

ST MARYS CATHOLIC CHURCH



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 compressed



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H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 17



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 18



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 3



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 2



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 6



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 9



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 7



H2174 St Marys Church Bairnsdale April 2008 10



H2174 St Marys Church
Bairnsdale April 2008 21



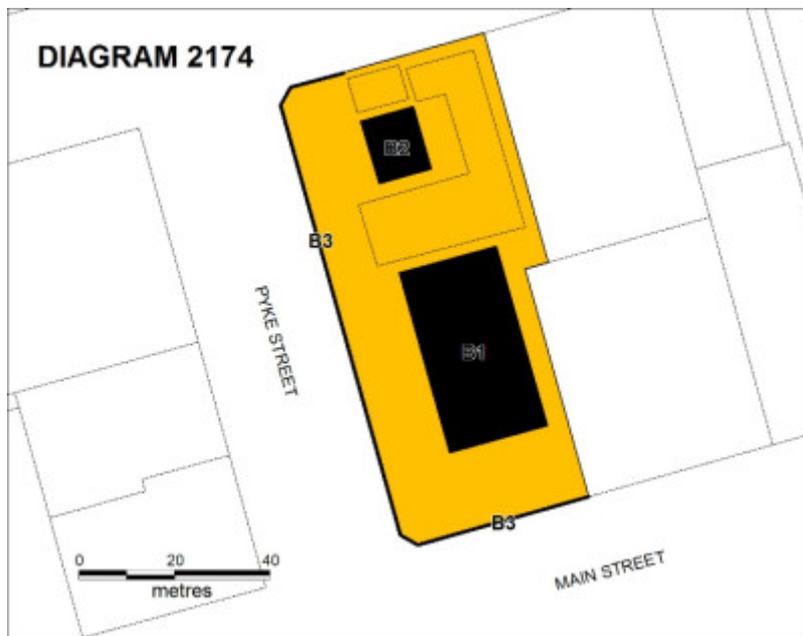
H2174 St Marys Church
Bairnsdale April 2008 12



During Photograph -
Reference F3861



During Photograph -
Reference F3861



H2174 st marys plan

Location

240-256 MAIN STREET BAIRNSDALE, EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2174

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO80

HO148

VHR Registration

October 9, 2008

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

St Mary's Church Bairnsdale was begun in 1913, replacing an earlier brick church of 1883. Father Cornelius Cremin proposed the new church soon after his appointment in 1909. Designed by the prolific Catholic church architect Augustus A Fritsch, the first stage comprising a nave of six bays with barrel vaulted ceiling and a sanctuary within a polygonal apse was opened by the Coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix, in July 1914. The second stage, being the final three bays of the nave, the west front with wheel window and tower, was completed by 1936.

The church is executed in the Romanesque style, constructed of red brick, with cement dressings, a slate roof, and small copper dome to the dominant 42 metre high, asymmetrically placed tower. The comprehensive interior decorative scheme is of murals depicting the apostles, numerous saints, imaginings of purgatory, heaven and hell, and numerous seraphims and cherubims. It was executed by Francesco Floreani between 1931 and 1938. Floreani was a migrant Italian from Udine, who had studied painting at Udine College and then at the Academy of Arts in Turin. He arrived in Melbourne in 1928 and briefly was a house painter in Melbourne. During the Depression he became an itinerant farm worker in Bairnsdale. In 1931 he approached Father Cremin for work, and after completing some minor commissions he set about a comprehensive decorative scheme for the church. The content of his murals were probably at least partly directed by Father Cremin, and are in flat, stylised manner, possibly inspired by Renaissance religious art. Father Cremin paid Floreani 3 pounds per week from his own purse.

The church was reordered in 1978, and whilst a new altar brought forward into the nave required the part removal of the marble altar rail, there have been relatively few other changes.

At the rear of the church is the presbytery, a two storey red brick structure designed by Fritsch and Fritsch and built in 1939 in a neo-Georgian style. It includes a semi-circular portico on Doric columns, quoins in contrasting salmon pink brick, shutters to ground floor windows and deep eaves to the slate roof. A brick fence, possibly built in 1939, encloses part of the site. Located between the church and manse is a modern red brick hall, and there is a modern parish office at the rear. Neither are significant buildings.

How is it significant?

St Mary's Church is of architectural, historical, aesthetic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

St Mary's Church is of architectural significance as one of the earliest, largest, most striking and least altered of the red brick churches designed by A A Fritsch. A A Fritsch was one of the key exponents of Romanesque and Baroque church architecture in Victoria and of the numerous red brick churches in a Romanesque or Baroque style by Fritsch, St Mary's is amongst the largest and the most idiosyncratic, chiefly for its asymmetrically placed tower. The presbytery is also distinctive, being an unusual example of the interwar Georgian revival style, and executed by the same architect.

St Mary's Church is historical significance in Gippsland for its role in the expanding development of the Catholic church from the 1880s. It is representative of the expansion in Catholic church building programs across Victoria in the first decades of the twentieth century. The church is significant for its close historical associations with the migrant community, particularly the Italian community.

St Mary's Church is of aesthetic significance for its comprehensive decorative scheme of murals, which are of a scale unmatched by any other church in Victoria.

St Mary's Church is of social significance as a landmark church in Gippsland and eastern Victoria both for its dominant presence and as place frequented by tens of thousands each year to view the Floreani murals.

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](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

Regular Site Maintenance : The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995: a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing; d) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. e) the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

Public Safety and Security : The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional.

Signage and Site Interpretation : The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items; c) signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place; d) signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place; Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation.

Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1913,
Architect/Designer	Fritsch & Fritsch, Public Works Department,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	St Mary's,
Hermes Number	2024
Property Number	

History

Associated People:

Assessment Against Criteria

a. The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object

St Mary's Church is historical significance in Gippsland for its role in the development of the Catholic church from the 1880s. It is representative of the expansion in Catholic church building programs across Victoria in the first decades of the twentieth century. The church is significant for its close historical associations with the migrant community, particularly the Italian community.

b. The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

St Mary's Church is one of the largest, most striking and least altered of the red brick churches designed by A A Fritsch in the first two decades of the twentieth century. A.A. Fritsch was one of the key exponents of Romanesque church architecture in Victoria between the 1890s and 1930s and of the numerous red brick churches in a Romanesque or Baroque style by Fritsch, St Mary's is amongst the largest and the most idiosyncratic, chiefly for its asymmetrically placed tower.

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

St Mary's is of aesthetic significance for its comprehensive decorative scheme of murals, which are of a scale unmatched by any other church in Victoria.

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

St Mary's Church is of social significance as a landmark church in Gippsland and eastern Victoria both for its dominant presence and as place frequented by tens of thousands each year to view the Floreani murals.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Plaque Citation

St Mary's, begun in 1913 and completed in 1936, is significant for its comprehensive mural scheme, unmatched in Victoria. The murals were executed by migrant Italian Francesco Floreani between 1931 and 1938.

Extent of Registration

1. All of the buildings marked B1 St Marys Church, B2 St Marys Presbytery and B3 brick fence on Diagram 2174 held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2174 held by the Executive Director being all the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 1061 Folio 140.

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/>