

# CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS AND ORGAN



Church of All Nations  
Carlton\_KJ\_6 June 08



Church of All Nations\_Carlton\_Fincham organ\_KJ\_6 June 08



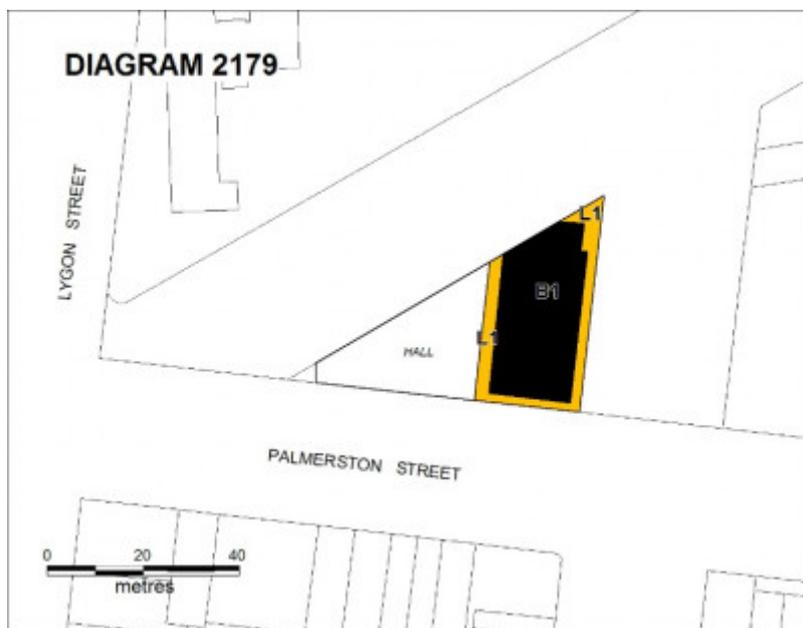
Church of All Nations\_Carlton\_KJ\_6 June 08



Church of All Nations\_rear gallery\_KJ\_6 June 08



Church of All Nations\_mission hall\_KJ\_6 June 08



church of all nations (amended by HC)

## Location

180 PALMERSTON STREET CARLTON, MELBOURNE CITY

## **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

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

H2179

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO976

## **VHR Registration**

February 12, 2009

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - February 27, 1997

What is significant?

The Church of All Nations Organ and Church, 180 Palmerston Street, Carlton.

The Church of All Nations Organ is a pipe organ built by Master organ builder George Fincham for the Church of All Nations (then the Wesleyan Methodist Church) in 1877. The organ was given to the church by the younger members of the church congregation, as recorded on a plaque beneath the central tower of the organ case.

The organ is a two manual instrument with fifteen speaking stops, three couplers and a mechanical action. A swell division was added to the organ by Fincham in 1886 to increase the versatility, expression and range of the organ.

The organ retains its original mechanical actions, console, attractive case and the ornate decorations on the spotted metal display pipes. It retains all of its original brilliance, sparkle and clarity of sound. The organ remains in the building for which it was constructed.

The organ has been played and praised by organists of international renown, including Ton Koopman, Martin Haselbock, Peter Hurford and Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, as being one of the finest organs of the Colonial period in the world today.

The organ has been moved from its original position in the gallery to the front of the church.

The Church of All Nations church building, originally the Wesleyan Methodist Church, houses the Church of All Nations Organ. The church was built in 1869-70 to a design by the distinguished Melbourne architect Joseph Reed of Reed & Barnes. It replaced a timber church which had opened in Palmerston Street in 1861. In 1869

Reed was commissioned to design a larger church of bluestone, which opened 6 March 1870. The contractor was John Pigdon. Due to lack of funds, the top of the tower, the spire and the side balconies inside were never built and the nave was shortened.

The church is a bluestone building in the Norman Romanesque style with freestone dressings. The front elevation has a porch beneath three Romanesque arches and a tower to one side. Internally there is a gallery at the rear and at the front is an elaborate timber pulpit approached by steps on each side. The Fincham organ is located in the north-east corner of the church.

The Church of All Nations lies on the southern edge of the Carlton Estate high-rise residential towers.

