



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

In co-operation with the Vestry, the building committee and the Rector of *Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church*, the architects designed a building of high aesthetic standards: one which displays the elements necessary both internally and externally to qualify as a fine piece of architectural composition - proportion, form, harmony, rhythm, unity and scale.

The building is a clear enunciation of the designer's philosophical objectives and demonstrates solutions to problems such as sun control, lines of vision and relationship between the celebrant and the congregation. All of it executed in an innovative contemporary style that acknowledges traditional church design.

The building reflects a high standard of design accomplishment with refinement of detail such that the solution of complicated problems appears almost as an over-simplification. (Criterion 1.1 & 1.2)

The scale and harmonious treatment of the exterior form of the building ensure it melds into the residential nature of the environs and the adjoining open space. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church, designed by Polish architect Anthony Solarski, demonstrates the Modernist influence of post-war immigrant architects on architecture in Western Australia in the 1950s. (Criterion 2.2)

Responding to contemporary issues the architect designed this building to be a neutral backdrop to ensure the congregation focused on the colour and movement of the liturgical presentation. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The use of "negative detailing" at the junction of materials throughout *Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church* was both innovative and influential in Western Australian architecture in the late 1950s. (Criterion 3.3)

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church is highly valued by the Dalkeith Parish in reflecting the needs of a new liturgical approach following World War Two; the building represents the culmination of the efforts of the founding Vestry of the new Parish. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church is an innovative example of post World War Two church design in Western Australia. The building acknowledges traditional church form, but the materials, finishes and details express contemporary values. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

The building has been maintained to a reasonable standard since construction and is in sound condition. Some defects have become apparent in 1996, including fretting mortar in the lower courses of brickwork and degradation of some areas of concrete, possibly due to insufficient cover of the reinforcement.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Members of the congregation of *Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church* will, in all likelihood, press for the building fabric to be altered from time to time, not only to accommodate new forms of liturgical expression, but also to accommodate memorabilia and largess. Changes in the fabric include the replacement of the original cross, installation of a carpet run in the aisle of the Nave, the predominantly blue leadlight glazing and the gate to the Choir Gallery. These changes are reversible or are not seen as overly intrusive. Otherwise, the designer's original intentions are intact and the place retains a high degree of integrity.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Other than routine repairs, the building fabric is original. The place retains its authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The Documentary Evidence is a precis of a history of the Parish of Dalkeith prepared by H Day in 1987, with supplementary material provided orally by Mr Day in May 1996. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Pidgeon and David Kelsall, Architects.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Parish of Dalkeith evolved from the Parish of East Claremont in May 1955. The former Rector of East Claremont, Reverend A F J Blain, was appointed and took services in a house on the south west corner of the intersection of Waratah Avenue and Adelma Road, some distance from the present site. The new Vestry which included Mr Charles Court (later to be premier of WA), Mr Lloyd Fethers, Mr Oliver Hynes and Mr Reg North soon decided to demolish the old house and build a new hall on the site. The design and construction of the Rectory in Alexander Road was commenced by 1956, followed by the commissioning of the design and later, the construction of the new church. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor, Sir Charles Gairdner, on 28 April 1957 and the building was consecrated on 15 September of the same year.

The project was partially funded from loans which eventually became burdensome for the Parish. In 1968, the hall was sold to the Bridge Club and a new hall called the Blain Room was built adjoining the church in Alexander Road.

Reverend Blain served as Rector until 30 June 1967, handing over to the Reverend John Cook who continued for the next eight years. In October 1975, Bishop Denis Bryant commenced a tenure of ten years to be succeeded by the Reverend Alan Pattison between December 1985 and July 1988, the Reverend Barry May between October 1989 and September 1992, and the Reverend Peter Ferguson from February 1993.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Inter-War subdivision of Dalkeith in the City of Nedlands, reflects a reaction by town planners against the formality of the rectangular grid in favour of the picturesque "garden City" concept of circular and curved road layouts with parkland in the resulting irregular spaces.

Viking Road abuts a section of one such circular road system in Dalkeith. A triangular park was formed by the curved section of Genesta Crescent and the projections of Viking and Alexander Roads from their intersection. The park in Genesta Crescent adjoins the site of *Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church* and with the planting on the site, forms a precinct. The church buildings provide the southern boundary of this precinct, the remaining boundaries being formed by low key residential development.

Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church is located on the southern side of Viking Road among the Inter-War residential development of Dalkeith with its characteristic open, unfenced lots and the verdant streetscape supplemented by the parkland. The church site occupies two standard

suburban lots, and contains the Church, the Rectory and a Church Hall called the Blain Room. The Rectory was designed by Hawkins and Sands, and built contemporaneously with the Church. Sympathetic use of building materials ensures visual harmony and unity of the buildings on the site.

Saint Lawrence's Anglican Church was designed by Hawkins and Sands, architects, and built by Sloan Constructions in 1957. The architect responsible for the design was Anthony Solarski, whose prolific detail sketches were initially developed on yellow bond paper. These revealed his concern for the proportion, colour and texture of the components of the masonry surfaces in the design. An important design doctrine adopted by Solarski was what is called negative detailing whereby junctions between materials were treated by forming a grooved recess at the joint rather than the accepted method of covering the junction with a moulding.

