

903-907 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

ELTHAM WAR MEMORIAL BUILDING COMPLEX

903-907 Main Road, Eltham

Prepared by: Context	Survey Date: December 2020
Place Type: Community	Architects: AK Lines & MacFarlane; AK Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall; Leith & Bartlett; David L Woodger (designer)
Significance level: Local significance	Builder: RJ Squires (Infant Welfare Centre); Chuck Wire Fence and Gate Company (Memorial Gates)
Extent of overlay: To title boundaries	Construction Date: c.1950-1967



Figure 1. Eltham Infant Welfare Centre. (Source: Context December 2020)



Figure 2. War Memorial Hall and Eltham Preschool. (Source: Context, December 2020)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Locality history: Eltham

Eltham, situated in hilly country northeast of Melbourne, is located on the country of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi wurrung, one of the five tribes of the Kulin Nation. A small, short-lived reservation south of Eltham on the Yarra River was set aside for Aboriginal people in 1852. The area is situated near the junction of the Yarra River and its tributary, the Diamond Creek.

Pastoral settlers moved into the area from around 1840 and took up pastoral leases (Bartolomei 2008). It was located proximate to the track used by the Ryrie brothers to provide access between their 'Yering' run, near Yarra Glen, and the Heidelberg village (*Victorian Places* 2015). In 1841, William Bell and Thomas Armstrong occupied land for a squatting run east of Diamond Creek in what was to become the Eltham district (Eltham District Historical Society 2000: np).

A plan for fifty allotments in the Township of Eltham, Parish of Nillumbik, was announced in 1848, with the name officially gazetted in 1851. The township, near the junction of the Diamond Creek and the

Yarra River, was laid out an area bounded by Baxter Street, Diamond Creek, Dalton Street and Bolton Street. The township plan shows a track to a bridge across Diamond Creek and the Main Road was noted as the 'Track from Melbourne' (Butler 1996:32). This area is known today as Eltham South.

Present-day Eltham, however, was not established on the township reserve, where land proved difficult to sell. Instead, the town grew from allotments in Section IV of the Parish of Nillumbik located on Main Road, to the north of Dalton Street and the township reserve (Butler 1996:32). In 1851, Melbourne property developer Josiah Holloway purchased one square mile (or 5120 acres) of this land, which he subdivided immediately, calling the subdivision Little Eltham. The central area of current-day Eltham is contained within the Little Eltham subdivision. A number of larger farming properties around the township were purchased from the early 1850s (*Nillumbik Parish Plan* 1951).

Eltham township grew during the 1850s around a cluster of buildings at the corner of Pitt Street and Main Road within the Little Eltham subdivision. Located on the road to the Caledonian Diggings, this small township became a service centre for the surrounding mining areas, and by 1854 supported a population of 282. In this period Eltham had two hotels, a brewery and tannery on Diamond Creek, a scattering of shops along Main Road (known in the 1850s as Maria Street) and a steam flour mill operated by Henry Dendy. The Little Eltham School, opened by the Church of England, was built in 1853 near Swan Street and closed in 1872. A second school, a National School (later Eltham Common School No 209) opened in Dalton Street in 1856. A Wesleyan chapel opened in 1858. Public buildings constructed at this time included a courthouse and a police station in Main Road in 1860. The 'flat land', which is now the Eltham Lower Park near the Yarra, was used as a racecourse (Kellaway cited in Butler 1996:32-33; Eltham District Historical Society 2000:np). A cemetery was established in 1858. The township and wider area was administered by the Shire of Eltham, established in 1856.

Between the 1860s and the 1880s, Eltham supplied food and produce for the gold-mining communities of the Caledonian Diggings at Queenstown (St Andrews) and Panton Hill. It also became a stopping place on route to the Woods Point diggings. Eltham's population grew in response. In 1871, the town's population was 165 and by 1881 this had increased to 388 (*Victorian Places* 2015).

A Primitive Methodist chapel was built in 1860. The following year St Margaret's Anglican Church, designed by the notable Melbourne architect, Nathaniel Billing, was built. In 1881, a Wesleyan church was constructed by George Stebbing to the design of Melbourne architects, Crouch and Wilson (Butler 1996:33). A new state school, constructed of local sandstone, opened in 1876.

Several large properties surrounding the township had absentee owners, who subdivided their properties into smaller farms either for lease or sale. The smaller properties, especially in the Little Eltham township, were run by farmers who often made a modest living as wage labourers. Like many later Eltham residents, they were attracted by cheap land and the country life (Butler 1996:33).

In 1884 Eltham was described as:

... a pretty little township on the Yarra Flats road ... It has a population of nearly 400 inhabitants, but in addition it is the centre of a large district extending over 208 square miles, having a population of 2344. The land in the district is mostly used for grazing purposes, although as a rule the small farms grow a good deal of wheat, oats and other agricultural produce. A large quantity of fruit, especially raspberries and strawberries, is also produced (Illustrated Australian News, 20 December 1884, cited by Carlotta Kellaway in Butler 1996:33).

The *Australian News* noted that gold had been found in the vicinity of the township, 'but not in remunerative quantities' (cited by Carlotta Kellaway in Butler 1996:33).

In the 1880s agitation began for the extension of the railway line from Heidelberg to serve Eltham and districts further afield such as Kangaroo Ground. The extension to Eltham opened in 1902 but was never extended to Kangaroo Ground. The railway brought excursionists from Melbourne, many of whom picked wattle during the flowering season, and focused development of the Eltham township around the railway station. Eltham was a picturesque village with the advantage of its proximity to metropolitan Melbourne as well as to attractive countryside with farms and uncleared stringybark forest (*Victorian Places* 2015). The attractive bush scenery attracted artists, writers and nature-lovers.

In 1903, the *Australian Handbook* described Eltham as part of an orcharding and grazing district. In 1901, 4289 acres were under cultivation, of which 2506 acres were planted with orchards and market gardens. The township, with a population of 377, included a state school, a branch of the Commercial Bank, and Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan Methodist and Primitive Methodist churches (cited in *Victorian Places* 2015). Subdivision of rural properties near Eltham township to form residential estates occurred from 1909 (Mills and Westbrooke 2017:69).

The electrification of the railway line was extended to Eltham in 1923, which eliminated the need to change to steam train at Heidelberg, and allowed faster through-trains and commuting times. The establishment of new residential estates in Eltham followed (Mills and Westbrooke 2017:71).

Eltham was described in 1940 as 'residential, horticultural, dairying and grazing ... a beauty spot for artists and picnickers'. By this time, the town had three recreation reserves, a higher elementary school (1926), swimming baths, tennis courts and a fire brigade (*Victorian Places* 2015).

Eltham has attracted a number of writers and artists over the years. The landscape painter Walter Withers (1854-1914) moved to Eltham in 1902 when the railway opened; others artists, including members of the Heidelberg School, painted in the area in the open air. Clara Southern and May Vale, landscape painters and students of Frederick McCubbin, settled in the region. Vale resided at Diamond Creek and Southern at Warrandyte (Bartolomei 2008). The war artist Will Longstaff also lived in Eltham for a period. From 1910, painter William 'Jock' Frater and cartoonist Percy Leason often camped and painted in the area. Artist Justus Jorgensen established the notable Montsalvat artist's colony buildings, on land he purchased in 1934. Seeking a closer engagement with the natural environment, the establishment of Montsalvat, with its adobe and rammed earth buildings, influenced future mud brick construction in the area. Several local architects and designers, including Alistair Knox, specialised in mud brick housing in the postwar period (*Victorian Places* 2015). Others who have been inspired by Eltham and have made the region their home include landscape architect Edna Walling, authors Alan Marshall and Carolyn Van Langenberg, artists Clifton Pugh and Danila Vassilieff; composers and musicians Graeme and Roger Bell; jewellers and sculptors Michael Wilson, Simon Icarus Baigent and Matcham Skipper; writer CB Christensen; poet Chris Wallace-Crabbe; and actress Kerry Armstrong (Bartolomei 2008; Pierce 1987:354).

Eltham experienced significant postwar development with a number of residential estates subdivided and put up for sale. The population of the town increased from 927 in 1933, to 1278 in 1947, to 7177 in 1971. As a result, Eltham High School opened in 1950 and the Catholic Ladies College was relocated to Eltham in 1971 (*Victorian Places* 2015). The Eltham War Memorial Trust Baby Health Centre opened in 1951. New shire offices opened in 1965, and Eltham College commenced classes in 1974 (Eltham District Historical Society 2000:np).

A distinctive style in local building emerged in Eltham in the postwar period, with a strong use of natural materials, low form structures, and an integration with the natural environment and the preference for bush gardens, especially after the 1970s. The Eltham Library, designed by architect Greg Burgess, was

constructed in mud brick and recycled timbers and received the RAIIA Institutional Architecture Award in 1995 (Bartolomei 2008).

The Shire of Eltham became part of the Shire of Nillumbik in 1994, with a small area becoming part of the City of Banyule.

Contextual history: war memorials

After World War I hundreds of statues, cenotaphs and plaques were erected across the nation to commemorate the service and immense sacrifice of Australian soldiers. The impulse to honour the memory of those who had lost their lives serving their country was great, but some of these traditional stand-alone memorials that lacked a useful function were met with criticism in some cases. Even the construction of the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, intended as the country's 'national' memorial, was challenged, with alternate plans for a memorial hospital gaining stronger support. In many localities residents pointed out that the resources that were available for a war memorial should be used instead to erect a public building or facility that made a useful addition to town or suburb. Various functional memorials were proposed, including public halls, grandstands, swimming pools and entrance gates. The provision of government funding for the erection of 'memorial halls' made this a popular option in many localities. They served a genuine need of the local community, providing a venue for social gatherings, public meetings, and entertainment while also honouring the war dead.

Following the Second World War, the focus shifted from nationalistic sentiment towards focused renewal of public infrastructure in local areas. There was a boom in the construction of public amenities that would be of benefit to local communities. This innovation in social planning encouraged the construction of multi-purpose community facilities. Frequently such facilities included a public hall and library or a cultural centre carefully sited around a public garden or courtyard. Monuments or other landscape elements were incorporated in these public and recreational spaces as a focus for more direct memorial reflection and/or public commemorative activities (Darian-Smith, Nichols and Willis 2010:206-213).

In 1945, as part of this wider movement to practical memorials, the Eltham Progress Association decided that the community war memorial should take the form of a baby health centre with a creche and children's library (cited by Rudduck in Darian-Smith, Nichols and Willis 2010:213).

Contextual history: Infant welfare centres and kindergartens

The formalised government provision of infant welfare in Victoria can be traced back to the formation of the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association in 1918. This was in response to the high infant mortality rates that prevailed in Victoria from the nineteenth century. Infant welfare relied on new teachings about the scientific management of babies and young children, which focused on nutrition, hygiene and daily routine. It established a system of mothercraft nurses and encouraged the establishment of local infant welfare centres that educated mothers about infant and childcare. The Infant Welfare Division of the Department of Health was established in 1926, after which government funding was available for the creation of infant welfare centres in Victoria (*Victorian Year Book* 1973:547). Many towns and suburbs across Victoria established infant welfare centres in the 1930s and 1940s, after which there was a dramatic decline in infant mortality.

The popularity, and necessity, of infant welfare in Victoria was highlighted in 1924, when 'mothercraft lectures' funded by the government. These operated out of a carriage of the 'Better Farming Train', which travelled to regional towns across Victoria to educate farmers in improved agricultural management. This early intervention into the welfare of children and their mothers alerted local councils to the importance of funding programs permanently.

Mills and Westbrook (2010:5) note the following in relation to baby health centres in the Eltham area:

The first Baby Health Centre in the region around Eltham was opened at Heidelberg in April 1926. It was funded by Heidelberg City Council and run by the VBHCA. Sub-centres were soon set up in Ivanhoe, Fairfield and Greensborough. The Greensborough centre serviced Greensborough and Diamond Creek in the Heidelberg Shire and it was anticipated that it could also support mothers from Briar Hill, Montmorency, Hurstbridge and Eltham, all in the Eltham Shire. The Greensborough centre operated one day a week from a room in an 1840s hotel building in the main road, known as Marble Hall. By 1933 up to sixteen Eltham residents were using this service at any one time. Up to this point the service had been provided to Eltham residents without a contribution from the Eltham Shire but by 1934 the Eltham Shire Council had been persuaded to provide a £30 annual contribution. A new purpose-built centre was opened at Greensborough in February 1935.

In the immediate years following World War II there was an expansion in the construction of new infant welfare centres in Melbourne's developing outer suburbs, in response to rapid population growth in these areas and to greater involvement of the Victorian government in managing this service. Architecturally, baby health centres built in the postwar period often straddled the two worlds they belonged to: their form referenced domestic architecture but was combined with the flourishes and hallmarks of civic structures (Darian-Smith and Willis 2010:42). This period in Australia coincided with the postwar focus on birth rates and on social and economic regeneration. The resulting 'baby boom' encouraged the development of municipal buildings that catered to the various needs of the burgeoning population (Darian-Smith and Willis 2010:47).

Much like infant welfare centres, the development of the modern Australian kindergarten or pre-school centre began in the early-twentieth century. Many early kindergartens were primarily concerned with the education and care of children in poor, working-class suburbs, who often had working mothers, and typically they were supported by charity or religious organisations (Nichols and Goad 2010:56; WA 2019). The first free kindergarten in Victoria was opened in the economically disadvantaged area of Montague (South Melbourne) in 1909. Many early kindergartens were not purpose-built but occupied pre-existing buildings—often in church halls that were attached to a parish church. By the 1930s, kindergarten networks, like the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, were increasingly common. The first Lady Gowrie Centre was established in Carlton in 1939 (Gowrie Victoria 2019). The location and siting of these kindergartens was becoming increasingly integral to their establishment; not only was the socio-economic status of the community and its geographical location considered, but the surrounds and site orientation of the building was increasingly important (Nichols and Goad 2010:65).

The postwar period saw a significant change in attitudes towards kindergartens, with their importance becoming recognised by all classes of society (Nichols and Goad 2010:71). Postwar population growth, stemming from the baby boom and increased immigration, also raised demands for the provision of kindergartens. At the same time, the Victorian government took a stronger lead in the provision of pre-school education, with the Department of Health becoming responsible in 1946 for 'the subsidising and supervising of pre-school kindergartens' (*Victorian Year Book 1973*: 547). The movement towards pre-school education grew rapidly in Victoria, and by the 1960s the 'kindergarten experience' was so entrenched in the conventional education system that it was considered the norm (Nichols and Goad 2010:54). Progress associations in suburbs such as Eltham became a driving force in the provision of early childhood education.

PLACE HISTORY

Site chronology

Date	Event
1939-45	World War II
1945	Eltham War Memorial Trust purchase the subject site
1950-52	Infant Welfare Centre designed and completed
1954	Memorial Gates installed
c.1953-56	Pre-School designed and completed
1961	Children's Library completed
1962	Decision is made to transfer site to Eltham Shire Council
1964	Eltham Shire Council procures section of land at northern end of the site
1965	Site handed over to Eltham Shire Council
1966	Children's Library closed and renamed 'Eltham War Memorial Hall'
1967	Senior Citizens Centre completed
1968	Main Road widened; retaining walls installed and Memorial Gates relocated to present site
2012	Eltham War Memorial Obelisk relocated to the subject site from the Eltham RSL
c.2014	Ramp system installed

History of the place

Planning for a community centre in Eltham began in 1943 by the self-titled 'Women's Auxiliary of the (proposed) Eltham War Memorial Trust'. A committee was formed in March 1945 at a public meeting of the Eltham Progress Association which was held to consider an appropriate means to commemorate locals who had lost their lives fighting in World War II. Soon after, the committee was formalised as the Eltham War Memorial Trust Inc. (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:4). The Trust resolved that Eltham's war memorial was to include a baby health centre, crèche and children's library, to serve as a 'constant reminder of those who fought ... and the little ones for whom they fought and died'. Over £200 was promptly subscribed for the construction of the proposed war memorial buildings (*Argus*, 28 March 1945: 8; Mills and Westbrooke 2010:4). Towards the end of 1945, the Trust purchased a site of one and a half acres on the western side of Main Road, Eltham, from Miss Shillinglaw. The site formed part of the Shillinglaw farm, which comprised lot 90 of Holloway's Little Eltham subdivision of 1851, which was part of Crown Allotment 13, Section IV in the Parish of Nillumbik (Eltham War Memorial Trust 1954; 'Parish of Nillumbik', PROV, VPRS 16171).

