
St James' Church and Hall



St James Glen Iris



St James hall



St James

Location

1463-146752986 High Street GLEN IRIS, STONNINGTON CITY

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO408

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 8, 2010

What is significant?

St James' Parish Hall of 1922, with extensions in 1932 by Williams and North architects, and the Church of 1957 designed by Bogle and Banfield architects, corner of Burke Road and High Street Glen Iris significant.

How is it significant?

St James' Parish Hall and Church is of State historic and architectural significance.

Why is it significant?

The Parish Hall and Church of St James' established on the present site after the boundaries of the parish were realigned in 1917 demonstrates a commitment to be located at the centre of the new parish. (Criterion A)

The parish hall is of social significance for its varied and extensive role in providing for both religious and secular uses. Built partly as a result of donations from parishioners in 1919 and again 1932, the hall demonstrates a central and important place in the life of the parish. (Criterion G)

The parish hall is significant as a hybrid structure of Arts and Crafts design with construction of reinforced concrete. It demonstrates an unusual blending of a historical design with innovative construction methods. As a building by Williams and North is demonstrates the particular interest in reinforced concrete by Alexander North whose practice in Tasmania had undertaken major commissions featuring this relatively new form of construction. (Criteria E & F)

The Parish Hall is significant for its high degree of integrity externally, featuring unpainted cement render finishes, window designs of multiple casements, exterior doors, and an external wall light fitting.

The 1957 church is an outstanding example of a modern building designed for worship, and it demonstrates a number of strong architectural ideas of the modern movement in its design. These include the cuboid form with flat roof and sheer walls with a band of highlight windows at the top of the wall, segregating the roof from the walls. The steel structure is of interest for the elongated proportions of the horizontal and vertical members of the frame and for the way in which this is separated from the wall planes, demonstrating the segregation of structure form the enclosure of space.

The concrete block screens (now removed) were an important feature of the design, and their loss has impacted on the original design intent. The east wall of coloured glass, although designed and built with great craftsmanship, is a major alteration to the design of the church and does impact upon the integrity of the interior.

The interior has a particularly impressive proportions demonstrated by the main space (nave) and the white steel columns dividing the it from the side chapel. The daylighting of the interior is achieved though strategically placed large panes of glass, which although originally designed to be reeded and translucent, are now of clear float glass.

Many original architectural details remain including the circular door pushes and pulls, some reeded glass partitions at the entry, the pendant light fittings and the semi-circular metal screen at the baptistery. St James is significant as the only known church work of Bogle and Banfield and displays stylistic similarities in their work for Korowa Girls' school in the concrete block screen walls. (Criteria B & E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Churches and Halls in the City of Stonnington - Heritage Citations Project 2010, Context Pty Ltd, 2010;
Hermes Number	155307
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

St James Church (1957) and parish hall (1932) form an architecturally diverse but high quality group of buildings, prominently situated on the corner of High Street and Burke Road.

Parish hall

The parish hall, has been designed in an Arts and Crafts manner by architects Williams and North. The buildings

were designed in reinforced concrete with rough cast render to the wall surfaces. Alternating bands of pebble dash render are used across the face of the front gable. It uses a domestic Arts and Crafts design in reflecting a conservative approach to a relatively new construction material. Plans show that the whole of the building including the window mullions was formed in concrete. The design of the hall may have been primarily that of North whose interest in reinforced concrete as a construction material is noted.

The parish hall is dominated by a central band of casement windows set beneath a wide and flat arch moulding. Pairs of highlight windows are used high on the gable end. The doorway is set in a recess to the side and has double timber and glazed doors. Of note is the wall mounted light fitting adjacent to the front door.

The gabled roofs are clad in concrete tiles and the wall surfaces are in unpainted render.

The hall has been extended with a cloistered clergy entry to the church, and there are a series of arches that open onto the car park that is located between the two wings of the building. Some contemporary fencing is set between the columns.

The parish hall combines a popular architectural style of the 1930s (Arts and Crafts Revival) with that of a relatively new for the time, and uncommon building material (reinforced concrete).

The hall has a high degree of integrity externally, and the unpainted wall surfaces contribute to this.

Church

St James Church is a departure from traditional architectural styles after World War 2 and is designed in a modernist style, being built as a cuboid structure with a steel frame and infill brick panels with a flat roof concealed by a parapet. It is noted in Philip Goad's *Melbourne Architecture* for its structural clarity and use of pattern and symbol.

The design has international precedents and is a strong statement based on the work of several key international architects, Philip Johnson and Mies van der Rohe.

The front facade to High Street is a plain brick wall with a glazed porch which was formerly concealed by a screen of concrete panels in a repeating cross pattern. The east side is now a coloured glass wall, however this was not part of the original design and has replaced windows that were also concealed by the precast concrete block screen (now removed). A similar action has occurred to the west side where the brickwork and exposed metal frame is now visible.

The interior is a single space of aisle, choir and side chapel that are subtly demarcated within the overall volume. The side entries to this space flank the Baptistry that is defined by a semi circular metal screen of distinctive design at the rear of a seat that mirrors this shape. The structure of the building is formed by elongated black steel columns and beams that are free of the planes of brickwork. Separation of the roof and walls is achieved through the use of highlight windows and these match the height of the roof beams.

The interior is defined by the use of plain brickwork and timber battening. Interior space is divided by a row of white painted columns defining the side chapel which is lit from a panel of translucent reeded glass. Hail damage to glass in the porch has resulted in replacement of this element with clear glass panels set in aluminium frames. Interior glass partitions and doors to the entries indicate the original type of glass used a pattern imported from Germany. Despite this removal the whole design intent is still evident including a section of the precast screen which survives. Photos in the Peter Wille collection show it in the original state. (SLV, H91.244/541)

The interior contains the original hardwood pews, polished floors, timber battened ceilings, suspended pendant lighting and other church fittings.

The removal of the concrete screen walls has resulted in a fundamental change to the design of St James, and the substitution of a coloured glass wall is a departure from the design intent. These have changed the way in which the church is experienced, however there is still sufficient integrity of the design that has endured beyond the changes.

Historical Australian Themes

Themes from Stonnington Thematic Environmental History :

10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases of development

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