

City of Port Phillip Heritage Review

Place name: Holy Trinity Anglican Church and Hall

Citation No:
2440

Other names: -



Address: 175 Chapel Street, St Kilda

Heritage Precinct: Carlisle Street
Commercial & Public

Category: Religion: Church and Hall; Parks
& Gardens: Trees

Heritage Overlay: HO65

Style: Victorian: Gothic (Church)
Interwar: Tudor (Hall)

Graded as: Significant

Constructed: 1882-83 (Church), 1925 (Hall)

Victorian Heritage Register: No

Designer: Reed & Barnes (Church), Sydney
W. Smith (Hall)

Amendment: TBA

Comment: Revised citation

Significance

What is significant?

The Holy Trinity Anglican Church complex at 175 Chapel Street, St Kilda is significant. The contributory buildings and features are:

- The stone Gothic Revival-style church by the architectural firm, Reed & Barnes, and built in 1882-83. The original interior materials and details including the organ contributes to the significance of the church.
- The brick, Holy Trinity Hall, designed in a Tudor Revival-style by the architect Sydney Smith, and built in 1925. The interior to the extent of the central hall only contributes to the significance of the hall.
- Mature Canary Island palms (*Phoenix canariensis*)

Non-original alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Holy Trinity Anglican Church complex in St Kilda is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

Holy Trinity Anglican Church is historically significant as the third Anglican parish in St Kilda and for its associations with the development of the area to the east of Brighton Road. The first church on this site was opened in 1871, and the existing Holy Trinity Anglican Church was built in 1882-83 and is one of the earliest Anglican churches established in St Kilda. It demonstrates the growth and development of the parish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; and the Holy Trinity Hall demonstrates continued use of the site by the Anglican Church and its activities and role in the community in the inter-war period. Holy Trinity Anglican Church also forms part of a cluster of historically important public and religious buildings established on the Market Reserve in the nineteenth century, which includes the former Wesleyan Methodist Church (1877), St Kilda (Brighton Road) State School No 1479 (1874) and the St Kilda Town Hall and Council Chambers (1890). (Criterion A)

The Holy Trinity Anglican Church is a fine and substantial example of a late-nineteenth century Gothic-Revival Church, built in Barrabool sandstone and Waurn Ponds freestone. The church, designed in a cruciform plan, is well-detailed in its fenestration; and of particular note is the circular baptistery at the southwest corner with its conical slate tile roof, which is a distinct and unusual element of the composition. Internally, the church contains a number of elements of note, including timber roof trusses, reredos behind the altar, arcading of the aisles, memorial stained glass windows and the manual organ. The landscape setting of the church, including the Canary Island palms, contributes to its aesthetic value. (Criterion E)

The Holy Trinity Hall is of aesthetic value as a fine inter-war church hall, designed in a variant of the Gothic Revival-style with the application of Tudor-Revival detailing. This has been applied in a restrained manner, but where used it is finely executed. This detailing is in render, and includes mouldings around the portal arch, and groups of pointed trefoil arches and crenelated parapets, all of which provide visual relief to the large areas of pressed brick walls of the hall. (Criterion E)

Holy Trinity Anglican Church and the Holy Trinity Hall are significant as the parish centre, and as a place for a wide range of religious and cultural activities. It is of social significance to the City of Port Phillip as a religious complex that has been known, used and valued by the local community for 140 years. (Criterion G)

Thematic context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

8. Building community life: 8.1 Maintaining spiritual life

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

8. Community life: 8.1 Spiritual life

History

Contextual history

The Anglican Church (originally known as the Church of England) was the largest denomination in Victoria in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many important figures, such as the governor, politicians, and government officials, were adherents.

In the City of Port Phillip, the foundation Anglican churches were Christ Church in St Kilda, St Luke's in South Melbourne, and Holy Trinity in Port Melbourne.

The first Anglican church service in St Kilda was conducted on Sunday 23 December 1849 by Henry Jennings at his home in Fitzroy Street. A Sunday School class was held on the same day. A land grant of just over one acre on Acland Street was approved in April 1850, and it was here, on a site known as Church

Square, that the first stage of Christ Church was erected between 1853 and 1857. Christ Church was the centre of a parish covering most of St Kilda, Balaclava, Ripponlea and Elwood. It was associated with the early development of St Kilda as an affluent bayside resort, with the congregation including many important local residents who played a major role in the development of the suburb. By 1861:

St Kilda was already recognised as the proper place to live, and local institutions like Christ Church, the St Kilda Volunteers and the St Kilda Ladies College had become important rungs in Melbourne's social ladder.

