

Statement of Recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

Former Church of Christ, VHR H0141

7-11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford, Yarra City

Wurundjeri Country



Executive Director recommendation

I recommend to the Heritage Council of Victoria (**Heritage Council**) that the Former Church of Christ, located at 7-11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford in the Victorian Heritage Register (**VHR**) be amended. The category of registration is recommended to be Registered Place.

In accordance with section 62 of the *Heritage Act 2017* (**the Act**), I suggest that the Heritage Council determine:

- to include additional land in the VHR (section 49(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Act); and
- the proposed categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place for which a permit is under the Act not required, will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place under section 49(3)(a) of the Act.



STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

Date of recommendation: 14 September 2026

The process from here

1. The Heritage Council publishes the Executive Director's recommendation (section 41)

The Heritage Council will publish the Executive Director's recommendation on its [website](#) for a period of 60 days.

2. Making a submission to the Heritage Council (sections 44 and 45)

Within the 60-day publication period, any person or body may make a written submission to the Heritage Council. This submission can support the recommendation, or object to the recommendation and a hearing can be requested in relation to the submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the [Heritage Council's website](#).

3. Heritage Council determination (sections 46, 46A and 49)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body. It is responsible for making the final determination to include or not include the place, object or land in the VHR or amend a place, object or land already in the VHR.

If no submissions are received the Heritage Council must make a determination within 40 days of the publication closing date.

If submissions are received, the Heritage Council may decide to conduct a hearing in relation to the submission. The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing if a submission requests a hearing, and that submission is made by person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place, object or land.

If a hearing does take place, the Heritage Council must make a determination within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.

4. Obligations of owners of places, objects and land (sections 42, 42A, 42B, 42C, 42D and 43)

The owner of a place, object or land which is the subject of a recommendation to the Heritage Council has certain obligations under the Act. These relate to advising the Executive Director in writing of any works or activities that are being carried out, proposed or planned for the place, object or land.

The owner also has an obligation to provide a copy of this statement of recommendation to any potential purchasers of the place, object or land before entering into a contract.

5. Further information

The relevant sections of the Act are provided at the end of this report.

Description

The Former Church of Christ is located on a square site, addressed as 7-11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford. It is bound by commercial buildings fronting Hoddle Street to the west and the Collingwood Railway Station carpark and station complex to the east. The former church is situated on the western half of the site with a hall extending east from the southern end of the church along the south boundary. An informally landscaped garden sits within the front setback of the hall, with a concrete pathway leading to the hall and church entrance. A palisade fence (later) on bluestone plinth extends along the north boundary of the site with gates to the former main entrance of the church and to the garden. The former church and hall are currently used as a branch of the City of Yarra municipal library.

The Former Church of Christ is a red brick structure constructed in 1889 to a distinctive Mannerist classical revival design by the architect Jonathan Rankine. The roof is a gabled form clad with slate. The principal (north) façade is symmetrically composed with bluestone steps leading to a central arched opening with keystone, flanked by giant order engaged columns with composite capitals. The opening has been altered with the fanlight boarded over and glazed timber infill panels installed to the opening. The original double doors, with exposed stiles and rails and diagonal timber panels, remain to either side. There is a rendered nameplate with inscription 'Tabernacle AD. 1889' above the opening. To either side, recessed bays are set between brick pilasters with composite capitals. The lower section of the pilasters and columns are decorated with rendered fluting and drapery swags. Each bay contains a single tall, round-arched opening with decorative pilastered architraves and exaggerated keystones. Window openings comprise decorative multipaned windows with tinted cathedral glazing. A rendered stringcourse with egg and dart moulding extends across the façade. The entire composition is topped by a classically detailed parapet comprising a central pediment with plain tympanum and entablature with frieze decorated by wreath motifs above each pilaster and column.

Side elevations comprise repeating, recessed, red brick bays set between pilasters with decorative cream brick modillions and pilaster capitals. Bays each contain a tall round-arched opening with rendered sill and voussoir. Windows are multipaned with tinted Cathedral glazing. There are two further entrances to the west elevation; the northern entrance comprises a raised door with bluestone steps, flat voussoir and round-arched blind opening above; and the southern entrance comprises timber-panelled double doors with simple ripple-iron awning over and round-arched multipaned window above. To the rear elevation is a red brick skillion roofed projection (former vestry) with altered openings to its south elevation. The skillion roof is clad with metal sheeting and there is one red brick chimney with cream brick detailing. Above the skillion, the gable end of the main church form is visible with central oculus (boarded).

The hall comprises a gable-roofed structure with weatherboard walls to the north and east and a brick wall along the south elevation. The brickwork of the south wall has been toothed into that of the adjacent rear wall of the former church and contains two timber sash windows on rendered sills with voussoirs above. The north elevation of the hall has been modified to accommodate a later geometric addition with projecting awning constructed abutting the church. A set of timber double doors and timber framed hopper windows remain on the northern elevation, to the east of the addition. The addition follows the materiality of the hall with weatherboard cladding and timber framed glazed openings with metal-framed sliding doors. The roof of the hall is clad with metal sheeting (later) and there are four painted steel vents to the ridge line. Solar panels have been installed to the north fall.

Internally, the church and hall have been adapted for use as a municipal library and multipurpose space respectively. Inside the church, the double-height volume to the nave has been retained, with a "floating mezzanine" insertion – offset from the building envelope and with glazed balustrade – providing additional, upper-level floor space. A recessed dado line extends across all walls, and openings are decorated with stop chamfered reveals. The ceiling is vaulted and timber lined with decorative timber ventilators and cast-iron lacework to the border. The northern end of the church comprises ground floor offices, with timber-lined ceilings, and original staircase leading to the choir stall above. The choir stall overlooks the nave with cast-iron lacework balustrade panels. The southern wall comprises a large decorative door case, leading to the former vestry, with open pediment carried on composite columns and flanked by smaller openings, each with an open pediment carried by console brackets with anthemion. The former vestry has been adapted to form an open-plan office, with raked timber-lined ceiling, and bathroom facilities.

