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1. Background

The Heritage Assessment prepared by Griffiths Architects concludes that the heritage values previously assigned to the place are not sustained following a more detailed examination of the available evidence. The Heritage Assessment concludes that whilst the place does contribute to the understanding of the history of the City of South Perth, the place should be reclassified as a Category D place and not be included within the City's Heritage List adopted under their Planning Scheme.

Hocking Heritage + Architecture undertook a review of the City of South Perth's Municipal Heritage Inventory in 2018 assessing Memorial Church of St Martin in the Field and Durbridge Hall to be a Category B place. The assessment was made on the basis of an external site inspection only and review of available historical and other relevant information. At that time, the following Statement of Significance was formed:

- The church and hall have aesthetic value for their demonstration of the form and detail of the Inter-War Gothic and Post War Ecclesiastical styles. Internal details that remain from the original construction are likely to reflect these styles.
- The place has historic value for its association with the establishment and development of Kensington in the Inter War and Post World War II periods.
- The place has historic value for its association with prominent individuals in the historic of Kensington and the Anglican Church.
- The place has social value for the members of Kensington and wider communities who have attended the venue for social and spiritual purposes since 1933.

Following a review of the Griffiths Architects heritage assessment and an internal site visit to the two buildings, Hocking Heritage + Architecture is of the belief that the place still demonstrates significant heritage value, however a revision of the category to a C is appropriate due to the changes that have occurred, its current condition and level of integrity.

2. Municipal Heritage Inventory

Undertaking the preparation of MHI's for local governments is a long and detailed process. External site visits are undertaken for each nominated place and unless specific reason has been provided, access to the interiors is not part of the assessment process.

Heritage assessments prepared as the place record form for each place included on the MHI are not exhaustive, they are not designed to be detailed assessments rather they provide base information based on inspection and research to determine that a place does demonstrate heritage significance. It is always recommended that further research is undertaken prior to any development proposals being submitted or approved by the Local Government.

It is also the nature of these projects that further information often becomes available after the initial assessment was prepared that may result in a different conclusion and a place may demonstrate higher or lower heritage significance than originally believed.

The assessments are based on the usual criteria of:

- Aesthetic value
- Historic value
- Scientific value
- Social value
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Condition
- Integrity
- Authenticity

The guidelines for preparing local heritage surveys for local governments published by the State Heritage Office were used at the time of the assessment, and in the preparation of this commentary.

3. Further information

At the time of the site visit, the current new owners provided additional information they had received from the Anglican Church that enables a more detailed assessment of the place to be made. The information provided by the new owners included architectural plans for the church dated 1953, alternations to the church dated 1988 and notes that had been provided to the Anglican Archives by Father Ted Doncaster dated 16 July 2010.

In addition to the heritage assessment prepared by Griffiths Architects, a structural engineering report prepared by Quoin Consulting was also provided. The structural assessment of the two buildings was prepared in June 2021. The conclusion of the structural assessment deemed the economic benefits of demolition would outweigh the heritage values of the places. Whilst the buildings were showing signs of deterioration, they were not regarded as being beyond salvage but the cost of adaptation and upgrading them to meet the requirements of current codes was believed to be inappropriate for these buildings.

4. Photographs

The following photographs were taken in July 2021



Figure 1: Memorial Church of St Martin in the Field, taken from Dyson Street



Figure 2: Memorial Church of St Martin in the Field, taken from the intersection of Dyson Street and Vista Street



Figure 3: Vista Street elevation



Figure 4: Memorial plaque on the Dyson Street elevation of the church



Figure 5: Part of north west elevation of the Church with ramped access into the building



