

# MISSIONS TO SEAMEN



MISSIONS TO SEAMEN  
SOHE 2008



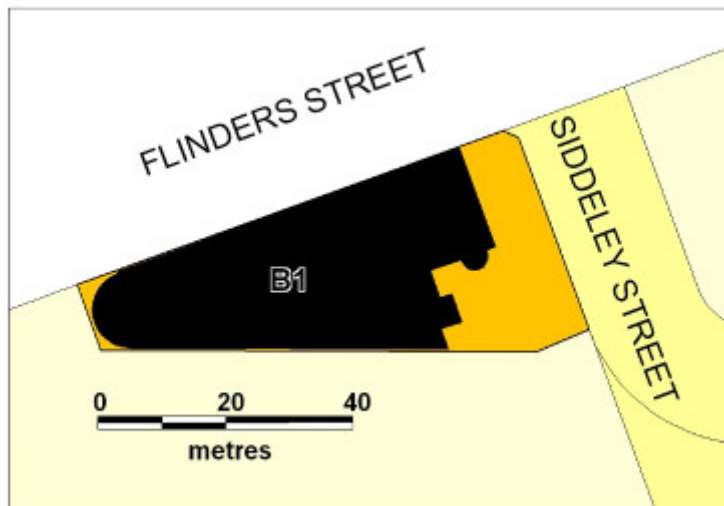
1 missions to seamen flinders  
street extension melbourne  
front elevation feb1986



missions to seamen flinders  
street extension melb side  
elevation feb1986



Missions to Seamen Flinders  
Street Extension Melbourne  
Dome January 1985



missions plan

## Location

717 FLINDERS STREET DOCKLANDS, MELBOURNE CITY

## **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

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

H1496

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO650

## **VHR Registration**

August 20, 1982

## **Amendment to Registration**

April 19, 2001

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 19, 1999

What is significant?

During 1916 the architect Walter Richmond Butler designed a new Anglican Mission to Seamen to replace premises in Siddeley Street, which had been resumed by the Harbour Trust during wharf extensions. The buildings, on reinforced concrete footings, are in rendered brick with tiled roofs. Butler designed the complex using a mixture of styles, one of which was the Spanish Mission Revival which had become prevalent on the west coast of America, especially California and New Mexico, during the 1890s. The style revived the architectural legacy of Spanish colonialism of the eighteenth century and the associated Franciscan missions. The revival of the style is explicit in the chapel with its rough-hewn timber trusses, in the bell tower with its pinnacles and turret surmounted by a rustic cross and in the monastic-like courtyard. The adjoining administration, residential and recreational building shows the influence of English domestic Arts and Crafts architecture, with its projecting gable, pepper pot chimneys and three adjoining oriel windows. Walter Butler, architect to the Anglican Diocese in Melbourne, had come to Australia with an intimate knowledge and experience of the Arts and Crafts movement and continued to use the style in his residential designs of the 1920s. The main hall has a reinforced concrete vaulted ceiling. Lady Stanley, wife of the Mission's patron Governor Stanley, laid the foundation stone of the complex in November 1916. The buildings were financed partly by a compensation payment from the Harbour Trust of £8,500 and £3,000 from local merchants and shipping firms. The Ladies' Harbour Lights Guild raised over £800 for the chapel. Most of the complex was completed by late 1917 whilst the Pantheon-like gymnasium with oculus was finished soon afterwards. The substantially intact interiors, including extensive use of wall panelling in Tasmanian hardwood, form an integral part of the overall design.

How is it significant?

The Missions to Seamen buildings are of architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Missions to Seamen buildings are architecturally significant as a milestone in the introduction of the Spanish Mission style to Melbourne. The style was to later find widespread popularity in the suburbs of Melbourne. The choice of Spanish Mission directly refers to the Christian purpose of the complex. The Missions to Seamen buildings are unusual for combining two distinct architectural styles, for they also reflect the imitation of English domestic architecture, the Arts and Crafts movement. Butler was one of the most prominent and progressive architects of the period and the complex is one of his most unusual and distinctive works. Notable interior features include the chapel, the internal courtyard and loggia, the main hall and lobby and the domed gymnasium with oculus. The chapel is of architectural and aesthetic significance for its timber truss roof and its fine collection of crafted joinery, including the altar and sanctuary chairs with their carved Australian flora motifs. Maritime imagery abounds throughout the complex: some stained glass windows in the chapel depicting stories and scenes associated with the sea; the pulpit in the form of a ship's stern; the large mariner's compass inlaid in the terrazzo floor of the lobby; and the copper ship finial on the roof. Built-in timber cupboards, wardrobes, panelling and studded doors throughout the buildings evoke a ship's cabin.

