

SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. SAVA HIGHGATE



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Serbian Orthodox Church of St. Sava
Other names	
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8746
State Heritage Register:	28 March 2014
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	31 Smith St
Locality	Highgate
Survey	LOT: 74 D/P: 32
Vol/folio	1152/133
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Exceptional</p> <p>Essential to the heritage of the area. Rare or outstanding example. Consider for nomination for State Register of Heritage Places if not already included.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 1</p> <p>The place should be retained and conserved. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place and be in accordance with a Conservation Plan if one is in place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The place is an outstanding example of a church designed in the Christian Orthodox Church tradition whereby all elements, including the ornate art works of the interior, the finely painted iconostasis, frescoes, mosaics, gold chandeliers and timber furniture, including a throne, are of religious symbolic importance; and as such, are integral to the significance of this place.</p> <p>The distinctive curved form of the church, with its domed roof and stark white walls, set in landscaped gardens has an overall aesthetic quality that is both visually pleasing and peaceful.</p> <p>The place is indicative of the arrival of East European migrants to Western Australia in the post World War Two period, and the subsequent establishment of migrant communities, introduction of their cultural activities, religious observance and architectural traditions.</p> <p>The place is associated with Archpriest Father Petar Rados OAM, who was instrumental in establishing the Serbian Orthodox community, parish and church in the early 1950s.</p> <p>The place is the second oldest Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia, and the first to be built in Western Australia.</p> <p>The place is valued by the Serbian community for religious, spiritual, aesthetic, social and educational reasons, and the use of the Serbian language in the liturgy of the church is important to the cultural identity of Serbian community of Western Australia.</p>

PLACE USE	
Original use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Current use	Religious: Church, Cathedral or Chapel
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	
Construction date	1954
Walls	Rendered Brick
Roof	Terracotta Tile Copper Sheet
Architectural Style	Orthodox/Post-War Ecclesiastical
Physical description	<p>Built in a traditional Orthodox style, the building features white stucco walls and two octagonal towers, with cupolas topped with crosses, centred over the ridge of the gable roof, consistent with eastern European inspiration.</p> <p>The towers have arched windows on each facet and a copper-esque roof material. The building is entered from the side via a small flight of stairs with metal rails, through an arched doorway. The church has a large projecting apse with its own tiled roof. Windows are often located in groups of three arched windows, symbolising the Holy Trinity.</p> <p>Setback from the street behind a low brick and steel rail fence.</p>
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Serbian Church of St Sava was constructed in 1954 by the Serbian community, most of whom had fled Yugoslavia following World War II. It was named after Saint Sava (1175-1235), the first Bishop of Serbia and founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He is the most important saint in the Serbian Orthodox Church and the patron saint of education and medicine. His father also took monastic vows and he was canonised at Saint Simon.

The foundation stone was laid on 31 January 1954, and the church was consecrated on 1 February 1956. In 1974, the bell tower was erected and the building completed. In 1979, three mosaics were set into the exterior wall of the bell tower. One of these was donated by a founder member of the church, one by the Ladies' Guild, and one by the organisation of Serbian Chetniks in WA in memory of their leader, Draza Himajlovic (1893-1946). Himajlovic was the leader of the resistance movement known as the Chetniks, and distinguished himself as their commander and later as Minister of War, and materially contributed to the Allied cause during World War II. However, he ordered the ethnic cleansing of Croats, Bosniaks and others and was tried after the War and executed for treason.

The construction of the church is illustrative of the various waves of migration that have occupied the Highgate and other northern inner-city areas. In fact, many of those involved in its construction were refugees from Yugoslavia following World War II. It is one of two Serbian Orthodox churches in WA, the other being Saint Trojica in Marlborough Street, Mount Lawley. In 1965 the church bought two cottages in Stirling Street (Nos 318-322) adjoining the rear boundary of the church. These cottages were built in 1887 and were demolished in 1999 to make way for two, two-storey units, thus providing more accommodation. Objections were lodged to prevent the demolition of what was believed to be the oldest duplex in the Town of Vincent. However, these were overruled by then Heritage Minister Graham Kierath.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

At that time Fr Peter Rados was the vicar-general of the Serbian-Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand. In 2008 he was the rector of the Church of Saint Sava and Bishop Milutin was the ruling Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Australasia. Other changes to the complex included a brick Sunday School building in 1962, school additions in 1971, and a brick storeroom was erected in 1984. In 2006 the official maximum number of people who could be accommodated in the church was 87 and 145 people in the hall.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onwards show the construction of the church, and the aforementioned additions and alterations to both the church structure and the other buildings on site. The more recent changes include roof replacement in 2013 and the major renovation of the building directly behind the church (not the Stirling Street properties), starting in 2017 and completed by 2018. Once the two-storey units on Stirling Street were built they had no further alterations. The church and back building have not had any alterations since.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Cultural Life: Religion Peopling WA: Demographic development	
Associations	Ladies' Guild Serbian Chetniks in WA organisation Fr Peter Rados	Mosaic Donor Mosaic Donor Rector
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. P8746 Serbian Orthodox church of St. Sava, Assessment Documentation, DPLH, 2014.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



ARCHIVAL IMAGES



Views of St Sava, 1984. Courtesy SLWA images b3663034 1-4.