

**Locality:** BRIAGOLONG  
**Place address:** 4 CHURCH STREET  
**Citation date** 2016  
**Place type (when built):** Church, Tree  
**Recommended heritage protection:** Local government level  
Local Planning Scheme: Yes  
Vic Heritage Register: No  
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

**Place name:** Briagolong Uniting Church and Dutch Elm



**Architectural Style:** Victorian Arts and Crafts  
**Designer / Architect:** Not Known  
**Construction Date:** 1874

## Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H is the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with the level of Government legislation.

### *What is significant?*

Briagolong Uniting Church and Dutch Elm at 4 Church Street, Briagolong, are significant. The original form, materials and detailing of the nave as constructed in 1874 are significant.

Later outbuildings and alterations such as the louvre windows, and additions to the front and rear are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Briagolong Uniting Church and Dutch Elm are locally significant for their historical, social and aesthetic values to the Shire of Wellington.

### *Why is it significant?*

Briagolong Uniting Church is **historically and socially significant at a local level** as a church that has served the local community for over 140 years, built in 1874 as St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The church represents the earliest development period of the town, built following the first round of town lot sales in Briagolong in 1874. On 22 April 1875, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church was officially opened. The church continues to serve the local community today. In 1876, an article in the *Gippsland Times* reported that intended works comprised the lining of the interior, fencing the ground and planting of trees. In 2015, a large mature Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) remains inside the front boundary, which may date to the early period of the church. St Andrew's became a Uniting Church at a later date. (Criteria A & G)

Briagolong Uniting Church is **aesthetically significant at a local level** as a representative example of a modest Victorian Arts and Crafts church in the Shire. Notable architectural elements of the picturesque church include the gabled roof, weatherboard cladding, the original six-paned sashes of the windows, and the general form and massing of the church. The Dutch Elm is in good condition and is a large example of the species, and it is significant for its important contribution to the landscape setting of the picturesque church. (Criterion E)

## Statutory Recommendations

This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wellington Shire Planning Scheme to the extent of the title boundary as shown on the map.

<b>External Paint Controls</b>	Yes
<b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls</b>	Yes, Dutch Elm
<b>Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3</b>	No
<b>Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan</b>	No
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>	Not assessed

## Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



### KEY

- Recommended for Heritage Overlay
- Title boundary

### Uniting Church 4 Church St, Briarolong

Project: Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study  
Client: Wellington Shire Council  
Author: Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd  
Date: 12/2/16

## History

### Locality history

Briagolong was originally part of Angus McMillan's Bushy Park Run and was known as Top Plain. From 1865, Briagolong was part of the Avon Shire (Context 2005:38). In 1866, land was selected at Top Plain after the Amending Land Act of 1865 was passed; the 42nd section of the Act allowed selection of four 20 acre blocks provided the land was within ten miles of a recognised goldfield. As a result, miners moved into the area to prospect for gold in the Freestone Creek and its tributaries. By 1868, many of the claims had been taken out along Freestone Creek and its tributaries; 200 miners were located on Macmillan's Creek at one time. A small number of miners continued to prospect during the 1870s. In 1873, the area was named Briagolong, which is derived from the name of the Aboriginal group of the area, the Braiakaulung. Members of this tribe had been removed to Ramahyuck Mission Station in 1864 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61; Victorian Places).

By 1875, Briagolong was known as a rich agricultural district. Early crops in the area included fruit, wine grapes and maize, and wheat, oats and barley on the drier lands (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61; Victorian Places). Hops was planted extensively and flourished in the Briagolong district on the river flats, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, with a number of hop kilns built. However, there was infestation of red spider in the early 1890s which caused the crop to decline by 1913. Fruit orchards in the area exported to London in the 1890s and from the 1880s, several vineyards were planted. Several small cheese factories existed in the district and growth of the dairy industry was spurred by the opening of the Briagolong Cheese Factory in 1873 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61; Context 2005:14).

A quarry operated on Freestone Creek, north of Briagolong from the 1860s and timber milling also became an important industry in the area (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61; Context 2005:14). "One of the first substantial red gum mills was William Forbes' Stratford Steam Saw Mill, that he established in 1865 at Murray's Corner, now known as Invermiechie. In 1872, he relocated to a creek on Freemans Road at Briagolong, and named his significantly expanded enterprise the Victoria Saw Mill. The saw mill provided red gum weatherboards for buildings, had a significant contract with the Melbourne Tramways Trust to supply two million red gum blocks for street paving, made red gum fellows used in wagon wheels, and produced fencing and verandah posts. Another sideline was the production of kit houses. The red gum was quickly cleared from the plains and Forbes closed his mill in 1889. At the mill site today, the top of the well can still be seen, while in the Briagolong area, there are several Forbes' kit homes. One of the most notable buildings in Briagolong, the Briagolong Mechanics Institute, was built from Forbes' weatherboards" (Context 2005:20). A number of other mills have operated in Briagolong over the years, exporting timber via the railway (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61).