The hall retains its rectangular internal form with kitchenette (later) installed to the west wall. The north and east walls are lined with horizontal beaded boards and moulded timber dado line with vertical lining boards below. The north wall contains a glazed sliding door (later) leading to the entrance addition. The ceiling is of a tray form with exposed tie beams and timber lining boards. The southern entrance addition contains brick floors and timber-lined ceilings. Part of the east wall of the church, internalised by the addition, is overpainted. A set of double doors to the east wall of the former church provide access to the library. The doors have exposed stiles and rails and diagonal timber panels.

Description Images



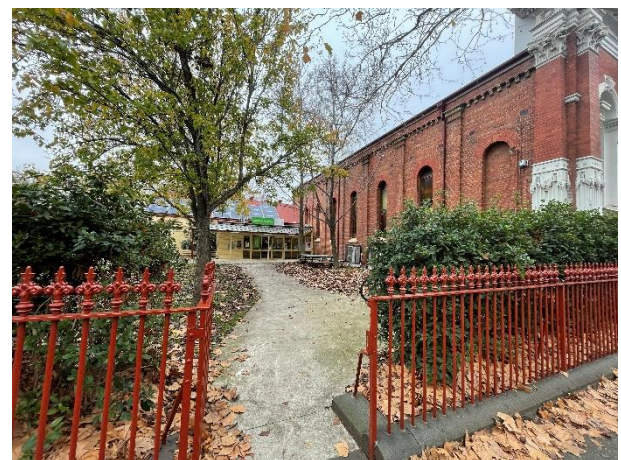
2026, Principal (north) elevation of the Former Church of Christ, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Mannerist classical revival facade, Source: Heritage Victoria. 2026, Mannerist classical revival facade, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Main entrance with later glazed timber infill panels and original doors with diagonal panelling, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Later cast-iron palisade fence on bluestone plinth to the north boundary, garden and hall to rear, Source: Heritage Victoria.



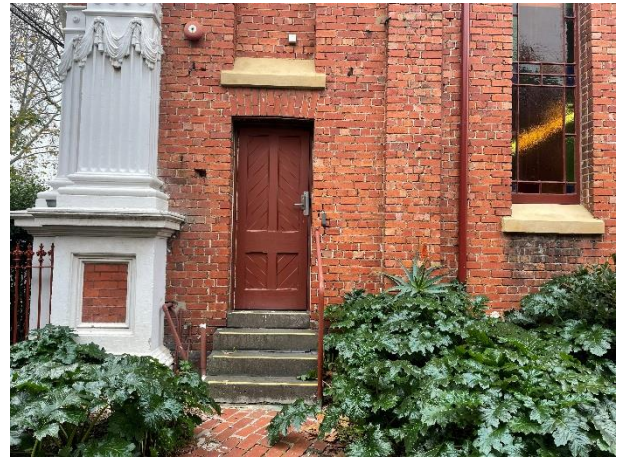
2026, East elevation, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Hall with later entrance addition (left) and east elevation of the Former Church of Christ (right), Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, West elevation Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Northern opening to west elevation, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Southern opening to west elevation, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Rear of the Former Church of Christ, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Former hall with later entrance addition, Source: Heritage Victoria.



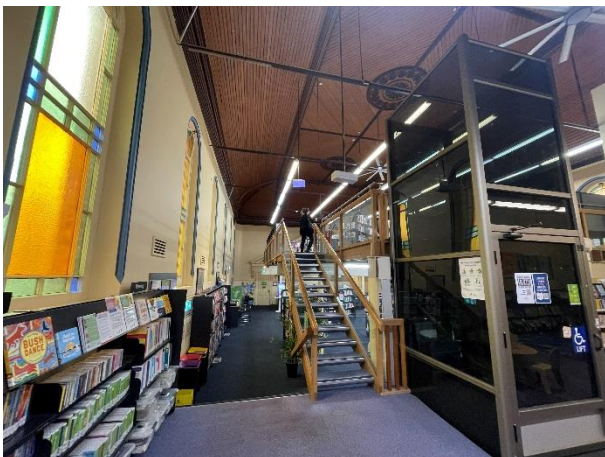
2026, North elevation of hall and later addition (right), Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, East elevation of the hall and brick southern wall, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Junction between the south wall of the hall and rear wall of the former church, Source: Heritage Victoria.



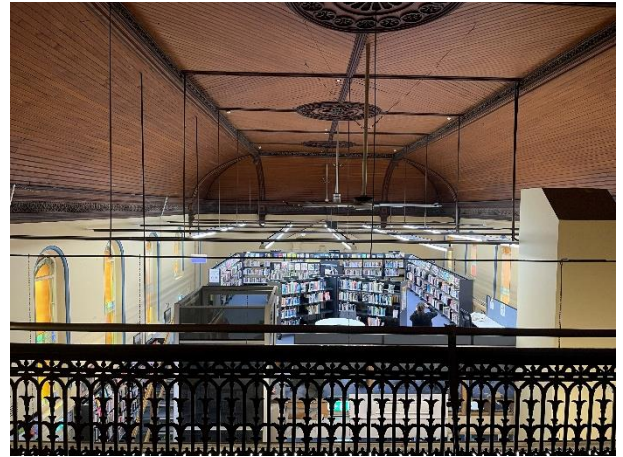
2026, Interior of former church nave with later "floating mezzanine" insertion, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, South wall of nave with decorative door cases, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Interior of the former church nave, Source: Heritage Victoria.



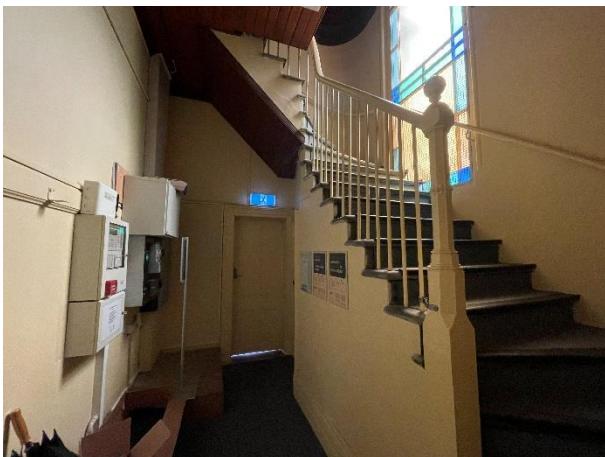
2026, Nave as viewed from the choir stall, Source: Heritage Victoria.



