

St Michael's Memorial Church, 270 High Street, Ashburton Statement of Significance, December 2021

Heritage Place:	St Michael's Memorial Church	PS ref no:	HO923
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What is significant?

St Michael's Memorial Church, 270 High Street in Ashburton, designed by CONARG and constructed in 1953, is significant.

How is it significant?

St Michael's Memorial Church is of historical, architectural, aesthetic, and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

St Michael's Memorial Church is historically significant as a post-war church representing the growth of the municipality's outer suburbs in the mid twentieth century. The Roman Catholic Church was particularly influential in this area of the municipality. The connection between the Catholic Parish and the Housing Commission Estate was also strong, with the growth in the estate swelling the congregation's numbers and making possible the construction of a large and imposing church for this area of the municipality. (Criterion A)

St Michael's Memorial Church is architecturally significant as a particularly well-designed example of a post-war modern church in Boroondara. Its design by CONARG is notable for its modern interpretation of Romanesque Revival in the post-war period, and for its combination of traditional and modern elements. The church demonstrates elements of a traditional church plan with narthex, nave, transept and sanctuary, but dispenses with the side aisles and chapels. The church uses a Romanesque form expressed in readily available post-war materials, in this case red brick. Its decorative elements are similarly expressed using brick rather than stone or render. The emphasis on materiality over ornamentation is typically modern. (Criterion D)

St Michael's Memorial Church is aesthetically significant for its intact and distinctive design by CONARG. It demonstrates characteristics of Romanesque Revival comprising sheer massing of form and massive walls. It applies modern interpretations of traditional Romanesque elements such as the brick dentil pattern in place of a corbel table, archivolt, dripstone moulding, stylised and simplified in brick. The rows of large stained-glass windows contribute to the modern ecclesiastic aesthetic. (Criterion E)

St Michael's Memorial Church is socially significant for its association with the Roman Catholic religious community in Ashburton. The association is evident in the fabric, with furnishings and decorative elements provided by parishioners and their families in Ashburton. (Criterion G)

Primary source

City of Boroondara Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 8: Ashburton (Context Pty Ltd, December 2021)

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