

# ST JAMES OLD CATHEDRAL



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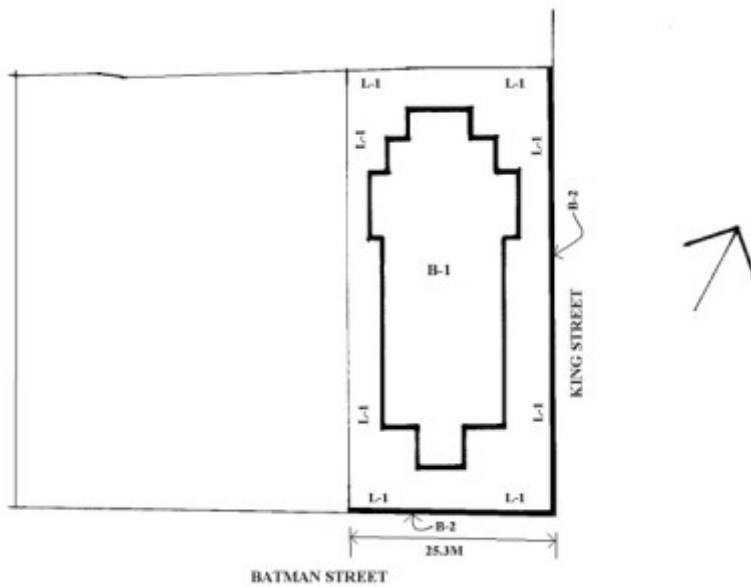
ST JAMES OLD CATHEDRAL SOHE 2008



1 st james old cathedral king street melb external view



st james old cathedral king street melb interior



st james old cathedral registration plan

## Location

419-437 KING STREET AND 2-24 BATMAN STREET WEST MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

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

H0011

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO478

## **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 - April 7, 2021

What is significant?

St James Old Cathedral was constructed on a Crown grant site of 5 acres of land bounded by Collins, William and Bourke Streets with the foundation stone being laid on 9 November 1839 by Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the District of Port Phillip. A simple timber pioneer church which preceded it was built with funds largely subscribed by Presbyterians and other denominations who made up the small community. Opened on 11 February 1837, St James was designed by Robert Russell, a London architect and surveyor who had arrived in Melbourne from Sydney on 5 October 1836. The Colonial Georgian building was constructed on bluestone footings of locally quarried sandstone. The unfinished building was opened for worship on 2 October 1842, and it was completed in 1847.

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne was founded in 1847, and on 29 June 1847 Charles Perry was consecrated in Westminster Abbey as Melbourne's first Bishop. He was enthroned in St James on 28 January 1848, and St James became the first Cathedral church of the new diocese, although it was not consecrated until 1853. When St Paul's Cathedral opened for worship on 22 January 1891 St James reverted to the status of a parish church. The diminished congregation, pressure of occupying valuable city land, and maintenance problems resulted in the church narrowly escaping demolition. It was relocated stone by numbered stone to its present site under the direction of Messrs Thomas Watts and Son, architects, re-consecrated by Archbishop Lowther Clark, and re-opened for worship on 19 April 1914. Changes made to the original design at the time of relocation include reorientation from east west to north south, the tower shortened by one stage, the main ceiling lowered a little, the sanctuary shortened by a few inches, the space between the main gallery remodelled to form a lobby and two vestries with passage and gallery stairs behind them.

Two side entrances were constructed to serve the new passage.

How is it significant?

St James Old Cathedral is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

It is of historical importance as the first Cathedral in Melbourne, the earliest surviving church in Victoria, and one of Melbourne's earliest surviving buildings.

It is of architectural importance as a rare example in Melbourne of a Colonial Georgian style building of simple design and pleasing proportions with Greek detailing at the doorways, and the only known surviving work of architect Robert Russell. Although he worked in London with eminent English architect John Nash, the style reflects his experiences in Sydney, especially the work of his contemporary Francis Clarke as well as of Francis Greenway.

The interior is important for rare and unusual features for Victoria, such as the traditional box pews of cedar, side galleries or Vice-Regal boxes originally for the use of Governor La Trobe and the Chief Justice, Baptismal font with the white marble bowl probably dating from the 17th century and coming from St Katherine's Abbey on the banks of the Thames, two mahogany pulpits presented by the ladies of the congregation in 1847. The World War 1 honour board carved by well known master wood carver Robert Prenzel and the World War 2 honour board which was copied from the earlier honour board. The stained glass windows are also of note with the 'east window' being possibly by the Melbourne firm of Ferguson and Urie, and the five windows by Christian Waller, wife of artist Napier Waller.

## 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:

Nil

Construction dates            1839,

Architect/Designer Russell, Robert,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,  
Other Names SAINT JAMES,  
Hermes Number 767  
Property Number

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## History

Associated People: Assoc.People CAPT.WILLIAM LONSDALE,GOV.CHARLES LATROBE,J.BATMAN  
Assoc.People CAPT.WILLIAM LONSDALE,GOV.CHARLES LATROBE,J.BATMAN

## 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 11 in the category described as a Heritage place, Heritage object is now described as:

St James Old Cathedral, 419-435 King Street, West Melbourne, City of Melbourne.

### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings marked (B-1) and the fence marked B-2 on Diagram 602508A held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L-1 on Diagram 602508A held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 10320 Folio 585.
3. All the objects held within the church as listed below: All the cedar box pews, Two mahogany pulpits, The baptismal font, The bishop's throne, The World War 1 and World War 2 honour boards.

Dated 13 August 1998.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 33 20 August 1998 p.2253]

*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/>*