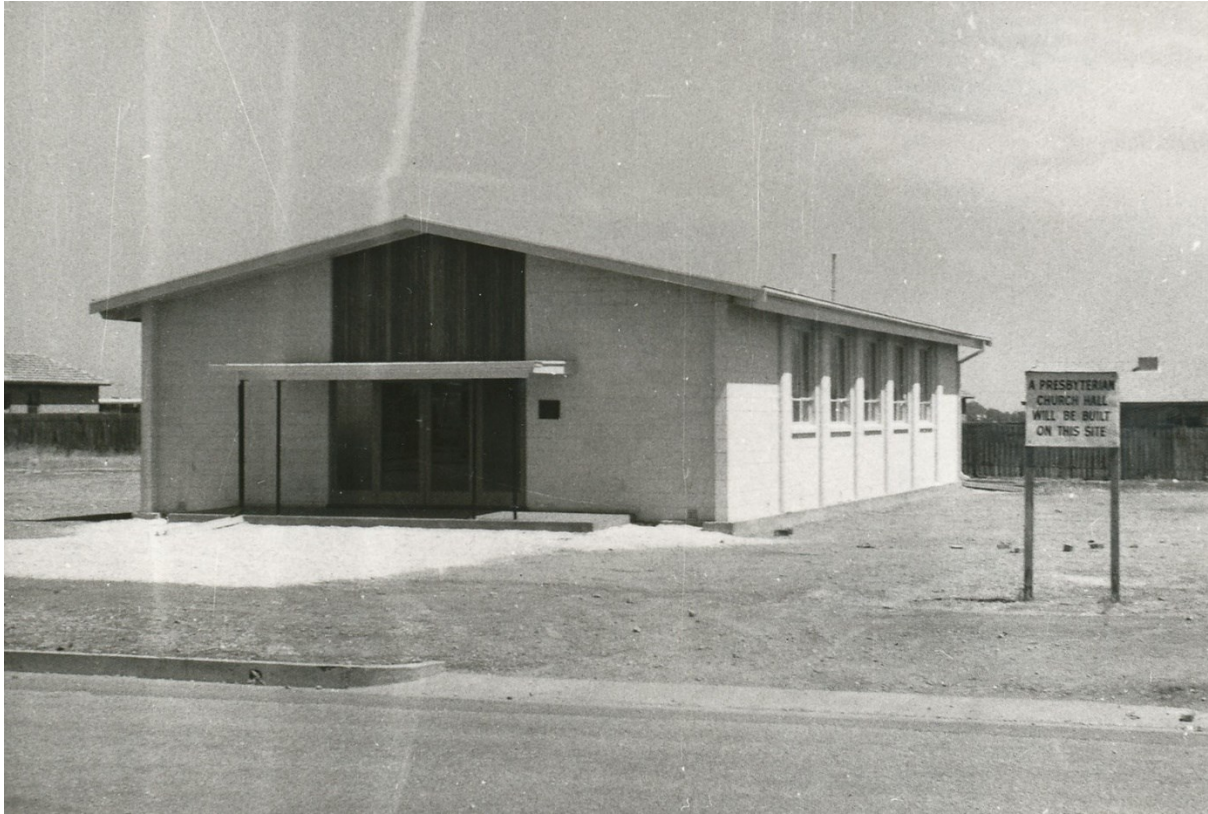
The first houses in Elizabeth were occupied on 17 November 1955 at Elizabeth South. In response, the Gawler Presbyterian parish was extended to Elizabeth South in early 1956 and the first service held at the Elizabeth South Primary School on 11 March. This was the second major denominational service to be held in the new town, the Catholic service having begun fifteen minutes earlier in an adjoining room.¹

The Victorian Home Mission Committee, the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia in South Australia (a church youth organisation) and Mrs G. Pitcher helped pay for both the purchase of a large block of land on Goodman Road and construction of the church. The land had previously been set aside for the construction of a Presbyterian Church by the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT).²

Like the other early Elizabeth churches, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was designed as a multi-purpose hall with no fixed seating, allowing it to be used for a variety of secular, community activities besides religious worship. The congregation acquired pews from the former Smithfield Presbyterian Church, which closed earlier that year.³ The building featured a large, self-contained kitchen (since refitted), accessed from the worship space through doors on either side of the sanctuary.

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was opened on 25 August 1957 and named after the widow and 'devoted secretary'⁴ of John Flynn, founder of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.⁵ Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was the third church to open in Elizabeth, after the Elizabeth South Methodist Church Hall (opened 3 November 1956) and a Lutheran Church, also at Elizabeth South (opened 1957, now demolished).⁶

By the time Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church opened, the local population had grown to 6,000 and continued to rise.⁷ A fenced netball court, paved with asphalt, was later built on the allotment to the south of the church.



The newly-completed Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church, c.1957.

Source: Playford's Past

In 1958, the church was extended with the addition of a hall, increasing the flexibility of the church building and allowing services and Sunday School to be held simultaneously. The hall was opened on 23 November 1958 by Rev J. Priestley, commissioner of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia.⁸ On the same day, another Presbyterian church, St Stephens, was opened on Womma Road, Elizabeth North. Seven years later, demand from the large number of Presbyterian churchgoers settling in Elizabeth led to the construction of a third Presbyterian church, St Andrew's at Elizabeth Vale (1964, now Potters House Christian Church).⁹

Besides pastoral care to members, the Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth provided social services to its local community. Members of the Jean Flynn and St Andrew's Presbyterian congregations played an important role in establishing the Elizabeth Counselling Service. Kindergartens were also established in the Jean Flynn and St Stephen's halls, fulfilling an important community need. This service operated into the mid-1980s. The Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth also organised social programs and events, including badminton and other sports, amateur theatre, social gatherings, and community meetings, as well as structured and unstructured religious youth groups.¹⁰

In October 1969, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church joined with the other Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist congregations in the City of Elizabeth to form the Elizabeth United Parish. However, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church was one of the 14

South Australian Presbyterian congregations which chose not to join the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977.¹¹

In recent decades the kitchen fitout was replaced. In c.2010, the netball court to the south of the church was subdivided and the resulting land sold as housing allotments. In 2024, the former Jean Flynn congregation is now known as Northern Suburbs Presbyterian Church.



Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church, 2024.

Source: DEW Files, 15 July 2024

Chronology

Year	Event
1560	Scottish minister John Knox leads the reformation of the Scottish church.
1690	The Presbyterian church becomes the established state church in Scotland.
1851	Three branches of Presbyterianism are active in South Australia.
1865	Three branches of Presbyterianism unite to form the Presbyterian Church in South Australia.
1894	Presbyterian minister Rev Robert Mitchell initiates the Smith of Dunesk Mission at Beltana.
1901	The Presbyterian Church in South Australia becomes part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
1911	Presbyterian minister Rev John Flynn begins developing the Smith of Dunesk Mission into the Australian Inland Mission.
1928	The AIM Aerial Medical Service is established.
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 AIM Aerial Medical Service becomes the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
1955	The South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) begins developing the 'New Town' of Elizabeth on open farmland north of Adelaide. 16 November, Elizabeth is officially established. 17 November, the first houses in Elizabeth South are occupied.
1956	The Gawler Presbyterian Parish is extended to Elizabeth South. 11 March, the first Presbyterian service in Elizabeth is held at the Elizabeth South School. On behalf of the Gawler Parish, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Incorporated negotiates with the South

Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) to acquire land on Goodman Road, Elizabeth South, for the purpose of building a church.

- 1957** 31 March, Smithfield Presbyterian Church closes.
- 25 August, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church hall is opened by Rev. J. Priestley, commissioner of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia.**
- 1958 A netball court is paved and fenced on church land south of Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church.**
- St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Womma Road, Elizabeth North, is opened by Priestley on the same day.
- 1959 American Baptist evangelist Dr. Billy Graham visits Adelaide.
- 1964 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, at Elizabeth Vale is opened.
- 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.
- 1969 October, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church joins with other Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist congregations in Elizabeth to form the Elizabeth United Parish.**
- 1973 September, the Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church congregation votes not to enter into a national union of the Australian Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches, one of 14 South Australian Presbyterian congregations to do so.**
- c.2010 The netball court to the south of Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church is subdivided and sold as housing allotments.**
- 2024 The former Jean Flynn congregation is now known as Northern Suburbs Presbyterian Church.**

References

Books and Chapters

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Reports and Theses

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SITE DETAILS

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church

PLACE NO.: 26594

106 Goodman Road, Elizabeth South

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Single-storey concrete blockwork church
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1957
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated 18 August 2022 Provisionally entered 12 December 2024 Confirmed 10 April 2025
CURRENT USE:	Presbyterian place of worship 1957 – present
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of Playford
LOCATION:	Street No.: 106 Street Name: Goodman Road Town/Suburb: Elizabeth South Post Code: 5112
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title CT 5663/32 A752 D6033 Reference: Hundred: Munno Para

PHOTOS

Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church

PLACE NO.: 26594

106 Goodman Road, Elizabeth South

All images in this section are from DEW Files and were taken on 15 July 2024, unless otherwise indicated.



Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church, showing chapel (left) and hall (right).



Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church, front elevation of chapel.



Interior of chapel, view towards sanctuary.



Interior of chapel, view towards entry.



Narthex structure in chapel.



View from chapel looking into narthex.



Interior of hall viewed from entrance.



Interior of hall looking towards entrance.



Freestanding chain-mesh fence structure protecting windows on southern side.



Dedication plaque adjacent to chapel entrance.

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- ¹ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here: a history of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia* (1986) Adelaide, SA: Lutheran Publishing House pp. 171
- ² Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* p. 171
- ³ 'Smithfield Presbyterian Church' in *Playfords Past* <https://playfordspast.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/331>
- ⁴ Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/flynn-john-6200>
- ⁵ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* p. 171
- ⁶ Danvers Architects, "City of Elizabeth Heritage Survey" (1997) pp. 22, 39
- ⁷ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* p. 171
- ⁸ Memorial plaque on hall, Jean Flynn Presbyterian Church
- ⁹ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* p. 171
- ¹⁰ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* p. 171
- ¹¹ Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here* pp. 225-226