

Statement of Significance: St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church, 583 Orrong Road, Armadale (March 2022)

Heritage Place: St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church, Armadale

PS ref no: HO87



(Source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021)

What is significant?

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church (formerly St Alban's Anglican Church) at 583 Orrong Road, Armadale is significant. The church site, comprising a substantial 1898 brick Gothic Arts and Crafts church with a 1963 brick tower and an 1885 late Victorian timber hall, is of local heritage significance. The interior of the 1898 brick Gothic Arts and Crafts church, inclusive of the polychrome brickwork, vaulted timber ceiling, organ, wrought iron sanctuary rails, arcade and arched doors is also significant. The front fence, garden shed and later alterations and addition are not significant.

How is it significant?

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church is of local historical, aesthetic and associative significance, as well as possessing rarity value to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church is historically significant as the first Arts and Crafts church in Victoria. (Criterion A)

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church is rare as one of the few Arts and Crafts churches constructed in Victoria during the late 19th century. (Criterion B)

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church is aesthetically significant as an intact example of a Gothic Arts and Crafts church. External and internal features of special interest include: the lancet leadlight windows, organ, vaulted timber ceiling, wrought iron sanctuary rails, arcade, arched doors, brick polychrome diaper patterning externally and internally, and general external form defined by a lofty nave and chancel under an unbroken gable roof ridge, tall clerestory and octagonal turrets. The original timber hall on the western side of the site has high integrity and is also aesthetically significant as a late Victorian weatherboard hall. (Criterion E)

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church is significant for its association with the renowned architect Walter Richmond Butler, of the firm Inskip and Butler. In addition to Butler's evident influence on the design of St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church, the church is also associated with

other architects including Wynstan Widdows who designed the tower and Louis Williams who designed the alter and reredos. (Criterion H)

Primary source

St John & St Verena's Coptic Orthodox Church, 583 Orrong Road Armadale, Citation Report, Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, March 2022.