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# St Mary the Immaculate Conception Church and Presbytery



St Mary's Church, 2011



St Mary's Presbytery



St Mary's Church



St Mary's Presbytery, west side

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## Location

87-91 Manning Street, MALVERN EAST VIC 3145 - Property No 74654

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO419

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 22, 2011

### *What is significant?*

Saint Mary the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church to the extent of the fabric of 1920-23, designed by architect Bart Moriarty, and to a lesser extent the completion works of 1962-64. The Presbytery, designed by architect PJ O'Connor, to the extent of the fabric of 1931.

The school, built in 1918 with additions in 1930, 1976 and 2009, is of historical interest only as a link between the original church of 1890 and the present church.

### *How is it significant?*

The church is of local historical, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington, and the presbytery is of local historical, aesthetic and architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

### *Why is it significant?*

St Mary's Church is historically significant as an illustration of the suburban growth in East Malvern following World War I. It is also one of the first war memorial churches to be built in the Melbourne metropolitan area following that war. About 60 percent of WWI memorials are traditional monuments, while most of the remainder were memorial halls and schools. Memorial churches were rarer (Criteria A & B).

It is also historically significant for its association with architect Bart Moriarty. During the interwar era he was responsible for the design and construction of numerous Catholic churches and halls in Victoria. And his role as builder of Newman College (1916-18) in Barrabool sandstone may have influenced the use of this stone for St Mary's (Criterion H).

St Mary's Church is socially significant as a centre for the local Catholic community since 1891, when the first church was built on the site (Criterion G).

St Mary's Church is of aesthetic significant as a local landmark on the Emo Estate, Malvern East, which is enhanced by its location at the end of Emo Road. It is also a representative example of a stone interwar Gothic Revival church (Criterion D).

St Mary's Presbytery is historically significant for its associations with architect PJ O'Connor who was noted for his interwar and post-war designs for the Catholic Church.

It is aesthetically and architecturally significant as a mature and very finely detailed example of PJ O'Connor's work. The design makes confident and free use of the California Bungalow, Arts & Crafts and Colonial Revival styles (Criteria E & F).

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Churches and Halls in the City of Stonnington - Heritage Citations Project 2010, Context Pty Ltd, 2010;
Construction dates	1891,
Architect/Designer	Harper, Robert, O'Connor, PJ, Moriarty, Bart,
Hermes Number	162621
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

## **St Mary's the Immaculate Conception Church**

St Mary's is a French Gothic church clad in Barrabool sandstone with a slate roof. It is restrained in its design, relying more on strong massing than excessive detail. In this sense the 1920-23 church can be seen as a forerunner of the 1930s muscular and stripped-back version of the Gothic Revival.

Most of the stone has a rock-faced finish, with smooth dressings and entrance arch. The broad parapeted gable front is dominated by a large lancet window with stone tracery and stained glass. Below it is a projecting entrance porch reached via terrazzo front steps. The double front doors (timber in a linen-fold pattern) sit within a decorative lancet arch, flanked by multiple colonettes. On the left-hand side of the church front is a slender octagonal tower (unfinished, as the spire has not been installed). On the right-hand side is a square tower with pointed engaged buttresses and crenulations at the top.

The side elevations have lancet windows with label moulds and stained glass. Between them are engaged buttresses to the height of the windows.

At the rear of the east side elevation is a flat-roofed section.

The entire building is clad in Barrabool sandstone. Due to its tendency to rapidly weather, the stone was largely replaced (in kind) in 2004.

## **The Presbytery**

The Presbytery of 1931 is a very well designed and intact house in the Free Style mode, borrowing elements from the California Bungalow and Georgian Revival styles. It is dominated by a sweeping hipped roof, clad in Marseille tiles, and accented by gables. Chimneys are roughcast rendered with a brick band at the top, evincing an Arts & Craft influence. The walls of the building are also finished in roughcast render.

The facade is demarcated by two gables, major and minor. The major gable is decorated with timber shingles in its upper half. The verandah roof is continuous with the hipped roof. It is supported on a row of full-height Doric columns, between which are mild-steel balustrading in a circle and cross pattern. The exterior of the presbytery is beautifully detailed, starting with the underside of the verandah roof. It is finished in lining boards, and there are openings built in above the windows clad in transparent glass Marseille tiles (Wunderlich brand) to let light in.

The front windows are double-hung sashes grouped in threes within a slightly projecting frame supported on brick corbels. They are filled with geometric leadlights ornamented by lily and cross designs. The front door, at the centre of the facade, is high-waisted with a ledged panel below and a leadlight window above. It is flanked by narrow sidelights, and has a leadlight highlight above.

The presbytery is highly intact. External alterations appear to be limited to the replacement of the verandah tiles with sympathetic red and black replacements.

## **St Mary's Primary School**

The church hall and school stands behind and to the west of the church. Its gable-fronted facade faces east into the school playground. This gable is built of red brick with a rendered apex. At the centre of this elevation is a long, multipaned window with an arch motif at the top. This section of the building dates from the 1918 building campaign, as noted by the foundation stone on it. The rest of this elevation is completely hidden behind new extensions, including the 2009 one.

The next section of the school to be constructed was a six-bay section with a gabled hip roof, which is visible on the south side of the school. It appear to date from 1930. The walls, again, are red brick and two-storeys high. The spandrels between the floors are smooth render enclosing a rectangle of bricks. The ground-floor windows are double-hung sashes divided by a brick pier, while the upper floor has three bays that retain groups of three two-over-two sashes.

At the rear of this section are three more bays with a flat roof and simpler detailing, which appears to date from 1976.

Overall, the integrity of the school is fairly low, particularly due to the concealment of the earliest parts of the building by recent additions.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

*Themes from Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, 2006:*

10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases of suburban development

8.2.1 'Country in the city' - suburban development in Malvern before 1920

8.2.2 'The City of Real Homes' - Development of Malvern after 1920

3.3.5 Recovery and infill 1900-1940

*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/>*