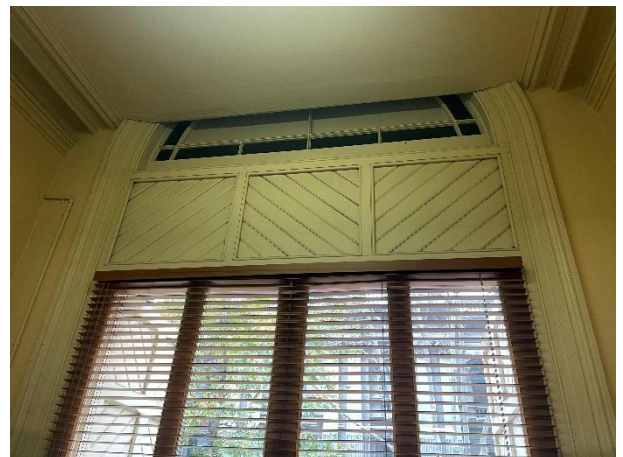
2026, Choir stall with vaulted timber-lined ceiling, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Vaulted timber-lined ceiling with decorative timber ventilators, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Staircase at the northern end of the former church, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Former main entrance of church with concealed fanlight and later glazed infill panels, Source: Heritage Victoria.



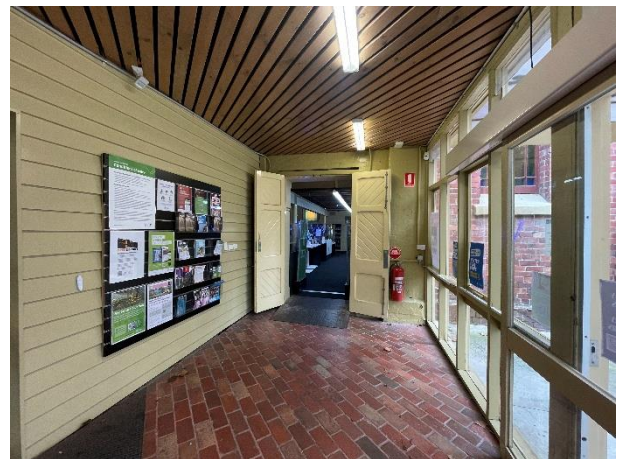
2026, Interior of the hall looking east, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Interior of the hall looking west, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Interior of entrance addition to the hall, Source: Heritage Victoria.



2026, Interior of entrance addition to the hall, looking into the church Source: Heritage Victoria.

History

Statement of Country

The Wurundjeri people have an unbroken connection to the land and waters around Abbotsford from time immemorial. Wurundjeri Country includes the city of Melbourne (Narm) and an area extending north to the Great Dividing Range and beyond, west to the Werribee River, and east to Mount Baw Baw.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission recorded how colonisation brought irreparable damage to First Peoples in Victoria with the introduction of diseases, massacres, dispossession from Country, confinement on missions and reserves, forced labour, separation of families and ongoing policies and practices that perpetuate systemic injustice (Yoorrook Justice Commission 2025).

The Wurundjeri continue to live, work, practise culture and manage land and waters around Abbotsford and the surrounding area.

Establishment of the Church of Christ in Victoria

The Church of Christ is a small denomination with origins among Scottish Baptists who sought the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Their ideas were developed by a Northern Irish Presbyterian minister Thomas Campbell who travelled to North America in 1807. In North America the name 'The Disciples of Christ' was adopted, while the United Kingdom followers took up the name 'The Churches of Christ'. UK migrants introduced the movement to Australia with the first church established in Adelaide in 1846 and a Victorian church founded in August 1855.

The denomination emphasised believers' baptism, congregational governance, and a deliberately simple worship style. Ministers did not use clerical titles or robes, lay members presided over weekly Communion, and evening services traditionally focused on evangelism. Their buildings were typically plain, but unlike other non-conformist denominations it was the Lord's Table—not the pulpit—forming the central focus of the sanctuary (Miles Lewis 1991: 12).

The Church of Christ began in Victoria with the arrival of the Ingram and Picton families from England who established regular meetings in Prahran and officially constituted a congregation in 1855. By 1857 a church was established in Geelong and in 1859 Melbourne followers were meeting at the Russell Street Temperance Hall, while in 1861 a chapel was built in Chapel Street, Prahran. By 1861 there were 12 congregations with a total of 230 members.

Several other congregations were established in the suburbs in the 1860s, including Carlton where a chapel was constructed on Lygon Street in 1865. The church had experienced some growth through the evangelism of TH Milner, visiting from Scotland in 1862, and further expansion with the preaching of Henry S Earl, who arrived from North America in 1864 as the first of a number of American preachers who influenced Churches of Christ in Victoria. In 1881, the Melbourne congregation settled in the former John Knox Presbyterian Church on the corner of Little Lonsdale and Swanston streets, purchasing the building two years later (eMelbourne; Graeme Chapman 1979: 15 online).

The Church of Christ in Collingwood

By 1868 the Lygon Street church was too small to accommodate the congregation and members in the Collingwood area started to hold separate meetings in Foresters Hall on Smith Street. Land was purchased in Langridge Street and a brick church was completed in 1872 (Church of Christ Collingwood 1932: 6).

The 1880s boom period saw greater numbers settle in Melbourne and an expansion of prosperity. At this time, the growing Collingwood congregation 'hoping for a greater field of service and more commodious building, decided upon seeking out a new site' (Church of Christ Collingwood 1932: 6). Land was purchased in Stanton Street and by August 1888 architect Jonathan Rankine advertised for tenders for the erection of a brick chapel in Collingwood (*The Argus* 4 August 1888: 17). In December 1888 Rankine advertised for tenders for 'Kauri pine sittings' for the Church of Christ Collingwood (*The Age* 19 December 1888: 10).

