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# ST OLIVER PLUNKETT CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## Location

314 GAFFNEY STREET,, PASCOE VALE VIC 3044 - Property No 43091

## Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO224

## Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2008

St Oliver Plunkett's Church, 314 Gaffney Street, Pascoe Vale, is of local architectural Significance and historical interest. Architecturally, the church is a particularly assured example of the influence of the Classical Revival on post-War ecclesiastical architecture. The church makes an important contribution to the streetscape. The association of the building with stained glass artist Alan Sumner is also of interest.

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Moreland - City of Moreland Heritage Review, Allen Lovell and Associates, 1999;<br>Moreland - City of Coburg Heritage Conservation & Streetscape Study, Timothy Hubbard Pty Ltd, 1991; |
| Construction dates        | 1959,                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Architect/Designer        | Robertson, Alan G & Associations,                                                                                                                                                      |
| Hermes Number             | 59033                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Property Number           |                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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## Physical Description 1

St Oliver Plunkett Church is a large cream brick church building with a dark brown brick plinth. Its style is Modern, but with elements of restrained Classical Revival. The Architect was Alan Gerard Robertson and it is a representative sample of his mature work. The church stands out as a particularly fine example of the materials used, the quality of its detailing and fittings and dramatic geometric form. The front elevation comprises a projecting central section with a central cross surmounted by a statue and flanked by pairs of entrance doors, reached by a wide staircase. The aluminium-framed windows are set between slender tiled piers. Beside the staircase is an almost freestanding circular chapel of dark brown brick with long narrow windows and a slender metal-clad spire.

The sacramental planning is traditional with an axial emphasis on the altar. The side altars, baptistry, confessionals and stations of the cross support this planning. Unusually for a Catholic Church of the time there is an upper level choir reached from stairs within the church.

Despite its wedge-shaped plan, the sacramental planning of the church is traditional, with an axial emphasis on the altar. The side altars, baptistry, confessionals and Stations of the Cross support this planning. Unusual for a Catholic church of this period is an upper level choir covering the narthex, and reached from stairs within the church. Of particular note are stained glass windows created by Alan Sumner, who was head of the National Gallery School at the time. The principal series of windows is those of the facade, set between cream brick piers and allowing for a flood of light from the south. The stained glass Stations of the cross are brightly coloured and jewel-like, whilst the focus on the altar is further reinforced by lighting from side windows.

The quality of materials and fittings used in the church is particularly high; notable are the glass mosaic tiles, marble veneers and light fittings. The intactness of the church is excellent. Alterations which have occurred are those related to the Vatican II Council, the repositioning of the altar, new front doors and security bars to the stained glass windows.

Key Architectural Elements: cream brick and render Moderne facade  
wedge-shaped plan

Comparative Examples: St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brighton  
Lutheran Church, Light's Pass, South Australia  
Polish Catholic Memorial Church, Marayong, New South Wales

Principal Historic Themes: permanent places of worship

*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/>*