The first township lots were sold in Briagolong in 1874, and by 1875 the population of Briagolong and the district was 200 (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61; Victorian Places). Briagolong became part of the Shire of Maffra in 1875 (Context 2005:39). The town grew in the following years, to include two hotels, a school, a Mechanics Institute and library (the original library is retained today), and churches. In 1888 there was a second round of town lot sales. The railway arrived in Briagolong in 1889 and milk was transported twice daily to Maffra (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61). In 1903, the *Australian Handbook* reported that the town comprised the 'Briagolong Hotel, wine hall, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, coffee palace, a State School (No. 1,117), a creamery, wine and cider industries, three stores, bee farm, and police station'. In 1911, Briagolong's population was at a high 462 people (Victorian Places).

The population of Briagolong reduced from 462 people (in 1911) to approximately 300 people in the 1930s and 1950s. By 1976, the town had a population total of 216 people, until a number of people moved to the area who were interested in building stone and mud brick houses, in search for an alternative lifestyle (Fletcher & Kennett 2005:61). In 1994, Wellington Shire was created by the amalgamation of the former Shires of Alberton, Avon and Maffra, the former City of Sale, most of the

former Shire of Rosedale, as well as an area near Dargo which was formerly part of Bairnsdale Shire (Context 2005:39). In the 2000s, the population of Briagolong remains in the 500s (Victorian Places).

## Thematic context

This place is associated with the following themes from the *Wellington Shire Thematic History* (2005):

### 9. Developing Cultural Institutions and Way of Life

#### - 9.1 Religion

## Place history

The Uniting Church, originally the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, is located on Church Street, facing east down Cahill Street. The one acre lot (lot 2, Township of Briagolong) was granted to 'J. C. Blundy & others, Trustees of Presbyterian Church' in June 1874 (Township Plan).

In November 1874, tenders were called for the labour to erect 'the weatherboard building for the Presbyterian Church at Briagolong'. Tenders were to be sent to John Blundy (*Gippsland Times*, 5 Nov 1874:2). The earliest announcement found for a service at the 'Presbyterian Church, Briagolong' in the local paper was dated 14 January 1875 (*Gippsland Times*, 14 Jan 1875:2). The church was built in 1874 and on 22 April 1875, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church was officially opened. The first minister of the church, Reverend John Roberts, had been visiting the area as early as 1867, holding services at the house of Mr Wilson (Context 2005).

In 1876, an article in the *Gippsland Times* reported that future intended works comprised the lining of the interior, fencing the ground and planting of trees. A large mature Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) is located inside the front boundary, which probably dates to this early period, due to its size (this needs to be confirmed). Both the Church of England and Methodists held services at the church during this period (*Gippsland Times*, 18 Apr 1876:3; Context 2005). St Andrew's became a Uniting Church at a later date.

The building has been substantially altered, possibly in the early 1970s. Photos dating to 1976 (MDHS) showed the exterior of the church (Figures H1-3). Turned timber finials were located at the peak of the gables (since removed). The porch (c1970s), its timber details and entrance doors were the same as those that remain in 2015. Louvered windows had been installed into the upper portion of the nave windows by this date, retaining the original six-paned bottom sashes. To the rear of the church was a small building with a gabled roof and pointed gothic window which was awkwardly positioned at the left of the rear elevation (since removed); this structure was probably the original front porch. To the right was an early addition; an attached weatherboard room with an uneven gabled roof and a pair of early narrow pointed-arch windows (similar to the one on the relocated 'porch'; windows since removed and this wall since re-clad). In 2015, a modern breezeway extends from the smaller weatherboard room attached to the rear of the church, to a modern outbuilding to the rear (east) of the church.



**Figure H1.** The church in 1976. The original porch with a pointed arch window had been relocated to the rear, and a c1970s porch added at the front. The top sashes of the side windows have been replaced with louvres. The finials to the roof evident here, have since been removed. (MDHS, ID. P02788VMFF 1976).