Infant Welfare Centre

Plans for the memorial complex hastened in the years following World War II, and in 1950 tenders were called for the erection of an infant welfare centre. The design, by architects AK Lines and MacFarlane, was a box-like form that harked back to the Functionalist design of the interwar years. AK Lines and MacFarlane were responsible for the Eltham Shire Office and Hall c1941 (now demolished) on the corner of Arthur and Main Road. There are distinct similarities in the formal composition and stylistic expression of both buildings (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Former Eltham Shire Offices and Hall constructed in 1941 to a design by AK Lines & MacFarlane Architects. Image taken c.1965. (Source: Eltham District Historical Society)

The Eltham Infant Welfare Centre was operating at full capacity in only a short time after its opening in 1952, and by 1955, the centre had seen over 3000 babies (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:7-9). Re-roofing occurred in 1957.



Figure 4. Eltham Infant Welfare Centre, c.1954. (Source: Eltham War Memorial Trust, 1954, cited in Mills and Westbrooke 2010: 8)

Memorial Gates

Following completion of the Infant Welfare Centre, the focus of the Eltham War Memorial Trust turned to memorial entrance gates, to be erected at the south of the newly completed Infant Welfare Centre. A legacy bequeathed by the late EJ Andrew in memory of his wife, Ellen, was used to fund their construction. An estimate was provided by to an estimate by the Chuck Wire Fence and Gate Company in 1953, and they were installed in 1954, complete with a wrought iron arch carrying the words 'Eltham War Memorial'. The decision to erect a flagpole was also made during this time, however it is not known

whether this is the existing flagpole (located near the Memorial Gates at the time of visiting in December 2020), as it is not present in historical photography from 1968 (see Figure 11). (Mills and Westbrooke 2010: 10)

Pre-School and Children's Library

A pre-school and children's library were to be the next additions to the War Memorial complex. Plans were drawn up by architects AK Lines, MacFarlane and Marshall in 1952, shortly after Marshall had joined the firm. The designs were submitted to the General Health Branch and the Maternal, Infant and Pre-school Branch of the Health Department in c.1953. The proposed buildings, together with the existing Infant Welfare Centre, were to form an arrangement that followed the Main Road boundary of the site. As the design evolved and tenders were sought for construction, further alterations were made to the plans. Ultimately, the library building was postponed, the size of the pre-school was scaled down, and the 'radiating' nature of the buildings' arrangement—originally designed to reflect the curve of Main Road (see Figure 5 and Figure 6)—was abandoned (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:11-12). The pre-school building was completed and opened by the end of 1956.

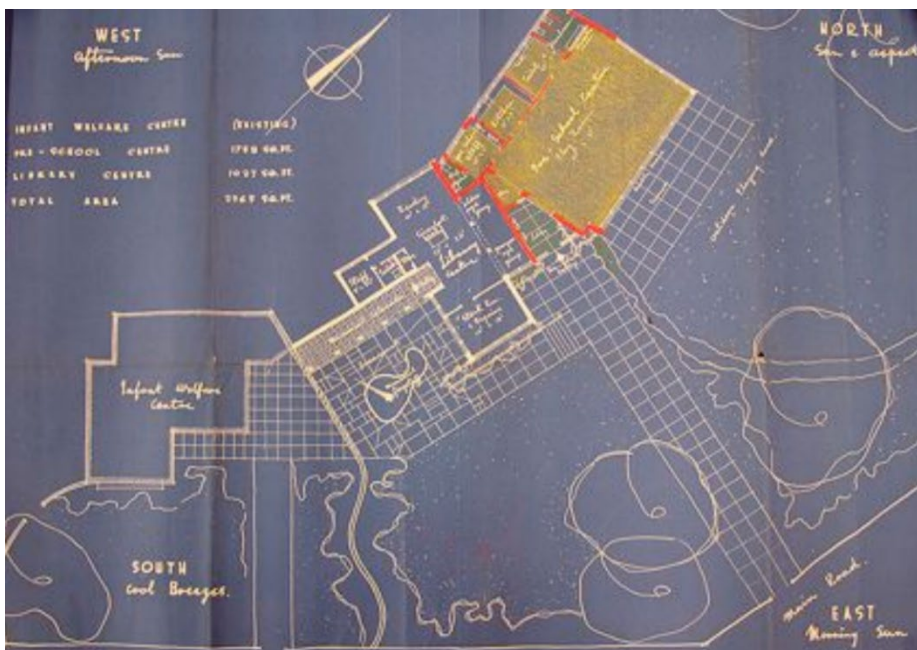


Figure 5. Sketch site plan c.1953, showing the spatial relationship of the Infant Welfare Centre, Children's Library and Pre-school. (Source: Public Building Plans File No.5841 Plan No.4057, Unit 413, VRPS 8044, PROV, cited in Mills and Westbrooke 2010:12)

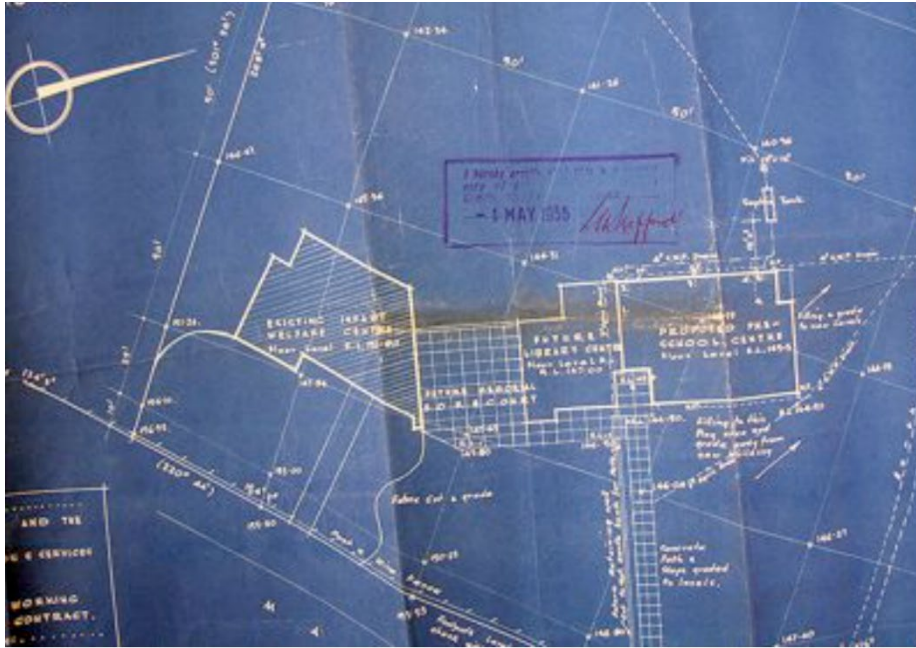


Figure 6. Sketch site plan dated 1956, showing amendments to postpone construction of the library and reductions to spaces in the Pre-School building. (Source: Public Building Plans File No.5841 Plan No.4057, Unit 413, VRPS 8044, PROV, cited in Mills and Westbrooke 2010:13)

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, regular community fundraising events were held, which were largely led by the Women's Auxiliary of the Trust, to raise money to build for further community facilities. Activities included an Easter Gymkhana and horse show, Children's Carnival and a publication of *A Favourite Book of Country Recipes*, which had an initial print run of 2000 copies (*Argus*, 10 May 1956; Mills and Westbrooke 2010:14). Once sufficient funds had been raised, local architectural designer David L Woodger prepared drawings for the Children's Library, which was completed and opened in 1961.

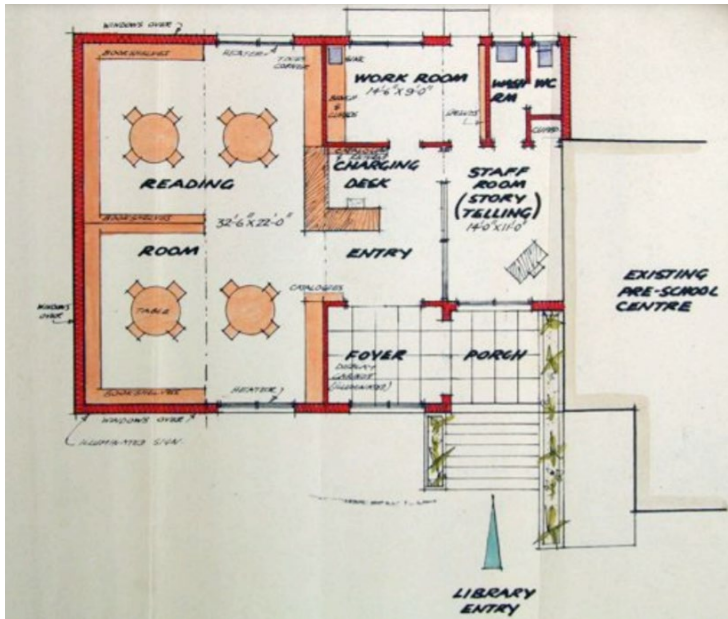


Figure 7. Sketch plan for the Children's Library prepared by local architectural designer David L Woodger in June 1960, showing existing pre-school building to the right. (Source: Public Building Plans File No.5841 Plan No.4057, Unit 413, VRPS 8044, PROV, cited in Mills and Westbrooke 2010: 15)

Site handover to Eltham Shire Council and Senior Citizens Centre

In 1962 the Eltham War Memorial Trust decided to devolve the War Memorial site to the Eltham Shire Council. The transfer of land was to occur once the Memorial Gardens were complete. Plans for the gardens had evolved since 1956, when they were initially perceived as a 'Memorial Forecourt' in the final plans for the pre-school building. In 1963 a quote for the 'institution of a memorial garden' was accepted. Works included the construction of concrete paths and grading of land to the rear of the buildings on the site (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:10).