As the area grew, the parish was soon subdivided with the establishment of All Saints in Chapel Street, (1858-1861), and Holy Trinity in Brighton Road (1870-1871). In 1916, the parish of St Bede's was created from the parishes of Holy Trinity, St Kilda and St Clements, Elsternwick, to serve the growing suburb of Elwood.

Holy Trinity Church complex

The parish of Holy Trinity was formed when it was subdivided from Christ Church to serve Anglicans in south St Kilda and Balaclava. The triangular piece of land on the corner of Brighton Road and Chapel Street was reserved for church purposes in the *Victorian Government Gazette* on 23 April 1866 and in October 1870 construction of a wooden church building was begun under the supervision of architect F. M. White. The church was opened on 29 January 1871 by Bishop Perry. It had cost £1217, including £182 for furnishings. The organ cost £100. Capable of accommodating 300 people, it was later used as a Sunday school (Bomford).

The site of Holy Trinity occupied the southern point of the triangle of land formed by Carlisle Street, Chapel Street and Brighton Road. This area, which had been partially set aside as a Market Reserve, was low lying and swampy, which led to it becoming used as a municipal tip. Despite this, the land was reclaimed and gazetted for public and religious buildings, which were established from the 1870s to the 1890s. After Holy Trinity the first building of the Brighton Road Primary School was opened in 1874, followed by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1877 (extended in 1885). The presence of these buildings perhaps influenced the decision of St Kilda Council to relocate the town hall and municipal chambers to the current site, opening in 1890.

As the congregation grew a substantial new church was built in 1882-3 to replace the earlier timber church, which became the church hall. Prominent architects Reed and Barnes designed the new church, which was constructed by Mr. Ekins for £7,675, with the total cost being over £10,000. This included a three-manual organ installed by George Fincham, which cost £600. A planned tower and spire were not built. The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Moorhouse on 23 November 1882 and the church was consecrated on 19 November 1889. The Board of Guardians at that time included W. Howard Smith, F.S. Grimwade and E.S. Parkes.

Architect Sydney W. Smith planned and supervised decoration of the interior of the church in 1905. At that time Smith was living nearby in the house at 6 Dickens Street on the opposite side of Brighton Road (see Citation 323). Smith also designed the new Sunday School Hall built in 1924-5 that replaced the old timber church hall. This was opened by Archbishop Lee in March 1925 (*The Herald*, 28 March 1925, p.7). In 1948 small additions were made to the men's toilet ante-room on the east side of the Hall to provide separate toilets for tram drivers. These works were designed and carried out by the Building Branch of the Tramways Board (BP).

Over the years, several memorials have been installed in the church. They include:

- A clerestory window to L.F. De Soyres, a young chorister who died in 1889, which was subscribed by the choristers and the boy's school friends.
- The north transept window, which is a memorial to the infant children of Frederick and Jessie Grimwade and alabaster tablets below in memory of the Grimwade family.
- A World War I roll of honour unveiled by Archbishop Lee in 1921 and the adjacent soldiers' memorial dedicated by Archbishop Booth in 1950.

References

Australasian Sketcher, Melbourne, 21st March, 1882

Bomford, Janette, 'The spirit of St Kilda: Places of worship in St Kilda'.

<http://skhs.org.au/SKHSchurches/churches.htm>, viewed 19 July 2021

Cooper, John Butler, *The History of St. Kilda from its first settlement to a City and after 1840-1930*, City of St. Kilda, Melbourne, 1931, vol. 1, pp. 336-42, illustration facing p. 336

Kerry, W. M.A., 'Holy Trinity Church Balacava Jubilee Souvenir 1871-1921', Fraser and Morphett, Prahran, 1921

Lewis, Miles (ed.), *Victorian Churches. Their origins, their story and their architecture*, National Trust, 1991

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH) Version 1, July 2020

St. Kilda Council building permits nos. 5928, 6 December 1924 for church hall; U.566, 22 July 1948 additions to church hall

Saunders, David, "Joseph Reed (1823? - 1890)" in Bede Nairn (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1976, vol. 6, pp. 13-14.

Description

An Anglican Church complex, on a prominent site on a wedge of land, bordered by Brighton Road, Chapel and Dickens Streets. It forms a group of landmark public buildings along this portion of Brighton Road and Chapel Street, that includes the St Kilda Primary School, the St Kilda Town Hall and the Wesleyan (Uniting) Church.

Holy Trinity is a substantial late-Victorian, Gothic Revival-style church, that is faced in coursed-rubble walls of Barrabool sandstone, that are relieved around window openings with Waurn Ponds freestone dressings. Coursed-bluestone forms the base of the walls. Buttressing is angled, except on the chancel where diagonal buttressing is used. The hip, gable and conical roof forms of the church are clad in slate tiles.