Figure 6: Ramped access into the church addition



Figure 7: View through church



Figure 8: Church roof



Figure 9: Remnant panelling around the church



Figure 10: Remnant altar



Figure 11: View from addition into church

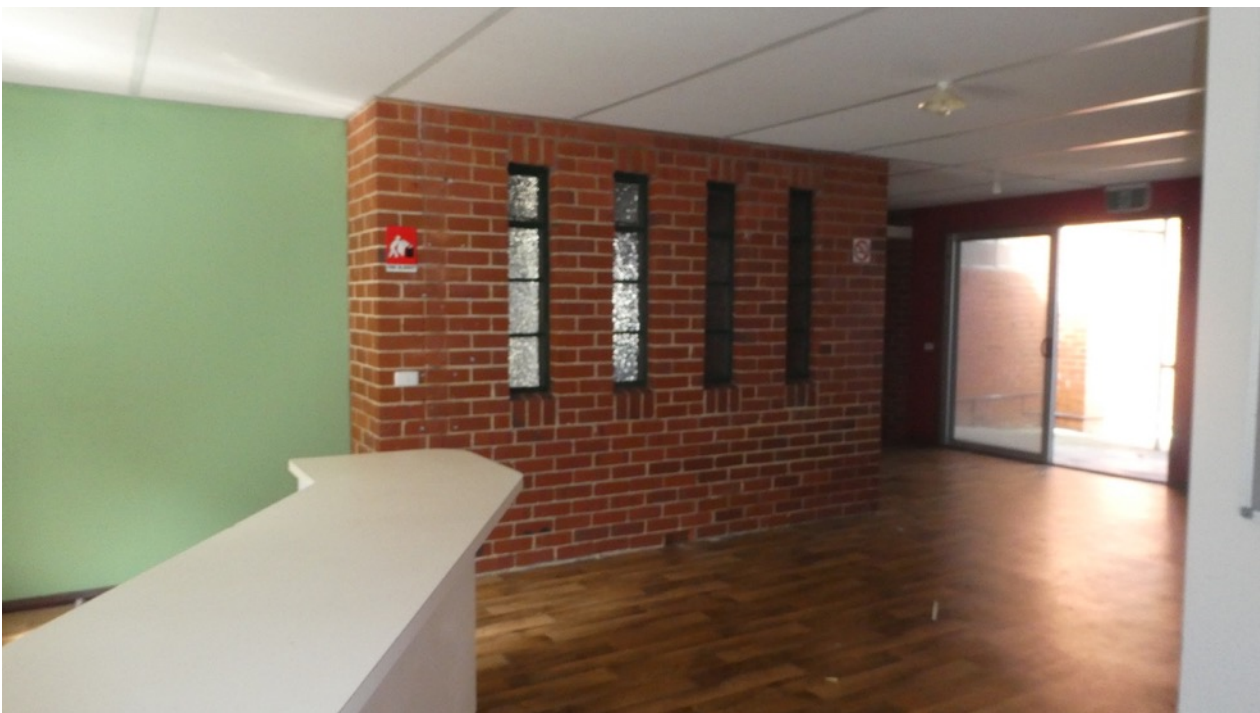


Figure 12: 1980s addition looking to the original external elevation of the church



Figure 13: View through Durbridge Hall looking towards Dyson Street



Figure 14: View looking through Durbridge Hall towards the stage



Figure 15: South east side of Durbridge Hall which opens out towards the Church



Figure 16: Kitchen facilities in Durbridge Hall



Figure 17: Timber panelling around the Hall



Figure 18: Change in timber floor boards in Hall



Figure 19: Durbridge Hall from Dyson Street



Figure 20: South east elevation of Durbridge Hall



Figure 21: View along north western elevation looking towards Dyson Street



Figure 22: Rear elevation of Durbridge Hall



Figure 23: 1988 additions to the Church and Hall

5. Discussion

The purpose of this section is not to prepare another heritage assessment but to provide comment on the heritage assessment provided by Griffiths Architects and to determine an appropriate management category for the place.

a. Criterion 1: Aesthetic Value: It is significant in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

It is agreed that the two buildings do not demonstrate design excellence but it is disagreed that the church and hall do not contribute to their setting, have landmark qualities or contributes to important views.

Whilst the buildings may not be of high design standards, due to their position at the intersection of Dyson Street and Vista Street they do make a contribution to the setting of the local streetscape and contribute to views. Whilst this may not equate to "landmark" qualities, their contribution to the locality cannot be ignored. They are set back from the street boundary and provide a contrast to the residential development that surrounds the two buildings. Both Dyson Street and Vista Street have experienced substantial redevelopment and the church and hall are remnants of an earlier streetscape character.

Places may not be considered to demonstrate aesthetic value if their distinguishing features have been lost, the landmark or scenic qualities have been irreversibly degraded by surrounding or infill development or it only has a loose association with creative/artistic excellence or achievement.

In the case of Durbridge Hall slight alterations have occurred in terms of changed window styles but on the whole, the place still presents closely to early photographs of the place and the design intent remains clear. The same can also be said of the church. Whilst the surrounding environment has changed due to redevelopment, it is not felt that the changing scale of local development has diminished the values of the place.

The Memorial Church and Durbridge Hall are considered to demonstrate some aesthetic value.

b. Criteria 2: Historic Value: It is significant in the evolution or pattern of the history of the local district

The Griffiths Architects' assessment concludes the place does not meet the requirements of this criterion.

For a place to demonstrate historic value, it should:

- Be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases that have played an important part of the locality's history
- Have a special association with a person/group of people or organisation important in shaping the locality
- Be an example of a technical or creative achievement from a particular period

A place would not be considered to demonstrate historic value if:

- It has brief, incidental or distant associations with important activities, processes, people or events
- It is associated with events of interest to only a small group of people
- It retains no physical trace of the event or activity

The Memorial Church and Durbridge Hall are both associated with the development and history of the area and have played a role in community life for a significant period of time.

The timber hall was built in 1933 as a venue for Anglican services for the Kensington community before becoming the parish hall. Many local community groups, not just those associated with the Anglican Church, subsequently used the hall for meetings and social events.

