

## ST CLEMENT'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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<b>Address</b>	205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Construction Dates</b>	1915
<b>Period</b>	Federation
<b>Date Inspected</b>	Late 2018 and early 2019



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

St Clement's Anglican Church at 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick, is significant.

The skillion roof additions to the north-west corner and separate cream brick toilet block to the north-east are not significant.

#### How is it Significant?

St Clement's Anglican Church at 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick, is of local historical, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Glen Eira.

#### Why is it Significant?

St Clement's Anglican Church at 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick, is of historical significance as an indicator of the presence and strength of the Church of England community in the suburb during the late Federation period. This is demonstrated by the decision of the congregation to replace their original smaller timber church (constructed in 1886) with a considerable and handsome masonry edifice at a more prominent location (erected 1915). Such an undertaking is also reflective of Elsterwick's wider consolidation as a middle-class locale by the mid-1910s. (Criterion A)

St Clement's Anglican Church at 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick, is of aesthetic significance as an intact and good example of a Gothic style church constructed during the late Federation period. It features elements characteristic of the period such as the palette of red brick and rendered bands, as well as exposed rafter ends to the roof. Designed by the recognised firm of Thomas

Watts and Son, it is distinguished by some of the detailing such as the mandorla-shaped vent to the façade and curvilinear junction between the corbelled walled sections and lower buttresses. (Criterion E)

St Clement's Anglican Church at 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick, is of social significance for the demonstrated, long attachment, over a century in its current location, shown towards it as a place of worship by the local Anglican community. (Criterion G)

## Description

St Clement's church is located on a prominent site on Glenhuntly Road, at the intersection of Hotham Street and Brighton Road. The church occupies much of the site with a carpark area and some later addition ancillary structures to the rear.

The Gothic style church is orientated north-south and has a Latin cross plan. It is comprised of a main nave, transept (whose western arm is larger than the eastern arm), and altar, with an entry porch to the east side (southern end). All sections have steeply pitched gable roofs clad in slate. The inclusion of exposed rafter ends is indicative of a Federation period construction and the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement.



Façade/south elevation



Rear/north elevation



West elevation, transept to rear



East side, entry porch. Tympanum with lancets in bas-relief, string moulding terminating with a boss

The walls are red brick, largely in stretcher bond though some sections are in garden wall bond (upper part of rear gables). The brick contrasts with the rendered elements, a combination typical of the Federation period. These include copings – banding to the façade, surrounds to the openings – and splayed faces of the wide buttresses. The end walls are wider to the upper part and have a curved corbel (rendered) where they integrate with the lower buttress. There is a foundation stone to the façade laid by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne on 21 August 1915.<sup>1</sup> A cross has been mounted at the apex of the façade gable and

<sup>1</sup> 'Church Dedicated', *Herald*, 6 December 1915, p3



there is a mandorla-shaped vent below.<sup>2</sup> The west transept (section of a church set perpendicular to the nave) is distinguished by a band of render with trefoil motifs, a triple arched vent and a bell over the west transept coping.

The windows have pointed arches and string mouldings with floriated bosses, typical of the Gothic style. The main window to the façade/south elevation has elaborate tracery with four lancet windows (slender pointed arched type) with diamond quarrels and a stained glass border. Above are circular openings with pentafoils (five lobbed), also with decorative glass. The main window is flanked by two buttresses which extend upwards as pinnacle-like elements, which are rendered and panelled. The north/altar wall has three lancets and the side windows are smaller with two lancets. Many windows contain decorative glass depicting religious imagery. A narrow window has been introduced to the west transept above the pointed arched openings.



Main façade window with flanking pinnacles



West transept opening

There are original doorways to the porch and west side of the nave accommodating two glass doors (not original) with a rendered tympanum (section above an opening with decoration, traditionally with sculpture) with five bas-relief lancets. There are basalt steps at the west entry that likely exist to the east entry but are obscured by the current terrace. There is also a single doorway to the west transept with a smaller tympanum. The light fitting above the entry porch is probably not original.



West elevation



North elevations – curved corbels

<sup>2</sup> A mandorla (almond shape) is employed in Christian painting and sculpture as a ring of light (similar to a halo) usually surrounding the figure of Christ or the Virgin Mary

There is a small, flat roof addition in red brick at the north-west corner of the church, dating to the 1950s. Nearby is a free-standing cream brick toilet block.

