

**FORMER CHAPEL OF ST JOSEPH, 27-29 STRABANE AVE, MONT ALBERT NORTH**

<b>Building:</b>	Former Chapel of St Joseph	<b>HO No</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Address:</b>	27-29 Strabane Avenue Mont Albert North	<b>Melway Map Ref:</b>	47 B6
<b>Building Type:</b>	religious	<b>Construction Date:</b>	1976-78
<b>Architect:</b>	Edmond & Corrigan	<b>Builder:</b>	unknown

**History**

The Chapel of St Joseph was commissioned by Father Michael Burke, priest of the Holy Redeemer Parish in Surrey Hills in 1976, to provide the local community with a multi-purpose space for both worship and community use. Designs were developed in 1976-77 and the Chapel completed in 1978.<sup>173</sup>

At the time Father Burke was impressed with a church that had been recently completed to designs by architects Edmonds and Corrigan. It was the Church of the Resurrection in Keysborough, built in 1975-76, which he felt imparted a sense of humanity and had been constructed at a moderate cost. As a result Father Burke commissioned these architects to design the Chapel of St Joseph on a suburban block of land in Strabane Avenue, Mont Albert North. It was to be a light-filled space that could be understood as both a place of worship and community activity.<sup>174</sup> Community use was to include the occupants of an

<sup>173</sup> [vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places)

<sup>174</sup> P Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, p 207

adjoining home for the elderly which was under construction at the time.<sup>175</sup> As in the Keysborough design, familiar suburban materials and a contextual relationship between the building and the suburban setting were adopted at Box Hill.

In the late 1970s there was a shift in commonly held aesthetic ideals during a time of change and debate. This influenced Melbourne architecture as shown in houses and small-scale institutional buildings designed by young architects outside the central city. This blatant suburban nature, the adoption of banal, everyday elements and materials in the design and the celebration of design as well as function, set these buildings apart from other work at the time and resulted in them being seminal works in the development of architecture both in Melbourne and beyond. Edmond and Corrigan's Chapel of St Joseph, Box Hill (1976-78) and their Resurrection Church and School, Keysborough (1976-81) have been described as being the most confronting works of this late 1970s shift,<sup>176</sup> and the architects had an extraordinary influence on the next generation of Australian architects and students.

The Chapel of St Joseph won the RAIA (Victorian Chapter) award for outstanding Architecture – New Buildings Category in 1983 and the RAIA (Victorian Chapter) inaugural 25 Year Award in 2003. Architect, Peter Corrigan won the RAIA National Gold Medal in 2003, and the firm Edmond and Corrigan is nationally and internationally recognised for its contribution to Australian architecture since the 1960s.

In 1991 the Chapel of St Joseph and the adjoining land was bought by the City of Box Hill and is now owned by the City of Whitehorse and used by the University of the Third Age.<sup>177</sup>

## Historical Themes

### *City of Whitehorse Themes*

#### 5 Institutions

##### 5. 1 Religion

### *Victoria's Themes*

#### 8 Building community life

##### 8.1 Maintaining spiritual life

## Description

The Chapel of St Joseph is a single storey solid brick building of domestic scale but complex three dimensional design. The plan consists of a main space, or church nave, with front lobby, ancillary spaces at the rear, front patio and long curved ramp and access verandah along the east side. The west wall of the nave is curved and the lobby is contained within two off-set curved walls at the front of the building.

Cream brick walls are set on a red brick base, and incorporate contrasting red brick strips and panels and timber framed openings. A flat roof is concealed behind parapets and a horizontal canopy partly covers the curved entrance ramp which extends from the patio. Two oversized horizontal steel beams span across the building and project beyond it, supported on steel columns. Internally, tubular steel columns mark the window bays of the church nave and angled struts suggest vaulting. Internal walls are of exposed brickwork, similar to that of the exterior. Interior and exterior steel framework, downpipes and timber fascias were all originally painted light blue.

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<sup>175</sup> vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places

<sup>176</sup> P Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, p 199

<sup>177</sup> vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places

## Comparative examples

### *City of Whitehorse Comparisons*

No other comparative examples exist in the City of Whitehorse.

