

Building: St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church **Significance:**
Address: Corner Canterbury and Warrigal Roads, Surrey Hills
650 CANTERBURY RD. **Melway Map Ref:** 46J11

Building Type: church and hall complex **Construction Date:** 1910
Architect: Campbell and Kernot **Builder:** A.B. Robertson



Photo: 2/2001

Intactness:	Condition:
G[x] F[] P[]	G[x] F[] P[]

Existing Heritage Listings:	Recommended Heritage Listings:
Victorian Heritage Register []	Victorian Heritage Register []
National Estate Register []	National Estate Register []
National Trust Register []	Heritage Overlay Controls [x]

History

The first (Presbyterian) Divine Worship at Surrey Hills on the 6th February 1887, took place in a Recreation Hall in Windsor Crescent and it is understood continued there until the first wooden church/Sunday School was erected in Boundary Road...and opened for use in March 1889.

The Boundary Road (now Warrigal Road) site measured 70 feet by 140 feet and was bought in May 1888 as lot 7 of Klepper's Orchard subdivision. As early settlers, it is understood the Klepper family planted grape vines on all the area now occupied by the church and that their farmhouse is incorporated in the house named 'Spenceycroft' in Canterbury Road. Philip Klepper, described as a *gardener* in 1885, was probably the last of the family to work the 5.75 acre property.

The church building was commenced in November 1888 to the designed of Peter Hogg with Thomas Geddes acting as clerk of works. It was extended in 1896 and then reconstructed and enlarged, the foundation stone for the rebuilding being laid on 27th. July 1929 by Thomas Hogg.

By then a new church had been built on land gifted in 1907 by parishioners, the Misses Gibson of Windsor Crescent. This was lot 6 measuring 74 feet by 140 feet on the corner of Canterbury and Warrigal Roads, the adjoining lot 5 in Canterbury Road having been bought in 1903. *Tenders for the new church were called for in September 1909, and that from a Mr. A.B. Robertson (of Elsternwick) was accepted at a cost of 2500 pounds, and Messrs. Campbell and Kernot were appointed architects.* In partnership this architectural firm had designed other Presbyterian churches, forerunners to this one being at Camberwell (drawings exhibited 1908), Kyabram (1906), Albury (drawings exhibited 1908) and Narrandarra (drawings exhibited 1908).

The foundation stone for the new building was laid by the parish minister the Reverend Alexander McDonald on 2nd. July 1910 with works being completed for a dedication service on 11th. December. The church was opened for public worship on the following Sunday.

Memorials in the church include carvings by parishioner John Kendrick Blogg, windows, reading lecterns and communion table, baptismal font and carillon.

Description

A vigorous Gothic Revival church of the Edwardian period distinguished by its picturesque modelling and references to the construction polychromy of the late Victorian period in its use of horizontal cement banding. The gable end to the nave has a circular rose window with lancet form drip mould and cement surround linked to a horizontal cement band tying this element in visually with a slender faceted bell tower, also banded and terminated by an elegant pressed metal faced pinnacle. There is an engaged porch with lancet arched doorway imposed against a gable motif in turn attached to octagonal walls and a faceted roof. A buttressed narthex connects the

porch with the mass of the nave and is subdivided into three buttressed bays with a continuous triangulated and cusped moulding. The church is cruciform on plan with a rectangular end although the sanctuary end wall against which the pulpit has been placed has a small apsidal end. The nave is three bays long and subdivided by buttresses and there are highly ornamental stained glass windows in the west transept. The roof is of slate and the castellations to the bell tower pinnacle have been concealed by galvanised metal sheeting.

Inside, the walls are of plain plaster, the floor is sloping and there is a stained timber ceiling with exposed hammer beam trusses. The fittings appear to be largely early and include an elaborate hand carved pulpit with the burning bush motif and panels on either side depicting plants mentioned in the Bible. There is also a hand carved honour roll with gum leaf ornamentation, both works having been undertaken by John Blogg, a member of the parish and author of the design for the memorial in the Surrey Gardens.

The northernmost hall has a foundation stone dated 27th. July, 1929 and is a brick structure with an ornamental lancet arched entry set into a gable roofed element engaged with the façade. The windows, which are flat headed, have shallow lancet arched sashes and there is a chimney at one end. The corresponding gable end to the façade may have had a belcote which has been demolished. This building is presently known as the kindergarten hall. It is linked by a services connection with the southern hall which has a dominant gabled roof and lower hipped roof addition facing north. The west facing façade is symmetrical though of utilitarian appearance presumably having been constructed at the time of the 1929 works. The rear gable end of this hall is weatherboard clad and there is an associated skillion roofed addition. The north facing entry to this section of the complex has a cement faced Tudoresque archway.

Comparative Examples

St. George's Uniting (formerly Presbyterian) church, East St. Kilda (1877-80), architect: Albert Purchas.

Churches with comparable bell towers include Melbourne Grammar Chapel (1892-93), architect A.E. Johnson, St. Patrick's, Port Fairy (1857-61), architect C.F. Hansom, St. Patrick's, Gordon (c.1872), architect Caselli and Tappin.

Significance

The Presbyterian Church complex at the corner of Warrigal and Canterbury Roads, Surrey Hills includes the church which was built by A.B. Robertson to the design of architects Campbell and Kernot in 1910. It is historically and aesthetically important.

It is historically important (Criterion A) as the centre of Presbyterian worship in Surrey Hills since 1910 and recalls the origins of that church on this site from 1888. The church is aesthetically important (Criterion E) as a well resolved and vigorously stated Gothic Revival church of the Edwardian period enhanced by its stylistic references to constructional polychromy developed during the nineteenth century and of special interest for its slender bell tower recalling the highly influential work of the seminal English architect J.S. Hansom, and being closely comparable to Albert Purchas' design for St. Georges, East St. Kilda. This church has significance for the

manner in which its design interprets Gothic Revival forms as they evolved during the preceding halfcentury. The associated hall complex, though of comparatively utilitarian appearance, is stylistically complementary and in this sense also aesthetically contributory.

Source

Ward, A., Whitehorse Heritage Review 2001

References:

PROV, VPRS 9553/P1, Shire of Nunawading Rate Book, Surrey Hills Riding: 1885/Assess.No.454, 1891/Assess.No.4714, 1909-10/Assess.No.3740, 1920-1/Assess.No.8662.

Box Hill Historical Society, Sands and McDougall Directory of Victoria, 1887-1900.

BHHS: A.G.G.Martin et al, St.Stephen's, Surrey Hills Centenary Booklet 1887-1987, 1987.

BHHS: Presbyterian Church of Victoria Surrey Hills Congregation.

Miles Lewis, Australian Architectural Index.

Municipality of Box Hill, MMBW litho plan no.73, 1927.

