

---

# ST AMBROSE'S SCHOOL & CHURCH HALL

---

## Location

1-3 Dawson Street, Brunswick VIC 3056 - Property No 5726

## Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO155

## Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

St Ambrose's Hall and School at 1-3 Dawson Street, Brunswick, are of local historical and architectural significance. Respectively erected in 1891 and 1916, the buildings provide evidence of the expansion of Catholic activity in Brunswick in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Along with the former Presbytery at 33 Saxon Street (qv), the buildings in Dawson Street contribute significantly to the notion of a 'church reserve' in the vicinity of St Ambrose's Church at 289 Sydney Road (qv). The hall, which is one of only a few nineteenth-century church halls surviving in the City of Moreland, is also of interest for its role as a venue for anti-conscription meetings during the First World War; and for associations with Prime Minister John Curtin (1885-1945), a former pupil of the school and himself a fierce opponent of conscription during that War.

Aesthetically, the school and hall are substantially intact and representative examples of their respective types, distinguished by simple but effective detailing in the Federation and Gothic styles respectively. Individually and collectively, the buildings form a significant element in the streetscape.

Heritage  
Study/Consultant

Moreland - Keeping Brunswick's heritage: A Report on the Review of the Brunswick Conservation Study, Context Pty Ltd, 1990; Moreland - City of Moreland Heritage Review, Allen Lovell and Associates, 1999;

Hermes Number

58960

## Physical Description 1

St Ambrose's School (1916), at 1-3 Dawson Street, Brunswick, is an elongated single storey, red brick building with a gabled roof clad in corrugated galvanised steel. The gabled entrance has red brick side walls and a wide rendered frieze topped with a simple pediment, decorated with the building's name and floral mouldings. Windows are paired timber-framed double hung sashes. The original slate roof has been replaced, and cyclone wire screens cover the windows. A red brick addition has been made to the southern elevation of the building. The adjacent St Ambrose's Hall (1891) is a single storey red brick building with a bluestone base and buttresses. It has a gabled, slate roof and rendered gable end copings, window dressings and buttress dressings. The gable notches have trefoil motifs. Doors and windows have pointed arch heads with a combination of stone and rendered dressings. Sills are of stone, and the windows are timber-framed, double-hung, four-light sashes with an awning window over. The foyer section was constructed later (c.1916), and has a prominent curved, rendered parapet with two moulded string courses and unusual polygonal pinnacles topping the shallow brick pilasters which mark the corners and flank the front entrance. A later, red brick addition with gabled roof has been made to the southern end of the building and there is a small skillion-roofed addition between the western elevation of the church and a brick garden wall. It has weatherboard cladding and corrugated steel roof.

Key Architectural Elements: face red brick walls with rendered dressings  
original signage over entrances  
timber-framed multi-paned windows to the school  
arched head timber-framed windows to the hall  
gabled slate roof to the hall

Conservation Guidelines:

remove non-original front fence  
preferably reinstate original roofing material to the school building  
remove non-original security doors from front entrance of the hall  
remove signage from window openings of the hall

Comparative Examples: St Mark's Parish Primary School, Argyle Street, Fawkner (c.1920s)

Former Holy Trinity School and Hall, 520 Sydney Road, Coburg

Former St Paul's School, 562 Sydney Road, Coburg

*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/>*