### *State Comparisons*

Comparison can be made with the Edmond & Corrigan designed Church of the Resurrection, Keysborough which was constructed in 1975-76. Like the Chapel of St Joseph, it was a pivotal 1970s building, exhibiting similar domestic characteristics and unconventionality in its design. It is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (H2293).



Church of the Resurrection, Keysborough

## Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Chapel of St Joseph, Strabane Avenue, Box Hill was designed by architects Edmonds and Corrigan and completed in 1978. It is a single storey parapeted building constructed of cream and red brick in a style that drew upon the surrounding suburban vernacular architecture.

### *How is it significant?*

The Chapel of St Joseph is of aesthetic and historical significance to the City of Whitehorse.

### *Why is it significant?*

The Chapel of St Joseph, Box Hill is of aesthetic significance as an outstanding and radical late 1970s building by architects Edmonds and Corrigan, the design of which had a profound influence on Australian architectural thinking and the architectural profession. Together with the Church of the Resurrection, Keysborough, by the same architects, it was one of the first Victorian buildings to gain national attention, due to a direct engagement with the post-war suburban domestic vernacular. The highly innovative and original approach of relating the building to the suburban context, made these buildings by Edmond and Corrigan very early examples of the pluralist architectural thinking of the 1970s, commonly described as Post Modernism. The Chapel of St Joseph and its architect won various architectural awards and the firm Edmond and Corrigan is nationally and internationally recognised for its contribution to Australian architecture since the 1960s. [Criteria D & E]

The Chapel of St Joseph, Box Hill is of historical significance as a response to the Roman Catholic Church's post-Vatican II reforms, which took place from 1962. This is embodied in the church's scale and its planning which allowed for flexible use and intimate congregational contact. [Criterion A]

## Recommended Extent of Overlay

To title boundaries.

### References

C Haman. *Cities of Hope. Australian Architecture and Design by Edmond and Corrigan 1972-92*. South Melbourne 1993

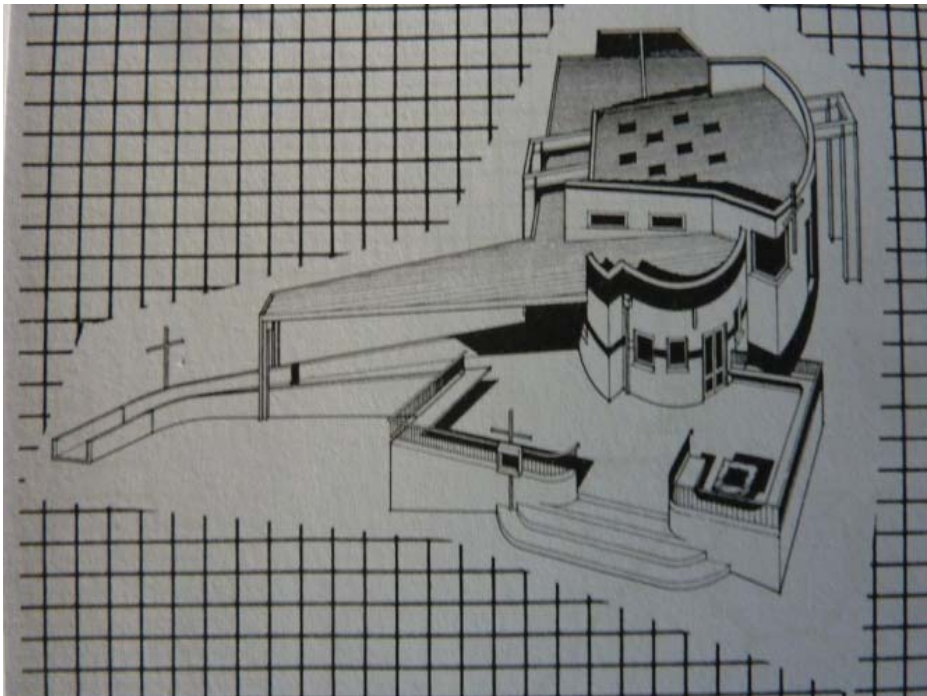
P Goad. *Melbourne Architecture*. Sydney 1999

P Goad and J Willis. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Port Melbourne 2012

G Missingham, 'Peter Corrigan's Architecture: A Kind of Exposition' in *Transition*, March 1981, pp14-20

[vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places)

### Historical Images



Drawing from *Transition*, March 1981, p 17