How is it significant?

The Church of All Nations Organ and Church is of historical and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Church of All Nations Organ and Church is of historical significance for its association with George Fincham who founded the most significant organ building enterprise in the colonial period of Australia. The organ is one of the finest examples now surviving from the George Fincham's best period of organ building. The organ's significance is enhanced by the presence of the original mechanical actions and its original console and its presence within its original setting.

The Church of All Nations Organ is of aesthetic significance for its attractive case, well-suited to its built surroundings, and ornate decorations on the display pipes.

## 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. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during

further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

**Routine maintenance:** Pipe Organs require regular servicing particularly tuning and attendance to action problems. Such procedures usually take place monthly, quarterly, half yearly or annually. Such activities would not impact in any way on the heritage status of the instrument provided they are carried out by appropriate firms, and would not require a permit.

**Internal alterations to the church building:** Internal alterations that do not impact on the cultural heritage significance of the organ, including its acoustic performance, are permit exempt. It is recommended that any proposed internal works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to them being undertaken or a permit application made.

Construction dates	1870,
Architect/Designer	Reed & Barnes,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	CARLTON METHODIST MISSION, WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH, PIPE ORGAN,
Hermes Number	2999
Property Number	

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

*The architect: Joseph Reed (1823?-1890)*

Reed was born in Cornwall, England, arrived in Melbourne in July 1853 and in January 1854 won the competition to design the Public Library. The same year he designed the Bank of New South Wales in Collins Street and the Geelong Town Hall. In 1856 he was the first elected member of the short-lived first Victorian Institute of Architects.

In 1858 Reed became university architect, and at about the same time designed the Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, and the premises in Victoria Street that later became the Royal Society of Victoria building. In 1862 he added the classical portico to the Collins Street Baptist Church and took as partner Frederick Barnes (1824-1884); together they drew plans for the National Museum at the university.

Reed dominated the architectural profession in Melbourne, mainly because of his many competition successes and his constant commissions for public and prominent private buildings. He popularised polychromy in Melbourne with three 1866 designs, the Collins Street Independent Church, St Jude's, Carlton, and the National school in Carlton, and in the 1868 design for Rippon Lea, at Elsternwick. Major buildings include the Town Hall and Menzies Hotel (1867), Trades Hall (1873), the Exhibition Building (1879-80), Wilson Hall (1878-82) and Ormond College (1879).

[David Saunders, 'Reed, Joseph (1823? - 1890)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 6, Melbourne University Press, 1976, pp 13-14.]

Reed designed almost every major church built in Carlton, including the Wesleyan Methodist Church, St Jude's (1869-90), the Congregational Church (1878) and the Church of the Sacred Heart.

### The organ

The earliest attempts at organbuilding in Australia were made at Sydney in 1840 when Johnson & Kinloch built a new two-manual organ for St Matthew's, Windsor. There were also isolated examples of local organbuilding in Adelaide, by Samuel Marshall, and in Melbourne, by Peter Hurlstone; in the latter city James Moyle was engaged in organbuilding during the 1850s together with Henry Smith. In the Barossa Valley region of South Australia, several German expatriates built small instruments based upon German models.

From the 1860s the indigenous organbuilding industry gained momentum at the hands of George Fincham (1828-1910). Developments mainly took place in Victoria, where a tariff gave protection to the craft; elsewhere in Australia the industry was slow to develop. Fincham was apprenticed to the leading London organbuilder Henry Bevington in 1842 and later worked as a foreman with J.C. Bishop in London before emigrating to Melbourne in 1852. Building and equipping a new factory in Richmond, his first instrument was completed in 1862. From small beginnings, the firm prospered and by the end of the century had built almost 150 new organs for churches and public halls in four Australian states and New Zealand. Initially adopting mechanical action, the firm developed a new system of tubular-pneumatic action which was used for many instruments from the late 1880s onwards. During the boom period of the 1880s, the firm built no less than 57 instruments, but only 26 were built in the following decade owing to the depression. These were characterised by the use of spotted metal pipework, low wind pressures, generally complete choruses and multi-towered cases.