The church was completed by May 1889 when the opening service for the 'new Collingwood Tabernacle' was conducted. It was reported that 'every available seat was filled' to hear addresses from sister churches and witness a baptismal service of nine new members. A celebratory tea meeting was held during the week in the Town Hall, opposite the church, which was attended by about 550 people (*Mercury and Weekly Courier* 16 May 1889: 2).

The church was described as follows in 1932:

A fine imposing Corinthian columned brick structure...and though erected 43 years ago, it stands today as one of the finest buildings in the Brotherhood. It has an imposing façade facing Stanton Street; marble baptistery; seating accommodation for about 600 people. In later years a kindergarten hall has been erected on the land adjoining.

(Church of Christ Collingwood 1932: 8)

The building is believed to have been modelled on the 1682 reredos by Sir Christopher Wren in the Temple Church, London (Andrew Ward and Associates 1989 and 1995: 591). Architect Jonathan Rankine also designed a modest brick chapel for the Church of Christ denomination at Doncaster in 1889 which now forms the western foyer of a larger church building (*The Age* 22 April 1889: 3; Doncaster Church of Christ).

Adjoining hall 1923

In 1923 the church constructed a kindergarten hall for Sunday School purposes to the east of the church. The work was largely carried out by voluntary labour and this, together with delays in approval, resulted in the building eventually opening in 1924 (PROV). In 1954 the church received approval for works to convert the hall to a pre-school centre including renovation of the existing kitchen, addition of office and toilets along the east side of the hall, removal of a window along the northern elevation and replacement with two windows, repairs to windows on the south wall and to the building's foundation and a new floor (PROV).

Use as a library from 1978

The congregation numbers dwindled in the later twentieth century, and the church was purchased by the City of Collingwood in 1976. Council appointed the firm of Daryl Jackson Evan Walker Architects to convert the church and hall building into a municipal library. A new entrance foyer was constructed to the north of the old kindergarten hall. While the original height of the church was retained, a 'floating mezzanine' was added with a glazed balustrade. The original front foyer at Stanton Street along with the vestry were converted into a staff area and librarian's office, while the choir stall was retained. A new glazed screen was added to the front entrance. The rear ante room, kitchen, baptistery and storeroom became a workroom and bathrooms.

Other works to the church included removal of the rood screen, removal of the gallery floor and the sloped floor of the church and replacement with new timber flooring. The hall, renamed the 'Activities area', remained largely unaltered except for repainting (PROV). The refurbished library building, known then as the Carringbush Regional Library, was opened by former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, a longtime public library advocate, on 16 July 1978 (City of Yarra Local History Collection).

Selected bibliography

The Age.

Andrew Ward and Associates, *Collingwood Conservation Study*, 1989.

Andrew Ward and Associates, *Collingwood Conservation Study Review*, 1995.

The Argus.

Chapman, Graeme, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: A History of Churches of Christ in Australia*, Vital Publications, Melbourne, 1979;

https://webfiles.acu.edu/departments/Library/HR/restmov_nov11/www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/qchapman/ONELORD.HTM, accessed online 21 May 2026.

Church of Christ, Collingwood, *Looking Backward Sixty Years, 1872-1932: Diamond Jubilee*, 1932.

Doncaster Church of Christ [website]; <https://www.doncasterchurch.org.au/about/history>, accessed 21 May 2026.

Encyclopedia of Melbourne [online resource], School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008; <https://www.emelbourne.net.au/>, accessed 21 May 2026.

Maston, Aaron Burt, *Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia*, Austral Publishing, 1903.

Mercury and Weekly Courier, William Griffith and John Spaven, Fitzroy, 1878 - 1903.

Phillips, Walter, 'The Denominations' in *Victorian Churches: their origins, their story & their architecture*, Miles Lewis (ed), National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1991.

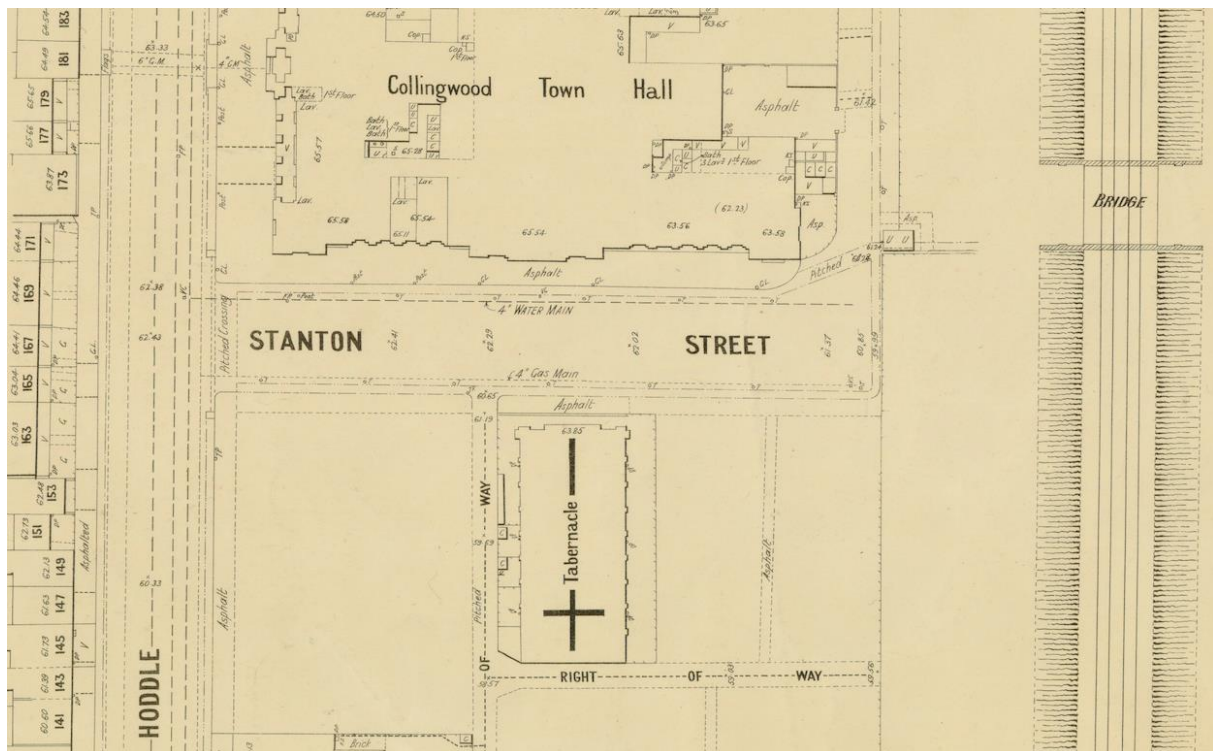
Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Public Building File 1017, VPRS 7882/P0001.