The church is cruciform in plan, containing a nave, aisles, transept, chancel and vestry. A spire for the church, on the northwest corner, was never built. This has disrupted the symmetry of the west elevation, with its distinct circular baptistry on the opposite corner at front. The baptistry has a conical roof with a wrought iron finial at its top. A wrought iron finial is also fixed to the top of the gable end of the chancel.

The fenestration on the west elevation of Holy Trinity Church consists of a large pointed-arched stained-glass window, with a rose window. There are large pointed-arched stained-glass windows on the ends of the transept. The end of the chancel has a large pointed arch window, and the other walls of the chancel have smaller lancet arched windows, all with stained glass. The nave and transept are lit with small quatrefoil windows. Some of the former stone crucifixes at the tops of the gables have been removed/damaged.

Internally, the church contains a number of elements of note, including timber roof trusses, reredos behind the altar, three-manual organ, arcading of the aisles, and a series of memorial stained glass windows.

The Holy Trinity Church Hall is an inter-war, brick, Tudor-Revival-style building, that is of a cruciform plan. The intersecting gable roof forms are clad in unglazed terracotta tiles, this roof punctured with cylindrical steel roof vents. The walls of the hall are embellished with restrained application of Gothic/Tudor detailing. This detailing including rendered pointed-arched window mouldings and other rendered wall details, that provide relief to the pressed red brick walls.

The front of the hall faces the junction of Brighton Road and Chapel Street, and this elevation is symmetrically composed. It has a broad gable, with three small glazed panels with a stepped label mould in the gable end, and below this is a broad rendered panel with *Holy Trinity Hall* signage flanked by panels with quatrefoil mouldings and framed by a vertical moulding. A well-detailed rendered portal arch, supported by recessed slender columns, is a distinct element of the façade, its effect diminished with the fitting of plain glazed doors. The entrance is flanked by two windows, with multi paned glazing and label moulds.



The other elevations (east, west and south) share similar materiality and detailing with the facade. Notable elements on the east and west elevations, are the lower cuboid forms at the corners adjacent to where the gable roofs intersect. These cuboid masses have crenelated parapets. The lower form on the west side has groups of rendered pointed trefoil arches. A band of three pointed trefoil arches remain on the east side, where the hall has undergone change. The windows on the east and west elevations on the main portion of the hall are large multi-paned timber frame double-hung sash windows. These are also on the rear of the hall, and are framed at their tops with rendered mouldings.

Some changes have occurred to fenestration, including original openings blocked and new openings added. On the east elevation, part of this has been remodelled to fit a toilet for tram staff. These changes have not diminished the external architectural character of the Holy Trinity Church Hall to any appreciable level. Internally, the interior of the hall remains intact. However, the stage has been enclosed and the layout and detailing of the spaces and rooms behind have been altered.

The building is in good condition and has a relatively high degree of external intactness.

Comparative analysis

Holy Trinity compares with Christ Anglican Church complex, 14 Acland Street, St Kilda (Citation 85) and All Saints Anglican Church, 2 Chapel Street, St Kilda (Citation 76).

The Holy Trinity Anglican Church compares well to the above churches. It is a fine and substantial example of a late-nineteenth century Gothic-Revival Church, built in Barrabool sandstone and Waurn Ponds freestone. The church, designed in a cruciform plan, is well-detailed in its fenestration; and of particular note is the circular baptistery at the southwest corner with its conical slate tile roof, which is a distinct and unusual element of the composition. The landscape setting of the church, including the Canary Island palms, contributes to its aesthetic value.

The Holy Trinity Hall is a fine inter-war church hall, designed in a variant of the Gothic Revival-style with the application of Tudor-Revival detailing. This has been applied in a restrained manner, but where used it is finely executed. This detailing is in render, and includes mouldings around the portal arch, and groups of pointed trefoil arches and crenelated parapets, all of which provide visual relief to the large areas of pressed brick walls of the hall. In terms of its quality of detailing and integrity Holy Trinity Hall compares well with the Christ Church Hall (1914) and the Gregory (All Saints) Hall (1911), which are both designed in the Federation Arts & Crafts style.

Assessment

This place has been assessed in accordance with the processes and guidelines outlined in the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance* (The Burra Charter) 2013, using the Hercon criteria.

Recommendations

Retain in the Heritage Overlay with external paint and internal controls. Apply tree controls to the mature Canary Island palms.

Primary source

Peter Andrew Barrett, *H07 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct heritage review Stage 2: Review of existing heritage citations*, 2021

Other studies

Andrew Ward & Associates, *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review*, 1998

Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan, *St Kilda 20th century architectural study*, Volume 3, 1992

Other images

