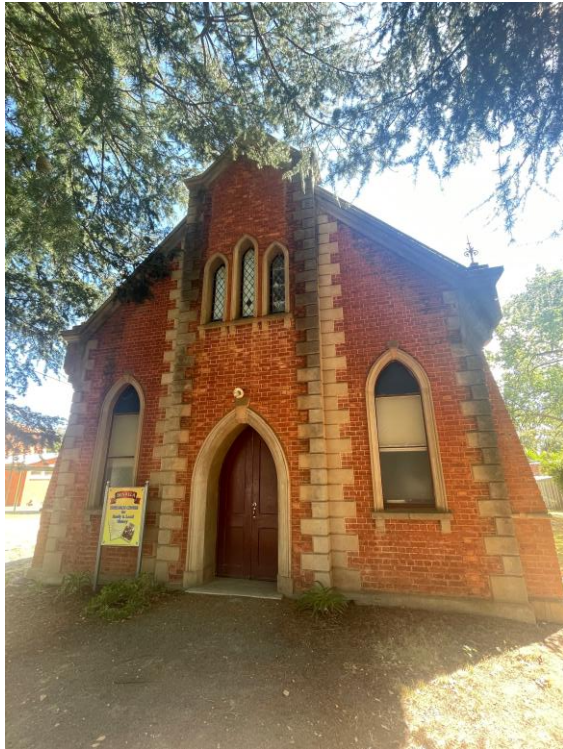


Place Citation HO13
Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

Address	3 Church Street, BENALLA		
Heritage Overlay	HO13		
Heritage Overlay Map			
Designer/s	Unknown	Dates	c1866 Presbyterian Church Turn of the century vestry 1958 Church Hall
Significance	Local	Builder/s	Unknown
Heritage Overlay Map	The application of the heritage overlay map to the full title area is supported.	Survey Date	March 2024

Place Citation H013
Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla



3 Church Street Benalla – façade



Window detail



North elevation

Place Citation HO13
Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla



South elevation



View to the hall to the rear of the church

Place Citation HO13
Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla



Church Hall



Rear and side elevations of the church hall

Statement of Significance 1992

(Source: Trevor Budge and Associates, *City of Benalla Conservation Study*, 1992)

The former Presbyterian Church is of historical significance for its links with the Presbyterian community in Benalla and as the most intact mid-Victorian church in the City (compare "Holy Trinity"). It is a prominent and very early building in the Central Benalla historic area, recalling the former Primitive Methodist Church and Salvation Army Barracks which together with the Wesleyan Church collectively gave rise to the change in street name from Barrack Street to Church Street. It is of architectural distinction in that it successfully combines Italianate detail with a predominantly neo Gothic composition.

Place Citation HO13

Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

The following Statement of Significance has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay, (2018)

Assessment against criteria

The following analysis is based on Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

3 Church Street Benalla, the former Presbyterian Church, vestry and church hall are significant.

The context as provided by the setting contributes to its significance.

The two *Cedrus deodara* trees are significant.

Significant fabric includes, but is not confined to:

- the original form, fabric and scale of the former church building; and
- architectural features that include: the break front with its classical profile architraves to the openings and a surmounting pedimented motif; wrought iron finials; buttresses with their unusual canted and stepped upper sections; lancet windows and pointed openings for the doors; timber doors; Gothic Revival form of the c1866 nave and the attached vestry to the rear;
- the original form, fabric and scale of the church hall; and
- mid-twentieth century architectural features such as the fenestration styling and detailing and the distinctive cross within the original glazing to the north of the projecting wing.

The former church and attached vestry to the rear is substantially intact and has largely retained its original form.

Place Citation HO13
Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

The church hall is substantially intact and it has largely retained its original form.

Alterations to the 1866 Church from the mid twentieth century and later are not significant.

Alterations to the 1958 church hall from the c1980s and later are not significant.

How is it Significant?

3 Church Street Benalla, the former c1866 Presbyterian Church, vestry to the rear and church hall are of local historical and aesthetic cultural heritage significance to the Benalla Rural City.

Why is it Significant?

3 Church Street Benalla, the former Presbyterian Church is of historical significance as it provides evidence of the early settlement of Benalla. It is an early example of the shift away from Benalla West to Benalla East. (Criterion A)

3 Church Street Benalla, the former Presbyterian Church is of historical significance as it is one of the earliest surviving buildings from the initial settlement of Benalla. It is the only surviving church that was once part of a group of religious buildings within Church Street that included: the former Primitive Methodist Church; the Salvation Army Barracks and the Wesleyan Church. This group of buildings collectively gave rise to the change in street name from Barrack Street to Church Street. (Criterion A)

3 Church Street Benalla, the former Presbyterian Church hall built in 1958, provides evidence of increased prosperity and population growth associated with the post-war development of Benalla. It is one of a number of distinguished mid twentieth century buildings that were constructed in Benalla during the post war period. (Criterion A)

The two Cedrus deodar trees are of historical significance as they contribute to the nineteenth fabric of this place. These trees were popularised during the nineteenth century by botanists of the period both for their botanical values as well as their aesthetic form. (Criterion A)

3 Church Street Benalla, the former Presbyterian Church is of aesthetic significance for its combination of Italianate detail within a predominantly Gothic Revival composition. Significant features include: the steeply pitched gable front and roof with wrought iron finials located on the frontage to each side of the gable; the tuck pointed brick work with cement quoins in the Italianate manner; the break front with classical profile architraves to the openings and the surmounting pedimented motif; the timber door; timber windows with lancet heads with later timber sashes and frames and the brick buttresses with an unusual canted and stepped upper sections. (Criterion E)