## History

Elsternwick Village was surveyed in 1851 by Robert Hoddle and again in 1856 by Henry Foot, and is now roughly split between the suburbs of Brighton and Elsternwick.<sup>3</sup> It consisted of a compact and elongated section of 'level wet land' bound by Davis Street in the north, Glenhuntly Road in the south, a public reserve in the west (over the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Elsternwick Racecourse, before being developed as Elsternwick Park) and the St Kilda and Brighton railway (Sandringham) line in the east.<sup>4</sup>

While initially situated on the periphery of suburban Melbourne, beyond the more settled environs of Prahran and St Kilda, the ready availability of considerable allotments in Elsternwick and the early private establishment of its railway station (1859) proved attractive to the genteel and affluent. Alongside dairies and market gardens, a patchwork of prestige estates, 'private houses of a superior character standing in pleasure grounds',<sup>5</sup> were erected from the 1860s. The government takeover of the railway line (1878), which improved services, and speculative activities of the land boom stimulated a more intensive phase of subdivision and development in the suburb over the 1880s. Along the major roads and across the former grounds of handsome mansions, rows of generally high-quality detached houses multiplied and dedicated shopping strips emerged. Following the general building hiatus of the 1890s Depression, a decidedly middle-class suburb consolidated with little unused land available by the early 1930s.<sup>6</sup>

A large 2 acre (0.8 hectare) Crown allotment in Section A of Elsternwick Village was reserved for the Church of England in 1852; a common practice in 19<sup>th</sup> century town planning.<sup>7</sup> This encompassed the block bound by Glenhuntly Road (south), McCombie Street (east), Miller Street (north) and Brighton Road (west), as depicted in the plan below.



1852 Church of England reserve is shaded pink

Note the spelling of 'Millar' Street has changed to Miller

(Source: *Brighton and Caulfield (part of) in Parish of Prahran...*, PROV, VPRS 16171, P0001)

In 1878, the Church of England trustees of Section A requested and were granted permission to 'dispose' of the property, at time of which it was recorded as vacant.<sup>8</sup> The first Torrens title was issued for their holdings soon after, with the church selling the northern section and retaining the southern.<sup>9</sup>

It was some 34 years after being granted the land that the first Church of England in Elsternwick, later Anglican Church, was erected on their holdings at the corner of McCombie and Miller streets. The first church – a modest timber building initially named

<sup>3</sup> Peter Murray and John C Wells, *From sand, swamp and health: a history of Caulfield*, Blackburn, J & D Burrows for City of Caulfield, 1980, p109

<sup>4</sup> *Village of Elsternwick*, Parish of Prahran, Department of Crown Lands Office, 8 August 1857, SLV, <<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/156244>>, accessed 26 August 2019

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Garran, *Picturesque atlas of Australasia*, Sydney, Picturesque Atlas Publishing Company, 1888, p148

<sup>6</sup> Murray and Wells, *From sand, swamp and health: a history of Caulfield*, p110

<sup>7</sup> *Elsternwick Village + Allotments of N & S Elwood*, 1851, PROV, VPRS 8168, P0005

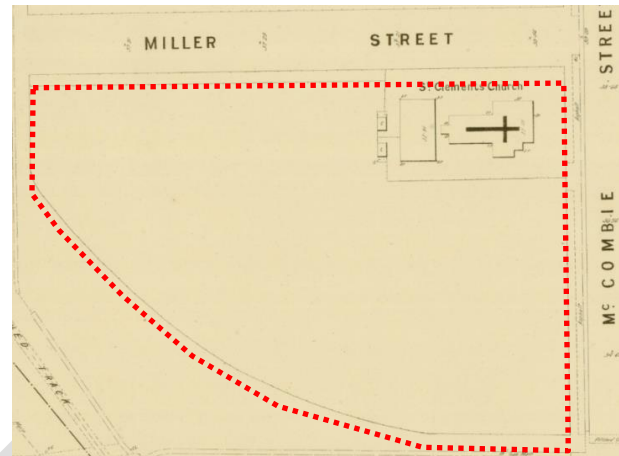
<sup>8</sup> NB – date for the reservation of the land herein ('Application for Leave to Dispose of Church Lands: Victoria, Act 391, First Schedule, *Victorian Government Gazette*, 10 May 1878, p1041)

<sup>9</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1047, folio 210 (17 July 1878)

the Chapel of the Ease to Saint Mary's Caulfield – was opened on 19 February 1886.<sup>10</sup> By at least the 1890s however, the subject site was being referred to as St Clement's Church.<sup>11</sup> A timber hall (used as a Sunday School) was also constructed to the rear (on Miller Street) with the location of both it and the church evident on a 1902 MMBW plan (refer below).



Photograph of the original timber church and hall from McCombie Street  
(Source: Covey, *Our first 100 years...*, p4)



MMBW plan no. 1484, Caulfield  
Original position of the Chapel of East to St Mary's Caulfield and hall in 1902, with the holding outlined (dashed) (Source: SLV)

The induction of Rev. Hugh H Gardner in August 1910 appears to have stirred further building activity at the site. An active local minister, Gardner endeavoured to grow the congregation and consequently, decided to seek a more conspicuous location. By October 1910, plans were underway to relocate the original timber buildings to the west on Miller Street; an estimate of £45 for removal and £120 for removal and repair being provided by Mr Webster.<sup>12</sup> This relocation and reconstruction was supervised by the local architect A L Badges.<sup>13</sup> In May 1911, an additional quote was received from the contractors to raise the church walls 2'6" (about 76cm), dropping the floors, doors and porches and making everything good for £46.<sup>14</sup>

In July 1911, the large grounds of the Church were subdivided, with the Church of England Trusts Corporation retaining about 1.5 acres, including the roughly ½ parcel on which the original timber buildings had been located at the corner of McCombie and Miller streets.<sup>15</sup> Also in that month, the Council of the Diocese granted £300 for the erection of a vicarage on the provision that a new church was built. By early 1912, a new two storey brick vicarage was occupied by the reverend and his family, having been erected at a cost of £1,240.<sup>16</sup> In 1914, the land associated with the vicarage – west of the extant church – was separated and the land to the east/McCombie street was sold in two parcels during June 1917.<sup>17</sup>

Soon after, a plan for a new church to replace the relocated original church was enacted. Owing to financial restrictions, the plans had to be modified with the sanctuary, nave and organ loft reduced in size and the proposed tower and spire substituted for a porch.<sup>18</sup> By May 1915, architects Thomas Watts and Son were advertising for tenders for the construction of a 'brick church, Glen Huntly road, for the Trustees of St Clement's Anglican Church'.<sup>19</sup> In June that year, it was reported that the contract had been struck and 'materials had been put on the ground'. The outlay was to be £2,500 with an estimated additional cost a £1,000 for the tower and other parts 'not yet put in hand'.<sup>20</sup> The tender of £1,998 from builder, James Brown, was eventually accepted.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Joan Covey, *Our first 100 years: the Anglican Church of Saint Clement, Elsternwick, Victoria*, Elsternwick, St Clement's Anglican Church, 1986, p4

<sup>11</sup> *Sands and McDougall's Directory*, 1890

<sup>12</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p7

<sup>13</sup> Public Building File, PROV, VPRS 7882, P1, Unit 172

<sup>14</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p7 – there is an undated photo with 'Webster timber' on a post and rail fence at the site, p12

<sup>15</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 1047, folio 210 – the land was acquired by George Coppel (Certificate of Title, vol. 3818, folio 552)

<sup>16</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p10

<sup>17</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 3846, folio 029 – a separate parcel of land was created for the land to Miller street also at this time