Solarski also adopted specific and conscious methods for the control of insolation, most evident on the north and west wall of the building. Further, the low roof pitch, the massing of the components and the flat internal ceilings are a fundamental rejection of the Gothic pointed arch as an ecclesiastical idiom in favour of the Mediterranean Romanesque. Accordingly, the building is an innovative post war example of the coordinated amalgamation of form and function.

The exterior was restricted to three basic, yet harmonious materials - beige face brickwork, rendered and rough cast concrete details and traditional Mediterranean orange terra cotta cordova roof tiles. The roof is a saddle back type of low pitch, the rough cast perimeter beam raking to form the gable barges. The masonry surfaces have been treated as sculptural structural panels. An intermediate perimeter beam emerges at first floor level as window shading, the entry canopy and the cantilevered beam split to project internally and externally thereby implying the volume of the Lady Chapel. The full height window openings in the Nave wall provide a clear statement of the proportions and enunciate the solid to void ratio and giving the building its scale and rhythm. The choice of beige pressed clay bricks sets the building into its period in this locality.

The Main Entrance to the building in the north west corner is surmounted by the Bell Tower with a cantilevered rough cast concrete canopy. A ramp has been added to the original stepped Entry which is paved with textured grey granolithic. The brick and concrete Bell Tower (fitted with loud speakers) is capped with a semi-circular rough cast finished precast concrete slab and flat slabs at intermediate levels. A pattern of textured brickwork in the Tower has been provided by offsetting groups of bricks; the design reflects the textural pattern of the sunscreen wall built of precast cement bricks on the west wall of the building. There is a formed, rough cast concrete sunscreen on the north side outside the Sanctuary, designed to shade the memorial window.

The major exterior materials, the pastel brickwork and the rough cast cement render were continued without refinement into the interior, supplemented by white terrazzo, plaster and clear finished timber. The volume of the Lady Chapel is suggested internally on the right side of the

Sanctuary by means of a concrete ring beam segment straddling the external wall and interpenetrating from outside the building. The beam flanks a simple, yet large pane of clear glass which serves to provide south light in the Sanctuary and to suggest the connection of internal with external space. The visual proximity of the later adjoining building outside, and immediately to the east, spoils this effect for the congregation. The Pulpit is a strong structural form in rough cast concrete with terrazzo and timber trim. The detailing of it is repeated in the treatment of the Choir Gallery.

The almost rectangular building plan has a seating capacity of approximately 300 accommodated in the Nave and Choir Gallery. The virtually square seating plan in the Nave ensures good contact between the celebrant and the rear pews. The blackbutt woodblock floor of the Nave slopes down towards the Altar; the aisle is laid with carpet. The Nave walls have vertically pivoted, obscure, clear glazed metal framed slit windows. Most of these have since been dedicated with coloured leadlight glazing. The east wall is a plain matching pastel brick surface, originally fitted with a simple cross. This has given way to a blue fabric wall hanging beyond a suspended polished brass cross.

The Cross has been fabricated into a square bar perimeter with an infill of wrought flat brass and a brass boss at the intersection. The material and design of the new cross is an intrusion into the visual and philosophical intentions of the architect. The Sanctuary has a memorial window on the north side, originally glazed in clear obscure glass, now glazed in a predominantly blue coloured obscure glass design.

Ceilings in the body of the church are flat, of formed fibrous plaster coffers of a deep section with deep recesses. The different design of the ceiling over the Sanctuary suggests a change of formality and emphasis and is provided by coupled, painted, timber battens in a criss cross pattern suspended between trussed purlins.

The Altar and Font are made of red polished Granite set on terrazzo plinths. The Choir Gallery covers the Vestry rooms at the rear of the church on the ground floor. The timber pews, the lectern and many other fittings were designed by Solarski. A comprehensive folio of the main contract drawings survives.

The design style of the building is Post-War Ecclesiastical c.1940-1960 as described on pp. 212, 213 of Apperly et al, *Identifying Australian Architecture*. This building was an important design development in Perth as an influential forerunner in the evolution of the "Late Twentieth-Century Perth Regional 1960- " style.

The building has been maintained to a reasonable standard since construction. However some defects have become apparent, including fretting mortar in the lower courses of brickwork and degradation of some areas of concrete, possibly due to insufficient cover of the reinforcement.

Most of the major design elements are intact although the original cross has been replaced, a carpet run has been installed in the aisle of the Nave and a wrought iron gate has been installed at the foot of the stairs leading to the Choir Gallery.

13. 3 REFERENCES

Australian Heritage, Commission Data Sheet.

THE ARCHITECT Journal of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, December 1957 .

Looking around Perth, Royal Australian Institute of Architects. 1981

Pitt Morison, M., & White, J. *Western Towns and Buildings*. 1981

Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present.* (Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1995,)

A set of the main contract drawings is currently held by Walter Hunter, Architect, Perth. (1996)