

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS *2A Denham St corner of
Church Street*

TYPE

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Unit Res. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape feature | <input type="checkbox"/> Public building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> View | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Church.</i> |

TITLE

Christ Church Anglican Church.

EXISTING DESIGNATION

HBR ☐ GBR ☐ AHC ☒ NT ☐ VAS ☐

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

1 ☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☐
 SIGNIFICANT ☐ SIGNIFICANT ☒
 STREET TREES KERB & GUTTERS

GRADING

A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐
 KEYNOTE BUILDING ☐

RECOMMENDED FOR

HBR/GBR ☒ AHC ☒ URBAN CONSERVATION AREA ☒
 VAS ☐ PLANNING SCHEME PROTECTION ☒
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ☐ OTHER ☐

SURVEY DATE *Nov. 91.*
 NEG FILE *50.13-17.*
 Title
 Vol.
 Fol.

THEME

- ☒ Early Settlement
☐ Mansions
☐ Victorian Garden Suburb
☐ Municipal dev.
☐ 1870s growth
☐ Garden villas
☐ Working enclaves
☐ Commercial Centres
☐ Edwardian Prosperity
☐ Interwar Housing
☐ Flats and Offices

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Date *1853, 1873, porch 1913,*
 Architect *Vestry 1953.*
 Builder *Charles Vickers*
(Frederick Wyth)
 Elements



- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Original or early hard landscape layout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark tree | <input type="checkbox"/> Original or early fence |

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

INTEGRITY Good ☒
 Fair ☐
 Poor ☐

CONDITION Good ☒
 Fair ☐
 Poor ☐

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden ☐

Denham St/
CHURCH STREET

CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN CHURCH

History

In the early 1850s, a prime site in the Hawthorn Village Reserve, on a hill overlooking the Burwood Road bridge, was acquired by the Church of England.⁶ This may have been as a result of the influence of Sir James Frederick Palmer, MLC, a prominent local Anglican. Palmer founded Christ Church erected on the site, which was the first Anglican Church on the Hawthorn side of the Yarra. He became a trustee and donor to the church, including an organ and bell, and to the school next door.⁷

In 1853, tenders were accepted for the "erection in bluestone, eked out with brick, of a church and a parsonage and schoolroom".⁸ The foundation stone of the church was laid on 19 November 1853. The architect was Charles Vickers. A contemporary account noted that "the design for the building is, although simple and inexpensive, of a pure ecclesiastical style, and in extremely good taste... a parsonage is also in progress".⁹

"It comprises a three-bay nave, transepts, chancel and a timber octagonal turret to the north west. Additions were made to building between 1873 and 1953, including vestries, organ chamber and porch. The interior is notable for its elaborate wooden chancel screen, imported and local stained glass, and organ by Alfred Hunter of London, installed in 1877. The original font was donated by Lieutenant Governor La Trobe".¹⁰

The church remains but the old parsonage has gone. A Sunday School hall was opened in Denham Street in 1871. Later, in 1923, a new Memorial Hall was built costing 5,000 pounds. Its foundation stone was laid by the prominent Hawthorn businessman and philanthropist, Sir William McPherson.¹¹

Description

Christ Church sits within the Hawthorn Village Reserve bounded by Power Street, Burwood Road, Denham Street and Barton Street. This rectangular section of land slopes dramatically from the river end to the low point of Hawthorn Creek at the eastern end of the Park. The high land is now emphasised by the cuttings formed in Burwood Road and Power Street. To some extent this parcel is also cut off from Hawthorn by these cuttings, which have significantly changed the basic landform and the original close physical relationship between the bridge crossing and the new Village Area. The church sits on the highest land of the Reserve and is substantially concealed from

⁶. Gwen McWilliam, *Hawthorn Peppercorns*, pp. 32-33.

⁷. Ibid. p.64 (illustrations from 1860s and later, pp.68-70).

⁸. *Argus* Oct. 1853.

⁹. *Church of England Messenger*, IV, pp.375-376.

¹⁰. *Victorian Churches*, ed. Miles Lewis, p.73.

¹¹. Gwen McWilliam, "Burwood Park", pp.53-55.

CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN CHURCH continued

almost all public viewing positions. Before vegetation and the cutting concealed it, it must have been a prominent landmark when approaching Hawthorn from the City, directly aligned as it was with the old bridge (see Kearney Map of 1855).

The church comprises a nave, reduced height transepts, chancel and porch. A vestry was added in 1953 with walled entry adjoining and beside the transept.

At the west front, facing the river one corner of the nave incorporates a square based projection which tapers to an octagonal tower with timber bellcote. Freestanding halls are located at the rear.

The walls are of bluestone, roughly squared and laid courses. The stones above the west window appear to have been relaid. The corner buttresses, octagonal portion of the tower and buttresses are dressed to ashlar blocks, generally aligning with the coursing of the coursed rubble. The latter porch and vestry are of precisely dressed blocks.

Relieving the bluestone is a pointed course of terracotta bricks at the top of each wall bay, and in quoins to opening. The latter have now been rendered over, probably because of their low strength. At the base of the sill level, a strung course of cream bricks runs through the building, changing height at the tower, and adjusting height at the buttress on the opposite corner in an unusual pattern.

The vestry is a simple gable roofed addition, sensitively let in under the eaves. The porch is a more assertive addition, truncated in height by the west window sill. Its walls are battered. At the peak of its arch is a celtic cross.

Assessment

Given its early date, the size of the church is quite adventurous. The design is very straight forward however. The simple early English form is embellished only by the belltower, the stones are rather roughly laid and the openings are very small and simple. All these factors point towards the early date for the church, executed well in advance of Hawthorn's rapid rise to a prosperous suburban centre. This building looks and feels like a pioneer building, which indeed it is.

The architect Vickers is known to have designed two other Churches of similar date. They are extensions to St. Peters Eastern Hill in 1853-54 where he added bluestone transepts to the simple nave of the 1848 structure, and the Ceres Holy Trinity Anglican Church of 1855 a simple nave/chancery porch structure.

The churches are all similar, early English designs without pretensions. The Hawthorn work is the most adventurous of the three in terms of Vickers involvement. Octagonal side towers or pinnacles are quite common in Gothic Revival churches. Although this one terminates in timber, there are clear precedents for its execution in stone. Although no earlier Melbourne examples have been discovered on churches, this feature is not exceptional and can be found in similar spirit though not matching detailing on Invergowie of 1851 (then Burwood House).

CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN CHURCH continued

The church is primarily of significance for its date, being one of the first built in what was to become the eastern suburbs, for its association with Gov. La Trobe.

Significance

State

1. One of the first churches to be built in what was to become Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs.
2. Illustrative of the pioneer nature of Hawthorn's development in the 1850s; of Hawthorn's planned first Village reserve; and of the importance of the Burwood Road river crossing as the gateway to Hawthorn.
3. One of the most adventurous example of Charles Vickers work and a substantially intact example of Early English Gothic Revival designs.
4. Associated with Gov. Charles La Trobe and Sir James F. Palmer.



Christ Church
Church Street



Christ Church
Church Street