

Statement of Significance: Murrumbeena Baptist Church, 44 Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena

Date of Statement: August 2020

Address:	44 Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena	Name:	Murrumbeena Baptist Church
Place Type:	Church	Grading:	Significant
PS ref no:	HO235	Constructed:	1961-62, 1967 (addition)



Photograph by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2019

What is significant?

The Murrumbeena Baptist Church at 44 Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena, is a large orange brick building in a stark post-WW2 modernist style, erected in two stages to the design of the same architect, Eric Lyon (formerly of Smith, Tracey, Lyon & Brock). The older portion, fronting Murrumbeena Road (1961-62) is a tall hall-like structure with zigzag roof, narrow copper spirelets and a façade of angled bays, while the rear addition (1967) is a smaller hip-roofed wing; both components have rose windows to the Sydney Street elevation, with coloured glazing.

The significant fabric is defined as the exterior to the entire building to the extent of the original 1961-62 building and the 1967 addition. The subsequent rear addition, containing office space and such, is not considered significant.

How is it significant?

The Murrumbeena Baptist Church satisfies the following criteria for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule to the City of Glen Eira planning scheme:

- Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Why is it significant?

The Murrumbeena Baptist Church is aesthetically significant as an unusual example of post-WW2 ecclesiastical architecture incorporating historicist references in a modernist framework. By his own admission, Eric Lyon took inspiration from Milan's celebrated fifteenth century Late Gothic cathedral, built in the Flamboyant style characterised by a spiky roofline of pinnacles, spirelets and flying buttresses. For Murrumbeena, Lyon re-interpreted this intricate effect with a minimalist modernist sensibility, reducing it to a low zigzagging roofline (a motif popular in the early 1960s, mostly for commercial and industrial architecture) with a row of slender copper spirelets. Along Sydney Street, a parabolic arched entry bay and rose windows (with coloured glass in an abstract pattern) provide more generic historicist references. While the church has been altered by removal of the concrete block screens along Murrumbeena Road, it remains a distinctive and eye-catching example of post-WW2 ecclesiastical architecture, demonstrating a high degree of creative achievement in its deft melding of contemporary and traditional influences. (*Criteria F*)

Primary sources

Heritage Citation PW20, *City of Glen Eira Post-war & Hidden Gems Heritage Review 2020, Stage 2: Citations*, prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd.