
St Joseph's Catholic School (formerly St John's Catholic School for Boys)



St Joseph's Catholic School
(formerly St John's School),
571 Glenferrie Road
Hawthorn

Location

571 Glenferrie Road HAWTHORN, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO786

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 9, 2021

What is Significant?

St Joseph's Catholic School (built as St John's Catholic School for Boys) at 571 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, is significant. The school was constructed in 1911 for the Jesuit Fathers of Hawthorn to a design by architect Augustus Andrew Fritsch, with a matching extension to the south end in 1929 designed by architect G.W. Vanheems.

In 1978 the staff and students of St Joseph's Catholic School moved from their original site at the corner of Power Street and Denham Road, where they have been located since 1854, to this site.

The school building is single storey, constructed of red face brick, and has a transverse gabled roof with parapets at either end. The roof is clad in slate, has a metal ventilator along its ridge, and exposed rafter tails to the eaves.

Post-1929 alterations and extensions are not significant, including the metal-clad entrance hood on the south elevation, the two-storey rear wing at the north end, and the metal-clad building that stands just behind the brick building.

How is it significant?

St Joseph's (former St John's) Catholic School is of local historical, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

St Joseph's Catholic School is of historical significance as both the first parish school established in Hawthorn and Boroondara and the one in the longest continuous operation, though it only moved to this site in 1978. More generally it illustrates the importance of parish schools in Boroondara's suburbs, which were strongly favoured by Catholic families in the ninetieth and early twentieth centuries over State schools. (Criterion A)

St Joseph's Catholic School is significant for its associations with the establishment and growth of the Hawthorn Catholic community since the 1850s, beginning at the Power Street site. The building at 571 Glenferrie Road is significant for its association with the early twentieth century development of the Catholic community that resulted in the foundation of new schools such as St John's. (Criterion G)

The 1911 building is associated with its designer, Augustus Andrew Fritsch, a Hawthorn local and the pre-eminent architect of the Catholic Church in the first decades of the twentieth century. He designed many notable churches, presbyteries, schools and convents throughout Victoria. This building incorporates a number of his favoured architectural motifs, seen at other churches and a convent, incorporated into a fine Free Style design. Of particular note are the details to the central gable, including the shaped gable apexes, bull's-eye window with render dressings and oversized keystone, and two pilasters flanking the front gable which extend above the parapet as piers and are topped with a cyma recta moulding in an ox-bow shape, and ornamented with an Art Nouveau floral bas-relief. (Criteria E & H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 3: Hawthorn, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1911,
Architect/Designer	Fritsch, Augustus A.,
Hermes Number	208287
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The A.A. Fritsch school building of 1911 stands at the front of the large school ground, facing Glenferrie Road behind a generous front playground. The playground is enclosed by a high, modern metal fence, and there are large trees and hedges in the front setback.

The building is single storey, constructed of red face brick, and has a transverse gabled roof with parapets at either end. The roof is clad in slate, has a metal ventilator along its ridge, and exposed rafter tails to the eaves. When first constructed, the south end of the building had exposed eaves, instead of a parapet like the north end, suggesting there had always been plans to extend the building southward (which occurred in 1929).

The north and south end gables have cement-render coping to the raking parapet and a bull's eye window at the centre. The top of each gable terminates in a rectangular plinth (instead of a point) that once held a cross. This form is used with greater elaboration to what was originally the central bay of the front facade. Here the coping has a cyma recta moulding along its top edge. The bull's eye window has a flat render surround which is lobed at the bottom, a raised moulding around the top half, and an oversized keystone at the top. Below it is a large flat panel for signage (the original raised lettering 'St John's School' has been removed). This panel has a simple cornice and curved sides, in a cyma recta profile. The most striking feature of the front gable are the two pilasters which extend above the parapet as piers and are topped with a cyma recta moulding in an ox-bow shape (a curve with flared ends) that was so popular for Edwardian Free Style buildings. The pilasters are expressed in face brick to the tops of the windows, and above that they are finished in smooth render with an Art Nouveau floral bas-relief near the top.

Below the eaves level, the front facade is divided into four sections, each with five windows with flat-arched heads and bluestone sills. The second bay from the north (the original central bay) projects slightly. The narrow windows have a hopper at the bottom, and a double-hung sash above. The 1929 section at the south end appears to replicate all details of the original building, including the windows and the treatment of the parapeted gable.

The front portion of the building, comprising the three front classrooms of 1911 and the southern addition of 1929, appear to be highly intact externally, apart from the conversion of four windows into doors (by dropping the sill, but retaining the double-hung window above), and the loss of the crosses on the gables. A modern entrance hood has been installed against the south end elevation, but it appears to be reversible. The fourth classroom, behind the north end of the building (as seen on the 1911 historic plan and early photo) appears to have been demolished and replaced by the current two-storey wing. The L-shaped rear verandah seen on the 1911 floor plan is also gone, with a modern, aluminium-panel-clad building in its place.

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/>