Fincham founded the most significant organbuilding enterprise in the colonial period of Australia, which prospered and survived for 130 years through four generations of the Fincham family.

### HISTORY OF PLACE

In nineteenth century Victoria the Wesleyans were by far the most numerous of the Methodists. In Carlton there were at least four other Methodist churches, indicating the extent and influence of Methodism in the suburb. The first Methodist services in Carlton were held in April 1860 by a group of English Methodists in the Lygon Street shop of William Jones. The preacher at the first service was 'a scholarly Irishman from Dublin', Rev J S Waugh of Wesley College. Under the guidance of Dr Waugh the small group of local Methodist laymen had built a timber multi-purpose building in Palmerston Street, which opened in February 1861. It seated one hundred people, and served as a place of worship, a day school and Sunday school. It was soon enlarged, but the rapidly growing population of the area meant that it was still inadequate.

In 1869 the distinguished Melbourne architect Joseph Reed was commissioned to design for the same site a larger church of bluestone which would seat seven hundred but with provision to enlarge it when necessary to accommodate twelve hundred. The foundation stone was laid on 27 July 1869, and the church opened 6 March 1870. The contractor was John Pigdon, a leading building contractor who was also Melbourne City Councillor and Mayor. Due to lack of funds the building was only partially completed: neither the tower nor the internal balconies were built and the nave was shortened. It was a low cost building for a growing congregation in a rapidly developing suburb, with the congregation drawn from local artisans, small business owners and shopkeepers. The original building (now demolished) remained in use for the Sunday School and as a meeting place. The Palmerston Street Wesleyan Church attracted the denomination's leading ministers. There was a school associated with the church, which was extended in 1872, but this has been demolished.

In 1876 the prominent Melbourne organ builder George Fincham was commissioned to build an organ for the church, the funds for which were raised by the pupils at the school and the younger members of the congregation.

From the 1850s Carlton had been a socially diverse suburb, with many middle and upper class families. It became highly industrialised later in the century, and by the 1890s the wealthier families had largely moved away. The 1890s depression had a great impact on the population, with high unemployment and great poverty. Fundamental social changes transformed the suburb in the twentieth century. By the first half of the century it was regarded as a slum suburb. Before WWII it became the home of Eastern European Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. In the 1950s and 1960s it remained the home for low income workers and for university students, but became the place of first settlement for successive waves of newly-arrived immigrants, at first mainly Italians.

In 1914 the Palmerston Street Methodist church was designated a mission circuit and it opened a 'material relief' program in the 1920s. The Rev George Dyson was appointed to the church, and he established the Carlton Methodist Mission in 1914, and revived the church in the inter-war period. Influenced by the late nineteenth century 'forward movement' in Britain, it was an attempt to reach out to working people and adopt new means of inner urban development. The name of the church was changed in 1918 to the Carlton Methodist Mission, and in 1933 a new mission hall was built adjacent to the church, designed by the architect A S Eggleston.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Housing Commission of Victoria began large-scale slum reclamation projects and cleared large areas, replacing the houses with high-rise blocks of flats. By 1970 111 hectares had been cleared and 3788 houses demolished and massive high-rise towers built on the block bounded by Lygon, Rathdowne, Princes and Palmerston Streets. By 1982 between two and three thousand people were living in the high-rise Carlton Estate. The church was situated at the very edge of this estate.

The church embraced the newly arrived post-war migrants and demonstrated innovation in worship and migrant services that was at the forefront of such services throughout Victoria. In 1963, with the congregation including large numbers of Spanish, Portuguese, Macedonian, and Arabic speakers, interpreter service were introduced, with interpreters sitting in booths in the balcony translating the services which could be listened to on headsets in the pews. As noted in the reminiscences of Mac Nicholl of a service held in the Church of All Nations on the second Sunday in January 1966:

During the sermon, which Malcolm is preaching today, we are aware that he pauses from time to time and glances upwards to the back of the gallery, where three members are sitting in booths with a glass window, reading the sermon over the channel allocated, trying to keep in time with the preacher. When we visit the booths later, we see that each translator has a complete copy of the service typed in double spacing and that he has previously translated it all so that it is not too difficult to keep in time with the leader of worship.

