

## FORMER INDEPENDENT CHURCH



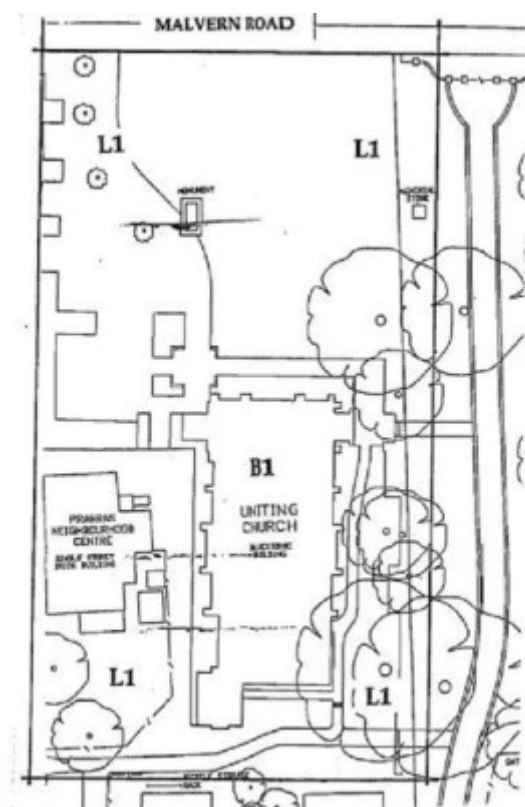
FORMER INDEPENDENT  
CHURCH SOHE 2008



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1 former independent church  
malvern road armadale west  
elevation feb1994



h01022 plan h1022

### Location

246 MALVERN ROAD PRAHRAN, STONNINGTON CITY

### Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1022

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO75

## VHR Registration

May 19, 1994

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 10, 1999

What is significant?

The Former Independent Church in Malvern Road Prahran was built in 1858-9 in bluestone with cement dressings, to the design of Thomas J Crouch and Ralph Wilson. It was intended to be completed in stages but never reached its designed final form, which was to include a masonry chancel and a tower. A wooden porch designed by CE Connop in 1886 provides entry in what was to be the tower base, and there is a timber extension at the east end, between the church and vestry, which probably dates from 1914. The church was part of the independent church complex consisting of the basalt church and vestry, the Hawthorn brick vestry passage and associated timber structures, and the Hawthorn brick Sunday school.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

The Former Independent Church is of architectural significance as one of the earliest designs of Crouch and Wilson whose partnership was formed in 1858. Crouch and Wilson's ecclesiastical and institutional designs were extremely influential in 1860s and 1870s Victoria, and this church is particularly interesting as a progenitor of their later work. Subsequent important works by this partnership include the Mickva Yisrael Synagogue in Albert Street, Eastern Hill and the Methodist Mission Church in Little Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The Former Independent Church is of architectural significance for its sloping floor, perhaps the first use of a feature that was later widely used in non-conformist churches. The sloping floor was designed to provide good sight lines from the congregation to the preacher, emphasising the function of the church as an inclusive meeting place rather than a place in which a mystery was celebrated.

The Former Independent Church is of historical significance as a symbol of the development of organised religion in Victoria, and particularly of the Independent (or Congregationalist) Church. It occupies an important position in the history of the Independent church in Victoria because it was an early off-shoot of the original two Independent

Churches in Melbourne. The Malvern Road church was built to cope with the overflowing congregation from the first place of Independent Church worship in Prahran, a chapel at the nearby corner of what is now Chapel Street, the thoroughfare whose name commemorates that first place of worship.

The Former Independent Church is of historical significance as evidence of the growth of early Melbourne. The growth in the size of church congregations that led to the construction of this church reflects the growth of Prahran, as Melbourne's suburbs rapidly expanded in the middle decades of the 19th century. The later works, comprising the organ chamber (1869) and the vestry and related rooms at the rear of the church (1878), are representative of the staged development of expanding suburban congregations. These staged developments and the fact that Crouch and Wilson's design for an imposing tower at the front of the church was never realised reflect the financial constraints within which such congregations had to function, particularly in the early years of suburban expansion.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (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 Heritage Act 2017.

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 of Heritage Victoria 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 of Heritage Victoria 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](#).

Construction dates	1859,
Architect/Designer	Crouch & Wilson,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	2947
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

One of the first metropolitan independent churches, but pre-dated by many in provincial towns, especially on the

goldfields. The church was designed to enable as many people to see and hear the preacher as possible, and reflected the non-conformist reaction to high church practice. For non-conformists the teachings of the Gospel was more important than the celebration of the eucharist.

## **Plaque Citation**

The Former Independent Church was built in 1858-59. It is of architectural significance as one of the earliest designs of Crouch and Wilson and for its sloping floor which emphasised the church's function as an inclusive meeting place. It is of historical significance as a symbol of the development of organised religion in Victoria, and particularly of the Independent (or Congregationalist) Church

## **Extent of Registration**

### **AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

Historic Building No. 1023.

Former Independent Church, 246 Malvern Road, Prahran.

(To the extent of:

All of the building known as the former Independent Church marked B1 on Plan No. 603452, signed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council; and

All of the land marked L1 on Plan No. 603462 signed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 8705, Folio 106.)

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G20 19 May 1994 p.1232]

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*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/>*