

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN MANSE (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Monroe Street BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 211

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** Branxholme

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** part 4, **SECTION:** 12 **PARISH:** PARISH OF BRANXHOLME  
5 & 6

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 473 J; VicRoads 223 S3, about 75 metres from the north east corner of Brown and Monroe Streets, in the township of Branxholme.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** State



St Andrews Presbyterian Manse (former), Monroe St, Branxholme

**Image Date:** 15/01/03

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the building including the interiors and the Minister's desk and bookcase, and all the land.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Plan of house is unusual in that it has a transverse passage, and apparently an old-fashion plan. It is similar to that of Yarra Cottage, one of the first substantial houses built in Melbourne, designed by Robert Hoddle in 1839. It is also similar to the plan of St Andrew's Manse, at Port Fairy which was designed by the local architect, James Mason in 1854 and built in 1856.

## **HISTORY:**

The Presbyterian Church was the first formal place of worship to be erected in Branhholme. Prior to this, church services of all denominations were held in the school house at varying intervals.

In early to mid 1861, meetings were held regarding the establishment of a Presbyterian Church in Branhholme, and in July, the present site in Monroe Street was purchased and a subscription list opened. At this time, tender was sought for the building of a stone church in Branhholme. Ewan McNaughton, a local builder made the successful tender, and the foundation stone for the Church was laid on the 18th of November, 1861. The ceremony included many influential individuals, including John McKellar of Ardachy, The Rev. Dr. Cairn of Melbourne and Rev. Angus MacDonald of Hamilton.

The Trustees of the Church reported to the Presbytery at Hamilton in June 1862 that their new church was ready to be opened, but they required a permanent minister and a manse for his accommodation. Although there was some delay in obtaining a minister, church services started on June 15, 1862, preaching English in the morning and Gaelic in the afternoon.

In the initial weeks of the church, there was some dispute as a part of the congregation broke away from the Church as they wished to call a minister from Scotland to preach in Gaelic. It was eventually decided that this would take too long and in 1863 the permanent minister, Reverend J. McRoberts was inducted in 1863, about the same time the manse was finished. Mrs. McRoberts also began the Presbyterian Sunday School for children which she ran until 1875.

Early in 1875, Rev. McRoberts health began to fail, and he resigned from his position in October. He died at the Manse in February 1876, and the Reverend Charles Thomson (M.A) was inducted in October 1876. Rev. Thomson remained at Branhholme for only four years, after which he resigned.

The Rev William C. Wallace, the Principal of Hamilton Ladies' College was the minister for the Branhholme Presbyterian Church between 1881 and 1905. Wallace was Moderator of Victoria, and had a keen interest in the progress of the district. Wallace was responsible for much of the 'beautification' of Branhholme, in his time there he organised huge numbers of oaks, elms, poplars and other European trees to be planted in the streets and public areas. He also was a principal player in the draining of the Condah swamp, now named Wallacedale in his honour.

## **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
- 8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## **CONDITION:**

The house is in poor condition with serious failings in the roof slates, cracking in some walls and other minor

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failures.

## **INTEGRITY:**

High degree of integrity externally and internally.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The former Presbyterian Manse was constructed in 1863, shortly after the adjacent church, and possibly by the same local builder, Ewan McNaughton. The architect is said to have been James Henry Fox of Hamilton. The manse is a simple bluestone house in the vernacular colonial style, symmetrical about the front door, with a low pitched hipped roof, still covered in slate, and a timber verandah, formerly covered in slate and now covered in corrugated iron. The house retains its original fenestration throughout, which, on the facade, demonstrates a particularly late use of french doors with finely subdivided glazing. The reception room on the north side, and adjacent to the church, was the Minister's study. Importantly, the Minister's desk and bookcase survive as built-in furniture between the chimney breast and the inside wall. The first Minister was Reverend J. McRoberts. The detached kitchen also survives, linked by a later vestibule, and is of interest because it stands beside rather than behind the house. Minor alterations have occurred internally, such as the relining of ceilings. A verandah was added in historic times across the rear of the main wing. The manse is significantly intact but is in only fair condition.

How is it significant?

The former St Andrew's Manse is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria and the Shire of Southern Grampians.

Why is it significant?

The former St Andrew's Presbyterian Manse is of historical significance as the residence associated with the former St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and of architectural significance for its very conservative style, plan and form, its intact interiors and especially the Minister's desk and bookcase and as an example of the work of Hamilton architect, James Henry Fox..

## **COMPARISON:**

237 St Andrew's Presbyterian Manse (Former), Martin Street, Penshurst  
H850 St Andrews Presbyterian Manse (Former), Albert Street, Port Fairy

## **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
	Presbyterian Church Branhholme, Victoria: 1862-1962 Outline History on the occasion of the Church's centenary	1962	
Agnes V. Walter	Branholme 1843-1973	1973	27