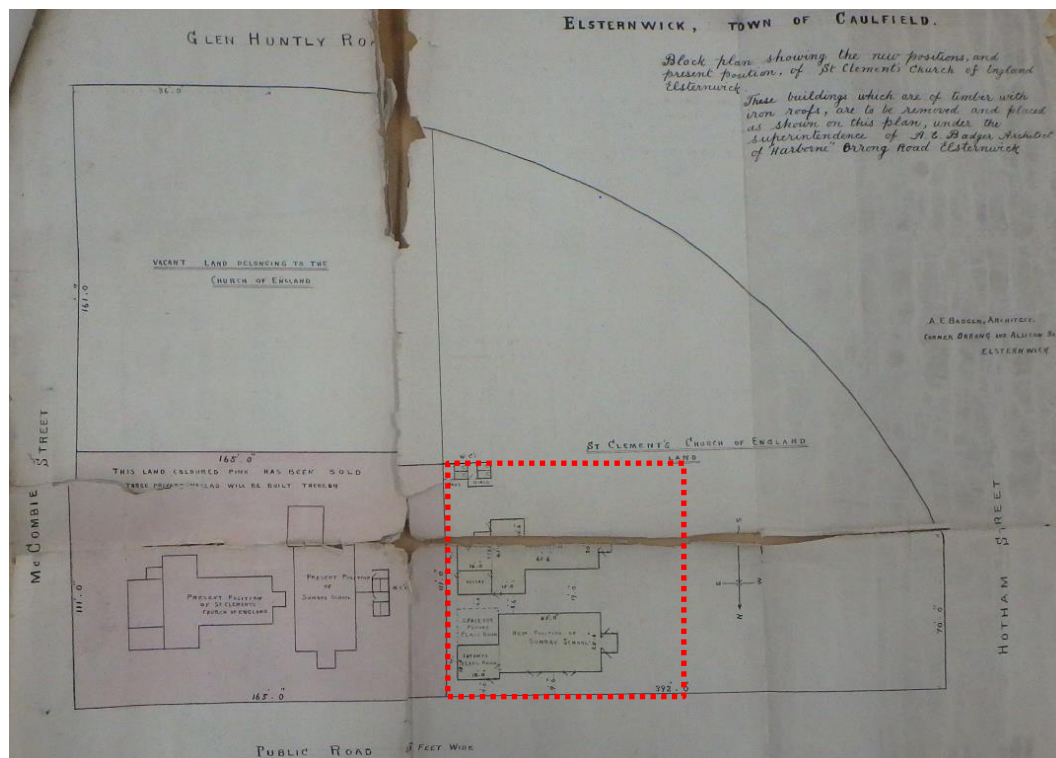
<sup>18</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p9

<sup>19</sup> 'Advertising', *Age*, 19 May 1915, p7

<sup>20</sup> 'Local News', *Age*, 28 June 1915, p10

<sup>21</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p9





Block plan, circa 1911  
Showing original location of timber buildings (left) and relocated location (dashed)  
(Source: PROV, VPRS 7882, P1, Unit 172)

The architects responsible for the design, Thomas Watts and Son, were a prominent firm established by Thomas Watts, a Bristolian who immigrated to Victoria in 1853. Watts was involved in the establishment of professional architectural associations in Victoria and served as the president of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. One of his notable designs is considered the grand mansion near Wangaratta, *Bontharambo* (1858).<sup>22</sup> A resident of Caulfield, Watts was closely involved in the (sometimes controversial) enactment of municipal improvements and administration, including chairing the Caulfield Road Board (1870-72).<sup>23</sup> He is also known to be responsible for *Stannere* (19 Sandham Street, HO60), a villa built for a local landowner (William Short) that later accommodated the Elsternwick Club.<sup>24</sup> Two of Short's sons joined him and the practice continued after the senior Watts' death in 1893. At the time of the design of St Clement's, the firm was being run by the youngest of the involved sons, John Salter Watts.<sup>25</sup>

Construction of the new church was relatively rapid with the foundation stone laid on 21 August 1915 and the building itself dedicated in December that year by Archbishop (Henry Lowther) Clarke.<sup>26</sup> The sketch plan (refer below), depicts the footprint of the church at erection. It was recorded that Tasmanian timber was employed internally, presumably the ceiling linings and/or framing.<sup>27</sup>

In 1922, a soldier's memorial window designed by leading Melbourne stained glass artists Brooks, Robinson, and Co., was installed in the east wall. Five years later in 1927, a rood screen was erected, which was designed by architects Gawler and Drummond.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Julie Willis, 'Watts, Thomas', in Phillip Goad and Julie Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p755

<sup>23</sup> Murray and Wells, *From sand, swamp and heath*, pp.123-26

<sup>24</sup> Glen Eira Historical Society, *Elsternwick Club, Sandham Street, 19 Elsternwick*, Victorian Collections, 1063B

<sup>25</sup> Willis, 'Watts, Thomas', p756.

