

Statement of Significance: Uniting Church, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak, October 2023

Heritage Place: Uniting Church, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak

PS ref no: HO110



(Source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021)

What is significant?

The property at 603 Toorak Road, Toorak, is significant. Specifically, the built form, scale, detailing, setback and internal layout, cedar fittings and organ of the 1875 stone Gothic Revival church is of local heritage significance along with the 1892 Arts and Crafts Manse and associated former stables. The bluestone boundary wall with a wrought iron gate, 1979 organ and stained glass windows are also significant, as is the landscaping specifically with regards to the mature cypress (*cupressus*) and spruce (*picea*) (on the site's southern elevation). The 1962 childcare centre and community building on the south western corner of site is not significant

How is it significant?

The Uniting Church is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Toorak Uniting Church, formerly known as the Toorak Presbyterian Church, is historically significant as a Gothic Revival church that developed strong associations with squatters and leading politicians from its outset, making it a particularly influential congregation. Designed by architects Reeds and Barnes, the church was attended by a range of notable people such as pastoralist and politician Francis Ormand MLC and influential merchant and squatter James Balfour MLC. It was also the site for many weddings and memorials. The Manse is historically significant as well for its contribution to the ecclesiastic narrative of the site. (Criterion A)

The Uniting Church is aesthetically significant as a highly intact Gothic Revival church that is highly visible from the surrounding area and therefore is a landmark building. The key features of particular interest include the stained glass windows designed by Ferguson & Urie, slate double transept cross shaped roof, textured sandstone blocks on a bluestone base, white limestone dressing emphasising fenestration forms and façade detailing, towers and turrets, and the overall imposing built form. The interior of the church is notable for its layout, cedar fittings and organ. The manse, called Kinross, in the north western corner of the site has high integrity and is also aesthetically significant to the site, as a highly intact and decorative Arts and Crafts manse. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Uniting Church, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak, Citation Report, Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2023.