In 1964 the Eltham Shire Council procured a strip of land at the northern end of the subject site, to be used for Country Fire Authority buildings, presumably in anticipation of the site being transferred to Council in the following year. A proposal presented by the Eltham Elderly Citizens Club for the erection of a Senior Citizens Centre, on the land still owned by the Trust, was approved, under the condition that the design of the new Senior Citizens Centre correspond with that of the existing buildings on the site.



Figure 8. Site plan prepared c.1965, showing location of the proposed Elderly Citizens Centre (outlined in red). (Source: Public Building File No.13712, Unit 1624, VRPS 7882, PROV, cited in Westbrooke 2010:16)

The site was transferred to Eltham Shire Council in 1965, with the Trust to form a committee of management for the property over the following twelve months. Architects Leith & Bartlett prepared the design for the Senior Citizens Centre, the construction of which was partially funded by a state government grant, and the building was opened in April 1967 (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:16). The Centre's design and materiality complimented that of the Eltham Shire Offices built on the site adjacent to the War Memorial complex just two years earlier, also to designs by Leith & Bartlett (see Figure 9 and Figure 10). Both designs incorporated a simple rectangular footprint and flat roof. A similar pattern of vertically proportioned window openings is evident in both buildings.



Figure 9. A 1968 photograph of the Eltham Shire Offices, built in 1965 to designs by architects Leith & Bartlett. (Source: Eltham Pioneers Photograph Collection No. 657 held jointly by Eltham District Historical Society and Yarra Plenty Regional Library)



Figure 10. Current photograph of the Senior Citizens Centre, showing the elevation fronting Library Place and facing toward the space formerly occupied by the Eltham Shire Offices. (Source: Context, December 2020)

In 1966 the Children's Library was closed and the building was renamed as the 'Eltham War Memorial Hall' and lettering was fixed to the principal elevation (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:17). Rubble retaining walls were installed in front of the War Memorial buildings when Main Road was widened in 1968, and it is believed that the Memorial Gates were relocated to their present position at this time (see Figure 11) (Eltham District Historical Society 2018).



Figure 11. A 1968 photograph of the War Memorial Garden and Memorial Gates at the southern approach to the Infant Welfare Centre, looking to Main Road. (Source: Eltham District Historical Society)



Figure 12. A 1968 photograph of the pathway from Main Road through to the Pre-school and War Memorial Hall. Note the rubble retaining walls, installed in c.1968 when Main Road was reconstructed. (Source: Eltham District Historical Society)



Figure 13. A 1968 photograph of the War Memorial Garden. Note the rubble retaining walls and concrete pathway. (Source: Eltham District Historical Society)



Figure 14. A 1968 photograph showing a view of the War Memorial building precinct from Main Road. At the far left are the former Eltham Shire Offices (opened 1965, demolished 1994), then the Infant Welfare Centre, and War Memorial Hall at the right. (Source: Eltham District Historical Society)

In 2012 the Eltham War Memorial obelisk (first erected in 1919 on the corner of Main Road and Bridge Street) was relocated from the Eltham RSL to the subject site. Further landscaping works were carried out at this time. In c.2014 the pathway providing access from Main Road to the Pre-School and War Memorial Hall buildings was audited against the *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 and found to be non-compliant. A ramp system was subsequently installed. (Eltham District Historical Society 2018)

AK Lines & MacFarlane (later AK Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall), architects

The firm of AK Lines & MacFarlane was initially the practice of Albert Keith Lines, who had begun his career prior to 1916 after serving articles with the architect Claude Merritt. Lines served in World War I, after which he returned to work for the house building firm of Morewood & Rogers, where he designed and supervised a range of projects before leaving to start his own practice in 1923 (Built Heritage 2010:135).

In 1928, Lines took on Jessica MacFarlane (still a teenager) as an articled pupil. The firm became increasingly popular amongst prosperous middle-class home builders, working on a series of large-scale residential works in the 'middle-ring' suburbs of Camberwell, Balwyn and Kew (Built Heritage 2010:135). Many of these homes were designed and supervised by MacFarlane, with several of them being published in *Australian Home Beautiful* (Built Heritage 2010:135). Suspending practice due to the onset of World War II, Lines and MacFarlane resumed work as a firm in 1945. MacFarlane was made a full partner at this time, becoming one of the first women to take on partnership in an architectural firm in Victoria (WWII at Home 2020).

Bruce Marshall joined the firm in 1948, and was made a full partner in 1952. MacFarlane married and moved to South Australia in 1954, however the firm retained her name. Bruce Marshall, who had expertise in large-scale commercial work, had a prominent role in guiding the firm's output in the following years (Built Heritage 2010:135).

The firm undertook large-scale factory projects around the state, however from the 1950s took on increasing amounts of civil and municipal works. The firm's work on council chambers had begun in the 1940s, prior to the war, when they produced the design for the Eltham Shire Offices in 1941. This body of work gave the AK Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall the reputation as one of the most prominent and specialised firms for the design and execution of municipal offices (Built Heritage 2010:135).

Moving into modernist designs in the post-war period, the firm was commissioned to design the Shire of Benalla civic offices in 1958. The following three decades saw the firm working predominately on municipal work, during which they were responsible for the offices built at Oakleigh (1962), Myrtleford (1967) and Ringwood (1970) (Built Heritage 2010:135). Albert Lines retired in 1967, with the firm continuing to operate.

AC Leith & Bartlett, architects

Arthur Cedric Leith was born in 1897, to a family that would later become greatly involved in architecture in Victoria (Built Heritage 2010:134). He had begun practicing under his own name as AC Leith & Associates by the end of the 1920s, and by c.1930 had taken over the pre-existing practice of Haddon & Henderson. Leith was soon after joined in practice by Harold Bartlett, in 1934. Bartlett had been the first to receive a diploma from the Gordon Institute of Technology (Geelong) prior to going abroad during the 1920s and 30s where he gained extensive experience. Bartlett was invited to return to Gordon to become the head of its architecture school, however he left shortly after taking up the post in order to take up the partnership with Leith (Built Heritage 2010:134).

The postwar era saw a number of municipal projects for the firm, including the Kew Civic Centre in 1959, the Lilydale Town Hall in 1961 and the Eltham Municipal Offices in 1965. Although predominantly known for their local council work, the firm branched out into significant high-rise buildings, such as the ANZ head office in 1960. (Built Heritage 2010:134). The firm is still in operation today.

DESCRIPTION

Overall Site and Landscape



Figure 15. Aerial view of the site with each individual building date noted: former Infant Welfare Centre 1950-52; Eltham Preschool 1956; War Memorial Hall 1961; Senior Citizens Centre 1967, Eltham War Memorial Cenotaph constructed 1919 relocated to this site in 2012. (Source: Nearmap 2021)

The Eltham War Memorial Building Complex is located at 903-907 Main Road, Eltham. The site is irregular in shape and bound by Main Road to the southeast and Library Place along its southwest and northwest boundaries. The site falls from east to west towards the railway line and from south to north. As a result, the buildings that face Main Road are set below street level behind stone retaining walls.

At street level, the war memorial gates (1954) alongside Main Road open on to a formally landscaped terrace area of lawn, paving and plantings installed in the 2010s. The gravelled forecourt to the southwest of the memorial gate contains at its centre the Eltham War Memorial Cenotaph (1919) (HO126) which was relocated to the site in 2012. Both the gravelled forecourt and lawned areas contain dedicated memorial benches and interpretive panels explaining Australia's involvement in numerous wars. A memorial sundial dedicated to Mrs Ada Lyon in recognition of her work with the Eltham War Memorial Trust is located adjacent to the northern pillar of the memorial gates. A contemporary black aluminium picket fence runs along the rear of this garden area from Library Place. This fence returns to meet Main Road at the northeast end of the garden and then continues along the Main Road boundary.