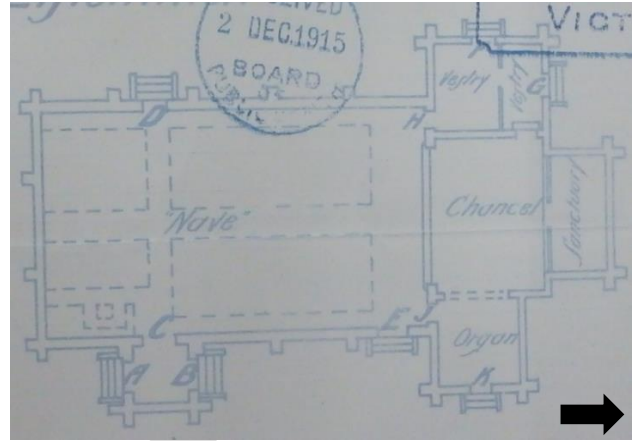
<sup>26</sup> 'Church Dedicated', *Herald*, 6 December 1915, p3; and Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p9

<sup>27</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p9

<sup>28</sup> *Stained Glass Window at Elsternwick St Clement's Anglican Church*, VHD, Victorian War Heritage Inventory, ID 196874, <<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/196874>>; and Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p38

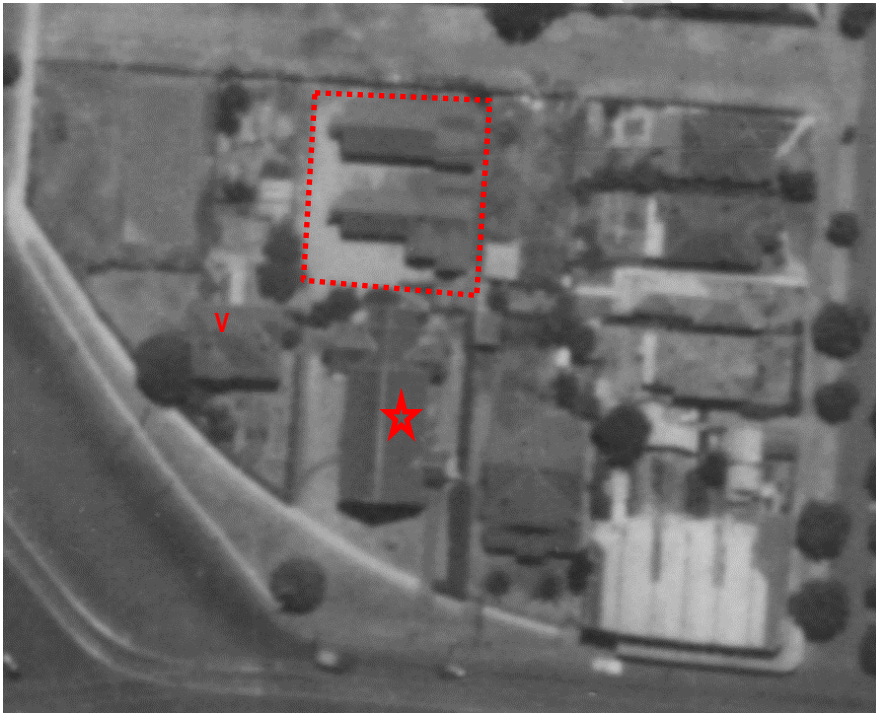


Photo of the church and vicarage (left) soon after completion  
(Source: Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p10)



Sketch plan of the Church, December 1915 (north indicated)  
(Source: PROV, VPRS 7882, P1 Unit 172)

The 1945 aerial photograph (below) depicts St Clement's when it occupied much of the western part of the block bound by Glenhuntly Road, Hotham Street, Miller and McCombie streets. At this time, the property consisted of the extant brick Church, the original/relocated timber church and hall to the rear/north (oriented parallel to each other), and the vicarage to the west.



1945 aerial photograph  
Showing extant brick church (star), vicarage (V) and the original timber buildings to the rear (dashed)  
(Source: Landata, *Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project*, Run 15, Frame 57787)

The original timber church and hall were destroyed by in January 1959, which also devastated the adjacent Scout Hall (2 Miller Street, Elsterwick, proposed for a HO).<sup>29</sup> In the photograph below the rear elevation of the brick church is viewable across the rubble of the ruined hall.

