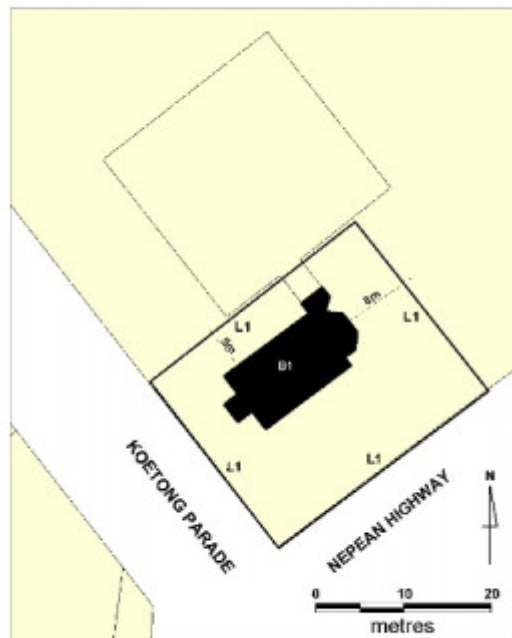


# ST JAMES THE LESS ANGLICAN CHURCH



ST JAMES THE LESS ANGLICAN CHURCH SOHE 2008 1 st james the less mt eliza



st james the less plan

## Location

105 KOETONG PARADE MOUNT ELIZA, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1890

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO109

## VHR Registration

August 17, 2000

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

St James the Less Anglican Church is a small brick church built in 1865. The building combines Gothic massing with round headed windows in a Primitive Gothic style. The church was constructed using locally made bricks on a granite base and was designed by William Grover. The apse and vestry, added in 1913, are brick on brick foundations. St James the Less Anglican is a simple church and an intact representation of churches of this era. The brickwork of the church has been over painted.

The five-panel altarpiece 'Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings' 1931 painted for St James the Less Anglican Church by the artist Violet Teague. The painting, in oils on canvas panels, was designed to fit into the apse of St James the Less.

How is it Significant?

The church of St James the Less with its altarpiece paintings is of aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it Significant?

St James the Less Anglican church is a small brick church built in Gothic style in 1865, which has associations with many of the early and notable residents of the Mornington Peninsula.

The five panel altarpiece 'Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings' 1931 by Violet Teague is aesthetically significant because it is a rare example of an altarpiece in situ in the State. It is one of only five altarpieces executed by Teague known to survive in Victoria and one of only two of her altarpiece paintings that remain in situ. The five-panel painting in oils on canvas panels was designed to fit into the apse of St James the Less church, with panels designed to accommodate openings for a door and a window. This painting is significant for its unusual representation of the subject matter, an allegorical painting of the Nativity and the scale of the work. The altarpiece 'Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings' was Violet Teague's largest and most ambitious religious work. The altarpiece is a rare example of a religious painting purpose-designed for a church. Although the production of religious art is not unprecedented in Australia it is highly unusual for work to be specifically designed for a place of worship. Violet Teague, who was born in Melbourne in 1872 and died at Mt Eliza in 1951, is one of the many Australian women painters whose extensive body of work has been neglected by history until recently. Her oeuvre included detailed oil paintings and portraiture, Japanese influenced woodcuts and prints and landscape watercolour paintings.

## Permit 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. 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Exterior:

- \*Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \*Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \*Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \*Regular garden maintenance.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering systems, provided the installation or replacement of the system/s do/does not cause short or long term moisture problems to the building.
- \*Laying or repair of gravel/toppings to the driveways and internal roads.

Interior:

- \*Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of paintings and other wall mounted artworks in nave and porch.
- \*Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Construction dates 1865,

Architect/Designer Grover, W,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,

Hermes Number 3968

Property Number

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## History

Contextual History: MT ELIZA Located to the north of Mornington, Mt Eliza was named in 1836 by Captain Hobson while he was surveying Port Phillip Bay. Permanent European settlement began around 1854 after the surveying and auctioning of Crown Land. Many large allotments were purchased by the settlers to accommodate varying farming enterprises. It was not until the early 1860s that a number of larger and more substantial homes were built by the early families. The larger homes situated closer to the coast tended to be used as summer houses for Melbourne residents beginning a long tradition of usage for Mount Eliza and the Mornington Peninsula. The growth of a township is usually marked by the establishment of the first school, which occurred for Mt Eliza in 1861, and local churches. The township expanded and by the 1930s smaller subdivisions of land were developed to create new estates. This process continued and by the 1960s Mt Eliza had changed again to an area of permanent dwellings although it continued to be used also as a seaside resort.