The Missions to Seamen buildings have historical and social significance as tangible evidence of prevailing concerns for the religious, moral, and social welfare of seafarers throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries. The complex has a long association with the Missions to Seamen, an organisation formed to look after the welfare of seafarers, both officers and sailors, men "of all nationalities". It had its origins in Bristol, England when a Seamen's Mission was formed in 1837. The first Australian branch was started in 1856 by the Rev. Kerr Johnston, a Church of England clergyman, and operated from a hulk moored in Hobsons Bay; later the Mission occupied buildings in Williamstown and Port Melbourne. In 1905 the Rev. Alfred Gurney Goldsmith arrived at the behest of the London Seamen's Mission to establish a city mission for sailors working on the river wharves and docks. The building reflects the diverse role played by the Mission with its chapel, hall and stage, billiards room, reading room, dining room, officers' and men's quarters, chaplain's residence, and gymnasium. The chapel contains many items which have been donated to commemorate seafarers, including stained glass windows, altar rails, baptismal font, pews, choir stall and sanctuary chairs. The location, size and arrangement of the buildings provide evidence of the volume of shipping and the scale of activity on the docks and wharves of Melbourne throughout much of the 20th century and the support structure created to assist those working in the shipping trade.

## 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

- \* 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

- \* 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 fixtures (excluding original kitchen cupboards) including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, and dishwashers 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 and exit signs.

Construction dates            1916,

Architect/Designer            Butler, Walter Richmond,

Heritage Act Categories    Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,

Other Names               MISSION TO SEAFARERS,  
Hermes Number           756  
Property Number

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## History

### History of Place:

The Victorian Missions to Seamen was established in 1905 in Siddeley Street with the object of spreading the Christian word to sailors, and providing spiritual and temporal welfare. It was an amalgamation of the London Seamen's Mission and the existing Victorian Seamen's Mission, which first held religious services in 1857 on a hulk in Hobson's Bay. Later missions were established also at Williamstown and Port Melbourne. The first chaplain of the Victorian Missions was Alfred Gurney Goldsmith, who had been Seamen's Chaplain at Hong Kong in 1895-96. The institute was established by the Church of England but drew on all Protestant denominations for financial support. Premises were leased in Siddeley Street until 1916 when the Harbour Trust had to evict the Mission due to extensions to its wharf. However they provided 8,500 pounds compensation towards the construction of new premises. Tenders were called in May 1916 for work costing 11,600 pounds although the final cost was probably about 15,000 pounds. Other donations towards the cost came from various Melbourne shipping firms and from the Ladies Harbour Lights Guild, which collected 700 pounds towards the chapel.

Dedication of the Institute and chapel took place in September 1917 by the Archbishop of Melbourne and the site was officially opened later the same month by the Governor of Victoria.

Associated People: Rev. Alfred Gurney Goldsmith (first chaplain)

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The complex has a long association with the Missions to Seamen, an organisation formed to look after the welfare of seafarers. The organisation had its origins in Bristol, England when a Seamen's Mission was formed in 1837. The first Australian branch was started in 1856 by the Rev. Kerr Johnston, a Church of England clergyman, and operated from a hulk moored in Hobsons Bay; later the Mission occupied buildings in Williamstown and Port Melbourne. The location, size and arrangement of the buildings provide evidence of the volume of shipping and scale of activity on the docks and wharves of Melbourne throughout much of the 20th century and the support structure created to assist the largely itinerant population involved in the shipping trade.

### Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

### Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

### Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

### Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The Missions to Seamen buildings exhibit unusual design characteristics with the combination of two distinct architectural styles, English domestic revival and the Arts and Crafts movement. Butler was one of the most prominent and progressive architects of the period and the complex is one of his most distinctive works. The complex has aesthetic significance, in particular for its chapel with its extensive use of Australian timber and carved timber decoration.

### Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

#### Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The scale of the complex, its facilities, architectural details, furniture and fixtures demonstrates prevailing concerns for the religious, moral and social welfare of seafarers.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

### **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the building marked B1 on Diagram Number 1496 held by the Executive Director.

2. All the following specified objects:

Chapel bell

Chapel:

Pews

Choir stalls

Altar and reredos

Pulpit

Lectern

Baptismal font and cover

Carved timber sanctuary chairs (two)

Chaplain's residence:

Oak sideboard in dining room

Dining room table and 6 chairs

Billiards Room:

Timber bench seat

Office:

Timber cupboard

3. All of the land shown on Diagram Number 1496 held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Crown Allotment 10, Section 98.

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*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/>*