

# ST JOHN'S CHURCH & HALL (FORMER)

Donvale Living & Learning Centre, Donvale Arts Centre

**Place No.** 316

**ADDRESS** 283 Springvale Road  
Donvale

**Last Update** 22/06/2005

**DESCRIPTION** What is now known as the Donvale Living and Learning Centre site includes the former St John's Church, built in 1907, and the church hall dating from 1914. The former church is a simple weatherboard building comprising a nave and porch with gabled roofs and a side wing with a skillion roof. Decorative elements are limited to the triangular headed windows which emulate Gothic arched windows in a crude fashion. The hall is a weatherboard building with a gabled corrugated iron roof and a double-gabled bay to the front. Its side walls contain regularly spaced timber-framed, double-hung sash windows. At the rear there is a skillion roofed wing with a red-brick chimney. The red-brick walls which enclose the rear underfloor area are possibly later additions.

Mature plantings around the buildings include Oaks and Cypresses, which contribute to the cultural landscape character of this section of Springvale Road (refer to separate citation in this Study).

**Condition** Good

**Integrity** Minor modifications

**Threats** None apparent

**Key elements** Buildings

**Designer**

**HISTORY** St John's Church at Doncaster East (now Donvale) was built by volunteer labour on land that had been donated by the Howell family. The opening service was held on 27 November 1907. Among the district families who built the church were the Howells, Howarths, Bullocks, the Purves family and the Standrings, Atkins, Kings, Walls and Duncans. By 1914, the church was able to build a hall, which was also built with volunteer labour. Mr May, who built the Athenaeum extensions and the Orchardists Cool Stores, built the hall, supervised by Mr F. Petty, district orchardist. It was 'almost done in one day' and cost 120 pounds.

The church and hall complex was an important community meeting place that played an significant role in the development of the Doncaster East area during the first half of the twentieth century. By 1925, interest in St John's resulted in the formation of an active Ladies' Guild, which included the wives of many prominent orchardists. Socials and dances were held in the church hall and were attended by whole families (1). During the Second World War, the ladies of Doncaster and Doncaster East formed a branch of the Comforts Fund, meeting at the former St John's' Church of England (2).

In 1976, the complex was sold to the City of Doncaster and Templestowe (now the City of Manningham) and the church windows were removed to St David's Anglican Church in Doncaster Road (3). Subsequently the 1907 church became the Donvale Living and Learning Centre, while the 1914 hall was used until the late 1980s as the Donvale Arts Centre but more recently hosted Melbourne Gospel Fellowship services on Sundays (4).

The Donvale Living and Learning Centre was established in 1977 to 'promote human growth and development, and education in a life-long process.' Until late 1979, classes were held in private homes and at Zerbes and Rieschiecks reserves because, although the council had agreed to allow the Centre to use the former St John's Church house, residents objected to the planning permit. As well as classes in Higher School Certificate (HSC), English and other subjects, child-minding was provided at the Centre. Classes increased from 3 per week in 1979 to 70 in 2001, attended by over 600 students (3). The Donvale Living and Learning Centre is one of six centres in the City of Manningham providing community-based learning. The others are the Bulleen and Templestowe Community House, Park Orchards Community House, TRY Activities Centre, Warrandyte Neighbourhood House and Wonga Park Community Centre (5).

Because of overcrowding, which has resulted from the growth of the Donvale Centre, Manningham Council has undertaken 'to relocate the centre within the coming few years' (6). The future use of the former church and hall is a matter of local concern.

## SOURCES

- [1] Context Pty Ltd, 'City of Doncaster & Templestowe Heritage Study', 1991, p.94; Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society, Historic Buildings No.17, St John's, Donvale, Newsletter, Feb.,1972.
- (2) Barbara Pertzel & Fiona Walters, 'Manningham. From Country to City', 2001, p.192.
- (3) Ibid, p. 178.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Ibid.

**Creation Date** c1907 & 1914

**Change Dates**

**Associations**

**Local Themes**

City of Doncaster & Templestowe, Mann

6.02 - Churches

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is Significant?

The former St John's Church complex, comprising the church constructed in 1907, the 1914 hall and associated mature trees including Oaks and Cypresses, at 283 Springvale Road, Donvale.

How is it Significant?

The former St John's Church complex is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to Manningham City.

Why is it significant?

The former St John's Church complex is of local historic and social significance as a now rare early community building that is associated with the settlement and development of the Doncaster East (Donvale) district as an orcharding area in the early part of the twentieth century, and for its continuing role as the Doncaster Living & Learning and Arts Centre, which has maintained community use. The change in use is of some interest as it demonstrates how community buildings are adapted to meet changing needs over time. (RNE criteria A.4, B.2, D.2 and G.1)

The former church and hall are of local aesthetic significance as representative and largely intact examples of simple Edwardian community buildings. Mature plantings around the church, including Oaks and Cypresses provide an appropriate and related setting and also contribute to the broader cultural landscape in this part of Springvale Road. (RNE criterion E.1)

## LEVEL

Local significance

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
Planning Scheme	HO		Recommended

**Extent** The whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries.

### Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	No	On VHR:	No	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	Yes	Prohibited Uses:	No	
Tree Controls:	Yes	Aboriginal Heritage Place:	No	
Outbuildings or Fences:	No	Incorporated Plan:	No	Incorporated Plan Details
Description:				

### Conservation Management

In order to conserve the heritage significance of this place, it is recommended that the following conservation objectives, as appropriate, be given priority in the future maintenance, development or management of the place:

1. Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other built elements, which is identified as contributing to the significance of the place. This includes the original fabric as well as fabric that may demonstrate important successive stages in the historic development of the place and/or provide evidence of

changing architectural styles or techniques.

2. Discourage the demolition of significant or contributory buildings unless the demolition is only of part of the building and it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that, as appropriate:

- The fabric to be removed is not significant, or
- The fabric to be removed is not of primary significance and its removal will not adversely affect the significance of the place, or
- It will assist in the long term conservation of the place, or
- It will facilitate the historic use of the place and will not result in the loss of fabric considered to be primary significance.

Note: The poor condition or low integrity of a heritage place should not be used as justification for its demolition, particularly if it appears the condition of the heritage place has deliberately been allowed to deteriorate.

3. Where there is a complex of buildings and other elements the aim should be to conserve or reveal the historic visual relationship between the buildings and other elements in order to demonstrate the historical use and/or layout of the place.

4. Conserve significant plantings on the property, and maintain a visual relationship between the plantings and the significant buildings on the property.

5. Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in understanding or interpreting the significance of the place.

6. Ensure that the siting and design of new development does not overwhelm the historic setting of the building and the site as a whole by becoming a dominant element or by interfering with key views to and from the site.

7. Encourage any new development on the property to relate and be complementary in form, scale and materials to the significant buildings and other elements, but be clearly contemporary in design.

8. Retain views of significant building(s) and plantings from the street.

9. In the case of subdivision of the property, encourage the retention of the significant buildings, trees and related elements on one lot.

#### NOTE:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this citation is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the place. For example, in most cases an internal inspection was not made of buildings at the time of initial assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings or trees may have changed.

The information contained in this citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to the property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works. Once this more detailed assessment has been made, a review of the significance of the place should be carried out by Council's Heritage Adviser or an appropriately qualified professional.

#### Extra Research

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** Context Pty Ltd, (1991), City of Doncaster and Templestowe Heritage Study, City of Doncaster & Templestowe, Doncaster, 94  
Context Pty Ltd, (2005), Manningham Heritage Study Review, Manningham City Council, Doncaster