As this landscaped terrace area is fenced off and at a higher level to the buildings on the site there is limited visual connection between the two

Entry to the complex of buildings is now through a single gate set in this fence along Main Road. This gate accesses a series of curved ramps that lead down to the Memorial Hall/Pre-school and the Infant Welfare Centre. These ramps and associated landscaping were installed in 2014. A second entry off Library Place is through a hooped metal fence adjacent to the Infant Welfare Centre.

Internally the site is fenced with various types of low transparent metal fencing that separate the War Memorial Hall/Pre-school building from the Infant Welfare Centre creating safe and secure play areas for children. The Senior Citizens Centre is accessed off Library Place and is unfenced.

The former Infant Welfare Centre is positioned at the south-west corner of the site. Its principal elevation addresses Main Road, and its southwest elevation faces Library Place. The War Memorial Hall and Pre-School building align with this building, and follow the arc of the site towards the north. These three building are of a similar materiality and form which heightens a sense of visual cohesion within the site. Key uniting design elements shared by these three buildings include the simple box-like forms with flat of low-pitched gable roofs, large expanses of unadorned cream brick walls and large window walls. A fourth building, the Senior Citizens Centre is located to the rear of the former Infant Welfare Centre and is orientated towards Library Place along the southwest boundary of the site.

The site is landscaped with a mix of indigenous and exotic plantings. The landscaping of the site has undergone significant change overtime. Some remnant stone rubble walls remain however the major pathways and entry points to the site and the early landscape layout have all been altered.

Eltham Maternal Health Centre (former Infant Welfare Centre) (1950-52)



Figure 16. Principal elevation of Eltham Infant Welfare Centre showing front window boarded over with concrete trim remaining. (Source: Context, December 2020)

The former Infant Welfare Centre, built in 1950-52 to a design by AK Lines and MacFarlane Architects, is the earliest building on the site. Positioned on the corner of Main Road and Library Place, the building's main entrance faces Main Road and was originally accessed through the memorial gates positioned along Main Road. The building is asymmetrical in plan with a projecting bay at its southern end. It is constructed of loadbearing cream brick walls laid in stretcher bond and has a flat roof clad in corrugated iron that is concealed behind a low straight parapet that wraps the front and side elevations. This massing of simple geometrical shapes gives the building a distinctive box-like form that is typical of early modern functionalist architecture that gained popularity in the 1920s and 1930s and continued through into the early postwar period.

Entry to the building is through a deep porch that runs across the front of the building in line with the projecting bay (see Figure 19). The porch returns at an acute angle along the north to create a large undercover area for pram storage. The main entry to the building is through a pair of doors set into the southern wall of this area and there are externally accessed bathrooms at its rear (see Figure 21). This area has a flat roof with exposed fascia boards and quad guttering that sits at a lower level to the main building form. The porch roof is supported off three slender metal posts across the front elevation. A dwarf wall at its northern end originally had a louvred infill panel to roof height but is now infilled with cement sheet (see Figure 20). The front section of the roof was originally an open pergola that has been covered with translucent corrugated PVC sheets, leaving the extant grid frame of the pergola legible.

The rear roof section of the porch is lined with painted timber boards. The porch floor is of ruled concrete. A simple steel balustrade connects the dwarf wall to the first slender metal post and then continues towards the street with the handrail terminating in a scroll.

The projecting bay was originally distinguished by a large, centrally placed, floor to ceiling window framed by a concrete border. The concrete frame remains, however the window has been covered over with timber boarding and two decorative metal panels (see Figure 17). The cream brick planter box that runs under the window is original. Under the entry porch is a large horizontal window divided into five vertically proportioned double-hung timber sash windows. This window sits above the foundation stone for the building which was laid in November 1950. There is a single solid door at the southern end of the porch that gives access to the projecting front room (see Figure 19).

The remaining elevations are utilitarian in nature with large wall surfaces of unpainted cream bricks punctuated by small timber framed windows located to provide light and ventilation to the rooms behind.



Figure 17. Southern elevation of former Eltham Infant Welfare Centre showing sheer unadorned wall surface of cream brick with low parapet concealing flat roof. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 18. Pergola across principal elevation of the former Eltham Infant Welfare Centre showing slender metal posts. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 19. North elevation of the former Infant Welfare Centre showing dwarf closed wall above that was originally a louvered screen to pram porch. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 20. Pram porch at the former Eltham Infant welfare Centre. The two doors set on the angle provide access to bathrooms whilst the pair of doors to the left are the main entry to the building. (Source: Context, December 2020)

Eltham War Memorial Gates (1954)



Figure 21. Eltham War Memorial Gates located along Main Road, Eltham. Constructed in 1954. (Source: Context 2020)

A pair of memorial entrance gates were constructed on the site in 1954. Located on Main Road, the gates and piers are positioned between the Infant Welfare Centre and the War Memorial Hall. They are set on a slight angle so that they orientate towards the entry of the Infant Welfare Centre. The gates are constructed of two concrete pillars that are clad in slate in a crazy-paving pattern. These pillars support a pair of wrought iron gates and a wrought iron archway scroll which contains the words 'ELTHAM WAR MEMORIAL'. On the southern gate a small plaque reads 'These Memorial Gates were donated by the Late Cr & Mrs EJ Andrew'. The northern pillar has two large dedication plaques attached to its front face, one for the War memorial and the other for the relocated Cenotaph that is now located in the garden area behind.



Figure 22. Rear of War Memorial Gates looking towards Main Road. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 23. Memorial Plaques on gate pillar dedicated to the War memorial gates and the Cenotaph. (Source: Context, December 2020)

Eltham Preschool (1956)



Figure 24. Principal elevation of the Eltham preschool. Entry to the preschool is through the recessed porch to the right of the planter. The entry to the left is to the former Children's Library added in 1961. (Source: Context December 2020)

The Eltham pre-school building was constructed in 1956 to a design by Lines MacFarlane & Marshall, Architects. Built towards the northern boundary of the site, the building is orientated towards the arc of Main Road and is attached at its southern end to the War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) which was added in 1961.

The pre-school building is constructed using a steel portal frame that is expressed internally. It is clad with cream brick and glazed infill panels and has a low-pitched transverse gable roof with exposed rafter ends. The building has a ground hugging form with a long un-broken roof line that contrasts to the box-like form of the Infant Welfare Centre. The principal elevation facing Main Road has an open recessed porch under the main roofline at its southern end with the roof overhang being supported by two slender steel posts.



Figure 25. North elevation of the preschool building showing window wall, low-pitched gable roof and stepping in of building. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 26. West elevation of the preschool building showing strip natural aluminium window with manganese brick sill. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 27. North elevation detail showing the top section of the window wall frosted as a false ceiling has been installed internally. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 28. Window wall under verandah. Note the original eave overhand has been extended to create a deep undercover play area. (Source: Context, December 2020).

Across the front of the building the roofline has been extended at a later date to create a deep verandah. Beneath the verandah the original timber framed window wall remains extant. This wall is divided into seven vertical panes with the outer and central panes divided horizontally into three equal sections with an awning sash window fitted to the centre section. Set into the window wall two solid timber panel doors provide access into the main classroom of the building. At the eastern end of the northern (side) elevation is a window wall that extends to the underside of the gable roof. The building steps back at the rear of this elevation with a single glazed door providing access into the building. The rear, west facing, elevation has a horizontal row of natural aluminium framed windows terminating in a glazed timber framed door with timber framed side window. The windowsill is of glazed manganese bricks.

War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) (1961)



Figure 29. War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) built 1961. The building became the War Memorial Hall in 1965 after Eltham Council bought the site from the Eltham War Memorial Trust. (Source: Context, December 2020)

The War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) building was constructed in 1961 to a design by David L Woodger, architectural designer. The War Memorial Hall is attached to the preschool building at its northern end. It follows the same built form, materiality and structural steel portal system as its neighbour but steps back from the preschool with a recessed entry at its northern end where it abuts the entry to the preschool. The two entries are by a brick wall and raised planter. Entry to the War Memorial Hall is through a pair of glazed timber doors set into the side (southern) wall of the porch area. These doors have a large, glazed transom light that follows the pitch of the roof. The western wall of the entry porch is set with a large timber framed window that is divided into four. The porch area retains its original terrazzo floor.

