

# SACRED HEART CHURCH, HALL AND PRESBYTERY



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SOHE 2008



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1 sacred heart church  
presbytery & hall st kilda  
church front view aug1984



sacred heart church hall & presbytery plan

## Location

83-87 GREY STREET ST KILDA, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## **Municipality**

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1765

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO146

## **VHR Registration**

December 3, 1998

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - April 1, 1999

### What is significant?

Designed by Reed, Henderson and Smart, the Baroque style Sacred Heart Church was built in 1884. The church was extended and the sanctuary added in 1922 to designs by the architect WP Connolly. The original Italianate campanile was also replaced by a German Baroque style tower of 36 metres with ox-bow parapet and copper dome surmounted by a statue of Christ. The church is constructed in brown face brickwork with stucco mouldings and a slate roof. The symmetrical front facade features a Tuscan order portico flanked by arch headed windows, deep buttresses and niches and blind oculi which continue around the sides. The interior has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and lunette windows in the blind arcading. The walls are decorated with stencilled and painted decoration believed to date from the 1940s and incorporating part of a decorative scheme by G & W Dean of 1901. The Carrara marble altar was built in 1909 to a Romanesque design by Kempson & Connolly. The pipe organ was built by Fincham & Son in 1909-10.

The hall and presbytery, built in 1901, were designed by W. P. Connolly of Kempson & Connolly in a style which harmonised with the church. The hall is constructed of red face brickwork on a bluestone plinth and has stucco mouldings and a slate roof. The detail of crosses at the main corners and at the top of the pediments used on the church is repeated on the facade of the hall. The red brick presbytery has arch-headed windows, terracotta ridging, finials on its slate roof and a double-storeyed, timber post and cast iron verandah. The presbytery's front fence has red brick posts and base with cast iron panel infill. The hall and former presbytery are now occupied by the Sacred Heart Mission.

### How is it significant?

Sacred Heart Church, Presbytery and Hall are of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the state of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

Sacred Heart Church is of architectural significance as the first church built by the Roman Catholics in Victoria using an Italian Renaissance Baroque style. The church is of critical importance in Roman Catholic architectural

history as it marks the shift from the Gothic Revival towards Renaissance and Baroque essays in red brick with cement dressings. It is only a year or two after important Roman Catholic churches were built in a Renaissance style in London, Paris and Dublin.

Sacred Heart Church is of aesthetic significance for the quality of its decoration and fixtures and fittings. The barrel-vaulted ceiling, nave, and sanctuary feature extensive painted and stencilled decoration and use of gold leaf reflecting the Catholic Italianate tradition of expressing holiness through a richness of ornament. The High Altar is an outstanding example of Romanesque design. The white Carrara marble is relieved by panels of Loanizer marble from Siena, with columns of richly veined Borenore and Fernbrook marbles from Australia. The sanctuary also contains two works of art in mosaic and a tabernacle with golden doors decorated with grapes and wheat and bordered with semi-precious stones. The side altars of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady are outstanding examples of work in marble. The marble lectern in the sanctuary and the marble altar rail are important features. The stained glass windows were the first Classical style glass to be used in Catholic churches in Victoria.

Sacred Heart Church, Presbytery and Hall are historically significant for their association with the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria. The church with its spacious barrel-vaulted nave and broad side arcading in the Italianate style allowed for bigger congregations and better views of the increasingly grand and solemn ceremonies and rituals of the expanding Catholic church of the 1880s. The rich Baroque decoration of the church symbolises the influence of Rome on the Catholic Church in Australia. The generally intact and cohesive complex built in stages reflects the development of the church until its present day role as an important welfare organisation.

## 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](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the

place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior of church:

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

#### Interior of church:

- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings, except in the sanctuary.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

#### Hall:

The proposed alteration and addition to the food preparation area, cool room and store situated at the rear of the hall, as shown in the attached plan, is permit exempt, providing that it is single storey and that the small, west-facing gable-roofed section at the rear is retained.