**Figure H2.** Detail of the porch in 1976, which probably dates to the early 1970s (MDHS, ID P02787VMFF 1976).



**Figure H3.** The rear elevation in 1975, showing the ‘relocated original front porch’ on the left (since removed), and an early addition to the right with similar pointed-arch windows (MDHS, ID P02785VMFF 1976).

### Sources

*Australian Handbook* (1903), as cited on Victorian Places.

Context Pty Ltd (2005), *Wellington Shire Heritage Study & Thematic Environmental History*, prepared for Wellington Shire Council.

Fletcher, Meredith & Linda Kennett (2005), *Wellington Landscapes, History and Heritage in a Gippsland Shire*, Maffra.

Maffra & District Historical Society (MDHS) collection: historical information and photos generously provided by Linda Barraclough, Pauline Hitchins & Carol Kitchenn, provided Nov 2015.

*Gippsland Times*

Township of Briagolong Plan

Victorian Places, ‘Briagolong’, <<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/briagolong>>, accessed March 2016.

### Description

This section describes the place in 2016. Refer to the Place History for additional important details describing historical changes in the physical fabric.

The picturesque Victorian Arts and Crafts church was built in 1874 as St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. The 1874 church is in good condition and retains a medium-low level of integrity.

**Figure D1.** The church is located on the west side of Church Street, looking east down Cahill Street. The building has a deep setback and is located on a slight rise, behind a mature Dutch Elm on the front boundary. A modern chain fence runs along the front (east) boundary.

**Figure D2.** The modest weatherboard church has a gabled roof clad in corrugated iron, with plain bargeboards to the gabled ends, reflecting a simplified version of a Victorian era Carpenter Gothic church. The side elevations consist of three windows, with six-paned sash windows to the bottom half, with a pair of modern louvered windows above, which replaced six-paned sash windows.

**Figure D3.** The façade has a c1970s central entrance porch with a concrete floor, gabled roof clad with corrugated iron, and a jettied timber valence and frieze. The section of nave beneath the porch is clad with fibro-cement sheets either side of the timber entrance doors, suggesting that the existing entrance porch replaced the earlier one that was temporarily relocated to the rear of the nave (since removed) (see Figs H1 and H3).

**Figure D4 & Aerial.** At the rear (west end) of the church is a small timber addition with a (uneven) gabled roof clad with recent corrugated iron, and a modern aluminum window to the west elevation (original pointed-arch windows since removed). Some of the weatherboard cladding appears to match the 1874 church, which suggests that this section may in part be original or early, but is largely altered.

To the west of the 1874 church is a modern weatherboard building with a gabled roof.

**Figure D5.** The modern weatherboard building is connected to the smaller weatherboard room attached to the rear of the church by a modern breezeway, that covers an entrance to the church off the southern elevation.

**Figure D6.** A large mature Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) is located inside the front (east) boundary, which probably dates to 1876, soon after the construction of the church. The Elm is in good condition and is a large example of the species.



**Figure D1.** The picturesque church has a deep setback and is located on a slight rise, behind a mature Elm on the front boundary. A modern chain fence runs along the front (east) boundary.



**Figure D2.** The modest weatherboard church has a gabled roof clad in corrugated iron, with simple bargeboards to the gabled ends, reflecting a simplified version of a Carpenter Gothic church. The side elevations consist of three windows, with six-paned sash windows to the bottom half, with a pair of modern louvered windows above.



**Figure D3.** The façade has a c1970s central entrance porch.



**Figure D4.** At the rear (west end) of the church is a small timber addition with a (uneven) gabled roof. To the west of the church is a modern weatherboard building.



**Figure D5.** The rear section of the southern elevation. The modern weatherboard building to the rear of the 1874 church is connected to the smaller weatherboard room attached to the rear of the church by a modern breezeway that covers an entrance to the church off the southern elevation.



**Figure D6.** The large mature Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) is located inside the front (east) boundary. The Elm is in good condition and is a large example of the species.

### Sources

All photos taken in 2015 by Heritage Intelligence Pty Ltd as part of Wellington Shire Stage 2 Heritage Study.

