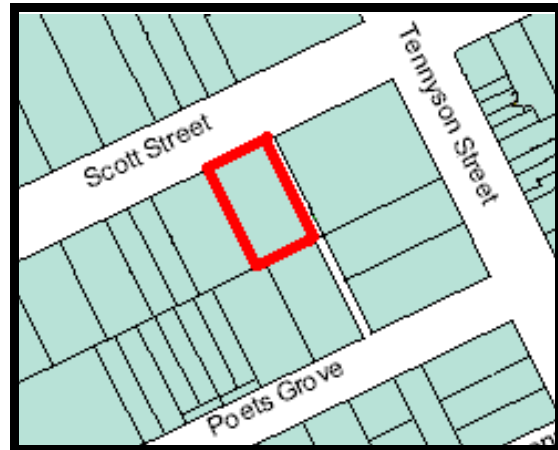


**Identifier** Scott Street Children's Centre  
**Formerly** Elwood Presbyterian Church



Not within a HO area

**Address** 31B Scott Street  
ELWOOD

**Category** Church

**Constructed** 1912

**Designer** A S Eggleston

## Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The original Presbyterian Church at 31B Scott Street, Elwood, is a modest gable-roofed timber-framed hall, clad in weatherboard and strapped cement sheeting. It was designed in 1912 by architect Alec Eggleston as the original home of the then newly-formed Elwood Presbyterian congregation, who extended the church in 1922 and replaced it with a new building in 1938.

### *How is it significant?*

The church is of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

Historically, the church is significant as the earliest church to be built in Elwood. Erected in 1912, it predates the first purpose-built Catholic, Anglican and Jewish places of worship in the suburb. More generally, the building retains associations with the intensive residential boom that occurred in Elwood in the 1910s following the reclamation of the swamp and the expansion of public transport networks.

Aesthetically, the church is significant as a representative example of a modest timber church, displaying little in the way of traditional stylistic pretension but nevertheless visually pleasing for its varied surface treatment (weatherboarding dado and strapped cement sheeting) and multi-paned sash windows. The church is of especial note as the only surviving timber church in the former St Kilda and, possibly, in the City of Port Phillip.

Architecturally, the church is a fine and relatively intact example of the ecclesiastical work of Alec Eggleston, a prolific architect who undertook much work for various Protestant denominations in the early twentieth century. A one-time RVIA president, Eggleston is best known as the founder of a highly successful architectural firm, later Eggleston McDonald, that continues to this day.

## Description

The former church is a relatively modest timber-framed structure comprising a large rectilinear hall with a small projecting central porch to the street frontage. Both portions have steep gabled roofs, clad in corrugated galvanised steel with timber bargeboards, while a rear addition has a skillion roof. The exterior walls are clad with weatherboard to window sill height, and with strapped cement sheeting above, creating a half-timbered effect. Each of the side elevations each have a row of four tripartite multi-paned casement sash windows; a triangular window in the gable end above the entrance porch is not original. The porch itself has a doorway to each side, each containing a pair of ledged timber doors with a small glazed panel. At the rear of the former church is a small hall-like addition with gabled roof, bracketed eaves, and timber cladding.

## History

In October 1912, architect Alec Eggleston submitted 'plans and specifications for a new church at South St Kilda' [sic] for the then newly-formed local Presbyterian congregation. The building, of timber construction, was modest in proportion, comprising a large hall 45 feet (13.7 metres) by 26 feet (7.9 metres), with an entry porch at the front and a small vestry at the rear. A decade later, the congregation had sufficiently expanded for the church to be extended. Another architect, Henry Kemp, prepared plans in July 1922 for the removal of the dividing wall (thus increasing the hall by 12 feet) with a new vestry built at the rear. The congregation continued to grow and, in 1938, it was decided to erect a new and larger brick church alongside. Yet another architect, J F D Scarborough, was engaged to undertake this work (qv 31A Scott Street). When the new church was completed, the original timber building became a venue for childminding.

The original architect, Alec Stanley Eggleston (1883-1955) had a long and prosperous career, starting a firm in 1907 that continues today as Eggleston Macdonald DesignInc. The grandson of a clergyman, Eggleston undertook much ecclesiastical work and was, for a time, architect to Wesley College, Queens College and Methodist Ladies' College. His first church was erected at Menzies' Creek in 1907, and was followed, over the next decade or so, by others in both timber and brick at Warburton, Bentleigh, Hampton, Ringwood, Gardiner and Tunstall (Nunawading).

## Comparative Analysis

When compared with other places of worship in Elwood, this modest timber church actually stands out as the oldest survivor. Erected in 1912, it is predated only by the original Methodist church in Mitford Street, erected two years earlier (and designed by the same architect), but demolished in 1968 for the erection of an SEC substation. St Bede's Anglican church in Ormond Road, often cited as the first church to be built in Elwood, actually dates back to 1916. The second Methodist Church, built in Mitford Street in 1918, was also razed in 1968. Elwood's other places of worship are much later in date: St Columba's Roman Catholic church in Normanby Road (1929), the second Presbyterian church in Scott Street (1938-39), the Talmud Torah synagogue in Dickens Street (1956).

The original Presbyterian church in Scott Street, Elwood, also appears to be one of the few (or possibly the only) surviving timber churches in the City of Port Phillip. Two other congregations in St Kilda began with timber churches, subsequently replacing them with larger masonry churches as numbers increased. The Congregationalists in East St Kilda built a timber church in Westbury Street in 1865 and a brick church in Hotham Street in 1887, while the Holy Trinity Anglican church in Brighton Road was also originally a timber building (also built 1865), later replaced in 1882 by a new stone church. Neither of the timber churches, however, still remain.

## Recommendations

recommended inclusions:

Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Port Phillip Planning Scheme

## References

Public Building File No 6332, Health Department files, VPRS 7882/P1, Unit 761. PRO.