City of Yarra Libraries, Local History Collection, accessed online 21 May 2026.

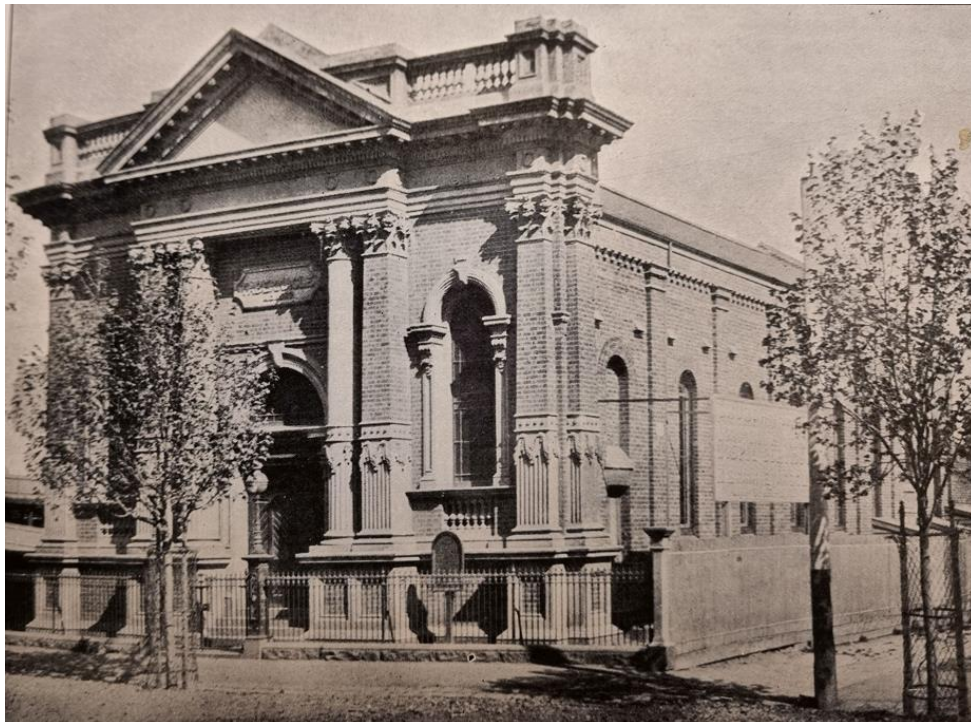
State Library of Victoria, Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) 40 feet to 1 inch Detailed Plans and Picture Collection, images as cited, accessed online 21 May and 6 July 2026.

Victorian Heritage Database (VHD).

Historical images



1901, Excerpt of Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan no. 1313, City of Collingwood showing Church of Christ 'Tabernacle' and Collingwood Town Hall to the north, Source: State Library Victoria, ID 9911657363607636.



c1903, Church of Christ, Collingwood [Abbotsford], Source: AB Maston, 'Jubilee Pictorial History of Churches of Christ in Australasia', hardcopy held by State Library Victoria, ID 991707823607636.



1932, Church of Christ Collingwood [Abbotsford], Source: 'Looking Backward Sixty Years, 1872-1932: Diamond Jubilee, Church of Christ, Collingwood' [Pamphlet], hardcopy held by State Library of Victoria, ID 99753353607636.



1973, Church of Christ, photograph by John Collins, Source: State Library Victoria, ID 9916592743607636.



c1970s, Church of Christ Tabernacle congregation, possibly last day of service, Source: Yarra Libraries, Identifier: CL PIC 410.

Further information

Registered Aboriginal Party information

The Former Church of Christ is located on Wurundjeri Country.

Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the Registered Aboriginal Party for this land is the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

The place is not in an area of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.

(25 August 2026)

Integrity

The integrity of the place is good. The cultural heritage values of the Former Church of Christ can be easily read in the extant fabric.

(8 July 2026)

Intactness

The intactness of the place is good.

(8 July 2026)

Condition

The condition of the place is good.

It is noted that the adjoining hall is in fair condition. It exhibits signs of foundation destabilisation and substantial cracking at the point where the southern brick wall has been toothed into the rear façade of the church (due to insufficient expansion tolerances).

(8 July 2026)

Note: The condition of a place or object does not influence the assessment of its cultural heritage significance. A place or object may be in very poor condition and still be of very high cultural heritage significance. Alternatively, a place or object may be in excellent condition but be of low cultural heritage significance.

Amendment recommendation

State-level cultural heritage significance of the place

The cultural heritage significance of the Former Church of Christ was recognised when it was included in the Historic Buildings Register in 1974. Its State-level cultural heritage significance was confirmed in 1998 when it was transferred into the Victorian Heritage Register.

The Former Church of Christ is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Amendment application

On 26 August 2026 the Executive Director made and accepted an application to amend the registration of the place to ensure it is consistent with current practices under the Act.

Assessment of additional land and summary of significance

The information below is provided under s.40(3A)(c)(i)(ii) and s.40(4)(c)(i)(ii) as part of the Executive Director's Statement of recommendation.

