

St Joseph’s Church Complex, 41-55 Stanhope Street, Malvern – Statement of Significance, June 2021

Heritage place: St Joseph’s Church Complex, 41-55 Stanhope Street, Malvern

PS ref no.: HO102



Figures 1-4. (R-L, top to bottom) St Joseph’s Church, Presbytery, Parish Hall and School (GJM Heritage, July 2020).

What is significant?

St Joseph’s Church Complex, 41-55 Stanhope Street, Malvern, built from 1889 to 1941, comprising the church, presbytery, parish hall (original church) and school buildings.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

All Buildings

- The original external form, materials and detailing of the buildings
- The high level of integrity of the buildings to their original design.

Church

- Romanesque style, sometimes referred to as ‘Blood and Bandage’ manner
- Red brick walls with (overpainted) cement render detail

- Slate-clad roof
- Detailed symmetrical front façade with central bay comprising a banded arched entrance, simple rose window, niche with statue of St Joseph and stepped parapet, and flanking dome-capped towers
- Stepped brick buttresses and corbels and circular windows.

Presbytery

- Large two-storey form with verandah and balcony on three sides and central protruding gabled entrance bay
- Cement rendered brick walls (overpainted) on bluestone base
- Hipped slate-clad roof
- Cast iron verandah posts, valences, brackets and balustrading
- Substantial cement rendered chimneys
- Pairs of tall rectangular double-hung windows set into an undecorated wall.

Parish Hall (former Church)

- Simple Gothic style
- Red brick walls with (overpainted) freestone dressings
- Steep corrugated steel-clad gabled roof
- Central steep-roofed front porch with blind pointed arch and trefoil above
- Chamfered buttresses.

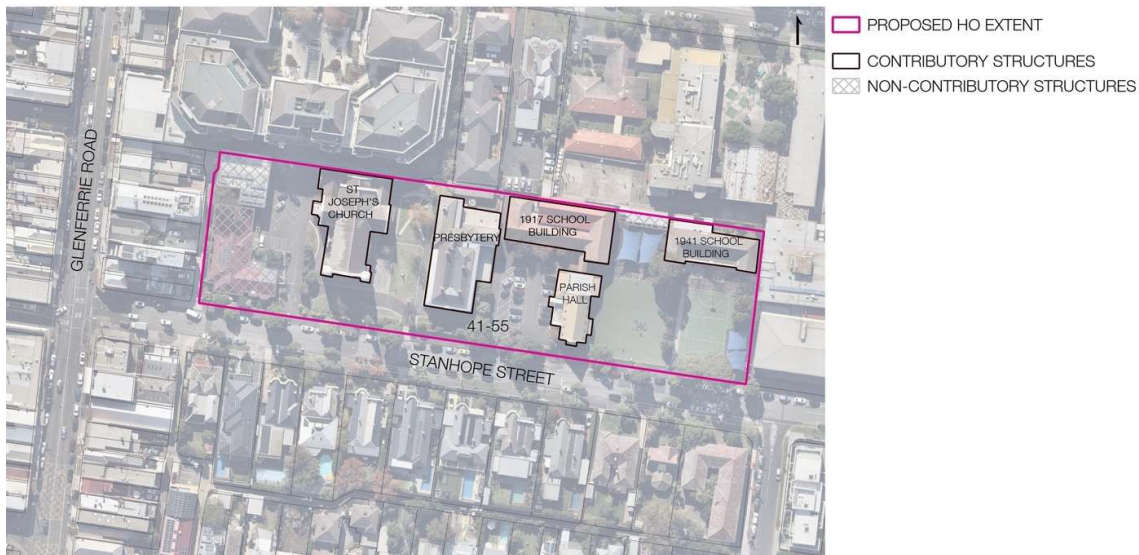
1917 School Building

- Simple rectangular, gabled and hipped forms
- Red brick walls
- Terracotta tile-clad roofs
- Large multi-paned double hung windows with top lights and subtle curved window heads.

1941 School Building

- Longitudinal hipped-roof form with parapeted gable ends to side bays of the front elevation
- Dark red brick walls
- Glazed tile-clad roof
- Stepped central pediment
- Brick detailing to front parapets and gable-ends
- Wrought iron 'St Josephs' sign on façade.

Later alterations and additions are not significant. This includes the single-storey buildings to the west of the site, the different front fence treatments, and later additions to the school buildings.



How is it significant?

St Joseph's Church Complex is of local historical, representative (architectural), aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

St Joseph's Church Complex is a large and highly intact group of religious buildings, including a church, presbytery, parish hall (original church) and school. This group of religious and educational buildings clearly demonstrate the operations of the Catholic Church in the municipality – and in suburban Melbourne more broadly – from the late nineteenth century through to the twenty-first century (Criterion A).

St Joseph's Church Complex is a fine and highly intact example of a religious complex in suburban Melbourne. It contains buildings from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar periods which display typical characteristics of a range of architectural styles, including the Victorian Gothic style (Parish hall/original church) and Victorian Italianate style (presbytery) of the late nineteenth century, the Federation Romanesque style (church), and Interwar Stripped Classical style (school buildings) of the early to mid-twentieth century. The church is a fine example of the Romanesque style of Catholic church building prevalent in the 1900-1920 period and is a well-resolved example of the early work of A A Fritsch for the Catholic Church (Criterion D).

St Joseph's Church Complex is a well-considered and carefully detailed complex of church buildings. The red brick Romanesque church, with richly composed front façade, is a prominent local landmark (Criterion E).

St Joseph's Church Complex has direct associations with the prolific Catholic architect, Augustus A Fritsch, who designed the presbytery and 1908 church. The presbytery reportedly marked the beginning of a long association he had with the Catholic Church in Victoria (Criterion H).

Primary source:

Malvern Heritage Review, GJM Heritage (June 2021)