Across the principal façade to the south of the recessed entry, two large floor-to-ceiling window openings punctuate the otherwise plain brick wall of the façade. One of these windows retains its original timber framed divided window, while the other has been replaced with a contemporary aluminium module that includes a sliding motorised door. Attached to the wall plane are metal letters that spell out 'WAR MEMORIAL HALL'. Above these letters an early light fitting is extant.

The southern wall of the building is distinguished by a large window wall with high sill and sloped head that follows the pitch of the gable roof. This window would have originally provided southern light into the original library's reading room.

The rear (western) elevation is utilitarian in nature. It has three large window openings fitted with timber framed windows that are divided into four equal panes.

Internally the structural steel portal frame is left exposed and the building retains its original partitioning system. This system uses a combination of brick walls and light weight partitions all of which are glazed above door head height to the raked ceiling above.



Figure 30. Principal elevation of Wall Memorial Hall showing ramped entry installed in 2012. (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 31. Southern elevation of the War Memorial Hall showing elevated window wall that originally lit the reading room of the Children's Library (Source: Context, December 2020)



Figure 32. West elevation of War Memorial Hall (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 33. Interior of War Memorial Hall showing extant glazed partitioning system and expressed structural steel portal frame. (Source: Context, December 2020)

Senior Citizens Centre (1967)



Figure 34. Senior Citizens Centre built 1967. The centre was not part of the Eltham War Memorial Trust's vision for the site and is notably different in architectural style, materiality and orientation to the earlier buildings on the site. (Source: Context December 2020)

The Senior Citizens Centre was constructed in 1967 to a design by Leith & Bartlett, Architects. Built after the site was acquired by the Eltham Council, the building was not part of the War Memorial Trust's original vision for the site. As such, it is notably different in its architectural style, details, materiality and orientation to the other three buildings on the site. Fronting Library Place to the northwest, the building is unfenced leaving it visually and physically separated from the other three buildings that sit within a fenced precinct. The building has a simple rectangular footprint with a flat roof clad in roof decking and cement sheet lined eaves. It is constructed of reddish-brown brick laid in stretcher bond. Although single storey, due to the fall of the site from east to west, the building is elevated above the ground at its western end allowing for carparking in an undercroft. Internally the building is planned with service spaces around its perimeter and a large central hall with a higher ceiling. This space is expressed externally via a pop-up section of the roof, which is clad in corrugated iron.

The principal elevation comprises two pairs of small rectangular windows either side of a projecting entry porch. This porch is enclosed with glazed panel walls, fitted with recent aluminium framed window. To the west of the entry porch the façade is punctuated by seven vertically proportioned floor to ceiling openings. Six of these are fitted with timber-framed window modules and one is fitted with a glazed timber door. The typical window module has a glazed upper half with central mullion and a solid panel below. The windows are set on the inside plane of the wall creating a deep reveal and distinctive sloped stone sills.

The eastern elevation is punctuated with five vertically proportioned window openings similar to those facing Library Place.



Figure 35. Principal elevation of the Senior Citizens Centre facing Library Place. (Source: Context December 2020)



Figure 36. East elevation of the Senior Citizens Centre showing recessed window module with stone sill. (Source: Context December 2020)



Figure 37. North elevation Senior Citizens Centre showing enclosed verandah with timber framed glazed wall. (Source: Context December 2020)



Figure 38. West elevation Senior Citizens Centre showing open basement car parking under the building. Note face brick work has been overpainted. (Source: Google August 2019)

The western (rear elevation) of the building is of face brickwork that has been overpainted. Three centrally placed openings at the lower level provide for parking under the building.

The southern elevation is of unpainted face brickwork. A central panel of light weight, timber framed half glazed wall is divided into 12 equal divisions and has a pair of half glazed doors at its eastern end.

The aesthetic integrity of the building is diminished by the installation of services on the roof including air conditioning units, solar panels and a roof ladder.

INTEGRITY

The Eltham War Memorial Building Complex, is largely intact to its original period of development (1950-1967) with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The buildings on the site retain their original built form and scale, materials and stylistic details, and continue to be used for civic purposes servicing the needs of residents in the local area. Alterations and additions to the buildings include:

- the boarding over of a large window to the principal façade of the former Infant Welfare Centre;
- the replacement of the louvred screen to the northern elevation of the former Infant Welfare Centre building with a solid panel;
- the extension of the roof line of the Eltham Pre-school building to create an undercover play area; the replacement of a timber framed window along the principal façade of the War Memorial Hall building with an aluminium-framed window and;
- the enclosing of the verandah along the northern wall of the Senior Citizen Centre building.

These changes are minor and have been sympathetically implemented. In most cases, these would be easily reversed. They do not diminish the buildings' contributory nature within the complex.

The site maintains its continued mixed community use as originally intended in the early plans for the site by the War Memorial Trust. This includes the use of the Pre-school, War Memorial Hall and Senior Citizens Centre. Although the site has been subdivided, with a sixty-five-foot strip of land to its north being sold to the Eltham Shire Council in 1964, the remainder of the site retains its civic purpose as envisaged. This vision has been retained even after the site was handed over to the Eltham Shire in 1965, with the trust approving the scheme for the proposed Senior Citizens Centre prior to the handover.

Landscape changes have diminished the intactness and integrity of the site as a whole. Land that was originally purchased by the War Memorial Trust for construction of the Eltham War Memorial Buildings has been impinged upon over time. Landscaping that was installed by the War Memorial Trust as part of the early scheme for the complex has been removed or substantially altered. Changes to the original landscaping occurred after the reconstruction of Main Road in 1968 resulting in the installation of stone retaining walls and the relocation of the memorial gates to their current location (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:10). Further changes occurred in 2012 with the relocation of the Eltham War Memorial Cenotaph (HO126) and the creation of the surrounding memorial gardens. Remnant elements that remain of the original or early landscaping of the site include the War Memorial Gates, some rubble stone walls and the memorial stone sun dial.

Overall, with the exception of the landscape alterations, the Eltham War Memorial Building Complex has high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Following the First World War, war memorials mainly comprised statues, monuments, avenues of honour, and plaques. However, as early as the 1920s there was already public sentiment that, due to a scarcity in materials and public funding, resources would better serve the community if they were channelled into the construction of community facilities (Mills and Westbrooke 2010:4). Following World War II, hospitals, especially for children, kindergartens and baby health care centres were popular choices. As public money was in short supply community funding was frequently bolstered by the introduction of a commemorative element.

The Shire of Nillumbik has a large and varied number of traditional war memorials within its suburbs. These include the Shire of Eltham War Memorial Tower, Mature Plantings and Park, 385 Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Kangaroo Ground (HO49) c.1925-6,1974; The Eltham War Memorial Cenotaph, 903-907 Main Road, Eltham (HO126) 1919,1960; London Plane Tree Avenue of Honour, Main Road, Eltham (HO229) c.1950s; Plenty War Memorial Gates, 103-107 Yan Yean Road, Plenty (HO249) c.1950s; Panton Hill War Memorial, Main Road and Church Road, Panton Hill (VWHI) c.1926; Diamond Creek War Memorial Reserve Circuit, Diamond Creek 1921 (VWHI); and the Christmas Hills War Memorial, Eltham and Yarra Glen Roads, Christmas Hills (VWHI) 1921. The present site of a complex of community buildings adds an important additional place type to this group of local war memorial places in Nillumbik. There are no other examples within the shire.

The Shire of Nillumbik also contains a number of community facilities and pre-schools of which a few postwar examples are on the Heritage Overlay. These include the Eltham South Kindergarten, 35 Fordhams Road, Eltham, 1965 (HO202); the Eltham Community Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham, 1977-78 (HO117); and the Eltham Library 4-10 Panther Place, Eltham, c.1992 (HO239). While each of these places represent the expansion of community services in Eltham driven by population growth after World War II, they were not community funded, nor were they built as war memorials. Architecturally, they are also not directly comparable to the buildings on the subject site as they are representative examples of the 'Eltham Idiom' a style characterised by adobe buildings that have become symbolic of the Eltham area.