The Executive Director recommends that the Heritage Council amend this registration because it is his view that:

- The State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the additional land or any part of the additional land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed [s.40(3A)(c)(i)].
- The additional land surrounds the place and is important to the protection or conservation of the place; or contributes to the understanding of the place [s.40(3A)(c)(ii)].

The Executive Director notes that:

- The current extent is limited to the fabric of the building and structures, and is insufficient to protect, conserve and allow for a proper understanding of the place.
- The current extent:
 - does not include the land associated with – or surrounding – the buildings on the site has been used in conjunction with the place since 1888.
 - Does not include the garden and bluestone plinth from the earlier palisade iron fence at the front of the property boundary.

The Executive Director is of the view that:

- If any of the additional land proposed for inclusion in the registration were developed, depending upon the nature of the proposal, there is potential for the development to impact upon the place and substantially reduce its State-level cultural heritage significance.
- The proposed inclusion of land associated with the place will provide clarity on the approvals process for works within the place.
- The proposed inclusion of additional land will ensure all fabric that relates to the State-level values of the place are appropriately captured and considered in any process to manage change.

Change of name

Not applicable.

Statutory requirements under section 40

Terms of the recommendation (section 40(3)(a))

The Executive Director recommends that the registration of the Former Church of Christ in the VHR is amended.

Information to identify the place or object or land (section 40(3)(b))

Number: VHR H0141

Category: Registered Place.

Name: Former Church of Christ

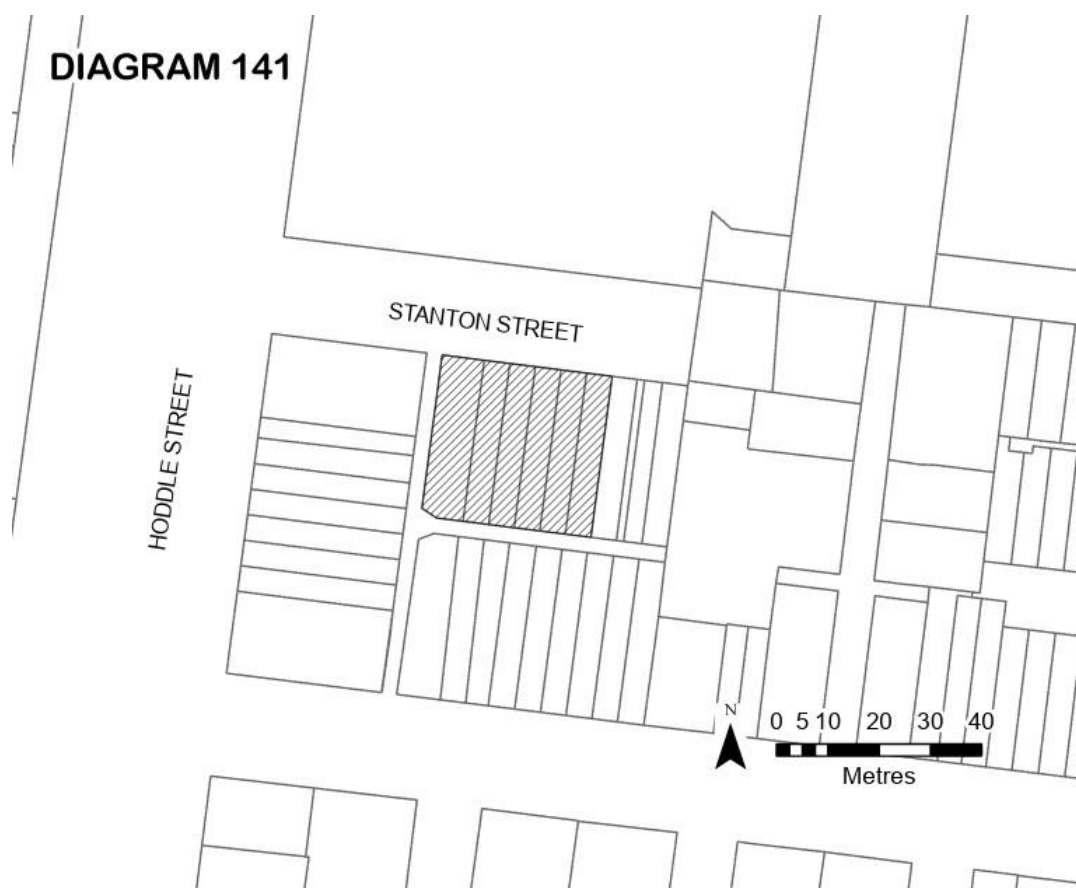
Location: 7-11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford

Municipality: Yarra City

Proposed extent of registration

The Executive Director recommends that the extent of registration for the Former Church of Christ be gazetted as:

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 141 encompassing all of Lots 20-25 on Lodged Plan 1960.



Non-statutory information about the proposed extent of registration

Aerial photo of the place showing proposed extent of registration



The red dashed line indicates the proposed extent of registration.

Note: This aerial view provides a visual representation of the place. It is not a precise representation of the recommended extent of registration. Due to distortions associated with aerial photography some elements of the place may appear as though they are outside the extent of registration.

Rationale for the proposed extent of registration

The recommended extent of registration comprises the Former Church of Christ, built in 1888-89, the attached former Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) constructed in 1923, and the bluestone plinth of the original palisade fence along the northern boundary.

The recommended extent of the registration is the same as the nominated extent of registration.

It should be noted that everything is included in the proposed extent of registration including, the land, all soft and hard landscape features, all plantings, and all buildings (exteriors, interiors and fixtures). A permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria is required for any works within the proposed extent of registration, apart from those identified in the categories of works or activities in this recommendation.

Summary of cultural heritage significance (section 40(4))

Statement of significance

The Former Church of Christ, Abbotsford is located on Wurundjeri Country.

What is significant?

The Former Church of Christ, Abbotsford, designed by architect and congregation member Jonathan Rankine and built in 1888-89, and the attached former Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) constructed in 1923.

How is it significant?

The Former Church of Christ is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Why is it significant?

