

St. Georges Church Precinct



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Church of England Parsonage and School c.1882



Corner Hobson and Learmonth Streets looking towards St. George's



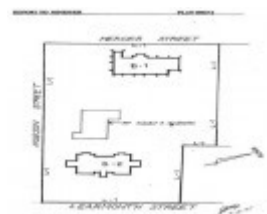
St. Georges Church



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Plan showing the extent of registration Source: Victorian Heritage Register

Location

Mercer Street and Learmonth Street and Hobson Street QUEENSCLIFF, QUEENSCLIFFE BOROUGH

Municipality

QUEENSCLIFFE BOROUGH

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1125

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO10

Heritage Listing

Queenscliffe Borough

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 1, 2009

Statement of Significance as recorded under the Queenscliff Heritage Study 2009

Following is the Heritage Victoria statement of significance:

What is significant?

The St George the Martyr Church and Parish Hall, Queenscliff are part of a complex that originally also included a Vicarage, all three attributed to the Melbourne architect, Albert Purchas. The Church was constructed in 1863-64 of locally quarried limestone, with a stuccoed brick tower added in 1878 and further extensions made in 1887 and 1958. The former Vicarage greatly altered and not part of this registration, was built of brick in 1865-66 and remained in use until 1967, when it was replaced by the current vicarage. Construction of the brick Parish Hall was begun in 1870 but it was not completed until 1902.

How is it significant?

The St George the Martyr Church and Parish Hall are of architectural, historical, and social significance to Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Church and Parish Hall are of architectural significance as representative examples of work by early Melbourne architect, Albert Purchas, who designed several significant churches in Victoria during the 1850s and 1870s. The Church, with its unusual roof form encompassing both the aisles and nave, is significant as a rare example of the Later Gothic architectural style, freely decorated and characterised by broad planning and large stained glass windows.

The Parish Hall is of particular interest as an example of a building constructed for the purposes of both education and worship. The scale and the location of this pair of early ecclesiastical buildings are important indications of the strength of the Anglican Church in the area.

The Church and Parish Hall are historically significant for their association with several parishioners such as TH Fellows, politician and judge and the prominent Baillieu family.

The Church and Parish Hall are socially significant for their associations with important cultural groups such as the Cosmopolitan Masonic Lodge Queenscliff (over 50 years), Grammar School (1882-1902), Literary Association 1883, Queenscliffe Borough Council Chambers 1899, Orange and ANA Lodges.

Revised Statement of Significance

The Victorian Heritage Register statement of significance has been amended to include reference to the former Vicarage, which is included in the St Georges Church precinct but excluded from the extent of registration, and to the other non-contributory buildings in the precinct:

What is significant?

The St George the Martyr Church, Parish Hall, and former Parsonage form a complex of three nineteenth century buildings, all of which are attributed to the Melbourne architect, Albert Purchas. The Church was constructed in 1863-64 of locally quarried limestone, with a stuccoed brick tower added in 1878 and further extensions made in 1887 and 1958. The former vicarage at 13 Mercer Street was built of brick in 1865-66 and remained in use until 1967, when it was replaced by new vicarage. It has been substantially altered and is not part of the Victorian Heritage Register listing. Construction of the brick Parish Hall was begun in 1870 but it was not completed until 1902. While part of the evolved form of the complex, the post-war buildings at 11 Mercer Street and 22 Hobson Street are not considered to contribute to its significance.

How is it significant?

The St George the Martyr Church complex is of historical, aesthetic (architectural) and social significance to the Borough of Queenscliffe.

The St George the Martyr Church and Parish Hall (but not the Vicarage) are also of significance at a state level and have been included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Why is it significant?

The Church, Parish Hall and Vicarage are of architectural significance as representative examples of work by early Melbourne architect, Albert Purchas, who designed several significant churches in Victoria during the 1850s and 1870s. The Church, with its unusual roof form encompassing both the aisles and nave, is significant as a rare example of the Later Gothic architectural style, freely decorated and characterised by broad planning and large stained glass windows. The Parish Hall is of particular interest as an example of a building constructed for the purposes of both education and worship. The former parsonage is an early building in a style commonly used for parsonages of the period and of which relatively few have survived.[i] Although altered, the overall form of the building is still evident, and it contributes both to an appreciation of the historical operation of complex as a whole and to the picturesque qualities of the place.

The complex as a whole is historically significant as a major church complex in the Borough of Queenscliffe since the 1860s. The scale and the location of the complex of early ecclesiastical buildings are important indications of the strength of the Anglican Church in the area. The complex is also of historical interest for its associations with prominent parishioners and Borough residents such as TH Fellows, politician and judge and the prominent Baillieu family.

The complex is socially significant as a focus for community activity and worship and for its associations with important local groups such as the Cosmopolitan Masonic Lodge Queenscliff (over 50 years), Grammar School (1882-1902), Literary Association 1883, Queenscliffe Borough Council Chambers 1899, Orange and ANA Lodges.

[i] St Peters Vicarage, Ross Street, Mornington c. 1864

Heritage Study/Consultant	Queenscliffe - Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study, Allom Lovell & Associates P/L, Architects, 1982; Queenscliffe - Queenscliffe Heritage Study, Lovell Chen, 2009;
Hermes Number	120958
Property Number	

Usage/Former Usage

Extract from the 1982 study

The land forming this precinct was set aside in the 1853 survey of the township as a reserve for the Church of England. It was subsequently to be occupied by St. Georges Church (1863-4), the Old Parsonage (1865-66), and the Parish Hall (1870). The latter building was constructed on the site of an early timber church hall and school building built in 1853-54 and a small timber school teacher's house.