Violet Teague is one of the many Australian women painters whose extensive body of work has been neglected in the story of Australian art until recently. Although the production of religious art is not unprecedented in Australia it is highly unusual for work to be produced specifically for exhibition in a place of worship. Of other documented religious paintings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the five panelled altarpiece "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" c1931 painted for St James the Less is one of few paintings that remain extant and in situ. Much of Violet Teague's work is in the hands of galleries and private collectors, the remainder having been documented but their whereabouts are unknown.

History of Place: ST JAMES THE LESS ANGLICAN CHURCH By 1860 Mt Eliza was a growing community in need of a permanent place of worship. Up to this time the local community had been using the local school as a place of worship. This issue combined with the institution of a permanent minister, Rev. James Glover for the parish of Mornington was the impetus for the construction of St James the Less. In 1862 local identity Edward Lintott donated 3.75 acres of land for the church. Local families provided the majority of funding toward the construction of the building and the fittings through donations. St James the Less was designed by William

Grover and built in 1865. The construction of the building was staged with the nave and porch to be constructed initially with the apse and vestry to be completed at a later date. The bricks were made on site using locally supplied clay with the building being founded on a granite base. A time capsule was placed underneath the corner stone laid by Glover. In 1913 the apse and vestry were constructed designed by James A. Wood. Many of the leadlight windows are memorials to founding members of the community. The five panel altarpiece "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" painted by Violet Teague in 1931 is a monument to the many members of the local community of the time who are represented in the painting.

**VIOLET TEAGUE**  
Violet Teague, born in 1872 in Melbourne, is one of the many Australian women painters whose extensive body of work has been neglected by history until recently. She was exhibited widely during her lifetime, Teague died in 1951, with her work being included in collaborative exhibitions with her artistic contemporaries and solo exhibitions. Although Violet's paintings were well regarded at the time, even awarded internationally, they stood apart from the mainstream and were consequently neglected in the story of Australian art. After her death, Violet's work continued to be exhibited. Her oeuvre ranged from detailed oil paintings and portraiture, Japanese influenced woodcuts, the painting of several pieces with religious themes and to working with watercolours over the course of her lengthy career as an artist.

In 1878 Violet's father Dr James Teague had the family holiday house 'Trawalla' built at Mt Eliza and this was the beginning of the family's long association with the community. She made a return trip to Europe in 1889 to study German language and then attended Atelier Blanc Garin in Brussels from 1890 to be educated in the techniques of painting. Violet returned to Melbourne in 1895 and worked from a studio in her father's Collins Street address. The influence of her regular travels to 'Trawalla' can be seen in her artwork. During 1899 Violet is involved in a summer school at Heidelberg run by painter E. Phillips Fox. From this time she is exhibiting her paintings widely and is being rewarded for her work, her involvement with the Society of Women Painters and the Victorian Artists' Society continues.

Violet Teague's social world ensured that she was party to academic, artistic and intellectual endeavour. She was involved in the organisation 'salons' and regularly wrote for the Theosophists Society journal 'Advance!Australia'. Here she explored the notion of spirituality and art. Violet's social endeavour continued with fund raising for the war effort, she was later awarded with two medals from the French Government for her contribution to the war effort. Violet continued her artwork out of Trawalla and in 1930 had a studio constructed for the completion of the "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings". The painting is exhibited in a solo exhibition prior to it being dedicated at St James the Less church in Mt Eliza.

Violet focused her efforts on fund raising for the Hermannsburg mission in Central Australia in 1934. She then travelled to Europe for two years to return to Melbourne with a solo exhibition of her work from her sea journey in 1938. Violet continued her artwork out of Trawalla until her death in September 1951.

