

ST JOHN'S CHURCH

373-383 Halifax Street, 10-14 John Street

When the first brick church was opened in 1841 on this site it was called 'St John's in the Wilderness' as it stood on the almost unoccupied south-eastern section of the city. This small church served a few local residents and the inhabitants from across the Park Lands in the suburban village of Unley.

In winter after dark it took considerable navigation to get from the vicinity of St John's to the more inhabited parts of the city. After twisting and turning to avoid the holes of mud and water, pedestrians often found themselves back where they had started, or in the Park Lands, then a forest of dead trees.

It can be gathered from this that St John's was not well attended and indeed it was partly closed between 1843 and 1846, and then in 1861 a substantial decrease in offertories and pew rents became a renewed cause for concern. In 1874 Reverend F. Slaney Poole obtained the incumbency, and under his care and guidance the St John's complex reached its present form. The boom period in the 1870s and early 1880s led to the erection of many fine residences which still largely determine the character of this south-eastern corner. The increase in population also led to an increase in the stature of St John's as a place of Anglican worship and no doubt stimulated Poole to consolidate the complex. In 1879-80 the Parish Hall was built, and in 1883 the new rectory. In 1886 when new classrooms were built the old church was condemned by the City Council surveyor.

A transfer of St John's to Hurtle Square was investigated but it was decided to rebuild the church while at the same time providing a mission church at the western extremity of the parish. A plot on Moore Street was purchased and it was proposed that the materials from the old St John's be re-erected as the mission church of St Mary Magdalene. Poole recounted in 1926 that St Mary's was erected by ' . . . using up so much of the old material as was possible', in order to keep costs down but also to maintain the historical link with the old St John's and



(CD Ref 1347/62)

overcome the 'tender regret' which members of the congregation felt when old St John's was demolished. (see St Mary Magdalene's Church).

Plans for the new church were prepared by the architect R.G. Holwell (associated with St Mary's, Sturt, now in the Marion City Council area, and St George's, Gawler). The builder was William Rogers, a member of the congregation who also erected the Jubilee Exhibition Hall off North Terrace (now demolished) and Rymill House.

Poole successfully demonstrated the need to

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finish St John's in one major building program, citing incomplete churches as something to be avoided. In 1887 the foundation stone of the new St John's was laid. The building is a credit to Rogers whose work extended far beyond that which the building contract required. It is substantially constructed of sandstone rubble unusually tuck-pointed. The brick dressings are also of interest, particularly the buttresses with their cut-back courses on the rake (reminiscent of brickwork peculiar to Norfolk, England). The prominent tower, fashionably asymmetrical with its clasped buttresses, is well detailed and integrated with the main body of the church, the solidity and austerity of which is relieved by the elegant sanctuary and division of walling into bays. The interior is simple, the width of the nave being unusually large. The roof structure is stoutly expressed with exposed king-post trusses and matchboarding. The building is substantially sound, with the tower a notable townscape feature.



(CD Ref 1828/80)

ACA, *Digest of Proceedings*, 13 November 1882, Smith Survey 1880; *Adelaide Church Guardian*, May 1919, 1 December 1944; *Church News*, 17 January 1896, 24 January 1896; Glover, C.R.J., *A brief history of the Church of St John the Evangelist, 1839-1909*, 1911; Jackman Gooden Architects, Historical architectural plans; Jose, G.H., *The Church of England in South Australia*, Vol. 1, 1937, p. 13; MLSA, Historical photographs (Town Acre 581, 582), Newspaper cuttings book, Vol. 1, pp. 20-1, 23-4, 25-9, 43-5; *Register*, 6 October 1923, 20 November 1926; *South Australian Register*, 17 October 1882, 9 January 1888, 1 January 1896, 6 October 1923, 20 November 1926.

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The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.

Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.



CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

The City Heritage Register - Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

Item	ST. JOHN'S CHURCH	Building No	23/0501
Address	373-383 Halifax Street; 2-6 St. John Street	CT	512/12

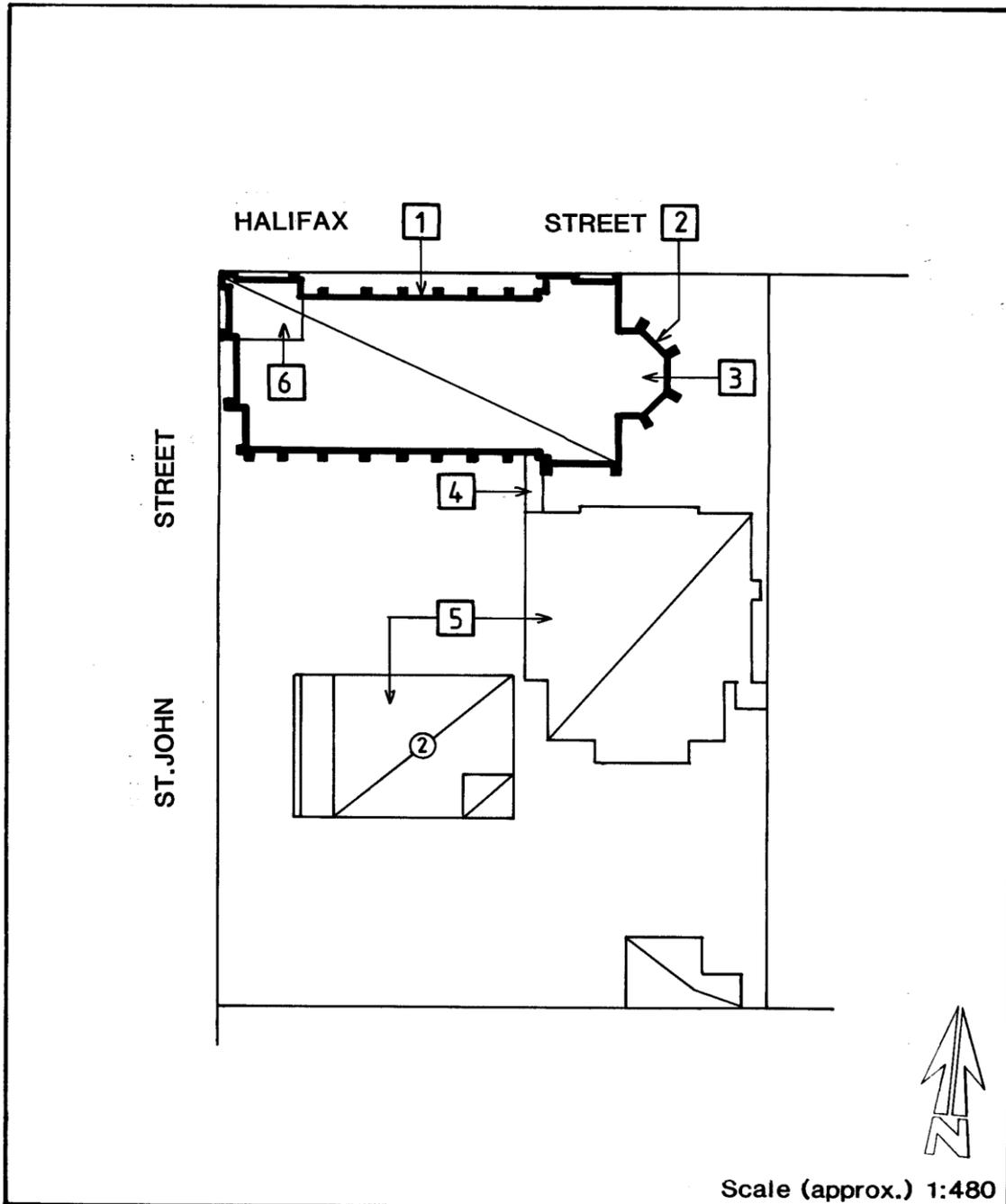


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NOTES:

1. Tuck pointed sandstone rubble with brick quoins and detailing over bluestone plinth.
2. Note Leadlight windows.
3. Apse.
4. Verandah walkway.
5. Note Hall and priory also listed.
6. Tower with battlement parapet.