The Former Church of Christ, Abbotsford, is of historical significance as the most substantial and elaborate nineteenth century example of the denomination's churches in Victoria, expressing the confidence and strength of the Church of Christ in the late nineteenth century, particularly within the predominantly working-class area in which it was built. Reflecting the popularity of evangelical sects amongst the working class at the time, the church illustrates the importance of religion in nineteenth century colonial society. The construction of the former Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) in 1923 demonstrates the importance of providing religious instruction to children in the early twentieth century, while its use as a pre-school from 1955 demonstrates the expansion of pre-school education in postwar Victoria as many Churches, community groups and municipal councils established pre-school facilities. [Criterion A]

The Former Church of Christ, Abbotsford, is architecturally significant for its elaborate and distinctive Mannerist classical revival design by architect Jonathan Rankine, believed to be modelled on the 1682 reredos by Sir Christopher Wren in the Temple Church, London. The building's notable design distinguishes it from other Church of Christ buildings which were typically plainer in appearance. The church's external and internal detailing remains highly intact, providing a fine example of Mannerist classical revival architecture. [Criterion D]

Recommended permit exemptions under section 38

Introduction

A [heritage permit](#) is required for all works and activities undertaken in relation to VHR places and objects. Certain works and activities are [exempt from a heritage permit](#), if the proposed works will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place or object.

Permit Policy

It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan is utilised to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

It is noted that the Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) exhibits signs of foundation destabilisation and substantial cracking at the point where the southern brick wall has been toothed into the rear façade of the church (likely due to insufficient expansion tolerances). Remediation of these issues may require substantial works to the hall structure. The ongoing use of this part of the place for learning is of higher value than the fabric of the hall itself, which is a simple, vernacular structure.

The c1978 entrance to the Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) and former Church is not significant.

Permit Exemptions

General Permit Exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the VHR. General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Act.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Permit Exemptions

The works and activities listed below under the heading 'Exempt works and activities' are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Former Church of Christ. These are subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

Guidelines for specific permit exemptions

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.
7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or

activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.

8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General conditions for specific permit exemptions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Aboriginal Heritage Council (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

Exempt works and activities

Specific permit exemptions include:

1. All works and activities to the “floating mezzanine” installation in the Church nave, including demolition, providing the works and activities do not physically impact the walls, ceilings and decorative internal features (including choir stall).
2. Removal or replacement of main library counter, providing the works and activities do not physically impact the walls, ceilings and decorative internal features (including choir stall).
3. Installation of new bookcases, display cases, wall-hangings and the like, providing attachment points to walls are minimised (floor attachments are acceptable), attachment is not to timber features (including choir stall, staircase and ceiling lining) and decorative features are not damaged or concealed.
4. Removal, replacement or upgrade of existing bathroom, kitchen and office fitouts ensuring no damage or concealment of decorative features.
5. Painting of previously painted internal surfaces.
6. Painting of external timber elements of the Sunday School Kindergarten (hall) and c1978 entrance.
7. All internal works to the c1978 entrance providing the works do not physically impact the Church or Sunday School Kindergarten (hall).
8. Removal, lopping, replacement and planting of new trees and vegetation in the setbacks to the north and west of the buildings. Gardening activities should provide an adequate separation between building fabric and plantings to ensure damp is not trapped against buildings, and watering systems should be directed away from building fabric.
9. Removal, replacement or installation of new tables, seating, bins and other small items of furniture in the front setback to the Sunday School Kindergarten (hall).

Appendix 1: Important information for owners and interested parties

Heritage Council determination (section 49)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body that will make a determination on this recommendation under section 49 of the Act. It will consider the recommendation after a period of 60 days from the date the notice of recommendation is published on its [website](#) under section 41.

Making a submission to the Heritage Council (section 44)

Within the period of 60 days, any person or body may make a submission to the Heritage Council regarding the recommendation and request a hearing in relation to that submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the [Heritage Council's website](#). The owner can also make a submission about proposed permit exemptions (Section 40(4)(d)).

Consideration of submissions to the Heritage Council (section 46)

(1) The Heritage Council must consider—

- (a) any written submission made to it under section 44; and
- (b) any further information provided to the Heritage Council in response to a request under section 45.

Conduct of hearings by Heritage Council in relation to a recommendation (section 46A)

(1) The Heritage Council may conduct a hearing in relation to a recommendation under section 37, 38 or 39 in any circumstances that the Heritage Council considers appropriate.

(2) The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing if—

- (a) a submission made to it under section 44 includes a request for a hearing before the Heritage Council; and
- (b) the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place, object or land that is the subject of the submission.

Determinations of the Heritage Council (section 49)

(1) After considering a recommendation that a place, object or land should or should not be included in the Heritage Register and any submissions in respect of the recommendation and conducting any hearing, the Heritage Council may—

- (a) determine that the place or object is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; or
- (ab) in the case of a place, determine that—
 - (i) part of the place is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; and
 - (ii) part of the place is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or
- (ac) in the case of an object, determine that—
 - (i) part of the object is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; and
 - (ii) part of the object is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or
- (b) determine that the place or object is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or

