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# Former Armadale Methodist/Presbyterian Church & Hall



69 Denbigh Rd church



69 Denbigh Rd Sunday School.jpg

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## Location

69 Denbigh Road, ARMADALE VIC 3143 - Property No 59572

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO406

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 6, 2010

### *What is significant?*

The former St Andrew's Presbyterian (Methodist) Church of 1902 and the 1891 Sunday School (and original church) at 69 Denbigh Road, Armadale, to the extent of their original fabric.

The elements introduced as part of the residential conversion, including the brick fence and lych gate, are not

significant.

*How is it significant?*

The former Church and Sunday School are of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

*Why is it significant?*

Historically, as an iconic example of local Presbyterian culture with a large, lively and influential Sunday School at the rear. (Criterion A)

Architecturally, the church of 1902 is an expertly massed design by prominent architectural practice Sydney Smith & Ogg. The Greek cross plan of the church reflects the Methodist emphasis on preaching, and is an early example of this type of building. (Criterion D)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Churches and Halls in the City of Stonnington - Heritage Citations Project 2010, Context Pty Ltd, 2010;
Hermes Number	155232
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The former St Andrew's Methodist (Presbyterian) Church of 1902 at 69 Denbigh Road, Armadale, sits at the front of its site. Directly behind it is the Sunday School, which was built as the original church in 1891. Both buildings were converted to flats in the 1990s.

### *Church*

The former church is a striking building in a Greek cross plan with a large fleche over the crossing. The walls are red brick with limestone dressings, and the roof is covered with slates with simple terracotta cresting.

The facade is dominated by a wide gable front. A gabled entrance porch is located at the centre, flanked by asymmetrical elements. On the right-hand side is a curved ambulatory-like space. To the left is the single-storey base of a square tower (the tower was not completed). At the apex is stone detailing in the form of seven blind lancet arches topped with a stone crocket. Below is a row of five lancet windows, all of the same height, beneath a continuous label mould.

The gable ends of the transepts are expressed differently. The apex is decorated with an incised stone diaper pattern, beneath a similar crocketed finial. The five narrow lancet windows are stepped so that the group of them forms a large lancet outline. These windows also have a continuous label mould.

The remaining windows to the church, and the front entrance, are all single lancet forms with a label mould. Architecture professor Brian Lewis described the interior as it was in the early 20th century, long before its residential conversion:

*It is a stubby cross in plan, with the western arm for the choir at a slightly higher level than the rest. Despite the cross-plan the building is designed as an auditorium, with aisles from the five doors converging down a gentle slope to the centrally placed communion table, above it is the pulpit dead centre at the higher choir level. The converging aisles make the front pews short with the longest beside the doors at the back. (B Lewis, Sunday at Kooyong Road, 1976, p 35)*

The Methodists/Presbyterians favoured centralised plan churches to allow for an octagonal internal space which was favourable to preaching.

In the course of the residential conversion, a number of gablets were added above the eaves line. All are in a half-timbered form (though glazed) which is confusing as this sort of detail was seen on residential buildings at the turn of the century. There is also a new 'half-timbered' entrance porch at the rear of the church and new rectangular openings (windows and doors) on this elevation. The central windows of the front gable and transepts have been infilled with brick. New brick fencing with cement dressings continue the palette of the original church, but again a modern lych gate creates some confusion as to what is original at the site. On the whole, however, these alterations are not visually imposing when viewed from the public domain.

### *Sunday School*

The 1891 Sunday School (the original church) is a smaller red brick building with cement dressings and polychrome brick accents. It has a transverse gable roof and a single-storey porch at the north end. The roof is covered in slates with three gabled metal ventilators on each slope. The parapeted gable end visible from the laneway is decorated in a polychrome diaper pattern, and the round-arched openings have red and cream stripes reminiscent of voussoirs. The windows and doorways have label moulds.

While the round-headed openings suggest a Romanesque influence, buttressing between window bays refers to the Gothic.

This building has also been altered in the residential conversion. A two-storey gable-fronted addition was built on the south end of the former Sunday School, and some openings have been partially infilled or new walls set back behind them. The most intrusive alteration is the addition of a 'half-timbered' projecting bay and balcony above the north-end entrance porch. Again, the insertion of a historicising domestic element into the Sunday School is confusing. Windows on the rear elevation are more extensively altered and enlarged to accommodate French doors, though the round-headed arch has been retained. Gablets were also inserted along the eaves line of this elevation.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

*Themes from Stonnington Thematic Environmental History:*

### 10.2 Worshipping

#### 10.2.1 Founding churches

#### 10.2.4 Churches as a reflection of changing demographics

*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/>*