Later, we become aware of the weekly routine. The preparation must be completed early in the week so that the material can be sent to the interpreter in time for him to prepare before Sunday. There will be times when things are running late, and I recall at least one occasion where I drove out to the western suburbs plant of I.C.I. on a Friday afternoon to give the sermon to our Arabic translator, Sinout Yacoub, who worked there as an industrial chemist. (<http://www.wellspringcommunity.org.au/blog/?m=200605&paged=2>)

In 1964 an English-teaching program began at the church and in the homes of migrant families, and in 1968 a language laboratory for the teaching of English was introduced, a Migrant Social Worker was appointed (one of only three in Victoria) and an after-school program for migrant children was set up. In 1972 Rita Hamblin from ABC Radio visited the church, and noted that 'the Reverend Norman Lowe has organised English Language Laboratories. Teachers use visual aids and migrants queue up for lessons. It's the first time I've seen anything like this in Australia'. (Quoted in CAN newsletter, 3 April 2008.)

In 1967 the church was renamed the Church of All Nations, after a church of a similar name in the Middle east, which appealed particularly to the migrant members of the congregation and which better reflected the diverse origins of the congregation.

The congregation has also established an Indigenous Hospitality House in one of their properties.

The organ

The pipe organ was built by George Fincham and was opened on 16 August 1877. The price was ?239. The commemorative plaque on the organ states: 'Presented to the Trustees / by the / Young People / of This Church / August 16th 1877.' The organ was installed in the gallery. In 1886 the Swell organ was added by George Fincham at a cost of ?165, and was reopened on 13 April 1886. In many churches the choir and organ were placed in the west end, or rear, of the church, sometimes in a gallery or on a platform, but were often moved later, especially in the 1880s, to the chancel end of the church (one reason given by one organist was that he

preferred choirs not to be in 'distant galleries where they are less careful to conduct themselves with due regard to the solemnity of the services, or the sanctity of the building (E N Matthews, *Colonial Organs and Organbuilders*, p 80)). The organ in the Church of all Nations has at some time been moved to the front of the church. The organ **was completely restored in 1991-92 by the South Island Organ Company (NZ)**.

#### REFERENCES:

Renate Howe & Tom Hazel, 'Diverse Places of Worship', in Peter Yule (ed), *Carlton A History*, Carlton 2004, pp 290-306.

Website of Church of all Nations

OHTA website

Wellspring Community website at <http://www.wellspringcommunity.org.au/blog/?m=200605&paged=2>

### Assessment Against Criteria

This was the proposed assessment against criteria **not** approved by the Heritage Council Registrations Committee in 2008.

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

The Church of All Nations has close associations with immigration to Victoria in the post-World War II period and with the assimilation of migrants into Victorian society. In the 1950s and 1960s Carlton was a focus for recently arrived immigrants, and in the 1960s particularly the church demonstrated innovation in worship and migrant services that was at the forefront of such services in Victoria.

The Church of All Nations has historical significance for the pipe organ built in 1877 by George Fincham, who founded the most significant organbuilding enterprise in the colonial period of Australia.

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

The Fincham organ is one of the best examples now surviving from the maker's best period. Its significance is enhanced by the presence of the original mechanical actions and console, an attractive case, well-suited to its surroundings, and ornate decorations on the display pipes.

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

#### *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*

The Church of All Nations has architectural significance as a fine example of the Norman Romanesque style in Victoria, and of the work of the architect Joseph Reed, Melbourne's most prominent architect at this time, who designed almost every major church in Carlton.

#### *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*

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

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

The Church of All Nations has historical and social significance as an important place of worship and of community assistance for local residents and newly arrived migrants since the nineteenth century.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Plaque Citation**

This church was designed by Joseph Reed and built in 1869-70. It contains an outstanding pipe organ, a gift from the young members of the congregation, made in 1877 by the distinguished maker George Fincham.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2179 held by the Executive Director, being all of the land described in Certificates of Title Volume 01215 Folio 928.
2. The building marked B1 on Diagram 2179 held by the Executive Director.
3. The Fincham Organ located within the building marked B1 on Diagram 2179 held by the Executive Director.

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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/>*