Figure 39. Eltham South Kindergarten, 35 Fordhams Road, Eltham, built 1965 (HO202).
(Source: Hermes)

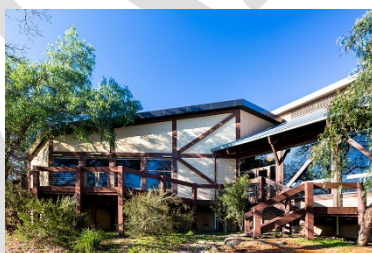


Figure 40. Eltham Community Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham, built 1977-78 (HO117). (Source: Hermes)



Figure 41. Eltham Library, 4-10 Panther Place, Eltham, built c.1992 (HO239). (Source: Hermes)

Given the lack of comparable examples currently on the Heritage Overlay, it is therefore necessary to compare the subject site with examples from outside of the Shire of Nillumbik.

Generally, there are fewer postwar places included in the Heritage Overlay than nineteenth century and early twentieth century places with postwar memorial community facilities such as infant welfare centres

and kindergartens particularly under-represented. Furthermore, there are no identified examples of a complex of community buildings built specifically to provide child welfare services on the Heritage Overlay. For this reason, it has been necessary to compare the individual buildings on the site against representative examples of their specific typology that are outside the Shire of Nillumbik.

Comparable postwar examples include:

Post-war baby health centres in local heritage overlays

Baby Health Centre, 318-324 Lygon Street, Brunswick East, c.1939 (HO106 of Moreland Planning Scheme)

The Baby Health Centre at 318-324 Lygon Street, Brunswick East, is of local historical and architectural significance. The site has been associated with maternal and baby health care since the late 1930s. Architecturally, the building is a well composed late example of the Moderne style, with an interesting semi-circular facade.



Figure 42. Baby Health Centre, 318-324 Lygon Street, Brunswick East, c.1939 (HO106). (Source: Hermes)

The Aberfeldie Baby Health Centre, 13 Beaver Street, Aberfeldie, built 1955 (HO381 of Moonee Valley Planning Scheme)

The Aberfeldie Baby Health Centre is of local historic, social and architectural significance to the City of Moonee Valley. The centre was designed by S.C. Steele and constructed in 1955. It is socially and historically significant at a local level as a place that symbolises the determined efforts of the Council and local community to establish a place that would improve the health and welfare of women and children. As was typical of baby healthcare centres built at this time the building is domestic in appearance, resembling a cream-brick post-war house, asymmetrical in plan with a hip tile roof with boxed eaves.



Figure 43. Aberfeldie Baby Health Centre, 13 Beaver Street, Aberfeldie, built 1955 (HO381). (Source: Hermes)

Emerald Street Community Centre, 1 Emerald Street, Essendon West built 1963 (HO332 of Moonee Valley Planning Scheme)

The Emerald Street Community Centre is of aesthetic, architectural and technological (engineering) significance and historical interest, to the City of Moonee Valley. Built in 1963 to a design by the Shire's Engineer, Garnet Price, it is notable for its distinctive form and unique structural substructure that melds characteristic of the 'Melbourne School' of post-war modernist architecture with an innovative structural approach to overcome the constraints of an unstable site. Historically the building is of interest as one of a number of purpose-built infant welfare centres built in the 1950s and 60s in the City of Keilor due to rapid residential growth.



Figure 44. Emerald Street Community Centre, 1 Emerald Street, Essendon West, built 1963 (HO332). (Source: Hermes)

Baby Health Centre, 2 Merlyn Street, Coburg North built 1955 (HO399 of Moreland Planning Scheme)

The Merlynston Baby Health Centre is of local historic, social and architectural significance to Moreland City. It is historically significant as an example of a place associated with an important program that encouraged the provision of modern and up-date maternal and child health facilities, particularly throughout the growing suburbs on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne, after World War Two. Designed in the form of a brick veneer house with a hip tile roof and a projecting flat-roofed porch, which is noted

on plan as a 'Pram park', The Merlynston Baby Health Centre is architecturally significant as a representative example of a small baby health centre, which illustrates the simple domestic scale and design that is typical of these buildings and reflects the philosophy of the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association.



Figure 45. Baby Health Centre, 2 Merlyn Street, Coburg North, built 1955 (HO399). (Source: Hermes)

Post-war pre-schools on the Heritage Overlay

Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, 2A Minona Street, Hawthorn built 1948-50 (VHR H2309, HO580)

Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, Hawthorn is a prototype of progressive post-war kindergarten design which had a profound influence on kindergarten design in Victoria. It was the first kindergarten to combine innovative planning and orientation with modern architectural expression; characteristics which became typical of many kindergartens designed by Horace Tribe and other architects throughout the 1950s.



Figure 46. Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, 2A Minona Street, Hawthorn, built 1948-50 (VHR H2309, HO580). (Source: Hermes)

Greenwood Park Kindergarten, 9 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood built 1954-55 (HO28 of Maroondah Planning Scheme)

Greenwood Park Kindergarten is a Modernist timber building, built in 1954-55 after local organisations, traders and individuals raised funds for the kindergarten's Building Fund. It is historically significant as an early and striking embodiment of the post-war kindergarten movement. It is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Modernist style as an example of its building type.



Figure 47. Greenwood Park Kindergarten, 9 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood, built 1954-55 (HO28). (Source: Hermes)

East Keilor Pre-School & Infant Welfare Centre, 31 Mark Street, Keilor East built 1967-68 (HO432 of Moonee Valley Planning Scheme)

The East Keilor Pre-School and Infant Welfare Centre is of local historic and social significance to the City of Moonee Valley. The pre-school and infant welfare centre is a brick building with a low-pitch skillion roof. The windows are floor to ceiling and have textured spandrels below set on manganese brick sills, and aluminium framed windows above with openable sashes set within fixed panes of glass. It is historically significant as an example of a place associated with an important program that encouraged the provision of modern maternal and child health facilities in suburban Melbourne during the early to mid-twentieth century. It is significant as a representative example of a combined pre-school and infant welfare centre of the post-war era. The mature eucalypts provide a related setting.



Figure 48. East Keilor Pre-School & Infant Welfare Centre, 31 Mark Street, Keilor East, built 1967-68 (HO432). (Source: Hermes)

East Ivanhoe Memorial Kindergarten, 1 King Street built 1958 (East Ivanhoe Pre-school), Ivanhoe (VWHI, not in HO)

The East Ivanhoe Memorial Kindergarten was opened in 1958. At the time of opening its official name was the 'East Ivanhoe Preschool Memorial Kindergarten'. It was the culmination of years of fundraising by the City of Heidelberg War Memorial Trust and the East Ivanhoe Pre-School Committee and was a response to the increasing demand for children's services in the area.



Figure 49. East Ivanhoe Memorial Kindergarten, 1 King Street, East Ivanhoe, built 1958 (not in HO). (Source: Hermes)

Armadale Memorial Kindergarten, William Street, Armadale, built 1951 (VWHI, not in HO)

Construction of the Armadale Memorial Kindergarten began in 1951 after intensive fundraising by the local community. It opened in February 1953. It has a marble plaque dedicated to those who had died during World War II and the quote "the foundation of every state is the education of its youth".



Figure 50. Armadale Memorial Kindergarten, William Street, Armadale, built 1951 (not in HO). (Source: Hermes)

Glenroy Memorial Kindergarten (not in HO)

The Glenroy Memorial Kindergarten was constructed in 1953 and was opened in 1954 by Health Minister Mr Barry. It was constructed at a cost of £7000 and initially provided accommodation for 50 children.



Figure 51. Glenroy Memorial Kindergarten, Glenroy (not in HO). (Source: Hermes)

War Memorial Kindergarten, Whittington (not in HO)

Following World War II, members of the local community engaged with the Shire of Bellarine to establish a permanent memorial to those who died during the war. It was decided the memorial should take the form of an infant welfare centre and a kindergarten. In 1951 the Shire purchased the land. About one third of the cost of the infant welfare centre was raised by the community and the balance was contributed through the Shire and other grants. The infant welfare centre opened in 1955 and was extended in 1961 for a kindergarten.



Figure 52. War Memorial Kindergarten, Whittington (not in HO). (Source: Hermes)

Discussion

The Eltham War Memorial Complex of buildings is an unusual grouping of buildings purpose built to memorialise those who served in World War II. There are no other known examples of war memorial buildings currently on the Heritage Overlay in Victoria that were specifically built to provide baby and child welfare services.

When compared to the above examples, each of the three buildings built under the auspice of the Eltham War Memorial Trust are good representative examples of modernist architecture as it developed within the Australian context.

