

273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote (Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, Northcote) Statement of Significance, September 2021

Heritage Place:	273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote	PS ref no:	HO323
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What is significant?

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints complex at 273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, comprising the c.1958 chapel and recreation hall building fronting Heidelberg Road and the c.1974-78 new chapel fronting Westgarth Street, is significant.

Significant fabric includes the:

- original form and scale of the c.1958 chapel and recreation hall building, including its simple rectangular form, very low-pitched roof form and its asymmetric composition of the horizontal and vertical elements of hall, rectangular tower and landscaped quadrangle;
- elements that reflect the Modernist ecclesiastic designs of the c.1958 building produced by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints' Building Division in Utah, United States, including the original orange face brick cladding, full-height metal-frame windows, clerestory windows and steel universal columns supporting projecting eaves on the Heidelberg Road elevation;
- original form and scale of the c.1974-78 chapel, including its basilica-like plan and four-wings with low-pitched gables;
- elements that reflect the Modernist ecclesiastic designs of the c.1974-78 building produced by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints' Building Division in Utah, United States, including original cream face brick cladding and decorative brick and concrete panelling, pattern of fenestrations as well as the tower; and
- other original landscaping elements including the lawn and brick paving on the Heidelberg Road set back, brick paving of the quadrangle, brick garden beds built as part of the c.1958 building scheme, and early signages on the c.1958 building and in front of the c.1974-78 chapel including the dwarf brick wall.

How is it significant?

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints complex at 273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is of local historic, representative and social significance to the City of Darebin.

Why is it significant?

273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is historically significant as a church complex consisted of a c.1958 chapel and recreation hall building fronting Heidelberg Road and a c. 1974-78 chapel fronting Westgarth Street, established for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) in 1958. The earlier building was built c. 1958 most likely to designs prepared by Arnold Ehlers and A. Neff Taylor in conjunction with the (Mormon) Church Architectural Department. Experiencing rapid growth nationally in the post-war period, the church underwent an unprecedented expansion program in all states of Australia between 1956 and 1958, in which 19 chapels and additions to existing sites were undertaken. The Church officials at Utah, United States oversaw the entire building program, from the selection of sites to design details and functionality.

The subject site would have been ideal for the church, as a new boom commenced in Darebin in the late 1940s with more than 2,500 new private houses and some large Housing Commission of Victoria estates were established between 1949 and 1954.

As a complex, 273-289 Heidelberg Road demonstrates the evolution of design aesthetics of the Building Division of the LDS church, where, unlike many other denominations, established a standardised church designs produced by the church's Building Division and repeated around the world. The pre-standard plan building built c. 1958, comprising a chapel and a multipurpose room, was based on the Church's primitive prototype that formed the basis for the development of standard plans after the 1950s. The c. 1958 building is a tangible evidence of the last era of custom-design meetinghouses, as one of 19 churches built in that period across Australia. The later c. 1974-78 building displays the elements of more standardised church designs that were repeated in churches built in the 1970s. Gable roofs with sprawling wings, almost always accompanied by the rectangular asymmetrically placed tower form were key characteristics of the standard-plan designs. (Criterion A)

273-289 Heidelberg Road, Northcote, is of representative significance for both the c.1958 and c.1974- 78 buildings' adoption of Modernist and Late-Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style idioms. The representative elements include a restrained material palette of brick cladding and steel window frames and details. A linear, box-like horizontal and vertical massing of rectangular forms and simple rectangular tower (the c. 1958 building); and adapted traditional basilica-like plans, asymmetrically placed vertical tower form and linear, box-like massing (the c. 1974-78 building) echo the widely popular Late-Twentieth Century Ecclesiastical style architecture. (Criterion D)

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints still operates today as a place of worship. The community centre houses Family History Centre, a branch of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. The subject complex is of social significance to the City of Darebin, for its continued association with the church community. (Criterion G)

Primary source

Context Heidelberg Road Heritage Assessment report - Final Report, September 2020

This document is an incorporated document in the Darebin Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*