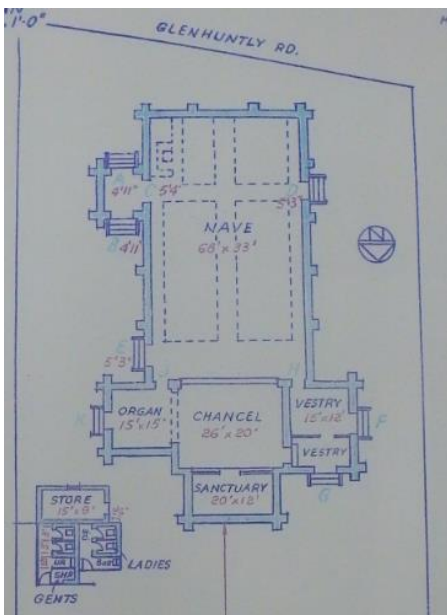
<sup>29</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, np



View to the 1915 erected church from the rear of the property in 1959  
(Source: Covey, *Our first 100 years*, np)

In late 1959, the wrecked buildings were replaced with the existing skillion roofed brick building to Miller Street (now part of 201 Glenhuntly Road, Elsterwick, currently an Audi dealership) to a design by local architect, Frank H W Woods.<sup>30</sup>

A 1960 sketch plan of the church depicts the contemporary building footprint. It indicates that the configuration had not changed since its construction in 1915. However, the extant cream brick toilets to the north-east had since been added.



1960 sketch plan of the Church site  
Glenhuntly Road is top of frame  
(Source: PROV, VPRS 7882, P1 Unit 172)

The Church has a fine array of stained-glass windows, most of which were installed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One window, installed to the ecclesiastical south wall in 1962, depicts the Pentecost and was designed by Alan Sumner, a well-known Australian artist and educator.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> PROV, Public Building File, VPRS 7882, P1, Unit 172

<sup>31</sup> Sketches of the window are held in the collection of the SLV and match the design of one of the windows in the Church (*Rough Pencil Sketch for a stained glass window of the Pentecost for St Clement's, Elsterwick*, SLV, H2009.133/125); and Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p37



Minor works or additions to the building include repairs to the floor in the wake of a May 1971 fire and the construction, in 1972, of the metal clad office to the north-west.<sup>32</sup> The vicarage was demolished sometime after 1971.<sup>33</sup>

## Thematic Context/Comparative Analysis

*City of Glen Eira Heritage Management Plan* – vol. 1 (Historical Background):

- The Post Federation Years (1900s-1910s)

*Known comparable places in the City of Glen Eira*

The subject building is one of a few noted brick churches built during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the municipality. Other examples include:

- Former Uniting/Methodist Church, 254 Neerim Road and 1A Toolambool Road, Carnegie (part of HO47) – designed in the Arts and Crafts idiom by Albert Phipps Coles in 1914. It consists of nave with front porch and rear corner tower. The lower walls are red brick with render to the upper part. The distinctive original curved half-timbering to the front gable end has been largely removed.
- Church of Christ, 514 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North (HO20) – red brick and rendered church, erected in 1918. Displaying detailing associated with the Romanesque and Gothic styles, it has a prominent front tower and flanking curved walls.
- St Aloysius, 233 Balaclava Road, Caulfield North (HO77) – an English Gothic style church in red brick and designed by Bartholomew Moriarty (1923-24). A substantial building comprised of a narthex, nave, aisles, large tower and transepts. The roof is the only one in this group clad in terracotta tiles. Its stone spire has been removed
- St Stephens, 158 Balaclava Road, Caulfield North (HO8) – a distinctive design in red brick and render designed in 1926 by prominent architect Robert Haddon (Haddon & Henderson) in an eclectic Arts and Crafts mode. It features a cross incorporated into the masonry of the façade and has unique tracery.

## Condition

Excellent

## Integrity

Largely intact

## Previous Assessment

C (local significance) - Andrew Ward, *Glen Eira Heritage Management Plan*, Field Survey Sheet 12, 1996

## Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or Fences	No

<sup>32</sup> Covey, *Our first 100 years*, p28

<sup>33</sup> The vicarage is evident on a sketch plan of the site in 1971 (PROV, VPRS 7882, P1, Unit 172). but is no longer extant,

### Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay is the parcel of land associated with 205 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay  
(Source: Nearmap, 23 February 2019)