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# FORMER ST VINCENT DE PAULS GIRLS ORPHANAGE



FORMER ST VINCENT DE PAULS GIRLS ORPHANAGE  
SOHE 2008



1 st vincent de paul's girls  
orphanage napier street  
south melb front view  
dec1984

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## Location

179-197 NAPIER STREET SOUTH MELBOURNE, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1531

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO212

## VHR Registration

December 17, 1986

## Amendment to Registration

May 23, 1998

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 21, 1999

The former St Vincent de Paul Orphanage, established at Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) in 1855, was the first purpose built Catholic orphanage in Victoria. Although the original orphanage building of 1858-1859, as designed by architect George and Schneider, housed both boys and girls, it was found to be both inadequate and poorly built, and after the Sisters of Mercy assumed responsibility for the girls' section of the orphanage in 1861, new buildings were erected, most probably to details by the little known John B Denny, the diocesan clerk of works and effective understudy to William Wardell. Additions at the orphanage in 1866 were certainly by Denny, and his austere and secular gothic hand is clearly evident.

The addition of a rectory, schoolroom, dormitories, and an infirmary, all of disparate architectural origins, preceded the construction of a chapel at the girls' orphanage in 1900. The modest brick chapel, originally designed by the Catholic architect Kempson and Connolly, was remodelled in 1923 and again in 1938 by the architect TJ Power, when the side walls were replaced with an arcade of gothic piers and arches, and new side aisles introduced.

The present chapel fabric, which is largely concealed by twentieth century extensions and first floor additions, essentially dates from the building program of 1938, although further alterations were made to the interior in 1954.

The former St Vincent de Paul Girls Orphanage at South Melbourne is of great significance to the history of charitable institutions in Victoria, and to the history of pastoral care in the Catholic Church in the mid nineteenth century. The principal building of the former girls orphanage is a distinctive example of Secular Gothic architecture in Melbourne and is of particular interest for the early associations with the architectural development of South Melbourne. The chapel, being an integral element of the orphanage, has both physical and spiritual care of the Sisters of Mercy at the site, but is of only marginal architectural significance, being now both deconsecrated and part vandalised.

[Source: Conservation Study.]

### 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](#).

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Construction dates      | 1858,             |
| Architect/Designer      | Denny, John B,    |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place, |
| Hermes Number           | 1061              |
| Property Number         |                   |

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## History

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings  
Former St Vincent De Paul's Girls' Orphanage, 169 Napier Street, South Melbourne.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p.3094]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the Heritage Act 1995 pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

*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/>*