

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 65 Wills Street Templeton Street DUNKELD

**STUDY NUMBER:** 424

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

**PRECINCT:** Dunkeld

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 9      **SECTION:** 21

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 433J B3; VicRoads 229 S4; located in the south-east corner of Wills and Templeton Street, one block south of the Glenelg Highway.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Former Presbyterian Church, Cnr. Wills & Templeton Street Dunkeld.

**Image Date:** 08/03/03

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the original building including its interiors and the Stapylton tree stump but excluding the modern extensions and all of the land.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The original church was a very simple stone structure in a primitive version of the Gothic revival style. In plan it is approximately 5m x 10m and it is 7m high to the ridge line. There is a vestry at the rear and a later porch at the front. The construction combines bluestone walls with Grampians sandstone quoins. There are no buttresses but the side walls have three lancet windows, now modified on the east elevation for extensions, and the vestry has one. The arches of the windows are treated as simple trefoils. The roofs of the nave, vestry and porch are gabled and clad with corrugated iron. The main gable has a simple finial. The building has been extended on the east side and the interiors have been modified to convert it into a museum and meeting rooms.

The historical collection includes the burnt stump of a tree carved with dates by Granville Stapylton, the second-in-command of Major Mitchell's, when they camped at nearby Lake Repose on 3rd October 1836.

## **HISTORY:**

The land on which the former Presbyterian Church now stands was reserved for that denomination in the original Township of Dunkeld plan. The grant was gazetted in 1864. The present church was built in 1865, the first church to be built in the township. "It resulted from a combined effort by the citizens and was used by all denominations for services in the early years" (Claburn, 26). No architect or builder has yet been associated with it. The first Minister was Rev. Robert Falconer whose charge included Dunkeld, Caramut and Peshurst. In 1869 the Dunkeld congregation left the Presbytery of Mortlake and joined with Cavendish and Karabeal. Other long-serving and significant Ministers include the Rev G D Lee from 1875 until 1903 and Rev. W Chapman from 1909 to 1917. "An amazing record of service was set by Young (1856-1932), who served as church secretary for 52 years. He also served as Shire Councillor for 24 years" (Claburn, 26). In the early twentieth century, Victoria Valley, Victoria Point and Karabeal amalgamated with Panyabyr a new church opening there in 1911. "In 1936 Cavendish transferred to the Balmoral/Harrow Charge and Dunkeld again united with Peshurst. In 1937 Dunkeld inducted its own Minister, Rev James P Gillan. He lived in a rented manse which was burned down during the 1944 fires" (Claburn, 74). In 1944 Rev Gillan resigned and the congregation continued under the Peshurst Minister, Rev F G Faram.

A front porch was added in 1927. The vestry was used as a police station when the original police building was burnt down in the disastrous 1944 bush fires which devastated the township. The building is now used as the museum and meeting rooms of the Dunkeld Historical Society. It contains in its collection the burnt stump of a tree carved with dates by Granville Stapylton, the second-in-command of Major Mitchell's, when they camped at nearby Lake Repose on 3rd October 1836.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

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  
8.8 Remembering the fallen

## **CONDITION:**

The building is in good condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Good degree of integrity externally but compromised internally.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

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## What is significant?

The former Dunkeld Presbyterian Church now houses the Dunkeld and District Historical Society. The building is located in the south-east corner of Wills and Templeton Street, one block south of the Glenelg Highway, in the central grid of the township. The former church is a simple primitive version of the Gothic Revival style, and includes the main church with a vestry at the rear and a later porch at the front. The construction combines bluestone walls with Grampians sandstone quoins. There are no buttresses but the side walls have three lancet windows, now modified on the east elevation for extensions, and the vestry has one. The arches of the windows are treated as simple trefoils. The roofs of the nave, vestry and porch are gabled and clad with corrugated iron. The main gable has a simple finial. The building has been extended on the east side and the interiors have been modified to convert it into a museum and meeting rooms. There has been no architect or builder associated with the design of the structure. In later years, the vestry of the church was used as a police station after the devastating 1944 bushfires which burnt much of the township. In recent years the former church has been used by the Dunkeld and District Historical Society. The Historical Society have placed a collection of historical records and objects within the building, as a museum collection. These include the burnt stump of a tree carved with dates by Granville Stapylton, the second-in-command of Major Mitchell's, when they camped at nearby Lake Repose on 3rd October 1836. The church and the collection survive in good condition, and both retain a high degree of integrity.

## How is it significant?

The former Presbyterian Church is of historical, architectural and social significance to the township of Dunkeld and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant? The former Presbyterian Church is of social significance to the township of Dunkeld as the focus for the strong Presbyterian population who settled the area in the mid to late nineteenth century. Historically, it is significant for demonstrating the strong Presbyterian faith in the Shire. Architecturally, it demonstrates a style of building which is typical of Presbyterian churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of further historical significance is its use after the 1944 bushfires, when the vestry at the rear of the structure was used to house the police station, which had been destroyed by fire. Its use as a historical society is also of historical and social significance, as this provides an important focus for the people of Dunkeld and surrounding districts, and provides a tangible link with the past.

## COMPARISON:

098 St Andrew's Uniting Church, Martin Street, Peshurst  
159 Presbyterian Church and Hall, Coleraine Rd, Balmoral  
20 St Andrew's Uniting Church, Winter Street, Coleraine  
204 Presbyterian Church Site, Hamilton-Port Fairy Road, Byaduk  
214 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Monroe Street, Braxholme

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

06-Mar-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Clabburn, Elise, et al.	Dunkeld and District: A Short History	1989	26
Walter Phillips, in Miles Lewis, ed.	Victorian Churches, their origins, their story & their architecture	1991	8-19