- (c) in the case of a recommendation in respect of a place, determine that the place or part of the place is not to be included in the Heritage Register but—
 - (i) refer the recommendation and any submissions to the relevant planning authority or the Minister administering the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to consider the inclusion of the place or part of the place in a planning scheme in accordance with the objectives set out in section 4(1)(d) of that Act; or
 - (ii) determine that it is more appropriate for steps to be taken under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or by any other means to protect or conserve the place or part of the place; or
 - (ca) in the case of a recommendation in respect of an object nominated under section 27A, determine that the object, or part of the object, is to be included in the Heritage Register if it is integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of a registered place or a place the Heritage Council has determined to be included in the Heritage Register; or
 - (d) in the case of a recommendation in respect of additional land nominated under section 27B, determine that the additional land, or any part of the additional land, is to be included in the Heritage Register if—
 - (i) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place, or part of the place, would be substantially less if the additional land or any part of the additional land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed; or
 - (ii) the additional land or any part of the additional land surrounding the place, or part of the place, is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place.
- (2) The Heritage Council must make a determination under subsection (1)—
- (a) within 40 days after the date on which written submissions may be made under section 44; or
 - (b) if any hearing is conducted, within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.
- (3) A determination made under subsection (1)(a), (ab), (ac), (ca) or (d)—
- (a) may include categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to a place, object or land, or part of a place, object or land, for which a permit under this Act is not required, if the Heritage Council considers that the works or activities would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place, object or land; and
 - (b) must include a statement of the reasons for the making of the determination.
- (4) If the Heritage Council determines to include a place, or part of a place, in the Heritage Register, the Heritage Council may also determine to include land that is not the subject of a nomination under section 27B in the Heritage Register as part of the place if—
- (a) the land is ancillary to the place; and
 - (b) the person who owns the place, or part of the place—
 - (i) is the owner of the land; and
 - (ii) consents to its inclusion.
- (5) If a member of the Heritage Council makes a submission under section 44 in respect of a recommendation, the member must not take part in the consideration or determination of the Heritage Council.
- (6) The Heritage Council must notify the Executive Director of any determination under this section as soon as practicable after the determination.

Obligations of owners (section 42, 42A, 42B, 42C, 42D)

42 Obligations of owners—to advise of works, permits etc. on foot when statement of recommendation given

- (1) The owner of a place, object or land to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of—

- (a) any works or activities that are being carried out in relation to the place, object or land at the time the statement is given; and
- (b) if the place, object or land is a place or additional land, any application for a planning permit or a building permit, or any application for an amendment to a planning permit or a building permit, that has been made in relation to the place or additional land but not determined at the time the statement is given; and
- (c) any works or activities that are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place, object or land at the time the statement is given.

(2) An advice under subsection (1) must be given within 10 days after the statement of recommendation is given under section 40.

42A Obligations of owners before determination or inclusion in the Heritage Register—to advise of permits

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) an owner of any of the following is given a statement of recommendation—
 - (i) a place or object nominated under section 27;
 - (ii) an object nominated under section 27A;
 - (iii) land nominated under section 27B; and
- (b) any of the following occurs within the statement of recommendation period in relation to the place, object or land—
 - (i) the making of an application for a planning permit or a building permit;
 - (ii) the making of an application for an amendment to a planning permit or a building permit;
 - (iii) the grant of a planning permit or building permit;
 - (iv) the grant of an amendment to a planning permit or building permit.

(2) The owner must advise the Executive Director in writing of—

- (a) the making of an application referred to in subsection (1)(b)(i) or (ii), within 10 days of the making of the application; or
- (b) a grant referred to in subsection (1)(b)(iii) or (iv), within 10 days of the owner becoming aware of the grant.

42B Obligations of owners before determination or inclusion in the Heritage Register—to advise of activities

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) an owner of a place, object or land is given a statement of recommendation; and
- (b) within the statement of recommendation period it is proposed that activities that could harm the place, object or land be carried out.

(2) The owner, not less than 10 days before carrying out the activities, must advise the Executive Director in writing of the proposal to do so.

42C Obligations of owners before determination or inclusion in the Heritage Register—to advise of proposal to dispose

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) an owner of a place, object or land is given a statement of recommendation; and
- (b) within the statement of recommendation period a proposal is made to dispose of the whole or any part of the place, object or land.

(2) The owner, within 10 days after entering into an agreement, arrangement or understanding for the disposal of the whole or any part of the place, object or land, must advise the Executive Director in writing of the proposal to do so.

42D Obligations of owners before determination or inclusion in the Heritage Register—requirement to give statement to purchaser

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) an owner of a place, object or land is given a statement of recommendation; and
- (b) the owner proposes to dispose of the whole or any part of the place, object or land within the statement of recommendation period.

(2) Before entering into an agreement, arrangement or understanding to dispose of the whole or any part of the place, object or land during the statement of recommendation period, the owner must give a copy of the statement of recommendation to the person who, under the proposed agreement, arrangement or understanding, is to acquire the place, object or land or part of the place, object or land.

Owners of places and objects must comply with obligations (section 43)

An owner of a place, object or land who is subject to an obligation under section 42, 42A, 42B, 42C or 42D must comply with that obligation.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units;
 In the case of a body corporate, 240 penalty units.

Appendix 2: Existing registration details

Existing extent of registration

City of Collingwood. No. 141. Church of Christ, Abbotsford, Stanton Street, Abbotsford.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3648]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the *Heritage Act 1995* pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

Existing extent diagram

This registration was gazetted in 1974 without an extent diagram.

Existing statement of significance

Last updated on - March 4, 2024

What is significant?

The former Church of Christ, Abbotsford was designed by architect and congregation member Jonathan Rankine and built in 1888-9 to replace an earlier building in Langridge Street. The church was one of the finest and largest erected by the Australian Brotherhood of the Church of Christ in the 19th century. The Church of Christ Collingwood congregation has disbanded and the building has been sensitively adapted to use as a Municipal Library. The exterior and many of the interior features remain intact.

How is it significant?

The former Church of Christ, Abbotsford is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Church of Christ is of architectural significance for its classical revival facade which is an exceptional and distinctive design. It was modelled on the 1682 reredos by Sir Christopher Wren in the Temple Church, London. The building is an unusual and noteworthy design and appears to have been the only church designed by Jonathan Rankine in Victoria. The Church's exterior and many of the interior features remain intact, providing a fine example of classical revival church architecture, and demonstrating the influence of one of the foremost architects of London's churches, Sir Christopher Wren.

The Church of Christ is of historical significance because its history parallels that of the suburb in which it was built. The grandeur of the church indicates the important place of religion in 19th century colonial society and the popularity of evangelical sects. The church's 20th century history has reflected the struggles of Collingwood and Abbotsford, with congregation sizes declining through wars, depressions and the industrialisation of the area, as well as decentralisation of Melbourne's population after World War Two, until it was converted to a municipal library in the late 1970s.

Existing permit policy and permit exemptions

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.