## Comparative analysis

### Arts & Crafts

During the Federation and Interwar eras (c1890 to 1944), the Arts and Crafts style was very popular in most small communities in Victoria, particularly for halls and churches, as it achieved an aesthetically picturesque building, using local materials, usually timber, for low cost. As many hand crafted embellishments as desired, or that could be afforded, could be applied to the basic rectangular plan forms with steeply pitched gable roofs. Furthermore, these decorative features were able to be created by local carpenter craftsmen or builders and therefore, they often took advantage of their particular individual skills. Earlier, in the Victorian era (1840s to 1890) similar picturesque styled churches and halls were built, but they are usually distinguished from the later eras, with gothic styled elements. The interiors of the Boisdale and Cowwarr timber churches are timber lined, and two of them have retained the unpainted linings, but the Boisdale one has been overpainted in white.

**BOISDALE:** There are only two church buildings in Boisdale, and both are timber Interwar Arts and Crafts buildings. St George's Anglican Church was originally built in 1924 as a memorial church in Llowalong and moved to Boisdale in 1953. Therefore the former 1921 Boisdale Uniting Church is the earliest church built in Boisdale; it is a typical example of an Interwar Arts and Crafts building but has unique timber framed round headed windows and it has very high level of integrity.

**BRIAGOLONG:** There are three church buildings in Briagolong, two are red brick buildings while the 1874 Uniting Church is the only timber church in the town, designed in the Victorian Arts and Crafts style. The Briagolong Uniting Church was built almost 50 years earlier than the Boisdale Uniting Church (1921), but it is very altered in comparison to the timber church in Boisdale, which has very high integrity.

COWWARR: There are only two buildings built as churches in Cowwarr, one being the modest timber Christ Church built in 1901 which is now a privately owned interdenominational church. It is the only timber church in the town and retains a very high level of integrity, designed in the Federation Carpenter Gothic style. The interior of this building is lined entirely with unpainted red pine with excellent carpentry and integrity. The other building is a substantial brick rendered Catholic Church, with brick vestry and timber hall.

## Management Guidelines

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. They also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant. The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive and a pragmatic approach will be taken when considering development proposals. Alternative approaches to those specified in the guidelines will be considered where it can be demonstrated that a desirable development outcome can be achieved that does not impact on a place's heritage integrity.

1. **Setting** (views, fencing, landscaping, paths, trees, streetscape)
  - 1.1. Retain clear views of the front and north elevations as seen from along Church street.
  - 1.2. Ensure signs and services such as power poles, bus shelters, signs, etc are located so that they do not impact on the important views.
  - 1.3. New interpretation storyboards, should be placed to the side of the building not directly in front of it.
  - 1.4. Paving
    - 1.4.1. For Victorian era historic buildings, appropriate paving could be pressed granitic sand, or asphalt. If concrete is selected, a surface with sand-coloured- size exposed aggregate would be better with the Arts and Crafts style.
2. **Additions And New Structures**
  - 2.1. New structures should be restricted to the rear of the property as shown in the blue polygon on the aerial map. The weatherboard extension at the rear is not significant and can be demolished.
  - 2.2. Sympathetic extensions are preferred. E.g. New parts that are in the same view lines as the historic building as seen from Church and Cahill streets, should be parallel and perpendicular to the existing building, no higher than the existing building, similar proportions, height, wall colours, steep gable or hip roofs, rectangular timber framed windows with a vertical axis, but parts not visible in those views could be of any design, colours and materials.
  - 2.3. If an extension is to have a concrete slab floor, ensure it will not reduce the air flow under the historic timber building.
  - 2.4. Avoid hard paths against the walls. Install them 500mm away from the walls and 250mm lower than the ground level inside the building. Fill the gap between the path and the wall with very coarse gravel to allow moisture to evaporate from the base of the wall.
  - 2.5. New garden beds
    - 2.5.1. These should be a minimum of 500mm from the walls, preferably further, and the ground lowered so that the finished ground level of the garden bed is a minimum of 250mm lower than the ground level which is under the floor, inside the building. Slope the soil and garden bed away from the building, and fill the area between the garden bed and walls, with very coarse gravel up to the finished level of the garden bed. The

coarse gravel will have air gaps between the stones which serves the function of allowing moisture at the base of the wall to evaporate and it visually alerts gardeners and maintenance staff that the graveled space has a purpose. The reason that garden beds are detrimental to the building, is by a combination of: watering around the base of the wall and the ground level naturally builds up. The ground level rises, due to mulching and leaf litter and root swelling, above a safe level such that it blocks sub floor ventilation, and the wall is difficult to visually monitor on a day to day basis, due to foliage in the way.