The precinct, with an open iron picket fence, wide lawns and gracious trees, is one of the most tranquil and pleasant areas of the town. At one of the high points around the Church uninterrupted views can be had of the town spreading across to the Fort and of Swan Bay to the north and west. Although sadly intruded upon by a new parsonage on the Hobson Street boundary the area still retains much of its late nineteenth century charm and character and is of great significance to the township as a whole. The particular characteristics that combine to achieve this character are: .

- (i) the presence of three key buildings of both architectural and historic significance in their own right and the relationship of these buildings to each other.
- (ii) the prominence of the church and old parsonage in the skyline of the town and the dramatic views from the Church itself.
- (iii) the relationship of the buildings to the surrounding planting, landscape and topographical features.

Physical Description 1

Landscape/Streetscape

The area is extensively planted with a variety of trees all of which should be carefully preserved. No living trees should be removed from the site and additional planting should be carried out where trees have died. The whole area should be included in any landscape assessment and planning work for the town as a whole. Consideration should be given to placing some of the trees on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees. The area around the church in particular should be further planted with plants suitable to the Victorian character of the area.

Physical Description 2

Extract from the 2009 study

This precinct is bounded by Mercer Street, Learmonth Street, Hobson Street between Learmonth and Mercer Streets and the northern boundary of 13 Mercer Street and 22 Learmonth Street. This contained precinct, with an open iron picket fence, wide lawns and gracious trees, is one of the most tranquil and pleasant areas of the town. At one of the high points around the Church uninterrupted views can be had of the town spreading across to the Fort and of Swan Bay to the north and west. Despite the later new parsonage on the Hobson Street boundary, the area still retains much of its late nineteenth century charm and character.

Two-thirds of the precinct is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (refer to plan below). The registration includes St Georges Church (B1) and the Parish Hall (B2). The single-storey brick building between the two registered buildings (22 Hobson Street) is included in the extent of registered land but is not registered. The extent of registration does not include the two buildings in Mercer Street (nos 11 and 13, the latter is the former parsonage).

St George Church (corner Hobson and Mercer Streets, included in VHR extent)

The following external description is from the 1984 Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study, with minor amendments.

Externally the church has the basic high gabled form of the Early English period, with pronounced stepped buttresses at close intervals and stucco label moulds which became continuous string moulds between the window-groups. Extensive stucco quoining has been used on the buttresses and windows.

The bell tower also has pronounced diagonal buttresses, its window heights graduate in scale with that of the tower itself. Distinctive pinnacles adorn the crenellation of the tower's parapet, the pinnacles being decorated themselves with crockets. It is likely that both the tower and the church have been clad with roughcast at a later date.

St George's occupies a commanding site which is high and well planted with mature Norfolk Island pines which lend further vertical elements to the skyline and act as counterpoints to the tower.

The interior has been divided into nave and aisles by giant stuccoed arcading. Coloured glass windows which have been donated by, or dedicated to prominent town's people have been set into plate tracery at both ends of the church. These people include Susanna L Risby (1884) and (Justice) Thomas Howard Fellows (died 1878), and the firm of Ferguson and Urie constructed a window in the memory of Charles C. Simpson (1892).[i]

The box-type pews appear original, presumably being mounted on their raised timber podiums when the quarry-tile aisle was added in 1887.[ii] Further encaustic, marble, slate and quarry tiling extends into the chancel.

The church contains a restored (1999) organ dating from 1871 by George Fincham. This is a single-manual instrument of six speaking stops built for St Philip's Church, Collingwood and among the earliest intact examples of Fincham's work to survive. It is of particular note for its decorated facade pipes, thought to be the most elaborate early indigenous decorative scheme to survive. It is also unusual for a small organ in that the grained oak casework includes metal pipes of 8ft speaking length.[iii]

Parish Hall (corner of Hobson and Learmonth Streets, included in the VHR registration)

The following external description is from the 1984 Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study, with minor amendments.

This building was formerly the school hall to St Georges Church. Steeply pitched projecting gables flank a buttressed central entrance tower. Designed by Albert Purchas and built around 1870 it had a number of additions until 1902. Previous uses include a Masonic Lodge, A grammar School, the Borough Council Chambers (c. 1899), as well as a state school and for several local societies.

Old Parsonage (13 Mercer Street, outside the VHR extent of registration)

The following external description is from the 1984 Queenscliffe Urban Conservation Study, with minor amendments.

The former parsonage is of two levels and a half basement. It has been constructed of brick, with rubble stone foundation. Tudor derived style has been used with rectangular windows and label moulds, an asymmetrical plan and the resultant diverse roof shapes which, like the church and the school, are prominent. A timber verandah, with vertical timber balusters, faces east and returns on the south side. Of note is a gabled wash house which is sited to the north of the parsonage.

The balustrading has been replaced, extra windows placed in the north and west facades, the south wall rendered, a skillion added at ground level on the west, a chimney truncated and the brick work painted. Internally some mantles have been replaced, kitchen added at ground level and a bathroom was placed under the stairs blocking the stair to the former basement-kitchen and maids' room. The latter work carried out by architect Owen Cazaly[iv] after the turn of the century.

22 Hobson Street

Included in the extent of registered land but not registered.

This single-storey brick building of the post-WWII period is sited between the two registered buildings.

11 Mercer Street (outside the VHR extent of registration)

On the northern edge of the precinct fronting Mercer Street within the original two acre reserve boundaries, there is a one and two storey cream coloured brick house with tiled roof of post-war construction.

[i] (i) Dedications

(ii) QS 30.12.1893

[ii] QS 8.10.1887. Assumed part of 1887 extensions

[iii] National Trust Register. File reference B6325

[iv] (i) QS 8.10.1887

(ii) Pamphlet Op Cit

(iii) National Trust file no. 3456. mention in vestry minutes of Purchas in 1887.

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/>