
FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



23298 Free Presbyterian Church Branhholme 0526



23298 Free Presbyterian Church Branhholme 0527



23298 Free Presbyterian Ch Branhholme 0473

Location

Monroe Street and Best Street BRANXHOLME, Southern Grampians Shire

Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 10, 2003

What is significant?

The original Free Presbyterian Church is said to have been the present Uniting Church, nearby in Monroe Street. After a disagreement about the playing of music during services, a small part of the congregation broke away to form a new Free Presbyterian congregation and to build a new church. Services were conducted in Scottish Gaelic, the native tongue of many of the congregation and without any music. The foundation stone was laid on 17th December 1878 and the church was opened on 30th March, 1879. Although the architect for the building is not known, the contractors were Foster Brothers of Branhholme and the cost was 445 pounds. It is one of the few remaining Free Presbyterian Churches in Victoria including that at Hamilton, whose interior has been stripped, making this one of the very few whose distinctively austere interiors survive intact. There is no adornment and the furniture is plain, reflecting the strict Calvinist values of the denomination. The Minister at the time of the break was the Rev William McDonald of Hamilton. Most of the ministers have lived in Hamilton but, in 1910, the Rev J D Ramsey was living near the church in Branhholme. The church retains a high degree of integrity and is in fair

condition.

How is it significant?

The Free Presbyterian Church is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria, the Southern Grampians Shire and the township of Branxholme.

Why is it significant?

The Free Presbyterian Church is of historical significance as a rare example of a minor branch of the Presbyterian denomination. It is of architectural significance as a very rare example of a Free Presbyterian Church with an intact interior, for its use of the Gothic revival style, which is all the more notable because before the 1860s the Presbyterians tended to eschew the Gothic style.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002; |
| Construction dates | 1978, |
| Hermes Number | 23298 |
| Property Number | |

Physical Conditions

The building is in fair condition. (The interior has not been inspected.)

Physical Description 1

A small and very simple rendered brick church in the Gothic Revival style, of three bays divided by buttresses, angled at the corners, and with single windows. The Church is sited to face eastwards across the valley of the Arrandoovong Creek. The walls are subdivided horizontally by a continuous moulding at the height of the window sills. The facade has a double-leaved, ledge and brace door within a lancet opening. Above this there is a small lancet opening with timber louvres. The roof which is pitched at 60 degrees is corrugated. The interior is equally austere, with no adornment, with the plainest of furniture and with no facilities for music, reflecting the strict Calvinist values of the Free Presbyterians as a denomination.

Historical Australian Themes

- Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life
- 8.6 Worshipping
- 8.6.1 Worshipping together
- 8.6.3 Founding Australian religious institutions
- 8.6.4 Making places for worship

Usage/Former Usage

church

Integrity

Excellent degree of integrity.

Physical Description 2

Mr. Malcolm Murchison, Mr. John McDonald and Mr. Hugh McInnes, first Elders
Mr. John McLean, Mr. Angus McDonald and Mr. Donald McLean, first Deacons
Mr. John McLean, Mr. Hugh McLean, and Mr. Angus McDonald, first Trustees

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>