### 3. Accessibility

#### 3.1. Ramps

##### 3.1.1. Removable ramp construction

- 3.1.1.1. A metal framed ramp which allows air to flow under it, to ensure the subfloor vents of the building are not obstructing good airflow under the floor which will allow the wall structure to evaporate moisture and reduce termite and rot attack to the subfloor structure.
- 3.1.1.2. If it is constructed with the concrete next to brick walls this may cause damp problems in the future.
- 3.1.1.3. Ensure water drains away from the subfloor vents, and walls and any gap between the wall and the ramp remains clear of debris. Insert additional sub floor vents if the ramp has blocked any of them.
- 3.1.1.4. The hand rails on the ramp should not be a feature, which would detract from the architecture. Plain thin railings painted in the same colour as the walls, so that they blend in, would be appropriate.

- 3.2. Metal banisters may be installed at the front steps. They are functional and minimalist and they have a minor visual impact on the architecture and therefore they are a suitable design for an accessible addition.

### 4. Reconstruction And Restoration

If an opportunity arises, consider restoring and reconstructing the following.

#### 4.1. Roofing, spouting and down pipes

- 4.1.1. Use galvanised corrugated iron roofing, spouting, down pipes and rain heads.
- 4.1.2. Do not use Zinalume or Colorbond.
- 4.1.3. Use ogee profile spouting, and round diameter down pipes.

- 4.2. Windows. Remove the louvres, and construct 6-pane timber sashes to match the bottom ones.

- 4.3. Porch. Remove the existing porch and reconstruct the original design as seen in Fig H3 at the facade.

- 4.4. Reconstruct the missing finials to match those shown in Figs H1 and H3.

- 4.5. Fences. Construct a timber picket fence 1.4m high or lower, across the front boundary.

#### 4.6. Paint and Colours.

- 4.6.1. It is recommended to paint the exterior of the building using original colours (paint scrapes may reveal the colours) to enhance the historic architecture and character.

### 5. Care and Maintenance

#### 5.1. Key References

- 5.1.1. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.

#### 5.2. Joinery

- 5.2.1. The original external timber doors and windows require careful repair and painting. It is important to repair rather than replace when possible, as this retains the historic

fabric.

### 5.3. Roofing, spouting and down pipes

- 5.3.1. Use galvanised corrugated iron roofing, spouting, down pipes and rain heads. It is preferable to use short sheet corrugated iron and lap them, rather than single long sheets, but it is not essential.
- 5.3.2. Do not use Zinalume or Colorbond.
- 5.3.3. Use Ogee profile spouting, and round diameter down pipes.

## 6. Water Damage

- 6.1. Avoid water damage by the lowering of the ground outside so that it is lower than the ground inside the building under the floor, installation of agricultural drains, running the downpipes into drainage inspection pits instead of straight into the ground. The reason for the pits is that a blocked drain will not be noticed until so much water has seeped in and around the base of the building and damage commenced (which may take weeks or months to be visible), whereas, the pit will immediately fill with water and the problem can be fixed before the floor rots or the building smells musty.
- 6.2. Damp would be exacerbated by watering plants near the walls.
- 6.3. Ensure good subfloor ventilation is maintained at all times to reduce the habitat for termites and rot of the subfloor structure. Subfloor ventilation is critical. Check that sub floor vents are not blocked and introduce additional ones if necessary. Ensure the exterior ground level is 250mm or more, lower than the ground level inside the building. Good subfloor ventilation works for free, and is therefore very cost effective. Do not rely on fans being inserted under the floor as these are difficult to monitor, they will breakdown as they get clogged with dust, etc, and there are ongoing costs for servicing and electricity.

## 7. Services

- 7.1. Ensure new services and conduits, down pipes etc, are not conspicuous. To do this, locate them at the rear of the building whenever possible, and when that is not practical, paint them the same colour as the building or fabric behind them or enclose them behind a screen the same colour as the building fabric, that provides adequate ventilation around the device.

## Resources

Wellington Shire Heritage Advisor

Young, David (2008), "Salt Attack and Rising Damp, a guide to salt damp in historic and older buildings" Technical Guide, prepared for Heritage Victoria.

The following fact sheets contain practical and easy-to-understand information about the care and preservation of war heritage and memorabilia commonly found in local communities across Victoria. They can be downloaded at <<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/victorian-veterans-virtual-museum/preserving-veterans-heritage/preserving-war-heritage-and-memorabilia>>:

- Finding-the-right-conservator-tradespeople-and-materials
- General-Principles
- Useful-resources-and-contacts.

NOTE: The blue shaded area is the preferred location for additions and new development:



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