3 Church Street, Benalla the former 1958 church hall is of aesthetic significance for its distinctive mid-twentieth century design. Significant features include: a notable glazed walling feature with rendered columns and the finely executed cross to the south window of the entrance wing and the large glazed areas of walling with rendered columns. (Criterion E)

The two Cedrus deodar are of aesthetic significance for their scale and maturity. They contribute to the setting of the nineteenth century church. (Criterion E)

Additional Controls

External paint controls apply	Yes
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Place Citation HO13

Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

Internal alteration controls apply	No
Tree controls apply The two <i>Cedrus deodara</i> trees to the front of the church.	Yes
Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-4	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017	No
Prohibited uses permitted	Yes
Aboriginal heritage place	No
Solar energy system controls apply	Yes

Description

The Gothic Revival church (c1866) and the later vestry (c1871) constructed to the rear of the church, occupy the eastern end of the site. The Church Hall is located mid-way between the c1866 Church and the later 1905 Church occupies the corner (western end) of the site.

The c1866 church is constructed from face red brick on a granite plinth. The later vestry having a brick plinth with stucco finish. The roofs of both buildings are clad in galvanised corrugated iron sheeting. The form of the c 1866 building is characterised by its steeply pitched pitched gable front and roof with wrought iron finials located on the frontage on each side of the gable. The front elevation is tuck pointed with cement quoins in the Italianate manner. It is break fronted with classical profile architraves to the openings and a surmounting pedimented motif. The door openings with timber doors and the windows have lancet heads with later timber sashes and frames. The brick buttresses have an unusual canted and stepped upper sections. Despite the Italianate decorative features the entire composition expresses a Gothic style.

The integrity of the place is good as it has largely retained much of its original fabric.

Externally the former Presbyterian Church remains mostly intact, the only exception being the timber framed windows that have been replaced. Internally, the building has been modified to suit its use as a venue for the 'Benalla and District Family Research Centre'. However, most of the early timber joinery and detailing is intact.

Church Hall

The building added to the rear of the church is rudimentary but follows a Gothic type form with its plain face brickwork and steeply pitched gable roof. The rough cast render section to the rear appears to be a later addition to the building. The building has timber framed sash windows to each side with a roof clad in galvanised corrugated iron sheet and two ventilation chimneys on the roof ridge. The building is linked to the church via open covered walk ways along concrete paths with steel column and corrugated metal sheet pitch roof.

The Church hall was constructed in 1958 and has a typical mid-twentieth century expression. The main central block has two projecting sections facing into Church Street and one to the rear (north). The main

Place Citation HO13

Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

central block is constructed from face red brick with a pitched gable roof that is clad with corrugated metal. The walling includes a brick plinth with large glazed sections with vertical cream rendered columns.

The large projecting gable roofed entrance wing is constructed from red face brick and the south window is defined by a large cross.

General History

In the late 1840s, land was granted within Benalla for the Church of England, Catholic, and Wesleyan congregations to build churches. The Presbyterians were omitted from these land grants, and it was not until the 1850s, when agricultural and pastoral land was sold, that these congregations were able to support a permanent clergy and the building of churches. The first Presbyterian service was held in Benalla in 1856 and was conducted by the visiting Rev. Dr. Nish of Bendigo. The first service was to be held in the Court House, however floods prevented would-be worshippers from crossing the river and so the first Presbyterian service in Benalla was removed to a room at the Commercial Hotel. By 1857, the Melbourne Presbytery had settled Rev. A. Grahame in the area with a charge that reached from Mansfield to Yarrawonga, and in 1865, the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria announced the appointment of the Rev. R. McNulty to the united congregations of Benalla and Mansfield. The induction service was held at the Court House in Benalla as the Presbyterian congregation was still without a church. However, town plans at the time show that in 1865, the Presbyterians received Crown Grant allotment 12, section G, which is the parcel of land on which the former Presbyterian Church presently stands.

The former church building, despite not being provided for in the initial land grants of 1849, was the most prominently located in church in Benalla, with a frontage that looked down Mair Street to the Melbourne to Sydney Road. Erected in 1866, the church was a small red brick construction in an early English Gothic style. By 1870, the Presbyterian congregation in Benalla had grown sufficiently to warrant a full-time minister in Rev. Alex Murdoch. A manse was constructed next door to the church (on land now occupied by the 1958 church hall), and the church vestry was built to the north to accommodate the growing congregation. An article in 'The Benalla Ensign' in April 1871 comments on the new additions: *The Presbyterian Church in Benalla is making good progress towards completion. The latest step in this direction is comfortably seating the church [...] The manse is likewise completed, and the Rev. Mr. Murdoch and his family have entered into possession.* The following year, a bell was gifted to the church by William McKellar, the first permanent squatter in the district.

It was one of the early buildings of the Central Benalla historic area, sharing a street frontage with the Salvation Army Barracks, Primitive Methodist Church and Wesleyan Church, culminating in the name change from Barrack Street to Church Street. Despite the 1871 additions to the church, the congregation had grown too large for the 1866 church. In May 1905 the foundation stone was laid for the new brick church, which was opened in October of the same year. The early church was then used as a Sunday school.

Source: Trevor Budge and Associates, *City of Benalla Conservation Study*, 1992

Place History

This church is believed to have been erected in 1866, possibly during the incumbency of the Rev. R. McCully. On 1.4.1871 *The Benalla Ensign* reported that the church was "approaching completion" (possibly a reference to the northern additions). It was replaced by the present church in 1905.

The Church Hall was constructed in 1958.

Place Citation HO13

Former Presbyterian Church 3 Church Street Benalla

Source: Trevor Budge and Associates, *City of Benalla Conservation Study*, 1992