

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated 25/01/20



## SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPLEX



Sacred Heart Catholic Church Complex



Sacred Heart Catholic Church Complex,  
Presbytery



Sacred Heart Catholic Church Complex,  
Nuns House

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### Location

322 BELL STREET, 4-6 CLIFTON GROVE, and 89 DAVID STREET, PRESTON, DAREBIN CITY

### Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO199

### Heritage Listing

Darebin City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### *What is significant?*

The Sacred Heart Church complex comprising buildings in Bell Street, David Street and Clifton Grove Preston. The following elements contribute to the significance of the place:

- The 1915 Presbytery
- The church (interior and exterior) dating from 1926 and the three mature Italian Cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*)
- The 1938 convent
- The 1956 Church Hall
- The 1957 Immaculate Heart College building that now forms part of Samaritan Catholic College.

Non-original alterations to the contributory buildings, and other buildings and plantings are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

The Sacred Heart Catholic church and school complex is of local historic, aesthetic and social significance to Darebin City.

### *Why is it significant?*

Historically, the Sacred Heart Catholic church and school complex is significant as the centre of the Catholic church in Preston. It is significant as a representative example of a major Catholic Church Parish centre and the numerous buildings constructed over a century provides evidence of important phases of the development of Preston into a city in the twentieth century. The complex as a whole also illustrates the growth and development of the Catholic Church in Darebin in the twentieth century, and reflects the influence of migration upon the growth of the church in the post-World War Two era. The post-war growth of the church is in particular demonstrated by the 1956 Parish Hall, and the 1957 Immaculate Heart College, which was the first Catholic Regional School in Australia. (AHC criteria A.4, B.2, D.2)

Aesthetically, the Sacred Heart Catholic church at 322 Bell Street, Preston is significant as a finely detailed example of a substantial Inter-war suburban church designed in a Classical Revival style. The church has many distinct and finely detailed elements both internally and externally including its bell tower and coffered vaulted ceiling. The scale of the church and its prominent siting on an elevated corner site make it a local landmark. While the church is the centrepiece, the other buildings including the college, convent and Presbytery contribute to the setting of the church and the sense of scale and presence of the complex. (AHC criteria E.1, F.1)

Aesthetically, the Sacred Heart Hall is significant as a fine example of the use of Moderne style elements on a building. It is of aesthetic significance for its compositional qualities and the incorporation an eclectic mix of finely detailed architectural elements in the David Street (north) elevation. (AHC criterion F.1)

Socially, the Sacred Heart Catholic church and school complex is significant as a place that is known, used and valued by the local Catholic community for over 100 years. (AHC criterion G.1)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011;
Construction dates	1914, 1925, 1930, 1955,
Architect/Designer	Conolly, WP, Payne, Mr,
Hermes Number	26700
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Preston comprises a complex on the north side of Bell Street east of High

Street. The site is bisected by Clifton Grove, and also has a rear frontage to David Street. The contributory buildings within the complex include the church, presbytery, convent, college and parish hall

#### *Church, Bell Street*

The church is situated on the north-east corner of Bell Street and Clifton Grove on a rise. The elevated position of the church, with its tall bell tower, gives it a landmark quality in this part of the district. The church, orientated in an east-west direction (its nave is parallel to Bell Street), is designed in a Classical Revival style and its red brick walls are broken up with cement render around wall openings and cement banding in a 'blood and bandages' arrangement. The pair of arches that face Clifton Grove form the entrance to the church. The bell tower has a serliana motif on all of the four sides of its top where the bell is fitted and the bell tower is topped with a metal dome with a cross fixed to it. The church has a gable roof clad in terracotta tiles, however, internally the roof is expressed as a vaulted ceiling, with a three-centred arch/vault spanning the width of the church. Behind the altar is a recess with three semi-circular headed arches. Early plantings included three Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), one at the corner of Bell Street and Clifton Grove and two marking the side entrance facing Bell Street.

#### *Presbytery, Bell Street*

To the east of the church is the Presbytery. It is a substantial Edwardian house, set back from Bell Street behind a garden. The house has a bellcast roof, clad in terracotta tiles, which extends down to form the verandah on the south and west elevations. Pairs of iron columns support the roof of the verandah. The projecting bay to Bell Street has a boxed bay window with side hung casements and transoms. The house is reasonably intact internally and externally and is in good condition. Additions have been made at the rear.

#### *Primary school, Bell Street*

To the west of the church, on the opposite side of Clifton Grove is the primary school, which has been built in stages. The earliest stage of the present building may be contemporaneous with the presbytery. It is a double storey red brick building with a gable facing toward Clifton Grove. It has been almost completely enveloped by later flat and gable roofed additions on all sides. The upper part of the facade facing Clifton Grove remains partially intact, and the main roof retains its original roof vents. Adjoining this building to east, and oriented north-west is a double-storey brick classroom block with a gable roof clad in terracotta tiles, It has buttresses and other elements that give it a religious character. The building has been altered extensively, with windows on its sides enlarged, which has diminished the building's integrity.

#### *Good Samaritan Convent, Clifton Grove*

To the north of the church, on the east side of Clifton Grove is the former Good Samaritan Convent. The building, which is now a womens' refuge, is domestic in scale and character. It has a hipped and gable roof that is clad in terracotta tiles and has the symbol of the cross affixed to the apex of the main gables. The windows in the main gable facing the street are tripartite with the upper floor window having an arched central pane. Other windows are double hung sash. The building is faced in Manganese brick and other parts of the walls are finely detailed with lighter brick. The foundation stone is in the front elevation toward the north end. A flat roofed addition has been made at the rear.

#### *Immaculate Heart College, Clifton Grove*

To the north of the former nuns' home is the complex's secondary college, which is a group of educational buildings that have been built in stages from 1957. The 1957 buildings appear to comprise the cream and red brick two storey gabled buildings with black end walls facing the street. The gable to the north has a single storey section projecting forward. The area between the buildings has been infilled with a Modernist flat roofed building. To the north of these buildings is a c.1970s three storey Modernist building with a flat roof. They are relatively utilitarian in character, and are in contrast to the church, presbytery and former nuns' home.

#### *Parish Hall, David Street*

A mid-twentieth century brick parish hall, with a double-storey front section that faces David Street, which conceals a lower rear section that contains the hall proper. The building is set back from its street boundary behind a concrete drive and garden. A high chain-link fence extends along the David Street boundary. The double-storey street facing (north) elevation is divided into three parts. A cream brick central section has a stepped corbelling detail at its top, below a concrete capping on the parapet. A flagpole is fixed to the top of the wall and it extends above the parapet. The first floor of the central portion has a strip window that is composed in a tripartite arrangement. Two pillars of thin glazed black bricks form this tripartite division. At ground level a steel porch projects above the entrance to the hall. The walls flanking the entrance doors are splayed with bricks similar to those on the pillars of the first floor window opening. On either side of the entrance are porthole

windows, which also have a band of glazed black bricks. Flanking the cream brick central portion are two clinker brick bays that are slightly recessed back from the wall of the central portion. They have windows with a vertical emphasis and each bay has a parapet that curves downward. A single-storey portion, also built of clinker brick, and which has a porch, is built to the west of the hall and may be an early addition to the building.

*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 data owner.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*