

Shrine of St Anthony Church Complex Statement of Significance, August 2020

Heritage Place: 180 -184 Power Street, Hawthorn

PS ref no: HO793



What is significant?

The St Anthony's Shrine complex is significant as a complex of buildings appropriated or developed by the Catholic Church and the Italian community during the post-war period. It was established with the purchase of the Victorian house at 182 Power Street by the Catholic Church c.1944 for use by the Italian community, when it was named *Villa Gonzaga*. As *Rivo Torto* the house, and neighbouring *Hirschell*, became the first home of the Capuchin monks in Melbourne from 1949. The former Victorian house *Greystroke* (demolished) was later added to the property and its stables converted to monastic use. The St Anthony's Shrine church was designed by Grigore Hirsch's 'Contemporary Architecture Group' CONARG and built over the course of 1961-69, combining modern and traditional characteristics within a Romanesque Revival design. Hundreds of Italian migrants and their families contributed towards its construction through their

donations or voluntary labour. The eclectic interior decorations of the basilica, with its altar, mosaics, painted ceiling, and side chapels, are testament to the diversity, prosperity and generosity of the Italian migrant community, so many of whom donated money or volunteered in the construction and furnishing of the church. The use of materials from different regions of Italy also reflects in its built form the diverse origins and identities of the Italian migrants of the period.

Significant:

- St Anthony's Shrine church
- The house, 'Rivo Torto', formerly 'Villa Gonzaga'.

Contributory elements:

- The converted stables of former 'Greystroke'
- Mature peppercorn trees from the remnant grounds of the Victorian era estates
- The elevated plaza setting with modern 'flame' sculpture and original metal lace fence.

Not Significant:

- The garage and attached brick building
- Car park
- Individual improvised outdoor shrines or monuments.

How is it significant?

The St Anthony's Shrine church complex is historically, architecturally, aesthetically and socially significant to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

St Anthony's Shrine complex is historically significant for its connection to the history of the Roman Catholic Church and its missionary work among post war migration in Boroondara. (Criterion A)

The complex is representative of a religious community complex established by migrant communities in the twentieth century, established with the conversion of older Victorian residences into community use, and expanded in the post-war era with the construction of a Modern church. (Criterion D)

The church is aesthetically significant as an outstanding example of the work of CONARG architects, and for its aesthetic characteristics combining Modern and Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical design. The church is particularly distinguished by its Lombard-style porch and cast doors. (Criterion E)

St Anthony's Shrine complex is socially significant for its special association with the Roman Catholic and Italian communities in Boroondara (Criterion G).

Primary source

City of Boroondara Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 3: Hawthorn (Context Pty Ltd, 20 July 2020)