Architecturally, the former Infant Welfare Centre building compares most directly to the earlier Baby Health Centre at 318-324 Lygon Street, Brunswick East, c.1939 (HO106). Both buildings break from the typical domestic form of architecture commonly used at this time for infant welfare centres as seen at the Aberfeldie Baby Health Centre 1955 (HO318) and the Merlynston Baby Health Centre, 1955 (HO399) utilising instead Dudok-inspired functionalist features. These include unadorned cream brick walls with a simple flat parapet and a sheltering pram porch. The composition and expression of these features gives the buildings a distinctive cuboid form that is typical of early modern functionalist architecture. It is of interest that the nearby Eltham Municipal Offices (now demolished), designed by A.K. Lines and MacFarlane in 1940-41, used a similar architectural style and compositional approach. This building is likely to have influenced the use of this architectural form for the Infant Welfare Centre in order to establish a visual unity between civic buildings in the area.

The Eltham Infant Welfare Centre building is not as progressive in design as the later Emerald Street Community Centre, Essendon West, 1963 (HO332) which is notable for melding characteristic of the 'Melbourne School' of post-war Modernist architecture with an innovative structural approach to overcome the constraints of an unstable site. This regional 'Melbourne style' is more evident in both the Eltham Pre-school building and the attached former Children's Library. In both these buildings we see the use of a steel portal frame to create an internal single span space that is enclosed with a low-pitched gable roof and window walls. These features are characteristic of the experimental structures and forms that typify Australian modernism of the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in Melbourne. This can be seen at the earlier Robert Cochrane Kindergarten 1948-50 (VHR V2309, HO580), the Armadale Memorial Kindergarten, William Street Armadale 1951 (not in HO), the East Ivanhoe Memorial Kindergarten, 1958 (not in HO) and the East Keilor Pre-School & Infant Welfare Centre, 1967-68 (HO432). This distinguishes the Pre-school and Library buildings from the War Memorial Kindergarten, Whittington c.1954-55 and the Glenroy Memorial Kindergarten, c.1953 both of which reference more typical conservative forms of domestic architecture in their design.

The Senior Citizens Centre was built in 1967 and was not part of the Eltham War Memorials Trust's original vision for the site. Built after the site was acquired by the Eltham Council, the building is notably different in its architectural style, details, materiality and orientation to the other three buildings on the site. It originates from a period of Eltham's history that is better represented on the Heritage Overlay i.e. Eltham Community Centre (HO117), the Eltham Library (HO239) and the Eltham South Kindergarten (HO202) however, it is more generic in its architectural expression. It does not contribute to an understanding of the distinctive 'Eltham Idiom', a style characterised by adobe buildings that developed at this time and have become symbolic of the Eltham area. As such the building is not considered to be of local significance. It is however of some interest as its construction was approved by the Eltham Memorial Trust prior to the Council acquiring the site and its design complimented the former Eltham Shire Offices built directly opposite in 1965 also to a design by Leith And Bartlett. The Eltham Shire Offices however, was however demolished in 1996.

As discussed earlier within this report, landscape changes have diminished the intactness and integrity of the site as a whole. Landscaping that was undertaken by the War Memorial Trust as part of the early scheme for the complex has been removed or substantially altered. As a result, the current landscaping of the site is not significant, with the exception of the War Memorial Gates, stone sun dial and remnant rubble stone walls. The Eltham War Memorial Cenotaph was relocated to the site in 2012 and is within its own Heritage Overlay.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
	CRITERION B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).
	CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).
✓	CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
	CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
	CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)
✓	CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).
	CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT

The Eltham Memorial Building Complex at 903-907 Main Road, Eltham, is significant.

The following features / components contribute to the significance of the place:

- former Infant Welfare Centre building (1950-51);
- War Memorial Gates (1954);
- Eltham Preschool (1956);
- War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) (1961);
- Stone sundial dedicated to Mrs Ada Lyon;
- Remnant stone rubble garden walls.

The Senior Citizens Centre building is of historical interest only.

HOW IT IS SIGNIFICANT

The Eltham War Memorial Buildings, Eltham, are of local historical, architectural (representative), and social significance to the Shire of Nillumbik.

WHY IT IS SIGNIFICANT

The Eltham War Memorial Building Complex is historically significant as a group of community buildings in Nillumbik that incorporated a range of community services and facilities. The complex included infant and child welfare, children's library, senior citizens centre, gates and gardens, and demonstrates the concept of a 'useful' or functional war memorial. The complex evidences the dedicated work by community groups in the postwar period in organising fundraising and managing the construction both of local war memorials and local community facilities across Victoria. The combined community and memorial functions of the Eltham War Memorial complex demonstrate the efficient and pragmatic use of limited resources. While the construction of buildings associated with infant and child welfare was not a rare type of war memorial building, a coordinated complex of several child welfare buildings as a war memorial is rare in Victoria. (Criterion A)

The collection of structures comprising the Eltham War Memorial Building Complex are largely intact, highly representative examples of Modernist architect-designed community buildings. Key design elements across the collection of buildings include the overall simplicity of the buildings, the simple box-like built forms with flat (Infant Welfare centre) or low-pitched gable roofs (Preschool and War Memorial Hall) and large expanses of windows. The War Memorial Gates are an excellent representative example of memorial gates for their period. The slate clad pillars, wrought-iron gates and arched wrought iron scroll are all typical landscaping materials used in the 1950s. (Criterion D)

The former Infant Welfare Centre is distinguished by its box-like form, which is emphasised through its use of planar wall surfaces and parapet, and is representative of a modern functionalist approach to design. The Preschool and War Memorial Hall buildings demonstrate characteristics of the 'Melbourne School' of post-war modernist architecture. This is reflected in their use of a steel portal frame to create an internal single span space that is enclosed with a low-pitched gable roof and large non-structural timber framed window walls. (Criterion D)

The Eltham War Memorial Building Complex is of social significance for its long and continuing associations with the local Eltham community to remember and honour those who fought in World War II. The site as a whole has played an ongoing role in the civic life of the local Eltham community since 1952, when the Infant Welfare Centre first opened on the site. The Eltham preschool, which has operated from the site since 1956, and the War Memorial Hall (former Children's Library) have served the community for over sixty years for various functions and activities, including the provision of services for children and meetings of local groups. (Criterion G)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as an individually significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme:

NILLUMBIK PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	Yes— Memorial Gates and sundial
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Argus.

Bartolomei, Deborah 2008, 'Eltham', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <https://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00516b.htm>.

Built Heritage Pty Ltd 2010. 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage 2'. Prepared for Heritage Victoria.

Butler, Graeme, and Associates 1996, 'Nillumbik Shire Heritage Review – Environmental History', Prepared for the Shire of Nillumbik.

Close, Cecily 1967, 'Leith & Bartlett', University of Melbourne Archives, accession no. 1967.0012.

Darian-Smith, Kate and Willis, Julie 2010. 'A healthy start: buildings for babies' in Lewi, Hannah & Nichols, David (eds.) 2010, *Community: Building Modern Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney.

Eltham District Historical Society 2000, *A Chronology of Known Local Events 1835-early 2000 including those in the Shire of Nillumbik and the former shires of Eltham and Diamond Valley*, Eltham District Historical Society Incorporated.

Gowrie Victoria 2019, Our History, www.gowrievictoria.com.au.

Mills, Peter and Westbrooke, Samantha 2010, 'War Memorial Building Complex, 903-907 Main Road, Eltham, Cultural Heritage Significance Assessment', prepared for Nillumbik Shire Council.

Mills, Peter and Westbrooke, Samantha 2017, 'Nillumbik Shire Thematic Environmental History – Revision 2016', prepared for Nillumbik Shire Council.

Nichols, David and Goad, Philip 2010, 'Early learning: the modern kindergarten' in Lewi, Hannah & Nichols, David (eds.) 2010, *Community: Building modern Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney.

Nillumbik Parish Plan 1951, Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne.

'Parish of Nillumbik' 2002, VPRS 16171, Public Record Office Victoria.

Pierce, Peter (ed.) 1987, *The Literary Guide to Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Victorian Collections website.

Victorian Places 2015, 'Christmas Hills', Monash University and The University of Queensland, <https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/>.

Victorian Year Book 1973. Government Printer, Melbourne.

Women Australia (WA) 2019, *Kindergarten Teaching and Pre-school Education*, www.womenaustralia.info.

WWII at Home 2020. 'Eltham War Memorial Building Complex, Eltham', National Trust of Australia (Victoria), <https://www.wwiathome.com.au>.

Yeoman, Russell, Pinn, Richards, and Connor, Jim 2020, *Sign of the Times: Eltham street names with history*, Eltham District Historical Society, www.elthamhistory.org.au.