

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	St James Catholic Church		
Address	15 Bywater Street KNOWSLEY	Grading	2008 Local
Building Type	Church		
Assessment by	Context Pty Ltd		



Recommended Heritage Protection	VHR - HI - PS Yes
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Architectural Style	Interwar Period (c.1919-c.1940) Gothic
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Maker / Builder	No information held
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Integrity

High

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of McIvor

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of

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the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.^[1]

The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral runs. Much of the former Shire of McIvor was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. Campaspe Plains was subdivided in 1852, and John Hunter Paterson established Derrinal Station on a portion of the land. His license was transferred to William Speed in 1853, and then Alfred Leonard Wilton in 1865. The license was eventually forfeited in 1880.^[2]

The discovery of gold at Bendigo and surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.^[3]

Development of the McIvor district was led by Heathcote, where facilities emerged in conjunction with an increasing population brought on by the gold rushes. The town site of Heathcote was surveyed by Phillip Chauncey and first land sale at Heathcote held on the 24th January 1854.^[4] The Heathcote and Waranga District Road Board was formed in 1861, and became the Shire of McIvor in 1864, encompassing a number of the small towns in the district.

Religious and educational facilities were established early in the development of the Shire, initially at Heathcote, then gradually spreading to other small towns in the district. Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. Pre-emptive rights allowed squatters to purchase up to 640 acres of their pastoral leases and many took advantage of the opportunity to establish smaller holdings. Grazing, agriculture, dairying and viticulture were mainstays for the region. Alongside agriculture, the timber industry was of vital importance to the district and a number of sawmills were established. Gold and alluvial mining continued in the district for a number of years after the height of the gold rushes.

Construction of the railway from Wandong to Bendigo took place in three stages and was officially opened in October 1888. The railway encouraged further development of the region and provided an easy means of transportation of both goods and people to and from the district. The development of the Eppalock weir in the 1930s, and its incorporation into Eppalock Reservoir in 1960-65 provided local farmers with an accessible water source for their crops.^[5]

In 1994 the Shire of McIvor was amalgamated with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

Knowsley was already fairly well established as a township prior to its establishment as one of the original stations on the Bendigo to Heathcote railway extension.

History of St. James Catholic Church, Bywater Street, Knowsley

The Church at Bywater Street was constructed in 1931, after the previous Church on the site was destroyed during a storm on Christmas Day in 1929. The previous Catholic Church at Knowsley was constructed circa 1892 and built upon land that had been donated by J. D. Bywater.^[6] Very little was salvaged from the original building^[7], apart from the organ, altar and Our Lady's statue which were all restored. These items are all in the present weatherboard church.^[8] It is understood that Mass was held in John O'Sullivan's woolshed at Erindale until the new church was completed.^[9]

The Catholic Parish of Heathcote is part of the Sandhurst Diocese, which includes localities in the north-central part of Victoria.^[10] It is reported that there were dwindling attendances in Heathcote's outlying churches during the 1970s, with only Redesdale and Knowsley holding fortnightly masses.^[11] Currently owned by the Catholic Roman Trusts Corporation,^[12] it is unknown whether St James is currently still in use as a church in the Knowsley area.

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- [1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, p. 1.
- [2] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.
- [3] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.
- [4] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 21.
- [5] Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock weir*, Hermes entry 6482
- [6] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), *The Catholic Parish of Heathcote; a history 1856 - 1997*, Heathcote, Victoria, p. 4.
- [7] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), pp. 6 -9.
- [8] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), pp. 6 -9.
- [9] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), pp. 6 -9.
- [10] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), pp. 6 -9.
- [11] McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), pp. 6 -9.
- [12] Information supplied by City of Greater Bendigo.

Secondary sources

McHarg, M. and Traynor, R. (1997), *The Catholic Parish of Heathcote; a history 1856 - 1997*, Heathcote, Victoria

Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor

Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock weir*, Hermes entry 6482

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8.0 Building community life

8.1 Maintaining spiritual life

Description

Physical Description

St James Catholic church is designed in the Gothic Revival style and was built in 1931, replacing an earlier church of 1892 that was destroyed in a storm. It is constructed with a timber frame and weatherboard cladding. It is believed to contain some fittings including the organ and altar that were salvaged. Elements of the Gothic Revival style include the use of gable roofs and the pointed arch windows in this case executed in timber. The window to the gable end is divided into four pointed arches of graduating height. The design includes some domestic timber detailing of bracketed eaves and

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gable end collar tie and finial and a bracketed hood over the front doors. There is a large sanctuary and vestry at the rear of the church. Unusually the front doors open straight into the main body of the church. The church is surrounded by mature cypresses.

The interior has not been investigated.

Physical Condition

Fair

Conservation Policy

It is recommended that regular painting be undertaken to conserve this building.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

St James Catholic Church of 1931 including the organ and altar from 1892 is significant.

How is it significant?

St James Catholic Church is of local aesthetic and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

St James Catholic Church is one of small number of timber buildings that contribute to the township of Knowsley. The form and detailing of the church are compatible with remaining nineteenth century buildings in Knowsley including the railway houses at 9 Railway Court and 12 Bywater Street, the former hotel at 11 Knowsley-Eppalock Road and store at 4 Knowsley-Eppalock Road, that make up the core of Knowsley. *Criterion A*

St James is of social significance for the Knowsley community as a place of worship for over 70 years, and on the site for over 100 years. *Criterion G*

Assessment Against Criteria

HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments. *Criterion D*

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Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. *Criterion F*

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions. *Criterion G*

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

Recommendations 2008

External Paint Controls

No

Internal Alteration Controls

Yes

Tree Controls

No

Fences & Outbuildings

No

Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted

No

Incorporated Plan

Yes

Aboriginal Heritage Place

No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the Catholic church at 15 Bywater Street, Knowsley be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Bendigo City Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.