The church was constructed in the period following World War Two for the growing population in the Kensington district. It also served as a memorial to those who fought and lost their lives in war. Whilst communities change and direct connection to those who fought in these wars may be lost or diminished, the purpose of the erection of memorial churches has not been lost.

The place demonstrates some historic value.

c. Criteria 3: Research Value: It has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the natural or cultural history of the local district and/or it is significant in demonstrating a high degree of technical innovation or achievement

It is agreed that the church and hall do not demonstrate research value.

d. Criteria 4: Social Value: It is significant through association or community or cultural group in the local district for social, cultural, education or spiritual reasons

Places can be regarded as demonstrating social value when a community or significant part of a community have held a place in high regard for a significant period of time and can include churches and community halls. Such places tend to be public places and are felt to make a positive contribution to the local sense of place and local identity.

A place will not be included if its association is commonplace or recognised by only a small number of people or if the associations are weak.

The Griffiths Architects' assessments recognises that the place has demonstrated social value in the past but does not believe it can be sustained into the future.

The church and hall have contributed to local life in some form for a significant number of years. The Anglican Church has seen the congregation dwindle to such an extent that the church was no longer required and

consequently has been deconsecrated. Whilst no longer used for its original function the church and hall still provide connection to the community and therefore contribute to the local sense of place and identity.

The guidelines prepared by SHO state that social value is one of the hardest values to define and that a place must be valued over and above the activities that occurred there. Therefore, it is argued that social value can still be applied here, despite the closure of the church, and remains even if the church and hall were adapted for new uses as local community members would still remember these buildings.

As the community changes and the connection to place diminishes through lack of use rather than as a local identity, then the extent of social value may change but at present it is believed that the church and hall do demonstrate some social value.

e. *Criteria 5: Rarity: It demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the cultural heritage of the local district*

To be regarded as demonstrating rarity value, a place must provide evidence of a defunct way of life or custom, or one that is in danger of being lost or demonstrate a building design/function/technique that is of exceptional interest.

It is agreed that the place does not meet the requirements of being rare. The places were constructed for worship and religious practices, though changing, still exist. The buildings are not rare in any terms.

f. *Criteria 6: Representativeness: It is significant in demonstrating the characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments in the local district.*

A place should be a good example of its type, may be a common building or construction type, be typical of a particular builder or architect or architectural style and should demonstrate a high level of authenticity.

Both the church and hall are of fairly common design and construction methodologies and do not demonstrate any particular achievement. Changes have occurred to both buildings but their original design intent remains clear though only demonstrating a moderate level of authenticity.

g. *Condition*

The condition of the place in relation to the values for which that place has been assessed.

Due to liturgical changes over the years the furniture and fixings of the church have been removed. The formal arrangement of pews/chairs with nave and altar have been removed to create a more open plan space that allows for flexibility in worship practices. The loss of this original formal arrangement does not equate to the place being in poor condition.

Both places are showing signs of deterioration but neither are considered to be beyond repair.

The condition of the place is considered to be fair.

h. *Integrity*

The extent to which a place continues to function in its original use. Up until recent times, both buildings continued to function as a church and local community hall demonstrating a high level of integrity. Whilst both buildings are still capable of functioning in their original use, the need for them has been questioned by the diocese and due to dwindling congregations and use, the buildings have been disposed of which may lower the level of this value. Therefore, the place demonstrates a medium level of integrity.

i. Authenticity

The extent to which the fabric is in its original condition.

Both places have undergone some degree of alteration and lost original fabric and detail resulting in a medium level of authenticity.

6. Structural Assessment

An argument for demolition of a heritage place is often based on the results of a structural assessment undertaken by an experienced structural engineer. A report was commissioned by the owners of the place in June 2021 reaching a conclusion that the cost of adaptation and compliance with current codes justifies demolition over retention and conservation.

The assessment noted that there were defects in the buildings. In terms of the church there was evidence of missing mortar, minor cracking, missing eaves boards and evidence of earlier repairs however the church was in sound condition. Durbridge Hall was showing signs of subsidence, failing downpipes, peeling paint finish to the roof sheeting, rusted gutters and weathering to the weatherboards and bargeboards. Both buildings were determined to be in reasonably good condition. As both buildings could be repaired they fail the test of demolition based on poor/failing structural condition.

The argument for demolition based on cost and amount of change required to adapt the buildings to alternative uses is a different matter. Upgrading the buildings will result in a loss of original fabric which would impact on heritage value but this is an argument for development proposal and not whether the place demonstrates a certain level of heritage significance.

7. Conclusion

Having considered the additional information provided by the owners and the heritage assessment prepared by Griffiths Architects, it is felt that the two buildings still demonstrate sufficient heritage value to be assessed as a Category C place.

Originally the place was regarded as a Category B in the heritage inventory however having seen the extent of the changes and current condition, it is appropriate to revise the category down to a C. This means the place is of some/moderate significance and contributes to the heritage of City of South Perth. The place has some altered and modified elements which do not detract from the overall significance of the place and conservation of the place is desirable.