**OEUVRE**  
Violet Teague's artworks were distinctly different to the mainstream of Australian painting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At the turn of the century when Australian art was focussed on the production of a nationalistic style, for example landscape and rural scenography, Violet's work concentrated on portraiture and woodblock printing. She worked in stylistic isolation, not referencing her contemporaries or the shift toward Modernism in Europe. During the inter-war period Teague's work explored many themes and media. The majority of her altarpieces were completed, she travelled to Hermannsburg mission in central Australia and produced a series of accompanying landscape watercolours and she journeyed on the sailing ship C. B. Pedersen, for which she produced several oil paintings. Teague's painting style was considered out of step, even anachronistic, compared to other modern works produced in the same period with her referencing techniques of the Renaissance and Pre-Raphaelite periods. Although the beauty and quality of the works are by no means diminished by this idea, her ability for greater recognition would have certainly been hampered by the impression of the works being 'old fashioned'.

"Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" St. James the Less, Mt Eliza c1931  
Seven known altar paintings and two processional banners for Protestant churches.  
Two processional banners-  
1939 for St Paul's, Frankston, destroyed by fire  
1943 for St Cuthbert's Church, Prospect, South Australia  
Altarpieces:  
"Madonna and Child", 1910, triptych originally at Gift Church, Wannon. The paintings hang in the Holy Trinity Church, (Coleraine, cnr. Church and Henty Sts?), not in their original frames.  
"The Adoration of the Shepherds" 1921, St. Peters Anglican Church, Kinglake West, now located, although not behind the altar, at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.  
"Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" 1931 St. James the Less, Mt Eliza.  
"Christ at the Carpenter's Bench" 1935 for the W.J. Schutt Memorial Chapel at St Paul's Training School for Boys at Newhaven, Phillip Island. Remains in original position.  
"Epiphany in the Snows", 1935 formerly in the Cathedral of the Arctic Aklavik, Canada. (Destroyed)  
"Flight Into Egypt" 1946 for Church of Christ, Carlisle River, in the Otways Victoria.  
Additional untraced altarpiece exhibited in the 1902 Annual VAS Exhibition.

**ALTARPIECE**  
"ADORATION OF ANGELS, OF SHEPHERDS, OF KINGS"  
The series of five panels is considered a more complex representation of the Nativity than her previous works for this subject matter. The tripartite story of the Nativity is compressed into one continuous narrative. The panel on the far left depicts the Angels in a reverential pose looking toward the newborn Christ. The second panel from the left depicts the nativity scene with the Virgin, the infant Christ, the three shepherds and animals. Teague represents this panel

as an interior space, sparse in decoration with the visual focus being on the newborn Christ. The central panel bridges the sanctuary window and the separation of internal and external space. Here, the extended branch of the cypress tree based on the tree at Trawalla where the family and friends would gather for the celebration of Christmas. The final two panels depict the Adoration of Kings with the central figure being Violet's father Dr. James Pascoe Teague, a memorial to him being the *raison d'être* for the work.  
Associated People:  
VIOLET TEAGUE

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion A

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

### Criterion B

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

The five panelled altarpiece "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" c.1931 situated in the apse of the church of St James the Less is a rare example of a religious painting specifically designed for a place of worship. "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" c.1931 is one of only two altarpieces painted by Violet Teague remaining in situ.

### Criterion C

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

### Criterion 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.

### Criterion 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.

The church of St James the Less with its altarpiece painting "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" c.1931 is of aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. The five panelled altarpiece is an unusual representation of the subject matter, an allegorical painting of the nativity, modelled upon members the parish of St James the Less. The five panelled altarpiece, painted in oils on canvas, is designed to fit within the apse of St James the Less.

### Criterion F

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

### Criterion G

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

The church of St James the Less and the associated altarpiece "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" is demonstrative of a lengthy association with artist Violet Teague. Violet Teague, born in Melbourne in 1872 and died at Mt Eliza in 1951, is one of many Australian women painters whose extensive body of work has been neglected until recently. Her oeuvre included detailed oil paintings and portraiture, Japanese influenced woodcuts and prints and landscape watercolour paintings.

### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## Extent of Registration

1. All the building known as St James the Less Anglican Church marked B1 on Diagram Number 1890 held by the executive director.
  2. The five panel oil paint on canvas apsidal altar piece "Adoration of Angels, of Shepherds, of Kings" by Violet Teague.
  3. All the land marked L1 on Diagram Number 1890 held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Part of Book 151 Memorial 9.
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*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/>*