#### Exterior of hall:

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

#### Interior of hall:

- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.

- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms and toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Exterior of presbytery (including front fence):

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.

Interior of presbytery:

- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates	1884,
Architect/Designer	Reed Henderson & Smart,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	3465

## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

The Catholic Church began its mission in St Kilda in 1853 at their Dandenong Road site. In the early 1880s, the St Kilda Mission sought to establish another centre of religious life in the centre of St Kilda and bought land in Grey street. The building of Sacred Heart Church commenced in April 1884 to a design by architects Reed, Henderson & Smart. The Archbishop laid the foundation stone on 13 July 1884 and Fr Corbett dedicated the church on 7 December 1884. The church was almost complete at that stage except for the side aisles. The church originally had a hip-roofed campanile which was replaced in 1922 by a German Baroque style tower with ox-bow parapet and copper dome.

In 1901 a wealthy parishioner paid for a complete redecoration of the church and some of this stencilled and painted decoration by G. & W. Dean has survived. The statue of St Anthony of Padua was donated in 1901. In 1909 the Carrara marble altar was built to a Romanesque design by Kempson & Connolly. The white Sicilian marble is relieved by panels of Loanizzer marble and pillars of Fernbrock marble (both Australian).

The pipe organ was built by Fincham & Son in 1909-10 and features a detached console, tubular pneumatic action and electric blowing.

Work commenced in 1922 on extensions to the church. The architect W. P. Connolly, a parishioner, was engaged. A fire broke out 23 March 1922 causing a great deal of damage, particularly to the ceiling. The church was extended, the campanile was replaced and a statue of Christ with his hands raised in blessing was installed on top of the dome. The stained glass used in the extensions is made with lighter glass than the original windows. The Archbishop opened the extended church which could seat 1000 people in November 1922. The church had eventually cost £17,500.

On 28 July 1901 Father McKenna laid the memorial stones and officially opened the hall and the presbytery. The buildings were designed by W. P. Connolly of Kempson & Connolly in a style which harmonised with the church.

Sacred Heart church is the first church built in Victoria for the Catholic Church using an Italian Renaissance style. It was radically different from the Gothic Revival churches of the day. Why the style was chosen is not clear. One reason for its adoption could have been that the Italianate style of church allowed for larger congregations and better views of ceremonies and processions which were becoming more spectacular in the 1880s and featured the use of mixed choirs singing the classical masses of Bach and Mozart. The wagon headed nave ceiling had good acoustic properties.

### COMPARISON:

Sacred Heart, Rathdowne Street, Carlton, 1897 H16. Designed by Reed, Smart and Tappin, this is the second classically styled church built in Victoria for the Catholics and the finest full-blown red brick Baroque church design in Victoria.

St Joseph's, Benalla, 1907-08 H845. This distinctive red brick church, designed by Kempson and Connolly, is in a style between the Baroque and Romanesque with pinnacles of almost a Moghul character and a wavy parapet suggestive of the influence of Robert Haddon. The church was gutted by fire in 1989 and has had a colourbond roof installed.

St Joseph's, Stanhope Street, Malvern, 1908. Designed by Augustus Fritsch, this is one of Victoria's most dramatic churches in the red brick and cement manner. While the details of the church are basically Romanesque, there is much of a Renaissance or Baroque character about the design.

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

## NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1765 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Sacred Heart Church, Presbytery and Hall, 87 Grey Street, St Kilda, Port Phillip City Council.

### EXTENT:

1. All of the buildings forming the Sacred Heart Church complex, St Kilda marked as follows on Diagram 604518:

B1 Church

B2 Presbytery

B3 Hall

S1 Presbytery brick fence to Grey Street.

2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 604518 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificates of Title Volume 1418 Folio 471, Volume 4201 Folio 032 and Volume 9495 Folio 595.

Dated: 19 November 1998.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 48 3 December 1998 p.2939]

*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/>*