

# ST MICHAELS UNITING CHURCH



ST MICHAELS UNITING CHURCH SOHE 2008



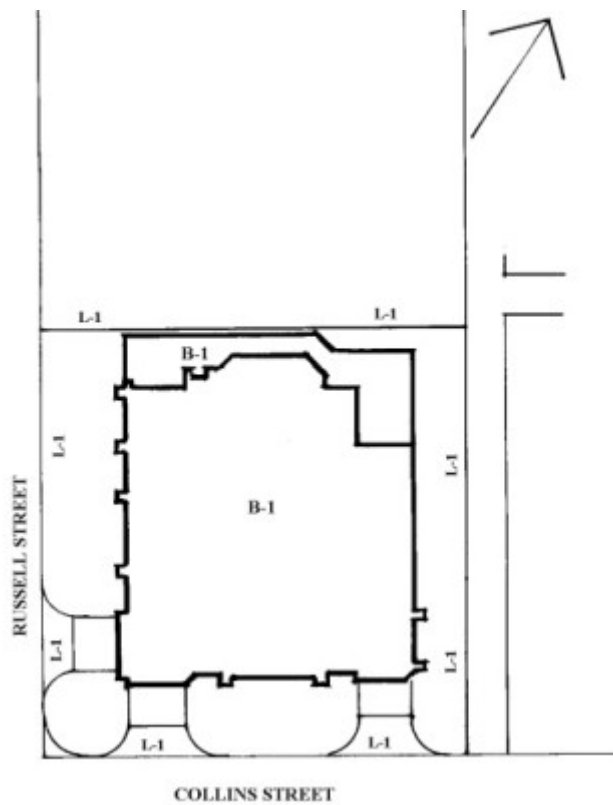
1 independent church of melbourne front view apr1998



independent church of melbourne side detail apr1998



independent church of melb seating



former independent church now st michael's registration plan

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**Location**

122 -136 COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

**Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

**Level of significance**

Registered

**Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0004

**Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO576

**VHR Registration**

October 9, 1974

**Amendment to Registration**

August 20, 1998

**Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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**Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - June 7, 2023

**What is significant?**

A small chapel stood on this site from 1841 following the arrival of the Rev William Wakefield in 1838. Tasmanian merchant and pastoralist Henry Hopkins had asked the Colonial Missionary Society in England for a pastor for the infant settlement of Port Phillip in the 1830s. The present building was designed by the prominent architects Reed and Barnes between 1863 and 1866. The foundation stone was laid by Henry Hopkins on 22 November 1866 and the building was constructed by John Young. The chapel was built in 1966 to mark the centenary of the building. The interior was altered in 1978 when some of the original seats were removed.

**How is it significant?**

The former Independent Church is of architectural, historical and scientific importance to the State of Victoria.

**Why is it significant?**

It is architecturally important as an exuberant and outstanding example of Lombardic Romanesque style and one of prominent Victorian architect Joseph Reed's finest buildings. The building is very finely detailed both externally and internally. It is of importance as a particularly early example of the use of polychromatic brickwork in Victoria, and unusual use of the style. Other polychromatic churches in Victoria are Gothic in style. The Independents or Congregationalists were one of the most experimental of the denominations and the use of such an unusual style reflects this independent spirit. The building is also of architectural importance as having a highly formative influence on subsequent polychrome church work, and on polychrome architecture generally in Victoria.

It is the finest example in Victoria of a galleried auditorium type church and is complete with tiered seating arranged in a semicircle around the pulpit. The interior is outstanding, with its semicircular arches on slender iron columns over the half circle gallery, with a domed ceiling above. The spiral gallery stairs are also a notable feature. The auditorium is of importance as having one of the most scientifically acoustic design of any nineteenth century churches in Victoria.

It is an important example of an Independent or Congregational church and is of historical importance for its associations with the Congregational denomination, and as the site of the earliest church of this denomination in Victoria. Established in England during the Puritan movement of dissent from the Church of England, the Congregational denomination was introduced to the colony by early settlers such as John Pascoe Fawkner and John Gardiner. It remained an Independent or Congregational church from the time it was built in 1866-67 until the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977 following an agreement between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches in 1971.

## 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:

#### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

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.

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

\* Removal of metal framed seating (pews) and replacement with timber seating to match the extant original seating (pews).

Construction dates	1866,
Architect/Designer	Reed, Joseph,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	INDEPENDENT CHURCH,
Hermes Number	721
Property Number	

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## History

Associated People: Assoc.People HENRY HOPKINS, JOHN PASCOE FAWKNER; Reed & Barnes;

## 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 in that the Heritage Register Number 4 in the category described as a Heritage Place, is now described as:

Former Independent Church, now known as St Michaels Uniting Church, 122-136 Collins Street, Melbourne, City of Melbourne.

### EXTENT:

1. All of the buildings marked B-1 on Diagram 600107A held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land marked L-1 on Diagram 600107A held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 9070 Folio 152.

Dated 13 August 1998.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 33 20 August 1998 p.2252]

*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/>*