

NAME: Former St. Lukes Church

ADDRESS: 121 St. Georges Road

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1879
ADDITIONS: Brick chancel and vestry added 1910
ARCHITECT: Crouch and Wilson
BUILDER: James Kennedy
FIRST OWNER: Church of England
PRESENT OWNER: Hungarian Reformed Church
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: bluestone
CONSERVATION AREA: A5



BUILDING CITATION:

This church was built as St. Luke's Church of England in 1879 to the design of Crouch and Wilson, architects, and constructed by James Kennedy contractor for £3,250. The style is principally early English. The facade is in bluestone with cream brick dressings and cement caps to the cutback of the buttresses. The church is composed of a main gable with four subsidiary gables running in from the side over the aisles. It was built to only two-thirds of its intended length.

In 1970 the church was sold to the Hungarian Reformed Church, and the interior has subsequently been painted and remodelled. The slim quatrefoil columns, coloured glass and deal boarded ceiling are of interest internally but there is nothing else of note.

The church provides a strong vista point when viewed from St. Georges Road and Brunswick Street. The imposing rather heavy asymmetrical facade with the large "witches hat" spire combine to make this a noteworthy landmark. The view from Watkins Street with the repetition of gables is unusual.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the external envelope of this building be added to the Victorian Buildings Register, retained on the Register of the National Estate and specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

BUILDING ANALYSIS:

This church was built in 1879 to the design of Crouch and Wilson, architects and constructed by James Kennedy contractor for £3,250¹. This is the second St. Lukes in North Fitzroy - a timber building was constructed in 1870² on a reserve between George and Napier Streets, but it was soon realised that the location was not ideal.³ The present site was bought on 27th November, 1878 and the foundation of the present church laid in February, 1879. The church was consecrated on 15th March, 1891.⁴

The church was built to only two-thirds of its intended length. The brick chancel and vestry were added in 1910.

1. *Australasian Sketcher* April 12 1879 p.6.
2. *Argus* October 1 1870 p.3 tenders called.
3. D.C. McColl *St. Lukes Church of England, N. Fitzroy; St. Marks Church of England E. Fitzroy*. B.Arch. University of Melbourne 1967 p.94.
4. *Ibid* p.99.

The Australasian Sketcher of April 12, 1879 described the building as follows:-

"The Memorial Stone was laid in February 1879 at corner of Watkin Street, St. Georges Road and Brunswick Street by the Right Rev. Dr. Moorhouse. The building is in the early decorated style of English architecture, and when completed will be 76' exclusive of lobby and chancel. The portion already commenced is 51'7" x 45' wide; the side walls at their lowest part being 23'6". The church is open to the ridge which is 47' high from the floor, and is finished externally with ornamental cast iron cresting. The roof is carried on 8 ornamental cast iron columns with foliated capitals. The tower at corner of Brunswick and Watkin Street rises to a height of 131' surmounted with an ornamental vane of wrought iron galvanised and gilded. At the south east corner is a turret with a high slated roof and ornamental cresting. Principal entrances are under the tower and the turret, and between the two is a paved lobby, 6' wide lighted by 4 windows of stained glass. Above these and lighting the church over the lobby is a large mullion window, with smaller ones on each side with geometric tracery. The material used in the building is bluestone, relieved with white pressed bricks and pressed cement. The cost of the building is estimated at £3,250 including the seats and gas fittings. The architects are Messrs. Crouch and Wilson, and the contractor is Mr. Jas. Kennedy."

The church is composed of a main gable with four subsidiary gables running in from the side over the aisles. The front facade consists of a tower at one corner projecting outwards in both directions, and a subsidiary tower at the other corner which has a separate roof. The smaller quasi-tower has triangular gambrel vents let into a pitched steep hipped roof, with a short ridge, capped by finials and ironwork. The main tower is slightly primitive. Above the main base section there is a level with two circular windows of quatrefoil insets, then what appears to be the bellcote level, a pair of Gothic pointed windows with louvre openings, then a horizontal almost Italianate eave with brackets. It has a crude steep pyramidal roof clad in metal sheeting with nothing to surmount the top, not even a finial or a cross. It has a rather strange witch's hat appearance.

The style is principally Early English. The facade is in bluestone with cream brick dressings and cement caps to the set-back of the buttresses. The smaller door at the left has one order of cement colonettes, the larger door has two concentric orders of colonettes and label moulds with foliated crockets.

Internally the space is a complete rectangle with a raking floor and very slim quatrefoil iron columns supporting a pitched roof. Diagonal deal boarding runs over the whole, broken only by intersections of the side gables. There is an openwork timber arch running between the tops of the columns and triangular vents are broken through into the main gable section. Simple bands of coloured glass around the edges of the windows are largely intact and may be original. The windows are pointed Gothic with oculi above. The chancel end has been slightly more modified with the panelling at dado height.

(19) St. Luke's Church 1879

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, NORTH FITZROY.

